

JOHN ERIC

HOME & LIFESTYLE®



Wanderlust

WHERE CURIOSITY LEADS, WE FOLLOW

JULY | SEPT 2025



Compass is a licensed real estate brokerage that abides by Equal Housing Opportunity laws. Information is compiled from sources deemed reliable but is not guaranteed. All measurements and square footages are approximate. This is not intended to solicit property already listed. Compass is licensed as Compass Real Estate in DC and as Compass in Virginia and Maryland. 1232 31st Street NW, Washington, DC 20007 | 202.448.9002



JOHN ERIC

WASHINGTON, DC | LONDON | SANTA BARBARA, CA

JOHN ERIC
Global Real Estate Advisor
+1 703 798 0097
john@johneric.com

COMPASS

Departments

JULY | SEPT 2025



102



94



120



60

JOHN ERIC HOME & LIFESTYLE

7 | **Letter from the Publisher**
8 | **John's Favorites**

16 | **Design Feature**
Making Waves - Family Tides is an Ultimate Beach Build by Marnie Custom Homes

23 | **Design News**
Sushi Gaku Opens in Georgetown

24 | **Details**
A stunner of a picnic basket.

26 | **Designer Spotlight**
Shannon Kadwell, CMKBD, Allied ASID, Kitchen and Bath Designer

30 | **New Experiences in Historical Cities**

34 | **Bookworm**
The Killing Stones: A Detective Jimmy Perez Novel, by Ann Cleeves.

36 | **All Aboard The Orient Express**

46 | **Profiles**
Explore the world of Rajini Vaidyanathan, News Presenter and Correspondent for the British Broadcasting Company

54 | **Ballooning in Cappadocia, Turkey**

56 | **Wandering Through the Atacama Desert**

60 | **Off the Beaten Path - Mongolia, Lofoten Islands, The Amazon Rainforest**

70 | **Arts**
The basketry of James Ebbert

76 | **Black Book**
The best places to swim with dolphins..

78 | **Living Large in the World's Most Expensive Hotel Suites**

84 | **Global Spas**

88 | **Foodie**
Enjoy the tastes of summer with recipes for tomato and watermelon salad, cilantro lime shrimp tacos and summer fruit topped sorbet sundaes

94 | **The Top 5 - Glamping Destinations**

98 | **The Top 5 - African Lodges**

102 | **Mixology**
Our mixologist Charles Tappan introduces delicious summer drinks.

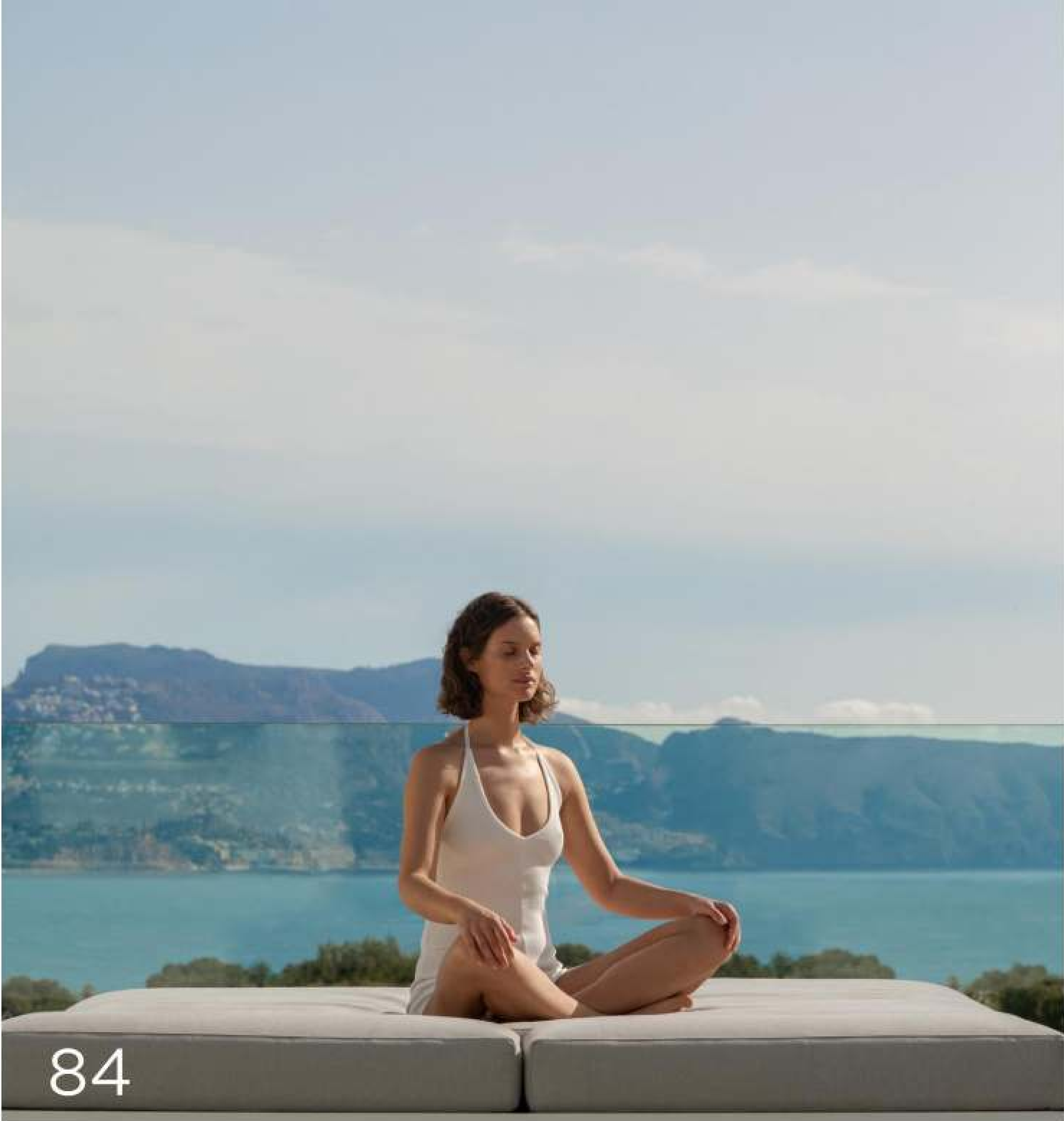
108 | **Exclusive Resorts**

112 | **The ABCs - Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao**

116 | **A Visit with Tokyo's Robots**

120 | **The Top 5 - Overwater Bungalows**

122 | **How Many Ways to Describe Wanderlust**



JOHN ERIC

HOME & LIFESTYLE

FOUNDER | Publisher
John Eric

Managing Editor
Angela Casey

Senior Editor-at-Large
Louis Kwasniewski

Creative Director
Hillary Broadwater

Design Contributor
Sherry Moeller

Master Mixologist
Charles Tappan

EDITORIAL

e-mail | angela@johnerichome.com

ADVERTISING

phone | 703.798.0097

ONLINE

www.johnerichome.com

124 | **Stylist**

Summer styles on the streets near you.

126 | Fun with International Games

130 | Must-Have Travel Essentials

132 | **Buzz**

All the news that you need to know.

133 | **Culture**

It's time for the Henley Royal Regatta and Venice International Film Festival

134 | Vienna's Calling

140 | An Ode to Yosemite

142 | The Wonderful Weirdness of the World

144 | **Diplomacy**

News and events from the diplomatic community

148 | **Real Estate**

John Eric brings you the best in luxury real estate from all across the metropolitan region and the country.





Boffi | **e DePadova**

A WAY OF LIVING

BOFFI | DEPADOVA GEORGETOWN
3320 M STREET NW – 20007, GEORGETOWN, USA
T +1 202 337 7700
INFO@BOFFIGEORGETOWN.COM
DEPADOVA.COM

Welcome

*“The world is a book and those
who don’t travel read only one page.”*

— St. Augustine



As summer arrives across the Northern Hemisphere, bringing longer days and a renewed sense of adventure, I feel especially energized. There’s something about this season that stirs the soul — the promise of discovery, the allure of far-off places, and the joy of stepping outside our routines. It’s in this spirit that we present one of our most anticipated issues of the year, our Annual Luxury World Travel Edition, curated to inspire your next great escape.

In this issue, we invite you to travel the world with us in true John Eric Home& Lifestyle fashion: with elegance, curiosity, and an appetite for the extraordinary. Step aboard the legendary Orient Express for a timeless European journey, explore the vast and untamed beauty of Mongolia, and venture deep into the lush and mysterious Amazon. From remote adventures to indulgent retreats, we’ve highlighted destinations that appeal to both seasoned travelers and curious explorers.

Luxury, of course, is not just found in the journey; it’s also in the pause. That’s why we’ve included our curated list of the world’s most exquisite hotels and one-of-a-kind dining destinations, each offering unforgettable experiences. Whether you’re drawn to modern marvels or historic icons, these places define the pinnacle of global hospitality and culinary artistry.

As always, you’ll find our beloved regular features throughout the issue, covering design, culture, style, and living well, wherever you are in the world. This summer, let inspiration guide you, whether you’re traveling across continents or simply across town. The world awaits. Explore it with us.

Warmly,

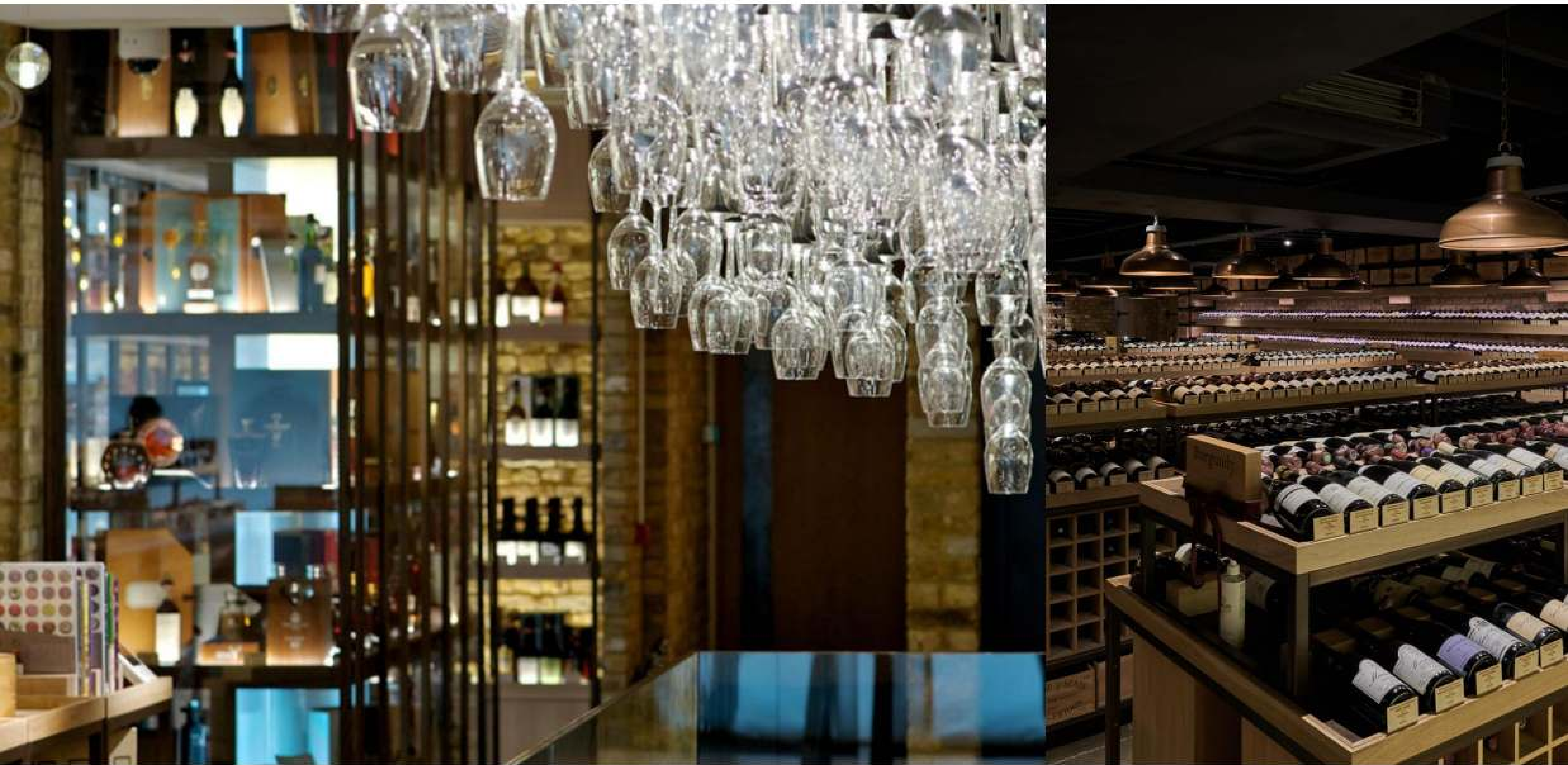


John Eric
Publisher

John Eric Home & Lifestyle Magazine

JOHN'S FAVORITES

MY PERSONAL BEST



1. Hedonism Wines

A MAYFAIR RITUAL: QUIET MOMENTS AND RARE FINDS AT HEDONISM WINES

On my way from my London office, I walk through Berkeley Square and head down Davies Street to Hedonism Wines, a spot I've come to appreciate not just for what they sell, but for how they curate it.

I usually start in the White Burgundy section. I'm always interested to see what's new or quietly tucked away. It could be something elegant or something unexpected. It's a ritual more about discovery than indulgence. What makes Hedonism stand out is the range. Yes, the wines are world-class, but the collection of rare spirits, beautifully designed glassware, specialty teas, and gourmet treats makes it just as much a destination for thoughtful gifting or simply learning something new.

It's less about walking out with something in hand and more about taking a few minutes to slow down, explore, and enjoy a place that gets the details right.





2. Cinder

A LOCAL FAVOURITE IN ST. JOHN'S WOOD

St. John's Wood has a special place in my heart. Tucked away from the chaos of central London, it's one of those rare neighbourhoods that still feels distinctly local — elegant, quiet, and lived-in. You won't find double-decker bus tours or souvenir stands here. What you will find is a sense of real community, leafy streets, and places like Cinder, which make the area feel like home.

Cinder isn't flashy or overly styled, and that's exactly why I love it. The atmosphere is warm and unfussy, and the staff are genuinely friendly. And the food? Comforting, elevated, and consistently good. Their menu is built around open-flame cooking, with dishes that are beautifully simple and deeply satisfying.

It's the kind of place where locals linger, couples, families, and old friends can catch up, and that energy is what makes Cinder feel so special. You can tell it wasn't designed for Instagram or the out-of-town crowd. It was made for the neighbourhood, and that shows in every detail.

For me, a night at Cinder is less about dining out and more about settling in. It captures the understated magic of St. John's Wood perfectly, refined, relaxed, and effortlessly welcoming.





3. Ladbroke Arms

A NOTTING HILL GEM

Sunny days in London are more common now than they used to be — and I, for one, love it. When the weather's fine, there's no better place to spend an afternoon than The Ladbroke Arms, a hidden gem tucked away on a quiet corner in Notting Hill.

This isn't just any pub, it's a neighbourhood favourite with real soul. The Ladbroke Arms pairs a warm, welcoming atmosphere with an elevated but unpretentious menu of seasonal dishes with a well-curated selection of wines, beers, and spirits. Whether you're stopping by for a leisurely lunch, a celebratory dinner, or just a quick pint in the sun, it never misses the mark.

Set just off Ladbroke Road, with a leafy terrace that comes alive in spring and summer, it's the kind of place that feels like a local secret even when the tables are full. On sunny days when I'm in town, I can be found outside, glass in hand. On cooler ones, just inside by the window, soaking in the easygoing charm.

The best of London pub life can be found here, that rare blend of good food, great people, and a setting that feels effortlessly right. The Ladbroke Arms is what every great London pub should be: timeless, welcoming, and quietly brilliant.





4. The Connaught Bar

The Connaught Bar in Mayfair is more than just a bar; it's a sanctuary where timeless elegance meets modern sophistication. Ranked No. 13 on The World's 50 Best Bars list in 2024, it remains a place where I love to meet colleagues, family, and friends.

The bar's atmosphere is a harmonious blend of classic and contemporary design, creating a welcoming space for everyone. Whether you're there to see and be seen or to enjoy a quiet evening, the Connaught Bar accommodates all.

The martinis are the highlight of any visit. Served from a sleek, black lacquered trolley, the experience is both theatrical and personal. You can choose from a selection of gins and house-made bitters, such as lavender, cardamom, or the signature "Dr Ago" blend, to tailor your drink to your taste.

On my last visit, I noticed a well-known American celebrity enjoying the evening with her wife, undisturbed and at ease, a testament to the bar's discreet and respectful environment.

The Connaught Bar is not just about exceptional cocktails; it's about the experience, the ambiance, and the people. It's a place where every visit feels special. That's why I return often.







MAKING WAVES

Family Tides is an Ultimate Beach Build by Marnie Custom Homes

BY SHERRY MOELLER PHOTOS BY DANA HOFF

One may recognize Marnie Oursler's name from her DIY Network series, Big Beach Builds, that ran for a couple seasons several years ago. Now Oursler and her team at Marnie Custom Homes, www.marniehomes.com, are busy building, on average, 10 beach homes a year along the Atlantic Coast, mostly in Bethany Beach, Delaware. Just named the 2025 Custom Home Builder of the Year in Delaware and Sussex County by the Home Builders Association of Delaware (HBAD), Marnie Custom Homes also won an additional 10 HBAD 2025 Regal Awards, 12 total, for their homes and team, including Oursler winning Designer of the Year.

A recent custom home they designed and built is Family Tides, which, at more than 10,000 square feet on four levels with 10 bedrooms and 13 bathrooms, is the ultimate in North Bethany Beach living. Dual kitchen islands sporting steely gray and white oak finishes, as well as abundant perimeter cabinetry in white and white oak, set the tone for the main floor. Open and airy, the kitchen combines porcelain and quartz counters with a custom walnut counter that doubles as a table. A marble backsplash, ceiling beams, and a detailed hood round out the amenities in this true cook's kitchen.

A wood-burning fireplace in the great room creates a cozy setting in the colder months, while remote-controlled screens on the wall-to-wall doors on the ocean side allow the owners and guests to take in the sea breezes all year-round. A screened porch and open decks provide multiple locations to relax and enjoy the view. If work beckons, a desk off the kitchen provides a tucked-away spot to answer emails and make calls before heading to the beach.



Decks - An open deck off the main floor connects with a screened porch offering clear views of the ocean. Retractable screens on the sliding doors provide a bug-free experience.





Kitchen - Sub-Zero and Wolf panel-ready appliances, including a 48" dual fuel range with 8 burners and a griddle, plus a 30" warming drawer, are put to good use during family breakfast time.

Each of the 10 bedrooms has its own bathroom, including an indoor/outdoor shower in the primary bath. A custom nameplate featuring a beach-themed moniker marks the entrance to each suite. One of Marnie Custom Homes' signature elements is a bunk room with drawer storage built into the steps, as seen in this soft blue and white bunk room. Bathroom tiles in fun, colorful patterns and textures elevate and personalize each bath.

Additional special amenities abound in this custom home, such as an under-stair playhouse, pet feeding station in the butler's pantry, dog washing station in the beach prep room - another signature Marnie Custom Homes element, fishing rod holders in the ceiling above the ground-level staircase, double swings off the dune-side deck, and a lower-level outdoor bar. Wallpaper in shades of the sea accent built-ins and spaces throughout the home.

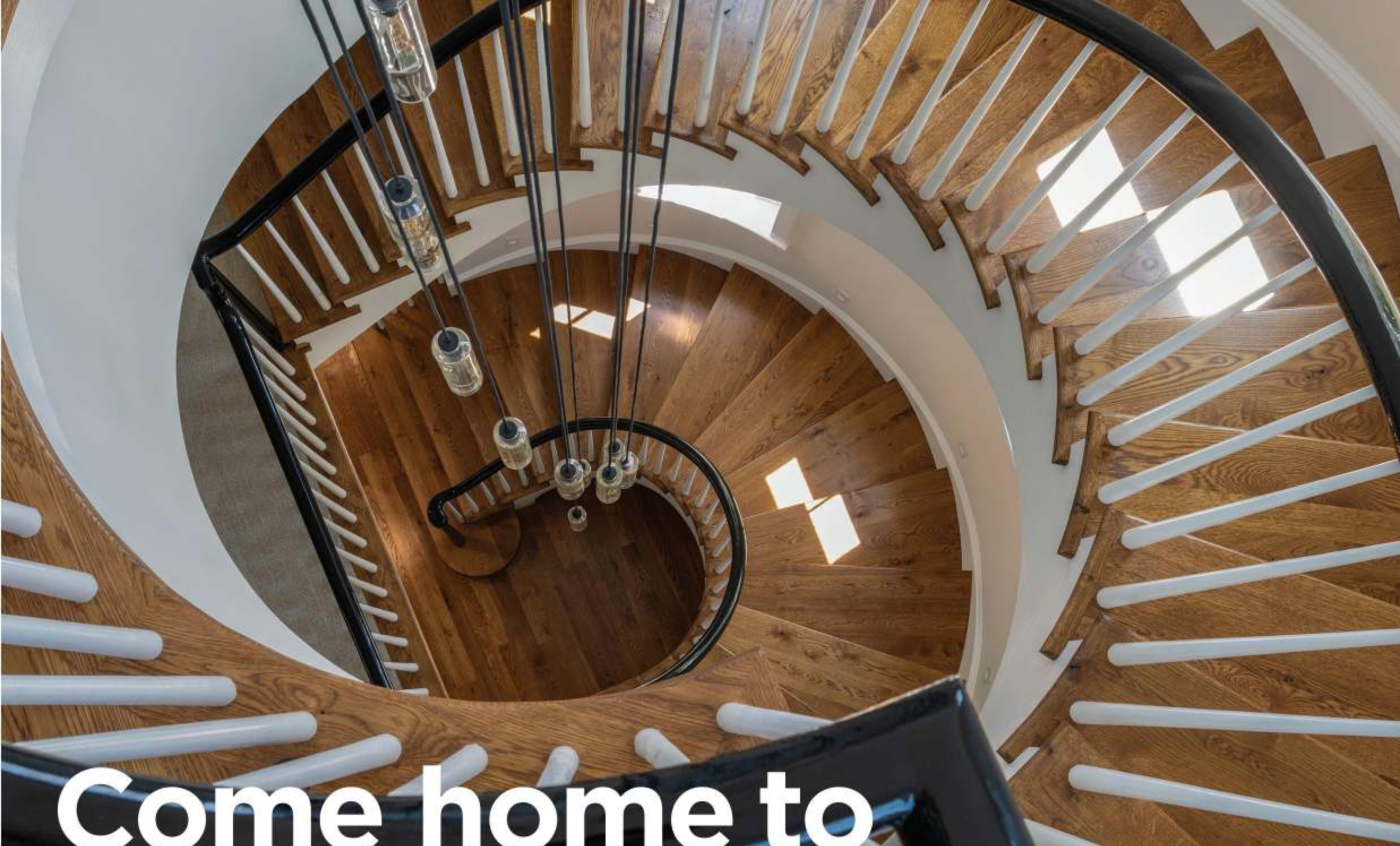
Because most of Marnie Custom Homes are located on or near a waterway, there are strict regulations to adhere to, including reinforcing the homes to withstand hurricane-force winds, as well as possible flooding. Building with high-quality materials and precise techniques, such as using steel framing,

ensure that the homes are safe and sound. Oursler built the first LEED-certified home in Delaware with sustainability in materials, appliances, and more always top of mind. Oursler was also named the 2022 Custom Home Builder of the Year by the National Association of Home Builders, the first recognition for a woman and for the state of Delaware.

To see more images of Family Tides as well as a video home tour, visit <https://www.marniehomes.com/showcase/family-tides>.

