CALL ME HIGH MAINTENANCE, OR CALL ME SAVVY. (Or both!) I’ve never understood why one must sacrifice creature comforts to soak up unspoiled natural beauty.

That’s why when I long to escape from it all—other than 5-diamond perks and pampering, that is!—I pause at The Resort at Paws Up.

The 37,000-acre working cattle ranch in western Montana is the ultimate in refined relaxation. Even city slickers can ride horses, try clay shooting, fly-fish for trout or hike among jaw-dropping scenery. You can go white-water rafting on the Blackfoot River, rappel down cliffs that made Lewis & Clark swoon or straddle a horse as part of dude ranch cattle drives. And after you scamper you can pamper—till the Black Angus cows come home. Paws Up takes the rustic roughing it out of ranch resorts, providing luxurious spa treatments, heated bathroom floors, hot tubs, gourmet grub, devoted service and—we know. We had you at “luxurious spa.”

Actually, it’s spectacular: a string of luxury tents beside a bubbling brook, with heated massage tables and a view of the meadows—but no clichéd spa elevator music to soothe you. Instead, you’ll hear birds chirp, the brook babble and the wind rustle the pines.

For digs, you can choose between nestling in a private home or in a luxury tent—that’s right, tent.

With two to four bedrooms accommodating four to eight guests, the sprawling homes are perfect for family getaways or reunions, to which Paws Up caters. And the secluded wilderness of the gated wilderness estates offers privacy even with their many windows and exterior decks (complete with six-person hot tubs).

Beyond the fireplace and vaulted ceiling of the “great room” (aren’t they all?) lie a cook’s kitchen, a loft game room and master suites, each with master bathrooms sporting a jetted spa tub, spa products, plush towels and a slate shower. (Other walls, floors and ceilings are largely wood.)

And don’t worry. You may be miles from nowhere, but you’ll have high-speed wireless Internet, 42-inch flat-screen TVs with satellite programming and surround-sound entertainment systems.

Also dotting the wilderness are Honey-moon Homes with champagne, a wagon ride to the restaurant and other amenities. As for those tents, relax—they’re the ultimate glamping (luxury camping) and as secure as those used for big outdoor wedding receptions. River Camp tents even include a personal camping butler and housekeeping service, not to mention electricity, a bathroom, a bed and delish meals.

Once you’ve cocooned, you can rise and roam among 100 miles of trails by horseback or ATV, often amid cattle or elk that roam the property.

You’d have to stay weeks (darn!) to sample all the activities, from kayaking, paintball and mountain biking to swimming, boating, hiking and rappelling.

Rapt for rapids? They’re class I and II (easy-to-moderate) on the Blackfoot River by raft or inflatable kayak, and class III-plus rapids (bumpy) for the Alberton Gorge all-day whitewater adventure.

Or to tap your inner Hunger Games’ Katniss, try archery, taught from beginner to expert with an emphasis on hunting. You’ll quiver with excitement as you bend your bow toward 3D animal targets. No blood, no fowl.

Kids’ activities are all supervised and age-appropriate, from fishing, hiking, biking and horseback riding to wildlife appreciation, summer wilderness workshops and full- or half-day Kids Corps of Discovery getaways. Those day camps include visits to ghost towns and feeding of baby animals as well as lessons in gold mining, jewelry making, compass reading and animal tracking. Kids also can pretend to be princes and princesses on horse-drawn carriage rides.

After working up an appetite, head to the chic wagon— that is, Paws Up’s two restaurants, whose rustic ranch cuisine melds fresh meats and produce from the area with sophisticated cooking. Try the Rocky Mountain trout sautéed with herbs—or opt for a barbecue with vintage Pinot Noirs.

With all this, satisfied you’ll be satiated? With all this, satisfied you’ll be satiated? Well, don’t forget to pause to smell the pines at Paws Up. Chances are you’ve never seen such expansive natural beauty, which the resort bills as “The Last Best Place.” And it’s no exaggeration.
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With all this, satisfied you’ll be satiated? No, don’t forget to pause to smell the pines blowing in the wind rustle the pines. You’d have to stay weeks (darn!) to soak up the breathtaking scenery. You can go white-water rafting on the Blackfoot River, rappel down cliffs that made Lewis & Clark swoon or straddle a horse to ghost towns and feeding of baby animals as well as lessons in gold mining, jewelry making, compass reading and animal tracking. Kids also can pretend to be princes and princesses on horse-drawn carriage rides.

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