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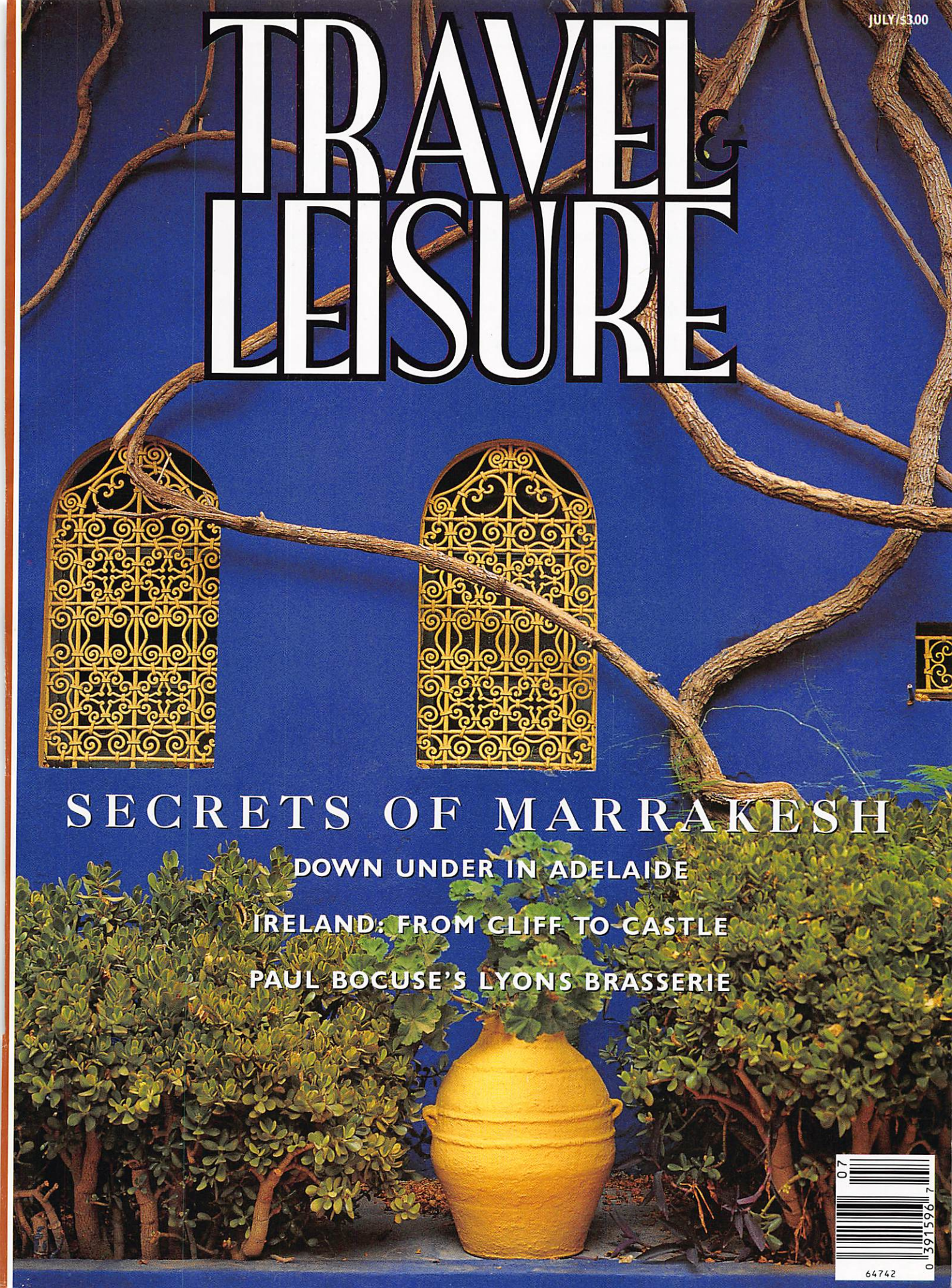

SECRETS OF MARRAKESH

DOWN UNDER IN ADELAIDE

IRELAND: FROM CLIFF TO CASTLE

PAUL BOCUSE'S LYONS BRASSERIE

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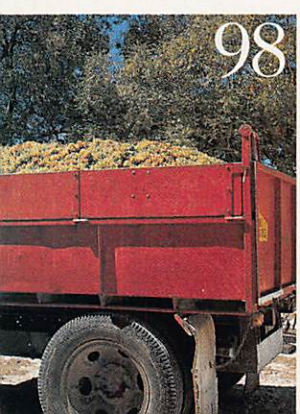
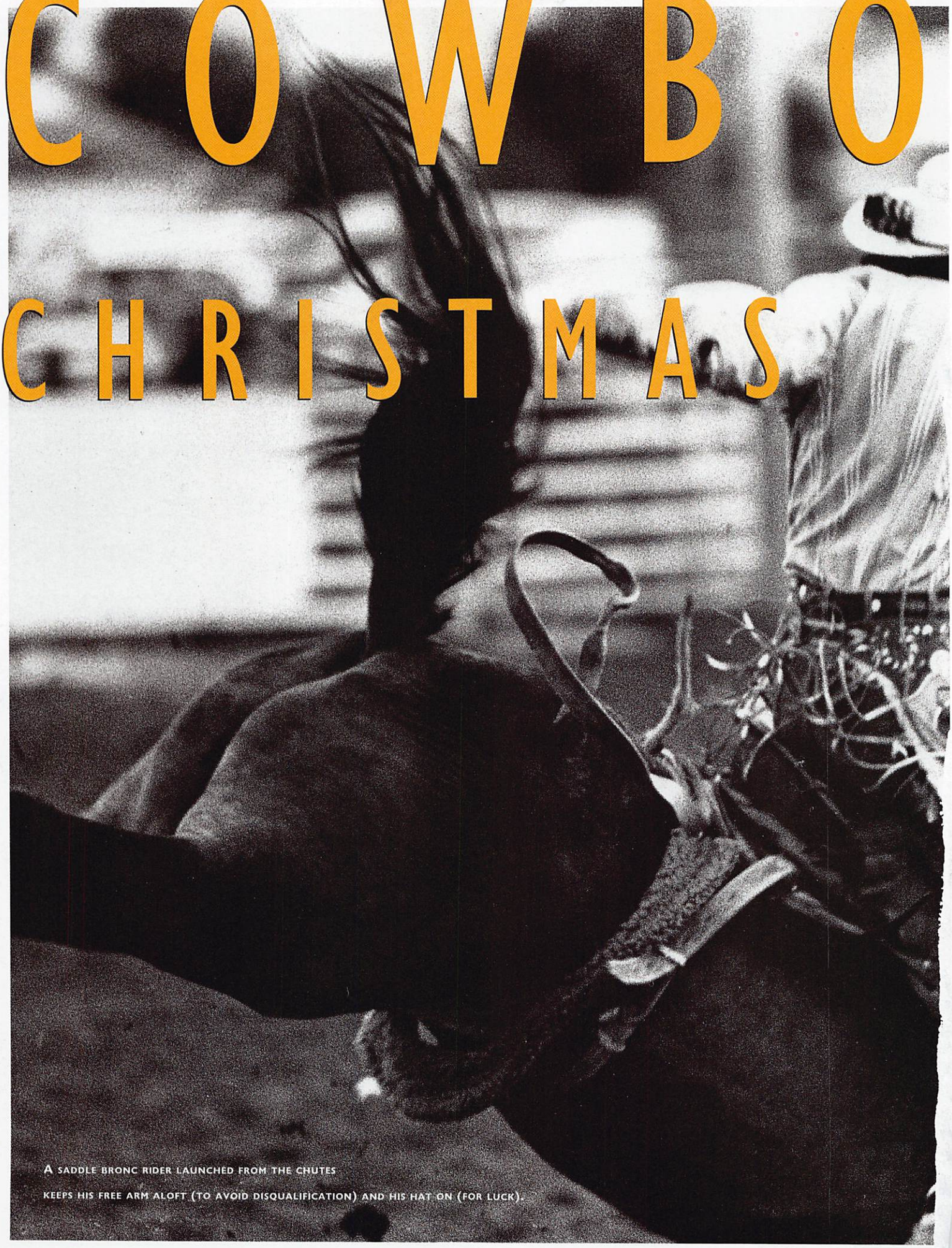