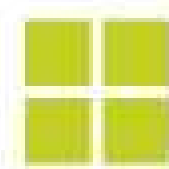
Above Right: Primary Bedroom - Oursler is known for her ceiling and wall details, as shown in the primary bedroom. **Bottom left: Exterior Back** - Outdoor spaces on four levels take advantage of the home's connection to the Atlantic Ocean. **Bottom right: Primary Bathroom** - With three showerheads indoors and two outdoors, the indoor-outdoor shower offers a spa-like setting with a bonus view of the ocean. Porcelain wood-look tiles inside complement the white polished porcelain on the walls and pebble stone tiles on the floor in the outdoor portion of the shower.





Come home to extraordinary.

At ANTHONY WILDER, we design and build spaces you can't wait to come home to. Our in-house architects, interior designers, project managers and craftsmen work together to create custom design solutions just for you. We mind every detail, so you can simply live—and love—the life you've built.



ANTHONY WILDER

ARCHITECTURE | INTERIORS | CONSTRUCTION

ANTHONYWILDER.COM 301.907.0100

DESIGN NEWS

CURRENT DESIGN NEWS

SUSHI GAKU OPENS IN GEORGETOWN

Sushi Chef Yoshi Ota announces the opening of a new DC restaurant

BY SHERRY MOELLER PHOTOS COURTESY OF SUSHI GAKU



Sushi Chef Yoshi Ota recently announced the opening of Sushi Gaku in Georgetown at 1338 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20007, with its official grand opening on May 21, 2025.

"I am so honored to join this historical area in Washington and am excited to introduce my Sushi dishes, which I have dedicated my life to cooking for 40 years," says Chef Yoshi. "I am planning to serve traditional sushi as well as a different style that our guests have never seen before."

Bethany Kazaba, CEO and Managing Principal at Neighborhood Retail Group, worked with Chef Yoshi to secure Sushi Gaku's location near the White House almost 10 years ago and is honored to assist with the new Sushi Gaku location in Georgetown. "Chef Yoshi's entrepreneurial spirit is a testament to his dedication to his profession and the culinary industry," says Kazaba. "I'm excited about the opening of Sushi Gaku, which offers an exclusive and exemplary dining experience in Georgetown."

One signature dish at Sushi Gaku will be Traditional Style Nigiri Sushi. This Edo Style Nigiri Sushi is prepared with akazu (dark vinegar), sushi rice, and perfectly balanced fish pieces. Chef Yoshi will also serve regular Nigiri with white sushi rice, as well as Maki and other casual Japanese dishes.

Chef Yoshi has been interested in the roots of sushi for a long time. He is planning to serve very fermented ancient-style sushi for the upcoming Omakase course, which will

debut after the opening, as it takes at least 2 months to prepare.

In addition, he is one of the only chefs in the area to hold a Fugu or Pufferfish preparation license. "I'm honored to bring authentic Japanese cuisine and my philosophy of cooking, eating, and drinking to the United States," Chef Yoshi adds.

Born in Hokkaido, Japan, Chef Yoshi began his culinary career at the prestigious ANA International Tokyo restaurant in Tokyo, Japan. For the past 40 years, he has practiced the art of sushi making in the United States and Japan, including work at New York's legendary Sushi Den.

While still in his early 30s, he opened the doors to his own restaurant in the heart of Ginza, Tokyo. For more than a decade, Ginza Gaku attracted both locals and international connoisseurs, often praised for serving high-quality, inventive sushi in a friendly atmosphere.

Since coming to the United States, he was one of the founders of Kushi Izakaya and Sushi in downtown DC and was the head Sushi Chef and Sake Sommelier at Sushiko in Chevy Chase, Maryland. His restaurant debut began with Yuzu in Bethesda, Maryland, then Sushi Gaku a block from the White House, and now the opening of his latest restaurant, Sushi Gaku in Georgetown.

Sushi Gaku opened on May 21 with dinner served from 5-10 p.m. For more information, including additional menu items and reservations, visit www.sushigaku.com.

DETAILS
IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

Picnics

WINDSOR LUXURY PICNIC BASKET

The Windsor Luxury Picnic Basket is a premium, handwoven wicker picnic basket designed for four people. It offers a blend of classic style and modern functionality and features genuine leather straps and rivets, adding sophistication. It's crafted for those seeking an elegant outdoor dining experience. It offers a full picnic service for four, including porcelain plates, hand-blown wine glasses, stainless steel cutlery, cotton napkins, a cheese knife, and a cutting board. It's also equipped with a stainless-steel vacuum flask and four stainless steel coffee mugs, along with two plastic food containers and an insulated wine duffel. And a fleece picnic blanket, too.

Dimensions and Weight: Measures 23.625" L x 15.5" W x 11.25" H and weighs 18.2 lbs.





Rill Architects

www.rillarchitects.com - 301 - 656 - 4166

DESIGNER SPOTLIGHT

THE BEST OF THE BEST



*Shannon Kadwell, CMKBD, Allied ASID,
Kitchen and Bath DesignerAnthony Wilder
Design/Build, www.anthonywilder.com*

With more than 15 years at Anthony Wilder Design/Build, Shannon Kadwell continues to bring a unique combination of creative and functional design experience to clients. Her skills come with more than four decades in residential interior design at some of the country's most classic boutique studios. As a master kitchen and bath designer, she looks at each interior in a very bespoke and individual way. With a hands-on approach to culinary crafts and spa experiences, Shannon exemplifies the concept of "coming home to something you love" and takes it to the next level.

What made you want to become a kitchen and bath designer?

My grandparents would buy old vacation cottages and fix them up as year-round homes as a hobby. Being around that was both educational and inspiring.

Who has been the biggest inspiration in your career and why?

My father, who says to always try something first: if it works, you learned a new thing, and if it doesn't, call the professional. Also, I love Mick DeGulio's work. He always has an insight into what is both beautiful and functional.





How has the industry changed since you started in this profession?

Pinterest and Houzz, as well as the home improvement TV shows, keep us on our toes and push us to be better and more well-rounded.

What's the best change you have seen?

In the last 30 years, I've seen many changes, but the one that has really allowed us to push the envelope is the removal of the single work triangle in the kitchen. Kitchens now have many workspaces throughout the room.

What are your favorite items, and maybe a signature item, to incorporate into your projects today?

I am in love with the galley workstation sinks, as well as the use of mixed natural materials and metals.

What are the most innovative items in kitchens and baths right now?

I'd say incorporating hands-free tech in the spaces. From the TOTO Neorest smart toilet, <https://www.totousa.com/neorest-as-dual-flush-toilet-10-08-gpf?color=cotton>, to the

Freepower charging pad, <https://www.freepower.io/>, which is incorporated into the countertop, they are all making our lives a bit less hectic.

What would you tell someone starting out today? What are your best lessons learned?

First, I would say, you will make mistakes no matter how hard you try not to. You take a breath and make the correction. No one is expecting you to know all the details about everything. Even those of us who have been in the business for decades are always learning new things; that is what keeps it interesting. Secondly, be your client's advisor, not their salesperson. They look to you for help putting all the things together in a way they can only imagine. For many, this is a time-consuming and overwhelming undertaking. The key is to talk truthfully with your clients and guide them with you on the journey.

Anthony Wilder Design/Build project photos by Anice Hoachlander and Stacy Zarin Goldberg

Thos. Moser

HANDMADE AMERICAN FURNITURE



UNIQUE EXPERIENCES IN THE WORLD'S MOST

Historic Cities

History and luxury may seem like unlikely companions—until you step into cities where the past is preserved not in dusty museums, but in immersive, one-of-a-kind experiences. Around the globe, the world's oldest cities are offering new ways to explore their stories – through private moments, rare access, and deeply personalized indulgences.

Our itinerary starts with the Eternal City, Rome. This ancient city offers far more than postcard-perfect ruins. It's a living museum, a tapestry of ancient and new, with a luxurious twist. Imagine entering the Colosseum after hours for a private tour, lit dramatically by moonlight, followed by a candlelit dinner in a restored 17th-century villa overlooking the Roman Forum. For the ultimate indulgence, enjoy a curated Trastevere food tour via vintage Vespa, led by a Michelin-starred chef who reveals the city's best-kept culinary secrets.

Once finished with Rome, we continue our trip and head to Austria. Vienna's elegance is legendary—and so is its love of music. For an unmatched experience, take a private ballroom dance lesson in an actual Habsburg palace, followed by an exclusive recital by members of the Vienna Philharmonic. Then cap off the evening with a private carriage ride through the old town and a tasting menu at Steirereck, one of Europe's most avant-garde fine-dining spots, tucked within the historic Stadtpark.

After our waltz in Wien, we take a quick skip over to the Czech Republic. Prague wears its Gothic and Baroque charm like a crown—and with the right access, you can live like royalty. Arrange a private dinner inside Prague Castle, complete with period musicians, Czech crystal tableware, and views over the illuminated city. By day, discover hidden courtyards and secret passages with a local historian, and unwind at the Augustine Hotel, housed in a 13th-century monastery where monks once brewed beer that you can now sip in a sleek designer bar.

Prague was cool, but it's time to seek out some experiences in Spain, specifically Granada. This city is synonymous with the Alhambra, but few get to see it in solitude. Book a private, after-hours tour of the Alhambra's Nasrid Palaces, where delicate arches and whispering fountains create an almost otherworldly atmosphere. For deeper immersion, spend a night in the Parador de Granada, a former monastery within the palace complex, and indulge in a private flamenco performance in the caves of Sacromonte, accompanied by local tapas and wine.



Europe has warmed us up for adventures, but now, we want more. More different and unique, and for this we head to Central Asia and the Famed Silk Road. In Samarkand, we step into a city where minarets and mosaics glitter under the desert sun. History is everywhere—and so is hospitality and unique experiences such as a private dinner inside a 15th-century madrasa, complete with traditional music and dishes served in hand-painted ceramics. Take a customized tour of the Registan and the Bibi-Khanym Mosque with an art scholar, then stay at a heritage boutique hotel built within a restored caravanserai, where every corner tells a story of Silk Road opulence.

We are on the move again, and this time, North Africa calls. We are heading to Cairo. Here, history stretches back millennia—and so do the possibilities. While most visitors jostle for selfies at Giza, a select few can enjoy sunrise camel rides through the desert with exclusive access to the Sphinx enclosure, typically off-limits to the public. Top it off with a luxury Nile cruise aboard a handcrafted dahabiya, where gourmet Egyptian cuisine is served on deck as you float past ancient temples and villages lost in time. While still in North Africa, we next head to Fez, Morocco's oldest imperial city. Fez is a labyrinth of history, culture, and craft. Luxury here means immersion. Book a private dyeing workshop with a master artisan in the UNESCO-listed medina, learning the centuries-old process behind Morocco's famed textiles. Afterward, unwind in a candlelit rooftop suite at Riad Fès, where traditional zellige tiles and fine Moroccan cuisine transport you to another era.

Leaving North Africa, it's time for us to check out unique experiences in the southern hemisphere, so we head to Cusco, Peru. Once the heart of the Inca Empire, Cusco is a blend of mystical ruins and colonial elegance. Luxury here feels spiritual. Start with a private shaman-led ceremony in the Sacred Valley, followed by a guided journey to Machu Picchu aboard the Belmond Hiram Bingham Train, complete with gourmet meals and live Andean music. Back in Cusco, stay at Palacio Nazarenas, a former palace turned luxury hotel, where your personal butler can arrange everything from private museum visits to artisanal chocolate-making classes using native Peruvian cacao.

Finally, we stop at the last city on our itinerary. Cartagena, Colombia. Cartagena is a city that sings with color, history, and Caribbean charm. One of its most unique offerings? A private island day trip via luxury yacht, with onboard ceviche workshops and snorkeling among shipwrecks once targeted by pirates. Back in the walled city, take a sunset walking tour with a local historian, stopping for rum pairings in a 400-year-old mansion. Stay at Casa San Agustín, a boutique hotel that fuses colonial architecture with modern indulgence.

These experiences aren't about extravagance for its own sake—they're about weaving yourself into the fabric of history. From ancient cities reborn in boutique palaces to private access behind once-imperial walls, luxury in these timeless places is intimate, curated, and unforgettable.



BOOK WORM

BEST READS

The Killing Stones: A Detective Jimmy Perez Novel

BY ANN CLEEVES

PUBLICATION DATE - SEPTEMBER 30, 2025

ST. MARTIN'S PRESS | MINOTAUR BOOKS

The Killing Stones marks the eagerly awaited return of Ann Cleeves' beloved detectives from the Shetland series and a gripping new investigation with a stunning new setting.

For those fans of Cleeves, who have conceived the beloved characters of DI Jimmy Perez (the Shetland series), DI Vera Stanhope, and DI Matthew Venn (The Long Call), you certainly won't be disappointed.

The book centers around Detective Jimmy Perez, who has left Shetland and settled into his new home in Orkney, a group of islands off the northern coast of Scotland. One stormy winter night, his oldest and closest friend, Archie Stout, goes missing. Always the detective, Perez catches a boat to the island of Westray,

where Archie worked as a farmer and lived with his wife and children. On his arrival, he finds a shocking scene – Archie's body, on an archaeological dig site with an ancient Westray story stone beside him.

From there on out, Cleeves' magical prose is used in solving this murder mystery. Rumors, tension, and twists are found within the plot. And, as always, Cleeves has intertwined stunning landscapes within her writing, this time those of the Orkney Islands. While reading, you can almost feel the rain on your face.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

ANN
CLEEVES

A DETECTIVE JIMMY PEREZ NOVEL

THE
KILLING
STONES

"Ann Cleeves is one of our secret chroniclers, charting—under cover of a series of expertly plotted and mesmerizing crime novels—how we live now." —MICK HERRON

The image shows the interior of a train carriage, likely the Orient Express. The walls are dark and feature ornate, rectangular metal plaques with relief carvings of figures. Two glowing, bell-shaped pendant lights hang from the ceiling. White curtains are pulled back to reveal windows. In the foreground, the backs of two plush, blue upholstered seats are visible.

RAILS OF GRANDEUR

WHAT IT'S REALLY LIKE TO TRAVEL
ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS



The Orient Express. It's not just a train. It's a time machine.

Stepping aboard the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, the modern heir to the most storied name in luxury rail travel, feels like falling headfirst into a 1920s dream. There are polished brass fixtures, Lalique glass panels, and liveried stewards with white gloves. Everything gleams. Everything whispers of mystery and elegance. If Agatha Christie had written a travel brochure, this would be it.

The voyage aboard blurs the line between history and high society. It isn't just a journey — it's an experience you wear.

A MOVING MASTERPIECE

The current Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, operated by Belmond, is a meticulous restoration of 1920s and 30s carriages that once hosted royals, diplomats, and jetsetters (before jets ex-

isted). Each sleeping car, bar carriage, and dining saloon has been brought back to life in painstaking detail. From its Art Deco marquetry to velvet-upholstered armchairs that seem made for plotting secrets or sipping champagne, you're not just watching the world go by — you're gliding through it on rails lined with velvet and gold. While the original route ran from Paris to Istanbul, today's itineraries include great combinations:

Venice to Paris

The Express offers a luxurious overnight journey from Venice to Paris, traversing some of Europe's most scenic landscapes. While the train's exact stops can vary based on the specific itinerary and operational considerations, a typical route includes the following major stops:

Venice, Italy – The journey begins at Venice Santa Lucia station, where

passengers board the train and settle into their elegant compartments.

Verona, Italy – The train makes a brief stop at Verona Porta Nuova station, allowing passengers to experience the charm of this historic city.

Innsbruck, Austria – Traveling through the Austrian Alps, the train pauses in Innsbruck, offering passengers a glimpse of the stunning alpine scenery.

Paris, France – The journey concludes at Paris Gare de l'Est or Gare d'Austerlitz, depending on the specific itinerary. Passengers disembark in the heart of the French capital, completing their luxurious rail experience.

Paris to Vienna

This route is also a luxurious overnight journey. Leaving Paris and arriving in Vienna, the train's exact stops can vary based on the specific itinerary and operational considerations. A typical



route includes the following major stops:

Paris, France – The journey commences at Paris Gare de l'Est or Gare d'Austerlitz station, where passengers board to begin their journey.

Vienna, Austria – The train arrives at Vienna station in the morning, allowing passengers to disembark and explore the Austrian capital.

Amsterdam to Florence

Like the others, this route is a luxurious overnight journey from Amsterdam to Florence. However, it has more stops than the more direct routes. While the train's exact stops can vary, a typical route includes the following major stops: Amsterdam, Netherlands – The route starts at Amsterdam Centraal station.

Brussels, Belgium – The train makes a brief stop at Brussels Midi station, allowing passengers to view and observe the charm of this historic city.

Paris, France – The train arrives at Paris Gare de l'Est or Gare d'Austerlitz. Passengers disembark with the opportunity to explore the French capital.

Innsbruck, Austria – Traveling through the Austrian Alps, the train pauses in Innsbruck.

Florence, Italy – The journey concludes at Florence Santa Maria Novella station, where passengers can experience the flavors of the Renaissance City.

London to Istanbul (once a year — a ten-night epic)

This route is a once-in-a-lifetime journey from London to Istanbul, retracing part of the original 1883 route of the Orient Express. This exclusive trip typically takes place once a year, usually in August, and spans approximately 10 days. The journey includes the following key stops:

London, United Kingdom – Boarding is at London's St. Pancras International Station.

Paris, France – After departing London, the train travels through the Channel Tunnel to Paris Gare de l'Est. Here, passengers will enjoy an overnight stay in a luxury boutique hotel on Boulevard Haussmann, with time to explore the city.

Budapest, Hungary – The journey continues through Europe to Budapest, where travelers will spend almost two days in a luxury hotel overlooking the Danube.

Bucharest, Romania – Next, the train heads to Bucharest, offering a chance to visit landmarks such as the Palace of Parliament.

Varna, Bulgaria – The route then takes passengers through Bulgaria, with a stop in Varna on the Black Sea coast.

Istanbul, Turkey – Finally, the train arrives at the city's Sirkeci Station for an almost three-day visit in Istanbul, completing the historic journey.

Throughout all trips, passengers are treated to gourmet



meals, fine wines, and impeccable service. Breathtaking views of the European countryside are on full display. The routes remind one of the elegance and romance of classic rail travel, offering an unforgettable experience. The landscapes are cinematic – rolling French countryside, snow-capped Alps, and vineyard-dotted hills in Italy. But it's not just the views that change — it's your pace. This is a trip designed for slowing down, for watching the sunrise from a mahogany-paneled cabin while a white-gloved steward delivers fresh coffee and warm croissants to your door.

THE CABINS

The Venice Simplon-Orient-Express offers three levels of accommodations, each with its own indulgent charm. Whether you want to geek out on history, experience luxury, or ride the rails in style, there is a choice for you. Historic Cabins – Original 1920s sleeper cabins have plush banquettes that convert into cozy sleeping berths by night with shared bathrooms (yes — authentic vintage travel). Suites – Recently introduced, these offer private marble bathrooms, dual configurations (bed or lounge), and themed decor inspired by cities along the route — Paris, Venice, Istanbul, and Vienna. Grand Suites – The pinnacle of train opulence. Think private





bathrooms, double beds, personal butler service, and unlimited champagne. You'll feel like Gatsby on wheels.

THE FOOD

The dining cars of the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express are truly the heart of the meal experience. You'll be seated at a beautifully set table with fine china, silverware, and crystal glassware. The waitstaff is impeccably trained to deliver service with grace and poise, making you feel like the most important person on the train.

Dining here is a ritual. Jacket and tie are required (black tie is encouraged), and the cuisine is nothing short of fine-dining excellence. The chefs source local ingredients from stops along the journey — truffles from Alba, seafood from Venice, cheeses from the French Alps.

Expect a three-course lunch, afternoon tea, and a four-course dinner that rivals any Michelin-starred restaurant. And then there's midnight brunch — because who doesn't want lobster rolls and caviar at 1 a.m., delivered while in silk pajamas?

But what are the meals really like?

Breakfast

Breakfast on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express is an experience

that sets the tone for an entire day of luxury, offering a calm, indulgent start to your journey. Picture waking up to the gentle sound of the train gliding along the tracks, and enjoying a meal served in your cabin or in one of the elegant dining cars.

Whether you're dining in your private cabin or one of the opulent dining cars, the atmosphere is one of quiet elegance. The soft clinking of fine china, the gentle movement of the train, and the view of the passing European landscapes outside your window create a relaxed, almost cinematic ambiance.

The meal is a mix of continental classics and luxurious options. It's a celebration of French and Italian culinary traditions, prepared with the finest ingredients sourced from regions along the route.

Some typical options include Continental (a spread of freshly baked croissants, pain au chocolat, and various breads, served with butter, jam, honey, and freshly brewed coffee or tea), Hot (classic breakfast options such as eggs cooked to your liking, smoked salmon, French toast, omelets, or eggs Benedict), Fresh Fruits (freshly squeezed orange juice and a variety of cereals or granola served with yogurt), and Pastries and Sweets (a selection of freshly baked pastries, including buttery croissants, pain au raisin,



and perhaps a delicate mille-feuille for those with a sweet tooth).

For those who prefer privacy, breakfast can be delivered right to your cabin. The service is impeccable — a tray laden with all the delicious items is set up, allowing you to enjoy it at your leisure while watching the sunrise or taking in the passing scenery.

Lunch

Lunch is as much about the experience as it is about the food — an elegant, multi-course affair that perfectly complements the luxury of rail travel. Lunch aboard the Orient Express is a refined, leisurely occasion, whether experienced in your cabin or the dining car.

The dress code for lunch is more relaxed than dinner, but still, you'll want to dress smartly to match the surroundings. Pack some chic daytime attire — perhaps a light jacket or a lovely dress, especially if you're enjoying lunch in the dining car.

Found on the lunch menu are seasonal, locally sourced items, including delicious appetizers such as terrine of foie gras with fresh figs, Carpaccio with rocket, parmesan, and a drizzle of truffle oil, smoked salmon with capers, dill, and lemon cream. Main courses do not disappoint. Diners may be served dishes such as roast lamb with rosemary jus, Sea bass fillet, or vegetarian risotto. But make sure to save room

for the desserts. How can you resist a Crème brûlée or Tarte Tatin or chocolate mousse with a hint of espresso, topped with fresh berries?

A selection of French and Italian cheeses, including brie, camembert, and Parmigiano-Reggiano, paired with crackers, fruits, and nuts, is served while the train's sommelier will select wines to pair with each course, often featuring French, Italian, and occasionally Austrian or Hungarian wines depending on the route.

Don't rush through lunch — linger, enjoy the elegance of the meal, and take time to enjoy the stunning landscapes that unfold outside your window; the experience is as much about the journey as it is about the food.

Afternoon Tea

Afternoon Tea on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express is a quintessential part of the luxury rail experience, evoking the glamour of the golden age of travel. Served in one of the train's beautifully restored carriages — the Café de la Paix car, depending on availability -- afternoon tea aboard the Orient Express is an elegant and indulgent affair, offering both delicious treats and a taste of history.

For those not lucky enough to enjoy the afternoon treat in the Café de la Paix, other cars service the event. The interiors of these carriages are steeped in 1920s Art Deco charm, with plush seating, rich wood paneling, and elegant glassware, making it the perfect setting to enjoy a refined afternoon.

While it's more relaxed than dinner, tea time on the Orient Express still calls for smart casual attire. You might see some guests dressed in light, stylish daytime wear, enjoying the experience in a relaxed but elegant manner.

A range of fine teas is offered — from classic English Breakfast to fragrant Earl Grey, delicate green teas, and even fruit-infused herbal options. The selection is high-quality, and a knowledgeable attendant will help you choose the perfect brew to complement your treats. The tea is served in elegant silver teapots, accompanied by fine china cups and saucers. The tea service also includes an array of accoutrements, such as fresh milk, lemon, and sugar cubes, served in antique-style silver containers.

Then there is the array of sweet and savory bites. The treats are beautifully presented and designed to indulge your palate. A selection of delicately prepared sandwiches, such as cucumber and cream cheese, smoked salmon with dill, and egg and cress. Each bite is light and flavorful. Freshly baked scones are served warm with clotted cream and strawberry jam. A beautiful assortment of pastries and cakes allows you to decadently dine on crafted cakes, tarts, and pastries. And, of course, petit fours. Miniature desserts such as pralines, delicate mousse-filled treats, or marzipan confections are designed to satisfy your sweet tooth most elegantly, all prepared by world-class pastry chefs.



