

# a road trip **Worth Remembering...**



Jenny Houck with a Fish

I recently traveled to Montana on a fly-fishing trip. Along the way, I met some amazing people and came home with incredible memories of my solo journey. On the first day, I drove to Hot Springs, Montana, to stay at the historic Symes Hot Springs Hotel & Mineral Baths. This unique lodging boasts antique Victorian décor in an unassuming atmosphere of casual, friendly hospitality. I relaxed to the soulful folk vibrato of local musician, John Patrick Williams. Williams, who recently signed with Bear Grass Records, autographed my copy of his CD, *American Nomad*, and chatted with me for awhile before I retired to my room for the night.

## Day 2

With a triple Americano in hand and *American Nomad* playing in the background, I drove to Paradise, Montana, aptly named for its prime location along the Clark Fork River. This once-booming railroad town (population 300) was established in 1903. Completely famished, I stopped for breakfast at Kathy's Whistlestop Café. The café, a favorite among the locals and visitors, exhibits photographs and memorabilia of the town's early days. Owner Kathy Gorham, a retired Boeing electrician, moved to Para-

dise with her mother in 2001, fulfilling a lifelong dream to "get back to Paradise," and continue a century's worth of family roots in the small community. My hearty home-style breakfast, accompanied by pleasant conversation, only added to the Whistlestop's warm, welcoming atmosphere. I even bought one of their legendary homemade cinnamon rolls (made by Kathy's sister) for my trip to Greenough.

When I arrived in Greenough at The Resort at Paws Up, I met for lunch with Lorraine Werner, the resort's head wrangler. The casual dining room was uniquely elegant, with canvas-lined interior walls artistically displaying old cookery, and massive log beams adorned with delicate chandeliers. We both ordered the gourmet grilled cheese sandwich with creamy tomato soup and crisp salad. Hearty and delicious, it more than prepared us for our afternoon ride!

## Day 3

After horseback riding the day before, I realized that I needed an authentic Montana cowboy hat. According to the locals and some friends back home, I needed to see Jimmy at Double H Cus-

WRITTEN BY **JENNY HOUCK**

### *Fly-fishing Wisdom from Jenny West, Licensed Fishing Guide*

#### **Casting:**

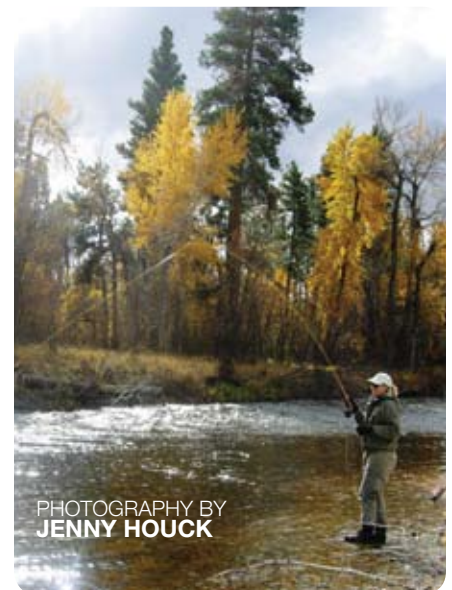
- Thumb to forehead - it's not in the wrist, but elbow first
- Stop on top, delay the back cast.
- It's not a baseball, don't throw it!
- Keep your elbow into your ribcage.
- Don't whip it!
- Let the rod do the work – not your muscles.
- Pick up a tight line.
- No mend= no fish.
- Roll cast when you can't do a back cast.
- Cast 45° off the boat to get the best angle.

#### **When Looking for Fish:**

- Wood is good.
- Grass kicks a\*\*.
- Foam is home.
- Rocks rock!

#### **When Catching a Fish:**

- You won't feel the strike – it's visual!
- Statue of Liberty to set the hook!



PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JENNY HOUCK**

tom Hat Company in Darby. Jimmy Harrison is currently one of 50 hat makers in the United States. Within minutes, the charming master hatter helped me pick out a perfect hat and hatband, and then custom-shaped it perfectly for my facial features.

After a fabulous day fly-fishing, I drove to Missoula and checked into the Doubletree Hotel Missoula Edgewater. My room not only provided me with the signature Doubletree comfort, but a fantastic view of the Clark Fork River. For dinner, my friend Tia and I headed to a fairly new Missoula restaurant, 515. The owners of 515, Chef Paul Myers, Brae Bullard, and Carrie Blabac-Myers, came to Missoula from the Seattle area and opened the eclectic, upscale bistro. My dinner consisted of a melt-in-your-mouth, naturally raised beef rib eye steak, olive oil mashers, Walla Walla onions and tomatoes. For dessert, Tia and I shared the decadent Chocolate Sampler and De-constructed Strawberry Shortcake.

#### **Day 4**

Breakfast with Tia at The Shack (Missoula) polished an already fabulous trip. On the way home, I stopped at the 10,000 Silver Dollar Bar for souvenirs and made my way back to Washington. With the memories still fresh in my mind, I'm already planning my summer return...