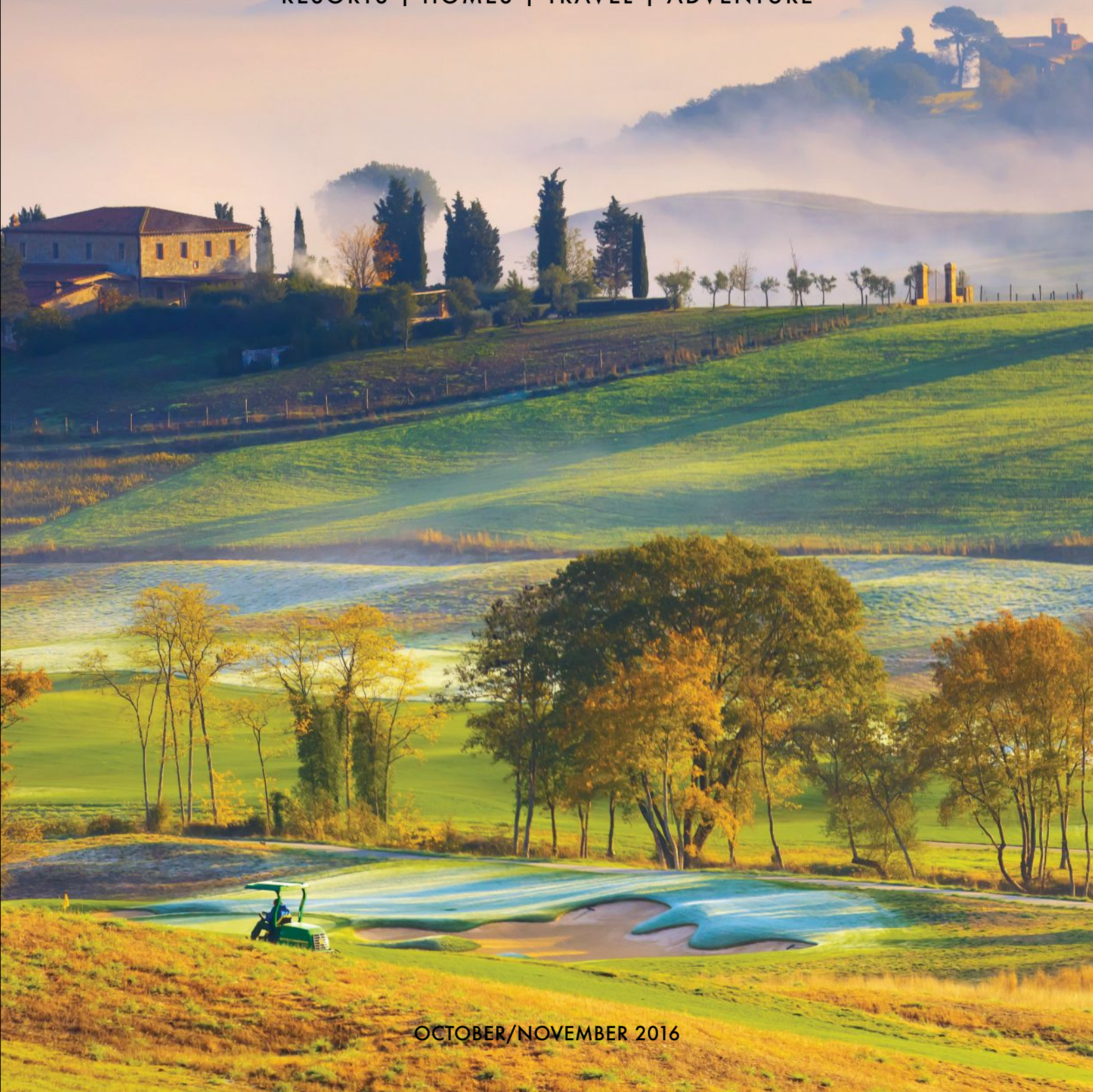


GENTRY DESTINATIONS

RESORTS | HOMES | TRAVEL | ADVENTURE



OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2016

PLANNING A GETAWAY

Over Labor Day weekend I had the opportunity to dash off to Tahoe with my family and bask in one of those glorious extended weekends that felt like a month away—a trip so good I left my cell phone in the hotel room and didn't go back for it immediately. The weather was crystal clear and the air held just a tiny nip of cold—portending the season ahead. Like so many folks in Silicon Valley, the possibility of getting away for a proper vacation of two weeks at one go is out of the question, so our family has learned to savor precious 3 – 4 day trips.

