

LASSOS & LEGENDS

ALISAL RANCH 2022





IN PERFECT STEP WITH OUR LEGACY

It's no wonder families come back year after year, generation after generation. Our own history dates back 188 years. It's a place steeped in tradition, preserving the very best of a bygone era.

This last year, we were privileged to celebrate 75 years as one of the country's great dude ranch destinations. From the open range of the 1800s to a luxuriously appointed guest haven that's played host to celebrities and dignitaries, our 10,500-acre property has been part of the West being pioneered, and won, in the Industrial Age.

At Alisal Ranch, you're invited to create a timeline of your own. You might find, as many others have, how easy it is to make lifelong friendships during your stay. And you might come to relish our beloved customs, such as formal-attire dining, breakfast rides, and cowboy poetry.

As our recent appointment to the Historic Hotels of America registry shows, we are committed to our heritage and mindful of the rare legacy we enjoy as a multigenerational, family-operated business. We are the California that once was—and still is—here.

Whether you're a seasoned guest or a new friend visiting for the first time, every experience here will become a part of your story. Each day will be made of happy moments spent in pursuit of a distinctly authentic outdoor experience. It could be as simple as the crisp morning air carrying heavenly breakfast aromas, the laughter of children, or an afternoon spent retracing the steps of our founders on the back of a horse.

In this issue of *Lassos & Legends*, we share what makes our historic Ranch truly special. We're delighted to introduce you to Chef Craig Riker, a true rock star in the kitchen, along with our Central Coast ingredient-driven cooking. We share why Alisal Lake is a time-honored favorite among guests and staff (and bald eagles!), and invite you to get to know a little bit more about our equestrian program, with 100 diverse, well-trained horses matched to each rider's specific skills and needs. We also take a peek at recent room renovations by Jennifer Taylor, a designer who's worked alongside Alisal Ranch owners, the Jackson family, for 20 years. Slated for a Spring 2023 completion, the improvements reflect a signature Western ranch theme in perfect step with our legacy. You'll see, it's a fresh, comfortable update.

So enjoy the read! And when you're ready to discover more, please join us on the Ranch. After all, there's no better spot on earth to disconnect, unwind, and rejuvenate while creating a history for you and yours.

Kathleen Cochran

General Manager
Alisal Ranch





MAKING WAVES

AND OTHER SIMPLE JOYS



“There is a beauty and a stillness here that’s just good for the soul,” says Randy Rogers. He should know. Rogers has lived his whole life in this area, spending the last eight years as supervisor of lake activities at Alisal Ranch. While he’s grown accustomed to the scenery, interacting with guests hailing from the city or other states serves as a daily reminder of why this place is so special. “The fresh air, the calmness...it just puts people in a different spot.”



The 100-acre, spring-fed lake may be the picture of serenity but that doesn’t mean you need to channel your inner Henry David Thoreau to enjoy it. The lake is one of Alisal Ranch’s most popular spots for fun-filled activities. Paddle a kayak or canoe or challenge your core with a stand-up paddleboard. Prefer something with a little more horsepower? Two Bass boats and five aluminum boats with trolling motors are available to rent.

However, the most popular way to while away a few sunny hours at the lake has always been with a fishing pole in hand (poles and bait are included in the nightly rate). First stocked in 1971, the lake is brimming with largemouth bass, bluegill and catfish—and catching one is almost always a sure thing. “We get everyone from experienced fishermen to first timers, tiny kids to grandparents,” explains Rogers. Lessons and guided trips are available, but if you’re just dropping your line off one of the two docks, Rogers and his staff will always share their tips.

Rogers’ love of nature is contagious. “Some of our guests will only come when they can get Randy,” laughs Lia Barth, marketing and communications manager. It’s something that makes the humble Rogers beam. “If I can teach someone something new, then when I lay my head on my pillow at night, I feel good.”

LAKE DAY LOGISTICS

Alisal Lake is accessible by a shuttle that leaves at the top of every hour from the resort. The fifteen-minute ride is especially scenic, with an opportunity to spot deer, bobcats, and even black bears.

