

WHERE TO GO NOW ↗

THIS PAGE: The beach at El Secreto in Belize.

OPPOSITE: Crossing the Golden Jubilee Footbridge toward the South Bank in London.

SKY CANVASSED THE WORLD FOR **15 MUST-HIT DESTINATIONS:** FROM CITIES THAT ARE PULSING WITH ENERGY TO HIDDEN-AWAY GEMS THAT WILL LEAVE YOU RESTED AND RESTORED. THE BUZZIEST STOPS IN **LONDON**, NEW MUSEUMS IN **MEXICO CITY**, RETRO-CHIC HOTELS IN **PALM SPRINGS**, CUTTING-EDGE RESTAURANTS IN **STOCKHOLM**, ECOLOGDGES IN **BELIZE** AND MORE. LET THE GLOBE-HOPPING BEGIN.

Edited by SARAH ELBERT

MARK PARRIN TAYLOR (LONDON)



1

SHANGHAI

PVG

From dinner on the 91st floor of the bottle opener-shaped Park Hyatt, the stunning Shanghai skyline sparkles constellation-like below. The city channels the classic sci-fi film *Blade Runner*, with its LED-generated digital advertisements that scamper up and down silver-skinned skyscrapers topped with fanciful flourishes. Across the river, the historic art deco-era Bund district glistens with low-rise, 1920s-era hotels that overlook the city's signature, winding promenade with its flashing lights courtesy of disco-driven dinner cruisers. In the distance, lights flare and fireworks sparkle, and traffic races up vast, new-build boulevards. Shanghai is Technicolor excitement, action, color and drama.

And the hotel selection is stellar: There are the luxe superbrands, including a contemporary, albeit deco-laden Peninsula, a Mandarin Oriental, a Shangri-La and the Four Seasons. There are historic Bund-situated properties such as the Fairmont Peace Hotel (pay a visit to the clubby jazz bar) and the Waldorf Astoria Shanghai (the Long Bar is just that: long). Or sample something more intimate, such as the stunning, Zen-like PuLi; the luxe, bespoke Le Sun Chine; or the sleek Waterhouse at South Bund. There's glorious shopping for every budget, and be sure to have a suit or dress crafted overnight courtesy of a tailor who will take measurements in your hotel room. The food scene is a knockout, too, thanks to heady pairings of East meets West at eateries such as Mr. & Mrs. Bund, Fu 1039 and M on the Bund with their see-and-be-seen, glittering scenes.

—JASON OLIVER NIXON



FROM TOP: Soaking up the view of the Shanghai skyline from a rooftop bar in the Bund; The Yi Long Court at The Peninsula Shanghai.

ARN

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

2

Copenhagen has been the darling of the culinary world for the past few years, but the hottest restaurant scene in Scandinavia now belongs to Stockholm. Culinary tourists in search of memorable meals should head directly to the Swedish capital, where chef Björn Frantzén is leading the charge. On a cobblestone lane in the old town (across the street from his two-Michelin-star namesake restaurant), Frantzén recently debuted three exciting establishments: an intimate wine cellar, a classic cocktail bar and a convivial gastropub called The Flying Elk, where the decadent menu is heavy with offal, truffles and foie. The capital's buzziest dining destination, however, belongs to chef Magnus Ek, who relocated his celebrated restaurant Oaxen Krog to the city last May. Among other notable openings is Speceriet, the cozy annex of Gastrologik, a refined new Nordic restaurant that earned its first Michelin star in 2013. Of course, the city offers much more than just great food. Between meals, devour the myriad cultural offerings that have recently surfaced across Stockholm, from a museum devoted to the Swedish pop group ABBA to the sprawling contemporary art venue Artipelag, where the surrounding grounds are as impressive as the ambitious exhibitions.

—INGRID K. WILLIAMS



FROM TOP: Artipelag gallery in Stockholm; Serving up flatbread at Speceriet; The funky dining room at Oaxen Krog.

SEE PAGE 152 FOR PHOTO CREDITS INFORMATION.

