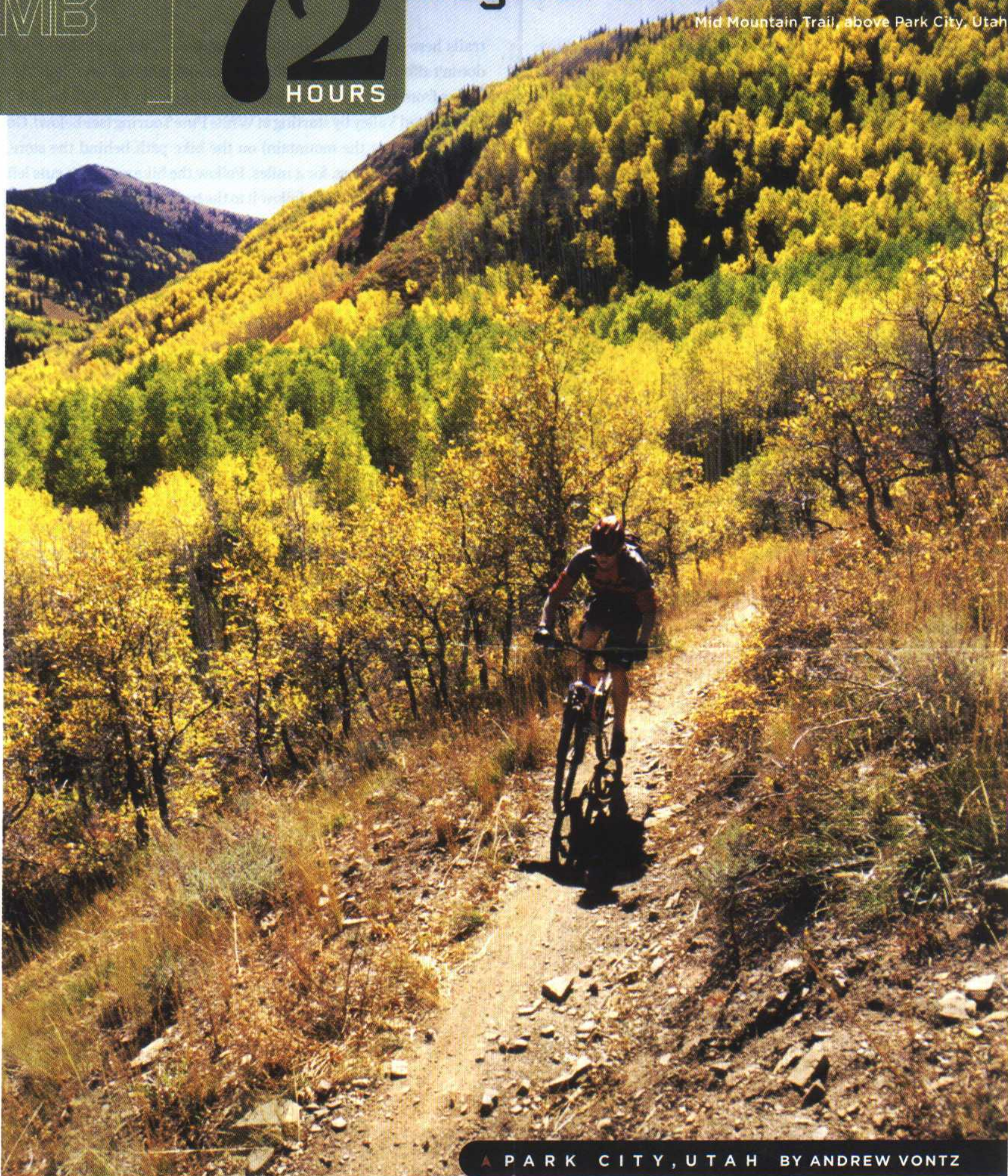


MB 72 HOURS

Magical Mountain Towns

Mid Mountain Trail, above Park City, Utah.



