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HOMIE — on the — RANGE

Five irresistible Montana retreats infuse agendas with an authentic experience of the West

By Lori Tenny

Calling all city slickers! Under the big skies of Montana, fresh air, untouched wilderness and ranch-style adventure await groups wishing to unplug and rejuvenate.

Montana is home to dozens of scenic and remote properties. The following retreats pull out all the stops to inspire, reward and motivate attendees with gorgeous settings, rustically luxurious accommodations, top-drawer culinary experiences and distinctive diversions.

The 320 Guest Ranch, Big Sky

www.320ranch.com

Located south of Bozeman near Big Sky, the 320 Guest Ranch is set in the middle of the Gallatin National Forest and close to Yellowstone National Park. The 110-year-old homestead, reborn over the years as one of the state's top properties, borrows from its rich past in its deluxe log cabins, chalets and log homes, as well as its conference center, restaurants and other facilities.

"The 320 Guest Ranch is unlike any ranch destination or resort," says Susan Murphy, director of sales at the property. "The historical ranch offers beautiful accommodations with a real Montana flavor. We offer a conference center that has a fireplace to keep the cozy atmosphere so groups feel more relaxed."

The ranch features a full array of adventures, from equestrian options to fly fishing and hiking, as well as the year-round activities at nearby Big Sky, famous for skiing.

"Our groups rarely spend the entire day in a meeting because there is so much to do here," she says, pointing to standout options such as unforgettable horseback excursions



MEET IN A PLACE UNLIKE ANY OTHER



Photo courtesy of The Resort at Paws Up



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From breathtaking scenery to modern facilities, Western Montana's Glacier Country is filled with more than enough to share. Make this a meeting that won't soon be forgotten as you discover the experiences that are only possible in Montana.



Urban ESCAPE

Montana may be renowned for its wilderness retreats, but you can also find places to escape in the state's bustling cities. Case in point: Billings, where The Northern Hotel recently reemerged as a historically hip haven for both locals and visitors.

The property, which originally opened in 1904 and has hosted presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and Richard Nixon, holds a special place in the city's past.

It was purchased by Billings natives Mike and Chris Nelson in 2009 and loving restored and reimagined via a multimillion-dollar renovation. The 10-story property, with 160 guest rooms and 12,000 square feet of meeting space, reopened in 2013 and is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It has become a social hub for the community, a hot spot for visitors and a favorite for groups meeting in town.

The Northern, which labels itself as "unpretentiously luxurious," boasts a chic and contemporary design with a nod to the building's treasured past and Montana's signature Western style. Sleek furnish-

ings, giant photos of galloping horses and landscapes, an inviting lobby fireplace, an elegant marble floor and two award-winning restaurants are among the highlights.

Bernie's Diner specializes in traditional comfort food with an inventive twist, while TEN is the hotel's fine dining establishment that has become one of the state's top restaurants. Helmed by chef Tim Freeman, TEN serves classic American cuisine with an innovative international flair, including steak, pork, fish, game and fowl. Creative craft cocktails, signature beer floats and regional microbrews are on tap at TEN's bar.

For more info, visit www.thenorthernhotel.com.

THE NORTHERN HOTEL, BILLINGS



into the wilderness, fun chuckwagon barbeques along the river and sleigh rides leading to a bonfire and tasty treats.

Outstanding cuisine is a highlight of the property, she adds.

"We feature Montana favorites such as elk medallions and bison, yet we cater to our guests and design many meals to make each experience memorable," Murphy says.

The 320 Guest Ranch accommodates groups of up to 250.

Flathead Lake Lodge, Bigfork

www.flatheadlodelodge.com

A third-generation family-run dude ranch, Flathead Lake Lodge in Glacier Country warmly welcomes groups with its majestic setting and endless activities—on water and land.

"Our beautiful location and excellence in hospitality built on Western family values set us apart as a great meetings retreat," says Jason St. Clair, director of sales and marketing for Quarter Circle LA Ranches, Flathead Lake Lodge. "I would also add our all-inclusive rate structure as well as our

private ranch setting with access to 2,000 acres and a half-mile of lakefront property."

Some of the property's best experiences for groups include a variety of horseback adventures, hiking and boating, according to St. Clair.

"We can also customize activities based on our group needs," he says. "The word 'yes' is ingrained in our service level."

This year, the property refreshed its accommodations with new furnishings, flooring and window coverings.

"They really do look wonderful," St. Clair says, of the renovation project. "We were able to update our accommodations while keeping the rustic charm that defines our property."