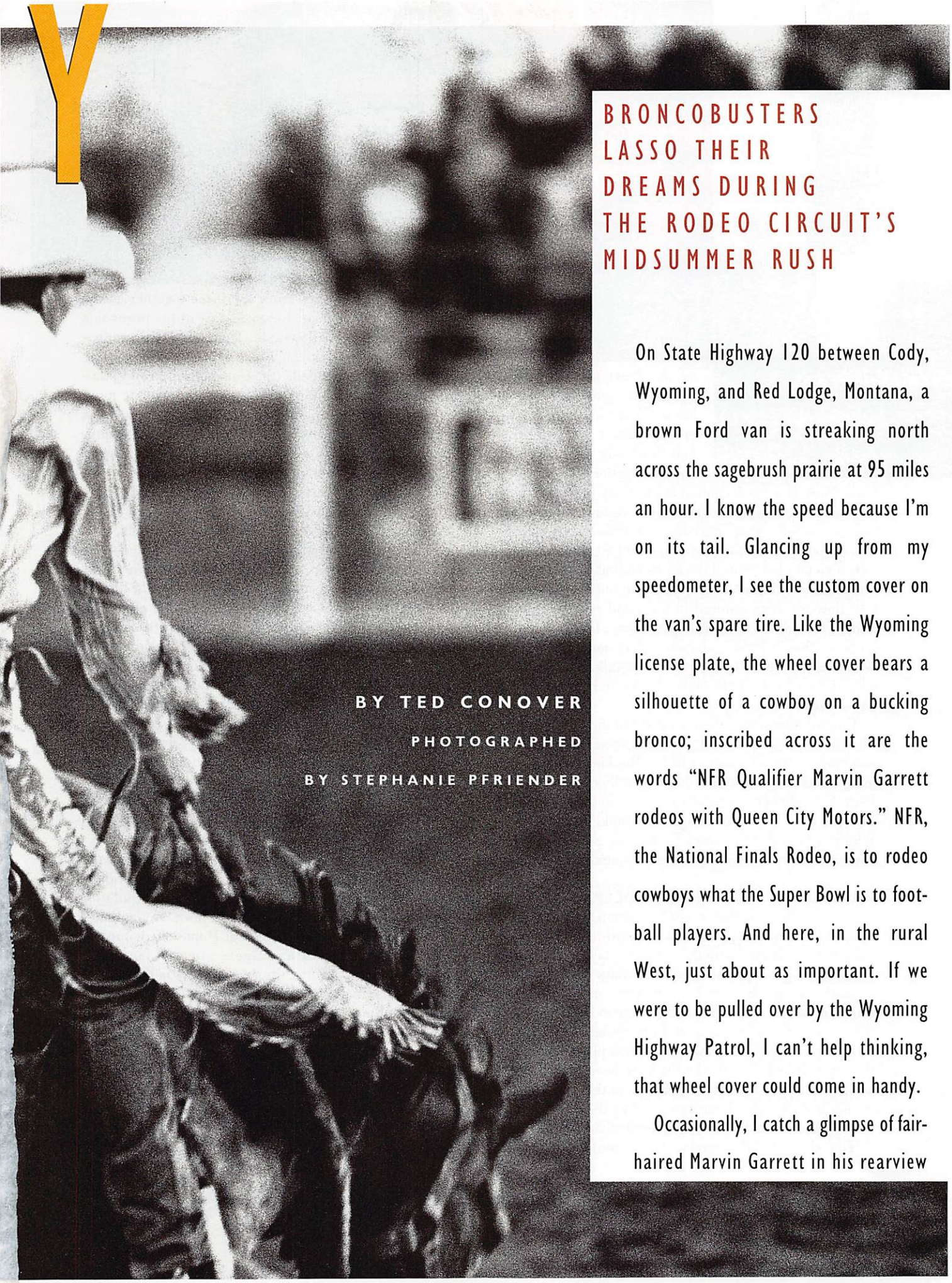
Cover: Museum in the Majorelle Garden, Marrakesh. *Photographed by Nadir*

FROM TOP: ALASTAIR THAIN; STEPHANIE PFRIENDER; THIBAULT JEANSON; HUGH HALES-TOOKE

COWBO CHRISTMAS



A SADDLE BRONC RIDER LAUNCHED FROM THE CHUTES KEEPS HIS FREE ARM ALOFT (TO AVOID DISQUALIFICATION) AND HIS HAT ON (FOR LUCK).