MICHAEL DELEON

PARK CITY, UTAH BY ANDREW VONTZ

WHY HERE, WHY NOW: Local law mandates that all real estate developers must also build trails, and the Mountain Trails Foundation has made sure that it happens. Park City now has a whopping 350 miles of singletrack accessible by bike from Main Street. Another reason to visit: June 23 kicks off the three-race **E100 Series** (thee100.com), which has 12- and 24-hour races for both team and solo riders on the Round Valley loop (see the next page). Last year's 12-hour winners climbed a whopping 18,620 feet. Tip: Nab a copy of Park City's *Prime Cuts*, a thoroughly annotated guide to the best trails in the area by über-loçals Charlie Sturgis and Mark Fischer.

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DIRT: The **Mid Mountain Trail** traverses the ski slopes above Park City to create a 30-plus-mile one-way singletrack joyride that spits out on the far side of the Canyons resort. While there are a few sustained pitches, Mid Mountain is rolling for the most part and gains a total of only 1,500 vertical feet. Because the trail hovers near an altitude of 8,000 feet, it affords the colors, smells and quiet associated with high altitudes but without the gut-twisting megaclimbs that usually come with this territory. The frequent switchbacks, whoops and berms, plus the sharp climbs and descents, make this an intermediate trail with low risks that will be fun for both XC and all-mountain riders. To get to the Mid Mountain Trail

Park City has 350 miles of singletrack accessible by bike from Main Street.

take Empire Ave. uphill, following signs for Park City Mountain Resort. Go right on Silver King Dr. and take the next right onto Three Kings Dr. Go left on Crescent Dr. and watch for the trailhead a few yards up the road on the left, across from a gravel road.

A few miles down the valley from Main Street lies **Round Valley**, a city park where dozens of miles of sinuous trails have been constructed. There's nary a level spot anywhere in the network as the trails ramp up in one-to-two minute climbs, then wind their way down and over folds in the hills before climbing back up. Most climbs are manageable in the middle chainring. While the

trails here are nontechnical for the most part, the drier desert soil doesn't afford the same tack found on trails higher up. The challenge comes from seeing how much speed you can carry and still hang on. Find Round Valley by starting at White Pine Touring (see below). Go left (as you face the mountain) on the bike path behind the store, away from the resort, for 4 miles. Follow the bike path as it cuts left under Kearns Blvd., then follow it to the trailhead at Old Ranch Rd.

Lost Prospector is a perfect example of the success the Mountain Trails Foundation has had working with land developers. The singletrack heads up a ramp of switchbacks into the hills for a mildly rocky and rooty sojourn across public land (and the backyards of some *MTV Cribs*-worthy homes). Even though it touches on the boundaries of developed real estate, Lost Prospector still feels like a mountain bike ride out in the forest. The town and the Wasatch Crest beyond are in view for much of the ride, which darts through stands of aspen on fast trails with great flow and frequent granny-gear climbs followed by swoopy descents. Like many trails in Park City, Lost Prospector is a relatively short loop—7 miles—that can be used to link up dozens of other trails for an all-day ride. Get here by starting at White Pine Touring, then ride onto the rail-trail behind the store and go left (away from the resort) for 1.6 miles; you'll see the trailhead on your right, singletrack that climbs uphill.

SHOP: **White Pine Touring** (1790 Bonanza Dr.; 435/649-8710; whitepinetouring.com) offers guided mountain biking and rock climbing excursions, has an exceptional store and the staff knows



Overlook Trail, above Telluride. The 12,804-foot Ballard Mountain is visible in the background.

the local trail system inside out. **Jans** (1600 Park Ave.; 435/649-1020; www.jans.com) offers guided tours and rents high-end mountain rigs such as Santa Cruz's Superlight (\$34 per day) and Blur (\$75 per day). Even if you bring your rig, it's worth stepping into Jans to drool over the inventory of high-end bikes.

