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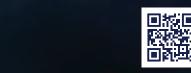
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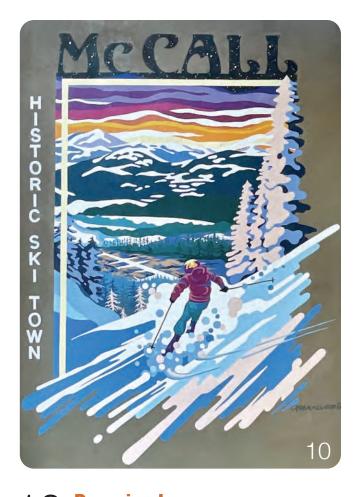
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BY RODNEY J. AUTH

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# Holiday Magic

he summer and fall were a blur. We did some travelling, buried my father-in-law, married off one of my daughters, and sent our last two kids to college—meaning we officially became empty nesters.

The whole process was disjointing. Oftentimes, I felt like I was viewing my life from afar as a spectator. A weird feeling.

But now the snow is beginning to fall, and the holidays are heading our way. Life has settled into a better rhythm. Like many of you, we're finding ourselves decorating the house, binging Hallmark Christmas movies, and looking forward to our family's return to the town we all love.

There is no place more magical than McCall in winter. Piles of snow line the street. Gentle flakes drift down from above, landing on outstretched tongues and eyelashes and smiling faces. A huge



Christmas tree stands as a silent, colorful sentinel next to the lake, filling the town with wonderful light and hearts with the promise of good things to come.

This feeling—part nostalgia, part hope, part unbridled joy—is what I hope you and your loved ones capture during your visit. It's the feeling we've tried to illustrate in each of the stories in this issue—starting with the wonderful cover art created by a local artist to celebrate McCall's love of winter and skiing on through fun stories of camaraderie and joy you can only find in the Liar's Den.

So, enjoy those first turns of the season and that time snuggled up with loved ones in front of a warm fire, and know you're always welcome in McCall.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

Rodney J. Auth

Publisher

P.S. Want to spread the McCall love? Mail the enclosed postcard to someone who needs a pick-me-up this holiday season.



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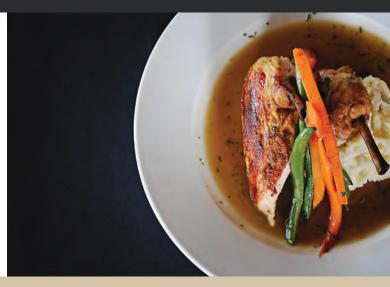
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#### **Shining A Little Less Light On McCall**

#### Lauren Johnson's Bright Idea

When most teens are glued to their phones after dark, Boise High School senior Lauren Johnson thinks about turning the lights off. Her Girl Scout Gold Award project, "Reducing Light Pollution," takes aim at an issue that's hiding one of McCall's most beautiful natural resources—the night sky.



Lauren's family spends their holidays in McCall, where they love to ski, sip cocoa by the fire, and stargaze over Payette Lake. Or at least, they used to stargaze—until the Milky Way began to fade behind a growing halo of artificial light. "It's wild," Lauren says. "You don't realize how much brightness affects the stars

until you go somewhere truly dark—or until you can't anymore."

Her project, featured on her website https://www.reducinglightpollution. my.canva.site, aims to bring the stars back into focus. Through research, community outreach, and a bit of good old-fashioned Scout determination, Lauren is showing locals how small changes can make a big difference.

Among her tips: use shielded light fixtures that point downward instead of into the sky, choose warm-colored bulbs under 3000K, and install motion sensors so lights are on only when needed. Not only does this save energy and reduce glare, but it also helps protect wildlife—from migrating birds to nocturnal critters—that rely on natural darkness to survive.

Lauren's project doesn't stop at advice. She's helping others get involved through fun, hands-on activities like mapping night sky brightness with the Globe at Night program and discovering local "dark sky" spots using DarkSky Finder. Her message? You don't need to move to the middle of nowhere to see the stars—just rethink how you light your home and neighborhood.

As Lauren and her family return to McCall this holiday season, she hopes her project will inspire others to look up—literally—and remember the wonder of a truly starry Idaho night. Because sometimes, the best way to brighten your community is to shine a little less.

#### **EVENTS CALENDAR**

#### **Brundage Mountain**

- Dec. 7 Stuff-A-Snowcat & Can Food Drive
- **Dec. 25** Santa Shreds Brundage!
- **Dec. 31** Light up the Night: New Year's Eve Celebration
- Jan. 17 Best Trick Pony Feature Focused Terrain
  Park Competition
- Jan. 20 Silverton Avalanche School: Pro 2
- Jan. 26 Silverton Avalanche School: Pro 1
- Feb. 5 Avalanche Science Guides Level 2
- Feb. 6 Avalanche Science Guides Level 1
- Feb. 7 Centennial Speed Dating
- Feb. 12 Avalanche Science Guides Level 1+
- Mar. 6 B4BC Weekend—Love Your Peaks Tour
- Mar. 7 Diva Day
- Mar. 8 Chris Bodily Memorial 4-Way Races— Giant Slalom
- Mar. 14 Beer and Gear Festival
- Mar. 28 Mountain Madness
- Apr. 1 Gaper Day
- **Apr. 4** The BREWlympic Games—Beer Relays & Gelande Quaff
- **Apr. 11** Brundage Cardboard Classic & Spring Party!
- Apr. 12 Last Tracks Closing Day

#### **Little Ski Hill**

- Dec. 6 Snow Ball Gala
- Dec. 13 McCall Life Town Edit
- **Dec. 20** T-bar Opening
- **Dec. 27** Holiday Rail Jam
- Dec. 30 MWSC Holiday Camp Celebration
- **Jan. 15** Soda Pop Local Youth Town Race
- Jan. 17 LSH Freeride Event
- Feb. 19 Soda Pop Local Youth Town Race
- **Feb. 21** LSH Slopestyle
- Mar. 5 Soda Pop Local Youth Town Race
- Mar. 14 14th Annual Banked Slalom

#### **Tamarack Resort**

- **Nov. 27** Thanksgiving Dinner at The Reserve
- **Nov. 29** Christmas Tree Lighting in The Village
- **Dec. 5** Full Moon Snowshoe Experience
- Dec. 25 Santa Skis for FREE
- **Dec. 29-Jan. 2** Winter Break Basecamp
- Mar. 6 SNOWFORT
- Mar. 7 SNOWFORT

#### **Bear Basin**

Dec. 21 — Winter Solstice Nordic Ski

#### **Toby's Place**

Nov. 24-26 — Shred Shed

#### McCall (General / Town Events)

**Jan. 30–Feb. 8** — Winter Carnival: Where in the World is Sharlie?





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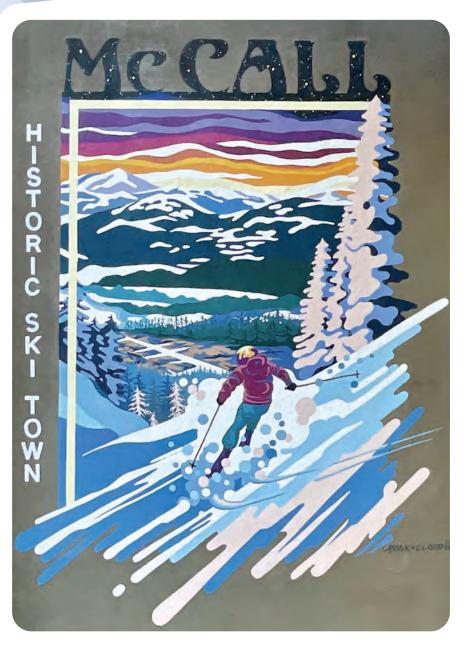


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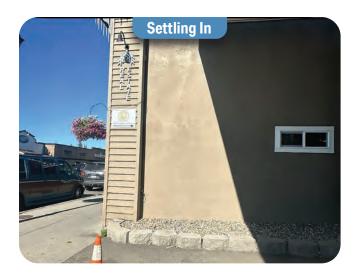
BY RODNEY J. AUTH

f you've ever rolled into downtown McCall and felt that giddy rush that happens when the first snow dusts the pines and Payette Lake turns to glass, then you already understand what "Drop In" is all about. The new mural on Lake Street doesn't only add a pop of color—it tells the whole town's winter love story, tracing a line from the earliest wooden skis clattering across snow to the joyful turns that still carve down Brundage and the Little Ski Hill today.

