

covered in snow, we continue down and eventually reach a section of black, burnt-out trees.

Their charcoal exterior is a stark contrast to the bright white blanket of

Using two green water tanks in the

distance as markers to make sure we are heading in the right direction, we ski on to the bottom section which is nicknamed "bobsled" thanks to its many natural twists and turns.

We are forced to jump the odd tree branch and skirt around rocks on the



Clark Gable, president Theodore Roosevelt, country music singers such as Willie Nelson and Johnny Cash and, of course, Twain.

As well as the stunning views,

After a few days skiing, we decide to

We pass the remnants of old rustic

Gold Hill, on the way to Virginia City,

which was one of the boomtowns of

Mark Twain started his journalism

The town also offers quirky shop-

After Virginia City we head to

Built in 1853, the bar's patrons over

Nevada's oldest saloon, Genoa Bar, for

the years have included the actor

and John Wayne tins.

a Genoa pale ale.

ing area.

Heavenly's biggest selling points are

The walls are covered in deer heads, old snowshoes, American flags and black and white photos.

When we arrive, two regulars named Dave and Jim are at the bar.

Dave, who is wearing a Harley Davidson T-shirt and a baseball cap, tells me he is a hunter whose Scottish grandfather migrated here and married a Native American woman.

He regales us with stories about the two rattlesnakes he has been bitten by in his life, and riding his Harley Davidson along Route 66.

"Bar closed!" Bar closed!" he cries jokingly when another man walks in, before introducing us to the 84-yearold they say still bales hay every day.

Suzy and I think he looks more like he is 60. It must be the mountain air.

The writer travelled with assistance from Vail Resorts and United Airlines



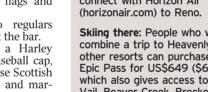
Getting there: V Australia (www.vaustralia.com.au, 13 82 87) and Qantas (www.qantas. com.au,13 13 13) fly to Los Angeles from Brisbane. United Airlines (www. unitedairlines. com.au, 13 17 77) flies a direct daily service from Sydney and Melbourne to Los Angeles.

From there you can connect with Horizon Air

Skiing there: People who want to combine a trip to Heavenly with other resorts can purchase an Epic Pass for US\$649 (\$627) which also gives access to ski at Vail, Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, Keystone and Arapahoe Basin for an entire season. See www.epicpass.com

Staying there: South Lake Tahoe has a large choice of lodging options. You can choose to stay in the casino area, Nevada base, California base or the Heavenly Village gondola base.

More: www.skiheavenly.com



## **Travel has** enough surprises.

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