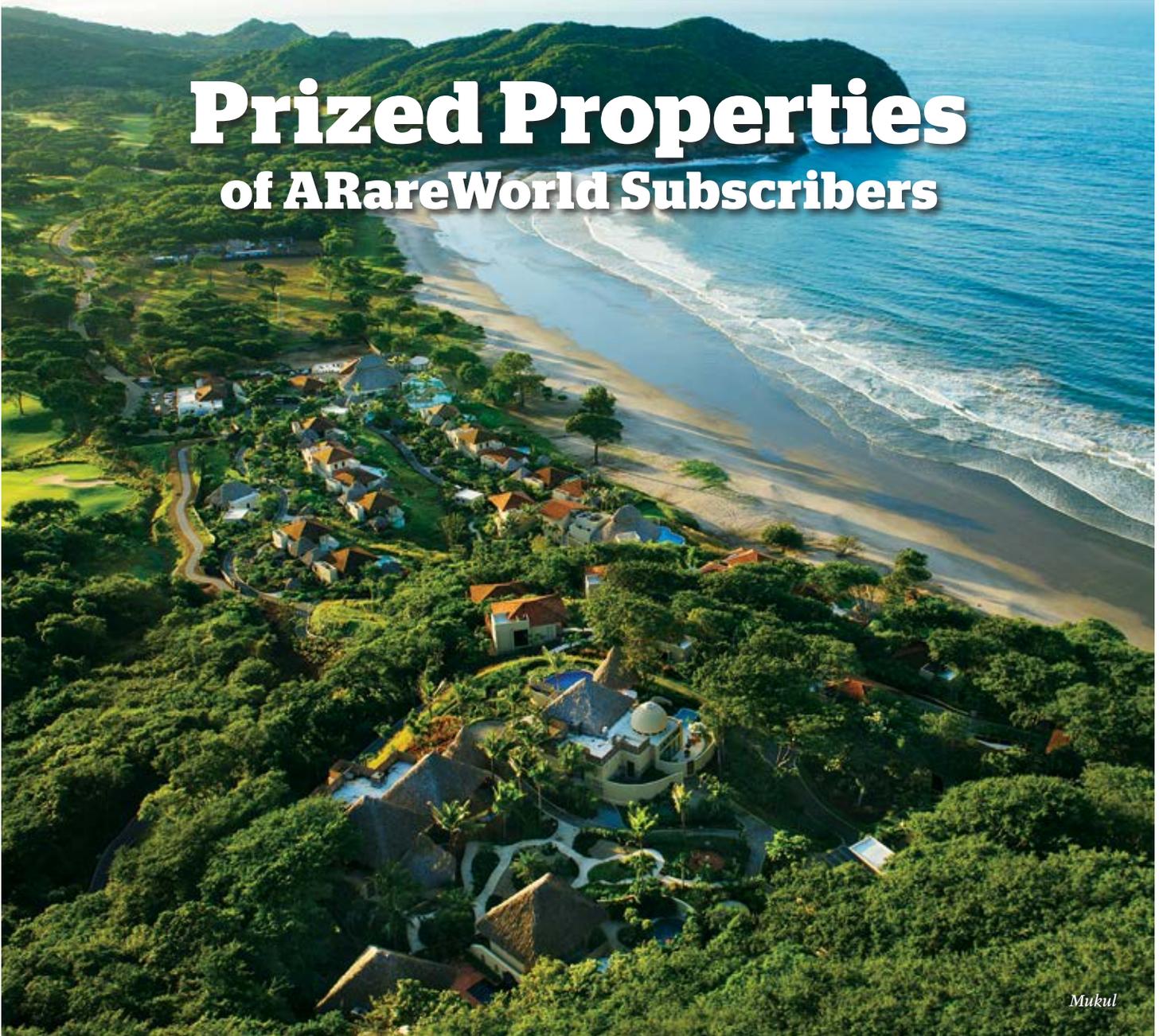


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THE TRAVEL INTELLIGENCE JOURNAL

Prized Properties of ARareWorld Subscribers



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DUNTON HOT SPRINGS

Slow down.