# A Little Ski History (With a Lot of Heart)

ong before McCall became a
destination for powder hounds and
après-ski lattes, it was a sleepy logging
town trying to stay busy in the long
winters. Back in the early 1900s—before
there was even a road into town—folks
here had to make their own fun once the
snow set in. Sometime between
chopping wood and tending fires, they
discovered something magical: sliding
downhill on boards was a lot more
entertaining.

By 1913, the train had made its way to McCall, bringing freight, mail, and the occasional wide-eyed visitor. The Johnson family's "transfer house" sat right where Toll Station Pizza stands today. That's where one of McCall's first ski runs took shape—on a hill right behind the barn. Local kids would climb up, launch themselves off the chicken



coop roof, and land laughing in the snow below. It wasn't exactly Sun Valley, but it was the start of something special.

Around 1923, a few enterprising locals decided McCall needed a winter carnival. They built a ski jump out near the golf course on Blackwell Hill and advertised it so well that 200 people came by train for the event. They even had the world's smallest jumper to go with the world's greatest—because balance is important, after all. The whole thing turned into a community celebration, equal parts daring and delight.

By the 1930s, skiing had moved from barnyards to bona fide hills. When Averell Harriman built Sun Valley, Idaho's first ski resort, he recruited instructors from across the state—including four athletes from McCall. One of them, Lloyd Johnson, worked for the Forest Service and helped set up the Little Ski Hill in 1937. That small slope became a big part of McCall's identity: a place where kids could find freedom, confidence, and a lifelong appreciation for the outdoors.

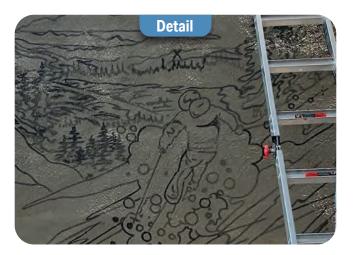
As Craig Johnson of the McCall Ski Heritage Foundation puts it, "Where else can you go as a child and be free? You're outside, in nature, learning confidence and camaraderie. That's the spirit we want to keep alive."

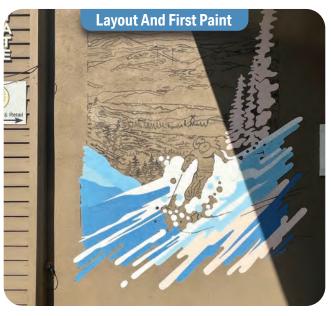
#### Preserving The Past—One Wall At A Time

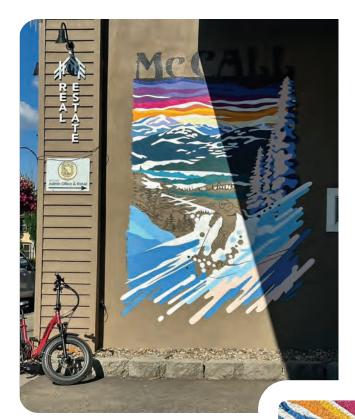
ast forward about a century. McCall's ski culture is still thriving, but the folks at the McCall Ski Heritage Foundation—founded by former Brundage owner Judd DeBoer and led by a group of passionate locals—wanted to make sure the town's snowy story didn't fade into history. Their mission is to "preserve, protect, and perpetuate" McCall's alpine and Nordic skiing heritage. Lofty words for a group that started with one simple idea: let's paint it on a wall.

The idea of a mural had been floating around for a few years. As Johnson recalls, "We wanted something that would get people's attention, something visible and fun that would make folks aware of McCall's ski history." They formed a "museum awareness committee" to brainstorm ways to











make their mission more public—and a mural fit the bill perfectly. "It's in your face," he says with a laugh. "People see it."

To get started, they applied for a local option tax grant from the City of McCall.

The foundation pledged half the funding, hoping the city could match it. When funds ran short, they didn't give up—they just scaled the design a bit smaller. "The bigger the mural, the more it costs,"

Johnson says. "We figured we could make something impactful that fit the space and still told our story."

Luckily, Johnson had the perfect wall in mind.

#### **Enter The Artist: A McCall Homecoming**

That's where artist Odessa Kaufman, founder of Chalk & Cloud Murals, entered the story. A former McCall resident who arrived in 2009 in a camper van and fell in love with the town, Kaufman's career has taken her from painting vintage Chris-Crafts at McCall Boat Works to designing Off-Broadway sets in New York and murals for brands like Hoka and Meta. Yet through all that creative wandering, McCall remained her compass point.

"When I got the call about the project," Kaufman says, "I jumped at the opportunity to come home and paint for this community. McCall shaped how I see and create—it felt like closing a circle."

Working with the McCall Ski Heritage Foundation, the Rotary Club, the Shelton Foundation, and guidance from the McCall Arts Foundation, Kaufman spent nearly 10 months refining designs before ever picking up a brush. She created three concepts inspired by the movement of skiing and the surrounding landscape—sketches filled with motion, energy, and snowlight. Those ideas were published in the *McCall Star-News* and shared online, where more than 500 residents voted on their favorite. The clear winner? A piece called "Drop In."

#### **A Mural That Moves**

"Trop In" is as dynamic as its name suggests. Picture a skier poised on a ridge near Brundage, just about to descend into the valley below. The town of McCall glows in the distance like a warm hearth waiting after a long day in the snow. The mural's colors and curves echo vintage ski posters—nostalgic yet fresh, historic yet alive.

"The imagery suggests both dropping into a ski run and dropping into McCall itself," Kaufman explains. "It's an invitation—to adventure, to visit, to belong."

She painted the mural in just 10 days, though the planning took nearly a year. The wall—visible for blocks along Lake Street—wasn't without its challenges. Cars whizzed by, pedestrians stopped to chat, and the parking lot next door was rarely still. "It was basically 10 days of painting, people, and propane fumes," she jokes. "But the community energy made it unforgettable."

Locals and tourists stopped constantly—some curious, some nostalgic. Many shared their own ski memories: of the



Since 1961, Brundage has been a place where families carve out traditions and skiers chase the Best Snow in Idaho™. From the opening of the Triad Lodge and the Pioneer double chair, to the arrival of the Bluebird Express and expanded terrain, and now the Centennial Express and Mountain Adventure Center, the mountain has always been at the heart of everything we do.

# THE MOUNTAIN ALWAYS

As we celebrate our 65th season, we honor the stories written on these slopes and invite you to help us shape the next chapter.





Little Ski Hill rope tow, of powder days at Brundage, of winters that smelled like woodsmoke and cocoa. Kaufman says, "After hundreds of murals, I've never experienced such positive community support. People were taking selfies with it before I'd even finished!"

#### Stars, Stories, And Ski Tracks

There's one detail, though, that most passersby don't know—at least not yet. Hidden within the letters of "McCall" are tiny constellations. Each one honors someone from the community who has passed: dogs, fathers, sisters, friends. "Each star forms part of a larger constellation," Kaufman says softly, "shining in memoriam over the community they loved."

It's a quiet tribute nestled within a loud, joyful scene—a reminder that McCall's history is made of its people as much as its powder.

#### The Bigger Picture

ror the McCall Ski Heritage Foundation, the mural is just the beginning. They've added a small plaque with a QR code linking to the foundation's website, where visitors can dive deeper into McCall's ski story. Eventually, they hope to expand that into an augmented reality experience—something that lets you hold up your phone and watch the mural come to life with historical photos and video clips. Imagine standing on Lake Street and seeing the town's ski past shimmer over the present: ski jumpers from 1923, rope tows creaking, kids zipping across the old Little Ski Hill.

And the location? It couldn't be more fitting. The wall

stands just across from Ice Cream Alley—fittingly sweet—and a stone's throw from the same area where Johnson's grandfather once ran his 1909 ice cream parlor. "It's funny how it's all come full circle," he says. "Maybe ice cream and skiing just go together in McCall."

#### **Drop In, Stick Around**

Today, "Drop In" has already become one of McCall's most-photographed spots. Visitors pose in front of it; locals pass by with a grin. It's bright, bold, and just a little nostalgic—much like McCall itself. Kaufman says, "The goal was to create something that feels dynamic and accessible, that the community could be proud of for years. From the response, I think we did just that."

For the foundation, it's also a reminder that McCall's ski story is still being written—every winter, with every kid who clips into skis at Little Ski Hill or drops into a powder stash at Brundage. As four-time Olympian and foundation board member Lyle Nelson likes to say, "McCall's ski culture has long imbibed local youth with confidence, social growth, and an appreciation for nature."

