

Devil's Tower Country

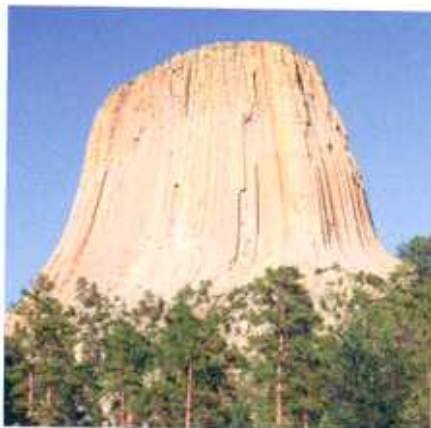
STORY AND PHOTOS BY KENT & CHARLENE KRONE

A "A dark mist lay over the land...Devil's Tower upthrust against the gray sky as if in the birth of time the core of the earth had broken through its crust and the motion of the world was begun," wrote N. Scott Monday. "There are things in nature that engender an awful quiet in the heart of man; Devil's Tower is one of them."

This says it all! Riding in Devil's Tower country is a unique experience, both in scenery and feeling. According to Native American legend, this magnificent geological wonder is etched with claw marks from the Great Bear. In its aura, you hear echoes from the past, pulling the past very much into the present.

Located in northeastern Wyoming, the Devil's Tower region is exciting to ride not only because of its rich history and abundant wildlife, but also for its magnificent and varied scenery.

Devil's Tower or "Bear Lodge" as it was known by Native Americans, was formed by an intrusion of molten rock into or between other rock formations. Over time,



relentless erosion wore away the surrounding sandstone and shale, thus exposing the much harder columns of greenish-gray igneous rock. The tower rises 1,280 feet above the nearby Belle Fourche River.

In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt recognized the uniqueness of Devil's Tower, declaring it our nation's first National Monument.

Wildlife thrives here. More than 150 species of birds populate the area, as well as

According to Native American legend, Wyoming's Devil's Tower (left, right) is etched with claw marks from the Great Bear. Shown at right is Kent Krone aboard his Missouri Fox Trotter gelding, Buddy.

white-tailed deer and black-tailed prairie dogs. During one picnic ride, we spent a fair amount of time watching the playful little prairie dogs going about their business in their "dog town" below the Tower.

Devil's Tower country is a magical, mystical place to create an adventure. Take your own horse or ride someone else's, but head out and explore this country.

Here, we describe two top area ranches and one campground: Diamond L Guest Ranch; New Haven Ranch; and Devil's Tower KOA.

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New Haven Ranch

Places are like people. Each is unique and has its own personality. New Haven Ranch isn't a dude ranch where one goes to relax and be pampered. This is a family-run working cattle ranch on the edge of the Black Hills in northeastern Wyoming.

The ranch gives you an opportunity to get involved in ranch work, learn about holistic ranching, enjoy riding adventures, and be around lots of animals.

Four generations of the Bohl family live and work on this family-owned ranch. Since 2003, guests have been invited to share their ranch life. Doerte, a German

guest, enjoyed ranch life so much that she quit her job in Hamburg to work on the ranch. Then she discovered she not only loved ranch life, but also her boss! She and Nick were married in 2006.

New Haven Ranch is located on the grounds of an old ghost town, New Haven, in the northeastern corner of Wyoming. To get to the ranch, we drove 18 miles on a dirt road in the middle of nowhere, as they say.

In this tough, rugged country, survival of the fittest is the natural way of life. Homesteaders were here 150 years ago.

Many were driven out by an unforgiving climate, hostile Indians, and greedy cattle barons.

Today, 800 cattle graze the ranch carefully managed by Nick and Doerte. If you look around, you'll see remnants from the past. Old buildings and rusting machinery bear mute testimony to past inhabitants.

The ranch, also referred to as New Haven Lodge, has five bedrooms, three bathrooms, and an additional half-bath. There's a balcony where you can sit and watch the changing light over the Missouri Buttes. After a long day's ride, you can enjoy the hot tub under the stars. Not a bad way to chase away saddle sores.

Meals at the lodge are taken family style around a large table next to an im-

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Clockwise, from top left: The entrance to New Haven Ranch; the ranch lodge; an old homestead; riders setting out for a day ride (the lake in the distance has a paddle boat for use by ranch guests).



Devil's Tower Country

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maculate kitchen. If you enjoy fresh, organic produce, humanely raised meat, and creative meals, these folks have got your number. Mealtimes were happy and relaxed.

Although you can just hang out and relax, New Haven Ranch is a tremendous opportunity for energetic folks wishing to explore and partake in ranch activities and work.

Because of holistic ranch-management practices, cattle are rotated to different pastures approximately every eight days. This necessitates a great deal of cattle gathering and moving in addition to regular cattle care.

Riding opportunities abound in this beautiful corner of "God's Country." There are timbered canyons, high plateaus, and aromatic sagebrush prairie. With your own horse or a ranch horse, you can saddle up for an awe-inspiring sight of Devil's Tower.

There's a picturesque lake where you may go fishing, swimming, boating, horse-swimming, picnicking, or do it all.

If you're an animal lover, you'll love this ranch! We saw goats climbing trees; we



Terrain around New Haven Ranch includes timbered canyons, high plateaus, and aromatic sagebrush prairie, report Kent and Charlene Krone, shown here aboard Buddy (left) and Scout.

didn't know they could do that. There are also sheep, dogs, cats, buffalo, geese, and ducks. Buddy had some problems with the

ducks. They were hoping he would share his grain with them; Buddy doesn't share! Nearby animals that fend for them-

selves include coyotes, snakes, mountain lions, eagles, skunks, raccoons, prairie dogs, antelope, deer, and porcupines.

Nick and Doerte are justifiably proud of their horses, which are strong and healthy, both mentally and physically. All the horses like people and are safe to ride.

Nick exudes vitality and contagious passion for holistic ranch management. He's studied in-depth sustainable agriculture and land reclamation. He uses his goats to battle noxious weeds. "You'd be amazed at what kind of weeds these goats can take down," he said.

Doerte, his beautiful, energetic partner, is a gracious, hard-working woman who shares Nick's vision of holistic management. She's responsible for much of the organic produce and ranch-raised ducks, geese, and chickens that are served for dinner.

Contact: New Haven Ranch, 100 Mule Creek Rd., Hulett, WY 82720; (307) 467-5663; www.wyoedgeadventures.com.

Kent and Charlene Krone combine their interest in photojournalism with a passion for horses. They've sold photographs to magazines, books, calendars, postcards, and video producers for more than 20 years. (For a sampling, visit www.superstock.com, and type PG_1314 in the search box.) They enjoy sharing their horseback adventures in the United States and Western Canada. Reach them at kckrone@suddenlink.net.



Nick Bohl, Tanya Stasch, Doerte Marks, and Walter Israel prepare for a ride at the New Haven Ranch. Bohl and Marks are the ranch owners.