

'Glamping' removes all the roughing-it from camping

By Sam McManis, Sacramento Bee

BIG SUR – Over the past few days, while “roughing it” on the rugged Central Coast, I have slept between high-thread-count sheets made toasty by a heated mattress, cringed as my bloated carcass was kneaded like a blob of sourdough by a sadistic redheaded masseuse named Nora, gazed at a coniferous hillside while submerged in the amniotic warmth of a hot tub, and seen a dazzling ocean view from a bed inside a yurt.

I also have eaten a \$22 Caesar salad, with free-range chicken, at a campground. I have hiked on private trails where ticks wouldn't dare alight on your epidermis. I have been basted, scalp to toenails, with medicinal oils purported to promote healing. I have lingered under a hot, pulsating shower, all lathered up with a loofah and artisan peppermint-and-grapefruit soap.

Yeah, it's been a nice time.

But, tell me, have I really been camping?

“No, not at all,” said traveler Molly Lindgren, cradling a coffee cup outside her yurt at Treebones Resort, equidistant between Hearst Castle to the south and Big Sur proper to the north. “And that's a good thing. I hate camping. I did it as a child and loved it back then. But now, I don't want to be bothered. The great thing here is, you're in this yurt, it's totally in nature, but comfortable. You're not roughing it so much.”

What I've been doing, snooty as it sounds, is “glamping.”

That's the smashed-together term meaning “glamorous camping,”

a high-end activity for those seeking to commune with nature without struggling with troublesome tent poles, without sleeping on the cold, unforgiving ground, while substituting organic, locally grown cuisine for reheated beans and franks, and happily trading up from s'mores to tiramisu.

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