For an extra touch of luxury, champagne can also be added to your afternoon tea service. You can enjoy a glass of chilled Veuve Clicquot or other fine champagne to accompany your treats, because no luxurious journey would be complete without bubbles!

As you sip your tea and nibble on treats, the scenic views outside your window transform as the train glides through picturesque landscapes. There's often light music in the background, and the gentle hum of the train adds to the peaceful, relaxing environment.

Dinner

At dinner, glamour is mandatory. Tuxedos, evening gowns, and vintage flair — this is one of the last places on Earth where formal attire is still truly celebrated. There are three 1920s- and 30s-era dining cars, each immaculately restored with rich wood paneling, polished crystal, fine linens, and Lalique glass. Stewards in white jackets glide through the aisles graciously attending to all guests.

Dinner is typically a four-course affair, beginning with amuse-bouches and ending in rich, decadent desserts. The menus change seasonally and are crafted by Executive Chef Jean Imbert.

A sample dinner might include, as an appetizer, a lobster medallion with citrus dressing. For the main course, roasted rack of lamb with seasonal vegetables and thyme jus. The cheese course features a fine selection of French and Italian cheeses, and dessert offers up Chocolate mille-feuille or pistachio crème brûlée.

After dinner, many guests retire to the Car 3674 – simply known as the Bar Car – which is the soul of the Orient Express. A pianist plays softly into the evening. Guests sip a classic martini or a house cocktail like the “Guilty 12” (a nod to the novel *Murder on the Orient Express*) and mingle under the Art Deco lights. Passengers become characters and strangers become accomplices. As the night progresses, champagne flows freely and the soft music plays on.

The Midnight Snack

If after your experience in the Bar Car, you return to your carriage and find yourself puckish, the Midnight Snack will surely please. It's a delightful and indulgent treat that adds a touch of comfort and luxury to the end of your day. It's a moment to unwind after a day of exploring Europe's most scenic landscapes and enjoying exquisite meals. Much like



everything on the Orient Express, this snack is served with the same elegance and attention to detail, ensuring that your late-night cravings are satisfied in style.

The Snack is typically served in your cabin, allowing you to enjoy it in private or with a companion. The lighting is soft and the ambiance is intimate, creating the perfect atmosphere for a peaceful and luxurious end to the evening. There's no need to dress up for the midnight snack; a bathrobe or pajamas are welcome if you're in your cabin. The experience is all about relaxation.

The Snack itself is a beautifully curated selection of light but indulgent treats, often tailored to the route and the seasons. While the specific menu can change, it is normally a presentation of assorted cheeses (French and Italian), charcuterie, fresh fruit, mini sandwiches, chocolate, and sweets. The Snack can be paired with Champagne (the classic choice), Cognac or a vintage port (to add warmth and relaxation), or coffee or tea (for those who prefer a hot beverage to wind down),

The Orient Express is all about personalization, so whether you want a light nibble or a more extravagant spread, the staff will tailor it to your needs. But make sure to indulge. This is another perfect example of how the train

elevates even the simplest moments to an art form. It's a small but sumptuous indulgence that ensures the last thing you do before falling asleep is simply wonderful.

Passengers aboard the Orient Express tend to share a passion for old-world luxury, storytelling, and the rare art of lingering. It's not uncommon to find yourself dining beside a fashion mogul, a bestselling author, or a couple celebrating a 50th anniversary in style. But the beauty? Everyone's on the same ride — no Wi-Fi, no distractions, just conversations and the rhythm of the rails.

No question, traveling on the Orient Express is a big splurge. The historic cabins (at the time of this writing) start at around \$3,000 per person for a one-night journey. Suites and Grand Suites can go up to \$10,000–\$20,000 per person, depending on route and season. But traveling on these iconic rail routes is not about getting from point A to B. It's about honoring the romance of yesteryear's travel. It's about stepping into that time machine and enjoying the elegance, class, romance, and mystery of train travel. It's no wonder that Agatha Christie found inspiration here. If you decide to jump on board, perhaps you will find your inspiration. The Orient Express is known to do that.



PROFILES

PEOPLE TO KNOW

In a fast-paced newsroom or a quiet room on a yoga mat, you'll find her — a woman equally comfortable dissecting global politics as she is singing Carpenters ballads behind closed doors. Rajini Vaidyanathan has built a journalistic career that spans continents and crises, yet it's her deep-rooted curiosity, empathy, and social consciousness that shine through most vividly.

Where the Story Begins

From the very beginning, news has been part of Vaidyanathan's DNA.

"My parents always watched the news," she recalls. "They ensured that we understood the world around us, even beyond our home in the United Kingdom. I remember one of my dad's brothers berating him for having the 6 o'clock news on instead of cartoons. But I'm glad we were exposed to current affairs early. It shaped our ideas of justice and morality."

That early immersion into current events was more than background noise — it became the foundation of her stunning career. It didn't take long before Vaidyanathan's curiosity and love of news transformed her into a truth seeker.

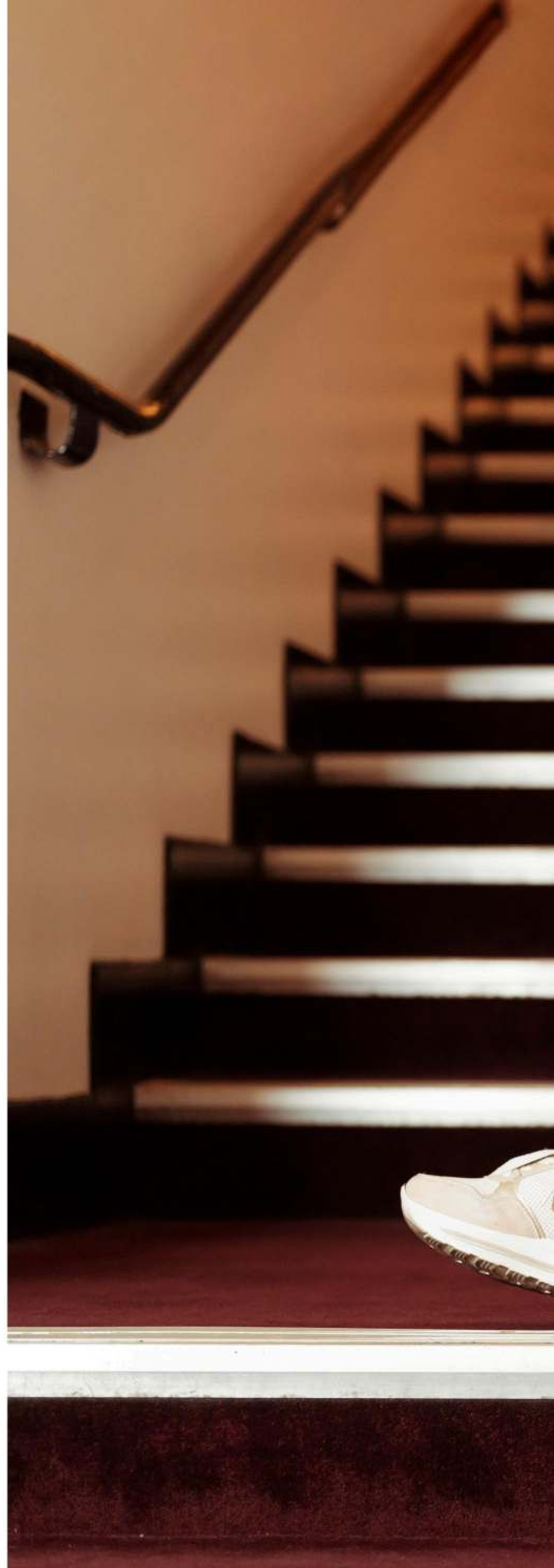
"My first foray into journalism was as editor of the school newspaper. While my fellow students fought over who was writing the Valentine's pages, I wanted to write about my local town's connections to the first Gulf War. I phoned up the local army reservist unit and the hospital, and it was my first taste of reporting on an angle on international conflict."

It was not only hard-hitting news that captured Vaidyanathan's interest. Her curiosity and creativity extended beyond the school newsroom. Years later, she found a way to combine her journalistic instincts with her love of music — by creating and selling her own music fanzines at live gigs.

"This combined two goals — getting free tickets to see my favorite bands and also getting to meet them as I interviewed them," says Vaidyanathan. "My first fanzine was the ridiculously titled Mutant Duck. I then wrote one dedicated to the indie band Travis, and through that struck up a friendship with the band which lasts to this day."

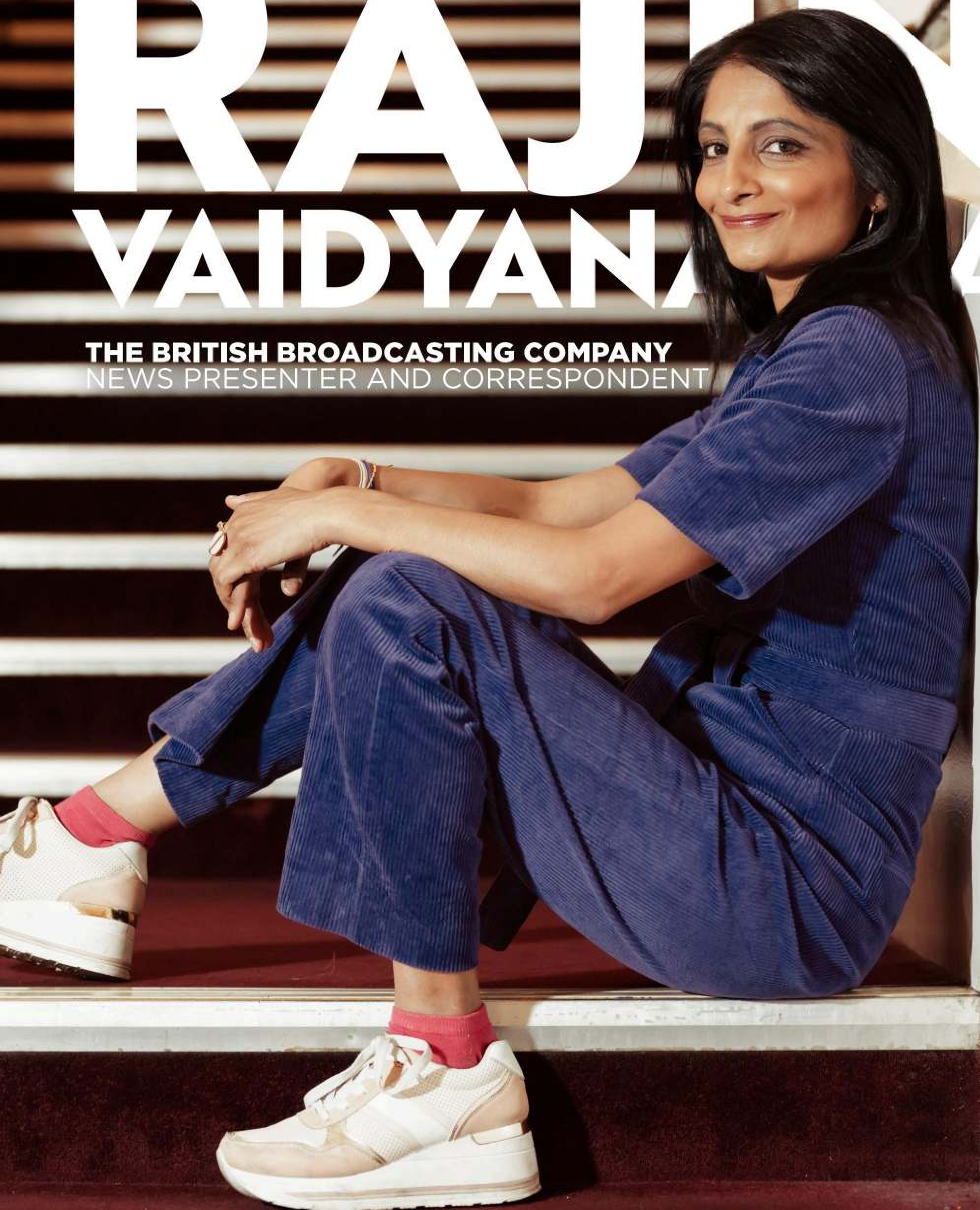
Although it was a different kind of storytelling, those fanzines proved early on that Vaidyanathan was as comfortable in a crowded concert venue as she would later be in a presidential press briefing room.

Perhaps what drew her to write about music, aside from her stated goals, was the fact that Vaidyanathan is a



RAJINI VAIDYANATHAN

THE BRITISH BROADCASTING COMPANY
NEWS PRESENTER AND CORRESPONDENT





BBC NEWS



musician herself. "Aside from writing about music, I loved making music." She played Viola in an orchestra and a string quartet. She also played the piano. "I taught myself guitar, but most of all, I loved to sing! I'd hide myself in my bedroom while I belted our Carpenters songs. Nowadays I still sing at friends' weddings, but that's the limit!"

With secondary school in the rear-view mirror, Vaidyanathan immersed herself in the media space at the University of York, from which she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (PPE).

"I edited the student paper. It was one of the biggest responsibilities I'd had at that time. Managing the newspaper's budget, sorting the print run, managing the different writers, and finding stories. Not only did that give me so many different skills. I also made many friends for life through it."

These experiences set Vaidyanathan well on her way.

From Behind the Scenes to On the Scene

Vaidyanathan began her career in Washington, weeks after graduating from university, when she secured a job as a researcher on the U.S. Elections program for BBC Radio in 2000. Through her industriousness, she connected with Roy

Neel, Al Gore's former Chief-of-Staff and top advisor during the US Presidential race.

"I booked Roy Neel live on election night. My presenter had interviewed him earlier in the evening. Then we learned about a possible concession and called him back. He literally said, 'Al's turning the car around. He's not conceding.' It was an electric moment of radio - and one of history. I was in Washington longer than expected, as it took weeks for a result. I was a researcher back then but soon realized that I wanted to be the one asking the questions."

A few years later, Vaidyanathan secured a place on the BBC's regional trainee scheme. There she worked as a local television reporter, learning the ropes and working a beat. "My first major exclusive was uncovering a cancer cluster linked to a chemical leak in the area. It led to an investigation. I always tell people who want to be on air to start in local news. You learn so much about how to connect with your interviewees and how to find and tell stories that matter."

Vaidyanathan leaned on both those she worked with and the stories she covered to elevate both her sense of understanding and her professional career. "I knew that these were areas that I'd want to work in 'for real' one day. Picking up any knowledge in those areas definitely helped. Even if that included making tea for important people!"



After a stint in local news, she moved to the national newsroom in Westminster – eventually becoming a political correspondent where she covered politics. Interviewing Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, David Cameron became a normal part of her life. “I remember, one day, I covered George Bush’s visit to Downing Street in the morning and then went to see Coldplay with my colleagues in the evening.” But it was work that Vaidyanathan took incredible seriously. “I always had to pinch myself when I stood outside (or went in) the famous black door at Downing Street. I’d always dreamt of being a political reporter and knew it was a huge responsibility and an honor.”

During that period, Vaidyanathan spent time traveling to Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank. She traveled through Europe including Brussels, Romania and Stormont, Northern Ireland. In 2008, she covered the New Hampshire primary race. In India, climate change. Vaidyanathan attended press conferences with world leaders, where she asked thought-provoking questions. “For a journalist in my twenties, it was the dream job.”

Vaidyanathan’s identity as a British Indian woman played a pivotal role in not only shaping her worldview but also her career. “My culture and connection to India have always been a big part of my life. My parents navigated the balance, ensuring that we were fully integrated into British life and culture but also connected to their land of birth.”

That duality didn’t just make her feel more connected — it influenced her as she traveled down her career path.

“My interest in my Indian culture led to my decision later in life to be a BBC stringer in Mumbai. I’d always wanted to report from my motherland so became a stringer in Mumbai to fulfill that ambition and connection. It was one of the best things I’ve ever done. It also later helped me secure one of my dream jobs as the BBC South Asia correspondent in Delhi.”

Since then, Rajini Vaidyanathan has built a career defined by history-making assignments. She has told stories that shift perspectives and challenge those in power. This correspondent has reported from the world’s largest refugee camp in Bangladesh, to flood-stricken areas in Pakistan, to the Covid crisis. “It’s always, in the end, about the human stories we tell.”

When asked if there’s a single moment that she’s most proud of in her reporting, her answer is expected.

“I don’t think it’s possible to pick just one moment,” Vaidyanathan says. “Some of my investigative work has been especially meaningful, particularly when it has helped change the conversation around an issue. That includes exposing sexual abuse in the Bollywood film industry, speaking with survivors of Larry Nassar’s abuse, interviewing Indian women working in factories exploited by major Western brands, and talking to families of Nepali migrant workers who died while working in Qatar.”

She continues, “I’ve also had the privilege of witnessing history up close — standing on the National Mall during Donald Trump’s inauguration, sitting in the White House Briefing Room for Barack Obama’s final press conference as President. I’ve interviewed British politicians such as the current Prime Minister, Keir Starmer, and reported from Sri Lanka during its recent economic crisis, as thousands stormed the presidential and prime ministerial residences. I’ve covered everything from the red carpet at the Oscars to the Football World Cup in Russia. It’s been hard work, but it’s been worth it. I’m grateful.”

Rajini Vaidyanathan is now one of the BBC’s trusted news presenters, a familiar face behind the anchor desk. But the imprint of her years in the field remains unmistakable. Her reporting shaped not only her career, but also her approach to storytelling.

“I love being in the anchor chair now, but for me, nothing beats getting out and talking to people and hearing their stories,” she says. “Part of that job does involve speaking to people in their hardest moments, but it is honestly an honor when people choose to open up to us in that way.”

Her words reflect a deep respect for the human side of journalism, and it is one built over years of bearing witness to lives in transition, turmoil, and resilience. Even in the controlled environment of a studio, it’s clear her heart remains with the people whose stories she tells.

That aspect of reporting genuinely touches



Vaidyanathan. “I was asked to do a TEDx talk in 2024, and I focused on the subject of covering grief on a regular basis. It drew on reporting from the aftermath of a typhoon in the Philippines where I saw death on a mass scale. It was also influenced by how many times I have interviewed grieving relatives, including after the mass shooting in Orlando, Florida. How that feels when you’re grieving yourself. I lost my dad in 2016 and miss him.”

Rajini Behind the Camera

In journalism, there’s no such thing as a “typical day.” But there are rituals that Vaidyanathan ascribes to. A trained yoga teacher, she carves out time for regular practice, meditation, and mindfulness. “Yoga, sound baths, gratitude — they help me stay grounded.”

Also, to stay grounded, Vaidyanathan remains connected to her circle of support. She’s quick to credit the people around her. “There are people I turn to for advice or just to vent — mentors, friends, family. They keep me balanced.”

And what would that tight circle tell us about this woman? They know a side of her that the broadcasting audience does not...

“They’ll tell you I love connecting people. Bringing together folks from all walks of life for great food and conversation. They might tell you that I love to sing. I even recorded an album once, when I lived in India!”

They might also tell us about the street dog Vaidyanathan adopted in India. The abandoned puppy was dumped in a park along with her siblings. “I was never ever a dog person, but she somehow drew me in. Nearly four years later and the dog from the Delhi streets is still with me in London. She’s called Devi - it means Goddess. She’s definitely a Diva!”

Vaidyanathan was diagnosed with severe endometriosis in 2024. Endometriosis - a chronic medical condition where tissue similar to the lining of the uterus can attach to organs like the ovaries, fallopian tubes, the outer surface of the uterus, and even the bladder or intestines - affects 1 in 10 women worldwide.

“Up until then I had to endure severe, at times crippling pain while in the studio and the field. For years, I felt extra tired at times and was in so much pain that I was bent double. Looking back, I’m not sure how I managed so many international trips and even studio appearances. Finally, after a decade of misdiagnosis in the United States,



India and the United Kingdom, the condition was spotted. After two surgeries in 2024, I'm much better, although the condition never truly goes away. It's important for me to use platforms to encourage more awareness around the subject. Which is why I'm mentioning it now, too."

Has Vaidyanathan made mistakes? Of course, but none that she regrets. "Every stumble has taught me something, usually patience, humility, or to listen more." She's learned that the best reporting isn't just about being first, but about being right, being fair, and above all, being human.

We asked Rajini this question: If you weren't in this profession, what would you be doing now? Her answer shouldn't surprise us. "I'd be singing. And teaching yoga."

But for now, her voice belongs to the newsroom. Telling the world's stories, one headline at a time.





TRACYMORRIS
— INSPIRED INTERIORS —
tracymorrisdesign.com





Up, Up, and Away in Stunning Cappadocia

At first light, the rugged, honeycombed hills and fairy chimneys – the surreal stone spires shaped by millennia of wind and volcanic activity – begin to take on a golden hue. Shortly after, the sky bursts in pale colors and one by one, vibrant hot air balloons rise and dot the skyscape.

Cappadocia, located in central Turkey, is often referred to as one of the most enchanting places for hot air ballooning. Every morning, weather permitting, hundreds of balloons take to the skies, carrying passengers over valleys, vineyards, and cave dwellings carved into soft tuff rock. From above, the terrain appears otherworldly. From below, the balloons are an amazing sight to see.

A balloon ride over Cappadocia is not just a tourist attraction. It's a bucket-list experience. As you ascend, quiet replaces the bustling sounds below. The view is 360 degrees of amazement. Ancient history and geological wonder combine in perfect harmony.

Ballooning in Cappadocia began in the early 1990s, and in the decades since, it has become an essential part of the region's identity. Local companies operate under strict safety regulations and expert pilots guide each balloon with precision and grace. Flights typically last about an hour and include a traditional champagne toast upon landing, a quiet nod to early French balloonists.

What makes Cappadocia unique isn't just its scenery, but the consistency of its flying conditions. The region's microclimate offers calm winds and clear skies almost year-round, making it one of the most reliable places in the world for hot air ballooning.

While the flight itself is unforgettable, the full experience begins long before lift-off. Most tours offer early hotel pickup, a light breakfast, and a front-row seat to the inflation process. Watching the massive balloons come to life in the pre-dawn darkness is a spectacle unto itself.

Once aloft, you're part of a living painting, surrounded by dozens of balloons, casting long shadows over Göreme National Park and the vast Anatolian plains beyond. Photographers flock to this moment, capturing memories that will be timeless.

If you decide to place this experience at the top of your bucket list, consider the following. The best time to visit is between April and October. Book early – especially in peak season when tours sell out weeks in advance. Make sure to bring warm clothes. Early mornings can be chilly, even in summer. Choose reputable operators – those with experienced pilots and strong safety records.

Happy Flying!

There are places on Earth so surreal, so silent, and so beautiful that it feels as though you've stepped onto another planet upon arrival. Chile's Atacama Desert is one of them.

Stretching over 600 miles along South America's Pacific coast, the Atacama is the driest non-polar desert in the world—a place where rainfall is so rare that some weather stations have never recorded a single drop. But don't let its dryness fool you – this is a desert teeming with life, mystery, and incredible natural beauty. From salt flats that mirror the sky to lunar valleys carved by wind and time, the Atacama defies expectations. Every turn reveals a new surprise. Ancient petroglyphs, towering cactus forests, and perfectly still high-altitude lagoons like Laguna Miscanti and Miñiques are all set against cobalt skies and snow-dusted peaks.

San Pedro de Atacama – The Desert's Soul

At the heart of it all lies San Pedro de Atacama. Equal parts frontier outpost and cultural crossroads, it's the gateway to most desert excursions. Here, travelers from around the world gather and prepare for days of exploration.

Despite its remote feel, San Pedro offers cozy guesthouses, local artisan markets, and restaurants serving Andean-infused Chilean cuisine. It's the perfect base for discovering the desert's extremes. It's also the perfect place to launch your desert experiences. And there are several great ones to choose from.

Valle de la Luna (Valley of the Moon)

Roughly eight miles from San Pedro sits the Valle de la Luna. Here, wind-eroded rock formations, dunes, and salt-covered grounds make it one of the most iconic spots in the Atacama. Tours usually take place in the late afternoon, ending with a sunset that turns the desert pink, orange and gold.

El Tatio Geysers

To reach the geysers, it's early to bed, early to rise. Located 56 miles from San Pedro, tours leave before dawn to catch their eruptions in the cold morning air when their steam columns are illuminated by the rising sun. If you choose to take this tour, make sure to bundle up. The site's altitude is 14,100 feet, so it's cold.





