

Explore

Big Sky

BEST OF

BIG SKY

2017

RESULTS ARE IN!

BEST OF BIG SKY 2017

The Big Sky community has spoken! With more than 3,000 votes cast—a record amount—locals and visitors recognized the restaurants, retailers, artists, architects, nonprofits, builders and bartenders that make this place we know and love tick.

Some of our readers may be visiting from afar, and others might be lucky enough to have called Big Sky home for a decade or more, but we can all agree that this is a pretty special spot. Dig into the write-ups that follow as we celebrate the finest Big Sky has to offer.

COMMUNITY MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Mark Robin

Mark Robin passed away on Dec. 18 at the age of 56. As most people in the Big Sky community are aware, Mark was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), a progressive neurodegenerative disease, in September 2016. Since that time, despite his deteriorating physical condition, Mark maintained a positive outlook and a commitment to living life as fully as possible. A longtime owner of The Hungry Moose Market and Deli, a hub of the Big Sky community since he and his wife Jackie started the business in 1994, Robin continued to share his experience through a poetry blog, raise money for ALS and other causes, attend community events, and travel, in the days leading up to his death.

He and Jackie have repeatedly expressed awe and gratitude for how the community has rallied around their family. In a June 2017 interview with EBS, by which time Robin had lost all muscle function below his neck, Robin said, “I’ve never had any regrets; we make choices and we live by those choices. The positive thing is I’m still around and I’m still living a very full life. I could live for a week or another 10 years—we just don’t know. But I want to be around for my kids, my wife, my community, my friends—you stick around to enjoy them and have fun together.”

A celebration of life will be held in Mark Robin’s honor at 2 p.m. Friday, Dec. 22 at Rainbow Ranch Lodge.



‘Deep Thoughts and More Football with Markymoose’

By Mark Robin

what is the meaning of life?
what is deep in your heart?
the answer lies within each of us
some people would say
it’s all about family
some people would say
it’s all about happiness
I say happiness is fleeting
there are moments of pure joy
I still have some of those
especially at Howie’s football games
I would still say
it’s all about family
a healthy family and friends
our friends have always been family to us
we are very fortunate
to have this extended family
in our case, it reaches far and wide
our customers, vendors, employees
I can’t believe how many good friends
we have made through the store
when I say healthy
I am speaking relatively
we all have our own stuff
that brings us up or down

This poem is an excerpt from Mark Robin’s blog post published on Oct. 20. - markymooseinbigsky.blogspot.com

BEST RESTAURANT



1st Lotus Pad Asian Cuisine

One of Big Sky’s most popular dining establishments, 2017 marks the sixth year Lotus Pad Asian Cuisine has been voted “best restaurant” in Big Sky. Since owner-chef Alex Omania opened the business in 2007, it has outgrown its no-elbow-room location in Westfork Meadow and now inhabits a chic, much larger space in Town Center—and is having no trouble packing the square footage. Lotus Pad’s expansion is not limited to Big Sky. In late November, Omania opened a Lotus Pad just outside of Cincinnati, Ohio. In either location, you can expect their signature, bold Thai-inspired flavors, family-style portions, impeccable service and a lively, but intimate atmosphere. lotuspadbigsky.com (406) 995-2728



2nd Olive B’s

Chef and owner Warren Bibber opened Olive B’s on Valentine’s Day in 2011. Big Sky has been in love with his bistro style gastronomic creations ever since. Specializing in fresh seafood, wild game, and creative desserts in a romantic setting, Olive B’s never disappoints. olivebsbigsky.com (406) 995-3355



#3 Ousel & Spur Pizza Co

When they opened in June of 2012, managing partners Jen Ketteridge and Josh Kone made a menu focusing on artisan pizzas featuring local ingredients. Other specialties include fresh pasta and gnocchi dishes that rotate seasonally. And all meats are sourced from Montana farms. The staff, many whom have been there since day one, are friendly and hardworking. ouselandspurpizza.com (406) 995-7175

BEST DATE NIGHT RESTAURANT



1st Olive B’s

When looking for a romantic getaway with your special someone Olive B’s takes home the gold medal. It’s appropriate that the winner of the best date spot is owned and operated by amazing longtime locals, Warren “Bibber” and Jennie Bibbins. Bibber and Jennie have created an intimate restaurant setting with incredible cuisine. Olive B’s has an open kitchen and it’s common to see one of the owners cooking up your special meal while enjoying a paired glass of wine, watching the sun set behind Lone Mountain. Located in the Meadow Village Center, Olive B’s has become a local favorite and if you’re on a date night be sure you request one of the private booths and let the food do the talking. olivebsbigsky.com (406) 995-3355



