

# THE SHIFT



EZRA CALLAHAN

## *THE SOCIAL NETWORKER*

MEET FIVE REBELS WITH CAUSE YOU NEED TO KNOW  
JULIANA SHALLCROSS REPORTS ON THE HOTTEST 2016 OPENINGS  
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## THE HOST

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# THE MODERN CLASSIC

**LAS VEGAS DELANO**  
**LOS ANGELES MONDRIAN**  
**MIAMI DELANO • MONDRIAN**  
**NEW YORK HUDSON**  
**MORGANS • ROYALTON**  
**SAN FRANCISCO CLIFT**  
**LONDON MONDRIAN**  
**SANDERSON • ST MARTINS LANE**  
**ISTANBUL 10 KARAKOY**  
**DOHA MONDRIAN** COMING 2016



# WELCOME TO THE COLLECTIVE



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Once upon a time – last year – in Miami, Brad Wilson told a story about ice cream. The President of Ace Hotel recounted observing a round-the-block queue for a new parlour, with would-be patrons waiting hours to sample unimaginable new flavours of the cold stuff. The world of ice cream was their oyster (cone). Yet on reaching the front of the line, he heard each of them ask the person behind the counter, “What do most people get?”

His fable took place at the 2015 Leadership Lab – a closed-door gathering of some of the finest minds in contemporary travel, seeking to design the future of our industry. A debate was emerging: in one corner, travel brands were viewed as a blank canvas of possibility – a completely customisable experience tailored to individual guests.

With choice playing such a prolific role in our lives – from the consistency of the milk in our morning coffee to the soundtrack we set for our evening commute – such thinking seems perfectly natural. But as their opponent, Wilson had a different idea.

“People hate choice. That’s why people like trends; but trends can be shallow. In a very big world, lots of information proliferation breeds the need to stand out, differentiate and educate your customer. It isn’t about following trends: it’s about creating great products that people love.”

This got us thinking – or more specifically, it got us thinking about you, the LE collective. LE is a movement built upon rebellion. Every person you meet this week is here because they fully commit to a point of view, even if that might look completely different to that of the person next to them. As Rebels With Cause, you’re not here to blindly adapt to the next big thing. Instead, you all know who you are – and you OWN IT.

So for our OWN IT issue, we’re celebrating singularity in all its myriad, brilliant and bonkers forms. From eco-hotels in the heart of the city to spectacular design in the sprawling wilderness; back-to-basics reappraisals of the art of service to innovations that do away with staff altogether; and mid-range millennial brands to soaring high luxury: we’re investigating how the only thing uniting contemporary travel brands is their dedication to standing apart.

Last year, we discussed how our industry was founded upon this concept of the unusual, the ‘boutique’ and the Limited Edition by zooming in on the original rebels – Schrage, Balazs et al – who illuminated the path. In the hunt for their heirs in innovation, we spoke to a new set of contemporary travel names you need to know – each of whom is transforming the industry through their unique

creative cause. Do they have what it takes to become the next generation of rebels? We’ll leave that to you to decide...

Zita Cobb, the founder of Fogo Island Inn off the coast of Newfoundland, explains how luxurious design combined with socially responsible business ethics can return us to the landscape – and ourselves (p18). Ex-Facebook employee number six, Ezra Callahan, is pioneering a different kind of connection, applying the lessons he learned from his years in a tech start-up to create a hotel for the social media-minded traveller (p26). Salt Hotels’ David Bowd wants to turn the experiences (and mistakes) he was privy to at the beginnings of boutique into hospitality schools geared towards a new era of heartfelt service (p10).

Inés Miró-Sans and co. adopt a truly crowd-sourced approach to luxury, in which a collective of creators (and friends) are giving rise to an organic vision at Casa Bonay that might just define the hotel of the future (p36). Meanwhile, black sheep of the industry Chip Conley has been ruffling feathers the world over by helping to bridge the gap between hospitality and the shared economy at Airbnb (no further introduction needed) (p46).

Not all movements can be pinned on a single person; so throughout the year, James Davidson has been charting the trends transforming travel over on our online branch of THE SHIFT. Here he catches up on the evolution of the hotel gift shop from style miss to stylish (p40); discovers how urban hotels are putting their own slant on eco (p22); and charts the rising creative scene in the international hub cities of Bangkok, Lima, Budapest and Detroit (p56).

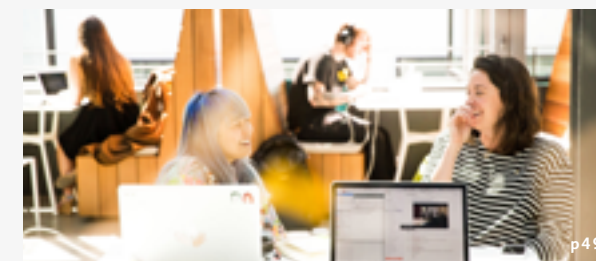
Fellow regular SHIFT contributor Juliana Shallcross wonders how mid-range hotels are interpreting luxury lifestyle for a younger, more budget-conscious generation – and what this means for the industry at large – as well as giving her top five openings to look out for in 2016 (p30 & 76). As the industry evolves, it’s clear that travel experiences that make us look and feel better aren’t going anywhere: Jacqueline Gifford delves into the brands who are making beauty and wellness their personal cause (p14).

Over at LE HQ, this year we gave you the opportunity to tell the world about your Big Idea to change travel in the revamped ‘un-conference’ format for the Ministry of Ideas (p50), in addition to the chance to apply or vote for those REBELS whose ideas are moving the industry forward (p70). You may also have noticed that as a title, PRINT is no more: henceforth, and in the spirit of committing to your cause, LE’s magazine will be called THE SHIFT, to match our online content arm and reflect our manifesto to follow the shift in luxury travel.

**So whether you’ve got the sexy, the sweet, the subtle, the scene, the cool, the hot, the in, or the lot. Whatever your cause, you’ve got this. So know who you are. And OWN IT.**

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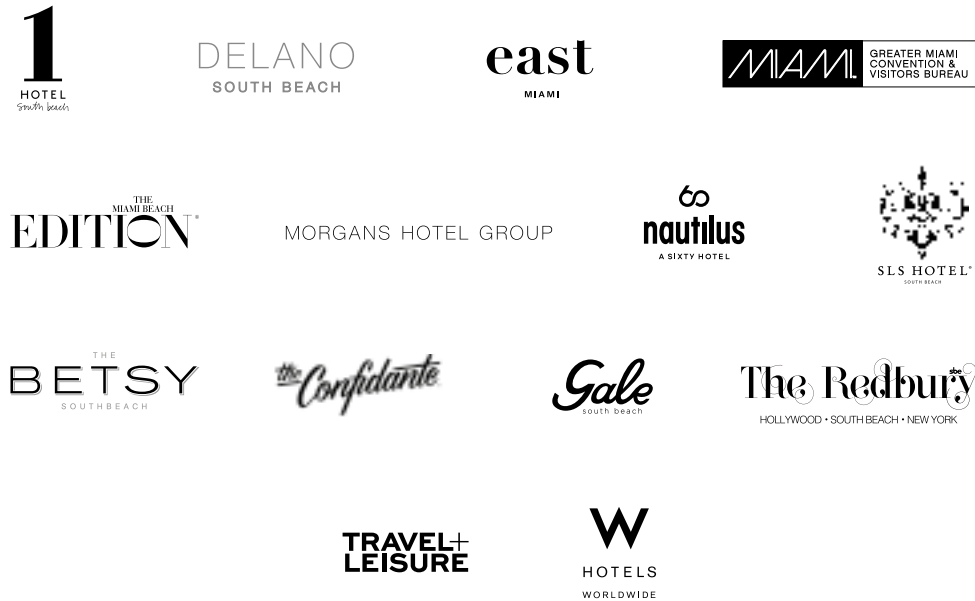
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AKA: **DAVID BOWD**  
THE HOST

PORTRAITS BY  
BILL HORIN

WORDS BY  
KATIE PALMER

**CAUSE**

PUTTING A BOUTIQUE TWIST ON THE B&B AND REINTRODUCING TRADITIONAL SERVICE VALUES WITH CONTEMPORARY FLAVOUR.

**ICONS**

SALT HOTELS

**MOTTO**

"I DON'T CARE WHAT PEOPLE LOOK LIKE; I CARE ABOUT HOW PEOPLE LOOK AFTER OUR GUESTS. I WANT PEOPLE TO BE THEMSELVES, BUT TO BE SO FOCUSED ON GUEST EXPERIENCE THAT IT'S ALL THEY'RE REALLY FOCUSED ON."

Chief Executive of Salt Hotels David Bowd was never a model pupil – “I’m not a rule follower and never have been, which is why I never finished high school” – but it turns out that he likes school enough to open one of his own. Salt School is a 10-week, 25-hour, intensive introduction to the hotel industry, tutoring willing students on everything from guest experience to sales and marketing.

Initially a side project supporting his aforementioned burgeoning collection of boutique B&Bs, which officially launched in 2013 with the opening of Salt House Inn in Provincetown, Massachusetts, Salt School has since been hailed as a movement so genuine it’s become part of Salt culture. The School gives people “an opportunity to come into our industry, to have a sneaky peek at what our industry is about, to choose whether or not it’s right for them, and then to be able to go as far as you want”, explains Bowd. There’s a note of defiance in his tone as he continues, “I didn’t finish high school; I was the school clown and rebel... And now I’m running the company of my dreams.”

So what prompts the school clown to get serious about education? I get the feeling that Bowd, having found his calling in spite of his teachers’ doubts, now wants to pay it forward. “I want people to enjoy their job. I want people to be happy at work. I want people to feel rewarded and appreciated, because those are all of the things that I wanted when I was in their position.”

When he was in their position, though, the industry was in a different mindset. With the birth of contemporary luxury came something of a backlash against traditional service values, with certain hoteliers too preoccupied with

being ‘cool’ to be kind. “I think where the industry got confused was when the boutique hotel came in and that also meant that every member of staff had to be six foot six, blond, size zero and had to match almost this minimalist design. And I think we, as an industry, got really caught up in that for a long time.”

Now practically an industry veteran – with job references from both Ian Schrager and André Balazs adorning his CV – Bowd has different priorities. “I don’t care what people look like; I care about how people look after our guests. I want people to be themselves, but to be so focused on guest experience that it’s all they’re really focused on.”

Interestingly, I later realise that when Bowd talks about “guest experience” he refers to the wellbeing of his staff as well as paying customers – it’s clear he considers everyone under his roof to be equally as deserving of his care and attention. “Our internal guests, our employees, their welfare, their experience is so important to me and to our organisation.” It’s fitting, then, that Bowd considers Salt a “family business”.

But unlike your traditional patriarch, this born rebel has patience – a penchant, even – for rule-bending. “Our team members are family and in a family people make mistakes. In a family people make errors of judgement but they’re still very loyal to the family and we’re still very loyal to them.” Another reference to his past, I wonder?

It was Bowd’s distaste for convention that led him to throw out the metaphorical rulebook when creating Salt Hotels. Averse to city hotels thanks to years of working in them – “it’s really hard to enjoy it because it’s like a busman’s holiday” – he nevertheless found bed and breakfasts “fusty and



THIS PAGE  
Breakfast Room at Salt House Inn





David Bowd with partner and Salt Hotels' Creative Director Kevin O'Shea

musty and full of rules; and they were furnished from just random places – there was very little thought having gone into the design element, the guest experience element.” So he decided to merge the best of both.

“We wanted to bring beautiful design to a B&B environment. And we wanted to get rid of the rules.” This flexible approach is what defines Bowd’s contemporary take on old-school service. In contrast to tradition – where, he imagines, “somebody sits in an office somewhere along the line and says, ‘Okay, here are the rules for our hotel’, without actually thinking about it” – Bowd put the needs of his guests first, then built a brand ethos (never a rulebook) around them.

In contrast to the doilies and fake flowers of traditional B&Bs, at Salt great design sits alongside “a great shower”, “a great bed” and “great linen” as key elements borrowed from the hotel world. Room service is another transferable perk; but in true Salt style, Bowd questioned the regular format: “It arrives, you have that awkward experience of somebody knocking on the door and then coming into your room with a tray. And you don’t know what to do... I don’t want to start my day off with that.” So at Salt they bag it up and hang it on your door knob: no human contact necessary.

But despite claiming B&B status, the Salt experience doesn’t end at breakfast. For today’s contemporary traveller, says Bowd, the concept of service has evolved dramatically. “It’s not just about a good night’s sleep and a great shower, it’s about curating somebody’s whole experience of a destination... if somebody comes to our town,

whether that’s Shelter Island, Asbury Park or Provincetown, and they don’t go away loving the town, then I think we’ve failed”.

“For us, it’s giving that little bit more. It’s not just, ‘This is the best restaurant’ any more; it’s, ‘This is the best restaurant and these are the best dishes in that restaurant.’” A far cry from the standard (and occasionally suspicious) endorsements made by your average concierge, the Salt team offers advice founded in personal experience, adjusted on a case-by-case basis to cater for individuals – whether they’re a foodie in the market for an impressive tasting menu, or a gang of revellers looking to line their stomachs ahead of a night on the town.

“I think today’s traveller wants to immerse themselves in everything local, and I think it’s why they choose us as a hotel brand, because we’re not a chain, we’re not cookie cutter in any way. They know we’re authentic, they know we’re truly engrossed in the neighbourhood that we’re in and they want to do the same.” I imagine a diary packed with reservations for restaurants that need ‘testing’... Not for the first time, a job at Salt sounds very appealing.

Indeed, Bowd considers being able to get to know guests as one of the benefits of running a smaller, B&B-style outfit. Whenever they’re in town, he and partner-cum-Creative Director of Salt Hotels, Kevin O’Shea, host breakfast for guests, dishing out local intel alongside eggs any style. With no rulebook to speak of, the Salt experience is an “organic” model that evolves

“I THINK TODAY’S TRAVELLER WANTS TO IMMERSE THEMSELVES IN EVERYTHING LOCAL.”

according to the feedback they garner along the way.

One example of this came when they trialled a “wine hour” – an traditional B&B event where guests and staff mingle over a glass or two. Alas, he and O’Shea found this to be “a very restrictive environment; people weren’t themselves and it was almost like they were forced into this drink.” So they scrapped the idea and, instead, told their team: “If you see a couple or even just somebody sitting there on the sun deck enjoying the weather, take them a bottle of wine and four glasses and go and have a drink on us.”

It’s touches like this that make staying at a Salt Hotel more like staying at someone’s home – after all, as Bowd points out, the first thing a host usually does is offer their guests a drink. When I quiz him on whether this sort of personal service is possible in a larger hotel (he has ruled out Salt Hotels ever giving rise to a



100 or 200-room property), he admits that size does matter.

“I do think it’s very, very difficult. I think that, you know, the sweet spot to us is 50 to 60 bedrooms. I think that you’re really able to know every guest and you’re really able to deliver on that personal guest experience.”

