

Santa Barbara

A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a green and black striped sleeveless dress and yellow strappy sandals, stands on a sandy beach between two palm trees. She is looking back over her shoulder at the camera. A yellow and black striped towel is draped over her shoulder. The background shows a clear sky and the ocean.

MAGAZINE

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**BRIDE'S
GUIDE**

FOR 2011

FINDING

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ALFRESCO

Chic Cuisine

APRIL/MAY 2011 \$5.99



the lush, coastal landscape of Big Sur. Perched on the cliffs of this dramatic stretch of California coastline, the site of a onetime homestead and working ranch is now home to 39 organically built rooms, including tree houses lifted out of the forest floor on nine-foot stilts, sod roofs where flowers bloom in the spring, a pool embedded with jade collected from nearby beaches, and more. Interiors of the rooms are intimate and comfy, each with a fireplace, a Jacuzzi tub, sweeping views of the Pacific, and outdoor stainless steel bath tubs perfect for staying cozy when the fog bank inevitably cloaks the coastal bluffs. Try the two-hour Couple's Shamanic Session (\$425) at the hotel spa, or indulge in seasonal fare—including veggies straight from the on-site garden—and choose from more than 13,000 bottles of wine at the inn's Sierra Mar restaurant. —KATRIN WANBERG

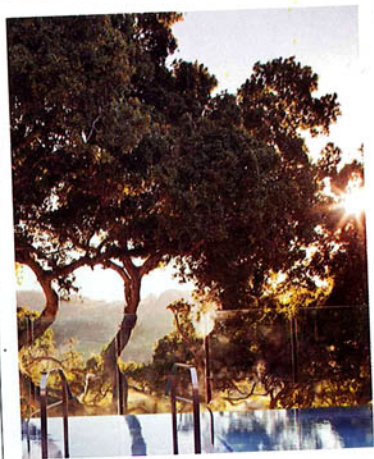
POST RANCH INN Hwy. One, Big Sur, CA, 831-667-2200, postranchinn.com. Rates: From \$550.

COZY IN CARMEL

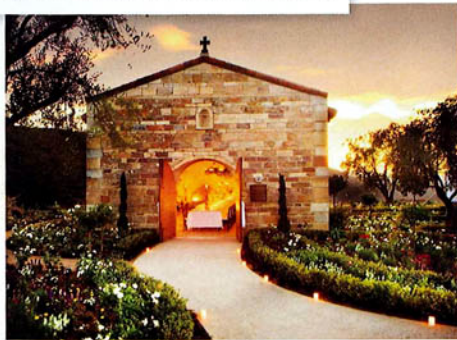
WHETHER YOU'RE IN THE MOOD to hit the tennis courts, indulge in an afternoon in the new 10,500 square-foot spa, explore thriving woodlands, or try your hand at beekeeping, **Carmel Valley Ranch** has a little something for everyone. The hostelry's Romance at the Ranch package (from \$465) provides couples with a comfortable guest suite, breakfast for two at the Lodge Restaurant, a credit at Spa Aiyana, access to the River Ranch club (think bocce ball and pool time), and hikes throughout the 500-acre expanse of country at the foot of the Santa Lucia Mountains. —K.W.

CARMEL VALLEY RANCH One Old Ranch Rd., Carmel, CA, 831-625-9500, carmelvalleyranch.com. Rates: From \$250.

Book your relaxing **couple's massage** in one of the eight double treatment suites with fireplaces.



MUST DO Make your groom feel pampered with the men's shave gift set (\$375)—a scrub, mask, Barber Shave Nutri-moist lotion, and more.



VIP at CAL-A-VIE Weddings don't get much more romantic than a candlelit ceremony in the 400-year-old chapel and l'Orangerie reception venue at **Cal-a-Vie** spa near San Diego. Purchased and brought to the 200-acre property from Dijon, France, the chapel is available for nuptials on a buy-out basis and can accommodate up to 125 guests. Up to 60 visitors can spend the days before the event focusing on fitness, healthy cuisine, and spa pampering. Cal-a-Vie's on-site team works with wedding planners to organize beautiful and memorable events against the backdrop of the spa's Provençal decor and theme. —G.T.

CAL-A-VIE 29402 Spa Havens Way, Vista, CA, 866-772-4283, cal-a-vie.com. Packages from \$4,195. For chapel, price upon request.