



# RIDE WORLD WIDE

## Wyoming, USA - The Bitterroot Ranch 2012

### Riding information sheet

The Bitterroot Ranch lies at the head of a remote valley in the Absaroka mountains of northwest Wyoming. It borders the Wind River Indian Reservation and the Shoshone National Forest, lying in the heart of fabulous riding country. Riders at The Bitterroot are guaranteed an excellent selection of horses, small riding groups and the chance to ride through some of the most scenic landscape in the Mid West. It is specifically geared to riders and is a super destination for those who love beautiful scenery, horses and riding. Bayard and Mel Fox who own the ranch, breed and train their own Arab horses and The Bitterroot is one of very few US ranches to have been granted British Horse Society approval.

**2012 Dates** The Bitterroot Ranch is open every week from 27th May to 1st October in 2012 and ranch stays are usually for 7 nights, Sunday to Sunday, with daily riding except on Sundays. Special riding / horsemanship clinics are held at the ranch on certain weeks and week long (Washakie Wilderness Ride) or overnight 'pack' (camping) trips can be also be organised at certain times. Some set dates are listed, other dates on request (a minimum of 4 riders and a maximum of 8 are required for week long pack trips and a minimum of 3 riders, a maximum of 6, are required for overnight pack trips). There is also a special cattle round up week planned for late autumn when cattle are rounded up and brought in from summer grazing high in the National Forest. Please see dates overleaf and call us to check availability.



**The Horses** The horses used at The Bitterroot are Arabs, Arab / Quarterhorse crosses and local ranch bred horses of mixed blood. Many are home bred. There are also a few Shetlands, Welsh and Icelandic ponies of 12 to 14hh for children. There are about 190 horses on the ranch in all, including foals, yearlings and youngsters, and with over 120 riding horses, there is an excellent selection for novice to advanced riders. The horses are of a kind, sensible temperament and are fit, forward going and responsive to ride. Guests are normally allocated three horses to ride during a week's stay which means the horses are always fresh, enthusiastic and well rested and riders have the challenge and variety of trying several different mounts. Please note that there is a strict weight limit of 14 stone 4lbs (200 lbs / 91 kgs) for riders at the ranch.

**Riding** Whilst staying on the ranch you will generally ride for about 4 to 6 hours a day, with morning and afternoon rides of between 2 and 3 ½ hours each day, and a full day ride with picnic lunch usually arranged for the last Saturday of each week. The horses are trained to neck rein and a relaxed riding style of non-interference with the horse is encouraged - you will be asked to ride with a loose contact with the mouth and a forward seat at the canter, up hills or when riding over difficult ground. Saddles are western style with a few Australian Stock saddles and one or two English endurance saddles available. Riding groups are limited to a maximum of 8 guests and rides are all lead by helpful, friendly guides (known as 'Wranglers' and all female!) who look after you very well. In high summer 'pack' (camping) Washakie Wilderness Rides take you over high passes and into remote of the Absaroka Mountains. Shorter pack trips can be organised on request during July, August and early September (weather permitting) and are a wonderful way to explore the National Forest and hills above the ranch. A minimum of 4 riders and a maximum of 8 are required for Washakie Wilderness Rides; minimum 3 and maximum 6 for two or three day trips (bookings for the pack trips must be made in advance - if you are booking alone / as a couple you may well be able to link up with other guests). There are often opportunities to work cattle whilst staying at the ranch and you will generally have the chance during a stay to help move cattle from one grazing area to another and also to try 'penning' or sorting cattle, a great cowboy skill! An autumn cattle round up is planned for one week in late September and there is also usually quite a bit of cattle work in early July when cattle may be moved from the ranch to summer grazing allotments in the Shoshone National Forest. Please call us if you are interested in visiting the ranch particularly for cattle work.



**Pace** The riding pace is varied to suit riders' ability and several rides are taken out at any one time with guests split into small groups according to ability. Much of the going on and around the ranch is excellent, with lots of open areas for long exhilarating canters. There are also some steep climbs and rough scrub covered hillsides to negotiate where the pace has to be slow. There is a small cross-country course for advanced riders and lessons (often video taped) with a certified instructor are available (usually twice a week) for beginners or for anyone who wants to brush up on their technique (two group lessons are usually offered, one for beginners and one for intermediate riders). The pace on pack trips is generally slower as you climb high into the forest and hills.

