

# TRAVEL

## Vermejo Park Ranch

### Ted Turner's Vermejo Park Ranch – New Mexico

STEVE THOMPSON

Vermejo Park Ranch is a private mountain resort and working bison ranch in northern New Mexico. In the fall of 1996, philanthropist and businessman Ted Turner, acquired this vast property making it the largest of his extensive land holdings. Turner retained and improved the guest operations, sold the cattle, reintroduced bison and focused on ecological projects to restore and preserve the ranch.

Vermejo is open to a limited number of guests by reservation only. The ranch offers lake and stream fishing, ecological and wildlife observation tours, shooting skeet or sports-clays, limited hunting, and professional corporate retreat services. A large focus is the restoration and enhancement of the Ranch's many diverse ecosystems, ranging from short grass prairie on the east to the alpine tundra on the west.

The Good American Post was invited to see Vermejo's latest edition, the new Costilla Lodge before its official opening this last summer. The massive high country lodge is compliant with ecological standards with timbers harvested from the ranch and careful detail has been given to its surroundings. Starting in January 2011 you can be a winter guest at Costilla and enjoy its lodging, gourmet meals, snow shoeing, sledding, nordic skiing, ice fishing and wildlife observation – a custom winter adventure is yours for the making. During the summer months the focus is nature and eco-tours. You are provided with a custom designed all-inclusive program May through September.

Nature-tourism is a growing trend - we have seen a surge in demand for nature-orientated travel across the country. Vermejo Park Ranch is the ideal destination for experiencing nature - it provides an experience equal to

that of our national parks, however without the crowds that sometimes ensue. Vermejo is the largest contiguous deeded ranch in New Mexico, containing 588,000 acres; it has elevations ranging from 6,400 feet to 12,960 feet and covers six bio-geographic life zones.

Birding is one of the most popular activities with over 150 species identified on the property. Many birds are migratory and at Vermejo for short periods during the year. Both golden and bald eagles reside on the ranch as well as numerous species of raptor. A few other notable birds are the white-tailed ptarmigan and the western tanager. The largest bird on the ranch is the merriam's turkey, which can easily be seen at any time during the year.

Hiking the many different high-mountain meadows and peaks is an activity available during the spring and summer. The staff can customize a hike to meet any desired level of difficulty. Some of the hikes encompass visits to an old ghost town, cowboy cemeteries, and adobe ruins. Big Costilla peak is the most challenging hike with an ascent up to 12,800 feet where the wreckage of a WWII bomber can be viewed.

Photo safaris are another popular activity for guests with significant opportunities to photograph wildlife in its natural habitat. Black bears are commonly seen around the lakes, there are between 1,500 and 2,000 mule deer, approximately 1,500 bison, a free-range elk herd of 8,000, and of course many other animals native to this area. Vistas of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains are spectacular anytime of the year and the fall foliage is breathtaking.

Early in the century, leaders of industry and finance including Firestone, Hoover, and Mellon, frequented

the exclusive resort located high in the Sangre de Cristo mountains of New Mexico. Vermejo has also hosted Hollywood stars, film directors and studio executives starting from the early 1920's and continuing to this day. They came to Vermejo - a place to relax, to regroup, and to plan.

Today, Vermejo Park Ranch continues to offer innovative businessmen and women a unique setting to address contemporary business challenges. Vermejo Park Ranch provides professional retreat services combined with first class wildlife viewing opportunities.

Vermejo's comfortable meeting space, gracious dining room and acres of unsurpassed beauty set the stage for dynamic, productive interactions, quiet reflection, and relaxing recreation.

Make your plans to visit Vermejo well in advance. The opportunity to visit this exclusive unique property should not be missed. Well appointed accommodations, a recently remodeled main lodge, the addition of Costilla Lodge, conference facility, and distinctive cuisine and service will provide you and your staff a truly extraordinary conference and private experience.

[www.vermejoparkranch.com](http://www.vermejoparkranch.com)

Please contact the reservations department at (575)445-3097 to customize a trip for you or your group.

Whether in philanthropy, business, entertainment or sports, Ted Turner has had a remarkable and visionary career. Highlights of his personal achievements and dedication to making the world a better place can be found at: [www.tedturner.com](http://www.tedturner.com)

