

DESTINATIONS OF THE WORLD
news

Essential travel intelligence

February 2019



VIENNA
unfurled

GET WILD
in Tanzania

INTERVIEW:
CHEF NIKO ROMITO
AT THE BULGARI
RESORT DUBAI

ON THE ROAD
*the Maserati
GranCabrio Sport*

**WINTER
ROMANCE**

AMOROUS ESCAPES AROUND THE WORLD

HOT HOTELS



AMAZING ESCAPES



SUPERYACHTS



LUXURY CARS



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THE RITZ-CARLTON
DUBAI INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL CENTRE

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NATURE AND MODERN TWISTS
ON LOCAL TRADITIONS.



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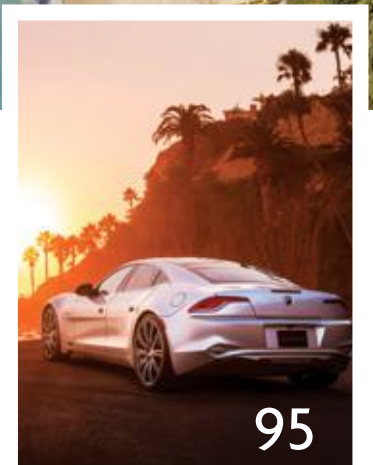
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COSY MEETS CLASSY

We bring you the best luxury travel news from around the globe

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MONTENEGRO EVOLVES LUXURY OPTIONS WITH ANANTI

THE ADRIATIC HAS EVOLVED ITS HIGH-END HOTEL OPTIONS in recent years, with the openings of Regent Porto Montenegro, The Chedi Luštica Bay and others – including the longstanding Aman Sveti Stefan, a stalwart of the five-star scene over the past decade. Bolstering the lineup of luxury hotels, Ananti Resort, Residences & Beach Club is due to open its doors in May as a member of The Leading Hotels of the World, with its own private beach.

The property includes two residential buildings, eight private villas (three to four bedrooms, between 300 and

550 sqm) and 14 suites (51 to 114 sqm). The independent villas feature a private pool and outdoor area with large terraces and an unobstructed sea view. Four of them also include a study, a private spa, a large gym, a Jacuzzi overlooking the sea, a relaxation room, a dining terrace with kitchen and BBQ, a separate studio for guests or nannies, a private reception and an infinity pool.

The 14 suites all face the sea and boast separate bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms, living rooms, dining rooms and outdoor terraces. Ananti also includes a state-of-the-art spa set over three floors to meet the needs of

spa and wellbeing lovers and a main swimming pool situated on the top terrace where the sea provides a perfect backdrop.

Inspired by Asian and Middle Eastern luxury, combined with Mediterranean elegance, the architecture of the development is designed to maximise the natural surroundings of Rezevici, from olive groves to nearby parks. The resort clings to the hillside and is completely integrated into the surrounding landscape, with interiors consisting of natural materials, with a blend of stone and wood.

STAR CHEF TAKES TO THE SKIES WITH AIR FRANCE

THE WOMAN WHO HAS WON THE MOST MICHELIN stars is underway with her partnership with Air France. The proud winner of seven stars across her restaurants, Anne-Sophie Pic, signed a deal with the French flag carrier to create new Business Class menus that will be available until the end of March. During the month of February, flyers can expect poultry with tonka beans, voasti polenta and chicken sauce – or beef cheek in a coffee marinade, with celery, chestnut and carrots. In March, options include guinea fowl and cream of green peas in a black tea sauce, or pollock with creamy black rice, butternut and coconut curry sauce. www.airfrance.com





DON'T MISS

LONDON'S ESTEEMED CHELSEA IS READY TO WELCOME BACK ONE OF ITS MORE ICONIC PROPERTIES. BELMOND CADOGAN HOTEL WILL RETURN AT THE END OF THE MONTH AFTER A THREE-YEAR, \$48 MILLION RENOVATION

THIS PORTUGUESE PALACE IS “THE ONE”

LISBON IS REPLETE WITH HISTORIC BUILDINGS with an aesthetic that blends a modern city with age-old charm – that’s why The One Palácio Da Anunciada is the perfect fit for the Portuguese capital. The new five-star hotel is housed in an old 16th-century palace, located just steps away from the central Praça dos Restauradores and from Avenida da Liberdade, one of the main art and shopping districts of central Lisbon. The One Palácio da Anunciada boasts 83 rooms – of which five suites – a gastronomic restaurant, a gourmet cocktail bar and a wine and tapas bar, a 2,500 sqm garden and an outdoor swimming pool with bar, the Despacio Spa at The One, business centre and meetings facilities. In the palace – founded in 1533 – there was once a library with more than 18,000 books and a museum with works of Rubens, Titian and Correggio and in the gardens there was a sculpture of Bernini built in Rome. In 1755, an earthquake struck and caused serious damage to the building. In more recent history, it was acquired by the Count of Burnay and, in 1926, by Ateneu Comercial of Lisbon.

www.hotelstheone.com/en/lisboa

TUSCANY’S VILLA LENA IS A WEDDING BELLE



VILLA LENA, THE UNIQUE AGROTURISMO SET in the rolling hills of rural Tuscany, will re-open for 2019 with an expanded wedding offering, and the introduction of its first honeymoon suite, Casetta dell'Amore. These new additions to Villa Lena are part of a wider renovation of Fattoria, one of the estate’s main buildings. The building will also be home to a new wine cellar, yoga deck, rain pavilion, art library and a number of additional guestrooms.

