

WINTER 2010-2011

VAIL VALLEY

M A G A Z I N E



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Solaris: a bright new spot in Vail Village

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Style

IN THE VAIL VALLEY

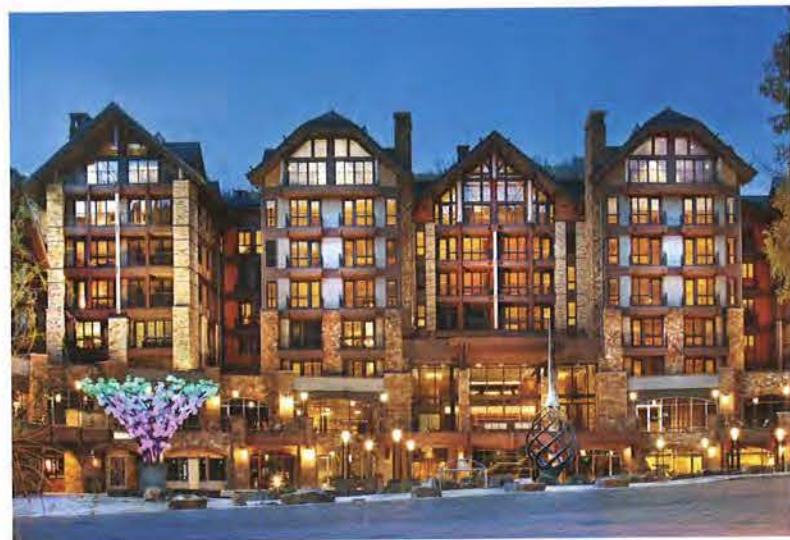


REAL ESTATE

SHOPPING

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WHAT'S HAUTE



SOLARIS

The new center of Vail Village

As a shining new state-of-the-art development, Solaris brings fresh vitality to the local ski village universe. Having replaced the old Crossroads complex, the area is now pulled into the Vail Village orbit with high-end amenities and retail tenants. Solaris features 79 elegant residential units, a five-star restaurant, one of the highest quality bowling alleys in the country, a luxury movie and dining complex, an outdoor ice rink, a bank, art galleries and more.

Craig Cohn, Solaris director of sales, marketing and leasing, explains the Solaris concept. "We went, looked and asked, 'What does this town need?' Vail was looking for a public gathering space with family-appropriate activities. Solaris has a fresh high quality. It's well-designed, well laid-out and planned with public usage and village amenities in mind. We built on that."

Solaris is an exceptional piece of real estate. Developer Peter Knobel recognized that 2.63-acre site gave him the opportunity to create a new town center for the community. In 2003, he had the foresight to purchase the shopping center portion of the declining Crossroads complex from owner Oscar Tang. Then, in early 2004, Knobel took on the challenge of buying out the 22 condos from the individual owners who lived upstairs. By the end of that year, he owned the entire property on the corner of East Meadow Drive and Willow Bridge Road.

A New Yorker whose family was in real estate, Knobel worked in Manhattan as a partner at Related Companies, developer of the Time Warner Center; and at Gilbert Charles Beylen, Inc. Knobel also achieved success in the telecommunications industry as founder of the Metromedia Fiber Network. He came to Colorado after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. As an avid skier, cyclist and outdoorsman, he quickly took to the Vail lifestyle. He built houses in Vail on Spraddle Creek and Forest Road and converted the former Tyrolean restaurant to a private residence.



The Penthouse at Solaris offering unheard of views of Vail Mountain and ample entertaining space.

When he decided to tackle the Solaris project, Knobel's intention was to bring energy back to Vail Village, telling the *Vail Daily* in July 2006, "I'm committed to Vail. It's the greatest place to live, and I can live anywhere I want to. It's a great place, and it needs quality infrastructure." The timing was right for Knobel's ambitious project. The *Chicago Tribune* stated in August 2007: "Vail has been named the No. 1 ski resort in North America 14 of the last 19 years, and both developers and officials want to keep it in the top spot." Former Vail Mayor Rod Slifer said, "Age and the need for new infrastructure have made this the right time to redevelop. It's very competitive out there. Every resort is trying to be a summer resort, too. We had to redevelop and grow."

When it was time to draw up plans for Solaris, Knobel turned to Barnes Coy Architects, a New York firm founded in 1982 that specializes in custom residential and interiors projects. He had worked previously with Barnes Coy to design his Vail residences. Knobel entrusted Barnes Coy to develop his vision. Architects Christopher Coy and Robert Barnes and project designer Christopher Clay collaborated to create a new focal point that would complement the village. Clay moved to Colorado in 2004 to open a Vail office. He said Solaris is his largest project in scale and budget. "I have worked on specific areas of large projects in the past, but, to be able to create an architectural language for an entire project of this scale and magnitude, was an opportunity I took seriously."

Solaris was to replace the antiquated Crossroads complex with 600,000 square feet of private luxury residences, restaurants and shops as well as a 30,000-square-foot public plaza equipped with heated pavers. Barnes Coy used traditional imagery and 3-D technology to create virtual models and renderings to highlight the development's finest design features for the approval phase in the summer of 2004. But Slifer and members of the

town council were concerned that an urban alpine architectural design would not fit well with Vail's traditional Bavarian-style village.

