

DESTINATIONS OF THE WORLD

news

Essential travel intelligence

March 2023

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DISCOVERING THE BEST-KEPT SECRETS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

EMERALD COAST

Costa Smeralda's luxury
LVMH makeover

48 HOURS IN RIGA

The Baltic beauty that has bags
of charm without the crowds

RED SEA DREAMS

An off-the-beaten-track
adventure in Aqaba

BHUTAN BOUND

&Beyond finds a sense of
place in the Punakha Valley

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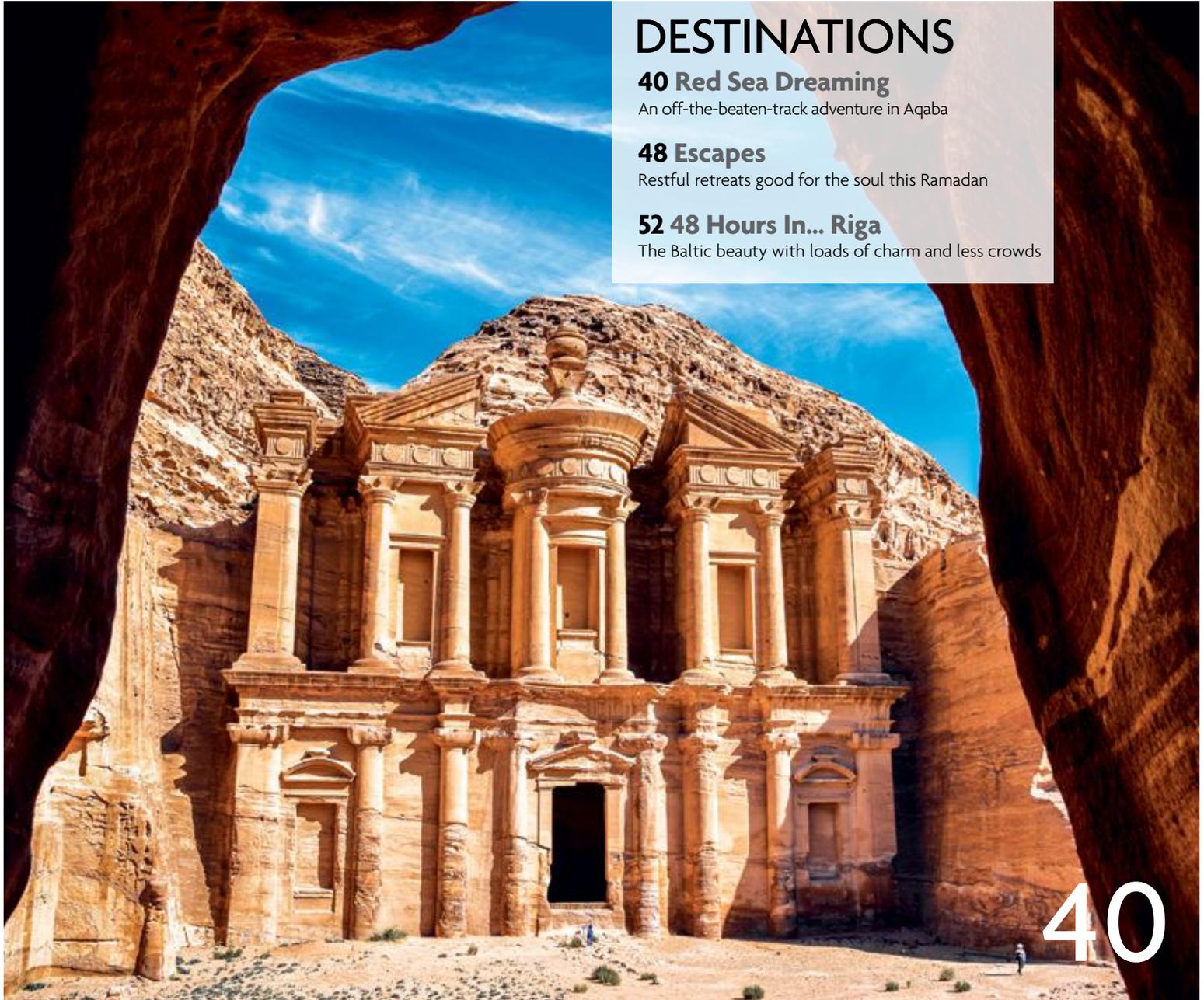
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JOSÉ by PIZARRO

You'll love the cozy and intimate vibes of José by Pizarro opening at Conrad Abu Dhabi Etihad Towers, where you can feast on the most delicious and authentic Spanish dishes that Abu Dhabi has to offer.

Get ready to tantalise your taste buds with a curated selection of José's most popular dishes, prepared by his expert kitchen team.