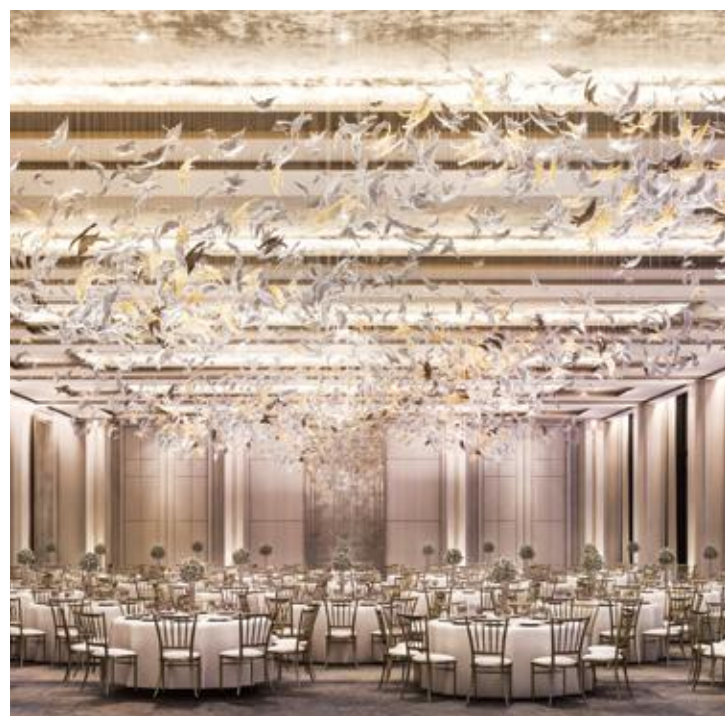
Designed in collaboration with internationally recognised architects, Hesselbrand, the renovations make use of the original qualities in the design of the building – whilst opening up each room to create a natural flow of light and space. The Fattoria building’s walls will be adorned with a rotating selection of original artwork from previous artists-in-residence. For those wishing to marry in the estate’s beautiful outdoors, the Villa’s expansive lawns will continue to be used. www.villa-lena.it



COCO COLLECTION STANDS UP FOR THE SEA

IN 2018 WE SAW AQUAMAN defending the oceans, and in 2019 Coco Collection is stepping up to play its part. This month, four women will embark on an unprecedented 100km stand up paddleboarding expedition around Baa Atoll, Maldives, as part of the brand's Stand Up for Our Seas initiative. The team will travel on stand up paddleboards around the atoll, stopping off at different local islands and resorts, running beach cleanups, hosting talks at schools, and giving presentations to various resorts and their guests. They will also be highlighting the steps and initiatives already underway by the local communities to tackle these issues. The activity is sponsored by Coco Collection in collaboration with CSR partner Olive Ridley Project (ORP), a UK charity based in the Indian Ocean which rescues and rehabilitates turtles entangled by discarded fishing nets.

www.cocollection.com



CAPELLA TO CROWN THE RIVER OF KINGS

CAPELLA HOTEL GROUP is putting the finishing touches on its first urban resort in Thailand. Capella Bangkok is set to open in the second quarter of 2019, located on the east bank of the legendary River of Kings (Chao Phraya River) – the first luxury property to open along the waterway in the last two decades. Undergoing a major transformation, the surrounding river and Charoenkrung neighbourhood are reveling in the rise of its burgeoning local arts scene and the revival of its provincial culinary landscape. The hotel itself offers 101 suites and the city's first riverfront villas, located within the highly anticipated Chao Phraya Estate. The 14-acre-plus prime

waterfront land development boasts unprecedented accessibility and 350 metres of riverfront real estate.

“The revival of the riverside has been happening organically for some years now and it's incredible to experience the enthusiasm everybody has for a return to the city's original roots,” said John Blanco, General Manager of Capella Bangkok. “It's reminiscent of the redevelopment of historic – and often artistic – waterfront locales in other major metropolises such as the Meatpacking District in Manhattan and Belém in Lisbon, and I have every confidence that it will have the same uplifting effect on the city as a whole.”

www.capellahotels.com

THE RITZ-CARLTON REVAMPS TOP SUITE

THE RITZ-CARLTON SUITE – the jewel in the crown of The Ritz-Carlton, Istanbul – has been unveiled after a two-year renovation across all rooms and event spaces. Located on the 14th floor, the 2,584 sq ft suite features floor-to-ceiling windows providing magnificent views across the Bosphorus. The space was re-imagined by well-known Turkish architect, Hakan Yürüoğlu, who is also responsible for the redevelopment of all banqueting areas including the stunning ballroom. In keeping with the other 243 guestrooms, gold and copper hues are combined with highlights of rich blue to reflect the rich history of the Ottoman Empire.

www.ritzcarlton.com



ULTRA-PRIVATE RESIDENCES REDESIGNED IN THE MALDIVES

VELAA PRIVATE ISLAND HAS UNVEILED its ultra private residence, NIKA, by multi award-winning interior designer, Patricia Urquiola. The two-storey 1,350 sqm detached residence opened its doors in December ahead of the festive season, offering the ultimate beach retreat accommodating up to 10 guests.

In her design, Urquiola plays with the perception between indoor and outdoor, challenging the defining lines between the spaces. She captured this by lengthening the height of the ceiling allowing the verticality of the windows to give a sense of a continuity to showcase the ocean views.

She has used materials such as raffia, natural wood and earthy textiles on the vertical panels to help to embrace the space, creating a warm, comfortable and light habitat.

“My vision for NIKA Private Residence stemmed from the local environment and the desire to celebrate it and create a sophisticated elegant space that recalls the surrounding nature,” said Urquiola. “The chosen colour palette for the project is a natural one, where the beauty of the details is always evident and the carefully crafted lightness of space capturing.”

www.velaaprivateisland.com



SHANGRI-LA INTRODUCES THE KLOOK CONCIERGE

THREE SHANGRI-LA HOTELS debuted the Klook Concierge service in December, allowing guests to discover and book Klook experiences throughout their stay via a tablet at the hotel concierge, even at the last minute. The properties in Bangkok, Singapore and Hong Kong are pioneering the partnership between Shangri-La and Klook, a world leading travel activities and services booking platform.