**Riding Experience** With the option of joining other experienced, intermediate or novice riders (or of riding alone with a guide if this works best) and of long and fast, or shorter, slower paced rides, both experienced and less experienced (or less energetic!) riders will be well catered for and will have fun and enjoyable riding at The Bitterroot. Lessons are available if required and are a great way to improve your riding whilst on holiday.

**Terrain** The diversity of terrain in the area lends itself to an exceptional variety of riding. You can ride in all directions from the ranch and there is a huge area to cover. Even riding out for several hours twice a day for a week, you will only cover a small cross section and there are new routes and areas to visit each day. The terrain varies from gentle sagebrush (rather like heather) covered hills and plains, flat grassy meadows cut by streams and rivers, to steep forested hills, rocky gorges and alpine clearings with marvellous views. The going is often good and there are plenty of places for long canters. The Shoshone National Forest is part of the largest ecosystem in the lower 48 states of the US and is an ideal habitat for moose, elk, deer and coyote as well as black and grizzly bear. You have a good chance of seeing deer, quite large herds of elk (particularly early in the season when there is still snow on the peaks and the game ventures lower down in search of food) and moose when riding and may also come across signs of bears. There are also several historical and geological sites to ride to, including an old hideout of Butch Cassidy and a place in the 'badlands' where there are many petrified bones of prehistoric animals.

**Accommodation** Accommodation at the ranch is in simple, rustic but reasonably comfortable log cabins each with private bathroom with shower, bath and loo. The cabins are built along the banks of a clear mountain stream and are well situated and separated to ensure maximum seclusion. All have wonderful mountain views and a wooden veranda outside with chairs to relax on. They are also cosy on cold spring and autumn nights with wood burning stoves and / or individually controlled electric heat. Beds are made up with sheets, duvets, quilts or blankets and towels are provided. Evenings at the ranch are spent at the main lodge where meals are also eaten. The lodge has a large dining room (several tables to seat groups of different numbers), a sitting area to relax in with comfortable sofas and chairs set around a large open fireplace, a library and also a games room with pool table. There is no television or organised entertainment at night and evenings are quiet and for relaxing! The ranch has 12 cabins, mainly twins / doubles but one single and two or three family cabins. Maximum capacity is 30 guests in all. On pack trips, riders camp at night, with tents and mattresses carried by packhorse. Camps are carried with you and are pretty simple; some help setting up camp is appreciated.



**Meals** A special effort is made with meals at The Bitterroot and much of the food is home produced. As well as home reared beef and lamb, fish is home smoked and cured, salads and vegetables come fresh from the garden and bread is home baked. The day starts with a cooked breakfast for those who wish; lunch is two courses served buffet style in the dining room and in the evenings, hors d'oeuvres are served with drinks before dinner. There is a good choice of menu including vegetarian options at every meal - Mel and Bayard are extremely well travelled and cooking at the ranch reflects this with varied menus and an international influence, as well as US favourites. On pack trips a cook accompanies riders and delicious hearty meals are eaten around the campfire. Wine is served as a pre-dinner drink and with dinner, and tea, coffee and soft drinks such as squash or lemonade are always available. If you prefer to drink beer or spirits (or would like other canned drinks), you might wish to take your own as the ranch is not licensed to sell these.



**Weather.** The climate in the area in summer is perfect for riding, but weather in the mountains can be changeable and unpredictable so warm clothes are essential. Summer days are generally quite warm with temperatures between 60 and 85 degrees F (15-30 C), though early mornings and evenings can be cool dropping to 30 to 40 F (0-5 C). Rain showers are possible year round - the yearly average at Bitterroot is about 12 inches. Humidity is low. Late May and June are often lovely months at the ranch when there is still snow on the mountain tops, spring flowers are starting to appear and days can be clear with blue skies - although sudden storms and snow showers are always possible early in the season so you need to be prepared. From late July to September temperatures get up to about 85 degrees F (30 C), though as you are in the mountains the air is always fresh and it is never too hot to ride.

