

FINANCIAL TIMES

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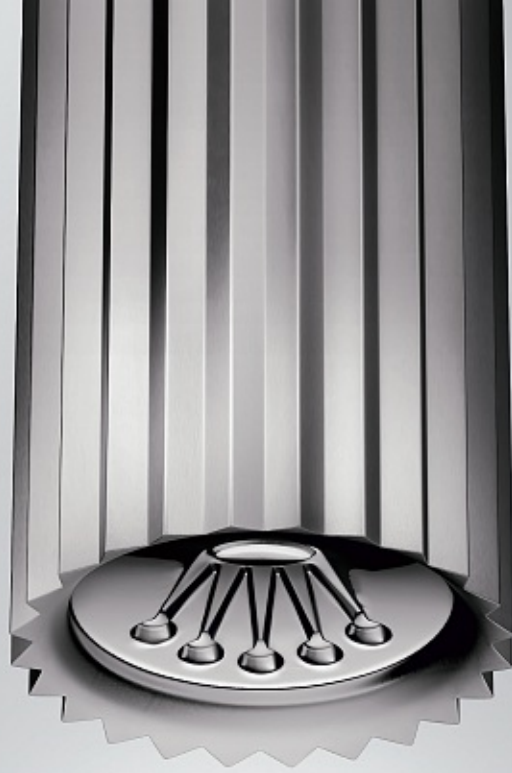
20 MAY
2023

SPRING TRAVEL
SPECIAL

DESTINATION NEXT

The It getaways of 2023

SINGAPORE, ANTARCTICA, JOHANNESBURG, MUMBAI, SUFFOLK, KYOTO, CHICAGO, SAN MINIATO, MARRAKECH, VIETNAM



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A woman with short dark hair and large, round, light-colored earrings stands on a beach. She is wearing a long, rust-colored, short-sleeved dress with a high slit. She is standing on a pile of driftwood. The background shows the ocean with waves and a cloudy sky.

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DIOR

GEM DIOR COLLECTION
Yellow gold and white gold.

HTSI

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2023

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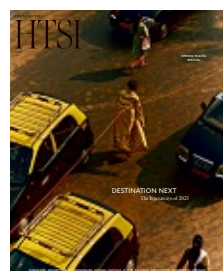
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BHARATH MURUGAIYAN wears BIANCA SAUNDERS satin-finish Sanka trench, POA. METRO leather Pathani shoes, about £39



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PHOTOGRAPH: VIVEK VADOLIYA. BHARATH WEARS ACNE STUDIOS RECYCLED POLYESTER T-SHIRT, €280. PÉROO HAND-CROCHET LEATHER TROUSERS, POA. SUNISEL COTTON BOXER SHORTS, £40. METRO LEATHER PATHANI SHOES, ABOUT £39. NEERA VIVEAS PRADA COTTON VICHY SHIRT, £1,200. PÉROO COTTON HANDWOVEN TROUSERS WITH EMBROIDERED FLOWERS, POA. METRO LEATHER PATHANI SHOES, ABOUT £39





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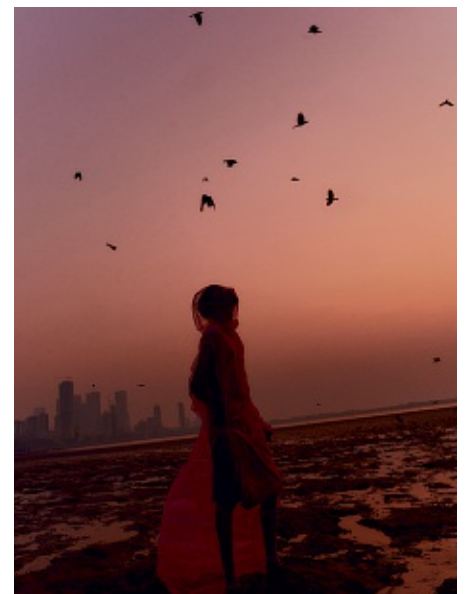
his week's travel issue takes us to some of the places I've heard spoken of most often recently, in a year where most barriers to travel have now been raised. In March, I was lucky to visit Mumbai for a Dior show at the Gateway of India, an awesome experience that indulged the senses and offered a glimpse of a city to which I hope soon to return. The trip also offered an opportunity to visit Chanakya, an embroidery specialist and school that Dior's creative director Maria Grazia Chiuri has worked with, and sponsored, for more than 25 years. More than 1,000 young women have gone through the school's programme that invites those from disadvantaged backgrounds to learn the skills of needlecraft and sets them on the path to a career.

As Jessica Beresford reports in our cover story (page 46), it's one of many initiatives nurturing the craft skills and expertise of artisans who have practised different specialisms for centuries in a country that's anticipated to become the world's third largest economy by 2027. The piece is accompanied by a shoot by photographer Vivek Vadoliya and stylist Nikhil Mansata that offers a captivating portrait of a city and a dazzling combination of colours, flavours, enlightenment and enterprise.

Maria Shollenbarger, our travel editor, spends so much time airborne that few journeys would seem to faze her (read her brilliant report from Singapore, page 60). But what would happen when her adventure included an elderly plus-one? On a trip to Morocco to celebrate her mother's 80th birthday, Maria considers the emotional and physical challenges of travelling with a parent (no surprise, the itinerary gets trimmed back fairly quickly), as well as the enormous privilege of seeing the world through older, wiser and less demanding eyes. Maria's piece is beautifully written and very moving: I hope it inspires anyone worrying about whether their parents can "manage" long-haul travel to take the plunge (page 42).



Right: a portrait of Mumbai (page 46)



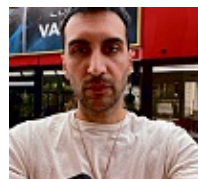
52 PER CENT OF AMERICANS PLAN TO BRING THEIR DOGS WITH THEM ON HOLIDAY

For those after more accessible amusements, we offer you a food odyssey through Suffolk. The county seems to have been a beneficiary of the big London exodus that took place in the wake of the pandemic and has enjoyed a food renaissance in the past two years. Local resident Clare Coulson trips through the new restaurants, beach huts and bars to observe – and taste – the change (page 68).

Lastly, what do you want from a hotel? Perhaps you want a living room that feels cosy and familiar? For this, check out our guide to the world's best home-from-home hotels (page 33). Maybe, though, you require a dog bed to host your favourite canine? Patti Waldmeir, the FT's North America correspondent and cynophile, will be well known to regular HTSI readers for her candid chronicles from the Midwest aboard a camper van. For this issue, however, she is testing the best dog-friendly hotels (page 25). According to current research, 23 million US households have a new pet since 2020, and 52 per cent of Americans plan to bring their dogs with them on holiday: the rise of dog-friendly getaways clearly makes some business sense. But while the dogs avail themselves of bark-cuterie boards and velvet dog beds, Patti finds that even the most luxurious establishment can present odd challenges for the "person" travelling with them. ■HTSI @jellison22

For the best of HTSI straight into your inbox, sign up to our newsletter at ft.com/newsletters

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NIKHIL MANSATA

Growing up in Kolkata, the creative director and stylist would wait for the international editions of fashion magazines to make their way to his local newsstand so he could pore over the pages. Mansata styled this week's shoot in Mumbai, where he lived for 10 years.



AMANDA WAKELEY

The celebrated fashion designer and creative director is known for her "clean glam" style and launched a podcast series, "Amanda Wakeley Style DNA", last year. Stepping out of her comfort zone, she went ski mountaineering in Antarctica. "It was the trip of a lifetime but it pushed me hard," she says.



FARIS MUSTAFA

Originally from London, the photographer moved to Singapore in 2020 and captured the city's cultural rebirth for this issue. "A highlight was shooting inside a converted gothic-revival chapel and a former British military barracks, which now house acclaimed restaurants," he says.



SNAIL CHIHULY, 2023, BY THE HAAS BROTHERS



the land, the dark night sky and brilliant stars – you can see the Milky Way. I call west Texas a “thin place” because the heavens and the earth are so close.

THE BEST SOUVENIRS I’VE BROUGHT HOME are setlists from concerts. I have Bob Dylan, Lucinda Williams, Bruce Springsteen, Robert Plant and St Vincent. One I don’t have is Willie Nelson’s – I just went to see him at the Hollywood Bowl.

A PLACE I’VE VISITED THAT HAS STAYED WITH ME is the Amalfi Coast, which is like Fellini meets the familiar and is just stunning. We stayed at Il San Pietro in Positano and rode the lift down through the cliff to the beach area below – spectacular!

THE BEST BOOK I’VE READ IN THE PAST YEAR is Adrienne Rich’s *The Dream of a Common Language*. This was lovely to return to after so many years studying poetry and creative writing in college. Since I recently moved house, all of these wonderful books have cropped back up – Frank O’Hara, Charles Bukowski – and often in multiples, which I think means that I’m meant to give them as gifts to friends.

MY STYLE ICON is Kris Kristofferson. It’s the whole ’70s cowboy meets musician meets actor vibe. His swagger, the flowing hair, and the conch belt are just pure sex symbol. Think back to *A Star Is Born*, *Convoy* or *Semi-Tough*.

AN INDULGENCE I WOULD NEVER FORGO is room service. It could be at Claridge’s in London or Le Sirenuse on the Amalfi Coast or a hotel just about anywhere really. I can judge a hotel by its fruit plate.

THE BEST GIFT I’VE GIVEN RECENTLY is a gold signet ring with an old mine-cut diamond, to my wife. When we got married we exchanged simple gold bands, but I knew that she wanted something with more pop. I found this ring at Duvenay while scrolling through Instagram.

Liz Lambert

The hotelier and designer on psilocybin chocolates, ranch life and perfect fruit plates

INTERVIEW BY **CHRISTINA OHLY EVANS**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **RAHIM FORTUNE**

MY PERSONAL STYLE SIGNIFIER is my day-to-day uniform of T-shirts in indigo and black by Filth Mart and Velva Sheen, a pair of jeans, and custom-made “roper” boots by Ranch Road. They’re comfortable, sturdy and I love the backstory of the maker, Sarah Ford, a former Marine who did three tours in Iraq and Afghanistan before going to Harvard Business School and launching this very Texan brand. My friend Jenna Lyons has said to me that I dress equal parts west Texas rancher and Japanese man – that sums up my aesthetic perfectly.

THE LAST THING I BOUGHT AND LOVED was a sculpture by the Haas Brothers that’s made of carved marble and blown glass. It’s currently part of a show called *Snails in Comparison* at the Lora Reynolds Gallery here in Austin, and we’re waiting for the exhibition to come down so it can be delivered. I love the mix of materials and the vibrant colours. lorareynolds.com

THE PLACE THAT MEANS A LOT TO ME is west Texas – specifically, our family’s ranch, where the Davis Mountains meet the Chinati Mountains. It feels unlike anywhere else on earth: the openness of



Top: Liz Lambert at home in Austin, Texas, with her dog Poppa. Above: Lambert’s Ranch Road “roper” boots. Left: her Ducati Scrambler motorbike

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY, COURTESY THE HAAS BROTHERS AND LORA REYNOLDS GALLERY/COLIN DOYLE LARRY TELLS COLLECTIVE/GETTY IMAGES

AND THE BEST GIFT I'VE RECEIVED is a Ducati Scrambler motorbike, next to the Christmas tree, complete with a big red bow. It was originally gold, but I had it painted blue with a white pinstripe and a small white dove on the gas tank. I'm usually more of a vintage bike person, but this one is spectacular.

THE LAST MUSIC I DOWNLOADED was Robert Ellis's "Yesterday's News". He's an absolutely masterful guitar player from Fort Worth, Texas, with a beautiful voice that combines elements of folk and jazz – kind of like Chet Baker.

I HAVE COLLECTIONS OF rocks, fossils and seashells; tables made of slate, stone and agate with brass inlay; ceramics; rings. I could go on. I am a Virgo and I am very edited in most areas of my life, but collecting is a passion.

IN MY FRIDGE YOU'LL ALWAYS FIND psilocybin chocolates, fresh berries and white wines from Scribe in Sonoma. We also keep biodynamic wines from Austin's The Meteor. scribewinery.com; [@themeteoraustin](https://www.instagram.com/themeteoraustin)

THE PODCASTS I'M LISTENING TO include "99% Invisible", which is about the architecture and design that surrounds us. I always learn something from "Death, Sex & Money", an NPR production on subjects ranging from facing your fears to infidelity to celebrity interviews. "Articles of Interest" and "Hidden Brain" are two others that I find fascinating because they dip into so many random topics. I spend so much time travelling that I'm always listening to a podcast.

I'VE RECENTLY DISCOVERED 3D printing, from Icon, pioneers in new ways of construction, and by working with Bjarke Ingels Group on our El Cosmico project in Marfa. I'm learning about the technology and sustainability behind 3D printing and how this raw-earth building technique is so much more efficient.

THE THING I COULDN'T DO WITHOUT is my reading glasses by Caddis. I have all kinds of frames, from aviator styles to matte sunglasses. It's the happiest brand. caddislife.com

THE LAST ITEM OF CLOTHING I ADDED TO MY WARDROBE was a black three-quarter-length calf-hair leather coat from Savas in Nashville. I went in to buy a leather jacket for a friend and came out with this coat as well. Local designer Savannah Yarborough trained at Central Saint Martins before starting her own leather clothing and boot business; she fits the bespoke jackets personally. ateliersavas.com



HAIR PASTE IS A GROOMING STAPLE

AN OBJECT I WOULD NEVER PART WITH is a bronze sculpture made by my brother, Lyndon, when he was in middle school. He died many years ago and recently my four-year-old son, also called Lyndon, pointed out that this figure is actually one of the supporting characters from Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*. I've always loved it and it has such special meaning for me – and now for our son.

I NEVER TRAVEL WITHOUT the pre-packed Dopp Kit – with technical things such as cords, chargers, adapters, lip balm – by my brand Far West; and a Far West Crossbody bag in saddle leather. I also love my black Louis Vuitton roller [case] with grey accents and my double-L monogram on the side. *Far West leather Technical Dopp Kit*, \$225, and *Crossbody bag*, \$280

THE ONE ARTIST WHOSE WORK I WOULD COLLECT IF I COULD is Helen Frankenthaler and, specifically, her prints. I love Colour Field painting and abstract expressionism in general.

MY FAVOURITE ROOM IN MY HOUSE is the bedroom in our midcentury Austin home. The bedroom is cantilevered out over the landscape and the space has great natural light. We also have midcentury Italian Stilnovo sconces on the walls and a very pale green rug, all of which makes this room feel like a refuge.

MY FAVOURITE LOCATION is the rock tank – an old water storage facility – on our ranch, which we now use as a swimming pool. It's the simplest design, made of old rock and local pipe – materials that are of this place. When I'm here I feel completely serene.

MY FAVOURITE APP is Nix Toolkit, a colour-matching app that tells you what manufacturers produce that particular shade you're looking for.

IN ANOTHER LIFE, I WOULD HAVE BEEN a Madam in some bar in the old west; I'd technically be running a "business" and I'd also get to drink whiskey. I tried poetry, I tried law and worked in the Manhattan DA's office. But I think I've found my perfect job as a hotelier and designer.

THE GROOMING STAPLES I'M NEVER WITHOUT are lip balm – any kind will do – and hair paste, often by Oribe. *Oribe Rough Luxury Soft Molding Paste*, \$39

THE PLACE THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING FOR ME is Baja in Mexico. We built a little compound in El Pescadero and it's surrounded by strawberry and poblano and basil farms. That smell of basil in the air! We live next to a beautiful surf break and it's a great place for spotting whales. It's now a gathering place for friends and extended family.

THE BEST BITS OF ADVICE I EVER RECEIVED include: "You are the sky. Everything else – it's just the weather" – meaning all of life's crazy fluctuations will pass. And from Hunter S Thompson, though not to me: "Buy the ticket, take the ride." It's important to be all-in. ■HTSI



Below: some of the setlists Lambert has collected at concerts. Right: her collection of rings. Below: her reading glasses and sunglasses by Caddis



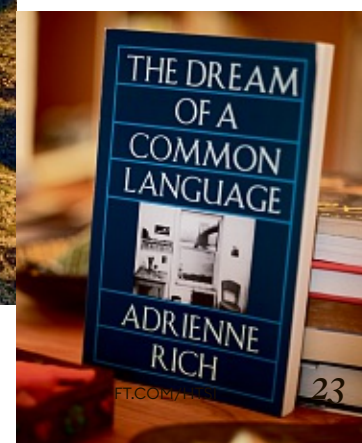
Above: leather Technical Dopp Kit, \$225, by Lambert's brand Far West. Below left: Lambert on her Ducati Scrambler



HER STYLE ICON KRIS KRISTOFFERSON

Below: T-shirts by Far West. Below left: Mule Ears Peaks in Big Bend National Park, Texas. Bottom: a recent read

"IN ANOTHER LIFE I WOULD'VE BEEN A MADAM IN SOME BAR"





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TRAVEL

BEG AND BREAKFAST

Patti Waldmeir treats her dogs to a luxury mini-break

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN SERNA

Some 23mn US households have acquired a new pet since 2020. Now big hotel brands are competing for the business of this new clientele: the pampered pup. According to a 2022 report by Mars Pet Nutrition, 52 per cent of Americans are planning on bringing their dogs along with them on holiday. The Hilton travel group says “pet-friendly” was the third most popular filter on hilton.com in 2021. But travel with pets can be a lot like touring with toddlers: better in theory than in reality. They can’t handle time differences; eating and elimination can be tough; and they’re cranky when their routine is disrupted. Even so, as someone who seldom goes anywhere without my elderly mutts, my philosophy is that with the right hotel – or campervan, or tiny house – a good time can be had by all.