With the partnership, Shangri-La can provide more differentiated experiences and benefits important to guests and Golden Circle members, including earning and redeeming Golden Circle Award Points from local experiences and at over 500 restaurants and CHI, The Spa within Shangri-La. Klook's expertise in meeting the needs of the “on-the-go”, tech-savvy, millennial traveller will complement Shangri-La's offerings and help define a new model of creating one's own journey.

www.shangri-la.com

Debut | February

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



TAJ ARAVALI RESORT & SPA Udaipur, India

Taj has debuted its second hotel in Udaipur, nestled in the foothills of the picturesque Aravali Mountain Range. Taj Aravali Resort & Spa is spread across 27 acres of lush landscaped gardens and offers 92 luxurious rooms, suites and tents with panoramic views of the Aravalis. The design ethos is contemporary with a mix of traditional Rajasthani influences and furnishings inspired by Mewar's world-class equestrian heritage.

www.tajhotels.com

VINTRY & MERCER London, UK

Just a two-minute walk from London's Cannon Street station and Mansion House tube, Vintry & Mercer is located in the historic Vintry Ward, a destination where the Vintry Guild (est. 1363) traded wines and the Mercer Guild (est. 1304) traded in fine fabrics. From barrel-aged cocktails to bespoke fabrics and old trading maps decorating the 92 rooms, hallways and dining spaces, guests will discover references to these historic trades blended with a contemporary edge.

www.vintryandmercer.com



THE APURVA KEMPINSKI BALI
Bali, Indonesia

Opening its doors in the upmarket Nusa Dua corner of Bali, The Apurva Kempinski Bali presents 475 lavish rooms, suites and villas with a serene beachfront setting. A total of six restaurants, bars and lounges allow guests to soak in the sensational natural setting, with sweeping views and both indoor and outdoor dining venues that celebrate regional flavours. The property cascades down the hillside like one of Bali's iconic rice paddies, emerging from the cliff tops and gradually making its way down to the Indian Ocean, with designs courtesy of award-winning architect Budiman Hendropurnomo of UK-based Denton Corker Marshall. At the front of the resort, overlooking the ocean, Apurva Spa is a relaxing haven, where body and beauty treatments are inspired by time-honoured Javanese and Balinese wisdom. The philosophy is based on the ancient proverb 'rupasampat wahyabiantara': true beauty is achieved when outer beauty is in harmony with inner beauty.

www.kempinski.com



AVANI+ SAMUI RESORT
Koh Samui, Thailand

Situated by Taling Ngam Bay on Koh Samui's southwest shore, Avani+ Samui is designed as a seaside hideaway, ideal for couples or families. The beach paradise is steps away from an untouched, secluded bay where guests can choose from 25 guest rooms, 27 private pool villas, or six beachfront pool villas. Each is spacious, with nature-inspired interiors and ample natural lighting. Privacy can be found within the villas, where modern amenities are surrounded by verdant gardens with a private pool for the ultimate luxury. For further indulgence, AvaniSPA will offer guests treatments to relax and reinvigorate with the option to be pampered in the privacy of their room or villa.

www.avanihotels.com





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Chairman
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Alia Belkahia
Responsable du Développement
Immobilier et Touristique
Groupe BIAT



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HYATT REGENCY AL KOUT MALL
Al Dabbous Street, Kuwait

Located in Kuwait's thriving oil and gas district within the city's largest waterfront retail and leisure destination, Hyatt Regency Al Kout Mall provides guests with easy access to the shopping centre's additional offerings including Al Kout Mall, Souq Al Kout, Al Kout Marina, Al Kout Fisherman's Wharf, and Al Kout seaside promenade. There's a range of culinary experiences including Andiamo, the hotel's elegant Italian restaurant, featuring a dynamic open kitchen display and authentic signature dishes. Guests can also refresh and relax over healthy juices and smoothies at the rooftop pool lounge or enjoy a casual meal in The Lobby Lounge.

www.hyatt.com



W DUBAI – THE PALM
Dubai, UAE

Imagine uninterrupted sea views, dreamy amenities, decadent dining and the glamour of the AWAY Spa – all with the upbeat and funky ethos of the W brand. W Dubai – The Palm is seeking to redefine the city getaway with “sizzling” W Happenings on the WET® deck and SoBe rooftop, and epicurean encounters at celebrity chef restaurants Torno Subito and Akira Back. The island oasis invites guests to get a dose of golden sunshine on the crystalline white sands of the resort's beach – which is claimed to be the best on the Palm – a playground for water sports with year-round perma sunshine.

www.marriott.com

LUX* NORTH MALE ATOLL
North Male Atoll, Maldives

The latest LUX* opening offers something different in the Maldives with oversized penthouse residences that demonstrate fresh forward-thinking design. By blending superyacht panache with a South Beach pulse, these standalone stays upstage the traditional thatched villa vibe. Just a short transfer from Male by luxury speedboat or scenic seaplane, the desert island resort may feel remote but is easily accessible. Each of the residences sits right on the beach or over the water with living areas that are at least 350 sqm. The breezy, spacious villas host a choice of spaces in which to eat, drink, relax – from the rooftop relaxing areas to the sun terraces – treating guests to continuous pastel panoramas of the Indian Ocean.

www.luxresorts.com





FEB-MAR
23-5

2019 CARNIVAL OF VENICE

Venice, Italy

Carnival in Venice is a one-of-a-kind celebration suspended between past and present with a traditional fervour and many events taking place across the city. Among these, the starting two-day Festa Veneziana with its typical masked regattas, the Best Masked Costume Contest, the Festa delle Marie and countless iconic parades. The carnival extravaganza is mostly associated with its countless events held for almost 18 days throughout the most significant locations in the vibrant city centre. Starting from the preparation days before the official kick-in of Carnival celebrations, a true triumph of traditional craftsmanship, to parades, contests to vote the most beautiful masks or even stunning regattas, adults and the youngest ones alike currently get struck by the unique Venetian atmosphere. A not to be missed event.

www.carnevale.venezia.it



FEB
9-18



FEBRUARY Diary

This month's eclectic diary dates range from athletic endeavours at the 53rd Super Bowl, to highbrow cinematic showcases at Berlin's annual film fest. What tickles your fancy for February?