You can see that spirit splashed right across the wall on Lake Street.

So next time you're in town, grab a coffee, wander down by Ice Cream Alley, and take a look. You'll find a skier mid-turn, a town aglow, and a sky full of stars—each one part of a story that started more than a century ago and still sparkles every winter.

Because in McCall, when it comes to skiing, art, and community, there's really only one thing left to say: Drop in. **MCL** 







Odessa Kaufman, founder of Chalk & Cloud Murals

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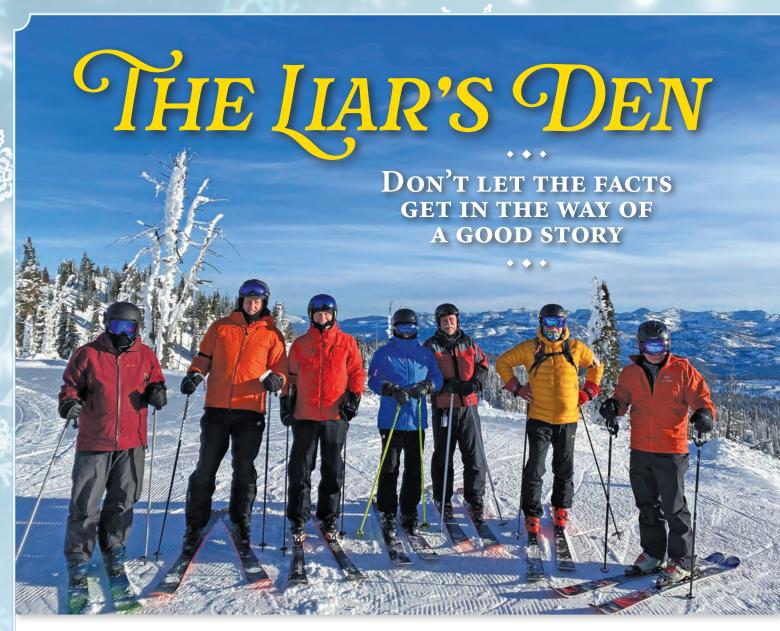


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By Rodney J. Auth

#### **IF YOU'VE EVER SKIED**

at Brundage on a powder day and heard a group of silver-haired skiers laughing louder than the wind howling off Lakeview, you've probably stumbled upon *The Liar's Den*.

No, it's not a secret bar tucked beneath Smoky's or a forgotten outpost on Hidden Valley. It's a brotherhood—part ski club, part comedy troupe, part retirement plan—that meets daily at first chair and occasionally at last call.

"The Liar's Den started about 10 years ago," says founding member Blake Hanks, who moved to McCall 13 years ago and somehow turned casual lift-line chatter into a full-blown institution. "A bunch of us just kept showing up early, coffee in hand, waiting for the lift to spin. We started skiing together, telling stories, and pretty soon we had a sign and a reputation."

The sign—crafted by Jerry Johnson—still sits proudly atop a table inside Smoky's Bar & Grill. It simply reads *The Liar's Den*, like a neon badge of honor (though without the neon, because this is McCall, not Vegas).

FIRST CHAIR, LAST LAUGH

What began as a handful of skiers has snowballed into roughly 24 members, all of whom share two

things in common: a love of Brundage powder and the wisdom that comes from a few laps around the sun.

"The prerequisite is basically that you have to be at least 60-something," Hanks laughs. "They're all retired guys. We ski hard in the morning, then come in for a beer and a burger. That's when the lying starts."

Like most tall tales, the stories grow with each retelling. The face shots get deeper, the runs steeper, the skis lighter, and the knees somehow younger. The Den's motto—borrowed straight from a moment of self-awareness during our conversation—is: "Don't let the facts get in the way of a good story."

"It's perfect," Hanks admits. "That's exactly what we do."

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BLAKE HANKS (PHOTOS)

#### A BAND OF POWDER HOUNDS

If there's one thing the group agrees on (aside from the benefits of

good wax and bad memory), it's that groomers are just highways to the real fun. "Groomers are great," Hanks says. "They get you to the powder and the trees. That's what they're for."

Collectively, they know Brundage Mountain better than most ski patrollers. "We play everywhere," Hanks adds. "We're explorers, powder hounds, and maybe a little nuts. But that's part of the fun."

They're also fiercely loyal. The Den shows up rain, snow, sleet, or inversion. They tailgate out back, wave to lifties by name, and cheer for anyone who drops a knee or clears a cliff.

As Hanks puts it, "We try to support Brundage in every way we can. It's our home, our lifestyle, and our passion."

OFF-SEASON ADVENTURES

When the snow melts, the skis go into storage—but the stories don't. The Liar's Den morphs into a

mountain-biking, beer-tasting, outdoor-adventure society.

"During the summer, we all mountain bike," says Hanks. "We try to get together once a week, usually Thursday nights. We meet at one of the bars, spend a couple hours hashing things out, and telling lies, of course."

This fall, they're taking the show on the road. The entire

Den—24 strong—is headed to the Southfork Lodge in Lowman for a long weekend of hiking, fishing, e-biking, and (naturally) storytelling.

"I've got a friend who owns the lodge," Hanks explains.
"We rented the whole place. They've got a great bar, a big screen for football, and hot springs nearby. We'll fish, we'll laugh, we'll probably exaggerate a bit about who caught what. That's just what we do."

The new owners, Robin Bryde (a cardiologist) and her husband Nick Gant, recently purchased the lodge, so the Den is happy to "make sure they have some business this fall."

#### Membership Has Its Priveleges

The group's fame—or infamy, depending on who you ask—has

spread well beyond Brundage's base lodge. "People come up to us and say, 'Oh, you're one of those guys! First chair, Liar's Den!" says Hanks, still amused. "Apparently, we make enough noise in the trees that people know who we are."

Membership is by friendship, not application. "It's funny how it grows," Hanks says. "New guys just show up and say, 'Hey, mind if I ski with you?' Next thing you know, they're hooked. We've got guys from Albuquerque, River Ranch, all over."

Founding members include Hanks, Bob Looper, Scott Tunnell, Jerry Johnson, Todd Campbell, Steve Riggers, Steve





Bussolini, Peter Caprio (RIP), Bill Larson, and the legendary Wild Bill—names whispered reverently at après ski gatherings (and occasionally shouted across the lift line).

# THE GEAR, THE CLORY, AND THE TALL TALES

The Den has even flirted with branding. "We had some hats made that said *Powder Pigs*," Hanks

admits. "But we decided maybe that wasn't the best fit. We'll probably get something new embroidered on our jackets—something classy."

Maybe *The Liar's Den Ski Patrol (Unofficial)* or *Masters of Exaggeration*. Either way, you can bet they'll be wearing them proudly in the lift line, coffee steaming and grins wide.

When asked to name the biggest "whopper" ever told in the Den, Hanks laughs. "That's tough. There are just too many. It's an everyday thing. None of us are exactly known for accuracy."

And that's the point. In a world obsessed with analytics and Strava stats, the Liar's Den reminds us that skiing is supposed to be fun—and sometimes the story is better when it's only mostly true.

# FROM POWDER TO POETRY

Hanks also happens to be a poet, penning verses about Idaho's mountains, rivers,

and seasons. His poem "Fall Thoughts" (page 19) captures the very essence of The Liar's Den—nostalgia, friendship, and the fleeting magic of a perfect run.

He's now collected 75 poems and is considering a book. "I have no idea how to publish," he says. "But I'd love to figure it out someday."

With his knack for storytelling and a few Den embellishments, it's safe to say the book will be a page-turner.

#### LEGENDS OF THE LINE

As for what's next, the Den shows no

signs of slowing down. Brundage is expanding, new lifts are going in, and a small city of dream homes is rising near the base. The Liar's Den members have mixed feelings, but most agree: progress keeps the mountain alive.

"We didn't want to see it at first," Hanks admits. "But without development, we wouldn't have the new lodge, the new lift, the new energy. You don't even really see the houses unless you go

looking. It's all give and take."

Besides, no matter how big Brundage gets, there will always be that same 8:15 a.m. crowd, standing in line, coffee in one hand, poles in the other—waiting for the mountain to open and the stories to begin again.

