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## The Adventure Issue

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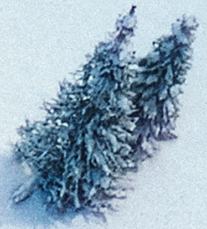


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▶ Travel isn't one-size-fits-all. Sometimes getting away means pushing deeper into wild terrain; other times, it's about disappearing entirely, slowing the pace, or surrendering the details. These four escapes reflect different instincts and desires, shaped as much by feeling as by place. From high-alpine lodges and jungle hideaways to soulful city stays and sun-washed beachfront retreats, each offers its own way of leaving the everyday behind and returning with a clearer sense of what you were looking for.

Departure



CRESTED BUTTE

# The Adventurer

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**UNTRACKED** Cat-ski access opens Crested Butte's wildest terrain.



**For those who believe getting away means going deep into mountain terrain, wild country, and high-alpine passes, Crested Butte's Eleven Scarp Ridge Lodge delivers. BY LACY MORRIS**

► At first glance, Eleven Scarp Ridge Lodge blends quietly into Crested Butte's historic streetscape, a stately building just off Elk Avenue, close enough to walk to dinner and close enough to feel like a local. But behind its unassuming façade lies one of Colorado's most rarefied mountain experiences. Owned and operated by Eleven, the Colorado-based adventure hospitality company known for pairing five-star

comfort with serious terrain, Scarp Ridge Lodge is a private alpine retreat designed for those who believe the best trips begin where the pavement ends.

In winter, the lodge offers guests something almost unheard of: an exclusive cat-skiing operation spanning more than 1,100 acres of untouched terrain at Eleven's backcountry ski tenure, Irwin. "It's truly like having your own resort," says general manager Rob Layton. "You're skiing all day in the backcountry, then coming home to town at night. That combination didn't exist before us."

That duality, remote yet connected and rugged yet refined, is what makes Scarp Ridge Lodge special. Days are spent chasing powder deep in the Elk Mountains, with pit stops at luxury cabins in the backcountry, and evenings unfold in a town that still feels refreshingly unpolished. It's adventure without austerity, luxury without pretense, and a reminder that Colorado still knows how to do mountain life its own way.



**FULLY IMMERSED** Life inside and outside Scarp Ridge Lodge.

**PRIVATE BY DESIGN**

Scarp Ridge Lodge's interiors strike a careful balance between historic character and modern mountain ease. Originally built in the late 1800s as a saloon and hotel, the building retains its storied bones and grand proportions, while Eleven's thoughtful renovation layers in warmth, texture, and restraint. Think reclaimed wood beams, stone fireplaces, leather seating, and quiet corners that invite post-ski decompression rather than spectacle.

With just six bedrooms, the lodge feels more like a private mountain home than a hotel. Common spaces are designed for togetherness, yet there's enough room to retreat when the day's effort calls for it. Because most winter stays are a full buyout, the atmosphere shifts entirely with each group. "One week it's a high-energy guys' trip, the next it's a multigenerational family," Rob says. "The lodge really becomes a second home."

That adaptability is central to Eleven's approach. Founded in Colorado in 2011, the company has built its reputation on deeply personal experiences, not polished formality. "We're not calling people Mr. and Mrs. Smith," Rob explains. "It's Frank and Debbie. It's genuine. Our guests are here for the same reasons we live here."

**FUEL FOR POWDER DAYS**

Mornings at Scarp Ridge Lodge begin early and deliciously. A private chef prepares made-to-order breakfasts as guests shuffle in, coffee in hand, scanning the weather and hoping for fresh snowfall. The energy is palpable, especially on powder days, when anticipation hums through the lodge before the snowcat ever arrives.

Lunch is typically enjoyed slope-side at Eleven's private

cabins in Irwin, where skiers refuel between runs with hot and hearty fare and a well-timed après drink. Back at the lodge, afternoons ease into an elevated happy hour with generous spreads waiting when guests return from the mountains.

Dinner is intentionally flexible. Rather than keeping guests tethered to the lodge, Eleven encourages a mix of private in-house dinners and nights out in Crested Butte. "We're a block off Elk Avenue," Rob says. "Guests can soak in the hot tub, have a drink, then walk to one of the best restaurants in town." The approach not only supports local businesses but reinforces



PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF ELEVEN



the feeling of being part of the community rather than insulated from it—a rarity in the world of ultra-luxury adventure travel.

### COLORADO AT FULL TILT

Each morning, if they choose, guests climb aboard a custom snowcat that pulls up directly in front of the lodge and winds through town before heading toward Irwin, a surreal transition from Main Street to

wilderness. After a 45-minute ride, the landscape opens into one of Colorado's snowiest microclimates, where steep chutes, gladed runs, and wide-open bowls stretch across the horizon.

Guides tailor every day to the group's ability and appetite for challenge. "If everyone's an expert, we'll ski that terrain," Rob says. "If it's a mixed group, we split it up. Everyone gets the best day possible." Non-skiers aren't left behind, either; Irwin's base cabins offer Wi-Fi, warmth, and a front-row seat to the mountains.

That customization is the heart of Eleven's philosophy—adventure shaped around people, not the other way around. "We're in the business of 'best day ever,'" Rob says. And at Scarp Ridge Lodge, it's easy



### BACKCOUNTRY BASE

Private cabins anchor Scarp Ridge Lodge's exclusive cat-skiing terrain.

to see why guests return year after year. Powder turns fade, legs grow tired, but the feeling of having experienced Colorado at its most authentic—wild, welcoming, and quietly exceptional—lingers long after the snowcat ride home.

**Eleven Scarp Ridge Lodge**  
[elevenexperience.com](http://elevenexperience.com)