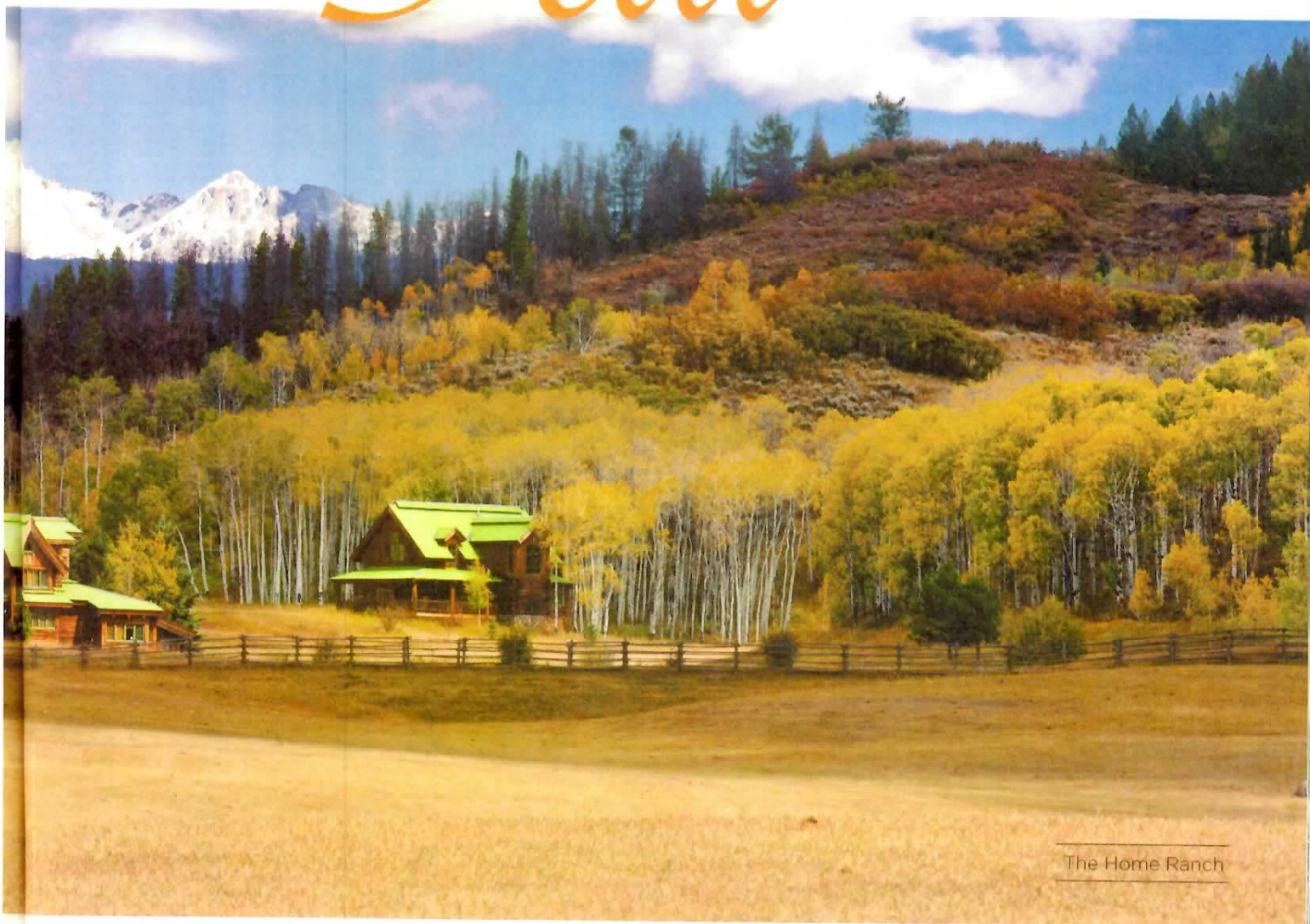


PERFECT *Fall* GETAWAYS



The Home Ranch

Over the river and through the woods to fall retreats we go. Warm days; cool, crisp nights; and fun adventures highlight the pleasures of fall.

by IRENE RAWLINGS



The Ranch at Rock Creek



The Ranch at Rock Creek

Saddle Up in Style Out West

The Ranch at Rock Creek is a working cattle ranch where guests can experience the “true West” without sacrificing style and comfort. Owner James Manley, who wanted to be a cowboy from the time he was a young boy, bought and developed this rugged 19th-century cattle ranch as a plush but authentic wilderness retreat for his family. Hand-hewn logs, native stone and wood reclaimed from Montana barns make it look as if the buildings have been a part of this land for generations.