ATACAMA

THROUGH THE ATACAMA DESERT



Altiplanic Lagoons: Miscanti & Miñiques

The twin jewels called the Altiplanic Lagoons are surrounded by snow-dusted volcanoes and vast golden plains. Found about 62 miles from San Pedro, the deep blue waters of the lagoons contrast dramatically with their surrounding arid terrain, creating a landscape that feels almost unreal. Flamingos, vicuñas, and Andean foxes roam nearby, while the reflection of the mountains shimmer on the surface of the still waters.

Rainbow Valley (Valle del Arcoíris)

Rainbow Valley (Valle del Arcoíris) lives up to its name with hills and rock formations painted in vibrant shades of red, green, yellow, and white. The colors, caused by rich mineral deposits and centuries of erosion, create a surreal, almost Martian landscape. Located 56 miles from San Pedro, it is one of the region's hidden gems. Less crowded than the more famous sites but equally impressive. The area offers quiet hiking trails and stunning photo opportunities, especially in the early morning or late afternoon light.

A Sky Unlike Any Other

By night, the Atacama becomes a window to the cosmos. With high altitude, dry air, and almost no light pollution, it's one of the best places on Earth for stargazing. The Milky Way appears in stunning clarity, stretching across the sky like a cosmic river.

Most tours are led by knowledgeable astronomers who provide insight into the night sky, explaining the constellations, the southern hemisphere's stars, and even the history of the region's celestial significance. Some tours also visit local observatories, where you can learn about the research conducted in this remote desert region.

For those with an adventurous spirit, the experience of lying on the salt flats, gazing up at the stars with nothing but the vast desert around you, is simply unforgettable.

Traveling through the Atacama Desert is not just a journey through one of the planet's harshest environments, it's an experience in contrast. Blinding salt and brilliant skies. Parched earth and glacial lakes. Silence so deep it hums. Here, it isn't about visiting a destination – it's about stepping into a world that challenges your senses and stays with you long after the dust settles.



Off the Beaten Path

MONGOLIA, LOFOTEN ISLANDS, AND THE AMAZON RAINFOREST

The world is filled with destinations that transport travelers to places where few have ventured. They offer experiences that are not just unforgettable but life changing. Among the most extraordinary and diverse places on Earth are Mongolia, the Lofoten Islands, and the Amazon Rainforest. Each offers its own kind of adventure, beauty, and culture. Each is an experience far removed from the ordinary.



A LAND OF VAST WILDERNESS AND TRADITION

Mongolia is one of the last places on the planet where ancient ways of life remain intact amidst its vast, rugged landscapes. Sweeping steppes, expansive deserts, and towering mountain ranges all offer a unique glimpse into both the natural world and a culture that has been shaped by that world for centuries.

For those willing to venture off the beaten path, are into adventure travel, and are willing to sometimes rough it, Mongolia offers unique and unforgettable experiences that will never be forgotten. Whether you're riding across the Gobi Desert, staying with nomads in a traditional ger (yurt), or experiencing the famed Naadam Festival, Mongolia is a place where the wild, untouched landscape and ancient customs come alive.

The best time to visit Mongolia is during the summer months, from June to September, when the weather is relatively mild and accessible for outdoor activities. Winter, though harsh, can be an incredible experience for the more adventurous traveler. The temperatures often drop below freezing, but the crisp snow and clear skies offer breathtaking views of the land, along with the chance to visit remote areas with fewer tourists.

WHAT TO VISIT IN MONGOLIA

The Gobi Desert – One of the most famous deserts in the world, the Gobi offers an immersive desert experience where you can ride camels, explore ancient Buddhist monasteries, and even discover dinosaur fossils at Bayanzag (The Flaming Cliffs).

The Altai Mountains – These towering mountains in the west of Mongolia are home to the Kazakh eagle hunters, whose traditional hunting with trained golden eagles is a practice that has been passed down through generations.

Nomadic Culture – A trip to Mongolia would not be complete without experiencing its nomadic lifestyle. Staying in a ger (yurt), joining local herders, and sharing in a traditional meal will immerse you in a way of life that's still largely unchanged.

Lake Khövsgöl – Known as the "Blue Pearl of Mongolia," Lake Khövsgöl is one of the most pristine lakes in the world. It offers trekking, horseback riding, and boating in the summer months.

If adventure travel isn't your thing, but you still want to experience something special in Mongolia, head to its capital, Ulaanbaatar, for July 11-13th. You'll witness one of the most unique international festivals, the Naadam Festival. Though thought of as a sports tournament, the truth is that it's a powerful expression of Mongolian identity, rooted in history, tradition, and the enduring spirit of its people.

Known locally as "Eriin Gurvan Naadam" or "The Three Manly Games," Naadam showcases the three traditional sports of Mongolia – wrestling, horse racing, and archery. These disciplines date back to the time of Genghis Khan, who valued them as essential skills for warriors of the Mongol Empire.

The festival begins with a vibrant opening ceremony at the National Sports Stadium, where a parade features athletes, dancers, musicians, and horsemen in traditional dress, accompanied by the beating of drums and the raising of the national flag. Then, it's time for the games to begin.







The wrestling events (Bökh) are the centerpiece of Naadam. Wrestlers wear traditional attire—an open-chested jacket (zodog) and tight shorts (shuudag). Matches are often accompanied by symbolic eagle-like dances. There are no weight classes, and the aim is simple – make your opponent touch the ground.

But there are also captivating horse races. Unlike those in the West, Mongolian races can stretch up to 19 miles, and feature jockeys as young as five years old. But it's not only about the jockeys. Horses are more celebrated than riders, and the fastest are showered with songs and milk offerings. It's a breathtaking spectacle across the open steppe.

The final competition is in archery, where competitors use traditional Mongolian bows to shoot arrows at small leather rings called surs. Both men and women participate,

wearing bright national costumes and demonstrating centuries-old techniques passed down through generations.

Naadam is a time for national pride and family celebration. Locals dress in traditional deel robes, feast on buuz (steamed dumplings), and enjoy singing, dancing, and storytelling. Markets spring up around festival grounds, selling handmade crafts, snacks, and souvenirs.

PRACTICAL TRAVEL TIPS FOR MONGOLIA

Transportation – Getting around Mongolia is best done with a local guide or in a 4x4, especially if you're heading into the countryside. Many roads are unpaved, and distances can be vast.

Currency – The Mongolian tugrik is the local currency, and while major cities like Ulaanbaatar have ATMs,

it's recommended to carry cash for remote areas.

Health & Safety – Vaccinations for hepatitis A and B, typhoid, and rabies are recommended, and travelers should take precautions for altitude sickness in certain areas.

MAJESTIC LANDSCAPES ABOVE THE ARCTIC CIRCLE

Rising sharply from the icy waters of the Norwegian Sea, the Lofoten Islands are a rugged archipelago unlike anywhere else on Earth. Located above the Arctic Circle, this remote string of islands offers travelers a rare combination of dramatic mountain peaks, pristine beaches, colorful fishing villages, and otherworldly light – from the Midnight Sun in summer to the Northern Lights in winter. Whether you're an adventurer, photographer, or just a seeker of solitude, Lofoten is where



raw nature and beauty converge.

Despite its northern latitude, Lofoten has a surprisingly mild climate thanks to the warming effect of the Gulf Stream. But it's the contrasts that make this destination so captivating. Towering cliffs plunge into turquoise fjords, and rustic red rorbuer (fishermen's cabins) cling to rocky shores beneath the skies. The islands offer a slice of traditional Norwegian coastal life with a modern twist, making them perfect for travelers seeking both cultural richness and natural beauty.

The best time to visit the island chain depends on your preference. In the summer (June to August), there are long days due to the midnight sun. It's the best time for outdoor activities like hiking, fishing, and kayaking. Winter, however, brings the northern lights, which draw visitors seeking the spectacle of auroras dancing in the night sky.

WHAT TO VISIT IN THE LOFOTEN ISLANDS

Hiking and Outdoor Adventures - The islands are crisscrossed with trails that lead up to towering peaks with panoramic views. Popular hikes include Reinebringen, offering spectacular views of the village of Reine and the surrounding fjords.

Northern Lights - Winter visitors can experience the northern lights, one of nature's most awe-inspiring displays. Lofoten's dark skies and minimal light pollution make it a top spot for aurora enthusiasts.

Fishing Villages - The islands are dotted with quaint fishing villages such as Henningsvær and Nusfjord, where you can explore colorful wooden houses, enjoy fresh seafood, and witness the centuries-old tradition of cod fishing.

For those feeling the Viking vibe, make sure to visit

The Lofotr Viking Museum in Borg, located on the island of Vestvågøya. The museum offers an immersive journey into Viking history and features artifacts and exhibitions that illustrate that period of history.

The museum features one of the largest known Viking longhouses, which was originally built around 500 AD and measures nearly 100 yards in length. It served as the seat of a powerful chieftain and is the only such structure confirmed through archaeological testing in Norway. The Longhouse includes living quarters, a feast hall, and a barn. Inside, you can wander around authentic Viking furnishings and displays.

The museum offers guided tours led by staff dressed in Viking attire, or you can use the museum's multilingual audio guide system to move around the space. Afterwards, enjoy a Viking-inspired meal and beverage at the museum's café. The museum is open year-round, with hours varying by season. It's recommended to check the official website for the most current information.

Afterwards, head to the Viking Ship Harbor. Here, a reconstructed Viking ship is anchored, and it's a great place to participate in Viking activities like archery, axe throwing, and balance games. During summer, you can even join sailing trips or try rowing the Viking ship.

PRACTICAL TRAVEL TIPS FOR THE LOFOTEN ISLANDS

Transportation - The islands are well connected by roads, ferries, and even flights to Svolvær, the main town on Lofoten. Renting a car is recommended for exploring the islands at your own pace.

Currency - Norway uses the Norwegian krone (NOK). Credit cards are widely accepted, but it's good to have some cash for smaller purchases.





Health & Safety - Weather conditions can change quickly, so pack layers and be prepared for varying temperatures. The islands are generally safe but always check weather forecasts if you plan to hike.

AN UNCHARTED PARADISE OF BIODIVERSITY

Stepping into the Amazon Rainforest is like walking into another world. The air hums with the life of buzzing insects, distant bird calls, and the rustle of unseen animals in the underbrush. Stretching across nine South American countries, the Amazon is not only the largest rainforest on Earth, but also one of its most vital. For the adventurous traveler, it offers a rare opportunity to witness nature in its most raw, wild form.

Most visitors begin their journey in Brazil or Peru, with popular gateways

like Manaus or Iquitos offering access to eco-lodges and river cruises deep into the jungle. From the moment you set out on a boat along the Amazon River, you're immersed in a world of green – towering ceibas, tangled vines, and a sky often veiled by mist. Wildlife is abundant yet elusive. If you're lucky, you might spot pink river dolphins, howler monkeys, or even a jaguar's paw print in the mud.

Local guides enrich the experience with stories of medicinal plants, tribal traditions, and survival skills passed down through generations. Many tours now emphasize sustainable travel, ensuring that your presence supports conservation and local livelihoods rather than harms them.

The best time to visit the rainforest, again, depends on preference. The rainy season (December to May) is when the jungle is at its lushest, but the dry season

(June to November) provides better access to more remote regions, and the weather is more comfortable for exploring.

WHAT TO VISIT IN THE AMAZON RAINFOREST

Wildlife Watching - The Amazon is home to incredible biodiversity, including jaguars, capybaras, sloths, howler monkeys, and a vast array of bird species, including the harpy eagle. Tours often include wildlife spotting by boat, jungle treks, and visits to indigenous villages.

Amazon River Cruise - The best way to explore the rainforest's waterways is by boat. A river cruise offers a comfortable base to visit remote villages, watch wildlife, and explore tributaries of the Amazon River.

Rainforest Trekking - For the more adventurous, trekking through the

dense jungle with an expert guide offers insight into the ecosystem. Learn about medicinal plants, jungle survival, and the importance of conservation.

For those seeking authentic connections, there are many opportunities to visit Indigenous Amazonian villages. Visiting one isn't your average vacation. It's a rare chance to experience life from a perspective rooted in ancestral wisdom and deep connection to the land.

There are several entry points into the heart of the jungle, and most journeys begin in one of the three main countries with strong Indigenous tourism programs. In Peru, visitors start in Iquitos. From here, eco-tour operators offer guided trips to communities such as the Yagua or Bora tribes along the Amazon and Nanay Rivers.

In Ecuador, the Kichwa and Achuar peoples welcome visitors to remote jungle lodges like Sani Lodge or Kapawi Ecolodge. Both are run in partnership with Indigenous communities. Access is typically via a small plane from Quito to Coca, then by riverboat.

From Manaus, Brazil, travelers can arrange visits to villages near the Rio Negro. Some tours include cultural exchanges with Tukanoan or Dessana families. For a more immersive experience, investigate multi-day trips with NGOs that support Indigenous sovereignty.

These visits are not theatrical displays. They are real-life experiences. Visitors learn traditional hunting techniques, witness ceremonies, or participate in cooking local dishes with cassava, fish, and jungle fruits. You'll likely sleep in simple guest huts or hammock lodgings and bathe in the river.

And don't fear – language is not a barrier. Many hosts speak Spanish or Portuguese, and local guides often translate. What's most powerful is the nonverbal connection. Shared meals, music, laughter, and respect.

Supporting Indigenous-led tourism not only provides income but also reinforces cultural pride and environmental stewardship. Always choose operators that collaborate directly with communities, follow ethical tourism guidelines, and minimize environmental impact. Be open, ask questions with humility, and never take photos without permission. Bring biodegradable toiletries, avoid single-use plastics, and consider donations to Indigenous-led conservation groups if you're moved to give back.

PRACTICAL TRAVEL TIPS FOR THE AMAZON RAINFOREST:

Transportation - Traveling to the Amazon usually involves flights to major cities like Manaus (Brazil) or Iquitos (Peru), followed by riverboat transfers or jungle expeditions.

Health & Safety - Vaccinations for diseases like yellow fever, typhoid, and hepatitis A are strongly recommended, as are malaria-preventative medications. Bring insect repellent to avoid mosquito bites.



Eco-Tourism - Responsible tourism is key in the Amazon. Opt for eco-friendly tours that support local conservation efforts and benefit indigenous communities.

Mongolia's vast wilderness, the pristine beauty of the Lofoten Islands, and the untamed wilds of the Amazon Rainforest offer some of the most extraordinary travel experiences. Whether you're seeking the serenity of ancient steppes, the rugged charm of Arctic peaks, or the vibrant pulse of the world's largest rainforest, these destinations provide an opportunity to connect with nature in its most raw, breathtaking form.

ARTS

PROVOKING THE IMAGINATION

JAMES EBBERT

In this month's issue, John Eric Home & Lifestyle spent time with artist and expert basket maker James Ebbert, known for his intricate and beautiful design work.

JEH: Let's start at the beginning of your journey. What was the catalyst, that moment that made you pursue working in decorative arts (either personally or professionally or both)?

JE: That would be my high school art teacher, Mrs. Schwelm. She taught me so much in just three years and did so in such a fun way.

JEH: What inspires you to create overall?

JE: I can't not create and have been like that for as long as I can remember. In art and other aspects. In my previous career, I owned a flower shop and worked as the main designer. That too is a creative field. Even though I was in a "creative" job, I still needed to create after hours.

JEH: What inspires you to weave a particular piece?

JE: I begin with a premise and then follow the path to where the materials lead me. Really, it's more the process. I need to start, then once I do, I just go. Never do I take something apart. If I make a mistake or go in a wrong direction, I continue and weave the mistake into something intentional.

JEH: Can you speak on the different mediums that you incorporate in your works?

JE: I almost exclusively use raffia. I like to dye the raffia with iron, coffee or tea, and have been experimenting with some other natural dyes, but I'm not a man of many colors. I was asked to participate in a recycling show and recently wove plastic shopping bags into a desk set. But I prefer raffia.





Throughout my career, I have changed mediums, but I have always needed an outlet for my hands and mind. Artwork is very relaxing and meditative for me. Typically, I can't stay still. I'm often caught pacing. It's best if I can keep my hands active and weaving keeps me busy in a meditative way.

JEH: Let's turn to the sourcing of your materials. How do you source and what makes something special to you?

JE: Discarded industrial elements, detritus from the Pittsburgh streets and random ephemera from friends. During the covid lockdown, I was weaving a lot – the rusty and discarded elements started then. I would take daily walks and pick up metal things from the street to decorate the baskets with.

JEH: The mixed materials that you use – are they used out of a vision or is it more practical?

JE: I pick things up because they look interesting to me, the coloring and texture work well with the raffia and the shapes that I make. They give the basket the right look. That's my aesthetic.

JEH: Can you describe for our readers how you prepare to weave?

JE: Actually, there is nothing in particular. My raffia and needle are usually next to me. It's rare that I watch anything on TV or listen to music without weaving. It's an incredibly long process. A large basket can take weeks, which is why most of the things I make are small and intricate.

JEH: Are there styles that have and/or continue to impact your work?

JE: My weavings adhere to general design principles rather than one particular style or period. Although, Native American basketry has always been my favorite, even as a child. Most of the shapes are typical basket shapes, some of the recent work I've been experimenting with are very uneven and untraditional shapes. I recently made several resembling tornadoes or cyclones.

JEH: Can you speak on the sustainable aspects of your work?

JE: Because I use natural materials, their lifetime is finite but long. On larger baskets, I will sometimes use hemp or jute twine, wrapping it with raffia. It gives some width to the weave. Maybe someday I'll find another fiber that I'm comfortable with, but nothing is right now on the radar.



Two Countries One Vision

Global Perspective. Local Expertise. Unparalleled Luxury.

As the world redefines what it means to feel at home, we unite the finest elements of two nations—offering exclusive residences and elevated experiences for the globally discerning. Backed by decades of expertise in high-net-worth real estate, we deliver a bespoke approach to transatlantic property investment, where every move is seamless and every detail, exceptional.

Your next chapter starts here.

THE LUXURY
COLLECTIVE UK
LONDON

+44 204614 1927

office@theluxurycollectiveuk.co.uk

10 Queen Street Place, London, EC4R 1AG, United Kingdom

www.theluxurycollectiveuk.co.uk





BLACK BOOK

INTERNATIONAL FAIRE

SWIMMING WITH DOLPHINS IS A BUCKET-LIST EXPERIENCE THAT COMBINES ADVENTURE, NATURE, AND UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES. IF YOU HAPPEN TO VISIT NEAR ONE OF THESE PLACES, MAKE SURE TO DROP IN FOR A SWIM.



Baird Bay Experience | Photo Credit SATC



DISCOVERY COVE, ORLANDO, FLORIDA, USA

This all-inclusive day resort is a great spot where visitors can swim with dolphins surrounded by sandy beaches and tropical landscaping.

WILD DOLPHIN SWIM TOURS, OAHU, HAWAII, USA

Here, eco-friendly tours take small groups off the coast of Oahu to swim with wild spinner dolphins. This experience, in the dolphin's natural habitat, is unforgettable.

DOLPHIN ENCOUNTER, KAIKOURA, NEW ZEALAND

This tour group offers guided boat tours to swim with wild dusky dolphins in the open ocean. Wild dusky dolphins are known for their playful behavior and acrobatics.

BAIRD BAY EXPERIENCE, EYRE PENINSULA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

This experience is unique as it offers opportunities to swim with both sea lions and dolphins in their natural environment. The tour company emphasizes eco-tourism and conservation.



Luxury Elevated

INSIDE THE WORLD'S MOST EXPENSIVE HOTELS (AND SUITES)

There are luxury hotels and then there are luxury hotels. When the phrase "money is no object" becomes reality, the travel experience transcends plush sheets and infinity pools. We're talking private islands, 24-karat gold-threaded linens, bulletproof windows, personal butlers, and Rolls-Royce fleets waiting at your disposal. These aren't just hotel suites — they're multi-million-dollar fantasies curated for billionaires, royals, and those for whom luxury is simply a way of life.

Where are these elite stays and what do they feature?
Here is a snapshot of the crème de la crème...



Photos courtesy of The Mark Penthouse, The Mark Hotel

The Mark Penthouse The Mark Hotel

Location: New York City, USA

Cost per night: \$100,000

At over 10,000 square feet, The Mark's penthouse is the largest hotel suite in the U.S. This five-bedroom palace in the sky features a 2,500-square-foot rooftop terrace that transforms into a private ballroom, a grand living room (which can be turned into a full-sized stage), library lounge, and dining room which seats 24. This is home away from home for celebs who often stay here during the Met Gala.





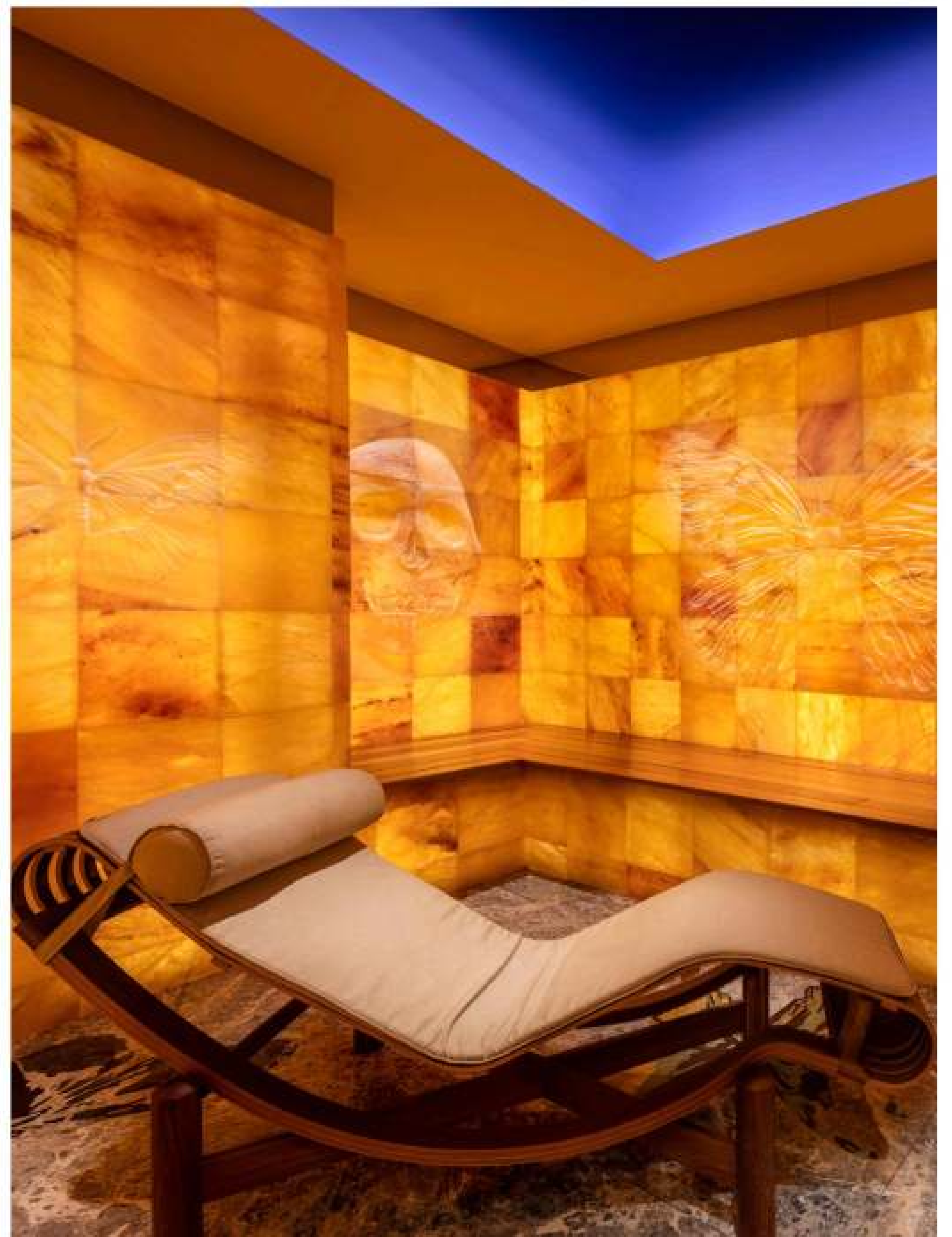
Photos courtesy of The Empathy Suite, Palms Casino Resort

The Empathy Suite Palms Casino Resort

Location: Las Vegas, Nevada

Cost per night: \$100,000 (2-night minimum)

Designed by British provocateur and artist Damien Hirst, the Empathy Suite is less of a hotel room and more of a live-in gallery. Pill motifs, original artwork, and a private salt relaxation room are all included. The 9,000-square-foot space includes a 13-seat bar, private wellness area, and a 24-hour butler. The pièce de résistance? A cantilevered pool overlooking the Strip.





