



Hotel Showdown!

Snowmass saw a major upgrade to its hotel inventory this winter.

The biggest, no doubt, was the ugly-duckling-to-beautiful-swan transformation that turned the Silvertree Hotel into the Snowmass Westin Resort. And in a reinvention that was wonderfully creative in all but its name change, the Wildwood Lodge became the Wildwood Snowmass. Though they do have one thing in common—their owner—the two hotels couldn't be more different. Here's how they stack up. —TP

THEME SONG:

WESTIN: *It's Been a Long Time Comin'*

WILDWOOD: *We All Live In a Yellow Submarine*

IDEAL GUEST:

WESTIN: Families tired of elk chandeliers and overstuffed furniture, but not tired of a full-service slopeside hotel.

WILDWOOD: The young at heart (and thinner of wallet). If you missed the 1960s ski-lodge action the first time around, here's your chance for a groovy vacation.

FIRST IMPRESSION:

WESTIN: Minimalist cool comes to the mall: sleek leather chairs and comfy sofas, sensuously curved lamps, a serene space to relax. Was this really the Silvertree?

WILDWOOD: Hipster cool comes to the mall: handrails wrapped in climbing rope, interesting art everywhere, a carved wood "totem pole" beam. And that's just the lobby. Is this really the Wildwood?

IRONY FACTOR:

WESTIN: 10 percent. Repurposed barnwood and retro-nubby fabrics earnestly evoke yesteryear.

WILDWOOD: 100 percent. Warhol would have loved this place.

ABOVE THE FIREPLACE:

WESTIN: Light gray stone stacked to the ceiling, with recycled wood beams inserted as horizontal accents.

WILDWOOD: Rachel Denny's "domestic trophy" deer head sheathed in a hand-sewn ski-sweater.

GUEST ROOMS:

WESTIN: The chain's signature Heavenly Beds and comforters; tastefully abstract nature photographs; pop-out reading lamps built into wood beams of the bed headboard.

WILDWOOD: Zingy color schemes; gray wool blankets instead of comforters; beds not Heavenly, but close enough.

READING MATERIAL:

WESTIN: In the lobby lounge: *Bucellati: Timeless Art*

WILDWOOD: In the living room: the *Ski Book*, a collection of ski writing by the likes of Ernest Hemingway, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Leon Uris.

MUST EAT:

WESTIN: Wild Pacific sea bass with mascarpone mashed potatoes and Meyer lemon sauce.

WILDWOOD: Mountain Man pizza with short ribs, wild mushrooms, goat cheese, and alfredo sauce.

MUST DRINK:

WESTIN: A glass of one of the impossible to find wines from the Cruvinet: Caymus Special Selection for \$63, Kistler McCrea chardonnay for \$35.

WILDWOOD: New Belgium Shift pale ale (one of ten New Belgium beers on tap).

WAKEUP CALL:

WESTIN: Morning sun in the restaurant invites lingering. Ditto the first-rate French toast.

WILDWOOD: "Let's skip breakfast and catch first chair, shall we?"

QUIRKY BUT COOL:

WESTIN: Rather than where they're from, staffers' name tags say, "My passion is..."

WILDWOOD: In guest rooms, artist Wayne White's scavenged thrift-store lithographs painted over with block-letter messages.

QUIRKY BUT QUESTIONABLE:

WESTIN: Carding everyone—even graybeards—at Vue, the lobby bar. Who brings ID to the hotel lobby?

WILDWOOD: Your "balcony" is actually the outdoor hallway leading to your room.

BOTTOM LINE:

WESTIN: Exactly what Snowmass needed, in so many ways.

WILDWOOD: Exactly what Snowmass needed, in so many ways. ●