**What to bring** We will send you a list of things we suggest you bring when you make your booking.

**Itineraries** The following is an example itinerary for a 7 night stay at the ranch - please enquire for the Washakie Wilderness Ride itinerary:

**Day 1 (Sunday)** Transfer to the Ranch. Settle into your cabin before meeting your hosts and other riders for drinks at about 6pm. Dinner at about 7pm and the night in cabins at the ranch. (D)

**Days 2 to 7** Six full days to enjoy the ranch with morning, afternoon and full day rides. Breakfast is served in the main lodge between 7.30 and 9 am each day and riders usually meet by the corrals at about 9.15 am for a morning ride of about 3 hours. You will usually return to the ranch for lunch and a siesta and then if you wish, can ride again in the afternoon, normally setting off at about 2.45 pm and riding for 2 or 3 hours to explore a new area. Optional riding lessons are usually offered on two mornings during the week (generally Tuesdays and Thursdays, with two group lessons organised for different standards of rider) and cattle work is often another option, either moving cattle between grazing, or perhaps sorting and penning cattle, a skill often practised by the cowboys in competition. A friendly sorting and penning competition (teams against the clock!) is usually organised for Friday afternoons. On Saturday each week, there is normally an all day ride with picnic lunch carried in saddle bags, taking you high into the mountains, to wild and remote country with marvellous panoramic views of the whole area. Day rides may also be arranged earlier in the week on request and two or three day pack trips are another option between July and September. If you don't wish to ride, there are some wonderful places to fish (fishing guides can be arranged on request) and walk, or you can simply relax in the gloriously peaceful surroundings with a good book! On the first day of your stay at The Bitterroot you will be given a short introduction to the horses, tack and routine and will have a short assessment and familiarisation ride to get used to them. (B,L,D)

**Day 8 (Sunday)** Breakfast on your final day before departing. (B)



### **Autumn Cattle Round Up - 24th September to 1st October:**

During this week cattle will be moved from grazing allotments in the Shoshone National Forest back to the ranch. There are five grazing 'allotments' in all in the National Forest and each year the Forest Service tell the ranchers which to use. Although the amount of cattle work depends on the grazing allotments allocated, this week is usually a wonderful opportunity to test your skills at gathering, driving and sorting cattle from the back of a good horse. Nights are spent staying at the ranch and dinner each day is at the main ranch. Lunches will normally be a picnic out riding.

**RATES 2012:**

**Please note** that due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, ride rates are now quoted in USD. The sterling price will be the equivalent sterling rate using the USD/sterling exchange rate in force when you book/pay.

The following are seasonal rates for a 7 night stay (twin occupancy).

**27th May to 17th June** - USD 2055 per person

(17th to 24th June - Private Clinic)

**24th June to 23rd September** - USD 2415 per person.

**24th September to 1st October** (Autumn cattle round up) - USD 2415 per person

**Washakie Wilderness Rides** - USD 2415 per person

**8th to 15th July, 12th to 19th August, 21st to 28th August**

[NB private riding / training clinics are running during some weeks although non-clinic riding guests can sometimes also be taken - please contact us to check availability]

**A 25% discount is available for children under 16 yrs staying for 7 nights**

**Children aged 4 yrs to 15 yrs:**

27th May to 17th June - USD 1540 per person

24th June to 1st October - USD 1810 per person

**Children under 4 yrs or non-riding nanny:** USD 360 per person

Half week stays are also possible on certain weeks (please enquire)

4 nights, 3 days riding - USD 1380 per person

**Rates INCLUDE** - All riding (6 days), guiding and equipment, 7 nights twin cabin accommodation, meals (dinner the first day to breakfast the last), drinks and a mandatory 15% service charge which covers all gratuities and taxes. A laundry service is also available at the ranch.

**Rates EXCLUDE** - Flights, transfers to / from the ranch, single room supplements (see below), personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), extra drinks, any visa fees.



