

GO WEST



Running of the horses held daily

Vista Verde Ranch in Steamboat Springs, Colorado serves as a luxury vacation haven year-round.

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 PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF VISTA VERDE RANCH

Step outside and take in the fresh Rocky Mountain air this summer. As someone who grew up in the foothills of the Rockies, I took for granted just how refreshing the crisp trees, rippling creeks, and vast open spaces can be. Recently, I visited that bliss in Steamboat Springs, Colorado and was not disappointed at Vista Verde Ranch.

Located about 20 minutes from downtown Steamboat Springs in the tiny town of Clark, Colorado, Vista Verde Ranch sits upon nearly 600 acres of fresh ranch land surrounded by the Routt National Forest. It's just far enough from town to allow you to fully connect with nature, but close enough to go exploring and stop into the local shops filled with artwork and treasures to remember your vacation.

Upon arrival, the ranch team was quick to include us in the



Summer trail ride through Elk River Valley

fun—leading us straight to the rustic dining room filled with guests who became friends by the end of our stay. Some were there for the first time like us, while others were unofficial experts on the ranch, as they had been returning for more than 10 years. Each meal was not only an opportunity to try the chef's Western creations made with locally sourced ingredients, but to get to know the other guests as well. From the rabbit ragu with perfectly cooked pappardelle and hand cut prime rib to the made from scratch soups and salads and perfect pastries, we enjoyed every meal.

JOURNEYS

Following dinner, we joined the other travelers in the great room for live entertainment, line dancing, camaraderie, and a glass of wine. It was just the right amount of Western fun with a luxury cabin to return to at the end of the night.

We spent the night soaking with a glass of wine in-hand in the private outdoor spa on our cabin porch. We stayed in the “Saddle” cabin, named after Saddle Mountain, and the views, day and night, were spectacular. The stars that evening looked otherworldly and three-dimensional. While taking in my morning coffee on the wraparound porch I caught sight of the morning herding of the horses from the pasture into the arena areas where we would soon join them for a trail ride.

That morning, Vista Verde’s head wrangler, Steph, showed us the ropes around our very well-trained horses before taking us out for a scenic view of the ranch from horseback. The shuffle of our carrier’s hoofs was only broken by the sweet chirps and sounds of nature as we rode past the wide-open spaces, under a clear blue sky.

In the afternoon, we headed back to the horse arena for a lesson in archery. One thing about Vista Verde, is the that the staff is not only incredibly friendly, but they are also skilled in many areas. The ranch also offers yoga, fly fishing, mountain biking, paddle boarding, cooking classes, wine tasting, and more during the summer.

Although you could spend every moment on the Vista Verde property, downtown Steamboat Springs in a treasure worth exploring as well. We spent the morning stopping into galleries, the highly recommended local bookstore, and locally owned shops on a stroll through town, before settling down for lunch. Salt + Lime, an eclectic Mexican restaurant with a Western flair, served up creative cocktails all their own with street tacos and sides to pair with the vibrant colors. It was just enough to fill



Fly fishing in a nearby crystal clear stream.

us up before heading back for an afternoon of fishing with our guide.

Our final dinner on the ranch left us with an appetite to return. The staff makes you feel at home while also offering all the amenities you’d expect. It is one of only three ranches in the U.S. to be awarded the AAA Four Diamond rating, which is evident the moment you walk through the door. If you plan to make it a family vacation, Vista Verde hosts families with children during certain months, offering fully supervised programs filled with activities that are sure to wear them out. We visited during an adults-only week and the quiet was divine.

Steamboat Springs is a worthwhile escape anytime of the year, and it’s clear why this Western paradise, which translates to “Green View Ranch,” is worth adding to your summer travel itinerary.

For more information on Vista Verde Ranch, call 970.879.3858 or visit vistaverde.com.



Vista Verde Ranch's sprawling landscape