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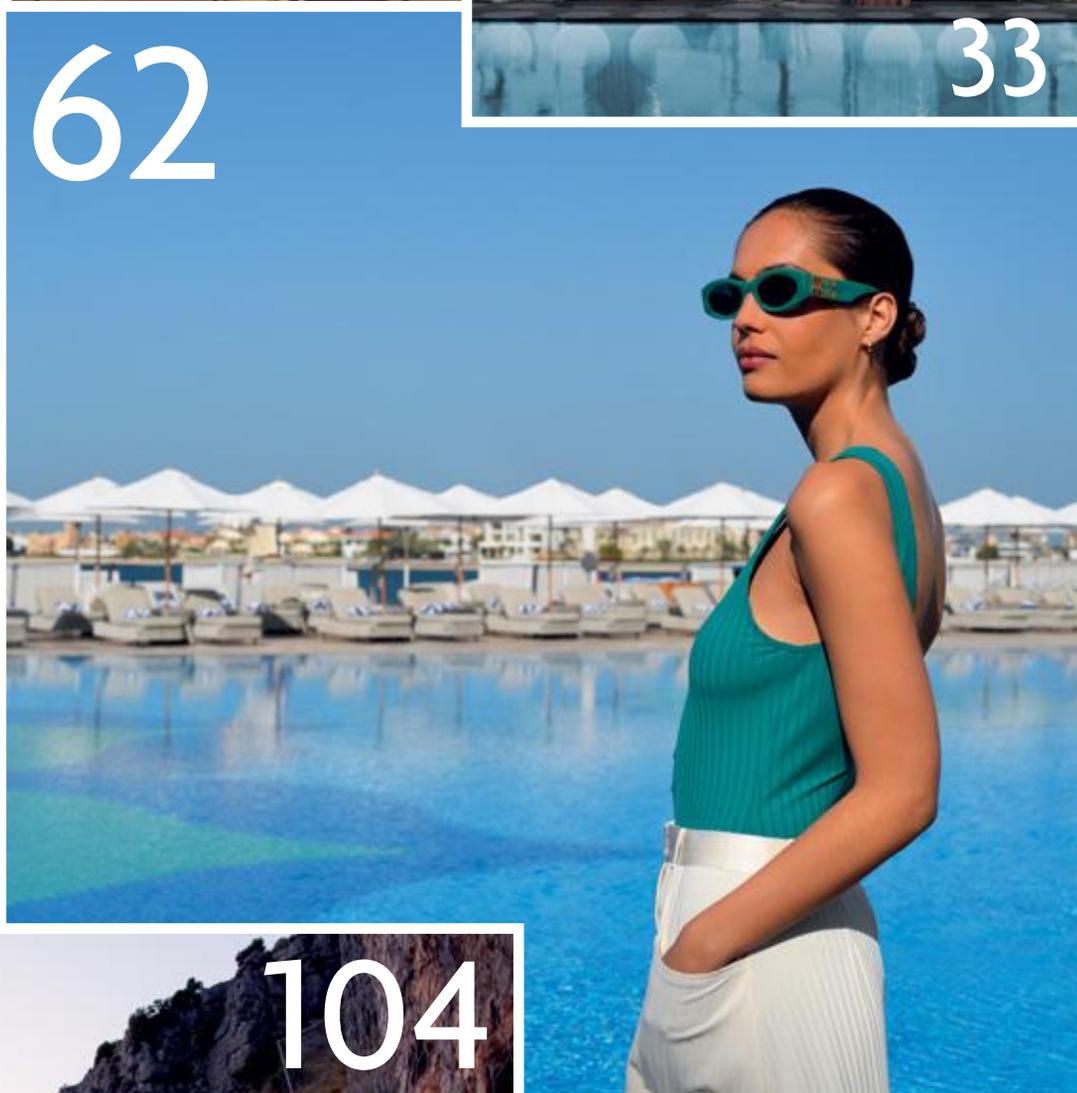
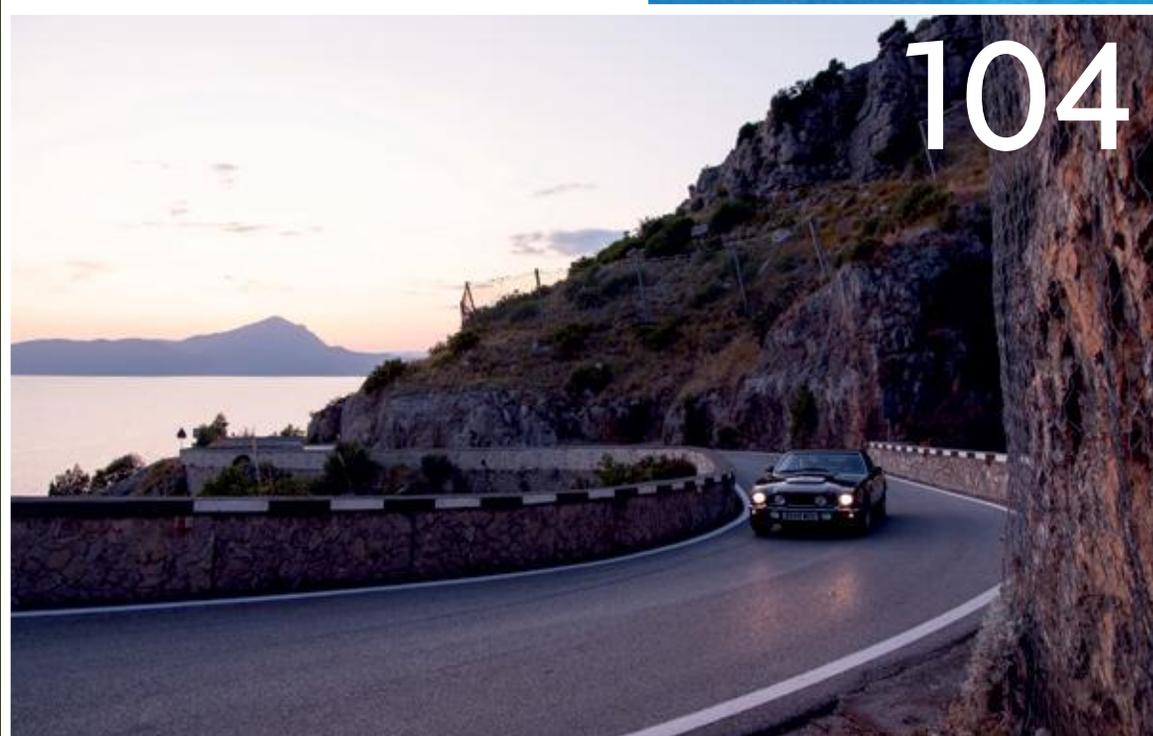