**Single rooms** - Please note that rates quoted above are based on **twin / shared** cabins and a supplement of **USD 345** per person per week (USD 210 per half week), including 15 % service charge, is charged for single occupancy of a cabin. There is one single studio cabin at the ranch which can be booked without payment of a supplement if available (please ask if you are interested in this), or, if you are travelling alone but are prepared to share let us know and we will see if we can find someone to share with you (we cannot guarantee this however as it depends on another guest being willing to share! You will need to pay the single supplement to confirm your booking and if we find another person to share with you, this will be refunded).

**Non riders / Fishing** - Non riders are welcome at The Bitterroot and it is a particularly good place for keen fishermen. It is also great for those who enjoy walking or who simply want to relax in beautiful and peaceful surroundings. The non-rider rate is **USD 1495** per person for a 7 night stay (throughout the season). There is some lovely walking from the ranch and it is in a wonderful area for fishing, with great opportunities to fly fish for trout. The Bitterroot has its own private stream, several stocked ponds and you can also fish in neighbouring lakes and streams in the Dubois area - an area under much less fishing pressure than that closer to Jackson Hole or almost anywhere in Montana, Colorado and Idaho. Bayard, a keen fisherman himself, is usually very happy to take guests who wish to fish, **cont. over**

**Non riders / Fishing cont.** out to do so two or three times a week at no extra charge and / or a local professional guide can be hired for day or half day trips at an extra charge. For more specific information on fishing in the area please ask for our separate information sheet. The nearest town to the ranch is Dubois, about 20 miles (a 40 minute drive) away. Those who have their own transport usually enjoy an evening visit to Dubois where there are several bars and is often square dancing or a rodeo to watch.

**Children** - Children are welcome at the ranch. There are a few children's ponies of 12hh to 14hh and the wranglers are very happy to take children out on shorter rides, on a leading rein if required. Many children enjoy fishing as well as the foals, dogs and other domestic animals and birds at the ranch, the sense of freedom it offers and the ability to wander anywhere without danger of traffic or strange people. There are however no special programs for children. Arrangements can usually be made for baby sitters in the afternoons if required. There is a video recorder and some children's films and a good selection of children's books.

**Flights and Transfers** - The nearest airports to the ranch are Jackson Hole and Riverton (about 85 and 105 miles from the ranch respectively) and we can arrange for you to be collected from and returned to either for an extra charge. There are several flight options to Jackson or Riverton, generally via Denver. You can fly to Denver direct from the UK with British Airways or several American airlines such as United and Delta fly to Denver via Washington, New York or Chicago. For flight information we suggest calling a specialised North American flight agent such as Trailfinders in London (tel. 020 7 938 3939). Airfares vary with the airline and season but budget around £650 to £900 for an economy return to Jackson. Please call us for more flight / travel information or if you would like a quote.

**Transfers from / to Jackson and Riverton** We recommend that you hire a car and drive to the ranch as this is usually the cheapest option and also gives you more flexibility - we will send directions to the ranch. The drive takes about 3 hours from Jackson and 2 ½ from Riverton, with the last 16 miles on a dirt road. It is an easy drive (no need for a 4X4, a standard car is fine) and there are several car hire companies in Jackson / Riverton (Avis, Hertz, Budget). Car hire can be booked through central reservation offices in the UK.

Having your own transport also enables you to visit the local town, Dubois, which is about 16 miles away, during the week.

If you prefer then transfers can be arranged from Jackson or Riverton to the ranch. Transfer rates are not fixed but from Jackson they will be approx USD 280 per vehicle each way for up to 3 people. From Riverton approx USD 195 per vehicle each way.



**Pack Trips** 7 night Washakie Wilderness Rides are run from some set dates and these as well as shorter pack trips can also be organised on request but are generally only run in July, August and early September when the weather is most stable. They are in any case dependant on the weather. For shorter pack trips there is an extra charge of USD50 per person per day and they are for at least 2 days / one night and a maximum of three nights. Trips are (usually) run for a minimum of 3 or 4 and a maximum of 7 riders. If you are interested in a shorter trip, please let us know, although these are usually only confirmed when you are at the Ranch as they are dependant on weather, numbers etc. You will be billed for the pack trip supplement when you are at the ranch.



