



THE BEST NEW RESTAURANTS

FOR WHEN WE ALL GET TOGETHER AGAIN
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PHOTOGRAPH: JOHAN HARMIDE

THE ENTRANCE TO TANAMAN AT POTATO HEAD, BALI

VERONIKA



RONGROS



VERDANT



DAVIES AND BROOK



FINO VINO



DAVIES AND BROOK



VERDANT



VERONIKA NEW YORK

It takeschutzpah to create a restaurant ambitious enough to serve as an anchor point inside an enormous Renaissance Revival building such as Manhattan's Church Missions House. But that kind of audacious confidence is restaurateur Stephen Starr's calling card. Having opened his first outpost at 21, he is the man behind other NYC hits Le Coucou, Pastis and La Mercerie. At Veronika, the palatial setting is the sort of space a Prussian duke would dine in, with 20ft ceilings, meticulously restored stained glass and gilded plates shining on every table. The European flavours coming out of the kitchen are an indulgent continuation of the surroundings: *escargots* served in a rich garlic and hazelnut butter; a *feuilletée* almost 10in high, filled with the juiciest heritage chicken and truffles; elegant *tafelspitz* reinvented with brisket, short rib and bone marrow. For pudding a baked Alaska is flamed tableside in a show that makes everyone stop and stare. You could entirely skip the fact that this is a museum restaurant, although it's sandwiched between the floors of the newly opened Fotografiska – the city's outpost of Stockholm's renowned photography gallery – and discounted tickets are available to all diners. This is not the first such foodie draw, but, unlike In Situ at San Francisco's MoMA, or Odette at Singapore's National Gallery, which are both designed to match their location, Veronika is an intriguing counterpoint to the thoroughly modern art above and below. *From about £120 for two; veronikanyc.com*

VERDANT TULUM, MEXICO

Concerned by the pressure on busy Tulum's delicate ecosystem, chef couple Maya Scales and Benjamin Coe have created a space that's almost entirely zero-waste. Distancing themselves from the jam-packed coastal road, they have turned the town's only community farm, about four miles from the beach, into a tropical plantation-house restaurant with a roof angled to collect rainwater for irrigation. Scraps are used to infuse oils and brines, and any non-compostables are turned into charcoal to cook on – there are always piles of pineapples smoking above an open fire. Everything on the menu is either sourced from local farmers or harvested on site where the focus is on non-native plants from countries with similar micro-climates. The pair have procured organic seeds from all over the world and now grow ingredients including Egyptian okra, Chinese pink celery and sub-Saharan

kiwano, a fruit that looks like a cross between a melon and a passion fruit when sliced in two. Handmade sweet-potato udon noodles are laced with Trinidadian curry oil and served in a lobster *consommé* spiked with fresh ginger and turmeric leaves; squash ribbons are brushed with lemon verbena and topped by macadamia-nut cream and Persian blue basil; a woodfired manzano-banana soufflé comes with kaffir lime and *rhum agricole*. In Tulum's struggle to mitigate the shift from an off-grid beach destination to an overly developed hotspot, Verdant's ecologically minded mission paves the way for today's conscious travellers. This is the only true farm-to-table restaurant on the whole of the Yucatán Peninsula. *From about £100 for two; verdant.mx*

DAVIES AND BROOK AT CLARIDGE'S LONDON

Chef Daniel Humm's Eleven Madison Park in New York was crowned Best Restaurant in the World in 2017. After that, unsurprisingly, things immediately got busy, but then he split from his long-time business partner Will Guidara in the midst of opening this, his first London restaurant. Six months of rumours, followed by another six months of shifting opening dates, finally saw the Swiss chef cut the ribbon inside Claridge's in December 2019. Humm was a commis chef here at just 15, and it's no secret that the delays were a result of his perfectionism. Mesmerising, muted Icelandic landscapes cover the walls, creating a disjointed panorama; a well-choreographed carousel of waiters moves clockwise around the room. But Humm is also enthusiastic in his attempts to keep it fuss free, and while there is a tasting option, diners can pick and mix from a four-course menu. His legendary duck (dry-aged for up to 14 days – those lucky enough to get into the kitchen will see them hanging in neat rows behind a glass pane) is almost as famous as he is. Here it's prepared with honey and lavender, and glazed with beetroot. But if there's one dish everyone should try, it's the caviar, served in a butternut squash with a *crème-fraîche*-spiked purée of miso butter. Londoners waited more than a year for this restaurant to open, and it's still where the city's best chefs want to blag a table. *Tasting menu, £145 per person; davesandbrook.co.uk*