We’ve done our fair share of unheated campervan holidays, so for this article we aimed for luxury. The mutts and I put our heads together and came up with a shortlist of the commanding heights of pooch tourism in the American Midwest, where we live. If we disagreed, I let the dogs decide: for as any parent knows, if the offspring aren’t happy, the matriarch will be miserable, whether travelling with dogs or daughters.

As a born Midwesterner who grew up in the ‘50s and ‘60s, when dogs lived outdoors in dog houses – and weren’t often let inside, let alone on the bed and under the sheets – I’ve been surprised at how the red carpet has been rolled out for my pets. In October, my 13-year-old Chinese street dog Huahua donned formal attire and sat down (in a chair) to savour a “bark-uterie board” of raw meats and treats at the Sheraton Grand Chicago Riverwalk, on the banks of the Chicago River. Just before Thanksgiving, her 12-year-old mutt mate Dumpling dressed in a starched tuxedo to lounge by the fire in the lavish library of the 1893 Chicago Athletic Association Hotel. (Huahua chose a black sweater-dress, with flouncy tartan ruffle, in



Above: the author’s dog Dumpling in the drawing room of the Chicago Athletic Association Hotel

honour of the season, but Dumpling’s tuxedo stole the show.)

My dogs were living rough on the streets of Shanghai before our family adopted them in 2010 and 2011, so no one could describe Dumpling and Huahua as to the manor born. But they quickly learned how to crawl into the lap of luxury, and stay there. These days, they look as natural as any royal corgi, lounging on the leather sofas and Turkish carpets of America’s top hotels.

Our first intro to the more luxurious end of travel was a “tiny house” cabin in

DUMPLING DRESSED IN A TUXEDO TO LOUNGE BY THE FIRE

the woods of western Michigan, part of the Getaway chain of mini-cabins in remote locations: complete with cellphone lockbox, they promise escape from the stresses of modern life. We all shared a queen-sized platform bed: the dogs weren’t supposed to be allowed on it – good luck with that. (We are still waiting to try out tent “glamping” at Camp Long Creek, in Missouri’s Ozark Mountains. With toilet, heat, refrigerator and king-



sized bed, I'm sure I'd love it – and just as sure the dogs would be agnostic. They aren't the outdoors type.)

But highest marks from the mutts went to our hotel stays: the Venetian Gothic-style Chicago Athletic Association Hotel won first place. Their pet amenities weren't the best – though the tapestry dog beds were plush, and multiple packets of dog treats were waiting for us in the room – but the quality of the pet welcome was flawless. The check-in clerk immediately asked to be introduced to my dogs by name, coming around from his high desk for a quick pet. And when he heard they were Chinese, he asked which Mandarin character for “Hua” was the correct one to use for Huahua's name. Pooch may not have cared that a clerk wanted to write her name in Mandarin, but her person was impressed.

Above: the author with Huahua at the Chicago Athletic Association Hotel. Below: Dumpling sports a tuxedo



Dumpling and Huahua revelled in the celebrity of being the only canines in the hotel's historic Drawing Room, which fills with young office workers and university students every afternoon. The pups wandered from patron to patron, demanding a stroke or cuddle.

POOCH MAY NOT HAVE CARED, BUT HER PERSON WAS IMPRESSED

I finally tore them away for a trip to the dog park – to which the hotel had helpfully provided a map, along with a list of dog-friendly restaurants.

This was crucial intel, since Chicago is not dog-friendly. The city's massive Millennium Park, directly across the street, does not allow dogs.

After playtime, we sampled a lockdown-inspired expansion in Chicago sidewalk and street dining. Dog owners can dine with their dogs, at least when it's warm enough. The pups and I watched the sun set behind the iconic Chicago skyline from the patio at Brown Bag Seafood Co. Dumpling had his favourite: Lake Superior whitefish.

Close second place went to the elegant art-deco-style Allegro Royal Sonesta Hotel Chicago Loop, mostly for the impressive pet shrine in our room: leashes and poop bag holders, collapsible water bowls and tennis-ball toys, plus an oversized welcome sign that even spelled their names right. But whenever we stay in places like this that aren't self-catering, we face the same problem: most US hotels don't allow dogs in their restaurants, which makes dining difficult when it's too cold to eat outside. During a November Chicago hotel stay, the mutts and I had to don boots and overcoats, and trudge to the nearest McDonald's – where they weren't allowed in either. I tied them up outside, and dashed in – while they made friends with a street dweller decked out improbably in bulletproof vest and combat fatigues. We retreated to a nearby bus shelter so I could wolf down my burger. Which wasn't very chic.

Virgin Hotels Chicago, ranked as one of the city's most pet-friendly by rover.com, the pet-care website, welcomes mutts for breakfast, lunch and dinner in the hotel's downstairs restaurant, and its Two Zero Three Coffee offers a whipped cream “pup cup”. The brand is unusual among big hotel chains because canine companions stay for free. (The Allegro Royal Sonesta charges \$75 per visit, but this itself is low by many hotel standards.) Virgin guests aren't required to cage dogs in the rooms, nor are they banned from leaving them unattended – as they are in many hotels – and there are no pet-size restrictions. The Trump International Hotel & Tower Chicago, for example, limits dogs to 25lbs each (Huahua weighs in at 42).

CLEARLY, POOCH TRAVEL has come a long way since my Michigan childhood, when the family dog was lucky if he got stuffed in the back of the station wagon and allowed to live in the yard.

Given the statistics, the number of people travelling with pets can only be set to increase. According to a 2022-23 study from the American Pet Products Association, 66 per cent of US households own pets now, up from 56 per cent in 1988 when they began tracking this data, including 65mn homes with dogs. “The expectations have changed,” says Iris Junge, general manager of The Allegro Royal Sonesta Hotel Chicago Loop: Sonesta, as a brand, saw a 19 per cent increase in stays with pets between July 2021 and July 2022, she says. “People used to be very quick to say, I'll kennel my dog... now they make them part of the family.”

But for all the touchy-feely reasons that I travel with dogs, I have to admit that cost is also a factor. Kennelling the mutts near my home costs the same as a modest hotel room for me and my two daughters (about \$130-\$150 per night). And then there are the cringeworthy extras: Pawsitively Heaven Pet Resort, an hour away, offers my pets a private room with raised bed, colour television and music for \$132 per night, double occupancy, but a “tuck-in with goodnight kiss” adds \$3 per night, and homemade hot meals such as “beef stewie loaf” cost \$3-\$5 per meal. At the Pooch Hotel in Chicago's trendy West Loop neighbourhood, pet parents can choose from seasonal camps and themed events where pooches get their paw pads rubbed and teeth brushed, and they can learn how to “sniff the flowers”. But even if you're willing to pony up, kennel spots can be hard to nab, booking up months in advance.

Let's be clear: I travel with pups for my sake, not theirs. I'm either too cheap to leave them at home or feel guilty doing so. But Karin Pienaar, animal-behaviour expert at COAPE International, the Centre of Applied Pet Ethology, says holidays aren't always good for them. “TV has images of people on holiday with their pets, gazing off into the sunset, but your average dog can find it quite distressing, and for some” – especially poorly socialised pandemic pups, she says – “it can be horrendous.”

Pienaar warns that many a pandemic pup would be better off left at home. And as Americans drive less and fly more, pet travel could return to pre-pandemic levels, experts say. In the past few months I holidayed in Denmark, Norway, Hungary and the Czech Republic – and not even I dragged poor Dumpling and Huahua along. ■HTSI

Mutt-haves

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Two of Seiko's new Prospex Diver Scuba Padi special edition watches

water, a depth to which as few people have been as have orbited the Moon. But given that you would be long dead if you were trying to max it out in a diving suit, is it philosophically and conceptually a diver's watch? I neither know nor care because it looks great and, for all its massive solidity, isn't so cumbersome that it interferes with my chief maritime activities of eating charcoal-grilled sardines, playing backgammon and smoking the occasional cigar.

It was made with titanium, RLX titanium to be precise: a first for a production-model Rolex. This year's hottest beach watch, the new Yacht-Master 42, also in RLX titanium, is arguably the most important Rolex launch this year. Is it a proper diver's watch? It doesn't really matter, because you're probably not going to be able to get your hands on one anyway, though it's waterproof to 100 metres, which would suffice for most of us.

Technical pedants would define a diver's watch by its adherence to the "ISO 6425:2018 Horology – Divers' watches" standard, which means the watch has been tested to 125 per cent of the depth stated, and is legible at a distance of 25cm after 180 minutes in the dark, among other things. The standard is now in its fourth incarnation since 1982, which makes you wonder how divers managed before it was introduced.

It is a question that arises this year not least because Panerai has relaunched its entire Radiomir collection, which is inspired by the watches worn by Italian underwater commandos during the second world war. Tudor, meanwhile, keeps on finding new incarnations and interpretations of its archivally inspired hero model the Black Bay, which traces its lineage back to 1954.

The 1950s was the decade in which the diving (as opposed to merely waterproof) watch as we know it today emerged. This year will be the 70th anniversary of both the Rolex Submariner (which was comprehensively overhauled in 2020) and the Blancpain Fifty Fathoms. Both watches made their debut at around the same time as scuba diving took off, and both Rolex's then marketing director René-Paul Jeanneret and Blancpain's CEO Jean-Jacques Fiechter were early adopters of the aqualung.

Blancpain's 21st-century CEO Marc Hayek is also a fanatical diver, and as far as the Fifty Fathoms is concerned he sees the 70th anniversary as a "reboot of its birth".

The beginning of the year saw the launch of the classic-look 42.3mm version. Now has come the Fifty Fathoms Tech Gombessa, which features an innovative three-hour scale on the bezel in conjunction with a fourth hand that completes one circuit of the dial in three hours to accommodate longer dive times. It is a clever development that reconnects the dive watch with its technical beginnings, basically making

THEY'LL DROP FURTHER THAN MANY OF US CAN RUN, LET ALONE DIVE

sure that the diver does not run out of air and can time his or her decompression stops.

Even though the electronic wristworn dive computer has taken on much of the work these days, a mechanical diver's watch is a sensible (and stylish) backup: so, it is reassuring to know that the Fifty Fathoms Tech Gombessa was worked on by both Hayek and submarine biologist Laurent Ballesta.

Seiko has also reinforced its partnership with Padi – the Professional Association of Diving Instructors. The Japanese watchmaker is bringing out not one, not two, but three new Prospex Diver Scuba Padi Special Editions. My favourite is the Great Blue Samurai because, as well as having a name that makes me wonder what a samurai diving suit would look like, it features Seiko's great gift to the diver's watch, the silicone accordion strap. Moreover, Seiko is particularly proud that its LumiBrite glow duration exceeds the ISO required minimum.

Seiko is also offering three new models for what one might call the lifestyle diver inside all of us. Tallest Peaks is a dive watch named after Seiko-wearing mountaineer Naomi Uemura. The Glacier Blue is a dive watch with GMT, not exactly a need for a diver, but I suppose it is entertaining to tell the time in Tahiti while diving in the Bahamas; and Grand Seiko brings us the Ushio Blue, *ushio* being Japanese for tide.

Di(v)e-hard Omega fans have been waiting to see what the brand will do to mark the 75th anniversary of its Seamaster line, which now sprawls from the non-diver Aqua Terra to the does-what-it-says-on-the-label 6,000m Ultra Deep. Full details are to be announced at the end of June on an as-yet undisclosed Aegean island. Let's hope they choose somewhere that offers a balance between opportunities for scuba diving in turquoise seas and the equally strenuous marine activity of lying around on the beach, building up strength for another night out under skies of midnight blue. ■HTSI

WATCHES

DEEPEST REGARDS

You know you want a diver's watch, even if you're unlikely ever to strap on an aqualung. By Nick Foulkes

What is a diving watch? It is a question that presents itself every May as summer looms. Even those of us who get scared when we can no longer see the sea bed will probably be wearing a watch that has some sort of calibrated bezel and is waterproof to more hundreds of metres than we could comfortably run, let alone dive.

Take the Rolex Oyster Perpetual Deepsea Challenge, which was launched last year: it is the ultimate diving watch, equipped to function at 11km under



Above, from left: ROLEX RLX titanium Deepsea Challenge, £21,900. BLANCPAIN titanium Fifty Fathoms Tech Gombessa, £24,700. GRAND SEIKO titanium Ushio Blue, £10,500. PANERAI platinum Radiomir Annual Calendar, £76,000. OMEGA steel Seamaster Planet Ocean 6,000m Ultra Deep, £11,700. TUDOR steel Black Bay 54, £3,200



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TRAVEL

THE WORLD'S BEST HOMES-FROM-HOME

FT writers nominate the hotels where they feel most welcome. Compiled by *Baya Simons* and *Rosanna Dodds*



Above: a view from Alcuuzcuz in Málaga. Below right: the kitchen and dining area at Artist Residence in Brighton

ALCUZCUZ, Málaga

This red ochre farmhouse used to be home to renowned interior designer Jamie Parladé and his wife Janetta. Now a boutique hotel run by Parladé's nephew, Andrés, the art- and antique-filled finca still bears the imprint of its former inhabitants, from the well-stocked library to the tapestries hanging in the six double bedrooms and cottage.

All the rooms are grand, but perhaps most charming is the former chapel, La Capilla, with its high-domed ceilings and arched doors. Beyond the terracotta-tiled terraces and wisteria-covered pergolas, you will find a saltwater pool screened by olive trees. Further still, the estate's lush tropical gardens and views of the Costa del Sol. There is fresh cake for tea, a courtesy bar for mixing your own drinks and a Moroccan-influenced Mediterranean restaurant for dinner at Alcuuzcuz Gallery next door. From €195, alcuuzcuz.es **AJESH PATALAY**

MUXIMA, Aljezur, Portugal

I'm not sure I had ever actually seen frogs perched on lily pads outside a Beatrix Potter illustration, but you'll come eyeball to eyeball with them in Muxima's bio-pool. Their gentle croaking (a real-life meditation-app chorus) adds to the calm at this guesthouse, which is set amid twisted cork and slender eucalyptus trees that scent the air with their woody, minty tang. Muxima has just seven rooms, each with north African-inspired decor. The breakfast is probably one of the best around: homemade bread, eggs, buttery vegetable quiches, jewel-like platters of fruit and traditional Portuguese cake. From €130, muxima-aljezur.com **CAROLA LONG**



MUXIMA, PORTUGAL

HIIRAGIYA, Kyoto

Japanophiles all have their own favourite *ryokan*: 19th-century Hiiragiya is often in the top five. Every aspect of its design points to a Japan of the past, from the umbrella-pine soaking tubs and lacquered writing boxes to the beautiful textiles (even the TVs are covered in silk). Charlie Chaplin and Liz Taylor are reputed to be among those who have stayed here, but you're unlikely to see another guest during your stay: privacy is everything. From ¥53,000pp (about £310), including dinner and breakfast, hiiragiya.co.jp **MARK C O'FLAHERTY**

THE POINT, Adirondack Mountains, New York

Originally a sprawling lakeside camp for the Rockefellers, The Point has 11 bedrooms, each individually styled but all with king-sized beds. Most are in the private detached cottages that circle the main log-cabin building, which has a vast central lounge festooned with plaid upholstery and deer heads. There's a huge stone fireplace and guests dine *en famille*, with black tie requested twice a week. New York elites come for a slice of '30s fantasy in which cocktails are served on sunset cruises and bottles of champagne are hidden in fairytale chalets at the end of hikes. The staff treat you like family, and the all-inclusive nature manifests in what feels like a lavish meal every couple of hours. Swim in the lake in summer, snow-shoe over it in winter, put a tune on the jukebox or play pool in the pub. The whole thing is a Bruce Weber meets Ralph Lauren fantasia of luxury Americana. From \$2,250, thepointresort.com **MCO'F**

ARTIST RESIDENCE, Brighton

When Justin Salisbury's mother was injured in an accident, he stepped in to run her seaside hotel. It was the middle of the 2008 financial crisis and Salisbury was just 20:



the former townhouse needed a complete renovation. His solution? To invite a group of artists to do it up for him. More than 15 years later – and with a little help from Alex Polizzi (aka The Hotel Inspector) – Artist Residence has 25 rooms featuring original artworks, locally sourced furniture and chirping Roberts Radios. Curling up, cocktail in hand, on the enormous red sofa always feels like a homecoming. From £145, artistresidence.co.uk **ROSANNA DODDS**

TAUBENKOBEL, Burgenland, Austria

Barbara Eselböck and her Michelin-starred-chef husband Alain Weissgerber took over Taubenkobel in 2014 from Eselböck's parents, reinvigorating the hotel with fresh eyes and raising their family on the premises. The seasonal tasting menu features locally sourced fish, woodland mushrooms, herbs and edible flowers, all



served on stoneware plates; biodynamic wines are poured into handblown glassware. Tastes seem both ancient and of the now, and Weissgerber infuses the presentation with playful storytelling. One long dinner can happily segue into an idyllic night in one of the former farm buildings, many with beds raised on mezzanine levels in the eaves. There are stone bathtubs, vintage furniture and record players with vinyl to entertain. In the summer, meandering gardens, hammocks and a natural swimming pool seduce. From €360, taubenkobel.com **HARRIET QUICK**

JK PLACE, Paris

The sole French outpost of a very Italian independent hotel group. The ground floor feels like an endless living room, with a lot of communal space for a hotel of only 29 rooms. The staff is informal, but remembers your quirks. No need to tell them twice that you want ridiculous amounts of water at breakfast – or a half-order of *cacio e pepe* as a starter (it's the best in Paris). The gym looks like somebody's posh dad's study; the sauna is, for once, hot enough, and, very importantly, the full-sized bottle of conditioner in the room actually detangles your hair. "Welcome home," they greet when you come to check in. They mean it. From €900, jkplace.paris **ALEXANDRA MARSHALL**



Top: inside Muxima. Above: Taubenkobel near Vienna. Below: the dining area at JK Place, Paris



GARDENS HAVANA

GARDENS, Havana

A fastidious restoration project started in 2015 transformed this crumbling townhouse in the middle of old-town Havana into a serene four-bedroom hotel.

