

PETER LOFTUS

Coast Near Lucia, 2008
Oil on canvas, 24 x 36 in



COURTESY: R. BLITZER GALLERY

PATRICE VECCHIONE

Where Music Takes Its Sound from Sun and Stars and Wind and Waves

The Monterey Jazz
Festival Artist
in Residency

Let the rich life run to the roots again.

—Robinson Jeffers, from “Return”

Could it be only ten miles south, down the coast from the chichi village of Carmel and a few miles east, up through the redwoods, that another world exists, an entirely rural one, a world to put the daily rush and grind at such a distance that the responsibilities of everyday life seem to disappear, if only for a little while?

Palo Colorado Road is an uphill turn off ocean-side Highway 1. Quickly the way becomes dark and thickly forested; in some places the road is wide enough only for a single car to get by. Tiny fairyland cabins perch on the hillsides. About four curvy miles up, at the ridge top, there's a nearly nine-hundred-acre property. A former gentleman's ranch, Glen Deven was owned by Dr. Sealy and Virginia Mudd, and following their deaths, was left to the Big Sur Land Trust.

The open-faced land holds several buildings, including the home of its former owners. Past those structures it's raw, unfettered Big Sur territory—hillsides wholly exposed to the elements, dramatic ridges that appear to have been cut into the sky, and deep below, dark canyons and creeks. Moths, butterflies, lizards, and lions inhabit this place.

Sitting on the ground across from a mountain's flank does something to a person; it rights any misplaced sense of self-importance, brings one to level, and gives a day ballast. Walking on land absent of human traffic untangles the mind's cobwebs, relaxes car-weary joints. For an artist, such placement can do even more; the imagination, like the feet, is free to wander.

As part of their bequest, the Mudds stipulated that Glen Deven serve artists. Virginia Mudd was a writer. She held parties for the Bach Festival musicians at her home. When musician and composer Bill Frisell was invited to Glen Deven for ten days in 2012 as part of the artist-in-residence program, a collaboration between the Big Sur Land Trust and the Monterey Jazz Festival, he produced some of his finest compositions. According to Tim Jackson, artistic director of the Monterey Jazz Festival, “Each year an artist is commissioned to write a piece for the festival. We look for innovative music. Bill is always doing interesting, eclectic work.”

Frisell loved the idea of going to Big Sur. Jackson said, “It was Easter Sunday when Bill arrived. His flight had been delayed, and it was late when he got in and raining really