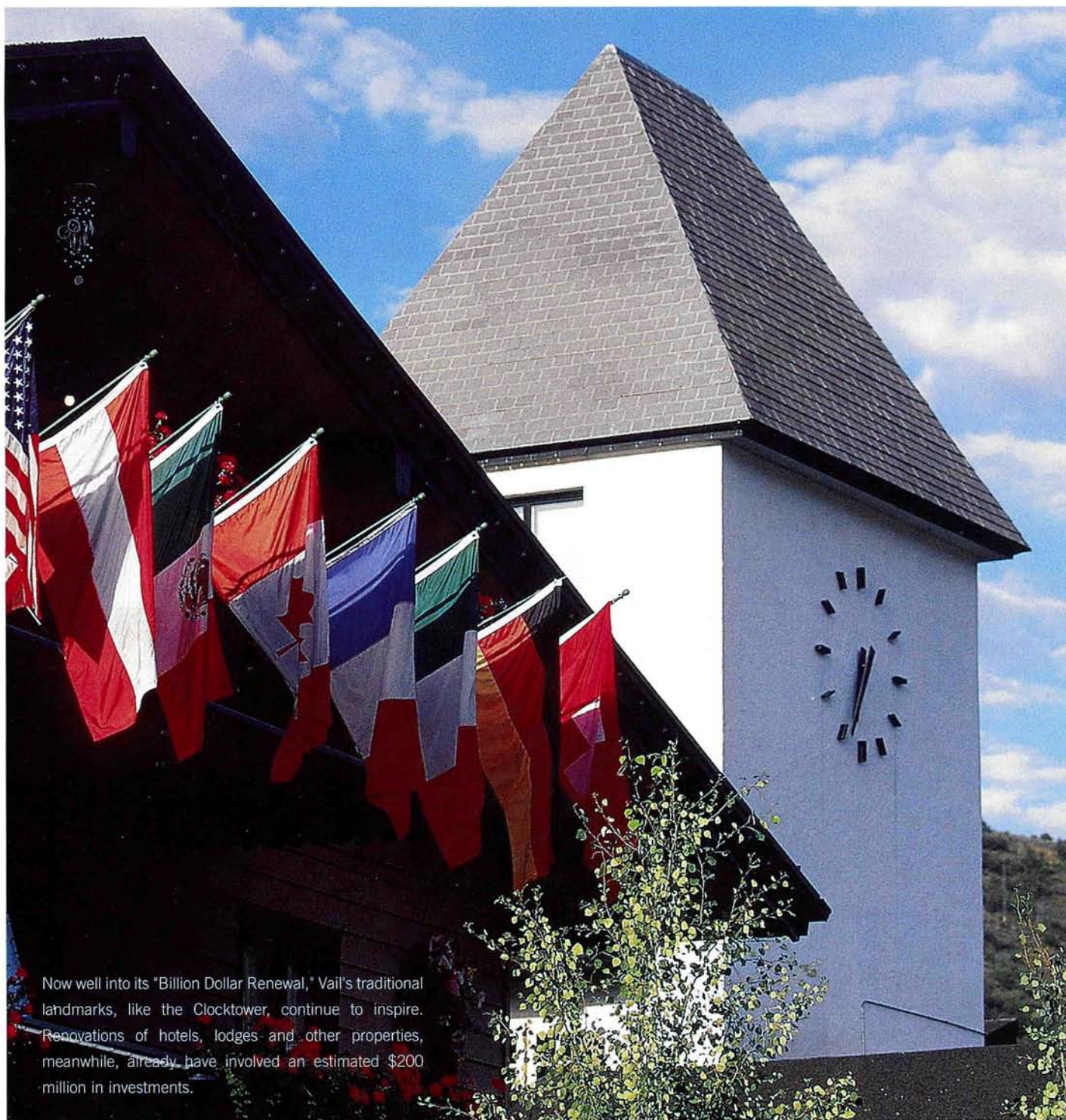


SO VAIL-ESQUE...

DISCRIMINATING NEW OWNERS NOW COMING HOME TO VAIL

Vail Resorts / Jack Atfield



Now well into its "Billion Dollar Renewal," Vail's traditional landmarks, like the Clocktower, continue to inspire. Renovations of hotels, lodges and other properties, meanwhile, already have involved an estimated \$200 million in investments.



BY TOM BOYD

In the eyes of multitudes of loyal visitors to Vail over the years, on stellar days as a gondola quietly propelled them to the top of the mountain, the world-famous resort village's familiar landmarks — the Clock Tower, the Covered Bridge — have peaked out from among Bavarian-style rooftops while sweeping views of the Gore Range become ever more impressive with each passing moment.

Now, however, for the first time in many years, discriminating visitors with the wherewithal can gaze upon something they've never been able to see before — a new Vail of which they now own a part.

"We've rented everywhere, above the Sonnenalp, across from the ice rink, back along the creek. We came very close to buying a place up in Cordillera," says Joe Donnelly, who's been coming to Vail since 1978 but until now had never bought a home. "We talked a lot about buying in Vail."

