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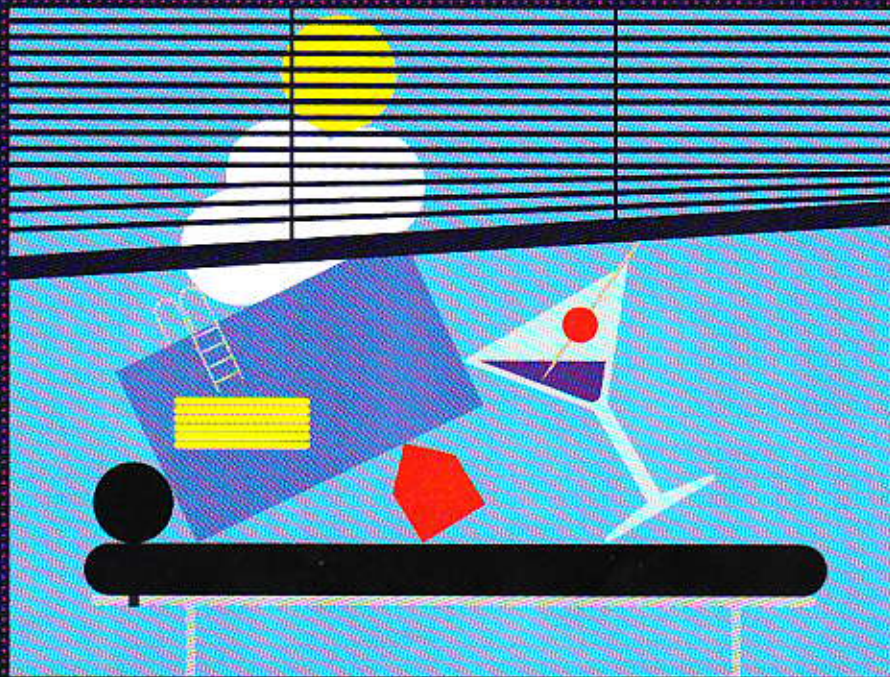


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QUICK: BUY IN MARGARET

Discreet destinations
and haute hideaways
from Polynesia to Peru



Illustrator: James Joyce

HIPPODROME HOTEL, MEXICO CITY

The entrance to this boutique hotel in a renovated art deco building is deliberately hard to spot. The muted 15 rooms and penthouse suite have a louche lounge feel and overlook Parque Mexico in the upscale Condesa neighbourhood. Another draw is the hotel's Hip Kitchen, a cosy bistro where the edamame with prosciutto is a stand-out. As is the variety of unusual martini flavours, such as mandarin, cucumber and, this being Mexico after all, coffee. *Avenida Mexico 188, Condesa, tel: 52.55 5212 2110, www.thehippodromehotel.com*

MORGAN'S ROCK HACIENDA AND ECOLODGE, NICARAGUA

Iguanas scuttle across the roofs, howler monkeys swing through the trees and giant sea turtles roam the beach. This ecolodge, close to the Nicaraguan beach town of San Juan del Sur, was set up by the Ponçon family to showcase the country's rich biodiversity. Designed to have minimal impact on its surroundings, the lodge features 15 (responsibly logged) tropical hardwood luxury cabanas perched on sea-pounded cliffs and

a private beach within a reforestation project. The resort, which uses solar power and has its own farm, is 90 per cent self-sustaining in food and drink. *San Juan del Sur, tel: 506.2232 6449, www.morgansrock.com*

HOTELL BORGAFJÄLL & SPA, LAPLAND

This hotel boasts a spectacular setting in the vast southern Lapland mountain range, about 760km from Stockholm. Designed in the late-1940s by English architect Ralph Erskine, using local materials and designs inspired by the local Sami culture, the look echoes the white slopes of nearby Klöverfjället; in fact, Erskine, who spent most of his life in Sweden, installed a ski slope on the roof. The skiing, too, is spectacular and ranges from gentle inclines to off-piste slopes that are best accessed by helicopter. The in-house restaurant is regarded as one of Sweden's finest, and the hotel just launched a new spa. *Borgafjällen, tel: 46.942 421 00, www.borgafjallen.se*