GRUB: World-class nightlife abounds on Historic Main Street, a long strip of bars, shops, restaurants and galleries that is the focal point of après activity in Park City. The cavernous **Harry**

O's nightclub (427 Main St.; 435/655-7579) brings in big-name DJs and musical performers (Jazzy Jeff headlined one night when MB was in town). Free bowls of peanuts sit on the bar at **O'Shucks** (427 Main St.; 435/645-3999), the closest thing to a dive bar in town and a favorite of both locals and Brad Pitt. Grab a seat at the aptly named **Eating Establishment** (317 Main St.; 435/649-8284) to have a Hungry Miner with basted eggs (\$9) and watch the human traffic pass by on Main. Hidden away in a mini mall, **Spencer's Smokin' Grill** (1890 Bonanza Dr.; 435/645-8483) has

traditional, slow-smoked barbecued meats served with sweet, mild sauce including a huge, tasty pulled-chicken sandwich topped with provolone (\$8).

CRASH: For a glitzy city with a spendy reputation, Park City has a surprisingly diverse range of overnight options. Your best bet is the **Old Town Guest House** (\$99 per night; 1011 Empire Ave.; 435/649-2642), a B&B in a Victorian home with a hostel-like vibe that caters to visiting athletes. There's a hot tub out back, a fridge for guests to stash eats, Internet access and a lounge with a library of paperbacks. The nightly rate includes a hot breakfast and snacks such as homemade cookies.

TELLURIDE, COLORADO BY RON KOCH

WHY HERE, WHY NOW: Telluride is the Rocky Mountain getaway for the rich and famous, but it's also home to sweet Colorado singletrack. It's tucked away in the San Juan Mountains, making it an off-the-beaten-path destination unless you fly—then it's a roller-coaster ride into the nation's highest commercial airport. A free (even with a bike) gondola connects the town with the ski area known as Mountain Village. Trails are XC-oriented, so don't bring your DH bike—unless you're going the weekend of July 28–29th. That's when the Mountain States Cup round makes its stop here, and you'll have a chance to fly down much of the World Cup downhill course.

DIRT: Before you head out, grab one of the great area trail maps that offer detailed directions and descriptions of the area's numerous rides. If you like your single-

track rocky and technical the best ride from the ski area is Ridge Trail, which drops off the St. Sophia Gondola Station. For a less technical ride without help from the gondola check out the **Galloping Goose** trail. It starts at the dirt lot (on Society Dr. off Hwy. 145) and features a moderate grade and little technical difficulty, and it can be ridden as an-out-and-back or as a loop. Fit climbing honchos in search of a challenge should ride Deep Creek. It's a demanding 15-mile loop from town and back that'll take you through classic Colorado aspen and pine groves with about 3,000 feet of elevation gain.

SHOP: **Paragon Ski and Sport** (213 W. Colorado Ave.; 970/728-0992) sells Specialized bikes and rents as well. Or stop by **Telluride Sports** (two locations, at the bases of Lifts 7 and 8; 970/728-8944), where you can check out the latest from Trek or rent a ride.

GRUB: High-end eateries are the norm for Telluride but you can find tasty, affordable food, too. For breakfast have a tasty omelet at **Las Montanas** (200 S. Davis St.; 970/728-5114). **Brown Dog Pizza** (110 E. Colorado; 970/728-8046) has slices, pasta and hot wings that go down great after a long day of riding. For awesome burgers, sandwiches and postride brews, check out the



The tight singletrack of the rocky, technical Ridge Trail.

Corner House Grille (131 N. Fir St.; 970/728-6207). No day is complete without a trip to **The Sweet Life** (115 W. Colorado Ave.; 970/728-8789) and a scoop of its amazing homemade ice cream.

CRASH: For high-end accommodations stay at **Bear Creek Lodge** (800/537-4781; resortquest.com); a more affordable but nice place is **Peaks Resort and Spa** (866/282-4557; thepeaksresort.com). Both are in the Mountain Village, an easy walk from the Gondola. Call or check the web for the latest prices. The most cost-effective way to stay is to camp at **Telluride Town Park** (970/728-2173; telluridevisitorguide.com), located on the east end of town, an easy pedal away. There are rest rooms and showers, and water is available—a budget-minded mountain biker's paradise. ☉