

SIGNATURE

The Diners Club International Magazine

SOUTHWEST INDIA'S CULTURAL HEARTLAND *The Glorious City of Kochi*

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for the Times
2023 Platter's
by Diners Club Wine Guide
Oversized Everything:
A Y2K Fashion Revolution

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Elegantly appointed and located in the quaint village of Franschoek, *Le coin Français*, both in concept and name, pays homage to the essence of this breathtaking valley as expressed in its cuisine, heritage, art and some of the finest wines in the country. Featuring state-of-the-art culinary techniques embodied in elegant time-tested French cuisine, *Le coin Français* offers two fine-dining menu options for lunch and dinner, coupled with outstanding pairing options. The restaurant also offers an option for a vegan/vegetarian menu with the same caliber and sophistication of cuisine.



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from the MD



Welcome

Esh Naidoo
Managing Director

The Diners Club experience means different things to different people. For some, it is knowing that their Diners Club card is there as a trusted companion on every trip and with every experience, while others value knowing that they belong to an exclusive club of discerning individuals.

Whatever your reason for choosing Diners Club, our mission is to provide a seamless experience and exceptional service each time you use your Diners Club card.

We are equally focused on highlighting some of the most unique experiences, destinations, and products available to you as a Diners Club

member, and trust that this edition of *Signature* will further broaden your horizons and lead you on a journey of discovery on every page.

From travelling to the farthest reaches of India - one of the world's most enthralling civilisations - to bringing you the best of local travel, design, art, and more, allow *Signature* to be your guide as you explore the old, and the new.

We invite you to take a moment to enjoy this edition with us, and trust that it will become yet another excellent reason to belong to the Diners Club family.

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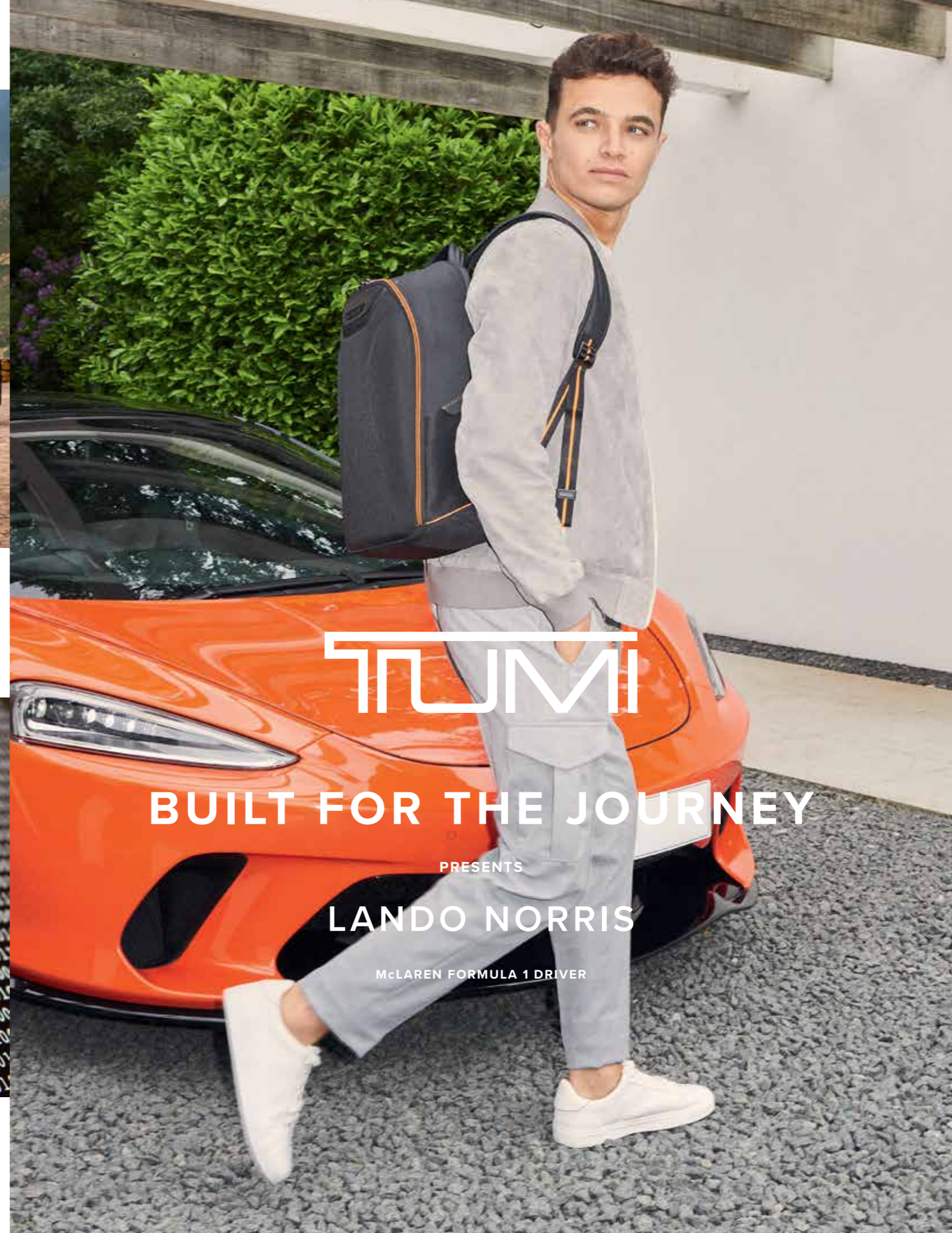
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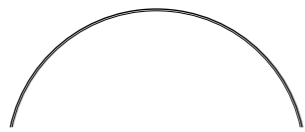

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GO THERE

THE SAXON: 2022 DINERS CLUB WINELIST AWARD ICON

Diners Club has always been more than a card. It's a gathering of people with many shared interests and objectives; people who love to explore, to learn and discover. The South African Diners Club Winelist Awards is one product of that journey. At the pinnacle of the Diners Club Winelist Awards, the Icon Award, introduced in 2018, is awarded to restaurants that have met all the requirements of a Diamond List while carrying an extensive international selection, excellent wines in multiple categories, as well as an impressive reserve or vintage selection, a deep interest in wine curation, and a sommelier on the floor by default. The 2022 Diners Club Winelist Icon Award was awarded to the Saxon Hotel & Spa for their outstanding achievement as a highly regarded South African fine dining destination. As the City of Gold's foremost accommodation and culinary establishment, The Saxon Hotel & Spa offers a perfect blend of rich cultural history and contemporary five-star service. Here, Head Sommelier and director of the Saxon collection wine programme Lloyd Jusa's extensive knowledge of wines enhances the enjoyment of guests' culinary experiences, and ensures that the perfect wine is paired with every meal.

www.saxon.co.za



SA WELCOMES THE CONCOURS MONDIAL DU SAUVIGNON

A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to showcase our spectacular country, our unique winemaking community and our excellent Sauvignon Blanc on an international stage took place in early March. Albeit a challenging time for the South African wine industry, there was great excitement at South Africa hosting the world's most prestigious Sauvignon Blanc competition for the first time in a New World country. The Concours Mondial du Sauvignon was held at Le Franschoek Hotel and Spa in Franschoek, where more than 1,000 Sauvignon Blanc wines competed for the attention of 50 judges. Although Concours Mondial is a trade-only competition, a Sauvignon Safari will be hosted in the Cape Winelands as part of the International Sauvignon Blanc Day celebrations during May 2023. The Sauvignon Safari will be an interactive Around the World experience of Sauvignon Blanc, including a tasting of participating Concours competing wines and trophy, gold, and silver medal winners.



www.sauvignonblanc.com.

TINTSWALO TRAVELLERS CLUB

Tintswalo Lodges has launched its Travellers Club to provide discounted preferential rates and special offers to regular guests who sign up as members. Membership to the Travellers Club is open to SA residents exclusively – secured by an annual deposit of R60,000, which is used in full as credits to pay for bookings at any Tintswalo property, and may be utilised to cover certain additional expenses associated with your booking. The family owned and managed Tintswalo group operates seven luxury lodges in six pristine locations, and recently crossed borders with the opening of Tintswalo at Siankaba in Zambia. Travellers Club members have access to the lowest rate per season at any Tintswalo property, including discounts of up to 20%, and rates can be secured up to two years in advance. Ts & Cs apply.

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JOIN THE ESCAPE

Four Must-See Cities to Live Like a Local

Experience the best of our signature choice of the five top cities to visit in 2023. Discover benefits, search airport lounges, and explore top-rated places where your card is accepted so you can get the most out of each trip.

Together with friends – old or new, fleeting or forever. Diners Club is accepted all over the world, and we’ve curated inspiring ways for you to experience five of the most intriguing destinations to visit this year

BANGKOK: PHRA NAKHON DISTRICT

The Phra Nakhon District is at the centre of Bangkok’s distinctive culture and is home to a plethora of ornate temples and timeless landmarks. Situated along the Chao Phraya River, this iconic district is one of the true cornerstones of a thriving metropolis.

Wat Bowonniwet Vihara

Start your day with a glimpse into Thai history. Featuring a 14th-century statue of the Buddha, this classical temple has served as a training and ordination site for several kings of Thailand. Be sure not to miss the golden stupa, a shrine with priceless relics from the royal family.

The Giant Swing

Spend an uplifting afternoon at one of the city’s most popular and unique attractions. Standing 27 meters tall, the Giant Swing has played a pivotal role in religious and royal ceremonies for the past two centuries, and is a must-see for Bangkok travellers.

The Democracy Monument

After sunset, there’s nothing quite like the sight of emerging lights from one of Bangkok’s shining

monuments. Located at the centre of the European-style Ratchadamnern Klang Road, the Democracy Monument is a standing reminder of Thailand’s first constitutional monarchy.

What to Do

Home of the massive Phahurat Market, also known as “Little India,” Phahurat Road is home to Bangkok’s largest Indian community. This road was built during King Chulalongkorn’s reign over a century ago and has been a popular destination ever since. With an endless array of shops and food stands, you’ll find more than enough spots to spend an entire day or more. Remember to bring multiple forms of payment on your journey.