RONGROS BANGKOK

The clue to this building's former function is in the name (*rongros* means 'garage' in Thai, although it can also be translated as 'house of

flavours'), but little else reveals that this riverside bolthole steps away from the glittering pagodas of the Grand Palace used to be an empty concrete parking box. Now, a sort of tiki-ballroom-meets-antiques-shop manifests itself with shimmering chandeliers, taxidermied peacocks, gigantic palm leaves and chairs upholstered in tiger print. While this mishmash of styles might sound like a kitsch disaster on paper, it works brilliantly. It is spearheaded by owner Ou Baholyodhin, former creative director at silk producer Jim Thompson and the force behind Siri House, one of Bangkok's most buzzed-about hangouts, and the city's who's who have taken notice. The menu draws on Baholyodhin's childhood memories and heirloom family recipes, luring in diners for a taste of the central Thai food he grew up eating. Must-orders include garlicky skewered tiger prawns with fried rice wrapped in banana leaf, cubed watermelon with mint and sun-dried snakehead fish from Sing Buri, and an indulgent beef-laden take on *krapow*, a spicy stir-fry. Creative drinks with *lao khao* – a rice-based moonshine – and fruits match the dishes' bold notes and mean that the rooftop terrace is the place to be at sundown when Wat Arun's golden spires sparkle against a candy-floss-pink sky. Clued-up Thai creatives have found a reason to venture to this area normally reserved for tourists. *From about £40 for two; rongros.com*

FINO VINO ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA

Restaurateurs Sharon Romeo and David Swain are the duo behind the beloved Fino at Seppeltsfield, a must-stop on any Barossa Valley wine tour. And now they have created a similarly unfussy farmhouse feel on busy Flinders Street in the centre of Adelaide. Paying homage to the locale are thoughtful interiors (tabletops of Harlequin Stone sourced from the Flinders Ranges, still-lives by the late artist Bridget Ohlsson), and sensational small plates by chef Joe Carey made with quality ingredients. Formerly in the kitchen at Brae in Victoria, Carey has switched from fine dining to simple peasant-style dishes done brilliantly. On the menu are Kipfler potatoes and lemon-steamed kale on chickpea-miso-dressed witlof, DIY-dipped into egg-yolk confit, alongside focaccia heaped with charred banana peppers and fresh curd. Vivacious staff recommend glasses of light-as-a-feather Jericho rosé from the small-producer-focused wine list and deliver grilled pineapple infused with dandelion-root tea for pudding to Zimmermann-clad ladies lunching. A great address for a quick Finotini (vermouth is swapped for fino sherry), a boozy supper with

friends or an all-out party. Fino Vino puts local and seasonal front and centre in a very understated, very Adelaidean way. From about £75 for two; finovino.net.au

MAISON PARIS

Simply 'home' for chef Sota Atsumi, this is the gritty-but-cool 11th arrondissement's first seriously elevated spot. Atsumi trained under stars Joël Robuchon and Michel Troisgros before manning the stoves at tiny Vivant for Pierre Jancou, one of the game-changers who led Paris into its new era of bistronomie. More recently, Atsumi put Clown Bar on the map with distinctive dishes including brains with dashi. But this is his very own, a dream-like space full of arty references and with a luxurious approach to dimensions: the central communal table is 25ft long and the ceiling height immense. Hefty relics hanging above the open kitchen recall the past of the building, a gabled low-rise and former workshop incongruous among six-storey mansion blocks. Dried hydrangeas are a wink to the country-house aesthetic, while hexagonal tiles everywhere create an enjoyable optical-illusion effect. The pared-down tasting menus represent a smart take on the produce-focused cooking that has become the new norm from West Coast USA to East London. There are classic tiny tarts of onion, hazelnut, haddock and beetroot, intense spider-crab bisque and monkfish with a mussel emulsion; instead of over-fiddling, Atsumi creates clever contrasts with confident plates including stickily blowtorched pigeon with his signature date-and-yuzu purée. This is a happy home indeed. From about £80 for two; maison-sota.com

