

TRAVEL > ROMANTIC GETAWAY

Romancing Nature

at the Post Ranch Inn



In architecture, sacred geometry is the idea that the geometric spaces and materials of the structures we inhabit impact our senses in the same way nature does. So, it makes sense that after spending a weekend 1,200 feet above the Pacific at the Post Ranch Inn on Big Sur's coast, I could feel these buildings at a cellular level, a biological relationship between woman and redwood, slate, glass, ocean, and sunlight.

Whether you're on a romantic getaway or a soul searching journey, this exquisite 40-room inn, like its sister properties in Sausalito, the Fiji Islands and Sea Ranch, offers guests an opportunity to commune with nature in its most organic form, while indulging in rejuvenating luxury. Every inch of this 100-acre property, from the cylindrical rooms that disappear under blooming canopies of wildflowers, to secluded tree-houses set on stilts, to the Sierra Mar restaurant that hangs over the expansive ocean like the deck of a ship, to the hot tubs of metal and stone that steam over the cliffs, to the redwoods, oaks and sequoias that ground it all, is a sanctuary.

Guests leave their cars in a parking lot below and walk or are driven in quiet Lexus Hybrids to an array of accommodations, the newest of which are 10 remarkable structures at the south end of this private paradise that include the cantilevered Cliff House, the majestic Ventana Mountain View Peak House and the expansive

Pacific Suite deck; Interior Cliff House

Pacific Suite with serpentine lines that open to glorious ocean views from the living room, bedroom and a tiled two-person bathtub with floor to ceiling windows that let in the ocean breeze on a starry night. There are no TVs here, but all rooms have king-sized beds, wood-burning fireplaces and a digital music system with 45 channels. Walls are paneled in redwood salvaged from old wine barrels (there are homes in Big Sur made from these barrels) and a fully stocked and complimentary mini bar will keep you on your own private deck most of the day.

But exploring this property is part of the Post Ranch experience, whether it's a trip down to the beach (the restaurant will pack you a lunch), morning yoga or a guided meditation in the inn's glorious studio or mountain-perched yurt, star-gazing with the resort astronomer, relaxing in one of the pools or hot tubs, or wandering the fertile grounds where benches and hammocks are abundant.

Not to be missed is a visit to the Post Ranch spa. Nestled on the ridge top with redwood trees surrounding views of the granite peaks of the Ventanas (or you can have treatments on your own private deck), practitioners here are as good as it gets, whether it's massage therapy, a facial or Jade stone or gemstone therapy. Most unique on the spa menu though are shamanic sessions. Guests who have arrived with too much ancestral baggage can quickly unload it in an hour-and-a-half session with the inn's resident shaman, Jon Rasmussen. Trained by the Q'ero Indians of Peru, Rasmussen works in this five-star village by using his relationship with the forces of nature to clear unwanted patterns on the soul and mythic level, using sacred feathers, snow goose wings, chumpi stones, and plant medicines. With these obstacles out of the way, the path to your destiny is cleared.

Those ancient processes can make you hungry, and the award-winning Sierra Mar restaurant, with awe-inspiring views of the Pacific, features an innovative, four-course, prix fixe menu, which changes daily and utilizes organic, seasonal fare and offers wine selections from one of the most extensive collections in North America. After a meal beginning with grilled squab breast with Frog Hollow peaches, cassis and foie gras and ending with baked Valrhona milk chocolate crêpes with hazelnut brown butter sauce, hazelnut lace cookie and bittersweet Valrhona chocolate sorbet (with a whole host of magical menu items in between), there is only one choice: Sizzle under a starlit sky in a hot tub over the Pacific coast and become one with nature. After all, that's why you're here.

For more information, visit postranchinn.com or call (800) 527-2200. Doubles start at \$550, one-bedroom houses start at \$1,060. Breakfast is included with stay.—JUSTINE AMODEO



Sierra Mar and Ocean House roof; Shaman Jon Rasmussen; Exterior Cliff House; Meditation pool

