great places

Family Fun
Caribbean Getaways



Top Eco Family Reunions

Great green getaways that offer good times for the generations: toddlers, grandparents, and everyone in-between.

The new year signals a fresh start. And there's no better time to gather the clan and start planning that intergenerational family getaway that you've all been talking about. Here are our suggestions for an eco family reunion that is sure to be a crowd-pleaser!

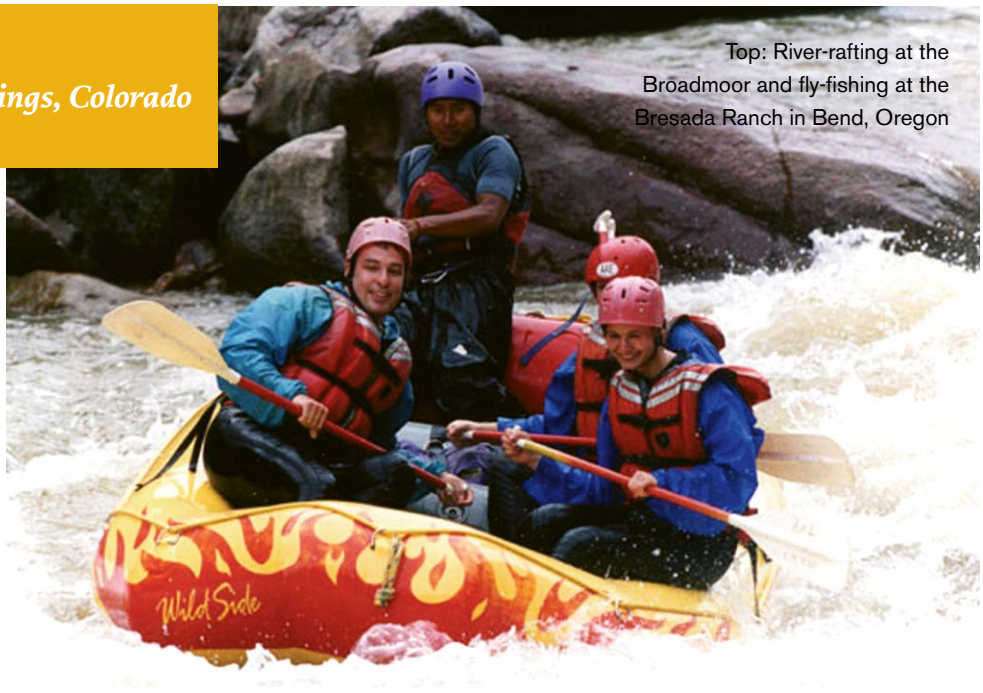
—The Editors

A family gathers around the fire pit at the Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

LIVING HISTORY

The Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, Colorado

thebroadmoor.com



Top: River-rafting at the Broadmoor and fly-fishing at the Bresada Ranch in Bend, Oregon

The Broadmoor opened in the shadow of the Colorado Rocky Mountains in 1918, on the mining fortune and wild imagination of Spencer Penrose. His goal was to create a level of luxury not yet known in the U.S.

And luxury is immediately evident upon pulling into the circular drive, walking up the winding Italian marble staircase, and crossing the grand 94-year-old Western-style lobby. But so is simple and gracious comfort, as children gather around the marshmallow-roasting fire pit and dogs stroll their owners around the small lake.

Even at its 744-room capacity, the 3,000-acre campus set around Cheyenne Lake with three Audubon-certified championship golf courses exudes calm and spaciousness. To slow down and to stay put are felt commands of the place. Especially when you consider that staying put includes hiking, biking, tennis, bowling (coming Spring 2013), a 350-seat movie theater and a 43,000 square foot fitness center and spa—Colorado's first Forbes 5-star facility.

Spencer Penrose's eccentricities included an on-site menagerie of wild animals. Today, his legacy is housed in the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, less than two miles away. Other short excursions will land you at the depot of the Pikes Peak Cog Railway or the family-friendly spelunking adventures of Cave of the Winds.

But with paddle boats, three swimming pools, horseback rides and cottage-side catered cookouts, there's plenty to do onsite. And with 18 restaurant and bar options that span classic fine dining to grab-'n'-go sandwiches, it's easy to forget to leave the grounds.

