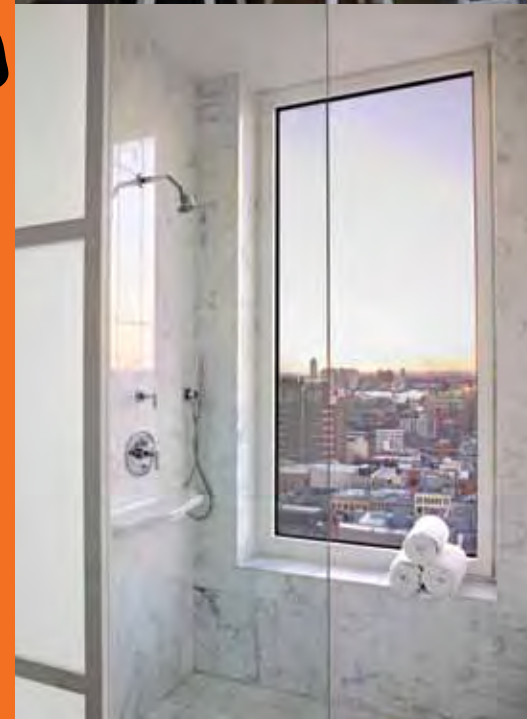


AGENDA

Fall into autumn and winter 2011/12: Agenda rounds up the latest hotels, restaurants and spas around the world as the weather cools down, but the season heats up.



Sleep

Whether it's a private island in a Cambodian archipelago, city break in Manhattan, yachting on the Mediterranean or experiencing an Indian historical hidaway, Agenda answers all travel needs this season with a roundup of the latest hotels and retreats to open around the globe.

Mondrian SoHo New York, USA

Amongst the A-list residents, fashionable and picturesque streets, and charm and energy of lower Manhattan's SoHo neighbourhood, the newest creation from the Morgans Hotel Group delivers the luxurious, chic and comfortable style for which the Mondrian brand is best known. The romantic design draws inspiration from Jean Coucteau's 1946 French fantasy film *La Belle et la Bête*, an iconic romantic adaptation of two French fairy tales, awakening the imagination and inviting guests into a vibrant escape. Visionary designer Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz collaborated with the Morgan in-house design team to ensure the signature Mondrian brand ethos was interwoven in the subtle yet provocative design features throughout the property where fantasy meets sophisticated chic. As well as the 270 rooms including four sprawling suites and a 25th floor penthouse with dramatic views of the Empire State Building, the edifice boasts a romantic garden building showcasing an oversized sculpture by acclaimed artist Beth Lipman, and the hotly anticipated Imperial No. Nine restaurant where Chef Sam Talbot introduces his sustainable seafood concept.
Mondrian SoHo, 9 Crosby Street, NY 10013, New York, USA, T +1 212 389 1000, W mondriansoho.com

Song Saa

Cambodia

Song Saa is the brainchild of Australian couple Rory and Melita Hunter, following their dream to create a sustainable sanctuary of uncompromising luxury. Khmer for ‘The Sweethearts’, the Song Saa are two pristine islands which lie side-by-side in Cambodia’s untouched Koh Rong Archipelago. Opening in early 2012, the private island is as seductive as the name implies: an intimate resort in a remote undiscovered paradise. The 27 over-water, ocean-view and beach villas are constructed from sustainable materials and in perfect harmony with this magical environment of turquoise ocean, white sands and wild rainforest, and will be complemented by a world class restaurant spectacularly positioned over the ocean. The sense of well-being is enhanced with a yoga centre and spa on a separate isle. A host of guest activities will be offered to authentically showcase the surrounding archipelago, its staggering scenery and innately friendly people, including kayaking the fresh water estuaries, hiking through virgin rainforest, and snorkeling and diving with the resort’s marine biologists. *Song Saa Private Island, Koh Ouen, Sihanoukville, Cambodia, T +855 77 777 439, W songsaa.com*



The Leela Palace

New Delhi, India

The Leela Palace, part of the Kempinski Group, exemplifies the splendid tradition, grace and elegance of Lutyens’ Delhi with the serene ambience of a personal palace. With dazzling Murano chandeliers from Italy; hand-woven carpets from Turkey; an art collection valued at US\$5 million; majestic royal-elephants, hand-carved using sandstone from Qatar; miniature paintings by the craftsmen of Rajasthan; and bidri work from Uttar Pradesh adorning the walls and ceilings, and a gold-leafed dome similar to the one at the Rashtrapati Bhavanm, the hotel is a modern marvel. The Leela Palace New Delhi is also the first hotel to be designed for Gold LEED certification, ensuring every aspect of the design, from rain-water harvesting to solar energy application, addresses the need for sustainable development and environmental conservation. The facilities include 260 oversized guestrooms and suites which are the largest in the city, a 6,500 square foot spa, a heated infinity pool on the rooftop, a whisky and wine bar and tea lounge as well as an array of five restaurants and lounges. *The Leela Palace, New Delhi, India, T +91 11 3933 1234, W theleela.com*



