HORNSING AROUND

By KAREN CATCHPOLE Special to the Star Tribune

The author displays all the appropriate gear — from leather chaps to beautiful horse — as she prepares to mount up again after lunch on a riding vacation in Lagos de Moreno, Mexico.

These guest ranches offer outstanding horseback riding and sophisticated style.

kind. Experienced enough to know a good horse from a bad one and itinerant and passionate enough to demand that every single precious minute on horseback makes me better in the saddle, not just saddle-sore.

As I’ve traveled across the United States and Mexico over the past three years, part of an ongoing road trip dubbed the Trans-American Journey, I’ve searched for and discovered a number of guest ranches that put a premium on good horses, great wranglers and great horsemanship for riders of all kinds. These picks from the herd also offer style, family fun, tradition and history. Saddle up!

Read about the ranches on G6.

M O R E  O N L I N E: See more photos of the ranches at startribune.com/travel

Part of the herd at Triple Creek Ranch in Montana.
Cowboy boots on loan at Smith Fork Ranch in Colorado.
Venue for a barn dance at Home Ranch in Colorado.
Riders with Hacienda Sepultura pass through the central Mexican Desert. Right: The ranch's guide and instructor, Jorge, Senor Irenolene, kicks back. (Photo by VERONICA R.)

Bar Lazy J Ranch owners Jerry (Teddy) and Valinda ride through grasslands in central Colorado. The ranch offers a variety of rides, including ones for children.

Now in its fourth year, the ranch’s Triple Creek Lodge is open year-round and has been named to the American Innkeeper’s list of top 50 naturalist inns in America. The lodge is a popular destination for families, groups and individuals interested in exploring the surrounding steam and natural beauty of the area.

The setting: The ranch is located on a private, 6,000-acre ranch in the heart of Colorado’s Rocky Mountains. The area is known for its beautiful landscapes, abundant wildlife, and access to a variety of outdoor activities, including horseback riding, hiking, and fishing.

The accommodations: The lodge has 10 guest rooms, each with a private bathroom and views of the mountains. The rooms are decorated in a rustic style that complements the surrounding scenery.

The activities: The ranch offers a variety of activities, including horseback riding, hiking, fishing, and wildlife viewing. Guests can choose from a variety of guided and self-guided activities, and there are options for families, groups, and individuals.

The cuisine: The lodge’s restaurant serves a variety of delicious meals, including breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The menu features a mix of traditional and local Colorado dishes, and all ingredients are sourced from local farms and businesses.

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