

**BIBA CELEBRATES
25 YEARS AND
A NEW COOKBOOK**

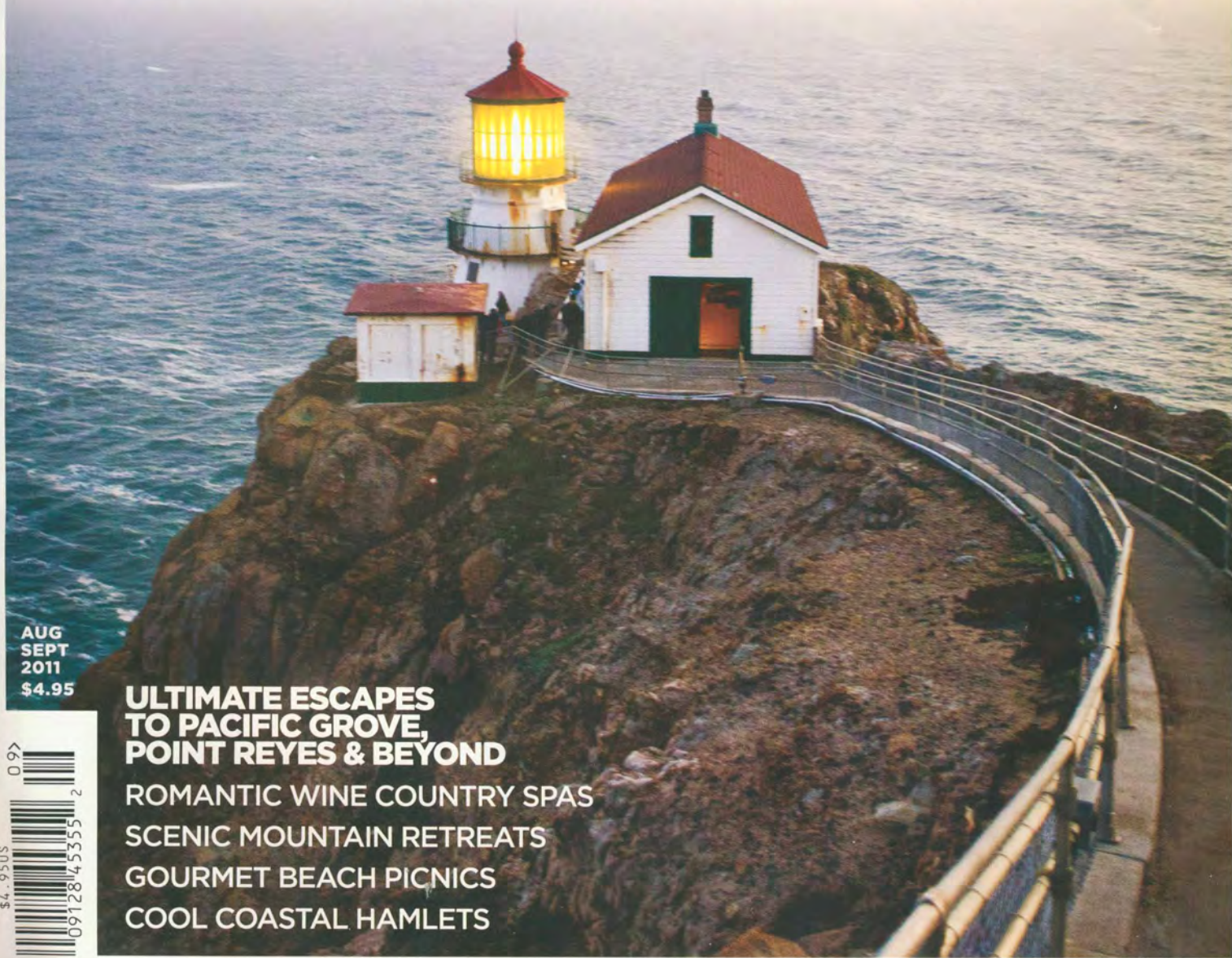
**TEQUILA AS ART?
DOWNTOWN HOT SPOT
REDEFINES MEXICAN CUISINE**

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Small Town

GETAWAYS

29



AUG
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2011

\$4.95

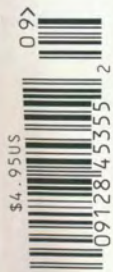
**ULTIMATE ESCAPES
TO PACIFIC GROVE,
POINT REYES & BEYOND**

ROMANTIC WINE COUNTRY SPAS

SCENIC MOUNTAIN RETREATS

GOURMET BEACH PICNICS

COOL COASTAL HAMLETS





A Kodak moment in Gualala Point Regional Park



POP.
1,572

It's pronounced wa-LA-la, and like that lyrical name, this coastal village a little over three hours northwest of Sacramento is all about softening hard edges and opening up to beauty. Logging built Gualala but art has kept it on the map thanks to a surprising gallery collection and a remarkable community arts center. Whether your focus is on art or nature, inspiration is everywhere, from an untamed coast of coves and sea stacks to meditative redwood groves. The serpentine Highway 1 keeps the outside world at a distance, so Gualala isn't easy to get to. Nor is it easy to leave. As Rosemary Campiformio, executive chef at St. Orres for 36 years declares, "There are places with things to do. Gualala is a place to be."

