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Where the Wild Things Heal

The Wild Animal Sanctuary in Keenesburg, is the world's largest and oldest nonprofit carnivore sanctuary. Founded in 1980 by Pat Craig, it's a haven for animals once doomed to suffer behind bars or within roadside attractions.

With three sprawling facilities—including The Wild Animal Refuge and The Wild Horse Refuge—it now oversees over 40,000 acres dedicated to rescue, rehabilitation and—best of all—dignity.

By Heather Shoning

ON THE COVER: Where the Wild Things Heal, page 36

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SETTING THE STAGE // editor's letter

TALK OF THE TOWN

KNOW SOMEONE who should be featured in AvidLifestyle? Tell me about them at heather@avidlifestyle.com



PHOTO: BY VANESSA MIRANDA

SUM, SUM, SUMMERTIME

IF YOU KNOW ME (or read this letter last July) you know I'm not a native Coloradan—like many of you. But also, probably like many of you, I still consider Colorado to be my “home.” Yet, there are so, so, so many Colorado adventures that I've not experienced yet. A couple of months ago, I checked one off the list that I'm a little embarrassed had not come sooner—I visited The Wild Animal Sanctuary. How I'd not visited before is beyond me. If you haven't been there, drop everything and go now.

I've known about the work this nonprofit organization does, and many people are aware of it thanks to the “Tiger King” saga. But the magnitude of the impact the sanctuary makes is jaw-dropping. So, I wrote this month's feature article about it (Where the Wild Things Heal, page 36). I'm not going to lie; I cried at the sanctuary and while interviewing Austin Hill, the sanctuary's public relations director. The stories of triumph over tragedy are heartbreaking in the sweetest, purest way. And the majestic creatures They leave me speechless. We are truly blessed to have such an amazing place in our state. Please go visit, spread the word, help how you can.

On a less teary note, we've got some great summer content in this issue! From Sizzling Swimsuits (page 44) to live music shows throughout the state (Get Your Groove On!, page 46), there's a season's worth of entertainment.

We also take you to Green Valley Ranch where living the golf-style life is less expensive than you might think (High-Flying Havens, page 30). If you're happy with the location you're in, but long for a top-notch kitchen, we've got a DTC-area kitchen before-and-after that will show you what's possible (Once Upon a Refresh, page 28). Plus, so many more inspiring stories.

I'd be remiss if I didn't tell you to mark your calendars for September 20, for the AvidLifestyle and Colorado AvidGolfer Wheels of Dreams Charity Experience benefitting The FullCircle Program, which helps teens struggling with abuse issues and their families get the help and resources they need to beat addiction. See our ad on pages 12–13 and get your tickets now.

Happy Independence Day, welcome to sum, sum, summertime, and happy reading!

Heather Shoning



Two lions enjoy life without a care thanks to the amazing work of the Wild Animal Sanctuary in Keenesburg.



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Reflecting Boundaries



PHOTOS: COURTESY KAREN LAUSA

KAREN LAUSA'S abstract paintings reveal personal experiences and ancestry

By Kastle Waserman

STRONG LINES and shapes and a moody color palette are distinct qualities of Karen Lausa's abstract paintings. For her, those lines reflect boundaries and confinement, a reflection of her ancestry and what she observed while leading a book discussion group within the Colorado prison system.

"I created the group after 25 years as a reference librarian where I grew bored and uninspired," Lausa recalls. "I was always very interested in social justice, and I wanted to reach out to juveniles sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. That was my passion and the love of my life. It gave them something to hold onto, and it gave me so much meaning in return."

The program was abruptly shut down in 2020, leaving Lausa in a state of loss. "Suddenly, I had nothing to do. I didn't know who I was anymore because my work was a form of validation."

She did the requisite feeling sorry for herself and a lot of yoga until one day, she spotted some art materials that her daughter had abandoned. "I picked them up and started painting, and I never stopped." >>>

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Her great uncle, Lion Feuchtwanger, was a writer who penned the book “The Oppermanns” about the day-to-day lives of a Jewish family living in Germany in 1933 as democracy was crushed at the hands of the Nazis.

“Growing up, I knew the Nazis had persecuted my great uncle during World War II. I knew stories from family anecdotes, but it wasn’t until I was older that I realized what they all meant. The fact that there’s a connection to art and literature makes me incredibly proud of what I’ve inherited.”

Lausa says that she sometimes feels intimidated by the art world and by people who have more experience and Master of Fine Arts degrees. Even at her recent show at Rogala Design, she worried that people were judging her for not having an extensive art background despite the fact she’s “always studying” and taking ongoing classes. “I’m learning to believe in my work and find confidence in what I’m doing. I’m just thankful I found it,” she says.

As she enters her 70s, Lausa says she doesn’t have time to wait and hone her skills. “I just have to jump in and paint for as long as I can.” She’s taking full advantage of every opportunity. She was recently selected for a residency through the Jen Tough Gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she’ll paint in the solitude and peace of the piñons, junipers and vast desert spaces, she says. The gallery will exhibit her work in 2026.

Find Karen Lausa’s work on her Instagram: [@subjecttochangeart](https://www.instagram.com/subjecttochangeart)



PHOTOS: COURTESY KAREN LAUSA

First, she did a series of portraits inspired by the war in Ukraine. “I was just imagining the faces of these people sheltering in train stations, and it really tapped that social justice part of me.”

Lausa then began a series of online art courses at Art2Life and switched to abstract work. Using a muted color palette of neutrals with splashes of bold magenta, black or rich blues, her paintings often convey boundaries, some with the spiral-like reminders of barbed wire. Other pieces have elements of collage, such as paper with printed words. Many are made from found canvas materials, such as shipping or deli paper. “I will use anything that appeals to me,” she says.

As Lausa’s paintings began to show blocked shapes and hard lines, she realized they were a reflection of the confinement she had witnessed in the prison system and also conjured up the fact that she comes from a family of Holocaust survivors.



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LEVEN SUPPLY'S kitchen manager, Luke Hodnett is dishing up a prosciutto pizza with peach balsamic drizzle and a burrata, peach and tomato salad once the season hits. He shares his pizza recipe so you can make it at home. Pro tip: Start with Leven Supply's new premade pizza dough for a quick week-night dinner.

PROSCIUTTO PIZZA WITH PEACH BALSAMIC DRIZZLE

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Leven Supply premade pizza crust
- ¼ cup garlic oil or extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup peach balsamic
- 5 pieces whole milk mozzarella, sliced
- 2 oz. prosciutto, thinly sliced
- 2 Tbsp. fresh basil, chopped

METHOD:

If using a pizza stone, place it in your oven and preheat to 500°F for at least 30 minutes.

Cover the dough in a thin layer of the oil so there are no dry spots.

Place the slices of mozzarella evenly around the pizza leaving gaps between them

Bake the pizza until the cheese is bubbly and the dough has some nice brown coloring to it (5–10 mins).

Once the pizza is out of the oven cut it into 8 slices.

Place a small pile of thinly sliced prosciutto on each slice of pizza.

Garnish whole pizza with fresh basil (the more the better!).

Drizzle with plenty of peach balsamic and serve immediately.

GRILLED PEACH BALSAMIC GLAZE

INGREDIENTS:

- 1½ cup peaches, sliced ¼" thick
- ½ cup balsamic vinegar, preferably aged
- 2–3 Tbsp. honey or maple syrup
- ½ tsp. lemon juice
- Salt, to taste

Neutral oil, for brushing

METHOD:

Brush fresh Palisade peach slices with a neutral oil and cook on a grill preheated to medium-high until warmed through and slightly caramelized. This also works great in your oven's broiler or in a smoker for even more flavor.

Remove from heat and set aside to cool.

In a small saucepan, combine balsamic vinegar, honey, lemon juice and a pinch of salt and simmer on low 10–15 mins until slightly thickened.