Knobel and Barnes Coy reassured them that the Solaris building design and materials would be integrated with Vail Village and developed with careful consideration of their Rocky Mountain context. After months of public hearings and contentious debate over zoning and height restrictions, the strength of Knobel's concept prevailed. He was given the green light to build in spring 2006.

Financing the \$325-million project in a tough economic climate was the next hurdle. Knobel combined pre-sales, public financing, private equity, a mortgage and his own investment dollars to seal the deal. He could now begin demolition of Crossroads and make final design and construction plans, hiring The Weitz Company, Inc., as the project's building contractor.

Unlike other Vail residence complexes of the same size, Solaris offers whole-ownership units in a private residential setting instead of some mixture of fractional ownership. Solaris residents enjoy the amenities of a world-class hotel in the intimacy of their own residence. Residents are

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— Peter Knobel, developer



The gourmet kitchen features elegant granite and marble slab countertops.

greeted on arrival by a parking valet, a private concierge, a bellman and a front desk operator. Cohn says, "The concept was to marry hotel-type amenities in a private residential setting. At Solaris, you walk into a five-star hotel surrounding. Most of our buyers are already Vail Village owners. We're selling to people who know and love Vail Village. This is an upgrade for them, a new property at a great location."

Clay says, "The lobby/restaurant area with canyon-like stone walls is the standout, and, I have to say, it is spectacular." The impressive two-story lobby has a 22-foot-by-55-foot glass window wall facing Vail mountain. Clay explains that Solaris' exterior and interior style reflects features of Craftsman Revival with the mark of handcraftsmanship. Exposed beams and rafters with built-in ornamentation ground the design. Exterior and interior details reinforce the pairing of mining and historical log-and-timber architecture of the Rocky Mountain West. Residential units, most with four bedrooms plus a den, range in size from 909 to 6,600 square feet. Cohn says, "The interior finish quality and amenities are, bar none, the highest quality in the Rocky Mountains."

The Solaris master suite is finished with hand-troweled plaster and the five-fixture master bathroom has floor to ceiling limestone. Each master bath is equipped with a relaxing air-jet soaking tub. Throughout the home, climate comfort is a priority with 100 percent in-floor radiant heat and 100 percent forced air conditioning. Lutron Lighting is standard in each unit as are an electronic Crestron Smart Home Computer System and pre-wired speakers in all the main living spaces.

Ceiling heights range from 9 feet to 16 feet, and the floors are crafted from custom hardwood and stone. Each unit has solid cherry doors and oversized windows with computer controlled automated shades. Solaris was constructed to give 80 percent of the units a Vail mountain view, an unheard of benefit in the ski village.

When it's time to entertain, Solaris residents enjoy cooking in their gourmet kitchen on elegant granite and marble slab countertops, sitting in front of their custom stone fireplace and serving wine from their in-home storage unit. Another option is to order in-room dining from local restaurants or to take advantage of the Solaris catering services. For a large party, onsite private room arrangements are available.

For the residents' convenience, Solaris also offers reservation, ticketing, and event services, transportation assistance, daily housekeeping, dry cleaning and laundry services, assistance with childcare, dog walking and sitting and 24-hour building security.

As for recreational and health amenities, residents have access to a 55-foot-long private indoor swimming pool, a 15-person hot tub, a deluxe health club facility and three spa treatment facilities with a massage on the premises. When it's time to hit the slopes, Solaris residents are within steps of the base of Vail Mountain. The Solaris ski concierge and slopeside ski lockers make the winter experience just that much more enjoyable.

With so many residential amenities in place, it was time for the developers to consider the commercial and public sides of Solaris. Cohn said,

"Locals cared about the amenities that we were going to build in Vail. We wanted to build Solaris to also be to their benefit."

For public use, the Solaris developers allocated 70,000 square feet of commercial space to include CinéBistro, a fully digital, 3-D capable, three-screen movie theater with full dining service. Bol has 10 ultra-high-end VIP bowling lanes, a children's video arcade, a coffee shop, an ice cream store, and approximately 18 storefronts with a dazzling selection of fine retail shops and galleries. The commercial portion of the Solaris property fills in the first two floors and wraps around a large public plaza.



Outdoors, Solaris truly becomes a community center with a free oval-shaped open-air ice-skating rink in the center of the half-acre plaza. Five comfortable benches ideal for people watching, warming fire pits in the winter months, pop-jet fountains for summertime, and a series of magnificent public art sculptures are all incorporated into the inviting space. Cohn predicts that as many as 4,000 to 5,000 visitors will enjoy the public plaza at one time in the near future.

To enhance the plaza's aesthetics, Solaris developers invested \$1.5 million in three works of public art created by accomplished Denver artist Lawrence Argent. Associate Professor at Denver University, Argent, who received his B.A. in sculpture from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Australia and his M.F.A. from the Rinehart School of Sculpture at the College of Art in Baltimore, Maryland, is known internationally for his multi-faceted public art projects.

