

HighLife

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STEADY STATE

VAIL MOUNTAIN'S
NEWEST DECK HONORS
DR. RICHARD STEADMAN,
AN INNOVATOR IN
ORTHOPEDIC SPORTS
MEDICINE

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Scores of those grateful to Dr. Richard Steadman gathered on Vail Mountain this week to dedicate Steady's Deck, Vail Mountain's newest permanent picnic deck.

The deck is located near the intersection of the Grand Escape trail and the new Meadow's Loop trail, between Grand Escape and Ridge Route in the Eagle's Nest Ridge area of Vail Mountain. Hikers will be familiar with Grand Escape, known as Eagle's Nest Expressway in the winter, for its connectivity between Wildwood and the Eagle Bahn Gondola. Meadow's Loop was a new trail as of last summer and is a two-mile hiking trail located entirely about 10,000 feet, connecting the top of Gondola One with the top of the Eagle's Nest gondola.

Those enjoying the gondola-to-gondola hike on Meadow's Loop can stop to picnic among the trees at Steady's Deck, taking in stunning views in a peaceful setting. The Meadow's Loop trail is about two miles in total, but Steady's Deck is less than one mile from the top of the Eagle Bahn gondola for those looking to take the most direct route. A short but strenuous hike, there will be a couple hundred vertical feet of climbing the doubletrack trail of the Grand Escape for those taking that route. From Gondola One, a singletrack climb to Steady's Deck on Meadow's Loop offers a short and scenic climb, as well, with about 400 vertical feet of climbing.

Steady's Deck was also a hit among winter guests for its convenient location; placed slightly above the Eagle's Nest Expressway, skiers can still make it to the Eagle's Nest lodge atop the Lionshead Village gondola after stopping at Steady's, or they can head downhill to Vail via Pickaroon run.

PIONEERING APPROACH

An award-winning innovator in the field of orthopedic sports medicine, Steadman became a legend for his pioneering approach, which got world class ski racers back on skis in record time and enabled professional athletes from nearly every sport to return to the playing field stronger than before.

In 1963, after earning his medical degree from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas, Steadman went to



SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

About 80 people gathered on Vail Mountain this week to honor Dr. Richard Steadman, front center, as the ribbon was officially cut on Steady's Deck, a picnic platform located between the Grand Escape and Ridge Route trails.

work in South Lake Tahoe, California, as an orthopedic surgeon at Barton Memorial Hospital. When he volunteered his services at a World Cup ski race in Heavenly Valley in 1973, a long and exciting relationship with the U.S. Ski Team began.

Soon, he was pioneering significant improvements in post-surgical rehabilitation developing novel exercise protocols that shook the foundations of sports medicine.

In 1974, U.S. Ski Team star Cindy Nelson became the first elite skier to be treated by Dr. Steadman. Nelson would undergo 11 surgeries in her 14-year career, without ever missing a full season, winning Olympic Downhill bronze in 1976, along with a trio of World Championships medals and six World Cup races. Legions of U.S. Ski Team athletes coursed through Tahoe over the next decades, often taking up residence in the Steadman home, as revolutionary protocols were tested and proven sound, first on his living room floor, then out on the race courses.

VAIL IS HOME

Nelson, working as Vail's Director of Skiing, and former Vail Associates owner George Gillett were instrumental in persuading Steadman to leave Lake Tahoe in 1990 with the promise of expanded research, treatment and training facilities in Vail.

Steadman has treated well over 22,000

patients during the course of his 40-year career in Tahoe and Vail. In addition to members of the U.S. Ski Team, the list includes such legendary athletes as tennis greats Martina Navratilova, Monica Seles and Billie Jean King, NFL Hall of Famers Dan Marino and Bruce Smith, musicians Judy Collins and Rod Stewart and global soccer sensations Cristiano Ronaldo and Lothar Matthaeus. Steadman became a consultant to the Denver Broncos and Colorado Rockies while serving as U.S. Alpine Chief Physician at nine consecutive Olympic Winter Games from 1976 through 2006.

Steadman's internationally renowned advanced surgical protocols and innovations include: Microfracture, a procedure that repairs the damaged joint and encourages the regrowth of articular cartilage; Healing Response, an arthroscopic alternative to full knee reconstruction; and The Package, a collection of arthroscopic procedures performed in a single operation, for which Steadman received a research award in 2012.

Today, the Steadman Philippon Research Institute in collaboration with the doctors of the Steadman Clinic, is known worldwide for its unprecedented clinical database and research into orthopedic injuries of the knee, hip, shoulder, ankle and spine.

This story contains material from a U.S. Ski Team press release