Let the balsamic reduction cool to room temperature.

Combine balsamic reduction and peaches in a blender and blend on high until completely smooth.

OPTIONAL:

Pass the blended liquid through a fine mesh strainer to remove any small sediments and give you a perfectly smooth sauce.

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PHOTO: COURTESY LEVEN SUPPLY

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Bar Vibes at



PHOTO: JENNIFER ELLE PHOTOGRAPHY

Hit the **ST. VRAIN BAR AND CANTINA** for pre-gaming a Red Rocks show

By Jay McKinney

EVERY VISIT to The Fort is a trip back in time to the 1800s. The expansive restaurant located on Highway 8 in Morrison was built in 1962 as an authentic replica of Bent's fur trading fort in La Junta that operated from 1833 to 1849. At Bent's Old Fort, traders, trappers and numerous Native American tribes would meet to conduct business and seek shelter in the vast American West.

Today, people can visit The Fort—the one in Morrison—and enjoy a variety of tasty drinks and entrees that aren't commonly found on most restaurant menus. While it accommodates formal sit-down dining, the opening of the St. Vrain Cantina and Bar within the restaurant offers guests the same delicious menu with a more casual dining experience.

The Fort



PHOTO: TRU BLU IMAGES



PHOTO: TRU BLU IMAGES

“We’ve had the cantina, but it’s always been a service bar for parties, and post-COVID, we decided to remake and rethink it,” says Holly Arnold Kinney, proprietress of The Fort. “There are a lot of people who are out hiking, who want to come in for a drink and an appetizer, and now that we offer full service on our covered outside patio, we needed additional seating for customers waiting for their tables.”

Kinney is the daughter of Elizabeth and Sam Arnold, who had the vision to build The Fort and turn it into a restaurant. Before opening the restaurant, the Arnolds did extensive research to find dishes that were popular during the 19th century and could be featured on the menu as “new foods of the Old West.” Appetizers like the roasted bison bone marrow, discovered in a diary from a travel writer

who visited the American Southwest in the mid-1800s, referred to as prairie butter by the early pioneers, are now a staple on the menu along with other foods such as elk, quail and traditional recipes from Mexico.

“We serve buffalo marrow in the bone as it was described in Lewis Garrard’s diary,” Kinney says. “When we read his description, we



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PHOTO: COURTESY THE FORT

thought, “We have to do this.” After some discussion with the purveyor, the restaurant now gets its bison bones with the knobs removed and sawn in half. The chef puts them under the broiler and serves them with a dash of Hawaiian clay salt.

With incredible food served in such a unique building, the restaurant and St. Vrain Bar and Cantina is popular with locals and tourists in need of a bite before their Red Rocks show, and it also caters to private parties, weddings and other events. Its name comes from French nobleman Ceran St. Vrain, who was a business partner with the Bent brothers of Bent’s Old Fort. In the bar, there is a large portrait of Ceran St. Vrain and, according to Kinney, some of his direct descendants have visited.

While The Fort is known for its game meats, serving upwards of 80,000 bison entrees per year, it also has incredible beef steaks, salmon, lobster and vegetarian dishes. One exciting appetizer recently added to the menu is Snakes in a Blanket—rattlesnake and rabbit meat sausage wrapped in a pastry and served with a red chili dipping sauce.

As far as libations go, the prickly pear margarita is a huge hit, and the Bloody Mary with Saddle Leather is a delicious drink offered during its brunch service that started on June 7. The bloody mary mix is made from scratch, and the cocktail comes dressed with a buffalo stick as opposed to a slice of bacon.

Stop by St. Vrain Cantina and Bar for your next pre-Red Rocks venture, or visit The Fort for a special occasion. Either way, you’re sure to leave with the same feeling of satisfaction as the trappers and traders who found solace at Bent’s Fort in the 1800s.

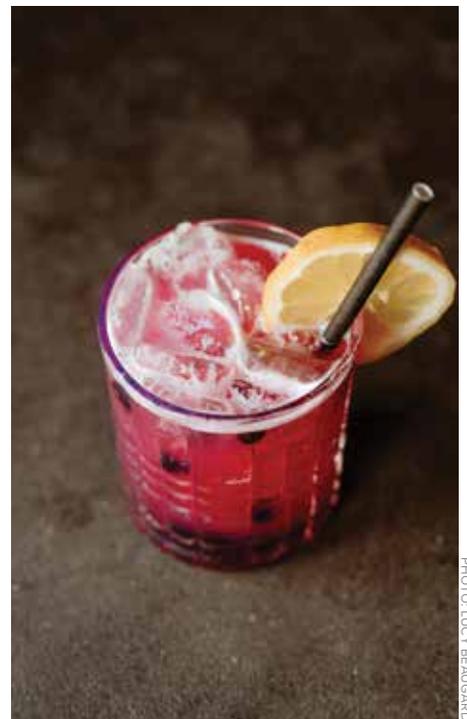


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Ready for Anything

From submarine supervisor to neighborhood dentist, **DR. ROBERT STABIO** is all systems go

By Kastle Wasserman

NOT MANY people can say their dentist was a U.S. Navy engineering watch supervisor on a submarine. Dr. Robert Stabio had a life very different before he settled into a career in dentistry.

An interest in engineering and nuclear energy prompted him to enroll in the Navy straight out of high school in 2007. “There was a lot of interest in renewing commercial nuclear power and expanding

that resource in the U.S. It seemed like that field would be growing," he says. "So, I went into the nuclear power program of the Navy." After a two-year training program, his Navy duties brought him into a submarine to serve as a nuclear power plant supervisor.

Like most jobs, Stabio started in a low-level position and eventually became certified for watch duties and a supervisory position. His days consisted of watch shifts, maintenance and emergency drills. After a while, he says, it was easy to start to get lackadaisical about all the false alarms. That is until a superior officer set him straight.

"One of our divisional leaders saw I was getting a bit lax. He sat me down and said, 'You may not be taking this seriously right now, but there will be consequences one day when this isn't a drill.'"

Sure enough, that day came. Stabio says one of the worst events on a submarine is a fire. "If the compartments fill with smoke, it can get deadly quickly. It's not like you can call the fire department," he says. While on watch one day, an electrical fire broke out, putting Stabio to the test. He sounded the alarm, and they found the source of the fire. "It was a pretty tense situation," he says. "But also thrilling because we trained for it and put that training to work."

And what could be worse than a fire aboard a submarine? A flood, says Stabio. And that happened, too. "It was two in the morning, and the alarm sounded," he says. "I was on watch in the very back of the submarine. The first thing you do is activate these valves for the flood control system, which is supposed to stop the water."

Because of all the drills, the crew assumed the flooding would stop. But it didn't. "That was a pretty frightening moment," Stabio says, noting they eventually located the source of the flooding in an internal water tank and were able to get it under control.

By the time he left the Navy, the nuclear energy industry had declined due to 2011's Fukushima Daiichi accident. So, Stabio opted to pursue a career in dentistry. However, he says his time in the Navy has served him well in diagnosing dental patients.

"The Navy helped me develop excellent critical thinking skills," he says. "When patients come in, they don't exactly know why they're having tooth pain, so I have to read between the lines to see what is potentially happening."

While dentistry provided him with a solid career path, he says he misses working in the nuclear energy field, especially now that there is talk of atomic energy's resurgence to accommodate artificial intelligence's energy consumption. So, would he ever go back?

"I think I'm beyond that point," he says. "But I might consider it if there was a real need. You never know!"



PHOTOS: COURTESY DR. ROBERT STABIO

(NOT) AT-HOME OFFICE

Punch up your workday with a new office setting for working and playing

By Heather Shoning

Love working from home but get a wee bit bored with the same ol' routine? Take a field trip to a new office to incorporate a little fun into your workweek.



