

How Vail Resorts conquered the ski industry

By Josh Dean, Men's Journal

Since it was installed in 2010, the “orange bubble” chairlift at The Canyons in Utah has become the resort’s most iconic feature. The high-speed quad, which whisks skiers 8,700 feet to the summit of Lookout Peak in just nine minutes, was the first in North America to have heated seats and a plastic shield – the bubble – to protect riders from frigid air and snow along the way. It’s just like a gondola, but you don’t have to take off your skis. Any skier would love it.

But Robert Katz is not any skier. He’s the CEO of Vail Resorts, the \$1.4 billion resort powerhouse that owns The Canyons. Vail bought the resort in 2013, and then – through a mix of luck, lawyers, and shrewd business – snatched up neighboring Park City Mountain Resort in 2014, merging the two into a single mega-resort now known as Park City.

Vail now owns 14 resorts, which have a total of 305 lifts, and Katz thinks long and hard about all the little things that go into making the properties successful – check-in times at the ski school, why this lift line is a minute longer than that one.

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