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Summertime sun beckons to guests

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KAMLOOPS, British Columbia — Winter is low season at Siwash Lake Ranch, for obvious reasons. Most guests prefer summer, when sunshine and blue skies paint a warm patina over the landscape.

"June is like a symphony," lodge owner Alyson Rogers says. "The wildflowers are blooming and migrating birds arrive every day. Some days we see sandhill cranes and ospreys; other days it's eagles and songbirds. We've seen Steller's jays, tanagers and all kinds of ducks."

But it's the horseback riding program that most families come for. Geared to all ages, it includes lessons, guided and solo trail rides and your own mount, a horse that fits your size and abilities.

"The lake is weedy at the edge, but it's 22 feet deep at the end of the dock, and yes, you can swim," Rogers says. "Actually, that's the most popular place to be after riding horseback all day. Everyone jumps in together to cool off."

Rogers and her family, plus a staff of 12, run the lodge in the summer. Two chefs prepare all the meals, with Rogers, who likes to cook, on deck to help. Website reviews of the ranch — presumably contributed by former guests — give high marks to the horseback riding program, the horses, the friendliness of the staff and the cuisine, usually described as healthy American. Wine, at no extra charge, is included at dinner.

If you're up for the journey, book a flight to Vancouver, a connecting flight to Kamloops and a 2 1/2-hour drive to the ranch. Getting here takes most of a day. But the final frontier is always its own reward.

—Anne Z. Cooke

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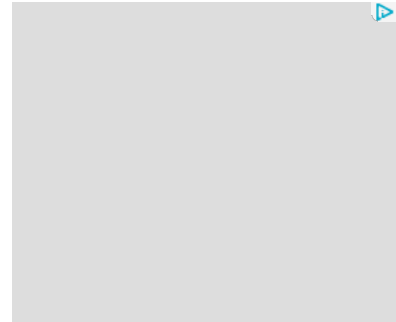
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