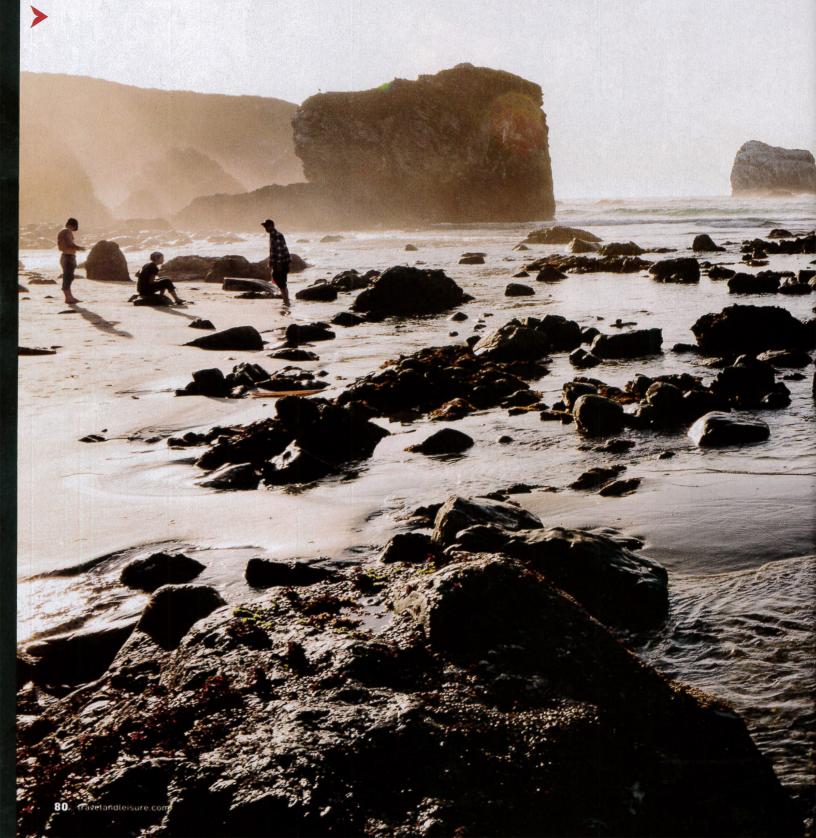
Where to Go in 2018 TRAVEL+ LEISURE



WHERE TO FIND Renewal >





BIG SUR

In the wake of destructive landslides, this coastal California retreat has rebuilt and emerged better than ever. By Jonah Weiner

hen historic rainfall pummeled
California last February, the damage to
Big Sur was severe. Mudslides cut
off access to Highway 1, the region's only
thoroughfare, from the south; then a crack
ripped through the Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge,
blocking the northern end. Almost overnight,
this 90-odd-mile stretch of craggy coastline—
long beloved for its sense of remoteness—
became an island.

Nearly a year later, Big Sur is stirring back to life. The bridge has been replaced and a major slide has been cleared. At the Post Ranch Inn (post ranchinn.com; doubles from \$875)—a compound whose tony accommodations, first-rate restaurant, and stunning Pacific views have made it a gem for decades—bartender Vanessa Share remarked on the closure's unlikely upside: "It brought Big Sur back in time to what it used to be." Even now, there's a lingering aura of wild seclusion: you feel it at Deetjen's Inn (deetjens.com; entrées \$24-\$38), a cozy 1930s-era landmark whose restaurant serves local chanterelles and small-production California wines by firelight, and at the old-school Big Sur Bakery (bigsurbakery.com), where surf rock chimes from the speakers and locals congregate over hot coffee and gooey slabs of strudel.

In other words, it's an ideal time to get to Big Sur, where renewal is in the air. After an elaborate renovation, the 160-acre Ventana Big Sur (ventanabigsur.com; doubles from \$675, campsites from \$325) has reopened as the first Alila property in the U.S.—and a luxurious rival to Post Ranch. The place is a stunner, whether you're facing a forested canyon from the pool or enjoying pink-and-orange sunsets from the terrace. In addition to the plush ocean-view suites, clad in weathered wood, there are now glamping tents nearby that marry rusticity and comfort. Adirondack chairs and

a fire pit sit out front; a creek burbles past. Overhead, the redwood canopy rises into the sky.

DON'T MISS Nepenthe, an iconic cliff-top restaurant with album-coverworthy views. nepenthe.com.

Jonah Weiner is a writer in Oakland. He visited Big Sur in November.