“Going back to Ian Schrager’s original thought for what a boutique hotel is, essentially it’s a Madison Avenue boutique versus a big department store. I think that the Madison Avenue boutique style really suits a small, intimate hotel – it’s much harder to be able to deliver that in a large hotel.”

Bowd acknowledges these limitations even among his own hotels. At 260 rooms, Asbury Park is noticeably non-Salt branded, “because people know that our hotels are in that smaller category”. Nevertheless this – along with other yet-to-be-announced, larger-scale projects in the Salt Hotels Management pipeline – remains, in his words, “in the spirit of Salt Hotels”, thanks to subtle nods such as a lack of check-in time and the signature map detailing recommendations for experiences in the local area.

When I ask if he has any tips for larger hotels wanting to inject a bit of ‘Salt spirit’ into their own brand, he advises them to, “Get rid of all the staffing levels and structure. Employ people that are really passionate about their role, with that mentality of guest experience, rather than thinking everything is driven by profit.” It appears that even in boutique’s newest incarnation, hiring right remains a priority – it’s just that, nowadays, they needn’t be six foot six and blond.

RIGHT ABOVE: The Chequit  
ON THE LEFT: Eben House Breakfast Room & Salt House Inn Collaterals



# Destination Wellness

*Jacqueline Gifford reports on what the latest buzzword means for travel in 2016*



WORDS BY JACQUELINE GIFFORD

As the travel industry shifts and takes Astock, different buzzwords dominate the conversation. Four or five years ago, everyone was obsessed with “authentic” and “local”, as travellers sought to lift the veil on destinations like never before. Two or three years ago, it was all about “farm-to-table”. From Washington’s San Juan Islands to downtown Miami, it suddenly became de rigueur to have everything at your local restaurant come from a farm or butcher within a 60-mile radius.

This year, the word “wellness” – and its siblings, “mindfulness” and “well-being” – is on everyone’s lips. “Judging by the number of juice bars and yoga studios you see, wellness has become mainstream,” says Barbara Close, the founder of Naturopathica, an all-natural beauty brand with standalone healing centers and spas. “24/7 living and chronic stress have brought wellness to the top. We can’t shut off.”

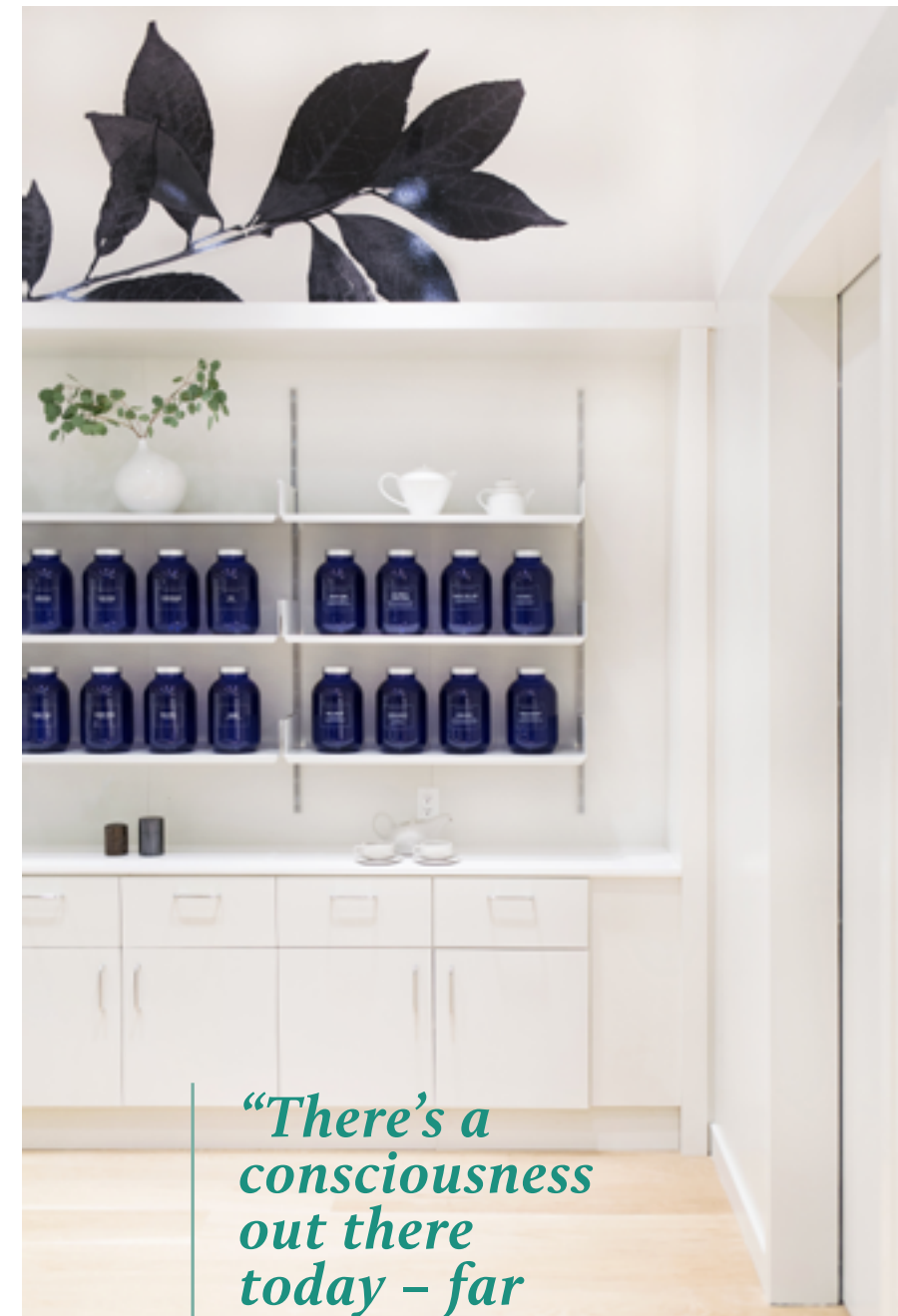
Close just opened a new flagship Naturopathica spa – complete with a vitality bar serving teas and tonics, and a remedy bar stocking tinctures – in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan. Visitors can come in, describe what they’re looking to treat (itchy skin, sleeplessness, bloating) and get products or a treatment entirely customised to their needs.

As Naturopathica, and wellness, have evolved, Close sees the need address the gut and digestion – specifically pre-biotics and phytochemicals. “Pre-biotics are what make pro-biotics (the good bacteria in your gut) thrive,” she explains. “That’s why we’re focusing on elixirs and tonics that have phytochemicals like turmeric, echinacea, reishi, a, any sort of herb that has medicinal qualities. People are starting to understand that the gut is connected to the brain, skin and emotion: food as medicine.”

Sleep as medicine is also key. “It’s the perfect moment in time,” says Neil Jacobs, the CEO of Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas, a brand that has properties stretching from Oman to the Maldives to Portugal’s Douro Valley. “There’s a consciousness out there today – far greater than ever before – around sleep, nutrition, exercise, spiritual and mental health.”

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Naturopathic Tea

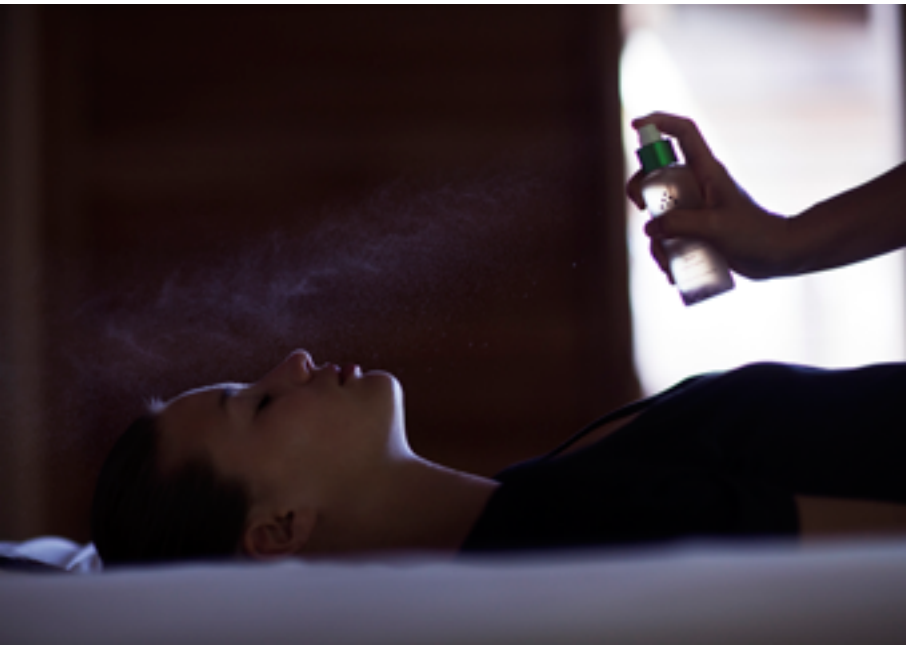
OPPOSITE PAGE  
Lanserhof Tegernsee



*“There’s a consciousness out there today – far greater than ever before – around sleep, nutrition, exercise, spiritual and mental health.”*

NEIL JACOBS  
CEO OF SIX SENSES HOTELS RESORTS SPAS





LEFT PHOTO | Six Senses Hotel Resort  
Yogic Sleep

RIGHT PHOTO | Cal-A-Vie Health Spa

Six Senses has always placed wellness at the core of their brand. They are once again leading the charge in the industry by unveiling a new integrative wellness-testing programme and yoga classes – the latter specifically designed to aid sleep. As part of the new programme, Six Senses guests undergo a screening that uses a finger oximeter to monitor heart rate, tissue oxygen uptake and arterial stiffness. They can also experience yoga nidra, or yogic sleep – a practice taught lying down, to induce full body relaxation. En-suite, a consultant will show guests what the optimal room temperature is for sleeping and how to prepare the body for rest.

Adds Jacobs, “The fear around Eastern medicines such as Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine is dissolving. People are ready to look at different approaches to wellness that in the past were taboo and woo woo.”

One thing’s for sure when it comes to spas and luxury: that one-hour

standard facial or massage just isn’t cutting it anymore. At the Park Hyatt New York’s airy Spa Nalai, the signature 120-minute Spa Nalai treatment – a combination of a citrus scrub, French clay wrap and rejuvenating massage – has tripled in bookings in the past six months, as clients say they need more than just one hour to unwind. At the Peninsula New York, innovative offerings include the 90-minute Wat Pho Royal Thai Massage, a traditional technique used to treat Thai royalty, or the Second Skin Facial by Biologique Recherche. As an alternative to fillers, patches with 80% hyaluronic acid are placed on targeted areas to regenerate skin.

In another interesting twist, more hotel properties are now offering clinical testing and ushering in a new age of 21st century destination spas. Take Lanserhof Tegernsee, a modern retreat in the Germany countryside with stunning views of the Bavarian Alps. Guests check in for a week – and

forgo the alcohol – to undergo urine analysis, DNA and genetic testing, food allergy testing, colonoscopies, cardiograms, and sonograms. (Massages and reflexology are thrown into the mix, too.) The ultimate goal: cleanse the gut and start anew.

And then there’s Cal-A-Vie Health Spa, one of California’s iconic destination spas. The resort offers nutritional analysis through blood and urine testing, so that they can measure guests’ vitamin, mineral and fatty acid levels and track how they are digesting fat and carbs. Fitness classes range from Zumba to hiking and yoga. Alcohol is a no-no – but no one’s going to kick you out for sneaking the occasional glass of wine. The point of travel, to a certain degree, will always be to stimulate the mind and indulge the senses, be it through food, fitness – and yes, even the perfect night’s sleep.

JACQUELINE GIFFORD

Jacqueline Gifford is the Special Projects Editor at Travel+Leisure, where she edits features and covers major markets including the Caribbean, Cruising, Beauty, and Hotels.

## get lost and be found

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PADDY BARRY

WORDS BY  
OLIVIA SQUIRE

# ZITA COBB

*AKA: THE  
PRODIGAL  
DAUGHTER*

“I think that the big question that lives in all of our lives is, ‘how do we belong to the world?’”

Things get existential pretty quickly when you’re talking to Zita Cobb. The founder of the Shorefast Foundation is not your average hotelier, in the same way that the property owned by it, Fogo Island Inn, is not your average hotel.

As a native Fogo Islander who resettled on the island (off the coast of Newfoundland) following a successful career as CFO of a technology company, ideas around return and identity are a natural preoccupation for Cobb. Her Inn is not just a hotel, but also a physical representation of this “big question” about how to belong. It is a place that attempts to resolve modern tensions between self and other; culture and nature; and business and life.

“I think most contemporary travellers are trying to get away from the kind of reductive materialism and hyper-real, seductive societies we’ve built for ourselves,” Cobb reflects. “We’re not looking for distraction any more: we’re actually looking for wholeness and for deeper engagement.”

Travel has always been both an escape and a journey – except today, we are escaping from “the great age of separation, a world that is increasingly siloed” and journeying into our innermost selves. Referencing the concept of ‘Zeressenheit’ – eloquently translated by philosopher William James as “torn-to-pieces-ness” – Cobb states, “Why do people travel? We all have some memory of some time in our life when the world felt whole: it felt right. And then you get torn to pieces...I think when people come to the island, they feel given back to themselves in a very powerful way.”

Part of this return to the self is engendered by the raw, untamed interactions with nature that a visit to Fogo Island entails – or as Cobb puts it, being “immersed in the really powerful and utterly uncontrollable gestures of life”, whether that means encountering a herd of caribou or standing on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean. Wilderness offers an “essentialising” respite from the capitalist ideology of perfection and acquisition that leaves us inert, anxious and uninspired; as Cobb theorises, “The hyper-real society kills creativity. The creative traveller is looking for a world where everything isn’t packaged and served up to them, because there’s no room for imagination in that.”

This stands in contrast to the ‘bucket list’ approach to travel, which disturbs



THIS PAGE  
Fogo Island Inn

## CAUSE

PIONEERING SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE LUXURY WITH A CONTEMPORARY EDGE, BY REIMAGINING THE HOTEL AS A CONDUIT FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE, HUMAN CONNECTION AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION.

## ICONS

FOGO ISLAND INN AND FOGO ISLAND ARTS, OFFICIALLY OWNED BY THE SHOREFAST FOUNDATION

## MOTTO

“WE ARE MORE OURSELVES WHEN WE HAVE FIGURED OUT HOW TO BE IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OTHER. BUSINESS CAN HELP US DO THAT. BUSINESS HAS HELPED US DO THAT.”





Cobb – “Why would I interrupt this delicious place that’s so hard to get to in myself to be tweeting or Instagramming?” – in that it removes travellers from the daily conflict between their digital and actual selves and allows them to “have a relationship with time” and place. “It kind of lets you give up some of your shit...it confronts you in your own nonsense about whatever our society has become a little obsessed with.”

