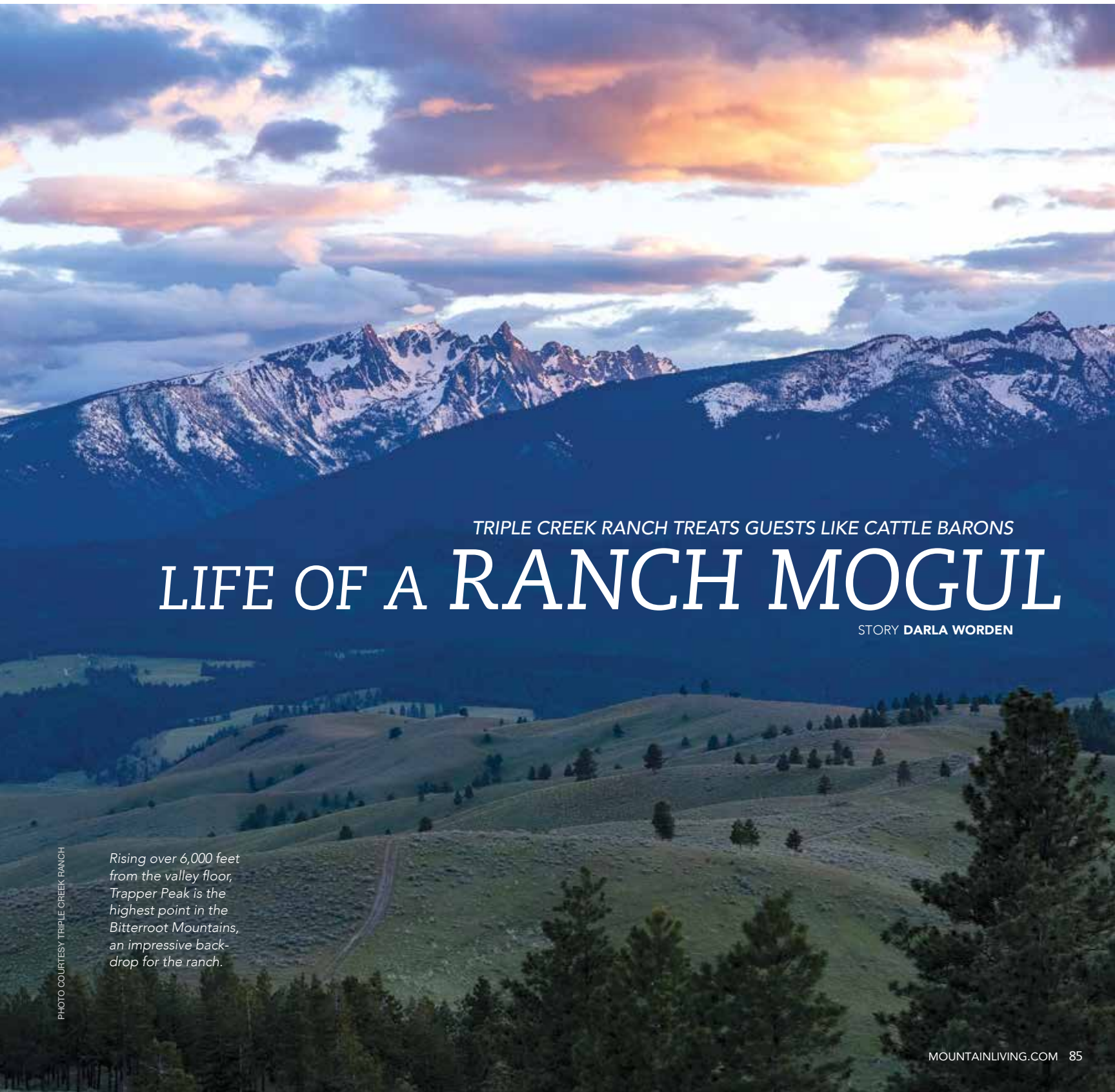


OUTSIDE

The world beyond your front door



TRIPLE CREEK RANCH TREATS GUESTS LIKE CATTLE BARONS

LIFE OF A RANCH MOGUL

STORY **DARLA WORDEN**

PHOTO COURTESY TRIPLE CREEK RANCH

Rising over 6,000 feet from the valley floor, Trapper Peak is the highest point in the Bitterroot Mountains, an impressive backdrop for the ranch.

Your driver awaits you at the Missoula airport complete with a picnic packed with your favorite sandwich

for the 75-minute drive to the ranch. You travel through Montana's scenic Bitterroot Valley, known for its blue-ribbon fishing, climbing in altitude from the valley floor to 4,600 feet, then enter the gate to the 28,000-acre ranch. There's time to go for a ride; call the barn and they'll have your horse ready. Or perhaps you'd like to wet a fly on the Bitterroot River or one of its forks; your guide will know where the fish are biting. So many choices before dinner. Ah, the life of a ranch tycoon ...