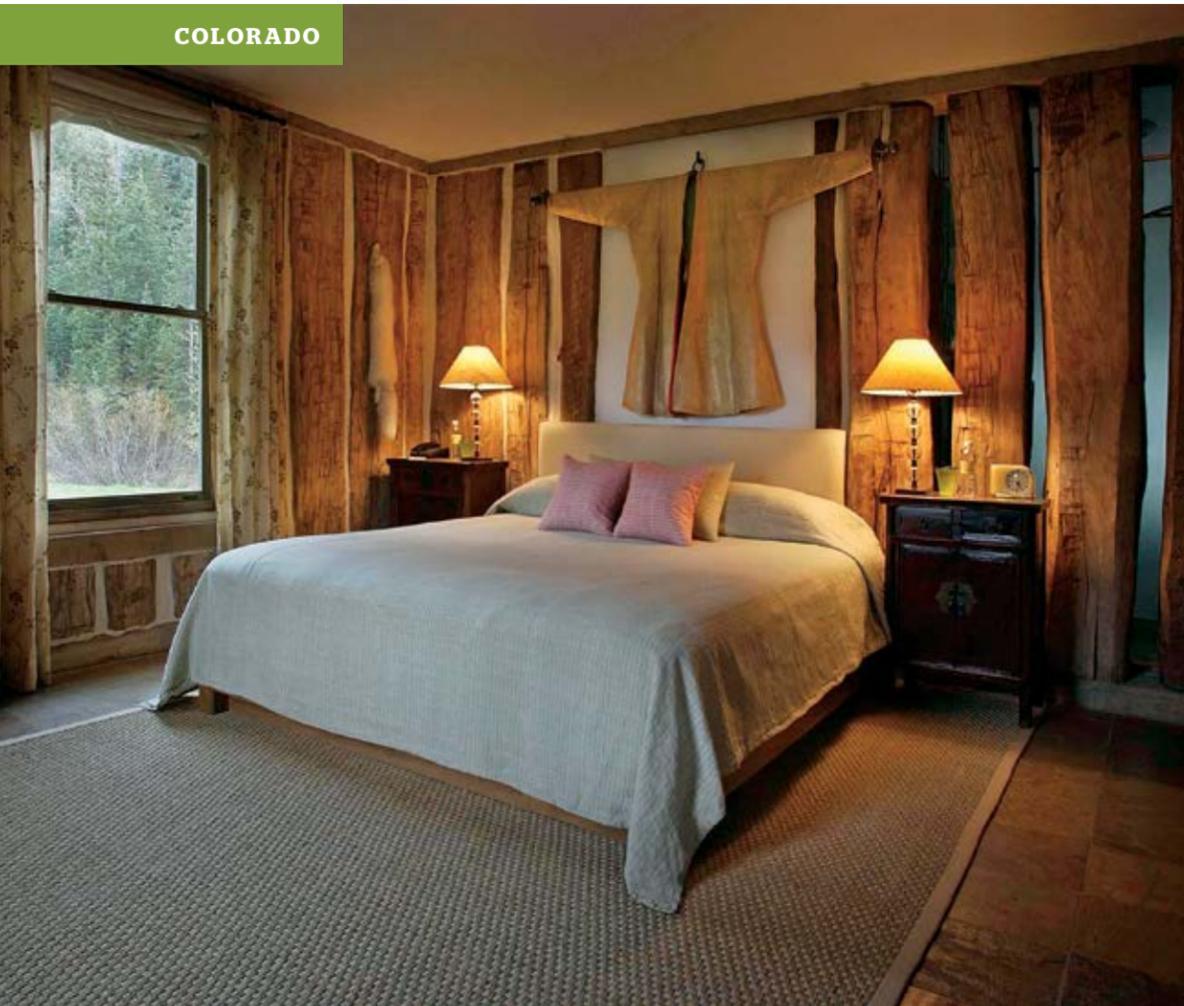


THE TOWN of Dunton was founded in 1885 as a mile long mining community in the Colorado highlands, but Dunton didn't last long. The entire town was deserted by 1918, and was eventually purchased by a single owner. The ghost town changed hands once again in the mid-1990s, and underwent a highly personal, seven-year restoration project before opening as a luxury resort known as Dunton Hot Springs.

There are four airports within an approximate two-hour radius of Dunton Hot Springs. If you're arriving privately, Telluride is the closest at about an hour. For commercial flights, Cortez is the closest, but there are more flight options available from Durango, so we opted for the latter.

