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BY MICHAEL CHILDERS

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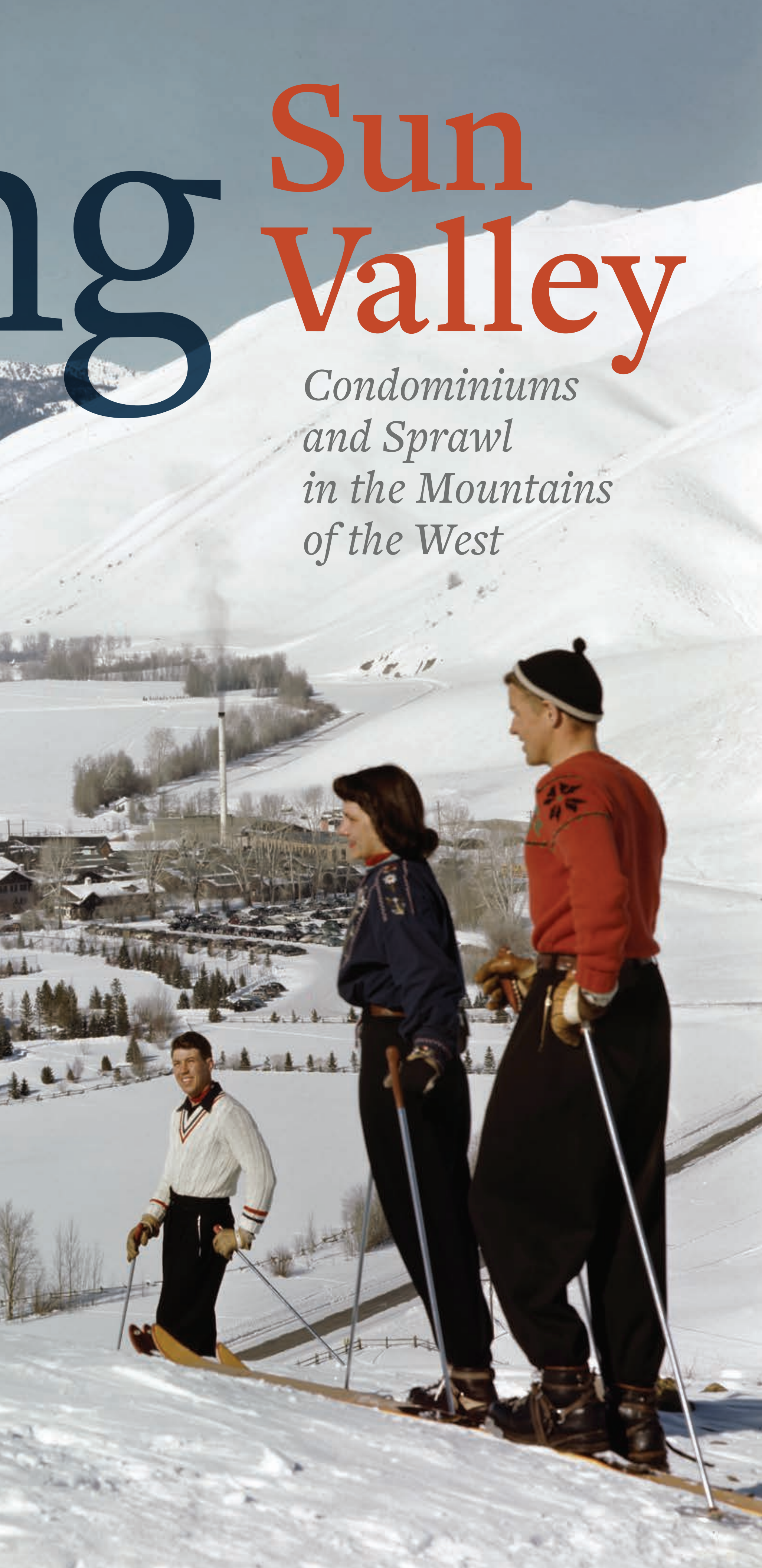
Sun Valley

Condominiums and Sprawl in the Mountains of the West



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The Sun Valley ski resort initially began as a popular remote getaway for the rich and famous. Ironically, the resort and surrounding area changed dramatically because of a 1961 law designed to solve an urban housing shortage.