WHAT TO DO

Art in the Redwoods

Talk to Gualala Arts Center's executive director David Susalla and he'll rhapsodize about the area's creative magic. That magic finds expression in everything from the center's surprising exhibits (a recent display on automotive art featured a modified 1932 Ford pickup that dominated the lobby) to cham-

ber music and jazz concerts in its theater and an outdoor amphitheater beneath the trees. Built of reclaimed redwood to resemble an old logging mill, the 15,000-square-foot center is set on 11 forested acres (46501 Gualala Rd., 707-884-1138, gualalaarts.org). Trails lead to such environmental installations as area artist Ursula Jones' "Fog Catcher" (strands of beads suspended from trees depict the forest's life-giving fog drip) and a traditional Japanese torii gate created by architect and craftsman Michael Anderson. The center celebrates its 50th anniversary from August 18-21 during the Art in the Redwoods Festival with special exhibits featuring a variety of media, from large-scale photographs to 10-foot bronze sculptures and wool and linen tapestries, musical performers like bagpipers and the Ernest Bloch Bell Ringers, and food prepared by the Gualala Arts Culinary Group.

Gallery Hopping

Featured in *Dwell* magazine for their pioneering design and retail work, Maynard Hale Lyndon and his wife Lu Wendel Lyndon opened Placewares & LyndonDesign in 2005 (39114 Ocean Dr., 707-884-1184, placewares.com) in Gualala's Cypress Village Gallery District (Hwy. 1 and Ocean Dr.). It carries Heath Ceramics and artwork including Maynard's irresistible and affordable (\$75) shadowbox-like "looking boxes"—three-dimensional pieces with doors and windows that open to such surreal juxtapositions as an oceanscape glimpsed within a modern Parisian house. Pick up that original silver gelatin Ansel Adams print you've always craved at Alinder Gallery (39140 S. Hwy. 1, 707-884-4884, alindergallery.com), which is curated by Adams biographer Mary Street Alinder and her husband James. On a ridge above town, Stewart-Kummer Gallery (Sat-



A room with a sky view at St. Orres

Mon. 11 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and by appointment; 35290 Old Stage Rd., 707-884-3581) displays works by leading Northern California artists and craftsmen in a cottage-like gallery. "Part of my objective has been to display art as people might be able to imagine it in their own home rather than a white cube gallery," says owner and director Don Endemann.

Wild Gualala

Gualala comes from a Pomo Indian word that means "water go-down place." And the Gualala River goes down to the coast at Gualala Point Regional Park (707-785-2377, sonoma-county.org/parks), where you can explore the estuary's sandspit or hike south above rugged coves and crashing waves to neighboring Sea Ranch. Paddle down the river on a canoe or kayak trip with Adventure Rents (888-881-4386, adventurerents.com). You'll get shuttled to a launch location and then work your way back through redwood forests and sandbars. Take your time and look for wildlife: You might spot river otters or a mother merganser leading her line of ducklings downstream.



St. Orres Restaurant's venison with wild huckleberries and yam waffles

summer or fall, the inn plans to open the seafood-focused Shoreline Restaurant, a dramatic modern space with a wall of windows and a dining deck to take in the view.

St. Orres

St. Orres has origins in the halcyon era when Mendocino County drew seekers looking for an unspoiled, natural frontier on the California coast. Woodworker and designer Eric Black continues work on his vision for the 53-acre property (\$95-\$350; about two miles north of town on Hwy. 1, 707-884-3303, saintorres.com), and with a lodge and cabins built in the Russian style of nearby Fort Ross and secluded in meadows and along a creek, St. Orres lets

you experience that Gualala dream of days and nights spent close to nature. Accommodations range from rustic cabins to cottages that are as notable for their construction (Sequoia Cottage was built entirely without nails) as natural settings that look out on the ocean and put you close to wildlife, including grazing coast black-tailed deer. —M.J.

WHERE TO EAT

St. Orres Restaurant

Long before local foods moved into the mainstream, Rosemary Campiformio lived the life in Gualala. At St. Orres (dinner nightly and weekend brunch; about two miles north of town on Hwy. 1; 707-884-3335, saintorres.com) she still forages from Gualala's bounty for such ingredients as black chanterelles (delicious in a garlic flan appetizer) and huckleberries, which make cameos in everything from rack of venison to a bread pudding with house-made cinnamon ice cream that seamlessly blends its textures and flavors. Combine her North Coast cuisine with the Ahwahnee-esque dining room and you have a classic destination restaurant.

Trinks Cafe

Out on the road, nothing beats a place like Trinks (39140 S. Hwy. 1; 707-884-1713, trinkscafe.com). Quick, casual and tasty, it's definitely of Gualala, thanks to an emphasis on the seasonal and homemade in its salads and sandwiches (the cranberry sauce on the turkey sandwich is from a family recipe and the ham is house-roasted), plus coastal views that don't usually come with a cup of coffee. Save room for handcrafted gelatos and sorbets from Gualala's Gelati Pazzo Marco. And check out Trinks' blog for thrice-weekly special dinners, which sometimes feature wild local king salmon.

WHERE TO STAY

Breakers Inn

With rooms and decks overlooking the ocean and Gualala River, Breakers Inn (\$125-\$265; 39300 S. Hwy. 1; 707-884-3200, breakersinn.com) delivers on its name. Panoramas take in seabirds winging by at window level and yes, breakers, rolling onto the beach. Each room is individually decorated with a geographic theme that incorporates such elements as a traditional quilt in the Pennsylvania Room, and screens and wood cabinets in the Japan Room. This



Adventure Rents offers kayaking on Gualala River.