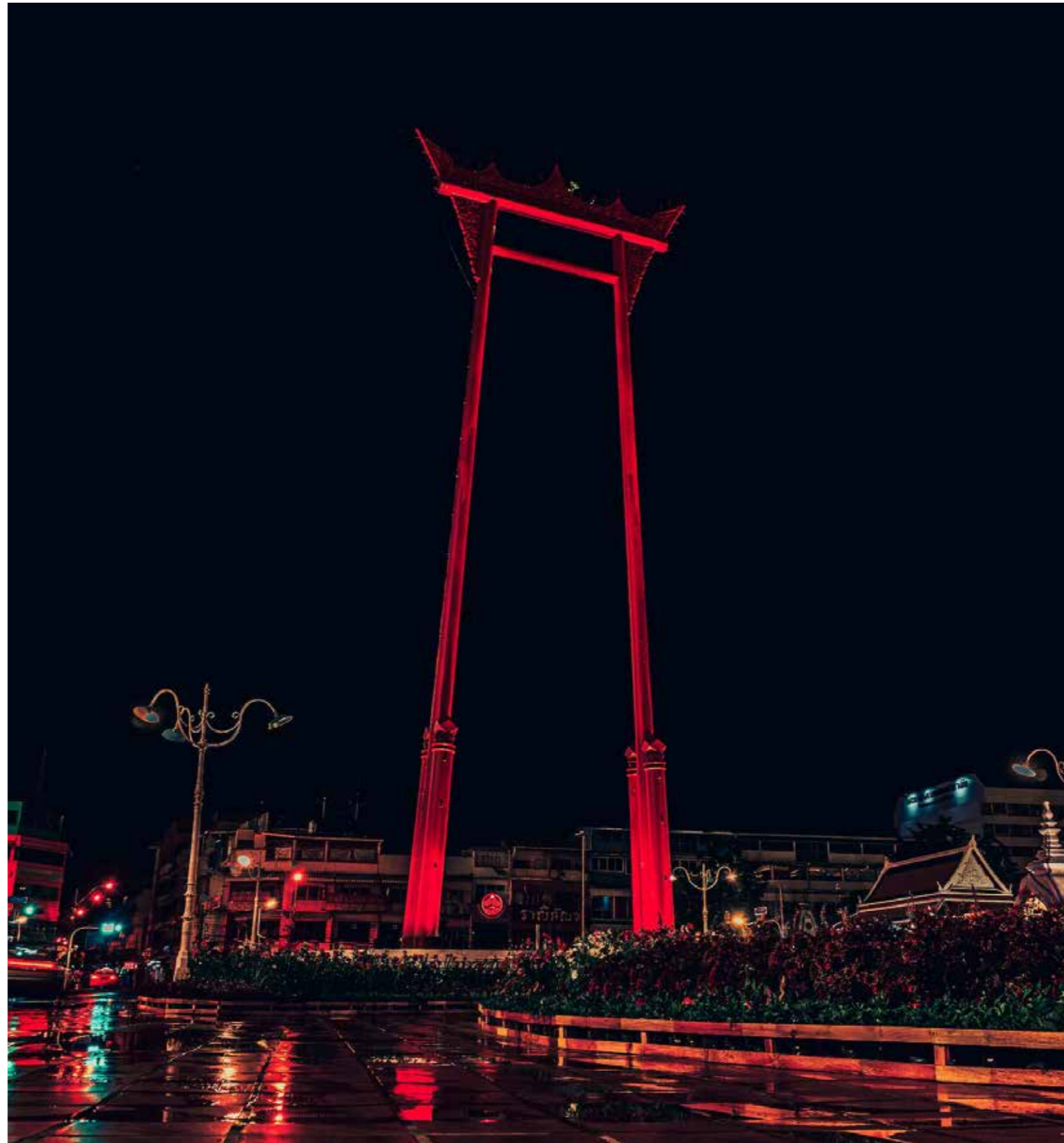
UNDER THE RADAR IN LONDON

As most Londoners typically spend their spare time in the area where they live, the city’s outer districts are a verifiable hub of weekend markets, traditional pubs, quiet parks, and melting pots of global cuisines.

Hackney

Art and innovation collide to forge a creative district that’s chock-full of galleries, tech start-ups, fashion houses, and innovative restaurants. Shoreditch is the obvious starting point, but Dalston, London Fields, and Stoke Newington all offer local charm well outside the typical tourist’s radar.

The Columbia Road Flower Market is a colourful display of how Hackney



*The Giant Swing in Bangkok
(by Moustapha Kebe)*

residents like to spend their Sundays – strolling about, stopping for coffee, and grabbing a bargain from the antique stalls that dot the cobbled side streets. Once you’ve soaked up the atmosphere, head north to Broadway Market for an excellent choice of restaurants, pubs, and cafes for lunch.

Notting Hill

Hugh Grant and Julia Roberts put this West London hotspot on the map for a generation of film watchers. The district comes alive every August bank holiday when the kaleidoscopic floats, deafening sound systems, and endless cans of Red Stripe lager of Carnival take over. For the rest of the year, it’s all about the weekly antiques market, cosy neighbourhood pubs, and an underground party scene.

From Monday to Saturday, the district’s main draw is the half-mile-long Portobello Road Market, where market vendors sell everything from antiques and vintage collectables to handmade crafts and crates of vinyl.

Borough Market

Its proximity to the Thames has meant that the charming area under the arches of London Bridge has been an important trading post for centuries, and historians have even suggested the Romans were doing business here from 48 A.D. Today, life centres around food, and lots of it. The market is part of most top chefs’ daily shopping runs, who love the fresh,



Democracy Monument, Bangkok (by Navit Science)



Royal Observatory, Greenwich

seasonal ingredients. The restaurants tucked under the railway arches surrounding the cobbled marketplace and nearby Bermondsey high street have become a mecca for hungry Londoners.

Greenwich

Just five miles from central London is the home of Greenwich Mean Time, marked by the Prime Meridian that runs across the courtyard of the Royal Observatory. But there's far more to this area than just its geographical importance. With a tree-covered park, a slow pace of life, and beautiful rows of Georgian townhouses, it's an ideal retreat from the hectic city life that's just a short tube or boat journey away.

Be sure to visit the Observatory, where you can marvel at a 4.5-billion-year-old meteorite before popping into a star show at the planetarium, and learn about the area's naval and maritime history at the National Maritime Museum.

BARCELONA'S MARVELOUS URBAN MARATHON

From awe-inspiring Modernista architecture to the Mediterranean's golden shores, the Zurich Marató Barcelona is a 42km-long springtime spin in early May, taking in everything irresistible about Catalonia's capital. It was Spain's first official marathon, held in 1978 in Palafrugell on the Costa Brava before relocating to Barcelona.

Camp Nou

From Plaça d'Espanya, at the foot of Mount Montjuïc, head west to the city's beloved Camp Nou. Built in the 1950s, this enormous stadium is the home base for the legendary Spanish football team, F.C. Barcelona. If you haven't bagged a sought-after match ticket, tours of the almost-sacred grounds include the 100,000-person stadium, dressing rooms, and an interactive museum.

Casa Batlló and La Sagrada Família

At the heart of the route lies some of Antoni Gaudí's most inspired creations. Overlooking Passeig de Gràcia, Casa Batlló is a swirling 1906



La Sagrada Família, Barcelona (by C. Messier)

beauty of an apartment complex crammed with classic Gaudian design and topped by a dragon-inspired roof. But for most, the UNESCO-listed and yet unfinished Sagrada Família is the pinnacle of Gaudí's work, a wondrous sky-spiralling church modelled on the natural world, with intricately sculpted facades and towers.

Torre Glòries and Poblenou

Designed by the French architect Jean Nouvel, the bullet-shaped Torre Glòries skyscraper looms high above the post-industrial Poblenou neighbourhood, and its 38th-floor dome has been transformed into a 360° viewing platform. Creative cafes, art galleries, tech-industry hangouts, and design stores dot the surrounding streets, while Poblenou's traditional tree-shaded Rambla is lined with Modernista buildings that lead down to a strip of golden beach filled with lively sea-view restaurants.

Arc de Triomf and El Born

After tracking along Barcelona's shimmering coastline towards Barceloneta, venture north past 19th-century Parc de la Ciutadella to the bold Arc de Triomf created by the Catalan architect Josep Vilaseca for the Exposició Universal de Barcelona in 1888. Just southwest, the always buzzing El Born is packed with wine bars, brunch cafes, chic boutiques, and tapas spots. Don't miss the 14th-century Basílica de Santa Maria del Mar or the rainbow-roofed Mercat de Santa Caterina - another great food-and-drink pitstop.

Cathedral and Barri Gòtic

Barcelona's ancient soul revolves around the narrow, cobbled lanes of the evocative Barri Gòtic (Gothic Quarter), which sprawls around the spectacular Cathedral of the Holy Cross and Saint Eulalia, a jewel of Catalan Gothic architecture. Dating from Roman times, this area is a joy to explore, particularly around the old Jewish El Call area, and has some inspired traditional shops.

El Raval & Sant Antoni

The final stretch of the marathon weaves past La Rambla along the edge



Downtown Miami (by Ryan Parker on Unsplash)

of El Raval, a famously multicultural neighbourhood with a creative edge. Favourite foodie stops in El Raval include Cañete for innovative tapas, Caravelle for world-roaming brunches, brewpub Fábrica Moritz, and Japanese-inspired Michelin-starred Dos Palillos. Just west of El Raval, Sant Antoni is a stylish, leafy hub filled with fabulous restaurants, independent boutiques, and a revamped late-19th century market.

THE TASTE OF...MIAMI

Many cities pride themselves on the diversity of their food scenes, but few can rival Miami when it comes to the melting pot of flavours from Latin America and the Caribbean. Add traditional Southern cooking, a touch of European technique, and a passionate group of young chefs to the mix, and you get one of the most exciting places to eat in the U.S.

Five Must-try Dishes

Cuban sandwich - These sandwiches are stacked with ham, roast pork, Swiss cheese, pickles, and mustard.

Some places even add salami for good measure. Once a popular lunch option for immigrant workers in the cigar factories, it's now found at street stalls and cafes across the city.

Key lime pie - There's no need to trek to the Florida Keys to sample excellent versions of this legendary dessert. The zingy filling of yellow Key lime juice, condensed milk, and egg yolks is slowly baked on top of a cracker crust, and some cooks add a fluffy meringue topping for extra indulgence.

Empanadas - A popular late-night snack for the party people, these pastries are either fried or baked and come packed with any combination of chicken, beef, ham, spinach, and cheese.

Stone crab claws - Be prepared to spend big money on this prized South Florida seafood, which has a limited season between October and May.

Alligator bites - While you may be satisfied with spotting alligators from the safety of a river boat, this is a great dish to try out if you're feeling adventurous. Described as a cross

between chicken and fish, it's a unique flavour best enjoyed at Kush Wynwood, where small chunks of meat are lightly fried and served with spicy mayonnaise.

Taste the Future

Since the golden days of the 1920s, Miami's shorefront hotels have been popular dining destinations, with guests taking the elevator to some of the most cutting-edge spots of their day. This trend continues today, with every five-star hotel trying to outdo the others with big-name chefs and forward-thinking concepts. Fail-safe options include contemporary Japanese cooking at Zuma at the Kimpton EPIC, dim sum and noodles at Hakkasan at the Fontainebleau, and modern Mexican La Mar by Gaston Acurio at the Mandarin Oriental.

For more information, please visit www.dinersclub.com/travel.

by *diners club destinations*
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QUEEN OF THE ARABIAN SEAS

India's Southern State of Kochi Shimmers with History

India's Kochi shimmers with history and buzzes with contemporary energy. No wonder tourists, creatives, bridal parties, and entrepreneurs are increasingly falling for its welcoming mix of age-old traditions, modern ambitions, great shopping and food, and simply wonderful people.

Eight centuries ago, a massive flood transformed southern India's geography – and the fortunes of a tiny fishing village called Muziris. New land formations created a natural harbour, and Muziris soon gained a storied reputation, rich spice trade, and a new name, Cochin. A cosmopolitan port in the lush state of Kerala, it flourished for centuries.

But in 1498, Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama landed on the Malabar coast, and a few years later, his fellow citizen, Pedro Álvares Cabral, established a settlement in Cochin, marking the start of 447 years of Portuguese, Dutch, and British colonialism. By the time Independence was won, Cochin's heritage buildings and tourism prospects were crumbling. Then, in the 1980s, a

small group of enthusiasts launched cultural and social events, clean-ups and carnivals and Cochin's fortunes transformed again. Today, Kochi, as it's been renamed, is an increasingly desirable destination.

Here's your guide to the best of its fascinating history, hospitality, culture, and enterprise.

FOLLOW THE CREATIVE TRAIL

Kochi is on the creative rise, with the Kochi Muziris Biennale attracting a thrilling mix of local and international artists and enthusiasts for three months of shows. Permanently, Cube artSpace, Mocha Art Café, Kashi Art Cafe and Pandhal Café & Deli run ongoing exhibitions. And for living art, Kathakali dance glows with vivid drama and costumes. The Kerala Kathakali Centre offers a pre-show introduction



and performance, and Kerala Folklore Museum displays wonderful costumes, instruments, and jewellery.

GET SET FOR A SHOPPING SPREE

From antiques, saris, shirts, crafts and scents to spices and kitchenware, Kochi is a shopping dream with service to match. Prepare to be overwhelmed – in a good way.

For choice and ease, visit LuLu Mall – 300 outlets, including an ice rink and bowling alley. Don't miss Forest Essentials and Juicy Chemistry for award-winning beauty buys, Bombay Store for crafts and gifts, Rita Kumar for designer fashion, and DC Books for brilliantly priced reads.

Mahatma Gandhi Rd, aka MG Rd, is Kochi's main artery, and is dense with crowds, cars, scooters, trucks and tuk-tuks. Head for Ramraaj, a fantastic store for men's clothing, especially linen shirts.

On the other side of the water,

the narrow lanes of Fort Kochi, Jew Town and Mattancherry beckon with craft, collectables, clothing, jewellery, spices, and perfume.

EAT LIKE A MAHARAJAH

Kochi's rich culinary traditions and abundant fish and produce are matched with fair prices, from street food to sophisticated spots. Expect layered flavours, coconut, and spices, irresistible dosas, sweet and savoury rice, aromatic biryani, curries, and grills (vegetarian and not). Significant customs include Sadya (meaning banquet) – a banana leaf piled with rice pickles, chips, curries, vegetables, and more. Be warned that alcohol is pricey and limited in India.