2nd Buck’s T-4 Lodge

Buck’s T-4 is one of the longest standing restaurants in Big Sky with a history dating back more than 50 years. Executive Chef Scott Mechura has crafted a creative menu that features everything from wild game, to hand-cut steaks and incredible daily specials. Buck’s is a great getaway with your special someone, and the recent remodel makes it even more enjoyable. buckst4.com (406) 993-5222



#3 Michaelangelo’s – Ristorante Italiano

Nothing says date night like fine Italian food, and Michaelangelo’s is a welcome addition to the Big Sky dining options. Located in the Meadow Village Center, Michaelangelo’s features an award-winning culinary team that has created a menu complementing the incredible setting, with its hip yet warm and cozy setting. Many say that the Filetto di Manzo is one of the finest steaks served in Big Sky Country. michaelangelosbigsky.com (406) 995-7373

BEST DIRTBAG MEAL DEAL



1st Yeti Dog

Yeti Dog, located a one- to two-minute jaunt from Big Sky Resort’s Swift Current chairlift, is the winner of the cherished “Dirtbag Meal” category. And what better way to sum it up than by looking at Yelp reviews?

“No one throws down flavor in Big Sky better than Yeti Dogs. I honestly almost enjoy getting Yeti Dog more than I enjoy skiing,” wrote Christopher D.

“Wander to this small establishment for quite a treat,” wrote Jason P., who was impressed with the “snappy” flavors—and the pricing. “For \$6.75, you can score any hot dog, a bag of chips/candy, and a soda. You can substitute the soda for a 16 oz. can of Pabst Blue Ribbon (PBR) for an additional \$1.00.”

bigskyresort.com/things-to-do/dining/yeti-dogs



2nd Wrap Shack

For 14 years, The Wrap Shack has been “rolling them fat” for customers in Big Sky. With wraps, tacos, margaritas and tallboy beers, this is a locals’ hang-out that feeds many. Owners Karen Macklin and Don Mattusch take pride in serving Big Sky fast, healthy and affordable food, and using the freshest of ingredients in their homemade salsas and sauces. werollemfat.com (406) 995-3099



#3 Gallatin Riverhouse Grill

The Gallatin Riverhouse boasts great vibes, music and food at an amazing riverside setting. Locals on a budget love the Riverhouse for all sorts of well priced menu items—and generous portions to boot—but the three-piece fried chicken meal is the fan favorite. gallatinriverhousegrill.com (406) 995-7427

BEST BURGER



1st Lone Peak Brewery and Taphouse

Three things to know about these burgers: 1. They’re big. 2. They’re spicy (if you want them to be). 3. They’re best accompanied by Lone Peak Brewery’s waffle fries. Wash down the works—we recommend their anniversary burger featuring locally grown Montana Wagyu, a fried egg, and sautéed onions and peppers—with one of the rotating brews on nitro and partake in a little game shuffle board while you wait. lonepeakbrewery.com (406) 995-3939



2nd By Word of Mouth

Winner of Big Sky’s Best Burger in 2014, By Word of Mouth serves up seasonal globally-influenced fare for lunch, dinner and Sunday brunch. BYWOM’s a great place for an elegant meal as well as a casual bar to enjoy après after a deep day on the hill. Can’t get enough of their flavor? Contact owners Pam and John Flach for catering for your next event. bigskycatering.com (406) 995-2992



3rd Gallatin Riverhouse Grill

This is a prime spot for any after party whether you’re toasting a successfully executed event or celebrating a day or fishing, skiing or hunting. Ask to have your burger prepared “Carnie style” for extra flavor and heat. gallatinriverhousegrill.com (406) 995-7427

BEST PIZZA



1st Ousel & Spur Pizza Co.

With a nice Italian flair on their menu, Town Center’s Ousel & Spur was voted the best pizza in Big Sky for the second year in a row. The salads and small plates are tasty, but it’s the pizza that keeps locals and visitors cheering for more. The foundation is high-quality ingredients and a great thin crust topped with fun items like elk sausage, roasted wild mushrooms and dried figs. The result is an unbeatable pizza. Ousel and Spur has an intimate setting among Town Center businesses and a great menu for the kiddos. While the pizza category was extremely competitive, Ousel & Spur’s consistency, quality and vibe put it in the gold spot. ouselandspurpizza.com (406) 995-7175



2nd Milkie’s

Milkie’s has been serving thin and crispy pizza since 1994 and has become an institution for Big Sky locals to watch football or play pool and tell stories over a round of beers in a casual setting. milkiespizza.com (406) 995-2900