At dinner, arrange for a gourmet picnic basket for your next day’s adventure.

Don’t fret if you run out of worms or sunscreen; the newly renovated Boathouse is stocked with sundries.





WITH MASTERY AND MULTICULTURAL INFLUENCES EXECUTIVE CHEF CRAIG RIKER

HAS ALREADY
FOUND HIS
RHYTHM HERE.

“THE TERM
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THERE ARE MANY BIG-NAME
ROCK STAR CHEFS, CRAIG RIKER
ACTUALLY IS A ROCK STAR CHEF.
LITERALLY.

Pre-culinary days, Chef Riker lived the dreams of many a young musician, playing bass and traveling the world with a rock band called Deadsy—fronted by Elijah Blue Allman. Yes, that Allman: the son of Greg Allman and Cher. The band started in the mid-1990s and quickly garnered a recording contract and a worldwide touring schedule that included Europe and Asia.

“Playing bass and eating my way around the world was quite an experience,” says Riker. As a musician, opening for acts such as Korn, Linkin Park, and Green Day (in what he describes as an “80s, new-wave-style band”), it would have been easy to think he’d reached his peak in achievement at a very young age.

And that’s why it seemed inconceivable that he would leave after just two years with the group. But there was just something about the food in the numerous countries he’d visited on tour that he just couldn’t shake.

“I started playing music at 12, and I started cooking at 15, so when I walked away from music, it was to go to culinary school,” he says. Following graduation from Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Pasadena, Riker proved he could become a rock star once more.

Living in Los Angeles while playing the music scene, Riker was drawn to the multicultural melting pot of Southern California cooking: “If you look at L.A., there’s Chinatown, Little Tokyo, Koreatown, a multitude of Latin food, soul food—it’s all there,” he says. “California cuisine is just so diverse, and I really embrace all of that in my own cooking.”

Riker was mentored early on by celebrated L.A. Chef Evan Funke (founder of the acclaimed Felix and Mother Wolf) as a first-time sous-chef for the Michelin-starred Rustic Canyon in Santa Monica. From there, he did turns crafting unforgettable culinary experiences for high-end clients at Forbes five-star hotels such as Montage Beverly Hills and The Ritz-Carlton Bacara.

Riker moved up the coast to helm Kimpton’s Finch & Fork in Santa Barbara, where he added a multicultural spin to a bevy of classic dishes. While there, he developed his vast network of local farmers, fishermen, winemakers, and brewers to source exceptional ingredients.

As chef of the vegetarian Oliver’s of Montecito, he cultivated yet another passion: turning vegetables into the main attraction. “It’s easy to cook mediocre vegetables when it hides behind a good piece of meat, but much more difficult to make the vegetables the star of the plate,” he says.

While Riker was there, Oliver’s was listed among the top 50 vegetarian restaurants in America.

“I feel like I was a little ahead of the curve there, before it became a path in fine dining,” he says. “Once I returned to meat, I didn’t neglect vegetables.”

Riker says his plans for Alisal Ranch are to honor its traditions, history, and the generations of guests who continue to call this storied Ranch their home away from home. Besides the beauty of its overall surroundings and its history, he says, the Ranch has a distinctly family friendly feel, and as a family man himself, he likes that.

This accomplished chef now finds himself in a unique position in time. He sees the momentum that the Santa Ynez Valley has gathered in the last decade—both in food and in wine—with a few Michelin stars awarded locally, and considers himself lucky.

“To me, this is the new Napa Valley, and an up-and-coming culinary destination,” he says. “I feel privileged to be at a ranch that has always considered itself just that—a culinary destination.”

A superstar of both bass and basting, in his off time, Riker is an avid soccer dad. It may just be the only thing in his life that leaves him happily on the sidelines.

Come along for the ride

Waylynn Lucas and Joe Dickinson
have a lot to say about the sweet life.