PHOTO: Courtesy of James Bond Indicia © 1962-2022 Danjaq and MGM; Nico Dumont

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NEWS

HOT EVENTS, NEW HOTELS AND GLOBAL JET-SETTERS



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PEACE IN PARADISE

From Soneva's first ever 'Soul Festival' launching in the Maldives to new wellness sanctuaries in Napa Valley and the much-anticipated soon-to-open Peninsula property in Belgravia, it's all go in the world of travel and hospitality. But we'll leave you with this picture of Soneva Fushi to instill a sense of calm once more

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DUBAI'S CRYSTAL MAZE

SH HOTELS & RESORTS IS PRIMED TO SET A NEW STANDARD OF GLAMOUR AND LUXURY in Dubai with the announcement of its upcoming Baccarat Hotel & Residences Dubai launch in 2026. The hotel is part of a new ultra-luxury mixed-use development in Downtown Dubai. Its twin tapering towers, designed by architectural firm Studio Libeskind, will combine a luxury hotel with full-service branded residences. The structures' glimmering glass façades evoke the exquisite luminosity of the House of Baccarat, a name associated for over two centuries with timeless objets d'art collected by the rich and famous. The hotel will feature 144 rooms and suites, along with 49 Baccarat-branded private residences, designed by the London-based design studio 1508 – known worldwide for its subtle and expressive reinterpretations of local vernacular design languages. Food and beverage offerings will include a formal dining room with indoor and outdoor seating, private dining rooms, a casual poolside bar, and a grand salon serving morning pastries, afternoon tea, and a drinks program into the evening. From its central location in the heart of Downtown Dubai, guests will enjoy convenient access to new and old Dubai, including iconic skyscrapers and the colourful cultural attractions of a venerable port city. www.baccarathotels.com



HYATT COMES TO THE HOLY CITY

THE RUA AL MADINAH PROJECT IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT INITIATIVES of the Public Investment Fund to achieve the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which aims to raise the readiness of the eastern region of the Prophet's Mosque to accommodate the rising demand in tourism. In conjunction with the Rua Al Madinah Holding Company, Hyatt is bringing three new Hyatt-branded hotels to the Holy City. The 860-room Hyatt Place Madinah will provide self-reliant travellers with a casual yet stylish environment that adapts seamlessly for all types of stay occasions. The 539 rooms at the Hyatt Regency Madinah will be designed for tranquillity and productivity and will incorporate inspirational design elements from Madinah's culture. True to the brand promise, the property will be a go-to gathering space for every occasion, while providing a memorable experience for those visiting the Holy City of Madinah on spiritual and religious journeys. Grand Hyatt Madinah will be designed to offer guests an elevated and sophisticated experience. Positioned as a destination within a destination, the property will have 330 luxurious guestrooms, premium dining experiences, and a double-height



lobby with modern interiors that will reflect the vibrant design and bold architecture. The three properties join Hyatt's highly anticipated pipeline in Saudi Arabia, which is set to solidify Hyatt's portfolio and diverse brand presence across key destinations in the country. www.hyatt.com

MARRIOTT HEADS TO MASAI MARA



2023 WILL SEE THE DEBUT OF MARRIOTT'S FIRST LUXURY SAFARI RESORT IN AFRICA, signalling the growth of the brand across the continent. Overlooking the famed banks of the River Talek, perched on the edge of the reserve, JW Marriott Masai Mara Lodge's prime location will offer guests an elevated camp from which to discover the Masai Mara National Reserve. With Baraka Lodges designing the property, plans feature 20 private

tents, including one presidential canvas-topped pavilion and two interconnecting canopied suites, each with a private terrace overlooking the river. Interiors led by Kristina Zanic will be a nod to the captivating surroundings, with the local landscape reflected at every turn. Warm touches of neutral hues and natural materials will balance the earth-tone colour palette inviting guests to connect with nature and focus on their wellbeing. Shared spaces

will include a restaurant, lounge bar, spa, and a large outdoor terrace with fire pits that will play host to traditional Masai dance performances in the evening. Conservation of the land and its inhabitants will be at the heart of JW Marriott Masai Mara. The safari lodge aims to employ up to 50 locals from the Masai community and will offer robust learning opportunities for guests looking to immerse themselves in the destination. www.marriott.com