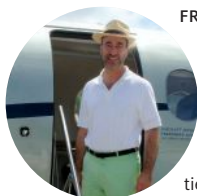
The magazine in your hands is chock full of luxurious ideas for getaways just like that and a few over-the-top spots that require you to linger even longer. Our features this month take you from Taylor River Lodge in Colorado (a must for the adventurer) to three lavish hotels in Tuscany (foodies will want to take note!).

Also in store, this issue we touch base with San Francisco based CEO and entrepreneur Victoria Tsai founder of the cult favorite skincare line Tatcha. Tsai shares some of her insider hot spots in Kyoto (*My Favorite...*, page 86). Style writer and Author Diane Dorrans Saeks reports on the ultra chic Portrait Roma Hotel in Rome run by the Ferragamo family (*Roman Holiday*, page 50). And Senior Editor Jill Layman reports on the genteel and charming Blackberry Farm (*A Taste of Southern Hospitality*, page 62). Turn the page and get ready to plan that getaway!



Stefanie Lingle Beasley

Stefanie Lingle Beasley // Editorial Director // edit@18media.com



FREDRIC HAMBER
Contributing Writer

It was easy to understand why Colorado's residents are generally ranked the most physically fit in the country. At the craggy 12,162-foot summit of Crested Butte, I was celebrating my accomplishment when a lean guy in his seventies arrived looking like he had been out for a leisurely stroll; I somehow sensed he does the climb a couple of times a week. Am going tropical for my next trip: a couple of splendid resorts in Fiji are on my radar.



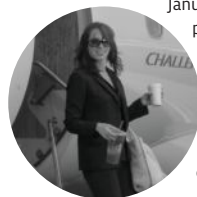
AMALIA MCGIBBON
Contributing Editor

When traveling to Tuscany, the ideal course of action is to quickly befriend an Italian family with a villa and get them to invite you to stay as their guests. In lieu of that, stay at one of the hotels I write about in this issue. Behind each there is a family who have poured their all into the property, and if you squint your eyes and imbibe enough *prosecco*, you can convince yourself you're just bunking with old friends. Of course, Italian hospitality is such that by the end of your stay, such will be the case.



