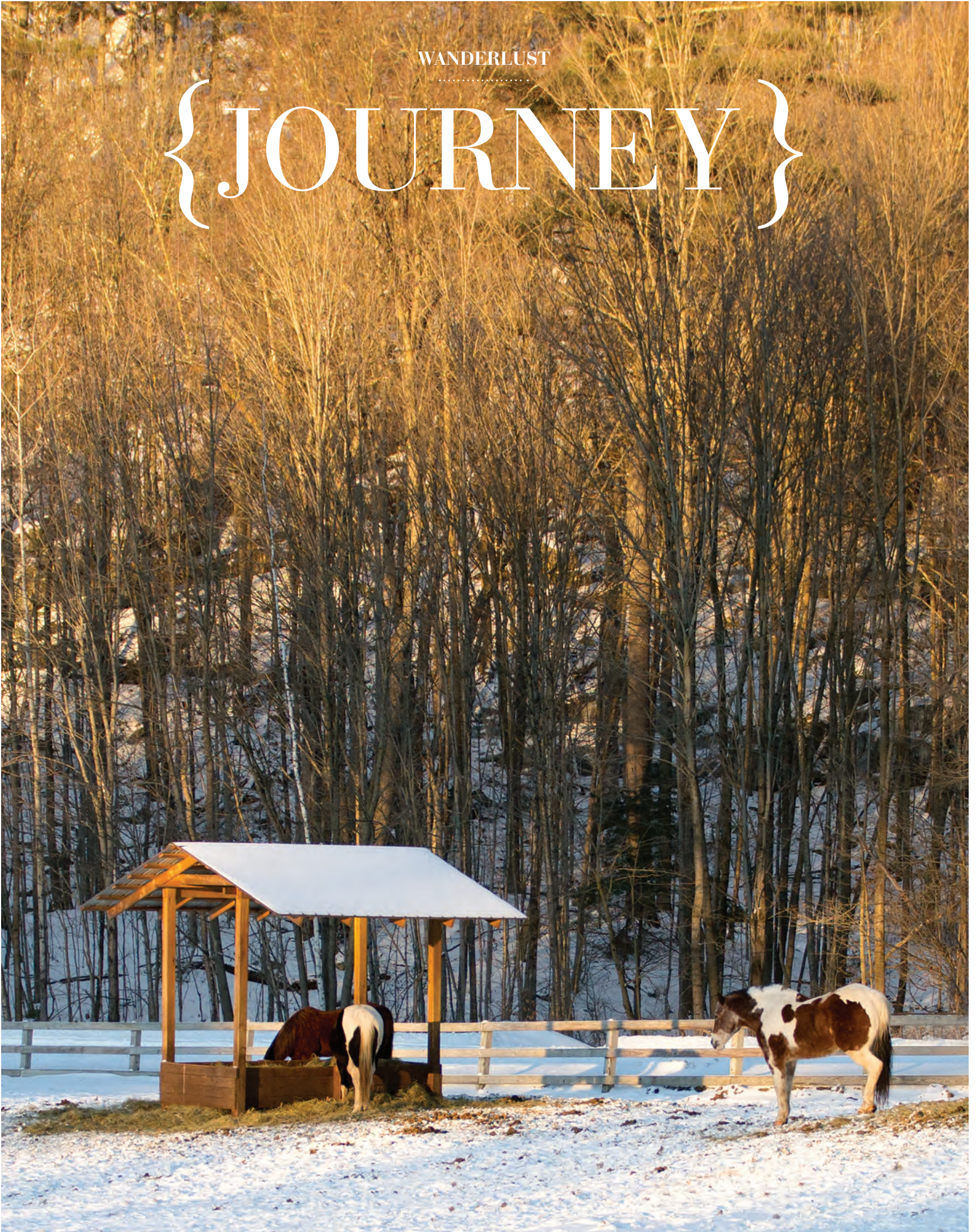


WANDERLUST

# { JOURNEY }





# RIDIN-HY

RANCH RESORT

TUCKED INSIDE A MULTI-MILLION-ACRE ADIRONDACK PRESERVE, THIS DUDE RANCH HAS BECOME A HOME AWAY FROM HOME FOR ITS GUESTS.

