

NOVEMBER 2018

805 LIVING



GIVE THANKS
GIVE BACK

Finds Travel

By Erin Rottman



ZEN SONOMA

When real-estate developer Michael Mohr traveled through Japan on his honeymoon last year, he stayed in *ryokans*—accommodations with traditional Japanese elements like reed floor mats and sliding paper doors—and spoke with owners whose inns have been in their families for centuries. “They know every tree, every rock, how the brook babbles, and it’s all very special to them,” says Mohr, co-owner of the 23-room **Gaige House + Ryokan** (thegaigehouse.com; from \$309) in Glen Ellen. “It got me really excited about our little jewel up in Sonoma Valley.”

Mohr realized that restoring the property, which had been closed during the 2017 Sonoma County wildfires, required examination

of the land and architecture and enhancement of existing features to make the most of the location alongside Calabazas Creek.

In April, Gaige House reopened with a new redwood deck that cantilevers over the creek and is built around a mature oak tree. Lanterns and swinging chairs hanging from the trees create a peaceful relaxation space. Another deck, designed for meditation, yoga, and massage, overlooks the garden and pool.

Half of the ryokans are set along the creek with private areas facing the water. Inside are traditional Japanese slippers and robes and large granite soaking tubs with bathing buckets and ladles. Breakfast, evening wine, tea, and mochi ice cream are included.

The meditation deck (above, left) is one of several tranquil spaces at the Japanese-inspired Gaige House + Ryokan. On another deck that stretches over Calabazas Creek, seating options include swinging chairs dangling from the branch of a massive oak.

HOT TIP Heading to Oakland or Las Vegas? No need to brave the southbound traffic to an L.A.-area airport. Nonstop flights to the two popular destinations are now available out of Santa Barbara Airport via **Contour Airlines** (contourairlines.com; from \$79 each way). Contour’s 30-passenger jets offer about as much legroom as traditional business-class seats, complimentary snacks, and one free checked bag.

SOLDIERING ON IN SAN FRANCISCO



Offering a bit of nature amid the urban bustle of San Francisco, the **Lodge at the Presidio** (presidiolodging.com; from \$275) is housed in former army barracks that date back to the 1890s and are part of the ongoing restoration of the Presidio of San Francisco, a 1,500-acre park in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The colonial revival-style hotel features headboards reminiscent of tent canvas and artifacts such as soldiers’ love letters and old playing cards and whiskey bottles.

“It seems to really reflect the personality and history of the Presidio, yet it’s modern and sleek and feels up to date,” says Lisa Petrie of the Presidio Trust, which owns the boutique lodge. “It’s a wonderful, quiet spot to wake up in the morning.”

Bikes are available to explore Presidio sites such as Crissy Field, a former military airstrip and home to beaches and a recreation path; Mountain Lake, where native species like Pacific chorus frogs and western pond turtles have been reintroduced; and a live archaeological dig site. Free PresidiGo buses shuttle guests to sites around the park as well as to downtown San Francisco.

TOP, LEFT AND RIGHT: TRINETTE + C-HIS; BOTTOM: CHERE PAFFORD