Because at the end of the day, The Liar's Den isn't only a ski group. It's a reminder that life's too short for small talk, powder's too sweet for precision, and the best friendships are built one tall tale at a time.

Or as their new motto says: Don't let the facts get in the way of a good story. **MCL** 



# FALL THOUGHTS

BY BLAKE HANKS

Standing in line, early in the morning

The snow falling heavily, large flakes landing on my shoulders

The air is crisp; it smells so fresh

And in the early light I wait

I wait for the chair to start, the start of the motor

The sound of the lifties, flipping chairs

Clearing the base area for another day ...

The excitement begins, the thought of another powder day, dancing in the trees!

So, I begin the ride, this first chair of the day

With my buddies, the Liar's Den boys

Laughter as we ride, stories we tell,

Picking our lines from up high

Headed for the untracked snow...

It's these moments, minutes I cherish

Sitting on the chairlift I've ridden so many times before...

Sharing memories with my friends

And as I ride the wind and snow blow

It's a storm day, another chance to test...

To see if we can make that turn

And so as I grow older, I value my time

Not just in the snow, but that chairlift ride

My thoughts of freedom, as we ride so high ...

And then the gift of another day....





Sundance Spas

Hot Tub & Sauna Sales Water Care Service Repair - All Brands

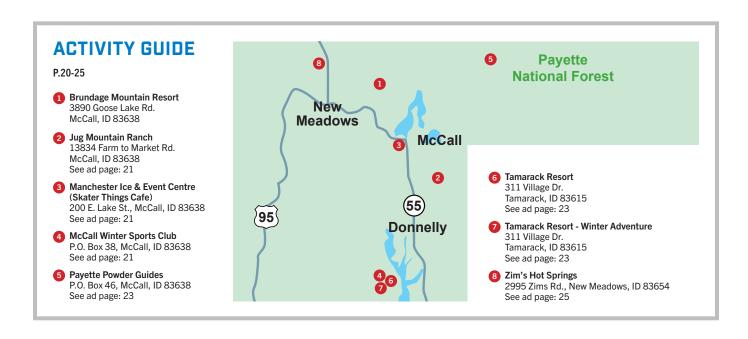
leisuremccall.com

611 N. 3rd Street McCall, ID

208.634.7570



McCall is home to the region's best providers of leisure, entertainment, and wellness, and we've pulled them together into the ultimate resource. Whether you're a longtime resident, a frequent visitor, or a first-time guest, we've made it easier than ever to find the business you're looking for—and get there, too. We call it our Idea Book. You'll call it your roadmap to success.







#### **Jug Mountain Ranch**

13834 Farm to Market Road McCall, ID 83638 (208) 634-5072 dustinames@jugmountainranch.com https://jugmountainranch.com









- Dining, drinks, and special events
- Nordic trails
- Fat Bike Single Track
- Snowshoe Trails



#### **Manchester Ice & Events Center**

200 E. Lake St. McCall, ID 83638 (208) 634-3570 info@manchestericecenter.com https://manchestericecenter.com





We offer ice skating, ice bumper cars, hockey game events, curling, figure skating events, and a sports bar.



#### **McCall Winter Sports Club**

3890 Goose Lake Road McCall, ID 83638 (208) 918-0234 mccallwintersportsclub@gmail.com www.mwsc.club





Creating World-Class Kids Through Winter Sports.



Jug Mountain Ranch
A Nordic skiers haven + winter single track for fat-bike enthusiasts.
https://jugmountainranch.com
See ad p.21



Zims Hot Springs
Nestled next to the Little
Salmon River.
https://zimshotsprings.com
See ad p.25



#### **Payette Powder Guides**

P.O. Box 46
McCall, ID 83638
(208) 634-6793
marty@payettepowderguides.com
payettepowderguides.com













#### Snowcat & Snowmobile-Accessed Ski Touring Since 2004

- Custom Day Trips Avalanche Education
  - Yurt Lodging Introductory Courses



#### **Tamarack Resort**

311 Village Drive Tamarack, ID 83615 (208) 325-1000 info@tamarackidaho.com https://tamarackidaho.com







Tamarack Resort is a premier mountain resort offering breathtaking views and unforgettable adventures on and off the slopes. Beyond the peaks, our mountain

destination boasts luxurious lodging, diverse dining options, award-winning golfing, epic lake adventures, and



much more. As one of the most versatile ski resorts in the region with year-round adventures available, Tamarack Resort stands out among top destination resorts in the country.



#### **Winter Adventure**

311 Village Drive Tamarack, ID 83615 (208) 325-1000 https://tamarackidaho.com/winter



## Level up your Winter Adventure with skiing, snowboarding, ice fishing, fat tire biking, snowshoeing, Nordic, and more.





No matter who you are or what you're looking for in your mountain visit, we invite you to join in the fun. With world-class skiing and snowboarding, a full suite of rental equipment, kids' lessons and activities, guided ice fishing, fat tire biking, snowshoeing, Nordic, and much more, Tamarack Resort is the epitome of mountains as they should be.



### Manchester Ice & Events Center

Bumper cars and ice skating can be found all winter long at MIEC. Bumper cars run every 15 minutes during scheduled times, and they are first-come, first-served; no advance reservations. Check the schedule:

**Manchestericecenter.com** See ad p.21





#### **Payette Powder Guides**

Snowcat and snowmobile-accessed ski touring since 2004. Custom day trips, avalanche education, yurt lodging, and introductory courses. https://payettepowderguides.com See ad p.23



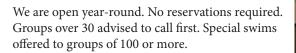
#### **Zims Hot Springs**

2995 Zims Road New Meadows, ID 83654 (208) 347-2686 larryb@crcasino.com https://zimshotsprings.com/





Zims Hot Springs is over 100 years old. Zims offers natural hot spring water, with two pools. The temperature range for the therapeutic pool is 102° in summer and 105° in winter. Large 3 ft.–9 ft. pool temperatures are 89° in summer and 99° in winter.







#### **Tamarack Resort**

Tamarack Resort boasts 2,800 vertical feet of epic terrain, 1,530 skiable acres, 300"+ annual snowfall, and breathtaking views. https://tamarackidaho.com

nttps://tamarackidaho.com See ad p.23





#### **McCall Winter Sports Club**

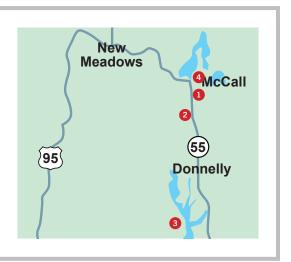
Creating World-Class Kids Through Winter Sports.

www.mwsc.club See ad p.21

#### **BUSINESS SERVICES GUIDE**

#### P.26-29

- Builders FirstSource
   400 Deinhard Lane, McCall, ID 83638
   See ad page: 27
- Pranklin Building Supply
  P.O. Box 1737, McCall, ID 83638
  See ad page: 27
- Mountain Community School 906 Base Court Rd., Donnelly, ID 83615
- 4 North Fork School, The 812 Reedy Lane, McCall, ID 83638 See ad page: 29





#### **Builders FirstSource**

The nation's largest supplier of structural building products, value-added components, and services. We're revolutionizing the future of the homebuilding industry.

**BLDR.com** See ad p.27



# HIGH QUALITY BUILDING MATERIALS FOR BUILDERS AND REMODELERS

Lumber & Engineered Wood | Windows | Decking & Railing Doors & Millwork | Roofing & Supplies | Hardware | Insulation Siding & Trim | Power Tool Center

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#### DJ McCall

Joel Hellerman 305 E. Park St. Ste. D McCall, ID 83638 (208) 469-9200 DJ\_McCall@yahoo.com http://www.dj-mccall.com







We provide outstanding professional DJ and Emcee services, complete with top-of-the-line sound systems and equipment, for your wedding or event.

This includes a trained DJ/Emcee who understands the needs of the event, and our familiarity with local venues is unmatched. Save money by staying local!



#### **Franklin Building Supply**

PO Box 1737 McCall, ID 83638 (208) 634-8111 bent@franklinbuildingsupply.com www.franklinbuildingsupply.com





#### We make building easy.

One project, one solution, one conversation at a time.