By Katie Navarra



PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY SUSAN & STEPHEN BEECHING

From atop the peaks of the Adirondack region of New York, tree-covered ranges sprawl out in all directions, changes in elevation causing ripples in the waves of forest like those that lap against the banks of the lakes and ponds that rest peacefully within the valleys.

Nestled within New York's largest protected natural area is Ridin-Hy, a 700-acre, third-generation, family-owned dude ranch. Guests saddle up to explore miles of trails aboard the ranch's 70-plus horses and clamber onto worn seats to cheer on cowboys at the Monday night rodeos. A lot of chrome can be spotted in the ranch's herd, and the boldly painted horses are most popular among guests.

"We have a lot of horses with color in our string because everyone loves them," Troy Beadnell said. Troy and his brother Tim, along with their wives, Carrie and Patience, co-own the ranch.

The steady horses carry new and experienced riders alike along scenic trails that hug the roaring Schroon River, climb into the Buck Mountain wilderness and meander around the crystal-clear lakes. It's an experience unlike any other and one that quickly converts newcomers into recurring customers. Before guests depart for home, nearly 90 percent book a return trip to the ranch.



«AS SOON AS YOU TURN ONTO THE DIRT ROAD THAT LEADS TO THE RANCH, THE CRAZY WORLD ENDS AND THE RELAXATION BEGINS.»

## FAMILY, FRIENDS & ENDLESS FUN

This spring, Cathy Mafale-Bailey of Bristol, Connecticut, will make her 33<sup>rd</sup> pilgrimage to Ridin-Hy. She's visited every year around Mother's Day with her parents, children, sister and brother-in-law. It's an annual celebration of family, set at the foot of the Adirondacks with a decidedly Western flair.

"We've been going as a family since my kids were babies and have gauged their milestones by what activities they could participate in as they grew up," Cathy said.

Since that first visit, Cathy and her sister Lynn were hooked on the ranch, especially its horseback offerings. In addition to their yearly family trip, the sisters added a fall outing—a girls' getaway with up to 20 of their closest friends. This October will mark their 20<sup>th</sup> annual girls' trip.

"It's a chance to reset," Cathy said. "As soon as you turn onto the dirt road that leads to the ranch, the crazy world ends and the relaxation begins."

Though televisions can be found in the bar and cellphone service is strong, the individual cabins do not have TVs in an effort to encourage guests to unplug.

PHOTOGRAPHY: KATIE NAVARRA

For Cathy and Lynn, riding is the highlight of every visit. Even though the sisters have owned horses and ridden since childhood, the opportunity to roam the scenic trails for four to five hours a day is unmatched.

"Stormy, Zach and Adam work in the barn and take good care of us and the horses," Cathy said. "We are respectful of their rules and they know we are experienced riders, so sometimes they'll let us ride new horses and help break them into the line."

## RENEWAL

Guests can choose from a myriad of summer activities such as paddle boating, water skiing, paintball, volleyball, softball and tennis. Throughout the winter, trail and sleigh rides are available, along with snow skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing and ice fishing.

Horses, however, are a main attraction. Susan Beeching of Collins, Connecticut, grew up with horses and continued riding into her 30s, but her husband, Stephen, never shared her equine interest. The couple ran a bed-and-breakfast, and as life got busy, Susan hung up her spurs.

When a friend offered to man their B&B for a weekend so the couple could get away and unwind, they jumped at the chance and chose Ridin-Hy so Susan could enjoy some saddle time. The trip proved life-



«

“THEY HAVE A GOOD VARIETY OF HORSES BOTH SIZE- AND TEMPERAMENT-WISE SO EVERYONE CAN GET ON AND ENJOY A RIDE.”

