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On tour:

Rustic lux

Mountain trekking

Ho-Chi Minh City

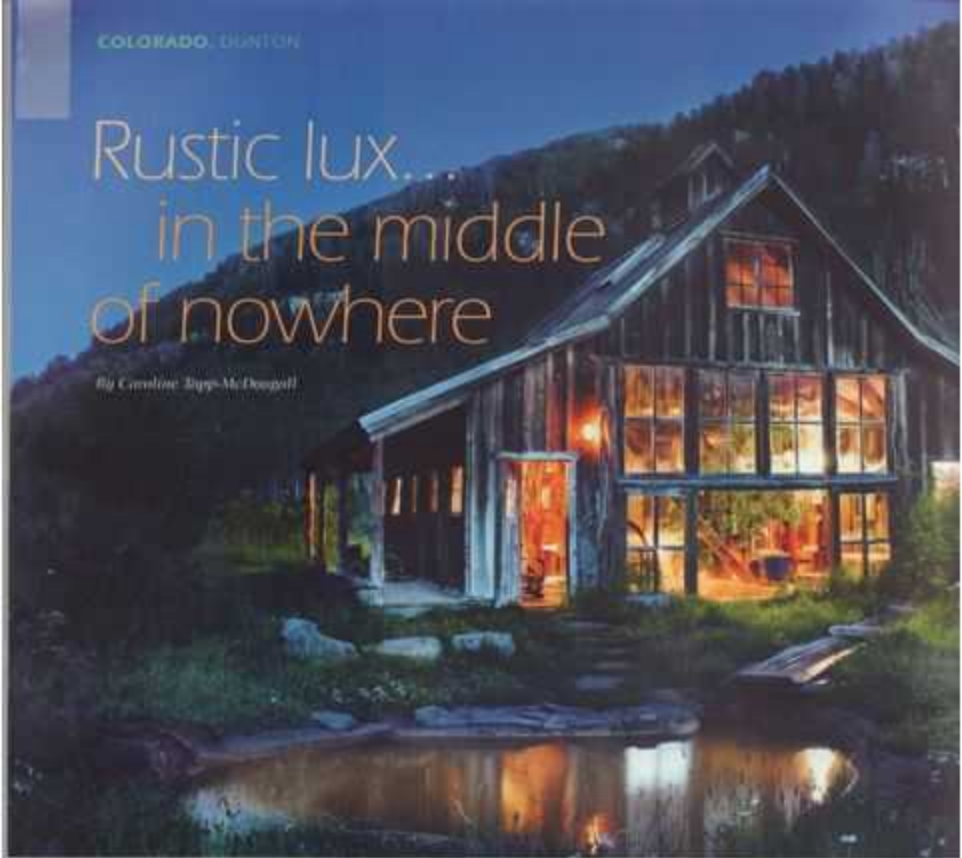
Structural simplicity

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Rustic lux... in the middle of nowhere

By Caroline Bays-McDonnell



For beyond the end of the "real" road, Dunton is calling our names. It's an unusual private preserve—an old deserted mining town surrounded by endless wilderness that the Henkel family has brought back to life as Dunton Hot Springs Resort. Here, hand-hewn log cabins, a miners' bathhouse with more stories than you can shake a stick at and a "life-worn" saloon that Bunch Cassidy is said to have used as a hide out, contribute to our year-year adventure.

While the town looks deserted when we first arrive, it's soon dead clear that there's more going on than first meets the eye in this former ghost town.





Tipping cabin.



Norwegian riding
through autumn colors
at the Tipping Cabin.



An antique copper tub in
the Vertical Log Cabin.

Adventuresome options for a few, but exactly what others have come all this way do, include diverse fly fishing (hours knee deep in the river casting with expert fly-fishing guides) and old-time trail riding on sturdy horses that know the forest paths. Signing up for a hike means a mixture of gentle to lung-torturing climbs, whatever's on the agenda. Less ambitious guests can sile their time away in the mineral hot springs or get "fresh air" and pampering in the up-river spa tent.

Our lodgings...Dunton's newest addition, Christy, the only all-season tent, constructed out of custom canvas and reclaimed materials from the



Bathroom
hammock.



Exterior of Christy's Tent.

1830s. It's one of a few new tents in the up-road river camp, but the others are not winter proof. Spacious, light and beautifully appointed, Christy's Tent is heated by a gas stove, has an en-suite bath and generous shower, and shares striking views of the Wilson Mountain Range. And, with a little luck, the tumbling waterfalls will sing us off to sleep.

Stylish cocktails and glam-pod-up traditional fare are Chef Karlos Baca's trademark. The kitchen brigade presents new seasonal menus every day. But there's a definite tip of the hat to regional lamb and game, as well as local produce from the owner's farm and vineyards. In the late summer, wild chammoules, boletus and other mushrooms are even foraged from the surrounding mountains, and nearby orchards yield ripened fruit.

Chef Baca's open kitchen is at the heart of the old saloon for everyone to view and enjoy. Regulars can often be seen rolling up their sleeves and helping the chef out as he preps the day's fare or creates something special, by



Interior of Christy's Tent.

request. At mealtimes, guests are all invited to eat communally at a beautifully dressed, long, antique table in the centre of the saloon—a tradition from the big cattle days that Dunton maintains. And, as menus change, so do matching wines. The reserve list is worth writing home about...from fine-growth Bordeaux and California classics to super Tuscan and lusty Aussie favourites. This "middle of nowhere" has one amazing wine cellar! ■

Getting here

Dunton Hot Springs lies across the mountain from Telluride and is open all year 'til the southwest corner of Colorado between Canon and Telluride. There are four airports close by: Color (CO), Durango (DRC), Telluride (TD) and Moab (MFE); it's a four-hour drive from Denver, but forget GPS when driving to Dunton. Rather, use the road map or call ahead for specific directions from wherever you are coming from.