BASECAMP SPITSBERGEN, SVALBARD, NORWAY

Located in Longyearbyen on the Arctic island of Spitsbergen, this is a very different sort of hotel experience. The

HOLGER KEHNE AND EVA CASTRO

Architects Kehne and Castro, of London's Plasma Studio, on their favourite haunts around the globe

Shenzhen Luohu market, China

The market in Shenzhen's Luohu station is probably the best place to buy just about anything. *1 Jianshe Road, Luohu District*

Teatro Teresa Carreño, Caracas

This theatre and cultural complex is like London's National Theatre, but much more intense. *www.teatroteresacarreno.gob.ve*

National Library, Buenos Aires

Designed in 1962 by Clorindo Testa, this looks like a spaceship that just landed in the city. *Agüero 2502, www.bn.gov.ar*

Wild Jordan Café, Jordan

The beautiful location, in a nature reserve overlooking the old city of Amman, makes this organic eco-café a great place to hang out. *www.wildjordancafe.com*

cosy warmth of a traditional trapper's cabin is paired with luxurious elements, so there's never any danger of you roughing it. Built of sealskin, driftwood, slate and timber from a nearby old Russian settlement, it's a perfect bolt-hole. Book a dog sledge expedition through the glaciers, but be back in time for a glass of wine in the glass-ceilinged loft room that has, if the time of year is right, panoramic views of the Northern Lights. *Tel: 47.7902 4600, www.basecampexplorer.com/svalbard*

HOSPEDERIA CONVENTO DE LA PARRA, BADAJOZ, SPAIN

Halfway between Lisbon and Seville, this restored convent was originally built in 1673 and was home to an order of Santa Clara nuns till 1978. The 21 rooms still have their original oak beams, whitewashed walls, muslin drapes and terracotta floors. The two cool, understated suites are heated with mini log burners, while balconies open into the courtyard and pool area. The hotel has an excellent restaurant serving local delicacies, such as ham from acorn-fed pigs and goats' cheese, with regional wines. *Santa Maria 16, La Parra, tel: 34.924 682 692, www.laparra.net*

BREATHE INN



BREATHE INN, NEW YORK

As another sticky New York summer sets in, so people who live there are beginning to plot their escape. For some, it's a house in the Hamptons; others head to Fire Island – but for people who want something different, and who aren't fans of the packed-to-bursting buses and trains that service those destinations, there's Breathe Inn. The best-kept secret in the Catskill Mountains, it's just two hours' drive from the city and represents a new kind of oasis for forward-thinking New Yorkers. Current owners Camella Ehke, who founded urban clothing label Triple Five Soul, and Marlon Aitcheson, a personal chef with clients including Russell Simmons and Annie Leibovitz, acquired the property two years ago and have since turned it into what could well be a template for other inns to follow. A yoga studio, a media room, a glass sun room, a heated outdoor swimming pool and an organic garden are a few of the highlights. The pair's vision is evident not just in the bright, airy aesthetics, but also in the atmosphere. Meals, prepared by Aitcheson, are communal and gourmet, with ingredients sourced from local markets; Ehke teaches the yoga classes; and you can watch old movies projected onto a wall before dinner. According to Ehke, the building has previously been home to the likes of Abbie Hoffman, the Black Panthers, several artists from New York's East Village and a renowned energy healer. The house definitely has a special energy to it. The idyllic environment, both inside and out, and attention to detail (handmade linens are by John Robshaw, beauty products by Red Flower) make Breathe a unique getaway. This is one to keep to yourselves for as long as possible. 1739 Route 214, Lanesville, tel: 1.845 688 7516, www.breathe-inn.com

NOMADE YACHTING, FRENCH POLYNESIA

The highlight of visiting French Polynesia is exploring the lagoons that surround so many of the islands. The ultimate way to explore some of them – Bora Bora, Taha'a, Huahine and Raiatea – is with Nomade Yachting. Its two 70m yachts, built in Australia with interiors by Kenzo, as well as pieces by local artists, have been specially designed so they can enter even the shallowest lagoon. Snorkel the pristine waters, or enjoy the spa and French Polynesian cuisine. Watching for shooting stars from the upper deck after dark is optional. www.boraboracruiises.com

