

The DOSSIER : A collection of thoughts, ideas, recommendations, and discoveries from all over the globe.

Outside the Frame
Timothée Lambrecq,
photographer

Japan

Hidden in the middle of Japan's Izu Peninsula, Amagiso's onsen is one of my top three onsens — and I have visited many across the country. The journey to the *ryokan* that houses the onsen is, itself, worth the trip, winding as it does through deep forests, wasabi farms, and a curious spiraling road. Then, you

reach Amagiso, a magical place where the environment is the main character and where each season gives the landscape a very different look and feel. My favorite thing about this photo is that it doesn't show the crowning feature of Amagiso: the waterfall, which is right next to the onsen baths.

Discover
More



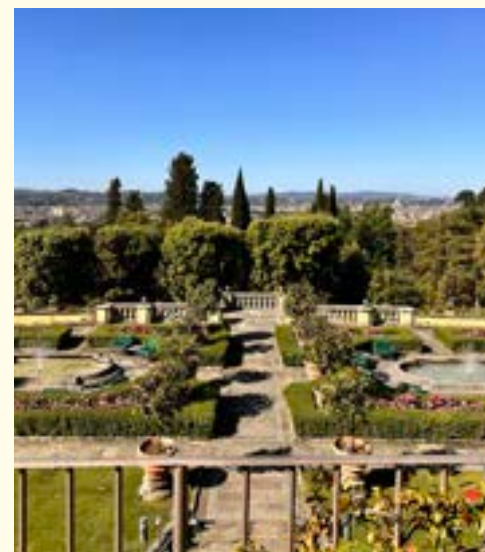
Looking Back
John Chuldenko,
senior editor
of Dossier

Astrophysicists theorize that time behaves differently in relation to one's position in the universe. Gazing out onto Florence, Italy, as the sky turns pink and the sun drops behind the Duomo, I feel as though space-time has shifted, that I might be in the 15th century, when Il Salviatino was constructed — but that's probably just the second Negrini talking.

Il Salviatino sits just outside of the city center, and here, elevated above the Florentine fray, it's easy to experience temporal confusion. The beautifully restored, 39-room property was once frequented by Salvador Dalí, and just up the road, I'm told, Leonardo da Vinci first tested his flying machine. Italy's strict preservation laws could have resulted in an aesthetic suffocation that might have made Il Salviatino feel like a museum.

Florence

It is the opposite. The structure is flooded with greenery, color, and vibrance — not unlike Il Salviatino's owner, Alessandra Rovati Vitali, who rushes to greet me. "I don't consider myself the owner; I'm more of a caretaker," she quickly corrects. Exploring the property, I'm struck by her creativity despite the constraints. Design choices that reflect Vitali's eclectic style make you feel a little like you're staying in her home. In fact, some of the pieces in the hotel are her own. "I love materials. When I see a painting, the first thing I notice are the fabrics," Vitali shares. Settling into my room, the parquet floors and a gigantic fireplace serve as centerpieces, but the view of the landscape is the star.



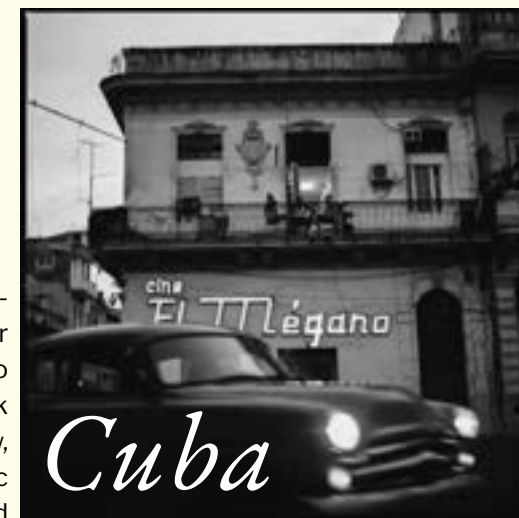
Sign of the Times
Molly Woodward,
photographer

I'd stood on this Havana street corner almost 20 years ago to the day that I took this picture. And now, like a typographic madeleine, the jagged letters spelling out the name of an old movie theater immediately transported me back.