You can book out either a floor comprising two bedrooms or take the entire space, all fitted out with handmade wooden beds canopied in swathes of white cotton, locally made tiles in the bathrooms and Marshall radios dotted throughout. Breakfast is served in your room or the palm-shaded, sofa-strewn courtyard, and there's a chef on hand should you desire to host a dinner party one night, or to sip a perfect mojito on the balcony overlooking the colonial-era street below before you step out for the evening. Alternatively, mix one to your own taste from the honesty bar.

From £250 for a pair of rooms, gardenshavana.com **BAYA SIMONS**

THE LOWELL, New York

It's a real hotel, with 17 floors, 74 rooms and suites, and the patrician pre-war mien of the prime Upper East Side location it occupies. But the homey welcome The Lowell offers is down to something more intangible than dimensions. Possibly because many rooms are cozy and fireplace-lit. Or because the suites feel like single-girl or -guy apartments, thanks



to the layouts and the unfussy but coddling decor (courtesy of Michael S Smith, the designer whom the Obamas chose to make the White House feel like a home). And then, of course, they have all the important connective moments covered – from knowing your drink to getting the shoe-repair guy on 64th and Lexington to stay late to fix your broken heel. From \$945, lowellhotel.com **MARIA SHOLLENBARGER**

CORTIINA, Munich

I've returned to the Cortiina, in the city where I was born and raised, each year for almost a decade. The rooms have a comfy style – think German functionality – and everything is of a high standard without screaming luxury. The location couldn't be more central, and the hotel provides bikes – a perfect way to explore the English Garden nearby. But my favourite Cortiina feature (and a beloved German tradition) is the brunch buffet with its great selection of bread, including bretzels (we Münchner pride ourselves on having the best). It's truly my home away from home. From €151, cortiina.com **ISABELLE KOUNTOURE**



3ROOMS at 10 Corso Como, Milan

Stepping into this oasis of midcentury elegance during frantic fashion week always feels like a sanctuary: 3Rooms is my favourite thing about staying in Milan. Located in the busy concept space at 10 Corso Como, 3Rooms is precisely that – three spacious apartments decorated in a tastefully sludgy palette of '70s oranges and browns. The suites vary, but all are 50sq m with courtyard entrances, and furnished with pieces by – or at least inspired by – Arne Jacobsen, Eero Saarinen, Joe Colombo, Isamu Noguchi, Charles and Ray Eames et al. Each apartment has a substantial living room, fitted with a coffee machine, a kettle and a fridge, which can be stocked up with produce from nearby Eataly for that extra home-from-home élan. Food can be ordered from the restaurant downstairs, or you can eat in 10 Corso Como's famously convivial dining rooms. From €550, 10corsocomo.com **JO ELLISON**

Top right: the snug at The Gurnard's Head, Cornwall. Above: 10 Corso Como, Milan. Left: the Hollywood Suite living room at The Lowell, New York. Right: a room at The Efendi Hotel, Israel



THE GURNARD'S HEAD, Cornwall

Perched majestically on the cliffs overlooking the Atlantic ocean on Cornwall's north coast, The Gurnard's Head is a welcome refuge from the oncoming sea winds and wild Penwith moors. This is where I like to come after a visit to Tate St Ives, and where I send friends looking for places to stay in Cornwall. Painted in distinctive Cornish saffron yellow, the cosy pub-with-rooms is replete with roaring fires and simple seasonal food, and a bar full of local characters who often have wonderful stories to tell. Its eight guest rooms each have Welsh blankets and shelves crammed with an excellent selection of books (the nearby village, Zennor, boasts DH Lawrence and Michael Morpurgo as former residents). Book tickets for a summer production at the Minack Theatre, a famous amphitheatre built into the rocks near Land's End. From £155, gurnardshead.co.uk **FIONA GOLFAR**

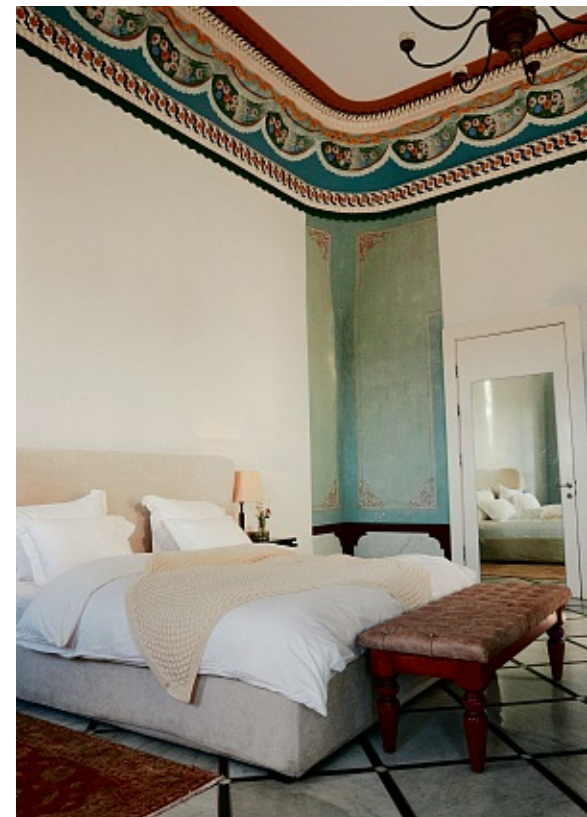
THE RED TREE HOUSE, Mexico City

La Condesa in Mexico City was named for the Countess de Miravalle, a Mexican colonial-era noblewoman said to be so wealthy that her parties would last an entire month. The area remains true to that spirit, alive at all hours with the thrum of restaurants, wine bars and rumba clubs. The Red Tree House, located in a mud-red '30s mansion – once lived in by the actress who played Frida Kahlo in the 1983 biopic – around the corner from one of La Condesa's wide, jacaranda-lined avenues, gives a flavour of what it might be like to reside in this lively corner of the city. Passing through the warm orange-and-brown maze of reception, living and dining rooms brings you out into a huge courtyard shaded by a grand old tree. It's here that breakfast is served each morning – churros, fresh fruits, melting molletes with fresh pico de gallo – and where wine and beer flows in the evening, courtesy of the hotel, resulting in a happy conviviality among guests. From \$135, theredtreehouse.com **BS**

THE EFENDI HOTEL, Akko, Israel

Uri Jeremias – known to foodies the world over as Uri Buri – is one of Israel's most

beloved chefs. Besides turning out honest, delicious seafood, his eponymous restaurant in Akko has always had a staff that's equal parts Arab and Jewish, who put the abstract rhetoric of co-existence into practice every day. His accompanying hotel Efendi, opened 10 years ago in two Ottoman-era mansions, is a place I would, truly, live if I could (for a few months a year, anyway). The suites, 12 in total, have standalone baths, and some come with hand-stencilled designs on the ceilings. Old stone floors encourage bare feet (Jeremias is fine with them, too). The long, low white sofa in the living room, where light pours in through monumental





Left: Ett Hem in Stockholm. Right: Jeakes House in Rye, Sussex. Below: Beit Trad in Kfour, Lebanon. Bottom left: Santa Clara 1728 in Lisbon

arched windows, begs you to stretch out for hours with a book. And the terrace: wide, scattered with low, sky-blue sofas and wood tables, with a view of the sea and a sunrise-to-sunset soundtrack of prayer calls and village life. *From €360, effendi-hotel.co.il* **MS**

ETT HEM, Stockholm

This Stockholm hotel's name translates to "a home". Across its three red-brick townhouses – in the airy bedrooms and calming communal spaces that reveal the combined imaginations of owner Jeanette Mix and designer Ilse Crawford – Ett Hem declares itself a haven. Staying here, where the hotel touchpoints are almost invisible, is like being the guest of a peerlessly chic and thoughtful friend, who furnishes their home with the best of midcentury design – Kaare Klint, Hans Wegner, Eero Saarinen – but creates a delicious sense of informality in all aspects of your stay, from the "help yourself" biscuit jars to the communal kitchen table. *From SKr3,995 (about £310), etthem.se* **CHARLOTTE SINCLAIR**

SANTA CLARA 1728, Lisbon

At Santa Clara 1728, as in any welcoming home, things happen at a communal table. If you take a seat in the garden, a host asks if you'd like a glass or nibble, and perhaps stays to chat for a moment. João Rodrigues – investor, commercial pilot and founder of the exquisitely tasteful Portuguese hotel collection Silent Living – opened this Lisbon gem in 2017, at the edge of Alfama, the real Lisbon, with views over the church

of Santa Engrácia to the Tagus river. There are just six suites; full of light, spare of furnishings, their slightly monastic feel softened by tiles and stone and huge beds wrapped in soft, white cotton. It is a deeply comfortable place, above all other things, and one loved by those who work there – evidenced by myriad small details (my favourite: the wildflower arrangements). *From €1,000, silentliving.pt* **MS**

THE BOATSHED, Waiheke Island, New Zealand

Who doesn't want a sweet house on Waiheke Island, that verdant happy place of both aged hippies and Google c-suiters, off the coast of Auckland in New Zealand? The more pressing question these days: who can afford one? Until you've amassed the cash, look to David Scott and his son Jonathan, who turned a holiday cottage overlooking Little Oneroa Beach that had been in the family for 35 years into The Boatshed, a divine retreat that is still, essentially, a collection of beach cottages. The living room, its books, magazines and music, are yours for the perusing/borrowing/playing. The open kitchen is open all day, you can grab yourself a towel for the beach, and hire Jeeps to go into town, or east to Onetangi Beach for a sundowner. *From NZ\$810 (about £400), boatshed.co.nz* **MS**

THE HAPPY HOUSE, Solukhumbu, Nepal

Owned by an elegant Sherpa family, The Happy House in Nepal's Solukhumbu was originally the haunt of mountaineers, including Edmund Hillary, one of the first to summit Everest, who gave the refuge its nickname. The hotel – bookable by the room, but often rented out exclusively for up to 20 guests – underwent a renovation in 2018: walls painted by a Sherpa master of Buddhist thangkas; deep leather chairs draped with handspun cashmere blankets; the smell of curried

pumpkin and baked Himalayan river trout drifting in from the kitchen. Walk a couple of hours uphill from the hotel and you've got a view of the entire eastern Himalayas, including Everest. *\$600, happyhousenepal.com* **SOPHY ROBERTS**



BEIT TRAD, Kfour, Lebanon

If there is one place in Lebanon that embodies Levantine hospitality, it is indisputably Beit Trad. In the 1980s, this traditional house was the summer getaway of Sarah Trad's family, a place her mum loved to fill with friends. Following in these footsteps, Trad has turned it into a proper guesthouse where every detail is a treat. Meals are served in a lavish yet eclectic dining room and are the epitome of homemade Lebanese cuisine, from the kibbeh (stuffed croquettes) to the freshly baked cakes. Each of the rooms is an escape in itself, and Trad makes you feel at home in your little nest in Lebanon. *From \$320, beittrad.com* **GILLES KHOURY**

BATTY LANGLEY'S, London

With an honesty bar, bowls of fresh fruit and a collection of more than 3,000 books, this former townhouse is about as homely as you can get –

with one catch. Everything in it is designed to reflect its Georgian roots. The result is a playful mishmash of heavy drapes, grand portraits and four-poster beds, topped off with the odd (hidden) modern comfort (there are TVs, you just can't see them). Many rooms have freestanding bathtubs, and sofas can double as beds for small guests (children are most welcome). There's no restaurant here; the team prefers to serve breakfast in bed. *From £325, battylangleys.com* **RD**

JEAKES HOUSE, Rye, Sussex

Built in 1689 as a wool store for a wealthy merchant, the brick building has housed a school, a chapel, a meeting house for the Rye Quakers and the Baptist minister's residence at various points. It is now happily run as a hotel, but the listed building still holds its original shape, with slanting floors, winding staircases and ceilings propped up by oak beams. Breakfast transports guests to the Victorian era, and it's not for the faint of heart: devilled kidneys on buttered toast and heady oak-smoked haddock with poached eggs (there is also a full English). Its eccentricities have made it something of a cult destination. When I stayed last December, Phoebe Waller-Bridge and Martin McDonagh came down to breakfast in the morning. *From £105, jeakeshouse.com* **BS**



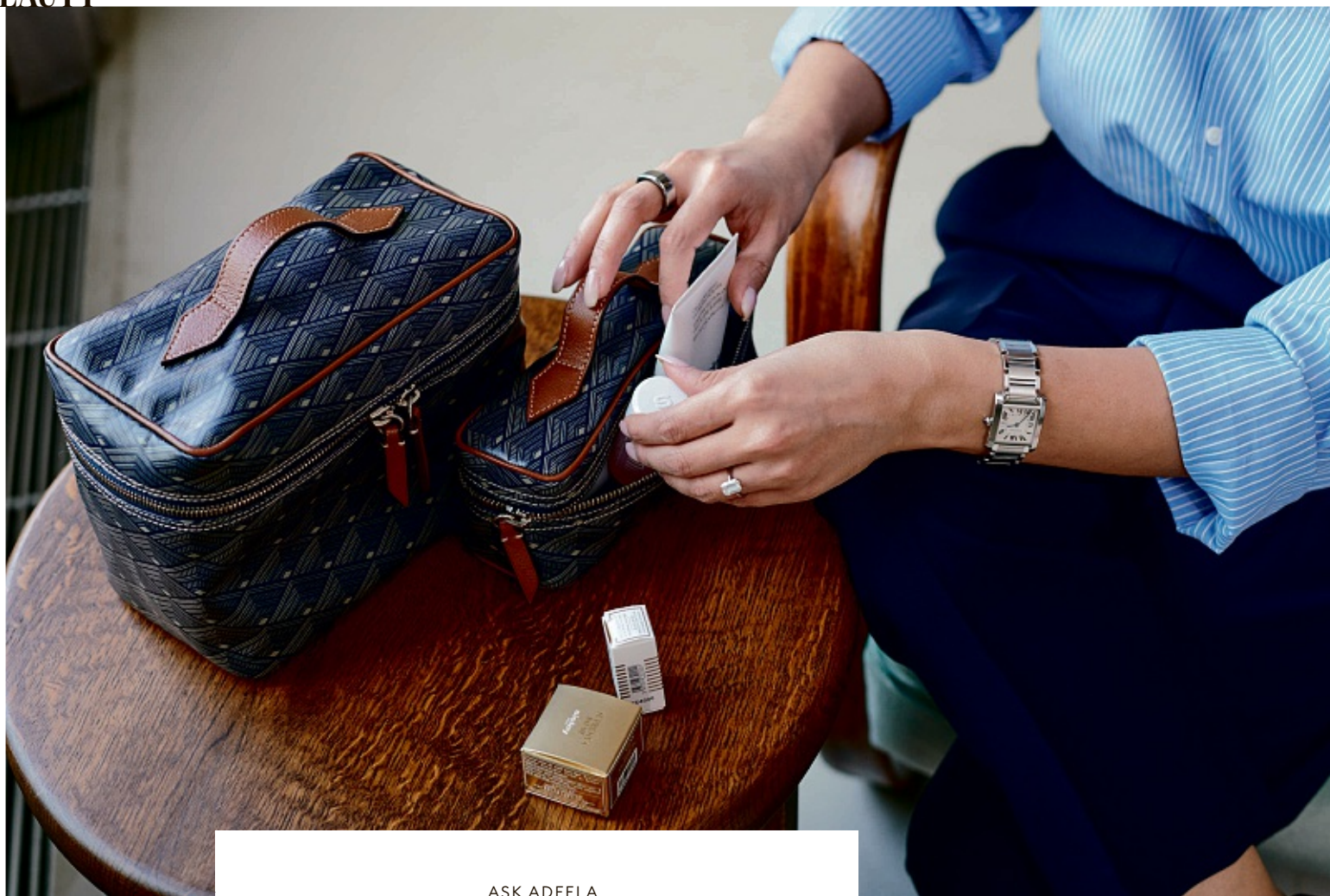
HÔTEL DE L'ABBAYE, Paris

This Saint-Germain-des-Prés stalwart is on the larger side of homely – 43 rooms and counting – but the quiet setting makes up for it. Set back from the street behind a private courtyard, the hotel has welcomed guests since 1973. Inside, the individually designed rooms mimic those of a classic French house, with floral wallpapers, living spaces and private terraces. But the most homely touch is the staff, some of whom have been there since the late '80s: regular visitors will be familiar with Mimi, who has headed up the bar and restaurant for more than 12 years. Grab a seat by the fireplace in the lounge – an address only promoted by word of mouth – for an evening meal. Some call it the most genuine spot in the city. *From €355, hotelabbayeparis.com* **RD ■ HTSI**



HÔTEL DE L'ABBAYE, PARIS





ASK ADEELA

What are your travel essentials?