Mandarin Oriental

Paris, France

Just opened this summer, the latest addition to the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group stable has the most prestigious address in the heart of this fashion capital, with the Garnier Opera, the Louvre and the Tuileries Gardens all close by. The original, magnificent Art Deco façade of this luxury hotel has been beautifully complemented by chic, contemporary interiors, making it a most luxurious, glamorous and Parisian experience in the city. Working with the foremost international names in architecture and design such as architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte and interior designer Sybille de Margerie, the hotel combines Parisian sophistication with art deco details and oriental touches. Dining facilities include two restaurants, a live cooking counter, a bar, cake shop and a garden which together offer a variety of settings and moods, while the 900 square meter spa offers a holistic experience to promote complete mind-body harmony. *Mandarin Oriental, 251 rue Saint-Honoré 75001, Paris, France, T +33 1 70 98 78 88 W mandarinoriental.com/paris*



The Opposite House

Beijing, China

With cutting edge design from world-renowned architect Kengo Kuma, groundbreaking restaurants and bars conceived by celebrated chef restaurateur David Laris as well as a fresh and innovative approach to service, this 99-room intriguing urban hotel has taken Beijing's hotel scene by storm. Located at The Village in Sanlitun (with Alexander Wang and a Comme des Garçons emporium as neighbours), The Opposite House is a vibrant, new open-plan shopping, dining and entertainment destination developed by Swire Properties. Kuma, who is famed for some of the most innovative retail and commercial spaces in Japan, including the LVMH group headquarters and the Suntory Museum in Tokyo, set out to create a spatial experience of light and space that completely transforms the look of the luxurious contemporary hotel from morning to night. He redefines conventional architectural boundaries to create seamless flowing spaces flooded with light. The name, The Opposite House, is derived from a Chinese translation which historically described the building located opposite the main house in a courtyard where esteemed guests would stay. The name also reflects the hotel's southern location within the courtyard design of The Village at Sanlitun and highlights Sanlitun as a district of diversity and opposites – old and new; east and west; bohemian and chic. Guest rooms are strikingly open and simple with natural brushed oak floors, furniture and even bathtubs, with subtle touches of Chinese décor to evoke a sense of place in Beijing, as well as a wonderful range of Chinese aromatherapy products. *The Opposite House, The Village, Building Number 1, Sanlitun Road, Chaoyang District, Beijing, China 100027, T +86 10 6417 6688, W theoppositehouse.com*



Fairmont

Abu Dhabi, UAE

Fairmont Bab Al Bahr invites guests to experience unrivalled accommodation in the nation's capital with a full weekend long itinerary. Available every Friday and Saturday the '36 Hour Weekend' package features a range of offerings, from the luxury of an early check-in and a late check-out, a Friday brunch experience with unlimited champagne, beach and leisure facilities by the outdoor swimming pool. 36 Hour Weekend offers guests the opportunity to be one of the first to experience Fairmont Bab Al Bahr, a property positioned at the mainland gateway of the city and situated directly on the beachfront, and with spectacular views of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque. The Fairmont offers a dedicated 'Kids Corner' for the little ones, which comes complete with soft cushions and child appropriate seats, and treats including a variety of smoothies and fresh juices, popcorn and candy floss. To keep kids entertained, this designated child friendly area features a range of interactive games on Xbox and Wii, and colouring kits. Rounding out the afternoon is live musical entertainment on the piano. Following brunch, guests can get settled into a Fairmont guestroom that features a modern design with marble, walnut wood paneling throughout and bamboo inspired soft furnishing, an LCD television and high-speed internet access. A unique interior design feature, guests may also enjoy a 'bath with a view', as many bathtubs are situated to provide an ideal vantage point to take in breathtaking views of the Creek. The following morning, enjoy buffet breakfast at CuiScene and relax by the sun drenched outdoor swimming pool. Prolong this experience with lunch at Poolside that offers a range of gourmet hamburgers and blended seasonal beverages before a late check out at 6pm. *Fairmont Bab Al Bahr, T +971 2 654 3000, W fairmont.com/babalbahr*



Eat

Dine at restaurants in South Africa, London and Beijing, where contemporary concepts combine with local and seasonal produce for award winning results.