—Bill Giebler



A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

Brasada Ranch in Bend, Oregon

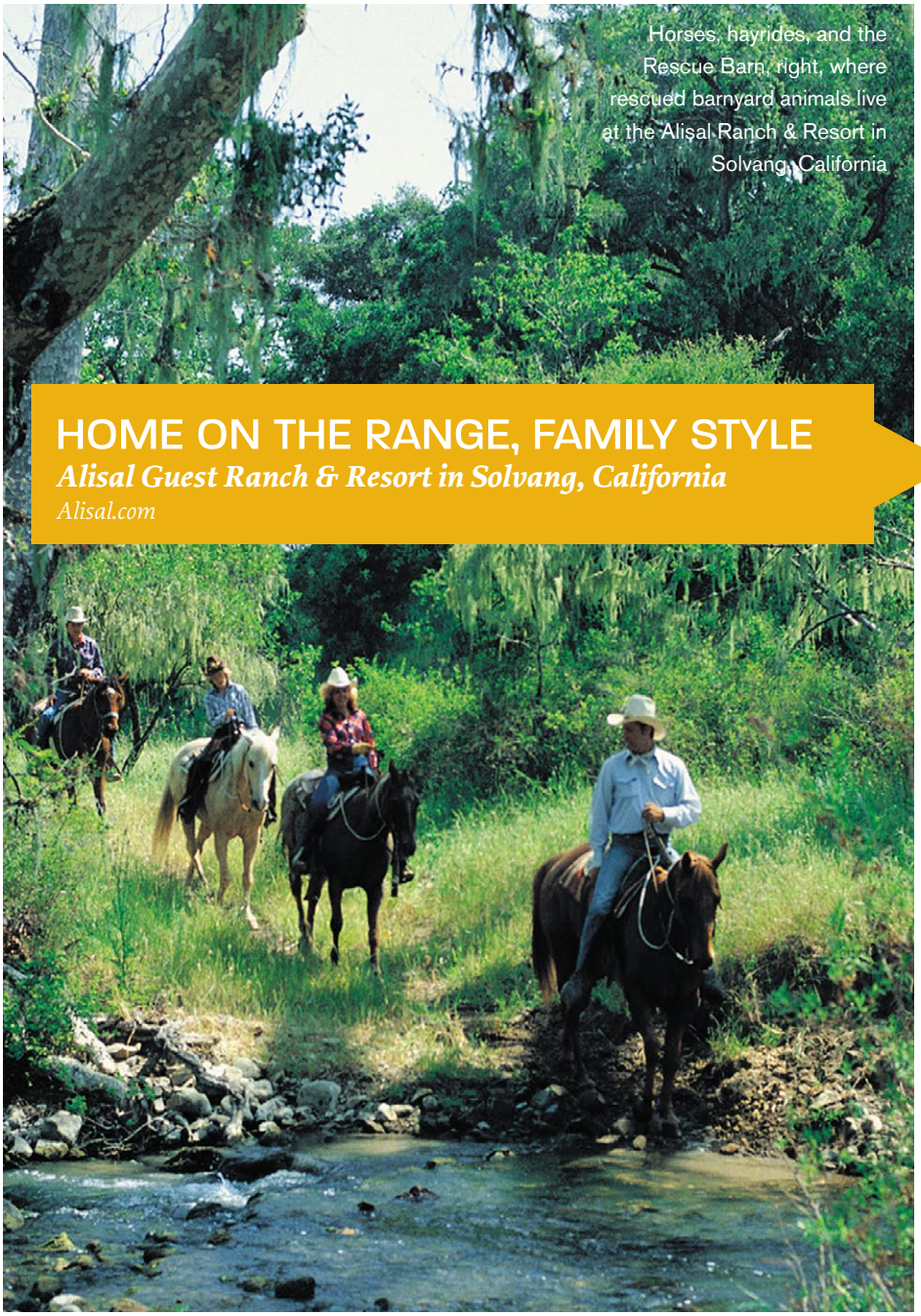
brasada.com

Scenic central Oregon is paradise for outdoor-lovers, and luxury resort Brasada Ranch makes the most of its prime location with adventure activities for everyone in the family.

Savvy team members from the Brasada Adventures program create memorable custom tours and off-property experiences for guests. Rock-climbing, fly-fishing, white-water rafting, star-gazing, natural history hikes, mountain-biking and bird watching are among the many options. (In winter, abundant snow makes for great skiing and other winter sports.) There's plenty for families to do within the environs of the 1,800-acre resort as well: horseback-riding, swimming, biking, fishing, tennis, golf and more.