EMERALD VALLEY VILLA, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

Byron Bay has become such a popular destination that it's in danger of losing its laidback charm. Luckily, just inland from the coast is its hinterland, a beautiful area of lush green forests and small farms. Michael Robison saw its potential and built Emerald Valley Villa, a five-star, eco-friendly retreat with four double bedrooms, Balinese-inspired architecture, an infinity-edge pool and on-site concierge. And with Byron Bay only 25 minutes' away, a surf isn't out of the question. 84 Jarretts Road, Goonengerry, New South Wales, tel: 61.2 6684 9200, www.emeraldvalleyvilla.com

JOSHUA TREE HIGHLANDS HOUSES, CALIFORNIA

LA creatives Frederick Fulmer and Jim Berg bought the original 1940s homestead cabins surrounding their holiday home, ironically, because they didn't want anyone living around them. But what emerged from a weekend spent remodelling them was four private little getaways, each perched on several secluded acres overlooking

mountains and the mystical Joshua Tree National Park. With no TVs or WiFi access, but an abundance of other contemporary appointments, guests rough it luxe-style at the Highlands residences, often contemplating the night sky from a hot tub while spying bobcats over glasses of champagne. Tel: 1.310 562 0511, www.joshuatreehighlandshouse.com

ONE ROYAL CIRCUS, EDINBURGH

After putting their heart and soul into renovating the family home, husband-and-wife team Mike and Susan Gordon decided to open it as a bed and breakfast. The splendid hallway and staircase lead up to five large, well-designed bedrooms. These are simple but luxurious, with no penny spared on the fittings: beds come with fine cotton sheets and goose-down duvets, while each limestone en-suite is stocked with designer fittings. At your disposal is a large kitchen, games room with pool table and table football, living room, bar and gym. 1 Royal Circus, tel: 44.131 625 6669, www.oneroyalcircus.com

MOORSTONE GUEST HOUSE, DARTMOOR, DEVON

Set deep in the Devon countryside, this charming four-bed hideaway belongs to Dutch owner John Willig, former manager of London private dining club Mosimann's, and his French partner Serge Bouchet. The late 18th-century house has been given a fresh, contemporary feel, while still keeping intact the original granite fireplaces and beamed ceilings. The food – widely regarded as one of the best gastronomic treats in the area – includes hearty breakfasts, picnic baskets and three-course dinners. Bridford, Dartmoor, tel: 44.1647 252 071, www.moorstone.net

SURFCASTLE, BALEAL ISLAND, PORTUGAL

The aptly named Surfcastle boasts sweeping views of one of Portugal's most coveted reef breaks. Owner João Sepulveda's renovations of three sea-facing houses make the most of the location so you can watch the surf from the comfort of your bedroom when you're not riding the waves or practising yoga. Sepulveda's business partner Pedro runs a surf school, so there's no reason for non-surfers not to at least test the waters. Avenida do Mar 186, Baleal, tel: 351.912 526 151, www.surfcastle.pt

KOLO, HELSINKI

From the street, there's not much to this two-storey century-old house. But once inside, this bed and breakfast comes into its own. Much of the credit goes to owner Mari Vatanen, iittala's visual director. The two sunny bedrooms and the kitchen, framed by exposed beams and brightly painted walls, are kitted out in the colourful bold prints, sturdy furniture and flair that seem to be second nature to the Finns. When things get chilly, there's a sauna in the backyard. Tehtaankatu 19, tel: 358.40 522 1411, e-mail: mari.kolo@elisanet.fi

DAVID ROCKWELL

The founder of the New York-based design and architecture practice Rockwell Group builds up our Big Apple address book

SubMercer

This legendary ultra-exclusive club is buried beneath the Mercer Hotel. The Harry Potteresque entrance, at 147½ Mercer Street, is reached through a little nook in the wall. 147½ Mercer Street, e-mail: inquiries@submercerc.com

Tender Buttons

Named after a Gertrude Stein essay, this museum-like button boutique sells thousands of buttons to the fashion-forward. 143 East 62nd Street, at Lexington Avenue, tel: 1.212 758 7004