FEW THINGS FEED THE SOUL QUITE LIKE POWERFUL
FEMALE FRIENDSHIPS. CHEF WAYLYNN LUCAS,
FORMER JUDGE ON THE FOOD NETWORK'S CAKE WARS,
AND JOE DICKINSON, RENOWNED DOG TRAINER,
KNOW THIS FIRSTHAND.

As it so often does, their story began with a horse. Lucas met Dickinson's husband at a wedding, and at his suggestion, the two met for a ride. They became fast friends, connecting over their shared experiences as successful business owners, mothers and women who want to squeeze every moment out of life.

Both know plenty about living whirlwind lives. Up until a few years ago, Lucas was living her dream as an executive pastry chef at some of Los Angeles' top restaurants and appearing on the popular TV series. Success aside, life in the big city just wasn't fulfilling. "I grew up with horses... and I was riding before I could walk, but I left it behind when I went into the culinary world," she says.

She missed the outdoors and the horses, and five years ago, she packed up and left LA, buying a ranch in Utah near her mother. Now, the chaos of the professional kitchen has been replaced by the braying of donkeys, quacking of ducks, and other cacophony from the 30 animals who live alongside Lucas and her young son. As if running a ranch wasn't quite enough, Lucas also runs a wholesale baking business, writes cookbooks, teaches cooking classes, and creates bespoke wedding cakes.

Joe Dickinson's daily life is equally tornadic. Having grown up around animals, the rigors of ranch life are nothing new to her. She trained horses from the age of 12, and now runs a successful dog training business with an online training component. It's just one of her many cowgirl hats. "I help run my husband's photography business, have a horse trailer business, and also help my daughter with a beer, coffee, and pastry business," she laughs.

Together, Lucas and Dickinson launched a podcast, Grit Grace Grow, on which they inspire other women to live their best lives and share their ups and downs.

This fall, they will be the featured guests at Alisal Ranch's first-ever **WILDWONDER** women's retreat.

"We're sharing what we've gained, and showing people how to live a slower, simpler life. We need to appreciate what's in front of us—even if it's weeds," jokes Lucas. After all, she adds, "Life gets big and crazy, and sometimes you just need to have a meltdown." And when life's challenges arise, it always helps when women lean on each other.



WILDWONDER

November 6–9, 2022 | March 12–15, 2023

Fearless...and fun. Our **WILDWONDER** women's retreat captures the renegade spirit of the Wild West and celebrates the fearless females who inspire us. Join us for three nights of connection with artisans, chefs, winemakers, cowgirls, and wellness leaders. Waylynn Lucas and Joe Dickinson will be our featured guests, offering life lessons and laughs along the trail.

Learn more at [alisal.com/experiences/wildwonder](https://www.alisal.com/experiences/wildwonder).

BEYOND THE BRIDGE: SWIRL YOUR WAY THROUGH SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

Once guests cross Alisal Ranch’s iconic bridge, few feel the need to leave the sprawling Ranch. But there are those wanderers—the ramblers among us—who lace up boots for discovery beyond.

*And in the Santa Ynez Valley,
the best discoveries usually include wine.*

The search begins with a slack-wrist swirl of a crystal glass, an explosion on the nose, and a sip that blankets the tongue like velvet. It crescendos with a fleeting afternoon love affair oenophiles and amateurs alike can’t seem to resist.

Alisal Ranch is at the doorstep of an array of award-winning vineyards. The American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) represented in this 30-mile-long valley boast the greatest number of wineries in Santa Barbara County, so tasting opportunities are plentiful. Choose your starting point carefully, as four AVAs in one trip will be ambitious.

THE DIRT ON THE DIRT

Sta. Rita Hills AVA:
Rocky soil produces Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

Ballard Canyon AVA:
Limestone and clay produce Rhône varieties including Syrah, Grenache, and Mourvèdre, as well as Italian varieties Sangiovese and Nebbiolo.

Los Olivos District AVA (newly designated in 2016):
Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Franc, and Spanish and Italian varieties flourish in an alluvial landscape.

Happy Canyon AVA:
Bordeaux-style varieties Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec, and Petit Verdot grow in clay, chert, and serpentine soils.



