

REAL ESTATE ALL-STARS

pasadena

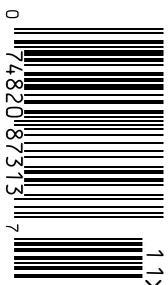
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020

**PASADENA
SHOWCASE HOUSE
OF DESIGN 2020**

**WHAT DO YOU GET
FOR \$1 MILLION?
HOME VALUES COMPARED**

**HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDES
FOR HIM AND HER**

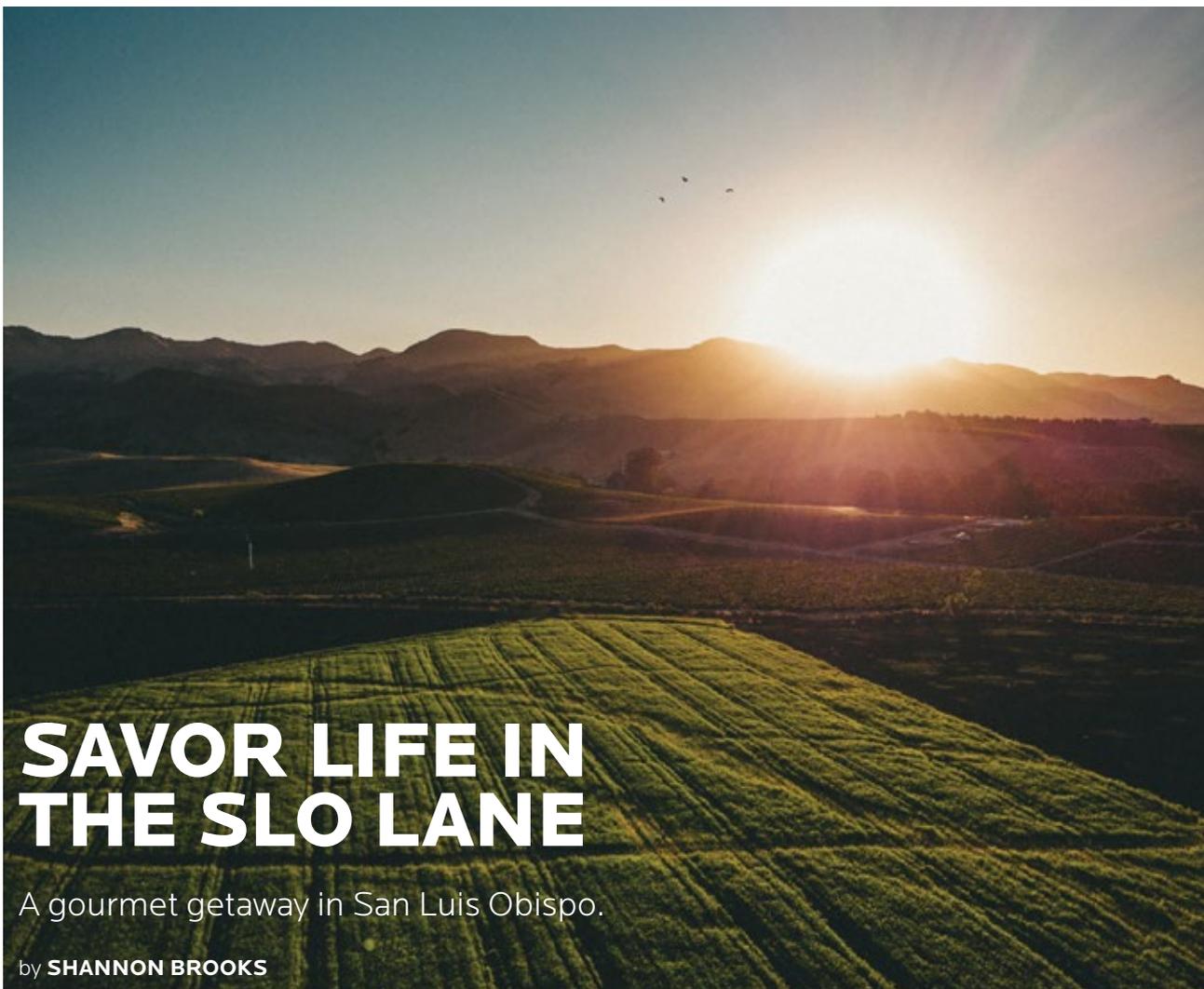
**URBAN EXPLORATION
THE SECRET STAIRS OF LA**