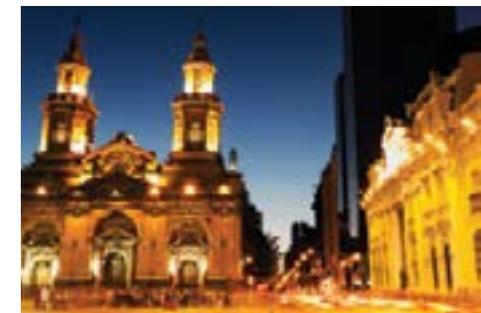
3

SANTIAGO, CHILE

SCL

This year, Santiago, Chile's capital city, is finally getting the attention it deserves.

Great neighborhoods off the tourist trail are gaining boutique hotels, such as the tasteful, 62-room Singular Santiago near Parque Forestal, set amid the 20th century neoclassical buildings in blossoming art hood Lastarria. Following the lead of chef Rodolfo Guzman's groundbreaking contemporary Chilean restaurant Boragó and nearly a dozen different pop ups organized by adventurous young chefs, Santiago's culinary scene is exploding with new restaurants such as Peumayen in Bellavista, which focuses on the cuisine of Chile's indigenous cultures, and 99 in Providencia. While Chile is still best known for wine, craft beer has made huge gains and microbreweries are now quite common. You can sample a tap list of 15 different local brews at new beer garden Barbudo off Plaza Ñuñoa. If wine is still your drink of choice, there's wine bar Bocanariz and, in the wine region south of the city, the very luxurious Viña Vik, a 22-suite all-inclusive lodge that is opening up later this year on 11,000 acres featuring multiple valleys, lakes, hills, forests and, of course, vineyards. —NICHOLAS GILL



TOP: Santiago's Plaza de Armas, illuminated at night. BELOW: The Kinkaku-ji (Golden Pavilion) in Kyoto.

UKY

KYOTO, JAPAN

If there's one thing Kyoto deals well in, it's heritage. After all, the central Japanese city served as the country's imperial capital until 1869. And Kyoto has long been associated with its 17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites (including several immaculately restored Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines), beautiful rock gardens, gliding geishas and traditional artisans toiling away in wooden buildings. But it's not all old-school in the city. February saw the opening of the Ritz-Carlton, Kyoto, one of Japan's most anticipated new hotels. Spread out along

the banks of the scenic Kamogawa River, the property integrates architectural and design elements from Meiji-era houses (wooden latticework doors, traditional Shippo cloisonné patterns). For culture buffs, the Kyoto National Museum is debuting its new Collections Hall in September. The striking,



contemporary glass building, featuring a hall designed by Yoshio Taniguchi (also behind New York's MOMA), will house the museum's permanent collection—more than 12,000 pieces of historic Asian art and archaeological objects. —ELIZABETH WOODSON

4



GPS

GALÁPAGOS, ECUADOR

5

Mention the Galápagos, and those who haven't been proclaim the archipelago high on their bucket list. Those who have speak of the islands' unadulterated natural beauty and once-in-a-lifetime experiences—snorkeling with whitetip reef sharks, spotting blue-footed boobies and coming nose to whiskers

with sea lions. But it wasn't always so. In fact, Ecuador only declared the islands a national park in 1959, and it took another 15 years for the surrounding waters to become a marine reserve. By then, 18th-century whalers, 20th-century tourists and a growing human population had wreaked havoc on the archipelago's delicate ecosystem. ¶ In 2007, UNESCO added the Galápagos to its "In Danger" list, where it re-

mained for three years. Visit today and your time there is tightly regulated, but it's an experience worth having thanks to naturalists who impart knowledge about the islands' history, its species and conservation efforts. Go Now: Small-ship cruise companies such as Lindblad Expeditions and International Expeditions offer daily hikes, kayaking, snorkeling and all meals.