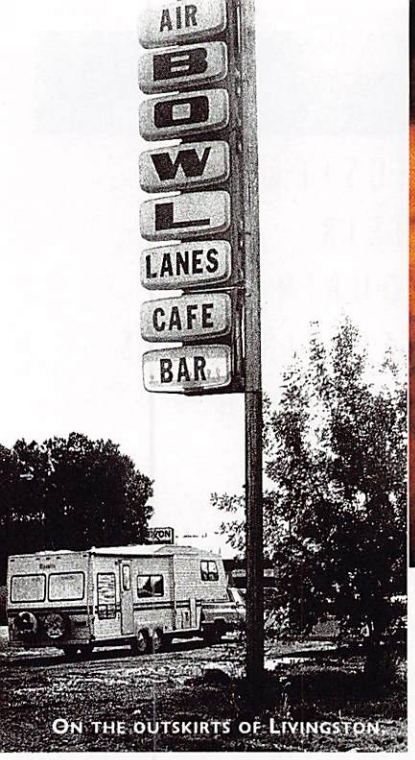
BRONCOBUSTERS LASSO THEIR DREAMS DURING THE RODEO CIRCUIT'S MIDSUMMER RUSH

BY TED CONOVER

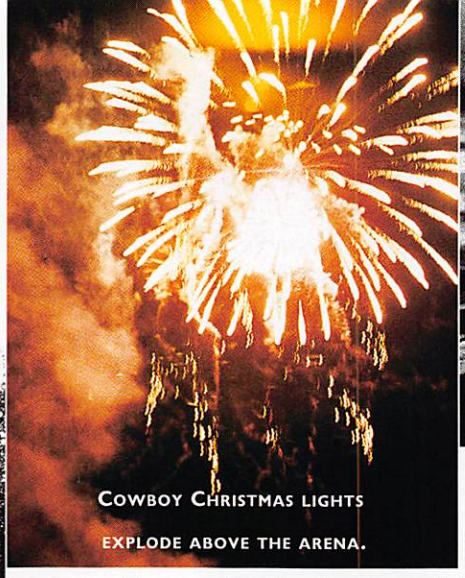
PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEPHANIE PFRIENDER

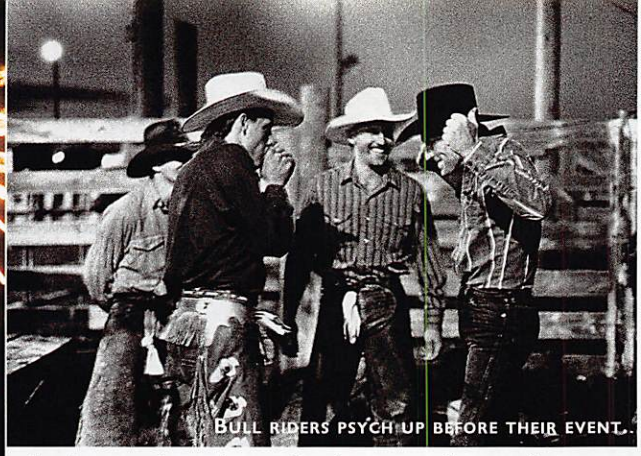
On State Highway 120 between Cody, Wyoming, and Red Lodge, Montana, a brown Ford van is streaking north across the sagebrush prairie at 95 miles an hour. I know the speed because I'm on its tail. Glancing up from my speedometer, I see the custom cover on the van's spare tire. Like the Wyoming license plate, the wheel cover bears a silhouette of a cowboy on a bucking bronco; inscribed across it are the words "NFR Qualifier Marvin Garrett rodeos with Queen City Motors." NFR, the National Finals Rodeo, is to rodeo cowboys what the Super Bowl is to football players. And here, in the rural West, just about as important. If we were to be pulled over by the Wyoming Highway Patrol, I can't help thinking, that wheel cover could come in handy.

Occasionally, I catch a glimpse of fair-haired Marvin Garrett in his rearview



On the outskirts of Livingston.


Cowboy Christmas lights explode above the arena.


Bull riders psych up before their event.

mirror. Next to him in the passenger seat sits dark-haired Mark, his little brother. It's 2:15 P.M. on the Fourth of July. Less than 20 minutes earlier, at 1:46 P.M., I saw Marvin score 78 points at the Cody Stampede riding bareback on a horse called Tom Thumb Featherlite; two minutes after that, Mark rode for a 70. Marvin's score was probably good for first place and $1,733—and he rode a victory lap around the arena on that expectation—but there wasn't time to stay and find out for sure. At 3 P.M. they are both entered in a second rodeo—in Red Lodge, Montana—about 60 miles away. If they make it on time, they'll have a chance to win several hundred dollars more. Then it's a virtual cakewalk: four hours to drive 123 miles to the Roundup Rodeo in Livingston, the day's last event.

Cowboy Christmas, the Garretts and their friends call this rodeo-packed time of year, and there's no place to celebrate it like the corner of the Rockies where Wyoming meets Montana and both touch Yellowstone National Park. For only here can a man compete in three rodeos in a single day. Which means he can make more money. Which means that the normally frenetic pace of a rodeo cowboy's life on the road reaches its manic extreme.

I AM FOLLOWING THE VAN BECAUSE I JUST

met the Garretts and they haven't yet invited me to hitch a ride. I've just met them because the hard-luck cowboy I'd intended to accompany to these rodeos, Jay Kirkland, got too banged up and discouraged in the days before to carry on and has limped home to Billings. My boots are not caked with mud because my own small attempt to learn bareback riding a month earlier suggested I might be better off just to, ah, write about it. I am here in the first place because in the city, where I live, the beasts have been removed, returning mainly in the form of packages at the meat counter or supple dark coats. I am fascinated by the world of men who know animals, and who long to ride the wild ones.

Though each of these rodeos has its own name and following, cowboys know the three together as the Gateway Rodeos, because each of the towns is a gateway to Yellowstone. There are bigger rodeos this time of year, such as Cheyenne Frontier Days and the Calgary Stampede (the Garretts will head to Calgary later in the week), but the scenery here, the nearness of the national park, and the fact that the heart of the real West beats most strongly in its small towns make the Gateway Rodeos an especially congenial place to spend the Fourth of July.

