

WESTWARD *Haute!*

HOW TO LIVE THE GALLOPING LIFE OF A REAL COWBOY OR COWGIRL, BUT WITH FIVE-STAR FOOD, AMENITIES AND SERVICE **BY AMBER GIBSON**



*INN AT
DOS BRISAS*
Washington, Texas



Novelist Missy Lyons, in her 2013 romance *Cowboys Don't Sing* (Siren Publishing) offered an adroit summation of what calls us to open spaces and the best method of exploring them. "There is no better place to heal a broken heart than on the back of a horse," one of her characters opines, and we couldn't agree more fervently.

That said, what breaks our *spirits* are hard beds, campfire grits, and rattlesnakes—so is there a way to get our RDA of romance without the pain of life on the range. Oh yes there is!

In the foothills of Texas Hill Country, Inn at Dos Brisas lies midway between Austin and Houston. Equestrian lovers get to spend time at the second largest privately owned indoor riding arena in the state—perhaps taking a gentle Clydesdale named Sampson out for a carriage ride and picnic. Riding lessons are available, along with guided trail rides, but the ranch's sporting side extends far beyond four hooves.

Hunting excursions are offered seasonally, along with fishing, clay target shooting, tennis on the Inn's new court, and golf at one of several nearby country clubs. For a more relaxed day, stroll the grounds with a metal detector and hunt for belt buckles and other artifacts from the property's Civil War days, or take the complimentary BMW for a scenic drive to see the spring wildflowers.

Great food is serious business here. Take organic farming lessons at the 42-acre USDA-certified organic farm and geothermal greenhouse, or just enjoy the bounty of fresh produce in the dining

room of the only *Forbes Travel Guide* Five Star restaurant in Texas, garnishing cruelty-free and free-range chicken, Texas wagyu beef, and wild line caught black bass. It's no surprise that the salads here are works of art, featuring more than a dozen types of lettuce along with herbs, flowers, toasted nuts, and truffled cheese.

Customized baking and cooking classes are available, and the Inn's sommelier hosts regular wine tasting classes with gems from the 7,000-bottle cellar, in addition to a nightly wine and cheese reception.

Hacienda/Casita rates start at \$490 per night, including breakfast. **10000** **Champion Drive, dosbrisas.com**



MAGEE HOMESTEAD

Saratoga, Wyoming

The beautiful auburn cattle roaming at Magee Homestead aren't your typical Angus, but instead Akaushi, one of four Japanese heritage breeds categorized as wagyu by the American Wagyu Association. Yes, this new Relais & Chateaux ranch is raising its own grass-fed beef, along with operating the largest greenhouse in Wyoming to supply the ranch with heirloom organic produce. Between steak and eggs for breakfast, burgers and tenderloin salads for lunch, and beef tartare and hearty sirloin or strip cuts for dinner, guests enjoy the best American wagyu there is, round the clock, and Chef AJ Buchanio's elevated ranch cuisine never fails to surprise and delight.

The spa at this intimate adults-only hideaway is also impressive, with aromatherapy massages and oxygen facials featuring Tata Harper, Naturopathica, and herbs from the greenhouse. (The grotto soaking pool, hot tub, sauna, steam room, and swimming pool are open 24 hours a day.) With only nine luxurious cabins, guests often feel like they have the whole place to themselves. Activities include paintballing, archery, shooting sports, and ATV riding, in addition to new bolted rock climbing routes and an impressive multilevel aerial adventure ropes course. Naturally, horseback riding and fly fishing are also popular at this Orvis-endorsed lodge.



This *Forbes Travel Guide* Five Star resort is open late May through mid-October and the friendly young staffers have a passion for the outdoors. (The bartender, for example, will build and stoke a fire for stargazing and s'mores-making enjoyment as you curl up under a warm blanket and sip an Old Fashioned.)

Cabin rates start at \$1,400 per person per night in summer, inclusive of meals, drinks and two daily activities. **6429 State Highway 130, mageehomestead.com**



THE HOME RANCH

Clark, Colorado

A short drive from Steamboat Springs, The Home Ranch sprawls across 8,000 acres in the Elk River Valley. As a working guest ranch with 80 horses, riding and horsemanship classes are the primary draws here although there's superb fly fishing, mountain biking, and hiking, too. After spending an entire week with the same mount, it's hard to say goodbye, and a few guests have inquired about purchasing their horses. Although the steeds aren't for sale, there are still eight 50-acre home sites available at neighboring Murphy-Larsen Ranch for those who truly don't want to shed their mountain skin.

Stay at one of six rooms in the main lodge and shuffle down to dinner in slippers; everyone dines together at one long table after pre-dinner drinks by the fireplace. Three-course meals are served each night, while breakfast and lunch consist of more casual ranch fare like huevos rancheros and burgers to fuel daytime adventures.

The eight individual cabins offer more privacy and each comes with its own hot tub. All rooms are stocked with complimentary local treats from Steamboat Springs, including beef jerky, honey waffles, and chocolate pecan toffee.