MEET THE PEOPLE

The warmth of Southern India's people is as renowned as its spices, and you'll encounter genuine friendliness at every turn. And what a place for

people-watching! Fascinating faces, young and old, beautiful women in bright saris, elegant kurta shift dresses and delicate gold jewellery, men making their mark in slim-cut trousers and shirts or traditional white sarong-style dhotis, and children often as exquisitely dressed as precious dolls.

SET SAIL

Kochi is home to India's deepest harbour, and you're never far from a beach, lake, bridge, or ferry. The Chinese Fishing Nets, a popular attraction, were introduced here 500 years ago, and you'll see commercial and tourist ships at work, day and night. Kerala's lush backwaters are also just an hour away, so taxi or Uber to Alappuzha, aka Alleppy, and board a houseboat to discover the canals and lakes of the old spice trade route. Blackpearl Cruises (www.blackpearlcruise.com) is a great option, with an ensuite bedroom, meals, and stop-offs.

A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

With its white façade and arched windows, St Francis Church has been Catholic, Protestant and Anglican under successive rules. Vasco da Gama's remains were buried here before being sent to Lisbon. The Gothic-style Santa Cruz Cathedral Basilica is a five-minute stroll away. From there, amble past blue and yellow buildings, stained glass, and bougainvillea to the Indo-Portuguese Museum's historic Bibles, statues, and altar.

WALK WITH HISTORY

The historic Fort Kochi area no longer has a fort, but its picturesque lanes are filled with heritage cafes, warehouses, hotels and shops for art, craft, collectables, and clothes. Princess Street, famed for its Instagram appeal, blends European, Chinese, British and local buildings, and it's a wonderful place to linger since it's also known as Loafer's Corner.

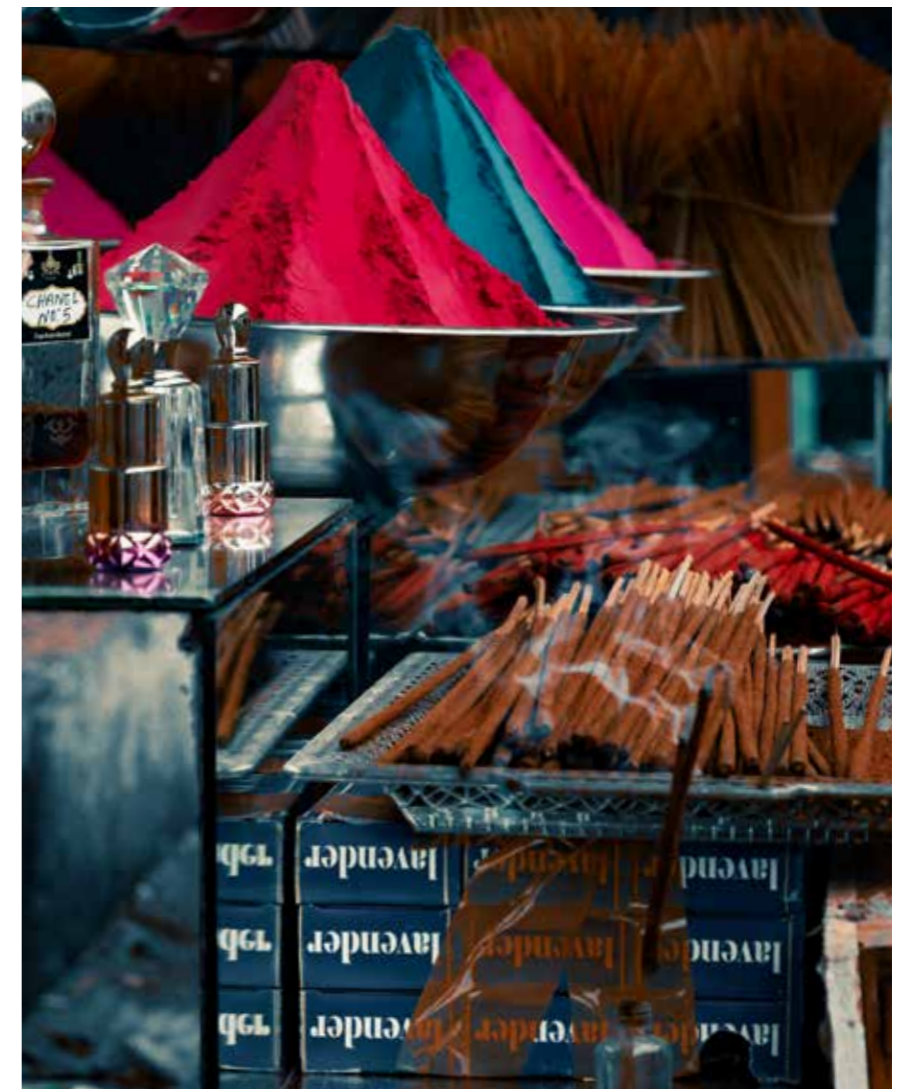
CELEBRATE THE CENTURIES

Kochi's bond with the Jewish people dates to the 11th century BC, and it's evidenced in the Paradesi Synagogue, with its painted tiles and shimmering chandeliers, and Jew Town, a charming area lined with stores and cafes. The Dutch Palace is another reminder of the multicultural mix. Built by the Portuguese as a gift for the Raja of Cochin, the Palace blends 16th-century European and Indian design and murals of Hindu legends and temple art. Finally, delight your senses at the centuries-old stores like Mattancherry Spice Market, then experience exquisite perfumes and incense making at specialists like the marvellous IRS Incense and Perfume Emporium.

By Aby Zachariah on Unsplash



Scenes from Jew Street (by Aby Zachariah on Unsplash)



LIVE GRAND

You know you're experiencing major scale when your urban resort features 26 acres of waterside frontage, one of South India's largest event spaces, a 22-foot high lobby, two private houseboats and three helipads. Of course, major scale is what the Grand Hyatt Kochi Bolgatty Island is all about.

"A Grand Hyatt must fulfil its iconic reputation, and that means grand food, accommodation, and services," notes Shana Ninan, the region's stylish and accomplished Director of Marketing Communications.

The hotel even has a grand backstory. Its legendary owner, Yusuff Ali MA, left India for Abu Dhabi as a young man of few means and rose to create the \$8-billion LuLu International Group. Now his love for his homeland, the UAE and his global experience shine through in the hotel's Kerala-style arches and water features, Arabic chandeliers and latticework, and modern steel and glass.

CHOICES, CHOICES, CHOICES

Designed to evoke a wave, the eleven-storey building offers serene Vembanad Lake views as well as its proximity to the CBD and historic areas. And it's four villas with private access, and 264 rooms and suites feature all the

five-star pluses, including superb beds and linen and spa-style bathrooms. The exclusive Grand Club, included for all guests staying in suites and villas, offers privacy, all-day tea and coffee, evening cocktails and canapes. And the elegant Nattika Houseboat is perfect for cruises, dinners, intimate parties, and dreamily romantic overnight stays.

Feeling energetic? Try the indoor and outdoor swimming pools, 24-hour gym, tennis court, badminton and basketball areas. Craving pampering? Award-winning Santata Spa offers Ayurvedic and international treatments, and you'll find exquisite crafts, jewellery, Kashmir shawls and clothes in the outstanding in-house souvenir store. After that, relax in the Lobby Lounge with floor-to-ceiling waterside views or celebrate cocktail hour in the Colony Bar, a favourite Kochi hangout.

Add warm personal service to the deluxe mix, and it's easy to understand why guests here range from families and businesspeople to Bollywood stars, bridal parties, and IPL cricket team owners.

THE TASTE OF LOVE

Combine superb quality with mind-blowing scale, and you'll understand why Grand Hyatt Kochi is one of Kerala's leading culinary lights - which is saying



something in this food-loving state.

"Our largest meal was a convention for 3,500 people, and for one wedding, we served up to 56 desserts," says Yogender Pal, the stellar Executive Chef whose expertise and vision guide 150 chefs, 100 servers, three restaurants, two lounges, and ongoing conventions, celebrations, and events. "But a big part of my work is checking dishes we make every day. It's about consistent love and passion."

Consistent love and passion surely flavour the breakfasts, lunches, and dinners at the airy Malabar Cafe, with its focus on South Indian cuisine and open cooking stations overseen by Kerala's first female chef, the warm, charismatic Latha Kuniyil. Think appams crisping on cast-iron cadies, dosas, stir-fries, curries, pastries, superb seafood, fish, and other treasured recipes.

For romance and glamour, head for the soaring views and fabulous food at the rooftop Colony Clubhouse and Grill.

At the heart of the Colony, a coconut-shell Mibrasa grill creates flavour-rich fish, seafood, poultry, and meat. Come Sundays, this is the place to find an incredible brunch and atmosphere.

Finally, the delightful Thai Soul features live cooking stations, bright

decor, and a brilliant menu.

"Thai Soul is Kochi's only Thai restaurant, and it's as authentic as we can make it," says Chef Pal.

Its biggest draw? The Saturday Drunch Market with carts serving street foods like shrimp spring rolls, beef satay and coconut ice cream, and beautifully curated stalls for clothes, crafts, and jewellery from women-centric enterprises.

AND ALL THE EXTRAS

From classical dance and vibrant festivals like Onam and Holi to sparkling Christmas and New Year's, the in-house calendar is a delight. Regular restaurant pop-ups are food lover heaven. (Previous collaborations featured Japanese, Italian and Delhi-based chefs.) And the 100+ City Experiences tours include site visits with historians, waterfalls, scuba diving and the chance to cook and dine with a chef.

For more information on the Grand Hyatt Kochi Bolgatty Island, visit www.grandhyattkochi.com.

by **pnina fenster**
photography by **hyatt hotels / unsplash.com**



Kathakali dance (by Saundarya Srinivasan on Unsplash)



PLACE OF SHORT REEDS

Experience Something Different in Maun

For those who yearn for adventure and the great outdoors, a safari holiday could be the perfect escape from the hustle and bustle of urban life. Among the many destinations available, one that should not be overlooked is Maun, located in Botswana in Southern Africa. This hidden gem offers a unique experience that will satisfy even the most discerning traveller.

Derived from the Seyei word “Maung,” meaning the ‘place of short reeds’, Maun is widely considered the tourism capital of Botswana. Established in 1915 as a small village, it has since grown to become the third most significant settlement in the country, with a population of approximately 55,000 people. Despite its modernization, the town has managed to preserve its traditional charm, providing visitors with an authentic African experience.

WHAT TO DO

One of the main attractions in Maun is the Nhaba Museum. Housed in a colonial-era building dating back to 1939, this museum showcases the history of the Okavango area, providing visitors with an insight into the region’s rich cultural heritage. Visitors can also participate in self-drive safaris to explore the area at their own pace, taking in the breathtaking scenery and observing the local wildlife up close.

Wildlife enthusiasts will be thrilled that Maun is home to a crocodile farm 12km south of the town. This farm allows visitors to observe live Nile crocodiles and learn about crocodile farming.



For those interested in birdwatching, several tours are available in the area, allowing visitors to spot a wide range of bird species in their natural habitat. A visit to the Boro-bouche ostrich farm is also a must for those seeking a unique experience.

In addition to its natural attractions, Maun has various accommodation options catering to the needs of safari tourists. From luxurious hotels to campsites, visitors can choose from multiple options that suit their preferences and budget. The town also has a car hire facility, allowing visitors to explore the region at their leisure.

WHEN TO GO

When planning a trip to Maun, it is worth remembering that the town has a semi-arid climate. As such, those not fond of extreme heat may want to visit during the winter months when the weather is milder and drier. However, for those who do not mind the heat, a visit during the summer months can be just as enjoyable, offering visitors the chance to witness the town’s vibrant cultural festivals.

ONLY IN MAUN

See Maun and Botswana through new eyes and make the most of your Botswana experience. See which of

these unique features you can spot.

BaHerero Women: Look out for the ancient Empresses from a fantasy, women dressed in big, elaborate, colourful traditional dresses.

Car Wash: More than just a way to earn a living, it is a communal spot with a barber, a semausu (tuck shop), and an outdoor restaurant.

Outdoor Gaming Station: Fancy a game of pool? Locate the pool tables under the tree, complete with a canvas cover to protect them from rain and dust.