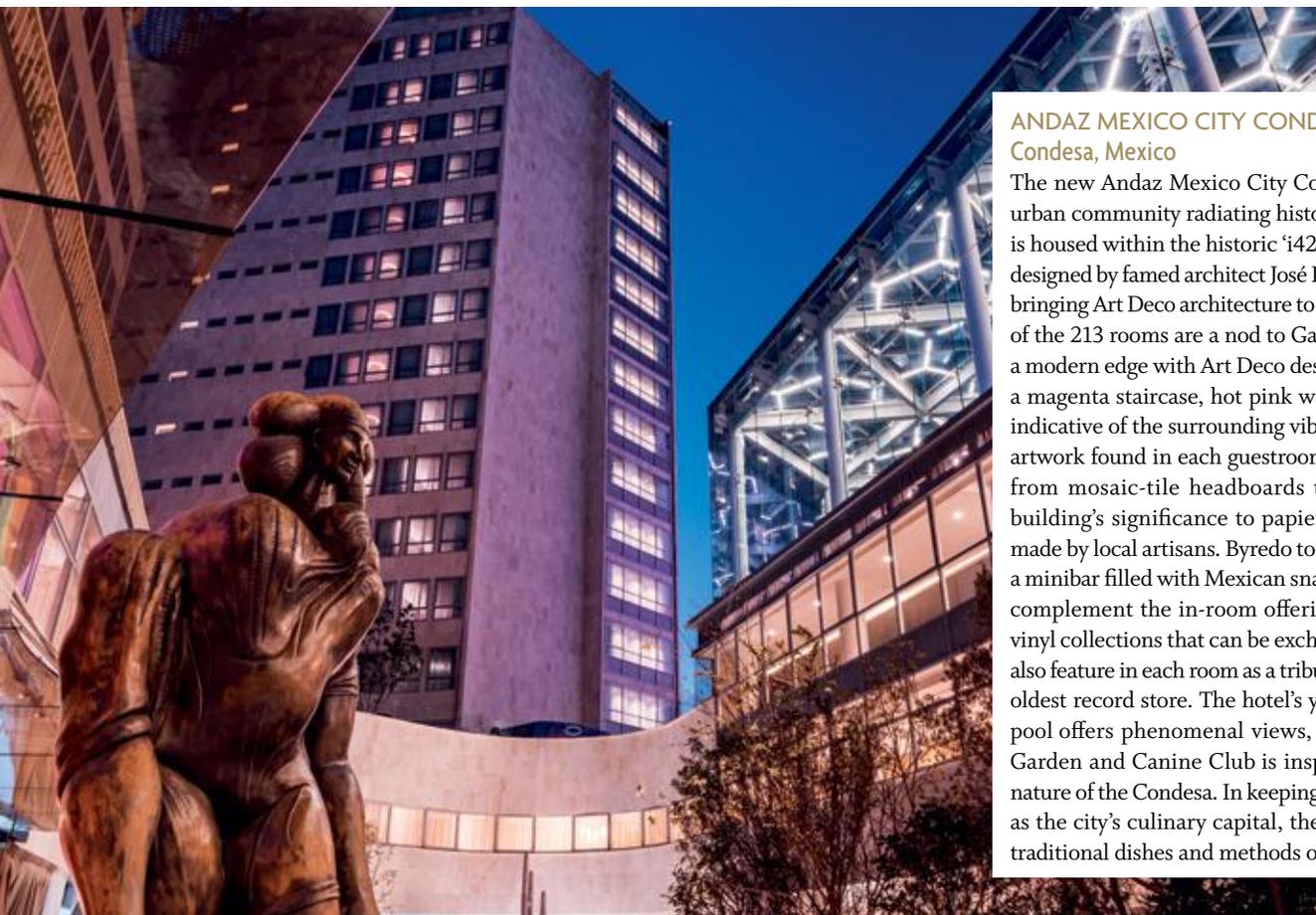
NOBU MAKES ITS NORTHERN EMIRATE DEBUT

NOBU HOSPITALITY IN AGREEMENT WITH ENEVORIA DEVELOPMENT is all set to launch the brand's second hotel and residence development in the UAE following the announcement of Abu Dhabi late last year. The Nobu Hotel, Restaurant and Residences will be located on Al Marjan Island in Ras Al Khaimah, the northernmost Emirate steeped in culture and 7,000 years of history. Known for its range of outdoor recreational activities, the destination is a welcome respite for regional and international travellers alike. Offering a long stretch of unspoilt beaches and views of the Arabian Gulf, the property will also encompass a Nobu Restaurant, a spa and fitness facility, swimming pools, and a Nobu beach club. Creating a premier lifestyle beach community, alongside the hotel, 300 branded Nobu residences – which can be used as permanent residences or holiday homes – will offer exclusive benefits to residents. Trevor Horwell, CEO of Nobu Hospitality commented: "We are thrilled to be continuing our expansion within the UAE and the vision for Al Marjan Island and Ras Al Khaimah aligns seamlessly with the Nobu brand. The charm of Al Marjan Island is the ideal setting for our guests and in developing a community who are seeking an authentic destination lifestyle and living experience." www.nobuhotels.com



Debut | March

HOT HOTELS, CHIC BOUTIQUES AND EXCLUSIVE NEW RESORTS
HERE'S OUR PICK OF THE WORLD'S MOST LUXURIOUS NEW LAUNCHES



ANDAZ MEXICO CITY CONDESA Condesa, Mexico

The new Andaz Mexico City Condesa sits in a charming urban community radiating history and culture. The hotel is housed within the historic 'i421 Live District' which was designed by famed architect José Luis Galán – credited with bringing Art Deco architecture to Mexico City. The interiors of the 213 rooms are a nod to Galán's vibrant style, pairing a modern edge with Art Deco design. Playful elements like a magenta staircase, hot pink walls and saffron sofas, are indicative of the surrounding vibrant community. Curated artwork found in each guestroom evokes a sense of place, from mosaic-tile headboards that pay homage to the building's significance to papier-mâché piñata figurines made by local artisans. Byredo toiletries, a workstation and a minibar filled with Mexican snacks from local companies complement the in-room offerings. Record players with vinyl collections that can be exchanged in the lobby library also feature in each room as a tribute to the neighbourhood's oldest record store. The hotel's year-round heated rooftop pool offers phenomenal views, while the Wootop Beer Garden and Canine Club is inspired by the dog-friendly nature of the Condesa. In keeping with the area's reputation as the city's culinary capital, the dining venues celebrate traditional dishes and methods of cooking. www.hyatt.com

