

# S BLS

*Santa Barbara Life & Style Magazine*

Nov/Dec 2017



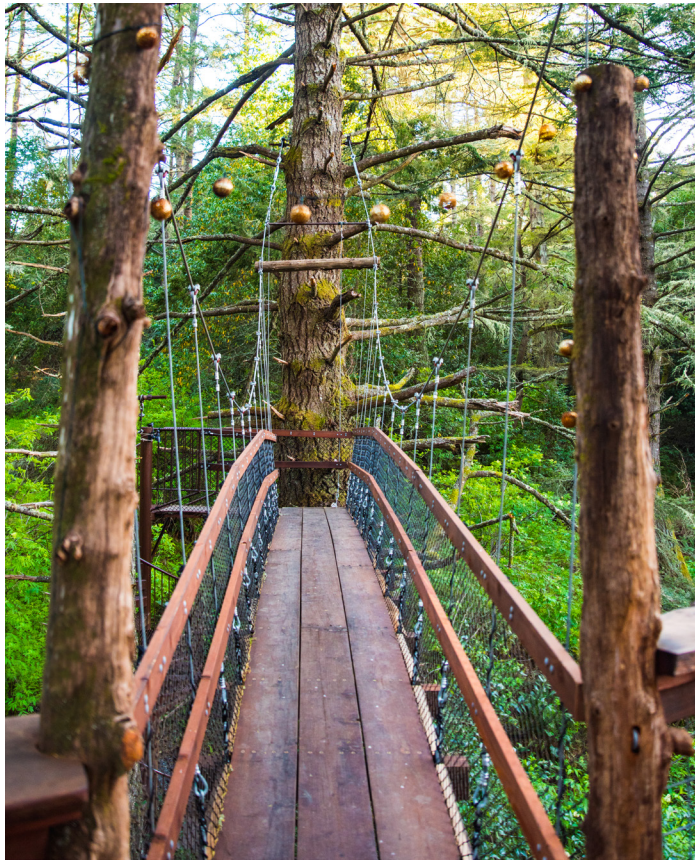
MAY YOUR SPIRITS BE BRIGHT



# HITCHED *and* HAPPY

Wake Up in California's  
Premier Redwood Treehouse

Photographed & Written by Silas Fallstich



stretch our legs. We catch sight of the perch nestled discreetly into the canopy. It looks as if it has always existed in this spot. A wrought iron spiral staircase leads upwards to a suspension bridge. This is one delicate piece of artwork, and we get to rest our little heads here. When we reach the landing we ditch our boots and the glass doors hinge at our feet. Redwood aroma hits me square in the face, this isn't a smell, this is a knockout of sensory magic. I've never had this strong of a single scent come at me, I'm KO'd, I'm knocked out, I'm done for. Our quick orientation to the cabin takes less than 10 minutes, 8 of those minutes belong to the aroma. We learn about the many features. It's the small details that create the sense of functional artistry. A slender bookshelf crafted from a salvaged tree, bathroom fixtures and details sourced from all natural elements. The most quaint and perfectly placed bathroom sink. The glass walled shower, suspended above the forest and exposed to every piece of the forest. This is much more than a destination, it's an active piece of art you can make your own. After immersing ourselves in the sights and smells of the treehouse we enjoy a brief chat with our hosts and then are left to ourselves.

The first time a little wind hits the house we feel the gentle sway, it feels unsteady and unnatural but also peaceful. Like a boat floating on a sea of clouds. More unexpected than unsettling. The features of this location exist as an extension of the natural environment. You feel your surroundings, a sense of tranquility is always present.

We cook in the BBQ. We eat loads of crackers and fancy NorCal cheese. We spoil our taste buds with local IPA. Crushing our sense of taste with every mouthful of flavor. By the end of it all we have eaten ourselves sleepy. We retire to a nice evening of reading and that is when it really happens. It isn't just the aroma or the gentle swaying, it's the lack of everything else. Nothing is here but this. The redwood smell, the sway of the trees, the happenstance chirp of a bird and the implicit existence of nothing else. The silence. That's it. The pure, enjoyable silence. I can't read, I can't do anything other than lay in this bed and marvel at where we are. I feel like a baby bird. Hatched and waiting. Hatched and happy. The silence must be getting to me because I'm quickly unconscious.