Photos courtesy of The Muraka, Conrad Maldives Rangali Island



The Muraka Conrad Maldives Rangali Island

Location: Maldives

Cost per night: \$50,000+

A two-story villa with a master bedroom submerged beneath the Indian Ocean. Floor-to-ceiling acrylic walls give guests an uninterrupted view of marine life while they sleep. The upper floor includes an infinity pool, private jet skis, and a dedicated staff, including a butler and chef. It's as close to feeling like a Bond villain as you'll get — but in flip-flops.





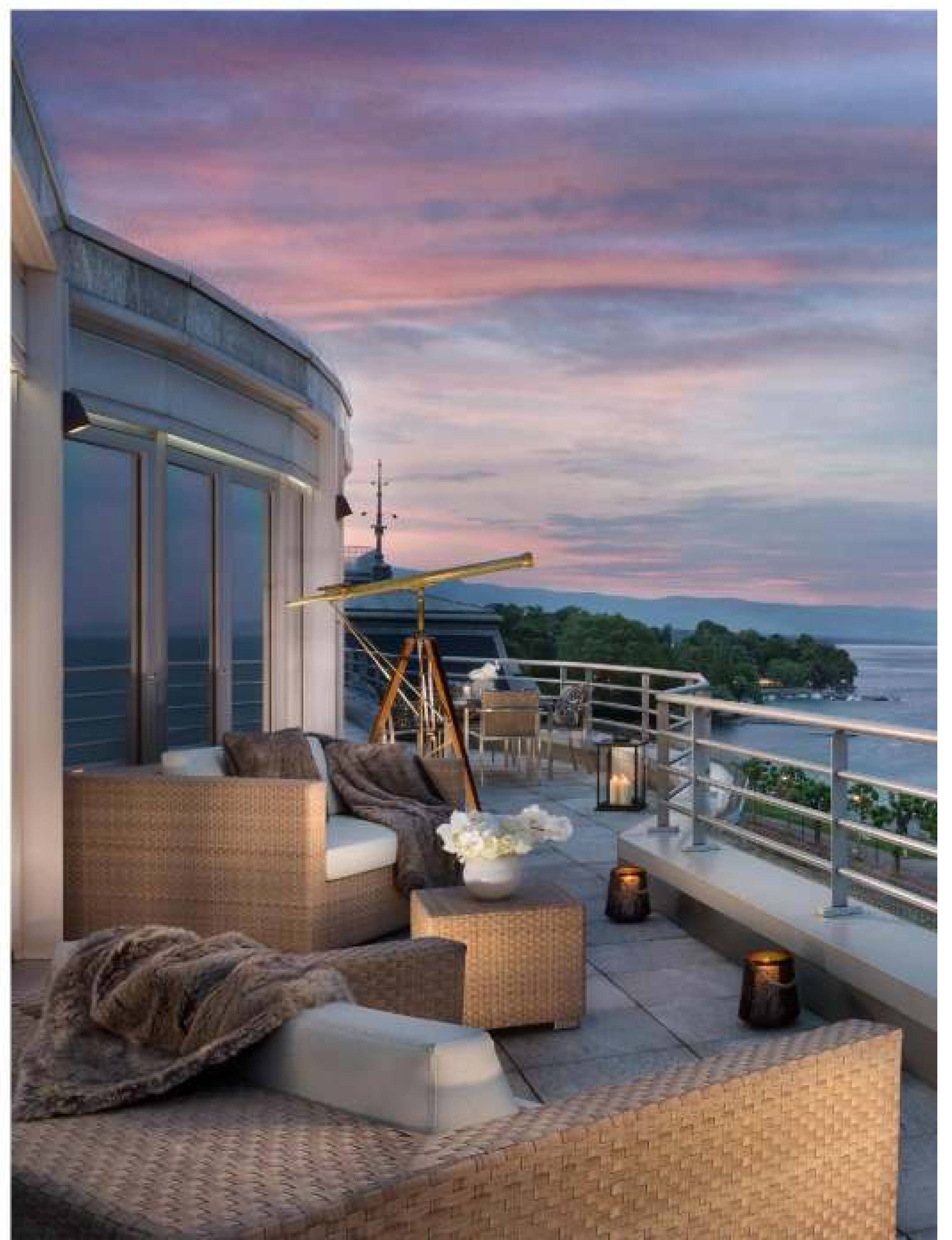
Photos courtesy of The Royal Penthouse Suite, Hotel President Wilson

The Royal Penthouse Suite Hotel President Wilson

Location: Geneva, Switzerland

Cost per night: \$80,000

Beloved by diplomats, A-listers, and high-profile figures needing both luxury and security, this suite spans the entire eighth floor of the hotel. Expect 12 bedrooms, 12 marble bathrooms, bulletproof windows, and a Steinway grand piano. There's even a private fitness center and a panoramic terrace with sweeping views of Lake Geneva and Mont Blanc.





Photos courtesy of Ty Warner Penthouse, Four Seasons New York

Ty Warner Penthouse Four Seasons New York

Location: New York City, USA

Cost per night: \$60,000

Seven years in the making and costing \$50 million to build, this suite occupies the entire top floor of the Four Seasons NYC. With 360-degree views of Manhattan, a private art collection, and a personal butler, the experience is as elevated as the view. The room comes with a chauffeured Rolls-Royce — naturally.

Villa La Cupola Hotel Excelsior

Location: Rome, Italy

Cost per night: \$50,000

Inspired by the architecture of ancient Rome, this villa boasts frescoes, marble baths, and a private cinema beneath its jaw-dropping cupola. You can sip champagne on the terrace with a view of the Eternal City, then head downstairs to your private spa with a sauna, steam bath, and a mosaic-lined jacuzzi.

The Hilltop Villa Laucala Island

Location: Fiji

Cost per night: \$55,000

Accessible only by invitation, the Hilltop Estate at Laucala is a secluded paradise perched atop a lush island hill. It includes a main residence and two guest villas, all surrounded by private pools, panoramic decks, and jungle. The estate also comes with a private chef, nanny, chauffeur, with the entire island's facilities at your disposal — from golf to horseback riding to deep-sea diving.



Photo courtesy of COMO Shambhala Estate

LUXURY SPAS

A truly exceptional spa experience can transport you into a realm of tranquility, transformation, and indulgence. From cliffside sanctuaries to jungle escapes, these elite spas go far beyond facials and massages—they offer immersive journeys for body, mind, and soul.



COMO SHAMBHALA ESTATE - BALI, INDONESIA

More than just a spa—this is a spiritual retreat tucked deep within Bali's lush jungle. COMO Shambhala Estate is renowned for its integrative wellness approach, combining Ayurvedic (an ancient Indian medical system) treatments, hydrotherapy, meditation, and bespoke nutrition. Every

guest gets a personalized wellness program, complete with a resident yoga teacher, dietitian, and therapist. Whether you're soaking in a private jungle spring or receiving a massage in an open-air pavilion, healing here is holistic and deeply immersive.

SHA WELLNESS CLINIC - ALICANTE, SPAIN

Nestled between the Sierra Helada mountains and the Mediterranean Sea, SHA Wellness Clinic is where science meets serenity. This award-winning medical spa is famed for its holistic programs that fuse Eastern therapies and Western medicine. Guests come here for everything from detox and anti-aging treatments to stress relief and sleep recovery programs, all guided by doctors, nutritionists, and wellness experts. It's no wonder celebrities and CEOs flock to SHA for a full-body reset.

AMAN SPA AT AMAN TOKYO - JAPAN

Minimalism meets Zen mastery at Aman Tokyo's spa, perched high above the city's skyline. This urban oasis offers panoramic views of Mount Fuji and a tranquil escape from the bustling metropolis below. The spa's signature treatments blend Japanese healing rituals with modern wellness techniques, including Shiatsu massage, kampo herbal therapy, and onsen-style baths. Add in the 30-meter pool and steam rooms overlooking Tokyo Tower, and you've got a next-level spa experience.

CLINIQUE LA PRAIRIE - MONTREUX, SWITZERLAND

If you're seeking wellness backed by decades of pioneering science, look no further than Clinique La Prairie. Overlooking Lake Geneva, this ultra-luxury medical spa is famous for its cutting-edge longevity and cellular regeneration programs. Founded in 1931, it offers world-class diagnostics, tailored treatments, and expert consultations in the utmost privacy. It's less of a spa and more of a full-spectrum life-enhancement clinic, all wrapped in five-star luxury.

SENSE, A ROSEWOOD SPA AT LAS VENTANAS AL PARAÍSO - LOS CABOS, MEXICO

Set on the shimmering shores of the Baja Peninsula, Sense Spa at Las Ventanas is pure paradise. Inspired by ancient healing traditions of Baja shamans, the spa blends local herbs, desert minerals, and indigenous rituals with luxurious treatments. Think moonlit massages, cactus flower wraps, and outdoor soaking tubs surrounded by fire pits. With private spa suites and oceanfront views, this is coastal calm at its most lavish.



Photos courtesy of SHA Wellness Clinic

FOODIE

TASTE OF THE TOWN



TOMATO AND WATERMELON SALAD

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 beefsteak (or other large variety) tomatoes, stemmed, washed and dried
1 pint cherry tomatoes, stemmed, washed and dried
1 tablespoon chopped tarragon leaves
4 strawberries, hulled, washed and cut into very small pieces
Maldon sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 to 2 teaspoons superfine (or granulated) sugar
6 ounces cold watermelon, rind removed, seeded and cut into bite-size cubes

DIRECTIONS:

In a bowl, whisk together the balsamic, lemon juice, and olive oil. Taste for seasoning. Set aside.

Place the tomatoes on a flat surface. Cut the smaller ones in half and the larger ones into slices. Arrange all of them in a single layer, flesh side up. Season them with salt, black pepper and sugar. Drizzle the tomatoes with the dressing. Toss them with the tarragon and strawberries.

Arrange the tomatoes down the length of 6 rectangular plates. Drizzle with the remaining dressing and top with the watermelon. Serve immediately.



CILANTRO-LIME SHRIMP TACOS

INGREDIENTS

For the tacos:

Juice of 3 limes
2 Tablespoons freshly chopped cilantro, plus more for garnish
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 teaspoon cumin
1 Tablespoon olive oil
Zest of 1 lime
Kosher salt
1 lb. shrimp, peeled and deveined
8 Tortillas, warmed, for serving

For the cabbage slaw:

1 cup shredded green cabbage
1/4 cup cilantro
1/4 red onion, thinly sliced
1/2 avocado, thinly sliced
Juice of 1 lime
1 Tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt

For the garlic mayo sauce:

1/3 cup mayonnaise
2 tablespoons hot sauce
Zest of 1 lime
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
Kosher salt

DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, whisk together lime juice, cilantro, garlic, cumin, olive oil, lime zest, and season with salt. Add shrimp and cover with plastic wrap. Marinate for 20 minutes in the refrigerator.

For the slaw, in a large bowl, combine all slaw ingredients. Toss gently to combine and season with salt.

For the garlic-lime mayo, in a medium bowl, combine all ingredients. Whisk and season with salt.

Preheat the grill or grill pan to medium heat. Grill shrimp until pink and opaque, about 2 to 3 minutes per side.

To build the tacos, add a scoop of slaw, a few shrimp, and a drizzle of the garlic-lime mayo to each taco. Garnish with cilantro and serve.



SUMMER FRUIT-TOPPED SORBET SUNDAE

INGREDIENTS

1 nectarine, chopped (1 cup)
3/4 cup fresh raspberries
3/4 cup fresh blueberries
2 tablespoons sugar
2 teaspoons orange-flavored liqueur or orange juice
1 pint (2 cups) lemon or berry sorbet
4 thin ginger cookies

DIRECTIONS

In small bowl, mix nectarine, raspberries, blueberries, sugar and liqueur. Refrigerate at least 30 minutes but no longer than 4 hours.

Into each of 4 serving dishes, scoop 1/2 cup sorbet. Stir fruit mixture; spoon over sorbet. Garnish each serving with 1 cookie.





Top 5 Luxury Glamping Sites

Glamping—where glamour meets camping—is the ultimate way to reconnect with nature without sacrificing luxury. These days, it's not just about fancy tents; the best glamping resorts offer private chefs, designer interiors, and unforgettable locations that rival five-star hotels.

FOUR SEASONS TENTED CAMP GOLDEN TRIANGLE - CHIANG RAI, THAILAND

Tucked deep in the misty jungles of Northern Thailand, this Four Seasons tented camp screams adventure. Each handcrafted tent features outdoor rain showers, custom wooden hot tubs, and river views of Myanmar and Laos. Days are spent exploring bamboo forests, visiting elephant sanctuaries, and enjoying sundowners at a hilltop bar.



Photos courtesy of Four Seasons Tented Camp Golden Triangle



Photos courtesy of Shinta Mani Wild

THE RESORT AT PAWS UP – MONTANA, USA

Known as the birthplace of luxury glamping, Paws Up sits on a sprawling 37,000-acre working cattle ranch in Montana's Big Sky Country. Guests choose from safari-style tents with clawfoot tubs and butlers, or stunning treehouses perched above the Blackfoot River. Horseback riding, fly-fishing, gourmet fire-pit dinners, and s'mores under starry skies—all with five-star service.

LONGITUDE 131° – ULURU, AUSTRALIA

Imagine waking up to a view of Uluru (Ayers Rock) from your king-size bed. At Longitude 131°, glamping reaches new heights with futuristic tents blending into the red desert landscape. Each "tent" comes with a curated minibar, art collections, and an outdoor deck for stargazing. You'll enjoy bespoke excursions into the Outback and gourmet dining with native ingredients.

WHITE DESERT'S ECHO CAMP – ANTARCTICA

Yes, you can glamp in Antarctica—and in serious style. White Desert's Echo Camp features six futuristic pods inspired by space exploration, with interiors mimicking a secret hideaway. Each pod has floor-to-ceiling windows facing the vast, icy wilderness. Guests arrive by private jet and enjoy gourmet meals, glacier trekking, and even visits to emperor penguin colonies.

SHINTA MANI WILD – CAMBODIA

Created by famed designer Bill Bensley, Shinta Mani Wild is a luxe tented camp set in a private Cambodian rainforest reserve. Guests arrive by zipline (yes, really) and stay in lavish, safari-style tents perched above waterfalls. The resort blends conservation and indulgence with private riverboat rides, anti-poaching patrols, and jungle-foraged fine dining.



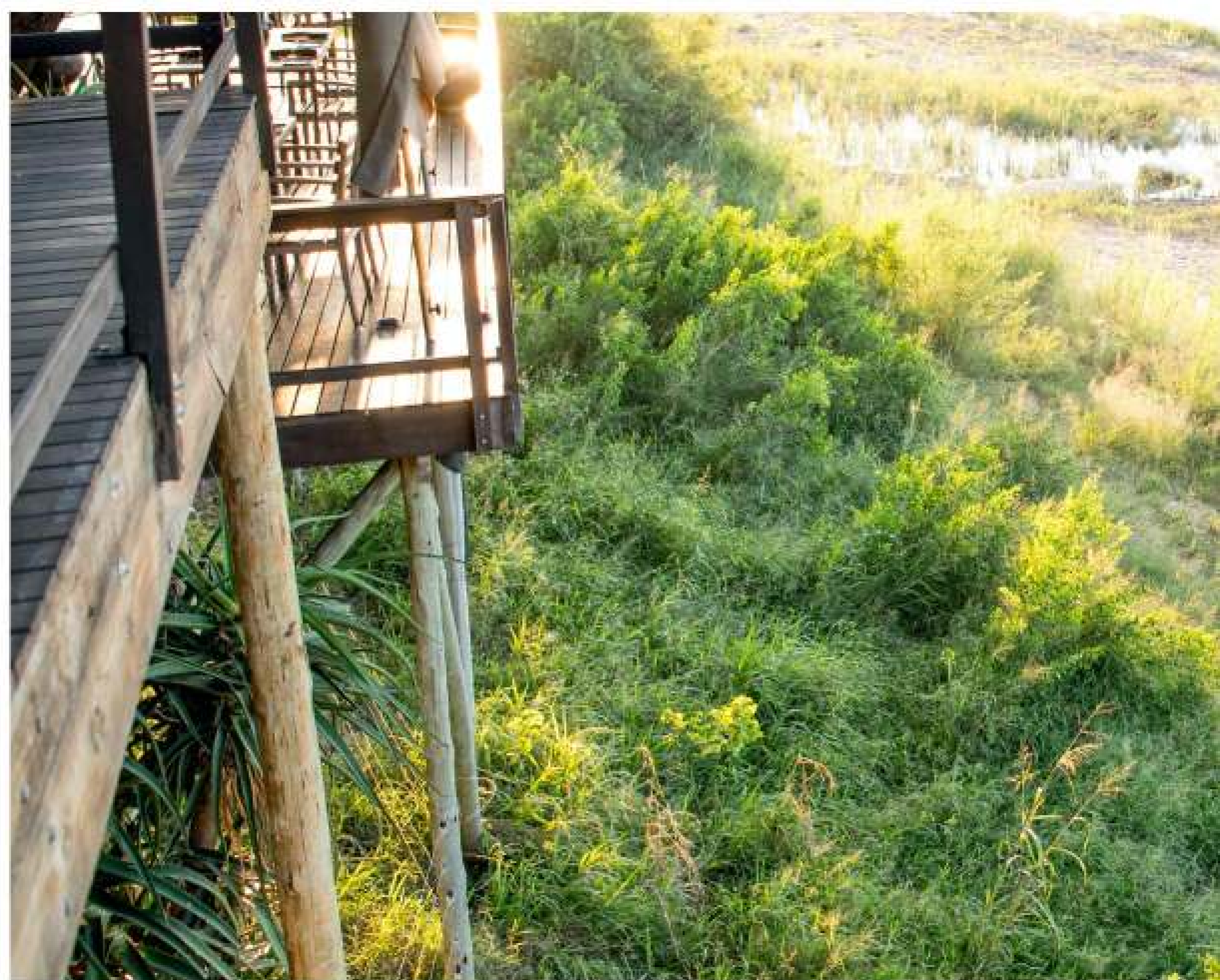
Photos courtesy of The Resort at Paws Up



Photos courtesy of Longitude 131°



Photos courtesy of White Desert's Echo Camp





Top 5 Travel Lodges in Africa

If you're dreaming of an unforgettable escape that blends untamed wilderness with world-class luxury, Africa's most exclusive lodges deliver just that. Nestled in some of the continent's most spectacular natural settings, these lodges offer unrivaled privacy, exquisite design, and once-in-a-lifetime wildlife experiences.

SINGITA MILELE - SERENGETI, TANZANIA

Tucked within the Grumeti Reserve, Singita Milele is not just a lodge—it's a private villa of dreams. Opened in 2024, this ultra-luxurious hideaway overlooks the endless plains of the Serengeti. With only five expansive suites, an infinity pool, private cinema, wine cellar, gym, and a full staff including private chefs and expert guides, Milele offers an experience that is completely tailored to you.

SINGITA BOULDERS LODGE - SABO SAND RESERVE, SOUTH AFRICA

Set along the banks of the Sand River in the renowned Sabi Sand Reserve, Singita Boulders Lodge is a sanctuary of contemporary design and raw nature. Built among ancient boulders and trees, the lodge's suites feature natural stone walls, private plunge pools, and open-plan spaces that flow seamlessly into the surrounding bush. It's particularly famous for its frequent leopard sightings, luxurious spa treatments, and exceptional wine.

Photos courtesy of Singita Milele and Singita Boulders Lodge



ANGAMA MARA – MAASAI MARA, KENYA

Inspired by the romance of Out of Africa, Angama Mara rests high above the Great Rift Valley, offering breathtaking views of the Maasai Mara below. Each of its 30-tented suites features floor-to-ceiling glass walls, allowing guests to wake up to nature in panoramic style. With access to the Mara's abundant wildlife, including the Great Migration, Angama also curates cultural visits, hot air balloon safaris, and private picnics on the kopjes (rocky outcrops).

ROYAL MALEWANE – THORNYBUSH GAME RESERVE, SOUTH AFRICA

For old-world grandeur in the African wild, Royal Malewane delivers in style. Located in the Thornybush Private Game Reserve adjacent to Kruger National Park, this lodge combines colonial-era charm with world-class game viewing. Think Persian rugs, antique furniture, private decks with plunge pools, and the most qualified guiding team in Africa. The Royal Suites and Africa House are ideal for families or groups wanting the ultimate in space and exclusivity.

MOMBO CAMP – OKAVANGO DELTA, BOTSWANA

Widely recognized as one of the best safari camps in Africa, Mombo Camp is perched on Chief's Island in the heart of the Okavango Delta. This eco-luxe camp offers spectacular wildlife viewing right from your tent, thanks to its prime location in a high-density game area. Each tented suite comes with its own plunge pool, wrap-around veranda, and floor-to-ceiling glass doors. With its deep commitment to conservation, staying at Mombo feels as good as it looks.





MIXOLOGY

TIPSY TEMPTATIONS

by Charles M. Tappan, Jr.



Handle with Care

Glassware:
Rocks Glass

Ingredients:

1.5 oz. Bols Genever Gin
1 oz. Blood Orange Juice
.5 oz Grapefruit Juice
.75 oz. Honey Syrup*
Crushed Ice

Garnish: 1/4 oz. of Black Currant Juice*

Directions: Fill a rocks glass with crushed ice and set aside. Combine the ingredients (except for the garnish float) into a cocktail shaker, fill with ice, and shake to a 13 count. Strain over crushed ice, garnish, and enjoy!

Background: Blood oranges and grapefruit from Italy, and currants from the UK give this drink strong European ties. Blood orange isn't as acidic as regular orange juice; it has richer earth tones, so the grapefruit juice adds a hint of bitterness that adds further depth. To brighten the earth tones, the honey syrup adds a healthy, sweet, and delicate floral character. The garnish topping of the black currant juice will be a fruit-forward flavor bomb that adds an eye-popping jam. At the same time, it's only just enough to keep from throwing the drink off. The color of this drink is deep ruby red and tastes exactly the way it looks. Built off the classic platform "The Bramble," handle this libation with care, because it's easy to have one too many!

Notes: *Honey syrup recipe is equal parts honey and water, mixed till integrated.

*If black currant juice is not available, use a dark antioxidant like pomegranate juice or Verjus. If you want a greater alcoholic twist, go with crème de mûre (blackberry) or crème cassis (black currant) liqueur.

*For garnish: Feel free to add a citrus wheel or a twist to up the look of the drink.

*For non-alcohol version - remove gin or use a non-alcoholic spirit.



Last Night's Highball

Ingredients:

1 oz. Junmai Ginjo Sake
1 oz. Satsuma Rum*
.5 oz. R  al Yuzu Citrus Blend Infused Syrup
.5 Lemon Juice
3 oz. Lemonade

Garnish: Lemon Wheel + Basil Sprig

Directions: Combine all ingredients into a shaker, except for the garnish, and shake to a 13 count. Strain over ice into a highball or glass. Garnish, serve and enjoy!

Background: Every night is special, and this drink's aim is to keep memories alive. Right out of the gate, this is big and layered citrus. Yuzu is renowned in kitchens across the world for its powerful citrus-forward flavor of hyperactive lemon, bordering on Warheads (the old sour candy) level. Using multiple types of tart citrus helps keep all the flavors from disappearing in the lighter lemonade. The lemonade is used to lengthen and temper the overall drink. The finished product should be as bright gold as the sunshine and have a flavor just as bright.