»



changing for both husband and wife, and a beginner’s trail ride sparked a newfound equine interest in Stephen. He was hooked, much to Susan’s delight. Now, Stephen’s a YouTube horse video junkie and takes weekly riding lessons, bringing horses back into Susan’s life at the same time. It’s all thanks to Ridin-Hy’s herd.

“They have a good variety of horses both size- and temperament-wise so everyone can get on and enjoy a ride. The horses are calm and safe, but not drones that only follow nose to tail,” Stephen said. “For someone like me, who doesn’t have a lot of access to horses otherwise, I can go out every hour as long as there’s not someone else waiting for a turn.”

Stephen describes the Adirondack Mountain trails as gorgeous and says even those who don’t regularly ride can appreciate the beautiful surroundings of a trail ride at Ridin-Hy.

### UNMATCHED HOSPITALITY

While horses are the ranch’s main draw, Ridin-Hy’s superior hospitality also beckons guests back.

“They are so accommodating, never to the point of being impractical or inconvenient for another guest, but when they can fulfill a request, they do,” Stephen said. “And for newcomers, especially those new to horses, they are really patient and make it fun.”

That kind of caring is contagious, and Stephen says when dealing with his own customers at their bed-and-breakfast, he often considers Ridin-Hy customer service.

“When something comes up with a guest, I think, ‘How would Ridin-Hy handle this?’” he said.

The hospitality appreciated by Ridin-Hy’s guests is also extended to local rodeo competitors. Each season, the ranch hosts 26 rodeos featuring bulldogging, calf roping, team roping, breakaway roping and barrel racing.

Bill Riel and his fiancé, Emma Reichert, from Mechanicville, New York, compete in team and breakaway roping and barrel racing at the ranch’s weekly rodeo. Ridin-Hy’s staff welcomes rodeo participants to enjoy the ranch’s offerings and on several occasions, Bill and Emma have arrived early to swim or utilize the ranch’s other amenities.

“They treat you just like one of the guests,” Bill said. “We’ve taken a half-day off from work to enjoy the afternoon there before the rodeo begins.”

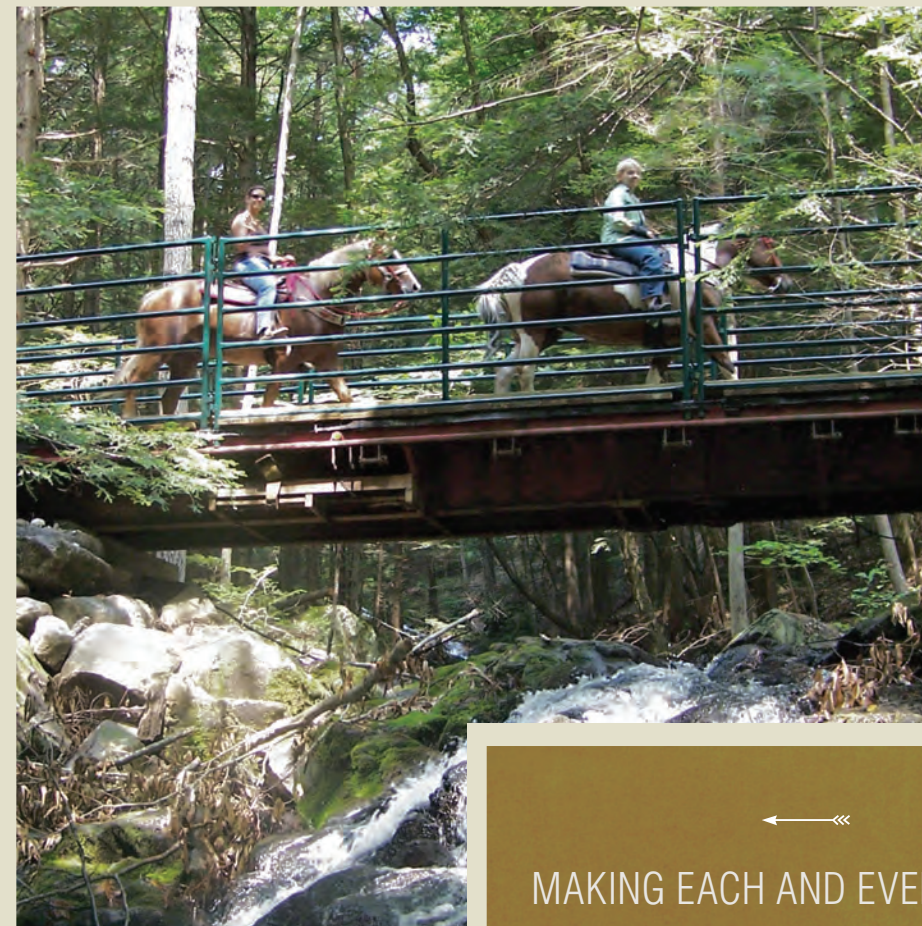
Emma adds that ranch guests—often hailing from very urban backgrounds—are encouraged to mingle with the competitors and get up close to their horses.

