

BUSINESS
Arms race
on amenities

Camera makers aren't just heavily investing in technology and streaming services. **PAGE B1**



SPORTS
Wild West
gets wilder

Can Cibo's new power with Kewi Leonard and Paul George. Can the Rockies keep up? **PAGE C3**



ZEST
Romance
renaissance

A new golden age may be in the air with a flavor unseen since the pinnacle of the chick lit era in the early 2000s. **PAGE G1**

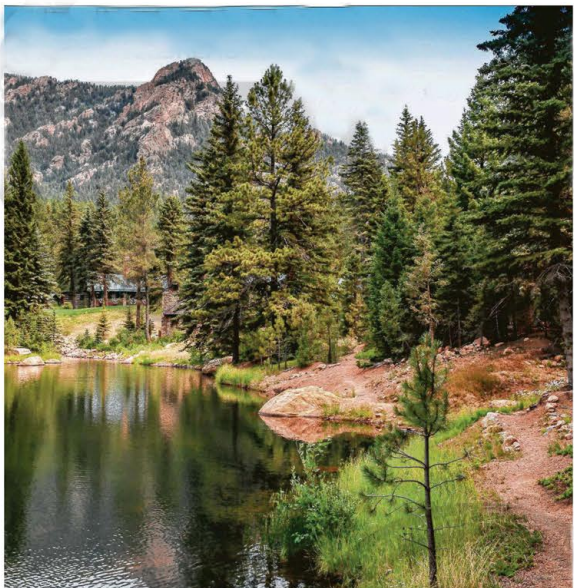
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

SUNDAY, JULY 7, 2019 • HOUSTONCHRONICLE.COM • VOL. 118, NO. 267 • \$4.00 ★★

★★ Houston Chronicle | HoustonChronicle.com | Sunday, July 7, 2019 | G13

ZEST

ESCAPES



Rocky ridges define the valley, at the Ranch and beyond.

Photo by Steve Haggerty/Courtesy of The Ranch at Emerald Valley

TRAVEL

Colorado guest ranch keeps traditions alive

Indoor and outdoor scenery, communal campfires prompt reflections on Old West life

By Anne Z. Cooke
TRAVEL WRITER

MANITOU SPRINGS, Colo. — I was returning from a hike up Mount Vigil, the peak you can see from the Ranch at Emerald Valley, near Colorado Springs, when a leather-faced cowboy walked by, humming a tune and leading a horse.

At the same moment, a car pulled up and the driver, eyes masked behind dark sunglasses, leaned out and asked for directions to the ranch, which just happened to be where I was staying.

I would have answered, but at that moment the old cowboy stopped dead, looked at the license plate — “Texas,” he muttered — looped the reins around the saddle horn and unreined a piece of gum. Then he pointed down the road. “That way,” he said.

“Thanks,” said the driver, heading “Tan Town.” He called “Say, do you know why they call it Emerald Valley? Was there a gold mine here? Gemstones, maybe?”

Curious myself, and still out of breath, I stepped closer, the better to hear.

“Well, now, I couldn’t say,” replied the cowboy, pulling a denied arm canteen off his belt. “I’ve worked on it myself. Might be for the green trees, a hideaway lake, and where a camp can get away and think.”

“They used to call it Camp Vigil, after that mountain there.

If you go
GETTING THERE
United offers nonstop flights from IAH to Colorado Springs, or you can fly into Denver and drive westward.

STAY
Learn more about the Ranch at Emerald Valley about Cheyenne Mountain, the lodge atop Cheyenne Mountain; and about the parent property, the Broadmoor Hotel, in Colorado Springs, at broadmoor.com. Rates vary depending on the season and weather. Included in daily rates: transportation between the Ranch at Emerald Valley and the Broadmoor Hotel, a 9-mile drive. On-site activities and equipment, trail hikes, nature walks, fishing gear, horseback rides, all meals, snacks, beverages, wine, beer and bar drinks. Because the Old Stage Riding Stable is a concession, long horseback rides, such as the popular cattle drives, are priced separately.

HIKING
A half-dozen hiking trails and climbs start at the ranch and explore the surrounding Pike National Forest. For guests combining a visit to Cloud Camp and to the Ranch at Emerald Valley, the 5.3-mile hike from the top of Cheyenne Mountain down to the ranch is a favorite.



Recording artist Jeff Houston, 40 years a guitarist and a campfire tradition, entertains on Wednesday and Saturday evenings at the Ranch at Emerald Valley.

Photo by Steve Haggerty/Courtesy of The Ranch at Emerald Valley

Real personal for old Mr. Penrose, Spencer Penrose he was, the man who built the first lodge up there on Cheyenne Mountain. A look in the 1920s, that was.”

The cowboy paused for another long swallow. “The way they tell it,” he said, “he’d get down here with his friends, sittin’ up late, telling stories about mountain climbing and all. That’s a pretty fine log cabin he had, the one they still got. It’s renovated now, with a real bar, all chatted

up, nice and tight. You’ll see. No log gettin’ in there.”