The Ranch at Rock Creek opened as a guest ranch in 2010, and its homey atmosphere makes you feel like you’re a guest in a private home. The ranch sits on 6,000-plus acres of Montana wilderness and is part cattle station and part modern hotel with amenities

like iPod docking stations in each room and free WiFi throughout. The ranch’s Silver Dollar Saloon has a very large flat-screen television if you’re lost without the evening news or feel the sudden urge to watch “Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.”

Accommodations include wood-paneled rooms in the lodge, family-sized log homes and creekside rustic-chic “canvas cabins” (with private baths and, most important at this time of year, big featherbeds and gas fireplaces to keep you warm). Everything is designed to make you feel like you’re stepping back in time—in a good way. Even the Red Flower organic soaps and other toiletries have an old-fashioned smell like Grandma’s rose-water hand lotion but updated with coriander and a hint of patchouli. ▸



Lone Mountain Ranch

With blue gingham curtains, Stickley chairs upholstered in leather and Native American-influenced fabric and a granite fireplace, the décor has a homey Western look. The food is locally sourced and innovatively prepared: beer-braised pork with figs; Montana elk rib eye with a cherry, watermelon and fennel salad; and for dessert, apple tart with rosemary-caramel sauce. Wash it all down with a glass of wine from a well-stocked cellar that includes dozens of notable American, European, Australian and South American wines, and even a quite drinkable Trapper Peak “Buckin’ Blanco,” a Sauvignon Blanc from Montana’s Bitterroot Valley. All meals, cocktails, beer and wine as well as on-ranch activities are included in the cost of your stay.

The riding staff is expert and friendly. Once a week, they put on a real rodeo—roping, bull riding, barrel racing—for guests. If you’re an experienced rider who really wants to cover some country, you’ll

be able to ride through miles of wide-open spaces. Of course, you’ll want to look like a cowboy in a checked shirt, jeans, cowboy hat and boots. If you don’t normally dress like you’re an extra in a Western movie, you can stock up on genuine cowboy duds at the ranch’s Mercantile.

Fly-fishing is one of the main reasons to visit this part of Montana. The on-property fishing in Rock Creek is excellent and the Blackfoot, Missouri and the legendary Madison rivers are nearby. Or simply relax by the pool or visit the spa (housed in its own rustic cabin) for treatments like the Saddle-Sore Soak or the Rock Creek Stone Massage. Fresh air, wildlife walks, trail rides and fly-fishing connect you with nature. At twilight, in that quiet hour just before night begins to fall, you might hear a bull elk’s bugle—reedy, high and thin in the mountain air. There’s nothing like it back home.
theranchatrockcreek.com

More Ways to Be a Cowboy

The Hideout

The Hideout (Shell, Wyoming) is a 100-year-old, 300,000-acre working ranch located at the foot of the Bighorn Mountains. There are opportunities for independent riding and lots of cattle work: cattle drives, round-ups and branding.
thehideout.com

Rancho de los Caballeros

Enjoy trail rides through the desert at Rancho de los Caballeros (Wickenburg, Arizona), which combines riding and cowboying with an 18-hole, par-72 golf course with great views, tricky mesquite-lined fairways and well-protected greens.
ranchodeloscaballeros.com

Lone Mountain Ranch

With all of Yellowstone National Park as its backyard, Lone Mountain Ranch (Big Sky, Montana) offers one of the few opportunities to ride horses in the park. Beginner-friendly horses and a kids' rodeo every Saturday night make this ranch ideal for families.
lonemountainranch.com

Inn at Dos Brisas

Inn at Dos Brisas (Washington, Texas) offers high-end country escapes that include riding the ranch's 300 acres of woods and meadows, participating in cutting-horse classes or simply relaxing by the pool. Meals are inspired by what's freshly picked from the 20-acre organic farm or, in winter, the greenhouses.
dosbrisas.com