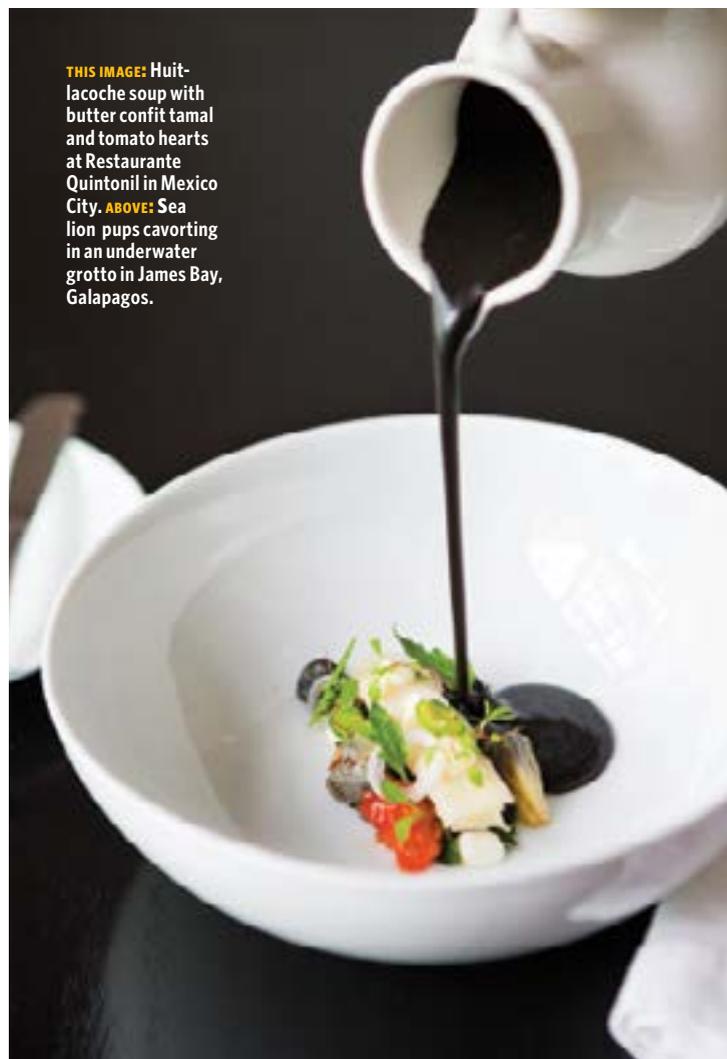
—CELESTE MOURE

6

MEXICO CITY

MEX

Mexico City's arts scene got a big boost last fall with the opening of the Museo Jumex, Latin America's largest private contemporary art museum, where works by significant Mexican and international artists come together in a striking complex designed by British architect David Chipperfield. The museum, in the city's posh Polanco district, blends into an already rich museum landscape that includes the Museo de Arte Moderno, the contemporary Museo Tamayo (itself just reopened) and the vast Museo Nacional de Antropología, all nearby. Noteworthy restaurants, bars and shops are popping up in the area, too, particularly in Polanco and the more bohemian Condesa and Roma neighborhoods. Among them: highly rated Quintonil, where the fresh, modern Mexican fare looks as amazing as it tastes, and the flagship store for DFC, a local label that enlists top Mexican artisans to produce design objects with an edge. Even the city's Centro Histórico is ushering in the latest—most recently in the form of Downtown México, a 17th-century palace-turned-hotel with a buzzing rooftop bar. It feels right at home in the oldest part of the city, where it's clear after a visit to the Palacio de Bellas Artes, the exquisite art deco opera house two blocks away, that here, chic is nothing new. —SHAWN GILLIAM



THIS IMAGE: Huit-lacoches soup with butter confit tamal and tomato hearts at Restaurante Quintonil in Mexico City. ABOVE: Sea lion pups cavorting in an underwater grotto in James Bay, Galapagos.