What makes Fogo Island Inn truly unique, however, is the way in which this determined philosophy is integrated into its business and operational aspects. It exists under the umbrella of the Shorefast Foundation, a registered charity set up by Cobb and her brother that uses “business-minded ways to achieve social ends”. The Foundation also comprises Fogo Island Arts, an artists-in-residence project including a smattering of standalone studios within easy reach of the Inn; and Fogo Island Shop, where an international high-end clientele can purchase designs made to order by Islanders.

Whilst a shop filled with expensive items might seem incompatible with a breach from addictive

materialism, Cobb disagrees. Purchasing a chair from Fogo Island Shop is an intimate experience whereby you understand who made it and how, providing a link with a people, culture and time. “It’s not anonymous: you understand the business model and where your money went. Meaning doesn’t fall out of the sky: we make meaning, and that’s the beautiful thing about life. Objects can help us do that.”

Similarly, the unexpected presence of international contemporary artists amidst the island’s rocky terrain goes beyond creating a press-friendly talking point. “You’ve got these things that on the surface are incongruous, but on a deeper level absolutely belong together, because they’re about place and ideas and life and meaning,” Cobb says, “It’s really about the tension between constraints and possibility – and when you are confronted with that, it’s exciting. It’s vitalising.”

Fogo Island Inn is fuelled by this tension, signposting a new way for businesses to reconcile the search for profit with the search for meaning. As Cobb expresses, “There are two reasons for a business to exist: for financial profit, or to solve

problems and contribute to the fabric of society.” She admits that achieving the latter takes dedicated investment of all kinds of resources, alongside a shift in attitudes, but “you see it working. Employment is up, enrolment at the school is up; Fogo Islanders generally have a deeper awareness of our own identities, our own possibilities. Because we are more ourselves when we have figured out how to be in a relationship with the other...The Inn and its projects have woven Fogo Island back into the story of the world. Business can help us do that. Business has helped us do that.”

Cobb has faith that whilst this mindset takes effort, investment and courage, the travel industry (and society at large) is moving along the right trajectory. “We have been in this dangerous dam with an extreme form of individualistic capitalism, and I really think that we all accept that this

is not taking us to a good place – even the people who have amassed great fortunes. We all want to contribute to the common wealth, because that’s how we belong, how we make things count,” she says. “We’ve been told somehow in our business thinking that you’ve got to make a decision between two opposing things; you have to choose business or life. Which is nonsense...if we live in this lovely tension between what seems to be opposites, underneath that there is a place where they come together.”

Indeed, the Inn itself was designed in the shape of an X – but unlike a cross on a treasure map, it isn’t an end point, but a starting point. Asked about the next step for the Inn, Cobb contemplates, “What I think and hope we’ve done is to leave room for the world to unfold and evolve and emerge in the way it wants and needs to. The Inn is like a Trojan horse for ideas – in this place where all of this comes together, God knows what might happen...”

This willingness to embrace an organic, rather than mechanised, sense of order underpins Cobb’s thinking. Fogo Island Inn allows us to rebel from our previous assumptions; confront the “big questions” of our existence; and ultimately return to ourselves with a wider sense of possibility, coherence and wellbeing – both in business and in life. As Cobb summarises, “Every community has potential. Every person has potential. So the more we can do that helps people see that the world underneath the torn-apart world that we seem to be living in is whole – and in that place, business is a part of reinforcing the whole the better.”

“THE CREATIVE TRAVELLER IS LOOKING FOR A WORLD WHERE EVERYTHING ISN’T PACKAGED AND SERVED UP TO THEM, BECAUSE THERE’S NO ROOM FOR IMAGINATION IN THAT.”

THIS PAGE  
Zita Cobb on Fogo Island

OPPOSITE PAGE  
An artists' residence on Fogo Island





# Throwing in the towel

*James Davidson investigates how the new breed of eco-hotels are changing more than just their laundry policy*

WORDS BY JAMES DAVIDSON

Dear Guest,  
Every day, millions of gallons of water are used to wash towels that have only been used once... Thank you for helping us conserve the planet's vital resources...

#### **\*throws clean towel on the floor\***

The cynical view is, of course, that we're being led to assist in the cost-cutting of big hotel brands. Small ones, too. After all, the time saved by employees on replenishing and washing laundry equates to money. Lots of it. And there's plenty of water... Right? Understandable argument. Thing is, climate change is already starting to play havoc with water supply, droughts are more common, but it is one of the root causes of the aforementioned global conundrum itself that is the biggest problem here: energy. Think water just flows out of taps? Treating and delivering water uses up a worrying amount of energy; leaving your tap running for five minutes is the equivalent of leaving a 60-watt light bulb on for 14 hours. And that's before we get down to the business of heating said resource to wash said towels.

#### **\*hangs clean towel up on the bathroom door\***

Launched a couple of years back, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense H2Otel Challenge is targeted at encouraging hotels to put the best processes into action – saving water, money and, the big one: reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Casino hotel group Caesars were the first to sign up. Not surprising: under the guidance of Eric Dominguez (Corporate Director – Utilities, Engineering & Environmental Affairs), the installation of more efficient laundry facilities had already saved the chain between \$135,000 and \$218,000 per year on water heating. Conserving an astonishing 30 million gallons per annum.

Sure, cutting costs is a big motivator, and at typically 16% of a hotel's water usage, laundry comes at a big cost. No wonder hotels are going to all lengths to ensure you keep hanging up your towels. An extensive 2008 experiment by behavioural scientists Noah J. Goldstein, Robert B. Cialdini and Vidas Griskevicius saw motivational strings pulled on a selection of unwitting participants. The crux? Social acceptance. Tests were carried out with two differing towel cards – one with the usual 'help us help the environment', another with a different tact: 'join your fellow guests in helping to save the environment'.

Published as part of the ongoing series, Journal of Consumer Research, the trio's motivation through social norm messaging goes on: "Almost 75% of guests who are asked to participate in our

new resource savings program do help by using their towels more than once. You can join your fellow guests in this program to help save the environment by reusing your towels during your stay."

#### **The crafty buggers.**

And they didn't stop there. A second study used what they call 'descriptive norms', specifying the guest's room number in the card messaging. Peer pressure is alive and well. But what next? It's 2016, and the world is already falling to bits. There are plenty of hoteliers, travel destinations doing interesting things prefixed with eco-, or green-, but wood huts in tropical climes are one thing; what about new-build city hotels in major international hubs of creativity? The hotel industry at large needs a sea change.

Having created W Hotels and ushered in a new standard in the design-led hotel experience, Barry Sternlicht is determined to do something positive – and it doesn't sound like mere lip service. Debuting in South Beach last year, and rapidly expanding, Sternlicht's 1 Hotels chain is the seasoned hotelier wanting to leave a positive mark on the world. 10 years as 'Chairman and CEO of Starwood Hotels and Resorts' may lead the cynic in you to think this is just another big-name chain with a compulsory sustainability policy, but he sounds keen to push boundaries – telling Paper magazine last year:

***"I've seen the receding glaciers and you know that all these fossil effluents are changing the environment. You just know it. You can see the impact. You don't have to guess. It's not a discussion. It's fact."***

STERNLICHT



“I’ve seen the receding glaciers and you know that all these fossil effluents are changing the environment. You just know it. You can see the impact. You don’t have to guess. It’s not a discussion. It’s fact.”

Maybe it was the lack of snow at his personal ski resort that really pushed him over the edge, but the important thing is that Sternlicht is doing something. Peer pressure towel cards? Nah, not here. Hotels have a five minute sand timer in their showers. This is a hotel brand not content with being green; time spent here will leave you questioning your everyday approach to sustainability. Their hotels are designed with recycled and reclaimed wood and materials; there are organic uniforms; food made with fresh organic ingredients; Keetsa hemp mattresses; triple filtration water system. But the big thing? Here we have eco-hotels aimed at the creative class. Lobby-culture is still in place; high-tech leanings are still indulged. The concept of a green hotel may be nothing new, but this strain of green hotel has my attention piqued.

Now, hotels with an environmentally-sound frame of mind are nothing new across the pond either, even those with a strong design edge – Cornwall’s The Scarlet is a real treat, with an exhaustive commitment to responsibility; Alentejo in rural Portugal is home to Ecorkhotel, the world’s first hotel clad entirely in cork, a 100% natural product – but how are Europe’s city centres fairing?

Indeed, Barry Sternlicht could look to Vienna’s Boutique Hotel Stadthalle for inspiration... As the first city hotel in the world with a zero-energy balance, they really are pulling out all the stops. So that’s a lot of solar panels; plans for three wind turbines on the roof; a major upcycling programme (firewood coffee tables, nightstands made from old books); the city’s largest lavender field (on its roof!); toilets flushing with water from their well. In a city rich in culture – classical to cutting-edge – the Stadthalle is further proof that you needn’t be in the middle of nowhere to maximise sustainability.

Flying the flag for chains, NH Hotel Group – the third largest in Europe – are, like Portugal’s Ecorkhotel, looking to wine for inspiration; their Cork2Cork programme harvests used bottle corks from 77 of their hotels to be used in construction and insulation.

There are clearly plenty of bottle stops being popped. Lisbon’s Inspira Santa Marta Hotel is another outfit savvy to cork’s possibilities, its thermal characteristics leading to energy-saving flooring. The former 18th century print factory



is another city hotel with a big list of pros in the green department, and looks to Spike Lee for its mantra: Do the Right Thing. Which means a big focus on social responsibility as well as environmental.

There is a problem that everyone intent on minimising their environmental impact will face, however. External forces. Going to ban Coke because you’re not happy with their policies; forgot to check on the provenance of a bunch of new designer chairs you took receipt of? I don’t have the answer, but a trip around the world may offer a clue. Canberra, Australia’s unglamorous capital. The city’s award-winning NewActon precinct. Nishi, a mixed-use building built to the highest sustainable specifications.

It is here where the Efkarpidis brothers – Nectar and Johnathan – and over 50 of the country’s leading designers and artists have collaborated on an entirely unique space that could offer a blueprint for conscious, culturally-minded hotels. Occupying the bottom three floors of Nishi, Hotel Hotel is a meandering space that emits creativity from its every recess – a filmmaker with zero experience in interiors designed its rooms; Melbourne’s March Studio



have filled a staggering foyer space with over 5,000 offcuts of recycled timber; an artist more acquainted with galleries created a mirror that sits behind the reception desk.

What is my point? Aside from the stupendous eco-credentials of the building in which it is housed, aside from the countless environmental considerations made in the hotel’s design and operation, compulsively collaborating with the country’s top creatives opens up a whole new world of responsibility. Independent makers care about provenance, groundbreaking design studios care about accountability, visionaries will favour found objects over the mass-produced. Think the creative class will check in and check out without noticing their surroundings? Wrong. The travellers attracted to Hotel Hotel’s individualistic approach will revel in being exposed to new creative, those creatives will revel in that exposure, their suppliers will... You get the picture. A cycle of thoughtfulness set in motion by a community of collaboration.

If Hotel Hotel’s guests are remotely as considered as their approach, do you think we’ll need towel cards? I get it. Not two hotel guests are the same. But creativity has the power to inspire, and we’re all in this together. Stay considerate friends... Thank you for helping us conserve the planet’s vital resources •



**JAMES DAVIDSON**

*James Davidson is a contributing editor for THE SHIFT and editor-in-chief of We Heart, an online design and lifestyle magazine that he founded in 2009 as a personal blog and now receives over half a million monthly views.*

THIS PAGE  
1 Hotel Central Park  
Hotel Canberra

OPPOSITE PAGE  
Boutique Hotel  
Stadthalle





PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
FOXES AND WOLVES

WORDS BY  
OLIVIA SQUIRE

# EZRA CALLAHAN

*AKA: THE SOCIAL NETWORKER*

## CAUSE

TRANSLATING HIS PAST EXPERIENCE OF BUILDING DIGITAL SOCIAL NETWORKS INTO CREATING PHYSICAL, SOCIALLY ENGAGING SPACES.

## ICONS

ARRIVE HOTELS, ARTS + REC (A REAL ESTATE AND HOSPITALITY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY)

## MOTTO

"WHEN I LEFT FACEBOOK I GOT REALLY INTERESTED IN THE IDEA OF BUILDING PHYSICAL SOCIAL SPACES WHERE PEOPLE CAN INTERACT AND HAVE SHARED EXPERIENCES, ALONG THE SAME LINES OF WHAT HAPPENS ONLINE."

the moment and direct," Callahan explains. "The whole notion of experiences seems to be almost like the social currency on places like Facebook and Instagram...building physical spaces to accommodate that was really intriguing to me."

Callahan is keen to stress that this "social traveller" isn't defined by age (so don't mention millennials), but by their desire for "real, local, authentic experiences... we're trying to appeal to anyone who shares their life openly; who visits a city and wants to meet others." Creating spaces that attract both locals and travellers is nothing new within hospitality, but where Callahan takes a more revolutionary approach is by building "for the neighbourhood, both to reflect but also welcome the neighbourhood." He continues, "A core idea of our brand is to build our properties with the locals in mind... we want to create spaces that celebrate and are celebrated by our neighbours, so they doesn't feel like a fake, tourist version. If they are popular with locals, they will naturally be attractive to visitors."

Ezra Callahan's first job was at the newspaper of Stanford University, scoring him a few early points for his CV. Turns out, he wouldn't be needing them much: his next job was as one of the first employees of Facebook (number six, to be precise), after he was offered the role by former housemate and Napster founder Sean Parker in 2004.

At the time, Callahan thought it was a better option than moving back in with his parents in Pasadena. Fast-forward eight years to 2012, when the company went public, and his 0.08% stake was reported by the Los Angeles Times to be worth \$80m.

So when you've become a multimillionaire and helped create a movement that has changed the everyday lives of over a billion people – and all before the age of 30 – what do you do next? For Callahan, the answer was as unconventional as his career trajectory to date: open a hotel.

ARRIVE recently arrived (natch) on to the scene in Palm Springs, the first hotel to open in the Uptown Design District. On the surface, it might appear like your average mid-Century, desert oasis dream – delve a little deeper however, and Callahan's connection becomes clear. This is a hotel for the social media era, from design right through to technology and service.

"When I left Facebook I got really interested in the idea of building physical social spaces where people can interact and have shared experiences; along the same lines of what happens online but very focused, in







Ezra Callahan with Chris Pardo, Architectural Designer

“WE DON’T WANT TO ADOPT TECHNOLOGY FOR THE SAKE OF TECHNOLOGY: THE GOAL IS ALWAYS MAKING THE GUEST EXPERIENCE BETTER.”

This has resulted in a property centred on communal areas that act as a crossroads for locals and guests, including fire pits, an al fresco restaurant and a massive 20-foot Jacuzzi (to make the most of those Palm Springs rays, of course). If you had attended its soft opening earlier in the year, you wouldn’t have found international cool kids, paid social influencers or journos sipping cocktails by the pool; instead, ARRIVE made a quiet entrance by exclusively inviting a crowd of locals and employees for a test run. The intention was not to make a splash as a romantic getaway or crazy party spot, but instead to “earn the respect of the neighbourhood” and become a “social landmark” where the neighbours are as much a part of the scenery as the building itself.

