

SENIOR ADVOCATE

Prime News for Those in Their Prime

PARK CITY, UTAH Summer Festivals and Other Fun

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Published 05/22/2009 - 9:57 a.m. CDT

I stood on the bridge at the bottom of Main Street in bright August sunshine and gazed at the continuous row of white tents that stretched for blocks into the historic heart of Park City, Utah. Hundreds of artists and crafts people were displaying their products in the tents at the annual Kimball Arts Festival, and I wanted to see everything. It was a daunting, if pleasurable, prospect, and I decided to take a few minutes to mentally develop an action plan.

While standing there, though, I couldn't help but reflect on the changes to the town since I first saw it 20 years before. That, too, had been in summer, and I had instantly loved the old mining town surrounded by a smattering of ski lodges. Over the years, I also had visited in winter, staying at one of the growing number of ski resorts, where I would be close to the slopes, and going into town to shop or dine.

This was my first chance to view Park City since it played a prominent role in the 2002 Winter Olympics hosted by Salt Lake City, and I saw considerable growth, with new downtown development that added accommodations, restaurants and shops without spoiling the town's heritage character.

Visitors today might be surprised to learn that Park City was incorporated in 1884 by miners, not skiers. Its original red brick and painted wood structures were built as boarding houses, banks, general stores, saloons and other businesses associated with a late 19th century boom town. More than \$400 million in silver was removed from its mines, creating 23 millionaires, including George Hearst, father of newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst.

Skiing was always a popular recreation, though. So perhaps it seemed only natural for citizens to take the sport more seriously when the mines began to play out. In 1963, Park City qualified for a US\$1.25 million government loan, installed a gondola, a chairlift and two J-bars, and transformed itself into a ski town. Growth was slow but steady until the Sundance Film Festival moved there in 1981, and Hollywood celebrities discovered a new winter playground. By the time the 2002 Olympics rolled around, Park City was at the center of three highly rated ski resorts: Deer Valley Resort, Park City Mountain Resort, and The Canyons Resort.

I left the bridge and headed to Main Street, realizing there was only one way to tackle the long row of temporary tent galleries: work my way up one side and down the other. I was glad that I had arrived the previous day, so I could devote most of this day to the festival. Friends would be arriving later and would have less time to shop the arts and crafts tents. We had made arrangements to meet at Deer Valley for dinner and an outdoor concert by the Utah Symphony Orchestra, one of many held throughout July and August as part of the Deer Valley Music Festival.

The following day, our small group drove to Utah Olympic Park, which was new to all of us. Although it was built for the 2002 Winter Olympics, the 400-acre park offers a range of things to do in summer. We arrived just in time for a guided tour of the Olympic competition sites. After viewing the bobsled, luge and skeleton track and looking down one of the highest ski jumps in the world, we decided the zipline might be an effortless way to get the downhill experience. Securely suspended in harnesses, we traveled 50 miles per hour on the zipline to the bottom of the ski jump hill 435 feet below.

Back at the base, a bit wobbly but none the worse for wear, we wandered through the Alf Engen Ski History Museum and the George Eccles 2002 Olympic Winter Games Museum, both in the park's visitor center, before having lunch. Then we went to the freestyle training pool for a demonstration by the Flying Ace All-Stars. The pool is designed for summer ski jump training, and the demonstration featured Olympians and U.S. national team members speeding down various jumps, soaring into the air and performing acrobatic feats before landing in the water.

This apparently inspired some active thrill-seeking by the men in our group, who returned to Deer Valley for mountain biking the next day. We women opted for more mild-mannered sports: inspecting the downtown shops and taking a historic walking tour. Although we had a guide from the Park City Historical Society and Museum for the Main Street business district tour, we could have managed on our own using the excellent brochure provided by the museum. In fact, that's exactly what we did later when we explored the Park Avenue residential neighborhood, a second brochure giving us details about the heritage houses and the people who once inhabited them.

Interspersed were breaks for cappuccino at Java Cow Café, a cute little coffee shop that also carries anything and everything cow, and lunch on the patio of Bistro 412, a French flavored restaurant that also offers indoor

dining year-round. We didn't want to eat too much, because the men were treating us to a farewell dinner at Wahso, a ZAGAT rated restaurant with an Asian accented white linen decor and a menu to match. We were impressed with the way the chef blended multiple Asian cuisines in classically prepared dishes, and Wahso left a good taste in our mouths.

I couldn't believe it was already time to head home. My friends would remain in Park City until the middle of the following day, but I had to rise early and catch a morning shuttle for the 45-minute drive to Salt Lake City International Airport. At least the ride gave me time to start planning my next trip to Park City.

PARK CITY SUMMER FESTIVALS

Deer Valley Music Festival (801-533-5626 or 801-533-6683, www.deervalleymusicfestival.org) is an initiative by the Utah Symphony and the Utah Opera to bring chamber, classical, opera and pop music to the Park City area. Scheduled throughout July and August.

Park City Food and Wine Classic (303-777-6887 or 877-328-2783, www.parkcityfoodandwineclassic.com) is a series of seminars, tastings and winemaker dinners featuring hundreds of wines and the finest restaurants. Held the first full weekend after July 4.

Park City Kimball Arts Festival (435-649-8882, www.kimball-art.org) closes historic Main Street and converts it into a gigantic gallery showcasing hundreds of artists and artisans. Food and music add to the festive atmosphere. Held the first weekend in August.

Park City Jazz Festival (435-940-1362, www.parkcityjazz.org) mixes free music clinics and workshops with performances by world renowned jazz artists. Staged in August.

INFO TO GO:

Egyptian Theatre (328 Main Street, 435-649-9371, www.egyptiantheatrecompany.org) independently produces a number of shows annually. Its 1926 Art Deco theater also hosts musical performances, touring acts and special events throughout the year.

Kimball Art Center (638 Park Avenue, 435-649-8882, www.kimball-art.org) hosts traveling exhibitions and shows of local artists' works in its three galleries. It also offers year-round art classes for all ages.

Park City Transit (435-615-5350 or 435-615-5301, www.parkcity.org/citydepartments) provides free accessible bus service around Park City and its three mountain resorts. Bright blue bus stop signs are easy to find, and route maps are available.

Royal Street Café (7600 Royal Street, 435-645-6724, www.deervalley.com) is located at Deer Valley's mid-mountain Silver Lake Lodge. During summer, it serves affordable but filling sandwich-and-salad lunches on its spacious deck.

Wasatch Brew Pub (205 South Main Street, 435-649-0900, www.wasatchbeers.com) became Park City's first brewery since Prohibition when it opened its doors in 1986. It hand crafts brews with such whimsical names as First Amendment Lager and Polygamy Porter.

Washington School Inn Historic Bed and Breakfast (543 Park Avenue, 435-649-3800 or 800-824-1672, www.washingtonschoolinn.com) was built in 1889 and has operated as a bed and breakfast since 1985. Decorated in period style, it features 12 guest rooms and three suites, each named for one of the school's teachers. All have private baths, and two suites have wood-burning fireplaces.