7

PORTLAND, OREGON

PDX

That Portland is a foodie boomtown isn't news, but the city isn't known for resting on its laurels. Stacking up are speakeasy-style restaurants within restaurants such as the new Lang Baan, a 20-seat jewel in the back of Paadee, serving traditional Thai food, while Roe, hemmed inside Block + Tackle, presents four- and seven-course seafood-heavy samplers. Reservations are snatched in minutes at



Salt and Straw

Holdfast, the 10-seat supper club of chef Will Preisch, who zings unusual and artful small plates inside KitchenCru. The caffeine-crazed town loves dunk-worthy Blue Star Donuts, and Salt and Straw's summer cocktail ice cream series transforms bar favorites into scoops. Dessert-first crusaders belly up at pastry chef Kristen Murray's new "pastry luncheonette" Maurice in the sizzling hot West End neighborhood, as other top toques expand their food fiefdoms—among them James Beard award-winning baker Ken Forkish, whose Trifecta is touted as America's first "bakery tavern."

—KIMBERLEY LOVATO

PSP

PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

For a town happily marooned in the 1950s, Palm Springs always manages to have something new cooking. Of course, "new" often means reincarnated in this retro-flavored desert resort town. The stylishly rustic Sparrows Hotel opened in October after half a century as the merely rustic El Rancho Lodge. With its handmade furniture and rusted steel roof, the boutique, ranch-style spot offers a more intimate complement to the nearby Ace Hotel. Also resuscitated to chic effect: the 29-room Skylark Hotel, vintage 1955, where the likes of Tony Curtis and Marilyn Monroe would pop by. Even when the city does brand new, it does so in shades of high modern. This spring, atop a 650-foot bluff, the Ritz Carlton opens its Rancho Mirage, a dapper, blend-into-the-palms property with a sweeping view of Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley. Of course, new hotels aren't the only doors opening here. Bar, which opened in 2012 on North Palm Canyon Drive, is cozy and hopping—and the best place in town to tuck into seared ahi over a lemony "Penicillin" cocktail. —CHRIS COLIN

8

ABOVE: Lounging at the Ace Hotel in Palm Springs. BELOW: The pool area at the Sparrows Hotel.



SEE PAGE 152 FOR PHOTO CREDITS INFORMATION.

LONDON CALLING!

9 THERE'S NO GROUP MORE DISCERNING THAN A CADRE OF TOP CONCIERGES. IF ANYONE HAS THE KNOWLEDGE, IT'S THESE CULTIVATED COGNOSCENTI. WHERE TO EAT? WHERE TO SHOP? WHAT'S DOING ON THE CULTURAL FRONT? LOOKING TO TAP THE PULSE OF WHAT'S HOT AND HAPPENING ACROSS THE POND, WE RANG UP SIX OF LONDON'S TOP CONCIERGES AT HOTELS BOTH NEW AND OLD (AND IN A RANGE OF THE CITY'S NEIGHBORHOODS, FROM THE HEART OF MAYFAIR TO BERMONDSEY AND BETHNAL GREEN) AND ASKED THEM TO SPILL THE CURATED CONTENTS OF THEIR LITTLE BLACK BOOKS.

By JASON OLIVER NIXON

Walking through the Tower of London precincts with the Tower Bridge in the background.

RINGING...



THE RITZ LONDON

Perfectly situated on Piccadilly with views of Green Park, the circa 1906 Ritz channels bygone glamour with its French-inspired décor. Pay a visit to the intimate Rivoli Bar for a cocktail, take afternoon tea in the opulent Palm Court (gents: jacket and tie, no jeans) or enjoy lunch al fresco on the Restaurant Terrace. theritzlondon.com



Michael DeCozar,
head hall porter,
recommends:

► **The Ritz Restaurant, naturally!** To a swinging soundtrack provided by Peter O'Donnell and his band, guests enjoy an indulgent four-course dinner before taking to the dance floor with the timeless glamour of the world's most beautiful hotel dining room as their backdrop.

► **The Shard:** Situated on the south bank of the Thames, The Shard is Western Europe's tallest building and has much to offer, from its top-floor, open-air viewing level to the three restaurants—Hutong, Oblix and Aqua Shard—with views of London that you'll never forget.

► **The "Up at the O2" experience:** Take the opportunity to walk/climb over the roof of one of London's most famous landmarks. "The view at the summit will take your breath away," DeCozar says.

► **The "Vikings: Life and Legend"** exhibition at the British Museum boasts a large collection of weapons and jewelry—and the longest Viking ship ever discovered.



