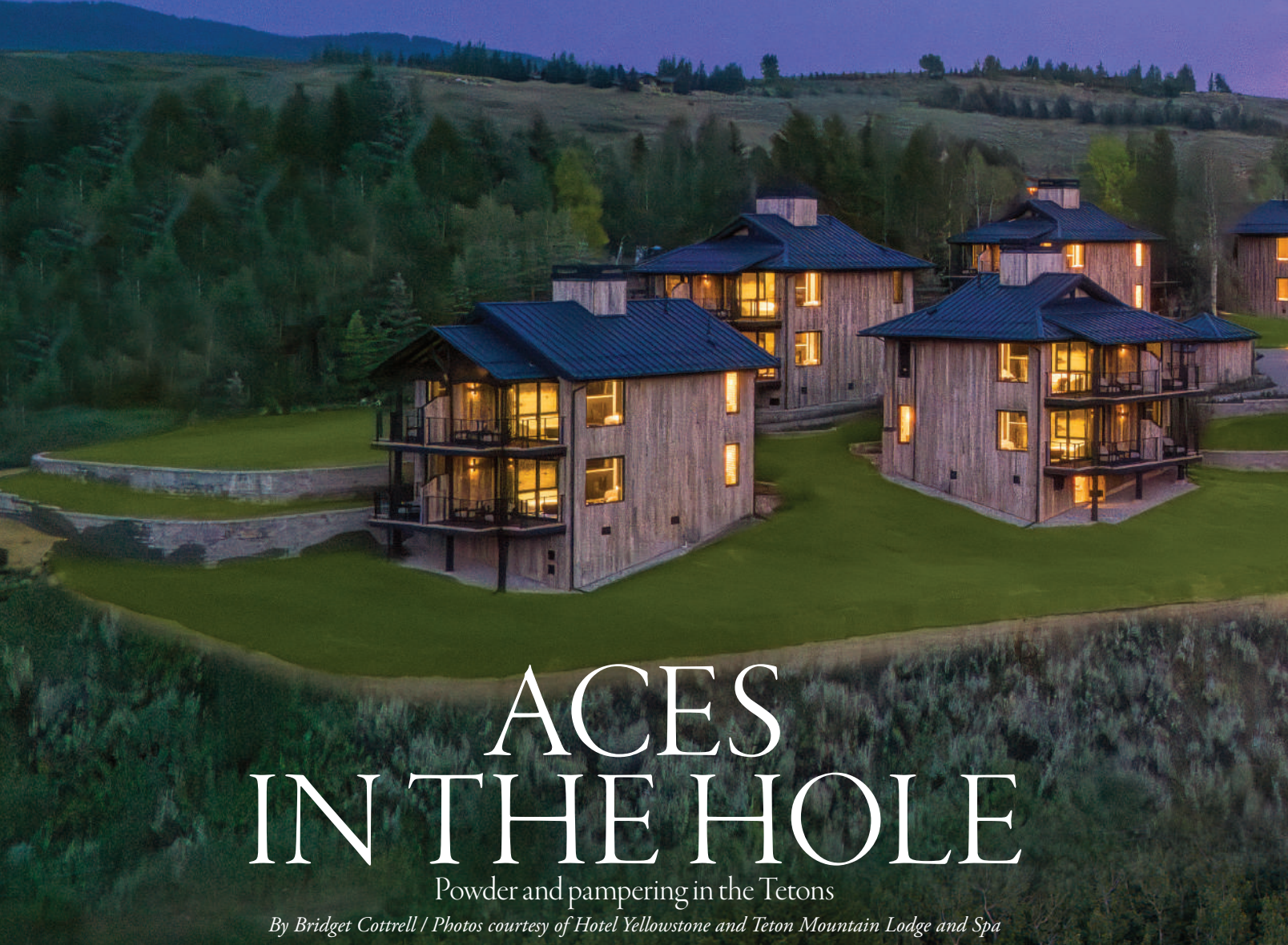


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ACES IN THE HOLE

Powder and pampering in the Tetons

By Bridget Cottrell / Photos courtesy of Hotel Yellowstone and Teton Mountain Lodge and Spa