The clamor of construction echoed across the northern end of Idaho's Wood River Valley throughout the summer of 1965 as crews raced to complete Sun Valley's new village. Lying between the resort's iconic Sun Valley Lodge and the Challenger Inn, the quaint, pedestrian-only village would soon include three restaurants, a sports shop, a gift shop, and a bookstore. Also included in the $30 million makeover were two new ski lifts, each extending farther up the northern side of Mount Baldy, an expansion of the resort's golf course, and the addition of an Olympic-sized swimming pool. The investment by the resort's new owner, California developer Janss Corporation, marked Sun Valley's rebirth as one of the nation's premier ski destinations. Within five years' time, the resort where movie stars once frolicked on the slopes and Ernest Hemingway completed *For Whom the Bell Tolls* became, as one journalist noted, "neat" again.[1]

But it was not the renovations to the Sun Valley Lodge, or the construction of the new pedestrian shopping mall with its boutiques and restaurants, or even the new ski lifts that returned the famous Idaho resort to its former glory. Rather, it was the addition of

This undated Union Pacific Railroad publicity department photo from either the 1930s or 1940s, with Sun Valley Lodge and Challenger Inn in the foreground, shows how open the valley was before the appearance of the "instant villages."

four new complexes of condominiums that forever redefined both the resort and its surrounding region. Established as a legal form of property by the federal government in 1961 as a way to help solve the nation's urban housing crisis, condominiums provided an affordable option to homeownership by redefining the interior of an apartment as property, leaving the exterior, facilities, and grounds to be managed cooperatively. This mixture of private and public space lowered property costs while allowing for greater density. But although condos, as they came to be called, did expand homeownership across the country's cities, they also redefined ski resorts, particularly throughout the American West, by making vacation homes affordable for the growing numbers of the upwardly mobile white middle class. In doing so, condos remade resort landscapes into a new form of suburbia.[2]

"They call them condominiums... I say they are instant slums," fumed Mary Hemingway. Such denunciations were becoming increasingly common as real estate developers raced to cash in on the region's real estate boom.

By the end of the decade, longtime residents of the Wood River Valley area, and its four small towns of Sun Valley, Ketchum, Hailey, and Bellevue strung along a line running north to south like charms in a bracelet, found their once isolated communities facing the problems of suburban sprawl. "They call them condominiums . . . I say they are instant slums," fumed Mary Hemingway from the deck of the home that she and her famous husband had built together in 1959, shortly before his death.[3] Such denunciations were becoming increasingly common across the West as real estate developers raced to cash in on the region's high-risk, high-reward real estate boom. Understanding the growing desire for vacation homes, particularly in mountain settings with access to public lands, they seized upon the relatively low construction costs of condominiums to make millions.[4]

Developers saw the combination of realty with recreational amenities as a potent mixture for generating massive profits. The once rural landscape of the Wood River Valley region was transformed into sprawling suburban enclaves that featured both the promises and the problems of suburban development. The view from Hemingway's home, which once overlooked the valley's sagebrush-covered hills, had become cluttered with all the hallmarks of suburban sprawl—residential subdivisions, shopping centers, office parks, civic institutions, and networks of roads connecting them.[5]

For Sun Valley's new owner, Southern California developer Bill Janss, condos were more than a quick way to make money. They were also a potential way to preserve mountain landscapes by limiting the scale of development. His approach was born out of years of experience in developing both ski resorts in Colorado and suburban communities in Southern California. Explaining his reasoning, Janss told *SKI Magazine* in 1964, "A recreational development is not a subdivision. The last thing you want is a city or a suburb."[6] Rather, he asserted, ski resorts must blend into their natural settings to attract new buyers. Condominiums offered an ideal way to mix high-density residential lodging with open-space preservation, making open space as valuable an asset as square footage. By limiting the size and number of new condo complexes, along with infilling the small area between the Sun Valley Lodge and the Challenger Inn, Janss sought to preserve the resort's historic feel while adding much needed amenities—and revenue.