Our expert shares her top tips for the long haul

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KASIA BOBULA

When deciding what skincare to pack for a holiday, you might be tempted to think only about the destination. But, as an international facialist and a frequent flier, my advice is: start with the journey.

Remember to protect against transepidermal water loss (TEWL). Daily evaporation of water vapour through our skin contributes to problems such as acne, dermatitis and psoriasis – this is exacerbated by the drying effects of the flight cabin’s recirculated air. Apply a sheet mask like La Mer The Hydrating Facial on the plane as your protective hydration lock.

Don’t let air cabin pressure exacerbate eye bags. Come June 2024, major UK airports could have snazzy new 3D baggage scanners that will hopefully see the 100ml in-flight rule scrapped. But one habit of mine that won’t be changing is packing a compact eye product in my hand luggage. Choose a serum or gel-like formula – concentrated actives in serums tend to absorb faster – such as La Prairie Essence Of Skin Caviar Eye Complex to smooth the look of fine lines and reduce puffiness.

Whether you’re heading to a beach, for a city break or to the slopes, SPF is the most important thing to pack. Apply, and reapply every two hours – especially after swimming or sweating. The Japanese are known for their advanced sun protection, making the lightweight Clé de Peau Beauté UV Protective Cream SPF 50+ my pick for the face. This moisturising formula blends into skin without

leaving a white cast. For the whole body, Caudalíe’s Very High Protection Sun Water 50+ spray is a good way to top up with a quick spritz.

Warmer weather means more perspiration, which can react with sebum (oil), environmental pollutants and make-up to trigger breakouts. Cleansing both morning and night with a sulphate-free formula such as Omorovicza Travel Cleansing Foam removes grime without stripping the skin of its protective oils.

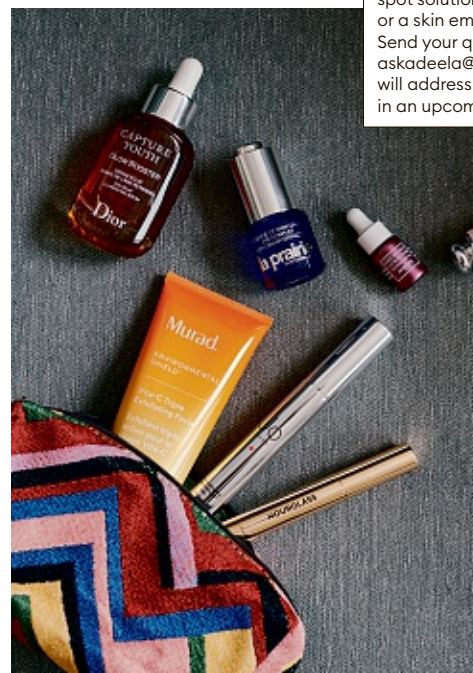
Changes in climate, plus more alcohol and late nights, can also compromise the skin barrier, which can lead to rosacea flare-ups, dryness or breakouts. Pack RéVive Sensitif Calming Serum to wear under moisturiser; its bio-renewal peptide helps to soothe irritation, redness and other signs of skin stress.

Finally, I personally thank the skin gods for Noble Panacea’s clinically tested and soon-to-be patented formula in its skin saviour set, which is especially valuable when I’m travelling. The Brilliant Discovery Ritual is made up of 7 doses radiance serum, eye cream, moisturiser and overnight cream, which hydrate and strengthen skin. Each comes in handy sachets that are perfect for packing. ■HTSI

Top: the author packs her cosmetics cases. Below: a few of her favourite beauty products for travel

ASKADEELA

Do you need advice on spot solutions, make-up or a skin emergency? Send your questions to askadeela@ft.com and she will address your concerns in an upcoming column



Extra space?

FOUR NON-ESSENTIALS I STILL CAN'T TRAVEL WITHOUT



DIOR Forever Couture Luminizer, £44

Enhance that holiday glow with this highlighter that bounces light off the skin.



BYREDO leather Travel Perfume Case, £85

By carrying this perfume case on holiday, I can link my experiences to scent. At home, every time I spritz the fragrance I'm transported back.



RALPH LAUREN HOME Iconic Cable Cashmere Travel Set, £395

I always take a travel pillow and blanket – airlines on short-haul flights don't provide blankets, and on long-haul flights with a tight turnaround and only an overnight deep clean, the blankets aren't always cleaned before reusing.



JIMMY CHOO Avenue vanity case, £875

I love a small, chic cosmetics bag – one that's not so big that I feel like I need to cram my entire bathroom shelf into it.



From top: OMOROVICZA Travel Cleansing Foam, £20. CLÉ DE PEAU BEAUTÉ UV Protective Cream SPF 50+, £91. NOBLE PANACEA The Brilliant Discovery Ritual, £166. RÉVIVE Sensitif Calming Serum, £210. CAUDALÍE Vinosun Protect Sun Water 50+, £28





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My polar PLUNGE

Designer *Amanda Wakeley* swaps high fashion for fleeces to face skiing's final frontier

Over a chance meeting in the mountains high above Verbier, friends mention they are planning to go ski mountaineering in the Antarctic spring, on an Explorer Ship led by the polar explorer Doug Stoup. Stoup has completed more ski trips to both the North and South Poles than anyone, and I know instantly that it is something I would love to do. Living part-time in Verbier, I have been lucky enough to experience some world-class ski touring. The effort usually offers the ultimate reward of skiing virgin powder in almost total isolation, with no one in sight apart from the occasional Alpine ibex or Chamois mountain goat watching from their rocky outpost, a golden eagle or two and, just once, a wolf. The feeling of being at one with the majesty of nature in all its forms is one of life's great privileges.

Months of preparation follow – countless Peloton rides, two-hour hikes wearing a 15kg weight vest, endless stretch-and-weights sessions – before I am finally packing my kit for this epic adventure. Ice axe (tick), crampons (tick), couteaux (tick). Safety harness, carabiners, skis, skins, poles and touring boots, tick. Backpack, shovel, probe, avalanche transceiver, CamelBak, energy gels. Technical mountain kit: base layers, merino, down and Gore-Tex, and my very techie carbon knee braces – thanks to various previous skiing accidents. It all leaves very little room for my favourite cashmere for onboard luxury. But hey-ho, that can greet me on my return; for now it's all about survival.

First stop is Buenos Aires, then on to the southernmost tip of Argentina, the outpost town of Ushuaia, where we spend a couple of days acclimatising. On a tour to the Martial Glacier, we take a 45-minute hike up to the snow line. It's spring in this part of the world and, as we are repeatedly reminded by the taxi drivers, the season is over but the days are long at this time of year.

The next few days are spent in much the same way – early starts and long hikes. The winds pick up towards the top, gusting around 40 knots: a precursor of the possible conditions on the seventh continent. But the views down to Ushuaia and the Beagle Channel are spectacular, and it's good to let my skis run despite the cruddy spring snow.

On day four we are introduced to our floating base, the polar-exploration vessel *Ocean Adventurer*, settling into the cabins that will be our home for the next 11 days. Ours is perfectly comfortable and spacious, positioned centrally overlooking the stern of the boat. For the next

Right: a gentoo penguin colony. Below left: sighting of a humpback whale in Charlotte Bay

48 hours we head south across the notorious Drake Passage, the body of water between South America's Cape Horn, Chile and the South Shetland islands of Antarctica, which is considered one of the most treacherous voyages for ships to make. Unbuffered by land at this latitude, waves can top 40ft – it is known as “the most powerful convergence of seas”. Despite being a keen sailor and never having been seasick in my life, I am cajoled into taking preventative medicine by the ship's doctor (a tactic successfully employed with most guests, and probably for their ultimate benefit). Suffice to say, thanks to a combination of the meds and the ship surfing the 40ft swells, I sleep on and off for the best part of 24 hours aided by an uncommon lack of connectivity to the outside world – a luxury in itself.

During the Drake Passage crossing, there are numerous lectures by the expedition team on Antarctica, its discovery (1820), the South Pole (which took another 100 years to reach) and the land mass (58 times that of the British Isles), of which less than one per cent is ice-free. It is the coldest, driest, windiest and highest continent on earth. We are also told about the wildlife we can expect to see: the wandering albatross (with its 11ft wingspan), several of which are accompanying us on our journey south; seals (Weddell, fur, leopard); whales – humpback, blue, fin and possibly orcas; and, most endearingly, the penguins – Adélie, chinstrap and my favourite, gentoo. With the focus on ski mountaineering, we will not have time to venture far enough south to see the emperors (but a great excuse to return).

Finally the focus turns to what we are doing here: the mountains. Getting more than 100 ski mountaineers accompanied by 26 ski guides safely ashore at different landing spots every day takes some doing. At 6am, a team of scouts – comprising six of the guides, with the highly skilled Zodiac operators and an expedition team – is dispatched to identify the best two to three landings for the day. It sounds simple, but with the brash ice and icebergs permanently on the move and the unpredictable weather of the Antarctic (it's not uncommon to experience extreme changes in short order, from sun to thick cloud to extreme winds and virtually zero visibility), not to mention the tidal variation, the landing sites have to take into account not only accessibility to the shore for the mountaineers in full ski kit from the Zodiacs, but also from the shore onto the base of the mountain. Often the scouts have to cut a snow ladder from the water

I'M POSSIBLY THE FIRST HUMAN EVER TO SKI OVER THIS TERRAIN

line to a place where the mountaineers can click into their skis and commence their ascent. Once a landing site is established, it's kitted out with plastic barrels containing survival kit for up to 30 people, should they be marooned on shore. These include thermal blankets, sleeping bags, fire-making kit and provisions.

Back on board, it's a 6.45am wake-up call, 7am breakfast and the first two teams depart at 8am, after a final disinfectant boot dip on the way off the ship (there is unanimous reverence for this spectacular and unspoilt environment).



Right: Wakeley and Hugh Morrison reach the seventh continent of Antarctica. Bottom left: an iceberg sculpted by the elements



out of the channel; we were lucky enough to transit without being stopped by ice congestion. As we pull out of the channel, we are joined by a pair of humpback whales gently accompanying us until they eventually flip their giant tails and dive. There is positive data around whale populations here. Indeed, not only are their numbers believed to be slowly recovering, the wildlife in general appears resilient, with the populations of some penguin species increasing; and we are told that the hole in the ozone layer is expected to heal by 2066. The need to protect the environment is continually reinforced, and the palpable sense that it is making a difference in this most delicate of biospheres is a boon to our party of ecologically conscious skiers.

At Georges Point, off Rongé Island, we spend the morning climbing Mount Britannia (3,800ft). The light is truly mesmerizing, with a depth of field and clarity that is hard to describe. When we return to the ship, we are invited to take the Polar Plunge – the sea temperature, at -2°C , is more than bracing.

One afternoon, I visit a gentoo penguin colony on Cuverville Island, home to 6,500 breeding pairs. It's a noisy, smelly place, but to be immersed among these comic, purposeful, surprised-looking little souls, completely unaware of our presence as they cruise up and down their "penguin highway", is utter magic. Penguins were not designed for walking; the awkward waddle often transitions to tobogganing. Once in the water, though, they are powerful, graceful creatures that can catapult themselves back onto the land at high velocity – at once impressive and adorable.

My favourite day is spent on Enterprise Island and Nansen Island, which takes us through an "iceberg garden" to deposit us for our explorations. There are bays in Antarctica that act as catchment areas for icebergs, and it's as though you are drifting through a raw sculpture installation, honed by the sun, the wind and the waves. The water is an intense turquoise and far more beautiful than I have seen anywhere else: the purest spectrum of perfect white through to aquamarine to cyan to deep turquoise and sapphire, and utterly mesmerizing. It's a sight that can never truly be captured by a photograph. As we return to the ship late in the afternoon, we are treated to the joyful sight of penguins feeding around the Zodiac, as graceful as dolphins.

Not every day is so tranquil. On one of the last, we are treated to the full range of Antarctic weather when, on a visit to Chiriguano Bay, the wind picks up to 50 knots. When the seas become too rough to land safely, we take a detour to Livingstone Island and Half Moon Island to visit the chinstrap penguin colony and witness some sleepy fur seals. As sad as we all are not to ski, we are fully aware that this can be an unforgiving environment. And visiting Antarctica as such active participants has created memories that will last a lifetime.

On returning to London, I find myself missing this extraordinary, untouched part of the planet in an almost visceral way. Antarctica has sunk deep into my soul. I can well understand why the expedition team and the guides claim that everyone who has visited becomes a "volunteer ambassador". You can't help it. ■HTSI

Three days into the voyage, we wake up in Charlotte Bay near Bluff Island on the continent of Antarctica. It is quite simply breathtaking. I want to bank it deep in my memory, this place I have long dreamt of visiting. There is an air of awe and anticipation as we head out.

Our group is led by the seasoned ski guide Hans Solmssen from Verbier and Mike Wachs from Jackson Hole, Wyoming. As most of the terrain is on or near glaciers, everyone is roped to a guide as the risk of dropping into a crevasse is high. This is quietly reassuring – we are all very connected, skinning in unison with a gentle tension on the rope between us, zig-zagging up the glaciers and cutting fresh tracks among the often visible crevasses. The reward is a 360-degree view from the top of the mountain looking over uncharted territory, and then a descent on varied terrain that has never been skied over (it is said that more people have summited Everest than have ski-mountaineered on Antarctica). Taking the first step onto the granite stones of Charlotte Bay, I am struck by the possibility that I may be the first human to have ever touched this particular stone; I've never felt so at one with the terrain. We are also blessed with fresh snow, and lots of it. We expected spring skiing but with up to two feet of fresh powder, the gleeful descents make all the climbing worth it.

On later days we adventure to Paradise Harbour and Waterboat Point, where we are invited to view the spectacular transit of the Lemaire Channel, just 5,250ft wide at its narrowest point and nicknamed "Kodak Gap". It is beautifully photogenic, with sweeping majestic glaciers falling directly into the sea and mountains towering steeply





Travels

Photography by *Ismail Zaidy*

with my mom

What happened when HTSI travel editor *Maria Shollenbarger* took her 80-year-old mother to Morocco?

My mother first heard the sound of the prayer call in Morocco 13 years ago. I was in Marrakech, sitting on the balcony of my hotel room near the Koutoubia, the city's famous medieval mosque; she was 6,000 miles away, in California. In the ink-washed dusk, the *adhan* rang out: a sonorous monotone, joined within seconds by a dozen more voices, rising in a chorus that commanded the sky. I took a video, scanning the tops of palm trees, and sent it to her with a message: "Sound up!" A few minutes later, she opened her phone and listened to it. Then she listened again, and again, and again.