THE ESSENCE OF COOL

Santa Ynez is among the most unique growing regions in the world.

East-to-west transverse mountain ranges form a perfect wind tunnel to transport coastal air that cools grapes at night—making this valley the literal essence of cool. Significant temperature shifts are what make these grapes flavorful on the vine.

But the valley’s winemakers are equally diverse.

Alisal Ranch partner and Penville Winery founder Patton Penhallegon is a trained chef and sommelier, and he initially learned winemaking from friends at Dragonette Cellars. Mentorship in this region is quite common, he says, and develops a winemaker in ways that schooling cannot.

He’s also among a camp of vintners who don’t actually own their own vineyards but, instead, source grapes from key blocks in favored AVAs.

“That’s by design,” he says. “My objective is to work with vineyards that have significance to the area, and to work with other biodynamic winemakers.”

Kaena Wine’s Mikael Sigouin grew up in Hawaii, had no background in wine, and started as a harvest intern in 1999 at Beckmen Vineyards. By 2001, he was assistant winemaker, left for a turn at the famed Fess Parker, then returned as Beckmen’s lead winemaker in 2007—all while working behind the scenes to launch Kaena.

“This valley has some of the best in nonclassically trained winemakers,” says Sigouin.

Dubbed “The Rhône King” by industry peers, in 2006, *Wine Spectator* named Sigouin among the Top 10 New Rhône producers. Like Penhallegon, his vintages result from sourced grapes, a practice that he says allows greater versatility in winemaking.

Conversely, Peter Stolpman is a second-generation vineyard owner. His dad planted vines in Stolpman Vineyards 32 years ago. He bottles Alisal Ranch’s own signature cuvée Syrah, but says about half of his production goes into his globally popular So Fresh line, which uses whole-cluster fermentation to create lighter-bodied, chillable wines.

“There’s just so much flavor at 34.6 latitude that we don’t have to work over our fermentations,” Stolpman says. “We’re much gentler with grapes than France and Northern California.

Fascinated by fermentation? Don’t know a Merlot from a Malbec? Either way, wine tasting turns a sun-soaked excursion into an indelible memory. Our numerous partners acknowledge Ranch guests with a variety of perks—from complimentary tastings to case discounts, depending on the cellar. So go ahead and savor the afternoon. *We have you covered.*

THE PERFECT RIDE STARTS WITH THE PERFECT MATCH.

AMONG ROUGHLY
100 HORSES IN
ALISAL RANCH'S HERD,
NO TWO ARE ALIKE.

And that's exactly how Head Wrangler Meghan Taylor likes it. "The cool thing about our herd...there is not one type that makes a good dude horse," she explains. "Just like our guests, our horses range in age and size—even ability." The one thing that does remain consistent? They're all geldings.

It's a choice that Taylor believes keeps the herd level-headed—at least most of the time. "Imagine having 100 boys together—that phrase 'horsing around' came from somewhere," she laughs. The hijinks keep the job interesting and show off the horse's distinctive characters. "Horses are just like people with different personalities...some are serious and others are silly."

Take Marmaduke. "He's the biggest goofball you'll ever see." Almost 20, he's a mischievous boy. "He used to untie his knots and then started untying the other horses," laughs Taylor. Eventually, the wranglers crafted a homemade buckle closure to outsmart him. "He is a good boy," she says. "He's one of the slower guys in the herd, making him an ideal choice for beginners."

Another favorite is Tabasco, who was Taylor's horse for two years. "We do everything with our horses—we gather the herd in the morning with them, we perform at Alisal Ranch rodeos, and many serve as wrangler horses before they ever have a guest ride them," she explains. Unlike Marmaduke's playful act, Tabasco puts on an entirely different show: "He always acts grumpy. He'll pin his ears back and act like he doesn't want to go out, but then he is the smoothest and nicest ride." Tabasco is well-suited for advanced riders.