Upon arrival at DRO, we headed through to baggage claim and immediately spotted a gentleman bearing a Dunton Hot Springs sign. Once we were all packed into the vehicle, it was about two hours and change to the property entrance. A blizzard was rolling in, demanding an easier pace on the road. As we ascended into the highlands, we quickly noticed the entire landscape blanketed in white, and shortly thereafter, "Welcome to Dunton."

Out of the vehicle, a gentleman by the name of Patrick offered a warm greeting and anything we'd like from the bar while we discussed our plans for our visit and received information about meals, amenities, and the like. We arrived between mealtimes, and should have asked the drive to make a stop on the way up the mountain, but nonetheless arrived hungry. Since the kitchen was closed, Patrick was so generous as to run over to his home across the way (through knee-high snow) in order to prepare a couple sandwiches to tide us over.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF DUNTON HOT SPRINGS

After we were all satiated, Patrick walked us over to our cabin for the duration of our stay, and on the way, made a quick stop to show us the property's most prized amenity. There are two mineral pools at the bathhouse, one indoor and one out, and both sourced directly from the property's calcium bicarbonate hot spring, which is rich in iron and manganese with traces of lithium. Throughout our stay, the bathhouse would be our default destination. Finished our writing after breakfast? Time for a soak. Walking back to the cabin from dinner? Might as well. It is on the way, after all.

Further on the conversation of wellness, Dunton does offer spa treatments as well as yoga and Pilates classes, but only on the basis of specific demand. It's best to arrange for these services ahead of your visit. There is also a small fitness facility equipped with a range of free weights, a bench, a bike, and boxing bags, but at 8,600 feet, we weren't so keen to workout.

There are 13 cabins at Dunton. Each has its own unique appeal, layout, and amenities. Décor throughout the property is on theme drawing from the simple and quaint old west style. For couples, our first choice

Finished our writing after breakfast? Time for a soak. Walking back to the cabin from dinner? Might as well. It is on the way, after all.

would be Well House for sake of its bathtub's direct line to the property's hot mineral spring. For families, we like Dunton Store, which sleeps up to four and, during the summer months, has its own private outdoor hot spring. We were booked into Major Ross, which we appreciated for sake of its proximity to the bathhouse and saloon.

All rates at Dunton are fully inclusive of food and beverage. There is a new menu each day for lunch and dinner, with dishes inspired by the freshest ingredients available, intermingling flavor profiles of the region with classical methods of preparation. Guests are welcomed for breakfast each morning with a spread of fresh fruits and cereals, with a chef on standby for anything you'd like from the kitchen. We had a breakfast crepe that was on special one morning, and it was delicious. By

default, meals are enjoyed communal style, and everyone we were seated with was offering consistent praise to the kitchen. We enjoyed a number of dishes we were served, though we didn't fully agree with the passionate reactions from our fellow guests and generally kept our opinions to ourselves.

During our visit, we were perfectly satisfied to enjoy the resort as an escape to a slower pace, where hot mineral soaks bide time between meals, the surrounding world frozen in ice and seemingly in time. Of course, others will have an agenda for more activity to their visit, and the property is poised to offer a worthy a la carte selection of outdoor activities suited to both winter and summer seasons. Summer options include fly-fishing, rafting, horseback riding, hiking, and rock climbing. In the winter, the conversation shifts to include heli-skiing, dog sledding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice skating, and even ice climbing.

With an ever increasing pace, it's easy to get off balance. A couple of days at Dunton, where cell reception is a no-go, is good for turning down the volume and getting closer to center. The experience here is thought-

ful, relaxing, romantic, and what's more, a very decent value by comparison to other five-star destinations of the west. ●●●●

Dunton Hot Springs

Dolores, Colorado
General Manager: Norbert Mede
duntonhotsprings.com

DOS & DON'TS

- DO** review all 13 cabin choices on the property website as each is unique and has its own décor, offerings, and rates.
- DO** arrange for spa and fitness appointments ahead of your visit. At most times, there is not a therapist based on property, and these services would be booked on an on demand basis.
- DO** consider Dunton Hot Springs for a full property buyout to accommodate up to 44. For a certain couple, it's the perfect wedding location.
- DON'T** feel pressured into the communal meal ritual if you'd rather sit elsewhere. They'll be happy to find you a separate table, or to serve meals in your cabin.