Donkeys Galore: Spot one or two of the 24,000 donkeys in Maun. You may get lucky and see a donkey cart, but these are more typical on the outskirts of town.

Driving Schools: Around every corner and, definitely under a tree, catch locals learning how to drive.

BaZezuru Women: Decked out in all-white dresses, this is one of the ethnic groups living in Maun.

Warthogs (Mathinthinyana): The Setswana name is a mouthful and fun to say. There might even be elephants in town, but these are a nighttime (and not so regular) occurrence.

Cows and Goats: More common will be cows and goats who are street-smart and traffic savvy.

Leteisi: Look out for skirts and dresses in this German print which comes in all colours.

The Tin Men: Roadside, observe the wares of our local tinkers – tin trunks, jugs, baths, or anything you ask for. You may even see one in action.

Stalls and Roadside Markets: Side hustles abound. Look out for stalls selling firewood, second-hand clothing, beauty products, shoes, and food, and

everything is available.

Semausu (tuck shops): The colourful tuckshops, often in the owner's yard, will sell you sweets, drinks, and Botswana fast food. Check out some of the weird and wonderful names.

Communal Homesteads: Spot the many houses in one yard, often with an outside toilet.

Hair 'Saloons': African hair is a big business. See if you can locate the roadside hairdressers/salons with their



own unique spelling, but don't expect to be served a beer while getting a haircut.

Proud Maun Representatives: A local entrepreneur that has tapped into the pride of Maunite (a resident of Maun). The PMR brand is all over Maun on taxis, t-shirts, hoodies, and hats.

Orange Money: Spot the small,



visitors a unique holiday destination that is second to none. 📍

by [bryan kayavhu / safari destinations](#)
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THE GRAND DAME OF PLETTENBERG

Exploring Plettenberg Bay from the Plettenberg Hotel

If you're vision of an exquisite holiday is taking in panoramic views, savouring delicious cuisine, being pampered with five-star service, and enjoying the luxurious comforts of an exclusive home-away-from-home experience. In that case, The Plettenberg is ready to welcome you.

Plettenberg Bay, or 'Plett' as South Africans lovingly refer to this bustling Western Cape town, is by many accounts the jewel in the Garden Route crown. Boasting no fewer than six Blue Flag beaches, excellent infrastructure, an array of activities and bespoke experiences, and luxurious accommodations at The Plettenberg hotel, Plett is one of the most well-guarded coastal vacation secrets in the land.

I last visited the seaside settlement some years back - for an all too short stay that included a one-night-only stopover before heading off again the next day. Ignorant of the many undiscovered (for me, at least) gems and the multitude of activities on offer in and around the town, I hurried onward, almost dismissively ticking the visit off my travel to-do list.

Given the opportunity to revisit Plett last month, I was determined not to make the same mistake twice, heeding Paulo Coelho's warning that "a mistake repeated more than once is a choice".

CHOOSE BAREFOOT LUXURY

Ranked in the *Condé Nast Traveler's* 2022 Readers' Choice Awards as one of the Top 15 hotels in Southern Africa, The Plettenberg hotel is a shining light





Keurbooms Gorge



of hospitality excellence in South Africa, offering style and barefoot luxury within easy reach of the many attractions of the resort town, including direct access to the pristine Lookout Beach.

The Plettenberg is part of the family-owned Liz McGrath Collection, alongside sister properties The Marine in Hermanus and The Cellars-Hohenort in Cape Town. As a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World (and the only ones to represent SA on the list), it is part of 520 unique and independently spirited hotels in 80 countries – vetted by what is considered the most desirable community of travellers around the world.

It isn't hard to understand exactly why this 'most desirable community' would choose The Plettenberg for an unforgettable stay. With 37 beautifully appointed rooms, including 12 spacious suites, the hotel commands adoration and seals the deal with exceptional views, heart-warming service, and world-class cuisine. For families and friends travelling together, or guests wanting a little more seclusion, The Plettenberg offers two private villas – the two-bedroom

Beach House, and the spectacular three-bedroom Lookout Villa. Here spacious open-plan living, well-stocked galley kitchens, and private decks, each with a heated plunge pool, add to the allure of staying at the most exclusive address on the Garden Route.

CHOOSE TO INDULGE

Liz McGrath Collection properties are known for many wonderful things, and its culture of impeccable hospitality extends beyond The Plettenberg staff's delightful smiles and readiness to serve. Recently promoted to Executive Chef at The Plettenberg – from the Cellars-Hohenort kitchen in Constantia – Kyle Macaskill and his team create magic on a plate at every sitting.

The Restaurant at The Plettenberg is renowned for its ocean bounty, drawing inspiration from the rich marine life that can be found in Plettenberg Bay. The indoor dining section offers beautiful pool and ocean views, while the outdoor terrace is perfect for alfresco dinners.

During our stay, I sampled some of Chef Macaskill's favourite items on the

new summer menu, including crispy calamari with avocado and sweet corn salsa, Dukkah spiced ostrich fillet, and crème brûlée served with shortbread crumble and vanilla sorbet. It was an absolute triumph made all the more memorable with a pairing of fine wines from Kay and Monty Vineyards, one of nine established wine farms in the Plettenberg Bay region.

It begs mention that The Restaurant at The Plettenberg takes its role as a cornerstone of the Plett hospitality scene very seriously and extends a warm welcome to non-resident guests who are welcome to book for breakfast, lunch or dinner. I hear that 'Curry Wednesdays' and 'Fish & Chips Fridays' are local favourites that are not to be missed.

CHOOSE FUN IN THE SUN

Although The Plettenberg has a lot to offer guests – from romantic getaways to family adventures where even your fur baby is welcome – it is also the perfect base for the ultimate summer holiday on the Garden Route.

As one of the region's best-kept secrets, the Plett Winelands punches well above its weight as a wine-producing region. Known to produce exceptional summer wines from its cool climate terroir, visitors can indulge in a wine and bubbly-centred experience stretching from Harkerville to the Craggs. For a wine-tasting experience with a difference, Luka Vineyards is highly recommended.

For the brave at heart, activities include bungee jumping, ocean safaris, horse riding, and treetop canopy tours. On the other hand, nature lovers can enjoy a thrilling ferry experience along the ancient Keurbooms Gorge with its indigenous forest in the Keurbooms Nature Reserve.




Nguni Restaurant

With so much to see and do in Plett, it is impossible to leave unsatisfied or unsatiated. On cooler evenings, locals choose the Nguni restaurant, situated in one of Plett's oldest buildings – an original dairy dating back over 100 years – where its African menu is a reflection of traditional selections in a unique setting.

Far beyond the ordinary, Plettenberg Bay is the hottest local travel destination for families this summer, and The Plettenberg is arguably its most illustrious ambassador. Offering guests an

experience beyond expectation, luxury accommodation options abound, culinary journeys are crafted, and memorable moments shine through.

For more info on The Plettenberg, go to www.theplettenberghotel.com, or visit www.plett-tourism.co.za to learn more about Plettenberg Bay. 

by **bernie hellberg jr**
/photography by **the plettenberg & plett tourism**

SPLENDID CRUISING

MSC Cruises Invites You to Experience the Future of Cruising

In 2023, MSC Cruises announced their ambitious plan towards net-zero operations by 2050, and the advances they have made on this journey. MSC Cruises imagines this to be great news, not just for those who love to cruise with MSC but also for those who are passionate about the impact of cruising on the seas and all the wonderful creatures that call it home. Aptly coined "Discover the Future of Cruising", the campaign showcases MSC Cruises' long-standing commitment to sustainability.

Filmed onboard MSC World Europa, a vessel that is the perfect manifestation of sustainability, MSC Cruises' most environmentally advanced ship yet, and the ultimate in luxury cruising, MSC Cruises' long-term campaign "Discover the Future of Cruising" will see MSC Cruises deliver MSC Euribia in June of this year and MSC World America in 2025, to further advance their sustainability ambitions.

As a global company that places sustainability at the heart of everything they do, MSC Cruises is excited about what the future of cruising looks like.

BRINGING IT CLOSER TO HOME

As the local South African cruise season draws to a close, MSC Cruises is delighted and look forward to welcoming the eco-ship, MSC Splendida, visiting Mzansi shores for the first time in November 2023, for the 2023/2024 cruise season. Bigger and better in class and luxury, she will operate from Durban and Cape Town and is guaranteed to take cruising to the next level in South Africa.

A beautiful destination in her own right, MSC Splendida will take

holidaymakers on a journey of discovery to picturesque Mozambique and the white sandy beaches of Namibia.

MSC Splendida boasts a capacity of 4,363 passengers, seven restaurants with exclusive dishes created by award-winning German Chef Herald Wohlfahrt, a variety of uniquely themed bars, spacious cabins and suites, fitness and relaxation facilities and endless world-class entertainment; MSC Splendida has something unique to offer for everyone.

MSC YACHT CLUB, A MAGNIFICENT ATTRACTION

With suites created by world-renowned architects, De Jorio Design International, MSC Yacht Club is the true definition of exclusivity and luxury and will be available for the first time in the country, onboard MSC Splendida. A ship within a ship concept, this private club offers guests a premium private yacht experience with the option to enjoy all the facilities the ship has to offer.

From priority embarkation and disembarkation to 24-hour concierge and butler services, fine dining in a private gourmet restaurant, elegant suites with opulent décor, an exclusive lounge with complimentary gourmet treats and drinks, exclusive access to

the Thermal Suite in the MSC Aurea Spa, and a sun deck with pool and whirlpools, MSC Yacht Club elevates the cruise experience to the highest levels.

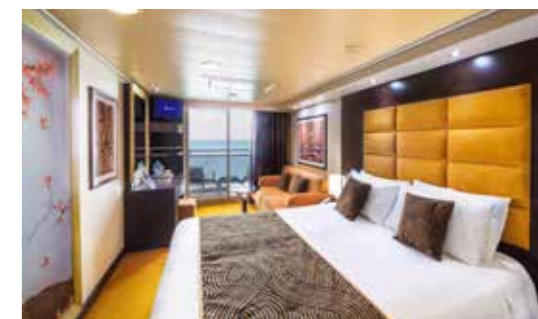
Additionally, MSC Yacht Club guests can book private, out-of-hours shopping and exclusive viewings onboard and have the unique opportunity to design their own excursion packages, to better suit their preferences.

THE CONVENIENCE OF A SMART SHIP

MSC Cruises believes that luxury and convenience go together. The MSC For Me App, exclusively available on all the smart ships in their fleet, including MSC Splendida, helps guests enjoy their time onboard easily and conveniently. Zoe, the first ever virtual cruise assistant, helps guests with a seamless, connected holiday, saving valuable time. With exciting new features, guests can access important information when they need it.

With all this and more to offer this cruise season, make MSC Cruises your travel partner of choice and experience the future of cruising.

Contact your local Diners Club-affiliated travel agent to book your next journey. 📞



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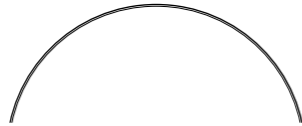
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LIFESTYLE

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should be seized with both hands. He knows his energy is infectious. His aura still captivates his audience effortlessly, he doesn't need to brag about his success. Drawing people in and leaving a lasting impression is an attitude, a way of life. It's something in the way he acts, the way he carries himself. The way he wears his fragrance. SIGN YOUR ATTITUDE. www.mercedes-benz.co.za



SAY HELLO TO KUNJANI

KUNJANI in Stellenbosch takes a slightly different approach to most things, including winemaking. In addition to the vineyards on their Devon Valley property, they seek out the areas where their favourite cultivars do best and personally select the best vineyards to source their grapes. Kunjani's range of wines have been honed to maintain excellent quality, a characteristic which the brand has become known for. The wine collection consists of Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc, Rosé, Merlot, Shiraz, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Enjoy a tasting in the comfort of the well-appointed Tasting Room or on the deck overlooking the vineyards with breath-taking views of Bottelary Hills. www.kunjaniwines.co.za

TUDOR'S MULTI-TIME TRAVELLER

Tudor's renowned Black Bay GMT divers' watch boasts a highly functional complication that establishes the local time at your current destination while maintaining sight of the time in two additional time zones. Fitted with the Manufacture Calibre MT5652, the Black Bay GMT sports a 24-hour graduated, rotating, dual-colour bezel - representing day and night - that gives a subtle aesthetic nod to the history of this watchmaking function. The Tudor Black Bay GMT is available with a selection of bracelets, including a riveted steel or steel and gold bracelet, depending on the model, with either a polished or a satin finish. For elegance and practicality, the Black Bay GMT can also be fitted with a "Terra di Siena" brown leather strap with a folding clasp and safety catch, or a black fabric strap with a burgundy or beige band that complements the sophisticated timepiece's signature bezel. www.tudorwatch.com



DELICIOUS DELHI

Discover a Melting Pot of Cuisine in India's Capital

Dining in Delhi is a whirlwind tour of the flavours of India, from lavish fine dining to the subcontinent's most inventive street food.

