



**MARBLE MOUNTAIN
GUEST RANCH**

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Building A Dude Ranch Cowboy Bunkhouse

Feb 26, 2016

"If ~n yer gonna hire some cowboys, Ya best have a respectable ranch bunkhouse. Ummm hmmm !

[We hire seasonal employees to run our seasonal dude ranch.](#) Makes sense, right? So where do we put all these cowboys, river guides, wranglers, house-keepers, and range-masters for 3-4 months out of a year? In years past this has been a real issue. Carving out a significant piece of real estate for seasonal use can be problematic in the larger picture of managing limited business assets. Shoot! If any body gets a newly refurbished living quarters, it's gotta be the paying dude ranch guests!.....true to a point.

Early attempts at creating a cowboy bunkhouse pretty much met with abject failure. We built an enclosed loft over the old hay barn " FAIL! It was too hot and it was a fire hazard. We decommissioned our least desirable guest cabin and assigned it to staff " FAIL! The out-of sorts cabin inspired out-of sorts maintenance by the resident ranch hands. We housed some staff in our private home " BIG FAIL! Try sharing bathrooms through an entire busy summer with non-family college aged ranch hands. We erected large tents as hireling habitats " obvious FAIL.

Here is a winter picture of our old hay barn with wrangler habitat in the upper loft:



Hay Barn with wrangler habitat in loft

So this year we have committed to match our high level of customer service to our equally high level of employee care. We are building a new bunkhouse! Built with the architectural lines of our original ranch barn, but with modern construction and full residential features, it is a glorious thing. It sports multiple bathrooms, a full kitchen, dining and living space, and creature comforts like air conditioning (and even hot water for the tender footed green horns)

It's a foregone conclusion that our business is never going to be any better than the quality of our staff. Enticing quality staff requires more than just a good salary, it also means you are going to have to enable a quality life while they live and work with us in a remote mountainous setting. Every living thing (including cowboys and river guides) needs a habitat, right? I'm somewhat embarrassed that it has taken this long for us to do this, but really, we have felt that the [quality of our guest accommodations](#) took first priority. Renovations and upgrades to the ranch during the last 22 years have largely focused on improving lodging for ranch guests. Regardless, here we are, and now we can hopefully keep the cowboys out of the rain, the river guides out of the sun, and the caretakers healthy and comfortable. It all comes in time, and it's now our time to build a grand bunkhouse "complete with INDOOR plumbing" wow! Such the life.

Here is the new bunkhouse (we call it the peach-tree house) at it's framing stage.



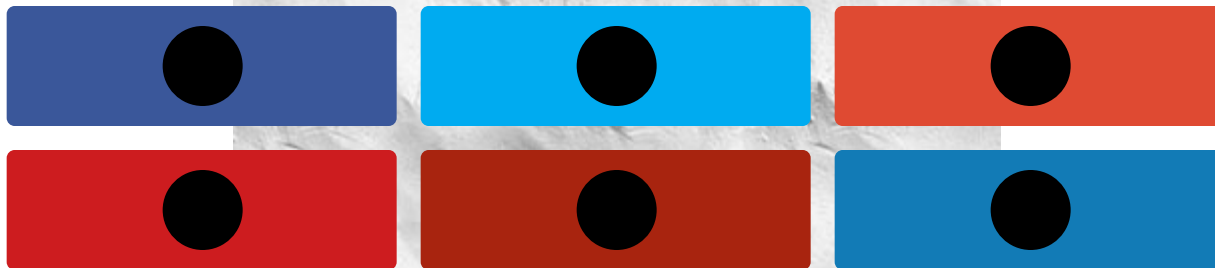
The "Hireling Habitat" – our cowboy's bunkhouse in the framing stage


What do you think? Shall we hang old lariats on the wall, and install all the interior trim with horse shoe nails and then bend horse-shoes as door pulls? Shall we make wall coverings with Southwestern rugs? It could be a nice look! Oh, my mind is running rampant with the western styled interior design possibilities. I am imagining an old pot bellied cook stove, a boot rack on the porch, a hat rack on the inside door wall, and some dimly illuminating kerosene lanterns for lighting effects. Yep, this is just too much fun.

See you on the trails or in the rapids, Doug

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