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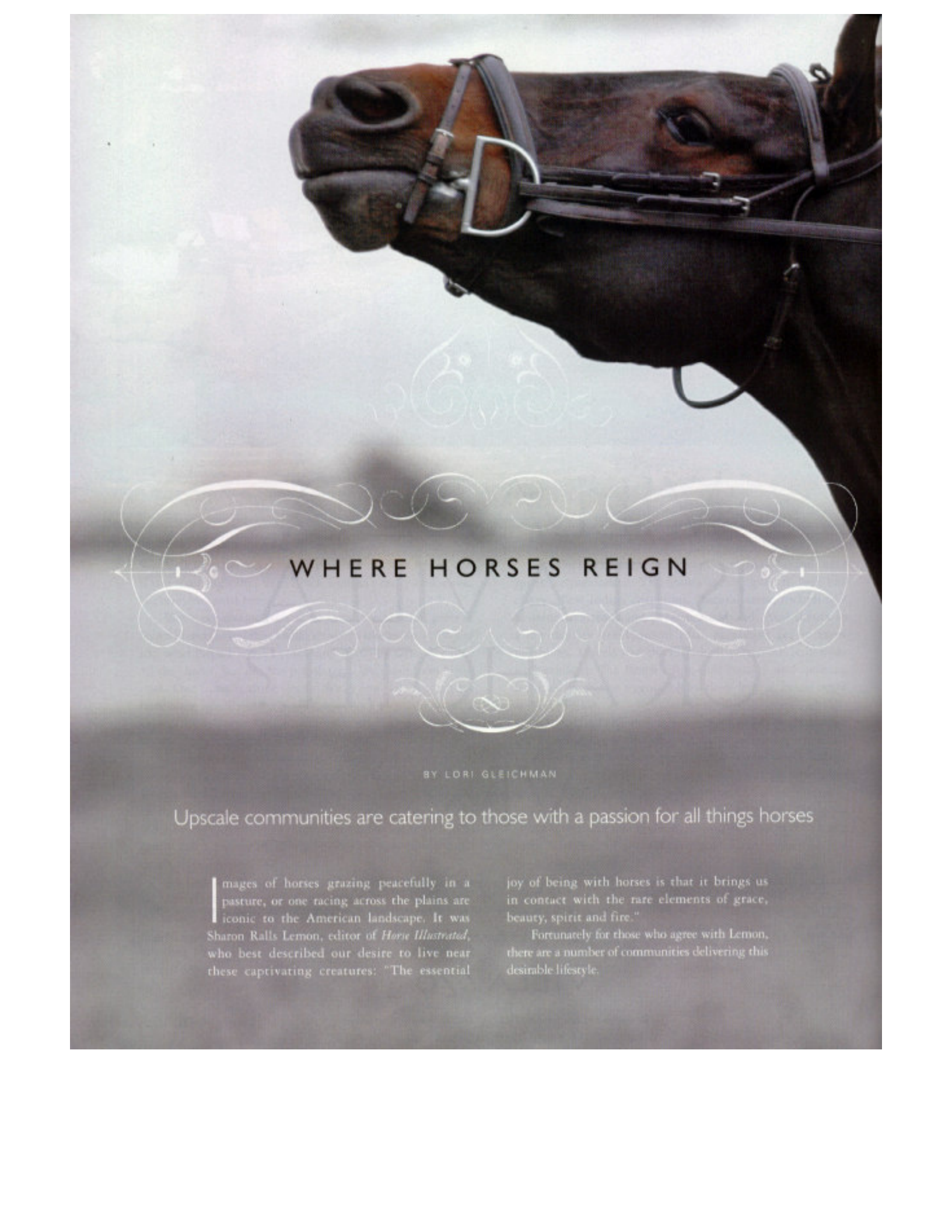
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WHERE HORSES REIGN

BY LORI GLEICHMAN

Upscale communities are catering to those with a passion for all things horses

Images of horses grazing peacefully in a pasture, or one racing across the plains are iconic to the American landscape. It was Sharon Ralls Lemon, editor of *Horse Illustrated*, who best described our desire to live near these captivating creatures: "The essential

joy of being with horses is that it brings us in contact with the rare elements of grace, beauty, spirit and fire."

Fortunately for those who agree with Lemon, there are a number of communities delivering this desirable lifestyle.





Spring Island



Spring Island



The Cliffs

THE CLIFFS

The Cliffs, located within the Carolina Preserve, includes seven communities that are scenic and uniquely designed around the belief that one's environment is paramount when it comes to healthy living. With this in mind, The Cliffs has its own organic farm, a wellness center in each community, 2,500 acres of parks, nature centers, miles of trails for walking and horseback riding and six golf courses. For horse enthusiasts, the equestrian center offers easy access to the Blue Ridge Mountains and Lake Keowee, and includes a state-of-the-art barn.

Homesites run from \$200,000 to \$3 million. Custom-built homes are priced from \$300,000 to more than \$4 million.

SAGUARO RANCH

Just 15 miles outside Tucson, Arizona, this is a place of dramatic southwest beauty, with approximately 80 percent of its 1,035 acres remaining undisturbed.

In addition to ample elbowroom, Saguaro Ranch offers a range of amenities from a full-service spa to a recording studio. When complete, the community's Horse Ranch will feature stables, training facilities, loping tracks, a covered riding arena and a staff bunkhouse. Horse-related activities like scheduled trail riding and dinner rides will also be planned.

