

# ELLEDECOR

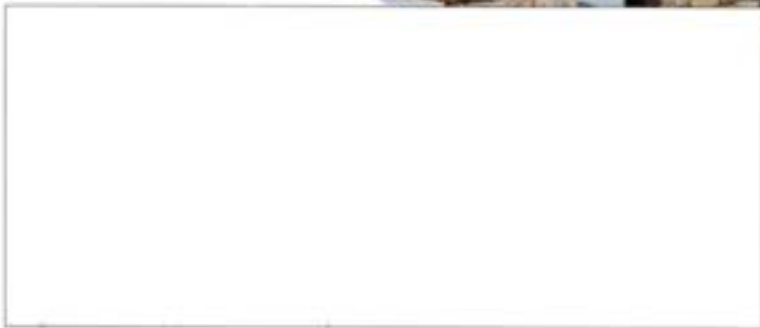
Daniel  
Boulud's  
**THANKSGIVING  
MIRACLE**

*Luxury*  
AND  
**THE  
BATH**

**THE**  
*private world*  
**OF A  
MONTANA  
CHALET**



NOVEMBER 2017  
ELLEDECOR.COM



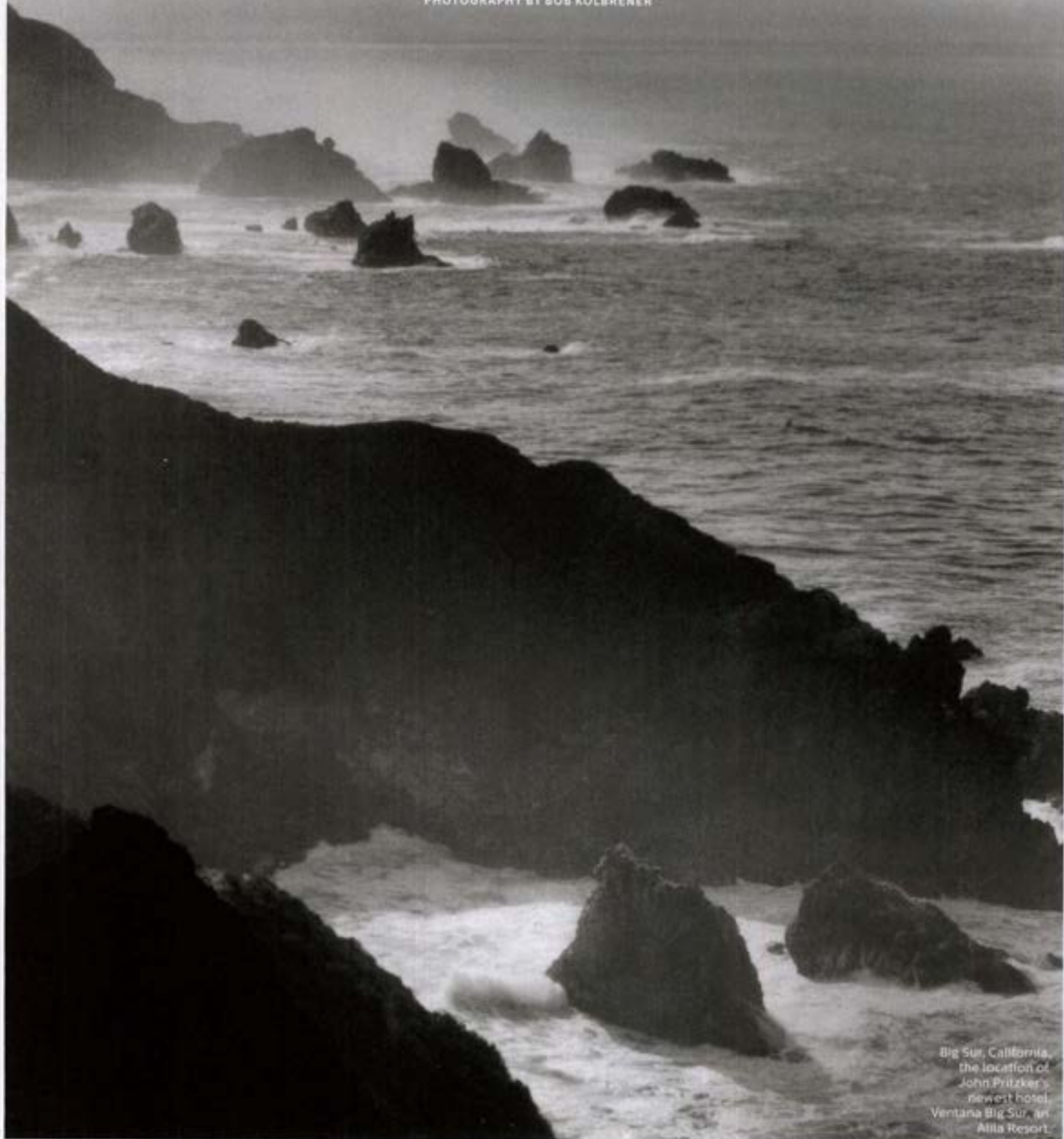
**THE DOMESTICATION** *of*  
**BRUCE WILLIS**  
*by M. Night Shyamalan*

