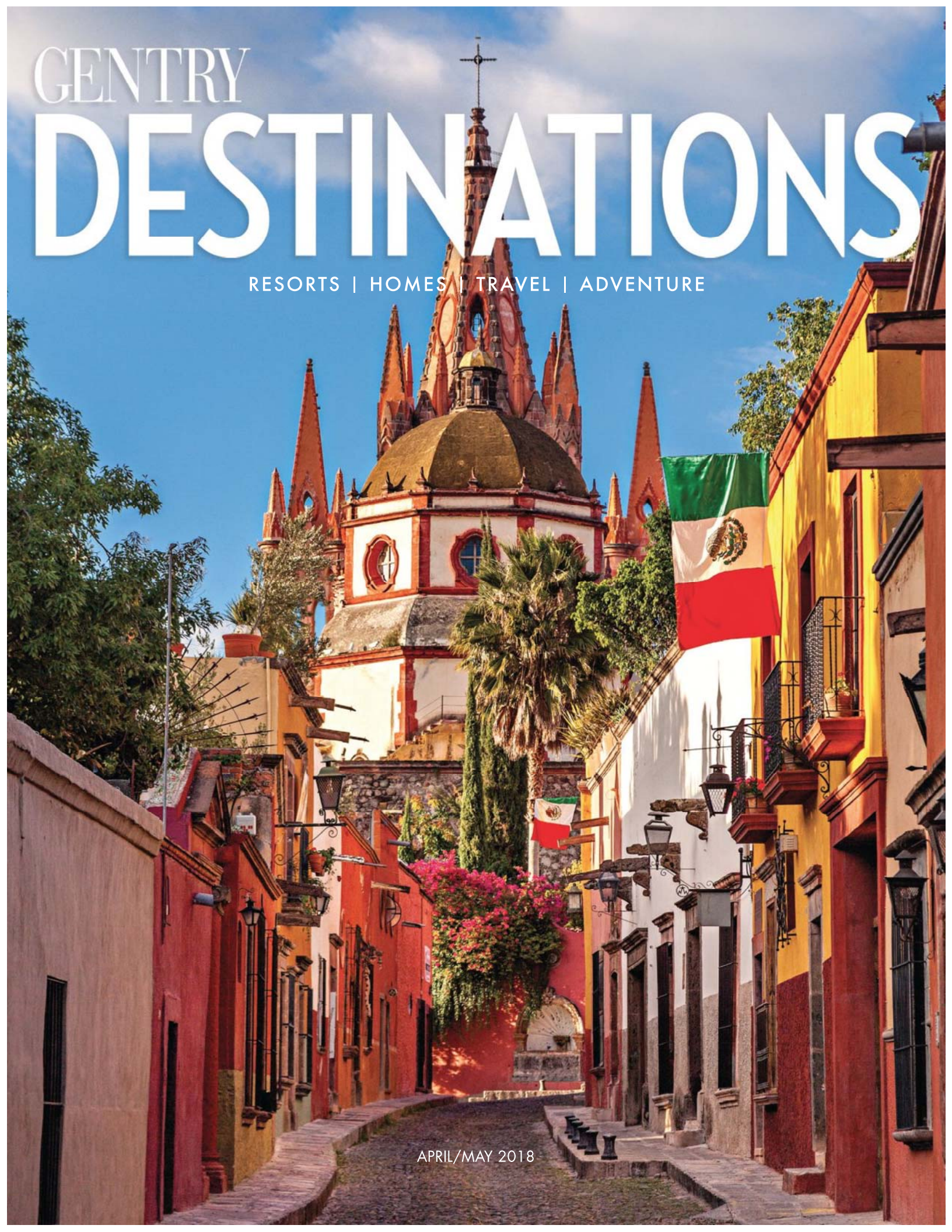


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APRIL/MAY 2018





The Clement Palo Alto



# IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME

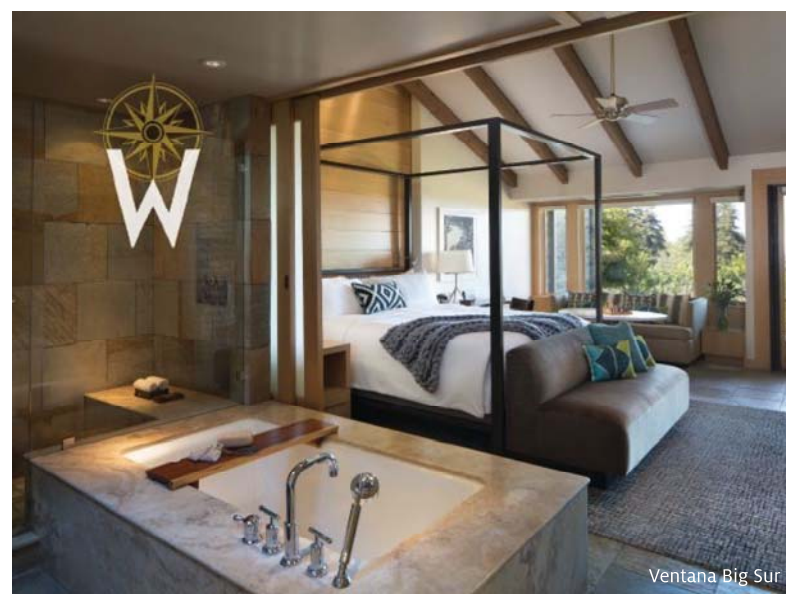
*Gentry Destinations'* Karen Salama catches up with the team at BraytonHughes—the San Francisco design firm responsible for some of the world's most beautiful hotels and resorts.