Morocco is one of the countries I know and love best. There is something about its cultures, both Arab and Berber, that is deeply compelling: at once inscrutable and full of heart. I've slept in forgotten villages and tents in stone deserts, and watched the rising sun set the snowy peaks of the High Atlas alight. From El Jadida to Guelmim, I've attempted (and failed) more times than I can count to bridge the camaraderie gap with my middling French and my five or so words of Arabic.

My mother's imagination was sparked by that first sound, those landscapes, that inscrutability. We made a vow: see the country together, just the two of us. In the ensuing years, images from more trips – around a dozen of them, by my count – filled her phone. Various tentative dates and plans were tabled. And, inevitably, various life exigencies, usually mine, intervened. The vow began to shimmer, becoming worryingly transparent.

Then, this year, it suddenly coalesced again around a milestone: her 80th birthday, and a set of dates in April that worked for both of us. I had the reality of time constraints – we had just seven days – to contend with, as well as the divergent needs and interests that attend multi-generational adventures. My mom has no passion for shopping, for instance, but can observe people or walk in nature – still, at 80 – for hours. I wanted to balance history and beauty, people and landscape, with comfort, and perhaps the smallest bit of comfort-zone pushing.

We met in Paris first, so she could acclimatise to the time change. As we ate asparagus at Le Bonaparte and walked past grey Haussmann façades through intermittent drizzle, I thought about the contrast with what was coming: heat, colour, smells, language, an iteration of Africa she'd never seen.

After a day made long by delays, Marrakech finally materialised through a prismatic veil of dust. The

Koutoubia was just visible in the distance as we touched down. We dropped our bags at Riad Mena, the beautiful seven-bedroom hotel that was to be our base, and immediately headed out for a food tour of the medina. Weaving through the Kasbah and the Mellah, the old Jewish market, we sampled and savoured: keftah sliced off skewers in strips, olives brined with coriander or rosemary or cumin, picked from huge wood spoons dipped into vats. There were honey-soaked briouates and amlou, the Berber butter made from crushed almonds, honey and argan oil. We walked and walked. My mother leaned in earnestly to taste this and that, to decipher the French and accented English over Arabic pop blaring from various speakers. Rug sellers unfurled their azilals and kilims like exotic heraldry, juice vendors beckoned. I shadowed her as she trod quickly but carefully; small steps, navigating people and puddles and darting scooters, fielding waves of colour and sound. It was three days before Eid, the end of Ramadan, and I'd thought Marrakech might feel different, quieter; but if anything it was at a higher pitch, swelled by ranks of tourists. For almost three hours we traversed the old souks, encircled by their thousand-year-old walls.

At the end of the evening, as we sat down to a *ftour*, the Ramadan fast-breaking to which our guides had invited us, I looked over at her. She smiled back, smiled out over Jemaa el-Fna Square. Then the prayer call began to sound. She closed her eyes, put her hands on the table in front of her, listening. I realised she had been waiting for it. I also realised something she'd not have said herself: she was exhausted.

Marrakech can overwhelm at any age. We slowed the pace. We spent the next morning in the Majorelle gardens, considering the blues and yellows of Jacques Majorelle's studio against profusions of cacti and bougainvillea – a chromatic nirvana, redolent of pungent desert plants. We wandered in the 16th-century Ben Youssef madrasa with a guide, ran our hands over *zellige*-tiled walls and Koranic verses rendered in carved plaster. We ventured back into the souks around Mouassine, whose wider alleys are more tranquil. I took photos so she didn't have to: red doors against pink walls, ornate incisions in silver lanterns, the patterns and shapes that caught and held her attention.

In the afternoons we stayed at the riad, on a terrace overlooking the courtyard, talking, reading, watching the one tall palm nod its shaggy head in the breeze. Delicate patterns of light spread across the bed in our room, filtered through the latticed menzeh window. The muezzin was fainter here; we'd pause our chat to listen. The quiet was like a balm.

We drove out of the city early one morning, taking the Tizi N'Tichka pass through the High Atlas. Within an hour the landscape was utterly changed. Stands of poplar



Palm trees above the city wall at Bab Doukkala, Marrakech. Opposite page: Maria Shollenbarger and her mother, Sherry, in the courtyard of Riad Mena



Left: the garden courtyard and pool of Riad Mena. Below far left: a lounge area. Below left: flowers arranged in the Mellah market



and birch – mountain trees, their leaves glittering like coins sifting through fingers – filled the gullies between volcanic peaks. When we descended into the desert plain hours later, she was transfixed by shifts in scenery: the orange earth fading, as soil mixed with sand; steep slopes ceding to low mesas, some covered in the faintest down of green. Beyond, the emptiness of stone desert.

My mother had heard all about Dar Ahlam, the 18th-century *ksar* deep in the Skoura oasis, converted into a hotel 21 years ago by its French owner, Thierry Teyssier. A stay here is a sort of carefully scripted fever dream of Morocco. Every experience is an occasion, from a rooftop supper lit by hundreds of candles to a hike in the Valley of the Roses, where you turn a corner and come upon a bivouac, cushions, a table – a surprise picnic conjured, like a mirage, ahead of your arrival.

The oasis, in a more prosaic way, is as magical as the hotel. Some of the *ksars*, once homes to prosperous date farmers, are in picturesque ruins; a few, like Dar Ahlam, have been painstakingly restored. Quiet dirt roads weave between fields of barley and olive and pomegranate groves. Donkeys, laden with their bales of cut grass, graze quietly in the sun; palms sprout erratically everywhere. An irrigation system of channels and subterranean tunnels called *khettarat* runs along the roadsides; water whispered as we made our way on foot to the house of Dar Ahlam's retired gardener, Momo, who is renowned locally for the

“IN A DESERT, YOU’RE UNENCUMBERED BY EXCESS”

quality of his fruits and vegetables. Seated in the shade of a trellis in his garden, we ate simple grilled aubergine terrines and tomato salad, while his eight-year-old daughter, Heba, practised her English counting skills on us.

On a past trip, I'd hiked the length of a gorge called Sidi Flah, about a half hour's drive away. This time, we drove out to watch the sunset from an outlook above it, a prime spot with a view out over miles of desert. Clouds had been amassing all that afternoon, and the wind picked up as we left. We parked and walked the final several yards up to the ridge where a low table, set for tea, awaited us. Two hotel guides laughed as they scrambled to secure the tablecloth with stones and right overturned lanterns. I took my mother's arm as a strong gust pushed us both sideways, asked her if she was OK. She offered a bright “Yes, honey!” with a smile that seemed to say, “Maybe?” We sat, our clothes billowing wildly. Fouad, our

guide, whose face folded into a hundred creases when he smiled, prepared our tea. Three times rinsing the leaves; add muddled fresh mint; three more times, rinsing and pouring. Miles away, the cloud lifted from the tops of the mountains and the red crescent of the sun cast their summits in relief. The wind began to die down, the enveloping silence of the south reassuring its place.

Days before, lying in the lacework of light on our bed at Riad Mena, I'd asked my mother what came to mind when she thought of the desert. “In a desert, you're unencumbered by excess,” she said finally, after considering for several seconds. “There's the potential for aloneness; a sense of no confinement. A desert directs you back to yourself.”

As I watched her sitting at the edge of the gorge, poised cautiously on the blankets, her fine white hair whipping around her face, I thought about deserts, and selves. When she was pregnant with me, she'd told me at some point on our journey, she used to go to Huntington beach and dig a hole in the sand, into which she could fit her burgeoning belly. She wanted to immerse me in that place, she said, to create for me a sense of being there, even before I was born.

I can't say if this is why today oceans and beaches are the alpha and omega of my sacred geography. I do know that my mother's thoughtfulness and selflessness have been gifts that have shaped the trajectory my life; gifts I leveraged to pursue paths that took me far away from her, for years at a time – something that, as she only recently admitted to me (such is her selflessness), has caused her real heartache. We are very close, and very different. She is gentle, and patient; she has never felt compelled to exert dominion over the events of her life in order to feel safer in it. Above all she is a mother, heart and soul, through and through. I am restless; I have never understood how to reconcile being pliant with being strong, so am often brittle instead. I never had children; there is no daughter, no point of reference or orientation for me to understand what our relationship has, for her, contained.

She is 80 now. We live thousands of miles away from each other. Our time together is not over; but it is finite. In the vast rooflessness of the desert, this truth – she will be gone one day – is almost too much to be borne. “Are you crying again?” she has asked me gently, smiling, more than once already on this trip. And I have reached for her elbow or her hand, or kissed her soft, dry cheek; getting, and giving, what I can, while I can.

We drive back across the Atlas, stopping for a final night before she flies to San Francisco. Our hotel, called Olinto, is in a broad valley between high peaks. The gardens are beautiful; hundreds of olive trees shade lavender beds, terraces and courtyards, and ring the large pool, shaped like a pond. The nine suites are individual pavilions, with roof terraces and cinematic views. The service is slow and confused, but the place is deeply comfortable, coddling, the staff sweet to a person. We wash away the desert dust and dress a bit for dinner.

“Thank you for this wonderful gift,” she had said that afternoon, her own eyes bright. By which she means not just the trip, she continues, but the chance to step into my life – for her, an experience as foreign, as meaningful, as Morocco itself. I hold her hand, and think about how gifts of love are almost never commutable, and don't have to be. At some point, we listen, together, to one last prayer call – pennants of sound released into the air, spiralling up, fading into the blue. ■HTSI

Maria Shollenbarger travelled with Cazenove+Loyd, which tailors trips to Morocco from £6,000pp for seven nights' B&B including private experiences (excluding international flights). cazloyd.com, riadmena.com



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Mumbai magnetic

The heady energy of the Indian port city invites a sophisticated approach to summer style

Photography by *Vivek Vadoliya*

Styling by *Nikhil Mansata*

Models, *Neeraj Saini, Bharath Murugaiyan and Ankit Karki*

Neeraj wears CASABLANCA cotton short-sleeve jacket, €985, and jacquard trousers, POA, NORBLACK NORWHITE cotton turban, POA, METRO leather slippers, Rs3,490 (about £34), GAZDAR gold, diamond, tourmaline and pearl vintage brooch (pinned to turban), about £7,837, lapis lazuli necklace, about £5,142, agate bracelet, about £1,959, emerald necklace, about £1,196, and lapis lazuli bracelet, about £98





Bharath wears OUR LEGACY cotton shirt, £320. ANAMIKA KHANNA silk skirt, about £176. METRO leather slippers, about £34



Top: Ankit wears DIVYAM MEHTA silk Sadri vest, about £431. ZEGNA silk-mix shirt, and wool and mohair workwear trousers, both POA. PRATAP handmade Peshawari shoes, \$405. Bottom: Neeraj wears FENDI linen shirt, £1,320. Cotton bib, stylist's own



Bharath (left) wears LOUIS VUITTON GOTS organic viscose jacket, £2,500, matching shorts, £990, and cotton knotted collar shirt, £790. Ankit (right) wears LOUIS VUITTON cotton denim jacket, £1,900, matching trousers, £1,100, and cotton knotted collar shirt (just seen), £790. PRATAP handmade Peshawari shoes, \$405



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Top: Bharath wears LOEWE polyester crinkled shirt, £550. Bottom, from left: Ankit wears GIORGIO ARMANI cupro deconstructed jacket, £1,700, silk shirt, £1,300, cupro trousers, £1,900, and cashmere and modal woven stole, £350. Neeraj wears GIORGIO ARMANI jacquard textured viscose jacket, £2,100, silk-mix shirt, £980, linen-mix trousers, £790, cashmere and modal foulard, £450, and leather belt, £370. Bharath wears DIVYAM MEHTA silk Aamod shirt, about £176, and Matka-silk top (worn as scarf), about £686. GIORGIO ARMANI jacquard trousers, £740. All wear METRO leather slippers, about £34





From left: Ankit wears NAUSHAD ALI FOR SAVE THE LOOM handwoven cotton shirt, about £289. EKA merino wool shirt, \$423, and merino wool trousers, \$312. PRATAP handmade Peshawari shoes, \$405. Neeraj wears PRADA cotton Vichy shirt, £1,200. PERO cotton handwoven and embroidered trousers, POA. METRO leather-Pathani shoes, about £39. Bharath wears ACNE STUDIOS recycled polyester T-shirt, €280. PERO hand-crochet trousers, POA. SUNSPEL cotton boxers (just seen), £40. METRO leather Pathani shoes, about £39

Bharath wears KENZO cotton-blend top, £325, and heavy cotton trousers, £550. PRATAP handmade Peshawari shoes, \$405. OBATA/IMU woven cotton Machhiwali bag, \$395





LUXURY SPENDING
IS EXPECTED TO REACH
€25BN BY 2030

Ankit wears DIVYAM MEHTA silk Bandhgala jacket, about £823. WOORYOUNGMI mesh top, POA, wool trousers, £350, and leather belt, £220. PRATAP handmade Peshawari shoes, \$405. Opposite page, top: Neeraj wears KARU RESEARCH cotton vest, \$360. TOD'S silk-mix shirt, £800. SAVE THE LOOM handwoven cotton Mundu sarong, about £34. METRO leather slippers, about £34

Models, Neeraj Saini at Ninjas Models, Bharath Murugaiyan and Ankit Karki at Feat. Artists. Casting, Feat. Artists. Grooming, Maniasha Fialkina at Faze Management. Stylist's assistant, Roshni Sukhlecha. Photographer's assistant, Dhanesh Saroj. Production, Harsha Sinha at Elements Production

A renewed emphasis on luxury handcraft is helping to buoy India's consumer growth.

By Jessica Beresford

The hands that fastidiously thread, stitch and embellish the clothes produced by the world's biggest luxury houses usually go unnoticed – and uncredited. Hours, days, sometimes even weeks are spent on the intricate beadwork or embroidery of a garment, but often only the brand's name is acknowledged on the label.

Dior's show for prefall '23, presented at the Gateway of India monument in Mumbai, was intended to correct this, highlighting the work of the artisans that the house has longstanding relationships with. The collection referenced traditional Indian silhouettes and used techniques employed in different parts of the country for centuries: an appliqué method developed in the western state of Gujarat festooned the back of a jacket; block printing, which originated in Rajasthan and Gujarat, created fuschia flowers on a long robe; while cropped jackets were trimmed with gold couching and satin stitching practised in regions across the country.

The collection was made in collaboration with Chanakya ateliers in Mumbai, with whom Dior creative director Maria Grazia Chiuri has worked for more than 25 years, first at Fendi, then Valentino, and now through the French maison. "Craft is really embedded in our culture – every village in India has their own identity through their craft, and it's a way of celebrating that," says Karishma Swali, Chanakya's artistic director. "What is unique about what we are able to offer at Chanakya is a take on these traditional techniques, making them relevant to today and also marrying them to the signature DNA of each brand."

Dior's acknowledgement of India as a place of exceptional skill is significant given its affiliation with French couture and culture. It also nods to the potential growth of India as both a producer and market for the global luxury industry. As a BRIC country, India has been identified as one of the world's rising economic powers for decades but, despite steady growth since the 1990s, there hasn't been a big domestic appetite for international luxury brands. But things are changing. India was recently labelled a "bright spot" in the midst of a global downturn, with estimates that it could outpace Germany and Japan to become the world's third-largest economy over the next decade. With India's population surpassing China's this year, according to the United Nations, and with 66 to 100 million in the middle classes, according to the Pew Research Centre, the country is increasingly appealing as a consumer opportunity. Apple recently opened its first store in India, in the financial capital of Mumbai, while Tata Group, the



country's largest conglomerate, recently partnered with Richemont to sell Cartier, Piaget and Jaeger-LeCoultre locally. Bain & Company estimates that luxury spending in India, around €7-€8bn in 2022, is expected to reach €25-€30bn by 2030, propelled by changing attitudes and the behaviours of younger customers.

"In India, the luxury fashion market is not that old – probably about 20, 25 years," says Divyam Mehta, a New Delhi-based fashion designer who launched his first line in 2007. "Before that we went through a period of industrialisation, where the industry was more driven towards what was basic or necessary, but when the economy grew in the '90s, that was when we really started focusing on design and building luxury brands."

Mehta's brand champions the textiles and local craft of India, creating modern ready-to-wear that plays on classic silhouettes. He says the growth in luxury spending is tied to a renewed appetite for artisanship in India, driven by a group of designers who are shunning mass production in favour of slow, handmade – and more expensive – fashion. "Craft is luxury," adds Mehta. "There is a movement that we're seeing, of more brands feeling the same way. With industrialisation, you're always trying to find a commercial solution to things, but when you do that you lose the emotion that goes into making things by hand."

One of this year's LVMH Prize nominees, Karu Research, was founded by New Delhi-based designer Kartik Kumra, who makes quilted drawstring trousers and separates from hand-loomed cotton. "I couldn't see any Indian luxury brands at the best international stores, like Dover Street Market or Selfridges, nothing representing the culture," says Kumra of the gap he sought to fill. "Dries Van Noten has done his embroidery here for a long time, and so does Bode. A lot of people make clothes here," he adds. "But other than bridal couture, there haven't been any cool ready-to-wear brands coming out of India for a really long time. No one had really cracked presenting India as a global

luxury concept, and there weren't really people talking about working with craftspeople."