CHICAGO AUTO SHOW

Chicago, USA

The USA's largest and best-attended auto show is ramping up for another robust show, promising visitors access to nearly 1,000 of the newest cars, trucks and SUVs; demonstrations of the industry's latest technology; interactive exhibits; family-friendly activities; special appearances from celebrities and sports icons; and much more. In addition to the latest production, concept and exotic vehicles, the show is packed with opportunities for attendees to get behind the wheel through multiple indoor and outdoor ride-and-drive experiences.

www.chicagoautoshow.com

SUPER BOWL LIII

Mercedes-Benz Stadium, Georgia, USA

It's not only the cherry on top of the NFL season but the pinnacle of sporting entertainment in the US, when the nation shuts down to turn on the TV and watch the biggest game of the year. The game will pit the winners of the AFC and NFC conferences against one another in a game of four quarters of 15 minutes which somehow ends up at around four hours... but hey, that's "football". Game tickets start at \$3,430, including the official pregame party, with official hotel packages starting at \$8,850 for a three-night stay at The Westin Buckhead Atlanta. The package also includes "meet and greet" opportunities with NFL legends, pre-game entertainment and access to the three-hour party.

www.nfl.com/super-bowl



**FEB
3,10,17**

WHITE TURF ST MORITZ

St Moritz, Switzerland

White Turf is a unique, exclusive, top-class event with exciting horse-racing, gourmet catering, lively music and inspiring art exhibitions, all taking place in winter sunshine on the frozen lake among the stunningly beautiful, snow-capped mountains of St Moritz. This spectacular, major event is not just one with Champagne on ice for the rich and beautiful but an annual event where race-horse owners, trainers and jockeys from all over the world meet up as well as being an unmissable fixture on the calendar for local people. If you have a passion for racing, or just want to spend an unforgettable day out at a unique event in spectacular winter surroundings, make sure you experience White Turf in St Moritz.

www.whiteturf.ch



**FEB
4**



**FEB
7-17**



BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Berlin, Germany

The Berlinale is a unique place of artistic exploration and entertainment. It is one of the largest public film festivals in the world, attracting tens of thousands of visitors from around the globe each year. For the film industry and the media, the eleven days in February are also one of the most important events in the annual calendar and an indispensable trading forum. Every year, around 400 films of all genres, lengths and formats are shown in the various sections and special presentations of the festival. The entire public programme of the 69th edition of Berlinale was announced January 29.

www.berlinale.de

PHOTO: Alexander Janetzko/Jan Windszus

DISCOVER A LAND OF PLENTY IN PORTUGAL



SUN, SURF AND SUMPTUOUS PRODUCE – Portugal has always provided a bountiful experience on Europe’s Atlantic frontier. And this winter, foodies are invited to slow down and discover the ancient Alentejo farming region with São Lourenço do Barrocal’s new Land of Plenty experience. In the heart of the Alentejo region, the vintage estate – spanning 780 hectares – offers a refreshing alternative to the traditional winter break, designed to immerse guests in the rural culture of the region. The new ‘Land of Plenty’ programme gives guests a taste of locally sourced cuisine on arrival, with a farm-to-table meal. Then, from immersive culinary workshops to uncovering local craftsmanship at the

local pottery centre, participants can experience old world charms and forage for ingredients to cook alongside the hotel’s executive chef. On the final morning, guests will head out on a hike or horse-ride around the estate, followed by well-earned relaxation at the Susanne Kaufmann spa, with a new menu of winter spa treatments to rehydrate and renew the skin. The Land of Plenty Package starts from \$1,950 for 2 people, including three nights’ accommodation in one of the hotel’s guest rooms on a full board basis, a cooking class, winery tour, pottery class, private stargazing session and winter warming spa treatment.
www.barrocal.pt

A MICHELIN-STARRED POP UP IN MARRAKECH

When it comes to Mandarin Oriental hotels in Morocco and Hong Kong there’s a very flavourful French connection. Mandarin Oriental, Marrakech hosted a pop-up by chef Richard Ekkebus, Culinary Director at The Landmark Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong. Boasting two Michelin stars, the chef presented his contemporary version of classic French cuisine to diners at the resort’s Mes’Lalla restaurant on February 1 and 2. Among his many awards, Ekkebus received the Chevalier de l’Ordre national du Mérite from the President of France, in 2015, in recognition of his contribution to French cooking – so this is certainly a pop-up to remember.
www.mandarinoriental.com/marrakech



STEAMED CUISINE: A GOURMET JOURNEY BY RAIL IN ZAMBIA

Expect five-courses of fast (ish) fine dining aboard the The Royal Livingstone Express in Zambia. Guests at the Royal Livingstone Hotel by Anantara can experience a one-of-a-kind culinary journey as the vintage steam-powered train embarks on two different journeys. The Victoria Falls Bridge Run takes place on Wednesdays and Saturdays, travelling on the Cape to Cairo main line, and the Mulobezi Line Run operates on the other days of the week and travels through the heart of the Zambezi River Valley. Along the journey, guests can enjoy the sight of giraffes, zebras and antelope, while sipping on curated South African wines, with a flawless service in the in the lovingly restored Pullman-style coaches – five carriages comprising two dining cars, a kitchen car, lounge car and observation car. victoriafalls@bushtracksafrica.com