Flathead Lake Lodge offers a conference center and 5,500 square feet of meeting space.

The Resort at Paws Up, Greenough

www.pawsup.com

The Resort at Paws Up, in Greenough, situated northeast of Missoula,

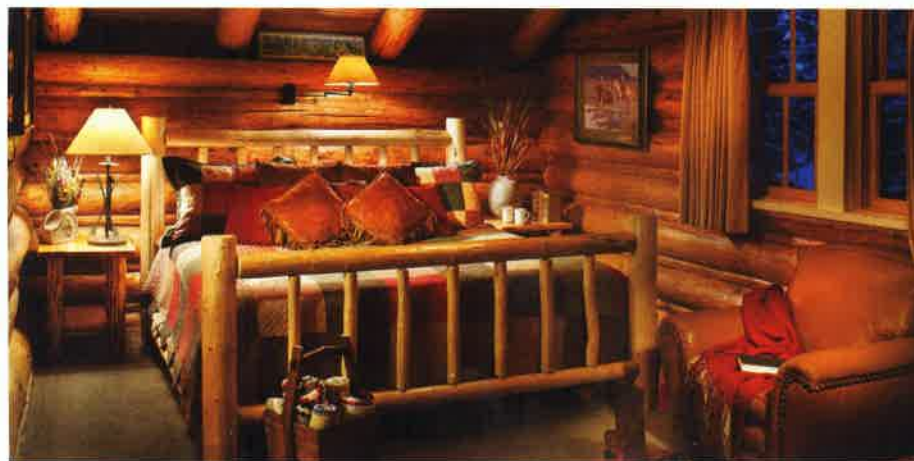
spans roughly 37,000 acres in the heart of the Blackfoot Valley and accommodates groups of up to 200 people in high-end ranch homes, estates and safari-style tented camps with private butlers.

Set on a working ranch and along the Blackfoot River, the property is a natural for teambuilding programs such as cattle drives, horseback rides,

fly fishing and river rafting. Yet the list of diversions goes on, with sport clay shooting, hiking, mountain biking, hot-air ballooning, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and dog sledding. During events, attendees might also find themselves learning how to throw a hatchet or enjoying a roping, barrel racing and mounted shooting performance. New this season is the Tree Top Adventure Ropes Course, with 10 aerial and four climbing elements.

The Resort at Paws Up specializes in sophisticated ranch cuisine that mainly utilizes locally grown produce and locally sourced meat and fish, whether groups are indulging in a meal at the property's restaurants and group venues or feasting on a chuckwagon-style lunch along the river.

When attendees want to wind down, Spa Town's outdoor treatment tents open to the scenic meadows and surrounding mountains.



FLATHEAD LAKE LODGE



THE RANCH AT ROCK CREEK

The Ranch at Rock Creek, Philipsburg www.theranchatrockcreek.com

Set southeast of Missoula near the historic mining town of Philipsburg, The Ranch at Rock Creek is one of the West's most exclusive retreats. The 6,600-acre ranch is a fully inclusive experience that incorporates accommodations, gourmet ranch cuisine and all activities into the rate.

Private luxury homes, glamping tents and lodge suites are among the distinctive guest units, which can collectively accommodate groups of roughly 75 people.

More than 20 year-round activities are offered, including a full lineup of equestrian ranch adventures, fly fishing, target sports, a ropes course, biking, hiking, geocaching, wild-life-watching tours, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and sledding. The ranch's Red Dollar Saloon entertains groups with billiards, shuffleboard and

four lanes of bowling.

Spa treatments and yoga round out the offerings.


The ranch can host group events at a variety of indoor and outdoor venues, including the Buckle Barn and its outdoor lawn.

Triple Creek Ranch, Darby www.triplecreekranch.com

Located south of Missoula on the southern side of Trapper Peak, the highest mountain in the Bitterroot Range of Western Montana, Triple Creek Ranch is a memorable setting for intimate groups of up to 62 people.

Posh cabins and ranch homes, exceptional dining, year-round outdoor adventures and a fine Western art collection are highlights of the property.

At the ranch, groups can partake in horseback riding, hiking, snowshoeing, archery and sapphire panning, all included in the rate. Off-property activities can be arranged for an additional fee, including fly fishing, whitewater rafting, cattle drives and all-terrain vehicle tours.

A signature experience is venturing into nearby CB Ranch, spanning 26,000 acres, for four-wheel drive tours, horseback rides, gourmet picnics and wildlife viewing, as well as team penning at Triple Creek's cattle and bison operation. 



TRIPLE CREEK RANCH



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