HOMEDOG

HomeDog, in Denver's Platt Park, is a pioneering coworking space that seamlessly integrates professional work environments with dog-friendly amenities. This innovative concept is perfect for the work-from-homers who want to enjoy a coworking space without leaving Fido at home.

HomeDog provides members and day pass holders with unlimited access to a modern coworking area equipped with fiber internet, private meeting pods and a spacious 6,000-square-foot outdoor patio. The facility also features a professional dog daycare, so Fido can play with doggo friends while you focus on work. Dogs are required to pass temperament tests and have up-to-date vaccinations to ensure a safe environment for all.

Beyond work and pet care, HomeDog has a bar and coffee shop serving local beer, wine and snacks. Additionally, you can rent out the space for dog birthday parties, adoption events or pop-up markets featuring local vendors.

HOMEDOG

1710 S. Broadway, Denver
720.994.2290, thehomedog.co

CLUBHOUSE WORK & GOLF

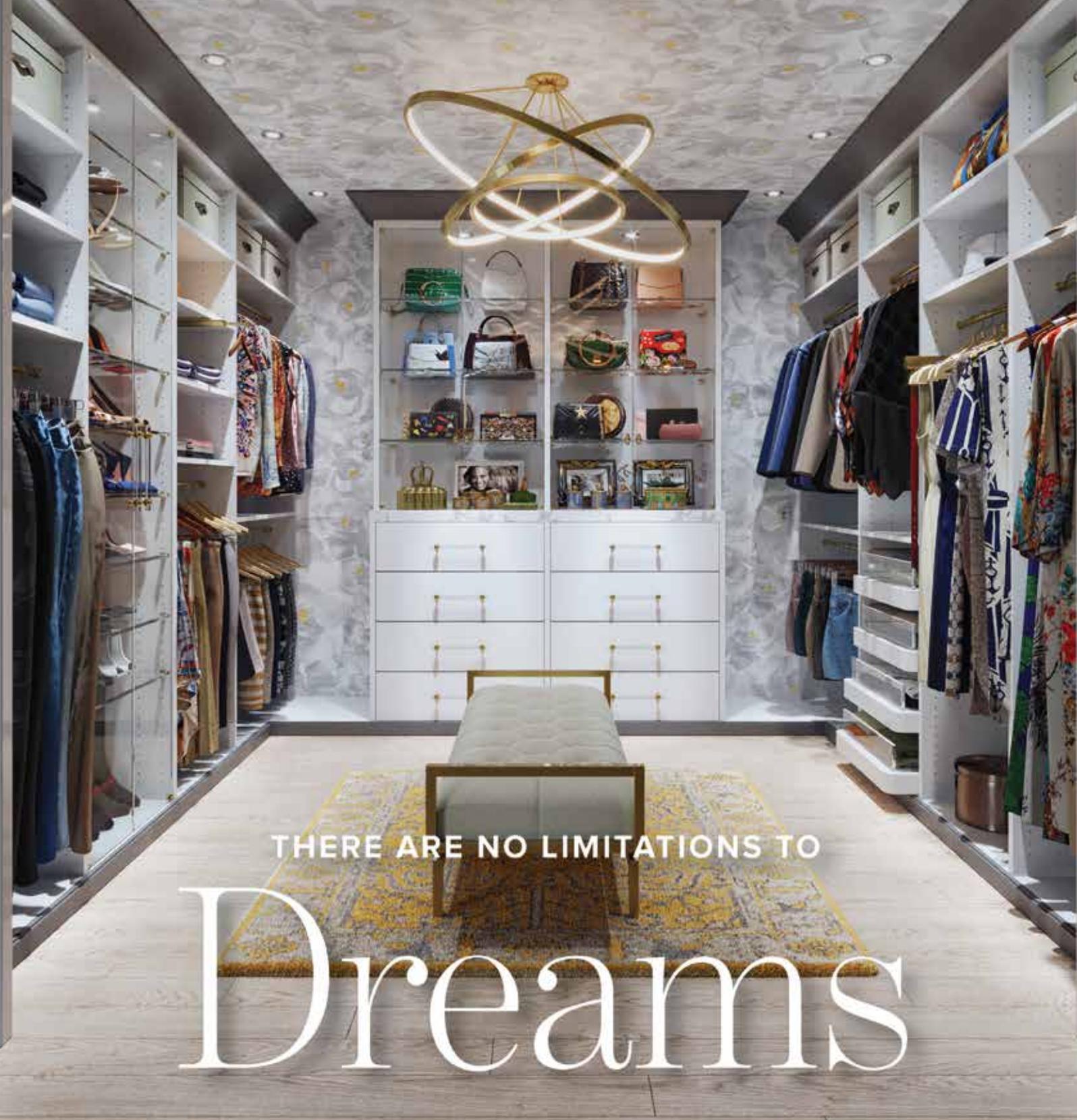
Clubhouse Work & Golf in Greenwood Village offers a unique blend of professional workspace and leisure amenities. This 17,000-square-foot facility combines 11,000 square feet of private office space with a 6,000-square-foot indoor golf area and social lounge, so you can get work done and dial in your follow-through.

Members can choose from various membership options tailored to different needs, from a virtual office for receiving mail and packages to a fully furnished private office. Amenities at Clubhouse Work & Golf are designed to enhance the work-life balance. Members enjoy high-speed Wi-Fi, soundproof phone booths, six meeting rooms, a fitness center, a relaxation room and on-site showers. The facility also features three Trackman iO golf simulators, a 450-square-foot putting green and a lounge area with a Franke espresso machine, tap beers and a wine fridge. Regular networking events and member happy hours foster a vibrant community atmosphere.

CLUBHOUSE WORK & GOLF

5680 Greenwood Plaza Blvd., Suite 120,
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720. 903.3733, clubhouseworkandgolf.com





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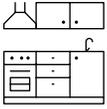
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ONCE UPON A REFRESH

STRATEGICALLY OPENING WALLS AND HARNESSING UNDERUSED SPACES TURNED A LARGE KITCHEN THAT FELT SMALL INTO A LARGE-LIVING FAMILY HUB

By Heather Shoning



AFTER



KELLIE MURDOCK, CEO of Inspired By Design, Inc., knows her way around both a blueprint and a saute pan. As a licensed general contractor, cabinet dealer and designer, Murdock brings a comprehensive approach to renovations—balancing form, function and cost efficiency. Plus, she cooks. So she can intuit great organization for ease of use. Her recent DTC-area kitchen redesign is a masterclass in spatial illusion—making the room feel significantly larger without adding a single square foot.

The original layout was awkward and cramped, with an angled peninsula, a small island and oddly placed hallways that interrupted flow and function. “It was a really big kitchen that didn’t feel big,” Murdock says. Her solution? Eliminate the peninsula and awkward storage areas to create better lines of sight and traffic flow. By shifting the dining room door and transforming an underutilized nook and coat closet into a hidden pantry, she added functionality while cleaning up the visual clutter.

A new, oversized island became the centerpiece—deep enough for storage on both sides and seating for daily use and entertaining. The redesign also included a thoughtful lighting plan with recessed lights calibrated perfectly to mimic daylight. “Contrast is actually what makes things feel brighter,” Murdock explains. “Not all white. We used a darker island and lighting elements to make the space come alive.”

Murdock also swapped out cold marble tile floors for warm oak hardwoods throughout the main floor. “The wood adds texture, depth and warmth—both visually and physically. The client used to say she was always cold in the house before,” she notes.

BEFORE



Perhaps most impressively, Murdock accomplished the transformation using the existing footprint, avoiding costly structural changes. “People think bigger means more space, but thoughtful design is what really makes a kitchen work.”