- Cabinets Vinyl & Wood Windows
- Floor Coverings Custom Doors
  - Wood & Composite Decking
    - #1 Douglas Fir Timbers
      - Wood Sidings
      - Engineered Beams





DJ McCall for all your event sound needs. www.dj-mccall.com
See ad p.27

The North Fork School
Accredited private education for students who love their public schools. https://www.thenorthforkschool.com
See ad p.29





#### The North Fork School

812 Reedy Lane McCall, ID 83638 (208) 630-4028 northforkschool@gmail.com https://www.thenorthforkschool.com





Since 1996, The North Fork School has offered academically rigorous, integrated humanities programs to students who remain concurrently-enrolled in other schools. Accredited through Cognia, North Fork programs reduce public class sizes while allowing local public schools to retain

full federal and state tax dollars for shared students.

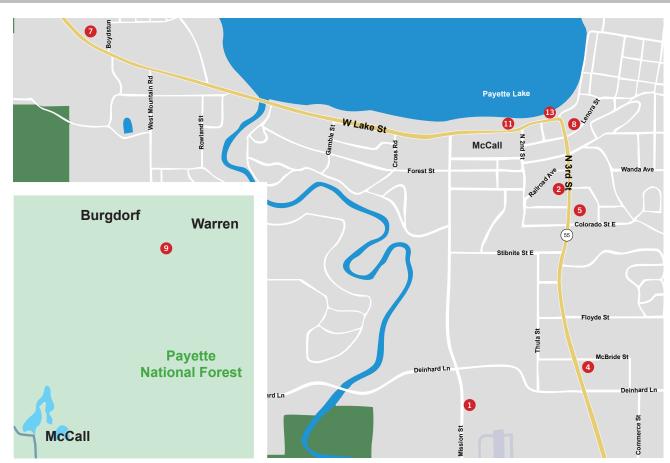
North Fork teachers coach small cohorts of students to mastery in successive years of study together. Over seven years of North Fork English & history curricula, students become critical thinkers who question and evaluate everything they encounter. This vertically-connecting knowledge cannot come from a series of separate classrooms over the years, run by different teachers, offering their own unique curricula. The integrated aspect of North Fork classes forges independent thought.



#### **Franklin Building Supply**

Your vision, our mission. We are here to serve you, snow or shine, because at Franklin Building Supply, service is our specialty!

www.franklinbuildingsupply.com See ad p.27



#### **DINING GUIDE**

P.30-41

- Broken Horn Brewing Company 201 Mission St., McCall, ID 83638
- KB's Burritos 616 North 3rd Street, McCall, ID 83638 See ad page: 31
- Mid-Mountain Lodge 311 Village Drive, Tamarack, ID 83615 See ad page: 31
- Miner's McCall 147 N. 3rd St., McCall, ID 83638 See ad page: 31
- 6 Old Town Market 507 N. 3rd St., McCall, ID 83638 See ad page: 35
- Palooza Basecamp & Eatery 100 North Main St., Cascade, ID 83611 See ad page: 35
- Pueblo Lindo 1007 W. Lake St., McCall, ID 83638 See ad page: 35
- 8 Salmon River Brewery 411 Railroad Ave., McCall, ID 83638
- Secesh Stage Stop 24728 Warren Wagon Rd. McCall, ID 83638 See ad page: 37

- Seven Devils Taphouse 740 Village Drive Tamarack, ID 83615 See ad page: 37
- Spitfire Tacos & Tequila 203 E. Lake St., McCall, ID 83638 See ad page: 37
- Tamarack Resort Village Dining 311 Village Drive, Tamarack, ID 83615
- - Bella Vista Pizza

  - Bumps & Brews
    Clearwater Coffee Co.
    Mid-Mountain Lodge
    Seven Devils Taphouse

  - Sugarloaf Creamery

  - The ReserveThe Village Market & Deli

 Triple B Diner See ad page: 39

- 13 The Den on Payette 317 E. Lake St., McCall, ID 83638 See ad page: 39
- 14 The Intersection BBQ 206 Virginia St., New Meadows, ID 83654 See ad page: 39
- 15 The Reserve 760 Village Drive #101 Tamarack, ID 83615 See ad page: 41





#### **KB's Burritos** 616 N. 3rd St. Ste115B McCall, ID 83638 (208) 634-5500

(208) 634-5500 oswaldokbs@gmail.com www.kbsburrito.com







#### WE COOK WITH PASSION

Locally Owned / Crafted with Love Hours: Monday to Saturday 10 am–8 pm • Sunday 9 am–3 pm



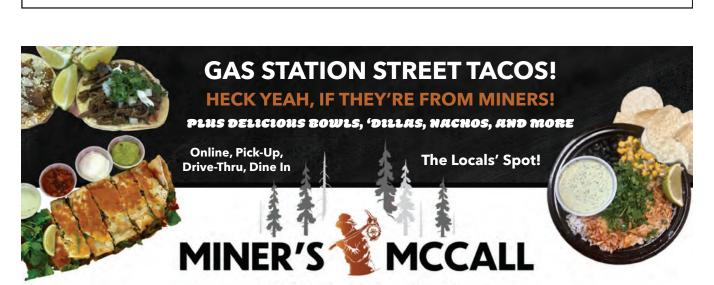
#### **Mid-Mountain Lodge**

311 Village Drive Tamarack, ID 83615 https://tamarackidaho.com/dining/ mid-mountain-lodge-dining



Dine on the mountain at the top of Tamarack Express at the Mid Mountain Lodge. Grab a hearty meal and handcrafted cocktail at 6,700' and enjoy breathtaking views of Long Valley and Lake Cascade below. Take a





MARKET · FUEL · DINER

147 N 3<sup>rd</sup> St | minersmccall.com | 208-634-2004



Secesh Stage Stop
Central Idaho's Backcountry
Off-Grid Destination
https://www.seceshstagestop.com
See ad p.37



Old Town Market
McCall's one-stop shop for dining, groceries, fuel, laundry, and more.
(208) 634-2016
See ad p.35



**Seven Devils Taphouse** 

End your perfect day on the mountain with us. https://tamarackidaho.com/dining/seven-devils-taphouse

See ad p.37



Palooza Basecamp & Eatery
Owner Jeff Tyler holds two of
the house's favorite dishes.
www.paloozabrands.com
See ad p.35



#### **Spitfire Tacos + Tequila**

A bold Spitfire Tacos + Tequila spread featuring flavorful tacos, street corn, fresh guacamole, and globally inspired burritos crafted to bring the fire.

https://www.spitfiretacosandtequila.com/mccall See ad p.37



**The Den on Payette**House-made comfort food, generous portions.
https://www.thedenonpayette.com
See ad p.39



#### Old Town Market Shell Gas Station

507 N. 3rd St. McCall, ID 83638 Store: (208) 634-2016

Café: 208-634-4592 Café hours: 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily





- Food & Dining Breakfast Lunch Daily Specials In-house Café
  - Homemade Clam Chowder (on Fridays only)
  - Groceries Convenience Store Fuel Laundromat
    - Snacks Soda Coffee Beer Wine



#### Palooza Basecamp & Eatery

112 North Main Street Cascade, ID 83611 (208) 733-0507 info@paloozabrands.com www.paloozabrands.com









Palooza Basecamp & Eatery in Cascade, Idaho, is your perfect launchpad for mountain adventures. This family-owned hotel and restaurant offers modern accommodations, alongside handcrafted and locally sourced meals and cocktails. Enjoy a relaxed atmosphere with quality cuisine and events. Whether you're exploring Lake Cascade or unwinding after a day outdoors, Palooza is your welcoming basecamp.

## Pueblo Lindo

#### Family Mexican Restaurant

1396 E. State St., Eagle, ID 83616 (208) 938-0088

1007 W. Lake St., McCall, ID 83638 (208) 634-2270

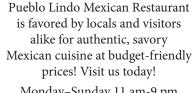
> 3327 N. Eagle Rd. Ste. 170 Meridan, ID 83638 (208) 888-5888











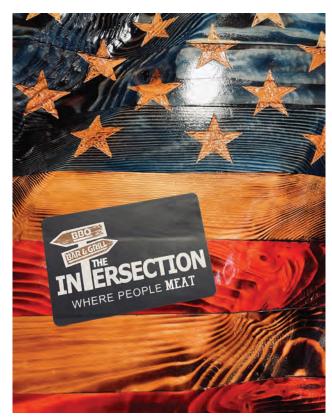
Monday-Sunday 11 am-9 pm (Closed Wednesdays)



https://www.facebook.com/pueblolindomexicanrestaurant

#### The Intersection BBQ, Bar & Grill

Got a wedding, reunion, or other event coming up?
Let us take care of the food!
We offer an in-bulk, carryout, or delivery, made-fromscratch menu. Call early to get on our calendar.
(208) 347-4499
See ad p.39





**The Reserve** 

Enjoy world-class fine dining at the base of the slopes at The Reserve. https://tamarackidaho.com/dining/the-reserve
See ad p.41



#### Secesh Stage Stop

24728 Warren Wagon Road McCall, ID 83638 (208) 636-4498 info@seceshstagestop.com https://www.seceshstagestop.com









• Grill & Bar • Cabin Rentals (Snowmobile Access ONLY: December-April)





#### **Seven Devils Taphouse**

740 Village Drive Tamarack, ID 83615 https://tamarackidaho.com/dining/ seven-devils-taphouse







Welcome to Seven Devils Taphouse. Find us in The Village at Tamarack Resort.

