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+

IBIZA

Swanky Sips...



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# LETTER FROM THE *EDITOR IN CHIEF*

## SWANKY RETREATS SALES DIRECTOR:

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*www.SwankyRetreats.com*

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Ana Lui



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Happy to be back with you guys!

This year I made no resolutions. I am not going to project or predict any trends. What I am doing is making plans for more fun, more abundance, more travel, more time with loved ones, and way more adventure. This issue inspired me to no end. With London (always) on my mind, I love that we could treat you to some of my favorites. If you've never stayed at the Beaumont London or the Mayfair Townhouse, now is the time to start planning on doing just that. Sophie gets you the details and I believe you'll be adding stays at these two beauties to your next trip across the pond.

With Fort Lauderdale being a little closer to home, we give you a detox to retox story that may have you reenvisioning what a stay in this city can look like. While we were at it, we thought we would continue to stretch the boundaries and take you along with us on a Swanky Sip to a biodynamic vineyard and kick it with some llamas in England's Surrey Hills.

We can't wait to share all of these with you in the pages of this issue and then bring them to life with our behind the scenes take on each story in our podcast the Travel Instigator. Tune in wherever you are on the planet on your favorite podcast platform.

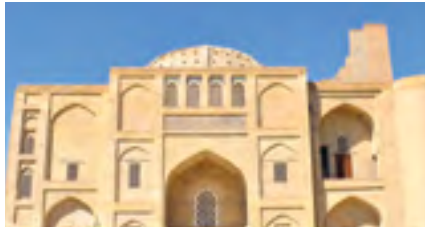
See you inside...

Peta

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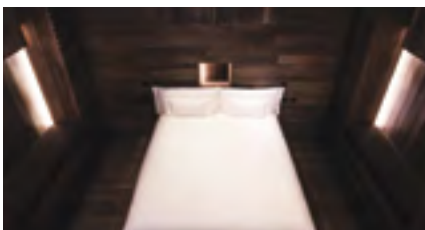
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# THE SWANK TEAM



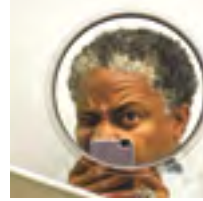
**ALEXANDRA MAE**  
**EDITOR-AT-LARGE**

When you look up "wanderlust" in the dictionary odds are that a picture of me is in the definition.



**AMY SEDEÑO**  
**EDITOR-AT-LARGE**

As a self-proclaimed @hotelista I do quite a bit of traveling, and from holding a tarantula in an ancient site in Guatemala to drinking high tea in Dubai, and petting grey whales in Baja, you bet I've got stories to tell.



**ANDREW INNERARITY**  
**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

I prefer to let the images do the talking.



**ANN MARIE SCHEIDLER**  
**EDITOR-AT-LARGE**

"Thailand was the trip of a lifetime for this Chicago girl...a sensory overload in the best of ways. The people, the food, the landscape: all unforgettable."



**AVA ROSALES**  
**FEATURES EDITOR**

Wherever the destination may be, it's the villa life for me.



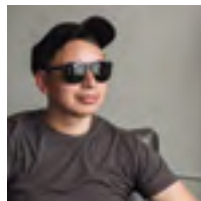
**DYLAN BENOIT**  
**CONTRIBUTING EDITOR**

I'm a chef with Champagne taste and a beer budget, but always seem to find myself surrounded by the most amazing people in the most amazing places. From eating termites in the Honduran jungle to learning how to make dim sum in Hong Kong, for me treasure is in the story.



**JEFFREY SOBEL**  
**CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

All I need is a book, a bourbon and a boat to a new destination - I'll be just fine.



**SERGIO OLIVARES**  
**CREATIVE DIRECTOR**

When I am not at a music concert, you might catch me hunting down new and exciting roads to drive on the weekends. "I live my life a quarter mile at a time." - Dom Toretto.



**SOPHIE IBBOTSON**  
**EDITOR-AT-LARGE**

I'm an entrepreneur, writer, and lover of wild places. I like nothing more than exploring new destinations with extraordinary landscapes, rich cultures, and preferably a sprinkling of remarkable wildlife, too. A jaw droppingly beautiful place to stay is the icing on the cake.