RITZ CARLTON, BAKU Baku, Azerbaijan

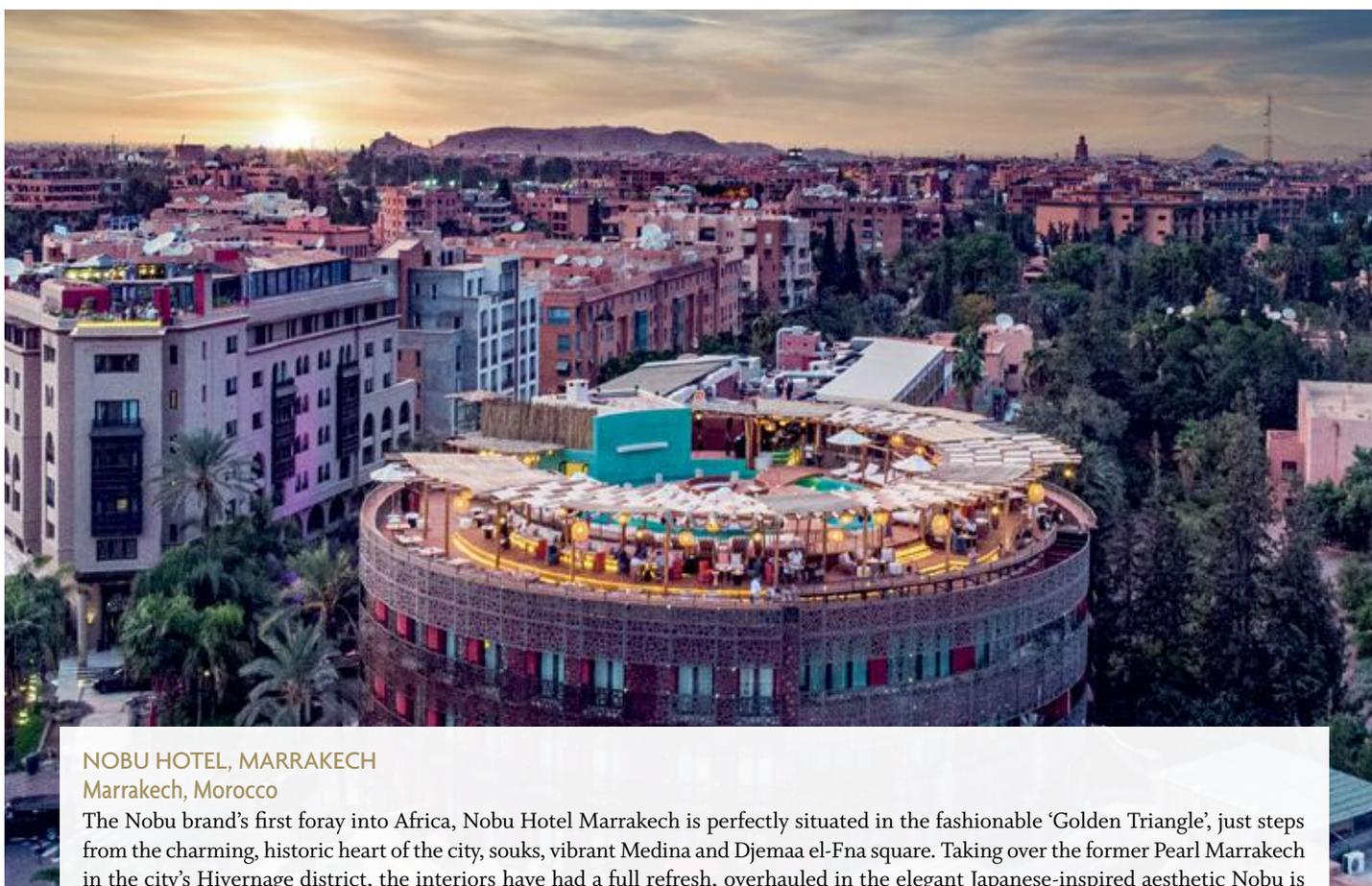
The recently launched Ritz-Carlton, Baku invites guests to immerse themselves in the country's fascinating culture. Located across from the Heydar Aliyev Center, an architectural icon that was designed by the legendary Zaha Hadid, the 33-storey hotel offers 190 rooms including the largest presidential suite in the city. The country's unique cultural narrative, which blends East and West, has been woven into the fabric of the property, which is designed by Kristina Zanic Design Consultants. Interiors take inspiration from the destination and artfully combine modern hospitality with history, art, and culture, with decorative details reflecting patterns and colours that represent Baku. Dining is a culinary journey at the hotel, with the all-day dining venue, Tribeca, serving classic New York and contemporary Californian cuisine. Leisure facilities include a bespoke Club Lounge and signature Ritz-Carlton Spa complete with two indoor swimming pools, treatment rooms, an outdoor garden space, and a fitness centre. The hotel's cultural experiences include a daily music performance with a Whaletone piano and traditional Azerbaijani music, accompanied by a local dancer. www.ritzcarlton.com





MONDRIAN SINGAPORE DUXTON Duxton Hill, Singapore

Becoming Singapore's new home of art-forward cool, the Mondrian Singapore Duxton is strategically located in the city's most happening precinct. Designed from the ground up by Los Angeles-based hot shop Studio Carter, the property is imbued with a philosophy of 'deconstructed shophouse chic'. Eschewing the traditional lobby, the space fully immerses guests in a bustling restaurant and bar from the moment they arrive. The 302 rooms and suites take inspiration from traditional Singaporean architecture, executed with contemporary flair with touchpoints reflecting Singapore's rich melting pot of cultures and trade routes. The in-house art collection complements the design narrative by featuring pieces by both emerging and established Singaporean and international artists. Dining outlets combine historic architecture from Singapore's centuries-old shophouses with a contemporary twist. Dario Cecchini, known as the world's best butcher, will preside over the flagship Italian dining experience, Bottega di Carna. Inspired by the wild nature of Southeast Asia, the Jungle Ballroom is a tropical cocktail bar pulsing with mystique and glamour. At the poolside rooftop bar, guests will be transported to the glitz and glamour of 1970s Hollywood, while the in-house artisan boutique, Christina's, transforms into a devoted wine and cocktail haven. www.sbe.com



