

# ESSENTIAL

ESSENTIALS FOR THE

*Park City*

LIFESTYLE

WINTER 14 / SPRING 15



# Fueling the Outdoor Recreation Addiction

by EA Quinn

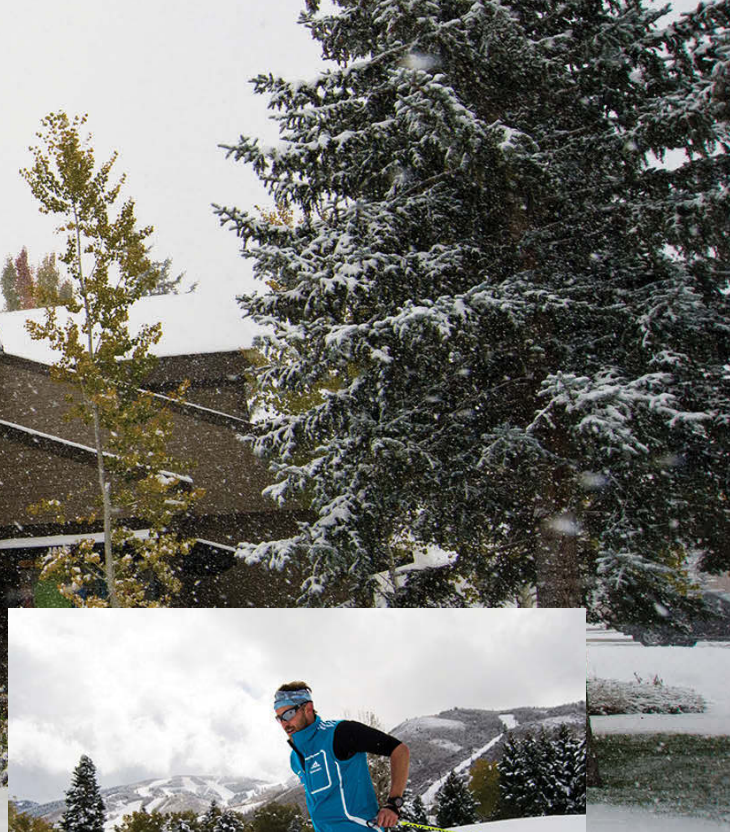


*“What started as recreation turned into a thriving, local business”*

**P**eople in mountain towns all have one thing in common: we are addicted. From first tracks to single tracks, fishing holes to watering holes, alpine climbs to moonlit descents. When that itch needs to be scratched, we turn to our dealers. They have the gear, the knowledge, and the people to keep us active while we seek our recreational nirvana. This is the story of one of these dealers, who has been at it for over thirty years. Since 1980, JANS Mountain Recreation Experts has supplied Park City outdoor addicts with the goods, gear and service to enjoy what the mountains, rivers and valleys offer.

The story of JANS begins long before ski lifts graced the Wasatch. Jan Peterson, founder of JANS, is the child of parents who were among the Wasatch's early ski pioneers. Inevitably, their passion for the outdoors passed on to young Jan, who started skiing at 3 and fishing at 10. By college, he was a talented downhill ski racer and avid outdoorsman, especially when it came to fishing.





After graduation, Jan began a career in advertising. However, the mountains' pull was too strong to keep Jan in advertising. When the opportunity arose to manage a Park City ski shop in 1975, Jan traded the advertising world for the outdoor world, and never looked back.

After a few years managing someone else's shop, Jan says the opportunity had arrived to do things his way. With investment help from old friends, JANS Mountain Outfitters opened its doors to the public in 1980.

Jans' approach to retail is simply to *"treat people entering our stores like we're welcoming them into our home."* This approach has always resonated with his employees and customers alike, creating a family atmosphere. Proof to this are the number of staff who have been with JANS since day one.

In the beginning, JANS' business relied solely on renting and selling ski gear. Expansion into other areas of outdoor recreation did not take long. Fishing came first. As Jan explains it, this decision was made mainly to obtain deals on fishing gear. They were on to something, though, and the business began to grow over time.

Rapid growth led to the need for expansion. Enter Russ Coburn, who first met Jan while teaching skiing at PCMR and attending college in Salt Lake. Their relationship grew to include fishing for steelhead and eventually to business when Russ, as president of a local bank, provided JANS a loan in 1986 to build the Park Ave flagship store.

With his banking background and long-time passion for skiing, fishing and biking, Russ saw opportunity in JANS. Becoming more and more involved with the growing outfitter over time, he eventually made the move from banking to mountain recreation expert, becoming JANS' GM in 1990.