The only visible difference was that the neon sign (broken and dark for decades) glowed, even though the theater had closed. These subtle subversions have popped up all over the city, part of a local artist's years-long effort to take back

the city's streets by relighting its decaying neon signscape.

On this hot, sticky night in late August, the air heavy with an oncoming storm and fumes from rumbling cars outfitted with makeshift parts, the former theater's bent neon tubes bathed the sidewalk below in a cool blue light, welcoming me back to a time and place that no longer exist.



Morocco



Guiding Lights
Prod Antzoulis,
photographer

The November sun warmed Casablanca as though it were summertime. My first stop in the city was at this mosque, still and majestic in its symmetry. The scene was muted, almost monochrome, until these three women appeared — their warm hues contrasting the cool marble.

When in *Sicily*, always take a last-minute getaway to **Pantelleria because you can have the dreamiest lunch of your life by the beach at La Vela. Order the grilled gambero rosso (red shrimp) and linguine alle vongole (clam pasta) with a glass of wine from Donnafugata, a local producer.**

Annie Shi,
restaurateur

In Good Company
Sophie Yun Mancini,
 deputy editor
 of **Dossier**

You notice the scent first. Walking into J.K. Place Roma,

one is met with the fragrance of something cool. It's a bit green, but sweeter, like the juiciness of ripe citrus, and it sets the tone for the whole stay: fresh, discreet, and understated. Tucked off a

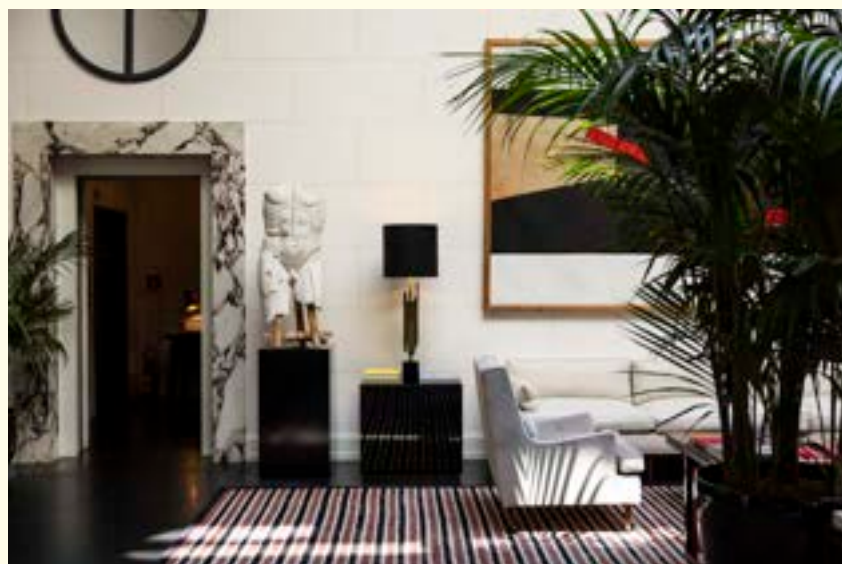
quiet cobblestone backstreet in the historic Campo Marzio district, this 27-room townhouse hotel sits just steps from Rome's most coveted treasures: It's minutes on foot from the Spanish Steps, the Trevi Fountain, the Pantheon, and Piazza Navona.

Interiors by Florentine designer Michele Bōnan blend midcentury modern with classical touches. Rooms are light and soft, with carpeting in dove gray, four-poster beds draped with an ivory canopy, and bright

Rome

marble bathrooms. The library downstairs is a popular place for sartorial Romans to gather for an aperitivo, colluding in little groups somewhere on the spectrum between business and pleasure. The floors, which also run through the restaurant and bar, are jet-black, high-polished wood, gleaming like the River Styx.

One of my favorite moments at the hotel — distinct in our modern apphellscape — was having the highly attentive and discerning staff present me with an actual paper map, having marked their favorite roads and sites in ballpoint ink. Analog, and ever elegant.