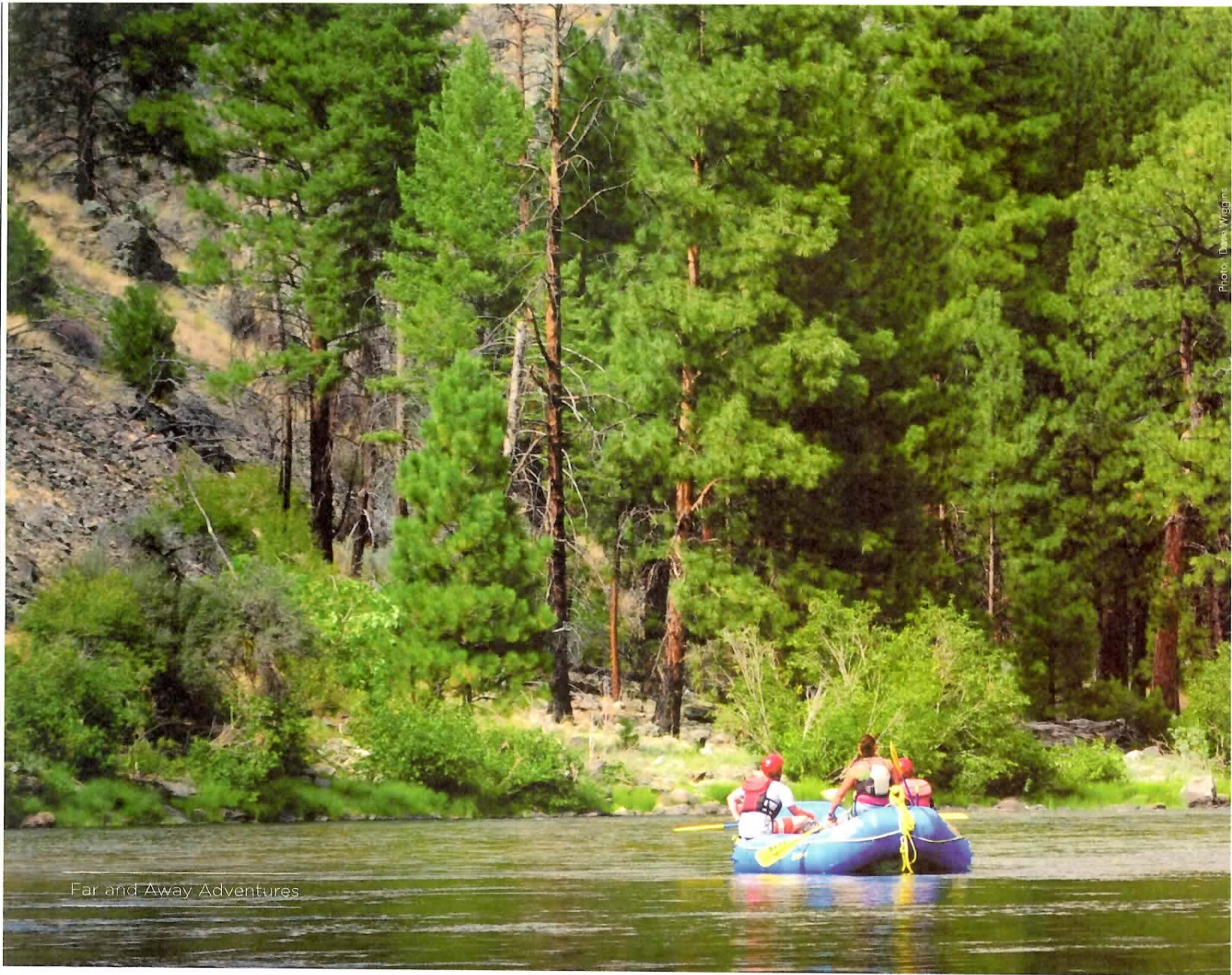
Home Ranch

In addition to the ranch's own riding trails, Home Ranch (Clark, Colorado) has access to a million acres of Routt National Forest, flanked by snow-capped Rocky Mountains. An easy, relaxed feeling extends throughout the property and even to the innovative Western cuisine that gives local ingredients the haute treatment.
homeranch.com ▶