INSPIRED BY DESIGN, INC.
4 W. Dry Creek Circle, #14
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720.853.1515
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High-flying Havens

In a year when buyers worry about their budget, the “AEROTROPOLIS” AROUND GREEN VALLEY RANCH offers down-to-earth prices

By Mark Samuelson



Berkeley Homes

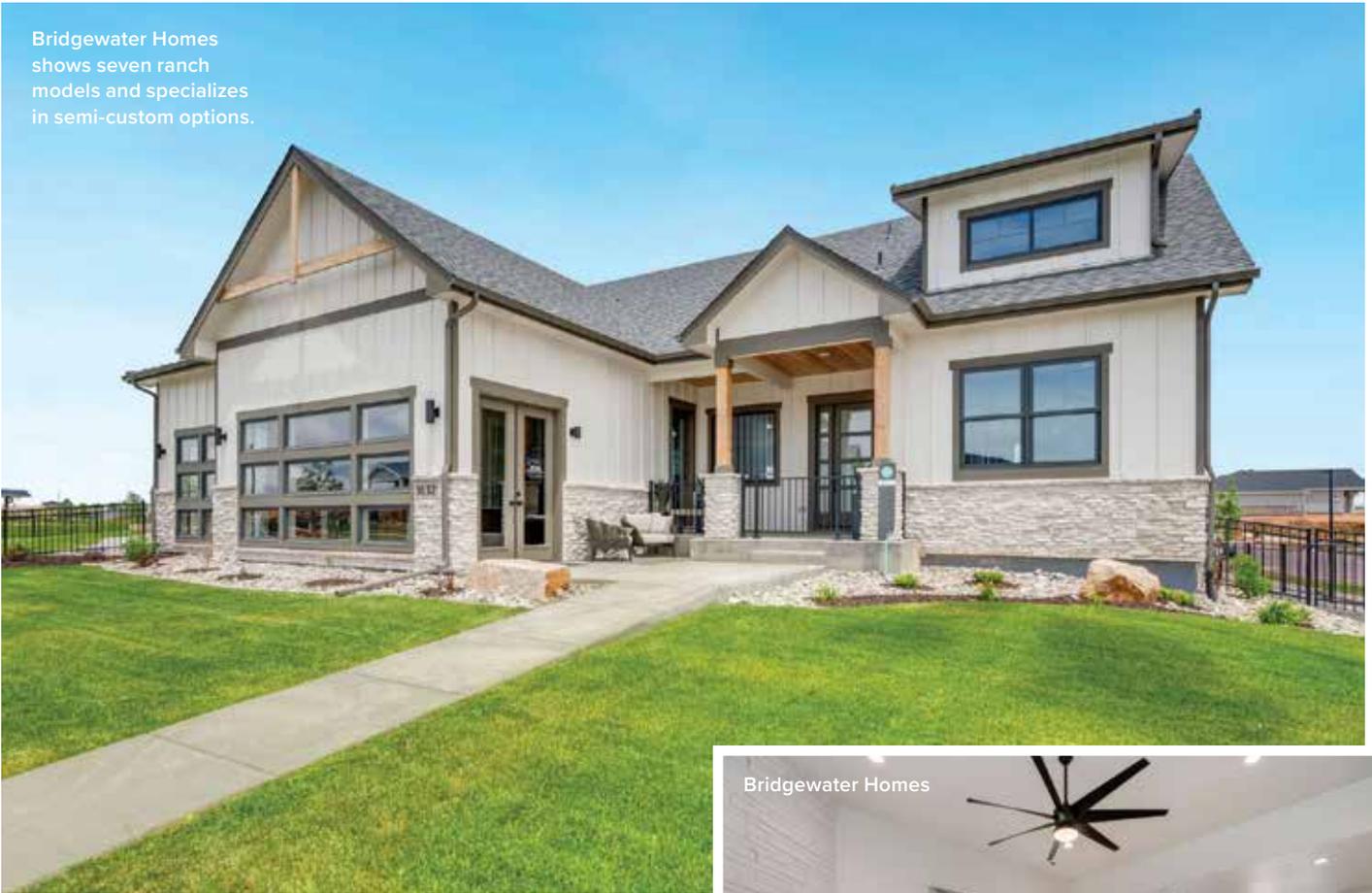
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Bridgewater Homes shows seven ranch models and specializes in semi-custom options.



WHEN GREEN VALLEY RANCH first opened its Perry Dye golf course, the area was little more than a bedroom community wrapped by prairie on the way to Denver International Airport. Now, its surroundings are the epicenter of an “aerotropolis” spanning six cities, one that’s become a phenom for its attractions.

Some passengers leaving the nation’s third-busiest airport head downtown or to the mountains, but others live right here in new master-planned neighborhoods. Those serve the expansion of commercial and light industrial development around DIA—some of it relocating from older areas of Denver.

Other visitors will never leave Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center—a prototype attraction near DIA’s entryway that re-creates Colorado’s outdoor ambiance, matched to water parks, sports, bike paths and dining options—from an upscale steakhouse to an English pub to mountain taverns.

“Gaylord is a nice amenity,” says Jeff Willis, one of many builders with homes you can tour within ten minutes of the golf club. “Green Valley Ranch lacked a lot of that twenty years ago, but now that corridor is a great residential area.”

In a year when prices and interest rates can be deal-breakers, Aerotropolis is also a place to find some of Denver’s best prices and financing at better rates.

BERKELEY HOMES AT PAINTED PRAIRIE

Willis’ Berkeley Homes is one of nine builders at Painted Prairie—with models a 15-minute walk from Gaylord, closer still to 22-acre High Prairie Park and a planned town center that will include more dining options. Painted Prairie has already earned Community of the Year awards not just from Denver’s home builders but also from the National Association of Home Builders and the Pacific Coast Builders Conference.

Known for its higher grade of architecture and trim, Berkeley offers its



Residence 4 plan with 2,462 finished square feet in a 4-bedroom-3-1/2 bath configuration. It’s priced from \$592,900.

It comes with a 2-bay garage that can optionally be expanded to a 3-bay garage. Adaptations take it to seven bedrooms, and there’s an option for throwing open the family room to connect with a finished outdoor living space with a gas fireplace.

“We put particular emphasis on outdoor spaces,” Willis says. “The Colorado lifestyle is all about having a usable outdoors.” He adds that coming this summer, Berkeley can deliver a home at almost two points below market rates.

Prices: From \$479,900. Directions: From DIA Freeway/Peña Blvd., take E. 56th Ave. east 3 miles to Picadilly Rd., left E. 61st Dr., then left to Lisbon St.

BRIDGEWATER HOMES AT AURORA HIGHLANDS

Ten minutes east from the fairways, Bridgewater Homes is among ten builders you can visit in 4,000-acre Aurora Highlands—designed in eight villages scattered among 13 planned parks, with a P-8 school already open. >>>

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Green Valley Ranch Golf Club is home to an award-winning 18-hole Championship course, a popular 9-hole par-3 course and a full range practice facility.



Interior of the Traveler plan by OakwoodLife at The Reserve.



Green Valley Ranch is the epicenter of an “aerotropolis” spanning six cities, one that’s become a phenom for its attractions.

Bridgewater’s Mike Shaefer says Aurora Highlands’ prominence along the E-470 Beltway brings surprising numbers of buyers. “We get more traffic than I’ve seen for a long time,” he adds. A “beach club” with pools now under construction, and a lower tax rate than Shaefer’s seen in communities in other areas of town are drawing visitors and buyer, he says.

Among 17 home plans by the Loveland-based builder are 10 ranches. “We’re really a semicustom builder,” Shaefer says. “If somebody wants something done differently, there is little we will not do.”

The variety includes its Remington “multigen” plan—5,100 feet finished plus a 3-car garage with carriage bay. The base price is \$859,990, and some buyers opt for more versatile homes that can reach \$1 million, featuring options like a 5-car garage.

Prices: From the \$630s. Directions: Take E-470 north from I-70 1 mile to Aurora Highlands Pkwy, turn right at Main St.