The Lion's Den
Alex Frank,
 contributing editor
 of **Dossier**

It's 9 a.m., and the shallow part of the Caribbean is the color of cyan. Our group has assembled for one of José Andrés' favorite rituals: scuba diving and, more thrilling still, spearfishing, followed by the immediate pleasure of cooking whatever the sea yields.

After casting off into the ocean, the James Beard Award-winning chef explains that we're here to hunt lionfish, a wildly invasive species whose voracious appetite is devastating local marine life. With no natural predators, a single fish can release tens of thousands of eggs every few days, then set about vacuuming up everything smaller than itself, hollowing out the reef from the inside. "It's kinda like cutting grass. You go fishing every day and do what you can," says Jason

Washington, a local diver who pioneered this environmental spearfishing practice. "We protect what we love."

Andrés first heard about Washington's efforts years ago when the chef was on the island for the Cayman Cookout, a long-standing culinary festival started by his friend, the iconic French chef Eric Ripert. Held at The Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman, with title sponsorship from private-aviation company Wheels Up, the event has become an annual pilgrimage for foodies, with chefs such as Ripert, Andrés, and Gregory Gourdet hosting demos, multicourse dinners, and moderated conversations about the world of restaurants and wine.

In many ways, the cookout's mission is a consummate Andrés pursuit — part food, part philanthropy. The Spanish American chef and restaurateur is as famous for his gourmet cuisine as he is

for his work as the founder of World Central Kitchen, a nonprofit that provides food relief for people living in the wake of disaster: the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the wars in Gaza and Ukraine, hurricanes and tsunamis all over the world.

Today, Andrés, Washington, and friends are going on two dives. The first dive comes up short, so Washington drives the boat a bit farther out. Andrés grabs his spear and swims down; within 30 minutes, he's captured a whole barrelful of lionfish, which he brings to the surface with glee. On the boat, the fish flap against the barrel's clear-plastic insides. Washington euthanizes the catch in ice, then carefully de-spines each ani-

mal to extract its venom. Alongside chef Thomas Tennant, Andrés chops up the fillets to make a beautiful ceviche, and — on a pair of portable burners he's brought — a rich, auburn stew. "It's fish and love," Andrés says of the primary ingredients.



Lost and Found
Michelle Ospino,
 photographer

My home for 20 years in New York City was called Little Colombia, so when I moved to Medellín, Colombia, two years ago, it felt a bit like a homecoming. The familiar warmth of Paisas (people from regions in the northwest of Colombia, including Antioquia, in which Medellín is located) and waking up to distant notes of salsa music mingling with the smell of coffee drifting through my windows bring me a deep sense of comfort and nostalgia. But living in a place different from where you grew up sparks a new kind of curiosity; it's been a powerful catalyst for my creativity.

One of my favorite ways to experience the city is by exploring its vibrant markets, where you can find everything from fruit and flowers to kitchen supplies, candles, and secondhand clothing. I recommend going on an empty stomach and tasting your way through the stalls. In Colombia, they say you can eat a different fruit every day of the year. Some even joke that if you can't find what you are looking for in La Minorista, one of Medellín's largest markets, then it doesn't exist.

Medellín



Sea Change
Anna Kaplan,
 associate editor
 of **Dossier**

When I was 13, my family took a holiday to Paros. The island's warm, calm Aegean waves were a heavenly foil to the icy Atlantic surf we frequently visited; the Greek isles became my paradigm of a sun-drenched paradise. But it took me more than a decade to discover that the Turkish side of the sea offers natural gifts in equal measure.

I arrived at Maxx Royal Bodrum Resort, located in southwestern Turkey on the Bodrum Peninsula, in the middle of the night, a soft salt- and pine-scented

breeze stirring memories of that first Cycladic summer. Yet, the panorama I found the next morning was markedly different: The Turkish Riviera's lush emerald hills encircled the property, which hugs the coast of a private bay, its cobalt waters melting into the similarly hued sky.

