

WESTERN HORSE & GUN

ROUND UP THE COWGIRLS

The Resort at Paws Up hosts the ultimate gal pal weekend with National Cowgirl Hall of Fame honorees

BY ALISON LEWIS



You've never experienced a girls' weekend like this.

From April 27–30, 2017, four National Cowgirl Hall of Fame honorees will descend on the luxe Montana ranch The Resort at Paws Up to treat guests to four days of intensive learning, laughter and lounging. (There may be a few sore muscles, but the Resort's spa will melt away that tension in no time at all!) Making good on Paws Up's promise that "you can do anything cowboys can do—only better," the National Cowgirl Museum's Cowgirl Spring Roundup is an authentic Wild West adventure that guarantees the ultimate gal pal memories and plenty of guess-what-I-did bragging rights. You won't find an event of this caliber anywhere else.

“The National Cowgirl Museum’s Cowgirl Spring Roundup is one of our most unique events, as it gives attendees the chance to get to know our honorees on a personal level,” says Patricia Riley, executive director of the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame. “Rarely do aspiring or career cowgirls get the chance to spend time with legends such as Sandy Collier or Barbara Van Cleve. Each participant will leave feeling inspired and motivated, thanks to the one-on-one atmosphere this event creates.”

In addition to the one-of-a-kind, one-on-one time with professional cowgirls, you can’t beat the surroundings. The Resort at Paws Up is 37,000 acres of cowgirl playground, featuring 100-plus miles of trails for riding and wrangling and 10 private miles of Blackfoot River access. Guests at the Cowgirl Spring Roundup will herd cattle across the same land that won the hearts of Lewis & Clark, fine-tune their aim shooting sporting clays at the Resort’s renowned course and choose any number of other wilderness adventures from a menu that’s longer than Billy the Kid’s rap sheet.

And when the cowgirling activities end, the Resort will take over with the pampering it’s known for: blissful spa treatments, gourmet meals—no cooking or dishes to do!—and accommodations that will make you want to file a permanent change of address. (We highly suggest you carve out an hour or two or even tack on an extra day to enjoy the extensive spa offerings. You will have earned it!)



Learning the Ropes

Fan girl alert: The list of Hall of Fame honorees reads like a who's who of the prestigious cowgirl world, so guests are guaranteed to be impressed before they even arrive (*see sidebar*). Once there, attendees will wrangle, ride and reminisce with champion rider, author, trainer and NRCHA judge Sandy Collier; sculptor and former barrel racer Deborah Fellows; founder and CEO of Ebony Horsewomen Patricia E. Kelly and award-winning ranch-life photographer Barbara Van Cleve. Space is limited to ensure an ultra-personal experience.

Guests will attend workshops and gain hands-on experience from the pros, trying and testing a new skill on each and every filled-to-the-brim day. From photography tips to trail riding, herding and hustling and more, hours are jam-packed with fun and legitimate ranch learning. Everyone is a cowgirl here, so count on saddling up for an authentic cattle drive (herding cattle from one point to another for pasture rotation), including learning such tricks as how to "cut" a sick or injured cow out of the herd.

Says 2016 Cowgirl Hall of Fame honoree and educator Dr. Eleanor Green, "A cowgirl can be so many definitions and so many different personalities. Every single person brings different strengths and different characteristics and different personalities, and yet they're all cowgirls because they're bonded by that common theme."

Evenings culminate with delicious dishes and drinks from the Resort's Executive Chef Ben Jones and a welcome kick back around the campfire. Drawing from the agricultural wealth of the region, Chef Jones creates refined rustic ranch cuisine that expertly blends local meats, produce and other ingredients for a mouthwatering palate adventure three times per day. (Think huckleberry French toast and vintage wine flights—just not at the same time!) The Resort also offers vegetarian friendly offerings and can accommodate special dietary needs as well.

Hang Your Hat

Just because you're "roughing it" on a ranch doesn't mean you have to snooze under the stars in a tattered sleeping bag. Just as amazing as the weekend festivities are the accommodations for which Paws Up is famous. The Resort offers a variety of luxurious, rustic vacation homes. Tasteful Western-chic decor provides the full ranch experience, only with extras such as hot tubs, personal transportation, flat-screen televisions, in-home laundry, Wi-Fi and the list goes on. Roomy showers will help to wash away the day's workouts, and sweeping vistas of the jaw-dropping Montana landscape will lull you to sleep before it all starts again the following morning.

At the end of this quintessential cowgirl experience, we can promise that you'll be first in line to claim one of the coveted 50 spots for the next spring.