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# SWELLELEGANT STAYS

*The indefinable sense of style that makes us swoon:  
swoanky, swell & elegant.*





## **The Mayfair Townhouse**

London, England

Oscar Wilde wrote *The Importance of Being Earnest* on London's Half Moon Street, a stone's throw away from Piccadilly. In the play, this is also where the charming but unprincipled character of Algernon lives. And Wilde's real-life lover, Robbie Ross, a journalist, art critic and dealer, resided at number 40.

The dandy lifestyle of Wilde, Ross, and their late 19th century contemporaries is the main inspiration for one of London's newest and chicest hotels, The Mayfair Townhouse. A terrace of 15 Georgian houses, seven of which are listed buildings with protected status, has been combined into an impressive 170 room hotel. The houses retain many of their original features, including their attractive facades, so at least on the face of it they remain very much in keeping with their Mayfair surroundings.





Step inside, however, and not all is as it seems. As reception manager Mitchell Collier explained, the designers looked not only to the dandies but also to the surreal worlds of Alice in Wonderland and Alexander McQueen. Arrivals are greeted in the lobby by a peacock encrusted with 25,000 Swarovski crystals. The staff call him Alfie, a nod to Lord Alfred Douglas, the most famous of Wilde's many lovers. What looks at first glance to be an oil painting of Lord Byron turns out to be a pastiche by artist ANTOX. The giveaway is that Byron is listening to something on his iPad.

The heart of The Mayfair Townhouse is the appropriately named Dandy Bar, an atmospheric space which feels like a private members club. The avant-garde cocktails have names such as Mr Bosie (Lord Douglas' nickname), The Casanova, and The Earl in Mayfair, and they showcase an eclectic array of ingredients, from

gin-infused fennel to black walnut bitter. Every one of the cocktails arrives looking like an artwork, and they taste as fine as they look.

Hedonism can be exhausting, but thankfully the hotel's guestrooms and suites are only an elevator ride away. The buildings' quirky layout means that every room is slightly different, but all boast lush furnishings, marble bathrooms, and limited edition artworks by award winning British artist Miss Aniela. A copy of *The Importance of Being Earnest* appeared by the bed after turndown for some perfectly chosen bedtime reading.

**[www.themayfairtownhouse.com](http://www.themayfairtownhouse.com)**

## **Petunia Ibiza**

Ibiza, Spain

Overlooking the magnificent rock of Es Vedra, Petunia Ibiza occupies one of the most impressive positions on the Spanish island with which it shares its name. A stone's throw from the sparkling shores of Cala Carbó, the hotel reopened for the summer 2021 season after extensive renovations, and it is now one of the finest places to stay in the Balearics.

On an island which averages 300 days of sunshine every year, you will want to spend much of your time outdoors. Petunia Ibiza has expanded its outside spaces with a new piazza, kitchen gardens, and even an outdoor gym. The brand new Es Vedra Junior Suite has no fewer than four private rooftop terraces, and residents and guests alike can wine and dine at the exquisitely appointed La Mirada Rooftop restaurant and bar. Unspoilt views stretch from the guest rooms straight out to sea.







Staying at Petunia Ibiza is a lifestyle choice. The hotel has added two speed boats to its collection, which you can hire for private use to sail from cove to cove around the coast. Ask the chef for a luxurious picnic and bottle of Champagne to enjoy the full celebrity experience.

If fashion is more your scene, you're in luck. Petunia Ibiza has a collaboration with Anais Formentera, plus a boutique stocked with swimwear by designers such as Manebi, Nue, and Khurakeva London. Throughout the tourist season there's a calendar of pop up fashion events, so you can show off your style and expand your wardrobe with the latest looks without even having to step outside the hotel.

When it comes to food and drink, you're also going to be spoilt for choice. Petunia Ibiza excels with sunset cocktails in the garden, followed by dinner at La Mesa Escondida. One of Ibiza's most loved restaurants, it was recently acquired by the hotel's owners and is delighting a new generation of food lovers with its freshly harvested produce and unique style.