"WINTER SPORTS UNDER A SUMMER SUN"

Sun Valley originally grew out of America's love affair with downhill skiing, which emerged in the 1930s. Sparked by the successful 1932 Winter Olympic Games in Lake Placid, New York, the recruitment of European ski instructors to the United States, and creation of outing clubs, downhill skiing bloomed into a fashionable winter sport across much of the country. Small rope-tow operations opened in seemingly every community that had enough snow and a hill big enough to schuss down. In the West, larger ski areas like Badger Pass in Yosemite National Park, Timberline Lodge on Mount Hood National Forest, and Berthoud Pass in Colorado offered an inkling of the sport's future promises. But none captured the public's imagination quite like Sun Valley.[7]

Perhaps more than any other ski resort in North America, Sun Valley was an invention of advertising and marketing. Seeking to bolster passenger numbers during the winter months, in 1935 Union Pacific Railroad's chairman W. Averell Harriman, himself an avid skier, commissioned an Austrian sportsman, Count Felix Schaffgotsch, to find the ideal location in the West to build a destination ski resort that offered the right mixture of snow, scenery, and of course, access by rail. Schaffgotsch spent the next several months traveling throughout the western

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Sun Valley began with Averell Harriman (right) hiring Count Felix Schaffgotsch to find an ideal location for a resort accessible by the Union Pacific Railroad.

states, deeming every site he visited unacceptable until he happened upon the Wood River Valley, which sits just outside of the southern edge of the Sawtooth National Forest. Seeing its gentle rolling hills and rail station in the nearby ranching community of Ketchum, in January 1936 Schaffgotsch declared that he had found what he was looking for. Harriman agreed. He bought a local ranch and began building his resort, which opened seven months later.

Harriman hired publicist Steve Hannagan, who had made Miami Beach into a popular winter destination. Hannagan, who hated cold weather but loved the idea of capitalizing on the area's nearly three hundred days of sunshine, christened it Sun Valley and created the tagline "Winter sports under a summer sun."[8] Harriman invited Ernest Hemingway and Hollywood celebrities to the resort to help promote it when it opened in December 1936. The new resort quickly gained national fame. Photos of skiers and celebrities cavorting at the resort and riding the world's first chairlift soon appeared in *Life* magazine. Newspapers regaled readers with stories of the resort's "ultra-modern Alpine hotel" sheltered in the shadow of the Sawtooth Mountains, which Hannagan claimed protected the resort from harsh winter temperatures and allowed skiers to schuss down the slopes "stripped to the waist."[9] The resort received additional publicity with the release of the popular 1941 musical film *Sun Valley Serenade*, one of several movies of the era either filmed or set there.

However, it was the $1.5 million Sun Valley Lodge, with its heated pool, majestic dining area, and luxurious rooms, that redefined the American skiing experience. But whereas Harriman sought to capture the romance of European Alpine lodges with his Swiss-style lodge and timbers made of painted concrete, he took a different tack with the adjacent Challenger Inn. Less opulent than the lodge, the inn was a more affordable option for visitors wishing to hit Sun Valley's slopes and still take in most offerings. Placed in the center of the valley floor, the two lodges focused visitors' experiences on dining, shopping, and socializing, rather than skiing. Guests took buses to the base of Proctor and Dollar Mountains, each separated by several miles. (Bald Mountain, located southwest of Dollar, would open three years later.) There, chairlifts whisked them comfortably to the top of each mountain's gentle slopes. Adding to Sun Valley's romantic allure, a host of European ski instructors led by Austrian ski champion Friedl Pfeifer put novice skiers through their paces on the slopes and then joined them

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Publicist Steve Hannagan promoted the idea of "Winter sports under a summer sun." Guests could ski down Bald Mountain, seen in the distance from the Challenger Inn in this 1955 photograph, or lounge in the heated swimming pool.

for après-ski cocktails at sundown. By combining luxury, a romanticized Alpine village, and skiing, Sun Valley came to define destination vacations, a model future resorts would later build upon.[10]