A LONDON HOME FOR THE WORLD'S TOP PASTRY CHEF

Chef Albert Adrià has launched “Cakes & Bubbles” at London’s Hotel Café Royal, following a successful pop up in 2016. Expanding his empire from the three-Michelin star elBulli, the sweet-toothed chef has developed a venue that blends tradition and modernity with a menu of classics such as egg flan with dark caramel and homemade doughnuts sit alongside a selection of specials such as airwaffles

with caramelised banana and chocolate ninyoyaki cake balls round out the menu alongside traditional pastries. Chef Adrià was voted The World’s Best Pastry Chef by The World’s 50 Best Restaurants and the opening of his Cakes & Bubbles venue follows on from the unveiling of Ziggy’s, a bar that pays homage to one Hotel Café Royal’s most renowned past patrons, David Bowie. www.cakesandbubbles.co.uk

MICHELIN TOUTS TWO NEW RESTAURANTS IN THE NETHERLANDS

The French tyre maker’s 2019 Netherlands dining guide adds two new two-star restaurants and 12 new one-star restaurants for a total of 110 Michelin-starred restaurants. Sabero, a fine-dining restaurant in Roermond from chef Nico Boreas, makes its debut in the 2019 guide with two stars after opening last spring. And Pure C, in the seaside town Cadzand, was elevated from one to two stars thanks to chef Syrc Bakker’s “deliciously disconcerting” dishes.

www.viamichelin.com

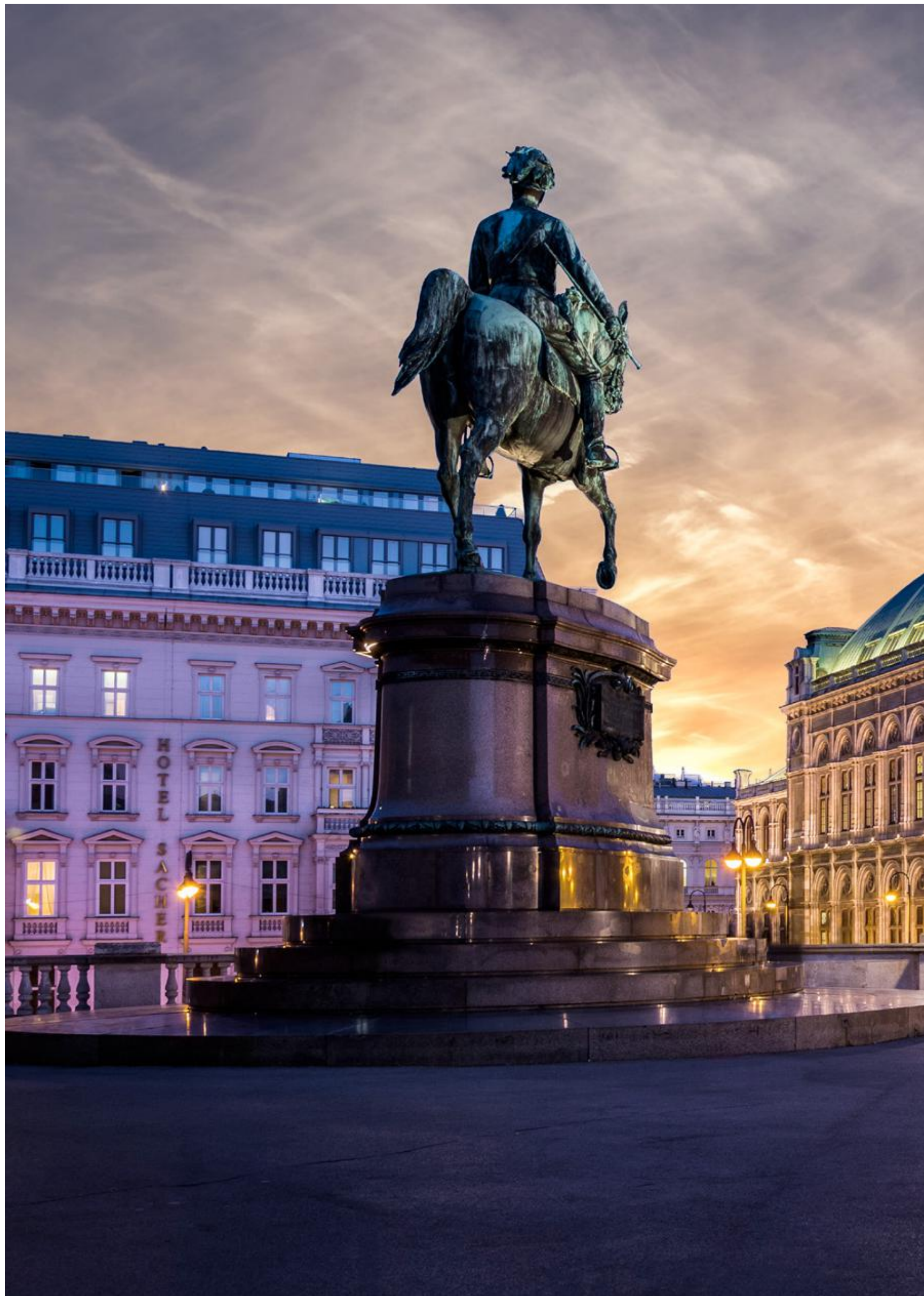


A tropical beach at sunset. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, with palm tree fronds silhouetted against the top. The ocean is calm, and a sailboat is visible on the left. The foreground shows dark, textured sand.