[www.petuniaibiza.com](http://www.petuniaibiza.com)



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Bonjour mes amis,

In Europe, ski season is in full flow. I've come to Courchevel in the French Alps to breathe in the fresh mountain air, feast my eyes on the snow covered landscapes, and to explore Les Trois Vallées (the Three Valleys) the largest linked ski area in the world.

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meticulously. The colour  
mountains themselves), a  
lines between the lodge an

towards  
and the pool  
dipped my toes in  
what a treat it'd be to com

There's no chance to swim in the gardens, v  
Hotel Mansour Eddahbi Marrakech. The spa area  
and the outdoor swimming pool is a turquoise jewel. I c  
at any great speed, for a few dozen lengths, then lounge  
gently warm afternoon sun. A few guests were stretching  
and I was tempted to enter the hammam, but in the end  
glass of tea.

in set faster than I had expected, and at night  
rance in the air. Couples cooed up to  
Mansour Bar & Lounge, then d  
and grant diners a little  
and occasional gigg

# LETTERS FROM...

By The Swank Team

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# A LETTER FROM *Asia*: Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Dear friends,

You'll have heard me speak often of "The Golden Road to Samarkand". It's a phrase and a concept which has inspired generations of travellers, poets, and artists to make their way across Asia along the Great Silk Road. But what many of them fail to realise is that there is a greater treasure still. It's the city of Bukhara, a World Heritage Site every bit as spectacular as Samarkand, but somehow more complete, more perfect than its more famous neighbour.

Bukhara's UNESCO-listed Old City is every bit as vibrant, as impressive, as the much-trodden streets of Istanbul or Rome. But in this strange time of COVID, I almost have the streets and squares to myself.



Picture me here. I am sat beneath the shade of a tree in Lyabi Hauz, a picturesque square which I surrounds the city's original drinking water reservoir. A few elderly gentlemen are playing backgammon and drinking tea; a couple of ladies are strolling by, dazzling in their rainbow coloured silks. When I look up, I see the most graceful of historic monuments. The Nadir Divan Beghi Madrassa was originally a religious school, its elegant facade decorated inspiringly with mosaics depicting two soaring simurghs, mythical birds rather like phoenixes.









Every day, late in the afternoon when the temperature starts to cool, I take a walk (and, more often than not, stop for a drink or a snack) in another part of Bukhara. Much of the time I feel as if I am wandering in an open air museum, but the fact that people still live here, their homes squeezed into labyrinthine streets between the countless historic monuments, means that there is still a living, breathing community. If there are ghosts of the past here, they are competing for space and attention with the school girls running down the street, the women taking a break from shopping to gossip on the street, two old men sitting quietly watching the world go by, and a street dog rolling on her back to have her tummy tickled.

In the very centre of Bukhara is the Poi Kalon, the square I walk through nearly every day. The Kalon Minaret crowning the plaza was built in 1127 and it has always been the tallest structure in the city. It is said that when Genghis Khan approached Bukhara with his Mongol horde, he saw this tower from a distance and admired its beauty. When he finally reached the city, he ordered his troops to spare it, even as they laid everything else to waste. I look up at it and am reminded how much of survival is down to luck.

Talking of good fortune, I've fallen on my feet with accommodation. I am staying at Komil Boutique Hotel, the most extraordinary property in the Old City, a stone's throw from the tourist sites. Through the gateway in an otherwise unremarkable wall is an open courtyard, the centrepiece of a spectacular 19th century house.

There are many such houses in Bukhara. A number of them are still family homes. Some have been renovated and modernised in haste, but here they have got the balance between contemporary comforts and the preservation of history just right.

This house belonged to one of Bukhara's wealthiest merchants. He must have been so proud of his home.





You can see it in the weight of the carved wooden doors, the tiers of balconies around the central courtyard, and the exquisitely decorated dining room. It still has the original plasterwork and painting on the walls, the work of master craftsmen long since departed from this earth. I sit each morning by the window, drinking tea and eating fresh bread with homemade jam, and thinking about the effort they made, the skill they showed, in every single brush stroke.

