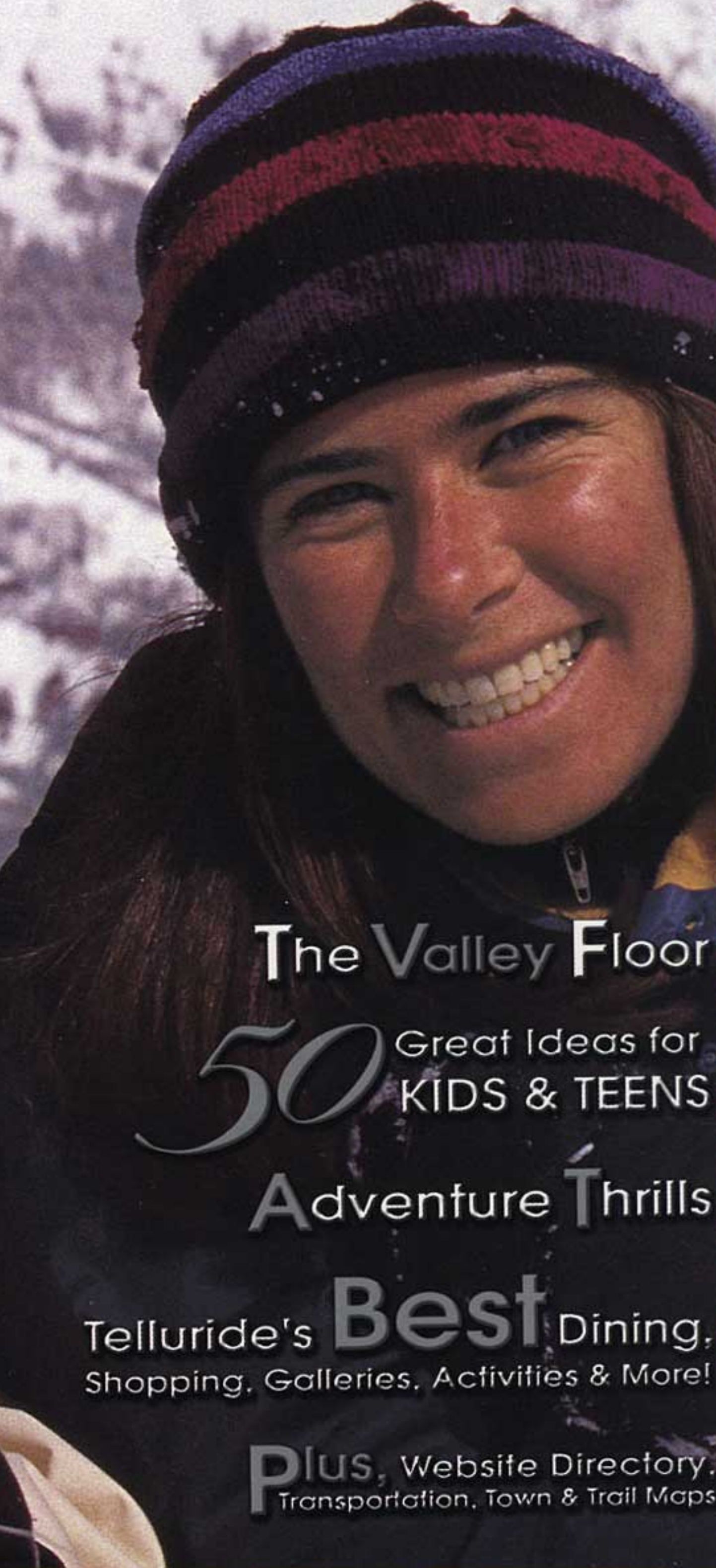


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TellurideStyle Magazine

A Magazine of Mountain Living



The Valley Floor

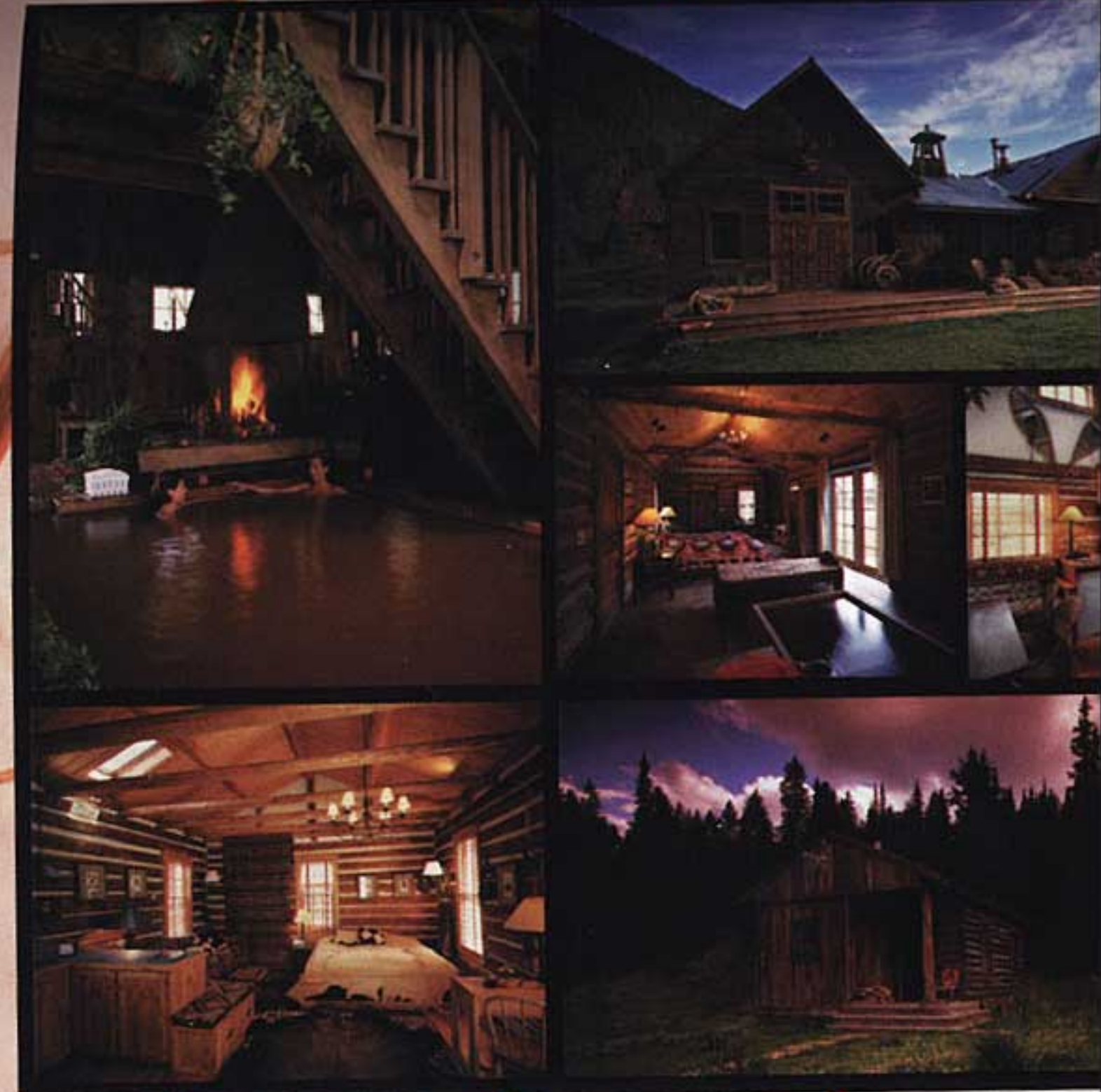
50 Great Ideas for KIDS & TEENS

Adventure Thrills

Telluride's Best Dining, Shopping, Galleries, Activities & More!

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Side Trips NEAR TELLURIDE



Dunton

When even Telluride's admittedly relaxed pace becomes too much, Dunton is waiting.

Named after a prospector who sought his fortune there in the 1870s, the mining/trading post town of Dunton Hot Springs sits at nearly 9,000 feet above sea level, an oasis off the road between Telluride and Cortez. It's pretty much as "away from it all" as you can get. Tradition at this exquisite retreat holds that Butch Cassidy would relax in the natural hot springs appreciating his privacy in the Wild West.. Today, a winter visitor takes a snowmobile, 4 x 4 SUV or helicopter to this stunningly restored 19th Century treasure. The trip takes a while, but is undeniably energy well-spent.

During a painstakingly five-year renovation, Dunton's owners have transformed this outpost into a luxury setting without rival. The most remarkable part about it is how little is obvious from the outside. The exterior of the cabins were left nearly untouched. As you walk up to them, you feel the sense of history and mysteriously feel the rich, lustrous spirit of generations past.

By opening a single door, one will see not only the infusion of the past into the present, but picks up on the staggering amount of detail and authenticity placed into their simple and earthy decor. The Dance Hall, for example, is an elegantly rustic space adjoining a fully-equipped dining room. The main Bath House boasts