

Center of Attraction

Hotel Ynez funnels the history of Central California into a contemporary vision of escape and relaxation

by **ABIGAIL STONE** photos by **KARYN MILLET**



CLOCKWISE: A view of the front desk; the property features a number of outdoor spaces; pops of color infuse the guest suites with vibrancy.

CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST increasingly draws vacationers lured by its proximity to L.A. and its award-winning wineries. The former Meadowlark Inn, a beloved mid-century modern motor court nestled on two private acres outside the storybook village of Solvang, has been completely reimaged, fusing Santa Barbara County's rustic cowboy-and-ranch past with its refined and elegant present. "Our mission is to rescue historical places with quirks and character and repurpose them into modern venues that both travelers and locals will be inspired by," says Kimberly Walker, one half of the Nomada Hotel Group, which also counts the Skyview Los Alamos and San Luis Obispo's Granada Hotel & Bistro among its properties.

Here that meant ripping up the parking lot in favor of planting a native garden where Adirondack chairs cluster around fire pits and Moroccan lanterns hang from the branches of a central oak tree. Hammocks, crocheted by a tribe of women in the Bolivian Amazon, swing on the private patios outside each of the 22 guest rooms, while pillows from Marrakesh-based Maison

Blaoui, crisp white Matouk linens and bright blankets from Wallace & Sewell warm the beds. Start the day with oven-fresh banana bread or apple cake before exploring the surrounding areas on complementary Linus bicycles and e-bikes,

indulging in in-room spa services or soaking up the sun around the newly restored pool. Wind down with specialty BBQ dinner kits packed with house-seasoned meats and veggies ready to cook on retro personal Weber grills. "Nomada began as a dream by the fire with friends," says Walker. "Ten years later it includes three hotels that have energized their communities, created jobs, supported artisans and brought together a team of creative people who are passionate about locally rooted hospitality."