The British Museum's Great Court



CLARIDGE'S

Located within a Victorian-era grouping of buildings in the center of Mayfair, Claridge's welcomes with a striking art deco lobby and lounges. Old school and yet wonderfully contemporary, Claridge's attracts longtime visitors as well as a cutting-edge clientele. Yes, that was Kate Moss taking tea in the lobby. Expect sublime service and gorgeous rooms. claridges.co.uk



Martin Ballard,
head concierge,
recommends:

► **Claridge's yet-to-be-named restaurant:** The biggest restaurant opening in the capital this spring—if we do say so ourselves! Simon Rogan, the two-Michelin-starred chef from L'Enclume brings his unique and inventive cooking style to the hotel.

► **The Whip:** Just a few steps away from Claridge's, this new horseracing-themed bar above a revamped pub is creating quite a stir with its luxurious décor and juleps that are to die for. "The mint version is great," Ballard says, "but I'd recommend the rhubarb and gin."

► **5 Hertford Street:** This is London's ultimate private member's club. The interiors of its in-house nightclub, by former fashion designer Rifat Ozbek, are worth a visit alone. "Befriend a member and pray for an invite!"

► **Richard Hamilton at the Tate Modern:** One of the most influential British artists of the 20th century, Hamilton is seen as a founding figure of pop art.

► **The Assouline boutique:** "There's nothing more relaxing and indulgent than sitting down with a good book," Ballard says. "Fortunately, we have one of the world's best bookshops right next door."



TOWN HALL HOTEL

This hotel in a historic, former East End town hall shines afresh with beautifully refurbished art deco interiors. The rooms are spacious and mix a sleek design with original Edwardian flourishes. Explore the surrounding Bethnal Green, a hot and happening neighborhood, before returning to dine at the hotel's restaurant, helmed by celebrated chef Lee Westcott. townhallhotel.com



Andreas Massari,
head concierge,
recommends:

► **Tramshed:** An authentic East End-style steak house where art and design meet under the shield of Mark Hix's cuisine. Don't miss the Cock 'n' Bull art gallery downstairs, which supports a wide range of artists—from the discovered to the unknown.

► **The Nightjar:** "This tops my list of the world's best cocktail lounges," Massari says. "The intimate cocktail den boasts live music and entertainment in the heart of Shoreditch."

► **1701 at Bevis Marks Synagogue:** This kosher fine-dining restaurant from chef Oren Goldfeld was inspired by classic Jewish cooking and occupies an ancient synagogue that has been in continual use since 1701.

► **Fortnum & Mason:** "THE place to take tea," Massari says. "If it's good enough for the queen, it's good enough for our guests!"

► **The Wallace Collection:** This private collection includes masterpieces of the Flemish School, neoclassic sculptures and Venetian three-dimensional painting school. "Do not miss the afternoon tea served in the courtyard," Massari says. "A true London secret."

LONDON CALLING! (CONT.)



SHANGRI-LA HOTEL AT THE SHARD

Housed within the eye-popping Shard Tower on the Thames' south bank, the Shangri-La opens for business next month (May 6) and will be the first U.K. outpost of the Asian hotel group. Sleek-chic interiors and legendary service will compete with incomparable vistas of the London skyline. Gong, the hotel's bar, will be the city's highest. *shangri-la.com*



Toru Machida, head concierge, recommends:

▶ **Borough Market:**

London's most popular food market is now open Wednesday to Saturday. It's a great spot to grab an al fresco lunch: "The local favorite is the pork belly and crackling sandwich with Bramley apple-sauce, served by the Roast stall."

▶ **Tate Modern:** This is the most-visited modern art gallery in the world, with about 4.9 million visitors last year. If art isn't your thing, the view from the top-floor restaurant and the kids-eat-free lunch menu will leave everyone happy!

▶ **Gabriel's Wharf:** This is now a white-hot neighborhood with shops, cafés and restaurants. Indulge in a crepe at House of Crepes, then rent a bicycle from London Bicycle Tour Company or burn some calories walking along the Thames.