The Hideout keeps kids busy, with options from a rotating climbing wall and snow-boarding simulator to air hockey and arts and crafts programs. And, for a taste of the old West, the property hosts Cowboy Cookouts on Friday and Saturday nights in the summer for young guests.

Beyond adventure, Brasada's focus extends to sustainability. The 80-cabin, eight-suite resort—with panoramic views of the high desert and distant Cascade Mountains—was the first newly constructed destination resort in the U.S. to receive a gold rating from the U.S. Green



Horses, hayrides, and the Rescue Barn, right, where rescued barnyard animals live at the Alisal Ranch & Resort in Solvang, California

HOME ON THE RANGE, FAMILY STYLE

Alisal Guest Ranch & Resort in Solvang, California

Alisal.com



Since 1946, Alisal Guest Ranch & Resort, in the jade hills of the Santa Ynez Valley wine country, has been a celebrated gathering place for the generations. Repeat guests with children and grandchildren come for scenic horseback riding, down-home hospitality and rare local ecology, including a bald eagle perched high in her gigantic nest.

This is an authentic cowboy's dude ranch that winds across 10,000 acres, with a fishing pond and boating options to attract children of all ages, and a heated pool and spa that makes Alisal (73 cabins and studios) a multi-attraction getaway for all activity levels. At the ranch, horses are well-tended and gentle, hayrides are slow and steady, and a retirement pasture for aging equines is proof positive that the family-owned ranch is a magical place.

After an all-inclusive buffet breakfast, you can volunteer at the "Rescue Barn" where dozens of rescued barnyard animals (goats, pigs, birds, kittens) live out their days at the Ranch. Another big draw: three-hour nature hikes ($25 per child) through the vineyard-friendly foothills to look for relics from native Chumash Indians and learn about local culture and Native American customs. A Hot Stone Massage in the Western-style Alisal Spa will soothe any aches after horseback riding or hiking.

An airy and well-equipped arts and crafts studio is adjacent to a playroom with billiards hip enough to attract the teen set. During a recent long weekend, my family spent considerable time playing in the heated outdoor swimming pool, going on hayrides and making eco-collages out of nature's autumn goodies.

