

insight boise

Discover the best of the West in Idaho's capital city.

Fall in Boise brings brilliant foliage, set against gleaming downtown buildings.

166 ARTS ALL AROUND

The fine arts are more than just an afterthought.

172 SPLENDID SURROUNDINGS

Enjoy unspoiled nature in a place where the great outdoors is still great.

176 THE START-UP CITY

A supportive climate makes this valley a fertile place for business.

182 LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Whatever your tastes, you'll find a home here.

Insight Series:

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up close

For Your Viewing Pleasure

From sculptures to stained glass, Boise's public art collection is a reflection of culture and community. Funded primarily by the Capital City Development Corporation and the City of Boise, it includes two- and three-dimensional designs as well as performance arts. A highlight is *Grove Street Illuminated & Boise Canal* by local artist Amy Westover. The sculpture's panels of aluminum, cast glass, steel, and acrylic feature silk-screened photographs and engraved text depicting Grove Street, one of Boise's most historic areas.

Public art "is an integral part of what makes Boise a special place," says Karen Bubb of the Boise City Arts Commission. Though the 80-piece collection spans the city, the majority is centered downtown, adding a splash of local color.

—Courtney Bowman



Grove Street Illuminated & Boise Canal uses photos and text to tell the history of Boise.

Wondrous Wines

A high mountain desert climate combines with volcanic ash soils and ancient lakebed sediments to make southern Idaho an ideal venue for wineries. The area's well-balanced wines, such as those produced by Bitner Vineyards in Caldwell, are winning accolades nationwide. Bitner first planted Riesling and Chardonnay in 1981, making these some of the oldest fields in Idaho.

Idaho was the first wine-producing state in the Pacific Northwest and has long been recognized for its Riesling. Today, Boise Valley wineries yield promising Pinot Gris, Voignoir, Cabernet, and Syrah. New vineyards are cropping up all over the valley. "When visiting the vineyards, there is no pretense," says wine merchant Brian Erickson, who owns Erickson Fine Wines in Eagle. "Everyone is happy to see you coming to taste their wines."

—Sydney Sallabanks



Bitner Vineyards claims some of the oldest grape orchards in Idaho.

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live



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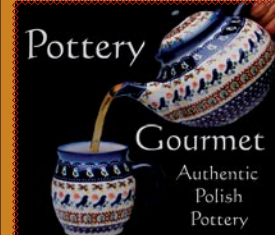


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Building vitality in Boise's downtown.

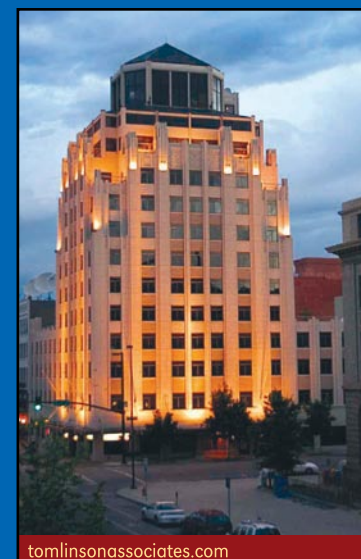
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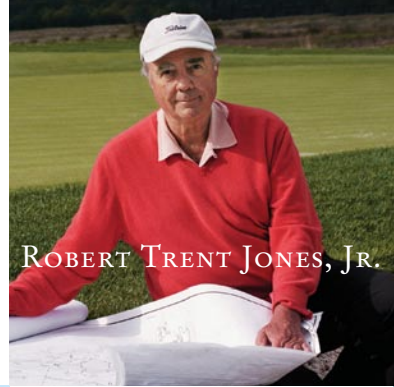
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Photo above courtesy of the
Idaho National Laboratory

up close

Keeping a Culture Strong

The roll call in Boise's classrooms goes far beyond Smith and Jones. Try Ueberuaga and Goicoechea, names that came to Idaho from the Basque region of Spain.

Over the years, many Basque surnames have been lost to intermarriage, but Basque culture remains strong in Idaho's capital. U.S. Census figures estimate a Basque population of 6,000, but Patty Miller, executive director of the Basque Museum and Cultural Center, says the actual figure is much higher, as not everyone knew to write in his or her heritage on the form.

"It is very much a living culture," Miller says. Unlike the diaspora in other cities, the Basque have stayed in the city since their late-1800s immigration. While the community initially worked as

sheepherders and miners, today its culture is found throughout the city. Mayor David H. Bieter founded the Boise Basque Choir, performed with the Basque dance troupe, and brings his community ties to his office. "In the United States you can choose to practice your culture, and that's what the community has done here, they've kept it alive," Miller adds.

Though Basque culture pervades much of the city, visitors can see its liveliness on the Basque Block, a quaint



Shops, restaurants, and historical buildings line the Basque Block.

downtown street with the museum, several restaurants, a market, a handball court and significant historical buildings, including the city's oldest brick building.