Nopi London, UK

The residents of Kensington and Knightsbridge are faced with a choice dilemma every time they visit the petite cafés of Ottolenghi. Everything, from the Bailey's cake to the raspberry cupcakes to the cheese straws to the rare beef and raw tuna and oversized salad plates, looks so tempting that you just want to taste it all. It was the display, quality and, of course, simply delicious fare that have gained Ottolenghi a cult following in London. The café came about in 2002 as a collaboration of three colleagues: Yotam Ottolenghi, Noam Bar and Sami Tamini. Its fare has been translated into an equally popular cookbook: *Plenty* (available at Boutique 1 books), divulges the ingredients of some of Yotam's best loved dishes. So it was perhaps to be expected that his next venture would enter the realm of fine dining: Nopi (which stands for 'north' of 'Piccadilly'), is Yotam's first restaurant. The menu here answers the needs of Ottolenghi fans: it divides dishes into categories — Veg, Fish, Meat and Sweets — and recommends that each diner order one from each group and then share with the table. The result is that two people can taste quite a bit of the menu, while larger tables can sample a veritable smorgasbord of Ottolenghi food. Veg dishes include burrata, which splits open to be mixed with toasted coriander seeds and blood orange, while fish features seared scallops, octopus, mullet and bream. Meat offers miso quail, twice-cooked baby chicken or lamb sweetbreads. With this menu Ottolenghi grows up, taking a step away from the Mediterranean roots so apparent in the cafés. But with dishes such as Shakshuka (north African style braised eggs with pepper and tomato) and the sharing concept, these roots are still there. The desserts of course are sublime: donuts are served hot, covered in cinnamon to be torn and dipped in berry compote or plum wine anglaise. There is chocolate mousse intriguingly flavoured with mace syrup or a passion fruit sorbet that pops with freshness on the tongue. The experience is set in a warm marble room, or you can choose for a private dining session downstairs overlooked by the kitchen: a sort of group chef's table, surrounded by fresh produce and enigmatic tins. *Condé Nast Traveller* already recognized them with the 'Gourmet Award' for innovation and design, by architect Alex Meitlis and Ottolenghi creative director Noam Bar. *Nopi*, 21-22 Warwick Street, London W1, UK, T +44 20 7494 9584, W nopi-restaurant.com



Reuben's Western Cape, South Africa

The latest gastronomic tour de force of TV chef Reuben Riffel is to be found at the beautiful five-star Robertson Small Hotel, a tourism destination located along the longest wine route in the world. Reuben's philosophy on food is to keep things simple by bringing out the natural flavours of the produce and, when combining flavours, to strive for perfect balance. Global but with a local spin, the menu focuses on fresh, seasonal cuisine, with an emphasis on locally sourced produce and meats. The Robertson Wine Valley is a year round oenophile draw with 52 world renowned wineries such as Springfield, De Wetshof and Bon Cap, and the restaurant features an extensive cellar with an impressive selection of award-winning wines. The valley offers a myriad of attractions for gourmets and wine lovers: wine-tastings at world-class vineyards, farmer's markets with handmade products from local kitchens and olive farms, plus, of course, the food festivals. *Reuben's at the Robertson Small Hotel, Western Cape, South Africa, T +27 23 626 7200, W therobertsonsmallhotel.com*



Made in China Beijing, China

One of the most essential aspects of a visit to China is exploring the cuisine, but in a country where so many flavours are available on the street, tourists can be wary to embark on a culinary adventure. The Grand Hyatt in Beijing has made it easy by selecting the best of Chinese cuisine and offering it in a breakfast setting at their Made in China restaurant, which overlooks the green roofs of a former imperial residence, located at what was once the outskirts of the Forbidden City. The buffet experience unfolds at a series of stations where chefs steam or fry right in front of you. Select from over 20 à la minute dishes from the steam and wok kitchens such as date pancake, steamed dumpling, spring roll with duck and wok-fried egg with shallot. The variety of small snacks ensures you can taste your way through several traditional soups (including wonton or fermented bean juice) and congees (porridge-like in consistency, the congees include black rice congee, chicken and corn flour), topped with local condiments. Together with 12 types of Beijing snacks including the famous crisp twist noodle, pea cake and caramel treats, the dishes combine as a tasting voyage of Chinese traditions and flavours. *Grand Hyatt Beijing, 1 East Chang An Avenue, Beijing 100738, China, T +86 108 518 1234, W Beijing.grand.hyatt.com*



Spa

Eco diving in the Maldives, hamam-ing in Marrakesh and couples treatment rooms in Cheltenham are just some of the spa treats in store for those in search of a body beautiful and relaxed mind this season.