During World War II, the hotel served as a convalescent hospital for the U.S. Navy and did not reopen to the public until December 1946. In the years that followed, the resort struggled as Americans embraced the automobile at the expense of rail travel. Sun Valley's isolation, once seen as an asset, became a liability as millions flocked to ski resorts within a day's drive of the West's booming metropolitan areas. New ski resorts cashed in on the heady mixture of proximity and real estate in attracting tens of thousands of new visitors every year. Beginning with the opening of Squaw Valley in California in 1960, the construction of small resort villages adjacent to national forests promised sizable profits to developers lucky enough to find the right mixture of snow, access, and most importantly, investors. Sun Valley fell on hard times.

"INSTANT VILLAGES"

The first resort condominium projects built in the United States were Crystal Lakes at Lake Tahoe and the Silver Skis Chalet in Crystal Mountain, Washington, in 1963. Each proved a smashing commercial success, with the developer of Silver Skis Chalet selling all 64 of its units for $9,000 to $14,000 apiece in a matter of days.[11] Within a year, condominium construction exploded across the country as developers looked to cash in on the latest ski boom. Colorado's Vail Ski Resort exemplified the new land rush. Within a decade of its opening, the posh resort earned $1.3 million in real estate sales alone, the majority coming from the sale of individual condo units.[12]

At Smugglers' Notch in Vermont, in 1969 IBM's CEO Thomas Watson Jr. invested $4.25 million redeveloping the small ski area into a thriving resort. Watson renamed the small ski hill Madonna Mountain and commenced building thirty-three townhouses, fifteen apartments, two restaurants, a small shopping village, and the now-requisite eighteen-hole golf course as the first phase of a ten-year development plan for a year-round vacation retreat. "The basic idea," Watson explained to *The New York Times*, was to build a resort "where owning a home is carefree, where automobiles are unnecessary because everything is a five-minute walk and where children can play safely anywhere." Condominiums made such "instant villages," as critics dubbed them, possible.[13]

For resort developers like Watson and Vail's Peter Seibert, who pioneered the modern ski resort residential design, condos were a sure-fire method to cash in on the nation's recreational real estate boom.[14] Because they allowed developers to offer multiple dwellings on the same tract of real estate, condominiums magnified profits, as was the case with Snowmass in Colorado, where buyers quickly snapped up 124 condominiums at $14,000 to $15,000 apiece before ground had even been broken.[15]

Buyers were motivated by price and convenience. Sometimes no more than a single-room studio, a condo offered the convenience of a vacation home without the traditional expenses and responsibilities of a single-family dwelling. In 1967, *SKI Magazine* noted that in Aspen, Colorado, a good building site cost a minimum of $12,000. Factor in the short construction season, cost of materials, and lack of access to power, water, and sewer, and building a vacation home was well out of reach for most middle-class people. Condos offered an affordable and convenient alternative, with shared maintenance costs, amenities like swimming pools and recreation centers, and even the opportunity for rental income, all within a relatively short distance from the beach, the lake, or a ski lodge.[16]

