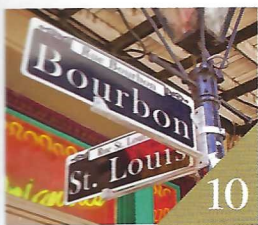
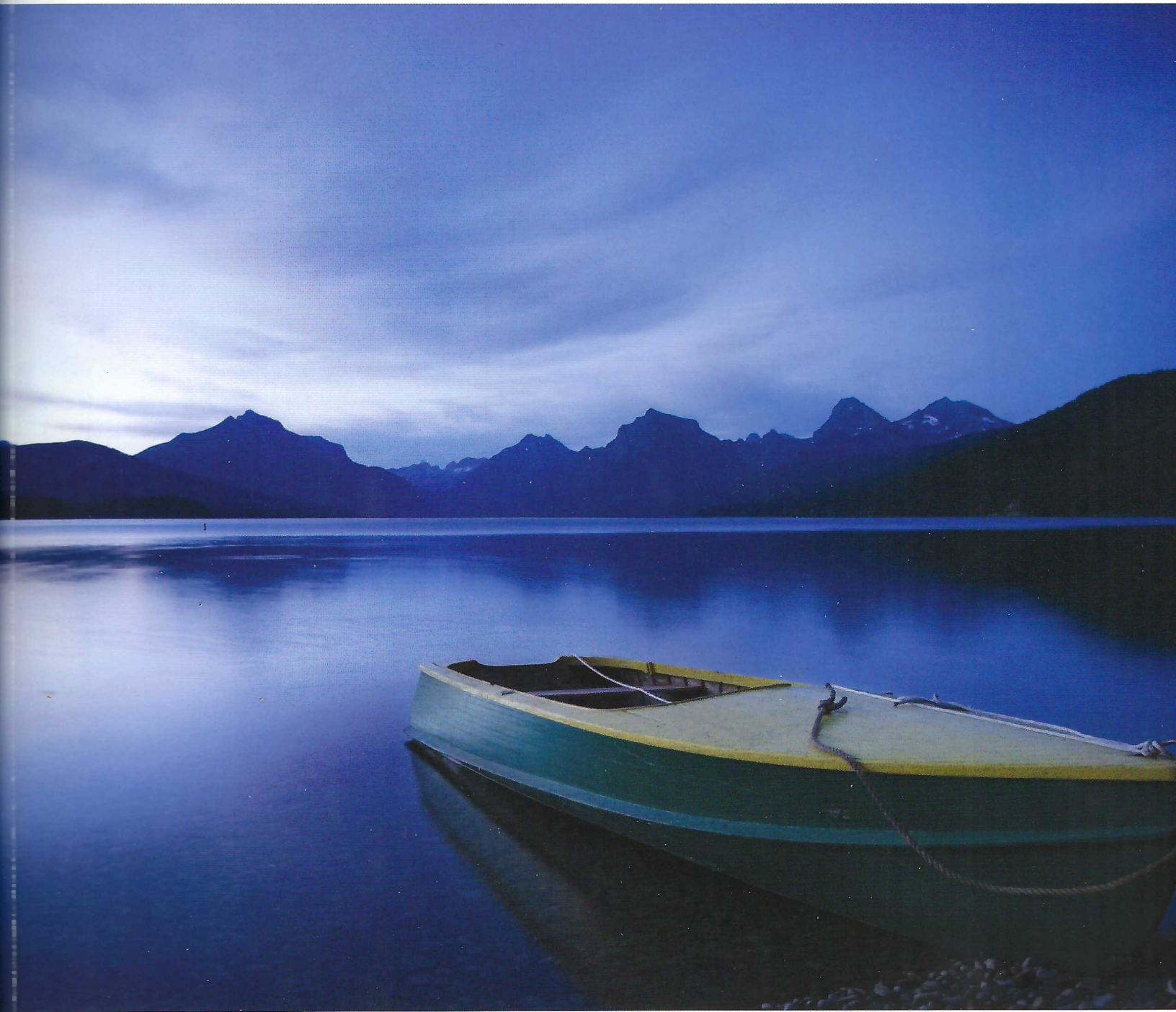