▶ **The Shakespeare's Globe,** on the Thames, is a reconstruction of the original Globe Theatre built just a few steps away in 1599. The season reopens on



The Globe theatre

April 23. Plus, don't miss the brand-new Jacobean-style Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, with its year-round, indoor productions.



ROSEWOOD LONDON

Recently opened on High Holborn, the uber-luxe Rosewood Hotels and Resorts has transformed the 1914 former Pearl Assurance headquarter building into a shining, very grand gem. Dramatic public spaces and contemporary, chic guest rooms create the perfect urban sanctuary, just minutes from Covent Garden and the West End's theatres. *rosewoodhotels.com*



Christophe Caron, chief concierge, recommends:

▶ **Holborn Dining Room:**

"Our brand-new and buzzy brasserie opened in late February," Caron says, "and it's truly a must-visit for traditional British cooking in a chic setting."

▶ **Matilda:** "This show is for the whole family and will give you goose bumps," Caron says.

▶ **Sir John Soane's Museum:** Just moments away from the hotel, the former home of the legendary architect is especially fun to visit on the first Tuesday of every month, when the rooms are lit by candlelight. "Arrive early!"

▶ **Hakkasan Hanway Place:** Thanks to delicious Chinese cooking, an amazing wine list and a kitchen that's open to the dining room, Hakkasan ticks all the right boxes for an evening with friends.

▶ **Lamb's Conduit Street:** In the Bloomsbury neighborhood, this is one of London's most picturesque thoroughfares. It's full of independent stores and boutiques as well as the Lamb, a beautifully preserved Victorian pub.

▶ **The British Museum:** Established in 1753, this museum has a permanent collection numbering 8 million works exploring human history and culture through the ages.



CORINTHIA HOTEL LONDON

Even if you don't stay at this hotel off Trafalgar Square, pop in for a look at the dramatic interiors inside this grand Victorian edifice. The Bassoon bar is the perfect spot for a mojito, and the Massimo Restaurant & Oyster Bar is buzzy and fun. Upstairs, the Corinthia rooms are beautifully outfitted. The spa is also exceptional, with décor to match. *corinthia.com*



Max Endacott and the Crafty Concierge team recommend:

▶ **Henry VIII's Wine Cellars:**

"It's so secret that we have to make an appointment with the Ministry of Defense for you to see it," Endacott says. The much-married English ruler's wine cellars are the last remaining, perfectly preserved part of the original Whitehall Palace (right next door to hotel). Measuring 70-by-30 feet with a Tudor vaulted ceiling and oak wine casks, the space will transport you back some 400 years.

▶ **Dennis Severs' House:** Step back in time to the early 18th century as you cross the threshold of this amazing home in the buzzy Spitalfields neighborhood in London's East End. Take the Silent Tour while you sip champagne and wander through the 10 candlelit rooms from times past.

▶ **Street Art London Tour:** Get cultured—or subcultured—with this up-close introduction to the East End's street art, including works by the world-renowned graffiti artist Banksy.

▶ **Alternative London Tour:** Stay off the beaten track with this tour that features some of London's best insider sights.



A Blue and Royals Household cavalry guard at Horse Guards' Parade.



THIS IMAGE: The helical stairway at the Dali Museum in St. Petersburg; **BELOW:** Visitors at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