THE LAW OF UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

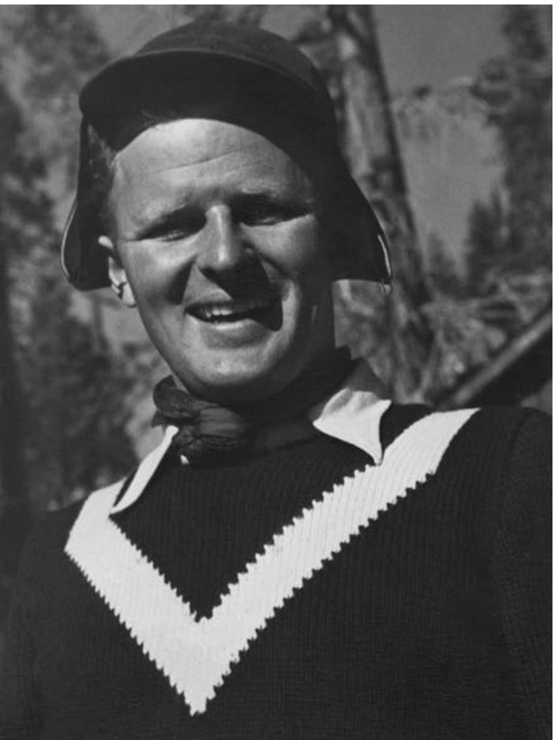
The original intent of making the condominium a form of property ownership had nothing to do with ski resorts. As a part of the Housing Act of 1961, Congress sought to alleviate the nation's growing housing crisis by liberalizing the Federal Housing Authority's home mortgage insurance program, using a Puerto Rican law as its model. The FHA insured mortgages for single-family units in multifamily apartment buildings in efforts to foster greater homeownership among moderate- and low-income families. But the law's true innovation was the establishment of the condominium as a legal form of property in the United States. Blending older cooperative apartments and individual ownership, a condo gave the owners title to the interior space of their apartments, along with joint ownership of all external common areas, such as grounds, heating plants, and hallways. This greatly decreased the cost of purchasing a home by divorcing homeownership from landownership. Theoretically, this would make homeownership possible for millions.[17]

At the signing ceremony for the law, President John Kennedy optimistically proclaimed: "These programs, old and new, offer our communities

Steve Hannagan promoted the resort as a film location to generate free publicity. In 1965, the movie *Ski Party*, costarring Frankie Avalon as a college student on spring break, was filmed there. The movie was shot just before the condominiums were built.

and private builders and lenders the opportunity and the challenge to build the cities of tomorrow where families can live in dignity, free from the squalor of the slums and the unbroken monotony of suburban sprawl."[18]

Condominiums failed to solve the nation's urban housing crisis, however. Rather than becoming the basis for the cities of tomorrow, as lawmakers had envisioned and Kennedy had promised, the new law had an unintended consequence that transformed underpopulated areas: it effectively subsidized resort development throughout the country and made it feasible for the nation's swelling middle class to purchase (and possibly rent out) a vacation home in the mountains—something Bill Janss had already recognized.[19]



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Bill Janss, seen in this undated photo, bought out his brother Ed's share of Sun Valley and aimed to keep 75 percent of the land as open space while expanding the resort by building condominiums.

Third-generation real estate developers, Bill and his older brother Ed grew up in Los Angeles. Both attended Stanford, where Bill anchored the university's ski team and later earned an alternate spot on the 1940 Winter Olympics team. After serving in World War II as a P-38 fighter pilot, Bill returned to California and eventually joined Ed in running the family business. In 1955, the brothers turned their attention to cashing in on Southern California's postwar real estate boom by developing the planned community of Thousand Oaks on the family's Conejo ranch property. But rather than following the tried-and-true model of bulldozing the landscape flat and then quickly putting up houses cheek to jowl, they preserved much of the property as open space to create a more natural sense of place for homebuyers.

By this time, "smog" and "sprawl" had entered into the nation's lexicon as middle-class anxieties fed a broad environmental movement focused on quality-of-life concerns—one of the most prominent being the preservation of open space. Driven by growing demand for housing and an increasing dependence on the automobile, suburbs across the country were rapidly transforming rural landscapes into communities indistinguishable from one another, with their ticky-tacky houses, as a popular contemporary song proclaimed.[20] In contrast, open space promised to relieve suburbanization's monotony, conserving natural settings and providing access to greater recreational opportunities.[21]

With Thousand Oaks, the Janss brothers turned conservation into a selling point. Bill later recalled, "I saw Thousand Oaks grow, and got a feel for what could be done with land."[22] Open space made Thousand Oaks a desirable community to live in by evoking the Conejo Valley's once rural setting, yet the development also provided modern amenities like supermarkets and fuel stations. Although critics viewed the community as little more than a cynical scheme promising affluent homebuyers they could have it all, to Bill and Ed the combination of land preservation and real estate represented the future.

