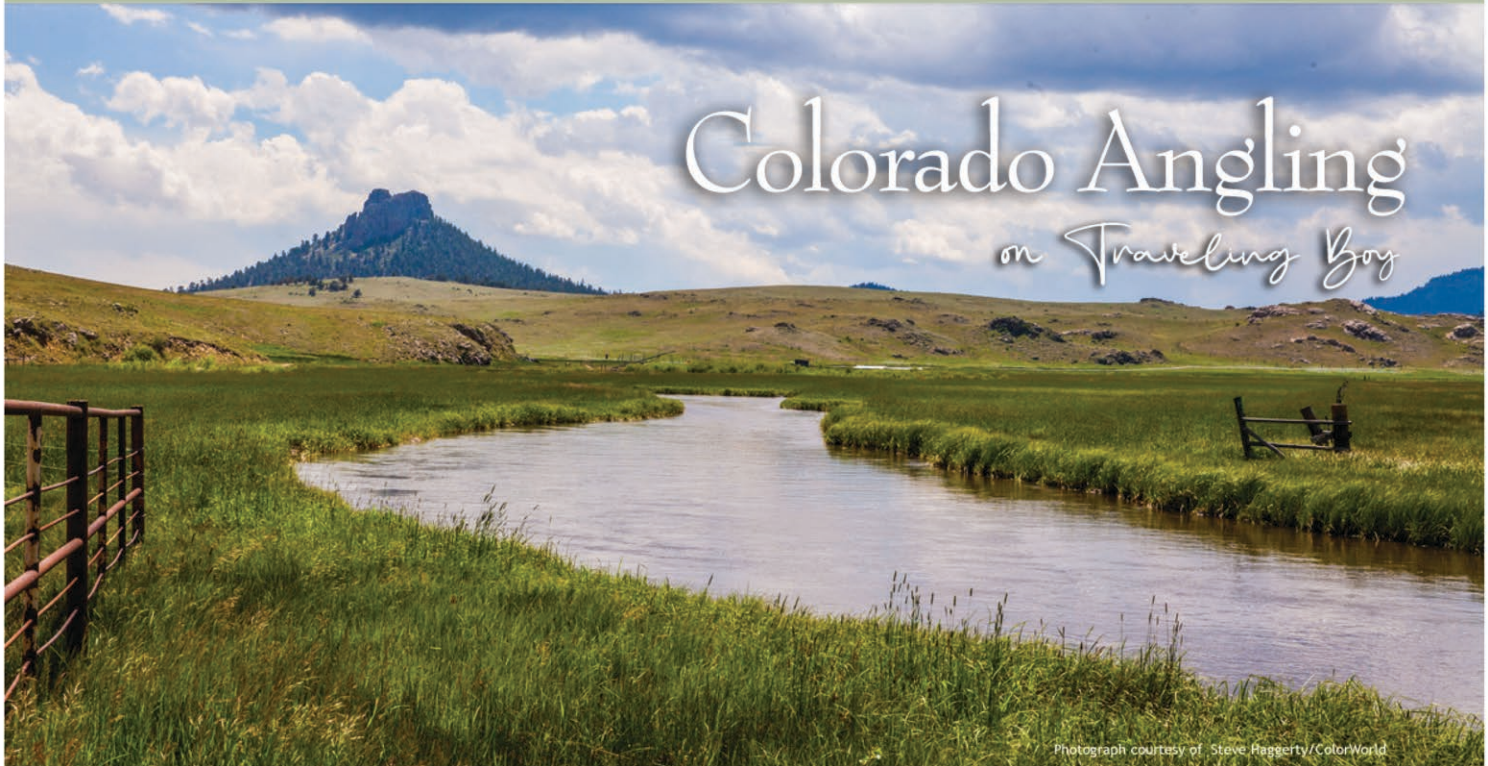




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ON CLOUD NINE FOR ANGLERS: Colorado's Broadmoor Fishing Camp

By Anne Z. Cooke

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Casting for trout in the Tarryall River, at Broadmoor Fishing Camp, in Colorado, with a little help from an expert.

JEFFERSON, Colorado – “If you don’t get a bite,” said Scott Tarrant, wading out into the Tarryall River, “remember the old timers’ advice. Foam is home. Follow the bubbles.”

“Sounds like a beer drinker’s election slogan to me,” said Josh, my neighbor in the next cabin at the Broadmoor Fishing Camp, in Colorado’s South Park, in Park County. Fly fishing for the first time, he leaned over to peer in the water and dropped his hat.

“Over there,” said Tarrant, the Camp’s lead fishing guide, pointing at the ripples beside fallen tree trunk. “The bubbles where the two currents meet. It’s like a conveyor belt, sweeping the fish and the floating insects together. That’s where you drop your fly.”



The Broadmoor Fishing Camp’s main lodge, a 1920’s log cabin in the valley known as South Park, is headquarters for the fishing guides, the guests, meals, and after-hours fish stories.

Fishing with Scott Tarrant I realized how much I didn’t know. After watching me for fifteen minutes, he showed me how to cast farther and more accurately by powering the rod from my elbow and not from my shoulder. “Remember,” he added, “the secret to fishing is simple. It’s knowing where the fish are.”

Ask around and find out which insects are hatching – it varies – and when the fish usually eat. This tells you which fly to use. Then look for the trout, which swim up against the current to get oxygen. When they need to rest, they find ripples and eddies where they can tread water and wait for an insect. This is where you drop your fly.