The resort is among the best expressions of the peninsula's growing global popularity, rooted in ancient history and vibrant, all-hours culture. Its culinary offerings — ranging from Latin, French, and sushi to Spago by Wolfgang Puck and an outpost by heritage Parisian restaurant Caviar Kaspia — underscore this worldliness. But it was Oro

by Alfredo Russo that served up the most profound meal of my stay. Over 1,000 miles from his hometown of Turin, the Michelin-starred chef employs local ingredients to craft audacious takes on Italian classics. Tomato and mozzarella was served with a bowl of "tomato water," a spin on the juice that typically remains on your plate after the classic salad is gone, begging you to soak your bread in its fresh flavor. Then, there was the 100-hour candied lemon, citrus cooked until its skin became soft, its center filled with limoncello cream. The dish was much like Maxx Royal Bodrum itself: familiar, comforting, and unexpected all at once.



Bodrum

When in *Jaipur*, visit Vijay Laxmi Sugandh, a

100-year-old apothecary. I had a fifth-generation herbalist

walk me through his family's remedies, which treat

everything from indigestion to "melancholy." *April Gargiulo,*
 founder of Vintner's
 Daughter skin care

Between the Canals

Elysha Beckerman,
founding partner
of **Dossier**

Even though I've been coming to Venice for over 16 years, my favorite things about the city haven't changed. I love the way it moves: Venetian limousines (water taxis) are driven by *autisti* whose families have navigated the canals for generations. Shops are still tucked beneath the homes of artisans who carry their legacy crafts forward into the future. Cicchetti (bite-sized snacks) remain central to Venetian social life — and were critical to my visit. I

lingered over

them for hours with a spritz, returning afterward to Hotel Violino d'Oro. A boutique property that opened in 2023, it's the latest project from Sara Maestrelli and her aunt, Elena Maestrelli, of Collezione Em, which also has properties in Florence and Forte dei Marmi. At Violino d'Oro, they entwine the city's vivid history with its contemporary currents, creating a hotel that feels more akin to a refined, inviting Venetian residence. Below are the CliffsNotes.

Violino d'Oro's most unique feature ... Interiors

Venice

featuring craftwork from local Veneto artisans: Rubelli textiles, hand-laid terrazzo tile, Murano glass. The property's wallpaper, tableware, and leather key holders are also created by legacy or emerging artisans, who have been curated by Sara.

The best view from the hotel ... My room had a balcony outfitted with a bistro table for two. Just before heading down to the hotel's Il Piccolo Bar, when the sun was still warm, we'd pause on the balcony to take in the city's sounds: vaporetto

motors, gondolier shouts, seagull and pigeon squawks, the din of pedestrians, and the clangs of merchants unloading wares.

A dish I'd recommend ... The prosciutto-topped polenta cake at Il Piccolo served on Ginori 1735 plates and well-accompanied by a Campari Rosemary Spritz — or any of mixologist Francesco Adragna's seasonal creations.

A local tip ... The Violino d'Oro team's favorite local spots: Vino Vero, Micheluzzi Glass, Antiche Carampane, and Cantine del Vino Già Schiavi.

**Behind Closed Doors**

Elysha Beckerman,
founding partner
of **Dossier**

The first time I visited Monte Carlo was at the start of its sun-drenched summer season. Returning during the festive period, what Monegasque consider the “off-season,” provided an entirely different experience, one that invited a slower pace. Instead of cycling from room to beach to pool to casino, I had time to linger. And Hôtel Métropole Monte-Carlo is exactly the kind of place you want to sink into. The hotel is set behind stone walls, wrapped in a manicured garden. Its interiors (recently redone by Jacques Garcia) unfold in moody layers, with shadowed corners, an atrium-style

Lobby Bar, a cigar lounge, and a breakfast restaurant that opens onto a terrace with views of the Mediterranean Sea.

A dish I'd recommend ... At breakfast, order the French toast. It was fluffy, light, and served with pure maple syrup. And don't miss the truffle cashews at aperitivo hour, perfectly paired with a classic Negroni.

Something not to miss ... Yoshi, the hotel's sushi restaurant, is located in a standalone building that opens onto a Japanese-inspired garden. It's like an entirely different world. Menu highlights included vinegar cucumbers, tuna sashimi, and miso cod — all garnished with freshly grated wasabi.