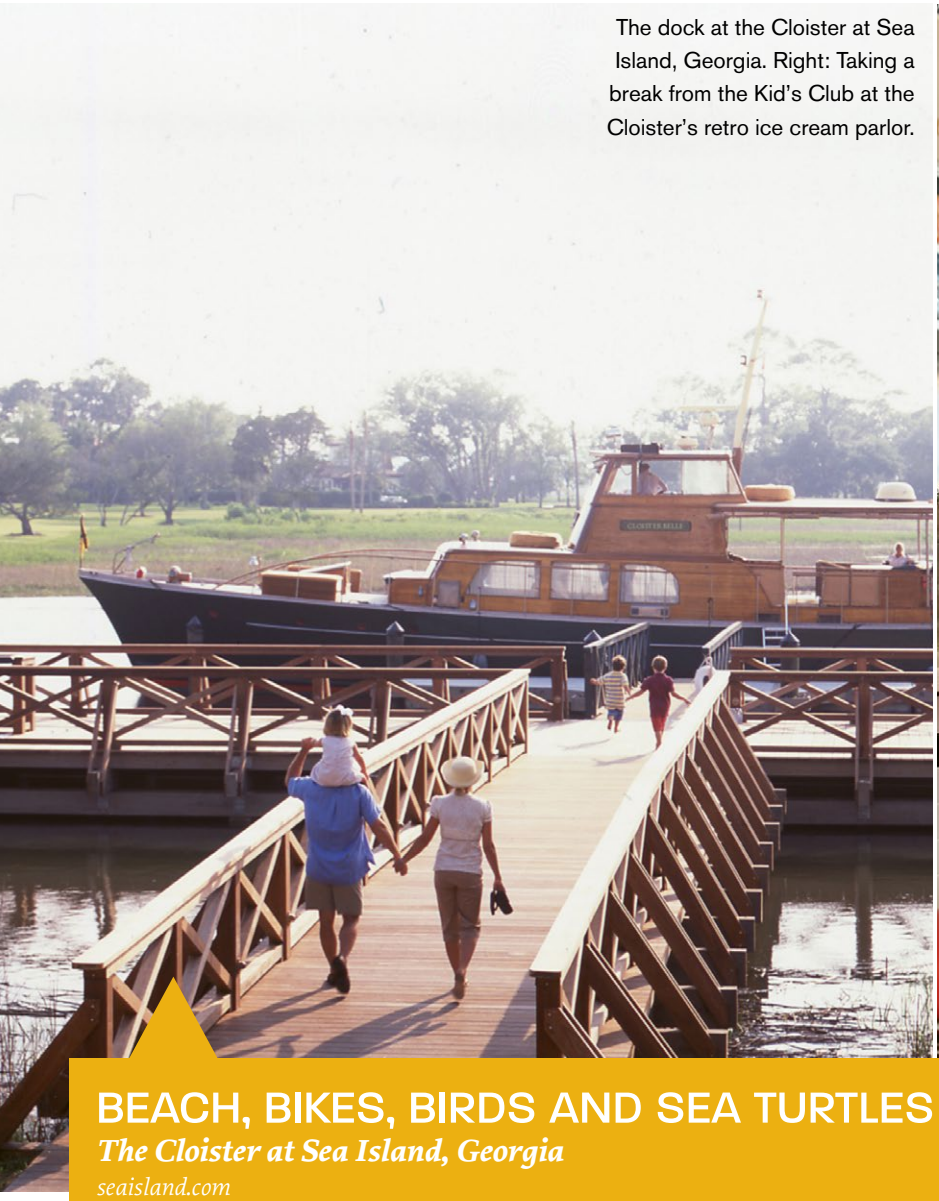
—Nicole Dorsey

Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). Brasada's event space was built with salvaged wood from an old lumber mill, and half of the sprawling property will always remain open space.

This commitment to sustainability extends to the intimate spa at Brasada Ranch. Several treatments incorporate Angelina Organic Skincare products, which feature botanicals grown on Oregon farms. Prior to treatments, guests sip fragrant and flavorful Metolius herbal teas hand-crafted with organic ingredients in the nearby town of Bend.

Adrian Carpenter, Brasada's talented executive chef, is a passionate farm-to-table practitioner and creates menus that showcase fresh local and regional ingredients prepared in innovative ways for the property's two restaurants. Salad greens come from a farm seven miles away, and eggs are laid by pasture-fed hens three miles away. The cuisine at Brasada is inventive yet always approachable—in other words, perfect for those who like a little adventure at the table, too.

— Liz Robins



The dock at the Cloister at Sea Island, Georgia. Right: Taking a break from the Kid's Club at the Cloister's retro ice cream parlor.



BEACH, BIKES, BIRDS AND SEA TURTLES

The Cloister at Sea Island, Georgia

seaisland.com

Since 1928, generations of families have enjoyed their vacations—and birthdays, weddings and reunions—at The Cloister at Sea Island, Georgia, a private resort and residential island set halfway between Savannah, Georgia and Jacksonville, Florida. The resort may have grown and changed over those 80-plus years (it re-emerged from a $350 million overhaul in 2006), but its special blend of elegance and white-glove service with down-to-earth southern charm remains very much intact. It's clear why this spot is such a hit with all ages, as there's truly something to appeal to every interest.

Adults will love the courses and facilities at the Sea Island Golf Club (located a short drive away at sister property, The Lodge), as well as the tennis and squash courts, clay shooting school, excellent wine program and numerous top-notch dining options (including the recently opened Tavola, with its on-site wood-burning pizza oven). The 65,000 square-foot spa is an award-winning facility with indoor garden, water circuit, meditation walk, super-sized gym and a menu of therapeutic treatments using natural ingredients like white oak, olive stone, essential oils and even seashells. Customized wellness programs are also available, as is an on-staff nutritionist, who often talks with both parents and kids about making healthy—and still tasty—eating choices.

The resort is a non-stop wonderland for the younger set, too, thanks to exceptional programs run by a dedicated Junior Staff. The Kids' Club focuses on activities that often involve heading out into the natural surroundings. Teens can mingle at the Beach Club or over bowling, kayaking, cooking classes and hikes. Best of all, the resort offers plenty for families to enjoy together, from bike rides, birding and beach horseback rides to movie nights and dessert at the retro ice cream parlor. Because of its unique surroundings of dunes, salt marshes and ocean beaches, the resort is dedicated to preserving the coastal habitat and educating guests on the environment. Programs include eco-labs, after-dark "survival skills" sessions and Sea Turtle Expeditions, where families can ride along with a staff naturalist as she patrols the beach recording sea turtle tracks, nests and hatchlings.

—Sandra Ramani