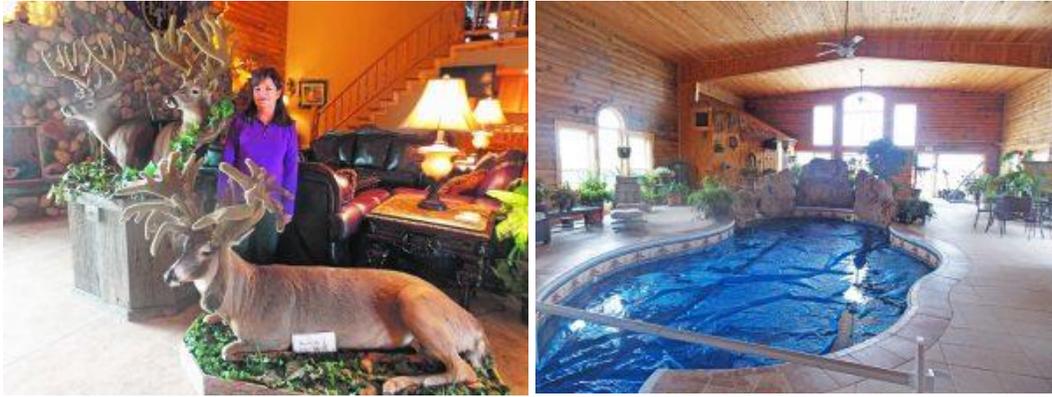


Gallatin natives offer solitude, outdoor events at East Fork Ranch



Two Gallatin natives, Joyce and John Worrell, originally had their hunting clients stay in the back bedroom of their home located on N Highway west of Albany. But soon the guests were inviting friends and things were getting too crowded.

"So my adventurous husband built an 11 bedroom lodge," Joyce said. "That's how it started."

The heads of trophy animals line the walls of the game room of the East Fork Ranch Hunting Lodge-Resort-Preserve, and several of the huge beasts have been stuffed. One is the famous deer called Double Down. This non-typical buck's antler size scored 385 points.

"A film crew got too close to the breeding pen and frightened him," Joyce said. "He ran into a fence and broke his neck. He was only five years old."

Joyce is the interior decorator for the Lodge and all the 11 private bedrooms have a different theme.

Established in 2007, the Lodge also has a cinema/media room; a heated pool with a sauna; and exercise machines in a workout area.

Guests usually book rooms for three days and two nights. The lodge will cook or have food catered in. Buschnell, the industry leader in sports optics, is their biggest client. One year the company brought 60 employees to the lodge.

Many of their customers are repeat customers. One gentleman who came for 11 years straight recently passed away. He asked that his ashes be spread over the East Fork Lodge land because it was his favorite place. His wife died one year later; she had asked for the same thing to be done with her ashes. Their son still comes to hunt every year.

John and their daughter Ashley and son Dustin enjoy the sport of hunting, but Joyce doesn't hunt.

"If you saw me shoot, you'd know why," she said. "I go on hunts with the rest of the family, but I don't carry a gun."

Visitors who don't like to hunt will find plenty of other things to do. There's fishing, trap and skeet range, sporting clay course, archery range, carriage rides; wagon trail rides behind two draft horses; extended-jeep

rides; shopping excursions to Jamesport, and bonfires. There are also women's events planned, including a Piccadilly in September.

In addition to the hunting lodge, there are three cabins where guests may stay. One of the cabins is handicapped equipped.

The Worrell's plan to build a church by the pond where 65 can sit comfortably.

Across the road from the hunting lodge and resort is a 1,000 acres game preserve. The deer are plot fed and released. Dustin Worrell runs the Whitetail deer program. The selective breeding program produces high quality bucks.

"With a thousand acres of rolling hills and timber, it's not a canned hunt," said Joyce. "But, they usually don't



go home without a nice deer."

A nearby ammunition factory is run by John Worrell and son Dustin. It takes up about an acre under roof and contains storage space.

DRT (Dynamic Research Technologies) started in 2005 to provide innovative products using Powdered Metal Technology. The factory employs about 50 people in three shifts. It has been operating 14 or 15 years, but at its location in Albany only since 2013.

Ammunition sells to law enforcement, military, for home defense, and for hunting.



Tactical firearms training takes place at an onsite armory, classroom and covered pavilion. There is also a 100 yard underground shooting range where bullets from the factory are tested. The range is made out of railroad cars.

In addition to the deer program, Dustin helps manage the factory.

Ashley Worrell, daughter of Joyce and John, is the office manager and does the accounting.

Carrie Craig is the event coordinator.

Lori Hopkins is cook, cleaner and gardener. She will be with the company three years in July.

Foreman is Ed Weddle. He handles equipment, maintenance and construction.

Joyce describes herself as the unpaid employee. She does everything from cooking to pulling weeds.

Joyce was a Bennett before she married. Her mother was a hairdresser and her father was a builder in Gallatin. He built the Tate home and the Bailey home, both at Lake Viking.

After she and John married, Joyce worked as a hairdresser in Kansas City for five years. They then moved to Council Bluffs, Iowa, for five years. Then back to Kansas City where they raised their family.

John attended Gallatin until his freshman year when he moved. He came back to Gallatin when Joyce was a senior and they married in August.

John worked for Midwest Walnut in Council Bluffs. In 1982, while he was in Council Bluffs, he saw the land around Albany advertised. It was 200 plus acres. He bought it and took the trees off and sold them to Midwest Walnut. He later bought American Walnut, which is located in St. Joseph.

He and Joyce would stay on the ranch over the weekends in a trailer to hunt. In 2001, they moved there to live full time.