As new owners at One Willow Bridge Road, where that street meets Meadow Drive, Donnelly and his wife and daughters will no longer have to base themselves in rented houses or hotel rooms; instead they can enjoy all the latest, greatest, state-of-the-art comforts of home — like heated subterranean parking — for seven weeks a year right in the heart of Vail Village.

"At the end of the day," he says, "we realized we were really looking forward to driving up to the mountains, parking our car and being able to walk everywhere."

THE VAIL MYSTIQUE

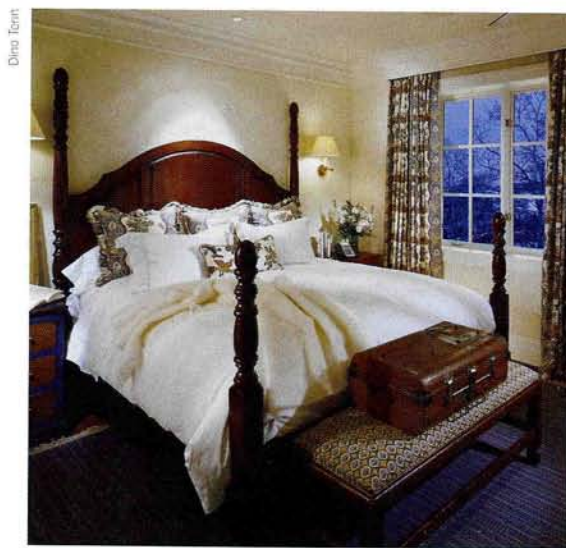
Among the newest properties to come online as part of Vail's "Billion Dollar Renewal," One Willow Bridge Road is a

"We realized we were really looking forward to driving up to the mountains, parking our car and being able to walk everywhere."

— Joe Donnelly, new Vail homeowner

fine example of what the new Vail lifestyle is all about. Its outer appearance maintains the spirit of Old Europe — which inspired Vail's founders — yet the interior is highly modern and fully loaded with all of today's technological advantages. It offers supreme privacy — important to people like the Donnellys — but it also integrates the strong community values Vail always has held in high esteem. Its ground floor, for example, is wide open to pedestrians, who can stroll into a cozy market, visit a wine bar and peruse posh retail shops.

Indeed, the European ambiance is a big part of the Vail mystique — which remains, but is increasingly becoming available with decidedly Vail-esque upgrades. In Europe, for example, there are age-old paving stones; in the new Vail Village there are heated paving stones. In Europe, self-reliance often is para-



Inspired by Old Europe, the newly opened One Willow Bridge Road is the epitome of a new lifestyle in Vail Village.



“This will change the way we do Vail. But we’re very comfortable with it.”
— Joe Donnelly,
new Vail homeowner

Photos by Dino Tovin



Top and above, Vail's new homeowners have all the modern conveniences right in the heart of Vail Village.

mount; in the new Vail, a guest-service mindset has taken hold that makes a stay here pleasant in any language. These upgrades are changing Vail for many people, and in a good way. “Coming to One Willow, it will change the way we do Vail,” says Donnelly. “But we’re very comfortable with it. We’ll be closer to Kelly Liken’s and Sweet Basil and all the restaurants we love.”

A ‘NEW TOWN CENTER’

In the 40 years since Vail’s first dawn as a town and ski resort, the progression of growth has been outward, and downvalley. Homeowners now, however, are beginning to come back the other way, as they can see Vail as it will look for the next 40 years — and possibly beyond.

Along with One Willow Bridge Road, a host of other projects are now open and operating in the Vail Village, with a long

list of others nearing completion. Renovations of hotels, lodges and other properties, as well as new streetscapes in Vail Village and Lionshead, already have involved an estimated \$200 million in investments. More than 100 new lodge units and 9,250 square feet of new retail space are open already; another 130 lodge units and 40,000 square feet of new retail space are scheduled to be completed in the next two years.

Perhaps the largest project in the works is Solaris, an immense, luxury hotel and condominium to replace the aging Crossroads, right across Meadow Drive from One Willow Bridge Road. As planned, it will deliver a half-acre public plaza — a skating rink in winter and an open-air plaza with a fountain in summer — as well as a bowling alley, a three-screen movie theater and two restaurants.

“People will be able to say, ‘Let’s meet at



When completed, Solaris, to replace the aging Crossroads complex, is expected to be Vail's new town center.

“It really does become a meeting spot in town, a new town center.”

— Craig Cohn, Solaris

Solaris,” says Solaris’ Craig Cohn. “It really does become a meeting spot in town, a new town center.”

To the west in Lionshead, about half a mile away, the \$250 million Arrabelle at Vail Square is under construction adjacent to the Eagle-Bahn Express gondola. The design of the complex, to be completed in November,

fits the mould of Vail’s other new projects: European in spirit yet bigger and much more grand than most of what’s seen in Europe’s resorts. The Arrabelle isn’t meant solely for the enjoyment of property owners, either. The structure will include its own public plaza, as well as new shops, restaurants and other facilities for resort employees.

One thing is certain: More than any other place in Vail, Lionshead will look and feel like a brand-new town.