NOBU HOTEL, MARRAKECH Marrakech, Morocco

The Nobu brand's first foray into Africa, Nobu Hotel Marrakech is perfectly situated in the fashionable 'Golden Triangle', just steps from the charming, historic heart of the city, souks, vibrant Medina and Djemaa el-Fna square. Taking over the former Pearl Marrakech in the city's Hivernage district, the interiors have had a full refresh, overhauled in the elegant Japanese-inspired aesthetic Nobu is known and loved for, fused with Moroccan craftsmanship. The all-suite property houses 71 suites split across three floors, each with views of North Africa's Atlas Mountain range or Koutoubia Mosque. Designed within the curvaceous architecture, The Pearl Spa, offers respite from the fast-paced streets outside and offers guests an on-theme Hammam treatment alongside a heated indoor swimming pool, Jacuzzis, steam baths, saunas, a gym, and a hair salon. With its own private entrance, DJ deck and poolside terrace the Nobu Restaurant and Bar serves signature dishes alongside new plates created by Chef Nobu Matsuhisa, using locally sourced flavours and ingredients. The Rooftop is centred around a circular pool and affords 360-degree views of the city including the old city walls surrounding the Medina district. The Rooftop restaurant houses a Nobu sushi bar, besides a daily selection of seasonal Moroccan and Mediterranean dishes. www.nobuhotels.com

Dubai's Truly Serene ALL-SUITE

Beachfront Escape



Surround yourself with the beauty of nature and be mesmerised by authentic heartfelt experiences during your stay at the newly refurbished JA Palm Tree Court suites.

This exclusive retreat takes you away from the hustle of the city to where you can enjoy serenity, rest and rejuvenation, all only 15 minutes from Dubai Marina.

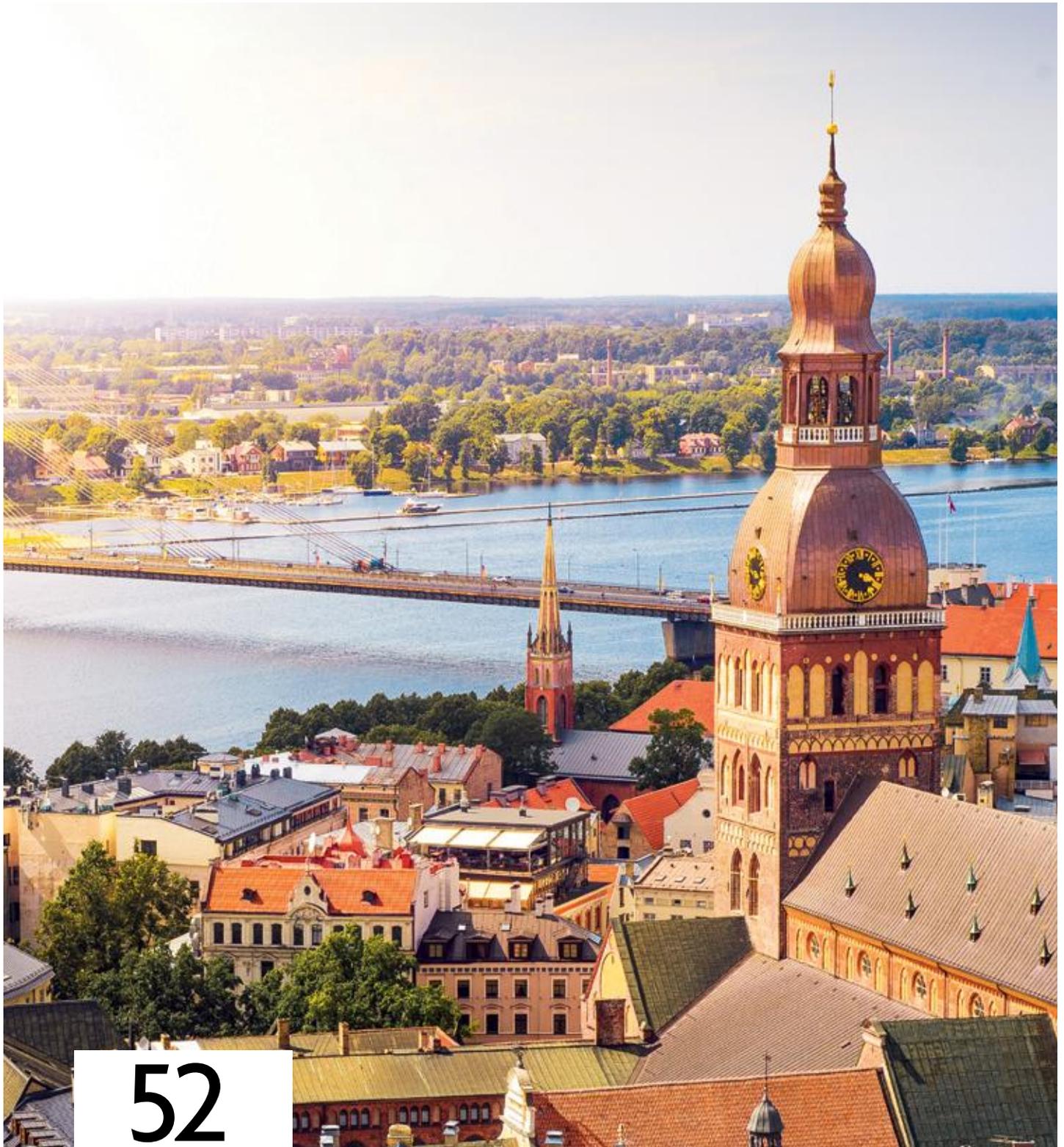
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AWAY WE GO