The best thing about the spa ... My Imperial Face Sculpt facial at Spa Métropole by Guerlain concluded with a stop at the Guerlain personal fragrance bar, a perfect extension of the treatment that ultimately led me to Musc Outreblanc, a musk scent with a floral heart.

A local tip ... Le Dressing, Monte Carlo's finest resale boutique, is not to be missed.

A song that embodies the property ... “Je T'Aime ... Moi Non Plus” by Serge Gainsbourg and Jane Birkin. It's unhurried, intimate, and distinctly European, just like Hôtel Métropole Monte-Carlo.



Monte Carlo

**Divine Signs**

Balarama Heller,
photographer

India

Born into the Hare Krishna movement in America, I grew up inside a charged landscape of devotion and ritual, shaped equally by ecstatic collective worship, instability, and rupture. Returning in 2019 to Vrindavan, India — the spiritual heart of the Hare Krishna tradition — I undertook both a physical journey and an interior reckoning. Guided by Joseph

Campbell's notion that sacred places allow “eternity shining through time” to become momentarily visible, I constructed an alchemical tapestry in which ancient archetypes intersect with contemporary consciousness. The work sifts through the accumulated magnetism of a site shaped by millennia of pilgrims, gestures, prayers, and longing for the divine.



Well Served
Mehr Singh,
writer

It's hard to overstate Daniel Boulud's impact on French dining in America. The Lyon native arrived in New York in 1982, at age 26, and quickly galvanized diners with his mischievously precise, sauce-driven cooking at Le Cirque, which went on to earn a four-star *New York Times* review. Since then, Boulud has opened some of the city's most storied restaurants, including Le Pavillon, Daniel, and his newest, La Tête d'Or, a Frenchman's take on the American steakhouse.

With nine cookbooks and a

Bahamas

shelf of James Beard Awards, Boulud now owns more than a dozen restaurants, cafés, and *épiceries* worldwide. Among them is Café Boulud The Bahamas at Rosewood Baha Mar in Nassau, where I sit with him under palm trees as he prepares to host his annual truffle dinner. Here, he prefers to keep things “a little more gentle.”

“In the Bahamas,” he clarifies, “you don't bring your New York attitude or your New York energy.” Still, the ever-restless chef remains in motion, which is why I ask him to share five culinary destinations worth traveling for — and what to order when you get there. **Troisgros in Ouches, France.** I've been coming here since I was 16, maybe. It's a fourth-generation restaurant on the outskirts of Lyon, just a few minutes from Domaine des Ouches. Troisgros has had three [Michelin] stars for almost 60 years, yet it's still soulful and creative. It's

current with our times, yet totally connected with the past. And I think, well, that's what I love about food. In the 1960s, [the current owner] César's grandfather created a revolutionary dish: salmon seared on one side without any fat and served with a simple sorrel sauce. It was both quintessentially French and strikingly modern.

Steirereck in Vienna, Austria. I had such a wonderful experience here. Chef Heinz Reitbauer has had this dish for a long time: He puts room-temperature [arctic] char in a little square tray and pours hot beeswax over it to cook the fish. He removes the wax after it sets and serves you the fish. It's a delicate, fantastic dish.

Core in London, England. Clare Smyth is an incredible, incredible chef [who] has really risen to the top. In 2018, I invited Clare, along with an all-female team of chefs, to cook with me at the 21st Annual Citymeals on Wheels Sunday Supper. We then hosted Core at the Centurion New York in 2023

for a collaborative dinner featuring iconic dishes from Core, such as Clare's Lamb Carrot and, of course, the lifelike Core Apple dessert.

Odette in Singapore. I've known chef Julien Royer for 15 years. Just like Claude Troisgros went to Brazil, and I made my name in America, Julien — after great stints at some of the top restaurants in France — went to Singapore and created Odette, which is one of the best restaurants in Asia. A signature dish is the Kampot Pepper Pigeon, where the breast is pan-fried rare, the leg is confited, and the heart and liver are pureed to fill dumplings. There's also the pho-inspired Jeju Abalone With Foie Gras.