Thanks to centuries as the royal seat of sultans and emperors, Delhi brings the best of India's cuisines together in one fabulous fusion. The Indian capital is famously fast-paced and frenetic, but its diverse culinary influences have found the time to blend into a lavish symphony of flavours that are best sampled in fine-dining restaurants and the street food served in Old Delhi's maze-like bazaars. A visit to Delhi is a voyage of gastronomic discovery, where even eating at a roadside stall can be a five-star experience.

A TASTE OF TRADITION

Tastes from across the subcontinent spill out into the streets in Delhi, from South Indian dosas (savory crêpes made from fermented rice and lentils) to Bengali fish curries, but it's the flavours of North India that linger on the palate. As the

principal city on the Grand Trunk Road that links Afghanistan and Bangladesh, Delhi has long embraced the sensational cuisine of India's north-western Punjab state: kulcha (leavened flatbread) and paratha (layered, unleavened flatbread), chole bhature (spiced chickpeas with fried bread), and moist, flavoursome meats fresh from the tandoor (clay oven).

You'll also find lavish dishes conceived in the kitchens of Mughal emperors, blending influences from Central Asia, Persia, Ottoman Turkey, and pre-Mughal Hindu traditions. Mughlai cuisine is a complex melting pot, best experienced in informal but fiercely flavoursome kebab restaurants near the Jama Masjid Mosque, such as the legendary Karim's (16 Gali





Butter Chicken

Kababian), famed for its richly spiced lamb burra kebabs marinated with curd and ginger.

CLOSE UP DELHI STREET FOOD

For street food, look no further than the knotted bazaars that sprawl around Chandni Chowk, the bustling marketplace running west from the Red Fort. Here you'll find hole-in-the-wall eateries and streetside stalls serving everything from stuffed parathas to the sweet fried-dough whorls known as jalebis.

For comfortable, sit-down dining, head to the long-established restaurants of Connaught Place, or the burgeoning residential "colonies" sprawling beyond Delhi's historic core. Start the journey at Sagar Ratna (18 Main Market, Defence Colony), hailed for its elaborately spiced vegetarian cuisine, or Rajinder Da Dhaba (Dda Market, Safdarjung Enclave), which brings Punjabi roadhouse cuisine into the heart of Delhi.

FIVE MUST-TRY DISHES

To taste the best of Delhi, hit the backstreets, where blink-and-you'll-miss-them workers' canteens and food stalls serve the city's most authentic eats, such as the following dishes.

Tandoori chicken - Not so much a dish as a national obsession: moist, tandoor-roasted chicken, marinated with yogurt, spices, garlic, and ginger (enjoy it with a squeeze of lime juice).

Chole bhature - Flavoursome stewed chickpeas with complex spices, served with a fried puri flatbread for dipping. An authentic taste of the Punjab, beloved by truck drivers on the Grand Trunk Road.

Lamb burra - A favourite of Delhi's Muslim community since Mughal times. An artful blend of spices, rubbed into lamb cuts that are then barbecued over charcoal.

Stuffed parathas - Fried, buttery, layered flatbreads. Deliciously rich, often stuffed (with chilies, almonds, and other fillings), and available in the alleyway known as Gali Paranthe Wali near Chandni Chowk.

Butter chicken - A never-let-you-down classic of tandoori chicken pieces, served in a sauce rich with spices, tomatoes, and butter. Invented by chefs at Delhi's Moti Mahal restaurant in the 1950s.

A TASTE OF THE WORLD

Coming to Delhi without sampling the fabulous, fiery flavours of North Indian cooking would be unthinkable, but the Indian capital has more up its sleeve than chili, cardamom, and coriander. Many mid-range restaurants celebrate a triptych of cuisines—Indian, Chinese, and Continental. But to enjoy the latter two categories at their best, seek out eateries that make an artform of a single cuisine or region.

At Olive Bar & Kitchen (One Style Mile, 6-8 Kalka Das Marg, Mehrauli), close to the Qutb Minar ruins, chef Dhruv Oberoi interprets the Mediterranean theme in a brilliant variety of ways, from Turkish-inspired meze platters to Roman-style pizzas and homemade artisanal sorbets. For flawless dim sum, Chengdu-style chili fried lamb, and other Chinese dishes, join the crowds at celebrated Shang Palace (Shangri-La Eros New Delhi, 19 Ashoka Road, Connaught Place), famed for its authentic take on Cantonese, Sichuan, and Yunnanese classics.

Japanese food is also popular, particularly in five-star hotel settings and upscale colony markets. In the ever-popular Khan Market, Town Hall (Middle Lane) showcases the pioneering sushi and sashimi creations of acclaimed chef Augusto Cabrera.

Fusion food is gaining traction all over Delhi, too, with Southeast Asian and European flavours sneaking onto menus. At Bo-Tai (Kalka Das Marg, Seth Sarai, Mehrauli), a chic cocktail-bar-style experience is given extra pep by a sharing-friendly menu spanning prawns with caramelized mango, pork-belly bao, and seared sole with Gruyere fondue. 🍴

by *diners club international*
/ photography by *unsplash.com*



Kulcha Prepared by a Vendor





EVERYTHING **XXL**

The Return of Y2K Fashion

Oversized fashion has made a comeback in recent years, and the trend seems bigger than ever. From oversized sweaters to baggy jeans and oversized blazers, this style has been embraced by both men and women across the globe.

The oversized fashion trend can be traced back to the 1980s when hip-hop and grunge music was popular. Oversized clothing symbolised rebellion, worn as a statement against the norms of mainstream fashion. This trend faded away in the 1990s, but it re-emerged in the early 2000s with the popularity of streetwear.

Today, oversized fashion is seen as a

comfortable and relaxed way to dress. It allows individuals to express themselves and to feel comfortable in their own skin. With the rise of body positivity and the rejection of traditional beauty standards, oversized fashion has become more than just a trend but a fully-fledged movement.

One of the most popular items in oversized fashion is the oversized sweater. This cosy staple has been a favourite for years, and it's easy to see why. It's

comfortable, warm, and can be dressed up or down depending on the occasion. Oversized sweaters can be worn with leggings, skinny jeans, or even over a dress. They're versatile and can be styled in a variety of ways, making them a must-have in any wardrobe.

Another popular item in oversized fashion is the baggy jean. This style of jean has a relaxed fit and is often worn with a tucked-in t-shirt or a crop top.



Baggy jeans are comfortable and can be dressed up or down, making them perfect for any occasion. Depending on the desired look, they can be paired with sneakers or ankle boots.

Oversized blazers have also become popular in recent years. This classic wardrobe staple has been reinvented with an oversized fit. These blazers are often worn over a t-shirt or a blouse and paired with jeans or slacks. They can be dressed up for a business meeting or dressed down for a casual day out.

ALL ABOUT INCLUSIVITY

The return of oversized fashion is not just about comfort and style; it's also about inclusivity. This trend embraces all body types and sizes, allowing individuals to feel confident and beautiful no matter what their size. Oversized clothing is not just for plus-size individuals; it's for everyone who wants to feel comfortable in their own skin.

Another reason for the popularity of oversized fashion is the growing interest in sustainable and ethical fashion. Oversized clothing can be worn for years, and it's less likely to go out of style. This means that individuals can invest in quality pieces that will last them for years, reducing the need to constantly buy new clothes. In addition, oversized clothing is often made from natural fibres, which are more sustainable than synthetic materials.

The return of oversized fashion has also impacted the fashion industry. More and more designers are incorporating oversized pieces into their collections, which has even influenced high-end fashion. Oversized clothing is no longer just associated with streetwear or casual wear; it's now seen on the runways of top designers.

Despite its popularity, oversized fashion is not without its critics. Some argue that oversized clothing

can make individuals look sloppy or unprofessional. Others argue that it can be challenging to find the right fit, especially for petite individuals.

However, these criticisms are outweighed by the many benefits of oversized fashion. It's inclusive, sustainable, and versatile, making it perfect for any occasion. As the fashion industry continues to evolve and adapt, it's clear that oversized fashion will continue to be a staple in many people's wardrobes for years to come. ¹¹

by **bernie hellberg jr**
/photography by **unsplash.com**



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FROM OBSERVATION TO CREATION

How Art Found Drielike van Wyk

For Cape Town-based acrylic painting artist Drielike van Wyk, art has become her life purpose. Although she grew up with the urge to create, it was only after a traumatic incident in her adult life that she re-discovered art or, as she puts it, “allowed art to find me”.

Growing up in a family of makers, the creative seed was always there. “My father was a special role model. He was the first person in the country at that stage to make guitars in South Africa – the rest were all imported. He made all his guitars from scratch, first building the tools he needed before carefully crafting each piece. I used to love playing with the wood shavings in his workshop while he was busy working on an instrument. I think being that close to creation, and to the materials involved, fuelled my own desire to make things,” she explains.

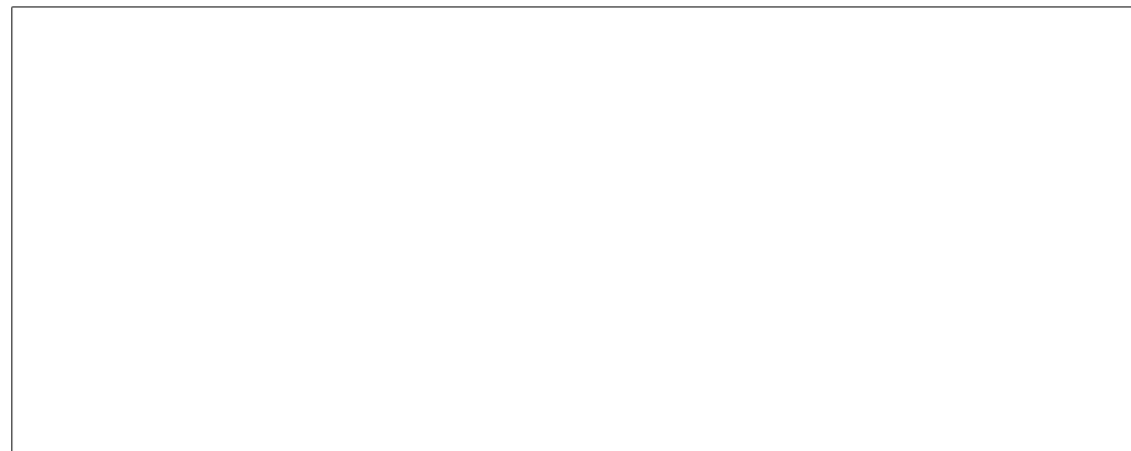
BEAUTY FROM TRAGEDY

She put her creativity on hold while carving a career in the corporate world, but when she experienced a traumatic life event, her life was turned upside down. During this intense grieving process, a friend encouraged Drielike to find a creative outlet to work through her pain. She gifted her with a large canvas and a basic colour set, and Drielike started painting.

“I painted an African woman with a large afro. It came out really well, and I put it on my wall,” she explains.

Soon after, somebody saw the painting in a photo and wanted to buy it. “The gentleman asked me to name my price as I had explained that it wasn’t for sale. He was very persistent, and I eventually gave in. He ultimately ended up paying even more than he had offered before when he finally saw the painting in front of him.”

Drielike bought another canvas and started a new piece as she was curious about the process she



had gone through with her first painting and wanted to experience it again, and go a little deeper into it. Sure enough, another offer came to buy the second painting off the wall. So, she painted a third, and the same thing happened.

"That got my attention. I realised that there was something there. I knew I wasn't looking for something, but it found, and it was worth pursuing," she explains. "Looking back, one of the worst things that happened in my life changed the course of my whole existence, my whole being, my whole life, in a good way."