“It’s wonderful to meet someone from New York City interested in learning about the horses,” she said.

Making each and every guest feel at home is part of the Beadnell family legacy. Troy and Tim bought Ridin-Hy from their parents in 2010, but the family’s involvement with the ranch dates back to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1940, the brothers’ grandfather Ed Carstens—a son of German immigrants—purchased the property, which was originally an all-girl’s camp. Although he lived most of his life in New York City, Ed had grand visions of horses carrying guests along the ranch’s miles of majestic trails. This, combined with the numerous water activities available on Sherman Lake, led him to believe the ranch could be a successful venture.

Twelve no-frills rustic cabins that accommodated 30 guests were the property’s original buildings. In 1943, Ed met and later married Orabel, a guest at the ranch, and in 1948 the couple built the ranch’s first main lodge—a sprawling structure constructed with rough-cut logs that had been harvested

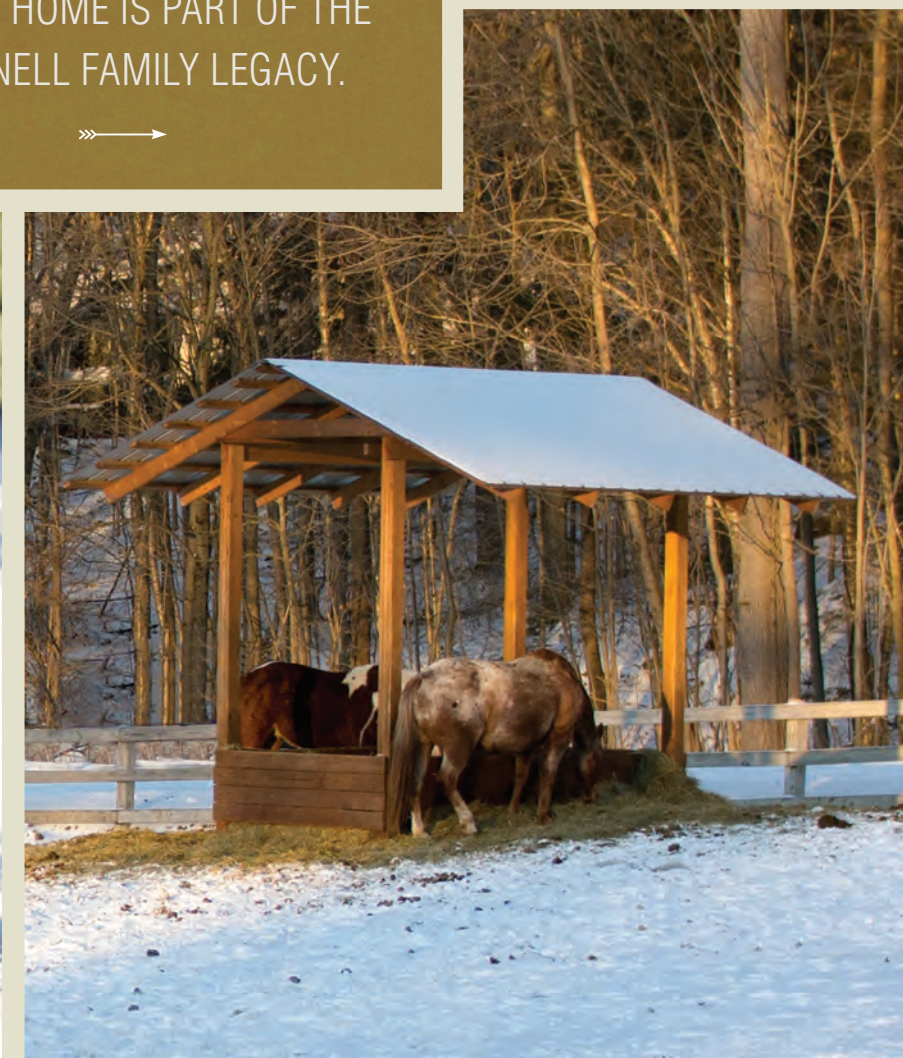
PHOTOGRAPHY: KATE NAVARRA, COURTESY SUSAN & STEPHEN BECHING