Indeed, when it came to design, fellow partner and designer/architect for the project, Chris Pardo, had community at the forefront of his mind, favouring a “design that is very grounded in the mid-Century tradition that Palm Springs really exudes, with a distinctive modern twist.” In a further nod to the social media-minded traveller ARRIVE anticipates, Callahan explains that it was important to “create spaces that are naturally Instagrammable.”

With the digital age being such an influence behind ARRIVE’s philosophy, you might expect the hotel to be full to the rafters with cutting-edge tech – robot butlers and all. However, Callahan and crew have a refreshingly straightforward attitude to technology, stating, “It’s a trap that the hotel industry needs to be very careful not to fall into. We don’t want to adopt technology for the sake of technology: the goal is always making the guest experience better.”

What follows is a pleasingly practical approach that other hoteliers would do well to heed. Callahan

is sceptical about replacing keys with smartphones, as it means “you have to have battery!”; so for now, ARRIVE will use RFID keys. In-room tablets “don’t really add anything” other than confusion; so ARRIVE will forgo them. Despite the fact that we all permanently carry around at least one screen, we don’t always want to watch things on a phone or laptop; so TVs will remain on the menu, albeit Apple TV-enabled ones where you can watch Netflix. And of course, “we will never, ever charge for WiFi”.

This isn’t to say ARRIVE is anti-tech; Callahan is admiring of Peninsula’s tech innovations, musing, “I think one reason they are having success is that they do a lot of R&D in-house and have a technology division. That is a luxury we would love to have in the future.” However until this happens, any technology should be targeted at integrating with the guest rather than the other way round. “A hotel room is ultimately a person’s temporary home, so we try to make it feel as much like that as possible...we have a lot of big brand ideas, but a lot of them stop at the guest room door.”

This intuitive rationale extends to ARRIVE’s service culture, which is about as far from white gloves as you can get. To reduce unnecessary friction, staff will be cross-trained to provide different services – so forget the traditional check-in desk. Instead, arrivals will be handled at the bar so guests can choose to either pick up their key and go straight to their room or have a friendly chat. As Callahan describes it, “It’s more a social conversation than a needlessly formal transaction, which a lot of times would be absolutely the last thing you want after a long journey.”

Similarly, getting hold of staff will be as simple as whipping out your smartphone, with all requests handled by text message as “the easiest thing that people do all the time anyway – why not try that with the hotel?” One final detail that will surely be appreciated by any traveller who’s accidentally broken the bank when breaking open the minibar: all items will be priced roughly the same as the adjacent 7/11. Callahan believes that “hotels have got into really bad habits of nickel and diming guests. You are just taking advantage of my laziness!”

Outside of the guest experience, Callahan intends to take one more thing forward from his time in a tech start-up: a true culture of sharing and empowerment that starts with its employees. He believes that a big part of Facebook’s success was its “very open, very participatory culture” in which employees were fully invested in and encouraged to freely debate the future of the company. Consequently, at ARRIVE all staff will be given a stake through “incentive equity” and be empowered to surface and take ownership of any ideas for improvement. “We have what we think is this great brand story, but at the end of the day, that doesn’t matter: it’s all on the grounds of how the staff carries it out,” Callahan says. “We want to really try and create that sense of ownership and sense of responsibility for thinking about the entire guest experience.”



ARRIVE Hotel Ice Cream &amp; Shop(pe)



Whilst the worlds of digital and hospitality may seem incongruous at first, talking to Callahan proves that there is a lot that hotels can learn from the success of companies like Facebook. Just like Facebook revolutionised our digital interactions, Callahan is looking to revolutionise the way travellers, locals and staff interact within the hotel environment with an approach that is perhaps truly rebellious in its simplicity.

So does it provide a potential blueprint for the hotel of the future? We’d have to say: 👍



ARRIVE Hotel Ice Cream &amp; Shop(pe)



# Going through a mid-price crisis

*Juliana Shallcross investigates why mid-range hotels are suddenly all the rage – and what this means for the future*

WORDS BY JULIANA SHALLCROSS

Without question, one of the largest shifts to ever hit the hospitality industry was the coming of age of millennials in the travel market. In the past five years, this tech-savvy, social media-loving generation, with their preferences for original,

authentic experiences and casual service expectations, have forced hotel companies to entirely rethink the way they do business. And the changes hotels have made are rather dramatic. Charging for WiFi? This was de rigueur just a few years ago. Now, most hotels have free WiFi with an option to pay for a faster network in the guest room. Checking-in at the front desk? Several new hotels brands are actually doing away with the front desk, allowing guests to check-in online. Handing out keycards? Guests can instead use their smartphone to open the door, thanks to the rise of keyless technology.

Yet what may have started out as a trend to capture the millennial business also intersected with the changing needs and wants of all travellers, regardless of their age. It turns out everyone, not just 20-somethings, appreciates thoughtful and comfortable design, coupled with the latest in technology and friendly service, and imbued with local flavour – all of which just happens to come at an affordable rate.

Thus, hotel companies have gone way beyond updating their properties and

services to better appease this neo-traveller. What they've done instead is create an entirely new class of hotels that are contemporary in terms of design and programming, but firmly mid-range when it comes to service and price points, which is especially appealing to younger travellers.

Here are just a handful of new hotel brands that are offering a creative twist on the hotel stay, where design and sophistication don't have to come at an extra cost: citizenM Hotels; Mama Shelter Hotels; Moxy Hotels; Hoxton Hotels; Freehand; tommie Hotels; and Generator Hostels.

Moxy Hotels, which is a part of Marriott International, is proudly meant for both the “young and the young at heart” types of travellers, according to Vicki Poulos, brand director of Moxy. At Moxy, guests can



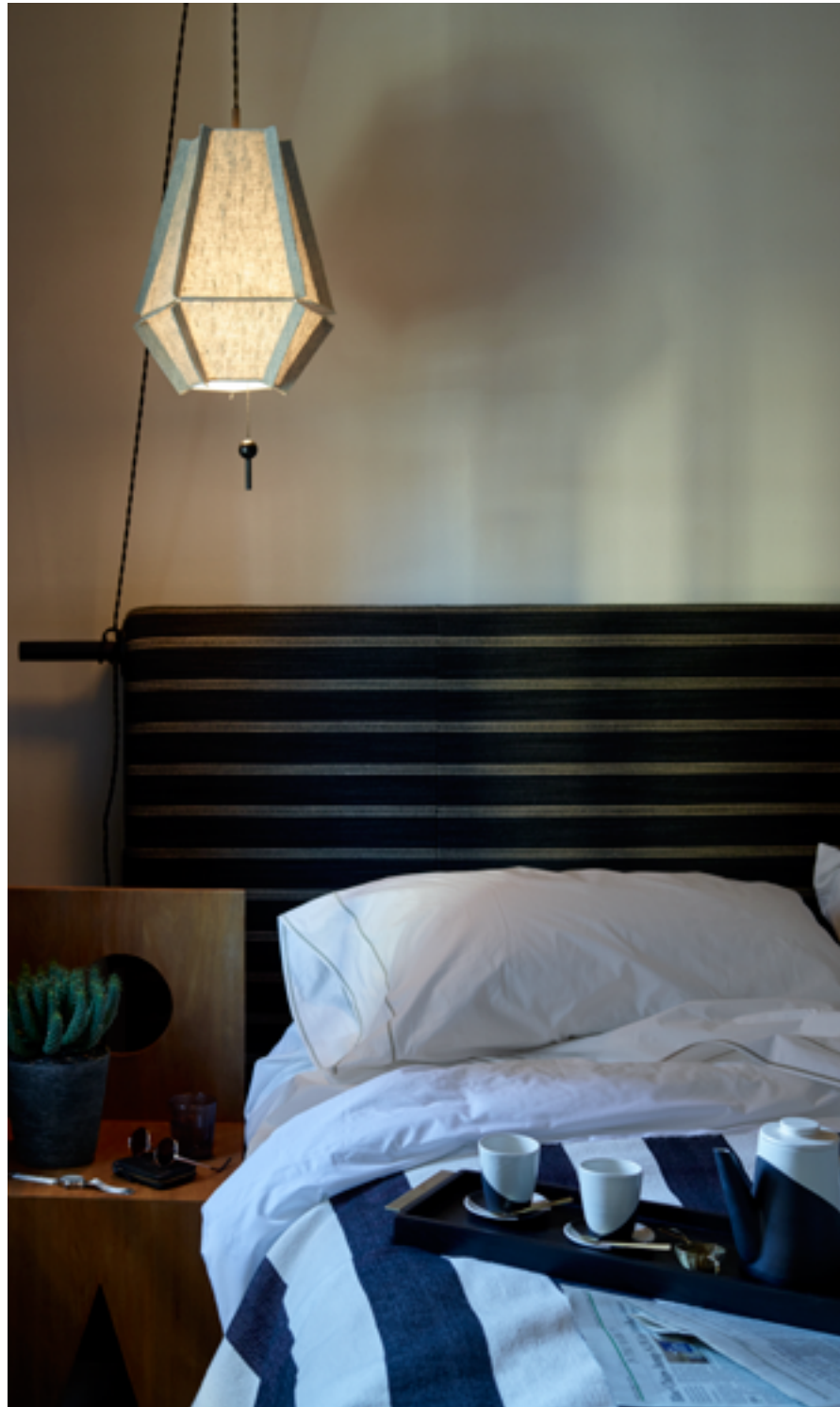
THIS PAGE BELOW Avaton Beverly Hills  
THIS PAGE ABOVE Moxy Hotel  
OPPOSITE PAGE Moxy Hotel





expect to check-in at the bar and use their smartphone to open their door, but also kick back in the public spaces, listen to a local band, or admire the latest work of a neighbourhood artist, all the while hanging out with fellow guests.

“Moxy is really more for people who are energised by this type of experience, and it goes beyond millennials,” she said. Yet to avoid the trap of being too “cookie cutter”, Moxy also gives each hotel the freedom to design their own programming, based on the hotel’s location and what those guests look for when coming to that destination. “We’re not prescriptive in what that activation or programming looks like,” said Poulos. “We trust the talent that is working in our hotels. Our common philosophy is really just fun and engaging spaces where guests feel like they can interact with each other.”



THIS PAGE  
Proper Hotels



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Yet we can't help but wonder – with all these high-low hotels (high on style, low on cost) being developed, what does this mean for traditional luxury hotels? Can they remain relevant? And how will they adapt when the millennials age and their travel tastes change once again?

The answer may lie with Proper Hotels and Residences, a new hotel group from the founders of Viceroy Hotels that seeks to serve a creative class of travellers, who grew up alongside lifestyle hotels and who, in the words of Proper's Creative Director, Joshua Katz, are well-educated and well-travelled with a distinct taste for "quality, craft, and incredible service." And Proper is keen on servicing the most influential and affluent 25 per cent of this group.

"We want to give them diverse and culturally rich experiences (what they have come to expect out of a lifestyle hotel) without compromising some of the things that made the grand hotels of the world so great," Katz said. "So we challenge ourselves to provide a luxury experience inside vibrant and always-evolving venues that feature a range of best-in-class food and beverage, high energy and flexible commons paces, an always-on programming calendar and collaborations and partnerships with leading brands and individuals."

As hotels get busy creating different experiences for all types and ages of travellers, the power and influences of millennials will still continue to shift the hospitality landscape – that's according to Marti Grimminick of International Connector, a consulting company that helps businesses and organisations better understand the needs of the next generations. But hotels need to take caution when developing their next new brand.

"When we pulse our global millennial network, what they seek is an authentic experience and the human

touch across everything from interactions with employees, to the use of technology, to the design of the hotel," Grimminick said. "They are not looking for a corporate staged version of what people think millennials want. They want to walk away with a real story about their stay."

Hoteliers thinking about creating another new brand for millennials, take note.



## JULIANA SHALLCROSS

*Juliana Shallcross was previously the managing editor of HotelChatter.com. Based in Los Angeles, she now keeps tabs on the ever-changing hospitality landscape over on the digital edition of THE SHIFT. Subscribe to THE SHIFT online to read more news pieces by Juliana alongside industry news and updates from our network of contributors.*





# INÉS MIRÓ-SANS

—  
AKA: THE  
UNCOOL GIRL

PORTRAITS BY  
LEE HARRIS

WORDS BY  
KATIE PALMER

## CAUSE

REDEFINING THE CONCEPT OF A LUXURY TRAVEL BRAND AS AN ORGANIC, CROWD-SOURCED MOVEMENT DESIGNED TO ENCAPSULATE A PARTICULAR WAY OF LIFE, RATHER THAN SIMPLY A LOCALITY.

## ICONS

CASA BONAY

## MOTTO

ON CREATING A BELIEVABLE LIFESTYLE BRAND: "IT'S THE THINGS WE LOVE AND IT'S THE PEOPLE WE LIKE TO WORK WITH, THERE'S NO MORE SCIENCE BEHIND IT."

Inés Miró-Sans thinks she's uncool. I know because she says, "We are not cool." At this, it's all I can do to splutter overly familiar, highly nerdy protests to the contrary, my previous line of questioning entirely forgotten.

Because the co-founder of hip new Barcelona hotel Casa Bonay is one of the coolest women – scrap that, people – I've spoken to. What began as a pipe dream in her days working at Ace Hotel New York – "That was like a big influence for me for sure, because I really wanted to go to work every day. I was really motivated and I was really influenced by that feeling; I knew I wanted to build my own hotel" – has slowly but surely manifested over the course of eight years, culminating in the hotel's opening in February 2016. True to her original vision of a collaboration between friends, all of whom "have put a little piece of themselves in the project", the resulting product is both incredibly personal and delightfully eclectic.

It's clear that Miró-Sans' time at Ace has a part to play in her vision for Casa Bonay. "When I was at Ace it was a beautiful moment there, it was great. That moment where it was something small... Of course, it was big – we were opening in New York – but it was still that moment where it was this group of friends developing this idea. It was big in terms of structure, but it was small in the sense of like you get to know all the people there and everyone knew that they were doing something great and awesome." Despite crediting Ace with reinventing hospitality, when it comes to her own innovative, crowd-sourced approach to creating Casa Bonay she remains modest; "it's the things we love and it's the people we like to work with, there's no more science behind it."

Far from viewing the project as a purely commercial undertaking, I get the feeling that for Miró-Sans it's been something of a social experiment. "I think it's more fun to not just take the brand and live the brand, but to work together. One of the most important things I think in hospitality are people." Among those collaboratively writing the brand book for Casa Bonay are Marcos Bartolomé and his renowned Satan's Coffee Corner; Spain's first cold pressed juice bar, Mother; indie book publisher Blackie Books, who curated the library; Shanghai-founded, Spain-made shirt brand baTabasTa with their lobby shop; design store AOO, who created the wooden furniture in the rooms; and Teixidors, who have handcrafted an exclusive



Hotel Casa Bonay





collection of blankets for the Casa. “I think it’s always better to have two minds than one,” says Miró-Sans... Make that seven, or more.