FLOWING ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

Seven years later and Driekie's colourful portraits have garnered a solid following. Entirely self-taught, using brush strokes and pallet knife edging, her process is never the same. "I never learnt to mix colours or follow a method, which keeps it fun and interesting. It was just in me from the get-go."

It also allows for the free flow of artistic expression. "As an artist, the process of creating is an immersive one. You have to be your own best friend because you really are riding a wave. One minute, you're on top of the world - the next, you're crashing on the rocks. And then, just as suddenly, you'll see the light again. Equally devastating lows follow the exhilarating highs. Constant change is part of the deal."

Faces are still her trademark, and in addition to originals, Driekie also does commissions. "I've always been fascinated by human behaviour and psychology. A group of people can stand in front of one painting, and each person will have their own opinion about what the face is expressing. What I like about it is the mystery, because only the person in the picture truly knows the emotion that lies behind it."

Her prints are printed with pigment inks on archival Epson Water Resistant Matte Canvas - a natural white canvas made from a durable




blend of polyester and cotton. Each print is covered with new paint strokes to personalise it, and is then finished with a varnish. This process takes up to two weeks.

PLACE OF SERENITY

Driekie's wish is that viewers will forever be mesmerised by the expressions on the faces she paints, and she aims to get as many paintings in as many houses around the world as possible.

"I hope that people can come to their own place of serenity through my process, that the piece makes them linger for a moment, to pause and be present. Above all, my wish is that my work also gives them a sense of hope, because as much as my process may be intense, it is also about celebrating and loving life, looking for joy in every moment."

Driekie's work is currently featured at Absolut Art, Stellenbosch; The Winelands Art Gallery, Durbanville; Anon Pop-Up Art Show, Observatory; Eye for Art, Umhlanga; and Hadani Gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel.

For more information and orders, visit www.driekie.com. 

COSY UP TO WINTER

The Colder Months Offer an Ideal Opportunity to Spruce Up Your Space

Winter is just around the corner, so make sure your home is prepped and as ready as your wardrobe will be for the chilly months ahead.

Preparing your home for the cold winter months before they arrive is as important as ensuring your winter wardrobe is complete. From big things like roof leaks to small items like ceiling fans, ensuring that you've prepared your home for the upcoming freeze well ahead is essential. The sooner you get your house ready, the better off you'll be, especially when spending more time indoors. Follow these useful tips to ensure your home is prepared, inside and out, for the colder temperatures.

BRING OUT THE FUZZ

It's time to bring out the thick rugs and plush throws. Adding mats to your

lounge and bedroom areas provides comfort underfoot and creates warmth within these spaces. A cosy winter throw or warm blanket in the lounge can be convenient to huddle under on frosty winter nights. Next, it's time to bring out the winter bedding and extra blankets for your bedrooms. Layering your bedding with a down duvet and wool blankets is a good idea for extra warmth.

ADD COSY COLOUR

The living room and bedroom set the tone for winter, as they're the favourite places to snuggle up. This year's trending colour for winter is calming blue-grey, but adding warmer tones can bring that cosy feeling to a room. Use this opportunity

to introduce layers such as fluffy scatter cushions with a thick fleece throw over, rugs or even heavy curtains to keep the cold out and create texture in a room. Consider light earthy stone colour tones to balance out a room full of layers, yet still bring in that warm feeling.

LIGHT UP THE WINTER DAYS

Darkness creeps in earlier as temperatures drop in winter, which can set the mood for low productivity. A simple and cost-effective solution would be candles. Adding candles to a room creates that shimmering glow of warmth and comfort. They can be placed in multiple areas to bring light into a room. Have you considered task lighting? It's



a quick and simple solution to light up a specific space for working or reading. Simple desk lamps can be used for task lighting and work great during the day too. Lampshades are a must for any room that has dark corners. Floor or pedestal lamps are a sure way to eliminate those dark corners.

COSY UP TO A FIREPLACE

If you already have a fireplace, especially a wood-fired fireplace, start stocking up on wood and store it in your garage or outdoor storage cupboards, away from the elements. If you don't yet have one, a fireplace is the must-have home accessory of the season. Current fireplace trends are bold and daring, with open flames that bring additional lighting into the room.

Gas fireplace trends have been at the centre of modern interior design for a long time, but this year could see gas fireplaces find a more traditional look. Traditional fireplace styles are most popular for rustic cabins and homes that offer a quiet, comfortable ambience. Naturally, warmth is one of the main benefits of having a fireplace. It doesn't matter if your fireplace is gas or wood-burning, as both can provide supplemental warmth for your space.

INTRODUCE SOME GREENERY

Liven up your home with an air of nature in the form of flowers and greenery. Some flowers in a vase in the kitchen and plants around the lounge or entrance hall can create freshness in your home during the gloominess of winter. Not only do flowers and greenery add new colours to your home, but they also add delightful scents.

UPDATE YOUR KITCHEN

The kitchen is indeed the heart of the home, and we all agree that this



area deserves special attention and personalisation. It's the room where families gather for meals, the kids congregate for homework time, and friends crash for quick snacks and happy hour. So, if you want to check a project off your yearly to-do list, a kitchen remodel might be perfect.

EAT OUT INDOORS

Indoor dining during winter is an excellent way to bring warmth and cosiness to your home. Whether having a casual family dinner or hosting a fancy dinner party, there are several ways to make your indoor dining experience memorable during the colder months.

Consider setting the mood with warm and inviting decor. Soft lighting, candles, and a cosy tablecloth can all create a welcoming ambience. You can also add some winter-themed decorations to add a touch of festivity.

If you have a fireplace, lighting it up can add warmth and ambience to your indoor dining experience.

With these tips, you can create a warm and welcoming experience indoors that is perfect for enjoying the winter months with family and friends. 🍷

by *bernie hellberg jr*
/ photography by *unsplash.com*



DESIGNED FOR THE TIMES

The New BMW 7 Series

Designed by French automotive designer Paul Bracq and released in 1977, the first-generation BMW 7 Series defined the luxury standard for BMW and set the pace and direction for innovation in the luxury segment more than any other vehicle in the Munich-based brand's portfolio.

Paul Bracq joined BMW in 1967 under the stewardship of then head of design at BMW, Wilhelm Hofmeister, who was notable for conceptualising many BMW designs, including the iconic 'Hofmeister Kink' that informs the BMW design language to this day. Bracq's designs are characterised by their elegance, simplicity, and harmony,

and like the 7, they have had a lasting impact on the BMW brand.

While the 7 Series has been the decades-long luxury trendsetter for BMW cars, its history is rich, varied, always distinguished, and sometimes controversial. Perhaps most conspicuously so was the fourth generation car designed by American designer, Chris Bangle, introduced in 2001.

Bangle's design for the 7 Series was

marked by a more radical departure from the traditional BMW design, featuring more sculpted and flowing lines and the dramatic (and highly controversial) 'Bangle Angle' rear end.

Over its 45-year history, the 7 Series has established itself as a benchmark in its segment and proven its ability to consistently redefine its purpose in a world overcome by the scramble for SUVs. However, the truth is that the 7's continued

existence relies, perhaps now more than ever, on this ability.

So, does the new 7 Series have what it takes to continue its global success?

EVOLUTION OF AN ICON

The 7's confident new exterior exudes a sleek and modern aesthetic, with a bold grille, expressive lines, and signature BMW curves that, like its forebears, make a meaningful statement.

Perhaps the boldest is the front end, now enhanced by the BMW kidney grille's contour lighting that, in concert with the car's crystal headlights, lays on a visually expressive Welcome and Goodbye Scenario when unlocking and locking the car. Adaptive LED Headlights, including matrix high beam and the BMW Selective Beam non-dazzling high beam assistant, are standard on all models.

Light functions are divided into two zones - high-set slimline light strips house the daytime driving lights, sidelights, and indicators. Low-beam and high-beam headlights are positioned lower down, deep-set into the front apron.

At nearly 5.4 metres long and 1.95 metres wide, the new 7 is a big car, although its monolithic surface design - developed by current BMW chief designer Domagoj Ducek and his team - cleverly conceals its actual bulk. Almost flush-fitting side windows with invisible seals, recessed electronic door handles, and a shoulder line extending from the daytime running lights into the rear lights create a perception of elegance rather than heft. At the rear, eye-catching slimline LED rear lights extend well into the car's flanks.

One non-metallic and nine metallic colour shades can be ordered for the

paintwork of the new BMW 7 Series body, while there are also four BMW Individual paint options and several BMW Individual two-tone paint finish options.

A THEATRE ON THE MOVE

The 7's interior is luxurious and comfortable, with a range of high-end materials, including leather, wood, and metal accents, and heated and ventilated massage seats in the front and rear that make for a truly luxurious driving experience.

One of the 7 Series' standout qualities is the advanced technology permeating every interior inch. The infotainment system, featuring the latest version of BMW's iDrive, an all-new digital dashboard, and a range of connectivity options, define occupants' digital experience.

At the helm, the new BMW 7 Series



cockpit has a significantly lower number of buttons, switches, and controls than its predecessor, relegating most controls to the iDrive-powered BMW Curved Display. The fully digital screen comprises a 12.3" information display behind the steering wheel and a 14.9" control display. A new steering wheel and gear selector design rounds off the car's sophisticated front. Meanwhile, BMW's new Interaction Bar also makes its debut, combining a control/operation and design element that extends across the entire width of the instrument panel and well into the door panel trim.

Although the 7 remains true to its heritage as a driver's car, it is predictable that many 7 Series owners will be driven

in the car instead of driving it themselves.

A host of interior options are on offer throughout the cabin. The highlight is the Executive Lounge option for rear passengers, including a reclining function for space behind the passenger seat. Heated and ventilated seats are standard across the range, while seat heating only is reserved for the rear. A nine-programme massage function for all four seats is optional.

Unique to the 7 Series is the BMW Theatre Screen with Amazon Fire TV built-in for the rear-seat passengers. Neatly folded into the centre of the standard panoramic roof, the cinema-style 31.3" touchscreen with 8K resolution and Bowers & Wilkins

surround sound system with optional exciters in the seats, folds down behind the front seat headrests when activated by the 5.5" touchscreen controllers in either rear seat armrest. At the same time, rear window blinds are raised to create a moody atmosphere perfect for streaming videos, playing games, listening to music, or watching downloaded programmes, all while on the road. The system transforms the rear compartment of the BMW 7 Series into a private cinema on wheels, although the view through the back windows is obstructed for the driver when the screen is extended.

Perhaps the most intriguing feature of the new 7 is that BMW has done away with manual door handles. Opening and closing the doors is now electric, activated by passengers or the driver when exiting. Sensors in the doors also prevent the doors from opening into approaching traffic or banging against another vehicle when parked.

STATELY POWER

Three powertrain options and (eventually) nine model derivatives will reach South Africa. On offer from launch are the in-line six-cylinder 3.0-litre turbo petrol 740i and the all-electric i7 xDrive60 powered by two dual electric motors and a 101.7kWh battery. A six-cylinder turbodiesel option is set to join the group later in the year. The i7 is the fastest of the three, with a zero to 100km/h sprint time of 4.7 seconds.

All three cars feature adaptive air suspension and an upgraded chassis system to help them strike a balance between driving dynamics and travelling comfort. Increased body rigidity over the preceding model and wider track and wheels support further improvements to the standard two-axle air suspension and the optional Integral Active Steering.

The 7 feels like it is gliding on air, thanks to its active role stabilisation function (included as part of the

optional Executive Drive Pro). As well as reducing rolling movements caused by bumps in the road on one side of the car, the new Active Roll Comfort function adjusts the body height on the corresponding side of the vehicle.