Photo courtesy The Hideout

The Hideout

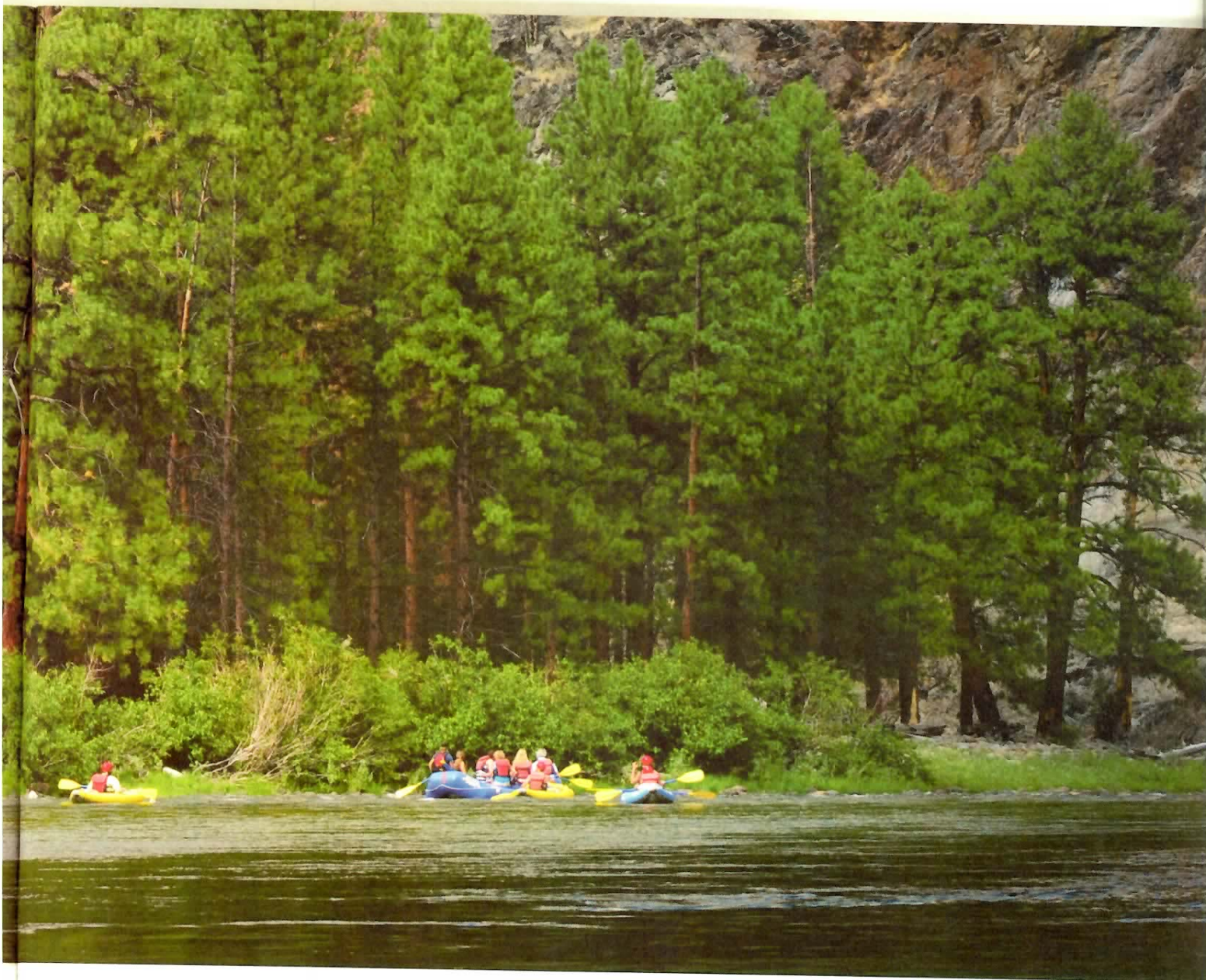


Glamping on the River

That's "glamour" plus "camping" equals "glamping," for you greenhorns. On Idaho's pristine Middle Fork of the Salmon River, the first thing you notice is the silence, broken only by the soothing sounds of water. This lovely river is protected by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, so rafting and kayaking are by permit only, meaning always uncrowded conditions, especially in the fall. Far & Away Adventures takes you (and all the gear you'll need for a six-day luxury trip) through the deep canyons and significant rapids of this 110-mile river in inflatable rafts (no motorized boats allowed) or, for a more

authentic experience, wooden dories piloted by an experienced river guide.

