

## Cordillera Resort, CO



Gerald Ford was our 38<sup>th</sup> president, his truncated administration in the mid-70s (less than two-and-a-half years) likely best known for the presidential pardon granted to his former boss and predecessor Richard Nixon.

Ford's athletic legacy is practically the equal of his political one. He was an Eagle Scout, and played football at Michigan, winning two national titles amidst undefeated seasons. In adulthood he embraced golf (though the game didn't seem to embrace him) and his well-documented winter vacations helped put Vail, Colorado on the skiing map. (America wasn't used to seeing their Commander-in Chief swaddled in snow clothes and strapped to long boards.)

It's been nearly forty years since Ford left office, and over the decades Vail has grown, like many mountain towns, into a bona fide golf destination. There are several dozen courses spread across the Vail valley, and whether one chooses to fly to Denver and take a National Rental Car two hours west on Interstate 70, or connect into nearby Eagle, and take the car some thirty minutes eastward, the single best

golf destination to be found is in the town of Edwards, and the trio of courses at [Cordillera](#).



Summit Course

The Summit course at Cordillera is almost overwhelming with its grandeur and scale. High in the sky at 9,000 feet of elevation, designer Jack Nicklaus throws everything including the kitchen sink at the golfer at this one-of-a-kind experience. Nosebleed drops, huge stands of birch and aspen trees, rock outcroppings, potato chip greens, bunkers dug halfway to China and everywhere you look room for a dozen other golf holes. The property is so capacious that the eighteen holes could've easily fit 72, heck maybe even 172 other holes on the property. A twelve handicap golfer has a better chance of breaking par than they would of walking the golf course carrying their bag. It is real mountain goat stuff, with long distances between greens and tees, steep hills and an adventurous spirit that is rarely seen in modern golf.



Mountain Course

Colorado native Hale Irwin is the architect of record at the Mountain course, 8,200 feet above sea level. This is another fun house and thrill ride, albeit on slightly lower ground than the Summit course, which is literally at the apex of the property. While the views might not have the epic grandeur of the Nicklaus design all the elements are in place for an unforgettable day of golf. Drop shot par threes, serpentine, plunging par 4s, the beauty of the golf course is most every tee shot plays downhill. There is nothing more satisfying than watching a well struck drive hang in the air with a mountain backdrop and watch it gently fall to earth. This is a former working farm, and the property is dotted with old tractors, plows and other examples of antiquated machinery, all of which offers a retro counterpoint to the joys of the playing fields.



Valley Course

The Valley Course is the most pleasant of the trio, albeit without the excesses of its high altitude brethren. This Tom Fazio design sitting 2,000 feet lower, has wide fairways, lovely fairway bunkering, and less drama in the green complexes. The fact that several holes play in close proximity to Interstate 70, and the circuitous cart path between the eleventh and twelfth holes that puts San Francisco's Lombard Street to shame do little to mar the experience.

Vail is known for its many fine dining experiences, but there's no need to leave Edwards, some twenty miles down the highway from Vail. Excellent pub fare is featured at Main Street Grill. Juniper is elegant, with beautiful views out the back deck, and food, including homemade desserts, that are nothing short of superb.