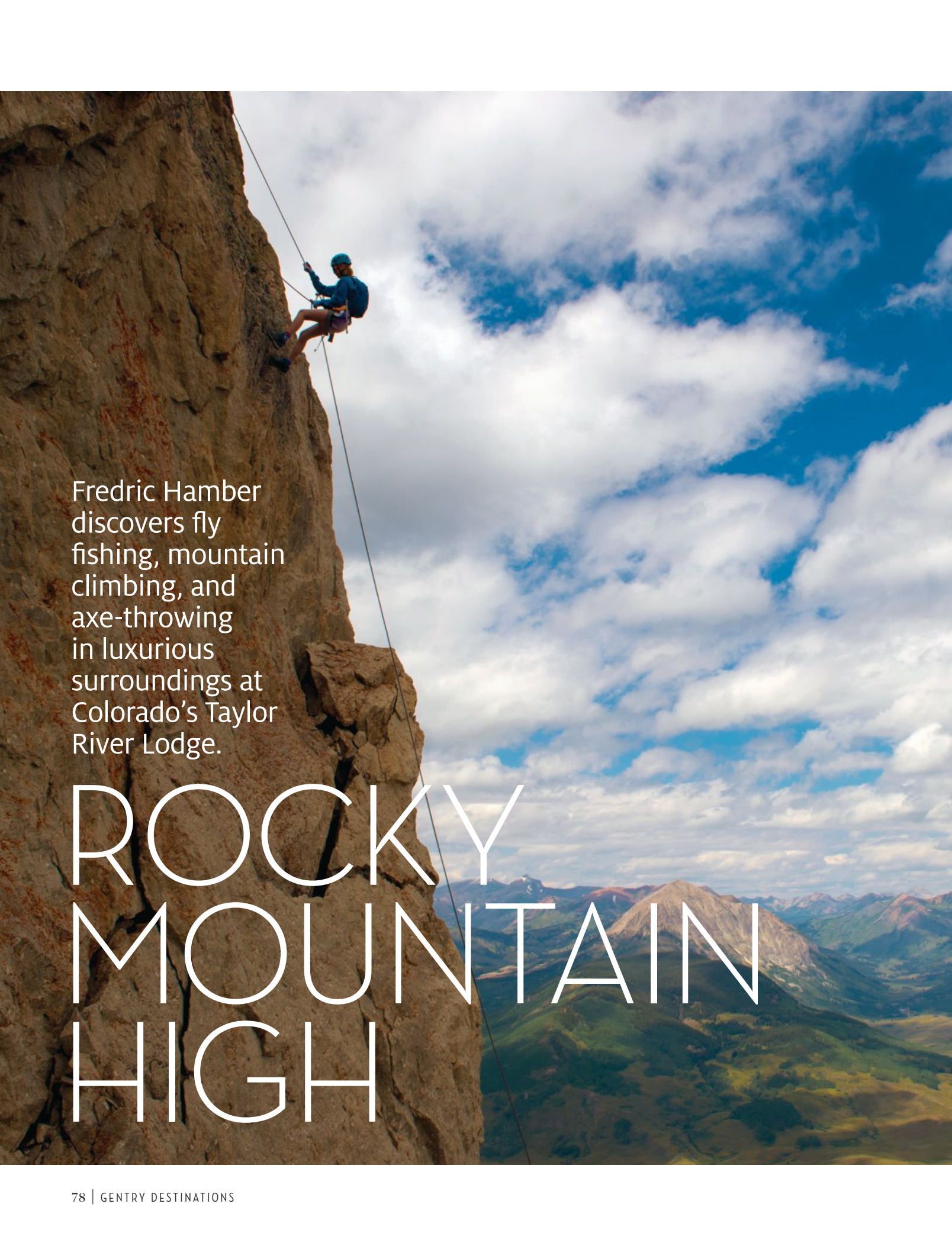
DIANE DORRANS SAEKS
Contributing Writer

After a glorious day spent chasing Bellini and Bernini and Borromini, returning to the tranquil rooftop terrace of the Portrait Roma hotel at twilight was a magical experience. Perched high above the rooftops, all of Rome seemed close, personal, and dreamlike.



CORRINE E. COOK
Senior Editor

I had the good fortune to bask in the oh-so-pampering delights of the Four Seasons Rancho Encantado this past January. It's easy to be seduced by this marvelous property and the magical Santa Fe sunlight. On my bucket list is the chance to go back and experience the magic of Balloon Fiesta when hundreds of hot air balloons fill the skies above Albuquerque and dazzle spectators for miles. The Four Seasons has a guest package experience that includes this visual feast!



Fredric Hamber
discovers fly
fishing, mountain
climbing, and
axe-throwing
in luxurious
surroundings at
Colorado's Taylor
River Lodge.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH



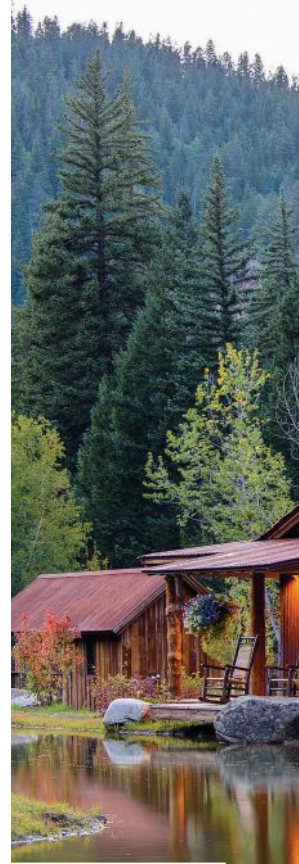
ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF ELEVEN EXPERIENCE

The trails, rivers, and mountains of Gunnison County, Colorado, are the outdoor playgrounds for guests at Taylor River Lodge. Rafting, horseback riding, mountain biking, guided hikes and rock climbing are among the included activities. A daily itinerary is customized according to each guest's wishes and can include a visit to the town of Crested Butte.



I am kayaking a stretch of the Taylor River in Colorado with Heather, my guide. Until this moment, I always assumed an “eddy” was the calm water near a riverbank. Now, Heather (a two-time National Telemark Champion) is teaching me that eddies also can be found in the middle of a river below a large boulder. She demonstrates the trick of paddling vigorously into an eddy at an angle so one can then relax for a moment. I follow her lead, then pause to look at the hills above covered in aspens and pines.