3rd Blue Moon Bakery

Big Sky’s local bakery is known for its lunch special, which will get you two big slices of pizza and a soda for \$8. Blue Moon has the thickest crust in Big Sky, but if you want still more doughy goodness, you can get it—beware of the glass display case full of other amazing baked goodies. bigskybluemoonbakery.com (406) 995-2305

BEST APRES



1st Scissorbills Saloon

Scissorbills Saloon is where the locals go, and the occasional enterprising tourist in the know. Tucked up on the third floor of the Arrowhead Mall, the après ski scene is boisterous and friendly, and the nachos are served in heaps. Operating partner Keith Kuhns, and fellow owners Adam, Kyle and Scott Olson, changed the name of the restaurant back to Scissorbills—the name it held during the ‘80s and ‘90s—from Bambu Bar and Asian Bistro after listening to popular demand. Any Scissorbills regular knows that familiar faces will be waiting for them with stories of their powder exploits on Lone Mountain. scissorbills.com (406) 995-4933



2nd Beehive Basin Brewery

Located in Town Center, Beehive Basin Brewery crafts a large and frequently rotating collection of beers with its specialized seven-barrel brewing system. Stop in to try some of their locally crafted beers and catch their brewmaster Andy Lieberg at work. beehivebasinbrewery.com (406) 995-7444



3rd Michaelangelo’s – Ristorante Italiano

For those whose après tastes tend toward fine dining, Michaelangelo’s Ristarante Italiano serves exquisite Italian cuisine prepared by Executive Chef Michael Annandono, who has been awarded Best Chef in America and Diner’s Choice from Open Table. michelangelosbigsky.com (406) 995-7373

BEST HAPPY HOUR



1st Rainbow Ranch

Happy Hour at the iconic Rainbow Ranch on the famed Gallatin River takes place seven days a week from 4-6 p.m. Wander down the canyon to enjoy this very special happy hour in one of the most picturesque settings in Big Sky. Available at the bar or in the cozy sitting area near the fire in the winter months and on the wrap around deck during the summertime, the food menu includes the Twin Cabin Burger, Wild Game Pot Pie, Smoked Trout Cheesecake, Wild Mushroom Bruschetta and Rock Shrimp Baguette. Drink specials include wines by the glass, half- priced beer and select well drinks.
rainbowranchbigsky.com (406) 995-4132



2nd Lone Peak Cinema

Lone Peak Cinema has been serving up cold drinks and the hottest new movies since the fall of 2011. Happy hour takes place seven days a week from 8-9 p.m. The later time coincides with late movies, sports and their ever-popular Friday night trivia. Offers include \$2 cans of beer, \$4 draft beer, \$6 glass of wine, and \$1 off wells drinks.
lonepeakcinema.com (406) 995-4478



3rd Alberto's

Quenching Mexican food cravings for locals and visitors alike, Alberto's offers happy hour Tuesday - Sunday from 4-6 p.m. Drink specials include their frozen or house margaritas for \$4 and Pacifico brew on draft for \$3. It's a great place to warm up after a long day on the hill or to cool off after a long day at work. **(406) 995-2326**

BEST BARTENDER



1st Josh Kone

If you're looking for a good martini in Big Sky, most locals know to head to BYWOM. If Jason Isbell is playing in the background, there's a good chance that Kone is tending bar. Equipped with extensive wine knowledge and quick wit, the owner of Ousel and Spur Pizza Co.'s high standards of service and maybe an occasional pineapple-infused vodka shot helped him clinch the title of best barkeep—in a town without a shortage of watering holes.



2nd Tanya Simonson

No. 2 in the polls this year, but still No. 1 in our hearts. Whether she's sling-ing drinks to locals at the Riverhouse, working an après behind the bar at Scissorbills, or keeping the party going late-night at The Brothel, Simonson likes to play her music loud and pour 'em stiff. "It's all about the playlist," said this year's silver medal winner. If you hear Gerry Rafferty's "Right Down the Line" come on, be careful ... you're about to have a good time.



3rd Mike Lanzarini

A transplant from Telluride, Colorado, Lanzarini pours beers in the winter at Lone Peak Brewery (his favorite is the XPA) and guides fishing trips for Gallatin River Guides in the summer. Are there similarities in the two gigs? Yes, Lanzarini says: "You've got to deal with new people on a daily basis and make them like you. You just have to be personable."