Notes: *If satsuma flavored rum is not readily available, another type of citrus flavor, such as passionfruit, can be a substitute.

*For a nonalcoholic version, use nonalcoholic white wine in place of sake and rum.

*If looking to make homemade lemonade, combine 1 part lemon juice, 1 part sweetener, and 3 parts water.

Glassware:
Highball Glass



End of the Line

Ingredients:

1.5 oz. Partida Reposado Tequila
2.5 oz Guava Juice
1 oz. Aloe Juice*
.5 oz. Tangerine Juice
2 dashes Orange Bitters

Garnish: Orange Twist

Directions: Combine all ingredients into a shaker, except for the garnish, and shake to a 13 count. Double strain through a mesh strainer over ice into a Collins glass. Garnish, serve and enjoy!

Background: Unfortunately, every great trip comes to an end, but that doesn't mean the last day has to be a sad one. Inspired by flavors of South America and subtle citrus, this drink is intended to be soft and refreshing. The Guava has a soft citrus tone, easier than tangerine, but with just enough bite to act as a great base foundation for a refreshing summer sip. The aloe juice is always refreshing and tempers the citric acid with its cool, refreshing, almost eucalyptus flavor tone. This long drink, inspired by classic citrus drinks all over the world, is one to help the senses stay alive, but easy enough to drink repeatedly. The burned orange color of the finished drink not only adds a soft look but also invokes soft flavors. A simple twist is elegant and brings the whole beverage home.

Notes: Aloe Vera Juice is readily available in supermarkets in the international aisle or via online ordering.

Glassware:
Collins Glass



EXCLUSIVE

GLOBAL RESORTS

In a world where luxury is more and more becoming standard, true exclusivity is rare. These five resorts redefine indulgence - offering not just opulence, but complete seclusion, once-in-a-lifetime experiences, and a level of privacy that is rare.



AMANZOE - PORTO HELI, GREECE

Aman resorts are synonymous with serene luxury, and Amanzoe is arguably the crown jewel. Inspired by classical Greek architecture, this sanctuary offers peaceful surroundings, panoramic views, and total privacy. Private pavilions with pools, a private beach club accessible via a short drive or helicopter, and tailored wellness experiences and holistic spa treatments are all enjoyed by guests.

NORTH ISLAND - SEYCHELLES

Tucked away in the Indian Ocean, North Island is where royalty (yes, actual royals - it was Prince William and Kate's honeymoon spot) and Hollywood elite retreat. With a strong focus on sustainability and barefoot luxury, each of the 11 villas on the island is handcrafted, spacious, and blends seamlessly into the natural environment. The resort offers personalized butler service and private beaches for each villa.



Photos courtesy of The Brando



Photos courtesy of North Island

THE BRANDO – TETIAROA, FRENCH POLYNESIA

Why it's exclusive: Owned by Marlon Brando, encircled by a coral reef
Located on a breathtaking atoll, once owned by actor Marlon Brando, this carbon-neutral paradise combines luxury with eco-conscious innovation. With just 35 villas, The Brando is the epitome of sustainable sophistication. Only accessible by private plane, the resort is all-inclusive and features access to pristine coral reefs and untouched beaches.

LAUCALA ISLAND – FIJI

Owned by Red Bull billionaire Dietrich Mateschitz, Laucala Island is a tropical fantasy. It offers outrageous luxury – think private golf course, submarines for guest use, and farm-to-table dining with ingredients grown on the island. Each villa comes with its own pool, buggy, and private staff, and guests enjoy horseback riding on the beach, world-class diving, and underwater adventures

EXPLORA – TORRES DEL PAINE, CHILE

Luxury doesn't always mean tropical beaches. Explora Patagonia redefines exclusivity by offering unmatched access to one of Earth's most remote and stunning landscapes – with comfort that doesn't compromise. Located in a UNESCO biosphere reserve, guided explorations, surreal views of glaciers, lakes, and the Paine Massif itself are enjoyed by guests.



LEARN YOUR ABCs...



Nestled in the southern Caribbean Sea, just off the coast of Venezuela, lie three sun-drenched islands. Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao. While they share a Dutch colonial history and warm trade winds, each island boasts its own unique charm, culture, and rhythm. Welcome to the ABC Islands—where paradise comes in three distinct flavors.

Aruba

With its iconic Divi-Divi trees and white-sand beaches, Aruba is often the most well-known of the trio. A favorite for honeymooners and sunseekers, the island is famed for its consistent sunny weather, upscale resorts, and vibrant nightlife.

Tucked along Aruba's western coast, Eagle Beach is more than just a postcard-perfect stretch of sand—it's a Caribbean icon. With its powdery white shores and crystal-clear turquoise waters, Eagle Beach offers a tranquil escape that blends natural beauty with laid-back luxury.



Regularly ranked among the top beaches in the world, Eagle Beach is ideal for travelers seeking a calm sea and, unlike other bustling beach destinations, Eagle Beach remains uncrowded, even during peak season.

For those non-beach bums, visit Arikok National Park. Covering nearly 20% of Aruba's land area, the park is a dramatic contrast to the island's calm beaches. Here, the landscape shifts to rugged hills, volcanic rock formations, hidden caves, and sweeping desert vistas. It's raw, natural, and full of surprises.

Visitors can hike or drive through the park's winding trails to discover ancient Arawak petroglyphs in Fontein Cave, dramatic ocean views at Conchi (the Natural Pool), and native wildlife like lizards, goats, and Aruba's endemic rattlesnake. The terrain is dotted with towering cacti, Divi-Divi trees, and wind-carved cliffs that plunge into the sea. And, of course, there is Oranjestad. The Capital of Aruba is a vibrant fusion of Dutch colonial charm and Caribbean color. Pastel-hued buildings, red-tiled roofs, and ornate facades, the city offers a walkable blend of history, shopping, and seaside beauty.

Stroll along Main Street to find boutiques, jewelers, and local markets, or explore Aruba's rich past at the National Archaeological Museum and Fort Zoutman, the island's oldest building. The free downtown trolley makes it easy to explore without breaking a sweat.

Oranjestad also boasts a modern marina, trendy restaurants, and lively nightlife. By day, cruise ship passengers browse duty-free shops; by night, locals and tourists alike gather to enjoy sunset views and live music.

Bonaire

In this region famed for its sun-drenched beaches and luxury resorts, Bonaire stands quietly apart. This small island trades glitz for authenticity and is a haven for divers, nature lovers, and travelers seeking a slower, more soulful escape. Bonaire is widely recognized as one of the world's top diving and snorkeling destinations. Its entire coastline is a protected marine park, allowing coral reefs and marine life to flourish just steps from the shore. More than 80 dive sites dot the island, many of which are shore-accessible – no boat required.

From sea turtles gliding through coral gardens to schools of vibrant fish weaving through shipwrecks, the underwater world here is as pristine as it is accessible. For non-divers, snorkeling at sites like 1000 Steps and Salt Pier offers equally unforgettable experiences. What makes Bonaire truly special is its deep respect for nature. Long before eco-tourism became a buzzword, the island prioritized sustainability. Its coral reefs are protected, its wild spaces preserved, and even its flamingos are fiercely guarded.



Head inland and you'll find dramatic salt flats, wild donkeys roaming the brush, and the pink-hued Pekelmeer Flamingo Sanctuary – one of only four breeding grounds for flamingos in the Western Hemisphere. For a taste of desert beauty, hike or bike through Washington Slagbaai National Park, a vast and rugged reserve teeming with wildlife.

Bonaire may be small, but its cultural heart beats strong. The capital, Kralendijk, is a charming waterfront town where pastel-colored buildings, Caribbean rhythms, and Dutch influences blend seamlessly. The island's culinary scene is quietly impressive, offering everything from traditional Creole dishes to fine dining with ocean views. Its nightlife is subdued, with only beach bars and the local music scene creating its laid-back island vibe.

Curaçao

Arriving in Willemstad, the island's capital, is like stepping into a tropical European city. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the city's pastel, candy-colored buildings line the waterfront, with the Queen Emma Pontoon Bridge connecting the historic districts of Punda and Otrobanda.

Here, explore narrow streets filled with museums, galleries, and bustling open-air markets. The floating market, where vendors from Venezuela once sold fresh produce by boat, speaks to the island's longstanding cultural crossroads. Curaçao's beaches are as diverse as the island itself. Cas Abao and Playa Kenepa Grandi offer breathtaking views

and crystal-clear waters perfect for swimming, snorkeling, or simply relaxing. But Curaçao's charm lies in its variety of sites. Hidden coves, rocky cliffs, and wild shorelines await the adventurous.

Just offshore, coral reefs teeming with life make Curaçao a top-tier destination for diving and snorkeling. From shallow reefs for beginners to deep shipwrecks for seasoned divers, the island's waters are a vibrant underwater playground. The island is home to more than 50 nationalities, and this is reflected in its music, language (Papiamentu), and especially its food. From Dutch pancakes and Indonesian satay to Caribbean stews and fresh seafood, the island's culinary scene is both global and deeply local.

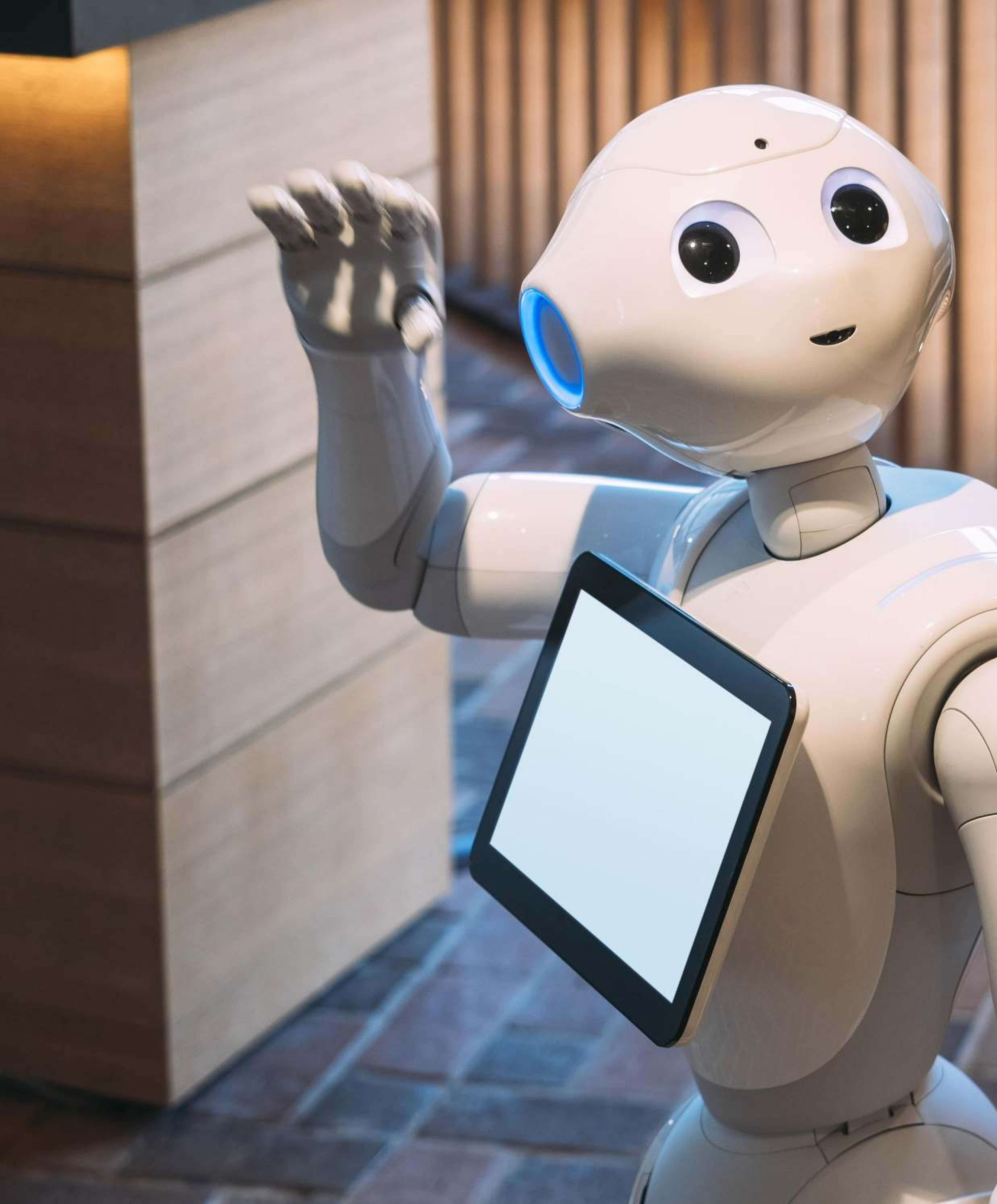
And, of course, there is the world-famous Blue Curaçao liqueur. It is distilled from the dried peel of the local laraha citrus fruit, and a visit to the Landhuis Chobolobo distillery offers both a taste and a bit of history.

Away from the city, Curaçao's landscape reveals another side. Christoffel National Park offers hiking trails leading to the island's highest point, Mount Christoffel, with panoramic views of the Caribbean Sea. Nearby, Shete Boka National Park showcases dramatic sea caves and crashing waves. Nature's untamed side is on full display.

One Region, Three Worlds

Though part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, each island offers a completely different experience. Aruba beckons with luxury and sunshine, Bonaire soothes with unspoiled nature, and Curaçao intrigues with color and culture. Collectively, the ABC Islands are a dream destination, each offering a piece of paradise and a unique personality to match.

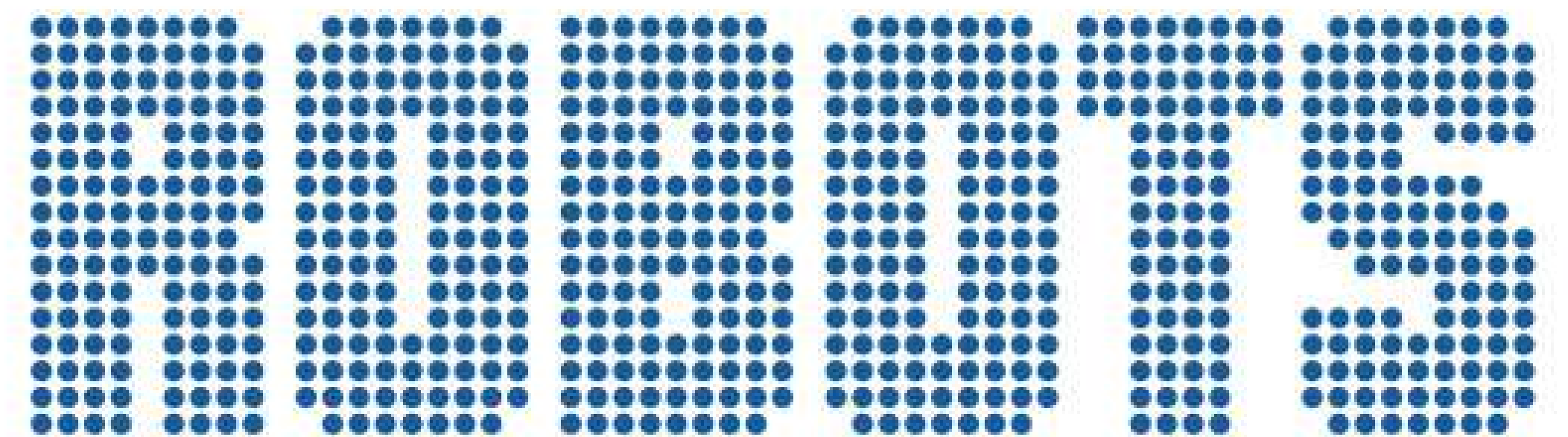






HEADING TO THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN?

MAKE SURE TO SAY
HELLO TO THE



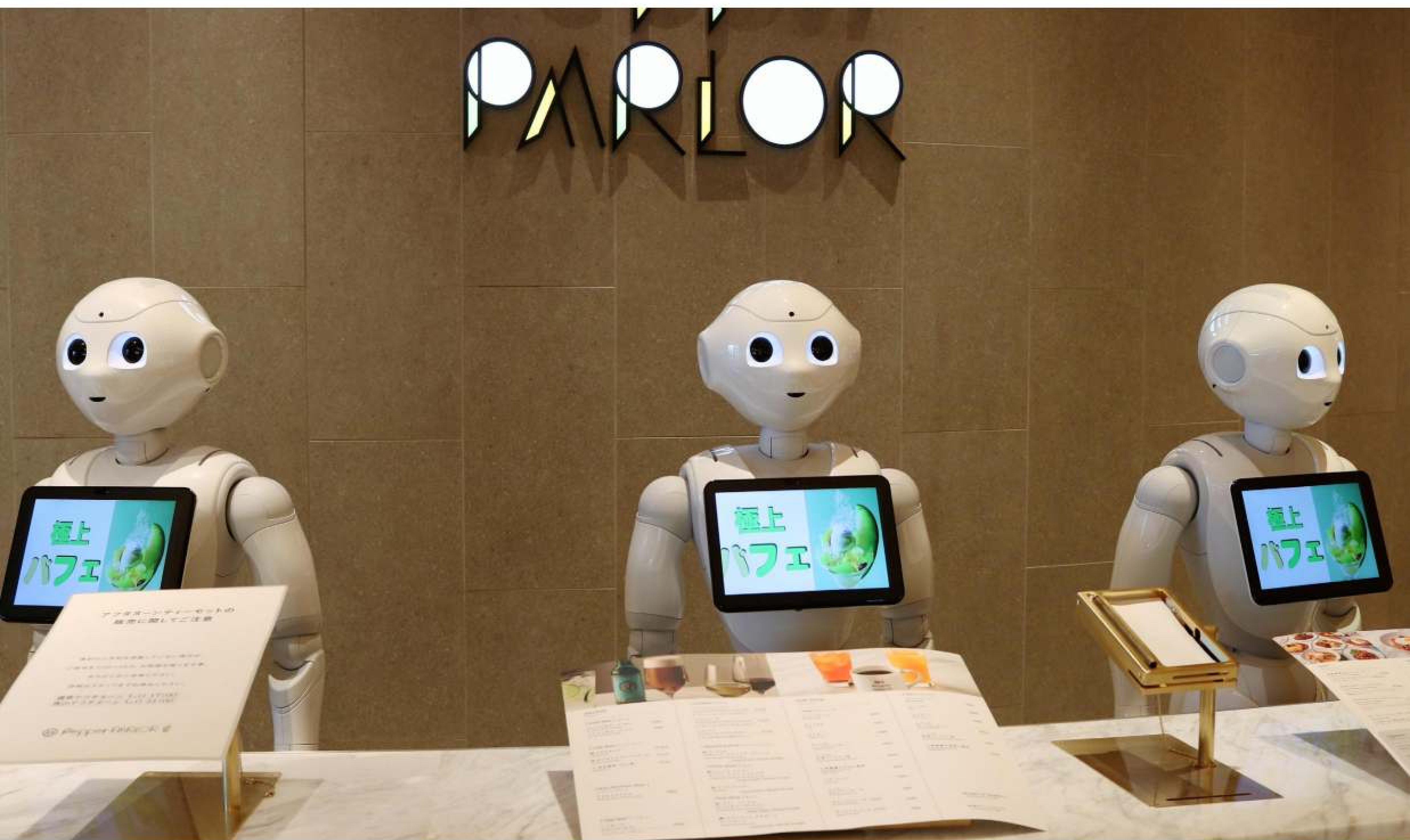
Japan has a fascinating relationship with robots, blending futuristic technology with traditional culture. The city is home to cutting-edge advancements in robotics, and robots are playing a key role in transformative innovation. Robots have found a home like nowhere else in the bustling heart of Tokyo, where neon lights illuminate the cityscape and ancient traditions intertwine with cutting-edge technology. How does this impact tourists to the city?

Arriving at Haneda Airport, tourists have already had a taste of what is to come. Humanoid robots welcome travelers, offering directions in multiple languages. Walking through the streets of Tokyo, it's not uncommon to encounter robots performing tasks that once seemed confined to science fiction.

In retail stores, robotic assistants like SoftBank's famous "Pepper" greet customers with cheerful smiles. These robots greet customers, provide information, and even perform simple tasks. While at the Aqua City Odaiba shopping mall, humanoid robots like Junco assist shoppers with information. Their lifelike appearance and smooth movements make them a popular point of interaction for tourists.

Hotels throughout the city have also embraced this trend. At the Henn na Hotel, the first fully run robotic hotel located in the Ginza district, guests are greeted by humanoid robots fluent in multiple languages. The bots even handle and deliver room service orders as well.

Restaurants, too, have capitalized on robotic innovation. At conveyor-belt sushi spots, robots expertly prepare and deliver sushi with precision, while some establishments feature robotic servers that can navigate crowded dining rooms without missing a beat.



At Pepper Parlor in Shibuya, dining becomes an interactive experience. The restaurant is staffed by multiple Pepper bots that greet guests, take orders, and even perform dance routines, creating an immersive atmosphere. Tokyo's Robot Restaurant in Shinjuku is one of the most well-known attractions for robot fare. Here, a high-energy performance featuring giant robots, dancers, and neon lights reaches beyond the menu, providing an experience that is a sensory overload. It captures the quirky side of Japanese entertainment.

And some cafes feature robots serving food or drinks. These robots can take orders and bring items to customers breezily. At the Henn na Café in Shibuya, Sawyer, a robotic barista, prepares your coffee with precision, offering a glimpse into the potential of automation in hospitality.

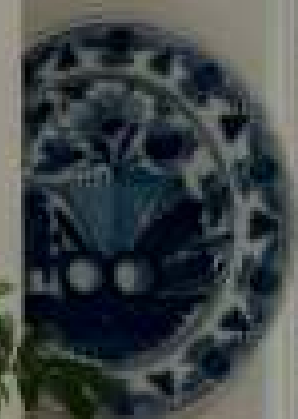
Tourist attractions are also botted up. The National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation is a must-see attraction for tech enthusiasts. Located in Odaiba, the museum showcases ASIMO, Honda's humanoid robot,

known for its dance routines and soccer skills. Visitors can also interact with various robots and learn about Japan's advancements in robotics.

If museums aren't your thing and bot fights are – look no further than the Red^o Tokyo Tower. Here, visitors pilot a robot in a simulated battle, combining gaming with physical activity. It's a unique attraction that offers a taste of futuristic entertainment.

In Tokyo, robots aren't just confined to science fiction—they're an integral part of daily life and a major draw for visitors. From futuristic cafés to interactive museums, the city offers a plethora of experiences where technology and entertainment converge.

Tokyo's embrace of robotics offers visitors an unparalleled opportunity to experience technology in everyday life. Whether you're sipping coffee served by a robot or watching a robot perform on stage, the city provides a futuristic adventure that's both entertaining and enlightening.



AIDAN DESIGN
KITCHEN FORM + FUNCTION



Photos courtesy of Soneva Jani



Photos courtesy of Song Saa Private Island



Photos courtesy of Four Seasons Bora Bora

Top 5 Overwater Bungalows

There's luxury, and then there's overwater luxury. Suspended above crystal-clear lagoons with glass floors, plunge pools, and private butlers, these overwater bungalows are the epitome of indulgence.

SONEVA JANI - MALDIVES

These are said to be the Rolls-Royces of overwater bungalows. Soneva Jani sits in a 5.6-kilometer lagoon of impossibly blue water. Its overwater villas are among the largest in the world, with retractable roofs for stargazing, private slides into the ocean, and decks with sunken lounges. This is barefoot luxury redefined—no shoes, no news, just nature and indulgence.

FOUR SEASONS BORA BORA - FRENCH POLYNESIA

Overwater perfection meets signature Four Seasons service at this iconic Bora Bora retreat. Set against the backdrop of Mount Otemanu, each bungalow comes with thatched roofs, teak furnishings, and direct access to the lagoon. Splurge-worthy suites include private plunge pools, overwater hammocks, and floating breakfasts served in your pool.

SIX SENSES LAAMU - MALDIVES

Remote, eco-conscious, and wildly romantic, Six Senses Laamu is the only resort in the Laamu Atoll, offering seclusion without sacrificing luxury. Villas are built using sustainable materials and offer open-air bathrooms, glass-bottom bathtubs, and sunken oceanfront dining. Perfect for couples who want nature with a touch of boho-chic.