### **Accommodation Before / After your stay**

**In Jackson** There are many hotels and motels in Jackson and if you need accommodation here for a night or two before or after your visit to The Bitterroot there are lots of options. Examples are:

The Sundance Inn, The Antler Motel, Inn on the Creek, Rusty Parrot Lodge, The Alpine House

All the above are centrally located on, or a very short (maximum about 5 minutes) walk from, the main streets of Jackson Hole, where there are shops, bars and restaurants. Jackson is a small town that has grown to service the tourists visiting for the wonderful winter skiing and summer walking and riding in the area. The Sundance Inn and Antler Motel are simple motels - rooms are fairly standard, ordinary but adequately comfortable with a small private shower-room, with basin and loo. These motels are single storey and bedrooms are built along a quiet side road (no outlook). Both have a central dining room where breakfast (coffee and muffins) is served. The Inn on the Creek, Rusty Parrot Lodge and Wort Hotel offer more luxurious accommodation and more facilities, set in larger grounds. The Alpine House has been recommended as an excellent choice in Jackson as it is still run like a family hotel with attention to detail that makes it stand out.

**In and around Yellowstone National Park** Yellowstone (South Entrance via the Grand Teton National Park) is about a 2 hour drive from Dubois and about 58 miles from Jackson and a few days touring the Park and surrounding country makes a good add-on to a stay at The Bitterroot.

All commercial operations within the Yellowstone Park boundaries (lodging, restaurants, tour guides, etc.) are operated by specially allocated concession - no one else is allowed to operate within the Park itself. For lodging (including camping reservations) within the Yellowstone Park boundaries, reservations must be made through AMFAC Reservations website <http://www.travelyellowstone.com/>. (Telephone 307 344 7311 (from the UK dial 00 1 307...)).

There are currently 11 serviced campgrounds within the Park, 4 of which can be reserved through AMFAC as above. The others operate on a 'first come first served' basis. If you are thinking of camping, bear in mind that you will need your own tent(s) and equipment - and also that weather in the Park area is often unreliable!

Just outside the Yellowstone Park boundaries, you can stay in the spectacular **Grand Teton National Park**, south of Yellowstone and north of Jackson. Lodges here include Jackson Lake Lodge or Jenny Lake Lodge. Colter Bay is another simple option. There are also 3 campgrounds (Colter Bay, Gros Ventre and Jenny Lake). Space in these for small groups (up to 10) and single sites is available on a 'first come / first served' basis.

For more information visit the Grand Teton website at <http://www.gtlc.com> (add /lodgeJac.aspx for lodges and /campgrounds.aspx for campsite info). Or <http://www.nationalparkreservations.com/grandteton>

**West Yellowstone** is at the **west** gate of Yellowstone, about 45 miles from Jackson Hole. For hotels here look at <http://www.montanahotels.org/cities/West-Yellowstone/> OR [www.wyellowstone.com](http://www.wyellowstone.com)

**Cody, Wyoming** is an interesting town **east** of the Park. It is home to the famous Buffalo Bill Historical Centre, one of America's largest museum complexes, which includes a Gallery of Western Art, a Firearms Museum, a Plains Indian Museum, the Buffalo Bill Museum and a Natural History Museum. Cody also has several other attractions including a nightly rodeo in summer. There are several good places to stay – for more details look at [www.codywyomingnet.com](http://www.codywyomingnet.com) and (Cody chamber of commerce) [www.codychamber.org](http://www.codychamber.org)

**Guiding / getting around the Parks** - Maps are provided at the entrance gates to Yellowstone and you can easily find your way around using these. There are a large number of walk-ways and places of interest are signed. If you stay at a lodge by the Park gates / just outside the Park, your lodge will be able to arrange guides (for both Parks) but guides are not really necessary.

**General travel information** (NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking)

**Visas** If you hold a full British machine readable passport and are visiting the US for a holiday only and staying less than 90 days then you do not need a visa BUT you need to apply in advance for the visa waiver. Applications are online only and currently cost US\$14.

**Health** No jabs are currently required as a condition of entry to the US from the UK and Europe, although you should be up to date with inoculations against Polio and Tetanus, particularly Tetanus when spending time around horses. Please also ensure you have adequate medical / travel insurance in case of an emergency. This is particularly important for visits to the US because of the cost of medical treatment.

(draft 05/12/11)