After a few miles, you're out of cell phone range (although the guides do have global satellite phones for emergencies). Your watch becomes irrelevant. Time is measured by daylight hours spent on the water—kayaking, fishing, swimming, running rapids or walking along an old Indian trail that parallels the river. You might stop to see cave paintings (evidence of ancient Shoshone village life) or float past a watchful family of otters who "escort" you off their fishing grounds.



You arrive at your campground (one of the sand beaches that dot the river's edge) to find the camp set up, complete with a full bar, linen-covered dining table set with china plates and crystal stemware and a camp kitchen that specializes in gourmet Dutch oven cooking. Expect organic and sustainable food like champagne-poached salmon, seared prawns and local lamb with rosemary sauce paired with appropriate wines.

Maybe a shower or a massage before dinner? No problem. The guides hook up a solar-heated shower and the masseuse (who also guides) sets her table up at river's edge, a discreet distance from camp.

After dinner, gather around the campfire enjoying songs and tall tales until night falls and it becomes too dark to see. Your private tent (with cot and linen-lined sleeping bag) beckons. In the morning, your guide brings coffee and a warm, moist washcloth to your tent. After breakfast, the guides break camp and move everything down river to await your arrival at day's end. Pretty soon you forget the day of the week; well, it just seems like too much trouble to figure it out. At the end of six days, you are disappointed to finally see a road and know this idyllic adventure is coming to an end. far-away.com ▷



Far and Away Adventures

More High-Style Camping

Rockwater Secret Cove Resort

The luxe tent treehouses at Rockwater Secret Cove Resort on British Columbia's Sunshine Coast combine the silence of the evergreen forest with views of both yachts and freighters gliding through the Malaspina Strait. Spa tents are down by the shore and can be opened up to the ocean sounds and breezes.

rockwatersecretcoveresort.com

The Resort at Paws Up

The Resort at Paws Up is one of Montana's original luxury camps. New for 2012, Moonlight Camp, tent suites (with en-suite bathroom) less than 100 yards from one of the best fishing spots on Paws Up's 10-mile stretch of the Blackfoot River, a perfect overnight adventure for big kids, little kids and parents who want to be kids again. And, oh, there's a camping butler to cater to your every whim.

pawsup.com

Clayoquot Wilderness Resort

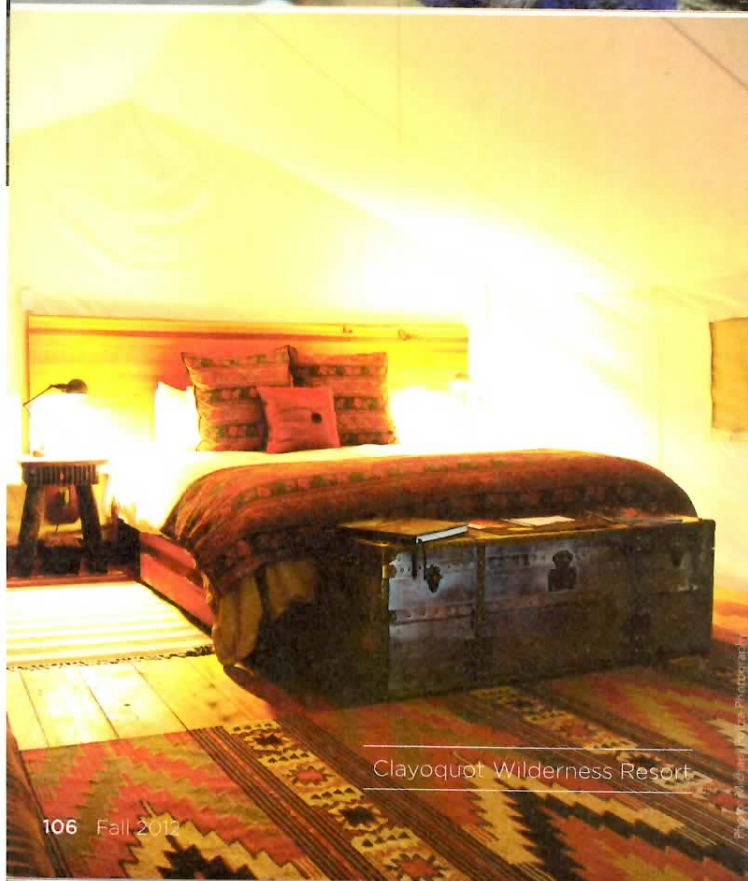
Clayoquot Wilderness Resort (Tofino, British Columbia, Canada) is located on the Wild West coast of Vancouver Island. The 20 guest tents are furnished with antiques, oriental rugs and heirloom silver. Activities include horseback riding in old-growth rainforest, river and ocean kayaking, deep-sea and freshwater fishing, and bear- and whale-watching.

