

Wicked Winter Fun

Colorado's Devil's Thumb Ranch offers a heavenly eco-setting.

Rocky Mountain hideaway: Devil's Thumb Ranch—a rustically elegant wilderness resort amid 4,000 acres of meadows and woodlands—is 65 miles west of Denver, near the Continental Divide.

Snow and sustainability: The ranch's buildings, pool and hot tubs are heated with geothermal energy, and Devil's Thumb won a 2004 EPA award for environmentally sensitive remodeling. The historic activities building was relocated and is used as a skiers' warming area. The special events center is a reclaimed, 1850s-era barn. Waste water is purified through sand filtration.

Dinner Bell: The romantic Ranch Creek Restaurant serves organic, artisan-style cuisine by chef Ken Ohlinger. (Try the portobello mushroom recipe on page 29.)

Accommodations with altitude: Get cozy by the fire in an antique-furnished, woodsy cabin. (EPA-approved chimneys reduce wood-burning emissions to very low levels.) A new lodge with 53 guest rooms and suites will be finished this year.

Outdoor playtime: Devil's Thumb's Nordic Center draws winter-sport enthusiasts for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing on more than 75 miles of groomed trails. Just 15 minutes away is the Winter Park downhill ski area. In summer, there's hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding and fly fishing.

Ahhhhh: Sore from skiing? The Ranch Creek Spa has a full menu of treatments using natural products.

Give in to temptation: (800) 933-4339; www.DevilsThumbRanch.com

—Laurel Kallenbach



Devil's Thumb offers luxurious cabins in the wilderness.



Miles of groomed Nordic tracks keep skiers exploring.