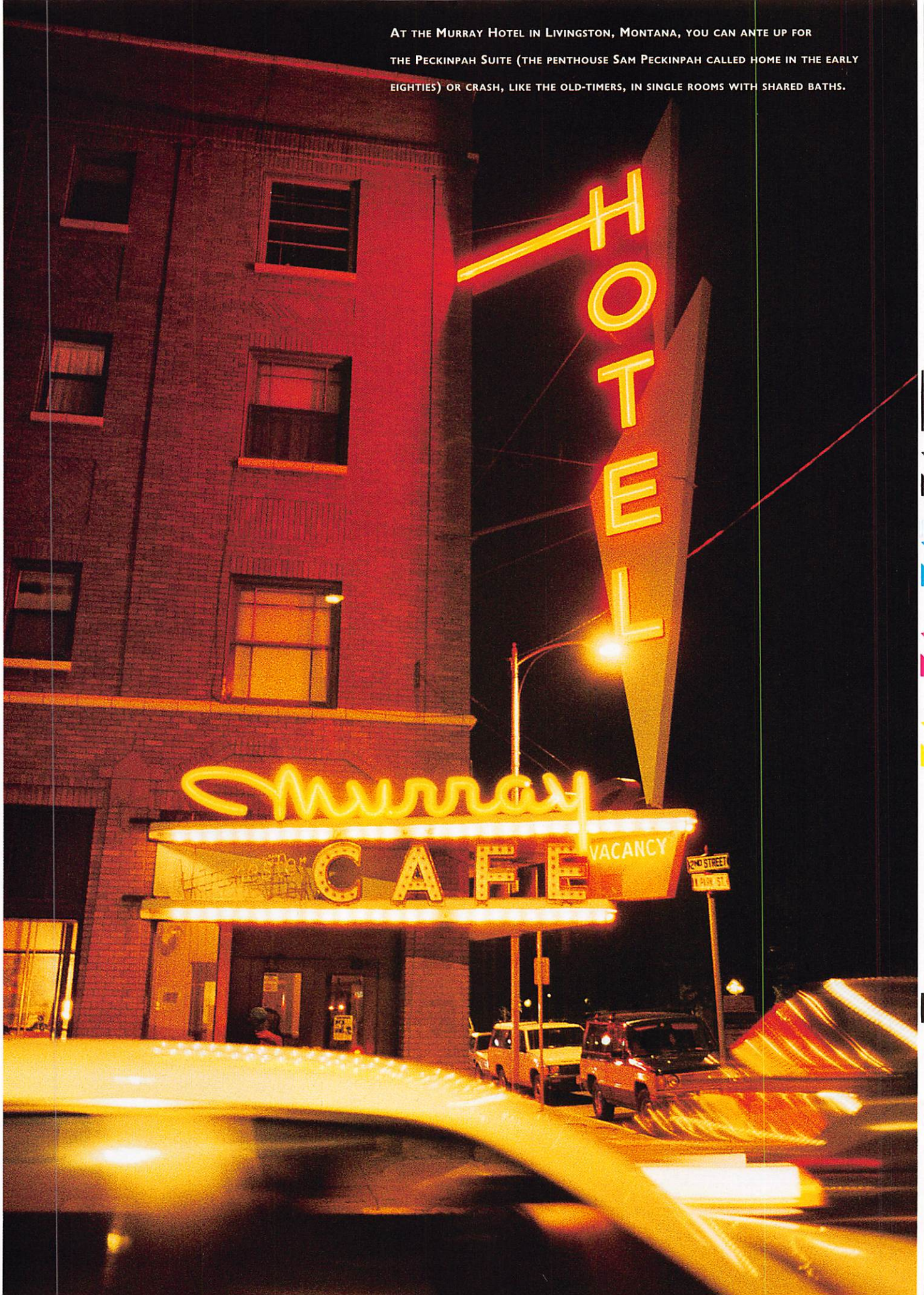
Cody and Red Lodge, though closest on the map, are perhaps the most different of the three towns. Cody, named after Buffalo Bill of Wild West Show fame, continues to be the only place anywhere with a rodeo every day, all summer long. Aspiring cowboys move here the way painters once headed to Paris, working odd jobs so they can afford to test their mettle under the spotlights of the Cody Nite Rodeo. With its sprawling Buffalo Bill Historical Center, historic Irma Hotel, wide main street, and countless country bars, Cody has somehow succeeded in honoring its rowdy past without chasing present-day cowboys out of town, a difficult feat in the New West. It's a place where, just off the ugly commercial strip that leads to the rodeo grounds, you pass a painstakingly re-created Western village called Old Trail Town, full of boardwalks and restored cabins and the graves of such notables as Jeremiah "Liver Eatin'" Johnson. Past and present coexist here in a particularly satisfying way, neither one denying the existence of the other.

Up from the dry plains of cattle country, the fragrance of sage yields to the smell of pine. Nestled against evergreens and picturesque peaks, Red Lodge (population 2,000) seems more a village than a town. Rodeo has a strong legacy here, too—the local Home of Champions Rodeo is named for the area's generations of famed riders—but a more ongoing draw for visitors is the breathtaking views from nearby 11,900-foot Beartooth Pass and seemingly limitless opportunities to fish, hike, and ski. The place feels a bit more gentrified, a bit more protected than Cody. Antelope walk calmly across Route 212 just north of town; unlocked bikes are a common sight. Instead of Cody's big functional metal rodeo arena, Red Lodge has an old wooden one, perched on a shelf overlooking town, next to the airstrip.

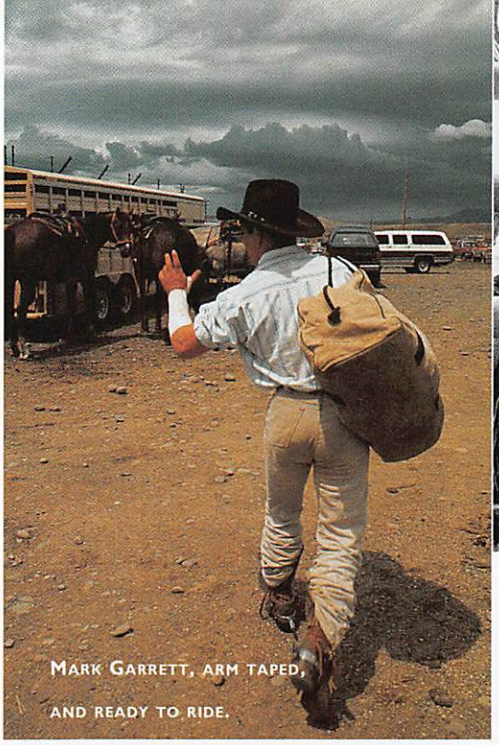
My guess is that Mark Garrett, age 28, has closed his

Aspiring cowboys move to Cody the way painters once headed to Paris.

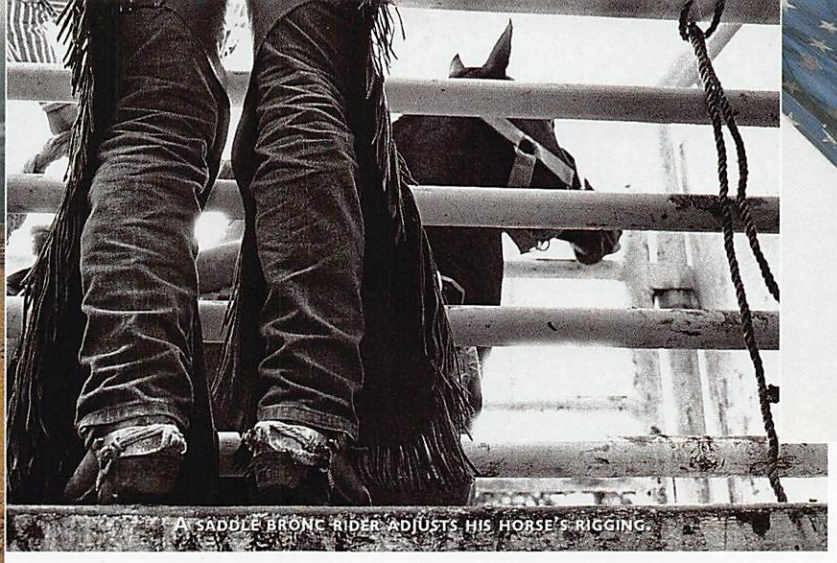
A cowboy wears Wranglers and chaps, ready for action in Cody.