0 74820 87313 7

\$5.95

11



SAVOR LIFE IN THE SLO LANE

A gourmet getaway in San Luis Obispo.

by **SHANNON BROOKS**

I have always been easily charmed by small towns and these days I find them even more appealing when it comes to choosing social distancing-friendly travel destinations. That is exactly what drew me to San Luis Obispo, a laid-back college town that is an easy three-hour drive north of Pasadena. My plan was to stay in SLO proper and use that as a base to explore the surrounding wine regions. In the evenings, I would take advantage of downtown SLO's walkability and restaurant scene.

STAY

The reimagined **San Luis Creek Lodge** was my home away from home. The newly updated boutique property is located on a quieter stretch of Monterey Street, less than a mile from the main downtown core—it was an easy and safe walk, even after dark. And they also have Linus bikes and helmets available for guests to get around town.

The Lodge looks unassuming from the street, though discerning eyes will note the chic, minimalist white sign

that distinguishes it from the neighboring chain hotels. As soon as I entered the lobby, I knew I had picked the right place based on the thoughtful design aesthetic and warm hospitality of the staff who welcomed me. LA-based designer and tastemaker Nina Freudenberger is responsible for the stylish modern look that is equal parts contemporary farmhouse and elegant surf shack. The 25 guest rooms are spread out among three buildings set back from the street—some have exterior entrances from the parking lot and others require going up shared stairwells.

I stayed in a premiere king room with a fireplace on the second level. It was airy and spacious with abundant natural light coming in through the shutters. From the textured blue wallpaper, light oak floors, and rattan headboard to the custom art, curated minibar selection featuring local makers, and Aesop bath products—every detail was well-considered and out of the ordinary. Even though it was not cold at the tail end of summer, I used the fireplace morning and night to further enhance the cozy vibe.



BIDDLE RANCH VINEYARD



NINER WINE ESTATES



GRANADA HOTEL & BISTRO

EAT & DRINK

A light breakfast is included in the room rate at San Luis Creek Lodge. During the pandemic, instead of using their breakfast room off the lobby, each morning they hang a reusable tote bag (for keeps!) on your door containing a thermos of locally roasted coffee and freshly baked scones. On my last morning, I rode a bike to the downtown **Scout Coffee** location—I had visited on a previous trip and knew they were considered the best in town for artisan coffee. My single origin pour over paired to a goat cheese and herb biscuit was well worth the slightly uphill ride back.

Since many California wineries are requiring reservations nowadays to manage the number of guests, I booked reservations in advance at two wineries in different growing regions. I am a big fan

of the new tasting format—all tastings are seated, wine pourers come to you, and food is often also on the menu. The first day, I visited **Biddle Ranch Vineyard** in the Edna Valley, a 15-minute drive from San Luis Creek Lodge. The next day I settled in for a leisurely tasting and lunch at **Niner Wine Estates** in Paso Robles, 30 minutes from SLO. Niner has a full-service restaurant and their pandemic pivot is a creative picnic-style presentation to minimize contact. My chopped summer salad with tomatoes from their garden and grilled salmon entrée were beautifully “plated” in their stainless steel containers and absolutely delicious.

I had two memorable al fresco dinners in downtown SLO on this particular trip. I feasted on local yellowtail crudo and a robust clote salad featuring Cal Poly corn

at **Granada Hotel & Bistro**. The following night, I was wowed by the vibrant halibut ceviche and savory mushroom empanadas at **Mistura**, a Peruvian restaurant in the open-air Creamery Marketplace complex.

SEE & DO

Wine is definitely a big “do” in SLO County—more than 250 wineries dot the landscape between Arroyo Grande and Paso Robles. Artisanal olive oil producers and family-run creameries offer immersive tasting experiences. The great outdoors is another big draw with miles of coastline and small beach towns like Cayucos and Cambria to explore. You can walk or bike the **Bob Jones Trail** to **Avila Beach**, go kayaking and eat fresh catch in Morro Bay, and drive up towards San Simeon to see the elephant seals. ■