SONG SAA PRIVATE ISLAND - CAMBODIA

Tucked away in the untouched Koh Rong Archipelago, Song Saa offers a rare blend of castaway charm and high-end design. Its overwater villas feel more like beachfront sanctuaries—with reclaimed wood, private pools, and open-air showers overlooking the Gulf of Thailand. A stay here means barefoot elegance with a strong sense of sustainability and community.

CHEVAL BLANC RANDHELI - MALDIVES

Yes, another spectacular collection of overwater bungalows in the Maldives! Unlike traditional thatched-roof accommodations, Cheval Blanc Randheli features architect-designed villas that seamlessly blend modern aesthetics with the natural surroundings. Each villa boasts expansive sundecks with private infinity pools, offering guests a serene and private retreat. Upon arrival, guests are greeted by a personal butler who ensures every need is met.



Photos courtesy of Six Senses Laamu



Photos courtesy of Cheval Blanc Randheli

YOU SAY WANDERLUST

[won-der-luhst] noun

a deep desire to travel and discover the world
at the end of your comfort zone

WE SAY FERNWEH



CODDIWOMPLE (V.)**Origin: English slang**

Definition: To travel purposefully towards an unknown destination.

Coddiwomple is when you have a vague idea of your destination but not a care for how long it takes to arrive. Such as if you go hiking, you know you'll eventually reach the summit, but every part of the trail along the way is just as beautiful.

RESFEBER (N.)**Origin: Swedish**

Definition: The meaning of resfeber refers to the restless race of the traveler's heart before the journey begins. When anxiety and anticipation are tangled together.

It's that moment just after you buy your plane tickets and excitement and fear flood in all at once, creating a mixture of emotions that make you feel anxious or physically ill.

SOLIVAGANT (ADJ.)**Origin: Latin**

Definition: Wandering alone. A solitary adventurer who travels or wanders the globe.

Not all those who wander are lost, but all those who wander alone are solivagants. From the Latin word solivagus, meaning lonely or solitary, solivagant describes anyone who enjoys meandering around new countries alone, to take it all in.

FERNWEH (N.)**Origin: German**

Definition: An ache to get away and travel to a distant place, a feeling even stronger than wanderlust. It is a German word that translates to "distance-sickness."

While someone with wanderlust might sit at home and happily fantasize about all the places they might visit, someone with fernweh would feel a deeper sense of longing, a sort of homesickness, but for foreign lands.

DÉRIVE (N)**Origin: French**

Definition: A spontaneous and unplanned journey where the traveler leaves their life behind and allows themselves to be guided by the landscape and architecture.

Literally translated as "drift," dérive is the idea that even if you drift, you will end up on the right path. When you're wandering through a new city and you just happen to wander on a path that takes you to great discoveries.

VAGARY (V.)**Origin: Latin**

Definition: A whimsical or roaming journey.

Vagary is the true definition of free styling. From Latin, vagārī meaning "to roam", it symbolizes taking an unpredictable pathway without knowing the destination and not caring.

ONISM (N.)**Origin: Danish**

Definition: Onism describes understanding that we'll never get to see it all. It's the frustration of being stuck in just one body that can only inhabit one place at a time.

Like the Swedish word 'resfeber,' onism describes the feeling of knowing that you'll never be able to see all the amazing places in the world that there are to see.

YOKO MESHI (N.)**Origin: Japanese**

Definition: This untranslatable gem describes the stress of speaking a foreign language.

The Japanese word 'meshi' literally means 'boiled rice' and 'yoko' means 'horizontal,' together it means 'a meal eaten sideways.' The Japanese have created a beautiful way of describing the unique kind of stress you might experience when speaking a foreign language.

SELCOUTH (ADJ.)**Origin: Old English**

Definition: When everything you see and experience is unfamiliar and strange, yet you find it marvelous anyway.

It's that feeling you get when you travel to a foreign land and food, culture, customs, or language is strange and different from everything you've experienced before, yet you love every minute of it.

STYLIST

FASHION FORWARD

This summer, fashion for both women and men is characterized by a blend of timeless elegance and bold experimentation. Here are the styles you will be seeing on the streets...

SHEER FABRICS

Sheer materials like tulle and chiffon are prevalent, adding a touch of sensuality to both women's and men's wear. Designers such as Khaite and Alaïa are incorporating these fabrics into shirts and jackets, balancing elegance with allure. Their women's line balances elegance and sensuality through sheer organza dresses.

WIDE-LEG TROUSERS

Baggy, wide-leg pants are back! And they are paired with feminine tops for a balanced silhouette. Chanel and Valentino are offering a relaxed yet stylish look.

UTILITY-INSPIRED FASHION

Functional fashion takes center stage with cargo pants, oversized pockets, and utility jackets. Designers like Burberry and Prada are blending practicality with high fashion, showcasing that utility can be stylish.

PASTEL PALETTE

Soft pastel colors dominate the season, with designers like Chloé and Blumarine here too using chiffon and organza to create ethereal, romantic looks. Versace and D&G are adding a modern twist with bold cuts and bodycon silhouettes.



THE WORLD'S BEST BEACH (AND PARK)

GAMES

YOU'VE NEVER PLAYED — YET



The sun is shining, the sky is azure blue. Move over Frisbee (and Horseshoes too!) There are new games in town!

PÉTANQUE

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: FRANCE

A quintessential pastime of the French Riviera, pétanque is the unofficial sport of slow summer afternoons and rosé-fueled banter. Played in parks and plazas from Marseille to Montpellier, pétanque pits players (either solo or in teams) against one another in a quest to toss hollow metal balls (boules) as close as possible to a small wooden target ball, known as the cochonnet.

Though often likened to bocce, the French will gently remind you that pétanque is a distinct affair. The game thrives on rougher terrain — gravel, sand, even uneven grass — and the smaller metal boules are lobbed, not rolled.

Where to get a set: Pétanque America is your best bet, offering authentic French brands like Obut, MS Pétanque, and La Franc. A worthy investment for anyone with access to a backyard, beach, or dusty courtyard.

BEACH CRICKET

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: UNITED KINGDOM / AUSTRALIA

The esky's stocked, and there's sand between your toes — it's time for beach cricket! This laid-back variation of the sport throws out the rulebook in favor of flexibility and fun. Often played in big groups, it's a cross between cricket and casual baseball batting practice.

Batters swing away while fielders can catch outs on one bounce or in the air. Just don't expect precise scorekeeping — it's more about the vibes.

Where to get a set: A junior cricket kit from Kookaburra Sport keeps things friendly (and avoids bruises from regulation cricket balls).

SEPAK TAKRAW

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: THAILAND

Imagine volleyball, but the net is lower, the court is tighter, and... you can't use your hands. Sepak takraw is Thailand's acrobatic answer to ball sports, requiring players to spike, block, and volley a woven rattan ball using only their feet, head, and torso.

Where to get a set: A \$16 rattan ball and a five-foot-high net are all you need to bring this sport to your local court or backyard.



MÖLKKY

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: FINLAND

Finland's take on lawn bowling is all about strategy and luck. In mölkky, players throw a wooden pin to knock over 12 numbered skittles. The kicker? After each round, skittles are reset wherever they land, which means your game can slowly take over the entire lawn. The goal is to be the first player to reach exactly 50 points. Go over 50? Well, you are reset back to 25.

Where to get a set: The official Mölkky World-endorsed version is just a click away on Amazon.

FRESCOBOL

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: BRAZIL

Frescobol is the samba of paddle sports — smooth, rhythmic, and full of flair. Played on beaches all over Brazil, it's a cooperative game where two players work in sync to keep a rubber ball airborne with wooden paddles, volleying back and forth like a mellow, musical tennis match. There are no winners, no losers — it's just a great rally and a lot of fun.

Where to get a set: Check out some sleek hardwood frescobol sets online or go for a budget-friendly option from Wilson that still does the trick.

These global games offer a passport-free way to bring a little international flair to your weekend fun. Whether you're channeling ancient shepherds or seaside athletes, all you need is a ball, some friends, and the willingness to try something new.

So — which one are you playing first?



Accessorize

IN STYLE

Luxury travel is all about comfort, style, and convenience, with a touch of indulgence. Here's a list of the best travel essentials for a seamless and elevated journey, whether you're hopping on a private jet or just flying first class. Grab these, and you can't go wrong. Even if your plane, train or ship is delayed.

COMFORT & STYLE

Cashmere Travel Set – Includes a blanket, eye mask, socks, and travel pillow (White + Warren, Loro Piana).

Luxury Travel Outfit – Elevated loungewear such as a silk scarf, designer sneakers (The Row, Totême, Lululemon's Softstreme line).

Silk Eye Mask – Slip or Lunya offer ultra-soft, anti-crease options.

Cashmere or Alpaca Travel Slippers – From Johnstons of Elgin or Brunello Cucinelli.

BEAUTY & WELLNESS

Curated Skincare Travel Kit – Dr. Barbara Sturm, Augustinus Bader, or La Mer minis.

Silk Pillowcase (Travel Size) – Protects skin and hair while you sleep in transit.

Portable Humidifier – Helps keep skin hydrated on flights (Hey Dewy or Canopy).

Luxury Hand Sanitizer & Wipes – Touchland, Aesop or Byredo.

Gold Eye Masks or Sheet Masks – For in-flight pampering (111Skin, La Prairie, Shiseido).

LUGGAGE & ORGANIZATION

Packing Cubes – Sleek leather or monogrammed ones from Cuyana or Paravel.

Luxury Weekender Bag – Louis Vuitton Keepall, BÉIS, or Brunello Cucinelli.

Monogrammed Luggage Tags – Goyard, Aspinal of London, or Hermès.

Garment Bag for Formalwear – Hook & Albert or Tumi Voyageur.

Shoe Bags or Cases – Breathable and stylish ones from Troubadour or Cuyana.

HIGH-TECH ADD-ONS

Smart Luggage Tracker – Apple AirTag or Tile in case of lost baggage.

E-Luggage Tag – Digital luggage tags for easier airport check-in (like those with Rimowa's electronic tag).

Universal Power Adapter – Sleek, multi-device options from Zendure or Anker.

E-Reader or Tablet – Load it with books, magazines, or offline entertainment (Kindle Oasis, iPad Mini).

Noise-Canceling Headphones – Sony WH-1000XM5 or Bose QuietComfort Ultra for peaceful travel.

Luxury AirPods Case or Tech Sleeves – From Bottega Veneta, Native Union, or Gucci.

Chic Travel Wallet – RFID-blocking with space for passport, cards, and cash (Smythson, Valextra, Celine).

Tech Organizer – Bellroy or Nomad for chic cable management.



A top-down view of various travel items arranged on a light-colored surface with a faint floral pattern. At the top left is a large, round, woven straw hat with a dark brown band. To its right is a light-colored, possibly silk, robe with a dark brown drawstring. Below the hat is a pair of tan leather pointed-toe flats. To the right of the shoes is a pair of white-framed sunglasses with dark lenses. In the bottom left corner is a pink, heart-shaped object, possibly a pillow or a bag. In the bottom right corner is a woven straw bag. The items are arranged in a casual, overlapping manner.

HOTEL & IN-ROOM INDULGENCES

Scented Travel Candle & Lighter - Diptyque, Jo Malone, or Le Labo with a windproof lighter.

Luxury Robe or Kimono - Lightweight silk or linen styles from Olivia von Halle, Frette, or Desmond & Dempsey.

Portable Espresso Maker - Wacaco Nanopresso or Fellow Opus with single-origin beans.

Personal Air Purifier - Small and chic models from LUFTQI or IQAir Atem Desk.

Fragrance Atomizer - Bring your signature scent in a leak-proof, travel-size vessel (Diptyque, Le Labo).

TRAVEL FRAUD

The Mastercard Economic Institute examined aggregated and anonymized transaction data from Mastercard and found that “the travel industry ranks among the sectors most susceptible to fraud attacks.” Mastercard’s data shows that fraud reports jump by 18 percent at popular destinations during peak summer travel and by more than 28 percent at cold-weather destinations during the winter travel season.

Among the destinations where tourists report higher levels of travel-related fraud are Cancun, Mexico; Hanoi, Vietnam; Dhaka, Bangladesh; and Bangkok, according to the report. As for the destinations that tend to have the lowest rates of travel fraud, they include San Francisco, Dublin, Seoul, Budapest, and Edinburgh. (Travel + Leisure)



HAWAII

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) is funding a \$6 million Maui Emergency Marketing Campaign to accelerate the island's tourism industry recovery. Made possible through statewide support, Maui's visitor totals remain 21 percent below pre-pandemic levels nearly two years following the devastating wildfires that claimed homes, forests, schools, and lives.

Several partners will support the campaign, including the Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB), Governor Josh Green, the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism Director James Kunane Tokioka and many others. (Travel Pulse)

UNITED

United announced that this fall will mark its busiest flight schedule of the year from Chicago with expanded service to popular, warm-weather destinations in the United States and around the world. In October, the airline is scheduled to fly up to 592 flights a day from its hometown hub of O'Hare, more than at any other time this year, surpassing the summer's schedule. The airline will also add 50 additional flights this November from Chicago, with expanded service to warm-weather destinations like Phoenix, Austin and Orlando. In addition, United will fly 10% more seats to Florida compared to the same time last year. (Travel Daily News)

CULTURE

WHERE ART AND LIFE MEET

HENLEY ROYAL REGATTA

JULY 1-6, 2025

HENLEY-ON-THAMES, ENGLAND

Renowned as one of the most prestigious rowing events globally, the Henley Regatta combines elite sportsmanship and elite rowing competitions with champagne, picnics, and high fashion. An exclusive experience, it's a favorite among royalty and aristocrats. The event spans six days, featuring over 400 races across various categories, including Club, Student, Junior, Intermediate, and Premier events. This year, racing starts at 9:00 am on July 1st.

VENICE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

AUGUST 27 - SEPTEMBER 6, 2025

VENICE, ITALY

The 82nd edition of the prestigious Venice International Film Festival will be held August 27-September 6 on the scenic island of Venice Lido. Attendees can expect traditional red-carpet events, exclusive screenings at the historic Palazzo del Cinema, and opulent soirées. This year, Director Alexander Payne has been appointed to lead the main competition jury. Known for acclaimed films such as *The Holdovers*, *Sideways*, and *The Descendants*, Payne has been nominated for 24 Academy Awards and has won two Oscars for Best Adapted Screenplay. Additionally, veteran German filmmaker Werner Herzog will receive the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the festival. Herzog, known for iconic films such as *Fitzcarraldo* and *Grizzly Man*, has directed, produced, and written approximately 70 films across both fiction and documentary genres.



VIENNA





Vienna, one of the imperial capitals of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, is a city where history, art, and luxury converge in perfect harmony. From grand palaces to world-class museums, decadent dining experiences to serene cafes, Vienna offers a lavish experience for travelers seeking refinement, beauty, and indulgence. If you're craving a great escape, Vienna is a city that delivers. And here's how to immerse yourself in its splendor.

Sightseeing in the city

The cultural capital of Europe, Vienna's aristocratic heritage, is reflected in every corner. If you're a lover of art, history, or music, there's no shortage of experiences. Begin your morning with an artistic journey starting at the world-renowned Kunsthistorisches. This magnificent museum houses one of the world's most impressive art collections, including works by Old Masters like Rembrandt, Titian, and Vermeer. The building itself is a masterpiece, designed in a neo-Renaissance style.

Afterwards, head over to The Belvedere Palace to view one of the most famous paintings in the world – Gustav Klimt's iconic *The Kiss*. Along with Klimt's masterpiece, your eyes will feast on this baroque palace's grand gardens, art exhibitions, and stunning architecture.

In between museums and gardens, stop by a traditional Viennese coffee house. Deme is a spot for sweet indulgences. This historic pastry shop and café has a refined atmosphere; its decadent pastries make it a perfect spot for a luxurious afternoon break. Try their world-famous cakes and watch as skilled pastry chefs work their magic behind the glass. You'll get a bit of a sugar high while you prepare for your next exploration. Next, visit the Schönbrunn Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage site and former summer retreat of Empress Maria Theresa and Emperor Franz Joseph. Here, you'll stroll through lavishly furnished chambers and the immaculate Baroque gardens, experiencing firsthand the splendor of royal life.

Returning from Schönbrunn, your journey continues along the Ringstrasse, Vienna's grand boulevard lined with architectural marvels such as the Vienna State Opera, the Austrian Parliament Building, and the Museum of Fine Arts. Gaze upon the amazing architecture that makes Vienna so unique.

YOU MUST BE FAMISHED BY NOW - DINNER?

Vienna is known for its fine culinary offerings, blending traditional Austrian flavors with modern gastronomy. Here are two spots not to miss...

Recognized with two Michelin stars, Steirereck is a gastronomic haven. Located in Stadtpark, the restaurant offers innovative dishes using local, sustainable ingredients. Pair your meal with an exquisite wine from their extensive selection, which includes some of the finest Austrian wines.

There is also Mraz & Sohn. This modern Michelin-starred experience offers avant-garde cuisine that pushes the boundaries of Austrian gastronomy. The creative tasting menu, paired with expertly curated wines, promises a dining experience unlike any other. Afterwards, enjoy a night sail on the Danube on a private yacht. Get Your Guide offers multiple sailing times each day and personalized trips. For a truly opulent night in Vienna, indulge in a cruise and watch the cityscape unfold with views of the Prater and its glowing Ferris wheel, the historic bridges of the Danube, and the graceful spires of Vienna's skyline—all casting shimmering reflections on the water.





TIME TO REST YOUR HEAD

Home to some of Europe's most exclusive hotels, these hotels are as much a part of the experience as the city itself.

The Hotel Sacher is an icon of elegance and has been synonymous with luxury for over 140 years. Nestled near the Vienna State Opera, this grand hotel boasts exquisite rooms and suites, impeccable service, and, of course, its famous Sachertorte, the legendary Austrian chocolate cake that you can enjoy at the hotel's café.

The Ritz-Carlton, Vienna, located in the heart of the city, blends historic charm with modern sophistication. Set within four 19th-century palaces, it features opulent rooms, a rooftop terrace with stunning views, and a lavish spa to unwind after a day of exploring. The Palais Hansen Kempinski is a symbol of 19th-century grandeur. Palais Hansen offers a lavish stay with a modern twist. Its sumptuous rooms, top-tier restaurants, and luxurious spa offer an unparalleled level of comfort and indulgence.

It's up and at 'em and time for a day of fun

Vienna isn't just about opulent sights; it's also the perfect destination for relaxation and rejuvenation. In the city, treat yourself to a luxurious spa experience and unwind in serene surroundings. There are a few great ones to choose from.

The Imperial Spa at the Hotel Sacher offers a sanctuary of tranquility. This establishment offers a range of pampering treatments in an atmosphere of elegance. Indulge in signature massages, facials, and body treatments while enjoying the hotel's exclusive luxury.

If you're interested in a more extensive wellness experience, make an appointment at Therme Wien, Europe's largest urban thermal spa. With a range of saunas, steam rooms, and healing thermal baths, you'll feel rejuvenated and relaxed as you take in panoramic views of the city.

After relaxation, it's time to hit Vienna's shopping scene. For those who appreciate the finer things in life, it is a paradise! The city is home to world-class boutiques offering the best in luxury fashion, jewelry, and artisanal products.

Kärntner Straße, Vienna's high-end shopping street, is known for its luxury brands like Louis Vuitton, Gucci, and Chanel. While away the afternoon browsing the elegant storefronts and indulging in a shopping spree in this chic district. There are also Graben and Kohlmarkt. These two streets are two of the most exclusive. It's where to find a bounty of upscale boutiques and jewelry stores.

But perhaps most enjoyable about shopping in Vienna is the various little shops and boutiques scattered throughout the city's streets and alleyways. They offer everything from the traditional to the unique to the interesting.

Whether you're indulging in Michelin-starred cuisine, relaxing in a spa, or whiling away hours among some of the most noted art pieces in the world, this imperial city offers an experience like no other. Vienna isn't just a place to visit, it's a journey into the heart of elegance, opulence, and culture.

YOSEMITE

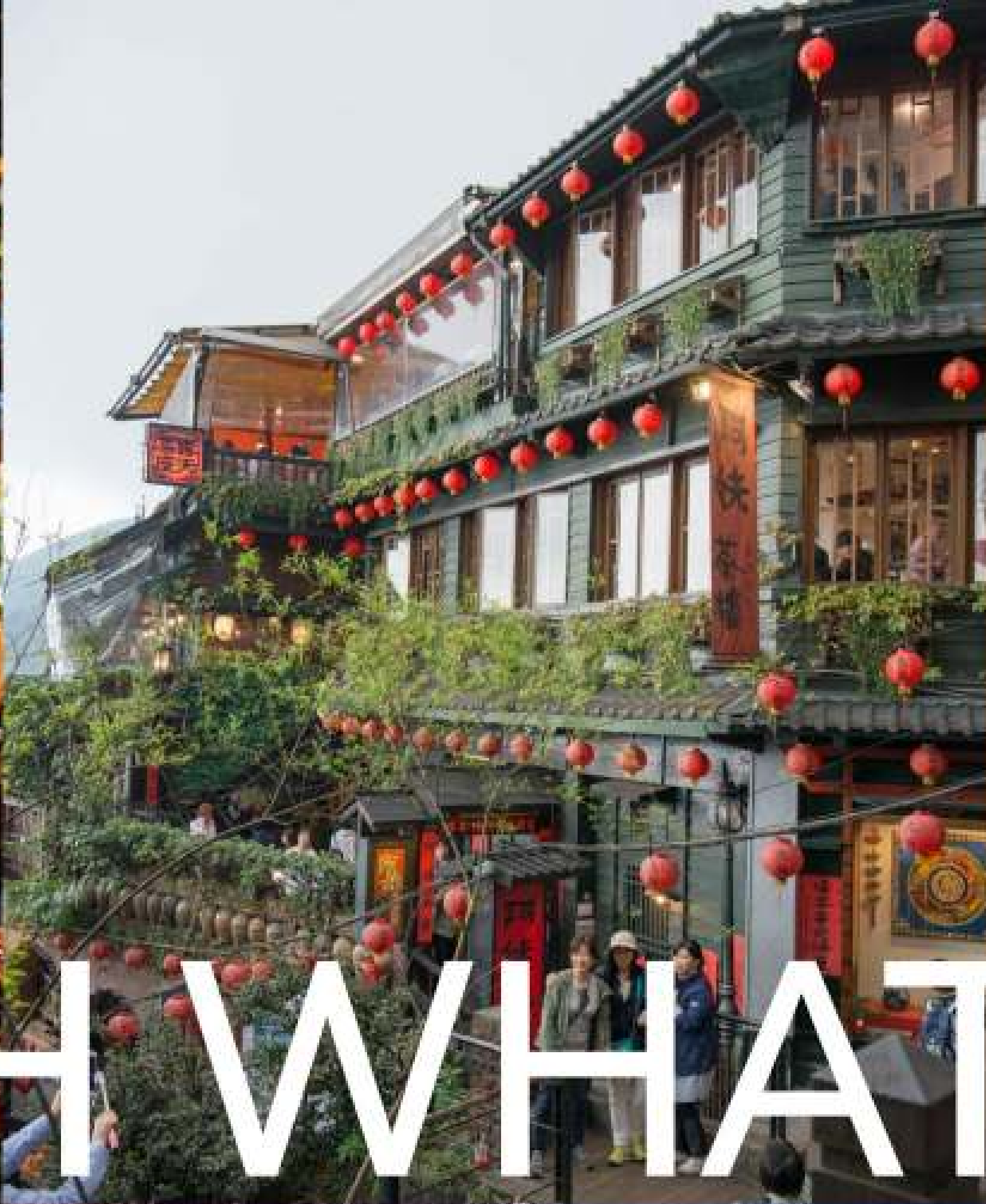
Yosemite! As if Nature had gathered her choicest treasures to draw people to her bosom, as if she had prepared in this glorious place a temple where she could be at once worshipped and cherished by her devotees.