TANAMAN AT POTATO HEAD SEMINYAK, BALI

Already a minimal-waste architectural showpiece, the Potato Head hotel in Seminyak has just upped its eco-credentials with the opening of its latest restaurant, an almost sci-fi take on veganism. The dome-shaped, electric-blue interior feels like a spaceship, with a reflective floor and colour-changing neon-lit columns that resemble giant lightsabers. It fits right into a place that has been designed as a sort of village for creative types to bed down but also collaborate and party. Chef Wayan Kresna Yasa takes a sustainable stab at Indonesian classic dishes with his completely plant-based food, steering away from soy-based proteins and playing with roots, pulses, fruits and fungi. The sharing-plate tasting menu is essentially

a love letter to the archipelago. Expect jackfruit rendang curry braised in coconut milk, stewed and grilled banana hearts, and stuffed bitter-bean rice cakes wrapped in banana leaves. Dishes are served alongside a drinks list of homemade kombucha, medicinal tonics including a cold-pressed pineapple juice with tamarind and cinnamon, as well as 'root' beers made from ginger, galangal and turmeric left over from the kitchen. If this is a peek into the future of dining, we can all breathe a sigh of relief. *Sharing menu, about £20 person; potatohead.co/seminyak*

THE MELTING POT CAFETERIA CAPE TOWN

What started out as a tiny three-month pop-up in the city's business district has found a permanent home on the second floor of a heritage building on Wale Street. Halfway between colourful Bo-Kaap and the gothic spires of the city's oldest cathedral, the new address is as culturally diverse as the street food on the menu. Chef-owner John van Zyl learned from the best at the original Chefs Warehouse in Cape Town, and then travelled from Laos to London before dishing up what he describes as 'quality junk food' to an after-work crowd. These are fast, affordable, tasty global plates that riff on local provenance and seasonal ingredients: Chinese fried chicken bao with Sichuan mayo and pickled carrot; Cape Malay spiced fish tacos; Brick Lane salt-beef bagels, and yellowtail sashimi with fermented black-bean dressing and coconut are typical dishes on the short, sharp menu. Order the 'one of everything', or sample just a couple, paired with craft beers and an equally tight edit of lesser-known wines updated almost as frequently as the menu by the sommeliers behind hit wine bar Publik. In a fiercely competitive city, where many of the best restaurants are owned by a handful of high-profile chefs, The Melting Pot has developed a cult following by allowing the razor-sharp flavours, laced with nostalgic travel memories, to do the talking. There are no reservations, so arrive early and sip the medicinal-strength cocktails in the secret gin courtyard downstairs while waiting for a table. From about £40 for two; [instagram.com/meltingpot_streetfood](https://www.instagram.com/meltingpot_streetfood)