Enigma in Barcelona, Spain. I would go see Albert Adrià and his brother, Ferran [Adrià], at Enigma in Barcelona. It's high on my list because I've been to El Bulli [on Cala Montjoi bay] and Tickets, their tapas spot [both now closed], but not their latest place, which is a whole other adventure — think minimalist cuisine like bites of koji marshmallow with caviar.

Autumn in New York

Skye Parrott,
editor-in-chief
of Dossier

There are many things to recommend The Mark, but my favorite part of the hotel may be its hot-dog cart. Located in the historic district of the Upper East Side, the independently owned property is all about placing the traditional and the new in conversation. The balance is felt as soon as you step through the doors of its landmarked building into the lobby, with its high-gloss,

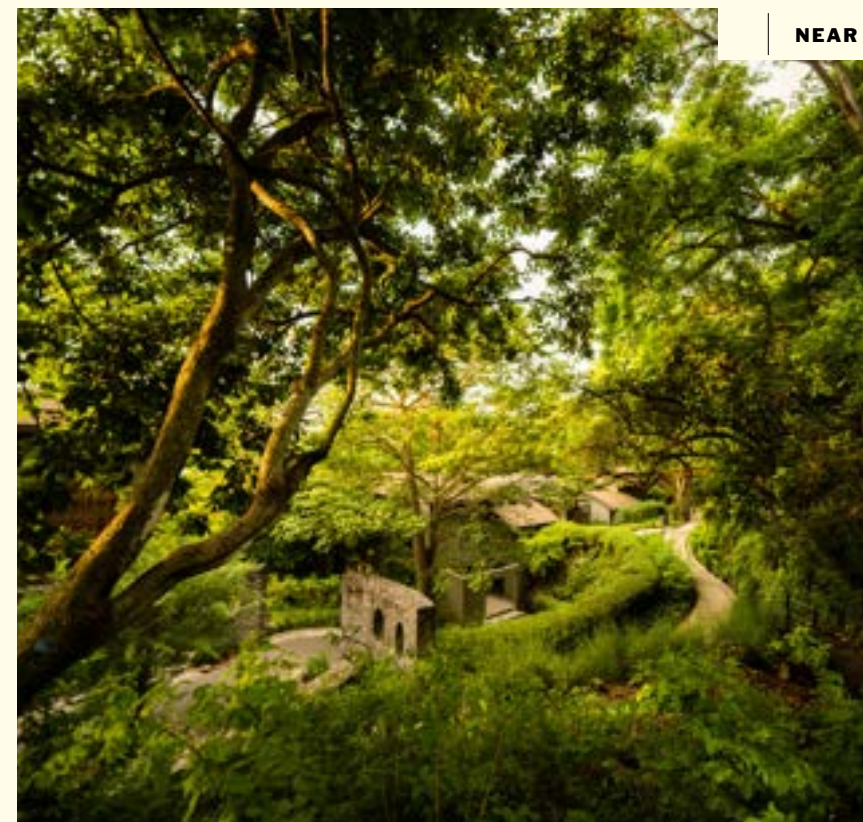
black-and-white striped floors. In guest rooms, similar black-and-white striping offsets mint-green bathroom cabinets, evoking both the checkerboard floors of prewar New York City bathrooms and the familiar stripes of a crosswalk. The spaces manage to be both classic and fun, a tightrope The Mark walks impeccably.

The aforementioned hot-dog cart is parked in front

of the hotel, right next to the doorman. What it serves is not your everyday street dog, but rather the ultimate hot dog. Created by chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten, it has a perfect crunch on the skin, which is topped with sauerkraut and pickles. I took mine to go so that I could eat it in Central Park on a crisp fall day. The experience was not unlike the property: quintessentially New York but just a little bit better.



Manhattan



On the Pulse
Erin Dixon,
executive editor
of Dossier

“Leaves have heartbeats,” my naturalist guide from Papagayo Explorers explained as we paddled through the mangroves of Palmares in Costa Rica's Guanacaste region. It's how the *comején* (termites) know to eat only the dead wood in the forest, he elaborated. With his guidance, I also spotted a baby boa constrictor wrapped around

a tree; observed fiddler crabs skitter over exposed tree roots, evading snapping fish mouths below; and saw birds circling and screeching overhead. When we stopped paddling, the silence became so complete that we could hear the pop of feeding jingle shell clams.