Enjoy artfully crafted cocktails, our tap wall featuring 40 taps, and our menu featuring comfort food and slope-side favorites.

End the perfect day on the mountain here for live music, events, and more.



#### Spitfire Tacos + Tequila

203 E. Lake Street
McCall, ID 83638
(208) 630-6119
info@spitfiretacosandtequila.com
https://www.spitfiretacosandtequila.com/



mccall







Lakeside Heat. Every Bite. Authentically Made Inauthentic Tacos.



#### **Mid-Mountain Lodge**

Enjoy a drink and a bite at 6,700' with the best views in Valley County. https://tamarackidaho.com/dining/mid-mountain-lodge-dining See ad p.31



**KB's Burritos**We cook with passion. Locally owned and crafted with love. **www.kbsburrito.com**See ad p.31



#### **Village Dining**

311 Village Drive Tamarack, ID 83615 (208) 325-1000 https://tamarackidaho.com/dining



Hungry after a day on the mountain? Tamarack Resort has you covered with dining options to choose from:







Clearwater Coffee Co.







**Triple B Diner** 



#### The Den on Payette

317 E. Lake St. McCall, ID, 83638 (208) 849-4040 Wes@thedenonpayette.com www.thedenonpayette.com









McCall's favorite spot for breakfast and brunch, nestled right on the shores of Payette Lake. We pride ourselves on offering delicious, home-cooked meals served with a smile, making every guest feel like part of our community.



#### The Intersection BBQ, Bar & Grill

206 Virginia St. New Meadows, ID 83654 (208) 347-4499 theintersection23@gmail.com www.intersectionbbq.com









#### **Tamarack - Village Dining**

Hungry after hitting the slopes? You'll find options for the whole family at Tamarack Resort's Alpine Village:
Seven Devils Taphouse, The Reserve,
Bella Vista Pizza, Clearwater Coffee Co.,
Sugarloaf Creamery, Triple B Diner,
The Village Market & Deli, and more!
https://tamarackidaho.com/dining
See ad p.39

#### **Miner's McCall**

Come in and enjoy our relaxed vibe and delicious food! https://www.minersmccall.com
See ad p.31





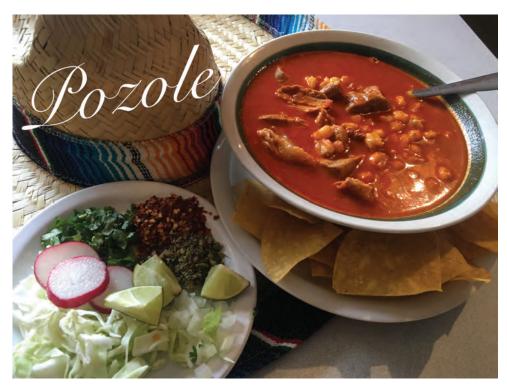
#### The Reserve

760 Village Drive #101 Tamarack, ID 83615 (208) 325-1014 skitam@tamarackidaho.com https://tamarackidaho.com/dining/ the-reserve





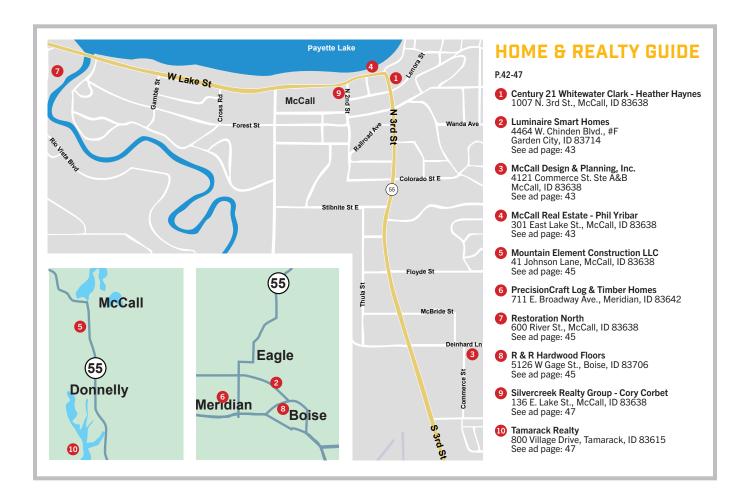
Nestled in the heart of Tamarack Village,
The Reserve Restaurant & Bar offers a
casual fine dining experience that seamlessly blends
a Steakhouse-Style Menu with a Cosmopolitan Twist.
Enjoy a seasonal and local flavor-inspired menu crafted
by our Executive Chef, paired with the perfect glass
of wine or expertly crafted cocktail.



#### **Pueblo Lindo**

The most delicious pozole and steak ranchero are made at Pueblo Lindo.

pueblolindomccall@gmail.com See ad p.35





#### **R&R Hardwood Floors**

Hardwood floors add warm elegance to a great room.

https://www.robsrr.com See ad p.45



#### **Luminaire Smart Homes**

4464 W. Chinden Blvd., Suite F Garden City, ID 83714 (208) 781-8301 info@boisesmarthomes.com https://boisesmarthomes.com







#### Home Is What You Make It. Make It Yours.

Luminaire Smart Homes designs and builds state-of-the-art smart homes and home theater systems. Our services include home theater installations, automated lighting control, security systems, whole-home audio systems and more! We offer personalized consultations and installations, tailoring each project to meet the specific needs and preferences of our clients.



#### McCall Design & Planning Inc.

121 Commerce St. Ste A&B McCall, ID 83638 (208) 634-5707 architect@mccalldp.com mccalldp.com







#### The Yribar Team

301 East Lake Street McCall, ID 83638 (208) 634-6494 joellen.yribar@mccallrealestate.com https://mccallidrealestate.com





Tamarack Realty
Visit us in The Village or in downtown McCall.
https://tamarackidaho.com/realestate
See ad p.47





Luminaire Smart Homes
Home Is What You Make It. Make It Yours.
https://boisesmarthomes.com
See ad p.43

#### McCall Real Estate Company – The Yribar Team

McCall Waterfront | Remodeled home w/3BR, 2BA, Bonus Rm & 6 car garage! www.mccallidrealestate.com
See ad p.43



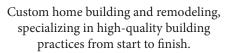


#### **Mountain Element Construction LLC**

41 Johnson Lane McCall, ID 83638 (208) 315-0057 mtnelement@gmail.com www.mountainelementconstruction.com











#### **Restoration North**

600 River St. McCall, ID 83638 (208) 315-4112 info@restonorth.com https://restonorth.com









We are the leading water damage and disaster mitigation company in McCall, Idaho, using certified techs, and providing the best customer service and product.

- Emergency and Restoration Services
- Complete Restoration and Reconstruction Services
  - Cleaning Services



#### **R&R Hardwood Floors**

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Our family-owned hardwood flooring business with over 40 years of expertise specializes in custom hardwood flooring, luxury vinyl plank (LVP) installations, and professional

refinishing services. Using sustainable materials, we combine traditional craftsmanship with modern techniques to deliver durable, elegant floors. Our dedicated team



ensures personalized service, transforming spaces with timeless beauty.



#### **Restoration North**

Water damage—we handle the damage and restore you "like new."

https://restonorth.com

See ad p.45



# Silvercreek Realty Group – Cory Corbet

Serving and helping clients in McCall, Donnelly, and New Meadows with the sale and purchase of homes, condominiums, townhomes, vacant land, commercial land, and new construction.

https://corycorbet.com See ad p.47





# Cory Corbet Associate Broker

136 E. Lake Street McCall, ID 83638 (208) 630-3283 cory83638@gmail.com corycorbet.com



Real Estate Service Professional since 1998. As an associate broker with SilverCreek Realty Group, I help serve the areas of McCall, Donnelly, Cascade, New Meadows and Boise Valley. I work with both those looking to buy a home or those selling. I have worked with multiple developers over the years selling vacant land, fractional ownership and condominiums. I work hard and am incredibly ethical. I love what I do and love sharing it with others. I am currently the president of our real estate board.