Kumra, who was studying economics in Pennsylvania while launching his brand, went back to India to visit different artisan groups to develop his supply chain and find people who could make the designs he had in mind. "The idea is that every piece has to have some level of artisanal involvement – we work with around 60 different groups," he says. Karu Research was picked up by Mr Porter and Ssense in its first season, and now has 30 stockists around the world.

Kumra says only five per cent of his business comes from within India – a fact he puts down to a lack of interest in homespun local craft. "It's super-hard to sell India to India," he adds. "When you're not proud of what you're presenting, and you don't support your own local designer economy, at least in ready-to-wear, out of the context of a wedding, then it's hard for a brand."

Despite that, the international market has provided impetus for many, giving fresh opportunities to support cottage industries that, as in many other countries, may otherwise become obsolete. New Delhi-based Kardo, which was founded in 2013 and is stocked throughout North America, Europe and Asia, includes a tag with each garment detailing the provenance – and the people – involved in making it.

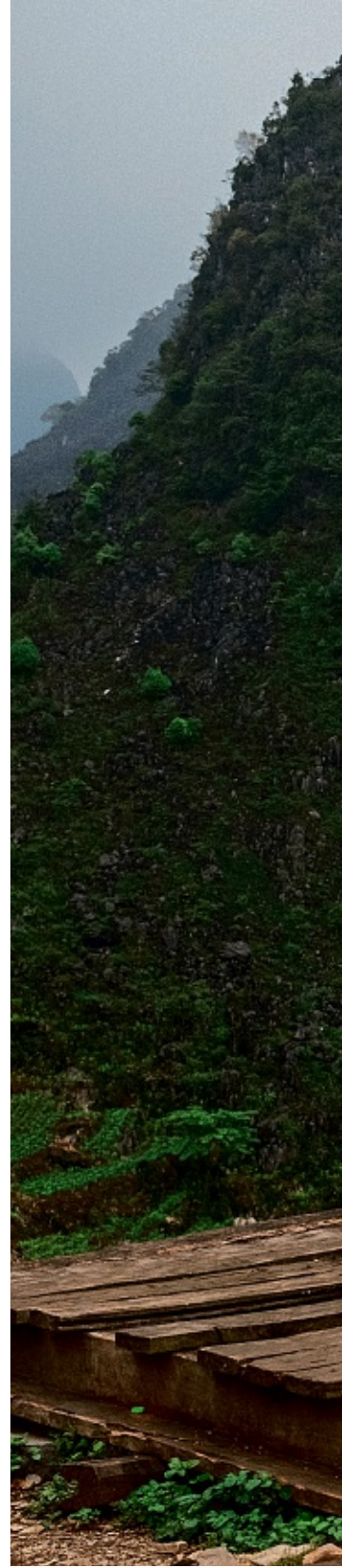
Nila, a Jaipur-based initiative, was founded by Carole Bamford in 2016 on the principles of preserving traditional craft while utilising natural dyes. "We work to develop and support the value chain, whether it's in cotton or other natural fibres or indigo and natural dyes, looking at farming, spinning and weaving," says Anuradha Singh, head of the Lady Bamford Foundation. "We are here to support arts and communities, to relook and rethink their craft spaces and their techniques, and use sustainable indigenous ways of producing, keeping their skills intact and giving them design intervention."

Singh adds that the emphasis on luxury and craft in India is also, in part, down to an acknowledgement of its importance to the economy and culture. "A lot of us have taken craft for granted, because it's been so much a part of our lives," adds Singh. "But I see that there is a renewed interest, in terms of people understanding more how valuable it is, not only for our culture, but also what it's doing for our country economically. The artisanal and craft industry is the second largest after agriculture. So I think this revival is also recognition from people overseas valuing that." ■HTSI





Left: one of many bridge crossings in northern Vietnam. Right: children play in Đông Văn. Below left: the author on his Royal Enfield Himalayan. Below right: the view from the La Vie Vu Linh homestay overlooking Thác Bà Lake



I've never been happier to see tarmac. The grey ribbon of road ahead of me flashes through the lush green of the Vietnam landscape. It comes at the perfect moment. I have just fallen from my motorbike, the back end sliding out mid-corner on a dusty gravel mountain pass in Hà Giang, so to be back on a real, proper road is a relief.

I have ridden 300 miles through picturesque tea plantations, boarded a boat on Thác Bà Lake and traversed the single-lane tracks of Hoàng Su Phì. Three days into a 12-day, 1,000-mile guided motorbike adventure through north Vietnam, I am already bewitched by this beautiful country, its people and its food.

The trip, organised by Vintage Rides, begins in the capital Hanoi, where the air is saturated with petrol and garlic – the two-stroke scooter engines in a constant battle with the sizzling pans on the sides of the street. To cross the road is an achievement in itself, a dizzying feat of calculated steps, the scooters and cars dancing around in their quest for space. Join on your own scooter or motorbike and you'll never question the traffic in London or Los Angeles again.

But life slows down soon after we leave the city. An hour's ride north of Hanoi finds the deep countryside where farmers grow rice or tobacco. The paddies open out, country lanes narrow and spectacular karst rock formations appear.

Each day is made up of a roughly 100-mile ride. The predetermined routes are designed to challenge riders with roads that pass through small villages, mountains and off-road sections. Riders can expect to spend between four and six hours a day in the saddle, making the trip a feat of endurance as much as skill. It's led by François Combes, 41, an experienced guide and expert rider who runs tours around the world. He's supported by three Vietnamese assistants who help riders communicate with locals as well as offer daily support. Viet, who was born in Hôi An, takes pride in making the group fresh coffee every morning, while Nam is the on-hand mechanic.

The trip attracts a range of people, from 25-year-old engineers to 64-year-old retirees. There are 11 of us in total, from the UK and France, and the camaraderie builds quickly. We hurriedly share intimacies over lunch, such as the intensity of the riding. It's a shared experience that is completed as a pack, with problems solved as one.

Further north of the country, we head towards the Unesco-protected geopark of Đông Văn. We are greeted by tooting horns and friendly waves as we pass through

FINDING VIETNAM

There's only one way to explore the hidden beauties of the country's roads less travelled, says *Charlie Thomas* – by motorbike

Photography by *Charlie Thomas*



each small town, the children just finishing school, heading home on their bicycles.

Such friendliness is at least partly to do with the fact that we are travelling on bikes. People are used to seeing scooters on the roads across Vietnam – Hanoi contains more than five million of them alone – and much of the country is made for two wheels. Big bikes are more unusual, thanks partly to their impracticality but also the 100 per cent import tax on foreign-assembled vehicles. I'm riding a Royal Enfield Himalayan, a mid-size 411cc adventure bike designed for traversing every kind of terrain. But, with its small size, quiet engine and retro '80s looks, it's far from being an intimidating motor.

Over the 12 days we encounter everything from smooth tarmac to grass, freshly rained-on mud, clay and gravel. The Himalayan can tackle it all with its high suspension travel, predictable power and relatively light weight. It inspires confidence (in my case maybe just a little too much confidence). You can rely on it through the slippery stuff, lean on its skinny tyres through the bends, and make use of its upright riding position when you want to admire the scenery.

Accommodation differs every day, from the very comfortable Hanoi Allure Hotel to places like La Vie Vu Linh, a community-run homestay overlooking the atmospheric Thác Bà Lake. It's run by Fredo Binh, a



THE BIKES CAN NAVIGATE THE CRACKS AND CREVICES OF THE COUNTRY



gracious host who employs local Dao people. Each room has a lakeside view, while guests eat together in the evenings, barefoot on traditional mats. Fredo does the rounds, drinking shots of homemade rice wine while regaling us with his own tales of adventure.

In the Dao village of Quan Ba we stay in wooden shacks, while in Hoàng Su Phì there are stilted huts overlooking rice paddies. Each is perfectly decent but it makes us grateful for the reprieve of hotels in Đông Văn and Cao Bằng, with their soft mattresses and air conditioning, given that daily temperatures reach up to 38°C.

While the quality of the places to stay is variable, the food is universally excellent. Bun Cha Hanoi sets the bar high on the first evening, with its blend of sweet-and-sour dipping sauce and grilled fatty pork. The most famous Vietnamese dish, pho, is a near daily necessity. Maison Teahouse Bungalow in Hà Giang specialises in its own version, serving it with raw beef and noodles that you cook yourself in a steaming bowl of broth. Incredibly fresh and spicy, it's the perfect fuel for a long day on the road. Other highlights include a dish of fried chicken with ginger – served with the head and feet so you know you're getting your full bird's worth – and a blood sausage that has a distinctive juicy, bitter taste.

The landscapes of north Vietnam are vast and hugely variable: one moment flat and green, the next jagged,

mountainous and intimidating. The karsts almost don't look real. Huge limestone pyramids, they sit defying each other, proudly competing for height and width.

On the Hà Giang loop, we climb up and through the mountains, embracing their unusual shapes. There are sweeping, high-speed Monza curves, tight Monaco hairpin bends and long Mulsanne straights, where you can admire the trees, water buffalo and wild dogs as you whizz past. Slower moments include the ancient lands of Ba Be National Park, with its endless rice paddies, narrow lanes and farmers in their *nón lá* conical hats. In these areas, the same scenes one associates with old footage and images of Vietnam remain largely unchanged.

Two wheels makes for an exhilarating way to explore Vietnam in more depth. Such a physical experience immediately makes one feel more connected to the landscape. It also opens up areas that are otherwise hard to reach: the bikes can navigate the cracks and crevices of the country, the hidden passages and unfinished tracks that are still off-limits to normal backpackers. As such, the trip still feels exclusive, a glimpse of a traditional society that is increasingly opening up to visitors and therefore inevitably changing. It's an incredible experience, even if you don't quite manage to remain entirely upright. ■HTSI
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The team at Burnt Ends restaurant prepare for lunch service. Opposite page: Pangium in The Orangerie of the Botanic Gardens

Photography by *Faris Mustafa*

SINGAPORE WIN

People have been anticipating the cool, cultural renaissance of this snoozy island nation for nearly 15 years. Is it finally here? *Maria Shollenbarger* finds out



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Opposite page:
 Potato Head
 Singapore bar on
 Teck Lim Road,
 Chinatown. Right:
 Talenia Phua
 Gajardo, founder
 of The Artling, on
 the roof of The
 Mondrian. Far right:
 The Dempsey
 Cookhouse



booth and they will come' – they need time to build networks. The goal was to position Singapore as a hub for connecting with regional collectors, and [those collectors] were all here. And the stuff in the peripheral programming was high-quality, which was gratifying to see."

Art-world acquaintances posted on social media from SEA Focus, the south-east Asian contemporary art-curation platform spearheaded by STPI Creative Workshop & Gallery (one of the city's few internationally renowned arts venues), and from SAM, the Singapore Art Museum. This year, both of them were at Tanjong Pagar Distripark, a multistorey complex at the edge of the water that has in the past two years been emerging as a new arts cluster in its own right: SAM moved into new premises here in 2022, and the site already houses a handful of galleries.

There were also party shots from off-fair venues, exhibiting degrees of glamour and even a bit of raucousness that looked downright un-Singaporean. "I just felt there was something different," says Alan Lo, the Hong Kong-born restaurateur, food-tech investor and philanthropist – he's the co-founder of Duddell's in his home city – of the energy during the event. Lo moved his family to Singapore during the pandemic, trading Hong Kong's bristle of towers and peaks for Singapore's fewer, and newer, ones, their sides sometimes furred with vertical greenery; the weaving shophouse-lined streets of Chinatown and Tanjong Pagar, incense still floating from the odd TCM purveyor lodged between two cocktail bars; and its justifiably world-famous 200-acre Botanic Gardens, where wizened qi gong practitioners trace arcane shapes in the air next to tabard-clad bootcampers from Melbourne or Leeds, amid broad-leaf mahogany and tembusu trees.

Lo intends to divide his time going forward: "Maybe it has to do with the fact that we've seen an influx of new people, whether from the mainland, or all the crypto guys, the tech and VC scenes that have also obviously been growing too. Whatever it was, it's no longer the sleepy island state that it used to be – it's more diverse, and dynamic. The pace is still slower than Hong Kong, but you don't need that intensity all the time.

"And of course, the food scene." Yes, that. Eating, drinking and nightlife (albeit a tame interpretation thereof) are where the city hit its stride some years ago. Ask a cocktail impresario anywhere in the world which Asian capital is on their radar, and Singapore is likely to be it.

It feels like déjà vu: back in Singapore, back to unpacking the topic of whether the buttoned-up country might be poised to emerge as Asia's new capital of cool. Singapore's presumptive rise as a destination in its own right – worth travelling for, rather than just transiting through – has been touted more than once in the past 15-odd years. In 2009, the catalyst was the city hosting an F1 night race and a concert, F1 Rocks, with Nobu Matsuhisa dispatching nigiri to VIPs in the pit and Beyoncé as a headline act. In 2013 it was a critical mass of chefs, mixologists and cultural venues with international talent behind them; in 2017, a similar set of addresses, all created by Singaporeans. Each time there was a groundswell of local enthusiasm, with creative types and Tourism Board officials labouring to lend substance to the "Singa-bore no more!" claim. And each time, out on the still-pretty-snoozy Singapore street, it was, if not quite failure to launch, also never quite the zeitgeist combustion everyone hoped for.

Now there's renewed speculation that this staid island nation of 5.5 million might be having a(nother?) moment; but this time spurred in part by outside forces – regional business shifts and the geopolitical machinations of Singapore's powerful neighbour, resulting in influxes of people, and wealth, from both Hong Kong and mainland China. *FT* reports estimate that more than 800 family offices have been established since the end of 2021; 2022-23 saw around 500 Chinese family offices, private-equity firms and wealth managers open or redomicile. (Singapore has already long been a base for UHNW residents from neighbouring Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.) Meta, Google and Apple all have their Asia-Pacific HQs here; some Hong Kong-based banks are relocating senior staff; blockchain and tech start-ups abound. The new

TALK IS ALL OF THE NEW EXPATS – AND THE SCADS OF CAPITAL THEY BRING

expats – and the scads of capital they bring, along with the odd pearl-pink Bentley – are a favourite topic of conversation. (Likewise the city's skyrocketing rents: friends talk of being pushed out of central neighbourhoods by rent hikes, while newly arrived mainlanders sign \$100,000-a-month leases on penthouse flats and the city's sought-after black-and-white colonial houses. In April, the government announced it would double its tax on private property purchases by foreigners to 60 per cent, in a move to cool a housing boom that has in part been driven by buyers from mainland China.)

Do the decoupling and diversification up there really account for cultural shifts down here? Culture in general, whether grassroots or institutional, is still one of Singapore's more persistent challenges. The two factors collided in January at the inauguration of ART SG, the contemporary fair created by The Art Assembly, the team behind ART HK (now Art Basel Hong Kong). More than 160 galleries – both big names (Gagosian, Lehmann Maupin, White Cube, David Zwirner) and boutique stars such as the Paris-founded Almine Rech and Belgian-based Xavier Hufkens – convened at Marina Bay Sands Expo & Convention Centre, with an estimated 43,000 international art enthusiasts and powerhouse regional collectors. "You had some heavy-hitting galleries, which is a good indication of their belief in the market," says Singaporean art adviser Talenia Phua Gajardo, whose company, The Artling, has both corporate and private clients across the Asia-Pacific region. "They're not unrealistic; they know it's not 'do a



HECTOR FINCH
LIGHTING FOR LIFE

“THERE ARE SO MANY GREAT LOCAL CREATIVES – WE’RE BRINGING THEM TOGETHER”

Breweries and distilleries now operate alongside homegrown bar concepts, many of them gorgeously designed: from classics such as 28 HongKong Street and Jigger & Pony to Atlas (with its 26ft gin “tower”), Junior The Pocket Bar (named for the teeny-weeny dimensions of its space on Ann Siang Hill), and buzzy newcomers Underdog Inn and Sago House. Singaporeans and the expats who call the city home love a tippie, and they love the new. Not for nothing did exclusive London wine club 67 Pall Mall choose Singapore as the site of its third location last year (and what a location: the 27th-floor flat overlooking Orchard Road formerly belonging to legendary film producer Runme Shaw; the room that was allegedly his bedroom is now known as the “Naughty Corner”).



In the restaurant world, “you’re seeing that ‘adding to the local tapestry’ thing a lot in food and drink”, says Wee Teng Wen, founder of The Lo & Behold Group. Wee has helped to create some of the city’s favourite addresses: Odette, the modern fine-dining venue, took home the “number-one in Asia” kudos at the 2019 San Pellegrino World’s Best awards. (His wife, Dawn Ng, is one of Singapore’s few internationally collected and represented artists; a large installation of her work graced the National Gallery Singapore’s atrium during the Fair.)