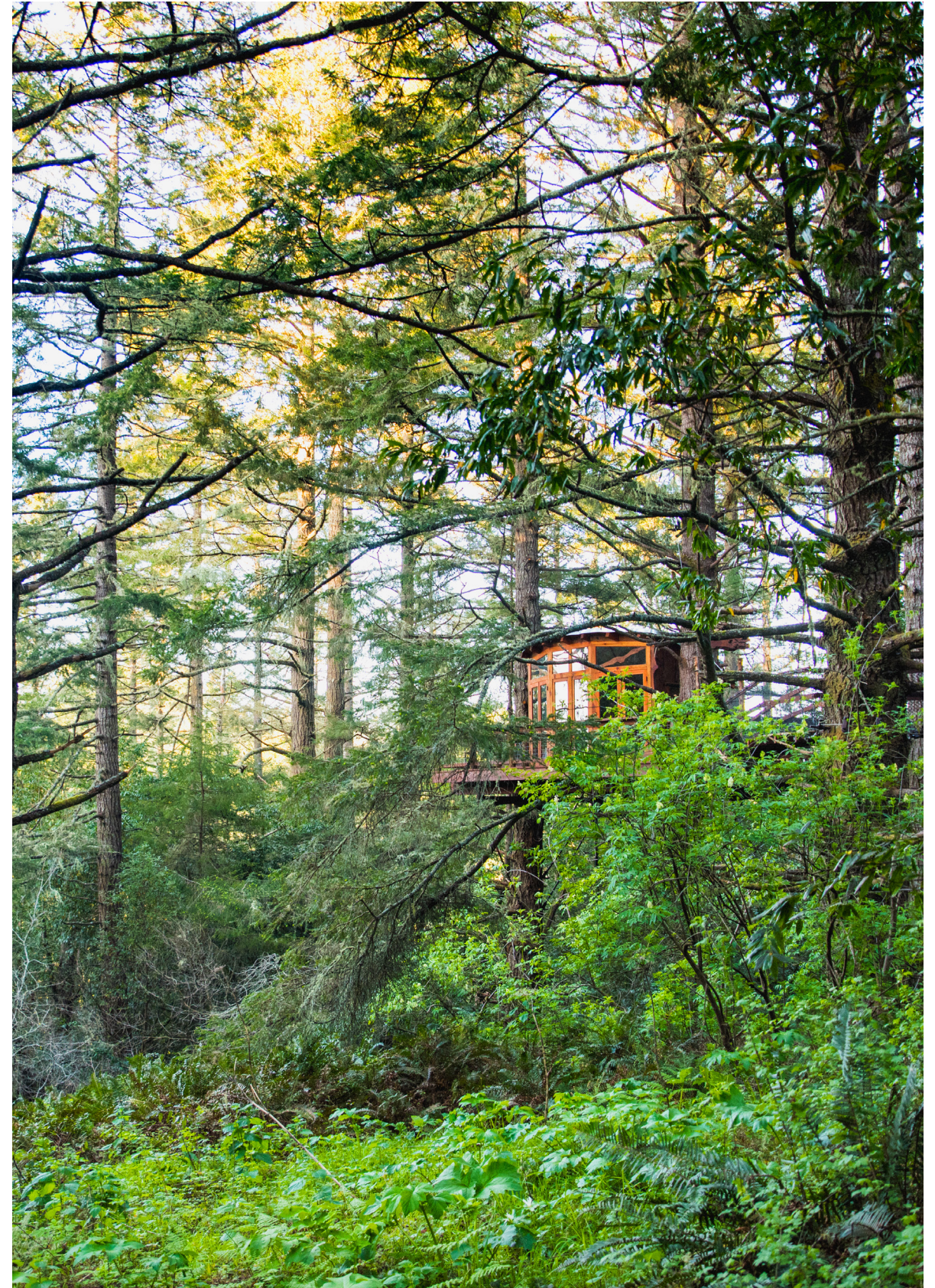
The morning light, seeps into the forest. It's ethereal, warm and natural. The same sensory feelings exist but they're becoming more a piece of



It's mid-afternoon, we've just arrived at Salmon Creek Ranch. There are no salmon here. Or at least if there are they have nothing to do with this visit. We are two minutes into our stay and eager little goats are aggressively eating from our palms. Eating is the wrong idea, that's wrong. They're consuming from bottles we hold. They're so eager that they don't stop to breathe. Our hosts, Lesley and John, explain that Daisy May and Violet were abandoned by their mother, based on their enthusiasm for feeding maybe one mom was not enough. From the feeding zone we discard our car, downgrade our food, supplies and luggage to a wheelbarrow and self transport ourselves down a muddy slope. Earlier I purchased used rain boots for \$7. They're my new favorite article of clothing. My girlfriend had to go to the local hardware store and purchase her brand new pair for \$35. She still holds some animosity. She first spotted the pair of used slickers that instantly catapulted me into a self-proclaimed local attire stardom. I even pair the rest of my costume to them. I'm a Bodega Bay tourist in every meaning of the word.

