

## GREETINGS from Sheri and Page!

Thanks so much for your interest in the *Literature & Landscape of the Horse Retreat*. Experiencing Wyoming's big, wide-open country *through the eyes of the horses* rekindles even the most dormant of creative fires.

The Vee Bar Guest Ranch in Wyoming, and the nearby mountains where we also ride, have unique, breathtaking landscapes. We ride across open meadows, up in the forest, across mountain clearings, on lower pasturelands, even in the arena! And the crew at the Vee Bar is the best. This photo by third-time, return guest Sarah Ray was taken during our fieldtrip to the nearby Deerwood Ranch Wild Horse EcoSanctuary.



Similar questions arise when people consider registering for the retreat. Here are answers to a few of the most common concerns ...

### **MUST I BE AN EXPERIENCED RIDER? WHAT IF I'M ALREADY A GOOD RIDER?**

First, this retreat is about more than just *riding* horses (more on that later), but the retreat is designed to accommodate ALL levels and styles of riding skills. Some guests are experienced in the English saddle, but have never ridden western in wide-open country. Some may have ridden years ago, but haven't been back in the saddle as an adult. Some may have horses of their own, but come seeking a new riding experience that will re-inspire them when they return home. Some feel very comfortable riding English or western, but come seeking to learn new ways to relate to horses.

Whenever we ride out in the open (riding abreast of one another), we divide up into 3 different groups before we leave the barn. Those who want to go at a leisurely walking pace, go in one direction (with 2 wranglers guiding them). Those who want to do some trotting, go in a different direction (with 2 wranglers). Those who feel very comfortable and would like a faster paced ride, go off in a different direction (with 2 wranglers). These groups are fluid – you can go with one group one day, then switch to a different group the next day. You will get to experience *all* the different landscapes regardless of which group you ride with. There will also be times when we ride together as a large group, when we go up into the mountains, for instance.

### **IS THIS A RIDING CLINIC? IS IT A WRITING WORKSHOP?**

The short answer is *'no,'* you do not bring your own horse and receive training from a certified clinician, nor do you bring manuscripts to 'workshop' during formal critique sessions. This is a creative, outdoor adventure for anyone who yearns for nature, longs to reconnect with horses, and hungers for creative inspiration in an authentic western ranch setting. Page *will be* leading facilitated sessions about writing and literature (often with horses at the heart of the story); and Sheri *will be* giving demonstrations sharing what she has learned from clinicians such as Buck Brannaman, Clinton Anderson, the winning Australian team from Road to the Horse. You will also receive some riding and horse-handling instruction from the Vee Bar wranglers. And, we can tailor all of this to fit your needs. Rather than a clinic or workshop, this retreat is about relaxing, re-inspiring, re-energizing, and re-kindling.

Because guests bring all different skill levels and aspirations with them, each participant is asked before the retreat to share with Page and Sheri, at their discretion, any personal creative goals (writing? painting? photographing? journaling?) or horse-related/nature related goals. This helps us ensure that we're addressing everyone's aspirations and concerns. And Kari or Lori at the Vee Bar will talk with each of you about your riding experience so you can be paired up with the perfect horse.

### **HOW DO WE SPEND OUR TIME?**

In addition to mealtime and socializing, we spend about 1/2 of our time outside with the horses; about 1/4 of the time together in facilitated sessions; and about 1/4 of the time in unstructured segments that allow opportunities to journal, work on writing projects, go for walks, hang out with the horses, take naps, put paint brush to canvas, eye to camera, or just sit by the river and daydream.

Regarding the equine part of the retreat, the emphasis is on *spending time with horses*, not just riding them. Guided by the Vee Bar wranglers and Sheri, we might be learning about:

- herd dynamics
- horses and their natural environment
- communicating with horses
- horses as prey animals
- horses as working animals (draft horses/cow ponies/dude horses)
- horses (and ourselves) as sensate beings in a sensate world
- horses' heartbeats
- grooming and tacking up horses
- riding across open range, across fast-flowing water, through mountain forests

We will be stimulating our creativity by:

- exploring literature (fiction and poetry)
- sharing wisdom written by 'horse whisperers' (nonfiction)
- immersing ourselves in the natural world; using nature as inspiration
- sharing discussions about writing and literature
- exploring animals as characters in literature
- exploring Place in literature
- doing fun, short writing prompts
- reading passages excerpted from a few favorite books
- sharing short passages of our journaling

### **IS THIS RETREAT FOR MEN AND WOMEN?**

Although most of the participants are women, men also attend, and there certainly is no shortage of masculine energy—from the Vee Bar wranglers, to Dale the Vee Bar chef, and probably half the horses are of the male gender. And the entire landscape—from the Snowy Range Mountains, to the meadows, to the old barn, the lodge, the bunk house, the cabins and riverside suites—all are 'classic' western, making the guys feel right at home. Plus, the Little Laramie River runs right through the middle of the Vee Bar. Brent Kilmer and his wife Kari, the managers and co-owners, are both Wyoming ranch raised, and absolutely the best!

“So many wonderful things happened because of your retreat---going to Wyoming and meeting you and Sheri, working on writing and "horse spirituality," having my husband Kirk go to Wyoming to ride, and, last but not least, meeting and adopting sweet and patient Dakota. Thank you for your friendship, your encouragement, your thoughts and words and ways.” – Lisa Couturier, Maryland

More client comments here: <http://www.pagelambert.com/endorsements.html>.