“Chefs are reviving old histories, old recipes,” he continues – and doing innovative new things with them. He and Alan Lo both cite Malcolm Lee, a young local who made his name reinterpreting the homey Straits-Chinese dishes of his childhood at a restaurant called Candlenut. Last year Candlenut’s business partner, Christina Ong (she of COMO hotels fame), also backed Lee’s new venture, Pangium, in a stunning space overlooking the city’s Botanic Gardens. “It’s Straits fine degustation – tasting menus done in a way no one else has,” says Wee.

Singaporeans have COMO’s Ong to thank in part for the evolution of Dempsey Hill, the leafy colonial army barracks-turned-lifestyle destination off Holland Road. Not that Singapore’s urban critical mass is ever especially overwhelming, the clingy humidity notwithstanding; but Dempsey has always been a shady, sedate reprieve atop its hill off Holland Road. Plane trees, their trunks covered in ferns, spread wide, dappled shade over green lawns between the barracks buildings, whose red-tiled roofs and whitewashed colonnades cast a faint bygone-era energetic shadow. Its cafés, shops and restaurants have historically been of varying quality but enduringly popular with the city’s Anglo-Euro expat community (for every wagyu burger or margarita joint, a fancy kids’ clobber boutique). Since about 2012, however, Ong has been upgrading in calculated increments. She partnered with Jean-Georges Vongerichten on The Dempsey Cookhouse & Bar, in the same barracks that holds Candlenut; London’s Dover Street Market is now in the one across from it. Culina, her cushy bistro-*traiteur* – already a Dempsey stalwart for some years – was fitted into larger, slicker premises alongside her other venues. Grandiflora, Sydney’s famous floral designers, now has a kiosk. The whole is known as COMO Dempsey, and has become a destination in its own right.

Above: Wee Teng Wen of Lo & Behold at his restaurant Claudine. Right: Singapore Art Museum at Tanjong Pagar Distripark

The halo effect has drawn other names. Australian chef Dave Pynt’s unique carnivore-centric take on modern American barbecue at his restaurant, Burnt Ends, has a diehard following in Singapore and beyond (and earned him a Michelin star). Last year he moved the restaurant’s Chinatown digs to a spectacular – and 10 times larger – space in Dempsey: all wood cladding, bold hanging lights, gleaming copper details and a long, long dining bar. “So much money has poured into Singapore,” Pynt says. “The volume of people who come through your door... they’re quite casual here, you know, but they’ve got budgets.”

Important multinational lifestyle hotel brands are betting on these budgets. The Standard and Edition Hotels groups have planted flags in the vicinity of mall-lined Orchard Road; both will open by early 2024. Talk on the ground has it that Ennismore’s The Hoxton has been in talks about a site in Jalan Besar, east of the CBD (a neighbourhood described by one local friend as “the Shoreditch of Singapore, such as that is”). Raffles reopened in late 2019 after a two-year, multimillion-pound renovation, and has never been better: all its verandas, spinning fans and four-poster charms intact, but with showcase-y new bars and restaurants, a huge spa and glittering public spaces. A second Raffles, this one a resort, is being developed amid the yacht clubs and tony apartment complexes of Sentosa Island, off Singapore’s south coast.

The Artling’s Gajardo, meanwhile, is busy installing the art collection she was commissioned to create for the Mondrian Singapore Duxton. The new-build tower rises 13 storeys above Tanjong Pagar, a Chinatown-adjacent neighbourhood of weaving, shophouse-lined streets, small parks and fragrant temples that is historically one of



Singapore’s primary nightlife hubs; an ace location, in other words. When it opens next month – with 302 rooms and suites, multiple restaurants and bars, a rooftop pool, and art by the likes of Ian Davenport and Andre Wee adorning its walls – the Mondrian will offer experiences that tie guests into the culture of the surrounding streets: hawker centre deep-dives, cult cocktail bars and small museums.

Lo & Behold’s Wee is already a hotelier; the Group opened the 37-room Warehouse Hotel, in a listed former go-down (local vernacular for a shipping warehouse) that was once a discothèque, in 2017, and it remains one of the city’s cooler stays. These days, he’s contending with co-living spaces, which are part of the company’s most ambitious project to date: the redevelopment of a former girls’ school, a full 230,000sq ft of empty space near Robertson Quay, a street or so away from the Singapore River. “The scale is kind of scary,” he admits with a smile. “But it goes back to what we do as a group, which is always about filling the gaps in the lifestyle ecosystem.” When it’s finished – some time next year, Wee reckons – the site will include boutiques with local designers and makers as tenants, a few curated eating and drinking outlets (of course), and an art exhibition and education space in the old hall. Lo & Behold will operate a couple of these restaurants; the rest are tendered out. “There are so many great local creatives and entrepreneurs – in retail, wellness, design – who are just completely off the radar,” Wee says. “Most don’t fit into the mall thing, which is still the primary retail platform, so they’re dislocated all over the city. The idea is to bring them together.

“I’m excited about this neighbourhood,” he says earnestly, warming to a topic he knows more about than most Singaporeans. “It’s a good expat mix; it’s equidistant between Orchard Road and the CBD. But it’s very underserved. Because most of the F&B runs along the quay, there’s no nucleus; we want to create that nucleus.” Worth revisiting the city in a year’s time again, then – déjà vu or no. ■HTSI





BENNETT WINCH

HANDMADE IN ENGLAND



The Good Adventure

34 SAVILE ROW

COAST WITH THE MOST

A new wave of restaurateurs, producers and chefs has turned understated Suffolk into the food destination to know. *Clare Coulson* reports





Photography by *John Boaz*



Buzz is not a familiar sensation on the resolutely understated Suffolk coast. But in late October when thirtysomething friends Will Orrock, his fiancé Cassidy Hughes and chef Harry McKenzie opened the Greyhound Inn in Pettistree – a tiny village so off the radar that even locals would need to think long and hard to place it – there was a palpable frisson of excitement. It was a long-held dream for Orrock, who had spent the past decade in advertising, and McKenzie, who left a seven-year stint at The River Café. Over the summer they did up the interior – opening up the bar, giving the place a chic paint job and decorating with pictures and mismatched furniture, much of which was sourced by Hughes, an interior designer, at local auction houses. And they toured the county visiting the regenerative farms and producers who shared their back-to-basics mindset.

“When you’re doing this kind of food it’s like wearing your heart on your sleeve. Doing it differently almost service by service,” says McKenzie, whose daily menu plucks the very best of what’s on offer locally, often informed by morning chats with suppliers in his kitchen,



Left: James Jay, head chef at (top) The Suffolk in Aldeburgh. Above: lobster with garlic butter at the restaurant

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KEIRA KNIGHTLEY WAS ONE OF THE FIRST DINERS THROUGH THE DOOR



and then deftly ramps up the flavours. Earthy celeriac – grown at nearby Fellows Farm – a handful of saffron milkcap mushrooms and braised kale, or baked cod with mussel butter sauce and celery are both utterly delicious. So too is an extraordinary chocolate tart made with Pump Street’s 85 per cent Ecuador chocolate and topped with salt and cocoa nibs. The wine list, put together by George de Vos, takes a similar approach to the food, choosing small vineyards that are committed to sustainability. Despite the quietest of launches, Keira Knightley was one of the first diners through the door.

The trio are part of a new wave of entrepreneurs and young chefs who have moved to the county, injecting new life into the food scene while collaborating with the superlative farms and producers on their doorstep. Bread at the Greyhound Inn is made up the road at Alexander and Emily Aitchison’s new Acre Farm bakery, where everything is baked in a wood-fired oven imported from Germany. They’ve planted 1,500 nut trees and 400 fruit trees across 11 hectares of their wider farm to supply fruit and nuts too (Emily also runs The Food Hub cookery school at Kenton Hall Estate). Raw milk, Bungay butter, cheeses and curd come from Jonny Crickmore’s Fen Farm Dairy, where the herd grazes in the Waveney Valley. Locally caught seafood arrives from artisan fish merchant Mike Warner (his store, A Passion for Seafood, is at Grange Farm, Hasketon) and meat from craft butcher Gerard King of Salter & King, who works with farms to produce slow-grown meat that’s totally unique to the area, such as the grass-fed Lincoln Red cattle that graze on lush meadows in Iken. Organic produce is grown by Fellows – a 70-acre farm and market garden owned by E5 Bakehouse, and by Maple Farm, owned by the visionary farmer and serial entrepreneur William Kendall – both of whom are spearheading agroforestry, growing heritage grain crops and milling their own flour.

Over in Aldeburgh, restaurateur George Pell opened the buzzy L’Escargot Sur-Mer – a sister to his Soho outpost – in the summer of 2020. That pandemic pop-up has expanded to become The Suffolk, with a 60-cover restaurant, Sur-Mer, a bar, a roof terrace overlooking the beach, private dining rooms and six cosy bedrooms in a handsome building that originally housed a 17th-century inn. The menu focuses closely on seafood from the heritage coast, with sublime oysters – grown by Bill Pinney at Butley Creek – lobster bisque and roast fillet of halibut with champagne and Avrugia caviar sauce. As well as working closely with the inshore fisherman who sell their catch from picturesque huts along the beach and the best local farms, head chef James Jay works with small-scale local growers too, often to order. With writer and gardener Tilly Gatherne-Hardy, he’s scouring heritage seed lists and planning crops for the kitchen at the walled garden of the nearby Glemham Estate.

Above left: Marriott Fisheries on the seafront at Aldeburgh. Top: country sourdough loaves at Acre Farm bakery. Left: the farm’s Alexander Aitchison



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“A PUB SHOULD BE AT THE HEART OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY”

Gathorne-Hardy’s mother-in-law, Caroline, Countess of Cranbrook, is a longtime campaigner for local producers and co-founded the not-for-profit Aldeburgh Food & Drink Festival almost two decades ago.

Alice Norman, formerly head chef at Mayfair’s Emilia, has also set up in her native Suffolk. She got in touch with Maple Farm’s William Kendall, who, by chance, was setting up a small kitchen. He offered her space, and in the spring of 2021 Pinch was born. She began with restaurant-calibre meals in a box to eat at home – think pappardelle and wild boar ragù with an asparagus and sea-herb butter – before launching her café, where creations have included cakes such as crullers (deep-fried rings of choux pastry glazed with Suffolk-inspired toppings) or chouffles topped with St Jude’s cow’s curd. She’s currently perfecting her gelato flavours with new equipment imported from Bologna, in readiness for summer.

At Walnut Tree Farm, a short drive up the A12 in Thorington, Joey O’Hare and Katy Taylor have formed Husk – a supper club in a converted cowshed where groups eat around a huge, live-edge oak table cut from one of the farm’s 350-year-old, storm-felled oaks. Guests

arrive to seasonal drinks such as a Quince Sour or Orchard Gimlet made with cordials and syrups from the farm’s fruit trees, while dinner might include Sutton Hoo chicken terrine en croûte with tarragon sauce and herb and verjus salad, or walnut-blackened venison fillet, hunter’s ragu, cauliflower purée and Thorington green sauce made with plum olives and parsley.

Ballymaloe-trained O’Hare has developed a kitchen garden, as well as a flock of birds, so that vegetables, herbs and eggs are produced on the homestead and biodynamic wines are sourced from small producers. This June they are adding four guest rooms with additional rooms to follow in two converted grain silos.

There’s a strong sense of community, not only between cooks and growers but among locals too. At The Canteen in Southwold, owned by The Old Hospital, head chef Nicola Hordern, who was formerly head chef at the departed Darsham Nurseries, also champions local and sustainable ingredients – braised hogget, chickpeas and wild-garlic borani might be followed by orange-blossom custard, apricot preserve and almond tuile, or lemon ice cream and ricciarelli – and cordials and liqueurs are made in-house. On one Sunday each month, community lunches allow guests to pay what they can afford or receive a free meal that is funded by a “pay-it-forward” scheme.

Similarly at the Greyhound in Pettistree, the team plans to organise community days where excess ingredients – such as the senseless glut of birds that end up in landfill during the shooting season – are transformed into pies that locals can pick up or customers can buy. “A pub should be at the heart of the community,” says Orrock. “And we should use our skills to help with that as much as possible.” ■HTSI

RESTAURANTS

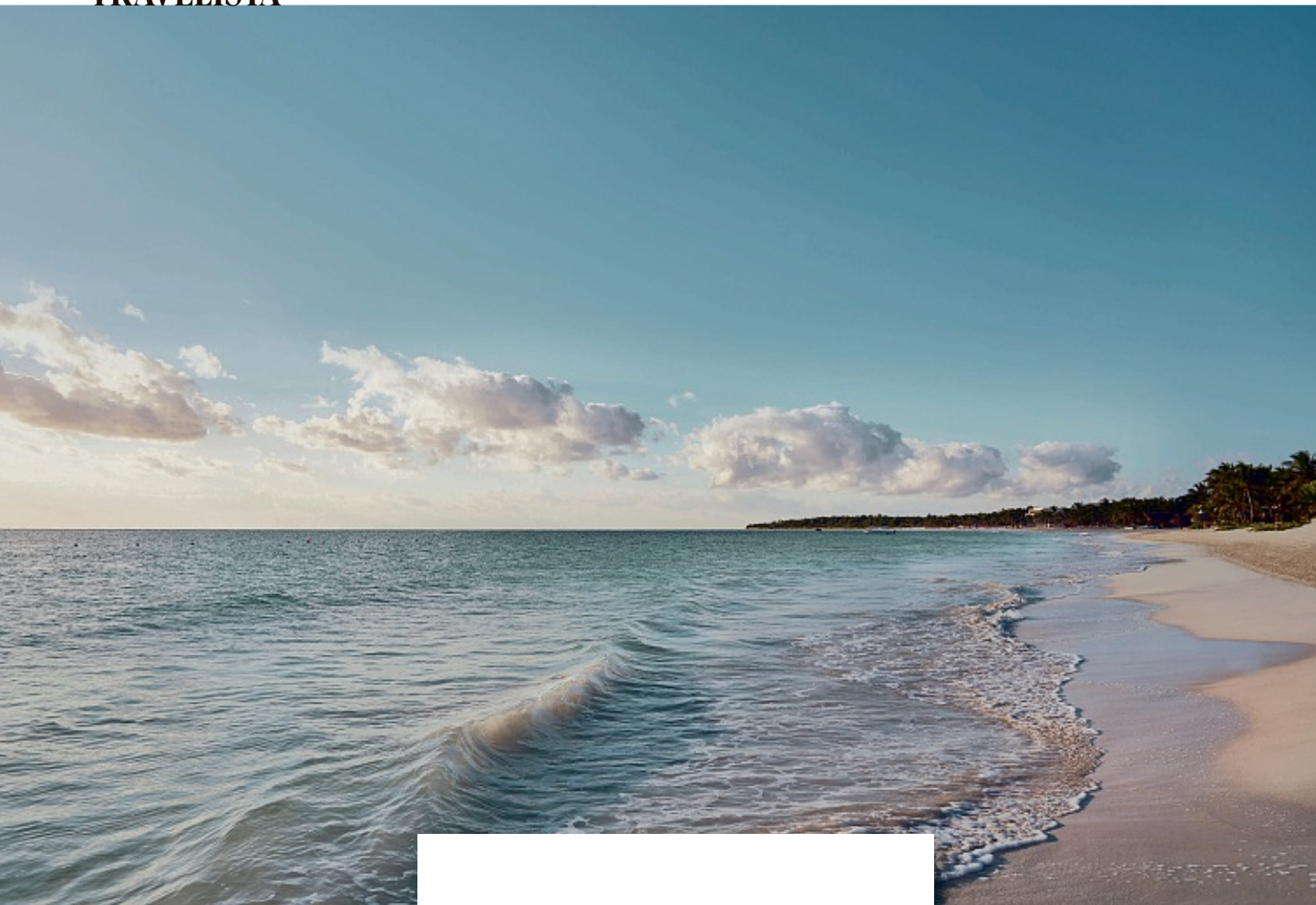
The Canteen
oldhospitalhub.co.uk/canteen
Greyhound Inn
greyhoundpettistree.co.uk
Husk huskthorington.co.uk
Pinch eatpinch.com
The Suffolk the-suffolk.co.uk

SHOPS AND FARMS

Acre Farm acrefarm.org
Fellows Farm
fellowsfarm.co.uk
Fen Farm Dairy
fenfarmdairy.co.uk
Kenton Hall Estate
kentonhallestate.co.uk
Maple Farm
maplefarmkelsale.co.uk
A Passion for Seafood
apassionforseafood.com
Pump Street
pumpstreetchocolate.com
Salter & King
salterandking.co.uk