From the Louvre Pyramid going up to the Berlin Wall coming down, 1989 was an undeniably monumental date in architecture. San Francisco-based **BraytonHughes Design Studios** arrived on the scene in that same seminal year. Ever since, its award-winning “total design” aesthetic has inspired some incredible destination getaways. The firm's projects currently span five continents, but this hometown hero remains true to its Bay Area roots. Our region's innate creativity coupled with BraytonHughes' encyclopedic local knowledge produces contemporary yet ageless properties.

This winning combination of global citizenry infused with San Franciscan sensibilities is exemplified by Kiko Singh. The BraytonHughes principal, who grew up in Hawaii, told *Gentry Destinations* that her mother worked with Pan Am Airways for 35 years. Subsequently, Singh became a world traveler herself, with a decidedly international design outlook. She has called the City by the Bay home since 2003, however, and takes justifiable pride in a recently completed area assignment. The **Clement Palo Alto** truly embodies the architectural ethos of, “If you build it, they will come.”

Tight vacancy rates speak to the steady stream of visitors flocking to this upscale accommodation, which winningly melds mid-century modern with contemporary glamour. Its 23 suites are the last word in luxury, and the BraytonHughes-designed interior eschews cookie-cutter features often found in hospitality chains. Instead, Singh says, the boutique hotel next to Stanford's campus is “designed to feel more like a Palo Alto manor house. It provides guests with an all-inclusive experience, including access to private chefs. With visitors flying in from China and umpteen other time zones, the fully-stocked pantry and other features can help occupants unwind and make the place feel like home.” Singh also highlights a holistic “indoor-outdoor” blend in the rooms that fosters “residential vibes with a Northern California feel.” Wonderfully playful touches include walls lined with guitars.

**Ventana Big Sur**, an Alila Resort, is another freshly finished project by BraytonHughes. The storied 160-acre compound, home to majestic redwoods and breathtaking Pacific Ocean views, has been a fixture of California's Central Coast since the 1970s. The redesign, with its welcoming social house and wonderful roaring fireplaces, comes complete with custom leather desk blotters emblazoned with quotes by famous authors waxing lyrical about the beauty of Big Sur. Such distinctive →



Ventana Big Sur



details imbue the resort with a uniquely specific sense of place.

The property's social house lobby was revamped by Brayton-Hughes into a trio of separate spaces. The main music and library room encourages guests to relax in large leather chairs and browse the bookshelf. An adjacent game room is furnished with a pool table and several interactive group games. The bar room features a communal table for a convivial atmosphere. Architects also refreshed the Sur House restaurant with intimate dining spaces, while the "glamping" campsite bathrooms now incorporate enlarged showers and custom-built shelving.

For the exclusive spa, BraytonHughes commissioned photographer Chere Pafford to provide beautiful black-and-white oceanscape images of the surrounding region. Work by noted macramé artist Holly Mueller, meanwhile, hangs in each guest room. Visitor suites have been further enhanced with exquisite new nightstand glass lamps containing beach sand. Indeed, curating natural design elements is a key element of the firm's architectural philosophy.

"People are finally embracing timelessness, and understand there is inherent value in not necessarily chasing trends," Singh explains. "A great deal of thought goes into guest room experiences. Increasingly, hotels are viewed as representing more of a sanctuary space." The goal, she adds, is to create "an area to rejuvenate, an oasis of calm even amid the hustle and bustle of big cities such as San Francisco. It's now less about being over-the-top than embracing peaceful features, which often include elements of whimsy. And, in an era of ever-escalating construction costs, developers are increasingly leaning on designers for inspiration".

Three of BraytonHughes' seven partners are female. So, with apologies to playwright Robert Bolt, Singh truly is "a woman for all seasons!" Quite literally, the **Four Seasons Tunis** represents an impressive addition to the firm's design portfolio. The five-star resort hotel, which opened in December 2017, is situated in the upscale Gammarth neighborhood of the Tunisian capital. Brayton Hughes designed all interiors of the property, spanning some 35 suites, four restaurants, and an 11-treatment-room spa overlooking the sea.

Stone sourced from the nearby area, along with gorgeous sculpture and mosaic floors, all testify to the importance of embodying regional sensibilities. Guestrooms, featuring locally produced rugs and artwork, further evoke the exotic ambiance of North Africa.

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Four Seasons Tunis