BEST BUSINESS



PHOTO COURTESY OF LONE MOUNTAIN RANCH

1st Lone Mountain Ranch

Lone Mountain Ranch is a perfect example of what makes Big Sky a special place to both live and play. A National Geographic Unique Lodge of the World, the expansive views and quiet solitude you find on more than 85 kilometers of groomed Nordic trails, combined with the warmth and friendliness of the staff, guests and locals, make LMR one of Montana’s best kept secrets. Offering luxuriously rustic accommodations with world-class amenities, including the recently reinvented Horn & Cattle Restaurant and Saloon, sleigh ride dinners, and year-round activities, Lone Mountain Ranch offers an experience not to be missed. lonemountainranch.com (406) 995-4644



2nd Ace Hardware

As the 2017 recipient of the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce’s Business of the Year award, Ace Hardware - Big Sky is helping our community save the drive to Bozeman with their selection of home products and tools, attention to detail and customer service. Ask Kelly, Rhonda, Craig, Dean, Kevin, Dan or any of their amazing staff for help on your next project. acebigskytools.com (406) 995-4500



3rd East Slope Outdoors

A staple in Town Center, East Slope is your headquarters for just about every recreation activity the valley has to offer, whether you’re downhill skiing, fishing, hiking or cross-country skiing. Check in with owner “Super Dave” Alvin before heading out to fly fish and he will give you the latest tips on what flies have been getting action. eastslopeoutdoors.com (406) 995-4369

BEST NEW BUSINESS



1st Lone Peak Veterinary

Since Sydney Desmarais purchased and remodeled the former Veterinary Clinic of Big Sky earlier this year, she’s handled everything from dental procedures on both cats and dogs to spays and neuters. She’s even completed a leg amputation. Most importantly, she’s handled procedures large and small with proficiency, professionalism and grace. Clients have remarked on her compassionate bedside manner—with both people and animals.

Following a four-month remodel, which included the addition of a new X-ray machine and a state-of-the-art surgical table and light, Desmarais opened the doors to Lone Peak Veterinary in September and is joined by vet tech Sarah Whitehead and relief tech Erin Priest.

lonepeakvethospital.com (406) 995-2266



2nd SAV Digital Environments

SAV is a newcomer to the Big Sky business scene but has history in the Bozeman area dating to 2004. Cory Reistad and his team offer the most cutting-edge technology and service for Big Sky homes. From AV systems and lighting to home controls and energy management, SAV is a welcome addition to the Big Sky landscape. savinc.net (406) 586-5593



3rd Montana Supply

Montana Supply is a lifestyle apparel shop with the hippest storefront in Big Sky. This trendy store owned by Josh Tozier and Alaina Stinson is a great place to shop for gifts—or buy outdoor apparel or new shoes for yourself—after grabbing a mocha latte and gluten-free muffin from neighboring Compass Café. [instagram.com/montanasupply](https://www.instagram.com/montanasupply) (406) 995-3490

BEST ANNUAL EVENT



1st Big Sky PBR

Big Sky PBR had quite a year. Not only did it win the PBR’s “Event of the Year” title for the 5th consecutive year and sell out in less than 24 hours, but it was voted as Big Sky, Montana’s best event for the third year in a row.

2017 featured all the things that make this event the Best of Big Sky, with rowdy bull rides, more than \$115,000 raised for charity, three nights of live music, and record event attendance. “This event generates a \$2.6 million dollar economic impact for Big Sky, with businesses bustling, full lodging, and packed restaurants,” said Ersin Ozer, Outlaw Partners’ Events Director, “plus it’s fun to welcome 40 of the world’s best bull riders to be a part of our community for the week.”

bigskypbr.com



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

2nd Music in the Mountains

Summer Thursday nights in Big Sky belong to Music in the Mountains. Residents of Big Sky and Bozeman alike join a robust visitor crowd to pack Town Center Park for the weekly concert series, sending music high into the Big Sky. The musical acts vary, but the great time stays the same.

bigskyarts.org



PHOTO BY RICH ADDICKS

3rd MountainFilm on Tour Festival

A newcomer to the list, Big Sky’s Mountainfilm on Tour expanded this year, captivating the sold out audience through their collection of documentary films for not one but two nights. Leaving viewers in awe and inspired, this event will continue to grow into a premier festival in the region.

bigskyarts.org/mountainfilm

BEST OUTDOOR RETAILER



1st Grizzly Outfitters

Going head-to-head in one of the most competitive categories and winning by less than 2 percent of the vote, Grizzly has returned as champion of the cherished Outdoor Retailer category. Grizzly Outfitters has been a staple in Big Sky for more than 20 years and offers a year-round selection of everything needed to live and play in the mountains. Owners Andrew Schreiner and Ken Lancey have assembled a great team who are passionate about getting you geared up to play outside. Located in town center with racks and shelves full of all the top outdoor brands, Grizzly’s known for its state-of-the-art ski tuning equipment and being one of the top boot fitters in the nation.

