

MODERN LUXURY

# PEAK



ASPEN-SNOWMASS BOULDER BEAVER CREEK BRECKENRIDGE CRESTED BUTTE DENVER STEAMBOAT TELLURIDE VAIL





84

## features

### 62 FADE TO BLACK

The night sky can be the perfect canvas for astrophotography. But to explore dark skies, you need to leave the glow of the city behind.

### 70 RALLY TIME

A Denver race car driver speeds 20,000 miles across seven continents on a global mission to end human trafficking.

### 74 BEST OF DENVER

Here are *Peak's* picks for 16 must-see destinations, culled from a colorful new guidebook to the Front Range.

### 84 BACK IN THE SADDLE

A private, working ranch in Wyoming lures guests with the promise of adventure and transformation.

### 88 EMPIRE RISING

Chef and entrepreneur Mawa McQueen expanded her realm in the Roaring Fork Valley on a legacy of grit and determination.

### 92 MODERN ARTIFACTS

Set against the archaeological wonder of the ancient pyramids of Egypt, Dior offers a men's collection fit for the modern man.



**On the Cover**  
Location:  
Dunton Hot Springs, Colo.

Photographed by  
Jack Richmond



# BACK IN THE SADDLE

A PRIVATE, WORKING RANCH IN WYOMING  
LURES GUESTS WITH THE PROMISE OF  
ADVENTURE AND TRANSFORMATION.

BY JENNIE NUNN



Clockwise from top left: The property's main lodge under a starry sky; Reid Creek is a working ranch, horses and all; the lodge's porch and rocking chairs invite guests to sit for a spell; cowboy boots are de rigueur.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF  
REID CREEK LODGE





EVEN THOUGH I GREW UP IN A SMALL, coastal town 40 minutes from downtown L.A., I've always felt suited for ranch life. My mom grew up on a farm raising goats and horses, my dad took us camping and I rode horses at summer sleepaway camp. All these years later, I think the magnetic pull of the mountains, still air and bright stars is much more than that. Maybe it's the weight of living in big cities for years, or perhaps it's the allure of the pure humility and grit of ranch living.

When I got wind of newly opened Reid Creek Lodge ([wagonhound.com](http://wagonhound.com)), a family-owned working ranch by Wagonhound Land & Livestock Co. that dates back to the 1800s, I jumped at the chance to embrace my country side—cowboy hat, dusty jeans and all.

Tucked in the Laramie Range in the Rocky Mountains, Reid Creek Lodge is roughly an hour's drive from Casper, just south of the teeny town of Douglas. Set on 300,000 acres, the ranch feels like your own private national park. Getting there is as easy as hopping on a direct flight from Denver. After being greeted at the airport by ranch staff, we make a pit stop to suit up in western gear at the 104-year-old boot purveyor, Lou Taubert Ranch Outfitters. I settle on a pair of cowboy boots with an Aztec-printed wool shaft and pull straps with turquoise leather tassels. I'm really going for it.

Armed with new kicks (which I'll wear for the next three days straight), I immerse myself in ranch life. The 8,000-square-foot luxe log cabin-like lodge has space for 22 guests with a floor-to-ceiling stone wood-burning fireplace, a game room with a pool table and an outdoor porch lined with rocking chairs. Reid Creek's private chef artfully prepares gourmet breakfasts with homemade rustic rosemary sourdough bread, pop-up picnic lunches and sit-down dinners like wild-caught salmon. Once settled in, we focus on designing each day based on endless offerings, from archery to hiking and wildlife viewing to fishing. If relaxing by one of the property's idyllic alpine reservoirs with a picnic blanket »











Clockwise from top left: Dinners are a sit-down affair; dessert and a dram can be enjoyed fireside; big picture windows capture expansive Wyoming views, and the lodge's decor embraces the West; exposed wooden beams add a cozy element to the guest rooms.



and a book is on the docket, that's completely acceptable too.

I join a trail ride through open plains under painterly skies. I'm on a horse named Hollywood, who falls into a full-blown gallop for much of the ride to keep up with his equine buddies. I feel like I'm flying, and though it's exhilarating, I'm equally terrified since I haven't done more than an occasional trot for nearly two decades. The horseback training from my camp days kicks in. Back at the barn, I say goodbye to Hollywood with a sigh of relief—but also with a huge sense of accomplishment. I don't even mind that my legs, shoulders and back are sore.

Later, we embark on a bumpy ATV tour to a prime hiking spot flanked by massive rock facades and majestic overlooks. We also venture on an e-bike along gravel and dirt roads to one of the ranch's many vistas to look for elk, pronghorn and bald eagles. The common thread here is the authenticity of the place and staff (many of them have grown up nearby) and the concept of time marked only by sunrise and sunset. And that's entirely intentional.

"Programs are not designed in an isolated way for entertainment," says Andrea Nicholas Perdue, CEO of Wagonhound Holdings. "Guests experience a connection to the land that is a reflection of a way of life in the rural Wyoming mountains. Our guests' energy can be solely focused on each other and the joy of spending their most valuable resource [their time], disconnecting from their everyday lives and immersing themselves in an authentic American West experience." The all-inclusive nature of a visit to Reid Creek Lodge means there's no need to stress about schedules, participation or timing.

Being present, pushing oneself beyond the comfort zone, and making connections is what it's all about. By the end of my three-day stay, I've come away with two self-realizations: I will sign up for horseback riding lessons back home, and I will make it a priority to challenge myself with different things, even if clouded by the distractions of everyday city life. ♦