“All kind of trees shades them log cabins, and your creek has a waterfall and lakes stocked regular with trout. The cabin on the hill is a palace, big enough for weddings and such. The cook’s in the kitchen most days, handy with the fryin’, I stop in now and then, and he makes me a plate.”

When the cowboy took another swallow, I spoke up. “Spencer Penrose the one who built

the zoo at the bottom of the mountain, and every time there was a parade he rode the elephant through town?”

“Yes, that was,” said the cowboy. “He bought the land for them animals. It’s what happens to folks from the East when they get to the West. The land took old Penrose, and it’s took the new owner, too. The rocks, the hills and your meadows, they call you to put down roots.”

Ranch continues on G14

G14 | Sunday, July 7, 2019 | HoustonChronicle.com | HoustonChronicle.com

ZEST

BBQ STATE OF MIND

Stolen barbecue trailers are becoming an epidemic

It is a scene that has played out dozens of times over the past few years: a primer shows up at his outdoor gear storage trailer to hitch up his barbecue trailer for an off-site event, only to find the space empty.

The trailer and everything on it — smokers, cookpots, refrigerators and even meat cooking on the pit — has been stolen by thieves who literally rolled away with the goods.

The recent epidemic of stolen trailers is an unfortunate side effect of the growing popularity of barbecue both as a commercial enterprise and as a weekend pursuit at competitions.

These elaborate rolling kitchens have become both a status symbol and a mainstay piece of equipment for commercial and competition pitmasters. The popularity of barbecue festivals and catered events requires pitmasters to “take the show on the road” to cook for thousands of guests at a time. The largest commercial trailers can cost as much as \$60,000.

The most recent barbecue festival theft occurred at Gattlin’s BBQ on EBA, just north of Loop 80. On Facebook, owner Greg Gattlin posted a picture of his mobile trailer emblazoned with his logo and announced, “So this weekend I decided to steal one of Gattlin’s BBQ catering trailers. If you happen to see this trailer on the streets call Gattlin’s BBQ and the police. Any bit of information helps.”

“What is remarkable about these thefts is how brazen they are. Gattlin’s trailer is essentially a painted 30-foot-long, pointed jet black with a prominent logo on both sides. It is not like a thief could hide something of this size and prominence in his driveway.”

Certainly, the thief must make some immediate cosmetic changes.

This happened back in 2015, when thieves stole a small trailer or pit belonging to Killen’s Barbecue. This was before chef Ronnie Killen’s Barbecue and restaurant had been built, and the trailer was parked by



Thieves drive around in a truck with a trailer-hitch ball mount, and an unsecured barbecue trailer may be too great a temptation.

— it’s painted bright green and covered in logos for his Southwestern Smoke Festival held every fall. Fortunately, the thief of the original trailer, Pitmaster, decided a replacement pit.

“What are some ways to stop the epidemic?”

First, realize that stolen trailers are the ultimate crime of opportunity. Many potential thieves are driving around in a truck with a trailer hitch ball mount, and an unsecured barbecue trailer may be too much

of a temptation. Putting up barriers to make it even slightly harder instead of easier to the owner’s best line of defense.

However, a chain and padlock aren’t going to be enough, as Killen and Shepherd discovered. These are easily removed with tools acquired from your local hardware store.

A better solution is to use a “boot,” similar to the immobilizing yellow device is now less applied to your car wheels when you don’t pay your parking tickets.

Another more drastic tactic is to use the trailer’s brakes and remove the wheels.

If a trailer is stolen, there isn’t a whole lot of recourse, other than to add a Logix-style GPS device that allows tracking of the trailer in case of theft.

But the best recourse is to leverage the fact that these trailers are hard to miss and known to be stolen, it will be because difficult to transport and to sell on websites such as Craigslist. However, as a KBBQ fan, the thief will always do it and a good saturation will call in a tip on its whereabouts.

greg@gattlins.com
ronnie@killens.com
jerry@jerrybbq.com

him worked decided to steal one of Gattlin’s BBQ catering trailers. If you happen to see this trailer on the streets call Gattlin’s BBQ and the police. Any bit of information helps.”

“What is remarkable about these thefts is how brazen they are. Gattlin’s trailer is essentially a painted 30-foot-long, pointed jet black with a prominent logo on both sides. It is not like a thief could hide something of this size and prominence in his driveway.”

Certainly, the thief must make some immediate cosmetic changes.

This happened back in 2015, when thieves stole a small trailer or pit belonging to Killen’s Barbecue. This was before chef Ronnie Killen’s Barbecue and restaurant had been built, and the trailer was parked by

him his Killen’s Steakhouse in Pearland.

After a site on the run, the trailer was in a vacant lot in South Houston after Killen got an anonymous tip. The chrome wheels had been painted black and a crude paint job had been attempted on the rest of the pit, presumably to camouflage it.

Earlier this year, chef Chris Shepherd showed up to his One Fifty restaurant in Montrose to find his trailer stolen again. Again, the trailer is hard to miss

Love the smell of wood smoke in the morning?
Join J.C. Reed, Alison Cook and Greg Morago as they discuss barbecue culture with special guests by subscribing to the Chronicle’s BBQ State of Mind podcast on Apple’s Podcasts, or visit houstonchronicle.com/bbqpodcast.