OAKWOODLIFE AT THE RESERVE IN GREEN VALLEY RANCH
Oakwood Homes is the master developer of Green Valley Ranch, where

some neighborhoods are designed for age-55-plus buyers who want the fairways as a retirement address. Now Oakwood has pushed east across Picadilly Road into the city of Aurora, where all elements of an age-55-plus lifestyle are on view at The Reserve at Green Valley Ranch.

You’ll see The Farmhouse, a club with a lifestyle director, pools, a golf simulator and a pretty park with a pond. “The emphasis is on active,” says Oakwood’s Kevin Sorensen, who can show you newly opened collections of low-maintenance ranches at prices well below 55-plus communities in other parts of town.

Among the new plans is the 2-bedroom Voyager, which features 1,623 square feet of finished space and a flex space that can be optioned into a third bedroom. The interior is light and bright, with oversized windows, 9-foot ceilings, granite or quartz countertops, and a primary suite with a large walk-in closet, double vanities and a spa shower.

Prices: From the \$480s. Directions: Take DIA Freeway/Peña Boulevard to Green Valley Ranch Blvd, head east 3 miles, past Picadilly Rd.



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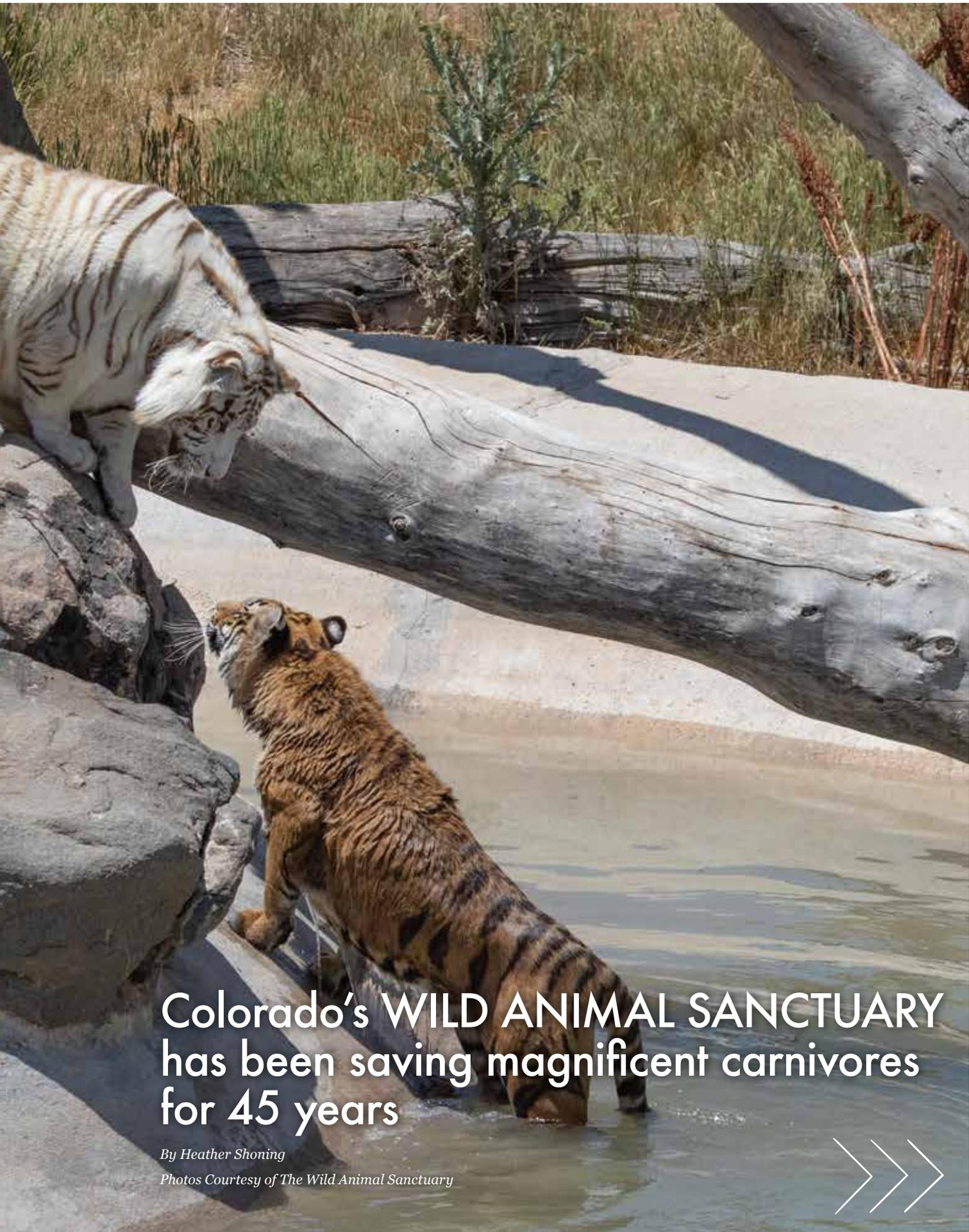


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WHERE
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HEAL



Colorado's WILD ANIMAL SANCTUARY has been saving magnificent carnivores for 45 years

By Heather Shoning

Photos Courtesy of The Wild Animal Sanctuary





A LION LOUNGES lazily under the Colorado sun, belly toward the sky, eyes half-closed, paws outstretched in the grass, not a care in the world. He is far from the gas station cage or concrete box he once called home. This is not a zoo. It's not a park. It's a revolution in animal welfare, and it's happening just 45 minutes northeast of Denver.

The Wild Animal Sanctuary in Keenesburg, is the world's largest and oldest nonprofit carnivore sanctuary. Founded in 1980 by Pat Craig, it's a haven for animals once doomed to suffer behind bars or within roadside attractions. With three sprawling facilities—including The Wild Animal Refuge and The Wild Horse Refuge—it now oversees over 40,000 acres dedicated to rescue, rehabilitation and—best of all—dignity.

“Pat was just a teenager when he saw the problem firsthand,” says Austin Hill, the sanctuary's public relations director. “He visited a zoo, noticed animals hidden away from public view, and when he asked about them, he was told they were surplus—no plans to ever bring them back out.” Haunted, Craig took action.

With a family farm in Boulder and a mission in his heart, Craig approached federal authorities. According to Hill, the response was basically, “Unless you're going to do it, no one will.” At age 19, Craig rescued his first animal, a jaguar named Freckles, and built what would become a world-renowned operation.

The sanctuary now has three Colorado locations. Keenesburg remains the only one open to the public daily, thanks to its innovative 1.5-mile elevated walkway—known as the Mile Into the Wild—that keeps guests at a respectful distance while offering unprecedented views of tigers, lions, wolves, bears and more. “Animals are deeply territorial,” Hill says. “Pat realized early that when construction workers were up above them, they didn't react at all. That led to the elevated walkway—where people become birds in the sky. It's non-invasive, and people often comment on how peaceful it all feels.”

The refuge in southeast Colorado spans nearly 10,000 acres of forested land that also offers, endless hills, buttes, bluffs, valleys and grasslands for current and future rescues. The third facility, The Wild Horse Refuge, protects nearly 30,000 acres of land for rescued wild horses.

The sanctuary's design mirrors its mission: to be the next best thing to the wild. Every habitat is built for freedom, safety and species-specific needs, from African lions to black bears. Feeding happens at varied times and places to mimic a natural hunting rhythm. And most importantly, all animals are sterilized to avoid perpetuating the cycle of captivity—except male lions, who require testosterone to retain their manes. In this case, the female lions receive a birth control implant.





Some residents are household names thanks to the infamous “Tiger King” saga, but others have quieter tales. There’s Manchas, a jaguar who once lived as a house pet in Mexico. He arrived stressed and losing fur from self-mutilation—but today, his coat is glossy and whole, and he shares a habitat with Bagheera, a black jaguar.