Powder hounds were certainly howling, and not for joy, as many of the West's most storied ski areas suffered from historically low snowfall totals at the start of the 2025-2026 ski season. Numerous Colorado mountain towns, including Aspen, saw rain over Christmas. In Deer Valley, Utah, every mountain pushed back its opening date for the first time in its history. Bucking these trends, Jackson, Wyoming, received significant early snow, placing it among the top U.S. resorts for early-season accumulation. By mid-January, Jackson Hole reported more than 130 inches of snowfall over Vail, Colorado, with 90 of its 130 trails open.

My advice to counter this unpredictability? Choose your accommodations wisely so you're not solely beholden to Mother Nature to make or break your holiday. As my ski skills are subpar at best, we split a recent trip to Jackson between two resorts: Hotel Yellowstone at Jackson Hole (HotelYellowstoneJH.com) and Teton Mountain Lodge & Spa at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort (tetonlodge.com), balancing outdoor adventures with indoor pampering.

Occupying the coveted crest of East Gros Ventre Butte with next-door neighbor Amangani (currently closed for renovations), the adults-only Hotel Yellowstone, which opened in August 2024, transformed an existing property from rustic to mountain

modern, fully capitalizing on seemingly infinite views of the Teton Range with huge expanses of glass.

In lieu of a lobby, check-in takes place in the property's communal living room (or the adjacent terrace), a welcoming space where an evolving menu of beverages and light bites is available from early morning through evening cocktail hour (there's also a generous selection of complimentary snacks, sweets, and drinks in each suite). A wide staircase leads down to Olivia's, an elegant all-day dining destination with décor that pays homage to the American West while seamlessly blending modern design influences.

Walls of glass on two sides and mirrors on the others provide a rotating gallery on a monumental scale; the way the fog rolls across the valley and the mist conjures fleeting, floating rainbows is an Impressionist's dream. Knowing active, adventure-filled days were in the offing, we had no qualms about going big at breakfast, including steak Benedict and stuffed French toast with blackberry syrup. Lunch offerings include elevated salads and sandwiches, while candlelit dinners are a more refined affair (beautifully plated, though no less hearty). Constant throughout all meals is the use of the best of what's local and congenial service.



The lodge is the hub of communal activity. It offers numerous amenities, including Olivia's Restaurant, a spa with pool and fitness center, and a gathering area where refreshments are served from morning through early evening.



The spa level pool.



Spa treatment room with salt therapy



Vista Suite



The communal living room set for afternoon snacks.



Grand Teton Suite

Hotel Yellowstone's 36 lavishly appointed 600 square-foot guest suites are spread across the four-acre property in clusters of four within free-standing buildings that are either perched on the precipice of the butte or around a pond. The wood-sided structures with standing-seam roofs blend into the thoughtfully planned native plant landscape, which gives way to sagebrush-steppe and native grasses that create a transfixing ripple with the slightest breeze.

In public areas and guest suites, the color palette is muted, employing shades that mimic the seasonality of the landscape from spring's green-gray to fall and winter's tawny and straw-colored hues. This subtlety, particularly in guestrooms, allows layered texture to rise to the forefront, from fluffy sheepskin upholstery on armchairs to the nubby softness of bouclé upholstery on a half-moon sofa. The power of nature is captured in large-format black-and-white photography, from grizzly bear cubs in the lobby to an image of a fog-shrouded fly fisher mid-cast on display in our suite.

