

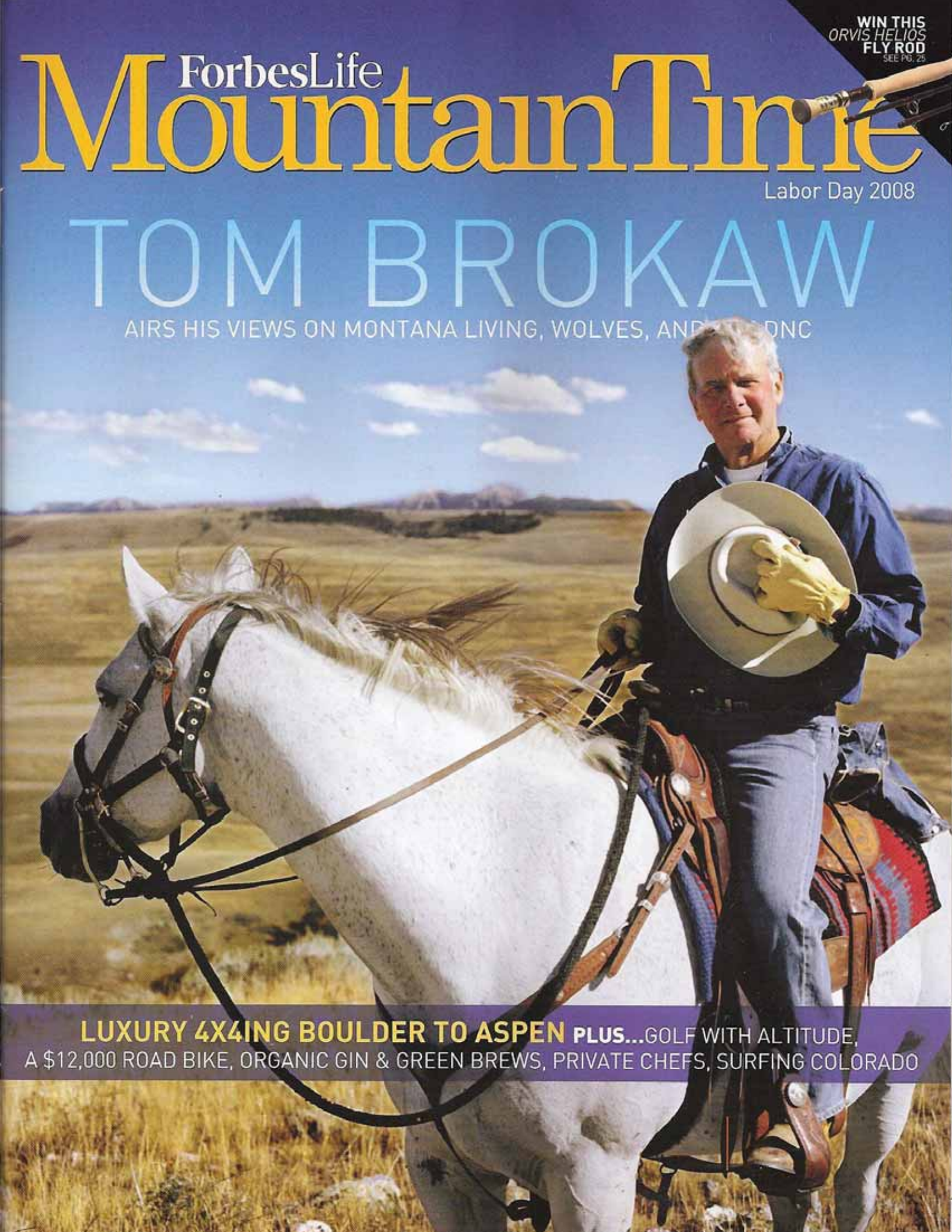
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Labor Day 2008

TOM BROKAW

AIRS HIS VIEWS ON MONTANA LIVING, WOLVES, AND DNC



LUXURY 4X4ING BOULDER TO ASPEN PLUS... GOLF WITH ALTITUDE, A \$12,000 ROAD BIKE, ORGANIC GIN & GREEN BREWS, PRIVATE CHEFS, SURFING COLORADO



Belle of the bar, Strater Hotel,
Durango, Colorado

TRAVEL

Revisionist History

All 19 properties of the Historic Hotels of the Rockies (historic-hotels.com) have recently undergone restorations. Built between 1862 and 1939, many now offer superb dining, distinctive microbrews, wi-fi, and spa treatments. Here's a sampler of the renovations.