Come fly with us to different corners of the world, where reflective travel meets all-out adventure, from Brazil to Bhutan, Aqaba to Costa Rica

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RED SEA DREAMING

Favoured by Jordan's most elite crowd, Aqaba allows you to escape the kingdom's well-trod tourist trail and explore beaches, marinas, diving wrecks, and the unforgettable beauty of Wadi Rum

WORDS: Harriet Shephard





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HOTELS

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ALONE IN THE DESERT

Get lost in the desert with hotels and experiences shine a spotlight on the epic, sprawling beauty of the Middle East, from Red Sea dreaming in Aqaba to the serenity and solitude in the Empty Quarter. With the Holy Month on the horizon, this is your opportunity to rest, relax, recalibrate and reconnect

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UNDER A BLUE SKY

Escape to a place of urban serenity, where sea
meets sky, India meets Arabia, and the
hospitality makes it feel like home

PHOTOGRAPHY: Nicolas Dumont





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FOR YOUR ART AND SOUL

Hublot and Japanese artist Takashi Murakami have launched a collection of 13 unique watches alongside 13 unique NFTs, allowing fans to buy into both the digital and physical space of unique and artistic horology. The NFTs are inspired by Japanese video games and TV of the 1970s, while the Classic Fusion watches will be presented at Watches & Wonders 2023 in Geneva this month

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AN ENVY OF EMERALDS

Presented at Doha Watches & Jewellery Exhibition in Qatar last month, Boghossian's High Jewellery collection gives us the most refined case of the green-eyed monster. Featuring one-off creations, including pieces from its Kissing collection, the designs are works of art, created with impeccable Swiss craftsmanship.

A RARE FIND

As flowers bloom and leaves turn green, let spring inspire your colour-coding. A wearable emerald forest, as we like to call it. Unique and beautiful



1. Green Garden ear pendants, Boucheron
2. Red Carpet necklace, Chaumet
3. Spread Your Wings ring, Akillis
4. Toi & Moi necklace, Messika Paris
5. Rainforest Majestic Escapes necklace, Harry Winston
6. Dearest Dior earrings, Dior
7. Ring, Mahallati
8. Jewelled Vault ring, Garrard
9. Plume de Chanel earrings, Chanel
10. Bracelet, Boghossian
11. High Jewellery ring, Van Cleef & Arpels
12. Earrings, Piaget
13. Emerald Ellipse necklace, Bvlgari
14. Bracelet, Fabergé x James Ganh



LAMBORGHINI SAYS GOODBYE TO THE V12

TWO ONE-OFF CARS – A ROADSTER AND A COUPÉ – have been created to celebrate the end of the V12 supercar era, ushering in the hybrid age. The Italian company is celebrating its iconic naturally-aspirated V12 with the Invencible coupé and Auténtica roadster.

The two distinctive one-of-a-kind cars were styled by Lamborghini Centro Stile to embody maximum creativity using the V12 platform, incorporating design cues that have contributed to the brand's iconic status, as well

as a sporting character inspired by the race track.

The Invencible and Auténtica are the last cars to be produced by Lamborghini with a 12-cylinder 6.5 litre engine and mark the transition to a hybrid era. They deliver 780 CV and 720 Nm of torque, paired with a 7-speed ISR transmission, and can reach a top speed of over 350 km/h.

“The V12 engine is one of the pillars of our history and our marque’s success,” says Stephan Winkelmann, Automobili Lamborghini Chairman and CEO. “As we head towards

embracing a new era of hybridisation at the heart of our Cor Tauri strategy, this is the Lamborghini way of celebrating the naturally aspirated V12 with two one-off vehicles that perfectly represent our concept of excellence in personalisation.”

The Invencible and Auténtica embody the essence of Lamborghini’s commitment to personalization and excellence, as the company moves into a new era of hybridization at the heart of its Cor Tauri strategy. www.lamborghini.com



RECORD-BREAKING BUGATTI CHIRON

RECENTLY RM SOTHEBY’S CONDUCTED ITS BIGGEST EVER PARIS SALE, grossing a remarkable €49,802,080 in front of a packed salesroom in the Salles du Carrousel in the Louvre Palace. The undeniable star of the sale was the unique Bugatti Chiron Profilée, which sold for an astonishing €9,792,500.

The selling price makes the Bugatti Chiron Profilée the most valuable new car

ever sold at auction. The Profilée is a single, bespoke-engineered, version of Bugatti’s acclaimed Chiron hyper sports car and the first and only ‘pre-series’ Chiron Profilée produced and is also the last Bugatti to be sold with the iconic W-16 quad-turbo engine by Bugatti Automobiles S.A.S. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to charity. www.bugatti.com

HYBRID MAYBACH ARRIVES

THE MERCEDES-MAYBACH S 580 e marks the beginning of a new era for the brand with more than 100 years of heritage.