«

MAKING EACH AND EVERY GUEST FEEL AT HOME IS PART OF THE BEADNELL FAMILY LEGACY.

»



PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY RIDIN-HY, KATE NAVARRA



**Original Lodge**

from the ranch's back mountain and two towering stone chimneys that divided the rambling porch overhang.

In 1958, Ed and Orabel brought on a children's social and activities director to help transition the seasonal camp into a family-oriented dude ranch. The couple's children, Gary and Susan, were raised on the ranch, and in 1970, Susan and her husband, Andy, bought the ranch and took over operations.

The three generations of partners extended the operating season until the ranch was eventually open year-round as it is today. They invested heavily in the facilities, upgrading existing structures and building new ones so it could accommodate up to 200 guests.

## TWICE OUT OF THE ASHES

On July 20, 1982, a fire ravaged the main lodge, ignited by kitchen towels and a faulty dryer. No one was harmed, but the lodge was a total loss. Ever enterprising, the ranch reopened just 10 days later, after one of the barns was converted into a kitchen for the summer.

"I always heard the stories of how horrible the fire was, but it's something you can't fully understand until you live it," Troy said.

Troy speaks from experience; fate and fire struck again 35 years later. On October 27, 2017, a guest placed what he believed was an extinguished cigar in a paper cup, which ignited a fire that engulfed and destroyed the main lodge. Fortunately, guests and staff were evacuated without injury, but once again, the building was a complete loss.

Undeterred, the family began the rebuilding process for the second time. In less than 60 days, the family and staff converted the ranch's gymnasium into a temporary main building and dining room, constructed a kitchen off the back and reopened to guests on December 26.


"There has been a huge outpouring of support," Carrie said. "Guests did whatever they could to help replace what was lost in the fire."

Guests arrived bearing a wide assortment of gifts from monogrammed T-shirts to scrapbooks and sculptures, gifts to help preserve the ranch's heritage beyond fond memories. Plans for a new main lodge are well underway: It will fill the same footprint as the original two lodges and



**Modern Lodge**

will be largely constructed by logs harvested from the ranch's 700 acres; the family has set an aggressive construction timeline with the goal of opening the rebuilt lodge by winter.

"It's very surreal," Troy said. "It's our business; I grew up here and working here and didn't realize how much Ridin-Hy means to our guests, too." 

### Saddle Up

Keep 'Ridin-Hy' online.

[rydinhy.com](http://rydinhy.com)