Casting again I aimed for the bubbles, but the bait – a menacing looking dry fly called Amy’s Ant – flew out and into a bush. Not that it really mattered. I’d been daydreaming, imagining the area’s early explorers, adventurers like Kit Carson and Jim Bridger, fur trappers who camped and hunted here in South Park in the early 1800s. They might have camped right there beside the river.



With five miles of river frontage on the Tarryall River, Fishing Camp guests can choose a variety of sites, from pools and white water to fast currents and rocky shallows.

I wouldn't have been there either, if a friend in Colorado Springs hadn't invited me to her wedding reception, held at the Broadmoor Hotel. Checking in, I picked up a brochure describing the hotel's new back-country adventures, including Fishing Camp. I hadn't been fishing since my dad died, but I decided to take a look.

My dad loved talking about his childhood, fishing with a bamboo pole and catching sunfish and bass on a lake in Wisconsin. My favorite tale was the one about the bass so long and heavy he could hardly hoist it up and into rowboat. He got it up and nearly there, he said, when a giant snapping turtle suddenly lunged up out of the depths and grabbed it, skinning his fingers. That brochure reminded me of what I was missing.

Reading it, I wasn't surprised to find that the Broadmoor had a couple of off-site camps, projects introduced by the owner, Phil Anschutz, a western history buff. After all, with the Rocky Mountains practically in the hotel's back yard, why not offer guests a couple of western adventures, the kind that travel industry surveys say is what today's more experienced travelers want?

The first camp to open, the Ranch at Emerald Valley, in 2013, was a former cowboy outfit in the trees adjacent to Pike National Forest. Then Cloud Camp opened, at 9,200 feet elevation near the top of Cheyenne Mountain. An enormous, authentic log lodge, with a restaurant, sundeck, guest rooms and additional cabins, it boasts a fabulous western art collection, an archery court and hiking trails.

Meanwhile, the idea of an old-time fishing lodge with a covered front porch, pine plank floors, rustic guest cabins and family-style dinners sat on the back burner, percolating until the day that Anschutz happened to spot an abandoned cabin on the Tarryall River, in South Park.



Large areas of South Park, the Tarryall River, broad meadows, rugged hills – the “wilderness paradise” where so many fur traders and “mountain men” wintered over in the late 1830’s – remain unchanged.

Finding the cabin was so unexpected it must have been in the stars. A historic log house, it was usable enough to restore. The site, with 76 acres and five miles of private frontage on the Tarryall River, ranks among Colorado’s top-five trout streams. Promising a first-class fishing experience, it’s close to Colorado Springs, convenient for single-day trips. And the location, in South Park, the valley that western historian Bernard DeVoto called a “paradise, the last place in the mountains where the old life could be lived to the full,” borders the Lost Creek Wilderness.



After-dinner gatherings meet in the lodge, furnished with inviting sofas, hand-crafted chairs, Navajo rugs and a collection of 19th century western memorabilia and antiques.

Fishing Camp has all the charms of an old fashioned log cabin, but spartan it is not. Not only is it restored, but it's been re-chinked, reroofed and enlarged. The utilities are upgraded to current standards, it has a new kitchen, bigger windows light the rooms and improved pine board floors resist muddy boots.

Navajo rugs hang on the walls between western paintings and a collection of western memorabilia that crowds the empty spots: snowshoes, buckets, cowboy hats, antlers, arrows, duck decoys, lanterns, antique fishing rods and woven wicker creels. A canoe and paddle straddles the rafters.

Individual log cabins, in the trees around the lodge, sleep two to eight. The logs are re-chinked and the doors, screens, porches and hand-crafted rocking chairs are new. The interiors are small but comfortable, with lots of windows, modern bathrooms and framed fishing-themed art.

All meals and beverages, served in the dining room, are included. Since most menus are planned by chefs at the Broadmoor Hotel itself, in Colorado Springs, ingredients are delivered daily and prepared, cooked, and/or assembled at the lodge.

Clearly, trout are what Fishing Camp is all about. But don't pass it up because you don't fish. Bring a fisher-person with you and explore the Lost Creek Wilderness from a network of trails that wind through rocky outcrops and open meadows. For would-be cowboys, the Tarryall River Ranch, off the highway three miles south of Fishing Camp, leads guided horseback rides. For beginners and experts alike, the Tarryall's combination of quiet pools and shallow rapids offer a variety of challenges, even for Tarrant, who loves a quiet hour at the stream. Asked about it, he says he's



a catch-and-release sportsman by choice. But, he adds, "Fishing Camp is a stream-to-table resort." If you yearn for that old-time taste of just-caught rainbow trout, fried in the pan, feel free to ask.



All meals, vegetables, fruit and other fresh ingredients are usually prepared by chefs at the Broadmoor Hotel. Delivered to Fishing Camp, they arrive prepared or ready to be assembled and cooked, depending on the recipe. Most are served family style.



For broader look at this area, west of the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains, ask about hiking trails, horseback rides and other guided activities in the Lost Creek Wilderness, the 119,750-acre preserve on the border of Fishing Camp.

PLANNING: Fishing Camp, open April 1-Oct. 31, is between Jefferson and Lake George, 3.5 miles south of Tarryall Reservoir on Highway 77 in Park County, Colorado. For more flexibility bring your car, or use the Broadmoor Hotel's daily transportation service. Rates per night may vary, but start at about \$830 for one and \$950 for two sharing a room, and include all fishing gear, guiding, meals, snacks and

alcoholic beverages. Half and full-day rates are also offered. Book at the Broadmoor Hotel, at (866)334-3693, or see www.broadmoor.com.



Guest cabins, sleeping two to eight visitors, are clustered around the Lodge and near the river.

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