Come winter, the ranch becomes a frosted winter wonderland, renowned as the best place for Nordic skiing in Colorado, with 20 miles of beautifully groomed trails. There's snowshoeing, tubing, and sleigh rides for non-skiers, too. Throughout the year, The Home Ranch hosts diverse events, including cattle round-ups, yoga and horse retreats for women, harvest weeks with regional food and drink artisans, and whiskey weekends with head distiller Rob Dietrich from Stranahan's Whiskey.

Rates start at \$3,600 for a lodge room and \$3,975 for a cabin for a three-night stay based on double occupancy, inclusive of meals, activities, and transfers to Yampa Valley Airport. **254880 County Road 129, homeranch.com**

NOW AVAILABLE
IN AMERICA
HIGH-PERFORMANCE
GERMAN WINDOWS &
DOORS



THE LUXURY OF DISTINCTION
Built to exacting standards and
intended for decades of
trouble-free, high-performance
operation, our windows and doors
are clearly for the discerning who
expect the very best.

AVAILABLE NOW
New York City • Asbury Park
Newark • Boston • Cape Cod and Islands

COMING SOON
Los Angeles • Monterey • Greenwich
Washington D.C. • Philadelphia

HARMAN
FENSTERBAU
BUILT FOR GENERATIONS

HFWINDOWS.COM
877.447.3888

THE RANCH AT ROCK CREEK

Philipsburg, Montana

Silver and sapphires were discovered in Montana in the 1800s, and the land near Philipsburg is still rich with natural treasures. Accommodations at The Ranch at Rock Creek range from canvas glamping cabins to two-story log homes for families, all with Rocky Mountain views. There's also an excellent kids club with age-appropriate outdoor education for children ages 4 to 12, so parents can enjoy adventure and time alone.

Geocaching, Ranger UTV tours to nearby mountain peaks, and photography workshops for beginner to advanced shutterbugs are available, with 6,600 acres of rugged Montana wilderness as subject and studio. Guests can also learn to identify and sketch wildlife and flora with certified master naturalists. (Keep your eyes peeled for bald and golden eagles in the sky and moose tracks on the ground.) It can also be nice to simply meander and soak up the sunshine and serenity. Bike to the grassy shores of Bikini Beach for a leisurely picnic or dive off the wooden dock for an afternoon swim. In the winter, the pond transforms into an ice rink with lights, music, and homestead hot toddies made with local moonshine and honey. During the summer, the ranch hosts weekly rodeos with barrel racing, roping, and bull riding.

Granite Lodge room rates start at \$3,000 per night in summer, based on double occupancy with a five-night minimum stay. This includes all meals, unlimited drinks, two daily on-property activities, and airport transfers to Missoula, Butte, or Anaconda. **79 Carriage House Lane, theranchatrockcreek.com**



TRIPLE CREEK RANCH

Darby, Montana

Tucked away in the Rockies in the heart of the Bitterroot Valley—the home of the Salish tribe of the Flathead nation and crossed by the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1805—Triple Creek Ranch has been a beloved Relais & Chateaux property for more than 20 years. Owners Craig and Barbara Barrett are consummate hosts, inviting guests for weekly cocktail hours at their home on the property. The Barretts have a passion for collecting classic and contemporary Western fine art and their private collection is one of the finest in the world. Original pieces are prominently displayed in guest rooms and throughout the property, and artist workshop weekends each spring and fall offer guests a



chance to paint and sculpt alongside prominent masters.

The food here is, in a word, exquisite. Dishes like pan-roasted squab with foraged huckleberries could be straight out of a Michelin-starred European restaurant. Book the private chef's table for a view of the kitchen while enjoying a seven-course tasting menu paired with wines from the extensive cellar.

For an adrenaline rush, there's mountain biking and whitewater rafting, along with riding ATVs or horses to explore the 26,000-acre CB Ranch just a couple of miles away. In winter, dog sledding and snowmobiling are preferred pastimes. Spot hawks, eagles, and herds of elk and bison on a morning nature safari, or take in scenic river floating, sapphire panning, or piecing together impossible Stave puzzles for a more relaxing pursuit.

Be warned: panning for sapphires can be addictive. Guests are allowed to keep any stones found in the Gem Mountain dirt and if they're large enough, the front desk will mail the sapphires off to Sri Lanka for cutting and heat treatment. These brilliant blue jewels are a souvenir simply like no other.

Cabin rates start at \$1,050 per night based on double occupancy, inclusive of meals, in-cabin dining, house wine, spirits, and beer, and ranch activities. 5551 West Fork Road, triplecreekranch.com 

CONCIERGE & EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE



OPEN 365 DAYS A YEAR, INCLUDING HOLIDAYS!

All Ages • No Appointment Necessary
Most Medical Insurance Plans Accepted
Medicare Patients • Workman's Comp
Concierge Medicine

URGENT CARE



OF
NEW JERSEY

2090 Route 27 North • Edison, NJ 08817

732-662-5650 • www.uconj.com

OPEN EVERY DAY FROM 8AM - 8PM