

# elevation

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## Vail for dummies

by Isaac Woods Stokes

**I** think the fact that they own the website Snow.com pretty much says it all. Whodey? Vail. And if it doesn't, this does—5,289 acres, aka eight square miles. There are diminutive European countries that have won Olympic curling medals that are smaller. Not to disparage curling, Elevation has been brushing up (haha... curling puns, can the apocalypse be far off?), and we are well aware that curling “rocks” weigh 42 pounds, are constructed from Welsh granite, and the last one thrown is termed “the hammer.” We know curling is dope, look for full Elevation coverage in 2010.

But what is the true extent of your knowledge when it comes to Vail?

**Beginner**—You're able to find your way out of the absurdly large parking garage in 30 minutes or less. Extra credit if you know about La Cantina, the tasty Mexican restaurant located in the garage, which probably is always going to be the cheapest food in Vail Village unless someone opens a bagel shop in a restroom. I once saw a guy cooking ramen on a campstove atop a picnic table along Gore Creek. I think he was promptly deported to A-Basin.

**Intermediate**—You're aware that Vail has precisely 34 lifts, but you don't count the five not-so-magical carpets. Further, you're wise enough to always select the less-crowded, but equally fast, Wildwood lift over the Mountaintop



### Inside Edge

See Snow.com or Vail.com on the web for info on Vail Ski Resort. Upcoming events include the Vail Film Festival (March 30-April 2), The Taste of Vail (April 5-8), and Spring Back to Vail (April 3-16). For details on Flylow Gear's telemark-specific outerwear check out FlylowGear.com.

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**Express lift at Mid-Vail.** You're hip to doing a few laps in the sparsely skied Game Creek Bowl before dropping down to the perpetually clogged No. 5 lift via the aspen glades to the skiers right of Never. You know that Mongolia is a country in Central Asia, not a flowing bush, and also that it's the namesake of the powdery easternmost perimeter of the Back Bowls.

**Expert**—You have the coordinates of the last 15 free parking spaces on the Frontage Road (Elevation could tell you, but we'd have to exile you afterward to Ski Pocono). You're cagey enough to hit

Blue Ox from Two Elk Lodge at the end of the day heading to the base, skipping the 15-minute lift ride. As an overachieving dirtbag you know where Hairbag Alley is. Gold stars if you've snowslid Lower Hairbag. Finally, East Vail Chutes and the Minturn Mile? Non-urban legends or snowy Shangri La? Seasoned Vail pros have visited both these promised lands.

**Boulder Weekly Gear Pick:** Flylow Gear telemark outerwear. Given the fact that tele-ers consider themselves a tribe apart from

ordinary snowsliders, what they've been lacking is some distinctive ski apparel. And, no, duct taped pants don't count. Flylow Gear has developed a line of jackets and snowpants just for the knee-dropping crowd.

The Kung Fu Jacket is constructed from a bark resistant softshell material, with a helmet compatible hood, supersized 15-inch pit zips, and an ingenious no-bulk belt loop powder skirt system. Naturally, there is an integrated stash pocket too. The burly Drop Kick Pants are fashioned from Cebonner Sumlon material (translation—a material that finally can withstand a tele-beating), have 18-inch side vents for easy kneepad access, and feature a tele-specific articulated fit for freedom of movement. On a whimsical note, the wash-care tags of Flylow garments instruct you to “drink cold beer” while washing. This is a company with soul, and the pinhead nation now has a uniform to call their own. **Ⓜ**