By her own admission, there was never a clear plan for how the numerous contributors would work together on Casa Bonay – “We started growing with these collaborations organically.” And for all the advantages of this relaxed, crowd-sourced approach, the drawback must surely be the risk that it all ends up looking a bit, well, random. Yet Casa Bonay manages to retain its own unique identity, be it not as, dare I say it, predictable as other contemporary travel brands in the industry. “You totally redefine the idea of the brand, which is a collage of people, and it’s a collage of the way we see life,” Miró-Sans explains. “Sometimes all these things, I never see them together outside, but inside of the universe they work and they feel right.”

Perhaps that’s due to Miró-Sans’ insistence that Casa Bonay is a collaboration of minds, rather than simply a curation of others’ ideas. When working with furniture designer Marc Morro, for example, she tells me, “We didn’t want to put signature pieces of furniture he was selling. We loved them, but it’s something that he already developed by himself. We wanted to do something together, hand in hand.” Apparently Morro began by creating the front desk, which Miró-Sans describes as “the heart of the hotel”; then he moved on to trays for the minibars, before using the “leftovers” to craft tables. The haphazard way in which the hotel appears to have come to fruition is only testament to Miró-Sans’ level of involvement at all stages of the process – when there’s no plan, there’s no handing over to a project manager.

If the hotel is a “collage of people” then, while most of those people are from Barcelona, it is also an amalgamation of their experiences both within the city and across the world. “It’s a mixing between a reflection of things we have here and that we love and things we don’t have here and we would love to have in the city. So it’s also something that we give to the city. I think we have that responsibility to showcase what we love from Barcelona; but also to try to add a little bit of something new that we offer to the city, that is not just there.”

That’s what makes Casa Bonay stand apart. Many brands get so caught up in the trendy notion of everything being ‘culturally relevant’ that the result is too neatly packaged to be truly authentic.

## “YOU TOTALLY REDEFINE THE IDEA OF THE BRAND, WHICH IS A COLLAGE OF PEOPLE, AND IT’S A COLLAGE OF THE WAY WE SEE LIFE.”

Yes, the renovation of the neoclassical home – originally built in 1869 by ‘master builder’ Francisco Batlle – has been super-sensitive to its heritage, but that’s where the cultural guidelines were cast aside. By focusing foremost on the personal tastes of individuals who hail from Barcelona, Casa Bonay has achieved what so many others fail to: a believable portrayal of a city that doesn’t claim to be anything more than “just one point of view” – and, importantly, that doesn’t box in the underlying vision. “It’s our point of view. If we like something from China, we’re going to bring it here.”

And so they have. The evidence of individual taste, as opposed to choices made to fit brand guidelines, is everywhere: the unlikely Satan’s Coffee Corner and Mother pressed juice bar pairing in the café area (reminiscent of a devil on one shoulder bickering with an angel on the other), for example – “It’s like life: sometimes you like healthy, but other times you don’t like healthy”. Simple, but true. And TÊT, the Vietnamese barbecue pop-up so-chosen because the rage in Barcelona is for Japanese ramen, but Inés and co. have a

partiality for pho, which is otherwise impossible to get. Another rejection of local norms is Libertine, a lobby and cocktail bar serving plenty of whiskey. Why? Because gin is the popular choice citywide and they are, quite frankly, bored of it.

Miró-Sans hopes that these contemporary injections of global flavour will add value to an otherwise blank slate of a neighbourhood, for residents and travellers alike. “It’s really nice to walk around this neighbourhood and at the same time, it’s super close to the neighbourhoods we like, such as El Born or Gotico or Gracia, which is uptown. But it’s not in the centre of these neighbourhoods. You know, you’re not in the crowd.” The latter is part of the reason she settled on the area: home to a community of independent artists and the like, Eixample nevertheless remains under the tourist radar for now – perhaps not an obvious choice, considering that occupancy rates will rely on both national and international tourists, but I imagine this is a subtle way of filtering appropriate clientele.

According to Miró-Sans, Casa Bonay is “a place open for everyone. We let in people in their 70s, in their 40s, in their 50s, in their 20s, and we don’t care about what they do.” But what she does care about is that they share her curious, explorative mentality in some small way – which might be a clue as to why she put her hotel on the path less trodden. “We are not elitist. We know a little bit about culture, a little bit about gastronomy; we are not masters and we are not super creatives, but we like things and we like to learn every



day.” I sense this explanation, and her earlier insistence that “We are not cool”, has more to do with rebelling against the unpleasantly exclusive, elusively unwritten boutique hotel rules of yesteryear. This rebel’s cause? Creating “a laid back atmosphere where everyone is included.”

And that means the neighbours, too. From the afternoon that they halted construction on the west side of the building so as not to disturb slumbering children Elena and Olivier, to the day they welcomed that same family into the hotel to enjoy the non-metaphorical fruits of their labour at the juice bar, the locals have never been far from Miró-Sans’ mind. For her, getting to know people is the most rewarding part of working in hospitality; but when I observe that the hotel is the perfect platform for creating connections between locals and travellers, she is quick to play it down. “We don’t want to push that because it’s something that should happen naturally. First we create the space, we create the ambience,

we create the offering and the mix hopefully will come.”

When we turn to talking about the future of Casa Bonay it becomes apparent that, despite having finally opened the hotel of her dreams, Miró-Sans’ hard work is far from over. “The beautiful side of that project is that we’re going to have more layers of it throughout the years. Now we have the rooftop coming up by the beginning of the summer and from here we’re going to work on different projects related to gastronomy and maybe develop products. This is the catalyst or the platform to do that.”

#### OPPOSITE PAGE

Gemma Ponsa Salvador - Mother Juice Bar  
Clara Arnus - baTabasTa  
Estanislo Carenzo - Elephant Crocodile Monkey, Libertine and Tet

#### THIS PAGE

Nina Maso - Santa & Cole  
Marc Morro - AOO  
Marcos Bartolme - Satan’s Coffee Corner





# Hotel Gift Shop 2.0

*How hotel merch went from basic to boutique in just a decade*

WORDS BY JAMES DAVIDSON

OPPOSITE PAGE  
La Boutique by Les Bains 1 © Guillaume Grasset

I can't remember exactly when it happened. I can't remember exactly what it was. I know what it wasn't: a keyring, an Alka-Seltzer, one of those boxes of fudge with a postcard stuck to the front. Definitely wasn't one of those boxes of fudge with a postcard stuck to the front. But I bought something...from a hotel. From a hotel gift shop.

Younger members of the creative class, fresh out of university, may need a little help with this one. When I was young, NOBODY bought anything from hotels. Unless you'd had a REALLY big night. Usually resembling little more than a converted cloakroom, steeped in despair, the hotel gift shop was a hangover of the trouser press generation. Those things in the corridor that buff your shoes; the acrylic leaflet holder cum television remote stand, complete with channel guide; a telephone that looks like you could use it to launch missiles

— hotel gift shops were as useless as a glass hammer, yet as ubiquitous as a Gideon Bible in your bedside table.

But times are changing — bloodthirsty Gen-Xers and Gen-Yers stalk prosaicness and mundanity with all the callousness of a supercilious Tory on a fox hunt; why have a pillow menu if you can't buy the goddamn things from an extravagantly-designed boutique downstairs?

Like most hotel trends that reverberate today, Hotel Gift Shop 2.0 began at the turn of the century in New York — W Hotels trading packets of tissues for fancy candles and upmarket togs. More than ten years later, if you ain't got a curator for your in-hotel concept store, you might as well pack up your trouser press and see if Basil Fawlty's got any jobs going. This thing is on fire, and it's being zealously stoked.





Talking of stoking fires, the wooden skeleton at La Boutique by Les Bains — the new standalone store across the street from Paris's infamous nightclub turned très cool hotel — is a physical rendering of that metaphor and has been put together by designers Diplomates, who count pinnacle of style Dover Street Market amongst their past projects. La Boutique has not just one, but two curators: filmmaker Jean-Pierre Marois and Thomas Erber of Cabinet of Curiosities. Its stock is all you'd expect from a similarly lovely big city concept store — odds and sods from in-demand indie makers; artisan coffee; art books — whilst branded hotel merchandise has been given a reboot; Greg Coulton's illustration of good-time-God Bacchus (the hotel's emblem) adorns plenty of products.

And that's kind of where we're at with the contemporary hotel shop. Whereby W kickstarted the revolution, selling luxuries that would see you take a part of your stay home with you, the cachet held by a number of today's most à la mode hotels means that we've almost come full circle. Your \$300 Ace Hotel x Alpha Industries Waterproof Fishtail Parka might be a very nice bit of clobber, but is it just as much 'branded hotel merchandise' as that Hilton hotel golf umbrella your dad carried in the boot of his Mondeo? You're looking at these hotbeds of hipness with the same sort of dropped jaw expression you give an illusionist: "how did they do that?"

Two words: honesty, experience. I'm not a man for buzzwords, but whether it be travel, food and drink, retail; they're two words that shape the practices of those who are getting it right with the culturally-minded X and Y generations. Sure, dad on the golf course might have been sending out a message to his fellow players — LOOK AT WHERE I STAY ON MY HOLIDAYS — but today's creative travellers aren't merely confirming an allegiance to their favourite hotels; they are buying into a way of life.

"If you get a sneaking feeling of déjà vu as you're glancing through, it's because you've seen these things before — on the backs of our New York City bellboys, at the foot of your comfortable Portland bed or between your bicycling thighs as you catch a cobble in Shoreditch". That's the sales pitch from Ace Hotel via their online shop, where you can buy that aforementioned parka, alongside handmade Merino and Gotland wool slippers; blankets designed by Commune, made at Oregon's Pendleton Woolen Mills; a record bag made in collaboration with Tanner Goods (from the centre of hipsterdom, the Pacific Northwest). Branding is at a minimum, honesty at a premium. These are really good products, made by real heritage companies, designed by real contemporary designers.

Of course it doesn't stop there — Hotel Gift Shop 2.0 does not begin and end with merchandise upgraded for millennials; retailers (actual people whose business it is to sell things) too see the importance of getting themselves in front of the style-conscious, culture-mad, income-heavy travellers who are flooding through the doors of these hotels. Staying with Ace briefly, cutting-edge fashion folk Opening Ceremony are one of the number of brands who have called the Portland-born hotel chain 'landlord'. Yep, fully-fledged retail outlets in hotels, and this isn't even Vegas.

Los Angeles concept store TENOVERSIX took things to another level again over in Dallas — part of a \$78 million revamp of 1920s neo-gothic hotel The Joule. The creative minds behind the fashion-led retail outfit were actually involved in the redesign of its communal spaces, blurring the lines of hotel and retail in an interesting take on the lobby culture that Ian Schrager pioneered.

If we're talking about catering to the young and hip, The Standard is a name never too far from the lips — the chain's Miami property



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THIS PAGE  
OHWO at The Standard Miami Beach

opened up their store in collaboration with art gallery OHWO (now known as Moran Bondaroff) just in time for 2010's Art Basel Miami. Designed by noted interior architect Rafael de Cárdenas, art books and one-off artists' editions sit side-by-side with swimwear from leading designers in an Art Deco-inspired space. Over in L.A., their Hollywood branch is home to a boutique from stylish eyewear brand Warby Parker (complete with a mural from local artist Geoff McFetridge), whilst on the East Coast, The High Line Standard riffs on the heritage of the humble hotel gift shop; stocking shaving kits, bath amenities and umbrellas. (Don't worry: it's all alongside artist collaborations, vintage vinyl, and luggage made with fashion brand WANT Les Essentiels de la Vie.)

Staying in New York, Parisian record label/fashion brand Maison Kitsuné have opened up their first dedicated U.S. retail space at recent addition The NoMad Hotel, but we have to leave the States for our final word. It wouldn't be 2016 if creatives weren't flipping things on their head. Dallas's The Joule may have obscured the lines between hospitality and retail, Ace Hotel has surely redefined what hotel merchandise can be, and The Standard harks back to the dark days of wretched hotel gift shops, but leave it to the Dutch to throw

a curveball. Hôtel Droog is a hotel IN a shop. The vast space of Amsterdam-based design brand Droog encompasses a full-size showroom for their forward-thinking products, a gallery, dining room, 'fairy tale garden', spa and ... wait for it ... a solitary, single bedroom.

From desolation to indispensable — the sad little corner stocked with packets of tissues and Bic razors has blossomed into a key cog in the hotelier's creative class-gratifying machine. Hotel Gift Shop 2.0 is here to stay.

#### JAMES DAVIDSON

*James Davidson is a contributing editor for THE SHIFT and editor-in-chief of We Heart, an online design and lifestyle magazine that he founded in 2009 as a personal blog and now receives over half a million monthly views.*



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PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
MONICA SEMERGIU

WORDS BY  
KATIE PALMER

# CHIP CONLEY

—

*AKA: THE  
BLACK SHEEP*

## CAUSE

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN HOTELS AND SHARED ECONOMY TRAVEL BY PULLING INSPIRATION FROM EACH MODEL INTO A NEW PRECEDENT FOR HOSPITALITY STANDARDS INDUSTRY-WIDE... AND RUFFLING A FEW FEATHERS ALONG THE WAY!

## ICONS

JOIE DE VIVRE,  
AIRBNB

## MOTTO

“THE DIVERSITY OF BOUTIQUE HOTELS AND THE DIVERSITY OF AIRBNB LISTINGS IS A REFLECTION OF THE DIVERSITY OF TRAVELLERS OUT THERE; PEOPLE SEE A HOTEL AS A MIRROR FOR THE ASPIRATIONS OF THEMSELVES.”

“You are where you sleep,” says Chip Conley; and when you’re the Head of Hospitality for the most valuable hospitality company in the world, there’s more to where you sleep than just a bed.

I’m on the phone to the founder and one-time CEO of boutique hotel group Joie de Vivre, who three years ago emerged from under the duvet of retirement to step into a newly created position at Airbnb. As he does an interview on hands-free while driving between meetings, I imagine his slippers and dressing gown are a distant memory.

The self-proclaimed “black sheep” of the industry, Conley admits that accepting this role made him “an even blacker sheep”. But while many of his peers consider the move treacherous, I can see why it would make sense for the creator of a brand hailed as “delightfully schizophrenic” – Joie de Vivre prided itself on having no two hotels alike, so for Conley the dissemblance of Airbnb’s offering must have been appealing.

“I think boutique hotels are very reflective of the idea of people wanting choice, and wanting a hotel that is reflective of the neighbourhood in which they’re travelling to. I actually think Airbnb just took the boutique hotel phenomenon like ten steps further... The diversity of boutique hotels and the diversity of Airbnb listings is a reflection of the diversity of travellers out there; people see a hotel as a mirror for the aspirations of themselves.”

Since 2013, Conley has been tasked with turning an innovative tech company into a bona fide hospitality brand. With over 500,000 homes and 350,000 hosts sprawled across 34,000 cities worldwide, this is no mean



The Airbnb office space



feat; but Conley is quick to deny that sheer numbers are their greatest obstacle.

“Some people would say the challenge would be how to get people who are not your employees to focus on these things, but that’s not our challenge – partly because these are micro-entrepreneurs whose livelihood quite often rests on great reviews, so they are actually more engaged than the average employee is.”