“With our first plug-in hybrid model, we are combining the luxury experience typical of Maybach with emission-free local driving when in electric driving mode. The Mercedes-Maybach S 580 e represents a pivotal step in the transformation of our heritage brand into an electric future. We will present our first fully electric model as early as 2023,” says Daniel Lescow, Head of Mercedes-Maybach at Mercedes-Benz Group AG. The Mercedes-Maybach S 580 e is initially available in China, followed by Thailand, Europe and other countries. www.mercedes-benz.com



112 YEARS OF ECSTASY



RECENTLY, ROLLS-ROYCE MOTOR CARS CELEBRATED the anniversary of its Spirit of Ecstasy mascot, first registered as intellectual property of Rolls-Royce on 6 February, 1911.

The origins of the Spirit of Ecstasy are the substance of legend and myth, as well as recorded fact. Her backstory involves many of the foundational characters in Rolls-Royce's own history, including the marque's

first managing director, Claude Johnson.

She celebrates her anniversary in her most streamlined and athletic guise, having been specially recreated in 2022 for the marque's all-electric Spectre. She's also truly ageless: today, she more closely resembles the original drawings made in 1911 by her creator, the illustrator and sculptor Charles Sykes. www.rolls-roycemotorcars.com

THE AUDI ACTIVESPHERE

THE LATEST MODEL IN AUDI'S futuristic concepts – and the fourth in the series – is the Audi activesphere. With an electric drive and quick-charging technology from Audi's Premium Platform Electric (PPE) modular system, the Audi activesphere, has a range of over 600 km, and extremely fast charging times thanks to 800-volt technology, combining the sustainability, dynamics and long-distance capability of a state-of-the-art electric vehicle with no local emissions.

The Audi activesphere concept offers maximum versatility for an active lifestyle both on and off-road. www.audi.com



ICONIC LOTUS TYPE 79 TO BE SOLD IN ABU DHABI

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AND EVOCATIVE World-Championship-winning Grand Prix racing cars of all time, the 1978 John Player Special Lotus-Cosworth Type 79 driven by US racing superstar Mario Andretti, was unveiled to the world's media recently in Paris as a highlight to be offered in Bonhams' inaugural sale at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix this coming November. This historic machine – chassis 79/4 – was the actual car in which Andretti memorably crushed all opposition to win the Dutch Grand Prix at Zandvoort and then claim his 1978 Formula 1 Drivers' world

title in the subsequent Italian Grand Prix at Monza. One of the most successful racing drivers of all time, Andretti embodied the American dream, having emigrated to the US from Italy in 1955. Just over 20 years later he had achieved the never repeated feat of winning the Indianapolis 500 (1969), Daytona 500 (1967) and the Formula 1 Drivers' World Championship.

To date, he is only the second American to have won Formula 1's greatest prize, following Phil Hill, who also clinched his title at the Italian Grand Prix at Monza in 1961.

Maarten ten Holder, Managing Director,

Bonhams Collector Cars, said: "We are excited to announce such an historic car to lead our first Grand Prix sale in partnership with Formula 1 Paddock Club™. This Lotus 79 encapsulates the very essence of what the series represents – innovation, advance, exploring the boundaries of technology and the insatiable hunger to win."

Bonhams' first sale at a Grand Prix will debut at this year's season-closing Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2023 on the weekend of November 24-26. The car has an estimate of \$6,500,000-9,500,000. www.bonhams.com

AT YOUR SERVICE

Celebrating 60 years of James Bond in one legendary trip, Black Tomato brings an exclusive 007-inspired assignment to you. Shaken, but not stirred

IF THERE WAS EVER A MOVIE CHARACTER YOU'D WANT TO WALK IN THE WELL-HEELED SHOES OF, James Bond has to be up there with the best of them. Who wouldn't want to spend a day in the life of 007? Well, let Black Tomato be your genie and grant your wish with its all-new private 007-inspired travel experiences to celebrate the 60th anniversary of James Bonds' debut in cinemas.

The luxury travel experts have been chosen by EON Productions to curate just 60 limited-edition bookable private trips – immersive, exclusive and once-in-a-lifetime itineraries walking in the footsteps of the world's most distinguished secret agent. The debut experience begins with a multi-country European itinerary, set in the continent that has played to host to umpteen Bond film locations. Working in close collaboration with the James Bond team, as well as some of their most long-standing location scouts, the trip will pay homage to 007's inimitable style and sense of adventure incorporating memorable scenes from some of Bond's best-loved movies.

The experience starts in London as the home of Bond, spanning arts, culture, action and adventure with uncompromising luxury throughout.

Then, in picturesque Chantilly, just outside Paris, you'll visit Europe's

oldest and most prestigious equestrian centre and the location of the stunning Château de Chantilly, which featured prominently in *A View to a Kill* (1985) as the lavish estate of villain Max Zorin. Here you can saddle up for a horseriding adventure through Chantilly Forest, before heading back to Château de Chantilly to explore the Bond villain's lair.

In Monaco, you can cast your memory back to *GoldenEye* (1995) with a visit to the Casino de Monte-Carlo, where you'll have VIP access to areas usually closed to the public, and a private lesson of Baccarat, just as Pierce Brosnan's Bond played against Xenia Onatopp in this very spot.

Lake Como will be the setting for a daring adventure where, from the private jetty of your villa, you can take inspiration from *Licence to Kill* (1989) as you waterski along the Moltrasio shoreline, before jumping aboard a private seaplane to continue your expedition. The finale takes place in Venice, but this particular assignment is top secret. If we told you, we'd have to...

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A scene from *Die Another Day* (2002)



Venice Grand Canal



Lake Como Villa Del Balbianello



A scene from *No Time To Die* (2021)

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