TAMPA/ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA



Once sleepy, the Tampa/St. Petersburg area has quietly exploded. St. Pete, for example, offers an impressive array of arts-focused institutions, all situated on the bay in the city's cozy, pedestrian-friendly downtown. The historic, 18-room Birchwood Inn makes a stellar home base before exploring the Dali Museum, the Chihuly Collection at Morean Arts Center and the Museum of Fine Arts. Antiques collectors will enjoy Central Avenue with its vintage outposts and eclectic eateries (Taco Bus, the Queens Head). And then there are the beaches: Stellar strands await at nearby St. Pete Beach, and check out the funky Postcard Inn on the Beach for sunset cocktails. ¶ Across the Bay, Tampa boasts a newly revved-up downtown that includes the Tampa Museum of Art, the Riverwalk with its eBoats, the Henry B. Plant Museum (housed in the minaret-topped former Tampa Bay Hotel) and the iconic Tampa Theatre for an arts film paired with a performance on a Wurlitzer organ. Families will appreciate the Florida Aquarium, a baseball game courtesy of the Tampa Yankees and the wild animals and amusement rides at Busch Gardens. Style aficionados shouldn't miss the restaurant-café-bookshop-boutique Oxford Exchange or the shops at Hyde Park Village. For a taste of old Florida, visit Ybor City with its historic cigar factories, cafés and bars. Wind down with dinner at Mise en Place (cornmeal-crusted oysters), the Edison Food + Drink Lab (bone marrow-crusted halibut), the just-opened Élevage at the Epicurean hotel (the latest from the owners of the iconic Bern's Steakhouse, just across the street) or Restaurant BT (Vietnamese bouillabaisse). — **JASON OLIVER NIXON**

10



AMSTERDAM

11

Amsterdam's so-called Latin quarter, or De Pijp, was once a funky off-center

market district consisting largely of night cafés and taxi driver-frequented Shoarma shops. Today, the Heineken Brewery-adjacent neighborhood retains a bit of its multicultural spunk and bohemian charm (the Molli squatter café, for instance), but it's also polished up some of its rough edges and emerged as a trendy "it" hood. De Pijp recently became home to the Sir Albert, a stylish boutique hotel conceived by Dutch ad agency KesselsKramer. Located on the site of a former diamond factory, the property quirkily simulates the experience of staying at an aristocrat's city manor house with a wink and a nudge. Upscale Japanese fusion eatery Izakaya is attached to Sir Albert's "residence." Across the street, a Good Genes bespoke denim store sells vintage American jeans. Even Dutch celebrity chef Julius Jaspers is infiltrating the area with his modern, light barbecue restaurant Julius Bar & Grill. Internationally renowned art is just a stroll or bike ride away at the recently revamped Rijksmuseum, in the bordering museum quarter. There's no better time to visit Amsterdam than April for the first King's Day (the 26th) since Prince Willem-Alexander took the throne.

— **SHANA TING LIPTON**



SEE PAGE 152 FOR PHOTO CREDITS INFORMATION.

SBA

SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA

12

Situated along the Pacific and hugged by the Santa Ynez Mountains,

Santa Barbara is the quintessential California coast town, with a sunny and charming disposition that's infectious. But a crop of new restaurants and hotels, the city's first distillery and a soon-to-open public market are adding fresh new



buzz. Make a beeline for the Funk Zone, an emerging arts district near downtown where artisanal restaurants, winetasting rooms, galleries and a high-end guitar shop, The Guitar Bar, happily coexist. Snag a table at The Lark, opened last year, and dig into Brussel sprouts with medjool dates and mussels with charred pineapple and chili. Finish with rieslings from Austria or pinot noirs from the nearby Santa Maria Valley at Les Marchands Wine Bar and Merchant, a stunning wine bar around the corner. Also nearby, Cutler's Artisan Spirits is a nine-month-old distillery right in the heart of downtown, where you can sample bourbon and vodka. The distillery's spirits are used in cocktails at El Encanto, a historic property reopened by Orient-Express last year after a seven-year restoration. Perched on a hilltop, the 92-room hotel retained several original craftsman-style bungalows that are now outfitted with fireplaces, private patios and clawfoot tubs.