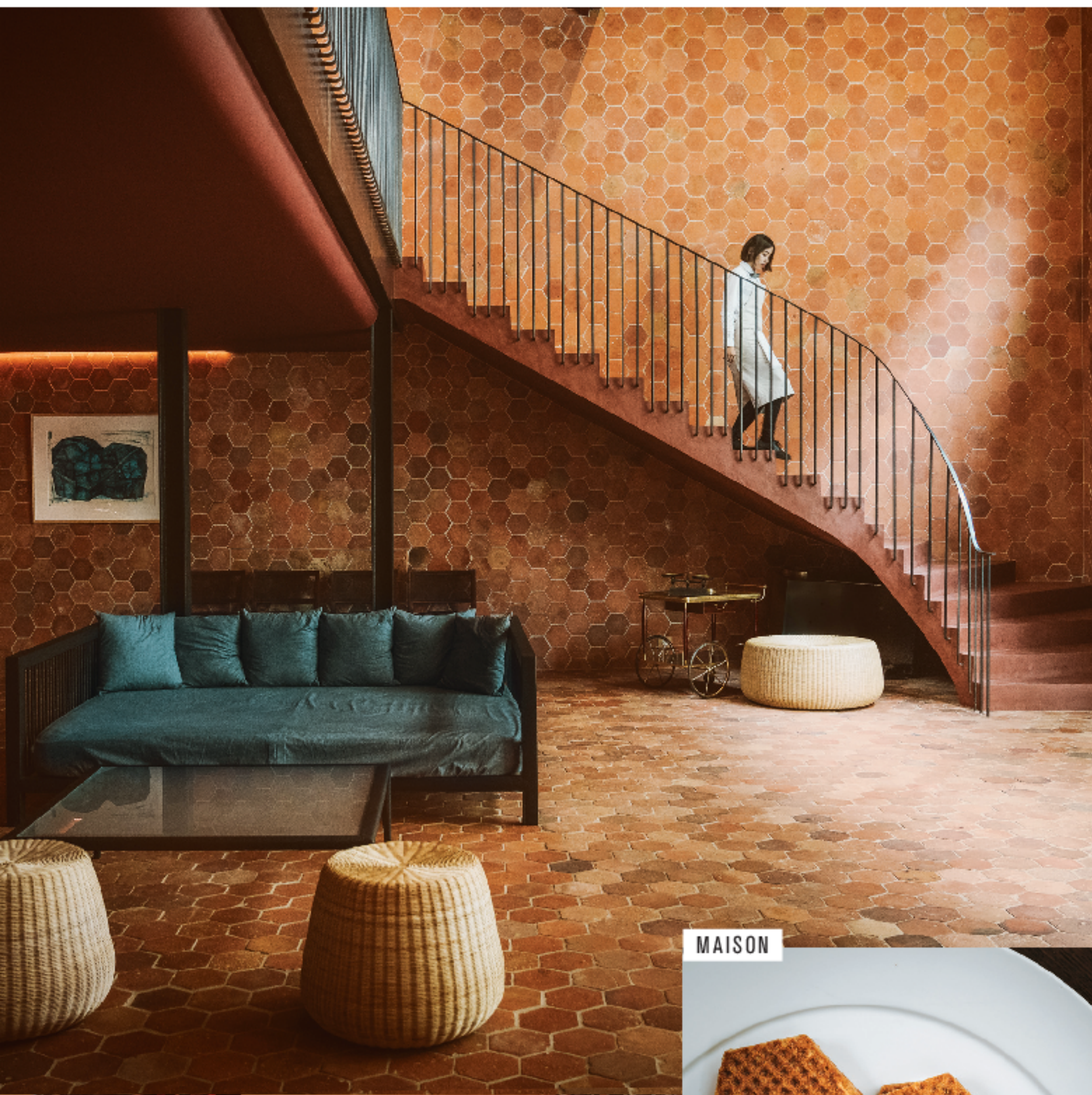
BASQUE LISBON

On a quiet side street in the up-and-coming Alcântara neighbourhood, past dilapidated warehouses covered in fly posting, a neon sign flickers above two emerald-green metal doors. Once inside, the urban grime is fast

forgotten. A marble-floored area flanked by red velvet curtains leads into an enormous room with 16ft-high ceilings studded with metal struts and brass lighting reflected in vintage mirrors. This converted warehouse, formerly known as the Alcântara Café, was at the centre of Lisbon's nightlife in its Eighties heyday. Now, the restaurant, by Eneko Atxa (at one time Spain's youngest chef to hold three Michelin stars), is modelled on the kind of cooking he was taught by his mother and grandmother. To start there are piquant *salazón* anchovies on fried bread, delicate tempura squid and an earthy yet sweet beetroot tartare. Mains include one-pot dishes such as clams in herby green sauce alongside charcoal-grilled lamb *carré* and a nutty whole cauliflower confit. On the drinks list is Txakoli, a light, dry white wine from the Basque Country sourced directly from the family vineyard and served in small barrels rather than bottles. With Basque, Atxa has brought this spot back to the centre of the city's nightlife scene, with DJ sets on weekends adding a louche touch and echoing the building's bohemian soul. From about £70 for two; enekoatxalisboa.com/basque

LOLA COPENHAGEN

This 18th-century windmill has recently undergone an extensive renovation to welcome the return of one of the country's most forward-thinking chefs, Kamilla Seidler. Having spent much of the past six years in La Paz, Bolivia, Seidler helped found one of South America's foremost restaurants with Gustu, based on the seasonal principles of the New Nordic food manifesto. But with Lola, she's moving things on with a wider-roaming roster of dishes influenced by Indian and central American cooking. A highlight is squid *podì* in fermented *beurre blanc* sauce; another is inspired by the El Salvadorean *pupusa*, a kind of pita bread, served with kimchi and horseradish cream; and there's a surprisingly hearty *paratha* with Indian spices and a double helping of the Scandinavian staple, celeriac. For pudding, chanterelle ice cream with buckwheat and salted caramel really shouldn't work but does. To drink, the limited-edition oolong-mirabelle kombucha by local company Læsk is addictive. Best of all, the quality of the food is underscored by considerations of sustainability, and several of the staff are hired and trained as part of a programme to employ those from the fringes of the labour market. Offering a contrast to the capital's other headline-grabbing new restaurant, Rasmus Munk's epic, multi-million-dollar playground Alchemist, Lola is at the forefront of the new global social gastronomy movement. From about £100 for two; restaurantlola.dk