wildretreat.com

El Capitan Canyon

The cream-colored canvas tents at El Capitan Canyon (near Santa Barbara on the California coast) stand on wooden platforms in historic groves of oak and sycamore trees and feature nice touches like hand-made willow beds, bedside lanterns and individual outdoor fire pits (for which you can purchase ready-make barbecue kits, including s'mores, from the resort's market). Monarch butterflies winter in the coastal eucalyptus groves; watch them flutter awake early mornings beginning in mid-October.

elcapitancanyon.com ►



Clayoquot Wilderness Resort

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Photo: Michael Polla Photography



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A Maine Road Trip

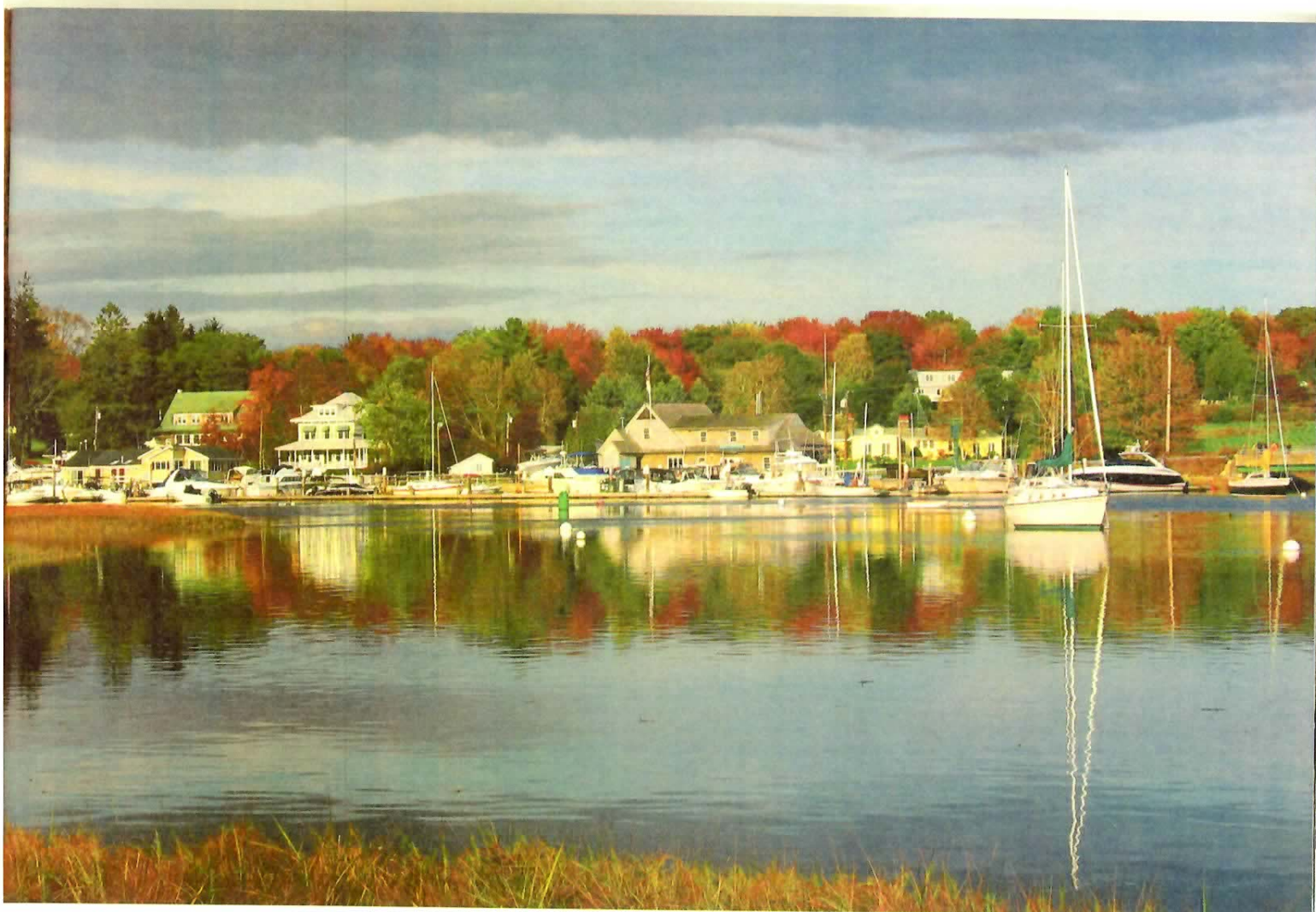
This is the quiet time in Maine. The summer folks have gone, the two-lane blacktops are traffic-free and the trees are exploding brilliant crimson, vibrant orange and deep gold. Typically the leaves start turning in late September and peak in or about mid-October. Around Columbus Day (October 8) is the peak time.