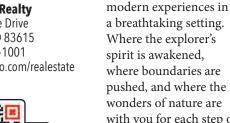




#### **Tamarack Realty**

800 Village Drive Tamarack, ID 83615 (208) 325-1001 https://tamarackidaho.com/realestate





Tamarack is the ultimate resort community for those seeking mountain-



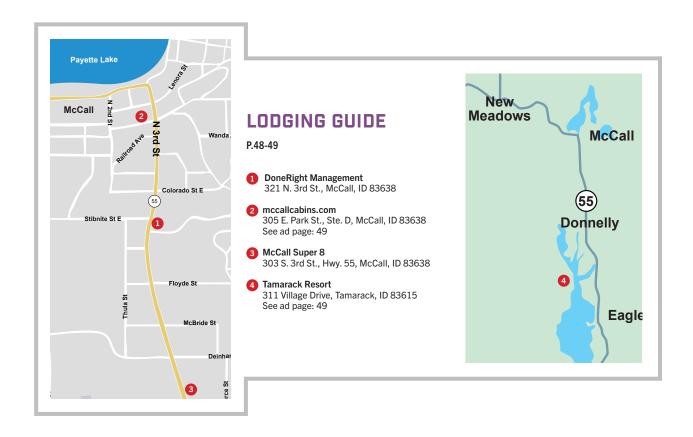
with you for each step of life's journey—from young shredder days, to having a family, all the way to a second home, dinner reservations, elevated amenities, and life's big events.



#### McCall Design & Planning Inc.

Site- and climate-specific architecture in McCall since 1979.

https://mccalldp.com See ad p.43



#### mccallcabins.com

Come spend a weekend, a week, or the rest of your life in beautiful McCall. Contact mccallcabins.com for all your rental or management needs.

www.mccallcabins.com See ad p.49





#### mccallcabins.com

305 E. Park St. Ste. D McCall, ID 83638 (208) 630-5045 info@mccallcabins.com www.mccallcabins.com





Whether you are looking for a vacation or long-term rental, or need someone to manage one that you own, we offer professional property management for long-term rentals, short-term rentals, commercial buildings, apartments/condos, wellness checks, and HOAs. Locally owned and operated for over 20 years, we have the experience and knowledge to take the hassle out of homeownership.







#### **Tamarack Resort Lodging**

311 Village Drive Tamarack, ID 83615 (208) 325-1000 info@tamarackidaho.com https://tamarackidaho.com/lodging





Tamarack is a premier all-season destination resort where you can ski pristine slopes, indulge in diverse dining options, play awardwinning golf, or boat on tranquil waters. Where we celebrate weddings, weekend getaways, family reunions, and... everything else. It's more than just a resort or a place you visit. It's a second home. It's a community. It's where lifelong memories are made.

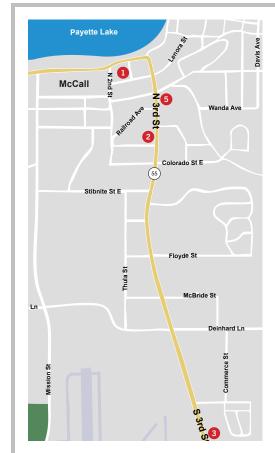






#### **Tamarack Resort Lodging**

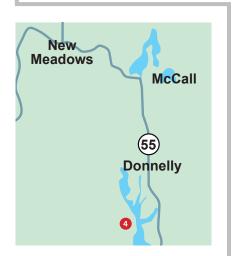
Your mountain paradise in Tamarack Resort's Estate Home Vacation Rentals. https://tamarackidaho.com/lodging See ad p.49



#### **SHOPPING GUIDE**

P.50-52

- Backcountry Boutique 1000 2nd St., Suite 101 McCall, ID 83638 See ad page: 51
- Barn Owl Books and Gifts, The Alpine Village 616 N. 3rd. St. McCall, ID 83638
- McCall Pet Outfitters and Supply 411 S. Third St., McCall, ID 83638 See ad page: 51
- 4 Tamarack Resort Village Shopping 311 Village Drive Tamarack, ID 83615
  - Idaho Impressions
  - Satellite Outpost
  - Tamarack Logo Co.
  - Tamarack Outfitters See ad page: 51
- Wild Onion 805 N. 3rd St., McCall, ID 83638







**McCall Pet Outfitters** 

Your one-stop shop for food, treats, toys, collars, leashes, harnesses, clothing, outdoor gear, and more.

https://mccallpet.com

See ad p.51



#### **Backcountry Boutique**

1000 2nd Street, Suite 101 McCall, ID 83638 (208) 634-9966 mary@backcountryboutiquemccall.com https://backcountryboutiquemccall.com





- Women's clothing, footwear, accessories
  - Toys & Games • Gifts









#### McCALL PET OUTFITTERS & SUPPLY

#### **McCall Pet Outfitters**

411 S. Third St. McCall, ID 83638 (208) 634-3440 orders@mccallpet.com www.mccallpet.com





McCall Pet Outfitters has served the people and pets of Idaho's west central mountains since 2006. We offer quality goods at reasonable prices. We are your one-stop shop for food, treats, toys, collars, leashes, harnesses, clothing, outdoor gear, and more.



#### **Village Shopping**

311 Village Drive Tamarack, ID 83615 (208) 325-1000 https://tamarackidaho.com/ the-village-at-tamarack



#### Explore the beautiful, Alpine-style Village at Tamarack Resort and enjoy some of the best shopping in the west central mountains, including:



**Impressions** 



Satellite **Outpost** 



**Tamarack** Logo Co.



#### **Tamarack Resort - Village Shopping**

Explore the beautiful, Alpine-style Village at Tamarack Resort and enjoy some of the best shopping in the west central mountains, including: Idaho Impressions, Satellite Outpost, Tamarack Logo Co., and Tamarack Outfitters.

https://tamarackidaho.com/ the-village-at-tamarack See ad p.51

#### **Backcountry Boutique**

We have the largest selection of quality women's footwear in McCall. https://backcountryboutiquemccall.com

See ad p.51



# Subscribe Today



McCall Life magazine goes fast when it hits newsstands and advertiser offices around town. In fact, our summer issue disappeared in just two weeks.

Visit www.mccalllife.com
(or scan the code below) and sign up
to have a hard copy mailed to your door—
wherever you live.

Never miss an issue again!





# From Timber To Trail

# Designing a log or timber ski retreat

By Matt Franklin

here's something magical about stepping out of your back door, clicking into your skis, and gliding straight onto the mountain. For those lucky enough to build a home slopeside, that experience begins long before the first snowfall—it starts with thoughtful design. Creating a ski-in/ski-out log- or timber-frame home means balancing rugged mountain character with the refined comfort and performance that alpine living demands.



#### Start With The Land

Ski-in/ski-out properties are among the most exciting—and challenging—lots to design on. They often come with steep terrain, irregular boundaries, and specific access routes to lifts or groomed trails. The site itself dictates what's possible; the slope's grade, the snowpack depth, and even the location of neighboring runs all influence the home's footprint.

Orientation is one of the first major design decisions. The goal is to capture expansive views and natural light while maintaining safe access and manageable

snow flow. In high-altitude regions like McCall, where winter sun angles stay low on the horizon, positioning the

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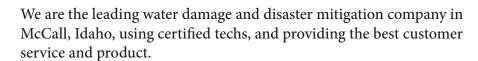
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main living areas toward the south can make a dramatic difference in warmth and brightness. Meanwhile, roofs must be engineered for heavy snow loads while simultaneously being designed to shed snow away from entry points, decks, and hot tubs. Working with an architectural design team experienced in mountain home design is invaluable.

#### **Designing For Mountain Life**

A ski home is more than a place to rest between runs—it's a retreat that supports mountain living. Functional spaces take on new importance. Mudrooms and gear rooms aren't afterthoughts; they're the first line of defense against wet boots, melting snow, and outdoor clutter. Durable flooring, built-in benches, and radiant heat keep these spaces practical and inviting. Many homeowners include boot dryers, dedicated cubbies, and even heated entryways to make the transition from slope to sofa seamless.