If this all sounds a bit like matchmaking, it is. Taylor and her wranglers take great care to understand a guest's ability and goals: "We have a horse for everybody and I tell our guests to be very straightforward about riding experience and goals. If they're a returning guest and they rode a horse they liked, we have a good handful of horses that will ride just like that one (if that particular favorite isn't available)."

*Whether you're more Marmaduke, Tabasco, or one of the other
98+ horses, there's a perfect match waiting for you at Alisal Ranch.*



ADOBE BREAKFAST RIDE

Wake up, then saddle up on our morning breakfast ride. You'll get to know your horse on this scenic ride to our historic Adobe Camp, where towering sycamores and a cracking campfire set an inviting tone. You've worked up quite an appetite on this ride—good thing we have a bountiful breakfast waiting for you. Our skillet-sized flapjacks are always a highlight, but there's plenty more, including eggs, bacon, sausage, quesadillas, and pastries.

*Our famous breakfast horseback ride is available year-round, 2–3 times per week.
Please check our seasonal activity guide for days and times.*



CALIFORNIA’S CENTRAL COAST DELIVERS HERE

Horseback rides to pancake breakfasts at the historic Adobe Camp. Bountiful breakfast buffets. Poolside lunches on the patio. Local wines at the Waggin’ Tongue Bar. Appetizers and local AVAs with live music at the Oak Room. And dinner at the Ranch Room, where dressing up has been a nightly tradition since 1946. Just like its herd, with a different horse for every rider, Alisal Ranch features a panoply of dining choices that suit every mood and every occasion.

The landscape here is rich with sun-ripened fruit, bright vegetables, and award-winning wines. It’s what makes California’s Santa Ynez Valley a paradise for epicureans, and Alisal Ranch is smack-dab in the middle of it all. The region’s cornucopia of delights serves as a blueprint for the kitchen’s ever-changing menus. You’ll taste the difference when a strawberry’s juicy sweetness hits your tongue or a garden-fresh vegetable is kissed ever so slightly by the flame of the grill.

Our signature California ranch cooking delivers a delicious blend of American classics mixed with Mexican and European influences. Grilled meats and seafood are the cornerstone of most meals. Who can resist the temptation of a tomahawk steak grilled over an oak fire?

Of course, with Alisal Ranch’s lush green lawns anchored by ancient oaks set against the backdrop of rolling hills, it’s easy to see why al fresco dining is a top choice. It’s also why BBQ Bootcamp is a perennial hit. Held twice annually, the three-day barbecue bonanza welcomes

barbecue greats like Frank Ostini and Valerie Gordon, plus a whole host of other celebrity chefs, TV hosts, and authors to share their tips and light plenty of fires.

And BBQ Bootcamp isn’t the only chance to rub shoulders and sample the tasty creations of some of the culinary world’s greats. California Ranch Cookouts are one our favorite events, too. Taking place outdoors on the Rodeo Arena and the Oval Lawn, our Cookouts are as entertaining as they are delicious. Over the years, Alisal Ranch has hosted a cavalcade of culinary stars including Govind Armstrong, Nyesha Arrington, Cat Cora, Neal Fraser, Suzanne Goin, Sam Jones, David Lentz, Tiffani Thiessen, and Brooke Williamson.

For a taste of what we have planned, and to find updates to our events schedule throughout the year, visit <https://alisal.com/signature-experiences>.

S MOKE AND *mmm...memories*

Few things satisfy an appetite quite like a platter piled high with finger-licking, lip-smacking ribs. They’re always a Ranch favorite, and this recipe is a definite crowd pleaser. Even in your own backyard, these ribs are sure to deliver a taste of the West—along with sweet thoughts of your time here with us.

ALISAL RANCH SMOKED BEEF RIBS

Ingredients

1 each of 3-bone rack full block cut beef ribs, center cut, approximately 5–8 lbs.