One of our favorite drives, along U.S. Route 1 starting in Kittery (the oldest, est. 1623, and southernmost town in Maine), features 50 miles of spectacular foliage, lobsters, lighthouses and quaint New England villages. Rent a canoe in Kittery and paddle up Chauncey Creek to Chauncey Creek Lobster Pier. Eat a lobster while watching the tide pour in and out of the cove, right under the slats of the outdoor deck.

In York, get your camera ready for views of the tall, graceful Cape Neddick Lighthouse. Stop by

the George Marshall Store Gallery for well-curated shows of contemporary art and craft. According to *Maine Antique Digest*, there are more than 100 antiques shops in the 20-some miles of Route 1 that connect York, Ogunquit, Wells and the Kennebunks. In fall and winter, there are dozens of antique shows—everything from vintage jewelry to classic cars.

Hike along tidal salt marshes and coastal meadows in the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge in Wells. Not into hiking? Stop for a bowl of haddock chowder at Billy's Chowder House, which overlooks the wildlife preserve. Drive to Kennebunkport, a postcard-perfect Maine town with tree-shaded streets and fine old houses, including the summer home of Presidents George and George W. Bush. Play a round at Cape Arundel (an old-fashioned links course), go whale-watching and eat a lobster



roll at the Clam Shack. There's always a line but it's worth the wait.

After a stop at Prouts Neck to admire the rugged coastline featured in Winslow Homer's iconic paintings (he lived and worked here), head north about 10 miles toward Portland. Hop aboard the Culinary Trolley for a foodie tour of Portland's hot new restaurants. Dine at Duckfat for duck confit panini; Fore Street for wood oven-roasted mussels; or Five Fifty-Five for poached eggs with Maine lobster (wash it down with its signature spicy-tomato fizz). Want to try your hand at hauling traps? Board *Lucky Catch* at Long Wharf for a stint aboard a real lobster boat. Take your catch across the wharf to the Portland Lobster Company and they'll cook you a fresh dinner. ▷



More Road Trips

Adirondack Park

New York's six-million-acre Adirondack Park is the largest natural wilderness in the Eastern United States. The fiery red and gold sugar maples are worth the trip. Take the gondola to the top of Whiteface Mountain for big views all the way to Lake Champlain.
myfallfoliage.com

Green Mountains

Vermont's Green Mountains are the perfect place to view fall foliage. Drive the back roads, along mountain ridges, past working farms and small villages with Gothic-steeped churches.
foliage-vermont.com

West Elk Loop

Colorado's West Elk Loop is a designated Scenic & Historic Byway. Start in Gunnison to drive through golden aspen groves along Blue Mesa Reservoir and the north rim on the Black Canyon in the Gunnison National Park.
gunnisoncrestedbutte.com