The Schumann resonances are a set of electromagnetic waves considered to be the Earth's heartbeat. *The Awakened Brain* — a nonfiction marvel tracing the neuroscience of spirituality — explores research suggesting that the

When in *Jakarta*, I always make time for Padang at Pagi Sore. It's our favorite spot for the Indonesian tradition wherein a vibrant array of communal dishes is served at once for sharing. The bold flavors and spirit of abundance are ever-inspiring to our menus back at home.

Ochi Vongerichten,
chef

human mind slows to this frequency when connected to something larger than itself, be it nature, deities, or fellow beings. Nearly every moment at Andaz Peninsula Papagayo Resort supported the hypothesis, dropping me into the pulse of the destination, deeply attuning me to its natural world.

Hummingbirds (there are 53 documented species of them in the country) whizzed between flora, one persistently hovering in front of my hillside Penthouse Villa, where a rooftop pool overlooked Culebra Bay's silky cerulean waters and dramatically shifting skies filled with birdsong, electric at sunset. Every morning at Gaio restaurant, white-faced monkey clans attempted to swipe mangoes from the sprawling breakfast buffet before a keen-eyed staff member shooed them off. A grandfather iguana calmly surveyed

the cacophony from a rocky perch in the middle of the resort, alternatively sleeping and peeping, rarely moving. In the outdoor Mind & Body dome, surrounded by the jungle with howler monkeys overhead, Yari — the resort's resident yoga and energy practitioner — actively channeled the universal frequency with a sound bath and a yoga session, crystallizing within me the transformative vibration that emanates throughout the enchanting property and region.

Costa Rica



Istanbul

Yasmin Sewell,
founder of Vyrao perfumes

I love Karaköy Lokantası because it's one of Istanbul's amazing “shopkeepers” restaurants, where locals meet to have beautiful everyday food and where you look at the old pier and smell the sea, too.



Strong Expressions
Hana Waxman,
interior designer

My relationship to Mexico is long-term and lived. Twenty years ago, I came here with curiosity and a sense of adventure, not knowing this would become my permanent home. Over time, it became the foundation of my life. My children were born and grew up here. My friendships, routines, and work are rooted here. Mexico has shaped how I see beauty, how I design, and how I understand community.

The country's creative language feels deeply connected to land and history. There is a strong relationship to material: stone, clay, wood, woven fibers, folklore, and handcrafts. What makes this language distinctive is its confidence. The ancient and the contemporary do not compete. Color is used naturally. Craft is taken seriously. Imperfection is valued. Beauty is never separated from daily life.

Every year, I attend the Zona Maco art fair in Mexico City to see how these values are explored by designers and galleries, both well-established and up-and-coming. Below are a few of my top finds. All respect process and material, working with local artisans to translate traditional techniques into something more contemporary.

Ago Projects. A gallery for collectible design and art, Ago Projects is a strong introduction to the country's current creative voice. It represents contemporary Mexican designers who are working closely with heritage craft and material, with an emphasis on the handmade.

Masa Galería. Sitting somewhere between art and design, this gallery caught my attention with its bold, thoughtful sculptural work, each piece carrying its own story.

Estudio Difane. I often order from this beautifully curated showroom. Its founders, Fernanda Salamanca and Andrea Gadsden, champion both emerging and established talent in Mexican contemporary design, often cultivating community through collaborations.

Angela Damman. Mexican textiles carry memory through generations. Nowhere is this more true than at Angela Damman, a sustainable luxury brand that works with native plant fibers and artisans in Yucatán to preserve ancient weaving traditions.

Azotea Studio. This is the ideal destination for seeing how younger designers are driving Mexican aesthetics forward, experimenting with form and material, particularly through upcycling, resulting in pieces that are rooted in heritage yet feel entirely new.