—STEPHANIE STEPHENS



NEW SHERIDAN HOTEL, Telluride, Colorado

The original Sheridan was built in 1891, destroyed by fire, rebuilt in 1895, remodeled in 1994, and is undergoing an ambitious, \$6 million redo. The reconfigured lobby will perk up with an espresso bar, while the Chop House restaurant will have a high-tech nitrogen wine-serving system and an ecologically sound menu. Expect the latest mod cons like flatscreens, wireless connections, and decor from London-based interior designer Nina Campbell. **From \$275 to \$500; 800-200-1891; newsheridan.com**

THE STRATER HOTEL, Durango, Colorado

This iconic landmark on Main Avenue houses the world's largest collection of original American Victorian walnut antiques. Its owners, the Barker family, have been continuously renovating the hotel, room by room, since 1983. The Diamond Belle Saloon is an original ragtime piano bar, and the adjoining Henry Strater Theatre has been presenting year-round live entertainment for 47 years running. **From \$105 to \$265; 800-247-4431; strater.com**



DON GASPAR INN, Santa Fe, New Mexico

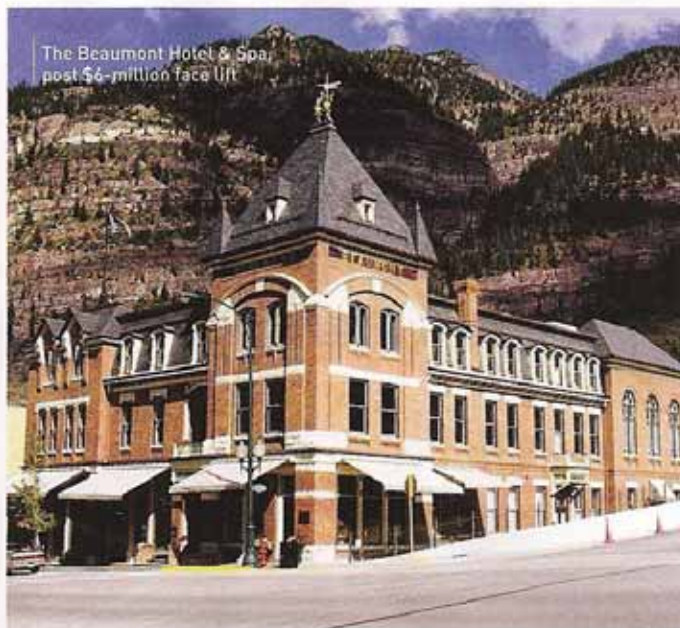
Innkeeper Ana's homemade green-chile stew is a must-have at the three-house adobe complex constructed in 1900, 1910, and 1930. Close to town, with breezy gardens and a fountain, the themed casitas feature new flatscreen televisions and DVD players. Try the Arts and Crafts Bungalow, with two wood-burning fireplaces, a kitchen, and a large living room adorned with Mexican antiques. **From \$105 to \$355; 888-986-8664; dongaspar.com**

THE HISTORIC ELK MOUNTAIN HOTEL, Elk Mountain, Wyoming

This secluded 12-room Victorian post-and-beam hostelry was open continuously from 1905 to 2000, before a full rehab in 2003 added hotelwide wi-fi and revamped the meeting room for corporate retreats. The romantic Evans Suite (Room 12) is a favorite for its elegant four-poster bed. **From \$119 to \$165; 307-348-7774; elkmountainhotel.com**

BEAUMONT HOTEL & SPA, Ouray, Colorado

Built in 1886, boarded up between 1963 and 1998, and then reopened in 2003 following an award-winning \$6 million restoration, the Beaumont is a sight to behold. The restored Grand Staircase leading to the second-floor Tundra Restaurant (think stained-glass windows and 28-foot ceilings) brings back the western romance of Louis L'Amour. A new state-of-the-art spa is a nice complement to the local natural hot springs. **From \$125 to \$350; 888-447-3255; beaumonthotel.com**



The Beaumont Hotel & Spa post \$6-million face lift

DNC SPECIAL

Old Is New

Three Denver landmarks to put the DNC in perspective.

BRUNCH AT THE BROWN PALACE

The famous Sunday brunch gives you four options—from simple baked goods to the \$180 Dom Pérignon splurge. The hotel (right) opened in 1892, has its own artesian well, and once served as the campaign headquarters for Dwight D. Eisenhower. **21 17th St., 303-297-3111, brownpalace.com**



COCKTAILS AT THE OXFORD HOTEL'S CRUISE ROOM

The Cruise Room at the Oxford Hotel opened the day after Prohibition ended. Its Art Deco decor, circa 1933, hasn't changed much since, nor have the martinis, which some claim are the best in the state. **1600 17th St., 800-228-5838**

TOUR THE MOLLY BROWN HOUSE MUSEUM

Walk in the footsteps of The Unsinkable Molly Brown, of *Titanic* fame, who was born and raised in Denver. Built in 1886, the home combines Queen Anne and Richardsonian Romanesque architecture and offers an exhibit on Denver's 1908 Democratic National Convention. Open weekends, 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Tickets: \$4. **1340 Pennsylvania St., 303-832-4092**

—RUSS RIZZO