



THE BROADMOOR AND RANCH AT EMERALD VALLEY

Rumor has it that Spencer Penrose, the founder of the Broadmoor Hotel, wanted to purchase the Antler Hotel in downtown Colorado Springs, but the owner refused to sell it to him. Instead, Mr. Penrose bought a decaying casino on 3,000 acres, and turned it into the mini city it is now. But first, he got lit, rode his horse into the lobby of the Antler Hotel, and told them that his hotel would be bigger, more successful and better than their hotel would ever be. As a snub, he had the letter “a” in the Broadmoor logo made smaller than the other letters as a reminder of these facts when he opened his hotel in 1918.

At the time, it took 700 artisans, (many from Europe) only eight Augusts to build his 340 room resort. Fast forward to the present day’s 744 rooms, three golf courses, 185,000 square feet of conference space, seven restaurants, shopping, pools, a spa, and the newest jewel in the crown, The Emerald Valley Ranch. It’s a bit like an Italian lake town a couple hours flying time from the OC.

I found myself sleeping soundly, jogging the lake circle, indulging in the spa, and wandering the grounds, when I wasn’t eating. The staff of nearly 1,900 employees from 23 countries all contribute to the perfect romantic sojourn, but my favorite employee was the bread maker, Johann Willar. We had the chance to watch the third-generation French artist start the day and sample hot fluffy baguettes from the commercial oven. After a couples massage, you can roast marshmallows by the outdoor fire, or better yet, head over to the private chapel and tie the knot!

The Ranch opened late last summer as a seasonal wilderness experience high in the mountains of the Pike National Forest. Guests hitch a ride in the shuttle from the famed Broadmoor, and commune with nature in one of 10 luxuriously rustic cabins set amidst the trees and lakes cuddled by a stream. The entirely new cabins (created on the footprint of the old ones) come decked out in a “Ralph Lauren meets Hank Williams” vibe. Tweeds, a local firm out of Woodland, decorated the individual dwellings and used thoughtful touches. Things like hand-selected river pebbles and rain showers mimic the sounds of the waterfall and stream running through the Ranch. The Turkish towels with the EV branding remind you that it’s a luxurious place. The Zapotec tribe of Mexico’s Waxaca Indians were commissioned to weave the cabin’s rugs. Your ranch hand can light your fireplace for a cozy



evening in, and each cabin has a duet of rocking chairs, cozy beds and high-thread-count linens. Philip Anshutz, the current owner, selected 140 original and reproduction pieces from his private collection of his own American Museum of Western Art to adorn the walls of the property (a cowboy herding the cattle through the snow adorns my bathroom wall in the Pine Cabin).

At this all-inclusive property, your dedicated chef prepares local specialties, appetizers and main courses that are heavy with Waygu beef, delicious Colorado lamb, potatoes, hearty vegetables and a variety of homemade desserts made by the Broadmoor’s pastry chef. Do you dream of rising early and stealing a few jumping rainbow trout from the lake? Maybe holding hands along the lush malachite colored valleys is your cup of tea? Does canoeing float your boat? We chose horseback riding. Aztec, a coffee-colored “forge a path of his own” type horse, chooses me for the mountain trail through the trees entwined with the old mine artifacts (circa 1920). I’m a novice rider, and Aztec manages to climb as close to the edge of the trail as possible (on the down side) and scrape me along each aspen, pine, or spruce tree we pass. I mentally choose my next year’s Christmas tree 100 times over as we climb the trails with the stream’s relaxing song. After the ride and a hearty lunch, we soak in one of the two outdoor cedar tubs brimming over alongside the lake as night falls and then go back to the room to nest and forge new paths the following day. – S.L.

■ Broadmoor.com/ranch