# COASTAL DISTURBANCE

A HOTEL VETERAN LANDS IN BIG SUR AND RATTLES A LOCAL LEGEND.

BY JOHN PRITZKER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BOB KOLBRENER



Big Sur, California,  
the location of  
John Pritzker's  
newest hotel,  
Ventana Big Sur, an  
Aria Resort.

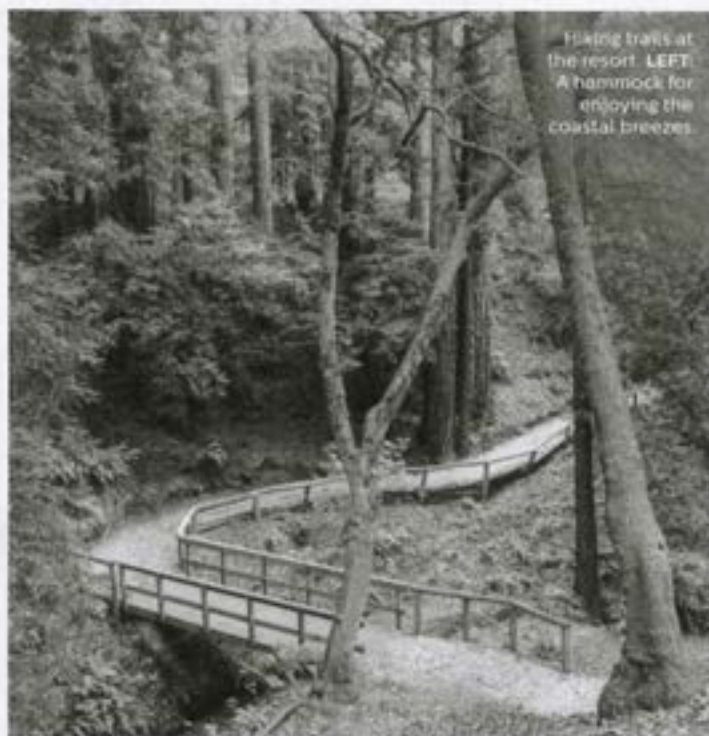
"There is still, in the streets." So wrote Jack Kerouac in *Big Sur*, his oft-cited though perhaps least famous tome (compared to *The Dharma Bums* or *On the Road*), which he completed after a personal battle with fame compelled him to move West. Kerouac wasn't the only one who looked to the area for inspiration. Ansel Adams, Henry Miller, and even the Red Hot Chili Peppers have all come to Big Sur to hear the sound of the Pacific pushing through the Santa Lucia Mountains, past lavender fields and the leaves of ancient redwoods, without the accompanying whoosh of cars.

Spanish settlers named it *El País Grande del Sur*, or "Big Country of the South." Everything here is bigger: the trees, the cliffs, and the ocean, which twists along Highway 1, evading the horizon line, so it seems to go on forever.

The recent storms have been equally epic but less poetic, fires and rains of biblical proportions that since early 2017 have rearranged the roads and landscape. As a result, Big Sur has been bereft of the travelers who, along with the local flora, fauna, and human characters, animate this heavenly stretch of the central California coast.



