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Hot Fire Features

Warm up with blazing settings & entertainment





HERE IS SOMETHING about circling around a fire, whether a more controlled experience like fire pits and fireplaces or natural and wild in the form of a campfire or bonfire. As we've been out and about visiting properties and taking in unique Colorado experiences, fire keeps coming to the forefront. Is it a trend? We're not sure, but here's a glimpse at some of the coolest yet hottest fire settings and performers in the state.

Cozy Mountain Fires

Located slope-side at Beaver Creek Resort, **Park Hyatt Beaver Creek Resort and Spa's** 8100 Private Dining Room has an indoor fireplace that not only provides ambiance but also sometimes goey, chocolaty surprises. Recently, a corporate group held an event on the 8100 patio, keeping the doors to the inside space closed until it was time for dessert. When the doors opened, guests were greeted by a roaring fireplace and a dessert station that included marshmallows for roasting, paired with after-dinner drinks and chocolate.

Park Hyatt Beaver Creek also has four large, outdoor wood-fired pits that are utilized year-round, two permanent gas fire pits including one on the patio of Sawatch Ballroom, and four poetable pits that can be placed in different locations. For example, the moveable fire pits have been used on the Rial Oxford Suite's 800-square-foot terrace that can hold up to 40 and overlooks the mountain.

Chris Ratner, president/CEO of Vail Valley Partnership, also highly recommends winter horse-drawn sleigh rides with **Bearcat Stables** to Bearcat's Cabin, located 15 minutes west of Beaver Creek, for time warming up around a cheery fire and a gourmet dinner prepared by Executive Chef Jonathan O'Leary of *Mirador* Restaurant at The Lodge and Spa at Cordillera. For larger groups, he recommends the sleigh ride dinners at **4 Eagle Ranch** in Wolcott. Upon arriving, chili and warm drinks are served at the historic Nelson Cabin before heading out on the sleigh and returning to a tasty buffet, songs by an open-hearth fire and a bonfire for roasting marshmallows.

On Friday nights from mid-December until early April, the Norse God of Snow, Ullr, is saluted at *Snowmass' Elk Camp*. Accessed by picturesque gondola ride, the beautifully designed restaurant/venue transforms into a winter wonderland for **Ullr Nights** with live music, à la carte cuisine, tubing, snowshoeing, ice skating, guided snowshoe tours, and


s'mores and hot chocolate by the bonfire. This is an especially friendly event for groups that want to include families.


NEST Public House at *Viceroy Snowmass* has a slope-side outdoor patio with fireplace that serves as the centerpiece for gathering, especially in winter. Large mountain views and gastropub cuisine round out the experience.

A good fair-weather option with all the activities and dinner taken care of is **Snowmass Creek Outfitters'** horseback ride in the wilderness of Old Snowmass served up with a barbecue dinner, cowboy music and poetry, and s'mores around the campfire on a private ranch.

Nearby in the town of Aspen, the luxurious **St. Regis Aspen** has an attractive lobby/lounge fireplace that can be viewed from both sides. Frequently there is live evening music in the lounge that looks onto the spacious Fountain Courtyard, an area that has proven popular for receptions, weddings and dessert-type events around the fire pits.



 Clockwise from top: Dutton River Camp - Cresto Ranch provides luxury in the wilderness; enjoy a tasty dinner, a sleigh ride and time around the fire at Bearcat Stables; the warmth of St. Regis Aspen's fireplace can be savored from lobby or lounge sides.

 From top: The ART hotel's FIRE Terrace went artsy with a large fire pit; at Grand Hyatt Denver's Fireside, the two parallel, raised fireplaces above the bar are excellent starting points for conversations.



At the 40-acre **Aspen Meadows Resort**, located on the west end of Aspen, guests are invited to create their own s'mores using the woodburning fireplace in Hefner Lounge and ingredients from the s'mores bar. The Davis Deck, accessed from either Hefner Lounge or Plato's restaurant, is a popular spot for welcome receptions with sweeping views of the mountains and several fire pits to gather around.

The Lodge at Breckenridge, newly renovated, not only has stunning views of Breckenridge Ski Resort, but also features a massive fireplace in the lobby and fireplaces in 15 of its 45 rooms, including the Sunlight Peak Suite. The lobby is frequently used for welcome receptions, and the fireplace by the ballroom is another popular spot.

