



## Artful Getaways

### Echo Valley Ranch & Spa

Close your eyes and imagine fresh pine scented mountain air, snow capped mountains, acres of range grass dotted with cattle and aspen groves. Yes... you are indeed in British Columbia's high country called the Cariboo!

Now imagine teak furnishings, silk fabrics, steeply pointed roof lines with gables ending in the traditional upswept tips found in the far-east. Inside... jasmine scented spaces with robed patrons sipping ginger tea offered by Thai masseuses.

Open your eyes and yes you **are still in the Cariboo!** Welcome to the Echo Valley Ranch and Spa **where East really does meet West!**



Trudy and I had the pleasure of experiencing this magically serene and refreshing oasis for 4 days this fall. The day we arrived we met a group of women who had come for the last 3 years to relax and enjoy each other's company in this wilderness paradise. On the first night as we sat down to dinner family-style; the women arrived dressed as hula and surfer girls providing a lively atmosphere to our excellent meal. Such was our introduction to 4 days filled with horseback trail rides, long walks with the ranch's 10 delightful border collies (providing security and entertainment), learning the skill of fly fishing, taking a 4x4 Safari for the spectacular vistas and in search of wild life through the arid Fraser Canyon, all the while being regaled with fascinating stories about the characters of area by our guide. Relaxation came in the form of Thai massages, easy conversation, and quiet times.

Each morning at 7 am we would enter the stunning Baan Thai building to practise a Thai Stretching and Breathing exercise led by the Spa Director, originally from Thailand. This was followed by breakfast served by the culinary team led by Chef Kim Madsen which never failed to deliver fabulous meals. Believe me...you would be hard pressed to find such wholesome fare with a culinary twist in Vancouver let alone miles from anywhere! Be sure to ask for Chef Kim Madsen's daily fresh baked pastry...**fabulous!**

After four days we understood why VIP's would often privately fly in landing on the ranch's paved private airstrip. The setting, facilities, and staff, all contribute to an easy comfort ensuring a memorable experience. Owners Norm and Nan Dove knew they had found something special when they first saw Echo Valley and they have truly developed the art of sharing it with guests in a relaxed, yet attentive to detail manner, which has guests coming back for more much like that group of women have done for three years in a row!

We certainly look forward to visiting again, perhaps this winter as Echo Valley Ranch and Spa open their first winter season, Dec 01 to April 1<sup>st</sup>, offering cross country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, and of course ...the Thai Spa experience in a wintery Cariboo setting!