Es Saadi Marrakesh, Morroco

In the mystical city of Marrakesh, the Es Saadi Palace Spa is set amongst rural tranquillity of the palm, banana and olive trees in the 20 acre Es Saadi Gardens & Resort. The Palace Spa is the largest in Marrakesh and offers a range of exceptional experiences and treatments including an indoor pool with hydrotherapy pathway, oriental and traditional steam baths and Moroccan hamams, a Dior Institut and a VIP area within the spa for extra privacy. Pampering packages ‘The Unfolding of the Spa’ and ‘A Girl’s Weekend’ offer the chance to immerse and indulge in the blissful treatments while becoming acquainted with the magic of the location. The biggest dilemma is how to manage your time to take advantage of the 150 room, five star hotel, 92 luxury suite Palace, 10 beautifully appointed villas and the theatre nightclub that make up the resort. *Es Saadi Gardens and Resort, Marrakesh, Morroco T +212 5 24 44 88 11, W essaadi.com*



The Montpellier Chapter Cheltenham, UK

Created to manage intriguing urban hotels in Hong Kong, China and the UK, with The Montpellier Chapter the Swire Group opened its first hotel in England (following one in Beijing and two in Hong Kong) in late 2010. This summer the hotel opened its spa as a retreat for locals and, at just two and a half hours from London, a haven away from hectic city life too. In collaboration with award winning Aromatherapy Associates (available at Boutique 1 this season), the four treatment room spa uses contemporary and traditional methods, including aromatherapy massages and facials, with natural essential oils. Signature treatments include ‘Chapter and Verse’ – a pampering ritual with a luxurious aromatherapy massage and facial, as well as a manicure or pedicure to release tension, rebalance and revitalise. Available for couples, it is the perfect addition to a romantic getaway, or mother and daughter break. Those seeking a relaxing retreat away from the hustle and bustle, can indulge in the two hour ‘Deep Sleep’ ritual – a body, face and scalp massage using vetivert, camomile and sandalwood to clear congestion, ease overactive minds and help guests drift into a deep state of relaxation. Designed by Make Architects, oak timber is used to add warmth and the two double treatment rooms, as well as the relaxation room follow a curved shape, creating the sensation of a cocoon. All Chapter Hotels are set in period buildings, rooted in their locations and reflective of the individual skills and passions of the architects, artists and artisans who collaborate in their creation. *The Montpellier Chapter, Bayhill Road Montpellier, Cheltenham, T +44 1242 527 788, W chapterhotels.com*



Sun Gardens Dubrovnik, Croatia

The Adriatic Sea provides the spectacular backdrop to the Dubrovnik Sun Gardens spa where innovative products from the renowned Anne Sémonin Spa line (whose range is available at Boutique 1 from this autumn too), are merged with chic surroundings and breath-taking views to the water. Spanning over 3,500 square metres, it is the largest spa on the Dalmatian coast and one of the country’s first fully integrated resorts, combined with a five star 201 room Radisson Blu Hotel. Guests tune out at the ultra-modern complex which includes a hydrotherapy pool with therapeutic massage jets, inner spa garden, the Anne Sémonin Spa Apartment with private lounge and sun terrace, relaxing 18-metre lagoon pool with waterfall and underwater vitality jet loungers, a vitality juice bar with sun terrace and a tepidarium with five individual stone loungers. A thermal area includes traditional coal sauna, salt sauna, hamam, aromatherapy steam room and large cold plunge pool and lifestyle showers, as well as two luxury spa couple suites nestled around an outdoor hot tub. *Dubrovnik Sun Gardens, Dubrovnik, Croatia, T +385 20 361 500, W radissonbluwcom/resort-dubrovnik/spa*



Baros

Maldives

An exotic luxury resort on a private coral fringed bijou island in the heart of the crystal clear waters of the Maldives, Baros boasts 75 thatched villas, numerous dining locations, a gym and spa. With its own diving and PADI centre and a house reef just 10 metres from the hotel, Baros is the idyllic location of the first Eco Dive and training centre of the archipelago. Certified by the official Reef Check organisation, guests can sign up to the Reef Check and Eco Diver courses to learn about tropical coral reefs and assist scientists in monitoring reefs worldwide. The world's reefs are changing at a startling rate, threatened by climate change and ocean acidification, but by allowing enthusiasts to get involved in collecting data that is used by local and international environmental managers, the EcoDive program empowers individuals to be a part of the conservation effort.

*Baros, Republic of Maldives,
T +960 664 26 72, W baros.com*



PAUL &
JOE