A fully restored Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge, the main artery, will reopen this fall. And when you drive over it heading south, hang a left and you'll arrive at Ventana Big Sur, an Alila Resort, which we have turned from a much-loved but neglected hotel (the former Ventana Inn & Spa) into a world-class



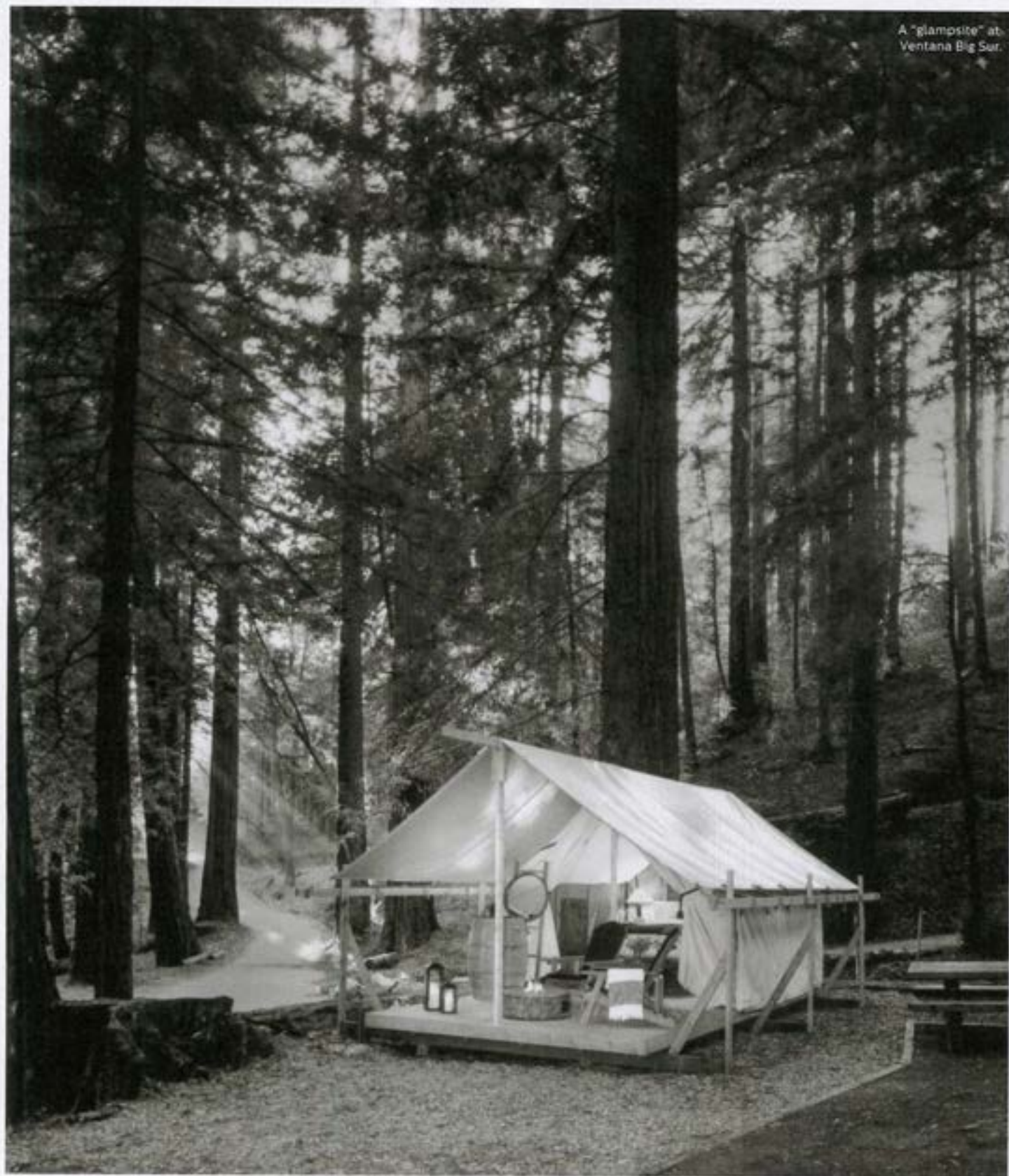
Hiking trails at the resort. LEFT: A hammock for enjoying the coastal breezes.

destination. I like to think of it this way: Remember the movie *Easy Rider*? This is the pad Wyatt and Billy built.