At the Murray Hotel in Livingston, Montana, you can ante up for the Peckinpah Suite (the penthouse Sam Peckinpah called home in the early eighties) or crash, like the old-timers, in single rooms with shared baths.



MARK GARRETT, ARM TAPED, AND READY TO RIDE.



A SADDLE BRONC RIDER ADJUSTS HIS HORSE'S RIGGING.

THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER.

eyes to catnap while his brother drives: just over 14 hours ago, at midnight, they performed at the Greeley Independence Stampede in Greeley, Colorado, 450 miles away. Then they drove all night to get to Cody. In the five days before that it was Pecos, Texas; Williams Lake, British Columbia; and Ponoka, Alberta. In Canada, however, they weren't driving: the Garretts are part of a small lucky rodeo elite whose high winnings justify the occasional charter of a small plane to cut down on cowboy wear and tear. They would still be with their legendary pilot, ex–bareback rider Johnny Morris, and his trusty Cessna 210 if the plane's engine hadn't caught fire on takeoff a few days earlier, when the aircraft was loaded with rodeo stars. ("Nothin' to worry about," Marvin says dismissively. "With Johnny everything is always okay.") Now Johnny is grounded, and the Garretts are doing the best Cessna imitation they can in their brown Ford van.

I picture Marvin, the one whose boot presses pedal to metal, waking his younger brother as they pass the Bear Creek Saloon, locally famous for its pig races. The rodeo is only 10 minutes away. Mark will use the time to tape his left arm again, the arm he uses to hold on to the horse. Bareback riding puts an incredible strain on that one arm, and riders guard against hyperextension and other ills by taping it into a slightly bent position. Then they roll the sleeves of their snap-cuffed western shirts back down so no one can see. The same is done with knee, elbow, and ankle braces, midriff supports, tailbone pads, and bandages of all descriptions: under their duds some rodeo cowboys look practically like mummies. Marvin's arm will have to wait until he's at the rodeo. I eat their dust as they zoom up a back road to the arena and, with the merest wave at a security officer, into the contestants' lot.

Bareback riding is traditionally the first event of rodeo, and bull riding the last; mixed in are saddle bronc riding, the other of the so-called "roughstock" events, and calf roping, steer wrestling and barrel riding, the "timed" events. "The Star-Spangled Banner" is playing as we arrive; hidden behind the chutes, the Garretts stretch, tie shut the tops of their boots so they won't fly off, and apply pine rosin to their gloves and rigging handles. The first rider is out of the chutes almost the moment the music stops; the Garretts are pleased to note that the organizers have placed them last in the order-to-ride roster. More than five minutes to spare!

Though they know most of the other guys, the Garretts are concentrating too hard to socialize. They greet only Deb Greenough, a nationally recognized bareback rider descended from the local dynasty (his great-aunts performed in Madison Square Garden), who is just down from the Calgary Stampede. "Back in action, huh?" asks Mark Garrett with a smile. "Yeah, looks like it's gonna hold," replies Greenough. "Wanna see?" They nod and Deb Greenough removes his shirt. He's short, like many successful roughstock riders, and has a heavily muscled torso. He flexes his right arm and the biceps pop oddly into the shape of a tennis ball. (Recently, part of the muscle separated permanently from its attachment near his shoulder during a ride.) It looks a little grotesque, balled up like that, but what matters is whether it affects his riding, and Deb says no, he doesn't think it will. "Ride good," he tells them.

THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE SCORE IN A ROUGHstock event is 100 points, but nobody has ever gotten that and even 90s are almost unknown. An 80 will win most small rodeos. To get each competitor's total, the judges add two scores together: one for the performance of the cowboy and one for the performance of the horse. The maximum possible score for each is 50. Since the horse (or bull) is so important, most serious participants will decide whether or not to ride a particular rodeo on the basis of the stock they've been randomly assigned in advance by a computer at the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association in Colorado Springs. Animals all have reputations, and usually the rider is likely to know whether a given animal *(continued on page 129; see page 132 for The Facts)*

The frenetic pace of a rodeo cowboy's life reaches its manic extreme.

COWBOYS

(continued from page 81) will merely canter across the arena (bad) or stay in one spot and buck like gangbusters (good). Once a cowboy is in the chute, though, he has to make the best of what he's got.

After taping his arm and donning his chaps, Marvin does some staring into space. "I start thinking about the next ride as soon as I'm off the last one," he told me in Cody. "I keep in my mind the best ride I ever made and just look back on it now and again."

Mark has drawn a mare named Sunriver Bay and thinks he can do something on her. Before putting both legs into the bucket chute and settling down on the rigging, he slaps his thighs, spits out his tobacco, pulls his black cowboy hat hard onto his head—and sees Canadian Darrell Cholach score a heart-stopping 80 points to take the lead. Marvin, standing at the side of the chute to make sure his brother's horse turns its head into the arena when the gate opens, murmurs encouragement. Mark sets his jaw, firms his grip, nods tensely, and awaits liftoff as the gate swings open. The horse rockets out, and in eight hectic seconds Mark Garrett earns a 76, tying for second place.

Three minutes later, Marvin is next. "This horse went to the Dodge National Circuit Finals," says the announcer of Marvin's mount, Class Act. Marvin nods to the gateman, then hangs on for a spectacular 79, good for second place and $733. Mark ties for third and $367. They've been at this rodeo for 19 minutes.

It's 3:25 P.M. in Red Lodge. Livingston doesn't start until 8, so we have a couple of hours to poke around. Outside the chutes it's less tense, and when we get hot dogs and coffee, the Garretts strike me as human beings for the first time: Marvin spills ketchup on his pants, and Mark tips his hat to Miss Red Lodge Rodeo 1992 as she struts by in her vest and chaps. Together the brothers field the admirers who approach seeking signed rodeo "baseball cards" with the stars' pictures on them. I can admire their celebrity because I've seen how hard it is to ride a bronc well. They seem to think it's hilarious I even tried, but it gives us something to talk about.

Rodeos, like similar spectacles that date to the ancient Romans, are all about the ritual separation of man and beast. It's accomplished here, as at most rodeos, by the placement of things. The grandstand sits on one side, the stock and the cowboys on the other. The grandstand is redolent of burgers and popcorn, cigarettes, and not-so-fancy perfume; the chutes and pens smell like the animals and what comes out of them. Tourists are here, but mostly it's locals, dressed in the manner of true rodeo folk: wearing Wranglers, not Levi's (and nothing stonewashed!), wide belts, not narrow (and often with big rodeo buckles), and favoring low-heeled, round-toed riding boots.

I spot women's national bareback champion Vickie Crawford, whom I met previously on a plane from Denver to New York. Crawford is the only woman I've ever seen dare walk behind the chutes at a men's rodeo. She informs me that the brim of my hat is shaped the wrong way, that I "look like a dude." Setting straight the East Coast city slicker is a time-honored Western tradition. The next night, in the kitchen of her boyfriend's house in town, she'll hold my hat over a teakettle and reshape the brim, sparing me further embarrassment.