Jan Peterson, founder of JANS





Since Russ took charge 24 years ago, JANS has continued to flourish by exploring and setting industry standards in new markets, while remaining committed to Jan's original retail philosophies: commitment to employees, customers and the community. And, don't forget, the addiction to outdoor recreation.

*"We will continue to grow, Park City is exploding"* Coburn explains when asked about the future of JANS. And he is right, Park City is one of the fastest growing tourism destinations in Utah, and probably the country. This sort of growth will surely help all local businesses. JANS has made a commitment to steering this growth and constantly providing for the community and for their customers, old and new.

*"It is very important for us not to shout that we want to be part of the community, but to show that we are part of this community,"* explains Scott House, director of communications and relative rookie at 12 years of service with JANS. Perhaps the best example of community support is the JANS Winter Welcome, now in its 34th year. What began as an idea Jan had to get kids on skis has grown to being the biggest fundraiser of the year for the Youth Sports Alliance, a non-profit focused on getting kids involved with sports.

In recent years, the JANS staff has explored new ways to build community: by playing a major role in Park City being designated a gold-level IMBA Ride Center; by providing top-notch avalanche courses through White Pine Touring, JANS guiding service and Nordic Center; organizing free weekly mountain bike rides for locals; and by being a steward of the rivers through facilitation of fishing guide licensing. And that's just to name a few. House sums this all up: *"A rising tide raises all ships. We want the community to grow because that will make it better for visitors, locals and businesses alike."*







One major point of growth for JANS has come with the launch of their website, [jans.com](http://jans.com), three years ago. *"Jans.com is not just designed to sell more product",* explains Jack Walzer, General Manager and JANS veteran with over 30 years of service. *"It's there to improve the customer experience and extend the JANS brand and expertise worldwide."*

But, Walzer is quick to point out that the web is not for every purchase, especially something like ski boots: *"There's a 50% return rate on boots bought online. Why wouldn't you want to come to the store and get fit and have us guarantee you 100% that this is the perfect boot."*

eCommerce represents one side of what [jans.com](http://jans.com) does. The other side does even more to fuel the recreation addiction. *"A family can book their entire vacation experience with us through Jans.com"* explains Eric LaPerle, White Pine store manager and JANS veteran of 16 years. *"They can book a mountain bike trip with us on Tuesday, then book rock climbing on Thursday, take a break on Friday, and go fishing on Saturday, all arranged from the convenience of home through [jans.com](http://jans.com)."* In the winter season the same thing can be done with cross country ski tours (and lessons), guided snow shoe outings, and winter fly fishing. This allows JANS to extend their product and service offerings and expert guidance to people around the country via the world wide web.

*"Outdoors, biking, nordic skiing, fishing, skiing, boarding, hiking, trail running all have all been part of our employees' lives; and it's part of their families' lives; it's part of their kids' lives. It's part of their culture."* explains Walzer. Even as JANS moves to the future, some things will never change: the culture, the people, and the commitment to service, passion and expertise.





AS SEEN IN

**ESSENTIAL**  
*Park City*  
MAGAZINE

## JAN'S PRO-TIPS

Jan will tell you, it wasn't incredible business savvy or lots of money or some wild innovation that led JANS to where it is today. It was his people, first and foremost. And not just any people, but people with that certain itch - the addiction to the outdoors. These are the people that JANS calls the "Mountain Recreation Experts". These are the people who have perpetuated the JANS culture since the beginning and will continue to do so into the future, sharing their passion with customers across the globe.



### WINTER FLY FISHING - CHRIS "WIS" WISTNER

"Layer like you would for a ski day. You want to be prepared for spending a day in the mountains. Long underwear, thick wool socks, finger-less gloves, fleece jacket, a good wind and water proof jacket, and a thick pair of Simms Gortex waders. And a beanie to top it off."



### SNOWSHOEING - PATRICK COFFEY

"Snowshoeing is the same motion as walking. Try to avoid picking your feet up too high as this can cause you to lose your balance. Take your time, enjoy the experience, and bring along a pair of hiking poles for some added stability on the deep snowpack that we are sure to get this winter."



### BACKCOUNTRY TOURING - SCOTT HOUSE

"Keep your skins stashed inside your jacket instead of your pack when you are in the field. The glue will stay warmer in your jacket and your skins will be easier to pull apart and put back on your skis; plus, you don't have to take your pack off at the top and bottom of each run. Your transitions will be faster which equals more ski time."



### NORDIC SKIING - PATRICK COFFEY

"Keep your head up! If you look down at your skis, your hips will sink back making it difficult to have proper body position."



### ALPINE SKIING & BOARDING - STEPHANIE HUMES

"Make sure that you have a great fitting ski boot. If anything is going to ruin a day, the causation is usually an ill fitting boot."