grizzlyoutfitters.com (406) 995-2939



2nd East Slope Outdoors

Narrowly missing the No. 1 slot, East Slope is quickly gaining popularity as they nestle in to their new Town Center location. Since 1986, East Slope has been known for its laid-back atmosphere and selection of goodies while owners Dave and Katie became staples of the community. A sick fleet of rental skis and fishing gear are East Slope’s specialty.

eastslopeoutdoors.com
(406) 995-4369



3rd Gallatin Alpine Sports

When it comes to a shop that’s passionate about bikes and snow sports Gallatin Alpine Sports, affectionately dubbed GAS, is it. Owner Tom Owens has created a great shop and while you can get just about anything there, Nordic skiers, snowboarders and bikers will love GAS.

gallatinalpinesports.com
(406) 995-2313

BEST SKI RUN



PHOTO BY LONNIE BALL

1st Liberty Bowl

Skiers of Big Sky Resort’s Lone Peak Tram invariably cut their teeth on Liberty Bowl, the only single black diamond run off the summit of Lone Mountain. Access to Liberty Bowl has become significantly easier this winter after an excavator cut new switchbacks into the south face of the peak this summer. The excavator was flown, in pieces, to the summit by helicopter and has made the approach to Liberty nearly rock free. Once the Dakota chairlift opens for the season, from the top of Liberty Bowl to the bottom of Dakota, skiers enjoy 4,000 vertical feet of uninterrupted fun.



2nd North Summit Snowfield

Formerly the prized domain of Moonlight Basin skiers, after the 2013 merger the North Summit Snowfield became part of Big Sky Resort’s legendary alpine terrain. Requiring one to three partners, avalanche safety gear and confident skiing abilities, you must sign out with ski patrol in the affectionately named “penalty box.”



PHOTO BY JEFF ENGERBRETSON

3rd Mr. K

Coming in at No. 3 in the Best of Big Sky survey, Mr. K is an iconic green circle run. Some years, it’s the only ski trail that experts spend their time on until there’s enough snow to open the resort’s steeper terrain. We love you Mr. K!

BEST PLACE TO TAKE YOUR DOG



1st Uplands/Hummocks Trails

A right of passage when moving to a ski town is having a dog and a place to walk Fido—it’s as important as groceries or a good bar. The 2017 Best of Big Sky survey had a tie for the best place to take your dog with Uplands/Hummocks trails. Uplands and Hummocks are an incredible 5-mile trail system built by the Big Sky Community Organization with easements generously donated by the Simkins Family. The trails have some of the finest views of Lone Mountain, offering a great mix of rolling hills, steep climbs and wetlands, ideal to wear out your four-legged friends. bscomt.org (406) 993-2112



2nd Beehive Basin Brewery

One of Big Sky’s favorite watering holes for custom-made brews is also a favorite place to bring your pooch. With a dog-friendly porch and watering bowls, Beehive Basin Brewery is a welcome place to bring furry fiends while tasting the latest single-hop pale ale. beehivebasinbrewery.com (406) 995-7444



3rd Ousel Falls

There’s nothing like taking your dog for a walk to a 30-foot waterfall, on one of the finest built trails in the region. Ousel Falls took third place for best place to take your dog, and while it’s becoming one of the busiest trailheads in the county, it still welcomes well-behaved K9s. bscomt.org (406) 993-2112

BEST REAL ESTATE AGENCY



1st Christie's International Real Estate

An exclusive affiliate of Christie's International Real Estate, this agency posts some impressive numbers in a town with an exceptionally robust real estate market. In 2017, Christie's Big Sky agents sold nearly \$80 million in single-family homes, more than \$79 million in condominiums, and \$31 million-plus in land—and that's just in the first three quarters.

Representing dozens of exclusive listings, the seven agents at PureWest Christie's International Real Estate of Big Sky broker sales for luxury ski-in/ski-out homes, riverfront properties great for fly-fishing out your backyard and large parcels well suited to a ranch transformation.
bigskypurewest.com (406) 995-4009



2nd L&K

L&K Real Estate is a boutique brokerage owned by Eric Ladd and Ryan Kulesza. With over 50 years combined experience, they specialize in luxury lifestyle properties and have brokered over \$1.5 billion in sales. Their personal approach stands out in the industry, and made for a tight race in this coveted category—just 10 votes separated first and second place.
lkrealestate.com (406) 995-2404



3rd Big Sky Sotheby's International Realty

Big Sky Sotheby's is owned by Tim Cyr and Cathy Gorman and has been in business since 2002. Big Sky Sotheby's International Realty brokers are a handpicked team of full-time Big Sky residents who bring in-depth knowledge of the area to every transaction. They're immersed in the community, the people and the real estate of southwest Montana.
bigskysir.com (406) 995-2211

BEST SPA



1st OZssage

In a new category this year, OZssage Therapeutic Spa in Meadow Village took the win as the best spa in Big Sky. Owner Jacquie Rager and her team of more than 10 estheticians and massage therapists have been offering massages, facials and spa treatments to the Big Sky community since 2001, complete with their own line of skin care products specific for the Montana climate.