Honoree Who's Who

Sandy Collier—champion rider, author, trainer and NRCHA judge

Sandy Collier grew up riding English style and eventually took a job on a California cattle ranch, where she learned to break and work wild mustang horses. She then started a training business and went on to compete, becoming the only woman to win the National Reined Cow Horse Association (NRCHA) World Champion Snaffle Bit Futurity. Author of *Reining Essentials*, she continues to train and also serves as an NRCHA judge. Among her many accolades is the Western Lifetime Achievement Award.

Deborah Fellows—sculptor and former barrel racer

Raised on a ranch in northern Idaho, Deborah Fellows grew up with a passion for horses and an

interest in art. Her father and brother were professional rodeo world champions, and Fellows traveled the circuit as a barrel racer. Her artistic endeavors include creating veterans memorials, and she is known for her horse portraiture and other sculptures. In 2009, she was elected to lifetime membership in the National Sculpture Society.

Patricia E. Kelly—founder and CEO, Ebony Horsewomen

A former U.S. marine and an equestrian trailblazer, Patricia E. Kelly founded the Connecticut-based nonprofit Ebony Horsewomen more than 30 years ago. Serving more than 300 young people annually, the organization creates a safe space for local youth to receive mentorship and personal development. Kelly has been teaching for almost 40 years and is a certified master urban riding instructor and equine husbandry instructor. She was recognized as one of CNN's Top 10 Heroes of 2014.

Barbara Van Cleve—award-winning ranch-life photographer

Self-taught photographer Barbara Van Cleve is a celebrated artist with 55 solo exhibits to her credit. Montana-born Van Cleve's photography offers sweeping Big Sky vistas and realistic portrayals of ranch life in the modern West. She taught photography and English literature at DePaul University in Chicago, where she became the youngest dean of women in the United States. Currently, she pursues photography full-time.

Upcoming Events at The Resort at Paws Up Not to Miss

WildFlavor

Saddle up for the ultimate culinary ride with flora, fauna and flavor at the WildFlavor event, April 20–23, 2017. The first of its kind at the Resort, WildFlavor will feature cream-of-the-crop culinary talent with four *Top Chef* stars, including Kristen Kish (winner, Season 10), Sam Talbot (finalist, Season 2) Casey Thompson (finalist, Season 3) and Brooke Williamson (runner-up, Season 10). Guests will have a prime spot to watch these chefs “fork it out” during a live cook-off challenge. A trio of expertly crafted meals will be served during the tasty four-day event.

AdrenZen

The Resort at Paws Up will host its first-ever wellness weekend event, Adrenaline Meets Zen (“AdrenZen” for short), May 5–8, 2017. AdrenZen’s dual theme fits perfectly with the Paws Up experience. The sprawling 37,000-acre resort offers exhilarating wilderness adventures, including everything from the challenging Grizzlyman Fitness Trail and the Sky Line Aerial Adventure Course to more than 100 miles of trails perfect for hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking and much more.

Montana Master Grillers: Hall of Flame

Join The Resort at Paws Up for Montana Master Grillers: Hall of Flame, May 26–29, 2017, for three days filled with tangy, finger-lickin’ flavor and stunning wilderness adventures. You’ll have plenty of opportunities to work up an appetite in the great outdoors, plus the chance to devour some of the very best grilled cuisine from four guest chefs who truly belong in the BBQ Hall of Flame. The grilling experts include Chef Beau MacMillan from famed Arizona travel destination Sanctuary on Camelback; Charlie McKenna from Chicago’s much-loved BBQ spot Lillie’s Q and his new restaurant Dixie and Jonathon Sawyer from Cleveland fave Greenhouse Tavern. Rounding out the top-tier bill of grillers is MMG veteran Wayne Mueller from Texas barbecue “cathedral” Louie Mueller Barbecue and Paws Up’s own pitmaster extraordinaire, Executive Chef Ben Jones.

Cowboy Experience

They say no hour of life is wasted that’s spent in the saddle. And Paws Up couldn’t agree more. That’s why Paws Up created Cowboy Experience, held October 19–22, 2017. The Resort wrangles a handful of ProRodeo Hall of Famers to show participants the ropes. They lead workshops, trail rides and demonstrations, and even share campfire stories each night. Of course, this isn’t Paws Up’s first rodeo. The Resort knows how to throw a party with chic rustic accommodations, gourmet food and fine whiskey. So kick off your boots and stay a while (like, the entire weekend).