The clown act partway through the performance is one we've all seen before (the guy with the mule that lies down and won't get up), but the twist today is that the arena is so muddy the mule won't lie down.

Following this interlude are saddle bronc riding—the classic rodeo event—steer wrestling, calf roping, and the only women's event in mainstream rodeo, barrel racing. These last three—timed competitions—interest the Garretts less than the roughstock events they participate in. (The timed eventers, whose pickup trucks pull trailers containing their own horses, constitute a separate tribe in rodeo.) Like the crowd, the Garretts are waiting for the big final event, bull riding.

Afterward, I see Marvin chatting with a saddle bronc rider who hitchhikes—with his saddle slung over one shoulder and a duffel in the opposite hand—from one rodeo to the next. Marvin offers him a ride and then beckons me in, too, and we hit the road to Livingston.

TRAVELING WITH THE GARRETTS IS A lot different from traveling with Jay

Where the Rodeos Are

THE GATEWAY RODEOS

CODY STAMPEDE Cody, Wyo.; July 2–4. This venerable rodeo, rich in prize money, has performances at 8 P.M. daily, plus a 1:30 show on the 4th. At 9:30 A.M. on July 3–4, parades down Main Street commemorate the event's 75th anniversary. All seats at the rodeo cost $11 and are reserved; call 307/587-5155.

LIVINGSTON ROUND-UP RODEO Livingston, Mont.; July 2–4. Look for Peter Fonda and other stars in the rodeo grandstand ($10 reserved seating, $6 general admission. Call 406/222-3199. Performances at 8 P.M. every day.

HOME OF CHAMPIONS RODEO Red Lodge, Mont.; July 2–4. Stunning scenery and a local dynasty of friendly rodeo stars make Red Lodge a can't-lose destination. Families should attend July 2, when $10 will get everyone through the gate; other days it's $6 general admission. Call 406/446-1718.

OTHER FOURTH OF JULY RODEOS

GREELEY INDEPENDENCE STAMPEDE Greeley, Colo.; June 29–July 4. Greeley bills itself as "the largest Fourth of July rodeo in the world," with $152,640 paid out to riders last year. Performances June 29–July 1, 7:30 P.M.; July 2–4, 1:30 P.M.

CALGARY STAMPEDE Calgary, Alberta; July 8–17. This famous northern rodeo takes place during the best time of year to visit nearby Banff and Jasper national parks. Performances at 1:30 P.M. daily.

WEST OF THE PECOS RODEO Pecos, Tex.; July 1–4. For that West Texas flavor on the site of one of the first rodeos in the country.

Kirkland, the older bareback rider who had also planned to be in all three Gateway Rodeos but then changed his mind. In 1985, 1986, and 1987 Jay missed the NFR by the barest of margins; he had labored mightily since but fell increasingly short, sometimes not even making his "nut," and coming no closer as he aged. This was heartbreaking even to a casual acquaintance because Jay, though a simple man, had a big desire.

I first met Jay when he picked me up in Great Falls, Montana, on his way from a rodeo in Reno, Nevada, to one in Ponoka, Alberta. In the backseat of the car were three Canadian cowboys, all headed home. When we reached the border about 1 A.M., the Canadian immigration officer leaned from his booth to peer into Jay's 1983 Olds Delta 88. Inside, besides me, were the four men in their Wrangler jeans, boots off, legs propped up, ice packs sitting on a swollen knee and a blue-colored ankle, soft-drink bottles filled with tobacco juice rolling on the floor, cowboy hats arrayed on the ledge behind the backseat, and, on the dashboard, a roll of tobacco, an alarm clock, a radar detector, a wad of dollars, adhesive tape, and a road atlas. The official had a trained eye.

"Rodeoin', eh?"

Those who were awake nodded. "What nationality?" We told him. "Buy anything?" Burgers and Skoal. He waved us through.

Though the guys in the back were doing okay, Jay, 34, hadn't won any money in more than two weeks, and his grubstake was running low. After some 25 years of rodeoing, the muscular blond cowboy had scars from surgery all over his body: on his right wrist, his belly, his knees, his shoulder, and his skull. He walked with a limp and reached frequently for the big bottle of Motrin tablets in the glove compartment.

In Ponoka three days later he did well enough to make it to the final round. But during an intervening trip to Williams Lake, British Columbia, we blew a transmission gasket near Jasper National Park, spent two nights in a motel and several hundred dollars on repairs, and at the last minute rushed back to Ponoka. Halfway there the transmission broke again and Jay, who had drawn an excellent horse in the final round and was very likely to make money, elected to abandon the car and charter a plane for the last 285 miles.

It seemed predestined that weather would delay the flight and we'd arrive in Ponoka 15 minutes after the bareback event ended. Hitching a ride back home to Billings, disconsolate but then pleased to be reunited with his fiancée, Teri Kaye Tryon, Jay elected not to do all three Gateways, only performances earlier in the week in Livingston and Red Lodge—at which he came up, again, "a long ways from a paycheck." A friend of his at Red Lodge, Todd Nunn, talked about Jay afterward: "When we was kids, eight or ten years old and riding in Little Britches Rodeo, there weren't a lot of kids who had a lot of try. Jay always had the biggest heart of all of us." That and his good nature sustained Jay, and in his gumption and suffering Jay Kirkland showed me things about rodeo that the stellar Garrett brothers could not.

His horse dropped him directly on the rigging handle, so hard that every man groaned and put his knees together.

IT IS, AS THE TITLE OF JIMMY BUFFETT'S song goes, a Livingston Saturday night. Livingston, though still a small town, is by far the hippest home of a Gateway Rodeo. Peter Fonda has been coming here for years; more recently, Dennis Quaid, Meg Ryan, Brooke Shields, Jeff Bridges, Michael Keaton, Tom Brokaw, Whoopi Goldberg, Glenn Close, and Ted Turner and Jane Fonda have all bought property in the area. Robert Redford came to Livingston to film *A River Runs Through It,* Norman McLean's novella about fishing and family in small-town Montana.

At the same time, houses sport green yard signs reminding neighbors, THIS FAMILY SUPPORTED BY THE TIMBER INDUSTRY. When the Burlington Northern line cut back most of its operations here in the early 1980s, lumber and tourism dollars became more important. A campaign to preserve the historic brick and stone façades along Main and Park streets appears to be reaping great rewards, with plenty of shoppers afoot and a mix of stores containing everything from the legendary Dan Bailey's Fly Shop to Russell Chatham's art gallery.