ROMANTIC ESCAPES

Love is in the air all across the globe and you could be jetting to any of these quixotic destinations in time for Valentine's Day – or whenever you're ready to make a romantic gesture





BABY IT'S COLD OUTSIDE

Wine older than Mozart, shopping fit for royalty and palatial
digs... that's Sarah Freeman's recipe for a cosily romantic
escape to the Austrian capital





ROAMING IN RUAHA

You can blend really wild experiences with lavish lodges in **Tanzania's Ruaha National Park**. Writer and photographer Graeme Green explores the nation's largest park and experiences a quartet of accommodations that provide the perfect vantage point for animal spotting

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF WWW.GRAEME-GREEN.COM



BUSINESS OR TREASURE?

Within the beating heart of Dubai's banking and finance hub, **The Ritz-Carlton, Dubai International Financial Centre** is much more than a business hotel, packed with gourmet delights and a bliss-inducing spa. Steven Bond checks in to a Junior Suite to soothe the stress of the week

Despite being a vast, hefty construction, Dubai's Downtown 15-storey Ritz-Carlton is overshadowed (only in the literal sense) by the picket fence of skyscrapers that line the city's superhighway. But once you roll off Sheikh Zayed Road and into the business district, the hotel is nigh on the most imposing buildings in the neighbourhood. The 341-key property is heavily based on art deco design with some Arabic flourishes and countless contemporary works of art strewn through the public spaces and corridors. The seven dining venues each present their own aesthetic, including Le Cirque, touted as the Big Apple's oldest French fine dining concept.

JUNIOR WHOPPER

One of the first tweets I posted when I moved to Dubai was from the lobby of The Ritz-Carlton, DIFC. To paraphrase: "the bathroom in the lobby of The Ritz-Carlton, DIFC is bigger than my apartment". It was about a month after I had arrived in the concrete jungle and I was still very much within the phase of gawking at all the fancy buildings. This one was no exception – except I was more focused on the interiors. If you haven't had the pleasure of perusing the hotel, I can assure you it wasn't hyperbole. And the reason I'm now recalling a vintage tweet? Because seven years later – just last month – I realised the bathroom in my suite was even bigger.

I'm no longer a prolific tweeter so I didn't rush to update my several dozen

followers on my sporadic bathroom commentary – but I was enthralled with the quality of echo I could produce in the combined shower, WC and closet area. Starting from 59 sqm, the space doesn't sound as capacious as it feels, but your door opens to a small corridor with a guest bathroom (also very large) ahead of the desk and dining area, complete with mini bar and coffee-making facilities. Ahead of you, the lounge puts a plush L-shaped sofa across from the TV, with an armchair completing the seating layout. The vibe is classic, elegant and very much in keeping with what you'd expect from a Ritz-Carlton suite – luxurious.

AN ECHO LOCATION

Stepping through into the bedroom, the first thing you'll notice is the size

of the king bed. Not just wide enough to sleep on at any angle but surprisingly high off the group. The huge slab of soft white dominates the room, across from a second TV, with another desk-cum-dresser, easy chair and a couple of storage units for stowing your essentials. The actual wardrobe lies past door number three, a frosted glass gateway into the aforementioned marble bathroom, which produces an echo perfect for shower-based capella sessions. You won't be short of amenities, with a full complement of Asprey's Purple Water amenities and grooming products.

The suite experience can be enjoyed without tapping into the hotel's swathe of eateries or entertainment options. It's tempting just to bunker down, order room service and let the hotel



“LIGHT AND DARK TONE WOODS, FINE LINENS, OVERSIZED RUGS AND A STUNNING MARBLED BATHROOM – IT’S YOUR OWN PRIVATE PALACE”



staff attend to every need in your little art deco hideaway. Light and dark tone woods, fine linens, oversized rugs and a stunning marbled bathroom – it’s your own private palace – but at this time of year you’ll want to venture out and enjoy the mild weather. There’s certainly space for a Jacuzzi (or a production of *La Perle*) in your suite’s bathroom but without a space to soak, you may choose to venture to the 15th storey pool. Catch some rays and order from the light menu as you enjoy the views of the surrounding behemoth buildings.

Drift off on your lounge but don’t miss out on the executive haven that is The Ritz-Carlton Club Level. For a heightened level of comfort and personal exclusivity, the Club Lounge at The Ritz-Carlton, DIFC is only

accessible only to Club Level guests. This oasis is often referred to as a hotel within a hotel, with exclusive amenities and continuous culinary offerings including breakfast, light lunch, hors d’oeuvres and sweets, with premium beverages available from midday. With a dedicated concierge at your service, it is the ideal place to conduct business, plan a couples retreat or simply unwind. There’s even a welcome cocktail to sample after a long day in Dubai (or unwinding in your suite) and a generous buffet that’s refreshed several times throughout the day.

DOWNTOWN ROMANCE

To commemorate romantic moments in February there is a special package available February 14, which includes a multitude of exclusive experiences

such as a 60-minute couple’s relaxation massage in the award winning spa, local pick-up and drop off by the hotel car, an exquisite brunch at Café Belge the next day, complete with dining in an intimate ambience of Le Cirque featuring an extensive array of delicacies and bubbles – perfect for a memorable celebration of love in the bustling city. There’s no rush whatsoever with a 4pm check-out and your loved one is sure to be touched by the customised in-room floral arrangement. Simply check the hotel website for more details.

To read more about hotel’s spa, fine dining venues and how to enjoy the best of Dubai’s financial district, pick up the upcoming “48 Hours in DIFC” feature in our March edition.

