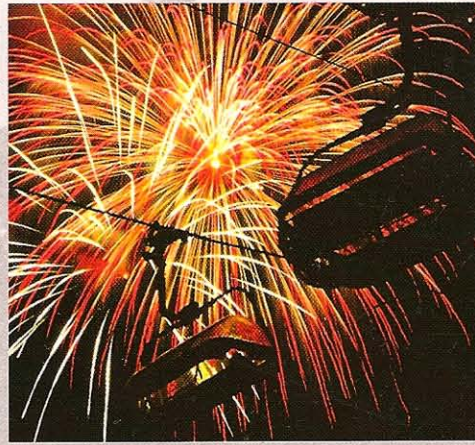


Celebrating 20 years of

VAIL VALLEY

M A G A Z I N E

Winter 2002-2003



Vail's 40th Anniversary
THE COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

COMPLIMENTARY COPY

Vail Landmark Businesses

by Jennifer Lewis

Vail is a study in contrasts. It seems as though with every passing year the town changes as businesses come and go against the backdrop of the unchanging mountains. It's easy to understand why retail stores, restaurants, and hotels face difficulties in the Vail Valley – they are mainly dependent on snow conditions, seasonal tourists, the popularity of recreational sports and the nation's overall economic climate in any given year.

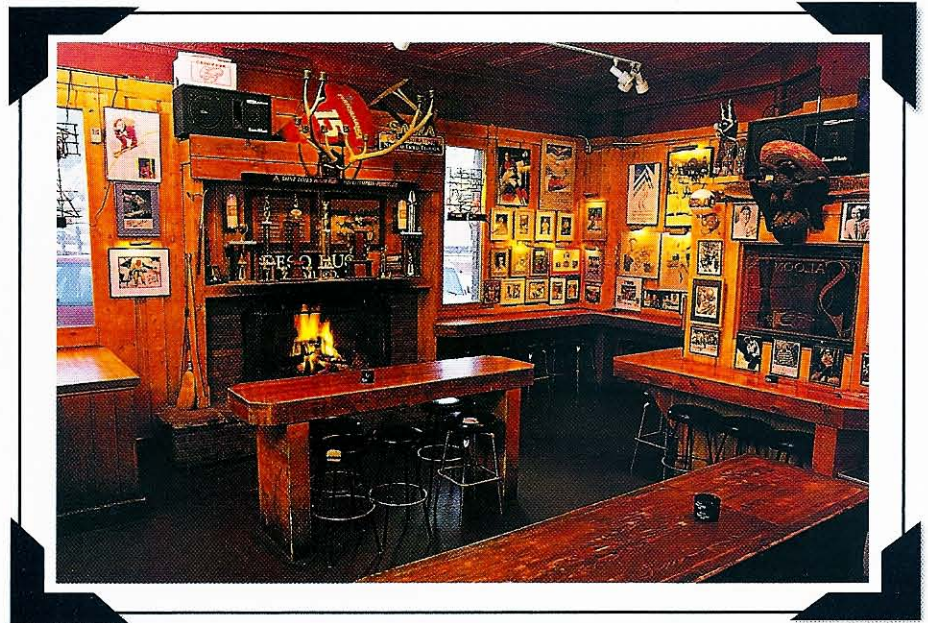
But, as Vail celebrates its 40th season this year, it is possible to find some businesses that have been part of Vail from the beginning. Vail Valley Magazine spoke to several of these establishments to find out more about what Vail was like 40 years ago and how, amid Vail's changing business landscape, they've managed to become fixtures in the community.

The Saloon

Minturn's role in helping Vail establish itself cannot be forgotten. When Vail was nothing more than a dusty construction site and a dream, the town of Minturn provided many of the essential services. The elementary, middle and high schools were in Minturn as well as the only area post office, grocery store, pharmacy and movie theatre. Among the many Minturn businesses that have been around since Vail's beginning, The Saloon has one of the more colorful histories.

The Saloon was actually built many years before Vail, in 1901, during Minturn's heyday as a railroad town, and served as both a saloon and gambling joint. Owner Andy Kaufman tells a story about an elderly retired railroad gentleman he used to know who, when he was a young boy, made money by running messages between wives and their gambling husbands. At that time, women couldn't, or wouldn't, step foot inside such a disreputable establishment.

According to Kaufman, Jeff Taylor bought The Saloon from the original owner in the 1950s and ran it with his daughter, Betty, during Vail's early days. In the early 1970s, The Saloon became a place called The Office for a few short years before Bob Cherry, a former Yankee ballplayer, bought it in 1976. Cherry named the business, The Saloon, and decorated the walls with the sports and movie memorabilia that are still there today. He started by serving three meals a day but eventually he settled on just dinner. The one thing Cherry prided himself on was cleaning up The Saloon which, Kaufman says, had become "a very rough and tumble joint."



Kaufman and partner Steve Campbell took ownership of The Saloon in 1986 and for the last 26 years have tried to protect the look and atmosphere. "We don't want to change the feel of this place because that's what's special about this business," he says.

One interesting aspect of doing business in the Vail Valley, according to Kaufman, is understanding the seasonality of a resort area and learning how to manage that. "Back in the '60s and '70s, when Vail was really growing and raw, it took a lot of guts to hold on because the off-season, even the summer, was really slow," Kaufman says. Even in the '80s, many businesses in the area, including

The Saloon, would shut down for seven or more weeks a year. Staffing is another issue Vail Valley businesses must face. "I think Vail attracts a unique quality of employees," Kaufman says. "People live here for a lifestyle and try to figure out how to make a living." Though employee turnover in the valley is notoriously high with many people moving to Vail for a few years before returning to big cities in search of a career, The Saloon manages to hold on to their employees year after year. "I credit the staff with the success of the business," Kaufman says. "We have lots of people who have been with us 10 years or more."