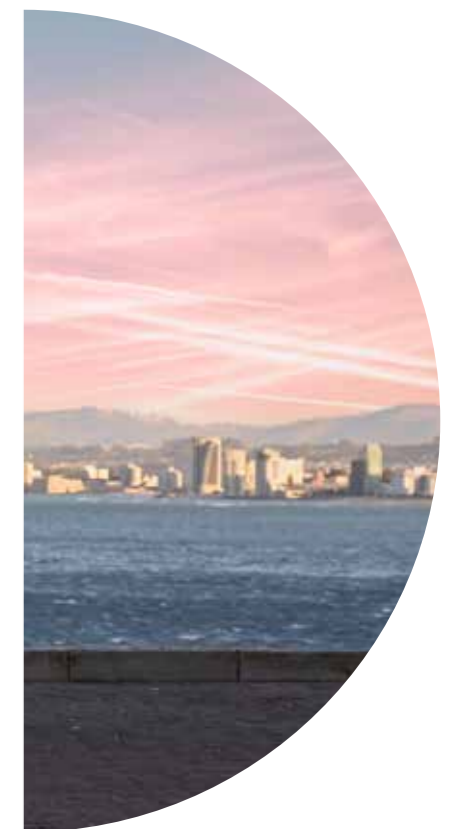
AUTOMATED DRIVING AND PARKING

In keeping with its status as BMW's technology flagship, the new 7 features the largest selection of automated driving and parking systems in a BMW model. Level three autonomous driving functions include Active Cruise Control with Stop&Go function, Steering and Lane Control Assistant, Automatic Speed Limit Assist, route monitoring function, traffic light recognition and Active Navigation. BMW's genius is how discreetly these systems are integrated to avoid intruding on the driving experience.

On models fitted with Parking Assistant Professional, the Reversing Assistant can also carry out steering movements for distances up to 200m. Manoeuvre Assistant can be pre-programmed for specific routes, and will automatically carry out all the tasks required, such as controlling the accelerator, brakes, and steering, as well as changing gears to move forward or reverse.

The new BMW 7 Series offers a luxurious and performance-focused driving experience. This latest iteration of the iconic BMW 7 Series proves that BMW continues to push the boundaries of luxury and performance, and in my opinion, is a worthy addition to its legacy. 📍

by *bernie hellberg jr*
/ photography by *bmw south africa*



MADE IN SOUTH AFRICA

South African Furniture Design's New Golden Age

There's never been a better time to support your favourite local design brands, and with so much to choose from, there's now something for every style, budget, and space to create something distinctly your own.

If the enormous success of recent events like the inaugural Cape Town Furniture Week and the 100% Design festival are anything to go by, South African contemporary furniture design is officially in its Golden Age. From attendance to the sheer number of new design houses and products, there has been a significant surge in the popularity of locally made, unique and stylish furniture pieces, resulting in the emergence of several brands that are leading the charge.

Standout among this new wave is the growing presence of the Always Welcome collective, an anchor of the recent fair and winner of the 'game-changers' award at 100% Design, whose recent expansion into the Cape from Johannesburg is cementing the local design collective's place as the everyday home of all our favourite things.

Brands in the collective, now numbering over 40 key members, include household names like Houtlander, Dokter and Misses, and MashT. Design Studio, TheUrbanative, Kino Furniture, Deft Studio, MONN carpets, and smaller, emerging brands like Ananta, Arrange Studio, House of Harhaz and several others. They're all regularly releasing new ranges and products to global acclaim,

exemplifying what makes South African contemporary furniture design so special.

South African contemporary furniture design celebrates the country's rich cultural heritage while also pushing boundaries and exploring new ideas. This approach has led to the creation of functional and visually striking furniture pieces with clean lines, bold colours, and unexpected details. Here are a few on our radar that we think you shouldn't miss!

HOUTLANDER

Based in Johannesburg, Houtlander is known for its timeless designs that combine traditional woodworking techniques with modern aesthetics. Their pieces are made using sustainable materials and are designed to last a lifetime. From the elegant spindle back chairs to their sculptural benches, Houtlander's pieces are both beautiful and functional. Their new Tambour range, which includes a drinks cabinet of dreams, must be seen to be fully appreciated.

DOKTER AND MISSES

Dokter and Misses is another brand garnering attention over many years for its unique and playful designs. Founded by husband and wife team Adriaan Hugo and Katy Taplin, the



Houtlander



Dokter and Misses



brand's pieces are characterised by bold geometric shapes and unexpected colour combinations. Their furniture pieces are often playful, with a touch of whimsy that sets them apart from more traditional designs. Their new Sketches From the Edge range, described by the brand as "our sketchbook of private mental objects that have scribbled and zigzagged their way into being", is full of statement pieces that will make your space feel unique.

MASHT DESIGN STUDIO

Founded by award-winning designer Thabisa Mjo, MashT Design Studio is a brand that celebrates African culture and heritage through its furniture pieces. Their designs are inspired by traditional African crafts, focusing on sustainability and ethical production. Their pieces often feature intricate patterns and textures, adding a touch of warmth and personality to any space. Their recently released Noodle Couch and range of ceramics entitled Presents From Joburg have become instantly collectable.

THEURBANATIVE

TheUrbanative is a brand that specialises in statement pieces that are both functional and visually stunning. Celebrating founder Mpho Vackier's engineering background, their furniture



is characterised by bold shapes and unexpected details, such as using unexpected materials like brass and marble. Their pieces are often designed to make a statement, serving as the centrepiece of any room.

KINO

Cape Town-based Kino Furniture is a brand that takes a more understated approach to contemporary furniture design. Their pieces are characterised by clean lines and minimalist designs, focusing on high-quality craftsmanship and sustainable production methods. Their furniture pieces are designed to be timeless, with a focus on longevity and durability.

DEFT

Deft Studio, one of the newer studios making a big impact, is a brand that creates furniture pieces that blur the line between art and design. Their pieces are often sculptural, with a focus on texture and form. From their studio in Qqeberha,

their furniture pieces are meant to be conversation starters, with unexpected details that make them stand out from more traditional designs.

MONN CARPETS

Finally, MONN carpets is a brand specialising in woven rugs and carpets. Their pieces are inspired by traditional African textiles, focusing on bold colours and graphic patterns. Their carpets are made using sustainable materials wherever possible, and they embrace ethical production methods, making them an excellent choice for those who care about style and sustainability.

Don't miss this new era of contemporary South African furniture design in your own spaces. With brands like Always Welcome Store, Houtlander, Dokter and Misses, MashT Studio, TheUrbanative, Kino Furniture, Deft Studio, MONN carpets, and many others leading the charge, there has never been a better time to start your own collection. 📌



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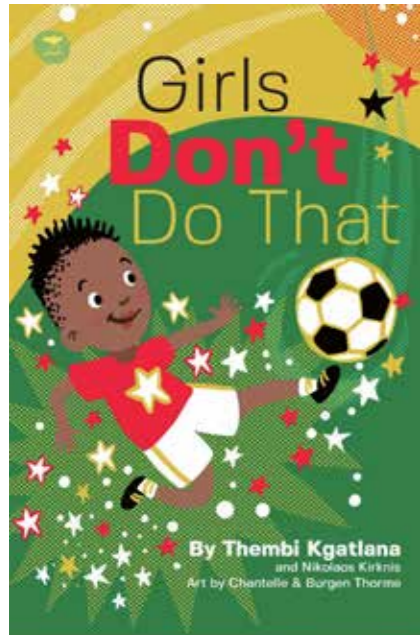
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TO ENTERTAIN



GIRLS DON'T DO THAT!

In this wonderfully written book, Thembi Kgatlane tells the story of her humble beginnings in Mohlakeng, the community's expectations placed on young girls, and the defiant spirit of a future national treasure.

'Girls don't do that!', they said when Thembi first took up football. Her hard work, determination and ability to put the insults behind her led her to play for Banyana Banyana and be named one of the greatest players on the African continent. The book is beautifully illustrated by the award-winning illustrators Chantelle and Burgen Thorne. Girls Don't Do That will be published in Afrikaans, English, Setswana, isiZulu, and isiXhosa for children aged 6 to 10, in April 2023.

Banyana Banyana's Thembi Kgatlane is celebrated worldwide – she represented South Africa in the 2016 Summer Olympics, was the leading goal scorer and Player of the Tournament at the 2018 Africa Women's Cup of Nations, she is the second woman player to win the African Player of the Year award after Noko Matlou, and she netted South Africa's first-ever goal at the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2019. Thembi has played for international clubs Houston Dash (USA), Beijing BG Phoenix (China), SL Benfica (Portugal), SD Eibar (Spain) and Atlético Madrid Femenino (Spain). Thembi has just signed a two-year deal with Racing Louisville FC in the US.

Nikolaos Kirknis is a former journalist and author of the bestselling book *The Curse of Teko Modise, Strike a Rock: The Thembi Kgatlane Story*, and *Ghetto Ninja: The Junior Khanye Story*. He was born and raised in Johannesburg.



NEW CHEF AT THE NELLIE

The Mount Nelson, a Belmond Hotel, ushers in esteemed chef George Jardine as its new Executive Chef. A harbinger of heritage and contemporary cool in the heart of the city, the iconic hotel has its sights set on a bold gastronomic future, and the Scottish-born chef is an integral part of this journey.

A celebrity in the culinary halls of fame, George leaves behind a wake of success at restaurants Jordan (most recently), Jardine and Seven, coupled with stints at lauded restaurants and hotels across the globe. He says of his new culinary home ground: "the Mount Nelson has always been an icon and – in one way or another – has been part of my life since the day I arrived in South Africa. So, when we discovered our alignment on the position, it felt like destiny." With a string of accolades to his name, such as Eat Out Chef of The Year for two years running and a spot as one of the world's 100 best restaurants (through Jardine) by *The S.Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants*, the celebrated chef brings an impressive legacy and the skills needed to transform the best locally produced ingredients into a culinary experience worth flying across the globe for.

"Ever-evolving culinary inclinations inspire our gastronomic vision at the Mount Nelson hotel. Partnering with chefs like George Jardine, who continue to innovate and curate ever-new experiences for our guests, is pivotal to our gastronomic metamorphosis," adds Tiago Moraes Sarmento, General Manager of the Mount Nelson.

Whether it's an alfresco picnic in the property's lush gardens, a seasonally inspired harvest table set under the shade of mature trees or a coveted seat 'backstage' at the Chef's Table, guests can expect to be immersed in the bounty of the Cape, journeying through its distinctive flavours and seasons. "The Nellie has gone through eras of great chefs. I look forward to continuing that progression and working with the team to render the Mount Nelson a one-of-a-kind destination on the international dining scene," he adds.



Shumbalala Game Lodge - An African Dream

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Taj Mahal, Agra
(By Rowan Heuvel)

by *bernie hellberg jr* / photography by *unsplash.com*

LAND OF THE ANCIENTS

A Showcase of Some of India's Most Alluring Landmarks


As one of the world's most ancient cultures, India's cultural and historical landmarks are revered across the globe. *Signature* brings you a selection of these, celebrated through the eye of the lens.

India is a land of diversity and cultural richness, home to a vast number of landmarks that are revered across the world. Among them, the Taj Mahal in Agra is an iconic symbol of love and one of India's most visited tourist attractions. Built by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his beloved wife, it is a mausoleum made of white marble and features intricate carvings and inlay work.

The Red Fort in Agra is another important landmark in India, known for its stunning architecture and rich history. This imposing fortress was built by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan and

served as his residence until he was deposed by his son Aurangzeb. Today, it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a popular tourist destination.

The Gateway of India in Mumbai is also a significant landmark, representing the city's colonial past. Built to commemorate the visit of King George V and Queen Mary in 1911, it is an archway that overlooks the Arabian Sea and is a popular spot for tourists and locals alike.

These landmarks are just a tiny glimpse of India's rich cultural heritage and history, and countless other sites are waiting to be explored. 