I know that I will find it hard to leave Bukhara. It's such an easy and rewarding place to be. Wherever I wander, there's always something fascinating to see, a friendly new face welcoming me, and, more often than not, the unparalleled smell of freshly baked bread wafting in the

air. What I am sure of is that my absence won't be long. Bukhara will call me back. Will you join me here next time? You certainly won't regret it.

Best,

*Sophie*

# SWANKY SIPS:



- ✓ **BIODYNAMIC**
- ✓ **VINEYARDS**
- ✓ **AND LLAMAS**

IN ENGLAND'S SURREY HILLS

When did you last have lunch with a llama? Deep in the English countryside, but within easy reach of London, is The Merry Harriers in Hambledon, a classic gastropub and rooms which is now also home to a large herd of llamas. Mungo, Louis, and friends will escort you on a walk through the Surrey Hills Area of Natural Beauty (AONB). You can plan a children's birthday picnic with llama guests in the woodland, and you can even opt for a signature llama experience, with a cosy night's stay, a three course dinner, and – you've guessed it – llamas.







Story By Sophie Ibbotson





Llamas are far from being a native species in Britain: they have their origins in the Americas, and played an important role, historically and culturally, for the indigenous peoples of the Andes and Altiplano. But in recent years, llamas have become an increasingly common sight in Europe, especially amongst the rolling hills of southern England. They are prized for their good nature and, along with their alpaca brethren, for their wool; and although sheep and cows are still far more commonplace, the llamas, too, are putting in appearances at traditional agricultural shows, delighting attendees.

The English landscape is changing, especially in rural areas. Many of the changes are for the better: there is a greater attention to biodiversity and land management, including planting of hedgerows, native woodland, and wildflower meadows to encourage pollinators such as bumble bees. And, as global warming changes the climate, it is now possible once again to have vineyards, which disappeared from Britain in Roman times.



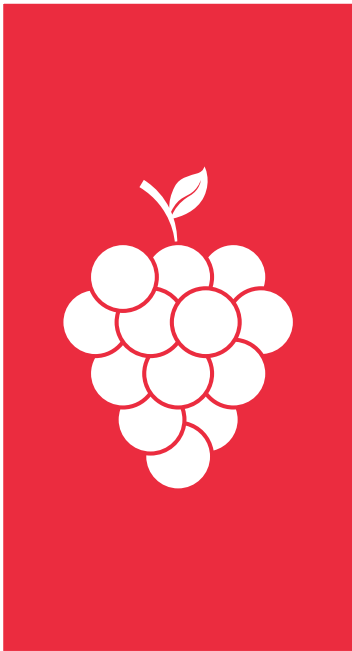


My reason for travelling to Merry Harriers (besides a love of llamas, which should go without saying) was to find out more about their partnership with Albury Organic Vineyard, a family-owned estate just a few miles away from the hotel. Owner Nick Wenman and his daughter Lucy Letley planted the vineyard in 2009. Working closely with vineyard manager Alex Valsecchi (who is one of the country's few female vineyard managers) and wine maker Matthieu Elzinga, they run it following organic and biodynamic principles.

You are probably already familiar with organic produce; avoiding the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides isn't always easy, but organic viticulture produces better quality fruit and, ultimately, better quality wine, as well as being better for the environment. But biodynamic agriculture? Until I visited Albury, it was a concept I'd only heard of at the Makaibari Tea Estate in Darjeeling, India. I wasn't aware that it was in use in vineyards, too.

Biodynamic vineyards are very rare. Albury is one of just a handful in the United Kingdom; there are also a small number in Australia, France, and the USA. Biodynamics was pioneered in the early 20th century by an Austrian scientist, Rudolf Steiner, who was concerned that modern industrial agriculture was damaging the quality of the soil, leading to reduced crop yields. Steiner took a holistic view, considering soil health, the raising of livestock, and the growth of plants as interrelated, interdependent tasks. He also combined some spiritual practices with his agronomy, including sowing and harvesting crops in accordance with an astrological calendar.