“Or Mary Jane,” Hill says, pausing. “She was kept in a cage by a truck stop, breathing in diesel, having her cubs ripped away from her and sold to motorists.” Inhaling deeply, Hill goes on. “Put it yourself in in her paws. That’s unbelievable—the amount of heartbreak, terror and anger you’d have at the world would be off the charts. But here—she’s found family. I saw her nuzzling and groaning with other tigers in her group. Pure happiness. That image is burned in my brain.” >>>

“Our goal is for people to understand why animals like these should never be behind glass or in cages again.”

Asiatic black bears rescued from bile farms in South Korea. “We watched one bear walk and spin, walk and spin,” Hill recalls. “Pat realized she was retracing the size of her old cage—her body remembered before her brain could understand that she was finally free.”

The sanctuary doesn’t just rescue—it educates. Visitors watch an orientation video before entering, while 19 solar-powered kiosks line the walkway with audio stories. Offsite presentations and a vibrant social media presence amplify the message. Volunteers, too—about 130 strong—are trained for either animal care or education shifts, donating at least 16 hours per month.

“Education is vital,” Hill says. “Because once you see it—once you know—you can’t unsee it. Our goal is for people to understand why animals like these should never be behind glass or in cages again.”

The Wild Animal Sanctuary operates entirely on donations. “We’re a 501(c)3 nonprofit—there’s no federal funding,” Hill explains. “It’s people. People make this possible.” Contributions come from estate gifts, social media fundraisers, lemonade stands—even school bake sales.

And for those without financial means? “Keep the conversation going,” Hill says. “Drop our newsletter at a gym or doctor’s office. Share our posts. Bring your out-of-town guests. It all adds up. Every voice counts.”

But it’s not without challenges. A proposed subdivision next door to the Keenesburg location poses an existential risk. Hill says it’s not about stopping development—it’s about ensuring people know what it means to live next to apex predators. “We’ve seen what happens when public pressure turns,” Hill notes. “Even though we were here first, we’re being cautious.”

Still, the sanctuary is growing. It acquired new acreage in 2023. New rescues continue. Habitat construction never stops. Hill stresses the importance the sanctuary places on being ready for the next rescue before it ever comes to light because once they say “yes,” this is the animal’s forever home.

“Animals are here with us—not for us,” says Hill. “This place is a beacon. And it works because good people make good choices. That’s it. That’s the whole thing.”

With 40,000 acres of open sky and grass under paw, The Wild Animal Sanctuary proves that with enough compassion and commitment, healing isn’t just possible—it’s happening every day. And the world is better for it.

THE WILD ANIMAL SANCTUARY
2999 County Road 53
Keenesburg
wildanimalsanctuary.org



BEAUTY UNVEILED

FLASHING YOUR FRESH FACE, A BOLD PRINT SCARF OR A HINT OF SKIN IS IN THIS SUMMER

By Amanda Lacey

SILK SCARF DOING IT ALL

It's time to break out your silk scarf collection because they're having a moment again from practical to classic and now back to trending. This mover-and-shaker accessory has been doing it all, from protecting our locks to decorating our handbag handles for years. Now, it's being worn as a bandeau top, tied at the arms of sunglasses as a strap to allow for decoratively hanging around the neck and even tied across the hips for a little amp in your swagger.

FLUSH YOUR FACE

You've seen it, and you've thought about it, and now it's time to embrace it. Blush is back and in a variety of new ways—cream, liquid and powder formulas. Going for a sans-makeup look but don't want to be totally bare? No problem! A blush will add that perfect pop of color, bringing life to your face. And should you go the cream route, it'll provide that healthy glow and "radiant from within" look. Extra tip: drag it up to the tail end of your eyebrows for a bit of a lift and a fresh sun-kissed moment.

COVER-UP MOMENT

Whether you're planning a beach getaway or sitting poolside to soak up the sun, a chic sheer maxi cover-up never hurts. Fresh off the Denver Fashion Week runway, Beach Haus Swimwear has us coveting some resort-ready looks effortlessly transitioning from outside to indoors. Available in-store and online now at beachhausswim.com.

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PHOTO: JACOB LUND - STOCK.ADOBE.COM

Sizzling Swimsuits

From STYLISH ONE-PIECES TO COMFORT-FORWARD BIKINIS and everything in between

By Amanda Lacey

SUMMER IS HERE, and with it comes the never-ending debate—to get a one-piece or a two-piece. One thing we can all agree on, regardless of the occasion, is that we're looking for comfort and reliability because nobody wants to be out for a day in the sun feeling less than thrilled about their swim-wear decision.

Pool days with the kids may warrant an option that doesn't cause any extra fuss, but that doesn't mean it needs to skimp on style. These days, full-coverage options can be just as supportive as they are chic. Details like mesh panels, cutouts, timeless prints and elongating silhouettes instantly lend the *va-va-voom*. Not to mention, one-piece swimsuits can also serve as bodysuits and be paired with jeans or skirts, making them versatile for both swimming and everyday wear.

From sun protective options to others that are made to evolve and fit your body's naturally changing shape, there's something out there for everybody and literally *every body*.

Knowing what style to choose might be tricky, but with a bit of help, you'll get the perfect suit, and then all you have to do is sit back, apply the SPF and sip on a piña colada.

ONE-PIECE

Who says a one-piece options lack excitement? Opt for a flattering v-neck with an eye-catching pattern or detail. A pleated crisscross bodice is just as pretty as it is

technical, adding a smoothing effect to give you that extra pep in your step.

TRIANGLE BIKINI TWO-PIECE

An itty-bitty moment isn't for everyone, so why not grab a printed triangle bikini top with matching high-waisted bottoms? Extra point if it's zebra-printed and adorned with embroidered tassel trim and side ring detailing. And not to worry if you're unsure about a fully printed ensemble because many with moderate seat coverage bottoms reverse from print to solid black.

Should you need a sporty option, look no further than a square neckline two-piece that luxuriously adapts to your unique shape and changing body. These feel-good monochromatic suits move with you and embrace you in and out of the water.

SWIM DRESS

Turn up your summer style with an every-destination perfect swim dress. This no-fail style can take you straight from the beach to the tiki bar at your beach getaway with no need for an extra cover-up. Opt for fun cuts such as a square neckline or a slit skirt.

AN ASYMMETRICAL MOMENT

A sleek one-shoulder silhouette with diagonal cutouts at the bust and waist or an adjustable back tie closure will give you sunshine-ready vibes and make you the star of the getaway.

OUR TOP PICKS:

Lands' End v-neck slender suit with pleated detail and perfect fit adjustable x-back shoulder straps, \$155, [Nordstrom Park Meadows, nordstrom.com](http://NordstromParkMeadows.com)

Johanna Ortiz zebra-printed triangle bikini top and reversible bikini bottoms, \$250 and \$285, [Neiman Marcus Cherry Creek, neimanmarcus.com](http://NeimanMarcusCherryCreek.com)

Youswim high-waisted two-piece featuring a square neckline and high-waisted bottoms, \$169, youswim.com

Beyond Control swim dress featuring slit skirt and trimmed with decorative grommets, \$139, [Everything But Water Cherry Creek, everythingbutwater.com](http://EverythingButWaterCherryCreek.com)

Tahiti one-shoulder cutout one-piece with tie closure and moderate bottom coverage, \$148, [Nordstrom Park Meadows, nordstrom.com](http://NordstromParkMeadows.com)

Get Your Groove On!



PHOTO: SCOTT DRESSSEL-MARTIN

Botanic Gardens

MOVE AND SHAKE this summer to these hot local—and international—bands at some of the Centennial State’s best venues

By Amanda Lacey

CALL US BIASED, but Colorado has it all—perfect scenery, good food and great music.

Summer is here, and whether you’re looking to stay local or go on a family road trip, it’s time to get outside. We’ve done the heavy lifting, finding the live music events that you won’t want to miss, and now all you need to do is grab the tickets—and go!

