

# WOMEN of the YEAR!

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# Chatelaine

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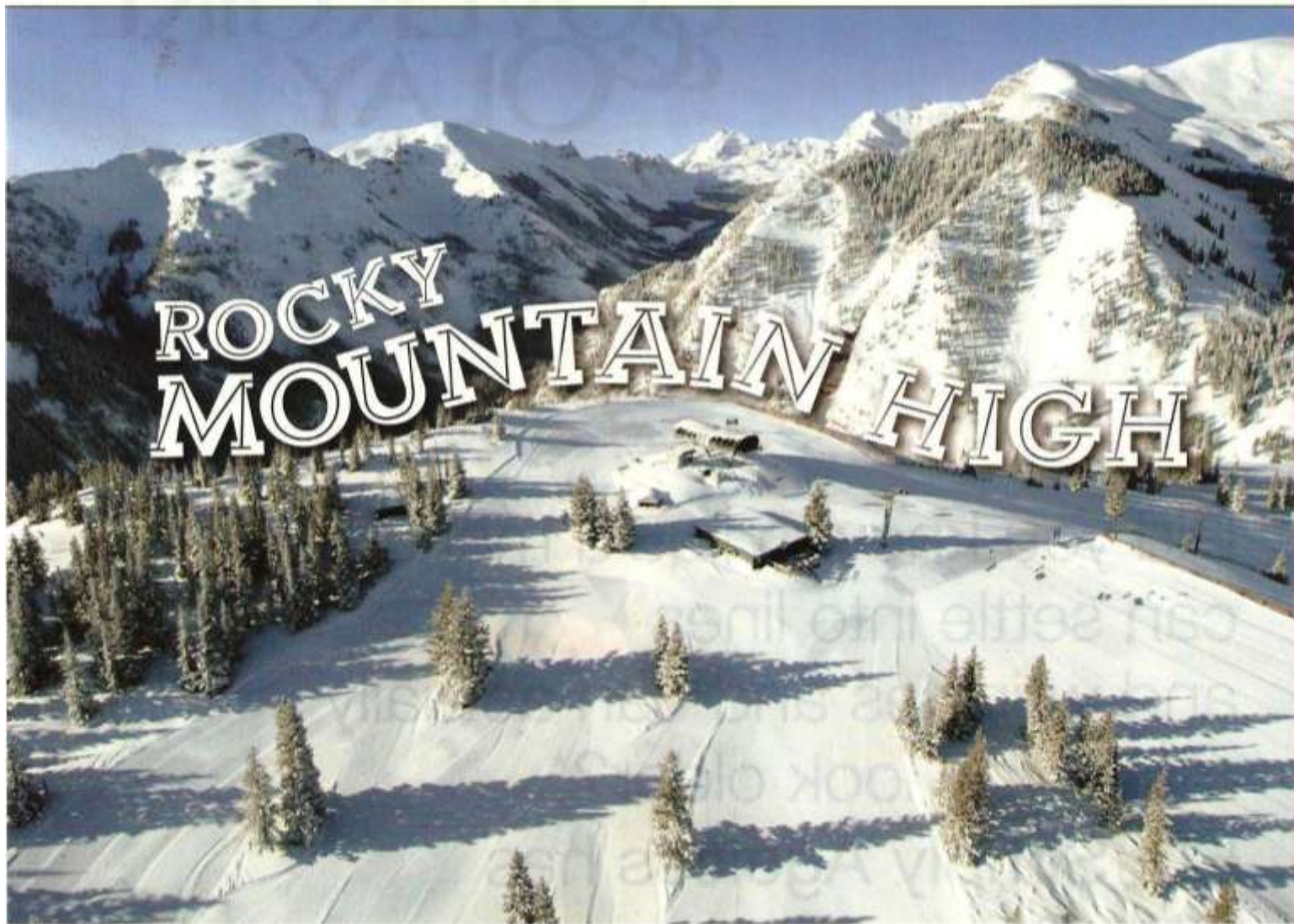
**Kate  
Middleton**

What's Next for the Most  
Talked-About Woman of 2011



NOVEMBER 2011 | \$3.99





Catherine Franklin always loved the idea of skiing but never seemed to have the time. After a 20-year hiatus she signed up for ski school and learned to make tracks on the mountains of Colorado

**M**Y CHILDHOOD MEMORIES of skiing include Mars bars, Nancy Greene and getting tangled up in rope tows. After a brief break, I took a second run at the sport in my 20s because my boyfriend skied every weekend. But once again my priorities changed and I hung up my skis. So when the opportunity presented itself to give it another try — this time on the mountains of Colorado — I jumped at the chance to get back on the slopes. The week-long trip took me first to Steamboat Springs and then to Aspen.

Steamboat, a mountain range that rises from Colorado's great plains, is pure cowboy country: a real working town where you're as likely to find ranch hands and rodeo cowboys at the après-ski watering holes as you are tourists. It's known for its light-as-air "champagne" powder, western hospitality and

mountain lifestyle. And Aspen is everything you imagine it to be: a mining town with a distinctive culture, designer shops and the extra cachet of being a celebrity hang out.

Over the week I discovered that the skiing experience has changed dramatically since my youth, and so has the equipment. Shorter skis, warm layers, boots that fit and gloves that actually keep your hands toasty — amazing! Even better, on my first day on the slopes, the weather was sunny and mild, the kind of day you dream about. Sunscreen required!

### Steamboat

My first challenge was to climb on the magic carpet (the modern version of a rope tow) without falling. But it seems skiing is like riding a bike, and I didn't embarrass myself as much as I thought I would. >



**WINTER WONDERLAND**

Aspen at night (right). Below, top to bottom: Catherine just before her first black run; the Lynn Britt Cabin on Snowmass; the famous Cowboy Coffee run at Steamboat.