At Albury, the team focuses on aspects of biodynamic agriculture which encourage a natural harmony between the earth, the vine, and the cosmos. They fertilise the soil with compost teas made from combinations of yarrow, chamomile, stinging nettle, oak bark, and dandelion. Some of the preparations include ground quartz. In winter, Albury's staff bury cow horns stuffed with organic manure in the ground. Come springtime, the horns (their contents now wonderfully decomposed) are dug back up, and the manure is sprayed across the site. It may sound odd, but the consequence is that the vineyard's soil is incredibly fertile, and all the plants growing within it – including the vines – are thriving.

It all sounds sensible enough, but from a wine lover's perspective, it's what the wine tastes like which is most important. Having toured the vineyard on a fall afternoon, just as the leaves on the vines were beginning to change colour, I headed into the on site tasting room. I can genuinely say that I sat down with a feeling of excitement rather than intrepidation, but having never actually tasted a biodynamic wine before, I didn't know quite what to expect.

Well, my excitement was justified. The Albury Estate Classic Cuvée won gold at the International Organic Wine Awards in 2019, with a score of 95 PAR points. Combining Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Pinot Meunier grapes, it is fresh, lively, and exactly what you want from a fine sparkling wine. The 2015 Albury Estate Biodynamic Wild Ferment is a sensational wild yeast fermented Chardonnay, and as only 600 bottles were ever made, if you are lucky enough to get your hands on some, you should save it for the most special occasion.







I returned to Merry Harriers in the late afternoon. The air was already cool, but the pub is wonderfully warm and cosy inside. I spied upon the menu Albury's Silent Pool Rose, which is included in the hotel's two-night A Taste of Surrey package. There was no doubt in my mind what I was going to drink that night.

I wanted to sit a while before dinner, on the patio outside my Garden Room. My view overlooked the llama paddock, where the herd was lounging about. Gentle Mungo did wander across to see what I was doing, but he lost interest in me (unsurprisingly) when he realised I had no food. He had to make do with a good scratch on his soft, woolly neck. I sipped on a gin from the local distillery, The Village Spirit Collective, topped up with a Fever Tree tonic. All I could hear was the swoosh of the wind in the trees and an occasional grunt from a llama; it is a rare treat to feel so completely at peace.