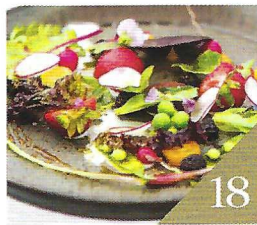
TRAVEL JOURNAL



ESCAPOLOGY

Little inspirations and big ideas for escaping in style.

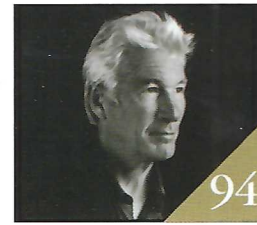
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CUISINE

Amazing chefs, great recipes, and the best dining in North America.

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CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

Actor Richard Gere discusses his love of travel and hospitality.

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BY STACEY ZABLE

WILD *in the* WEST

ICONIC AMERICA IS ALIVE
ON BESPOKE RANCHES

On horseback, skis or on foot, among snowy peaks and breathtaking nature, the American West whispers like a campfire story. There's a welcome quietude, even in lively company. Imaginations run wild in cinematic scenes. Out here, modernity knows its place. Earth, water and sky, unforgettable vistas, myths and legends—all form a living portrait where a rugged past meets a cultured new frontier.

Hard to picture a time when Illinois, Ohio and Missouri were considered “the West” to most Americans, who kept mostly to eastern cities, wondering what was out there. President Thomas Jefferson wondered, too. His confidential letter to Congress in 1803 was the catalyst for Lewis and Clark to form their Corps of Discovery Expedition, at a taxpayer cost of \$2,500. That's about \$52,000 in today's money—to map the untold riches of a continent.

Those treasures have grown steadily more popular in recent years, thanks in part to a new generation of experiential travelers with a passion for America. The National Park Service (which turned 100 in 2016) continues setting attendance records. Montana's Glacier National Park recently hit almost 3 million recreational visitors, while Yellowstone National Park—touching Wyoming and parts of Montana and Idaho—surpassed 4.2 million. Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park recently welcomed 4.5 million visitors in a single year. These annual migrations testify to the powerful draw of western wonders.

Factor in the renewed popularity of “Westerns,” country music's mainstream crossover, the insatiable appetite for books and documentaries—it's a new expression of an old tradition: People from Manhattan to Mumbai romanticize sepia-toned notions of “how the West was won.” The great Native American nations, cowboys and ranchers, pioneers and their hardscrabble lives continue to fascinate us.

The Wild West has always been known for colorful characters—and innkeepers are no exception. A collection of extraordinary independent ranches has taken the hardest practices from America's “Westward Ho” era—riding herd, camping on the range, facing the beauty and fury of western winters—and made them into memorable encounters. Horseback riding, dogsledding, hiking, spa relaxation and brilliant cuisine all have a home where the buffalo roam. It's “Manifest Destiny” redefined, as lifestyle explorers blaze new trails.





"THE LAST BEST PLACE"

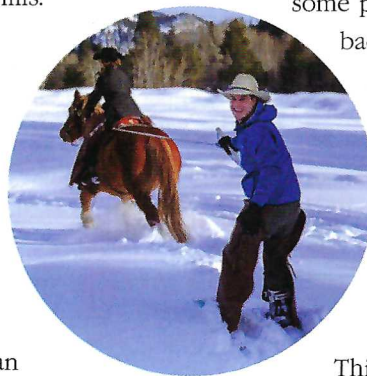
Voyagers to the Bitterroot Mountain Range in western Montana are richly rewarded: They enter a seemingly endless landscape of snow-capped peaks, green valleys and tree-lined hills.