The Post family were among Big Sur's earliest settlers, and they built their home at what is now the entrance to our property. Soon, the Post House Bakery & BBQ will smell of cinnamon buns, coffee, and baby back ribs slathered in the family's secret barbecue sauce. The bakery is only a five-minute walk from our 15 "glamping" tents that sit next to a brook tucked in a redwood canyon. Room service in the forest? Hell, yeah! ▶



A newly redesigned room at Ventana Big Sur.



A "glampsite" at Ventana Big Sur.

Each of the property's 59 rooms and suites has been completely remodeled, as have the Sur House restaurant and the Social House—gathering spots for wine, music, billiards, and general breeze-shooting. A new Alila spa, featuring Japanese soaking hot baths and products by Arcona Los Angeles, will open in the spring.

As I reflect on the past year on a stroll through one of our meandering trails into another Pacific sunset, Kerouac, again, comes to mind: "And when the fog's over and the stars and the moon come out at night it'll be a beautiful sight." *Ventana Big Sur, an Alila Resort, officially opens in mid-October. From \$600 per night. [alilahotels.com/ventana](http://alilahotels.com/ventana). ■*

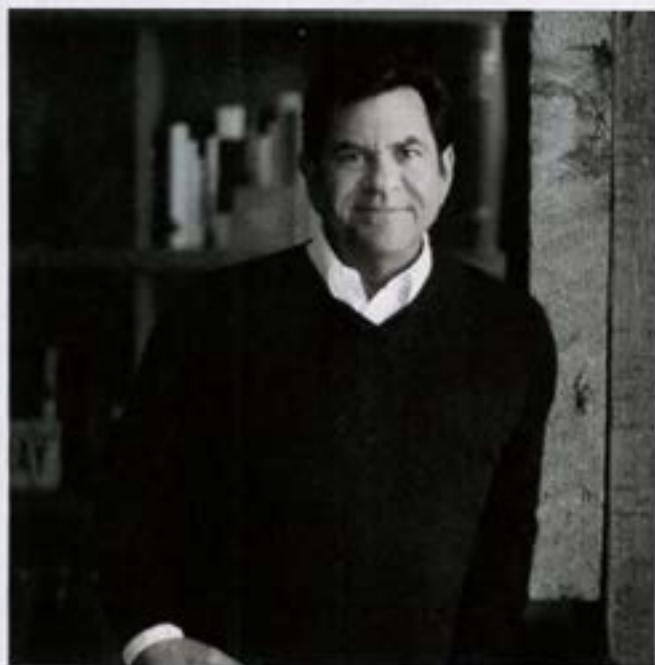


A redwood circle.



**SOPHIE PERA**

The London-based stylist, who joins ELLE DECOR this month as European editor at large, produced "Next to Normal," on page 184, and Mood Board, on page 66. "As Diana Vreeland said, you gotta have style. It's what helps you get up in the morning," Pera says. "It's your home, your books, everything you love that makes you happy."



**JOHN PRITZKER**

The son of the founder of Hyatt hotels, Pritzker—a hotel and real estate developer who writes about his newest venture in Big Sur, California, on page 108—was born to be a host. "Hoteliers are pleasers," he says. "There's no bigger thrill than overhearing somebody talk about a great experience at your hotel. That's what they remember."



**NANCY HASS**

We asked the New York-based writer, whose feature about a classic Manhattan apartment designed by Robert Couturier appears on page 168, to name her favorite piece of furniture.

"An armchair by Danish minimalist Poul Kjaerholm," she replied without hesitation. "It's the most beautiful, least comfortable piece ever designed."



**ALEXEI HAY**

"Humbleness in a subject makes for good pictures," says Hay, who photographed this month's cover story about Emma Heming and Bruce Willis on page 184. "People on the street usually have that in spades. But every once in a while, you meet a celebrity who's been around long enough to have been humbled by his or her career, rather than inflated. Willis was exactly like that."