“A bigger challenge”, he says, “is that the rules and laws around what we can and can’t do are very complicated.” Because Airbnb’s hosts are not employees, Conley and co. are forbidden from actually training them; instead, they are limited to providing “educational tools”, which must be carefully tailored to meet the laws in each part of the world where the company operates (that’s 190 countries, by the way).

So, how do you go about giving 350,000 pupils the hospitality 101? “The first step we needed to do was to get really clear on some minimum standards around hospitality.” In collaboration with guests and hosts, and with an injection of extensive hospitality

experience from Conley, the team identified a set of criteria that Airbnb listings should meet – including accuracy; communication; cleanliness; location; check-in; and value.

It’s all very well putting such standards in place, but in the absence of some all-seeing GM, how are they enforced? “One big difference between us and a hotel is that about 70 to 75 per cent of our hosts and guests review each other, where as in a normal hotel, only about 10 per cent of guests actually fill out an online survey.” What this means, in essence, is that the Airbnb community – and that’s what the network of users on the site has become – is self-regulating, with Conley simply nudging things in the right direction.

This “very robust peer-to-peer review system” is central to his grand plan for the Airbnb brand. “We are incredibly focussed on how we encourage and reward our best hosts, so we created a Superhost programme. About seven and a half per cent of our hosts globally make the Superhost programme. And that’s a way for our guests to be able to evaluate quality.” Aside from a medal hanging from their profile image, one thing all Superhosts have in common is a five star rating – a detail somewhat reminiscent of luxury hotels.

This comparison is a prickly one, with many in the hotel industry seeing Airbnb as the enemy. But when I ask if Conley considers Airbnb to be direct competition for hotels, he cites a recent study by Smith Travel Research Group; “They asked to collaborate with us and to review our data in Manhattan in New York, which is our strongest market... we gave them access to all of our data and the article came out in Hotel News Now – basically they said Airbnb has almost no effect on the hotel industry.”

Unbelievable? To some, maybe. But Conley – who still owns more than a dozen hotels and thus also wears the “hotelier hat”, as he is quick to remind me – has a vested interest in

## “I DO BELIEVE THAT AIRBNB IS HELPING TO BREAK DOWN THE PERCEPTION OF THE ‘OTHER’.”

ensuring that Airbnb doesn’t wipe the market clean. “In New York almost 60 per cent of the room nights for Airbnb are people staying for a week or longer; and, in fact, almost 20 per cent are people staying a month or longer – so, generally speaking, that’s not who stays in hotels... Hoteliers’ bread and butter is often the business travellers staying two nights who need to be downtown, or near a convention centre – that’s not our customer.”

“I think the bottom line is that hotels and homes can coexist. The ultimate evidence of this is that in markets like London and San Francisco, like Tokyo, the hotel industry is showing record occupancies at the same time that Airbnb is growing very swiftly. I don’t think it’s a zero sum game.”

When I address Airbnb’s published plans to double their number of business customers (currently at 10 per cent), Conley points out the many different types of business travellers. For example, short stays looking for location and convenience might be better off at a hotel, where their array of services provides pampering and efficiency “that Airbnb will be only good at, never great at... what a hotel does well, Airbnb could never replicate”; while for extended stays or corporate relocations looking to ‘test drive’ a neighbourhood, Airbnb could be a better fit.

That’s not to say there’s a strict formula that differentiates the two, though. “People seem to think there’re an Airbnb traveller and a hotel traveller and they’re not the same, but actually they’re very much the same. There are a lot of business travellers who travel for business in hotels and then take their family and stay in a home on Airbnb.”

This is a reference, of course, to the ever-blurring line between business and leisure

where today’s creative class traveller is concerned – ‘bleisure’, as it’s known. “One advantage [of Airbnb] is that in major cities about 70 per cent of Airbnb listings are in the non-hotel areas... someone could actually get to know a neighbourhood and get to know it really well because they can actually live in a neighbourhood where others live.”

This is telling of Conley’s belief that Airbnb will succeed by delivering guests unique, local experiences. So how is the brand better equipped to do this than, say, a hotel? The power of Airbnb, suggests Conley, lies with its people. “You build a relationship with your host... you go and you’re either staying in someone’s home and they’re there, or you’re staying there because they’re gone for a little while, but you start to build a rapport online with the hosts.”

“Hosts put together guest books – sort of local, neighbourhood suggestions of things to do – so at the end of the day you’re turning a stranger into a friend when you’re going to an Airbnb; you’re building a relationship with someone who is giving you one-to-one attention, which is really hard for a hotel to do.”

So, what can hotels learn from “the new disrupter” in the industry? “I think a lot of people, even in a luxury environment, are trying to book things themselves; so, while it’s great to have a concierge help, the best thing a hotel can do often is to direct you in the right direction – to give you access to things you might not have been able to access otherwise.”

“Instead of putting people on packaged bus tours, have a collection of locals who are aficionados or specialists in that particular subject and get to know your guests before they get there, then make some recommendations of who they should see – in essence, matching people who have similar interests.”

In fact, Conley is so proud of Airbnb’s people that he thinks their hosts deserve to win a Nobel Peace Prize. “I do believe that Airbnb is helping to break down the perception of the ‘other’. Since more than half of our Airbnb guests are international travellers, we’re sort of creating kitchen table diplomacy, where people are getting to know others from around the world and we’re actually helping to build up the amount of trust that there is in the world.”

“The travel industry overall is a positive in terms of the noble purpose, being that you want to go travel the world to get to know people different than yourself – now that is a great purpose, and it helps to create a little bit more of a world where people can actually be more empathetic toward each other. I’m a big believer that travel can provide for that”.



The Airbnb office space



# Ministry of Ideas,

# Reconstructed



*LE's day of thought-leadership gets an unconventional makeover*

LE's Ministry of Ideas was born out of our passion for doing things differently. From the beginning, we didn't want to talk about 'trends in travel': we wanted to be inspiring the trends in travel.

Unlike fashion, music, or technology, travel is too labour and capital intensive to have new trends each season. So our mission has been to bring people in from outside the industry to share their ideas to inspire our own. That part hasn't changed. But a lot has...



## YOU SPOKE

It's our fourth edition, and since we want to keep things fresh and innovative, we decided to dig a little deeper into the purpose of a conference and what expectations our collective have when they come to our Ministry. First step, we went out and spoke to our collective to see what they want out of a Ministry of Ideas. The two themes that emerged were pretty simple...

- 1 "After a year not seeing many of our industry friends, the last thing we want to do is sit and listen to someone speak to us - we want to speak to each other!"
- 2 "LE brings together the coolest people in travel. We are therefore by nature some of the industry's biggest thinkers (and loudest mouths) - why can't we share our ideas and discuss them with our peers?"

*Interesting, we thought.*

## WE LISTENED

So over the past twelve months at LE HQ in London, Serge, CJ and our team have been re-imagining the Ministry of Ideas. We played with many different models - until we thought: What would Uber or Airbnb do if they were running a conference?

In today's shared economy, companies like the above are flipping the model upside down. The control is being given to the user to self-curate and self-facilitate their own experience. So we thought in terms of a conference, why should the organiser control the topic? The speakers? The conversation? Shouldn't the role of the organiser be to curate the right minds to be in the same place at the same time, and then facilitate a platform allowing for accidental conversation between each other? And where should the whole thing go down? Let's ditch the stuffy conference hall and hold the whole shebang in the decidedly un-conference setting of the SLS South Beach Pool.

## WE SHARED

The result of all this speaking and listening is the fully revamped Ministry of Ideas: the first un-conference dedicated to inspiring the evolution in travel.

To see the action live or in replay, visit our live streaming channel, liveLE, at [www.lemiami.com](http://www.lemiami.com).

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# All over the map

*From South America to North America, Europe to Asia, James Davidson investigates the world's newest creative and cultural hotspots*

WORDS BY JAMES DAVIDSON

## EUROPE / PRAGUE

The Czech Republic capital is many things that make travel writers overuse fairytale as an adjective — but it is the lads-on-tour stag do (born of that lethal combination: cheap flights and obscenely cheap alcohol) that has stuck to Prague.

Luckily, buzzing neighbourhoods like Žižkov, Vršovice and Karlín, and events like Designblok and Prague Design Week are putting the elbow grease in for you: specialty coffee

has arrived — complete with twirly moustaches — there is craft beer to accompany the famed pilsners, a burgeoning Czech food scene, contemporary art spaces galore and design-led hotels to house a new breed of traveller. Prague is shaking off its shackles; there is a new bohemian in Bohemia.

Operating since the turn of the century, Designblok has taken major strides in recent years — finding

itself high on the list of international design fairs. With a tradition of hosting its three main shows (Superstudio, Openstudio and Art House) in imposing buildings, usually inaccessible to the public, the festival incorporates design and fashion and attracts cutting-edge exhibitors who will be hawking their wares around major events like Milan Design Week and London Design Festival, alongside lesser-known local talent.



OPPOSITE PAGE  
Ceviche Old Street  
Gallery - Lima

THIS PAGE  
Misto - Prague  
Designblok - Prague

Riding on the success of Designblok, Prague Design Week is a fledgling event hosted at Kafka's House. Focusing heavily on Czech creatives, its lectures and workshops look to keep Prague's cultural scene moving forward with pace. Of course you needn't wait until an annual event is underway to enjoy design here: gallery-shop Křehký offers a cornucopia of little somethings for fans of that point where design meets art; Cihelna — curated by illustrator Silvie Luběnová — is a sophisticated concept store treading a similar path.

Where do the creative class put their heads down in Prague? The answer: options are expanding. Indeed, the city has been one concerned with grandeur, or with sizeable, business-minded hotels ... yet the shaking of shackles is happening across the city's bedrooms, too.

Built in 1967, Parkhotel had a little revamp of its public spaces recently, original architect Zdeněk Edel involved in a vision that builds upon the hotel's cultural legacy. Your room might remain a little ... Corby Trouser Press ... but at least you can enjoy posh contemporary furniture in its lobby. Those with enough Czech koruna to splash out can rocket themselves partway up the Žižkov Television Tower; renamed Tower Park Praha, the 1985 tower now boasts a restaurant, bar, and one-room hotel. Yep, from 70m in the sky you can enjoy unrivalled views of the famous city, from an unashamedly retro cabin, complete with wood-panelling. Taking on later 20<sup>th</sup> century design and fusing it with the thousands of years of heritage that Prague is forged upon, Hotel Josef — in the city's old town — is all stark minimalism set on streets steeped in history.

However, I think those bohemian sorts will be most excited by The Emblem; an Art Deco-inspired property that cares greatly about design, art, and showing you a good time. (Among the hotel's offerings is Prague's first members' club.) Culture organisation Are collaborate with The Emblem on bespoke art walks — because, where there is design, there is art. And here in Prague, there is plenty of it. There are big, established galleries — Museum Montanelli (MuMo); DOX Centre for Contemporary Art — and reputed institutions at the bleeding-edge (FUTURA Center for Contemporary Art is a three-floor not-for-profit initiative that hosts boundary-pushing exhibitions and shares an artist residency program with Brooklyn's Triangle Arts Association), but there a wealth of small, independent outfits too.



## ASIA / BANGKOK

Just as it seems Bangkok would be the last place to arise as an emerging hub of culture and creativity, so too it seems the most natural of Asia's cities. For all the reasons for, see all the reasons against: its madness, its constant teetering on the edge of collapse, its eye-burning, mind-melting juxtapositions.

Thai artist Korakrit Arunanondchai's everything-but-the-kitchen-sink gesamtkunstwerk installations — all splattered paint, jumbled messaging, haphazard sculpture, and abused mannequins — embody the bedlam of Bangkok. Arunanondchai is not the only Thai artist making waves. Bangkok-born Pornwipa Suriyakarn directly references the uneasy contrasts and contradictions between traditional Thai spirituality and contemporary consumerism, through pop culture-inspired mixed-media work that coalesces such iconography as Louis Vuitton and ancient objects of worship. The culture of consumption and global economy are at the heart of Surasi Kusolwong's practice too; often working with products bought from Bangkok street markets, his performative installations have made their way to major galleries as far and wide as Switzerland, Japan and New York. Community-focused art spaces like Speedy Grandma and Soy Sauce Factory are ports of call for the next generation of Thai artists.





THIS PAGE  
Rukkit at Bukruk Urban Arts Festival. Photo © Rukkit

What do you get when you cross a vibrant art scene with an ever-changing urban landscape, burgeoning counterculture, and an eagerness to embrace nonconformist international cultures? Street art, that's what. The folk behind Bukruk Urban Arts Festival have been transforming the city's walls once a year since 2013, the latest edition wrapping up at the end of January. It's a 10-day shindig that incorporates music, exhibitions, printing workshops, talks, animation, and ruddy great murals from some of the world's leading street artists: Italy's Sten and Lex; Belgium's ROA; Nychos from Austria; Spaniard Aryz...

And it's not just fringe art that Thais are beginning to lap up. An unorthodox fashion scene is swelling on BK's streets; a booming denim culture that fuses traditional Thai heritage crafts with an international aesthetic has seen authoritative online fashion portal Highsnobiety name reputed retailer Pronto Denim as one of the world's leading denim emporiums.

Bangkok's party scene needs no introduction, but it may need some navigating — away from stereotypical backpacker's delights there is a long-established punk and garage rock scene that keeps underground bars disorderly till the early hours; small nightspots like Studio Lam or Dark Bar are just two places to head for those who know the difference between EDM and Boiler Room. But, in a city that is on a tipping point of a different type of cultural revolution, let us put hedonism to one side...there are a growing number of bars, cafés and restaurants that are following a blueprint sketched out in creative capitals like New York or London.

Spots like Bridge Art Space and The Jam Factory embrace slashie culture, fusing happening galleries with a bar/café setting; the latter also acting as an art bookstore, and both hosting regular workshops, exhibitions, and pop-ups. Much has been made of places like Bo.Lan taking Bangkok's famous cuisine to the next level; and nose-to-tail restaurant Smith (by celebrity chef Ian Kittichai) is making a real name for itself, from a beautifully-designed industrial space behind an unassuming (read: scruffy) façade.

Bangkok may still be waiting for its first hotel that embraces the changing tide of creative culture. There are no mixed-use lobbies packed with bearded folk; I don't think there's a hotel café that grasps the concept of pour-over; nor penthouses with walls dedicated to revolving art installations. Sitting just over the Chao Phraya River though, is Sala Rattanakosin, a 17-room boutique hotel that stands out among the continual procession of new hotels for its original fit-out; a thoughtful conversion of seven 'shophouses' that retains an air of grit and authenticity.

SOUTH AMERICA / LIMA

Bastion of creative thinking, high-culture magazine Dazed, recently announced Lima as one of '10 creative cities to leave the country for' — where London's priced-out creatives might traditionally be flocking to Berlin or Barcelona, the mag suggested upping it all and heading to Peru. Why? The emergence of two major art fairs plays a key role — ArtLima and PARC big news among the international art community.