— *John Muir*



Explorer, naturalist, writer, and advocate for U.S. Forest conservation, John Muir became known for his articles that praised the natural world, speaking in poetic, spiritual terms about his affection for ecology and humanity's connection to the earth, garnering a large and varied readership. He also published a grouping of essays and campaigned for the establishment of Yosemite National Park, which was created in 1890. Muir became a major figure in the creation of parks for the Grand Canyon and Sequoia regions as well.

Muir co-founded the Sierra Club in 1892, serving as its president for over two decades. In the new century, he continued to make history with his 1903 three-night camping trip with Theodore Roosevelt, which helped shape the U.S. president's conservationist policies. Muir was also a world-traveler who, at age 73, took an extended trip to the Amazon, studying its fauna and topography and being swept away by the region's beauty. A host of honors and accolades were bestowed upon him during his life.



OH WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD!



Traveling is not just about taking in breathtaking scenery, having fun adventures, and making memories that will last a lifetime. It's also about absorbing local cultures and different aspects of life. Here are some of those aspects to keep on hand next time you travel...



TAIWAN: If you are on a Taipei street, and in the distance hear Beethoven's Für Elise, expect a garbage truck to soon pass by.

BRAZIL: Many showers have electric heating built into the showerhead itself, leading to the occasional wiring surprise.

ITALY: Placing bread upside down on the table is believed to bring bad luck—it's considered disrespectful to food.

RUSSIA: Some stray dogs in Moscow have learned to navigate the subway system, hopping on and off trains to get food and shelter.

THAILAND: Pointing at someone with your feet is considered very rude because feet are seen as the lowest and dirtiest part of the body.

BOTSWANA: Traffic lights are called "Robots" – if someone mentions a "robot," they're talking about a traffic light, not an actual machine.

NEW ZEALAND: When meeting someone, many New Zealanders (especially in Māori communities) will press their noses together in a traditional greeting known as the "hongi."

SOUTH AFRICA: Power outages (load shedding) are a regular part of life, and people have become experts at working around scheduled blackouts.

GERMANY: Germans have a habit of automatically closing doors behind them, even when inside their own homes or offices.

MALTA: While Malta has traffic laws, local drivers often follow their own interpretation of them, making traveling the roads an adventure.

JAPAN: Convenience stores (konbini) have shockingly good meals, and you'll find everything you need, from fresh food to banking services.

ENGLAND: Places like Great Snoring, Ugley, and Piddletrenthide actually exist.

PERU: Meals are often huge, whether it's ceviche or a plate of lomo saltado—expect generous servings.

THE NETHERLANDS: Many Dutch homes leave their curtains wide open, showing off their tidy interiors—it's seen as a sign of having nothing to hide.

AUSTRALIA: Barefoot in Public? Totally Normal. – Many Australians casually walk barefoot in supermarkets, parks, or even shopping malls.

INDIA: Getting a haircut or shave can happen right on the street, with barbers setting up shop on sidewalks.

IRELAND: In rural areas, it's normal to stop and wait for sheep casually wandering across the road.

SAUDI ARABIA: Many Saudis deeply value falconry, and even luxury hotels sometimes cater to guests traveling with their prized falcons.

HUNGARY: Hungarians avoid clinking beer glasses when making a toast, due to a historical tradition dating back to the 19th century.

SOUTH KOREA: After a night of "Norebang" (karaoke), it's not uncommon to see people casually strolling around in their pajamas, or people just hanging out on the street in sleepwear.

MOROCCO: Many houses have vibrant, decorated doors, sometimes painted blue to symbolize protection from evil spirits.

USA: There's a national day for nearly everything, including National Pizza Day, National Talk Like a Pirate Day, and even National Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day!

LAOS: While Laos officially drives on the right, there's a mix of left-hand and right-hand drive vehicles, making traffic unpredictable.

KENYA: Minibuses known as matatus are more than just transportation—they're often decked out with flashy lights, graffiti-style art, and loud music.

INDONESIA: Car horns aren't just for warnings—they're used to signal turns, acknowledge drivers, or even just greet people.

COSTA RICA: No Street Names? No Problem. Many places don't have proper street names, and directions are often given based on landmarks like "200 meters past the big mango tree."

SWEDEN: Whether on buses, trains, or elevators, Swedes tend to keep quiet and avoid unnecessary small talk.

DIPLOMACY

DC INTERNATIONAL



Inside the CIA: William J. Burns' Memoir Announced

Former CIA Director William J. Burns has announced his upcoming memoir, *Diplomat Spy: A Memoir of Espionage in Revolutionary Times*, set to be published by Random House. The book will provide an insider's look into Burns' tenure as CIA director from 2021 to 2023, highlighting his experiences in diplomacy and intelligence during pivotal global events.

PassportDC Celebrates Global Culture Through Embassy Experiences

The annual PassportDC event, Hosted by EventsDC, took place in May, celebrating and showcasing the Washington's diplomatic community and vibrant international culture. Visitors received a souvenir passport and collected stamps at each stop, where embassies offered a variety of cultural experiences, including live performances, fashion shows, traditional cuisine, art exhibits, shopping and more. Highlights included live performances and a cooking demonstration at the Embassy of China, art and textile displays from six countries at the Embassy of the African Union and folk dancers and crafts at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway.

Jean-Noël Barrot Outlines Vision for Transatlantic Unity

Jean-Noël Barrot, the French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, hosted by the Atlantic Council, discussed the future of transatlantic relations and the role of Europe in the new world order. He emphasized the importance of maintaining a strong European presence and strategic autonomy in the face of global challenges. Barrot also addressed the need for multilateralism to survive and the potential rise of China as a new hegemon in this context. The event was a significant opportunity for Barrot to articulate his vision for the future of the transatlantic relationship and the broader Atlantic alliance.



MARNIE
custom homes
MARNIEHOMES.COM

DREAMING OF A BEACH HOUSE?

WE ARE COASTAL DELAWARE'S PREMIER CUSTOM HOME BUILDER
BETHANY BEACH & FENWICK ISLAND, DE

HELPING YOU ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS.



FIRST SAVINGS
MORTGAGE

KRIS HUNNICUTT
Vice President
703-851-0955 Mobile/Text
NMLS ID 187113
A Billion Dollar Producer
khunnicu@firstsavings.com

First Savings Mortgage
NMLS ID 38694

8444 Westpark Drive
The Fourth Floor
McLean, VA 22102



Little Greene®

— PAINT & PAPER —

Bring your interiors to life with 'Storybook Papers.'

A whimsical new wallpaper collection for children and grown-ups alike.

Rainbow Paint & Decorating in Birmingham, AL | Foxtrat Home in Southport, CT
John Boyle Decorating Centers – Locations throughout CT | The Paint Store Online at Ron Shaffer Interiors in West Palm Beach, FL
C & T Design in Natick, MA | The Paint Department in Nantucket, MA | Trindade Paint Store in Martha's Vineyard, MA
Luu Color Center in Rockville, MD | CLT Paint Cures in Charlotte, NC | Hart and Hill in Wilmington, NC
Chance's Hardware in Latham, NY | Blue Mist Paint & Flooring in Spartanburg, SC | Island Shade Shoppe in Johns Island, SC

Order free colourcards on our website.

Showroom now open: 9 East Putnam Avenue, Greenwich, CT 06830. | Tel: 1-888-516-6130 | getintouch@littlegreene.us

littlegreene.us



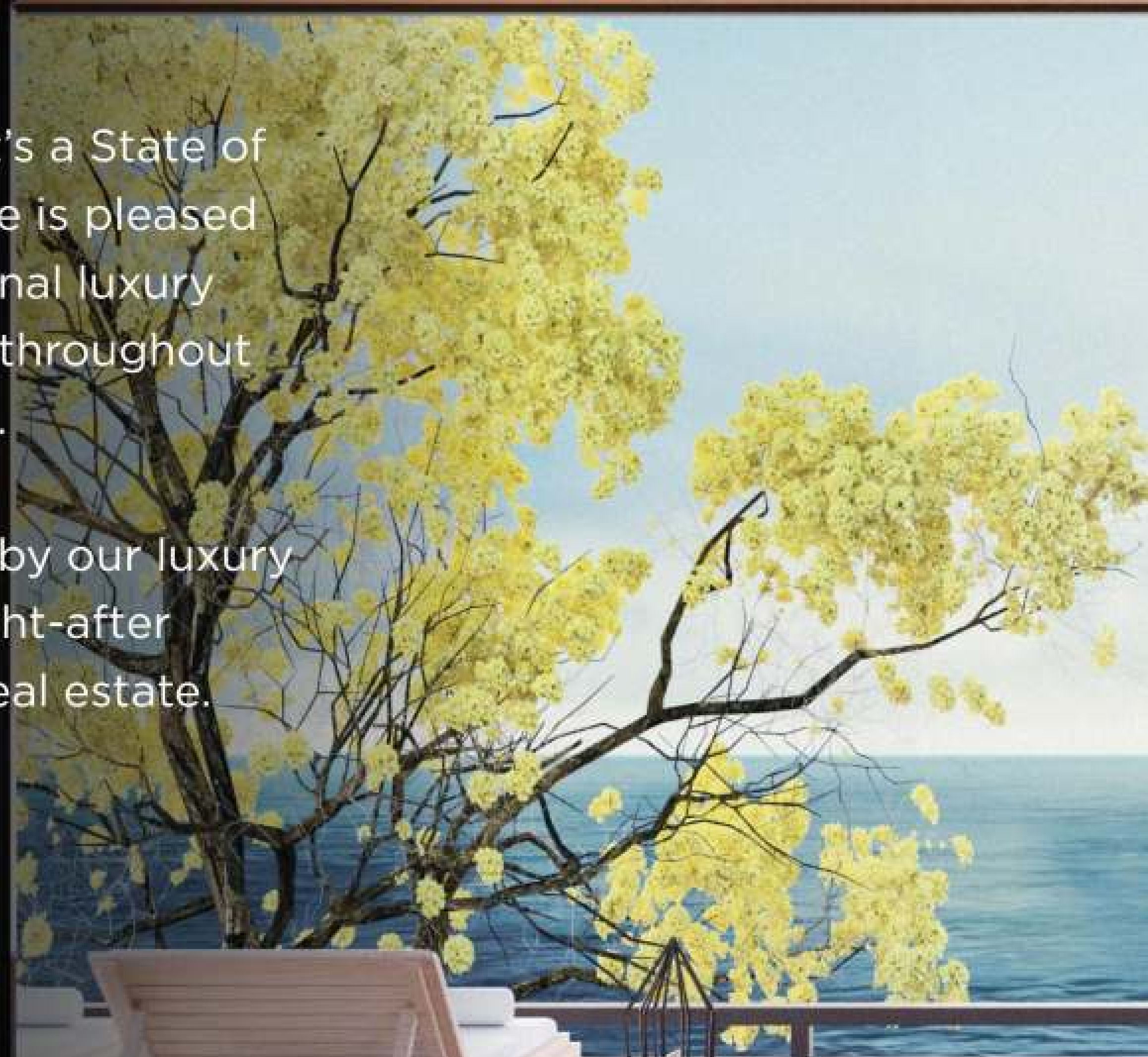
LUXURY PROPERTY Portfolio

SOPHISTICATION + ELEGANCE + STYLE

Luxury Isn't Just a Price Point, It's a State of Mind! John Eric Home & Lifestyle is pleased to bring to our readers exceptional luxury homes and properties available throughout the United States and the world.

These properties are presented by our luxury partners who are the most sought-after experts and advisors in luxury real estate.

johnerichome.com
johneric.com









1970 WARM SPRINGS ROAD

GLEN ELLEN CALIFORNIA

PROPERTY FEATURES

3 Bedrooms
5 Full Bath
5,646 Square Feet



MATT SEVENAU
matt.sevenau@compass.com





282 BAYSHORE
DRIVE

MIRAMAR
FLORIDA

PROPERTY FEATURES

4 Bedrooms
5 Full Bath
4,255 Square Feet



COMPASS

ALISON RICHARDS
allison.richards@compass.com





4 SOUTHWOOD
DRIVE

CHERRY HILL
NEW JERSEY

PROPERTY FEATURES

6 Bedrooms
8 Full Bath
9,784 Square Feet



MELISSA YOUNG
melissa.young@compass.com





363 E WACKER
DRIVE, UNIT 4308

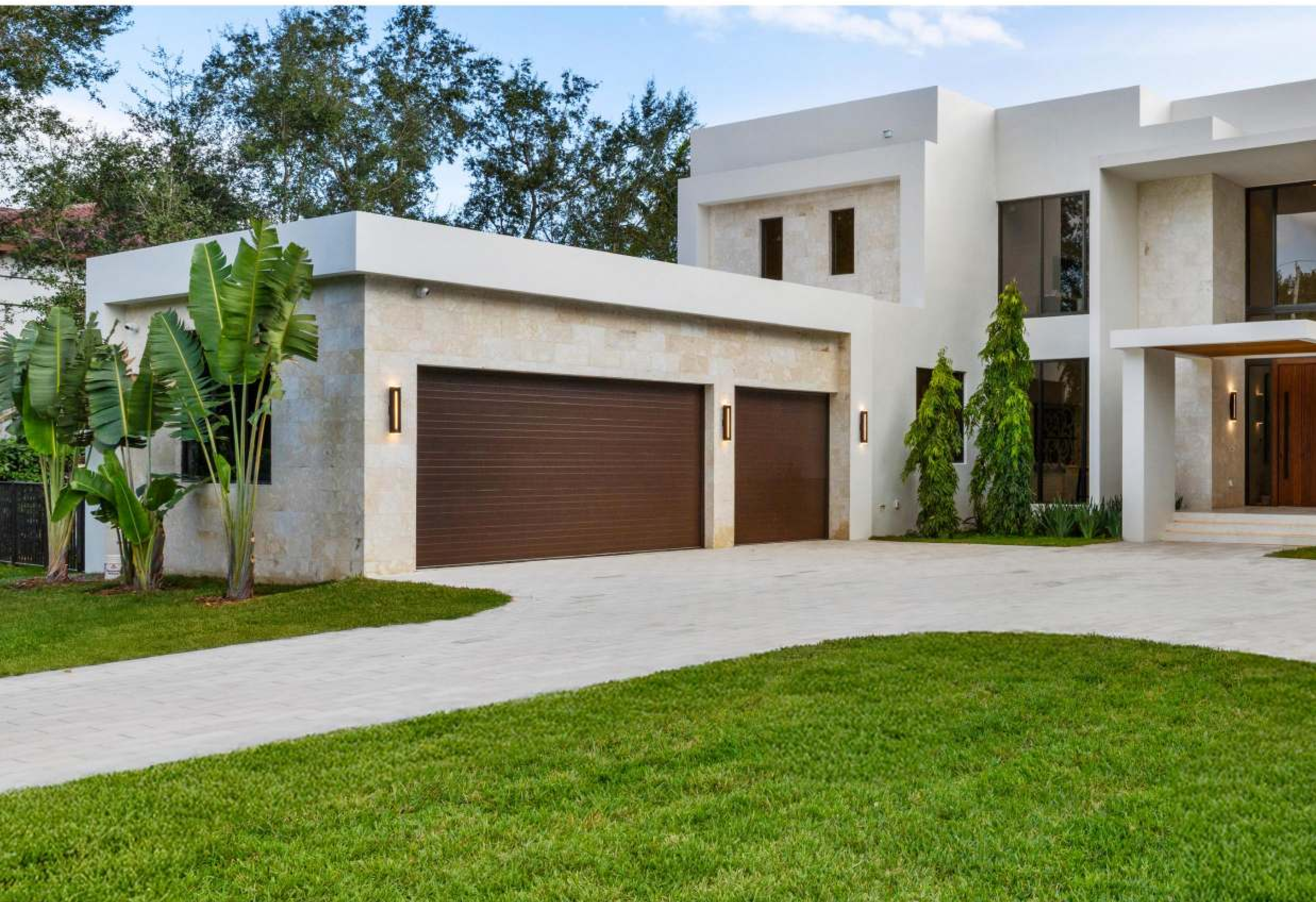
CHICAGO ILLINOIS

PROPERTY FEATURES

3 Bedrooms
3 Full Bath
2,546 Square Feet



RAFAEL MURRILLO
rafael.murillo@compass.com





5796 SW
91ST STREET

PINECREST
FLORIDA

PROPERTY FEATURES

7 Bedrooms
10 Full Bath
8,805 Square Feet



ANGEL NICOLAS
angel@thenicolasgroup.com





16730 BERKSHIRE
COURT

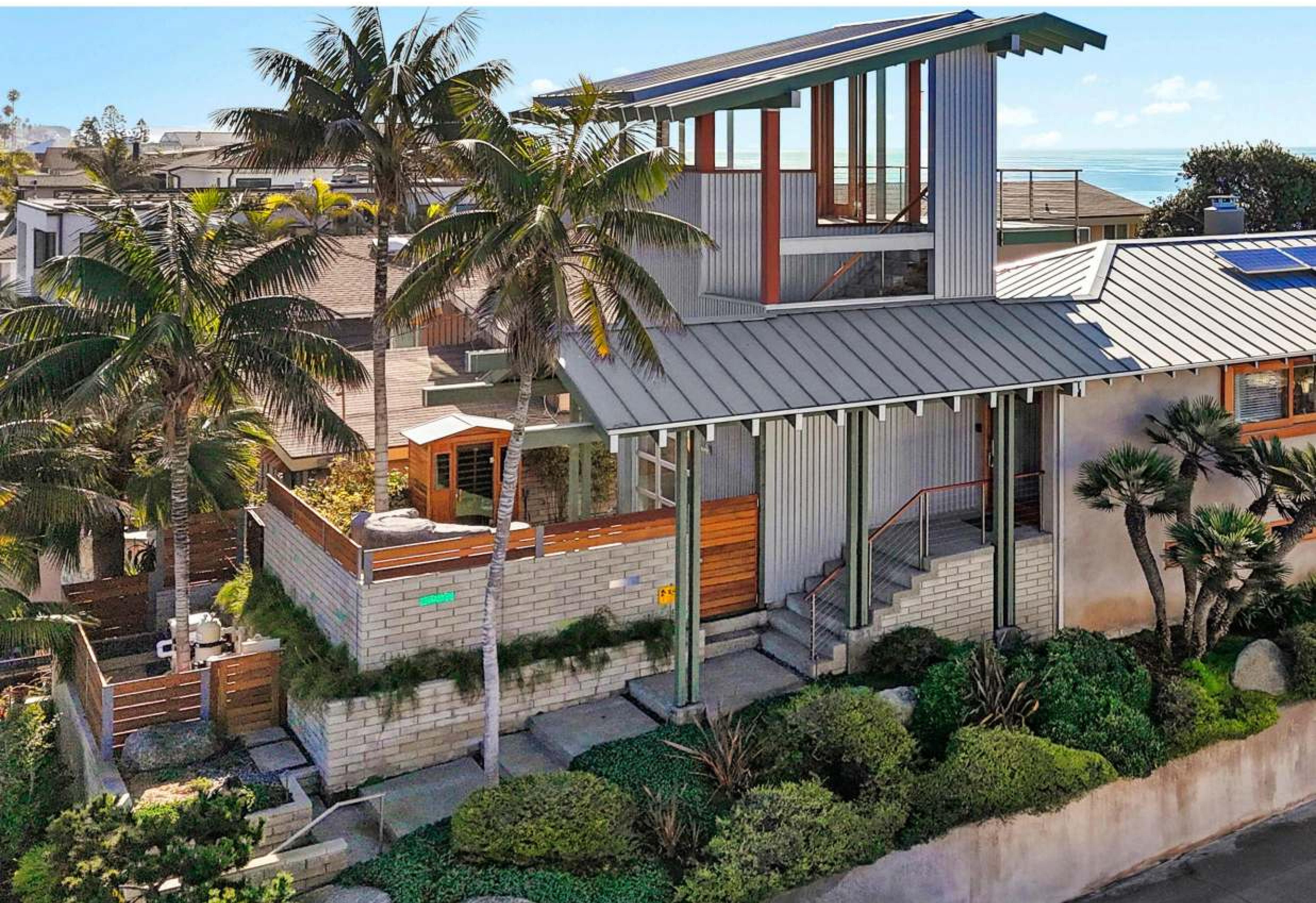
SOUTHWEST
RANCHES
FLORIDA

PROPERTY FEATURES

6 Bedrooms
7 Full Bath
7,543 Square Feet



BEN MOSS
ben.moss@compass.com





330 NEPTUNE
AVENUE

ENCINITAS
CALIFORNIA

PROPERTY FEATURES

3 Bedrooms
3 Full Bath
1,983 Square Feet



BRETT DICKINSON
& ROSS CLARK
seanny@dickinsonclarkteam.com





395 E REDS
ROAD

ASPEN
COLORADO

PROPERTY FEATURES

6 Bedrooms
8 Full Bath
7,182 Square Feet



STEVEN SHANE
steven.shane@compass.com





411 PEARL
COURT

ASPEN
COLORADO

PROPERTY FEATURES

5 Bedrooms
5 Full Bath | 1 Half Bath
5,576 Square Feet



STEVEN SHANE
steven.shane@compass.com





3800 WAILEA
ALANUI DRIVE
UNIT B101

KIHEI
HAWAII

PROPERTY FEATURES

3 Bedrooms
4 Full Bath
2,879 Square Feet



DENNIS RUSH
dennis@dennistrush.com





452 WALNUT
STREET

NEW ORLEANS
LOUISIANA

PROPERTY FEATURES

5 Bedrooms

6 Full Bath

5,741 Square Feet



ELIZABETH MCNULTY

amberly@neworleansluxuryliving.com





120 25TH
AVENUE N

ST. PETERSBURG
FLORIDA

PROPERTY FEATURES

4 Bedrooms
4 Full Bath
3,977 Square Feet



ERIC DUNGY
eric.dungy@compass.com





222 GREYSTONE
ROAD

EVERGREEN
COLORADO

PROPERTY FEATURES

7 Bedrooms
8 Full Bath
12,086 Square Feet



JESSICA NORTHROP
michael.petrelli@compass.com





2 WATER PRT

NEWPORT COAST
CALIFORNIA

PROPERTY FEATURES

4 Bedrooms
5 Full Bath
5,280 Square Feet



KATY THIELKE STRASER
rwilt@compass.com





212 JOHN
STREET

MANHATTAN
BEACH
CALIFORNIA

PROPERTY FEATURES

6 Bedrooms
8 Full Bath
6,754 Square Feet



LAUREN FORBES
sam@laurenforbesgroup.com





1515 SE 9TH
STREET

FORT
LAUDERDALE
FLORIDA

PROPERTY FEATURES

4 Bedrooms
4 Full Bath
3,786 Square Feet



LIZ CALDWELL
ciara.emanuele@compass.com





43 STAR ISLAND
DRIVE

MIAMI BEACH
FL ORIDA



PROPERTY FEATURES

8 Bedrooms
11 Full Bath
11,104 Square Feet



LIZ HOGAN
liz.hogan@compass.com





9356
CHERRYWOOD
TRAIL

LITTLETON
COLORADO

PROPERTY FEATURES

7 Bedrooms
13 Full Bath
14,693 Square Feet



LORI ABBEY
lori@theabbeycollection.com





1237 CITADEL
DRIVE NE

ATLANTA
GEORGIA

PROPERTY FEATURES

6 Bedrooms

5 Full Bath

4,620 Square Feet



MATTHEW DOYLE
matthew.doyle@compass.com





33 SOLEBURY
MOUNTAIN ROAD

NEW HOPE
PENNSYLVANIA

PROPERTY FEATURES

5 Bedrooms
6 Full Bath
5,834 Square Feet



MICHALA COSTELLO
michala.costello@compass.com





1030 SOMERA
ROAD

LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA



PROPERTY FEATURES

6 Bedrooms
7 Full Bath
8,594 Square Feet



SUSAN STARK
susanstarkhomes@gmail.com

Your Realm is Limitless

THE MOST COVETED MEMBERSHIP
IN LUXURY REAL ESTATE



500+ members
325,000+ clients
40+ states
110+ brands
12 countries

And we're just getting started



REALM[®]

POWERED BY HUMAN CONNECTION

REALM-GLOBAL.COM



7735 old georgetown road, suite 700
bethesda, md 20814
240.333.2000

GTMARCHITECTS.COM

WELCOME TO YOUR
NEW **HOME**