RANCH

“You buy an acre, build a cabin, get some chickens, and you think you’re done. Then the place next door gets a sale sign, so you buy it, get a rail fence and a cow and call it a ranch. Then that homestead down by the creek, well, you need water in these parts, so you buy it, too. That’s history, hereabouts.”

With that, the old cowboy tipped his hat, nodded to both of us, clucked to the horse, and they disappeared down the road.

“Guess I’ll see it for myself,” said the driver, adjusting his sunglasses and revving the engine. “Can I give you a ride?”

“No, thanks, I’ll walk,” I said.

“The ranch is pretty close now, down around the corner.”

Alone again, I got to thinking. That cowboy was right. Gossip is just another word for history, especially in ranch country. In the late 1800s, the dirt track here was known as Gold Road. I’d seen the mine tailings myself, a heap of yellow dirt pushed up past the trail, where our horseback ride turned toward the corral. And for all that, they never did find gold.

After the last gold strike petered out, arrivals included a settler, a Girl Scout Camp and finally Spencer Penrose, who leased the 16-acre parcel from the Pike National Forest for his newly created association, the Pike Peak Camping and Mountain Trails Club. The club didn’t last, but the cabin survived the years, including an interval as a dude ranch, in the 1970s.

After the Broadmoor Hotel changed hands, in 2011, the new owner, Philip Anschutz, bought the property, eventually restoring and enlarging the lodge and



Saddling up at the Old Stage Riding Stable for a morning ride at the Ranch at Emerald Valley in Pike National Forest.



Flags and a once-a-season patch of manicured grass celebrate a holiday at the ranch near Colorado Springs, Colo.

building guest cabins, hoping to re-create the ranch and its era, along with an authentic touch of wilderness.

When the work was finished, it was so accurate that I couldn’t tell the old walls from the new ones or the antiques from the reproductions. The interior furnishings, custom made, not only echoed the era but added a decade of luxury. The 10 guest cabins — sized for two, four or eight guests — had their own continued logs and period décor; all outfitted, of course, with modern amenities.

As for the so-called “paddock,” that was by the way. In the six I tried to make a reservation, every cabin was booked, except that one up the hill. Climbing uphill on a winding stone path, I thought I’d been banished to the barn. Then I saw the flagstone patio — large enough for a 50-guest reception, and opened the front door. The living room, furnished with hand-tooled leather chairs, luxurious sofas and a man-styled fireplace,

begged me to sit down; the walls, hung with western and Native American art, insisted that I take a closer look.

The kitchen, large-party sized, included a king center island, surrounded by walls covered with cupboards, and counters with three sinks and the latest appliances. With bedrooms upstairs and down (and bath rooms for each), there was room for eight.

After that, no chry was like another. You could sleep late or eat breakfast early, then climb the ridge to see the views. Two or three trails climbed peaks or crossed through the forest, or you could ride horseback. A hot lunch and farm-fresh salad or sandwich was followed by a game of Scrabble, a walk around the perimeter or a nap in the hammock.

Come 4 p.m., I fetched the fly rod and headed for the lake where the rainbow and brown trout were breaking the surface. Used the wrong fly and came away empty. Cocktail hour fol-

lowed, improved by the chef’s hors d’oeuvres. Broadmoor Live as long as you could eat or talk, in the dining room or stargazing around the campfire.

Wednesday and Saturday evening campfires, when recording artist and cowboy singer Jeff Houston entertains, were the biggest surprise of all. Come, you’re thinking? Maybe, but don’t laugh yet.

I was watching the fire toss up sparks and sipping a smooth cabernet, expecting to hear the usual blaring thrumming, elevator music, usually, when Wednesday and Saturday evening campfires, when recording artist and cowboy singer Jeff Houston entertains, were the biggest surprise of all. Come, you’re thinking? Maybe, but don’t laugh yet.

I was watching the fire toss up sparks and sipping a smooth cabernet, expecting to hear the usual blaring thrumming, elevator music, usually, when Wednesday and Saturday evening campfires, when recording artist and cowboy singer Jeff Houston entertains, were the biggest surprise of all. Come, you’re thinking? Maybe, but don’t laugh yet.

repertoire he hides under that cowboy hat and partymaid asked. Country & western, pop, bluegrass, Pete Seeger, Elton John, the Grateful Dead — he knew them all.

Listening, I couldn’t help wondering why I felt so familiar. Then I remembered. The evening reminded me of Stead’s Ranch, founded in 1904 and long gone now, a historical guest ranch and lodge tucked among the pines, beneath snowy peaks, in Colorado’s Rocky Mountain National Park.

For many a golden summer, a worldwide procession of guests came through Stead’s, from mountain climbers and presidents to stage celebrities, opera singers and families with kids, all sitting around the campfire together, sharing the West’s special brand of hospitality.

Which is just how it felt that night at the Ranch at Emerald Valley, at the end of the track, they once called the Gold Road, I think they’ve hit pay dirt after all.