Inside, open-concept living areas highlight the craftsmanship of log- or timber-frame construction. These homes naturally lend themselves to high ceilings, sweeping trusses, and exposed joinery. In a ski-in/ski-out setting, they also provide the perfect frame for large windows overlooking the slopes. The interplay of wood, stone, and glass connects the indoors to the rugged beauty outside, creating a sense of warmth that feels both luxurious and grounded.

The great room often becomes the heart of the home—anchored by a grand fireplace, filled with the smell of natural wood, and flooded with sunlight. From there, spaces flow easily into the kitchen and dining area, encouraging gathering and conversation. Thoughtful lighting design and energy-efficient materials help the home feel cozy on a snowy evening and bright on a summer morning.

#### **Built For All Seasons**

Log and timber homes are energy-efficient and perfect for any season. In McCall, where summer brings mountain biking, hiking, and lake days, outdoor living spaces are just as important as ski access. Covered decks, screened porches, and outdoor fireplaces extend the home's living space into nature, celebrating the beauty and serenity of Idaho's great outdoors.

#### A Life At The Summit

Ultimately, designing a ski-in/ski-out log- or timber-frame home is about embracing the full mountain lifestyle. It's about mornings spent



carving fresh powder and evenings gathered around the fire with friends. It's the balance of adventure and serenity, craftsmanship and comfort.

With the right design team, every decision—from how the roof sheds snow to how the windows frame the sunset—becomes part of a larger story. The result is more than a home; it's a retreat that celebrates the spirit of McCall and the timeless beauty of life in the mountains. **MCL** 

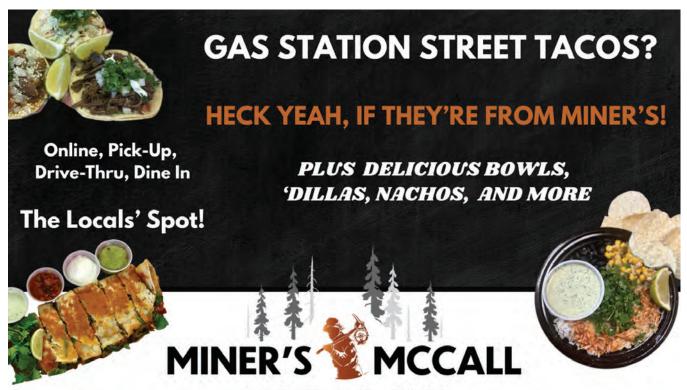
Matt Franklin is the lead architect at M-T-N Design, the award-winning, in-house architectural design firm for PrecisionCraft Log & Timber Homes. With 30 years of experience designing the finest custom, mountain-style log and timber homes across North America, Matt brings deep expertise and a passion for creating homes that reflect both the land and the lifestyle of each client. His thoughtful approach has helped M-T-N Design and PrecisionCraft win nearly 100 national design awards.



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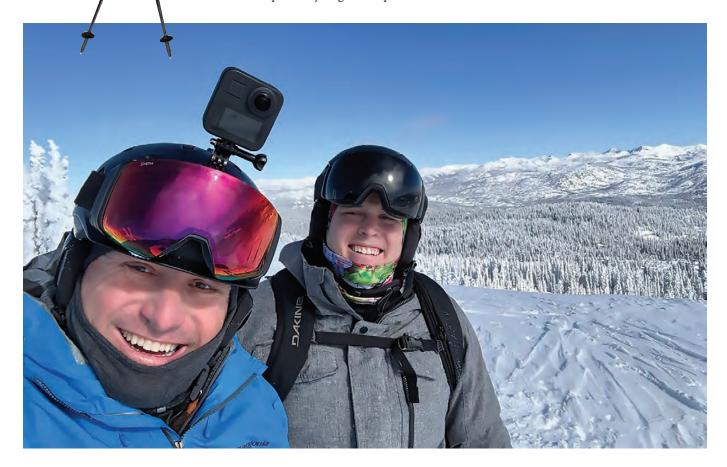
The text pinged on my phone. I was driving, so I ignored it and went on singing along to the radio, cleverly disguised as a Spotify playlist on Apple's CarPlay. Pulling into the trailhead, I jumped out, grabbed my phone, and scrolled to the text as I prepared to take my skis off the top of the car for another day of turns.

Mid-reach to the rack, I stopped and smiled. My oldest child, my one and only son, wanted to come out for a week to ski with me, his mom, and his sisters. Awesome. I instantly replied, "Let's do it. Tell me when to pick you up at the airport."

Then, I forwarded the text to his sisters and mom and listened as the responses pinged in while I stepped into my boots and got ready for a few quick turns in the sun. I laughed as I once again wondered at the power of texts and how another awesome adventure was started with a few simple words typed on a screen.

A few short weeks later, I found myself standing in baggage claim at the Boise airport, waiting for a glimpse of my son. Soon enough, Travis rounded the corner and headed my way. A quick hug and a few pleasantries later, we grabbed his gear, walked to the parking garage, loaded the car, and headed up the mountain.

The nice thing about these airport runs is they give you time to reconnect. Two hours. Two and a half if you run into small delays. Much longer if you get unlucky. The drive offers plenty of time to talk about the flight, life back home and, most importantly, organize a plan of attack for the week.



RCOUNTR



Our plan was to start at Tamarack, work through all three resorts (Little Ski Hill and Brundage), and do a little side-country hiking and powder slaying. To say the whole family was amped is an understatement.

The next day dawned bright and cold. We rushed to Tamarack, rode two

lifts to reach the summit, and with nary a word to each other, skied off the chair, jumped the wind lip to the right of the lift, and sliced down, angling left into the trees. About a third of the way down, my son and one of my daughters' boyfriends spotted a cliff jump. The boyfriend slid up to it, took a look,

hopped down, and skied out of the runout.

Travis yelled, "How's it look?" "Good," yelled Lucas. "But stay right."

We heard nothing from Travis, but we saw plenty. He came into the cliff with too much speed, threw a 360-





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degree spin, caught his back tips on a pine tree branch mid-air, went off-axis, landed hard, losing both skis and snapping a pole in half.

"Whoa," I yelled up the slope. "You OK?"

He stood up and smiled. "Yeah. Came in a little hot."

He held up his snapped pole and shrugged. We skied the rest of the way to the Summit Express without incident, and Travis threw both his poles in the trash.

We again rode the lift, exited skier's right, took the ramp past the ski patrol shack, and dropped into a nice powder run. All eight of us hooted and hollered, slashing in and around each other's tracks. We rolled over a lip and came to a stop to have a chat. My son, who had been dinking around in the trees, jumping off anything that offered even the smallest opportunity, came roaring up to snow us, but again he mistimed his speed, swiped, and broke one of my daughter's ski poles. So, for those of you keeping score at home, that is two ski runs and two poles broken. I don't think I've ever seen one pole broken, much less two in two runs.

I slid over to my son.

"Hey man, love the enthusiasm, but how about we not kill somebody?"

He laughed, "Sorry, Dad. It's been too long since I've been on skis. I think I was trying to have all the feels in every run. I'll dial it back."

So, he did. We spent the rest of the week getting up early, making a good breakfast, and then putting in a long day of skiing—returning home tired and fulfilled.

Throughout the week, Travis and I and the rest of the family got to share chairlift rides, tree runs, powder runs, groomer runs, and side-country hikes. And, because skiing is an inherently social sport, we also got to spend all those little moments reconnecting. Sometimes, we'd stand in an incredibly beautiful place under snow-laden trees or on the peaks of mountains, just soaking in the sun and vibes. Other times, we'd chit-chat about life—things that were going well, hopes and dreams for the future, things that needed to be fixed.

It's the power of skiing—the innate ability to spread joy and create bonds. And it's also the history of our little town. I hope you get to enjoy some time with people you love in our mountains. Just maybe, try not to get overly enthusiastic. It can get expensive—and painful.

Have a great winter! MCL



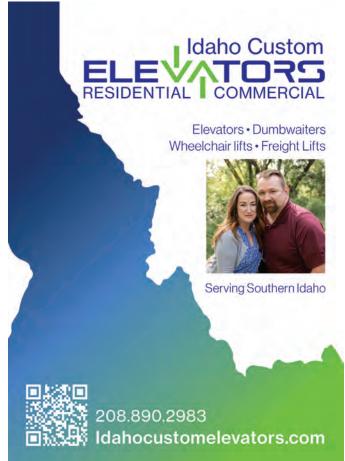
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