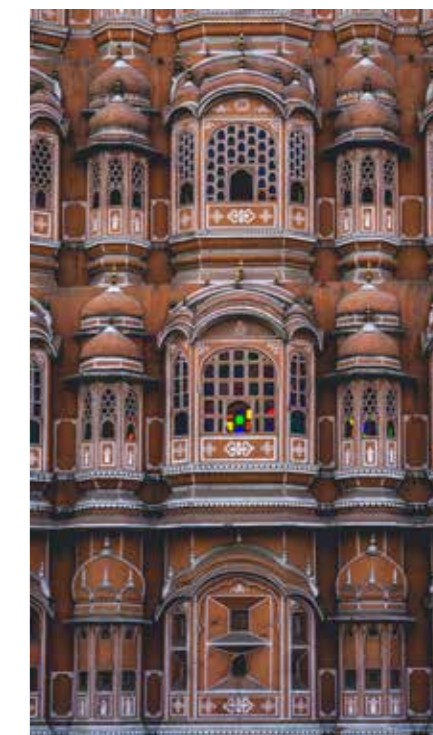
Konark Sun Temple, Konark
(By Venkat Rajalbandi)



Gateway of India, Mumbai
(By Sarang Pande)



Hawa Mahal, Jaipur (By Derek Story)

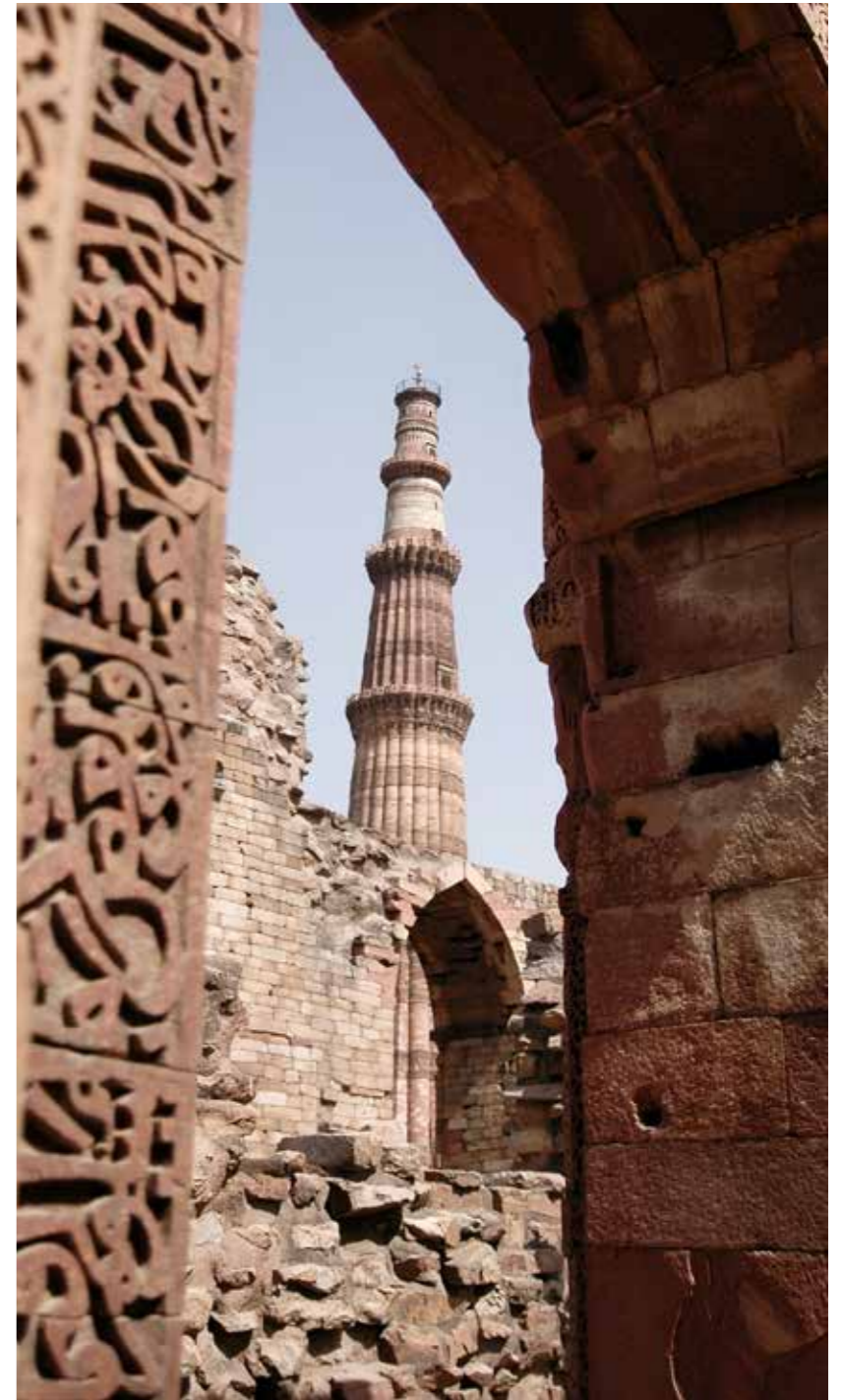




*Bahai Lotus Temple,
New Delhi
(By Swapnil Deshpandey)*



*Grand Stupa, Ajanta Caves, Maharashtra
(By Siddhesh Mangela)*



Qutub Minar, Delhi (By Rohit Tandon)

A HEALTHY HARVEST OF NEWCOMERS

2023 Platter's by Diners Club Wine Guide

Pafuri is a place of contrasts - vast vistas and ancient landscapes coupled with a wealth of bird and animal life, with often the tiniest inhabitants stealing the show - and your heart.

For the team at Platter's by Diners Club, one of the enduring pleasures of compiling South Africa's original and still best-selling wine guide is the opportunity to showcase the annual crop of new wineries.

Typically, there are around 40 debutants, each with their own foundation story, winegrowing approach and scale of operation, from the one-barrel soloist working from the family garage to the sprawling showpiece flaunting every vinous bell and whistle.

With profiles of 37 newcomers among its 744 pages, the 2023 edition of Platter's reflects the newcomer arena in all its diversity, while highlighting key trends shaping the wider industry.

RISE OF THE VINELESS WINERIES

Since the late 1990s, an increasing number of ventures have started without their own vineyards. Among the latest of

these 'vineless' enterprises is Terrabosch Wines, the brainchild of beverage-industry marketer, innovator, and strategist Mac Mabitlala. Based in Stellenbosch, Mac works with an established and awarded estate in a neighbouring region to produce a Bordeaux-style red blend named Ultima, whose debut in the guide was rewarded with a sought-after four-star rating.

Also in Stellenbosch, trained winemaker (and David Bowie fan) Kayleigh Hattingh fell in love with a pair of mountain-top vineyards and, raging pandemic notwithstanding, decided to launch her own wines under the label of Rebel Rebel. Her red wine, a Syrah, reflects the long-standing trend of handling the Shiraz grape such that it mimics the restrained, savoury style prevalent in its country of origin, France. Kayleigh's white wine, a Colombard, illustrates the more recent tendency to work with old vines (35 years or more) and have the resultant wine certified as originating from a Heritage Vineyard.



Colombard is one of several traditional grapes to be revived and made fashionable in recent years. By far, the most successful of the rehabilitated heirloom varieties is Chenin Blanc, the best examples of which are earning critical acclaim around the world. A newcomer to watch in this regard is Tim Hillock Wines, operating from a small cellar in Swartland and sourcing grapes mostly from farms in the area. Owner-winemaker Tim Hillock is on-trend in many other respects, such as keeping his winemaking as simple and

natural as possible. One of his red wines, a Pinot Noir, is made from fruit grown at one of the most coveted addresses in the Winelands, the high ground around the town of Ceres, prized for its cool, sometimes snowbound growing conditions.

MORE THAN WINE

Wine is by far the most-featured beverage in Platter's, but it isn't the only one sampled and described in the guide. Its grape-derived cousins, brandy, and husk spirit, are also included in the

platter's in your pocket

Scan to buy the Platter's by Diners Club Wine Guide hardcover book or download the app, for everything you want to know about South African wine. The app is free to download, thereafter an annual subscription applies.



approximately 8,000 labels listed in each edition.

On the brandy front, probably the most important new arrival is The Inventer, with master distiller and industry icon Johan Venter at the helm. His goal of specialising in innovative, never-to-be-repeated limited editions, presented in individually numbered bottles, is beautifully realised in his launch brandies, named XO Blanco and XO Rosso, made from white and black grapes, respectively (use of the latter for fine-brandy distillation being very rare and noteworthy).

Also featured among the guide's debut brandies is Devon Hofmeyr and Nikita Joubert's Eendracht VSOP, whose brand home is the Eendracht Pub & Grill in the Gauteng town of Cullinan. Distillation was done under contract at Elgin in the Western Cape, but future production will be in dedicated facilities on-site, mere metres from the lip of the famous mine where the world's largest gem-quality rough diamond was discovered in the early 1900s.

For more information, please visit www.wineonaplatter.com.

by **philip van zyl**
/ photography by **platter's by diners club**

HEALTHCARE IN THE CLOUD

How the Metaverse Is Reinventing Healthtech & Its Future

Despite being in its early stages, the Metaverse is constantly developing. The technology, which combines Artificial Intelligence (AI), Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and web 3.0 technologies, has enormous potential in healthcare. The Internet of Medical Devices, quantum computing, and robotics are poised to transform the healthcare ecosystem entirely. Metaverse is likely to change the paradigm of the healthcare system, improving surgical precision, therapeutic usage, and more.

Major healthcare companies and hospital chains are increasingly joining the virtual world of the Metaverse to improve patient care. MRFR expects the global healthcare in metaverse market to reach \$5,373 Mn by 2030, expanding at a massive 48.3% CAGR from 2024 to 2030, citing that many patients have also joined or are considering joining this virtual space.

Health information technology has been shown to improve healthcare quality and safety. Metaverse applications in healthcare can significantly improve patient outcomes by opening new channels for delivering cost-effective treatments. Metaverse can be an excellent tool for healthcare professionals, allowing remote monitoring and telemedicine for geographically limited patients.

REINVENTING HEALTHCARE

Metaverse promotes health 4.0 by combining AI, AR, and VR, improving patient safety outcomes, and allowing patients to interact and gain a clear understanding of their health condition. It is essentially the next version of the internet that uses AI, AR, VR, and ever-increasing connectivity, such as 5G networks, to



create more immersive, interactive, and experiential online environments.

Since the Metaverse will be the mode of online interaction in the future, it is considered one of the critical technologies that would expand the serviceable area to a broader patient base globally, adding newer services and service delivery and payment models. As a result, this technology is expected to gain significant traction in the healthcare industry in the coming years.

IMPACT OF THE METAVERSE ON HEALTHCARE

The healthcare system appears volatile because of the increasing

pressures of prevailing issues such as chronic diseases, ageing populations, an insufficient health workforce and limited resources, and rising costs. It is now clear that the Metaverse has the potential to be the most transformative factor in the healthcare industry. The technology will be used in five areas: clinical care and wellness, collaborative working, healthcare education, and monetisation.

The pandemic accelerated digitisation and automation in the healthcare system, and digital services such as telehealth became commonplace. With social distancing and contactless mandates, remote care became important, and telepresence, digital





twinning, and blockchain became critical to influencing healthcare. These three technologies will provide new methods to significantly enhance treatments that bring favourable patient outcomes and reduce costs.

Digital health is revolutionising care methods and is becoming a critical enabler in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology sectors. It is expected that VR/AR will play a causal role in developing medical education training modules and improving communication skills for clinicians and medical students.

These technologies will significantly improve comprehensive healthcare, including the current disease prevention and treatment model, ushering in this industry. However, there is still a long way to go before the medical field undergoes the metaverse transformation.

Among the well-known companies in the healthcare metaverse market are Novarad Corporation (US), Brainlab AG


(Germany), GE Healthcare (US), Meta Platforms Inc. (US), Siemens Healthineers (Germany), Nvidia Corporation (US), and Microsoft Corporation (US).

ENABLERS OF THE START-UP ECOSYSTEM

Various tech companies, start-ups, entrepreneurs, investors, and government bodies began to aggressively foray into the metaverse space, exploring existing and new concepts to assess the potential uses of the technology in medicine. For instance, on 13 September 2022, the North American Innovation Centre (LG NOVA of LG Electronics) announced that it had selected nine start-ups to build new digital health, Metaverse, and electric mobility businesses.

LG intends to broaden its role in investigating new services and applications for enterprises seeking to leverage Metaverse capabilities. Digbi Health, LifeNome, Mindset Medical,

XRHealth, NeuroTrainer, and iQ3 Connect are among the healthcare and metaverse finalists for its global challenge program -Mission for the Future. These companies will collaborate with LG NOVA on new business ventures and try for investments to develop impactful solutions from LG and other investors within the LG NOVA ecosystem.

On the other hand, on 12 September 2022, XRHealth, a Metaverse provider of therapeutic VR solutions to improve patient care, announced that it has added NeuroReality's cognitive training to its virtual clinics. NeuroReality provides an immersive VR gaming experience called Koji's Quest for stroke and brain injury patients. 

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