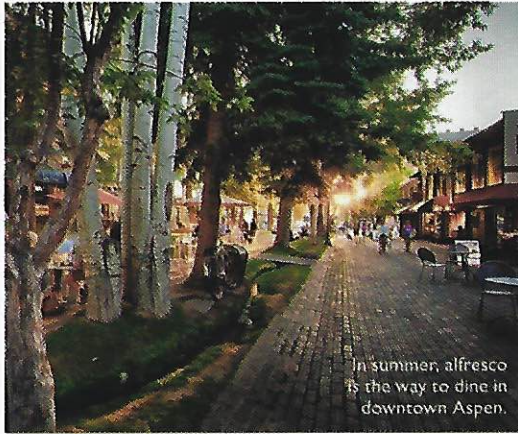


big-city perks. You get to choose your own adventure and let Aspen do the rest by taking your breath away.



In summer, alfresco is the way to dine in downtown Aspen.



A spirit nest, on Aspen Mountain frames the gondola.



ICONIC LOCAL

Lissa Ballinger

Curator of the Aspen Institute's art collection

Lissa Ballinger has worked in the art world for more than 20 years, collaborating with museums, art galleries, private collectors and art consultants. She earned her master's degree in art administration from Columbia University in 2002, and in 2014, she completed the coursework with the American Society of Appraisers through the University of Chicago. In 2010, Ballinger started Walnut5, an art advisory business specializing in collection management for individuals and institutions. She also serves as the curator of the Aspen Institute's art collection and galleries. Ballinger is not only artistic, she's athletic. She teaches classes at Aspen's Pure Barre, as well as stretch and MOi cycle at the Maroon Creek Club. Her competition résumé includes ultramarathons in the backcountry and the Grand Traverse, a grueling 40-mile backcountry race over the Elk Mountains from Crested Butte to Aspen.

Favorite thing about the town of Aspen? My community of savvy, curious, smart, hardworking, fun, athletic friends

Favorite hiking trail? Lost Man loop never disappoints. It transports you above the tree line and has a secret cluster of white bog orchids. Go in the morning to avoid crowds.

Favorite ski trail? It depends on the time of day, snow conditions and what aspect the run is. That's why skiing is so exciting to me—it changes every day. I've had the best on-piste ski runs of my life on G8 and Ozone in Highland Bowl. Sometimes the Dumps on Aspen Mountain hit the spot.

Dining splurge? Plato's Restaurant in the Aspen Meadows Resort has, by far, the best view in Aspen, and you can nibble on a genius, handmade, Herbert Bayer-inspired chocolate dessert as you watch the sun set.

Cocktail of choice? L'Hostaria serves the best red wine in the valley.

Best place to caffeinate? The Americano at SO Cafe

Not-to-miss event? Any ACES event, from the Beaver Walks to the members' dinners to astronomy evenings to An Evening on the Lake. Every event is special and memorable, while staying authentic to the incredible mission of the organization.

Best-kept secret? Aspen is all about the people who live and work here. —Helen Olsson

TOWN PHOTO COURTESY ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION/ JEREMY SWANSON; SPIRIT NEST PHOTO BY SASHA JULIARD; BALLINGER PHOTO BY MATT POWER