

# Check In/Check Out

## **SNOWMASS VILLAGE, COLO.**

Viceroy Snowmass

#### **UPSHOT**

This slopeside boutique hotel, a skiin ski-out resort, puts a stylish ecological spin on the family-style accommodations that Snowmass is known for, with 173 LEED-certified condostyle rooms starting at \$224 in low season, \$435 in high.

#### **BASICS**

The Viceroy is a great option if you're seeking the slow pace and good midrange skiing of the Snowmass resort but don't want to sacrifice the high style of neighboring Aspen. The spacious rooms all have magnificent mountain views and easy access to the resort's 91 ski trails.

#### LOCATION

The Viceroy, in sleepy Snowmass, Aspen's low-key sibling in the Roaring Fork Valley, is best known for its groomed slopes and kid-friendly vibe. It overlooks the Assay Hill chairlift and is a short stroll from the shops and restaurants in the newly developed Snowmass base village, and 25 minutes (by free shuttle bus) from Aspen.

## THE ROOM

Interiors are by Jean-Michel Gathy, best known for his work on Amanresorts hotels in East Asia. The peppy young bellhop who escorted me to my very large entry-level "studio residence" drew my attention to the faux fur ("Everyone asks if they can buy

fur ("Everyone asks if they can buy one," he said) draped over the foot of the exceptionally comfortable pillowtop bed. The motion-sensor thermostat kicked on as we walked in. The plush throw, gas fireplace and polished (fake) horn protruding from the wall above the iPod docking station combined to evoke a mogul's mountain retreat. A full-service kitchen with a small Sub-Zero fridge and Viking range seemed aimed at families with children, as did the audio-video console, with DVD player and videogame inputs. A Nespresso machine came fully stocked with free pods.

## THE BATHROOM

The bathtub, which had a rainwater showerhead, was surrounded by a mosaic of earth-tone glass tiles. There were bathrobes on the hooks and Neil George bath products (made with gooseberry, orange blossom and sage) on the sink and on the tub, in eco-conscious refillable pump-action bottles.

#### **AMENITIES**

The Viceroy has two restaurants. At the very serious Eight K — named for the hotel's elevation — the chef, Will Nolan, a transplant from New Orleans, serves mountain cuisine with Creole accents. The more casual Nest Lounge and Café serves sushi downstairs near the pool deck in a cheerful room outfitted by the designer Kelly Wearstler. Though the fish was certainly fresh during my lunch at Nest (it's all certified by the Clean Fish Alliance), the bulging rolls were much too complicated. The cafe's menu is also available outside by the pool, which is heated in winter. In the evenings, when it's cold enough, there's an outdoor bar carved in ice serving some 200 vodkas. A 7,000-square-foot spa nearby offers ritual treatments in-



A kids' room is one of the amenities.

spired by the local Ute Indians. To reduce the hotel's carbon footprint, in lieu of minibars every guest gets a stainless-steel 16-ounce take-home thermos to fill with iced water and other free refreshments at stations throughout the hotel.

## **ROOM SERVICE**

I accessed the room service menu on the TV (it's also available in paper form), ordering \$14 buttermilk pancakes for breakfast. They arrived 20 minutes after my call: fresh, fluffy and packed with blueberries.

#### **BOTTOM LINE**

The Viceroy combines the amenities of a luxury hotel with the coziness of a condo, and its ecological ethos is not too self-righteous. The staff is friendly, the restaurants destinations in their own right, and the slopeside location can't be beat.

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