Ozssage has enjoyed very little employee turnover, and Rager says, "The success of the business is the work of the therapists that have worked here over the years."

ozssage.com (406) 995-7575



PHOTO BY KENE SPERRY

2nd Santosha Wellness Center

Under the ownership of Callie Stolz, Santosha Wellness Center offers massage, a variety of body therapies, yoga, psychotherapy and a new infrared sauna as a holistic approach to health. The team at Santosha strives to help people live life to the fullest with optimal health.
santoshabigsky.com (406) 993-2510



PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY RESORT

3rd Solace Spa & Salon

Nestled in the heart of Big Sky Resort's Mountain Village, in the lobby of the Huntly Lodge, Solace Spa & Salon offers treatments to soothe the effects of high altitude and dry climate. With products from Epicuren, Jurlique, Babor and Ugg, Solace ensures each individual has opportunity to relax and find tranquility and rejuvenation.
bigskyresort.com/things-to-do/solace-spa-and-salon (406) 995-5803

BEST SALON



1st Monica's Salon

New mom Monica Kulesza opened Monica's Salon in 2010 and has helped Big Sky look a little fresher ever since. Kulesza and the gals at Monica's certainly have proven their mad cosmetology skills in this full-service salon that offers a wide array of treatments for hair, face and nails. Their clientele range from your neighbor in for a quick trim to a blushing destination bride getting gussied up for her big day. To keep your locks looking their best, Monica's Salon also offers an assortment of quality hair care products.
bigskyhair.com (406) 995-2722



2nd Mountain Haven Salon

Mountain Haven Salon has earned quite the reputation over the many years of being open on Gallatin Road, and it shows. Owner Jaci Clack's offers up every service at her Big Horn Center salon to get you looking your best. A trained Aveda cosmetologist, she can help get you the right hairstyle, color, and cut with polished nails to top it off.
(406) 993-4543



3rd Hairninja

Unique in Big Sky for offering hair and eyelash extensions, Hairninja also offers cutting-edge color service and keeps stylists hip to the times with a commitment to advanced education. Owner Leah Clendenin employs two other full-time stylists at her Meadow Village salon. hairnijasalon.com
(406) 995-7510

BEST GROCERY STORE



1st Roxy's Market & Café

In a tight race with each store receiving over 30 percent of the vote, Roxy's Market & Café near Town Center was recognized as the best grocery store in Big Sky. The second of three stores opened by Roxy and Steve Lawler, Big Sky's Roxy's is a hybrid market that offers a variety of products ranging from natural and organic to conventional, and also includes specialty items.
"We try to add a lot of local products, whether it's produce or artisan products like cheese," Roxy said. "We are independently owned and operated ... that's pretty much non-existent in the grocery store business."
Roxy's opened in November 2014, following the opening of a store in Aspen, Colorado. Currently, the Lawlers' third grocery in Montecito, California, is under threat by wildland fires in the area.
roxysmarket.com/big_sky (406) 995-2295



PHOTO BY JACKIE ROBIN

2nd Hungry Moose Market & Deli

The Hungry Moose has been offering local products under local ownership since 1994, complete with an easy-to-use delivery service. With a flagship store in Town Center and a ski-in ski-out location in Big Sky Resort's Mountain Mall, as well as regular community outreach, owner Jackie Robin says, "The Moose is the local's grocery store."
hungrymoose.com (406) 995-3045



3rd The Country Market

Lynne Anderson and her team do their best to meet the grocery needs of Big Sky, always with a smile on their faces. The Country Market opened in 1972 in the Meadow Village Center and has been under Anderson's ownership with her husband Steve for about 10 years, offering "a little bit of a lot of things."