Top left: the interiors of (above) the Greyhound Inn in Pettistree. Bottom left: chef Harry McKenzie previously worked at The River Café. Below: his nettle and cow’s curd agnolotti





TRAVEL NEWS

Summer by the sea

New digs and grandes dames to book now

WORDS BY MARIA SHOLLENBARGER



Top: the beach at Maroma on Mexico's Riviera Maya. Above: villas in its gardens

PNOÉ BREATHING LIFE IN CRETE

Fashion fades; style is eternal. The famous words are Yves Saint Laurent's, spoken in the context of clothes, but the apothegm is as apposite in the world of hotels, which also has its flash-in-the-pan trends of design, service and amenities. Style endures, though: witness millennial enthusiasm for unadulterated classics like Vienna's Hotel Sacher, or how the powers that be at Rosewood knew better than to even think about touching Bemelmans Bar during the recent renovation of The Carlyle in New York. Maroma, on Mexico's Riviera Maya, was for many of its near-30 years of existence the ne plus ultra of old-school Quintana Roo style. But it's now owned by LVMH – a conglomerate not known for letting its brands gather moss – which acquired Belmond in 2019. So this summer Maroma is putting the finishing touches on a soup-to-nuts renovation. You might not guess it at first sight, given all the

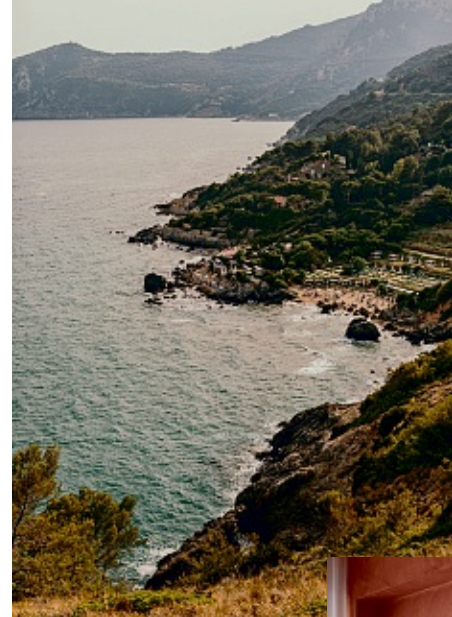
curvilinear stucco architecture has (wisely) been left unaltered. Inside the 72 rooms and suites, however, British designer Tara Bernerd has reimaged everything, from the textiles and glass chandeliers to the Saltillo floor tiles – most of which, naturally, is made in Mexico. LVMH's own Guerlain has set up in the spa, the first of its kind in Latin America. Most interesting, and anticipated, is Fotografia Maroma, the on-site exhibition curated in collaboration with Mexico City dealer Patricia Conde, which will show works by nationally renowned artists; the inaugural one, from 3 August, will travel onwards to Art Basel Miami and Photo London. belmond.com, reopens 1 August; from \$1,095

KEEPING IT CRETE AND TIDY

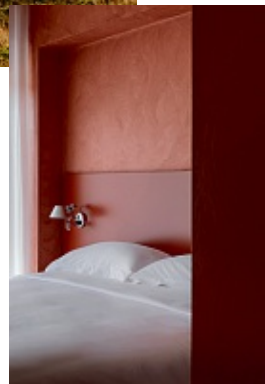
On the northern coast of Crete, near the city of Heraklion, a new adults-only resort strips back the Mediterranean model

MODERNITY REIGNS IN HOTEL LA ROQQA'S INTERIORS

to focus on food, wellbeing, and the intersections between the two. The name – Pnoé Breathing Life – doesn't exactly roll off the tongue, but what it proposes is simpler: 60 suites, all with private pools; some with saunas and hammams; ample access to a semi-private, and serviced, beach (on what can sometimes be an overpoweringly crowded island); and some cutting-edge wellness – including hyperbaric oxygen and Zerobody dry-float chambers – mixed in with conventional massages, facials and bodywork. The architecture is low, lean and sexy: glass walls, no walls, infinity pools, pale terrazzo floors, sleek wood joinery. The food doesn't push any agenda: there are juices, crudo and raw menus for anyone who wants a cleanse, and speciality meat cuts from a local butcher and house cocktails for everyone else. pnoe-breathinglife.com, from €550



Above: La Roqqa's Beach Club at Porto Ercole, Tuscany. Right: a room at La Roqqa



HOW TO ROQQA THE MONTE ARGENTARIO PENINSULA

On the Tuscan peninsula, there's a very contemporary new take on resort life. The 55-suite La Roqqa, which will open in July, sees Stockholm-based developer Conni Jonsson enlisting celebrated Milanese architects Ludovica and Roberto Palomba Serafini to reinvent the old Hotel Don Pedro here. Overlooking the quaint village and bobbing fishing boats of Porto Ercole, La Roqqa is now all angles and light. Modernity reigns in the interiors, where iconic '60s- and '70s-inspired Italian designs fill spare spaces with terrazzo floors and terracotta-painted walls. You can walk down into town and hire a boat to explore the peninsula's many gorgeous inlets and secret beaches, or just admire the wide seascape from your position on the Forte promontory. laroqqa.com, from €1,540

ROSEWOOD MAKES KONA COOL AGAIN

On the Big Island of Hawaii, an old-school classic has been getting some attention, courtesy of Rosewood. Kona Village was genuinely American-ionic, a stalwart of the '70s and '80s childhoods of many West Coast holidaymakers until it was largely destroyed in 2011 by the same tsunami that devastated Japan. Rosewood has upped the game here considerably, rebuilding and styling the rooms and suites, and adding to the count so there are now 150 keys. All have outdoor *lanais* (verandas), many outdoor showers as well; they range from garden-view thatched huts that sleep two to 6,000sq-ft-plus four-bedroom villas. rosewoodhotels.com, from \$2,500 ■HTSI
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KONA VILLAGE, HAWAII



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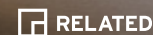
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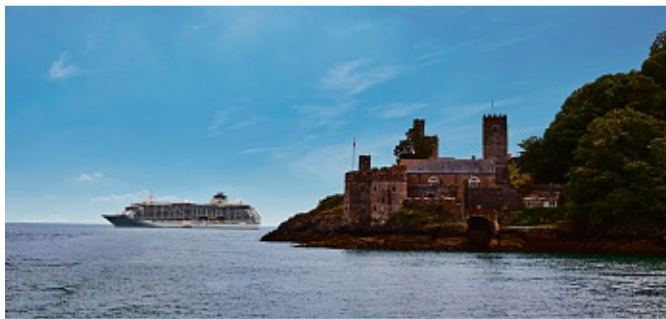
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WHEN THEY ASK WHERE YOU'RE FROM.

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Right: Shinji Fukuyo, master blender at the Yamazaki distillery (below). Below right: Yamazaki 18 Anniversary Edition, £1,600

You come face to face with drinks history as soon as you alight from the train in Yamazaki, a town just outside Kyoto. Opposite the station, behind neatly clipped hedges, sits a little wooden tea house, the only surviving design by Sen no Rikyū, the 16th-century creator of the Japanese tea ceremony.

A short walk away, on a forested slope, lies Japan's oldest whisky distillery, Yamazaki. Founded in 1923 by Shinjiro Torii, the founder of Japanese drinks giant Suntory, and Masataka Taketsuru (a student of Scotch whisky distilling who went on to found Nikka Whisky), this red-brick building celebrates its centenary this year.

Yamazaki's great age may come as a surprise – particularly if you're one of the many westerners who only learned Japan *made* whisky when they saw *Lost in Translation* (2003), in which a bemused Bill Murray attempts to shoot a Suntory whisky commercial: "For relaxing times, make it Suntory time!"

Japan has actually been making whisky of sorts since the mid-to-late 19th century. Yamazaki was its first purpose-built distillery. Its *raison d'être* was to make malts for blending, and it remains an important component of Japan's best-selling whisky Suntory Kakubin, a blend you'll find everywhere in the ubiquitous "Kaku high", or Kakubin highball, served in a tall glass with soda and ice. It wasn't until the early Noughties that Japanese whisky gained wider recognition, following a spate of wins for Yamazaki and its blended stablemate Hibiki at global competitions. It lit the touch-paper for demand, and prices duly spiralled.

Japanese whisky is made in a manner very similar to Scotch; the malted barley is imported from overseas. So what makes a whisky characteristically "Japanese"?

"It's two things," says Shinji Fukuyo, Yamazaki's master blender, over a tasting at the distillery that looks out on a



DRINKING

Suntory time

As Japan's iconic whisky house turns 100, *Alice Lascelles* asks if it can stay ahead of the pack

very cold, dry winters, which accelerates maturation, giving us a much deeper, well-matured whisky. But it's also craftsmanship. We think our work is very precise and very detailed. If we look at other Japanese industries such as car manufacturing or watchmaking or industrial arts like pottery or lacquer wares, it's all very precise, detailed work."

Another thing that tends to distinguish Japanese distilleries is their versatility – unlike Scotch whisky companies, which have a tradition of trading whisky for blending, Japanese companies are much more geared towards self-sufficiency. In the spirit of *tsukuriwake* – or "artisanship through a diversity of making" – Yamazaki uses various strains of barley, eight pairs of copper stills in varying shapes and sizes, and six different types of cask, which gives Fukuyo a big spectrum of malts to play with. It allows him to build, almost pixel by pixel, the intensely fragrant flavour profiles of Yamazaki and Hibiki.

In the cool, dark warehouse, I walk among ghostly whitewashed casks coopered from mizunara, or Japanese oak – another important part of the Yamazaki recipe. "It gives our whisky a very oriental note," says Fukuyo. "It's spicy but incense-y, like a temple washed by rain."

To mark the distillery's centenary, Suntory has bottled a special-edition Yamazaki 18 (£1,600), aged

entirely in mizunara; it's aromatic and sweet, with notes of white peach, almond, orange zest, tatami mat and cedarwood. There will also be a limited-edition peated 18-year-old malt (£1,275) from Suntory's other single-malt distillery Hakushu (which by coincidence celebrates its half-century this year). Distilled and aged in the cool climes of Japan's Southern Alps, it's as lush and subtly smoky as a spent campfire covered in dew.

lush forest of bamboo, firs and maple trees. "One is nature. The water here is very pure, very clean and mild. Scottish water has more organic compounds in it, so it has a stronger character. Our climate also changes drastically from hot and humid summers to



"OUR WHISKY IS SPICY BUT INCENSE-Y, LIKE A TEMPLE WASHED BY RAIN"

drop the word "Japanese"). Some craft distillers like Chichibu, meanwhile, have been exploring using more local materials including Japanese barley and peat. "A 100 per cent Japanese whisky is an interesting concept," says Fukuyo, "but not if it comes at the expense of quality. We will keep on innovating but that will always be our first priority." ■HTSI

📍@alicelascelles

Suntory's motto is *yatte minahare* – a saying that embodies the concept of always moving forward. And Japanese whisky is now experiencing a dynamic period of growth. This year sees the launch of two ambitious distilleries: Komoro is the brainchild of Koji Shimaoka, a former MD at Citibank, who tells me his aim, long-term, is to build a whisky business to rival Suntory; the other is the Karuizawa Distillery, whose heavyweight backers include the owner of ultra-luxe Japanese whisky retailer Dekantā, Teaghlach Holdings PLC.

Rules were recently tightened, regarding the definition of "Japanese whisky". From next year, only those that are fully fermented, distilled and aged in Japan can legitimately use the term (blends that include whisky from overseas – of which there are a surprising number – will have to

Five great whisky bars in Japan

ANALOG, TOKYO

One of Tokyo's growing band of "listening bars", where you can leaf through vinyl, dram in hand. I went for Hibiki Harmony over an ice ball, and The Strokes' "Is This It?", paired with popcorn chocolates and truffle crisps served in repurposed 7-inch.

MARUGIN, TOKYO

This rough-and-ready *izakaya* bar was the first to serve Kaku-Highs on draught. A tankard of whisky and soda sounds insurmountable, but trust me, it's mostly ice. Extremely refreshing with a skewer of chargrilled peppers or quail eggs.

APOLLO, TOKYO

Just a few candles away from total blackout, and hosting a mere 15 seats, this basement bar in Ginza is incredibly atmospheric. Quality, not quantity, dictates the menu. Tom Waits is on the turntable. Immaculate highballs are served with hand-carved ice.

CAAMM, KYOTO

Crammed floor-to-ceiling with bottles and memorabilia, Caamm is like the den of a very cool hoarder. Choose from more than 1,000 whiskies – some rarely seen outside Japan, such as the Suntory Essences – then retire to one of the low-lit nooks.



BAR HIGH FIVE, TOKYO

Cocktail fans come from far and wide to see proprietor Hidetsugu Ueno in action. If you're very good, he may even carve an ice gem for your dram. Whisky drinks include a delicious highball of Hakushu, soda, honey, lime and yellow Chartreuse.

HOW TO SPEND IT IN...



Left: *Kubongwa okukhulu nokuncane* (on left) and *Sikhula ngemfundiso yenu*, both 2023, by Wonder Buhle Mbambo at BKHz Gallery. Below: 2A in Hyde Park

DECONSTRUCTED FALAFEL SHAWARMA AT THE GOURMET GROCER



SO MANY IDEAS HAVE COME FROM CONVERSATIONS AT THE ROYALE

room where everyone plugs in their phones and plays music, so it's also very communal. If I want to dress up and feel chic, I'll go with friends to Marble, an incredible restaurant in Rosebank. I love the decor, which

has a lot of browns and olives mixed with marbling. I'll order a steak and a sweet white wine.

Downstairs from Marble is BKHz, a gallery that I adore – partly because of the space but also the person behind it, Banele Khoza, who is an artist himself. Every six weeks he spotlights emerging names. His commitment and taste are incredible. You always learn something new and that's really important for me; in my work, I'm always trying to portray what contemporary South Africa actually looks like now. I don't think you can be a fashion designer if you don't have your ears to the ground.

A place for emerging names in fashion is Africa Rise, which was opened in Sandton by designer Thula Sindi and represents a lot of young, local talent. I also adore the store 2A because it gives a local window into the luxury world; luxury fashion for people in South Africa is often something that's far removed but 2A brings it to us. I often browse the latest collections by Pierpaolo Piccioli for Valentino and I always watch what Maria Grazia Chiuri is doing at Dior. When I saw the collaboration I did for Dior in stores late last year, it was such a weird full-circle moment; I always felt like I was stuck on the outside of the industry, so seeing the collection was special for so many reasons.

A place I go to almost every day is the restaurant Doppio Zero at Rosebank. I walk in and I don't need to say anything, they just say: "The usual?" My order is a pollo limone – grilled chicken breast with roasted vegetables. They serve it with a side of sweet chilli sauce and I love how all those flavours come together. And then, if it's the weekend, I get a strawberry Daiquiri. Another restaurant

I adore is Food I Love You, a restaurant at Constitution Hill that has an incredible story; it's in the building where Nelson Mandela was once imprisoned. What is so good about Mpho Phalane's food is that she infuses a sense of modernity into the traditional meals we ate growing up. It goes back to those juxtapositions – those tensions between things that seem like they shouldn't be together, coming together and creating a beautiful result. ■HTSI

JOHANNESBURG

Fashion designer Thebe Magugu explores a city of juxtapositions

INTERVIEW BY MARY HOLLAND
PORTRAITS BY AART VERRIPS

Johannesburg was never my first choice. When I matriculated in Kimberley, I applied to Central Saint Martins and got rejected, which was heartbreaking. It was too late to apply anywhere else, so my mom said: your next best option is Johannesburg. I came here from Kimberley in 2013 to study fashion design, photography and media at LISOF [now the Stadio School of Fashion]. I fell in love with Joburg the longer I lived here. The city has a lot of juxtapositions – you have resourceful and creative people but everyone knows that it can be quite violent. It does come with its difficulties but Joburg has also received an unfair rap. I always say: don't always listen to other people's interpretation. And you can't say you've been to South Africa if you haven't experienced Johannesburg.

I start my mornings at The Gourmet Grocer, a café and grocery in Birdhaven. I always order a rooibos tea and a smoothie with peanut butter and yoghurt. On Saturdays I sit there and catch up on work without having to worry about hurrying to the office. I also love a restaurant called The Royale, which is owned by my friends. So many collaborations or ideas I've had have come from conversations at The Royale. Alongside the dining area, there's a



Top left: Thebe Magugu at Marble restaurant. Left: The Royale. Below: Magugu in downtown Johannesburg



EATING & DRINKING

Doppio Zero doppio.co.za
Food I Love You foodiloveyou.co.za
The Gourmet Grocer gourmetgrocer.co.za
Marble marble.restaurant
The Royale theroyale.co.za

SHOPPING

2A [instagram.com/2a_store](https://www.instagram.com/2a_store)
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