THE SEARCH FOR A SUPER MOUNTAIN

It was with this lesson in mind that Bill and Ed Janss turned to developing their first ski resort. While vacationing in Aspen, they began thinking earnestly about getting into the ski resort business. After a day on the slopes with a former Stanford classmate, Kingsbury "Bill" Pitcher, the three fell into a serious discussion about developing their own resort. Ski areas like Aspen, they noted, offered opportunities similar to Southern California, where real estate sales depended as much on location as on price. Additionally, all three knew the ski industry. The idea struck them as potentially profitable, and the Janss brothers asked Pitcher to begin looking for a "super mountain anywhere in Colorado" on which to build their ski resort.[23]

Like Count Schaffgotsch before, finding the ideal location took time—in Pitcher's case, three years. But sitting in a narrow valley just a short distance from Aspen at the headwaters of Brush Creek were twin mountains, Burnt and Baldy, that offered the ideal mixture of gentle slopes, ample snow, and private land adjacent to a national forest. If the perfect ski resort existed, this location checked every box. And so, in August of 1958, Janss Investment Corporation filed for a special-use permit with the U.S. Forest Service to convert the mountains into a winter playground. It would take six years for the firm to break ground on its new resort. After fending off a rival application by Aspen architect Fritz Benedict and purchasing several ranches in the area, the Janss brothers entered into an agreement with Aspen Skiing Corporation to begin developing Snowmass, in which the longtime ski resort company would develop the on-mountain facilities and Janss Investments would build the base village.[24]

In many ways Snowmass mirrored the dozens of other new ski resort developments scattered across the West. As with Sun Valley, Snowmass' base village sat on several acres of private land adjacent to several thousand acres of national forest. Ski lifts provided access to nearly two thousand acres of mostly gentle terrain ideal for novice and intermediate skiers. Sales of real estate, primarily condominiums, brought in hefty profits. Yet Snowmass differed from other resorts in one significant way. Wanting to preserve as much of the valley's natural setting as they had with Thousand Oaks, the Jansses hired their former rival Benedict to design a compact, walkable, mixed-use village, where "the skier should be able to ski to the lifts and eliminate the car."[25] Inspired largely by the look of European mountain villages, Snowmass' West Village had 140 condos, six lodges, a handful of private chalets, several shops, restaurants and cafes for après-ski refreshment, even an opera house. With no need for cars, visitors parked in hidden lots adjacent to the village.

"A recreational development is not a subdivision," Janss said when explaining the rationale behind Snowmass. "The relationships between mountain, streams, trees and man-made facilities are critical and a mistake once made is almost impossible to correct. Nature, pitted against man with modern tools, is becoming more and more fragile."[26] The plan was to preserve as much of Brush Creek's natural setting from the sprawl of second homes already dotting the hillsides. Condominiums allowed a much more compact resort, preserving more of the area's open space.

As Snowmass took shape at the base of Burnt Mountain, the Union Pacific was facing a much different reality with Sun Valley. It had become a well-worn joke throughout the ski industry that the railroad giant's annual budget meeting always opened with the board of directors asking how much money its ski resort would lose over the coming fiscal year. Sun Valley had been Averill Harriman's pet project. But after 1946, when Harriman left the corporation's helm, Union Pacific's primary focus became moving freight, not passengers. Sun Valley soon began to bleed cash. Seeking a solution to the resort's financial woes, in 1964 the Union Pacific board approached the Janss Corporation for help in renovating the aging resort. Although focused on developing its Snowmass project, the California real estate firm immediately grasped Sun Valley's worth, specifically the possibilities for the 4,800 acres of undeveloped property surrounding the two historic lodges and adjacent ski areas. All that was needed, the Janss brothers told them, was building new shopping and lodging amenities and making some on-mountain improvements to attract skiers, and Sun Valley would once again rival any ski resort. But that would come with a hefty price tag: an estimated $5 million just to start.

"The relationships between mountain, streams, trees and man-made facilities are critical and a mistake once made is almost impossible to correct. Nature, pitted against man with modern tools, is becoming more and more fragile."