6 MILLION DOLLAR BAND

Offering the ’80s experience we all want and love, 6 Million Dollar Band is sure to have you moving and on your feet all night long. Specializing in the best of ’80s New Wave, Synth Pop and good old-fashioned rock ‘n’ roll, anticipate hits like Kenny Loggins’ “Footloose,” “Like a Prayer” from Madonna and The Cure’s “Just Like Heaven,” all delivered in a high-energy, concert-quality show production. With a passion and emotional connection for what they do, 6MDB isn’t playing around. “We’re fortunate to have three professional a-list quality vocalists, and we also work really hard on the sonics of the band so we can get the synthesizers and guitars to sound exactly like the original record,” says Ryan Day, drummer. >>>

- JULY 1** Crescent Amphitheatre, Greenwood Village, 6 p.m.
- AUG. 2** Freedom Festival 2025, Parker, 10 a.m.
- AUG. 29** Nan Desu Kan Convention, Aurora, 7 p.m.
- SEPT. 20** Estes Park Autumn Gold Fest, Estes Park, 4 p.m., 6milliondollarband.com



PHOTO: COURTESY 6MDB

Narrow Gauge



SEPT. 20 Catch Narrow Gauge at the Wheels of Dreams Charity Experience at the Hangar Club. For more information on the event, see pages 12–13., narrowgaugecountry.com

PHOTO: COURTESY OF NARROW GAUGE

BOOGIE MACHINE

This super '70s disco dynamo brings it all: costumes, hair and disco-era hits with a taste of funk and rock. Packing dance floors for more than twenty years, the fun, energetic show is perfect for the whole family. Don't forget your retro garb! "Whether we're playing an event, intimate show or large festival, we encourage audiences to dress up with us. They can count

- JULY 9** Pirates Cove Water Park (Adult Night), Englewood, 6 p.m.
- AUG. 17** Castle Pines Summer Concert, Castle Pines, 5 p.m.
- SEPT. 29** Warehouse25sixty-five Kitchen + Bar, Grand Junction, 8 p.m., boogiemachine.com

on us to deliver the goods—and all we ask is they enjoy the good vibes and unplug," says guitarist and singer Jerry Bergeson.

NARROW GAUGE

For anyone who hasn't caught a Narrow Gauge show yet, get ready for a high-energy ride. You can look forward to the classic rock and country lineup (electric and acoustic guitars, bass and drums) with a little extra flavor from the mandolin. Performing a non-stop trip through country and classic rock to more contemporary hits, there's sure to be something for everyone. No matter the song, you can be sure to count on the energy. "For us, the energy and reaction we get from the audience is what truly makes

a cover exciting to perform," says Jim Greer, lead guitar and vocals. "There's also a unique magic that happens when we're all locked in together on stage—even though we're playing familiar songs, they never come out exactly the same way twice, and when everything just clicks and feels right musically, that's an incredible feeling." Schedule is in the photo above.

YONDER MOUNTAIN STRING BAND

Bluegrass music is everywhere, and if you're a fan, you already know and love Yonder Mountain String Band. From Nederland, the band is a group of music veterans—celebrating their 27th year together—who share a passion and desire for creating great music and moving audiences.

- JULY 6–26** U.S. tour with Railroad Earth
- AUG. 12** Botanic Gardens Summer Concert Series, Denver, 6:30 p.m.
- AUG. 29** | Bar Ranch, Gunnison, 8 p.m.
- AUG. 30** | Bar Ranch, Gunnison, 8 p.m., yondermountain.com

They continue to exist at the forefront of the progressive bluegrass scene as undeniable innovators and pioneers of the modern jamgrass movement—blending bluegrass with elements of rock, alternative, psychedelic and improvisational music.

DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

World-class musicians perform in an unparalleled venue: the UMB Bank Amphitheater in the heart of Denver Botanic Gardens. Grass seating allows you to bring a blanket or low-seating chairs. Each event is BYOB and BYOF (bring your own food), or you can purchase from the on-site restaurants. This unique and intimate live music experience has the stage presented in the round, with the audience seated on all four sides. At set break (or if you need to stretch your legs at any point), attendees can wander through the gardens.

- JULY 8** Fruition and Tophouse, 6:30 p.m.
- JULY 23** Monsieur Periné, 6:30 p.m.
- AUG. 11** Melissa Etheridge, 6:30 p.m.
- AUG. 13** Andy Grammer, 6:30 p.m., botanicgardens.org

If you don't score summer concert series tickets, you're just in luck because DBG also offers an Evenings al Fresco series. Each night features a vibrant mix of talented local musicians spaced throughout the gardens, performing unamplified against a stunning backdrop of peak summer blooms. Find a complete list of dates and performers for each night online.

KEYSTONE CONCERT SERIES

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Winter Park

JULY 19 & 20, full
lineup available online
playwinterpark.com



PHOTO: LAUREN HAWES

planning now. No matter which festival you choose, anticipate incredible views of the Rocky Mountains, live music, world-class dining and maybe even a surprise wildlife encounter. All festivals feature a gathering of musicians, both nationally recognized and local, and there's something for everyone, making them perfect destinations for families. Schedule is in the photo to the right.

WINTER PARK JAZZ FESTIVAL

The 42nd Annual Winter Park Jazz Festival offers a world-class lineup of jazz talent. Enjoy two days of jazz in Winter Park's state-of-the-art amphitheater, Rendezvous Event Center in Hideaway Park. You'll want to prepare yourself as Boyz II Men will be headlining this year's event. Schedule is in the photo above.

OTHER HIGHLY NOTABLE MENTIONS

JULY 8 Alabama Shakes, Red Rocks Amphitheatre

AUG. 2 The Lumineers, Empower Field at Mile High

SEPT. 1 Neil Young, Fiddler's Green Amphitheatre



Keystone

JULY 5 Stars & Guitars
JULY 12 & 13 Wine & Jazz Festival
AUG. 2-3 Bluegrass & Beer Festival,
keystonefestivals.com



PHOTO: ALEXANDRIA BOSTIC

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JULY



RAISE THE CUP



RAVENNA COUNTRY CLUB
AUGUST 10-11, 2025

Sign up for Colorado's elite two-player, best ball showdown this summer!

The **2025 Central Bank Cup** (August 10-11) features a sunset pairings party at Eddie V's in the heart of DTC, followed by 18 holes of scenic play at Colorado's premier country club - Ravenna - the following day, featuring mouthwatering on-course provisions, a chance at \$50K, luxe gift bags, contests - and so much more!

Spots are filling fast! Register today!



Plan Ahead September 20

WHEELS OF DREAMS

Join AvidLifestyle and Colorado AvidGolfer at the Hangar Club for the ultimate date night at our 5th Annual Wheels of Dreams Charity Experience. One of the hottest interactive, luxury events in town where you will immerse yourself in mouth-watering tastes at nine different culinary action stations, enjoy amazing cocktails, incredible indoor and outdoor entertainment, and so much more. It's an evening of experiences, food and fun that helps raise awareness and money for our amazing charity partner and local families! This year's beneficiary, FullCircle Program, is a community of people who believe in healing, hope and the power of coming together to rebuild lives and help teens and their families cope with addiction issues. **DENVER**, avidlifestyle.com

Ongoing Through July

DISCOVERY PARK SUMMER CONCERTS

Warm, sunny days are ahead, and so is the free summer concert series at Discovery Park. Get your picnic baskets, lawn chairs and beach blankets, and get ready to enjoy the sounds of summer. Look forward to Thumpin' (July 3), Hand Turkey (July 10), and "Make Me Smile" (A Tribute to Chicago) Performed by Groove 'N Motion (July 31). **PARKER**, parkerarts.org