Author William Kittredge called Montana "The Last Best Place" and, viewed from the striking Bitterroot valley, you understand.

The Montana that Kitteridge wrote about (and as producer forever memorialized in the cinematic love letter, "A River Runs Through It") is Lewis and Clark country. Archetypes of the American can-do spirit, these explorers spent more time in what would one day be Montana than any other place along their voyage. In his journal, Captain Meriwether Lewis wrote that Big Sky country was filled with "seens of visionary inchantment." Spelling aside, he captured it perfectly.

For your own journal entry, travel in comfort to Montana's Bitterroot Range. It remains the "enchanted" place that fired Lewis' imagination.

Here beneath Trapper Peak, highest mountain in the Bitterroot Range, exists a natural playground for western explorers. Show some pioneer spirit and head out via dogsled, on horseback or skis to navigate acres of pristine snow. When it's time for more adrenaline, glistening Montana meadows "a utopia for skjoring, a Norwegian word meaning "ski driving." Guests put on their skis, trade in poles for a tow rope and get pulled by a rider on horseback. It's like water-skiing—in snow, with a horse. Your part is to hang on and enjoy an incomparable joyride.



This is the world of Triple Creek Ranch in Darby, Montana. Owners Barbara and Craig Barrett have carved out an enviable slice of western paradise with 700 acres of four-season fun. Their nearby 26,000-acre CB Ranch is a working cattle operation where guests get a feel for the authentic West



(without scuffing their Stuart Weitzman boots). It's also where you find the orchard and garden that personify gourmet farm-to-table dining at this luxurious all-inclusive ranch resort. High-touch service accompanies each meal, whether it's sumptuous breakfast served in secluded cabins, picnic lunches elegantly packed to accompany outdoor adventures, or any feast served in the vaulted-ceiling Dining Room of the Main Lodge. An award-winning wine cellar and full bar on the Rooftop Lounge add to the distinctive culinary experience.

Montana is never out of season, although wintertime escapades at Triple Creek Ranch hold special charm. First, select a mode of transportation. How about your own dogsled? After a brief lesson on how to harness and hitch the team to a sled, to stop and go and otherwise steer, you're out gliding over the powder. Guides do the driving for those who just want to revel in the scenery. If you prefer to explore via snowmobile while at the Ranch, that option is available as well.



Wine Spectator has bestowed its coveted Award of Excellence on the Triple Creek Ranch wine cellar for ten consecutive years. Curated by sommelier Jeremy White, the collection has grown to more than 700 selections, representing every major wine region in the world.

The all-inclusive experience, so rare in true luxury resorts, is another thoughtful step the Barretts have taken to assure that you feel completely at home at Triple Creek Ranch.



Executive Chef Jacob Leatherman is an exemplar of the Relais & Châteaux culinary philosophy.

By horseback the snowy ranch is captivating, as the noble animals in their winter coats show you the natural world. Triple Creek Ranch offers a year-round riding program with 60 fine horses. Like other activities, horseback riding is included; an activities team orchestrates three to five rides a day, depending on the season.

Some come to challenge the Continental Divide itself, on one of more than 60 runs at the Lost Trail Powder Mountain Ski Resort. Lift tickets, rentals and welcome touches like hot beverages and freshly baked cookies en route are part of the all-inclusive rate.

Not a downhill skier? Try snowshoeing along a Bitterroot National Forest trail, or traversing almost 30 miles of groomed cross-country ski trails at nearby Chief Joseph Pass. All sizes of cross-country skis and snowshoes are on hand in the ranch's Activity Center for guests to borrow at will. Simpler pleasures come in the form of ice fishing, and the childhood thrills of snow tubing.

Guests return from their snow day to the splendid gastronomy of Executive Chef Jacob Leatherman. His "Montana Rugged Luxury" menu of Aspen Smoked Sturgeon served with Bison, Grilled Lobster with Peruvian White Bean Puree, and Roasted Antelope Loin with Brie Grits once earned his team an invitation to the James Beard House in New York. With the inspired pairings of sommelier Jeremy White, Triple Creek Ranch is an exemplar of the Relais & Châteaux philosophy that great wine and cuisine are essential to "the Art of Living."

