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A-LIST SUMMER DESTINATIONS

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ALEXA KADISH & JULIE BRAUN'S LUST-HAVES
THE PONTE FIRES UP BEVERLY GROVE
STEVEN SODERBERGH'S NEW SPIRIT

EAST OF EDEN

It's the mother of all backdrops for HBO's *Big Little Lies*, the landscape of many a Steinbeck story, a surrealist setting for artist Salvador Dalí and, now, the environs for your next escape. Yes, Monterey County, Calif., lends itself to the creative eye, but it's also a sanctuary for travelers on a quest to enrich their minds and bodies.

Follow our three-day route—your journey starts now. —Kristen Schatt



1. Lovers Point in Pacific Grove 2. Salvador Dalí's "The Persistence of Memory" from the *Changes in Great Masterpieces* suite (1974, lithograph), 24 inches by 27 inches, at the *Dali17* exhibit 3. Carmel Valley Ranch's lobby at the main lodge 4. The Vineyard Oak suite's private balcony 5. The mojito-inspired Hanky Panky cocktail 6. Horseback riding along the Salinas River State Beach

DAY 1

Gorgeous vistas beckon you outdoors upon arrival, and a stroll along the Monterey Bay Coastal Recreation Trail in **Pacific Grove** (seemonterey.com) does the trick. This 1-mile segment of the path runs between Lovers Point and the aquarium on Cannery Row and is rich with natural wonders—frothy waves, blues from sky to sea, seals on the shore. Refuel with the seafood salad at **Schooners Coastal Kitchen & Bar** (Monterey Plaza Hotel, 400 Cannery Row, 831.372.2628, schoonersmonterey.com); then explore the *Dali17* exhibit (admission \$20, Museum of Monterey, 5 Custom

House Plaza, 831.372.2608, dali17.com). With 580 works, it's the largest private Salvador Dalí collection in the United States—fitting, as Monterey was the only place in the country that the surrealist lived and painted. On display: a rare original lithograph of "The Persistence of Memory," from the *Changes in Great Masterpieces* suite. (Look closely at the landscape; museum coordinator Hilary Roberts suggests it's reminiscent of the Monterey coast.) Your last stop: the 500-acre **Carmel Valley Ranch** (1 Old Ranch Road, 831.625.9500, carmelvalleyranch.com). The main lodge is perched atop a road that winds by the

golf course, fitness complex, garden and vineyard. Check in to a **Vineyard** suite (from \$655 per night) and refresh with a soak in your balcony tub before texting the shuttle to take you to the lodge for a late-afternoon elixir at the **bar** (try this month's Hanky Panky cocktail). A final pour: a custom, behind-the-grapes experience amid the vines—a tour with vintner Peter Figge, or a paired dinner with sommelier Mark Buzan (advanced reservations required, price upon request).

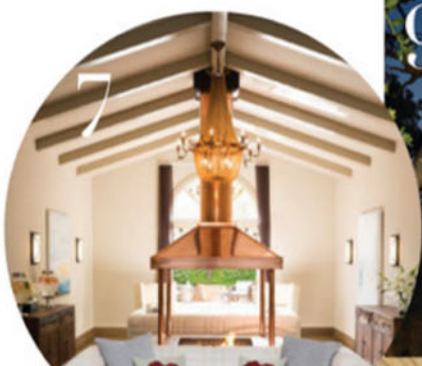
DAY 2

National Steinbeck Center in Salinas (admission \$13, 1 Main St., 831.775.4721,

steinbeck.org) is required reading: Steinbeck was born here in 1902, and works like *Tortilla Flat* draw on the region. (Don't miss the Steinbeck Festival May 5 to 7.) Then, head to Salinas River State Beach for a horseback ride with the **Monterey Bay Equestrian Center** (from \$80, 119 Monterey Dunes Way, Castroville, 831.663.5712, montereybayequestrian.com). Located about 20 minutes from Salinas, the beach is a local secret and affords supreme solitude, with the steady gait of your horse (Torino is tops) beneath you and the splash of the sea all around. Rides are reservation-only and tailored to your needs to ensure comfort

LOVERS POINT AND HORSEBACK RIDING: PHOTOS COURTESY OF SEEMONTEREY.COM; "THE PERSISTENCE OF MEMORY" PHOTO BY SCOTT CANNELL PHOTOGRAPHY.COM; VINEYARD OAK SUITE AND HANKY PANKY COCKTAIL: PHOTOS COURTESY OF CARMEL VALLEY RANCH

7. The warming room at The Spa at Bernardus Lodge 8. A seasonally changing scallop dish (shaved black truffles, snap peas, freshly foraged chanterelles) at Lucia 9. Outside the main lodge at Carmel Valley Ranch: a saltwater swimming pool, infinity hot tub and cabanas 10. Hilltop yoga with a view of Robinson Canyon's natural chaparral 11. Wrath Wines' pinot tasting bottles 12. A peek inside Il Tegamino's charming patio for alfresco dining



7



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11

12



from the time you're in the saddle until you're on two legs again. Hungry post-ride? Nibble a steamed artichoke at The Choke Coach at **Pezzini Farms** (460 Nashua Road, Castroville, 831.757.7434, pezzinifarms.com) before trekking to the *Forbes* triple four-star-rated **Bernardus Lodge & Spa** in Carmel Valley (415 W. Carmel Valley Road, 831.658.3400, bernarduslodge.com) for luxe lounging: the 50-minute A Dozen Roses experience (\$160), with a full-body rose clay application to remove impurities, a Moroccan rose aromatherapeutic oil massage and a glass of Bernardus' blush rosé; and dinner at **Lucia**. Reserve the chef's table (from

\$225 per person, two-guest minimum) to feast your eyes on the action of gourmand Cal Stamenov's kitchen (he'll create your unique menu and the signatures scrawled around your booth (Julia Child, Leonardo DiCaprio, recent visitor Kate Upton). Other Lucia highlights: the scallops and seasonal abalone rouge; the latter's texture is a dream. And a dip in the adults-only **infinity hot tub** back at CVR ensures a sound sleep.

DAY 3

Greet your final morning with a sun salutation during a complimentary 90-minute yoga session on CVR's **hilltop platform** overlooking Robinson Canyon (\$150 for private

individual class, outdoor yoga returns Memorial Day weekend). Brunch at **Valley Kitchen** in the lodge comes next; executive chef Tim Wood is inspired by the local produce and the backgrounds of his guests and staff. It's why chili chicken wings with salt and honey harvested on-site and Vietnamese rice paper rolls made to order are on the menu. And later this year, savor the creamiest cheese you'll ever taste from the property's new tribe of goats. With bellies full, cruise to the quaint Carmel-by-the-Sea to savor sweet nectar. A **Wine Walk** passport (\$100, carmelwinewalk.org) provides access to a dozen-plus tasting rooms and never expires. Sip varietals from **Wrath Wines**

(team it with a trio of cheeses, including East of Edam) and **Silvestri Vineyards**, whose Grammy-winning namesake has scored upward of 100 films (think *Flight*) and is buddies with Giuseppe Panzuto, owner of the pint-size dinner spot **Il Tegamino** (south side of Ocean Avenue, between Lincoln and Monte Verde in the Court of the Golden Bough, 831.250.5790, iltegamino.com). It's walk-in-only and so personal that Panzuto often delivers the dishes. The taste of the sauteed octopus, with its lemony potato olive-oil puree; the crab seafood ball (from the meatball bar); and the homemade cannoli with lush, light ricotta (a dessert special) linger—much like the memory of Monterey.