a 30-foot high ceiling and a decidedly modern picture window that reveals El Diente Peak, a local "fourteener." And every guest cabin is decorated with woven blankets, furs, fireplace and a combination of antique and recently-hewn furniture that speaks to Western craftsmanship. One even has its own soaking tub, while another has a private view of a waterfall. There is also a library and computer post for those who need to stay in touch with their emails or internet communique.

Dunton is not open to the public, precisely. The town is available for groups wishing to spend a leisurely six hours enjoying the journey, gourmet lunch, soaking, and general sense of well-being. But this is just a teaser; to fully appreciate this non-ghostly ghost town, you need to stay longer. Helicopter skiing from here is a natural fit, and unwinding in the hot springs ends a day nicely. Eamonn O'Hara, Dunton's resident chef, recommends at least a week stay to enjoy the relaxed atmosphere. An aura of peace comes from every plank of recovered wood, every piece of hammered tin, even (and especially) Dunton's first-rate staff. Even royalty enjoy Dunton in blue jeans. "They looked comfortable," says Eamonn, "and they liked the fact that we looked comfortable too. It's very open out here."

The center of early evening in Dunton is an enormous handmade dining table covered with every trapping of the gourmet palate. Groups simply love it. "Everyone sits around at the table, the fire's going, the music's playing," Eamonn recalls proudly. "It's a little different. We don't want that stiff-shirt thing."

Don't expect to run into people at random here. Dunton pleases everyone, one group at a time. If you've ever wanted to have the run of an entire town, even a small one, this could be your best chance. ▶▶