Indeed Lima is enjoying a recent cultural renaissance — but, rather than an internationally-renowned art scene, it is something very different that has kindled this movement. Food.

Opening Central in 2009, Virgilio Martinez surely has a key role to play in the emergence of Lima as a contemporary cultural destination — celebrating ancient Andean heritage, his restaurant currently occupies fourth place on the list of the world's top 50 restaurants; the chef's London restaurant, Lima, being the first Peruvian cuisine restaurant in Europe to be awarded a Michelin star. The 30-year-old has changed the world's perceptions of South American food; building on his country's biodiversity and ancient Andean heritage, Martinez has elevated Peruvian creativity to new heights.

In London, 'Peruvian' is a veritable buzzword on the haute cuisine circuit and Martinez is not the only chef making waves...in Ceviche Soho and Andina, Martin Morales has forged a Peruvian cuisine scene in one of the world's most food-forward cities. But it is not only his country's edible creativity that Morales is an exponent of; a keen art collector, the former DJ opened Ceviche Old St Gallery — a restaurant cum gallery — this October. Claiming itself as the 'first ever Peruvian contemporary art gallery outside of Peru', debut exhibition BIRTH includes works by more than 50 of Peru's leading artists, a number of whom look for inspiration in Chicha art. Beginning as a movement of psychedelic, rhythmic music in the 1960s, Chicha is the essence of alternative South America — born in Colombia,



brewed in Peru, it symbolised the lower classes, and perturbed the elite. Nowhere was Chicha culture more symbolic than in the near-neon, unabashed typography of the posters that promoted the concerts of the movement's key movers.

A name not so commonly associated with Lima is Mario Testino. Perhaps the city's most acclaimed son, the fashion photography icon is one of many on a mission to reverse that ratio; opening his not-for-profit cultural centre MATE in 2012. A permanent display of his work is accompanied by work from emerging Peruvian artists, a determination to expose his country's creativity at the museum's core.



THIS PAGE  
Dengue Dengue Dengue!  
Elliot 'Tupac' - Lima



## NORTH AMERICA / DETROIT

Wish You Bought Gold in '06? You'll Wish You Bought Detroit in '12.

So runs the headline of an article published by Forbes in August 2012; by Josh Linkner, CEO of Detroit Venture Partners. The tech-entrepreneur's business partner Dan Gilbert has bought up some three million sq ft of commercial property in downtown Detroit over the last few years. But why?

I spent five bitterly cold days

in Detroit in January 2013 touring its ruins. Everything I'd previously associated with Detroit made sense. And most of this was its musical heritage. Motown to MC5 to The Stooges to The Belleville Three to Eminem to The White Stripes. Musical movements are so often associated with hard times, and Motor City has had plenty.

Of all I saw in that week, though,

it is a sense of formidable positivity that stayed with me. Started in 1986 by Tyree Guyton and grandfather Sam Mackey, The Heidelberg Project is probably the best example of this; a community creativity that stands toe-to-toe with the devastating ruination of the city. Troubled by the state of his neighborhood, Guyton transformed blocks of abandoned properties into one of the world's most unique art



projects...and its inspiration resonated in other areas of the city.

Fast forward a few years, and a series of arson attacks on the project confirm that the Michigan city still has its difficulties, but Detroit is now officially autonomous again and, in theoretical economic terms at least, on the road to recovery. Responsible for curating and producing over 100 murals across the city, online art retailer 1xRUN and bricks-and-mortar operation Inner State Gallery have just wrapped up their Murals in the Market project, propelling the city that cars built into the upper echelons of world street art by way of 45 new large-scale works throughout historic Eastern Market.

Detroit's creative class is in such fine fettle that, earlier this year, it got its own magazine — Grand Circus the result of a successful crowdfunding campaign. Grand Circus celebrates Detroit's makers, artists, designers, retailers, hospitality industry and so forth — joining a growing roster of annual festivals in observing the city's flourishing cultural underbelly. This year's Detroit Design Festival featured highlights including a tour of homes being renovated by artists, a panel discussion chaired by Grand Circus's founder Alex Trajkovski and the opening of new arts space Wasserman Projects.

Situated in a 5,000 sq ft renovated firehouse, Wasserman Projects joins Inner State Gallery and a whole host of new murals at Eastern Market — an area that was very quiet a few years back; save for lovely community letterpress studio Signal-Return. And there we have that word again: community.

You'll still pass plenty of abandoned property to reach it from downtown, but Detroit Institute of Arts — saved from flogging its prized assets (estimates have the valued the collection at as much as \$4.6 billion) during the municipal bankruptcy case by some \$27 million raised by the city's biggest businesses — has a new



'living room' space in Kresge Court; a fine-looking coffeeshop courtyard that encourages WiFi-hoggers and offers residents an opportunity to spend valuable time among one of the United States' most treasured collections of art.

The city's contemporary art collection is doing just fine too. London-based arts organisation Artangel commissioned their first international venture here, a full-scale replica of the single-story ranch-style house art-provocateur Mike Kelley grew up in unveiled at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit in 2013; the Michigan-born artist's first and only public artwork.

Just a few years ago, Detroit's hipster credentials lay within an exceedingly tight corner of Corktown ... a tiny hive of activity opposite Michigan Central Station. Downtown itself is on the rise again — new openings like Townhouse, The Whisky Parlor and The Keep bringing young people, real life young people, back into town.

## JAMES DAVIDSON

James Davidson is a contributing editor for *THE SHIFT* and editor-in-chief of *We Heart*, an online design and lifestyle magazine that he founded in 2009 as a personal blog and now receives over half a million monthly views.



# Screen Time

*How Visit West Hollywood is breaking stereotypes with virtual reality marketing from YouVisit*

WORDS BY KATIE PALMER



OPPOSITE PAGE  
WeHo locals and faces of the YouVisit campaign, Dakita, Jake and Mary

When a multi-billion-dollar industry responsible for influencing more minds than probably any other on the planet borrows its name from your city, it's going to be tough to shake those associations. So when Visit West Hollywood – the tourism board responsible for marketing the City of West Hollywood's "unique location, image, businesses and industries" (plural – say what?!) – embarked upon its latest campaign, it did the only thing it could: it beat Hollywood at its own game.

We may be some way from being able to experience movie blockbusters in virtual reality, but travellers considering West Hollywood for their next jaunt will soon be able to get a truly immersive taste for the city without ever having to board a flight – and it's all thanks to the virtual reality pioneers at YouVisit.

Founded by three entrepreneurs who shared a passion for travelling – Taher Baderkhan, Abi Mandelbaum and Endri Tolka – YouVisit was conceived to empower anyone to be inspired by and vividly explore the world as if they were actually there. Their first venture was to

revolutionise how students research U.S. colleges and universities, enabling them to virtually step onto any campus and get the best understanding of what it's like to be a student at the school.

Fast forward seven years and the boys, now all tie-wearing and grown up, have on their hands a multi-million dollar business creating virtual reality tours for Harvard, Hewlett-Packard, Zumba – and now Visit West Hollywood.

If you're wondering how a technology you've only ever associated with gaming could possibly be worth that much cash, then consider this: "VR is exploding, similar to what mobile did seven years ago," says YouVisit CEO Mandelbaum. Remember mobile – that platform that sprung up faster than you could say "It'll never catch on" to become the marketing monster it is today? According to Mandelbaum, that's where VR is headed.

"Virtual reality is the most realistic experience you can have of a place without being there. It's powerful. It gets people excited and engaged and interested in having that experience in real life," he explains. What's more, according to YouVisit's

Virtual Reality Appetite Index one in five (19 per cent) American adults said they would use virtual reality to help pick a vacation destination.

But if you can get the vacation experience without the associated jet lag of actually making the trip (not to mention a significantly reduced bank balance), then why bother? Could there be a danger that offering a virtual reality experience of your destination could actually satisfy travellers enough to deter rather than encourage them to visit? Mandelbaum doesn't think so. When YouVisit set up tents in Manhattan, where more than 1,000 visitors used VR headsets to experience a Carnival cruise, "the reactions were incredible. They would say, 'I didn't know I could do all that on a cruise.' Once they see what it's like, they're more inclined to book."

In fact, from a business standpoint, says Mandelbaum, virtual reality is powerful marketing. A typical visitor to YouVisit spends more than 10 minutes engaged in the VR experience – "an eternity" in the digital world – and 13 per cent of them take some action afterwards, such as booking





a hotel room or reserving a table at a restaurant. “We’ve understood for a while that virtual reality has applications outside gaming. The power is not in escaping to a fantasy world, but in bringing real-world experiences to everyone,” he goes on.

For Visit West Hollywood’s part, they’re utilising the technology in an attempt to dismiss the two-dimensional fantasy of Hollywood that so many people imagine. Yes, the Walk of Fame, Hollywood Sign, Universal Studios and TCL Chinese Theatre are all good fun, but Visit West Hollywood wants the world to know that there’s more to their town than dreams of screen stardom and too-white teeth.

In partnership with YouVisit, they’re creating a campaign that juxtaposes multiple perspectives and locations to highlight the diversity West Hollywood has to offer. In fully immersive 360-degree virtual reality, the viewer will meet ten different West Hollywood locals in ten very different areas of the city – from designer stores and hotel bars, to rooftop vistas and public spaces, to the Pacific Design Center and Sunset Strip. Yes, some of these people and locations are iconic; but many are more unexpected, chosen for their historical or cultural significance – or, in some cases, simply because they’re cool.

The viewer – or, more accurately, the “experiencer” – also hears sound bites from the locals as voiceover, giving insight on the history, where the town is going and what they love about living in WeHo, as they fondly call it. Crucially, the experiencer is always at eye level, which allows them to make a personal connection with someone in relation to the space around them at every location. And there lies the value of VR: the ability to layer information in such an immersive way that the viewer feels both mentally and emotionally invested; not to mention the fact that virtual reality quite literally creates a captive audience(!).

But for the travel industry, the potential of VR technology doesn’t end with promoting destinations. Take the hotel business center, for example: once upon a time, a lone



desktop computer and printer was sufficient to equip the odd remote worker; but in an age where telecommuting is becoming more and more prolific, virtual reality may be the next big thing for connecting co-workers in different time zones.

As COO of YouVisit Tolka suggests, “VR stations in the business center will not only help hotels differentiate themselves from their competition but also provide an additional revenue stream with minimal investment. Visitors could come to your L.A.-based hotel with the purpose of attending meetings physically nearby for the morning, but then have the ability to check in on a job site in Chicago and attend a meeting in NYC, all before having dinner with a new partner back in L.A.”

Maybe, one day, people might even virtually attend travel trade events... And miss out on the parties? Naahh !

To experience YouVisit and Visit West Hollywood's collaboration, visit FRINGE on the LE show floor. Home to the hottest rebels in travel tech and innovation, it's a hub of ideas and inspiration.

OPPOSITE PAGE  
WeHo locals and faces of the YouVisit campaign, Valerie, Devon and Darryl

THIS PAGE  
Visit West Hollywood Map



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 W Koh Samui  
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 W Punta De Mita  
 W Singapore -  
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# Modern Music

*A conversation with hospitality music curator  
Jared Dietch of Music Matters*

**L**E Music Producer Jared Dietch started his career as a music curator for hospitality with over 20 years' international DJing experience already under his belt. Now the programmer and curator of music for hotels like Thompson, Andaz and W, Jared's company Music Matters™ is helping brands develop their identity by bringing background music into the foreground.

**Q:** Has background music become more important to stores, hotels and restaurants in recent years?

**Jared:** I believe it's always been important, but today's guests and listeners are more sophisticated. It's not enough to say, "this is a modern, European-style hotel, so let's do the obligatory Hotel Costes/Buddha Bar stuff." We're being exposed to a range of music styles many times broader than it was in the past. Guests want something signature, eclectic, with the fingerprint of the brand on it to mark their experience in time.

**Q:** What would be your advice to a hotel trying to curate music that suits their specific brand?

**Jared:** Forget what you think about music and focus on the emotion you want to invoke in your guests. What should they feel when they are thinking back to their experience with your brand? The music I programme follows an emotional context. Sometimes brands get caught up in trying to identify the genre or sound they think 'matches' their positioning. Doing it that way, you risk ending up with a very predictable, monotonous vibe.

I think it's also important for the brand to work with the right programmer, just like with designers or other creative. You don't go to a pastry chef to develop a Japanese dinner menu. Can they do it? Yes, they probably can; but a better fit would probably yield a better result.

**Q:** Thanks to services like Songza or Spotify, music and classification algorithms are more advanced and accessible now than ever before. Does this make human curation less necessary?

**Jared:** An algorithm can detect BPMs, genre, key, lyrical content and, from what I understand, over 400 other characteristics. But that's not curation. When I put Shuggie Otis and Fever Ray on the same playlist, it's because the vibe puts me in a certain place... It's something more nuanced than I think the data has decoded... yet (laughs). There will always need to be human translators between the brand and the music going back and forth to develop the brand's true sound.

**Q:** You've been essentially programming music for decades as a DJ, when you were responding in real time to the atmosphere in the room. Do you find it's a challenge to do that for background music, where you don't have the immediate reaction of the guests to guide you?

**Jared:** My goal as a DJ was to get the room to fever pitch, with peaks and valleys and massive climaxes. Background playlists still need to feel good to the soul. They need to flow and meander without being flat or dull; they just don't have those climaxes we go after in the club. What DJing gave me was the chance to observe the ways music affects people emotionally – and it's surprising, it's not always what you'd expect. Sometimes 'sad chords' are uplifting. Some 'chill out' songs can cause incredible anxiety. When I hear music now, I have sixth sense about how it's going to make the room feel.

**Q:** What's really caught your ear recently?

**Jared:** Clint Madgen from Preservation Hall Jazz Band was doing a small one-man-band set at Okeechobee. It





© Jared Dietch



SOUTH BEACH

# AS FAR AS YOUR EYES CAN SEE

was a really mind-blowing and bending experience at three o'clock in the morning. Just before I left, the set was coming to a close. He put on a record that I had never heard before: Like A Ship by Pastor T. L. Barrett... I pulled out my phone and Shazamed it. I actually went up to the DJ and Clint to say thank you and he said, "You know what? I found this song in the exact same way." He said, "I was at a party at somebody's home. They put this record on and everyone lost their mind. I ran up and asked them what it was." It's really amazing that there are still those undeniable moments that you look around everyone's having the same experience.

**Q:** What do you do when clients want something you're uninspired by, or that you think is the wrong direction for their brand?

**Jared:** I think there's a little bit of license that's being borrowed (laughs) when they insist on their own flavour of

music. There is a way of giving the client what they want, but at the same time being able to educate them... Being subtle in how you steer the ship. That's the beauty of working with brands that you believe in. And that believe in you.

To learn more about Jared Dietch | Music Matters, visit [FRINGE](#) on the LE show floor. Home to the hottest rebels in travel tech and innovation, it's a hub of ideas and inspiration.

