

# Mountain Music

## When the lifts close the fun is just beginning at Targhee's Trap Bar

By Clark Corbin

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Photos used in this reprint courtesy Grand Targhee Resort

A stool at Grand Targhee Resort's Trap Bar and Grille becomes some of the most valuable real estate on the mountain during late afternoons.

Crowds, largely still in snowpants, check out skiers through a large glass window and huddle up to the bar while brews with quirky names such as Moose Drool and Bitch Creek ooze from the taps. Autographed skis and snowboards cling to the ceilings and a large moose head is mounted right next to a Montreal Canadians jersey.

Whether it's catching the band before heading to bed or grabbing some microbrews with buddies, The Trap is the place to be at Grand Targhee when you're not laying tracks.

By 7 p.m. the crowd thins to single digits, but bartender Paul Dethardt isn't worried about the feast-or-famine dynamic.

On big powder days, The Trap is rocking at noon and doesn't slow down until after dinner. Often a lull follows, but the pack reforms, dressed for a night out, as it gets later or bands warm up.

Driggs resident Chris Thornton straggles in when the crowd returns. He's a regular and has landed an occasional job running the sound at the bar.

"There's a nice atmosphere — never a bunch of drunks smashing stuff up," Thornton said. "There is a really good vibe, and it's nice to be on the mountain."

To most patrons, The Trap is known for two things — as an après ski headquarters and a live music haven.

Local and regional bands normally take the stage Thursdays through Saturdays, and food and drink specials abound in the late afternoon. But managers and staff said the bar is in the middle of a revival, tweaking its menu and reaching out to a greater mix of musical outfits.

As Thornton tests the mics, two longtime climbing buddies from Seattle, Jack Lanum and Paul Gonzales, wander in, plop down on rustic stools in front of the bar and order a pitcher.

The two remembered The Trap from an RV trip that brought them through Targhee two years earlier and stopped back in the night before for a couple of beers and saw the Clumsy Lovers show.

They were hooked.

"There's great music and it's open," Lanum said. "There's the two best reasons right there."

When Lanum and Gonzales go out, they aren't looking for frills or a huge party — and that's why they like The Trap. As they said, it doesn't have a pretentious feel and patrons commingle easily about the mountain conditions, their favorite run of the day and the always brilliant prospects tomorrow holds.

Once 9 p.m. hits, the Clumsy Lovers don't waste any time. A lady in the audience lets out a loud "yeeooow" and the five-piece bluegrass band races into their first two songs at 100 mph. Before the first set is over, dozens crowd onto the small dance floor, grooving loosely as folk, reggae and Celtic riffs fill The Trap.



Shakers fly in the hands of the bouncing crowd. Fiddle player Andrea Lewis races through the audience, jumping on top of the bar and playing her instrument with a recklessness that could throw her arm out.

All is good. All is happy.

“I get up here every couple weeks,” Thornton said. “They get a really good smattering of bands for what it is — a small remote place working on its rep.”

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