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BEYOND THE BORDER: THE RESORT AT PAWS UP, MONTANA

A Montana ranch resort affords the ultimate corporate retreat, meeting or event.

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Glamping (glamorous camping) may be getting plenty of attention these days, but the folks at **The Resort at Paws Up** in Montana aren't just following a trend; they created it. The Lipson family, owners of Paws Up, has been involved with cattle ranching for over 40 years, first in Colorado and later in Montana. They purchased the 37,000-acre, 140-year-old cattle ranch outside Missoula over two decades ago, and after several years decided to transform it to welcome guests. "There really wasn't anything at the high end," says Laurence Lipson, managing director. "Paws Up is not a guest ranch ... it's a resort on a ranch."

Indeed, it remains a working cattle ranch today. In fact, from the very first time you step your boots onto the property, you'll see—and feel—the difference. "We didn't want to offer just guest rooms, so we built individual homes on 4 acres," explains Lipson. The resort now offers clusters of private homes, as well as luxury glamping tents. These tents are the last word in luxury—think heated floors, spa-style bathrooms and stunning décor that would make Ralph Lauren salivate. They are also what Paws Up is best known for—originating the glamping trend in the United States.

Paws Up, named for the way a dog jumps to greet you, lives up to its name with a warm and welcoming vibe. Plenty of properties claim to have a relaxed elegance or a laid-back luxury, but this resort defines it. The staff is top notch and the resort is more casual than a whiteglove resort; Lipson refers to it as America's premier luxury ranch resort.

The spectacular 37,000-acre property is surrounded by protected land and is brimming with history. There really is a river that runs through it, and yes, it's that river from the beloved book (though the Robert Redford/ Brad Pitt movie was shot in a different location). Look in any direction and that land free of distraction belongs to Paws Up. It is awe-inspiring to look out over the landscape and see a herd of cattle or even elk. The blissful quietude is soul-soothing and in a world where distraction is de rigueur, Paws Up offers an antidote. Of course, that's not to say there is nothing to do but listen to the sounds of silence here. It's quite the opposite, with a seemingly limitless array of activities.

The 11,000-square-foot Wilderness Center is the nerve center of Paws Up (and where all groups meet for activities). Unlike many other resorts that bring in outside outfitters and/or guides, "98 percent of the activities take place right here on the property," says Lipson. River rafting, fly fishing, skeet shooting, sporting clays, ATV property tours (or to the nearby ghost town), hiking (there are 100 miles of trails) and a ropes course are all ideal for team-building or blowing off steam between meetings. Saddle up for a cattle ride or enjoy a trail ride with some of the most scenic vistas you'll find in America. Seeking more reflective and less rugged? Head to Spa Town, perhaps the most unique spot you'll ever surrender to a massage. The collection of glamping tents allows participants to enjoy the feeling of an alfresco treatment with the privacy and comfort of a luxury tent.

LODGING» There are 18 one-, two- and three-bedroom homes, 10 Wilderness Estate homes with three bedrooms and 30 tents (in five different campsites on the property). Buyouts accommodate 200 people, but groups as small as 10 are equally catered to here.

MEETINGS/EVENTS» They once paraded the bulls here, but now the century-old bull barn is used as the most interesting meeting space you've ever seen. It's rustic, yet refined in this barn, where upstairs banquets handle about 150 guests and two additional breakout meeting rooms are on hand. Playing off the property's history, the Saddle Club is another interesting place to hold a meeting or event. This indoor arena, with capacity for up to 300, is used most often for rodeos or shows (you can arrange for a private rodeo for your group for a fun Western-themed event) but has several rooms (including the Tack Room) that inspire a pride of place. Naturally, the great outdoors lends itself to many events, from riverside dinners at the campsites to chuckwagon celebrations.

DINING» There are two restaurants: Pomp (dinner only) and the Trough (breakfast and lunch). Those staying in the tents have their own camp, complete with a Paws Up-style butler for meals. Expect gourmet food with a Western slant.

WHEN TO GO» Paws Up is now open year-round. Each season has its own magic and activities. Summer is popular, while spring and fall are considered their value season.