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Vail Daily editorial: Vail looks to the world

Higher-end lodging has visionaries thinking

Vail Daily Editorial Board
Vail, CO Colorado

When Vail is cooking, it's an international resort.

The voices around you as you cross the Covered Bridge then are as much Spanish and German as English, and that English is as likely to have a bit of the Queen's own as the American we speak.

That said, the Vail Homeowners Association has been talking a lot lately about improving Vail's international prospects. Certainly, there's some clay to work with here.

The thought seems to be how to move Vail from being known as a great place to ski to becoming truly coveted, to becoming the worldwide jet set's No. 1 choice.

The cornerstone of this thinking is the latest additions to the lodging — Four Seasons, Ritz-Carlton, Solaris most notably.

We'll note this is big step up from whining about big buildings ruining everything and how will these ever get filled anyway?

Vail at her best is the place where bold dreams famously come to life, and the more faint-hearted doubters pretty much turn out wrong every time. The Great Recession may give pause, but consider that the new Vail is managing pretty well through even this, all things considered.

And the thing about recessions is that they generally come to an end.

The association even sounds kind of positive-ish about Ever Vail, now beginning to creep along in the approval process toward the territory of “forever” or even “never” at this pace.

No question this is a scary time, at the bottom of a downturn not seen since the Depression.

Of course, the late 1950s and early '60s were a pretty scary time, too, for pioneer Vailites. Scariery than now, if you think about that a moment.

They elected to think big — big as they could imagine — and went for international ski racing names to help begin building a brand. Eventually that led to alpine ski championships in 1989 and 1999, along with an annual World Cup stop for the men at Beaver Creek.

This is not novel stuff, making plays for the international market. The Vail Homeowners Association simply is talking about taking the next logical steps toward pre-eminence on the world stage.

Some of it might seem absurd, like fussing about that messy parking on the frontage roads (makes the place look more hopping, actually). Some of it only makes sense, like getting customs firmly ensconced at the Eagle County Regional Airport.

Vail is well positioned to stand out more in the world, and is a bit ahead of its peers that might be thinking along similar lines. Just remember, though, that Vail already has an international following. That's a great starting point.