Urban Center Books

Arguably the best architecture and urban design bookstore in the city. 457 Madison Avenue, www.urbancenterbooks.org

Bank of New York Lobby

Entering the Bank of New York's soaring art deco lobby, designed in 1932 by Ralph Walker, is like diving into a gold swimming pool. 1 Wall Street, tel: 1.212 495 1784, www.bnymellon.com

Noguchi Museum

Housed in a converted factory, the Noguchi Museum showcases the artist's major works, as well as public projects, gardens and Akari light sculptures. 9-01 33rd Road, Long Island City, www.noguchi.org



VILLA 32

BEDARRA ISLAND VILLA & STUDIO, WHITSUNDAYS, AUSTRALIA

If you're looking for desert island-type privacy, head for Bedarra Island Villa. In Queensland's famous Whitsunday Islands on the Great Barrier Reef, Bedarra has a luxury resort on one side and a handful of private residences on the other. The villa and studio, with interiors by architect Ian Moore, are on Doorila Cove, a stretch of perfect white sand lined with palm trees. The villa sleeps four guests, while the studio sleeps two. The only other people you'll see are the caretakers. Tel: 61.2 9337 2887, www.contemporaryhotels.com.au

RIAD PERLE, MARRAKECH

Deep in Marrakech's Dar El Bacha district, Perle, part of the Lotus group, is reached by careful navigation through the narrow streets of the Medina. Designed by celebrated French designer Antoine Van Doorne, the Perle's contemporary space takes its inspiration cues from 1930s

glamour, and features a traditional hammam and a spacious patio dotted with mirrors and art deco pieces. 22 Fhal Zefriti, Quartier Ksour, tel: 212.24 431 537, www.riadslotus.com

KAYOTEI RYOKAN, ISHIKAWA PREFECTURE, JAPAN

With its fine 17th-century architecture, the quaint village of Yamanaka feels like a time capsule. In its midst is Kayotei ryokan, housing ten minimalist eco-chic suites arranged in the traditional sukiya-style of a tea ceremony pavilion. The ryokan's main bath is surrounded by glass walls with lofty views of forested hills while the kaiseki meals are served on locally made pottery in private tatami-clad rooms. Bookings can be made through The Real Japan, tel: 81.76 224 6870, www.real-japan.com

VILLA 32, TAIPEI

Set against the maple tree-covered slopes of Yangming Mountain, Villa 32 sets out to soothe even the most jaded jetsetter. Lined with Iowa wood and Australian sandstone, the retreat has private hot springs and fluffy duvets inside each of the five sublime suites. Indulgent touches abound, including Evian water by the bathroom sink and Hermès flatware in the understated dining room. And in one of Taiwan's finest wine cellars are the owner's rare finds, like a Château Lafite 1784. 32 Zhongshan Road, Beitou, tel: 886. 2 6611 8888, www.villa32.com

LAS CASITAS DEL COLCA, PERU

A one-hour flight from Lima brings you deep into the Colca Canyon to a 60-acre estate strewn with cacti, fruit trees and vegetable gardens. Natural materials, such as Laja stone from the Arequipa region, were used at this tranquil 20-room eco-friendly lodge. The best valley views are from the Samay spa where the Andean-inspired treatments use local products. Large soaking tubs, indoor and glass-ceilinged outdoor showers and a heated plunge pool seal the deal. Parque Curina s/n Yanque, Arequipa, tel: 51.1 610 8300, www.lascasitadelcolca.com

ROOM NATIONAL, ANTWERP

Antwerp-based fashion designer sisters Violetta and Vera Pepa found themselves hosting clients in their own homes one too many times. So they decided to open a three-bedroom B&B over their Nationaalstraat flagship store and studio. What started as a word-of-mouth accommodation option for travellers from within the fashion industry has increasingly become the preferred choice of style mavens everywhere. Nationaalstraat 24, tel: 32.3 226 0700, www.roomnational.com



VERA PEPA OF ROOM NATIONAL


SECRET ELITE ONLINE
 At www.wallpaper.com, enter the secret code from the spine of this issue to find more destinations.

Photography: Adam Friedberg, Marnix Coossens