Mustard Marinade

2 parts yellow mustard
1 part whole grain mustard
1 part Worcestershire sauce
1 part water
1 part apple cider vinegar

Seasoning Blend

1 part salt
1 part black pepper
1 part garlic powder
1 part lemon pepper
1 part ancho chile powder
Light touch of cayenne

The Glaze

1 cup brown sugar
1 cup honey
1 cup beer, brown ale
½ cup bouillon paste

Directions

Heat a smoker to 250 degrees Fahrenheit. Brush the beef with the mustard marinade and season both sides of the beef liberally. Place the seasoned meat in a smoker for five hours.

Slather the smoked meat with the glaze and wrap with foil. Finish preparation in a smoker or in a preheated oven at 250 degrees Fahrenheit.



WESTERN FLAIR

MEETS MODERN COMFORTS



Authenticity and details. Carefully curated, beloved antiques. A fireplace showing off magnificent river rocks. When guests who've been visiting for decades arrive, they'll discover a familiar place with updates beyond compare.



ROOM RENOVATIONS HONOR HISTORY WHILE CELEBRATING THE PRESENT.

Alisal Ranch has served as a second home of sorts for many families for generations, so how do you inject a storied place with new life without stripping it of its charm? The answer is very carefully, at least if you're interior designer Jennifer Taylor. She has worked with Alisal Ranch for over 20 years, searching for just the right furnishings with owner Ann Jackson in the early years. Of course, well-loved sometimes also means well-worn. "It was time for a face-lift," Taylor says.

The room renovation was not without its challenges. "People love Alisal Ranch exactly how it is, and they often don't want it to change," she explains. She was careful to keep the spirit of the Ranch alive in the guest spaces. "The design has to be fun and interesting—we want to transport guests from their everyday lives."

With bridles and saddle blankets pulling double duty as room decor, plus wall art detailing the anatomy and colors of horses, the rooms display a clear pride of place. "It's meant to be a real immersion in the ranch experience," according to Taylor. Ralph Lauren furnishings, Pendleton blankets, and fireplaces bricked with local river rocks round out the Western look. Taylor also unearthed a treasure trove of finds from the Ranch's attic, putting vintage lamps and artwork to good use in the rooms and suites.

As fashion-forward as the accommodations are, everything was designed with the guest's comfort in mind. In other words, don't worry about your muddy boots. "These are not museums," says Taylor. "You're meant to put your feet up on the couch."



Past, present, and future:

THIS GOLDEN STATE LEGEND KEEPS ON SHINING.

Two hundred years ago, settlers flocked to the Far West for many reasons. For some, it was adventure.

For others, it was the dream of acquiring farmland and getting a new start in the balmy California climate. The Spanish and Mexicans had begun to organize the territory through the mission system. Mexico controlled Alta, California—now known as the Santa Ynez Valley.

The historical clock of Alisal Ranch began ticking in 1834, when a land grant, then known as a “rancho,” was issued to Raimundo Carrillo. He called his 13,500-acre parcel “Rancho Nojoqui” (naw-ho-wee) after the Chumash Tribe village “Naxuwi,” which meant “meadow” or “honeymoon place.” The acreage featured a waterfall, lush green pastures, and a beautiful sycamore grove.

FEASTS THEN FAMINE

Carrillo wasted no time stocking the fertile ground with 1,000 head of cattle, raised in those days for hides and tallow to make soap and candles. Before the Gold Rush exploded in 1839, these were the only commodities that connected California to the outside world. Five years later, the Golden State became the center of world production of precious metals. Where once cattle had sold for \$5 per head, they suddenly commanded \$300 to \$500 per head, as hungry miners with gold in their pockets created a new market for beef.

The next two decades, however, were marked by enormous adversity. Nature brought ranchers to their knees with floods and droughts that wiped out crops, along with a pestilence that decimated herds. Fires ravaged hillsides and ranch buildings, with little infrastructure pre-dating the Industrial Age to stop it. The losses were many.

These challenges forced frequent changes in ownership until Henry Pierce bought the ranch in 1868. Despite its withered and barren fields, he restored 1,300 head of cattle previously lost to famine and added 5,000 sheep and 90 head of horses. To expand Rancho Nojoqui, Pierce bought 70,000 additional acres of neighboring land.