Real estate includes 28 guest casitas and 180 single-family lots ranging from four to five acres and priced from \$1.415 million.

CORNERSTONE COLORADO

Located 45 miles from Telluride, Cornerstone captures the beauty of the Old West with half of its 6,000 acres preserved as open space. Just over 400 families will enjoy the amenities of this resort community, which features a Greg Norman golf course and a full-service equestrian center.

For those who want to keep horses on their property, Cornerstone's ranch homesteads, which go up to 50 acres and start from \$900,000, are ideal. However, says Jim Mikula, the club's general manager, the community's stables are getting a lot of interest from potential buyers.

"They love their horses and love recreating with them, especially riding out for a day or a weekend, but they don't necessarily want the hard, daily work involved with taking care of the animals or the land they require," he says.

Cornerstone's stables include a 40-acre meadow where a community barn, boarding facilities, several pastures and various arenas will be available to every level of rider and riding style.

MARABOU

Just outside Steamboat Springs, Colorado, Marabou is a luxury ranch preservation community where most of



Via Paratours

its 1,700 acres will remain a working cattle ranch, allowing residents to participate in all aspects of ranching—from herding cattle to riding horses to harvesting hay.

Marabou also boasts nearly 10 acres of fishing ponds and a 2.5-mile stretch of the Elk River, a fly-fishing haven that will only get better once the river enhancement project is complete. The barn and equestrian center includes a full-size arena, pen, stalls and a tack room. Residents can also learn to ride, rope or barrel race with former World Champion Cowboy, Chad Bedell. Additional amenities include a spa, fitness center with swimming pool and an outfitter's cabin.

Located just minutes from downtown Steamboat Springs and world-renowned snow skiing, more than half of Marabou's 62 6-acre homesteads are sold (prices start from \$2.5 million). Residents are guaranteed four weeks a year to stay at the

owners' cabins until their home is built. Afterwards, the cabins will be available for family and friends.

MERIWETHER RANCH

The nation's first private residence club dedicated to the outdoorsman, Meriwether Ranch firmly believes that horse power is "still one of the most reliable forms of transportation." That's especially true for residents riding to that perfect fly-fishing spot or tracking game during hunting season, as Meriwether Ranch backs up to thousands of acres of federal land, which abuts a 2.5 million-acre national forest.

The ranch's equestrian center is impressive with boarding facilities, fully equipped tack rooms, a 17,000-square-foot riding arena and trailer storage. Additional amenities include a fitness center and restaurant tucked inside the Meriwether lodge.

Ten Riverfront four-bedroom, four-and-a-half bath homes are priced at \$328,000 for a one-eighth fractional interest and include a spacious great room that shares a beautiful stone fireplace with the master suite and patio. Fourteen smaller Sportsman's duplex homes are priced at \$148,000 for a one-tenth share and surround a private fly-casting pond and include more than 700 square feet of outdoor living space. There are also ten lots for custom, full-ownership homes priced from \$625,000.

SPRING ISLAND

South Carolina's Spring Island offers a peaceful, scenic place to live and ride as its 35 miles of trails wander through towering pines, ancient oaks, salt marshes and ponds.

"It's simply the most gorgeous landscape," shares Linda Hartough, an artist who lives on Spring Island with her



The Cliffs

husband and three horses. The couple rides several times a week, exploring the island and its more than 1,200 acres of preserved open space. Their 6.5-acre property includes a pasture and an open-framed, two-stall barn. When the Hartoughs can't take care of their horses, they call on the services of the equestrian center.

"If we're running late or need help with something, we just call up to the barn and they come right over," she says. "We also travel a lot, so it's convenient to board the horses there while we're gone on extended trips."

Spring Island's 20-acre equestrian center features a 24-stall barn, 15 grass paddocks, two riding rings and a professional crew of stable hands and trainers.

There are a number of resale homes available on Spring Island with prices from \$575,000 and climbing to more than \$6 million. Approximately 40 homesites ranging in size from one-third of an acre to more than 13 acres are priced from \$260,000.

VIA PARADISUS

Location, location, location. That's the best way to describe Via Paradisus, a private equestrian community in Ocala, Florida, that is adjacent to the Florida Horse Park to the west and the Florida Greenway to

the north. The former is a training site for the U.S. Olympic team, offers a variety of services and activities, and hosts several world championship events each year. The latter is a 110-mile corridor that is home to gopher tortoises, whitetail deer, shore birds, manatees and more.

"It's a beautiful place to ride," says Kathy Schoeler, a sales representative at Via Paradisus.

Phase I sales include 10- to 20-acre homesites, ranging between \$55,000 and \$78,000 an acre. ■

SOURCES: *The Cliffs*, (866) 435-5123, cliffscommunities.com; *Saguaro Ranch*, (520) 498-2300, saguaroranch.net; *Cornerstone Colorado*, (970) 650-2000, cornerstonecolorado.com; *Marabou*, (877) 879-7919, marabouranch.com; *Meriwether Ranch*, (877) 835-2207, meriwetheranch.com; *Spring Island*, (843) 987-2200, springisland.com; *Via Paradisus*, (352) 347-6900, thewinningdream.com