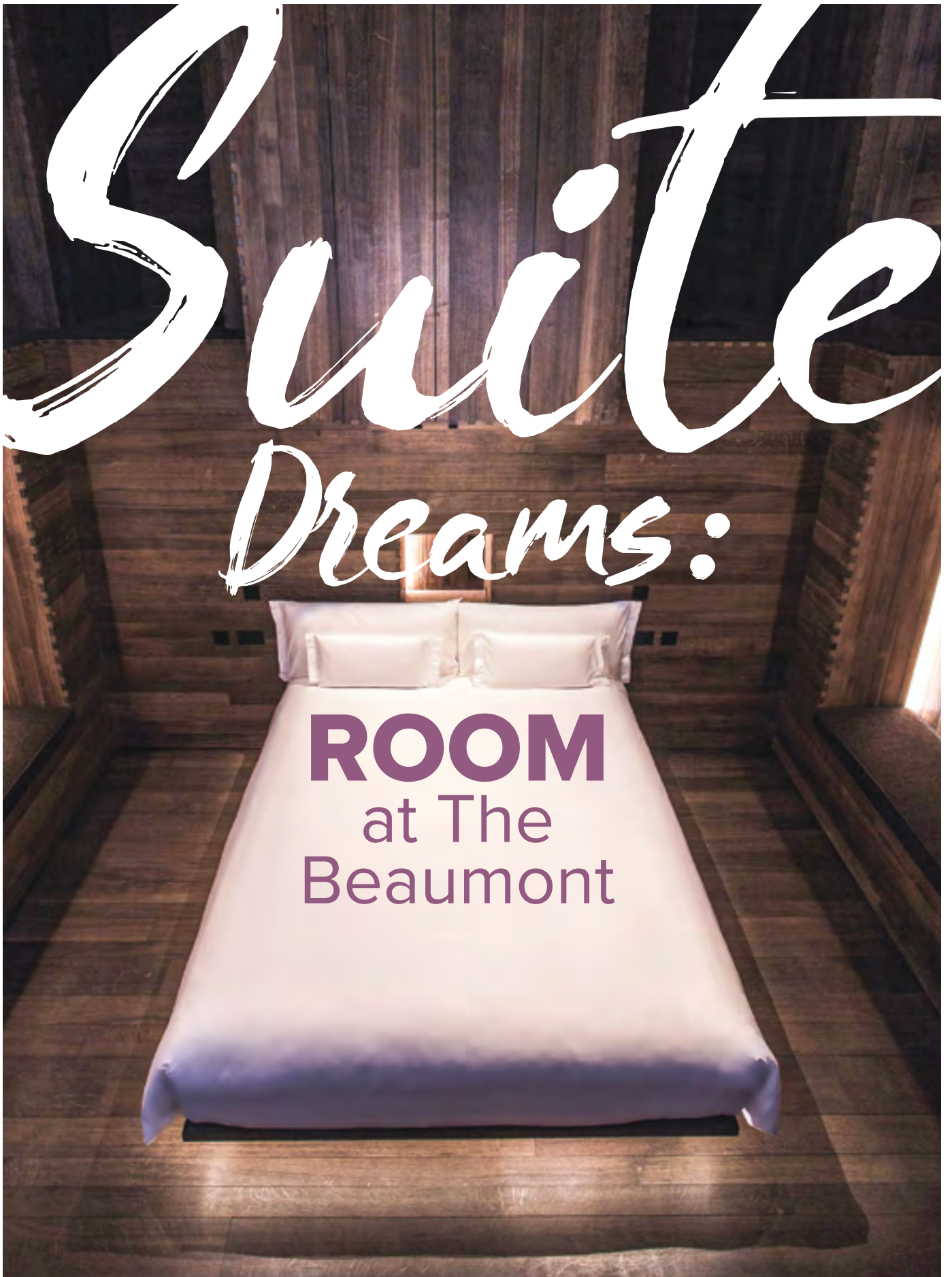
With the equinox recently past, it was already dark when I crossed the patio from my room to the restaurant, which is in the historic part of the pub. It dates from the early 18th century. The glow from the windows beckoned me inside, and I'd scarcely stepped over the threshold before being greeted by house dog, Jake. His human assistants were hot on his heels. From then on unrolled a magical evening of good food, good conversation, and laughter, the quintessential English pub experience finishing off a perfect day.

**[www.merryharriers.com](http://www.merryharriers.com)**

SR







*Suite  
Dreams:*

**ROOM**  
at The  
Beaumont



Contemporary sculptor Sir Antony Gormley has long been regarded as one of the most influential people in British culture. Winner of the Turner Prize and a Royal Academician, Gormley's iconic Angel of the North, which stands guard over the River Tyne, is the largest statue in Britain. But less well known is that he has also created an inhabitable sculpture in the heart of London. ROOM is both a semi-abstract monumental artwork, and also the capital's most exclusive hotel suite.



