

# word *of* mouth

JANUARY 2008 *Greening up the slopes in Vail . . . A Boston chef's ode to pork fat . . . Thailand's new flop spot . . .*

Snap happy:  
Beside the Art  
Nouveau Dragon  
Bridge, which  
crosses Ljubljana  
River. Ljubljana  
Castle is at left in  
the distance.

the  
**NEIGH-  
BORHOOD**  
*Break the chains; San  
Fran's indie boutiques*  
(page 54)

tour  
**BUS**  
*Why The Thrills  
just love  
Japanese fans*  
(page 58)

home  
**FRONT**  
*Fly south  
to bag a spot in  
the sun*  
(page 58)



the  
**BUZZ**  
*(the destination)*

## SLOVENIA Ljubljana

Slovenia's tiny capital takes center stage this month as the country assumes presidency of the European Union. It deserves the attention: Ljubljana exudes unspoiled Eastern European charm and has an animated cultural scene that positively throbs in the avant-garde Metelkova neighborhood. In medieval Stara Ljubljana (Old Town), check in to the quirky **Antiq Hotel**, on a quaint cobblestoned street (386-1-421-3560; [antiqhotel.si](http://antiqhotel.si); doubles, \$110-\$240). For dinner, head to **Manna**, where the Slovenian cuisine—including nineteenth-century heirloom dishes such as ▶

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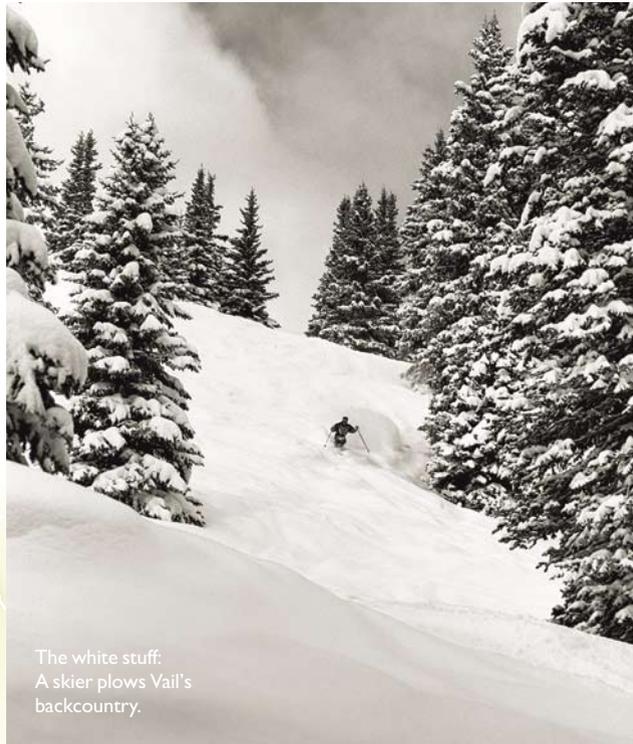
štruklji dumplings—lives up to the name (1a Eipprova Ulica; 386-1-283-5294; entrées, \$14–\$25).

Trace the city's history from its origins as the Roman town of Emona at the **Mestni Muzej** (City Museum), where unearthed artifacts are displayed in situ—dirt and all (15 Gosposko; 386-1-241-2500). The new funicular brings you to the sixteenth-century **Ljubljanski Grad** (Ljubljana Castle), from which you can see the Julian and Kamnik Alps on a clear day (1 Grajska Planota; 386-1-232-9994). Below, wander through the ancient town center—much of it closed to cars since last fall—and along the Ljubljanica River to the Central Market and Triple Bridge, both



designed in the 1930s and '40s by native architect Joe Plenik.

Ljubljana's most alluring living artists inhabit edgy Metelkova Mesto, where they took over an abandoned military complex in 1993. With squatter's rights secured (for the most part), they now display their works at **Galerija Alkatraz** (24 Masarykova; 386-1-434-0345). The nearby **Hostel Celica**—once a prison for political dissidents, including Slovenia's prime minister, Janez Janša—is a backpacker's haven that's also an art gallery, café, and music venue (8 Metelkova; hostelcelica.com; 386-1-230-9700). The **National Museum of Slovenia's** Metelkova extension opens here in March and will focus on applied arts. At night, check out Metelkova's gritty and oft-changing clubs, or circle back to the chic bar at Old Town's new **Stara Mačka** restaurant to toast your luck at discovering this gem of a city (8 Krojaska Ulica; 386-1-251-1749; entrées, \$16–\$28).



The white stuff: A skier plows Vail's backcountry.

*Lanvin's latest collection has its jet-setting devotees in mind: The line, dubbed **22 Faubourg**, includes travel essentials like loungewear and luggage. This roly, with designer Alber Elbaz's splashy sketches, will liven up even the dullest carousel (jeffreynewyork.com; \$3,008).*



## COLORADO

### Vail Unveiled



Vail's Pucci-sporting ski bunnies have a flurry of new reasons to visit this season. A billion-dollar investment in the town is beginning to show off-piste. Among the new lodgings are the Euro-inspired **ARRABELLE AT VAIL SQUARE**, which has such perks as a ski nanny to care for junior after class (970-477-3796; arrabelle.rockresorts.com; doubles, \$425–\$850), and **VAIL PLAZA**, a luxe 207-room resort in the center of Vail Village (970-477-8000; vailplazahotel.com; doubles, \$408–\$470); the **LODGE AT VAIL** launches an 8,500-square-foot spa in March. And there's a big check in the eco-box: Initiatives at Vail Resorts include offsetting all energy usage with wind-power credits and serving hormone-free meat and organic dairy products at its restaurants. The hills are alive.



Alila Cha-Am.

## THAILAND

### Alila Cha-Am



Cha-Am, a sleepy coastal village a two-hour drive south of Bangkok, wakes up this winter with the opening of **ALILA CHA-AM**. The 79-room hotel looks set to become the weekend retreat for Thailand's design elite, many of whom swung by to check out Duangrit Bungag's minimalist limestone and aged-wood structures during construction. For guests able to tear themselves away from Cha-Am's long, unblemished snake of sand—a real rarity in these parts—there's the Alila Spa, with its thermal mineral pool, and rooms featuring whizzy entertainment systems from Bose and Apple (65-6735-8300; alilahotels.com; doubles, \$325–\$900).

Want to pack like a pro? For witty travel wisdom, pick up **COLIN COWIE CHIC**, which is out now (Clarkson Potter, \$30).