My parallel turns, although shaky, counted for something, and I was put with a group of five women at the same level. After a quick run on an easy hill, we piled into a gondola with our instructor, Jeff, and made our way to the top of the mountain. Having never skied anywhere other than Ontario, I was overwhelmed by the height and space of the gorgeous landscape.

The goal for the first day was to get relaxed enough to lift your eyes beyond the tips of your skis, plan your turns and enjoy the view. I was amazed at how fast I progressed. The runs were wide and long and the inclines gradual so you could actually practise technique — a huge contrast to the small hills I'd learned on. We took turns following Jeff's tracks in the snow, which was a great way to get into a rhythm. By the end of the day we were skiing the blue runs (intermediate) and I was loving every minute of it.

On the second day I felt my confidence build. By mid-morning we were skiing the bumps and I did one black run (difficult). It wasn't pretty; my heart was pounding and I broke a sweat, but I made it. At the end of the day I sat in the late-afternoon sun, with a view of the mountain and happy skiers soaking in hot tubs.

**On to Aspen**

This beautiful old town looks like a scene from a postcard. It's a great place to visit and is

especially picturesque at night. Aspen Mountain is steep and known for its difficult runs, but there are three other slopes to choose from. I started out with a small group lesson on Buttermilk, an inviting mountain for beginner- and intermediate-level skiers that also boasts a 22-foot Olympic-size super-pipe — the home of the ESPN Winter X Games.

My next stop was Snowmass, the largest mountain in Aspen. This is when I got familiar with the amazing ski valets, who transfer your gear from one mountain to another. I left my skis at Buttermilk and they were waiting for me in the morning at Snowmass.

I woke up the next day to grey skies. As the day progressed, it began to snow, gently at first, and then I was skiing in a storm. I anxiously followed the red jacket of my instructor, Pat, and I have to admit I was terrified. We stopped to rest and he pointed upward — we had been on a black run! He congratulated me on "shredding the powder." I'd graduated from "beginner plus" to "intermediate."

On my last day I had a delicious breakfast at the Little Nell, the famous ski-in, ski-out hotel, and drank in the atmosphere. Ivanka Trump was dining next to the window and there was an elderly gentleman dressed in a one-piece Prada suit. I confidently headed out to ski fresh powder. On a black diamond, no less! >



# HOT LIST



## ASPEN

## STEAMBOAT

### GETTING KITTED OUT

Four Mountain Sports has free overnight storage

Ski Haus: For every adult five-day rental, one kid is free

### CAFFEINE FIX

Main Street Bakery

Creekside Café

### SLOPESIDE DINING

Lynn Britt Cabin Gourmet: lunch in an authentic log cabin

Hazie's has daily chef's specials and spectacular views

### HIT THE SHOPS

Highlights include J.Crew, Prada, Gucci, Dior

F.M. Light & Sons for authentic western wear

### CULTURE BEAT

Aspen Art Museum is cutting edge

Ghost Ranch Saloon for great live music

### APRÈS-SKI

The Terrace Room at the Little Nell

Slopeside Bar & Grill

### FANCY FOOD

Matsuhisa: This hip Japanese has delicious tuna *tataki* and great people-watching

Café Diva: Try local delicacies like elk tenderloin from local ranches

### FUN FOR KIDS

The Treehouse at Snowma's

A dinner sleigh ride at Ragnar's

# Great Gear!

Say goodbye to cold feet and foggy goggles. Bonnie de Merlis, owner of Toronto's Sign of the Skier, shares her top shopping tips



**SKIS** Völkl's Luna skis are wider and have more shape, which "allows you to turn easily," says de Merlis. Völkl skis, \$530.

**JACKET** Gone are the days of puffy suits; it's all about having a shell with high-tech layers underneath. Look for a jacket that's windproof, waterproof and breathable. Sunice jacket, \$450.

**HELMET** "The question we always get is 'Should my helmet match my boots?' The priority should be fit. And consider a liner underneath for extra warmth." Giro Sheer Titanium Ornate helmet, \$200.

**GOGGLES** "Make sure they have anti-fog coating, and yellow- or orange-tinted lenses are the best for low light." Smith Optics Anthem goggles, \$145.

**BOOTS** "Set aside an hour to find a pair, and make sure the fit is snug. Too big and you'll have less control over your skis." Also bring your ski socks, which should be snug around the foot. Rossignol Electra Sensor 380 boots, \$260. All equipment available at [thesignoftheskier.com](http://thesignoftheskier.com).

# WHERE TO STAY

Whether you want to cozy up in a chalet or sit next to Jack Nicholson, revive post-ski legs at one of these hot spots



## Steamboat Springs

### SHERATON STEAMBOAT RESORT

Location is everything. Situated at the base of the mountain, the hotel is just a

few ski-booted steps from lifts, ski school and rental shops, and the views are stunning. *From \$1,212 a week, [starwoodhotels.com](http://starwoodhotels.com).*

### MOVING MOUNTAINS CHALETs

Play house in one of these chalets. Perfect for families. Bonus: They can come fully catered. *From \$4,086 a week, [movingmountains.com](http://movingmountains.com).*



## Aspen

**THE LITTLE NELL** Almost as famous as the A-listers who make it their mountain home,

the 92 rooms are pricey but luxurious (with fireplaces and heated floors!). Plus it's the only ski-in, ski-out hotel in town. *From \$2,841 a week, [littlenell.com](http://littlenell.com).*

**SKY HOTEL** A hipster haven, this overhauled motel has a woodsy lounge and a small, chic pool area. *From \$2,531 a week, [theskyhotel.com](http://theskyhotel.com).*