Astonished by the cost and unwilling to pour more cash into what seemed to be a money pit, the board asked the Jansses if they would be interested in buying Sun Valley. The brothers quickly agreed, taking ownership of Sun Valley in 1960. "You only get the chance to buy a national park [sic] once," Bill recalled when accepting Union Pacific's offer.[27] As rumors of the sale slowly trickled out over the next year, Union Pacific's president Arthur Stoddard admitted at the time of the sale, "The operation of Sun Valley has been rather remote from our business of running a railroad."[28] Some skiers lamented the end of an era, but when it was finally announced that the California real estate firm would invest some $30 million in the resort over the next decade, many cheered the hoped-for revival of America's most famous ski resort.[29]

REINVENTING SUN VALLEY

The first order of business was to reimagine the resort village and whom it would attract. "The first thing we did," Bill Janss told a reporter in 1972, "was to say 'Sun Valley is for people.'" Almost immediately he did away with the private dining area for celebrities at Sun Valley Lodge.[30] Construction of a new shopping mall began immediately, and the lodge's old boiler room was converted into a nightclub. "I realized the one problem with Sun Valley was the village had to have a certain size," Janss explained. "You have to have enough people to support five or six restaurants, and more than one night spot."[31]

CSNAFZGER, SHUTTERSTOCK

The people Janss hoped to draw needed places to stay. Construction of four new condominium complexes began the following year. Clustered around tiny manmade Sun Valley Lake, within a short walking distance of the new shopping village and the ski lifts at the base of Dollar Mountain, the condo complexes promised buyers easy access to restaurants and recreation with the amenities of home. Additionally, the Janss Corporation offered attractive financing, placing the potential of owning a resort real estate property within reach of many people who typically were not able to invest in a second home. Lured by the combination of easy financing and location, buyers bought all of the initial 128 condo units within days.[32]

Soon, the resort began to flourish. The *Idaho Statesman* celebrated the "more than a hundred residents or families" that had moved into the Ateliers condominiums.[33] Bill bought out his brother for $6 million the following year, becoming Sun Valley's sole owner.[34] Drawing from his experiences with both Thousand Oaks and Snowmass, along with other resort projects in Hawaii and California, he vowed, "We will not destroy our principal attractions, space and quality."[35] He aimed to keep 75 percent of the land as open space.[36] The key to preserving open space was the condominium, which allowed what he called "a total development" by accommodating more people and generating more profits while limiting the overall footprint. The additional benefit of private ownership with

This contemporary view of the Sun Valley area shows "the microcosm of a present national dilemma," as one writer noted in 1972. On the one hand, as imagined by Bill Janss, development is fitted into the landscape. On the other hand, this much development brings the problems of suburbia into the valley.

shared maintenance costs allowed Janss to control the resort's overall feel while the individual condominium owners shouldered the burden.

But condos where just half of the equation of Sun Valley's reinvention. Lifelong skiers themselves, the Janss brothers understood that Sun Valley's two mountains needed significant improvements. They began at Bald Mountain, the larger peak, by extending the lift to the top; it had become operational three years after the resort opened. After buying out his brother's share of the resort, Bill doubled the number of chairlifts on both mountains and expanded the north-facing slopes of Bald Mountain. He also had the upper runs on "Baldy" groomed, opening more of the mountain to intermediate skiers, arguing, "You don't learn to ski while standing in lift lines." And in 1973, he built Lookout Restaurant atop Baldy and began construction of a new lift up its southern ridgeline, which he named Seattle Ridge for its sometimes inclement weather.[37]

Although magazine articles lamented the loss of open space and an idealized rural lifestyle, the drawbacks did little to dissuade any buyers from moving to Sun Valley.