BEST ARCHITECT



PHOTO BY WHITNEY KAMMAN

1st Centre Sky Architecture

Owner Jamie Dugaard and his team specialize in mountain architecture inside and out, focusing on resort, custom residential and ranch projects throughout the Mountain West including Big Sky and the private communities of Yellowstone Club, Moonlight Basin and Spanish Peaks Mountain Club. “We are humbled and thrilled to be recognized and want to thank the Big Sky community, clients, general contractors, subcontractors and artisans [who] allow us to experience what we design,” Dugaard said.

A commitment to sustainable design and site integration pairs with mountain architecture flair in a winning combination—and one that Big Sky has agreed is the best for the third year running. centresky.com (406) 995-7572



2nd Bechtle Architects

Since the early 2000s, Scott Bechtle has created custom design solutions ranging from commercial projects to residential homes. Bechtle’s team has been at the center of Big Sky’s rapid growth by helping plan and design cornerstone projects like Town Center. He draws inspiration from creating a collaborative vision with clients that shape mood, show personality and connect people with their environment. bechtlearchitects.com (406) 993-2693



3rd Reid Smith Architects

Reid Smith Architects uses the stunning landscapes of the Mountain West as an inspiration springboard to create some of the most innovative spaces out there today. The Reid Smith team balances creativity with budget and function while capturing the spirit of the land. reidsmitharchitects.com (406) 587-2597

BEST BUILDER



1st Big Sky Build

Owner John Seelye’s team builds for both locals and second homeowners, and tackles a broad range of remodels. “No job is too big or too small, and that’s helped carry us through economic downturns,” Seelye said, adding that his co-workers at Big Sky Build and the subcontractors, architects and interior designers they work with are integral to the business’s success. “We are in good company in this sophisticated building community. ... We have such great competitors that are equally deserving of this but I think our employees are what set us apart.” Big Sky voters agreed for the third year running. bigskybuild.com (406) 995-3670



2nd Haas Builders

Going on two decades now, John Haas has been building custom boutique homes in Big Sky. His employees appreciate being rewarded for the hard work they do on projects ranging from the Essentia Townhouses to a building currently under construction in Town Center that will include residential spaces, offices, a restaurant and an expansion of The Cave liquor store. haasbuilders.com (406) 995-4552



3rd Lone Pine Builders

Lauded by one client for bringing “a level of perfectionism into the field of construction that is rare,” Lone Pine Builders’ Brian and Kate Scott have developed a reputation for attention to detail. Or, as their website puts it: “At Lone Pine Builders, we don’t just build a house, we craft a home.” lonepinebuilders.com (406) 993-2400

BEST ARTIST/PHOTOGRAPHER



PHOTO BY TOMMY JEROME

1st Kene Sperry

Whether shooting weddings, portraits or epic powder adventures, photographer Kene Sperry brings a sense of gratitude and curiosity to his art form. He spends most of his time taking photos and recreating in southwest Montana, but also travels to lands near and far, and it is during those solo journeys that he does most of his “visionary thinking.” The greatest lesson Sperry has learned from taking millions of photographs of people all over the world is that we are all connected. “What I have discovered is we all desire to be seen, heard, respected and loved,” reads his artist bio. “The best gift you can give anyone is your complete presence, truly it is the best gift you can give yourself.” kenesperry.com (406) 581-2574



2nd Ryan Turner

Ryan Turner has been shooting extreme adventure and fine art photography for more than two decades. He and his wife Angie operate a gallery in Bighorn Shopping Center next to Bugaboo Café. Turner’s work has been featured in many national publications, including Powder, Men’s Journal, National Geographic Adventure, and Ski magazine, where his work is currently featured in an article about Big Sky Resort. ryanturnerphotography.com (406) 580-5997



PHOTO COURTESY OF MOUNTAIN TOWN PHOTOGRAPHY

3rd Heather Rapp

Mountain-scapes and wildlife figure prominently in artist Heather Rapp’s colorful canvases and murals. Rapp’s work can be found brightening many local businesses such as Caliber Coffee and Beehive Basin Brewery; and now, Town Center utility boxes as part of an ongoing public art initiative. heatherrappart.com (503) 750-9831

BEST PROPERTY MANAGEMENT CO.