When not out marveling at the infinite Big Sky, ranch guests retreat to 25 sublime private log cabins dotting the property. Sore muscles and stress dissolve in private hot tubs available on the outdoor decks of most cabins. No need to leave for a massage—therapists can set up right by your wood-burning fireplace. Curl up with additional comforts designed for making the outside

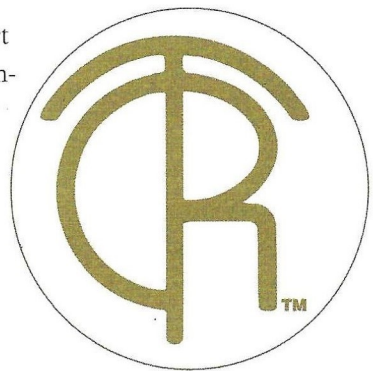


world disappear: king-size beds with lush linens, forested views, and a deep sense of place. The adults-only retreat for those 16 and older encourages guests to break from the burden of technology: Though there's no cell service, there is complimentary Wi-Fi, and land lines and free long distance in each cabin.

The all-inclusive experience, so rare in true luxury resorts, is another thoughtful step the Barretts have taken to assure that you feel completely at home at Triple Creek Ranch. Frequent guests say they return because of how it feels here—the ultimate compliment for any innkeeper. That elusive essence is the Barrett's passion, and their specialty. Honeymooners and romantics love the “*mi casa es su casa*” treatment as well. They first enjoy Montana's wealth of wonders, then cozy up in their private cabin—just room service, a roaring fire ... and love.

When summer comes to Montana, it awakens whole new dimensions in leisure. Fly fishing is one of our favorites—owner Craig Barrett is an avid angler who was originally drawn to the ranch's location for its proximity to the region's best steelhead fishing. The former CEO of chipmaker Intel, Barrett's business card now reads “Cowboy & Fisherman.” Challenging and contemplative, fly

fishing at this ORVIS®-endorsed resort may be the most intimate way to commune with the Montana wilderness. A half- or full-day fish float belongs on any summer itinerary. And since you're already wet, be sure to pan for actual sapphires in gravel collected from mines in the nearby Sapphire Mountain range.



To keep your higher mind engaged between hardy ranch pursuits, take in the stunning art collection curated personally by the Barretts. Triple Creek Ranch displays original works by American masters from Frederic Remington to Oleg Stavrowsky, with some of the most important pieces located in the Barretts' private home. Express an interest and they may invite you in for a showing, for cocktails, or to share a meal in the Ranch Dining Room. Craig and Barbara Barrett are innkeepers of the heart. At the culmination of your visit, they will feel like old friends—and Triple Creek Ranch, your ranch away from home.