No stranger to the Vail art scene, Argent, in collaboration with Scott Rella, created "Conduit," an impressive ice sculpture, in January 2009 for the town. He is probably best known in Colorado for "I See What You Mean," a public art piece made for the Denver Convention Center Expansion Project in 2005. Also known as the Big Blue Bear, the charming sculpture is a popular downtown Denver attraction.

The Solaris commercial center sits on top of a discreetly hidden underground 338-car public parking facility. Always at a premium, Vail parking is now easy and convenient for both Solaris residents and the public. In addition, the garage facility offers heated parking, car washes and valet services.

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SOLARIS

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Solaris Sales and Marketing:
Craig Cohn 970-479-6000

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Residents have access to a 55-foot long private indoor swimming pool, a 15-person hot tub, a deluxe health club facility and three spa treatment facilities.

When tourists and locals are looking for a fun night on the town, Solaris offers dinner and a movie at the center's highly unusual theatre CinéBistro. Operated by Cobb Theatres, CinéBistro combines cocktails and high-end dining with first run films in a festive setting. A family-friendly venue, Vail's CinéBistro, unlike comparable theaters around the country, allows minors before 8 p.m. After that time, it is strictly 21 and older. CinéBistro's guests are asked to come a half-hour before the feature starts so the wait staff can place their order. With a professional chef in the kitchen and a full service bar, CinéBistro makes all meals from scratch and offers an impressive wine list. And it is all served before the movie begins.

The menu differs from typical café fare. "Previews" (appetizers) include such items as ceviche misto, flatbread with Brie and balsamic figs, ginger tuna and salmon spring rolls, and "popcorn" chicken, rock shrimp or calamari. For the "Feature" or main course, CinéBistro offers Italian penne fra diavolo and fettuccini al forno, Colorado lamb, chicken arugula, BBQ pork rib stack with the restaurant's signature Cherry Coca-Cola sauce, a N.Y. strip steak, buffalo tenderloin and a fish entrée of pan-seared Atlantic salmon. Hearty salads, sandwiches and sides are also available. For dessert, mouthwatering items such as a deconstructed peanut butter pie, "Cinéful" chocolate cake or a tasty crème brûlée satisfy diners long after the credits roll.

To keep the kids happy during the early show, CinéBistro sells the "Cinéssentials" of popcorn with a complimentary refill, chocolate cookie dough bites, Reese's Pieces, red licorice and Milk Duds. For the late night crowd, the restaurant serves single, double and triple espressos. And, if it's just dinner a guest wants, CinéBistro is happy to serve a fine meal without the accompanying movie ticket.

In keeping with the cinematic theme, the CinéBistro bar serves cleverly named cocktails, beer and wine. Before and during the movie, guests might sip on a Green Hornet Appletini, a High Noon Ultimate Margarita or a Twilight Bite. Both domestic and imported beers are sold and the wine is listed in progressive style from light to full-bodied. French, Italian, Californian, Chilean and Spanish wines are all available.

Inside the 415-seat theater, movie lovers appreciate the plush comfortable high-back leather rocking chairs, superior quality Surroundsound and clear crisp projection from the latest in digital cinema technology. All three theaters are 3-D capable.

If bowling is on the family entertainment agenda, Cohn says, "The bowling alley is as luxurious as it gets."

When tourists come to a renowned ski resort, they expect world class shopping. Solaris does not disappoint. Now Vail's largest shopping center, Solaris offers 70,000 square feet of retail space, offering a mix of high-end art galleries, jewelers and clothing stores. Among the fine shops are Vail

Fine Art Gallery, Vail Style, Vail Gallery and Borrelli, an elegant clothing store that sells luxurious Italian fashion crafted with modern refinement.

Several local businesses have closed shops elsewhere in Vail to relocate to Solaris because it now anchors the community. Betteridge Jewelers manager Rob Shay told the *Vail Daily* in August 2010, "I think it will be the new center of town. It's a beautiful new building, and there will be a lot of people there." Masters Gallery, located west of Solaris on Meadow Drive, has decided to open Galerie Zuger, a second store, at Solaris to offer different works from the original gallery.

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— Craig Cohn, Solaris

At the Solaris retail center, a potential buyer can purchase their dream home through Slifer Smith & Frampton Real Estate, the largest real estate firm in Eagle county; finance it at Alpine Bank, one of Colorado's largest banks; and then — as many new Solaris homeowners have done — design, decorate and furnish it with assistance from one of the design experts at Worth Home.

Solaris has been deemed the new hot spot in town, welcomed for the rejuvenation that developers had in mind. Clay says, "The large scope and multi-use program provided its own challenges. Inventing a coherent language for the design was not without its trials, but I am pleased that the end result has been well received." Cohn adds, "The quality of what we've done has gone way beyond public expectation."

Knobel's original intention was to transform the way people live in Vail Village. At the onset of the Solaris project, he said, "I want to create effortless mountain living, with metropolitan convenience and unsurpassed quality, amenities and service. Most importantly I want to do it in a way that enhances Vail's pristine beauty and feels worlds apart from sterile urban environments." ❖



The impressive two-story lobby has a 22-foot-by-55-foot glass window wall facing Vail mountain.

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