1st Beehive Property Management

A relative newcomer to Big Sky, Beehive Property Management has been in business for six years and manages 32 properties, from the meadow to the mountain. Founded by Anne Gagne (center) and her brother Travis Wangsgard, Beehive was opened after one of Wangsgard’s neighbors was being taken advantage of by another property management company, according to Gagne. The sibling duo, originally from Salt Lake City, employs Brittney Ford (right), Lane Foster and Amanda Doty (left) out of their dog-friendly office on Highway 191. beehivemanagement.com (888) 571-0119



2nd Hammond Property

Founded by Scott Hammond in 1997, Hammond Property Management services nearly 500 properties throughout Big Sky. Hammond provides weekly home inspections and offers a network of associated subcontractors for additional services and maintenance. They also represent numerous homeowners and condominium associations in this resort hamlet. hpmmontana.com (406) 995-7220



3rd Big Sky Vacation Rentals

Despite being more of a vacation rental company than property management outfit, EBS readers still voted Big Sky Vacation Rentals the No. 3 business in this category. Opened by Kirsten and Mike King in 2010, BSVR moved into a new office building behind Ace Hardware in February 2015, which features stunning views of the West Fork of the Gallatin River. Fifteen of their 16 full-time, year-round employees live right here in Big Sky. bookbigsky.com (888) 915-2787

BEST NONPROFIT



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

1st Arts Council of Big Sky

Many of Big Sky’s favorite events—Music in the Mountains, the Nutcracker and Mountainfilm on Tour, a relatively recent addition—are productions of this staple in the community. But their focus extends beyond events into growing Big Sky’s budding arts community. Initiatives like ARTventure are adding to the arts programming in Big Sky’s schools, and public art installations are making Big Sky into a more colorful—and beautiful—place. “We believe that a thriving arts and cultural scene is critical for our residents and visitors to enhance the numerous recreational opportunities that make Big Sky such a special place,” said ACBS Executive Director Brian Hurlbut. bigskyarts.org (406) 995-2742



2nd Gallatin River Task Force

“It was a big year for on-the-ground projects for us,” said GRTF Education and Communication Coordinator Stephanie Lynn. In addition to their long-term water quality monitoring work and community outreach and education efforts, GRTF broke ground on a river access improvement project at Moose Creek Flat and tackled a restoration project on the Big Sky Golf Course. gallatinrivertaskforce.org (406) 993-2519



3rd Big Sky Community Organization

Long celebrated for its role building and maintaining trails, hosting summer camps for kids, and organizing sports for the older set (softball, anyone?), BSCO also spearheads important infrastructure development for public safety. BSCO was integral to the new stoplight installation in Town Center and has been tirelessly pursuing grants for roadway improvements to enhance motorist, pedestrian and cyclist safety. bscomt.org (406) 993-2112

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BEST TEACHERS



PHOTO BY ELIJAH HARDER

Tony Coppola (left)

Tony Coppola has been teaching in and out of the Big Sky School District district for nearly 10 years, finally finding his niche in high school social studies where he believes that blending humor, rigor and accountability helps inspire results from his students. “I came here to ski, like many others, and found a deeper personal connection in the education world,” Coppola said.

Brittany Shirley (center)

Hailing from Anaconda, and one of the district’s only Montana-raised educators, Brittany Shirley finds solace in the classroom by inspiring her students to find their voice through creative writing, blending technology into the curriculum, and building meaningful relationships with her students. “The greatest days are spun from random acts of dancing, singing, and students finding their love for reading,” Shirley said.

Jeremy Harder (right)

Jeremy Harder first started teaching in Big Sky in 2000. Over the years he has learned the most important component to inspiring lifelong learners is to create positive relationships with his students through trust, respect and humor. He also has a knack for bringing technology into the classroom, which he balances with weekly outdoor expeditions.

Speaking for all three teachers who received this award, Harder added, “Our district is a prime example of how a living and working healthy school ecosystem can prepare students to become active, caring, lifelong learners who demonstrate respect for themselves and others and have the capacity to participate in the world around them.”

Votes for best teacher were widespread across the district—Big Sky kids are lucky to have a broad mix of inspiring and enthusiastic educators to engage with daily.

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Dearest Big Sky,

It is with absolute humility, pride, and honor that Big Sky Build has been voted Best Builder in the Best Of Big Sky Survey for the third year in a row; this is an award we do not take lightly. I cannot express enough what this means to the men and women of this company and I would like to thank them and all of our clients, architects, design teams, subcontractors, and suppliers who contribute to our success.

When I started this business in 1997, I never thought, in my wildest dreams, that I would get to work with such talented and committed people on these spectacular projects. To see how our little ski town of Big Sky has progressed over the years, to see how we have grown into a world-class ski resort, both winter and summer, is a testament to everyone who calls this beautiful place home. The team of Big Sky Build takes pride in building not only second homes but also homes for those who make this a year-round residence. We have always believed that no project is too large or too small, we just want to build for you! You are the ones who make this town what it is, and for that, I thank you all!

To my co-workers at Big Sky Build, you are the ones that I take my hat off to. Thank you, I love you, and now get back to work, we have projects to build! Happy Holidays everyone!

Love,
John Seelye



**BIG SKY
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