Located across the mountain from Telluride and 4 miles downriver from Durton Hot Springs, the seasonal **Dunton River Camp - Cresto Ranch** has eight upscale and spacious 640-square-foot canvas tents located in an alpine clearing available from June through October. At the heart of the ranch that can host up to 16 guests is a restored 19th-century farmhouse with dining room, guest



salon, wraparound deck only 20 feet from the Dolores River and spectacular views of the San Juan Mountains. After dinner, guests gravitate to the outdoor fire pit and enjoy s'mores with perhaps a nice bourbon, single malt whiskey or hot chocolate.

Cultured Fire Experiences

The Ranch at Emerald Valley and Cloud Camp, **The Broadmoor's** two Wilderness Experience lodging properties in the mountains surrounding Colorado Springs, have fire pits lit nightly for guests to enjoy after



dinner. Cloud Camp can accommodate up to 56 guests and has an ultraimpressive main lodge filled with Western art and a huge indoor fireplace by the large dining table where family-style dinners are served. The Broadmoor's main property in town also has stylish patio spaces with fire features where guests can wind down the day.

Also in Colorado Springs, **Cheyenne Mountain Resort** has a private, 35-acre beachfront lake where groups can use bonfires for team-building activities and after-dinner gatherings from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Inside, the lobby fireplace situated near Mountain View restaurant and Elevations bar and lounge is a popular post-meeting locale for those looking to enjoy a beverage and casual conversation with fellow attendees, and the outdoor fire pit is popular with those looking for a breath of fresh air.

"S'mores kits are a popular welcome amenity among group planners," says Curtis Bova, director of sales and marketing. "Located on the main terrace, the outdoor stone fire pit offers a great place to cozy up to the fire in a rocking chair, sip on a mug of hot chocolate and roast a s'more while taking in the magnificent views of the Rocky Mountain Front Range."

The most unique lobby fireplace in Denver is the result of a major remodel at **Grand Hyatt Denver**. At Fireside - The Bar, groups can mingle around linear stacked fireplaces above the bar and order a cocktail made from fresh ingredients, local microbrews and an array of appetizers.

Fireside Bar & Grill at **The Inverness Hotel & Conference Center** in Englewood has a cozy fireplace area complete with views of property's beautiful golf course. The menu emphasizes locally sourced ingredients and a broad selection of wine, spirits and Colorado craft beer.

One of the latest additions to Denver's patio scene is **FIRE Terrace** at the new **The ART hotel** that holds 35 and is connected to the indoor **FIRE Lounge & Restaurant** that adds capacity for another 88. The fourth-floor patio overlooking the bustling Broadway Street below provides amazing views of downtown

ISES BONFIRE BASH

The International Special Events Society Denver Chapter hosted a Welcome Back Bonfire Bash on August 25 at Cherry Creek Marina to provide a fun evening of networking, delicious barbecue dinner prepared by Three Tomatoes Catering, games and a social media photo booth presented by Fun Productions, and a crackling fire with mouthwatering s'mores. Sent out with the meeting notification was an insightful comparison of networking and roasting marshmallows, which is too clever not to share.

Networking is a lot like roasting marshmallows ...

Approach No. 1:

MARSHMALLOW ON FIRE

Full of drama and flare, intended for quick results and most effective with vibrant, dynamic personalities. Often associated with people who—back when they were kids, of course—just might have thrust their marshmallow stick into the thick of the fire, pulled out a flaming torch and ran around the bonfire whooping!

Approach No. 2:

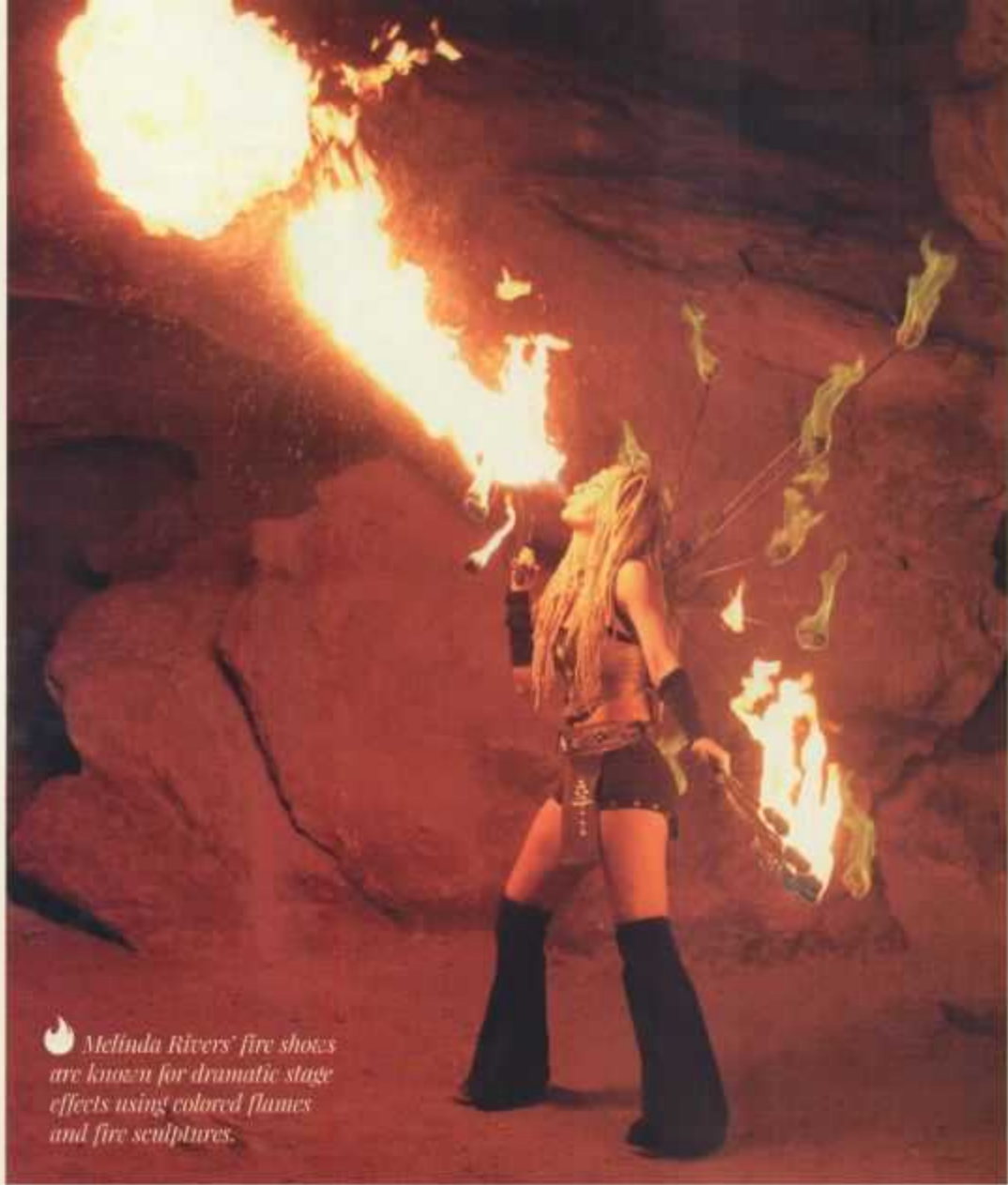
SLOW-ROASTED MARSHMALLOW

Thoughtful and intentional with a vision for the exquisite and result. A lot happens in the time it takes these potent personalities to carefully nurture their marshmallow, aka networking, experience. A cup of coffee or a glass of wine could be shared in this approach. Steady through the chaotic whooping, flying sparks and smoke in the breeze ... all for the perfectly browned, melted-to-the-middle, slow-roasted marshmallow.

The Whole Point:

MARSHMALLOW TURNED S'MORE

Until the graham crackers run out, the whole point of roasting your marshmallow in the first place is to enable a satisfying collaboration with chocolate and cracker, a melding of three elements into one fabulous experience. And of course, we are all in the business of collaborating to produce fabulous experiences!



 *Melinda Rivers' fire shows are known for dramatic stage effects using colored flames and fire sculptures.*

Denver and has a large artsy fire pit in the center and smaller fire pits by smaller seating areas to the side. The terrace menu is divided into four parts: ice, skewers, fire and sugar! —

At **Second Home Kitchen + Bar** at JW Marriott Denver at Cherry Creek, the outdoor fire pit is long enough to heat up the entire courtyard and is complemented by modern

couches and lounges and is especially popular with the après work crowd.