It's just the two of us on the Class II whitewater. Taylor River Lodge, which opened in September, is the sixth in a portfolio of properties worldwide owned by Eleven Experience, an under-the-radar company that specializes in bespoke vacations in unusual locations, including Iceland and Patagonia. Before my trip, I received a questionnaire with a list of available activities to rank my interest in each. By the time I arrived, an “experience manager” had mapped out a customized daily itinerary, including this kayaking session and a guided climb to the peak of Crested Butte. I felt like a kid back at summer camp—except summer camp never included a post-hike visit to a local rum distillery, while my experience manager did.





Luxuriously outfitted cabins overlook a private stretch of the Taylor River. Chef-prepared meals are served in the dining hall next to the casting pond stocked with rainbow trout where fly-fishing instruction is offered daily. A heated saltwater lap pool (opposite) and hot tub provide a relaxing spot for reflection.

The property is situated in Gunnison County on a mile-long stretch of private river access with six cabins, some with lofts for children, and two single family houses. A maximum of 32 guests ensures discretion for Eleven's privacy-seeking clientele.

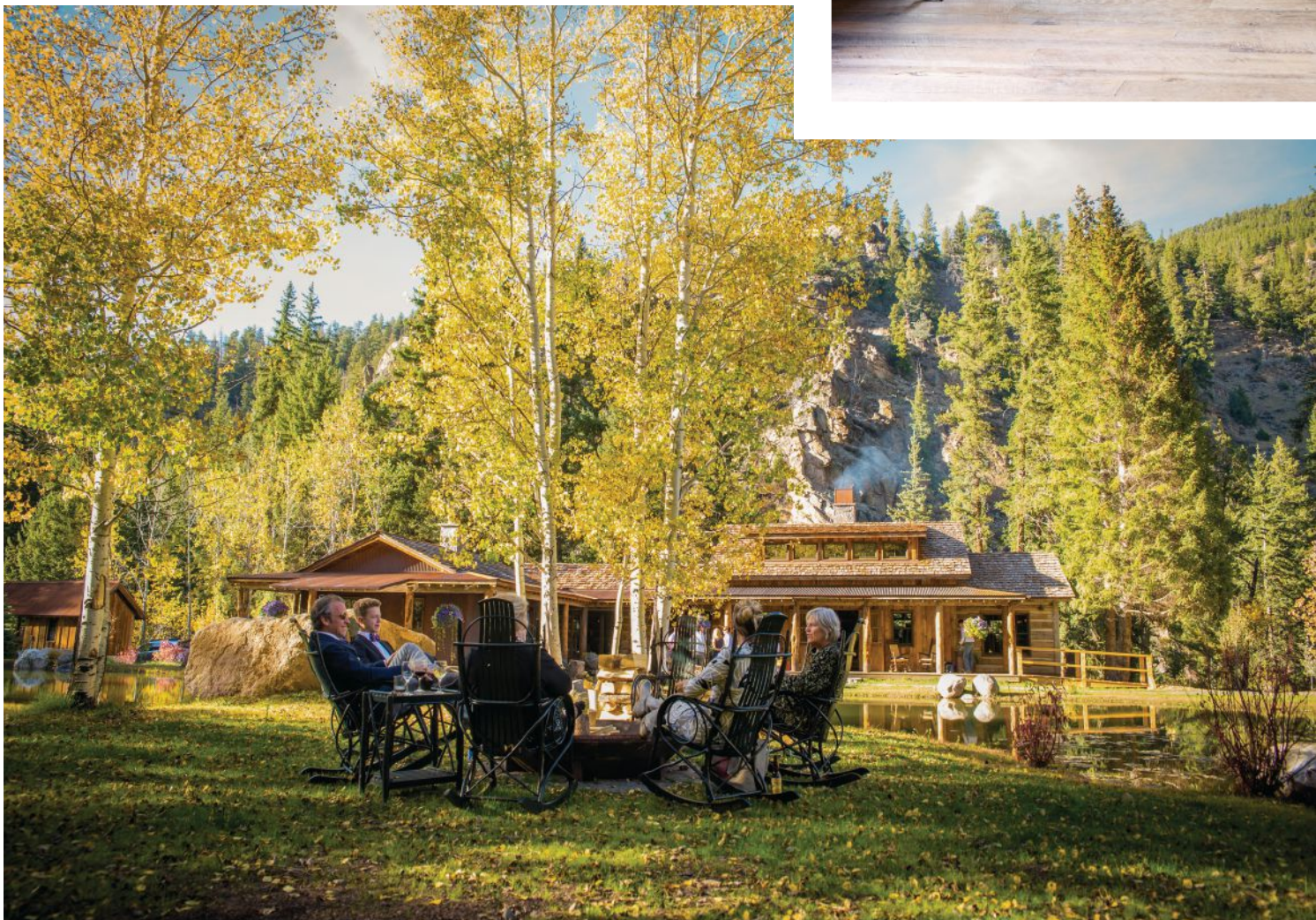
Everything is up to date, with Bluetooth audio and Lutron panels in lieu of light switches, yet the place somehow has a familiar, always-been-there feel. It is easy to imagine you're at your grandfather's summer cabin in the woods, if your grandfather's taste ran to Fili D'oro bedlinens, heated towel racks, and Jack Black Skincare goodies in the bathroom. Interior walls are reclaimed wood from Midwest barns, with custom features, including rain gutters, fishtail door hardware, and fireplace tools—all made by metal worker Jeff Brethauer, who crafts the metal elements in all of Eleven's properties.

