

Lose Yourself in the Old West

Polo, golfing and old-fashioned fun in Sheridan.

By Raechel Donahue

It's called America's #1 Western Town for good reason. At the foot of Wyoming's Bighorn Mountains, Sheridan seems to be a perfectly preserved tintype of the Old West. 114 years have done nothing to diminish its charms, but now you can get a perfect cappuccino at the Java Moon, shop until you drop on Main Street, play a few rounds of golf, catch a couple of polo chuckers, enjoy an evening of jazz at the WYO Theater and then settle in for the night in a vintage B&B or an air-conditioned hotel with high speed internet.

Sheridan is not a celebrity ski and party destination like Jackson Hole, although many famous people have visited, including Queen Elizabeth, who came for both polo ponies and the famous saddles tooled by King's Saddlery. Sheridan had the first polo field in this country and today boasts two popular polo clubs. Scions of the Doubleday, Pulitzer and Mars (as in candy) dynasties keep homes here, and it's a place that seems to encourage a dash of eccentricity. Kim Love, who owns and operates the town's four radio stations, keeps a pair of camels on his ranch. They make a nice live addition to the yearly Nativity scene.



July brings WYO Rodeo, featuring Cowboy Days, Indian Nights. It kicks off July 11 and throughout the week the town is a Western Mardi Gras, as celebrants wander closed-off Main Street with cocktails in hand. A parade, carnival, duck race and dances add to the fun. The exciting Indian Relay Race draws huge crowds and the week ends with a tailgate party and polo match at Bighorn Polo Center.

Although there are four local golf venues in this community of only 17,000, by far the most glamorous is Powder Horn, a spectacular 27-hole club that is open to the public, at least until the gorgeous homes on the property are completed. Don't worry—according to owner Homer “Scotty” Scott, you have at least ten years. World class designer holes are accentuated by lush duck pond water hazards, and the occasional antelope or elk adds a bit of interest. The hardest bit is keeping your eye on the ball instead of the magnificent scenery. There's a circulating refreshment cart, but do try the pecan encrusted chicken salad at the Eagle's Nest.



Main Street is only a few blocks long, has much to recommend it. Oliva's tiny cafe makes your chile relleno before your very eyes and for more

elegant fare, you can't go wrong at Oliver's. Stop for a beer at the 100-year-old Mint Bar, which inspired *Brokeback Mountain*. Aspiring cowgirls will love the unique clothing and great souvenirs at the Bucking Buffalo Supply Company.

If you can't live without email or cable TV, have no fear. The Holiday Inn offers all the upscale amenities and there are plenty of small motels with swimming pools. Sadly, the rooms at the Sheridan Inn, Buffalo Bill Cody's audition spot for his Wild West Show, are currently being renovated, although you can still get a steak at The Chop House and visit the museum.

We chose the Antique Rose Emporium, a charming Victorian bed and breakfast and tearoom conveniently located two blocks from Main. The \$95 suite includes two beautifully decorated bedrooms, a divine sitting room, a stocked kitchen, and a sunny dining room where breakfast meats, French toast and a full selection of teas magically appear each morning along with anything else you request. No TV, but, like Sheridan, you can't beat it for beauty.



As Buffalo Bill said, "Sheridan's a place where a man could lose himself." In fact, it's a great place for the whole family to lose themselves for a while.