More about Triple Creek Ranch page 92

PRAIRIE HOME COMPASSION

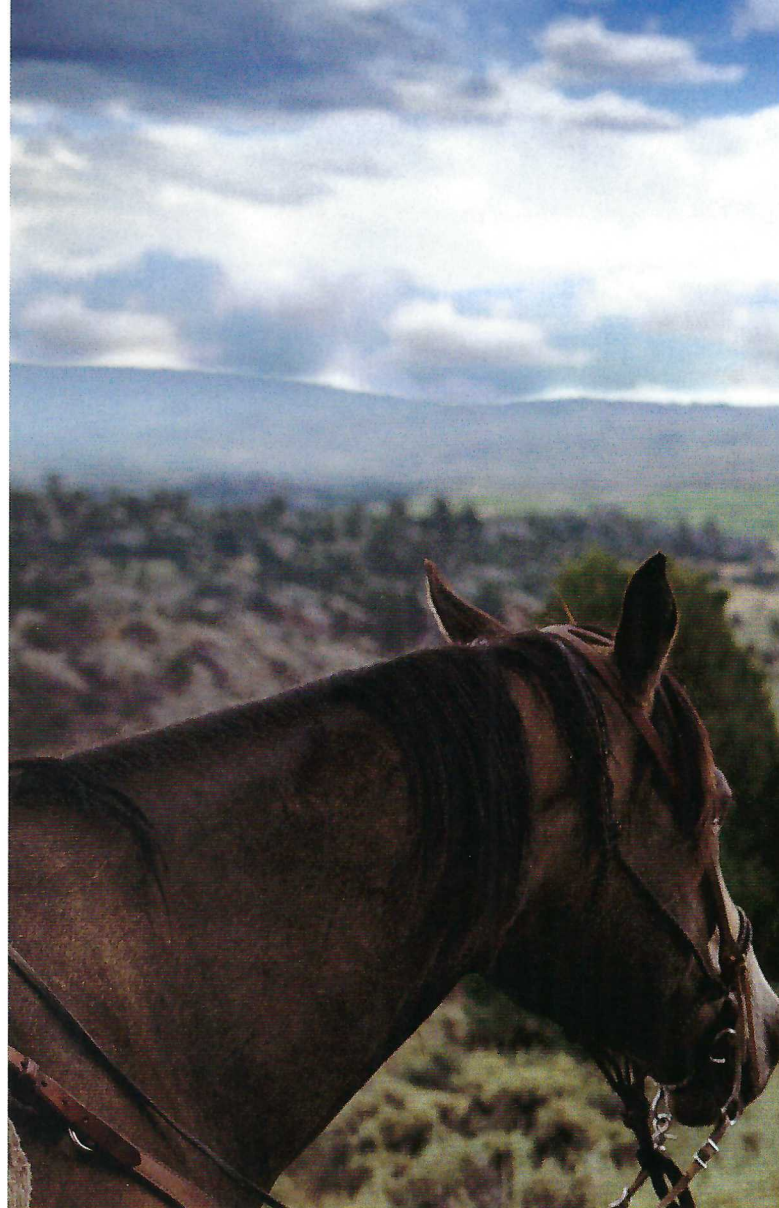
The pretty town of Saratoga, Wyoming, holds the worst-kept, best-loved secret in the state: Hobo Hot Springs. The healing marvel drew Native Americans to this spot eons before wagons came west. And it's not just the water. There's an ageless beauty to the North Platte River Valley, with its intricately carved landforms and vivid flora. Days start with sunbeams peeking through cabin windows, and pass through dreamy amusements into cool evenings.



Disconnecting from the grid and finding your inner cowpoke happens almost by osmosis at the Magee Homestead, a high mountain “prairie hideaway” located just outside Saratoga. With stirring views of the valley, Magee Homestead is exclusive—they welcome a maximum of 27 guests, adults only; however, guests of any age are welcome with a “Rent the Homestead” option. People visit from May to October for high season in the high country, and countless bespoke moments.

The property where Magee Homestead now sits was a cow camp and hay-producing ranch in the early 1900s. Those homesteaders never could have imagined the Wellness Pavilion and Magee Spa standing there now. Organic massages, facials and natural body treatments top the list with frequent guests. Relaxation is perfected by the Grotto soaking pool with sauna and steam rooms. The wellness programming feeds off the wondrous surroundings with yoga and meditation in the Magee yoga yurt or underneath the open skies. More natural ways to relax come in the form of fly fishing for wild trout, and hiking or biking over 50 miles of trails and in the nearby Medicine Bow National forest.

A far cry from cowboy digs of old are Magee Homestead's beautifully restored log cabins. The names of individual cabins come from the original property title work, which likely reflects the names of the first homesteaders here. The nine hand-hewn cabins have the unmistakable feel of a Western retreat with contemporary rustic furnishings, high wood-beam ceilings, outdoor porches and stone fireplaces in some. Quitting one's day job to live and work at Magee Homestead is a common guest fantasy. There's always next season.