A massive cantilevered door at the front of the pool house opens gloriously high to let in the sounds of the river below when one is enjoying the hot tub and saltwater lap pool. A few yards away, a small spa offers treatments; management has their pick of the best graduates from a local massage school.

The casting pond is stocked with rainbow trout. Even if you're a beginner at fly-fishing you're in good hands. "Moose" (his nickname apparently from birth) will guide you through the motions by the pond until you get the hang of it, then you'll put on waders (the lodge supplies equipment for all activities) and walk down to the riverbank to continue catch-and-release. I enjoyed watching a woman from Long Island go from newbie to fly-fishing addict in short order under Moose's tutelage.

There's a sport for lawn games, including archery and slackline. One afternoon I spent a happy, silly hour bonding with a couple of new friends over games of BB gun target shooting and axe throwing, each of us getting in touch with our inner "guy" and wondering why axe throwing is not yet an Olympic sport.

Meals are served in the Kokanee Dining Hall. The chef's time as a saucier was evident in his deft touch with the flavors accompanying the pan roasted Atlantic salmon: fennel, orange, petite herbs and a beurre blanc in which I spotted the tiniest fleck of fresh dill. On my hiking days the kitchen packed a sack lunch for the trail.





Families have time to reconnect at Eleven Experience's exclusive summer camp, which accommodates a maximum of 32 guests. A pool table, dartboard, and foosball lure all ages into the game/media room before dinner. Cocktail hour can be indoors or out. After dinner, the lodge staff delight in arranging after-dinner s'mores at campfire.

The agricultural communities of the nearby North Fork Gunnison River Valley provide the splendid and abundant fruits, berries, and produce in the cuisine and on the breakfast sideboard. "Georgia's got nothing on Colorado peaches," one hiking guide—a Colorado native—boasted at lunchtime, and it was hard to disagree with him. One evening at cocktail hour, the peaches made an appearance sliced and wrapped in speck and drizzled with balsamic vinegar as lodge guests gathered for drinks and good conversation.

Packages are all inclusive with meals, drinks, activities, and airport transfers from Gunnison or Montrose. A thoughtfully stocked complimentary mini-bar includes trail mix and energy bars to keep you going during activities, and wine, beer, and chocolates for when you're done. Less strenuous activities, including painting and cooking classes, will be on offer as the season progresses, and the experience managers can tailor separate kids' schedules or different his-and-hers activities. Each night my customized agenda for the next day was left on my bedside during turndown service to keep me on track.

Building relationships with clients is a key part of Eleven's philosophy. Their flagship property, Scarp Ridge Lodge, located less than a half hour north in Crested Butte, has a 90 percent guest return rate, and they've now begun booking "split stays" for clients who want to spend a few days in Crested Butte and a few days at Taylor River. Colorado hospitality is a watchword among the staff, many of whom are natives of the state or graduates of a local outdoor education certification school and delight in taking guests to off-trail ski runs or local hang-out spots in Crested Butte.

A clever inclusion is the services of a professional photographer who will accompany your group for a day; a photobook is then mailed to you back at home. As Eleven's Sarah Stoll, who oversees experiences at the Colorado properties, explained to me, "The whole connection/reconnection piece is something that our building development team and owner are passionate about. They curate these properties so that there's a specific spot to sit in the afternoon sun with a beer with your guide and talk about how amazing your day was."

Like the moment after paddling hard into an eddy, when one pauses to breathe. ♦

