



UNITING SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S HORSEPOWER

THE EQUESTRIAN NEWS

LIFESTYLE

Valentine's Day is Romantic Getaway at Alisal Guest Ranch



By Kathy Anderson

Nestled in the majestic rolling hills of the Santa Ynez Valley and the Santa Barbara County wine country, the Alisal Guest Ranch and Resort has been serving up "Old West" hospitality ranch-style since 1946. Set on a 10,000-acre working cattle ranch, Alisal is California's premier guest ranch, offering horseback riding for all levels of equestrians, golf, tennis, fishing, first-class accommodations and fine dining.

Guests can explore the ranch from the back of horse on the breakfast or sunset rides. In the crisp morning air, guests ride horseback over the ranch's open spaces watching wildlife begin their day. Roaming deer, grazing cattle, calls from hawks flying overhead and an occasional glimpse of an eagle perched high in a tree are your nature companions.

The brisk ride earns you a hearty appetite whet by the smell of a big 'ole country breakfast cooking as you ride up to the historic Adobe Camp. Under giant sycamore trees by a crackling campfire you "set back" to enjoy a cowboy poetry recital, a singing cowboy on guitar and the best flapjacks you'll ever taste. Those preferring alternate transportation can just hop aboard the hay wagon. For the significant other not inclined

to jump astride a Western saddle, there's fishing in the lake, tennis, golf at two 18-hole courses or just relaxing by the pool.

Harkening back to bygone days, the 73 guest cottages available in either studio or spacious one-bedroom suites evoke classic California ranch design. Beamed ceilings

accent the Western art on the walls and complement the relaxing atmosphere in front of the wood-burning fireplace (with complimentary firewood.) In keeping with a sense of period and assuring a quiet getaway, there are no in-room televisions or phones. Telephone messages and faxes are delivered promptly to the guestrooms.

Dinners are served in the ranch dining room highlighted by a large red-brick fireplace. The ranch operates on a modified American plan for meals, with breakfast and dinner included in the room rate (from \$465 to \$595 per night). Executive chef Pascal

Godé has designed a menu that changes daily and offers at least 10 entrees nightly.

To celebrate Valentine's Day, sports-minded romantics can indulge in the Wine & Roses Romance Package, which includes studio accommodations for three days and two nights, sparkling wine and roses on ar-

rival, welcome basket with fresh fruit, cheese and chocolate truffles, breakfast and dinner daily (including wine with dinner), a picnic basket for two with wine, horseback riding on scheduled rides, golf green fees, tennis and fishing at Alisal Lake (excludes boat rental, golf carts and bike rental.) Cost is \$1,495 per couple. Other ranch packages include the Golf Getaway (complete with unlimited golf privileges), Cowgirl Bootcamp (an all-inclusive adventurous women's retreat in laid-back Alisal style) and more.

With a history dating back to 1843, when Conquistador Raimundo Carrillo received

the 13,500-acre Rancho Nojoqui land grant as payment for his services to the Mexican government, to the Hollywood heyday of the 1940s, the ranch has never lost its magic and charm. Alisal's languid landscape and secluded location have made it a hideaway for Hollywood's "A" list for more than 50 years. In 1949, Clark Gable ponied up to marry Sylvia Hawkes in the resort's library.

The guest register also bears the names of other luminaries, including Christina Applegate, Jeff and Beau Bridges, James Brolin and Barbra Streisand, Kevin Costner, John Travolta and Goldie Hawn and Kurt Russell.

Only 128 miles away from Los Angeles, but a century away from the urban sprawl, the natural unspoiled beauty of the ranch can be experienced by horseback, canoe, golf cart or hiking boots. At the end of an exhausting day of outdoor activities, a delicious dinner, a glass of local Santa Ynez Valley wine sipped in front of a blazing fire, facing life back in this century will get a boost of new vigor.

Alisal Guest Ranch and Resort is located at 1054 Alisal Road, Solvang, 93463; 805-688-6411; 800-4-ALISAL. For more information, visit www.alisal.com.

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