

“Nature...Abstracted” Art Retreat with Jennifer McHugh

Rancho la Bellota, Baja CA
May 28 – 31, 2026



About Rancho la Bellota: Rancho la Bellota is a beautiful, rustic working horse/guest ranch in Baja, California. It's nestled down in an oak-lined canyon, just north of the Valle de Guadalupe wine country between Tecate and Ensenada (the ranch is in the center of the above photo). It's completely off the grid, meaning no electricity, and this makes the whole experience even better. Don't worry, there's hot water, solar lanterns, and plenty of candles! The owners, Raul and Caroline, are a wonderful couple and the most gracious hosts. They make us feel truly spoiled the whole weekend!



Accommodations: Accommodations are charming adobe guest cabins with private bathrooms. Each cabin sleeps two, one on a full-size bed and the other on a twin under bunk bed.

Art workshop description: While observing & soaking up the ranch's beauty, colors and patterns, we will work on two projects over the course of the long weekend. Our main work of art is a mixed-media abstract landscape on canvas, using acrylic paint, paper, fabric and various tools for mark-making to create texture & patterns. The other creation is a painted paper sketchbook, used to capture personal moments and memories at the ranch. Although I encourage lots of photo-taking to have inspiration at your fingertips, these projects will not be planned ahead. Our intention is to be fully immersed in the process, watching our creative works evolve intuitively. No prior experience is needed, just an open mind and willingness to explore in a very relaxed and fun atmosphere.



Horseback riding: About 30 horses roam the ranch land and when it's time to ride, Raul wrangles them up and brings them to the corral. These horses are well-trained, gentle and know the trails very well...but you must be able to mount your horse from the ground & in good overall physical health to ride. Safety is number one! The ride is 1-2 hours and absolutely picturesque every step of the way. It's always my favorite part of the weekend and a memorable part of the retreat.



NOTE: The horseback riding is completely optional. If you prefer to stay at the ranch and relax, read, paint, go for a walk, hike, or just nap in the hammock, you're more than welcome to skip this activity.



Basic itinerary: Thursday - 11 a.m. caravan to Tecate border & leave cars in secure lot on U.S. side, our hosts meet us at the border and drive us to RLB, cold margaritas await us, relax/get familiar with the ranch/dip in pool, ranch dinner, tequila tasting, campfire & stargazing under the most amazing starlit sky

Friday - ranch breakfast, art time, lunch, drive to Valle de Guadalupe for afternoon of wine tasting, back to the ranch for dinner, campfire & stargazing or relax in room

Saturday - ranch breakfast, art time, lunch, horseback ride OR relax at the ranch, dinner, campfire & stargazing or relax in room

Sunday - coffee & pastries, art time, light brunch, pack up/leave around 1 p.m., back in San Diego by 5 p.m.



Cost: \$875 includes all transportation in Mexico, 3 nights shared accommodations, 3 delicious, home-cooked meals per day, adult beverages (margaritas, beer, tequila), freshly-made juices at breakfast & lunch, 7-8 hours of professional workshop instruction, a beautiful guided horseback ride, and an afternoon of wine tasting in Valle de Guadalupe wine country.

NOTE: A 50% (non-refundable, unless your spot is filled) deposit of \$438 is due now to secure your spot, and the remainder the week before the retreat. Wine tastings & purchases are on your own. ALL art materials are provided...woo hoo!

I hope you can join me! E-mail with any questions: jgmchugh@cox.net xo Jen



WHAT PREVIOUS GUESTS HAD TO SAY...

I had the best time at the ranch. It is beautiful, peaceful, and I felt such a deep sense of relaxation staying on the property. The weekend was so perfect between eating great food, spending quality time with like-minded people, making new friends, sitting around the fire at night and riding the amazing horses.....it was all so glorious. THEN on top of it, doing art with Jen was the icing on the top of a perfect weekend. Love her perspective how to look at your surroundings and translate it on to your canvas. I can't wait to go again! * *Melanie K.*

What a magical art retreat! Give yourself the gift of disconnecting from all the distractions of the world and focus on nature and art. Jennifer is a gem. She does a fantastic job organizing the retreat and creates a fun and welcoming environment for artists. If you're looking for an off-the-grid, creative getaway, I highly recommend it! * *Karla P.*

I had such a fabulous time at Jen's art retreat. I was a bit intimidated in the beginning as I went solo and was a beginner artist. But I was met with wonderful women...so warm, friendly and fun! This was not a competitive type of art retreat, much more playful and collective. And the ranch was so special with horseback riding, quiet nights around the camp fire, good tequila, dogs roaming around and the best food prepared each day. Jen is a great teacher, loves to get messy, brings all the supplies and with her guidance allows you to be free...to create. She is always available to assist and I love when she just sticks her fingers in the paint and goes for it! Everything was just amazing and I can't wait to return! * *Michele G.*

Jennifer's art retreat in Baja, Mexico, was an incredible experience with so many layers. The ranch was comfortable, charming, and truly authentic Baja. The horseback ride was unforgettable—a must-do. The art classes were the highlight and struck the perfect balance between guidance and creative freedom. Overall, it was a truly immersive way to experience a weekend away. * *Tracy B.*

I had dreamed of taking one of Jen's art workshops for years, so I was thrilled when she announced she was hosting an art retreat in Mexico! Our 4 days were filled with laughter, art, horses, delicious authentic food and the beautiful, natural surroundings Rancho la Bellota. Our group ranged from career artists to hobbyists but skill level didn't matter. Jen is a natural, intuitive instructor who gently guided all of us through her processes with her encouraging, positive energy. I left the retreat with several art pieces and my heart filled with many precious moments I shared with new friends who will be with me for a lifetime. * *Lin A.*

Jen's art retreat at Rancho la Bellota was an incredible experience—not just an inspiring location for creating art but also a true Baja adventure. With ranch-to-table meals, dedicated art sessions, horseback riding, and a day trip into the Valle de Guadalupe, it was an ideal weekend off-the-grid. * *Lauren L.*

If you want a fun, relaxing, and comfortable place to create your art, this weekend retreat is for you! The adventure starts at the border, and doesn't stop until you say good bye. The energy of the ranch is intoxicating with amazing food, art sessions, horseback riding, tequila and wine tasting and quiet evenings relaxing by the fire. The owners of the ranch are amazing and the artists from my retreat have become some of my favorite friends. You can't go wrong with Jen as your guide...she's the best! * *Ann G.*

Jen's art retreat at the ranch is a wonderful weekend of adventure, new friendships and art. I have had the pleasure of attending this fun weekend two years in a row and learned a lot about creating abstract art inspired by the beauty of Baja. The horseback riding, wine tasting and delicious meals prepared on-site are just a few of the many highlights. If you're lucky to get a space in her retreat, you'll have the time of your life. * *Donna S.*