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# SAY HELLO TO THE CREATIVE CLASS

*Wondering who exactly is this elusive group of cultural influencers? You're looking at them.*

When it came to shortlisting applications for THE REBELS, to decide what the creative class really want we drafted in help from the real thing: meet our 2016 judges and bona fide members of the creative class – who better to identify those rebellious brands at the cutting edge of contemporary travel?





RANA FLORIDA

**RANA FLORIDA**  
CEO OF CREATIVE CLASS GROUP

As Chief Executive Officer of a global advisory services firm composed of leading next-generation researchers, academics and business strategists, chair of the judges Rana Florida is particularly interested in how creativity, culture and design can drive regional economy.

**Tell us about you.**  
“Entrepreneur, CEO, author, writer, cultural curator.”

**What makes you a rebel?**  
“I constantly question the status quo. I detest rigid rules and processes. I am constantly searching for better ways of doing things.”

**Why are you passionate about your cause?**  
“The creative minds we meet across the globe fulfil my curiosity for new ideas and new ways of thinking.”

**What do you want to see from THE REBELS 2016?**  
“I’d love to see innovative ideas on how to enhance the arrival experience to make travellers feel instantly at home and connected to the city.”

**KATE BETTS**  
PRESIDENT OF KATE BETTS+CO

An award-winning magazine editor and manager, Kate Betts has held top positions at Harper’s Bazaar and Vogue, been editor at large for Time magazine, and authored two critically acclaimed books based around the subject of life and style.

**Tell us about you.**  
“Best-selling author and award-winning magazine editor.”

**What makes you a rebel?**  
“New ideas and great stories.”



KATE BETTS



CHRIS BENFIELD

**Why are you passionate about your cause?**  
“I am a storyteller and I love to discover new trends, stories, destinations.”

**What do you want to see from THE REBELS 2016?**  
“Disruptive ideas!”

**CHRIS BENFIELD**  
PRINCIPAL OF BENFIELD PARTNERS

As Principal of New York and Los Angeles-based design studio Benfield Partners, Chris Benfield’s strong focus on the importance of place combined with his expertise in design and art allow him to create unique settings that reflect his clients’ needs and aspirations.

**Tell us about you.**  
“A simultaneous multipotentialite.”

**What makes you a rebel?**  
“I invoke my Fifth Amendment not to answer, on the grounds that I may incriminate myself.”

**Why are you passionate about your cause?**  
“I invoke my Fifth Amendment to remain silent, on the grounds that I may incriminate myself...”

**What do you want to see from THE REBELS 2016?**  
“A UED strategy that creates inspirational and aspirational experiences that connect and serve as memorable brand differentiators.”

**JACQUELINE GIFFORD**  
SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR FOR TRAVEL+LEISURE

As special projects editor at Travel+Leisure, Jacqueline edits features and covers major markets including the Caribbean, cruising and hotels. She frequently appears as an expert guest on television programmes such as NBC’s TODAY show to share getaway ideas and discuss trends within the industry.

**Tell us about you.**  
“Hotel-obsessed new mother and wife to a New York Giants fan.”

**What makes you a rebel?**  
“I’m an equal-opportunity traveller who lives to travel, and travels to live.”

**Why are you passionate about your cause?**  
“Because travel literally changes people for the better.”

**What do you want to see from THE REBELS 2016?**  
“Hotels that are opening up new destinations, or making classic ones stand out in a fresh way.”

**RACHEL CONLAN**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR AT HAVAS LUXHUB

Rachel Conlan is responsible for driving the strategic and commercial operations of Havas Luxhub, a consultancy that helps guide luxury, fashion and lifestyle companies on their road to becoming modern brands, with clients including LVMH, Sotheby’s and Kit and Ace to a few.

**Tell us about you.**  
“Modern luxury maven and creative thinker with a vibrant wanderlust for the unknown.”

**What makes you a rebel?**  
“I’m a rebel with a cause, obsessed with helping luxury and lifestyle brands challenge conventional paradigms to delight their customers.”

**Why are you passionate about your cause?**  
“The luxury world is in the midst of the largest transformation we’ve ever seen... It’s a very exciting time to be a marketer in our space.”

**What do you want to see from THE REBELS 2016?**  
“I want to see innovative and disruptive ideas that set new standards in travel, pushing the boundaries for the category and for consumers.”

**GULLA JÓNSDÓTTIR**  
PRINCIPAL OF GULLA JÓNSDÓTTIR ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

Icelandic-born Gulla Jónsdóttir is the owner and principal of Los Angeles-based design studio Gulla Jónsdóttir Architecture & Design. She counts Le Grand Restaurant in Paris and the Hollywood Roosevelt hotel in Los Angeles and Macau among her most notable projects.

**Tell us about you.**  
“I grew up in Iceland where the dynamic Nature became my inspiration; very feminine and sensual. I’m not afraid of the power of femininity.”

**What makes you a rebel?**  
“Art is not separate from life and life is not separate from architecture. Real artists are rebels that reflect the times we live in.”

**Why are you passionate about your cause?**  
“I fell in love with Architecture when I was 12 in Florence. It’s like looking at a great piece of art and falling in love with it.”

**What do you want to see from THE REBELS 2016?**  
“The project should have a soul. It should be bold, flow and function well and be emotional – a journey of the senses would be ideal to see.”

**ROMAN MILISIC**  
CREATIVE & CONTENT DIRECTOR FOR PORTER & SAIL

Aside from being Content & Creative Director at Porter & Sail, Roman Milisic is an artist, writer, speaker and communications specialist. Having previously worked with brands from NASA to Nokia, from Diesel to Playboy, his work promotes innovation, deconstruction and connection.

**Tell us about you.**  
“Seer, cultural engineer, drinker of beer, irresponsible sloganeer.”



RACHEL CONLAN



JACQUELINE GIFFORD



GULLA JÓNSDÓTTIR





ROMAN MILISIC

**What makes you a rebel?**

“I love to take the things we know, turn them upside down, inside-out and back to front, and see if they make something new.”

**Why are you passionate about your cause?**

“We’ve found a way to engage readers, allow them to act on what they read, and follow those actions to get a true picture of the reader.”

**What do you want to see from THE REBELS 2016?**

“I want to see a hotel changing the game. I want to be looped into the local insider experience. I want the whole city to be my resort.”

**CORY VITIELLO**  
CHEF AT THE HARBORD ROOM & FLOCK



CORY VITIELLO

Chef Cory Vitello studied at The Stratford Chef School, before apprenticing at Scaramouche Restaurant in Toronto. He went on to open award-winning restaurant The Harbord Room, followed by THRCO and most recently Flock Rotisserie & Greens. He stars on The Food Network’s Chef In Your Ear.

**Tell us about you.**

“I’m a cook. At the heart, it’s what I am and what I love. That will never change.”

**What makes you a rebel?**

“I’m not sure that I am! My cooking, designing and running my business is done around my clientele first and personal ego a distant second.”

**Why are you passionate about your cause?**

“I put myself on the plate every day at the restaurants – they’re a living and constantly adapting part of me.”



GEORGE YABU

**GEORGE YABU**  
FOUNDER AND CCO OF YABU PUSH-ELBERG

Recognised as innovators in hospitality, for more than thirty years George and his business partner Glenn Pushelberg have created distinctive signature environments for a diverse and often high profile group of clients – including Ian Schrager, Daniel Boulud, Jean-Georges Von Richten and Park Hyatt International.

**Tell us about you.**

“I am a designer of interiors, furniture and objects. I have an immense amount of curiosity about people and what they do.”

**What makes you a rebel?**

“I’m definitely a risk-taker and have always been more interested in forging my own path as opposed to following someone who came before me.”

**Why are you passionate about your cause?**

“I have the opportunity to teach and guide others and, in return, learn from all the young and talented designers who surrounded us.”

**What do you want to see from THE REBELS 2016?**

“A new approach to planning or materiality and the inclusion of artistry in the work. Function and a connection to place are also important.”

Now it’s over to you, the collective. Check out THE REBELS shortlist (as chosen by this gorgeous lot) and place your votes via our website or LE app. The winners will be announced at the Official REBELS & Closing Party on Thursday 9 June, brought to you by Travel+Leisure and hosted by Morgans Hotel Group at Delano South Beach.



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# Hotel Hotline Bling

*Five hotly anticipated hotel openings for 2016*

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In these heady days of booming hospitality growth, with new hotels opening left and right and new brands being rolled out as if on a factory assembly line, the risk of hotel fatigue has never been greater. (Airbnb, anyone?)

Yet we're not ready to crash in a stranger's apartment forever. Every year, there are a handful of special hotel projects that make us tingle with excitement. That's because these hotels really want to do things differently – whether by kicking off an

innovative new brand, refining their experience for a new locale, or simply building an experience the likes of which have never been seen before.

Of all the 2016 contemporary luxury hotel openings that we rounded-up on THE SHIFT at the start of the year, five forthcoming hotels truly stood out. So pour yourself a drink, slip off your shoes and get comfortable, as we tell you why these are the most anticipated hotel openings of 2016.

## ACE HOTEL // NEW ORLEANS

The Big Easy has never been short on music, cocktails, or culinary delights, but it has been on cool hotels. Until recently. AC Hotels by Marriott opened their first U.S. hotel in New Orleans in 2014,

with a millennial-friendly Moxy arriving this year too. Provenance Hotels opened the delightful Old No. 77 Hotel and Handlery last year in the emerging Warehouse District and even Virgin Hotels are



# Feeling totally at EAST



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QT // MELBOURNE

working on a hotel here. But it's Ace Hotel's reinvention of an Art Deco building on Carondelet Street next to Lafayette Square that may transform the city's bland hotel scene entirely.

Design firm Roman and Williams have installed bespoke furniture and lighting in the 234 guestrooms in a style reminiscent of the roaring 20s, when the building first came to life as home to the Max Bennett Furniture Company. The end result is still very true to the Ace style – an understated mix of mod and vintage – but there's something just a bit sexier about this Ace.

Amenities in the rooms are standard Ace fare from the free WiFi, carefully curated mini-bars and SMEG refrigerators, Rudy's toiletries, and Pearl+ soaps. Another Ace tradition can be found on the beds – a custom-designed Pendleton quilt. Even better, larger rooms will have either a Martin guitar or a turntable, perfect for when Jazzfest rolls into town. Or for any other New Orleans night, really.

Rounding out the Ace offerings will be a restaurant, bar, and Stumptown coffee shop. Oh wait, the Ace New Orleans has one more ace up its sleeve – a rooftop swimming pool.

QT Hotels, the Down Under boutique hotel group, are anything but ordinary. Indeed, that's written in their mission statement, along with offering design, art, style and luxury, all with "a touch of quirk." (We will also forever remember them as one of the first Aussie hotel brands to offer free WiFi at all their properties.) After opening up two hotels in Sydney, along with hotels in the Gold Coast, Port Douglas, Canberra, and near the slopes at Falls Creek, QT will soon be coming home, in a sense, to Oz's cultural capital.

The QT Melbourne, located in the city's Central Business District but also close to the shops of Collins Street, will have 200 guestrooms along with 24 lifestyle apartments. All will be designed by Nic Graham of g+a design,

the man responsible for putting his clever contemporary mark on the other QTs. Graham, who partnered up with design expert Shelly Indyk, will strike an industrial-inspired tone at QT Melbourne using "handcrafted steel, stone and timber" to balance out the wild and sometimes dizzying interiors that QT is known for.

Aside from eye-catching and jaw-dropping design, and as well as a curated nightlife and dining experience, guests will be privy to some of QT's signature, but still quirky, services, which in the past have ranged from in-house stylists to in-room squeeze-your-own-lemonade to elevator music that is tuned to how many people are riding in the lift. So quirky and we love it.



© QT Melbourne



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## EAST // MIAMI

The EAST Hotels are well known in Hong Kong and Beijing for being “a business hotel with a life,” as their tagline proclaims. Both properties are determined to turn dull and predictable business trips into lively and social hotel stays, while at the same time helping guests be productive out of the office. The hallmarks of an EAST hotel are often stylish and tech-forward guestrooms, stunning rooftop bars, and an approachable level of service. (That said, EAST does have a luxury pedigree as its parent company, Swire Hotels, is responsible for the sumptuous House Collective consisting of the Opposite, Upper and Temple houses in Beijing, Hong Kong, and Chengdu respectively.)

Now, EAST is bringing their hotel *je ne sais quoi* to Miami, inside a brand new billion-dollar mixed-use development called Brickell City Centre in the heart of the city’s financial district. EAST, Miami will have 352 guestrooms and eight suites, each with their own private balconies, along with 89 one, two and three-bedroom apartments, some of which will be open to guests as well.

Miami-based architecture firm

Arquitectonica designed the sleek-looking tower while New York-based Clodagh Design handled the interiors. For its signature restaurant, EAST will open *Quinto La Huella*, an outpost of *Parador La Huella*, Uruguay’s most famous beachside grill. Up on the 40<sup>th</sup> floor, guests can escape the stressors of work at *Sugar*, a rooftop haven with unbelievable views of Miami, Biscayne Bay, and the Atlantic Ocean.

EAST, Miami will also be adjacent to a stunning shopping centre, anchored by a three-story Saks Fifth Avenue high-end department store. The centre will feature a special “climate ribbon”, a unique overhang made of steel, fabric, and glass that will not only protect shoppers from rain but will regulate airflow and temperature as well as collect three million gallons of rainwater, annually, for reuse.

While the lure of South Beach may be hard to resist for some travellers, EAST, Miami will be a perfect choice for the seasoned and sophisticated Miami visitor – and the LE collective will be some of the first to experience it in person at this year’s Opening Party...



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## SIX SENSES // ZIL PAYSON

When it’s high time to escape the stress and drama of your life, seek out Six Senses’ forthcoming resort on *Félicité*, a private island in the Seychelles. Here, 30 private pool villas, designed by Richard Hywel Evans of Studio RHE, are enclosed behind teeming, oh-so-dramatic granite rocks that line the shores. Completely encircled by the Indian Ocean, the luxury resort will have three separate beach areas, along with two restaurants, a bar, a fitness center and a Six Senses spa. Boasting a location just outside the area’s cyclone belt, Six Senses Zil Payson will be a year-round destination for diving, snorkelling, sailing, island-hopping and the treasured pastime of doing nothing at all.

## PROPER HOTEL // SAN FRANCISCO

Not all millennials are happy with a “cheap and chic” hotel room, especially not older millennials who are seeking a higher-end hotel without having to cave in to a formal luxury brand with unoriginal services and ho-hum amenities. This discerning luxury millennial traveller will find just what they want and need in Proper Hotels, a new brand from the founders of the Viceroy Hotel Group.

Proper will debut in San Francisco in a historic flatiron building at the corner of Market and McAllister Streets in the city’s Mid-Market nabe. The hotel’s 135 rooms will be styled by interior designer Kelly Wearstler, whose swank style has elevated many Viceroy hotels, while

downstairs, a historic lobby will be transformed to appeal today’s travellers and locals like. Three restaurants will open on the ground floor while an indoor/outdoor rooftop restaurant and bar will offer up glorious views of San Francisco...when the fog has rolled away, of course •

## JULIANA SHALLCROSS

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