That's the experience awaiting guests at Triple Creek Ranch, an all-inclusive Relais & Chateaux property in western Montana. Owners Craig and Barbara Barrett fell in love with the ranch, named for the confluence of House Creek, No Name Creek and Baker Creek on the property, and bought it in 1993 with a vision of sharing it with guests. A mere 25 private cabins are nestled throughout the ranch, each sited for maximum privacy. Welcoming guests ages 16 or older, Triple

Creek Ranch offers one-, two- and three-bedroom cabins, each appointed with rustic elegance, sumptuous bedding and art from the Barretts' private collection, ranging from classic Western artists such as Charles M. Russell and Frederick Remington to contemporary artists including William Matthews and Oleg Stavrowsky.

After getting situated in their cabins, guests embark on the adventures of their choice. In addition to horseback riding and fly-fishing there are popular signature events including cattle drives, cross-country horseback adventures and trapshooting, to name a few. Popular weekend events include cooking classes, wine tastings, all-women riding events, cowboy school and spring roundup. >>

BELOW, LEFT: The ranch offers an extensive menu of unique guest activities like sapphire panning and cider pressing. RIGHT: One of the 25 private cabins on the ranch, the Ponderosa sits on the edge of a scenic pond.

PHOTOS COURTESY TRIPLE CREEK RANCH





All this activity inspires hungry appetites, and Triple Creek Ranch is known for the delectable meals prepared by its award-winning staff—many guests cite this as the most memorable part of their stay. Guests never go hungry on the ranch: Each cabin is stocked with an assortment of snacks, food may be delivered to cabins any time, and picnics may be ordered to take on adventures.

Dinner is an event unto itself, with a new menu prepared by Executive Chef Jacob Leatherman each evening. Chef Jake's talented team incorporates the freshest ingredients—many sourced from the ranch—to please all palates, including special dietary needs and requests. The ranch sommelier is on hand to offer a wine pairing from the complimentary selection of house wines, or guests may purchase premium vintages from the wine cellar. Like to take a bottle with you? The bartender will assist you in shopping for what you want

and package it into a Triple Creek shopping bag to bring back to your cabin.

Focusing on five-star service, the ranch staff has planned for a guest's every need: Getting around a property of this size might be challenging, if it weren't for the convenient golf carts assigned to each cabin. And forget your wallet—guests don't see a bill until they check out on one simple itemized bill, and one gratuity is suggested at the end of a stay that is shared between all staff.

One guest visiting from Seattle has been to the ranch over 10 times and considers it her own private getaway. "I like the outdoors," she says. "I just don't like to rough it."

No roughing it here. >>

ABOVE, LEFT: Riding is a popular activity on the ranch, and in autumn guests ride amid golden splendor. RIGHT: Cabins, each with woodburning fireplaces, are luxuriously appointed with sumptuous bedding and pieces from the owners' private art collection.

PHOTOS COURTESY TRIPLE CREEK RANCH



ABOVE: In addition to the classic two-dimensional mediums, the ranch art collection boasts a terrific array of sculpture. RIGHT: Many guests rate dining as one of their favorite experiences on the ranch. BELOW: A popular weekend event is the all-woman, four days of riding, nonprofit fundraiser, *Klicks for Chicks*.



THE SCOOP

LOCATION 75 miles south of Missoula in western Montana.

GETTING THERE Fly into Missoula airport. No need to rent a car, as a driver from Triple Creek Ranch will pick you up at the airport and drive you to the ranch. In the car, you'll find a picnic with your favorite sandwich for the scenic drive to the ranch. Or to truly experience ranch mogul style, there's a helipad on property for your helicopter.

ACCOMMODATIONS 25 private cabins: 18 one-bedrooms, 6 two-bedrooms and 1 three-bedroom. All cabins feature wood-burning fireplaces, private or nearby hot tub, king beds, air conditioning and Wi-Fi.

TRANSPORTATION AROUND THE PROPERTY Cabins are scattered around the ranch property, so to make transportation to the dining room easy, each cabin is assigned a golf cart.

ALL-INCLUSIVE NIGHTLY CABIN RATE INCLUDES

- Private cabin
- All meals
- House wines, spirits and beer
- On-ranch activities and signature event activities

DINING The ranch prides itself on delicious meals prepared by an award-winning staff with produce sourced seasonally from the ranch's own gardens and orchard. Meals are served in the main lodge dining room, but there is complimentary cabin delivery upon request, and picnics are available to take on adventures. ○

triplecreekranch.com