

Vail is not the enemy

By Derek Taylor, Outside

When it comes time to throw stones in the ski world, there's no easier target than Vail. A \$3 billion-plus publicly traded company, Vail is an easy target because it's a big target. Taking it down verbally is a rite of passage in many mountain communities. Just as a generation of Red Sox fans can't mention Bucky Dent without giving him a middle name that starts with F, many denizens of ski towns across the nation find it impossible to say the word Vail without immediately following it with "sucks."

Vail, there is no doubt, brings much of this on itself. Look no further than the recent diarrhea storm it recently created when it purchased Utah's Park City Mountain Resort after the ski area inexplicably failed to renew the terms of its lease. Even setting aside that it was Canadian real estate developer Talisker, not Vail, that originally evicted PCMR, or that it was neither Talisker's nor Vail's responsibility to remind PCMR that its sweetheart lease was about to expire, the strong-arm tactics Vail employed in acquiring its nearest competitor for just slightly more than Randolph Hearst's former Beverly Hills home were decidedly "un-bro" and left many people with a bitter taste. When Outside first reported that Vail acquired PCMR, the comment section of our Facebook wall overflowed with vitriol directed at Vail.

But before you grab a torch and join the lynch mob, I have something to tell you. Vail is not your enemy. Don't get me wrong, I've done more than my fair share of Vail bashing. I used to live in a town (Crested Butte) that sold "Vail Sucks" shirts in most storefronts. And if I were to compile a list my favorite ski resorts, there might –might – be one from the Vail Resorts portfolio on the list. But when it comes time to spew venom, there's something else to remember. Unlike many

entities that storm in and adversely affect our little mountain utopias (Talisker?), Vail is a ski company.

Not only is Vail a ski company, it is a successful ski company. The 11 areas the company runs survive. They attract people. They create skiers. At a time when the buzz in the long-struggling ski industry is about increasing the size of the pie rather than fighting over the pieces, Vail is actually doing that.

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