Mexico

Golden Hour
Brad Torchia,
photographer

When I was growing up in upstate New York, my family would spend most weekends at our small cottage on Seneca Lake in the Finger Lakes region. My parents worked for Kodak, so they would bring me disposable cameras. I ran around with the cameras, taking photos — an instrumental step in my path to becoming a photographer. I feel a powerful mix of memories when I'm there, and I've made an effort to

return each summer for a few days — to spend time with my family and make a few photos. This one came as I was driving down the road to our cottage one evening at sunset. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw a deer. I grabbed the Mamiya RZ67 in my passenger seat, quickly focused it, and shot one frame before I even came to a stop. It felt perfect, like I was exactly where I was meant to be, exactly when I was meant to be there.



When in Tokyo, I always visit A.Presse, whether I'm shopping for myself or my husband. I'm drawn to the precision of the craftsmanship, the considered retail environment, and an aesthetic that feels both enduring and contemporary."

Olympia Gayot,
J.Crew creative director of women's and children's design



Inside Out
Skye Parrott,
editor-in-chief of *Dossier*

There are two distinct sides of Marrakesh. One is the energetic bustle of the medina; the other is the calm of the oases that lie behind its walls. On my recent visit in the city, I was told that the outsides of *riads* are deliberately plain and unassuming, but behind those humble walls, you never know what you will find.

Opening the door that led into our two-bedroom villa at Mandarin Oriental, Marrakech, my children gasped. It showcased one

Marrakesh

of my favorite aspects of riads (and their architectural progeny, haciendas), the way they allow you to be both inside and outside at the same time. These riads create that beautifully: They're constructed of standalone structures encircling a massive swimming pool, including two living rooms (the outdoor one features a fireplace), a dining room, and a bathroom with a steam room and plunge pool as spacious as the outdoor whirlpool.



The whole property echoes this delightful feeling of being both outside and contained, set as it is on 49 acres of gardens, 10 minutes from the city center. Once we arrived, my kids didn't want to leave. They explored the grounds — which include a beautiful vegetable garden and farm with goats — by bicycle while my husband and I had massages in the spa, which was constructed using thousands of the city's traditional red bricks. Since we

were visiting during Ramadan, we also got to experience the nightly iftar, a lavish, celebratory buffet that hosted (mostly local) families breaking their fast.

As soon as we left, my youngest daughter began talking about returning, beginning her musing with, "The next time we go to The Mandarin in Marrakesh..."

Then she'd stop and check for confirmation.

"We're going to stay there again, right?"



Ireland

Nothing Compares
John Chuldenko,
senior editor of Dossier

“Are we *staying* here?” my 11-year-old, Charlotte, asked as we arrived at golden hour to Dromoland Castle. A treasure of County Clare for hundreds of years, Dromoland has every excuse to be stuffy — and is

anything but. Endearing and warm, the property and its staff unlocked a childlike wonder in all of us. We felt as though we were at a kind of 16th-century summer camp, hurtling arrows and rowing across the lake. Charlotte seemed to dance herself back into early childhood in the walled garden.

The next day, we quickly identified our falconry instructor, Jack, by his piercing eyes and the Harris’ hawk clutching his fist. Jack led us through the quiet of the property’s vast grounds, sending the hawk soaring to the trees, then back onto our hands, articulating the ancient, delicate partnership

between the birds and their falconers. Holding the hawk, I marveled at the efficiency of nature and the proximity to power before Jack gently reminded me to raise my hand higher to deter the hawk from perching on my head.

After dinner on our final night at Dromoland, my wife and I worked our way through the castle’s extensive whiskey collection as an Irishman playing a guitar sang traditional songs in the castle’s living room. Guests got up and danced as if they lived there, and the staff hosted like they did as well. Charlotte curled up with my wife on an antique sofa. Then, as if reading my mind, the musician played a beautiful version of the Pogues’ “A Rainy Night in Soho.” I watched, transfixed. The soul of Ireland doesn’t reside solely in its literature and music; its charms percolate, like the bubbles in Guinness, through the warmth of its people.

When in *Cartagena*, visit Tierra Bomba Island. You’ll find gastronomy and wellness-focused beach clubs, horseback tours, mountain biking, and scuba diving. The island has it all, and yet people always skip it for the Rosario Islands and Barú, which can often feel overcrowded and exploited.

Portia Hart,
**founder of Hart Hospitality
and Nuestra Cartagena**