CONNECTING TO A ‘PLACE’

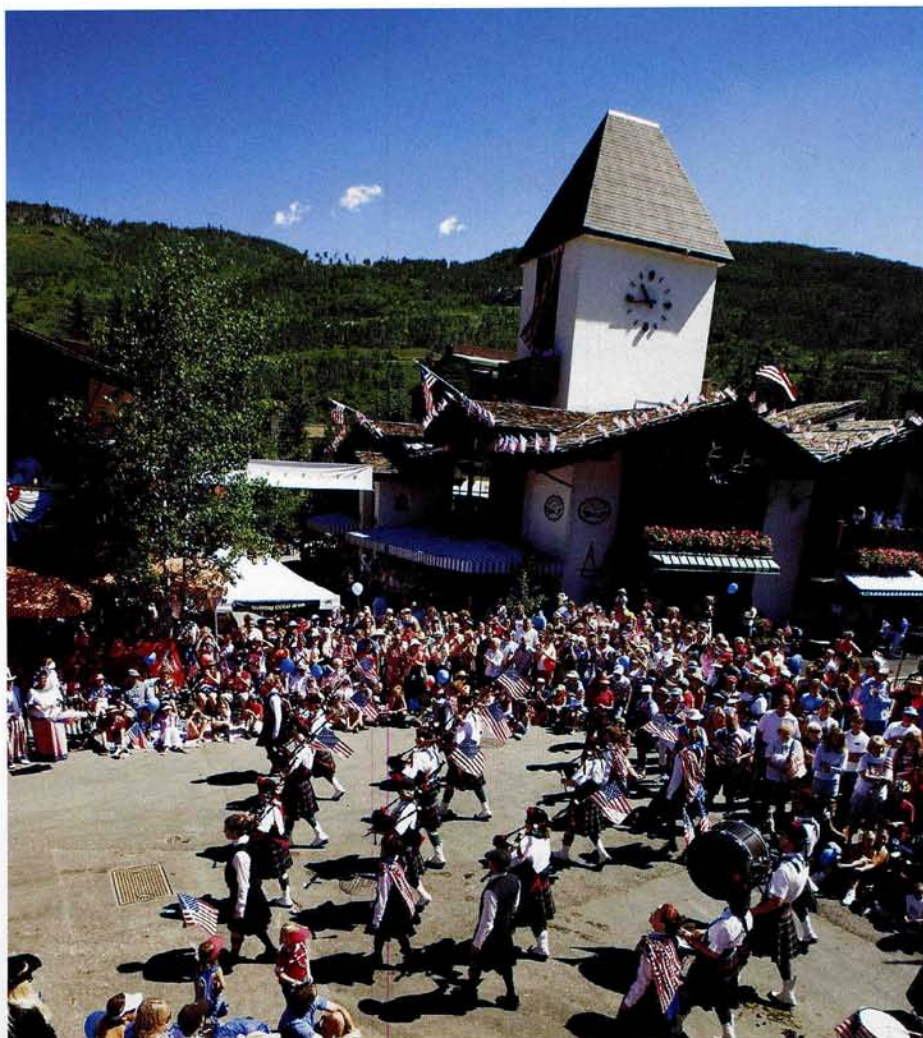
Back in Vail Village, there is no question many new homeowners love being near a new town center offering the sense of being a part of Vail’s re-invention. They’re secure in the idea they’ve made excellent investments.

That doesn’t solely pertain to money and finances, however. Donnelly, for one, says he

“People are making a tremendous investment in the culture and the way of life here. They want Vail to be what it has always been.”

— Joe Donnelly, new Vail homeowner

Vail Resorts / Jack Atfield



The annual Fourth of July parade is a highlight of Vail's increasingly popular summer season.

now feels a strong sense of involvement, community and connection with the resort town “as a place.” The Billion Dollar Renewal, he says, isn’t a good idea simply because of cold-hearted financial calculations made by people whose hearts and minds are far from Vail; long-time visitors and part-time residents like him are collectively rallying to maintain Vail’s special appeal.

“I think you have hundreds or thousands of people, just like me, who are mid-baby boomers, who have been coming for years and years and are now investing in the town,” he says. “People are making a tremendous investment in the culture and the way of life here. They want Vail to be what it has always been.”

Vail’s new homeowners say these qualities truly shine at another time of year, as well. Suzanne Donnelly, in particular, has a fondness for Vail’s summer season, Joe Donnelly says, and they make the trip from home in Kansas City to Vail every time they have the opportunity.

“July Fourth to us is just a gas,” he says. “It’s a lot of fun. It’s like a small-town Kansas July Fourth from that perspective.”

Indeed, the hometown feel of Vail is the intangible asset that puts this place on top of the list for a growing number of families’ vacations. There are other mountain resorts where one can go in search of glitz or glamour, but in Vail there is no matching the welcoming demeanor of the locals and the quiet respect and privacy given to guests. New investment can take care of many things — the rest is up to the people that bring the buildings to life.

For the new breed of Vail homeowners, like the Donnellys, that’s made all the difference. 