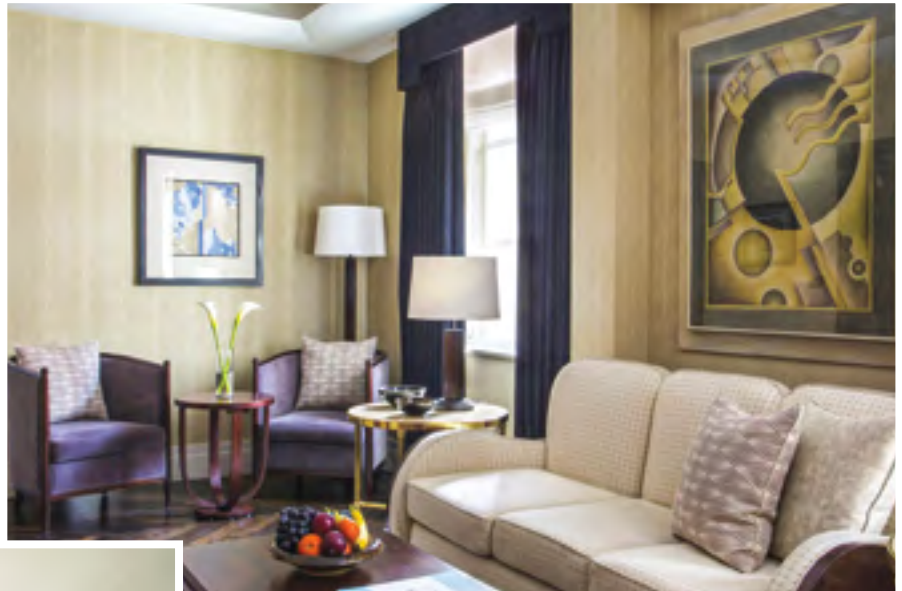




Standing outside The Beaumont on Brown Hart Gardens, a stone's throw away from the world famous Selfridges department store, ROOM is unmissable. Its brutalist cubist form contrasts dramatically with the hotel's Art Deco facade, and sparks even more curiosity than Queen Victoria's elephant house across the street. Sashaying past the uniformed doormen into the tastefully glitzy lobby, there is a taste of the decadence of *The Great Gatsby* in the decor, which only gets stronger in the Gatsby Room. Guests enjoy afternoon tea whilst being serenaded by a pianist at the grand piano, then later wander on through to Le Magritte Bar for sophisticated cocktails, or into the Colony Grill Room for the best steak in London.

Those fortunate enough to be checking in to ROOM ascend to the second floor, inevitably admiring the glamorous vintage photos in the elevator on the way. The dark wood of the suite's private entrance lobby gives way to a brightly lit living room and a white marble and chrome bathroom that positively sparkles, but it is the stairs beyond which lead the eye upwards. Full length black curtains hide what is inside, increasing the sense of anticipation.





The curtains are pulled back with a dramatic flourish. A shaft of natural light streams into an otherwise deliberately dark interior. The concrete cubes which create the building's structure are clad with a wooden lining. Clever lighting accentuates the blocks. Here, form is everything: the only item of furniture inside is the stark, white bed; there's nothing else to distract from the space.

Lying on the bed looking up, you realise that ROOM is far, far higher than it is wide. As with all the most thought provoking abstract art, the usual, predictable visual reference points are distorted. There's nothing that one might recognise as a living space, and yet here you are, occupying the room. It is at once an extreme experiment in Bauhaus architecture, and in manipulating human psychology.

Staying in ROOM is an art lover's dream, but also a challenge. You cannot glance about the suite, close your eyes, and forget about it. You have to look – and think – deeply. Long after you have left The Beaumont, ROOM will play on your mind. It is the epitome of an unforgettable place to stay.

[www.thebeaumont.com](http://www.thebeaumont.com)

SR



**DETOX**  
**RETOX**  
**RINSE**  
**REPEAT**  
*(FORT LAUDERDALE STYLE)*








Field reporting can be daunting. Traveling around the world to bring you the latest and greatest travel stories can take its toll. Here we have one for you where we stepped up and took one for the team. Cheers to you!

### ***THE FOLLOWING IS WHAT WE KNEW THE TRIP HAD IN STORE FOR US:***

- We'll get the heart pumping with an open-air pure barre class at sunset overlooking the Atlantic Ocean  
***CHECK...SOUNDS PROMISING ENOUGH.***
- Detox and get our glow on with a curated spa treatment at AWAY  
***DOUBLE CHECK THAT I READ THAT CORRECTLY!***

Below were my choices: 

### ***SPA TREATMENT OPTIONS:***

50 min. Detox Massage - Detox and recoup with energizing techniques and a rich blend of oils designed to stimulate metabolism and eliminate toxins.

