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# Four Sun Valley Idaho restaurant favorites: the absolute best of the best dining



October 1, 5:58 PM NY Fine Travel Examiner Lauren Keyson

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Sun Valley has the distinction of being America's first destination ski resort. Its reputation as a glamorous playground for well-to-do skiers as well as hikers, bicyclists is rooted in its history, and the area still attracts the likes of Clint Eastwood, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jamie Lee Curtis and Jean-Claude Van Damme as part-time residents. The area has also attracted a population of talented artists, resulting in a thriving performing arts and fine arts scene. And best of all, visitors and residents can enjoy incredible dining that's on par with large cities. The four hands-down absolute favorite restaurants: CK's and Vintage for dinner, Cristina's for breakfast and lunch, and The Pioneer Saloon -- the local steakhouse and bar, all four considered the very best in fine dining in Sun Valley by the members of Ultimate Escapes, a luxury destination club with residences in Sun Valley:



SunValley Idaho - fine dining in the mountains

### Cristina's Restaurant

Located in a charming, salmon-colored house on a small street, the food has the fresh, uncomplicated flavors of Cristina's Tuscan childhood. In the early morning hours the Cristina crowd is focused on newspapers and quiet talk, while being well served by the bakery and kitchen. Lunch is the main event at Cristina's where local shopkeepers, fly-fishing guides, and athletes mingle with tourists, actors, politicians and ranchers. The food includes homemade pastas, fresh salads, hearty soups and thin crust pizzas.

### CK's Real Food

Regional northwest cuisine: The owners emphasize the use of as much local organic produce in season as possible. Five Idaho gardeners currently supply them during our short growing season. Lava Lake Lamb is a local sheep ranch that supplies the bulk of the lamb for many of our dishes. Using local and regional foods, and drawing inspiration from different cuisines around the world, they create tasty and healthy dishes to complement our extensive wine list.

### Vintage Restaurant

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The setting is casual and intimate in a restored 1927 cabin. Prices are fairly moderate, and the menu changes constantly but might include Butterfield Niman Ranch organic leg of lamb done Tuscan hill country style, Mexican Cabo San Lucas shrimp and lobster with green curry and "beach stand" tropical fruit salsa. Dinner only, Monday to Saturday.

[Pioneer Saloon](#)

The Pioneer Saloon, renowned for perfectly aged, tender and flavorful beef, is typical of an earlier Idaho when ore wagons rattled down Main Street and business was done with a handshake and a drink. Natural woods, mounted game, and period firearms help recreate an authentic saloon atmosphere.

Hearty Steaks & Prime Rib. Fresh Seafood. Meaty Ribs. Hard Liquor. Wine and Beer.

Look for Part II of our next Sun Valley installment: The four best activities do to in Sun Valley.

Lauren Keyson is a consultant for [Ultimate Escapes](#) luxury destination clubs and a freelance journalist. She writes about travel, personal finance and the business of finance.



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