The cozy glow of indoor and outdoor fireplaces are a key part of the atmosphere at **Kachina Southwestern Grill**, located at The Westin Westminster. Two private indoor dining spaces, Canyonlands for up to 50 seated and 75 standing and The Library for 20 either

way, have atmosphere-enhancing fireplaces. The outdoor Cowboy Club patio holds up to 25 seated or 30 standing and boasts a unique rounded fireplace.

"Kachina Southwestern Grill is one of my favorite places to host business and organizational events, as well as spend time with friends and family," says Melodie Reagan.

president of Crazy Good Marketing based in nearby Louisville. "Their food and service are top-notch, and the beautiful décor makes it easy to relax and have fun. Enjoying the fireplaces gives me the joy of being with good friends, sharing around a campfire, yet being totally pampered."

Located in Denver's Washington Park neighborhood, **bittersweet** specializes in artisanal cuisine and has two private dining spaces, each with its own indoor-outdoor fireplace and capacity for hosting up to 30 people each. Alfresco group dining also is available on two private patio areas, one seating up to 30 and another for groups of 12 to 14.

Dazzling Performers

It's one thing to sit gathered 'round a fire pit, campfire or indoor fireplace and quite another to see flames being handled by a skilled entertainer dressed in magnificent costumes.

5 Star Talent & Entertainment works with three performers who dazzle with fire. "My clients say, 'Fire adds beauty, magic and an exciting touch to the event. Guests and attendees are intrigued with fire,'" says CEO/President Terri Fisher.

For example, Melinda Rivers' fire shows are known for dramatic stage effects using colored flames and fire sculptures. Her dances feature lights, UV reactive material and fire using poi, staffs and hula-hoops as well as fire fingers and fire wings.

Sven Jorgensen, a Cirque-style fire acrobat, has been performing as a one-man circus for 27 years. "Fire is safety, shelter, warmth and the basis for all of our technological mastery. In that way, fire speaks to our most primal selves and elicits a powerful sense of awe," he says. "Fire is transformative. Before our very eyes we see fuel becoming light. When people watch a fire performance they are reminded, on a subconscious level, that there is always hope for something better."

Entertainer Paul Borrillo, who is represented by 5 Star and owns **Borrillo Entertainment**, says he is frequently asked to provide a fire performer and "add spectacle to an event." He

notes, "I was asked to provide entertainment for a building renovation celebration, and we stationed a fire performer outside as guests arrived and walked down the red carpet. It drew a crowd of bystanders who were treated to a fire show even though they were not guests at the event."

There are a few cautions, though. "Let it be said there is an element of danger involved in any fire show," Borrillo emphasizes. "Therefore, I only work with entertainers who I have seen perform and trust their attention to safety. Many hotels have strict no-fire policies. Other event locations require permits and proof of fire insurance. When in the hands of professional fire performers, it can be one of the most ancient entertainment experiences."

Rivers and Jorgensen also work with Denver-based **Talent West** along with Bryan Connolly, a fire performer/juggler. "Bryan is our Renaissance-style performer—the Circus Knight, as he is known, is dashing and debonair with a comedic, flirtatious style," says Debbie Lease, co-owner of Talent West. "His fire juggling and manipulation is amazing, and his costuming matches as well."

Fire entertainers draw crowds around them because their craft is a highly skilled form of performance art that takes many years to perfect. "They mesmerize a crowd—fire (and lights, too) naturally do that," Lease says. "Most performances are outside, some at the front entrance of venues as an attraction that 'sets up' guests for an exciting evening of additional entertainment. Other performances are part of a larger staged Cirque show, perfectly choreographed with music and a storyline."

For another option, **AXS Group** in Denver works with a juggler who tosses multiple emblazoned batons and "ultimately feasts on it to the astonishment of his audience," describes Chris Starkey, co-founder/mojo maker of AXS Group.

Many street performers utilize fire to attract an audience or to conclude their show with a shocking danger element. "Fire performances are brief, so I use them in shows where maximum attention is needed," Borrillo explains. "Fire is the most dramatic of elements and holds a natural attraction in the human psyche." ❧



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