50 min. Go Deep Massage - Boost energy and banish tension, designed to target deeper muscle layers and release tension

50 min. Prescription Facial - Inside and outside recovery. Fully customized to whatever your skin needs most; hydration, deep cleansing, age protection or treat sensitivity

50 min. Detox Facial - Detox the skin from pollution and treat impurities and imperfections with this deep cleansing treatment suited to all skin types.

I read that thrice to ensure I was making good decisions!





## ***NEXT UP ON THE AGENDA?***

- The sea is calling! We'll retex with a half-day boat charter to explore Fort Lauderdale's iconic Intracoastal. Don't worry, cocktails and music are all in the queue.

### ***I UNDERSTAND THE ASSIGNMENT...***

- Indulge in award-winning cuisine at Steak 954. PS. We can't miss its iconic 15' foot jellyfish tank!

***READ:*** Hold off on any weight loss plans until spin class.

- Soak in the sun with crafted cocktails and bites at the Insta-worthy rooftop WET deck pool.

### ***SEE ABOVE***

- Work off last night's dinner with a morning cycling class. Trust us, you haven't done one like this before (ocean views included) Here we are!
- Happy Hour calls! We'll venture into the heart of downtown Fort Lauderdale for happy hour and scope out some other must-visit destination hotspots

What did I say in the beginning of this piece? Cheers to you, team.

This was going to be a great time. I took a rideshare service to the W Fort Lauderdale which is located directly along the sultry shores of Fort Lauderdale Beach. Judging from the itinerary, it was better to leave the driving to someone else. W Fort Lauderdale lives up to its chic and glamorous reputation, with a bold personality to match. As South Florida's signature playground, this beachfront beauty pushes travelers to live it up from sunrise to sunset with an endless list of amenities and activities.





It all started innocently enough with welcome cocktails in The Living Room before dinner at El Vez. This is the Hotel's Mexican restaurant where the faint of heart need not belly up to the table. The choices are all delicious and portions are healthy. By healthy, I mean the opposite of what just came to mind. I ate (and became addicted to) Macho Nachos. They are delicious and festooned with chile-braised brisket. My mouth waters simply thinking about this dish. I nibbled on ceviche as an appetizer, but when I said addicted, I meant it. I went back for those Macho Nachos on a daily basis.

With afternoons at leisure, I indulged in the rooftop pool to soak in the South Florida sun. This Insta-wonderland is primed for selfies and underwater photos thanks to the see-through pool walls. After a lot of that, I decided to hop on one of the resort's E-bikes and cruise A1A (beachfront avenue). It wasn't so much of a workout as it was a fun way to explore the gorgeous beach and people-watch.

**BY 6:00 P.M. THAT NEXT EVENING, IT WAS TIME FOR PURE BARRE CLASS (LIVING ROOM TERRACE)**

After a relaxing afternoon, in order to keep on track with the detox/retox theme, it was time to get the heart pumping with an open-air pure barre class at sunset overlooking the Atlantic Ocean before dinner at the decadent Steak 954, an award-winning steakhouse curated by James Beard Award winner Stephen Starr. The 15' jellyfish aquarium was more of a mesmerizing wall that greeted us as we entered the dimly lit dining room. The exercise class prior to this indulgent evening was a wise choice. Guilt be gone!





Mornings at spin classes by Sea Cycle, afternoons at WET or on the beach, Dinners and cocktails all flowed nicely together, punctuated by spa treatments. Only once did we head off property for happy hour at Rhythm & Vine and an Italian dinner on the famed Las Olas Boulevard.

After all of that, it was only appropriate to end with Beach Yoga and breakfast at SoBe Vegan.

## **THERE YOU HAVE IT.**

**THE PERFECT DETOX TO RETOX GETAWAY ON THE SHORES OF FORT LAUDERDALE.**

[www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/flwh-w-fort-lauderdale](http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/flwh-w-fort-lauderdale)

[www.elvezftlauderdale.com](http://www.elvezftlauderdale.com)

[www.steak954.com](http://www.steak954.com)

[www.sobev.com](http://www.sobev.com)

[www.rhythm-vine.com](http://www.rhythm-vine.com)

[www.Sunny.org](http://www.Sunny.org)

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