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Home on the ritzy ranch

Urban Cowhands

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Life on a ranch used to be tough -- hot days, livestock to tend and chores. Then came Elk Park Ranch, near Radium, B.C., with its 16 prime ranch properties. Life on the ranch now includes access to skiing, golf, fishing and other fun stuff to please any urban cowboy.

"Own horses and cattle or just build your own dream home," says Fred Schickedanz, developer of Elk Park Ranch (elkparkranch.com). The site will include a 200-acre urban core with single-family homes and condos to be built over the next eight years. Nearby, the Ranches are 16 large acreages that can be turned into weekend rural escapes or hobby ranches, ranging from 38 to 480 acres.

Prices are not yet set for the Ranches, but are expected to range from \$1.1-million to \$4.5-million. The properties will be sold by reservation this fall.

Horse lovers may also want to head to the U.S. For US\$1-million or so, buy into "integrated ranch developments." At the Maytag Mountain Ranch in Colorado, 27 home sites of more than 3,000 acres each will share ownership of a 250-head herd of red Angus cattle (maytagmountainranch.com). Homeowner fees of about US\$8,000 will cover the salaries for two ranch managers and pay to maintain a trout stream; each shareholder also receives a quarter side of beef.

The Pitchfork Ranch, near Meeteetse, Wyo., is another dream ranch with even vaster views and more river miles with parcels going for US\$1.25-million to US\$5-million (pitchforkranch.com).

Meanwhile, the Marabou ranch, being built in Colorado (marabouranch.com) will offer 62 home sites and open space for dry-land crops, a grouse breeding ground, a winter elk range and horses, of course.

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