Railroad tracks define one edge of Livingston where most hours of the day you can still catch a whiff of diesel and feel the low rumble of an idling locomotive. On the opposite side of town it's the sights and smells of the rodeo grounds, and this night—just as for the past two—they are crowded. A couple in line for tickets ahead of me is advised by friends to scan the grandstands for Peter Fonda—he's a big fan of bull riding. A group of local ladies staff a kitchen, selling hamburgers, hot dogs, and Coors to raise money for the rodeo; the Shriners are vending Sno-Kones. The rodeo announcer, from his perch across the arena from the grandstand, blows into his microphone and, though they aren't really necessary yet, the spotlights are turned on. Then, instead of playing a cassette, the announcer himself sings "The Star-Spangled Banner" and the bareback riders know they're up.

Marvin Garrett is hunkered over a big Appaloosa named Snake Oil Willie when the announcer hails him as "one of the best bareback riders of all time" and "one of the three best cowboys in the world." These pronouncements, though disputable, seem to hearten Marvin, who emerges

Learning the Ropes—at Rodeo School

To understand the rodeo cowboy's enterprise better, I decided to get on a couple of horses myself. Lyle Sankey's Memorial Day weekend course in Okeene, Oklahoma, sounded like the chance. "Stock for all levels," read the ad in the rodeo newspaper. "Video playback. Class Room Instruction. The School Designed for the Man Riding Bucking Horses."

There was no reason why a 34-year-old with no experience couldn't qualify, Sankey told me over the phone. "It's really up to you," said the acclaimed teacher and former champion. "It's how much you really *want* to do it that will determine your success." Rodeo, as its followers everywhere will tell you and as Sankey repeated all weekend, is primarily a mental game.

But to attend rodeo school as a novice, I learned, you had better want to do it a whole lot. Enough to risk getting significantly banged up, because none of us, not even the seasoned vets, left rodeo school unscathed.

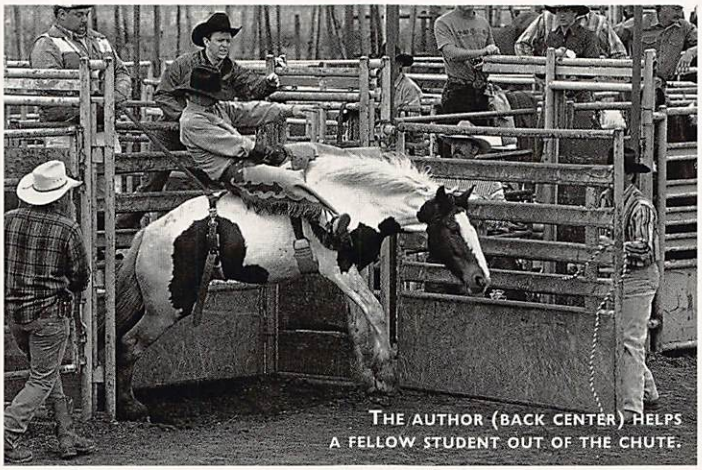
Borrowing a term from aviation, Sankey calls the weekend's session "ground school." In a shed next to the arena his assistant checked our spurs and the fit of our gloves in the riggings. (The rigging, like a sturdy leather suitcase handle with girth straps, is what bareback riders use to attach themselves to a horse.) The fit needed to be tight, Sankey counseled, but not so tight you couldn't get out when you needed to.

Before screening videos from the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas to illustrate his lecture on the fundamentals of form, Sankey asked for a show of hands to find out who had been riding for how long. Everyone but me had ridden for years, many in high school rodeo. The others, mostly farm boys ages 16 to 24, but also including a pilot for USAir, seemed eager—a little too eager—to see how I would fare.

We practiced awhile on bales of hay. Then, donning chaps and slipping foam-rubber tailbone pads down the seats of our jeans, we walked to the arena.

You imagine the moments spent on a bucking horse to be the most thrilling, but they are not the most dangerous. That distinction, Sankey said, is reserved for the seconds right before the ride, when a cowboy is inside the chute with the horse, and right after, when he's on the ground, often surrounded by the galloping mounts of the pickup men and the flailing hooves of his own horse. But, dropping gingerly onto your horse in the chute, it's what will happen in the arena that you think about. Lyle had taught us to visualize the ride: shoulders back, stomach tightened, chin down, free hand skyward, spurs high so they'd be set in the horse the first time he landed outside the chute. Staying on eight seconds is the first challenge, he said; doing it stylishly the second. I nodded.

That maiden voyage lasted perhaps five seconds. I remember little of the passage of time, only a brief circumscribed mental picture of my gloved hand, my boots in the air, and then the ground looming up fast. I landed on my face and chest. Lyle ran out, picked up my hat, and chastised me for getting up slowly when the horse was still close by, bucking. If there'd been any air in my lungs, I would have tried to defend myself. Back behind the chutes the others slapped me on the back. "When your breath got knocked out, we saw it make a little poof in the dust," Lyle joked, grinning.



THE AUTHOR (BACK CENTER) HELPS A FELLOW STUDENT OUT OF THE CHUTE.

Not until the adrenaline subsided did the ache in my hip and the knot on my calf make me wonder what I'd knocked them against. The fence around the arena was a good place to watch all the action during the next three days—some good rides, but mostly bad ones, and a few disasters.

James, a high school sophomore from Alpine, Texas, whose Border Patrol father had driven him the 12 hours to the school, got hung up on his second try; we saw the horse stamp on his legs a couple of times. Before long his calf had swollen to twice its normal size, but James went out again. He lasted the full eight seconds on his third ride, but after Lyle blew the whistle, his horse's lurch dropped James down directly onto the rigging handle, so hard that every man on the fences groaned and put his knees together. Hobbling off, James thanked the pickup men and tried hard to walk normally.

The next day Pete, too, got hung up and stomped; Greg got tossed off backward and landed on his head; even Doug, the stock contractor whose ranch was hosting the event, was propelled off a horse and against the metal fence, which he slid down and then walked away from, slowly, with a limp. My third horse spooked in the chute, slamming me against the back of it and bruising my shoulder before cowboys could pull me out.

Evenings, at a café in town, one could measure our progressive decrepitude. Men sat down stiffly, reached slowly, ate quietly. Our entertainment the second night, over chicken-fried steak, was Jason's X-rays. Jason, a trim muscular hunting guide, had held his arm after a seemingly successful ride. No one paid much attention until 10 minutes later when someone noticed that tears had slipped out under his eye. From what little I knew of Jason, this meant he was in agony.

"Lyle, I think I better go to the hospital," he had said, refusing a ride even though his truck had manual transmission. At dinner Jason was in a cast, with a spiral fracture of the ulna that would require surgery within a week.

Sankey handed out gear bags as awards the last day. "The guys who succeed are not always the most talented," he began. "They're the ones who are the most mentally tough." Eighteen-year-old Chad, who had vastly improved his saddle bronc riding, received one, and the other went to the indomitable James. Lyle praised James's improvement but then, laughing, got to the point: "His leg's so bad he can't even walk, and here he is with a big grin on his face all the time, going, 'Isn't America great? Isn't rodeo wonderful?' " As Lyle handed him the bag, James rose creakily to his feet one last time, beaming.