The important bit

WHAT: Junior Suite
 WHERE: The Ritz-Carlton, Dubai International Financial Centre
 PRICE: from \$340 per night
 TEL: +971 4-372-2222
www.ritzcarlton.com



BEACH, PLEASE

Immaculate beaches, lavish brunching and bedrooms you won't want to leave – **Rotana Saadiyat Resort & Villas** is the latest jewel on Abu Dhabi's island-strewn coastline. **Matthew McQueen** checked in for a weekend staycation and discovered the hotel's coastal charms

Rotana's latest opening in Abu Dhabi is also one of its most luxurious openings in the UAE, hence my great excitement to experience the resort firsthand. Entering the spacious marble lobby, light streams in through floor-to-ceiling windows looking over the tranquil grounds with design features that pay tribute to local heritage, with space left to allow the native turtles to thrive. Within the grounds, the swimming pool is adorned with statues of the amphibians, indicating the emphasis on ecology and conservation. With a bridge over the swimming pool flowing naturally to the beach club and golden beach as far as the eye could see, this soon became my favourite corner of the capital.

Check-in took place in the privacy

of the Club Lounge, allowing a discreet process before being whisked away to the suite. Working with natural contours and light woods, our home for the weekend had a beach house feel, with sea views enhancing the ambience. Both the living area and bedroom offer separate balconies with floor-to-ceiling windows, allowing a tremendous amount of natural daylight to stream in.

The suite has a real sense of purpose, tying in all of the coastal elements to create a resort feeling that you don't often get in the UAE – and I would have expected to have had to travel overseas to experience. The wall in both the bedroom and the living area display paintings of turtles, nodding to Saadiyat beach, which hosts a number of Hawksbill turtle nests every year – a critically endangered species. Guests

can sometimes have the opportunity to visit the turtles, or see them nesting from the boardwalk.

During a weekend stay, The Market Brunch is a must. Set up and laid out like a traditional town square, many of the delicious delicacies are placed between bags of spices, fruit and vegetables creating the ambience of a bustling market. One of the signature elements to this brunch is the fresh seafood counter where you select the fresh fish to be cooked on the barbecue. Select your live lobster, indulge in oysters or choose from an excellent variety of fish – the tuna steak is highly recommended and sliced as thick as you fancy.

Your evening is best spent at the Turtle Bay Bar & Grill, offering some of the most delicious seafood and steaks available in Abu Dhabi. I would highly

recommend the Wagyu Sirloin, easily one of the best steaks I've enjoyed in a long time. Accompanied with sour cream mashed potatoes, it was an incomparable experience, especially when followed by the menu's decadent chocolate fondant – a perfect finale to the meal. Following a day of relaxation and indulgence it was time to retire to the comfort of a king bed and take some time to rejuvenate for the next day. The hotel is a gem and I don't envisage my next stay being too far in the future.

The important bit

WHAT: Club Rotana Suite
WHERE: Rotana Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi, UAE
TEL: +971 2 697 0000
www.rotana.com



“THE LIVING AREA & BEDROOM OFFER SEPARATE BALCONIES WITH FLOOR-TO-CEILING WINDOWS, ALLOWING A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF NATURAL DAYLIGHT TO STREAM IN”





NO ADULTS ALLOWED

Our pick of the best of the best travel treats for junior travellers this month, from kids' clubs that inspire and delight, to toys that will always remind them of that special family escape

FAMILY ADVENTURES IN OMAN

Teens visiting Anantara's dynamic Salalah resort can immerse themselves in fun at "Alshirae" Teens Club, with karaoke, painting classes, board games, table tennis, table football, billiards and air hockey. There are themed activities such as an underwater treasure hunt, movie night, pajama night, disco night and karaoke nights, which are sure to keep everyone entertained throughout your stay. And if that fails, there's always the Xbox.

Little ones will have their hands full at "Al Bahhara" Kids Club in a safe environment with dedicated staff and superb facilities. Kids can enjoy the outdoor area complete with a play set, sandpit, a children's

splash pool and mini-loungers. The parents can take a break from the kids and step into an enchanting retreat called "Just The Two of Us". The magical spa journey includes a choice of an express facial or body exfoliation, followed by a couple's full-body massage performed in tandem.

As well as your typical water and beach sports to boat trips that include fishing, dolphin watching, beach volleyball, paddling and snorkelling, families can also book a full-day Jebel safari where they can explore historic Taqah's fishing life, castle towers and stone houses. There's also the option to visit Wadi Darbat to view various wildlife, and a short distance

away they can stop at Sumhuram to see ancient ruins including the Queen of Sheba's Castle.

Venturing a bit further out into the glorious landscape of the mountains, families can take an adventurous hike to Teiq cave, which sits atop one of the largest sinkholes in the world. Alternatively, they can explore the city while educating the kids about the Omani heritage and end the day up with a sumptuous set menu combined with a magical setting for an under star family's movie night and dining experience.

salalah.anantara.com





TRAIL AND IMPROVEMENT: MALTA'S NEW FAMILY TRAILS UNLOCK THE ISLAND

Beyond the bustling fish markets and time-capsule towns, Malta boasts an underrated countryside that's been made accessible via a series of themed trails across the three main islands. The latest addition by Malta Tourism Authority is the easy-going Family Trail, which allows parents and children to discover the islands'

natural landscapes, marine habitats, and parks. In addition, families can opt for other adventures, such as riding quad bikes around the island of Gozo, Segway tours around Valletta, and fancy dress fun, role playing as Maltese Knights at the Playmobil Funpark. www.visitMalta.com



YAS ISLAND'S FAMILY FEST

Yas Kidz Fest is set to be the most dynamic and fun experience for families this year. Aimed at children under 10 and their families, the three-day festival is an imaginative, outdoor adventure like no other, designed with kids in mind. Taking place February 21–23, Yas Kidz Fest will feature activities that allow your little ones get creative, dance, explore, discover, cook or just sit and enjoy live entertainment. The festival will be home to the largest Kids Play Town including bouncy castles, slides, face painting, treasure hunts, carnival rides and games, outdoor activities, mystical mazes, magicians, sand pits, messy play areas, and water play areas. For the full line-up of activities – at du Arena Yas Island from 2pm to 9pm each day – just check the website. www.kidzfest.ae

