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HOT AIR BALLOONS FILL THE SKY AT 33RD ANNUAL SNOWMASS BALLOON FESTIVAL Weekend includes tallest balloon in U.S., Snowmass Wine Festival, Mountain Biking & more.

Snowmass Village, CO (August 21, 2008) – With temperatures dropping and fall on its way, Snowmass Village promises plentiful Rocky Mountain fall colors. Throw in over 30 vibrant hot air balloons competing in four days of high altitude competitions, a popular wine festival and mountain bikers circling the trails for twelve hours straight, and you've got the makings of a perfect fall weekend.

The Snowmass Balloon Festival (Sept. 11-14)

The Snowmass Balloon Festival sends over 30 balloons up in the space of a ballfield to compete in:

- **The Hare & Hound Chase** for media (Sept. 11) finds pilots and media chasing a Hare balloon around Snowmass for the chance to win the Hot Air Media Trophy
- The **Colorado Rat Race** timed distance race (Sept. 12) spans the length of the Roaring Fork Valley at rush hour.
- **Dawn Quixote** (Sept. 13) sends all balloons alight to joust with tethered weather balloons juxtaposed against the magnificent fall mountains.
- **Target Tubing** (Sept. 14) presents the perfect reflective photo opportunity as hot air balloons "splash and dash" over the Snowmass Club Golf Course ponds while attempting to aim tennis balls into huge floating tubes.

Considered one of the **highest balloon festivals** in the nation, the 2008 balloon festival also hosts an **evening Balloon Glow** on Saturday evening with a barbecue, free concert, and balloons lighting up the night sky to twinkle on and off like Christmas ornaments.

This year the event additionally features one of only two chances in Colorado to see the **tallest balloon in the United States**, the Energizer Bunny "Hot Hare." At 166 feet and higher than the Statue of Liberty, this enormous rabbit has ears as tall as a typical hot air balloon at 60 feet, wears sunglasses 32 feet wide, and boasts a size 98 EEEEE shoe.

Snowmass also attracts multiple high profile pilots. Event founder Betty Pfister is a **renowned female aviator** and Women's Air Service pilot (WASP) from World War II

who has won international piloting championships and awards. **Accomplished gas balloonist** Tim Cole has been part of several around-the-world and record-setting flights, including being on **Steve Fossett's team**. Russ McLain runs the entire ReMax ballooning program nationwide. **Twenty eight of the thirty-four pilots are Colorado residents**, and three pilots, Jim Carter, Dewey Reinhard, Jon Seay have record attendance (and stories to tell) from thirty-three years of balloon festivals in Snowmass.

ALL BALLOON EVENTS ARE FREE TO THE PUBLIC and launch from the Snowmass Village Softball fields at 7am each morning, while the balloon glow starts at 6 p.m. Food vendors and special family activities for the kids are also on-sight. For more information and a complete schedule, visit www.snowmassballoon.com or call 1-800-SNOWMASS.

The 6th Annual Snowmass Village Rotary Wine Festival (Sept. 12-13)

The 6th annual Snowmass Village Rotary Wine Festival is the perfect sensory compliment to the colorful balloons, offering a four-course Winemakers' Dinner on September 12 and a **tasting of over 200 wines** and regional cuisine on Saturday. Festivities kick off on Friday at 6:30 p.m. at the Artisan in the Stonebridge Inn. Award-winning Chef David Von Holten prepares a four-course extravaganza paired with Australian wines from Penfolds. Tickets for this sell-out event are \$125 and available by calling (970) 923-4036.

On Saturday, the event continues with a special Base Village tour at 10 a.m. followed by a noon champagne tasting. The official wine tasting begins at 12:30 with 200 wines to sample, including Penfolds, Trinchero Family Estates, Picket Fence, Betts n Scholls, La Spinetta, Ribbon Ridge, Silver Oak Cellars, Francis Ford Coppola Winery, Witness Tree Cellars, and more. Music by Bobby Mason & Friends, a Silent Auction, and tastings from regional chefs complete this popular fall event. Tickets are \$50/person and available at Sundance Liquor & Gifts, Daly Bottle Shop, from any Snowmass Village Rotarian and at the festival entrance on Saturday. For complete details visit www.snowmassrotary.org or call (970) 923-4036. All proceeds from this event benefit local non-profits.

The Twelve Hours of Snowmass (Sept. 14)

Completing the weekend line-up, this dawn-to-dusk twelve-hour mountain bike race on Snowmass' spectacular fall trails is part of the prestigious Rocky Mountain Ultra Regional Endurance Series and benefits local youth organizations Aspen Youth Center and Extreme Sports Camp. Perfect training for the 24 Hours of Moab, racers can participate in solo, team, or corporate divisions. For more information, visit www.12hoursofsnowmass.com or call (970) 544.4130

WEEKEND LODGING SPECIAL

Discounted and affordable lodging rates are available throughout Snowmass Village, whether visitors are looking for hotels, condominiums, or rental homes:

The Silvertree Hotel & Wildwood Lodge: Rates start as low as \$119.00/night f at the Silvertree and \$109/night at the Wildwood Lodge. Taxes not includes, some restrictions may apply, dates valid 9/11-14/08. www.snowmassvillage.com

The Mountain Chalet: Rates start at \$89/night including breakfast daily. Taxes not includes, some restrictions may apply, dates valid 9/11-14/08. www.snowmassvillage.com

The Laurelwood Condominiums: Rates start at \$89.00/ night with a 2 night minimum. Taxes not includes, some restrictions may apply, dates valid 9/11-14/08. www.snowmassvillage.com

Timberline Condominiums: Rates start at \$91/ night for a deluxe studio, a 30% savings! Taxes not includes, some restrictions may apply, dates valid 9/10/2008 – 9/15/2008. www.snowmassvillage.com

First Choice Properties: Take 20% off all direct booking lodging only, with a 3-night minimum stay. www.snowmassvillage.com

Consider bringing your group, family reunion, or meeting to Snowmass Village. For more information and lodging specials, visit the official Snowmass Village website at www.snowmassvillage.com or call 1.800.SNOWMASS. For media information, contact Allison Johnson at 970.309.5485.

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