

ANNUAL GOLF GUIDE: The best courses and communities

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SUMMER LIVING

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Bozeman, Montana

This year, spend your summer vacation in Montana and you'll understand why folks are flocking to the area. This sportsman's paradise boasts delightful summer months filled with warm days, cool clear nights and enough activities to fill the season. Bozeman and the surrounding area, including the Big Sky Resort, have an addictive quality!

This wild corner of the West has become a mecca for second homeowners. Indeed, second homes are the bulk of E. Louis Loucks's business, Complete Project Resource. This full-service project management company works on behalf of the home owners, providing assistance with finding local architects and builders.

Loucks found himself drawn to the area several years ago. "This is a special place. The unmatched natural landscape and great hometown atmosphere provides a great quality of life. It doesn't take long to get to know people."

Carole Sisson, owner of Sisson Designs, agrees. She has run her full-service interior design firm here for over 25 years. One of her favorite things to do is watch the wildlife—including elk, moose and bears—as they wander through the yard at her secluded home in nearby Big Sky. "I find the peace and quiet on the mountain to be very rejuvenating after a busy week in town," she says.

Many transplants are following the lead and new independent businesses seem to be popping up

every day. One big reason is the abundance of an educated workforce—Montana State University is right in town.

Christopher Wardle owns The Bozeman Watch Company, a business that seems to epitomize this independent Western spirit. Working with designer Patrick Ayoub, Wardle offers residents and visitors American-designed and engineered watches. Describing Bozeman as "romantic and tough," Wardle believes that there is "no place in the world like Montana, where a handshake is still a contract and a person's word is always reliable."

So make Bozeman your home base and head out in any direction. You are sure to find an adventure. Big Sky, known as a world-class ski resort, offers plenty of warm-weather activities such as scenic lift rides, bike trails, and, after a busy day, the full-service Solace Spa. Gallatin National Forest is close, as is Yellowstone National Park. Bridger Mountain has a wonderful, well-marked trail system and, of course, the fly-fishing here is legendary. Or just stay in Bozeman and take in attractions such as the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture or the Museum of the Rockies.

For more information about Bozeman and the surrounding area, visit the Bozeman Area Chamber of Commerce, bozemanchamber.com; Big Sky Resort, bigskyresort.com; or the State of Montana, visitmt.com. ■

Shop Bozeman's Main Street

Bozeman's Main Street offers a delightful taste of the Old West

Bozeman Watch Co., 11 E. Main
(877) 878-1780, bozemanwatch.com
Christopher Wardle's stunning, American designed and engineered timepieces are produced in limited editions and numbered.

Miller's Jewelry, 2 E. Main
(406) 586-9547, millersjewelry-mt.com
Specializing in Montana Yogo sapphires, this long-time local jeweler also offers a wide selection of Waterford crystal and Reed and Barton jewelry chests.

Vargo's Jazz City and Books, 6 W. Main
(406) 587-5383, vargosbooks.com
Slow down and linger through an eclectic mix of new, used, and out-of-print books, as well as an overwhelming collection of jazz recordings.

Thomas Nygard Gallery, 135 E. Main
(406) 586-3636, nygardgallery.com
Since 1976, this gallery has offered a collection of 19th- and 20th-century American art, and specializes in works from the Northern Plains.

The Montana Gift Corral, 237 E. Main
(406) 585-8625, giftcorral.com
Take home a Western souvenir from this cute little shop, which offers a wide selection of made-in-Montana t-shirts, wood carvings and beauty products.

Barkenhowell's, 777 E. Main
(406) 586-6160, barkenhowells.com
Don't forget a little something for your furry friend! This chic dog boutique features luxury toys, accessories and food, including the famous "doggie biscotti."