

LOOK WHO'S TALKING

# FRESH AYRE

Second-generation hotelier Douglas Ayres turns to Paso Robles as a haven of healing, hospitality and harmony.

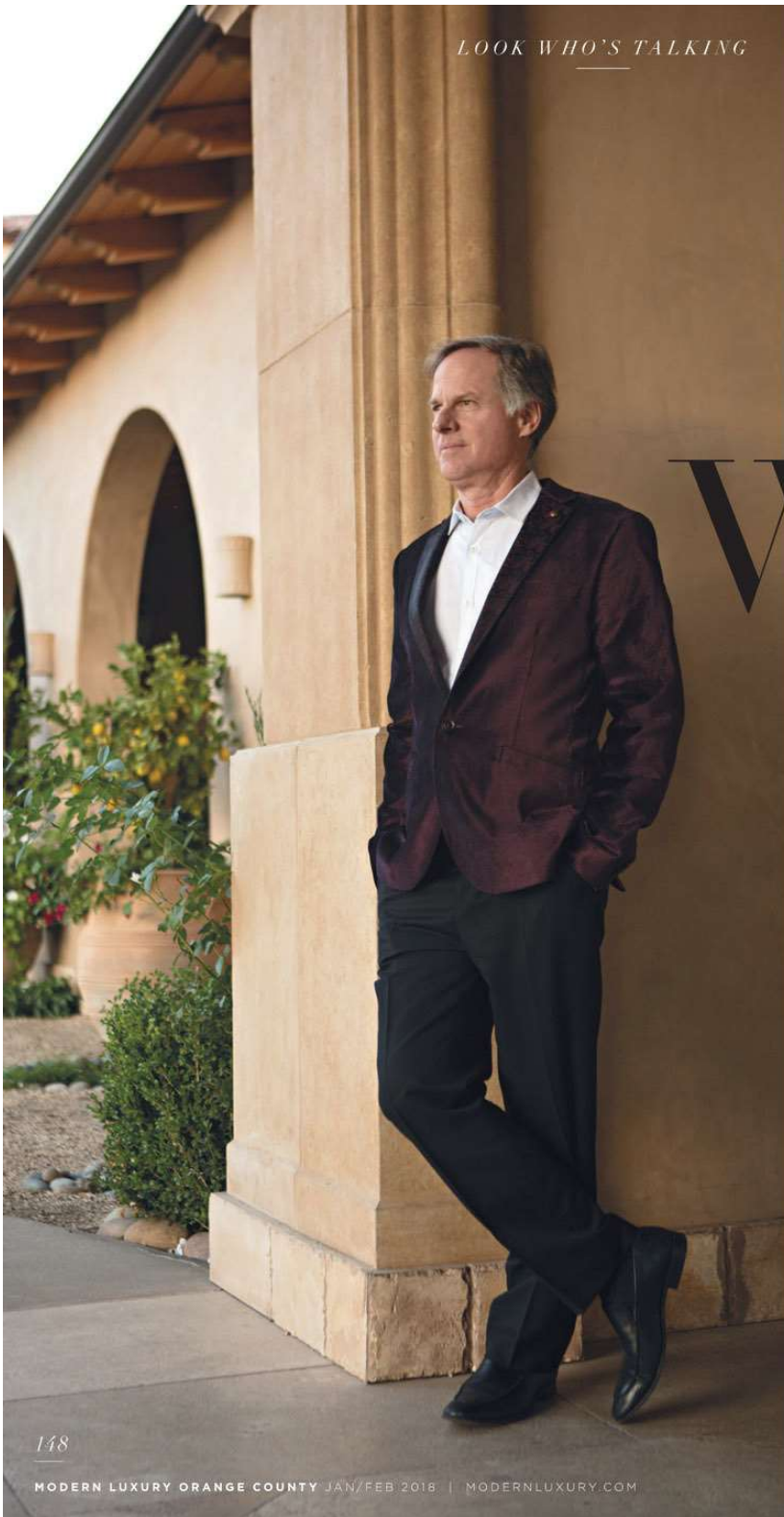
By Priscilla Willis

Photography by Vijat Mohindra

With a hospitality dynasty stretching back to the early 1980s, Douglas Ayres was the last to join his siblings in the operations of the Costa Mesa-based Ayres Hotels brand, founded by his father, Don Ayres Jr. Today, he presides over the daily operations of Allegretto Vineyard Resort Paso Robles (suites from \$369, [allegrettovineyardresort.com](http://allegrettovineyardresort.com)). "Sixteen years ago, I visited Paso Robles and stayed at a bed and breakfast overlooking a vineyard, and I knew this was my destiny," recalls the O.C. native. "I fell in love with the area, its people, the rolling hills and sense of community." But in 2006, tragedy struck. Devastated by the loss of his son Dylan, Ayres' dream was put on hold. Turning inward, he embarked on a spiritual journey—even living in a monastery in the foothills of the Himalayas—yet the hope of Paso Robles never left his rearview mirror. In 2015, he turned his trial into triumph and opened his long-awaited resort. "Allegretto is part of one's journey, where guests can gather with friends, enjoy wonderful wine and food," says Ayres, "and maybe something strikes them while they are here that will help them on their [path] in life."

This month, to promote Ayres' vision of harmonic hospitality, Allegretto is launching docent-led wine and art tours. The hourlong experience includes a tasting of Allegretto's award-winning estate wines and a behind-the-scenes look at the resort's museum-quality collection of art and artifacts, which has been carefully curated by Ayres himself. As for his future, Ayres continues to look forward, taking with him the pains of grief that have propelled him toward creating an oasis of healing and celebration. He says, gratefully: "All my dreams since I was a kid, and along the path of my life—have all been met right here." Now, that's looking at the glass half-full.

PHOT ON LOCATION AT ALLEGRETTO VINEYARD RESORT PASO ROBLES



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