As Ruth Lieder, Janss' public relations spokesman, observed, "There's a basic consensus, since Bill took over, that the development on the mountain has been phenomenal. No one can discount that. They criticize everything else."[38] Indeed, criticisms of Janss centered on the surrounding area's rapid growth, which, right or wrong, many locals blamed on the resort. Within seven years of the Jansses' purchase of Sun Valley, subdivisions built by other developers sprawled across the Wood River Valley floor, causing locals and visitors alike to complain about snarled traffic, the conversion of the area's sagebrush-covered hills, and limited services. Condemnations of "resort sprawl" were wholly consistent with those about suburbanization. Although magazine articles lamented the loss of open space and an idealized rural lifestyle, the drawbacks did little to dissuade any buyers from moving to Sun Valley.[39]

It seemed as if everyone in Idaho had caught "Janss fever," but not many developers shared his desire to protect open space. This unsurprisingly led to conflict. When asked about the pace of development, John Vhay, the city planner for the nearby town of Ketchum, railed, "Look down the valley. The whole area has been cut up. By God, if you could see the subdivisions proposed for this valley! We had one [development] come in last night that just made me want to cry. A little chunk of sagebrush land down there cut up into quarter-acre lots."[40] In the five years between 1965 and 1970, Blaine County—home to Sun Valley and the nearby former sheep-ranching community of Ketchum—added 896 new residences, the overwhelming percentage being condominiums. New developments blanketed the valley bottoms of nearby Elkhorn, Parker, and Independence gulches. Everywhere one looked, it seemed the rangelands were being filled with condominium complexes.[41]

Even Janss was susceptible to the promise of fantastic real estate profits, announcing in 1972 his partnership with Johns-Manville Corporation, a mining and construction materials firm looking to diversify its holdings, in developing Elkhorn Village just down the valley from Sun Valley Lodge. Once again, he promised to limit the development's effect on the local environment by building a small, dense village. "Elkhorn is going to be the first really well-done recreation village in which they have put a limit in the number of units," he stated. Locals took a less sunny view of the new development, which called for 2,110 units that would accommodate 5,000 people, seeing it as another example of Janss' greed.[42] As Ketchum's Vhay put it, "There's a feeling that Janss is just going to glut the market to where it's no longer economical for him and then he'll clear out."[43]

To develop the new village, Janss and Johns-Manville turned to California developer RecreActions. Elkhorn followed the Janss formula of mixed-use, high-density development that preserved much of the area's natural setting. The first condos were completed for the 1972–1973 season, and by 1976 the village included an ice-skating rink, eighteen-hole golf course (the third in the area), and more retail space. However, Elkhorn proved too costly, nearly bankrupting Janss. After briefly negotiating with Disney, which was looking to get into the ski resort business, he sold Sun Valley to a reclusive oil and real estate magnate, Earl Holding. The owner of the Little America Hotel chain and Sinclair Oil, Holding sought to attract greater numbers of intermediate skiers and aggressively pursued summer visitors. Such changes caused further discord throughout the area as sprawl continued to spill down the valley into the towns of Ketchum and Haley.[44]

"In Sun Valley is the microcosm of a present national dilemma," wrote *SKI Magazine* journalist Morten Lund in 1972. The "purveyors of suburbia" now ran ski resorts, particularly Sun Valley, Lund warned. "With all the good and bad things that reside in that milieu considered, suburbia is the preferred milieu of nearly every American not an intellectual or striving for a Third World kind of life."[45]

Although many bemoaned Sun Valley's suburbanization under Bill Janss, many others welcomed it. The same mixture of affordability and access that was driving suburbanization across the country was driving this resort's remarkable pace of growth, and that of other resorts around the country. And for many, it was the condo that opened the door to owning their own dream vacation home. "I think they are magnificent," one owner proudly told Lund of his purchase, although he went on to say that not all condos were equal in construction quality. "I've been all over the world in a lot of communities, in Europe, here, Mexico. I don't know any that are better."[46]

And that was the point. Condominiums remade Sun Valley by democratizing the once exclusive resort for a growing number of Americans now able to travel and own a vacation home. Created by a law intended to solve the urban housing crisis of the 1960s, within a decade, condominiums had become synonymous with ski resorts. Like most modern resorts, Sun Valley capitalized on its amenity-based economy through real estate development, bringing with it both greater access for the masses and sprawl. As Lund noted, unless you were "an intellectual or striving for a Third World kind of life," the new Sun Valley was utopia, and the condo the new middle-class vacation home.

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