Down hill we travel. Our hosts give me the pleasure of driving my own wheelbarrow. I feel so much more at home. I've fed the goats, I've done my best to imitate the local garb and now I'm wheeling my own wheels. We pit stop at the egg processing room. This is unexpected. We learn all about duck eggs, about a man from Australia who pays over \$30 for 12 eggs. We learn more than learners learn while being taught. We even get to clean a few of the richest eggs.

Further down the hill we go. Through a rainy old-growth forest. It's saturated. It isn't a long walk, and it's all downhill, it feels good to





and sampled our way through half their offerings. We are well on our way to toasty. I can't stop drinking the Grapefruit IPA, it's the perfect balance of citrus, fruit flavor and hops. At 7% and with little food in my belly, I feel good fast. We interrupt sips with rounds of Yahtzee, a pastime that creeps into our routine quite often. It must be the excess of beer because I'm actually winning a few rounds. Or possibly my arithmetic is a bit more inaccurate than my sobriety.

Eventually we leave the Crooked Goat, a little wobbly, the name's meaning becoming clearer than we intend to admit. We still feel good about ourselves. We meander slowly to the car, allowing the hops and grapefruit to seep from our heads. Before long we are strolling downhill back to the treehouse with a wheelbarrow full of supplies.

Rejuvenated by the walk through the forest we pack a light bag and head down trail towards the river. The walking is steep but well footed. Jenna discovers a salamander along the way. She always seems to find these little wildlife treats. The beast clings to her like she's its long lost mom. Further down we stroll halfheartedly along the river. It's muddy, but easy going. We hike through the ranch campground and make promises to visit sometime soon. We are happy to be outside enjoying some of the ranch's 400 acres of land.

We return to the treehouse for some afternoon vino. We are quickly turning into recluses. Looking for any reason to just be here. Be present. Be on the deck, in the bed or beating back our binge in the floating shower. I want to sleep in there. It's the full nest affect. No need to worry about being completely naked and exposed, the only person to see is your partner, a few songs birds and the occasional squirrel.

Before long we return to BBQ more. Chatting about the goats, dogs, cows, and life on the farm. We purchase steaks from the on ranch Mercantile. They're the perfect cut. Juicy, massive and guaranteed to kill any buzz. We drink more to wane off the feeling of sobriety. Then play backgammon to digest our meal. We are back in bed. She's reading the pages away. Digesting her second book of the trip. I'm still just here. Not a worry. Not a thing on my mind but being perched in the place. Not anywhere else but here in this cozy bed, happy as a baby bird. ✕

[www.salmoncreekranch.com](http://www.salmoncreekranch.com)



the experience. They're becoming normal. We forage for breakfast but nothing is giving. We cruise to Roadhouse Coffee in Bodega Bay. The friendly barista/shop owner greets us and makes a grand cappuccino in irregular and mismatched mugs. The place is a ramshackle of custom wares, art and vintage belongings. Pastries and caffeine tide us over before we backtrack towards Sebastopol for a supply run.

Sebastopol is a mecca in this neck of the Northern Coast. I knew the treehouse would be amazing. I knew I'd like everything about it. That didn't stop me from making the trip, but Sebastopol, this was unexpected. It's hip. There are stores, boutiques, hipster coffee joints, groceries, banks, tourist traps, dive bars, you name it and they have it plus a surplus of flannel. We enter Community Market and spend more time than is needed restoring our supplies, we grab four of the heftiest pork sausages I've encountered. Once the cooler is packed we are on foot exploring the industrial area. We hit the Little Four Store and pick up some of the cutest wares around. A hat for my niece-to-be, a necklace for my girlfriend, sneakily packed by the shop owner.

Next door is Crooked Goat Brewery, not open until noon, our hop deprived pallets are already watering. We kill time walking across half the downtown for ice. It's a good voyage. A shoe store is selling rain boots for \$45, I'm still laughing, my girlfriend frowns.

We are the first eager beavers into the brewery. The bartender doesn't seem to mind. We say we will only have one but before long we've tasted

