

# VOGUE

TRAVEL

## The Ultimate Northern California Road Trip, From Supercars to Farm-to-Table Cooking

BY COREY SEYMOUR

November 2, 2022

Want to blow the mind of your eight-year-old kid? That's easy: Take them to Monterey Car Week in California, when merely stepping onto the street serves up a constant, ad hoc parade of everything from supercars to vintage hot rods from morning till night—and there just so happens to be a world-class aquarium a stone's throw from your hotel. My son, Guy, and I were in heaven.

In fact, the driving was so utterly thrilling that I was almost sad to actually arrive at our destination—but The Madrona, a mile outside of Healdsburg, quickly helped me get over myself. Originally built in 1881 as the High Victorian residence on a working farm, and refitted as a restaurant and country inn a century later, The Madrona is just recently reopened after a year-long, \$6 million renovation and features 24 rooms and bungalows set amidst orchards and gardens overlooking the picturesque Dry Creek Valley. The service, charm, and hospitality were so pronounced as to be almost High Southern, and we quickly dropped our things in our antiques-filled bungalow and made our way to the pool.



Courtesy of The Madrona

Brilliant small touches were everywhere, from the well-placed cooler filled with local botanical seltzers from Amass to bathrooms stocked with an array of Flamingo Estate hair and body care amenities. (Weeks after our visit, we're still chasing them down, having suffered from their absence in our lives.) The walk from our bungalow to the main lodge for dinner took us past the orchard, with a quick detour through the cuttings garden (adjacent to the robust, thriving vegetable garden, the fruits of which populate the Madrona's various menus), as we carefully steered clear of bothering the beehives. And when the kids became bored waiting for their food on the vast wraparound porch, the solution was literally in front of us and down below: We sent them down to the lawn for a spot of croquet, after which they chased the fireflies emerging from the fading light.

About those menus. In the hands of executive chef Jesse Mallgren, every impossibly fresh ingredient is a revelation. There are estate tomatoes with miso, ume vinegar, and shiso; local peaches with compressed celtuce, marcona almonds, and lemon verbena oil; brilliant steaks and burgers; and even local black cod. (The kitchen is also masterful at making plain cheese pizza with absolutely no garnishings, should you have—just hypothetically of course—a young child terrified of absolutely anything other than cheese on top of his cheese pizza.) And as for drinks? I mean, you're in Sonoma County. Let's just say that the breweries and vineyards which surround the Madrona in every lush direction are very, very well-represented here.

<https://www.vogue.com/article/the-ultimate-northern-california-road-trip-with-supercars>