DON'T MISS

YOUR LITTLE ONES ARE IN FOR A TREAT AT SHANTI MAURICE IN THE MALDIVES. UP TO TWO KIDS CAN STAY, EAT AND PLAY FOR FREE WHILE ADULTS GET A BEST RATE GUARANTEE WITH A ROOM ONLY RATE – HALF BOARD IS BOOKABLE WITH A “DINE AROUND” OPTION

FEBRUARY Essentials

You'll find no cliché roses in this month's range of exquisite essentials – celebrate love in your own way with these colourful and alternative items from Bulgari, Chopard and more

Compiled by: Anna Zhukov



RED HANDED REPTILE

Crafted in smooth carmine jasper calf leather with cobalt tourmaline contrasting edges, the Serpenti Forever crossbody bag is reinterpreted with a seductive twist for the Electro Love St. Valentine's capsule collection. The iconic snakehead closure is enriched with a carmine jasper pierced heart charm. A light gold plated chain, inspired by the sinuosity of the snake's body and a small pocket mirror complete the bag. www.bulgari.com



DIAMONDS ARE "FIOREVER"

These Bulgari Fiorever 19-carat white gold earrings are set with two central diamonds. Designed to capture the spirit of Rome, the Fiorever range puts the four-petalled flower at the heart of its collection.

www.bulgari.com



DEAD ACCURATE

A unique timepiece snapped up in six minutes, Chopard's L.U.C.T Spirit of "La Santa Muerte" is a stunning tribute to the festive spirit of Mexico's Day of the Dead celebrations. It was unveiled during the 12th edition of the Salon Internacional de Alta Relojería (SIAR) – Latin America's most prestigious watch show.

www.chopard.com

IN YOUR BONES

An evolution from “BR 01 Skull” to “BR 01 Laughing Skull”, this bold Bell & Ross timepiece is made from microblasted steel and decorated with a “Clous de Paris” finish. The marriage of the skull dial and its guilloché case adds to the character of the whole piece. www.bellross.com



HAPPY HEARTS

A profusion of “Happy Hearts” grace these Chopard 18k rose gold rings – an elegant addition to the Happy Diamonds collection. An expression of freedom of spirit and irrepressible joy, the red and mother of pearl editions feature one distinctive diamond heart among the rest. www.chopard.com

AS IF BY MAGIC

Chopard’s new Magical Setting collection boasts vibrant pendants and earrings but these scintillating cluster rings allow the diamonds and gems to dazzle on the finger. The stones are held in place as if by magic with no visible means of support. www.chopard.com



WINDING LEATHER

The Serpenti Forever soft bangle bracelet “Electro Love” is hewn from carmine jasper calf leather with brass light gold plated hardware. The iconic Serpenti décor is reinterpreted with a seductive twist and features a snakehead in carmine jasper and cobalt tourmaline enamel and carmine jasper heart-shaped element. www.bulgari.com

PURSUIING HAPPINESS

Chopard’s Happy Diamonds watches are designed to be true must-have timepieces for free-spirited women who seek to differentiate themselves. This edition is 18-karat rose gold and features five dancing diamonds and a mother-of-pearl dial on a red leather bracelet. www.chopard.com



About Time

What are you making time for this month? These five fabulous watches offer a range of styles but there's something they all have in common – incredible craftsmanship



FIGHT AND FLIGHT

The new new Spitfire line in IWC's Pilot's Watches collection was unveiled at last month's SIHH. To celebrate the unique engineering expertise of the designers of the legendary British fighter aircraft, all Spitfire watches feature IWC-manufactured calibres and for the first time, the Swiss watch manufacturer has used hard gold for the watch case – a significantly harder and more wear-resistant version of red gold.

www.iwc.com

VINTAGE CHARACTER

Carl F. Bucherer's new Flyback Chronograph boasts an 18k rose gold case that houses a column-wheel mechanism, ensuring both precision and ease of use. The vintage character of the timepiece gets an elegant contemporary twist thanks to black and red accents and a kudu-leather strap. Taking design cues from Carl F. Bucherer models from the 1960s and 1970s, the timepiece captures the spirit of these bygone eras.

www.carl-f-bucherer.com



MARINE MASTER

Glashütte's Senator Cosmopolite distinguishes itself with unmistakable elegance: a black railroad chapter ring and black Roman numerals adorn the lacquered silver-grained dial. Released last year, the piece is a direct descendant of a 2015 watch that is widely touted as one of the brand's greatest editions.

www.glashuette-original.com



CONTEMPORARY EVOLUTION

Audemars Piguet celebrated the launch of its new collection 'CODE 11.59 by Audemars Piguet' within the walls of its forthcoming Musée Atelier on last month. The piece writes a new page in the brand's history and "represents its genetic code" – in this case, CODE stands for Challenge, Own, Dare and Evolve. The contemporary evolution of a classic, the collection provides a contemporary twist and a certain edginess to the classic round watch, while carrying on AP's long history of unconventional form and design.

www.audemarspiguet.com



FROM HARRY WITH LOVE

Relive the romance of Valentine's Day at every moment with Harry Winston's heartfelt tribute to love. Beating with three-dimensional hearts in passionate red mother-of-pearl, the graceful white gold case of this Avenue Classic timepiece is adorned with diamonds and a touch of luscious red rubies. Harry Winston delivers a bold and unequivocal message of love with the Avenue Classic Sweet Valentine timepiece.

www.harrywinston.com

CRUISE

C O N T R O L

The Maserati GranCabrio Sport could be the best car to woo your Valentine this month. Kris Karacinski has his own affair with the trident marque and explores what the drop top tourer has to offer

PHOTOGRAPHY: Eliot Sleep





Senator Cosmopolite



Glashütte
ORIGINAL

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German Watchmaking Art since 1845.

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