—Margaret Littman

Going for Pro

Basketball junkies and top NBA scouts will converge on Qwest Arena in January when the Idaho Stampede plays host to the fourth annual National Basketball Developmental League (D-League) Showcase. Members of the D-League's 14 teams will play in front of representatives of each NBA team. At stake for approximately 140 prospects are 10-day NBA contracts, each potentially worth more than twice the \$20,000 average annual salary in the minors.

"It's a chance for your hard work to pay off and let (the NBA) know you're on the map as a basketball player," says defending D-League MVP Randy Livingston, who spent time last season with the Stampede



Randy Livingston

and the Seattle SuperSonics. "It's exciting. You (can) go from Holiday Inns to Ritz-Carltons."

The Treasure Valley will cash in as well. The showcase is expected to have an economic impact of more than \$250,000 for Boise, and anticipated coverage by NBA TV will reach millions of homes in 66 countries.

"This is huge for our town," says team president Steve Brandes.

—Steve Pastorino

GROWING GREEN

After explorers Lewis and Clark discovered Idaho in 1805, French-Canadian fur trappers followed, trekking across the land and into *les bois*—the woods. The brilliant landscape and lush forests of Boise still capture attention centuries later, as reflected in its official nickname, "The City of Trees."

"Boise has always been a 'green' city," says Thomas Chandler, vice president of the city's board of park and recreation commissioners. "Its citizens are closely tied to and protective of the Boise River, the foothills, and their trees."

The city's 30,000 trees shade parks and line city streets, and tens of thousands more grow on private properties, turning a sidewalk stroll into a glimpse of the past.

—Courtney Bowman

No matter where you travel, you won't find a better potato.

It's no accident that Idaho is famous for its potatoes. But what exactly is it that makes them so great? Maybe it's the naturally perfect conditions in which they're grown—under warm, sunny Idaho skies in rich, volcanic soil, irrigated by pure mountain streams. Or maybe, as fitness expert Denise Austin will tell you, it's the fact that Idaho® Potatoes are part of a healthy diet, with zero fat and cholesterol.

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three *by* three

More than a half-million people make their homes in the Boise Valley.
Three of them recommend their favorite spots.



the writer

O hio native Anthony Doerr moved to Boise, his wife's hometown, in 1998. Great things have come his way in the years since: His first book, *The Shell Collector*, was a *New York Times* Notable Book; his second, *About Grace*, was named a Book of the Year by *The Washington Post*; twin boys were born in 2004; and he won the Rome Prize, a year's sabbatical that led to his latest work, *Four Seasons in Rome: On Twins, Insomnia, and the Biggest Funeral in the History of the World* (2007, Scribner). For the next three years, Doerr will serve as writer-in-residence for the state of Idaho.

Doerr on the best places to go and take the kids:

- Hull's Gulch, a network of protected land at the north end of the North End neighborhood, is great for taking the kids—and the dog—in any weather.
- The MK Nature Center is full of geese, bats, trout, and occasionally a chinook salmon. It's right next to the Boise River, right on the Greenbelt, and full of urban wildlife.
- Big City Coffee has big tables, fantastic hot chocolate, fresh muffins that weigh a pound each, and cookies the size of dinner plates. Great, healthful food in Boise's Linen District.



the cyclist

W hen Dave Beck was growing up in Idaho Falls, east of Boise, he was able to ride his bike all over town for hours at a time. "As long as you were home for dinner by 5:30 you'd be OK," he says. Today he's giving his children's generation the chance to hit the open road. He works with the Boise Youth Riders Development Squad, organizing rides for children as young as 8. Coaches work with the young riders, leading them through the mountains and over flat roads. Mom and Dad can come, too, fulfilling another of Beck's goals: making cycling a family affair.

Beck's also part of the planning effort for the Idaho Velodrome and Cycling Park, which will have venues for BMX, mountain, and road biking. The park, which broke ground in Eagle in August, is set to open in April.

Beck on the best biking trails in the Boise Valley:

- The road ride from Boise to Stanley (on Idaho Route 21) is incredible. It takes you over several large passes.
- The new Shafer Butte trail system located in and around Bogus Basin offers some of the country's best trails.
- The trails in the Danskin Mountains are great spring riding.



the businesswoman

I t's the little things that identify the products of Camille Beckman, the 22-year-old company headed by Susan Roghani. For example, the tiny rose that tops each jar of cream or lotion. Customers at the 9,000 U.S. shops that sell Camille Beckman come back seeking "whatever it was they tried in the jar with the little rosebud on top."

Natural products are important to Roghani: She's worked with plant extracts ever since she made her first soaps and lotions as a child. The company's factory in Eagle sits on a 40-acre plot of land with two artesian wells. "The pristine beauty of Eagle made it the location of choice," she says.

Roghani on the best places to experience nature:

- The Idaho Botanical Garden has everything from water plants to cacti.
- The Rose Garden in Julia Davis Park is one of my favorite places. My husband and I have gone there for dates many times.
- To truly experience the splendor of nature, head up to the mountains. You will quickly notice the pine trees and the aroma that fills the air. For best results, go after an invigorating rain.

—Interviews by Marian Cowhig and Lisa Watts

FAR LEFT: PHOTO COURTESY OF ANTHONY DOERR

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