WATER AND WEALTH

Necessity prompted Pierce to create a method by which the entire valley could irrigate its fields—an innovation that leveraged the Santa Ynez River. In doing so, he revolutionized area ranching and eradicated drought. In 1882, Pierce renamed the ranch The Alisal after the Chumash word meaning “sycamore grove.” His family owned the Ranch for nearly 40 years before selling in 1907, when it became known as the Alisal Ranch Company.

Charles Perkins, the director of the Southern Pacific Railroad, bought the Ranch in 1926. An internationally known stock and saddle horse magnate for his steeplechase prospects and thoroughbred breedings, Perkins headquartered his horse, Flying Ebony, at the Alisal. Flying Ebony won the Kentucky Derby in 1925, officially putting the Ranch on the world map.

When Perkins died in 1943, his sister became sole owner, and put the Ranch on the auction block. Ann and Pete Jackson purchased the title and took the reins of the Alisal, which they owned along with another property, Rancho San Carlos, in Montecito.

The Jacksons were well known for their ties to the polo community. In 1936, the family had become part owners of Santa Barbara Polo Club and eventually owned the complete complex. Ann Jackson, a polo player herself, built the vintage cottage-style polo clubhouse. The family sold the club in 1963.



A 20TH-CENTURY RANCH REIMAGINED

Locals had worried that with the Jackson’s purchase of The Alisal, the much-loved Nojoqui Park, leased by the American Legion in 1925, would eventually be lost to public use. Ann and Pete swiftly answered concerns by gifting the 58-acre parcel that included Nojoqui Falls to the county of Santa Barbara.

Meanwhile, friend and fellow polo player Lynn Gillham had been promoting polo in Tucson, Arizona, and managed a “dude” ranch of his own in Nevada. The term “dude” referred to a “city slicker” all duded up who came out to the country. It originated in the latter nineteenth century, when stories about the Wild West had begun to fascinate people on the East Coast and the wealthy boarded the transcontinental railroad to see for themselves the raw and unspoiled country.

Gillham had seen something special in The Alisal: the perfect place to build a hospitality business—a dude ranch—given the interest from Hollywood celebrities poking around the Santa Ynez region. In 1946, he helped the Jacksons imagine The Alisal Ranch and Resort.

On July 6, 1946, with accommodations for just 30 people, plus barns and rodeo fields, Alisal opened its doors. It quickly became a popular getaway for American families and a host of notable celebrities. Clark Gable married there in 1949, and other guests throughout the years included Groucho Marx, Gregory Peck, Mickey Rooney, Ava Gardner, Kirk Douglas, and Walt Disney.

THE LEGEND LIVES ON.

The Jacksons knew The Alisal was a great concept and quickly doubled guest capacity to 60. Today, there are 73 cottages with capacity for up to 200 people, and this Ranch so steeped in American history and equestrian heritage continues to thrive 75 years on.

Now known as Alisal Ranch, the property remains a family-owned-and-operated dude ranch.

Activities have expanded well beyond horseback riding to include golf, boating on Alisal Lake, tennis, fishing, and swimming. With no televisions or telephones in the rooms, Alisal Ranch harkens back to a simpler time and remains a rustic retreat for those who seek a getaway to the California of yesteryear.

“The Jackson family has managed to preserve all of the wonderful traditions that date back to the early days of the ranch,” said General Manager Kathleen Cochran. “They always reinvest back into the property, offering guests premium standards of luxury while maintaining its heritage and the simplicity of being at a dude ranch.”



The real gift is the time you'll get
to spend with you and yours.

During certain times of year, anything is possible, including a warm-weather, family-friendly magical tradition. No mittens necessary for hay rides, visits with Santa, Christmas caroling, and scavenger hunts. No papercuts involved when you wrap up the gift of archery and air rifle lessons, encounters with barnyard animals, trail rides, and tennis. Year after year, generation after generation, Alisal Ranch is more than a destination. It's your home for the happiest of holidays.