—Ted Conover

STEPHANIE PFRIENDER

from the chute in an inspired fashion and spurs rhythmically, raking the horse's neck while his upper body flops wildly across the animal's back and sides. The horse looks absolutely possessed and practically levitates off the arena floor in great paroxysms of protest while Garrett, allowing his head to flop around in his trademark rag-doll fashion, somehow conveys a sense of being completely in control and yet on the verge of certain disaster as the horse leaps and bucks. Finally it's over, and the crowd rises to its feet as Marvin's score hits the boards: *80 points!* The only bareback total even near it for the three-day rodeo is a 75.

A golden aura seems to surround Marvin as he collects his hat, waves to the crowd, and then walks behind the chutes to receive the congratulations of his peers. Fifteen minutes later, though, alone and stripping off chaps in the shadow of a wooden fence, he is rubbing his left shoulder—it clipped the gate on the way out of the chute, he explains. Only now does he feel it. "Things got a little Western out there, didn't they?" he says with a grin.

Meanwhile, Mark has garnered 74 points for what all the cowboys tell him was a "good spur ride"; he splits third place with Larry Sandvick. "You're disappointed, aren't you?" Marvin asks, and Mark nods. Mark's winnings for the day are $788, while his brother has come away with $3,338. Mark can do, and has done, better. In 1989, for example, at only 23, he went to the NFR fourth in the world standings and grossed nearly $60,000 for the year.

But one good thing about the pace of their lives is that there isn't much time to dwell on the past. As skydivers drop into the arena and fireworks—the Cowboy Christmas lights—spangle the skies over Livingston, the brothers are back in the van, cruising up Main Street, forsaking the country bars whose festivities spill onto the sidewalks, aiming for the interstate, for North Dakota by morning.

THE FACTS

RODEOS

Rodeo cowboys, often in a hurry and on a strict budget, tend to eat a lot of fast food and sleep in their trucks. But they would not wish the same for you. If you'd like to combine a rodeo weekend with a stay at a guest ranch, or need advice on where to hike and fish by day and hit a rodeo at night, you can't go wrong contacting **BILL AND PAM BRYAN'S OFF THE BEATEN PATH** (109 E. Main St., Bozeman, MT 59715; 406/586-1311). A highly personalized travel consulting service, Off the Beaten Path will customize a rodeo-based itinerary—or help dovetail your trip with local events. Independence Day weekend is one of the busiest of the year; reservations should be made well in advance.

HOTELS

IRMA HOTEL *1192 Sheridan Ave., Cody, Wyo.; 307/587-4221; doubles $84 (historic room), $57 (motel room); dinner for two $35.* Named by Buffalo Bill after his youngest daughter, the Irma is, after 90 years, still the best place to stay in Cody. Renovations to the sandstone landmark's guest rooms have rendered them less evocative of the past than the grand tin ceiling, booths, and cherrywood bar of the Irma Restaurant, but the hotel is well run and its porch is a fine vantage for the Fourth of July parade. Prime rib is the entrée of choice at the Irma (as in many restaurants in this region).

POLLARD HOTEL *2 N. Broadway, Red Lodge, Mont.; 800/765-5273 or 406/446-2860; doubles $65–$125; dinner for two $60.* Closed since 1922, the venerable Pollard reopened last month with a new entryway, hot tubs and steam cabinets in the 40 rooms, and a health club downstairs with two racquetball courts. In the new Dining Room restaurant, the menu changes daily and includes game and seasonal specialties.

ROCK CREEK RESORT *Hwy. 212, five miles south of Red Lodge, Mont.; 406/446-1111; doubles $79–$140; dinner for two $45.* An upscale complex nestled in the woods. Rooms in the new Beartooth Lodge have great views; the adjacent Grizzly Condominiums are less desirable. Swimming and tennis on the premises; golf and riding close at hand.

MURRAY HOTEL *201 W. Park St., Livingston, Mont.; 406/222-1350; doubles $49–$150; dinner for two $40.* Livingston's historic hotel, across from the train station, retains a downscale charm foreign to Cody's Irma or the Pollard of Red Lodge. The hotel's Winchester Café has some of the best food in town.

TALCOTT HOUSE *405 W. Lewis St., Livingston, Mont.; 406/222-7699; doubles $55–$70.* L.L. Bean used the handsome Edwardian exterior of this five-room bed-and-breakfast, three blocks from downtown, for a recent photo shoot; inside, hostess Pam McCutcheon extends a warm casual welcome, even to your dog.

RESTAURANTS

PROUD CUT SALOON *1227 Sheridan Ave., Cody, Wyo.; 307/527-6905; dinner for two $35.* Small and homey: "Not bragging or anything, but we probably serve the best shrimp around."

CASSIE'S SUPPER CLUB *214 W. Yellowstone Ave., Cody, Wyo.; 307/527-5500; dinner for two $30.* Live country music nightly from 9 P.M. Located west of town, on the way to the rodeo grounds.

17 BROADWAY *17 S. Broadway, Red Lodge, Mont.; 406/446-1717; dinner for two $30.* Good Sunday brunch; contemporary American food.

LIVINGSTON BAR & GRILL *130 N. Main St., Livingston, Mont.; 406/222-7909; dinner for two $25.* A buzzing scene that's not too cowboy.

DON'T MISS

BUFFALO BILL HISTORICAL CENTER *720 Sheridan Ave., Cody, WY 82414; 307/587-4771.* Four museums in one big complex: the Buffalo Bill Museum, the Whitney Gallery of Western Art, the Cody Firearms Museum, and the Plains Indian Museum.

DAN BAILEY'S FLY SHOP *209 W. Park St., Livingston, Mont.; 800/356-4052 or 406/222-1673.* A river runs pretty close to it. World-famous.

CHATHAM FINE ART *120 N. Main St., Livingston, Mont.; 406/222-1566.* A gallery devoted mainly to painter Russell Chatham's celebrated landscapes.

BEAR CREEK SALOON *Rte. 308, seven miles east of Red Lodge, Mont.; 406/446-3481; no credit cards.* Pig races, karaoke, and Mexican food —TED CONOVER

BEST BOOKS

COWBOYS ARE MY WEAKNESS by Pam Houston *(Washington Square)*—The stories, which take place in the wilder regions of the West, feature sassy heroines who may be vulnerable but are strong at their core.

AMERICAN RODEO: FROM BUFFALO BILL TO BIG BUSINESS by Kristine Fredriksson *(Texas A&M University Press)*—The well-told story of this sport, from its roots in impromptu cowboy contests at the end of the cattle drives to the multimillion-dollar industry it is today.

RAIN OR SHINE by Cyra McFadden *(Vintage)* The memoir of the author's love-hate relationship with her father, Cy Taillon, the dean of rodeo announcers. —MARTIN RAPP