As beguiling as the rooms are, it's the view that's the real draw, and I spent a great deal of time on our generously proportioned, covered balcony, where, from our elevated vantage point, the red and green runway lights from the airport (the only commercial airport in the U.S. located entirely within a National Park) twinkled like Christmas lights and in the early morning light, and grazing ranch cows scattered amid the yellowed grasses

looked like pinpoints. An accordion door separates the floor-to-ceiling Calacatta marble bathroom, complete with a Toto Washlet Japanese-style toilet, from the bedroom, so you can literally bathe in the view from your oversized freestanding soaking tub.

An intimate spa at Hotel Yellowstone offers an outsized menu of destination-derived treatments for a boutique property, including red light therapy, infrared sauna, cold water therapy showers, and two couples' treatment rooms, each with a Himalayan salt treatment booth. Also well-equipped is a petite gym with TechnoGym Cardio equipment, free weights, and yoga mats. The pièce de resistance of the spa level is a heated negative-edge pool surrounded by retractable floor-to-ceiling glass windows that invite in refreshing mountain breezes.

Hotel Yellowstone is located less than five miles from the charming and historic Jackson Town Square; 15 miles from Grand Teton National Park's Moose Junction Entrance; and 60 miles from Yellowstone National Park's South Entrance. They've partnered with local outfitter Backcountry Safaris to offer curated destination experiences exclusively for guests, encompassing wildlife safaris, fly fishing, Snake River floats, UTV excursions, and sunrise or sunset toast outings. For winter fun, Hotel Yellowstone is nearby both Snow King Mountain, which recently opened Snow King Observatory and Planetarium



(snowkingmountain.com/mountain/snow-king-observatory), the only mountaintop observatory and planetarium in the United States, and Jackson Hole Mountain Resort (jacksonhole.com), which is celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2026.

A premier destination for powder enthusiasts, averaging 459 inches of snow each season, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort serves up some of the most challenging terrain in the West, including iconic runs like Corbet's Couloir, a double-black diamond. Nearby, the National Elk Refuge (fws.gov/refuge/national-elk) offers sleigh rides around the herd, North America's largest, with winter populations typically ranging from 6,000 to over 10,000 head. In warmer months, the resort's Aerial Tram, which ascends 4,139 feet to an elevation of 10,450 feet in just 12 minutes, offers access to a vast trail network that links Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, Bridger-Teton National Forest and Grand Teton National Park.

The slopeside Teton Mountain Lodge & Spa is situated in the heart of Jackson Hole Mountain Resort. It was love at first sight as soon as we entered the soaring lobby, when I was unable to notice anything else once I spied Scout, the GM's cuddly Bernadoodle and the hotel's unofficial mascot, positioned like a welcome mat at the front of the reception desk. After administering Scout's obligatory belly rubs, I was able to survey the surroundings in the recently renovated space, which seamlessly blends modern aesthetics with

Jackson Hole's rich Western heritage. Rugged natural materials such as dark wood, timber beams, and large stone-faced fireplaces, which anchor multiple cozy seating areas with plush couches and throw blankets, are juxtaposed with custom chandeliers, blackened steel, and antique brass accents, and expansive windows that frame the natural beauty of the surrounding mountain landscape. The rustic alpine-style design continues in the guestrooms ranging in size from 350 to 1,580 square feet. Common among them is a stone-faced gas fireplace and built-in boot dryer, and most boast a fully equipped kitchen with a separate dining area. Spacious bathrooms offer a jetted tub or a double-headed rain shower.

The hotel's Spur Restaurant, consistently rated among the top restaurants in Teton Village, is one of a handful of year-round dining venues in the village and popular with the après-ski set. For a grab-and-go breakfast, pick up a Bear Claw 399, a delectable treat named to honor the late Grizzly 399, the oldest known reproducing female grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem when she was killed by a car in October 2024. You can indulge in the delectable treat guilt-free, knowing that proceeds support grizzly conservation in the area. The cuisine at Spur is elevated American West with heavy European alpine influence. All three meals at Spur feature hearty fare with plenty of locally sourced ingredients (including vegetarian options) to power active days.