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WINTER 2016



*Natural
Elegance*



Homes &
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Winter Renewal

A Rocky Mountain ghost town comes back to life as the West's most creative hotel

The West has its share of sumptuous wilderness resorts, but none as romantic as Dunton Hot Springs, a former ghost town hidden in the heart of the Colorado Rockies. Even finding it is a cinematic experience. Guests drive along a red-dirt road some twenty-two miles from the nearest town, Dolores, through the rugged, pine-clad San Juan Mountains. Behind a lonely bend, a cluster of thirteen restored wooden cabins magically appears, nestled in a verdant meadow by the West Dolores River. Arrive in winter, after a snowfall, and the silence is all-enveloping; a few plumes of smoke from antique chimneys offer the only movement. It is, quite literally, a new frontier of luxury.

Every cabin is hand-crafted and eccentric, with wood-fired stoves and distinctive décor, including Vertical Log,

so named because its wooden logs were laid vertically rather than horizontally, and Well House, built around its own spring.

This inventive blend of design elements makes Dunton an adventure to explore. The main hot spring is enclosed in a cathedral of raw wood and glass. A superb restaurant in the former dance hall serves fresh local fish and venison. The general store, which once doled out flour and

Opening pages: New cabins at Dunton Hot Springs reference the architecture of the original gold-mining town. Left and above: Thirteen guest cabins dot the land and function as a kind of self-sufficient town.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF DUNTON HOT SPRINGS
WRITTEN BY ICAN PERCIBET



Each of the cabins is individually decorated, combining Western antiques and wood-burning stoves with state-of-the-art comforts that would astonish the original nineteenth-century residents. There is no cell phone reception at the resort, but each cabin has Wi-Fi.



potatoes to miners, houses a gym. And a library filled with contemporary art books has a grizzly skin on the floor, local gemstones laid out in antique boxes, and a bottle of Dickel whiskey artfully placed with fresh glasses at the ready for guests to indulge on winter nights.

Raw nature is only a step away. Hiking trails lead right from cabin doors to a burbling waterfall and into the hills, where century-old mine shafts still gape and mining implements rust away in poetic abandon. In summer, mountain bikes are available to explore more remote trails, and flyfishermen can spend days on West Dolores River. In winter, the energetic can cross-country ski and snowshoe. Heli-skiing, dog-sledding, and horseback tours are available, too.

In the saloon, I perched at the wooden bar, tattooed with graffiti — including the names “Butch Cassidy and Sundance.” The carving is loaded with legend, the barman remarks, since nobody can prove or disprove its authenticity. “We’re pretty sure Butch Cassidy passed through here after robbing a bank in Telluride,” he says. “So it’s not impossible that it’s real..”

Sipping my boitfique beer, I decide to accept the carving as real. There’s no resisting the romance of Dunton.



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