MEDITATIVE MOMENTS

The peaceful Western setting has many perfect spaces for rejuvenation, including the wonderful Yoga Yurt, taking you further away from the everyday.



More about Magee Homestead page 89



GOURMET RANCHING

Today's farm-to-table culinary movement seeks to reestablish a link between nutrition and location that American pioneers understood. They lived off the land, improvised a lot, and took cues from

Native cultures. Such were the humble beginnings of American cuisine. The trend has come full circle, as luxurious Western inns—some doubling as working cattle ranches—now invite guests to harvest home-grown produce in kitchen gardens and cook alongside top chefs.

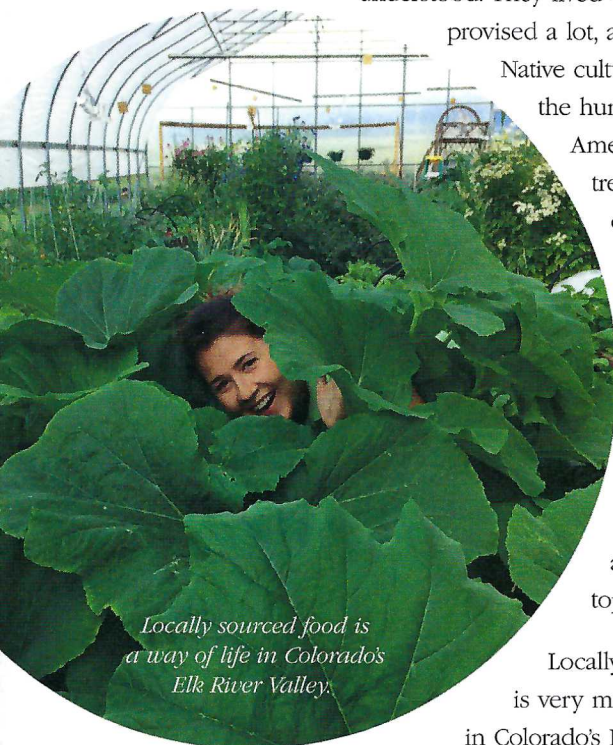
Locally sourced food is very much a way of life in Colorado's Elk River Valley.

Just north of Steamboat Springs in Clark, Colorado, is The Home Ranch, a 4,000-acre working cattle operation that began life as a frontier homestead. Today, The Home Ranch, surrounded by the one-million-acre Zirkel

Wilderness along the western edge of the Continental Divide, is an outpost of excellence, a winner of several *Wine Spectator* awards, and ranked among *Condé Nast Traveler's* Readers' Choice Awards Top Resorts in Colorado.

Ranch-raised organic ingredients in this kitchen include cattle, pigs, chickens and produce from the greenhouse and bed garden. Garden Tours take place twice a week or more if there is true interest from guests, who are invited to cut salad greens, pick fresh strawberries and harvest alongside the Ranch's "Green Team" of horticulturists. Alfresco dining—including an outdoor kitchen with brick oven next to the garden—showcases the vibrant colors and freshness of the home-grown treasures that soon arrive expertly prepared and plated.

Executive Chef Jonathan Gillespie has a well-known Open Door policy when it comes to his kitchen. It's informal: Gillespie will set up a time for guests interested in cooking to work side-by-side with him. Sitting down to enjoy Gillespie's haute cuisine is even better than meeting him. Hyper-fresh produce from the garden—crisp salad greens, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, potatoes, basil, tomatoes and more—inspire the menu. Family-style dining and group tables in the dining room or the seasonal outdoor locations cause spontaneous fun. It's a truly unique encounter; perfect for the Western now voyager.



Locally sourced food is a way of life in Colorado's Elk River Valley.



More about The Home Ranch page 90