—TANVI CHHEDA



BELIZE

BZE

You've heard about Belize for years. Maybe your friends honeymooned there and praised it as a smaller, quieter Mexico (with better snorkeling and no bars with alcoholic frog mascots). Or perhaps you've heard about the growing number of Americans retiring to its affordable, seaside condos. But why Belize now? Because the tiny but beautiful Central American country finally has the hospitality industry it deserves. In its defense, it got a late start. Belize gained independence from Britain in 1981 and began adding infrastructure to support tourism—paved roads, airports, a few no-frills beach hotels. And then came Francis Ford Coppola, who used his mob money, so to speak, to open the Blancaneaux Lodge in the Maya Mountains in 1993 and Turtle Inn on the Caribbean Sea in 2001. Both set the standard for high-end resorts in Belize and paved the way for the recent wave of luxe hotel openings, including organic farm/ecolodge Belcampo Belize in the southern Punta Gorda region and the seaside villas of El Secreto on the Ambergris Caye. Not that you should ignore the classics: Blancaneaux is a backcountry paradise with spacious cabañas and plenty for the adventurous, including hikes to hidden waterfalls and unspoiled Mayan ruins and the occasional jaguar sighting. Turtle Inn grafts that five-star formula onto a classic beach setting. Time to update your bucket list. —CHRIS CLAYTON

13

YYC

CALGARY, CANADA

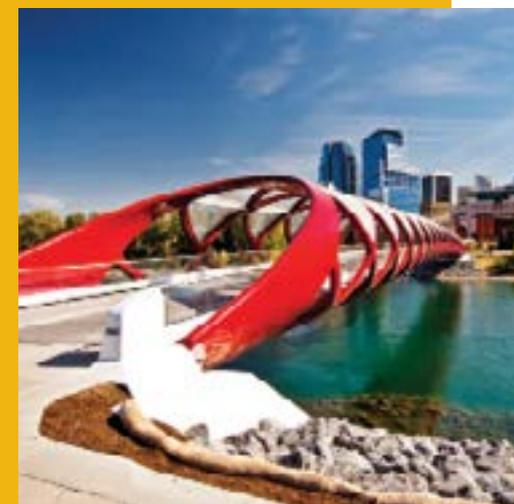
14

With Banff National Park about an hour away and the Calgary Stampede attended by more than 1 million people each summer, this city's no stranger to travelers. But a booming urban scene, fueled by the oil and gas industry, means that Calgary, home to Canada's strongest economy and a young population (the median age is 36), has more to experience than ever.

Cropping up amid construction cranes (more than 20 office towers and condo high-rises are underway) are exciting new eateries such as Charcut, where chef John Jackson and Top Chef Canada runner-up Connie DeSousa get rave reviews for their charbroiled dishes, and National, where more than 80 brews (nearly 70 on tap) are served in buzzing beer halls. Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods such as Kensington Village are walkable, but light rail and a car-share fleet of

150-plus Smart Cars make it easy to catch a ride. And yet it's still a city at one with nature. Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava's two-year-old pedestrian Peace Bridge spans the Bow River and wetlands of Prince's Island Park just north of downtown. And Calgary's tallest building, Norman Foster's The Bow, is 58 stories high and overlooks its namesake river, one of the world's top waterways for trout fishing.

—SHAWN GILLIAM



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT:

Biking along the Santa Barbara Pier; Lamanai, a Mesoamerican archaeological site in Belize; El Secreto resort; Cork & Cow in Franklin, Tennessee; The pedestrian Calgary Peace Bridge.

15

FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE

BNA

Franklin, with its boho-meets-Southern-chic vibe, seems to have a magnetic pull on the celebrities who pick, strum and sing their way to fame in Nashville—a range of stars who have made the city their Tennessee home base. Located in the rolling, creek-cut hills less than 30 miles south of Music City, Franklin has a magical combination of shopping, dining and history essential for turning a mere location into a buzzy destination. ¶ Main Street, with its architectural smorgasbord of buildings ranging from antebellum to art moderne, is the logical first stop in town. Goods behind the historic storefronts range from indie-label fashion (Haven stocks the likes of Current Elliot and Elizabeth and James) to au courant home décor (The Iron Gate captures the white-hot timeworn elegance aesthetic) and stationery with a generous dose of gentility (Rock Paper Scissors). A little south of downtown, dive into antiques and architectural salvage at Winchester Antique Mall and City Farmhouse. ¶ This being the South, food is critically important to getting the full Franklin experience. Both upscale and down-home dining traditions are well represented, and you can just as easily get a steak with foie gras butter (at Cork & Cow) as you can turnip greens or meat-and-three (Dotson's and Bishop's, respectively). —GINA CZUPKA

