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Must-Haves, Smart Buys

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WHERE TO
SKI
ALL YEAR



ADVENTURE

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The Best of Adventure Your Guide to **2006** Everything Cool

5 Trends That Are Changing
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14 Astonishing
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45 Gear Picks
That Rock

Tempest on
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The New Soul of
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BY DAVID QUAMMEN



ADVENTURER OF THE YEAR

ED VIESTURS'S
Mountaineering
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 **KING KONG**
The ADVENTURE Q&A

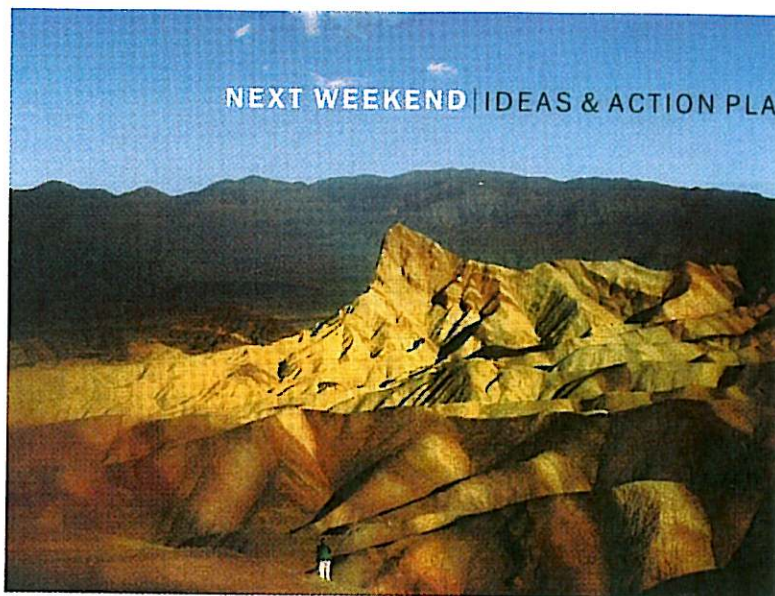
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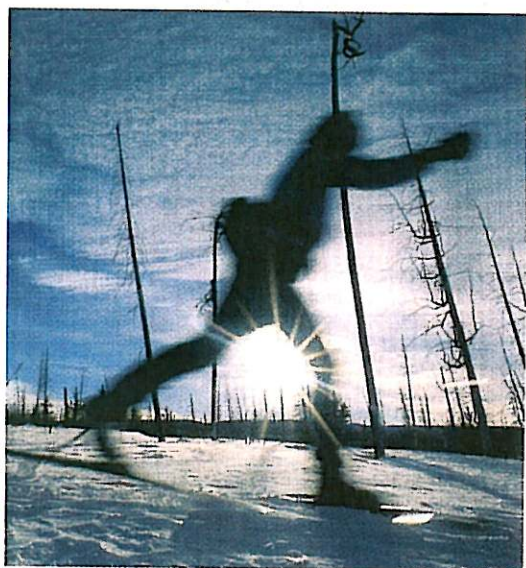


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Where cattle once grazed, cross-country skiers now work 50 miles of meticulously groomed trail backdropped by the unmistakable pyramidal spire of Montana's 11,166-foot Lone Mountain.



MOONSCAPE: The view from Death Valley's Zabriskie Point



Cross-country skiing in Yellowstone National Park

WEST

A Volcano of One's Own, WASHINGTON • After a storm has scrubbed the air, and dumped another two feet of fresh powder, the view of Mount Rainier from High Hut (www.skimtta.com) positively dazzles. The 14,409-foot volcano appears close enough to touch. One of four rustic backcountry abodes operated by the Mount Tahoma Trails Association on the cusp of Rainier, High Hut is perched above open slopes, offering the best views and telemark skiing of the lot. The three huts and one yurt are all spare but clean, heated by propane or wood stoves, and—at a mere \$5 per person a night—a veritable steal.

Tree Houses for Grown-Ups, OREGON • When sleeping in a queen-size bed suspended 35 feet up a tree, you'll know when the wind picks up. "Our tree houses move like ships," says Melody O'Donnell of Out 'n' About Treesort & Treehouse Institute (\$110, including breakfast; www.treehouses.com), in the Siskiyou Mountains of southwest Oregon. "Most people find it soothing, although some get 'treesick.'" Out 'n' About features nine tree houses, including Forestree, an abode reached solely by a swaying rope bridge. Climb down at sunup to hike the 6.6-mile Fall Creek Trail through old-growth forests to the summit of a 3,600-foot mountain.

Moon Over Dunes, CALIFORNIA • Winter ushers in "American season" in Death Valley National Park, when the brain-addling heat of summer—and busloads of Europeans—subside. Make Stovepipe Wells Village (\$103; www.stovepipewells.com) your base for exploring and be sure to request a room with a view of the hundred-foot crescent-shaped dunes out back. Nearby Mosaic Canyon offers a short scramble through a narrow passage of polished marble. The five-mile hike from Golden Canyon to Zabriskie Point weaves through multihued badlands before reaching the otherworldly lookout. Return via Gower Gulch to complete the loop. ▲

ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Room and (Snow)Board, ARIZONA • Come December the White Mountains of eastern Arizona start to live up to their name. Snow piles up at Hidden Meadow Ranch (\$500, all-inclusive; www.hiddenmeadow.com), a complex of ten luxury log cabins set in an enormous, 8,500-foot-high meadow. Miss Piggy, the ranch's snowcat, drops skiers and boarders at the top of Greens Peak (\$100 a day), site of a ski resort abandoned in the sixties. There you can carve first tracks by simply traversing a bowl and picking your line for a thousand-foot descent.

Big Sky Meets Big Snow, MONTANA • Glide or shred? That's the daily conundrum at Lone Mountain Ranch (\$2,083 for two, four-night minimum, including transfers and meals; www.lmranch.com), an assemblage of 24 swanky cabins tucked into groves of lodgepole pine, in Big Sky, south of Bozeman. Where cattle once grazed, cross-country skiers now work 50 miles of meticulously groomed trail backdropped by the unmistakable pyramidal spire of 11,166-foot Lone Mountain. Backcountry skiers can sign on for a guided tour of nearby Yellowstone National Park (\$150). Downhill buffs are just a shuttle-bus ride away from two leading resorts: Big Sky and brand-new Moonlight Basin.

PACK THIS

• **Silva Ski Speedometer** Machismo après-ski debates at Arizona's Hidden Meadow Ranch can now be settled with Silva's Tech⁴ O Ski Speedometer (\$259; www.silva.se). It won't tell you how high you jumped ("Did you see my air, dude?!"), leaving the future open for other inventors, but it will notch your max and average velocity and help you win—or lose—that bet.