Ongoing Through September 7

WINGS OVER THE ROCKIES 2theXtreme

This 5,000-square-foot exhibit reveals the surprising ways math powers the things kids love most—sports, games, music, weather, entertainment, space and robotics. Designed for guests of all ages and abilities with a special focus on students in grades 3-8, 2theXtreme brings math to life through real-world applications and hands-on activities that are as educational as they are fun, including a downhill snowboard race simulation, a 360-degree action photo stage like those seen in blockbuster movies, real-world role models explaining how they use math in everyday life and much more. **DENVER**, wingsmuseum.org

June 28–August 3

CENTRAL CITY OPERA 2024 FESTIVAL

This year's festival calendar is full of opera performances and other related events, like Lunch & A Song, Short Works and talkbacks. This season's operas are "The Barber of Seville" and "The Knock," plus "Once Upon

a Mattress," which enchants with its playful humor and larger-than-life characters. Skip driving up to Central City and hop on the convenient Opera Bus, leaving from either Glendale or Lakewood for select performances during the summer festival. **CENTRAL CITY**, centralcityopera.org

July 4-6

CHERRY CREEK ARTS FESTIVAL

This annual weekend-long festival showcases the works of more than 260 juried artists and includes art-related activities for the whole family, like Creation Station, where attendees can add their own artistic touch to a huge collaborative mural. The festival features artists in 13 different media categories including ceramics, printmaking, jewelry, metalworks, mixed media, painting, photography, sculpture and more. And did we mention free live music all weekend? This event is free and open to the public. **CHERRY CREEK NORTH**, cherryarts.org

July 6

98.5 KYGO BIRTHDAY BASH

98.5 KYGO will turn 45, and in keeping with tradition, the station will celebrate with a concert at Fiddler's Green Amphitheatre. The show will feature Koe Wetzel, Kip Moore, Corey Kent, The Castellows and Bayker Blankenship. Doors open at 3:00 p.m.; show starts at 4:00 p.m. **FIDDLER'S GREEN AMPHITHEATRE**, fiddlersgreenamp.com



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July 11–20

CRESTED BUTTE WILDFLOWER FESTIVAL

This mission-driven festival aims to spread awareness and help in the preservation of the wildflowers in the Gunnison Valley. Founded in 1986, this annual event takes place in Crested Butte, also known as the “Wildflower Capital of Colorado” from Friday to Sunday. There will be countless activities for everyone to participate in like art classes, garden tours, hiking, culinary workshops and much more. This will be a great chance to immerse yourself in nature, get educated and have fun while doing all of it. **CRESTED BUTTE**, crestedbuttewildflowerfestival.org

July 12

PEDAL THE MOON

Grab your bike, helmet and a few decorations—family fun is lighting up East Plum Creek Trail at the town’s annual Pedal the Moon bike ride. As dusk begins to fall, riders will follow East Plum Creek Trail to Festival Park—approximately 6 miles on mostly flat terrain, suitable for riders of all ages. Cyclists are encouraged to participate in the festive spirit by decking out their bikes with lights and other embellishments. At the intersection of East Plum Creek and Hangman’s Gulch trails, be sure to stop at the decorating station and get creative with glow-in-the-dark items, provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Once you arrive at Festival Park grab a hot dog, chips and a drink, then relax under the light

of the moon while enjoying music and some glow giveaways. **CASTLE ROCK**, crgov.com

July 12

SUMMER SAFARI DINNERS

Prepare yourself for an unforgettable experience at The Wild Animal Sanctuary’s highly anticipated fundraising events of 2025—the Summer Safari Dinners! This series will be held at the sanctuary and will include an appetizing dinner and stimulating conversations about The Wild Animal Sanctuary with several senior sanctuary staff, animal caretakers and dedicated volunteers. Mark your calendar for July 12th, August 16th, or September 20th, and secure your spot now. Please note that these dinners are exclusively for adults due to the event’s location and proximity to animal enclosures. **KEENESBURG**, wildanimalsanctuary.org

July 14 & July 25

MOVIE NIGHTS AT INFINITY PARK

Grab a picnic basket and a blanket and head to Infinity Park in Glendale for free movie nights, featuring popular family-friendly movies paired with live entertainment. July 14 is “Toy Story” and July 25 is “Bridesmaids.” Pack a cooler with what you need to enjoy the show, or food will also be available for purchase from an on-site food truck. Gates open at 6:00 p.m. and even your four-legged furry friends are welcome to attend. **GLENDALE**, infinityparkatglendale.com

July 17

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES: JEWEL & THE ROUGH

Gather the whole crew, bring a blanket, a picnic, or money to purchase food truck treats and enjoy dinner and live music while watching the sun set behind the Rocky Mountains. This free family event features the best of local bands and guarantees to be a good time. **HIGHLANDS RANCH**, hrcaonline.org

July 19 & JULY 20

COLORADO SYMPHONY: “JURASSIC PARK” IN CONCERT

The action-packed adventure pits man against prehistoric predators in the ultimate battle for survival. Featuring visually stunning imagery and groundbreaking special effects, this epic film is sheer movie magic 65 million years in the making. Now audiences can experience “Jurassic Park” as never before: projected in HD with a full symphony orchestra performing John Williams’ iconic score live to picture. General admission and VIP ticket options available online now. **DENVER**, coloradosymphony.org

July 19 & 20

LAVENDER FESTIVAL

Celebrate lovely lavender at this family-friendly event, with more than 2,000 fragrant lavender plants, lavender products made by local artisans, demonstrations, food and drink vendors, educational sessions about lavender, live music,



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ON THE AGENDA // can't-miss events

and tours of Chatfield Farms. Timed tickets must be purchased in advance; tickets are limited in each time slot. Tickets will not be available onsite. **DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS CHATFIELD FARMS**, botanicgardens.org

July 23–October 5

BRIGHT NIGHTS AT FOUR MILE

Bright Nights at Four Mile is a chance for you and your loved ones to experience light come to life. Handcrafted larger-than-life sculptures will illuminate the night and your imagination as you walk among—and even through—these magnificently radiant displays that come together to create an enormous interactive exhibit. New this year: Wander through the whimsical Farmhouse Flora and Fauna, step into a surreal Chinese Dreamland and dive into an expanded interactive zone full of surprises. This 10-week festival runs July 23–October 5. **GLENDALE**, fourmilepark.org/brightnights

July 23

MAJORY PARK UNCORKED

The Marjorie Park Uncorked event series features a variety of entertainment, from live music and performance art to comedy and movie nights, there's something for everybody. The event is also paired with options for bites, wine, beer, cocktails and yard games, all in an artful environment. Guests are welcome to bring their own picnic (no outside beverages, please) or enjoy bites and beverages from an on-site food truck or the concessions. This edition of Marjorie Park Uncorked will feature musical guest Jake Leg, featuring Lockwood Barr. This bluegrass band brings big smiles and foot-stomping good times to venues and festivals across the U.S. Doors open at 5:30pm. **GREENWOOD VILLAGE**, moaonline.org

July 25–27

BRECKENRIDGE FOOD AND WINE

The grapes are calling from Breckenridge. This quintessential mountain-town Main Street bustles with fun during this event, bringing you a unique, wine-tasting experience with more than 300 wines from across the globe. Main Street Station Plaza and The Village at Breckenridge, transform into a beautiful, mountain-side vineyard starring an array of varietals created by top wineries. From the soft and smooth to the unabashedly bold, guests will get more than their fair share of delicious sips alongside live music and more. Ticket options are available for everything from the Saturday Grand Tasting to the All-Access pass for the entire weekend, including the vaunted Wine Pairing Dinner on Friday night. **BRECKENRIDGE**, rockymountainevents.com

July 26

GREENWOOD VILLAGE DAY

Celebrate 75 years of the city with carnival rides, live entertainment, food trucks, games and more. Festivities take place at Village Greens Park beginning at 4 p.m. and go until late in the evening. And did we mention this family-friendly event will also include a fireworks show? Ticket registration required. **GREENWOOD VILLAGE**, greenwoodvillage.com

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