THE MELTING POT

MAISON

TANAMAN

BASQUE

LOLA



THE COUNTER AT CRAVAN BAR, PARIS

THE COOLEST NEW BARS

TAYER + ELEMENTARY LONDON

Czech-born wunderkind Alex Kratena hasn't just jumped postcode for his first solo bar project, he's made a giant leap of style sensibilities.

After helming the plushly purple Artesian at The Langham, he has opened an industrial-edged mixology workshop with the help of his partner Monica Berg. This is two bars for the price of one. Out front is Elementary, where Kratena muddles Palo Santo Gimlets of gin, sherry, Lillet Blanc and a cordial infused with the sacred wood usually used as incense, while behind a wall imprinted to look like bamboo is the boundary-pushing Tayēr. This is Berg's domain, where she coolly pours from bottles in a hip-level bar station for evocatively named drinks such as Blood Orange. Dynamic and experimental at the grittier end of Shoreditch, this is the brave new face of London's cocktail scene. *From £7; tayer-elementary.com*

SVANEN OSLO

Many a modern cocktail menu resembles an apothecary's shopping list, but here's a bar in an actual apothecary. And it's one of the finest: a mahogany and marble-columned wonder crafted in 1896. The bar itself is the former counter; rows of cabinets are lined with jars and namesake swans; the panelled ceiling is illustrated with the clean-living Greek gods of medicine. The menu is inspired by ingredients marked in Latin on the wooden drawers – gentian and rowanberry, fennel and juniper. Order a Nordic Tiki (aquavit, orange liqueur and bitters) and hole up in one of the alcoves resembling old train carriages. While this is the newest venture by Yunus Yildiz, co-founder of Oslo hotspot Himkok, there's a *fin-de-siècle* atmosphere you could bottle, as if Edvard Munch was about to wander in and pick up a tincture of laudanum. *From about £10; facebook.com/svanen*

CANTINA OK! SYDNEY

At the end of a dingy alley in the suited-and-booted centre, this blink-and-you'll-miss-it cantina is a portal into Mexican life. It's strictly standing room only, but that doesn't deter the after-work crowd who pop in for cheeky but punchy Margaritas. In the wrong hands, the saturated magenta walls, raffia lamps and woven baskets could be too camp, but with Alex Dowd and Jeremy Blackmore (of Tio's Cerveceria in Surry Hills) in charge, it's a slam dunk. The menu is tight, with twists on classics; it's more about the huge variety of interesting agave, mostly from small-batch producers. This liquored-up hole-in-wall is the rebellious bar Sydney has been craving. *From about £10; cantinaok.com.au*

CRAVAN PARIS

The capital's social scene is evolving. What's emerging are bars that are French to the core, not wannabe speakeasies or overdone wine shops.

Enter Cravan, unpretentious but exceptional. A listed 16th *arrondissement* café from the outside, with interiors fuelled aesthetically by poet and boxer (and Oscar Wilde's nephew) Arthur Cravan. Art Nouveau is triumphantly let loose with mottled mirrors and vintage tiles, and owner Franck Audoux (ex Le Chateaubriand) and his equally talented support act Youssef Louanjli serve up perfectly executed drinks. The Tunnel, a twist on a Negroni, pairs perfectly with lobster rolls or Brittany clams in garlic butter. Cravan cleverly maintains traditional values – it's all the charm of Paris wrapped up; cutting edge but with one eye on the past. *From about £11; instagram.com/cravanparis*

LALOU NEW YORK

In the annals of Brooklyn corners subject to rapid hipsterfication, Prospect Heights is well established. The most stellar addition to Vanderbilt Avenue, already packed with artisanal ice-cream shops and restaurants, is natural wine bar LaLou – airy and narrow, with white brick walls and a granite bar in a nod to the preferred ageing practice of many winemakers (the stone doesn't impart flavours). There are 150 bottles selected by Joe Campanale, who made his name creating cult cellars at West Village destinations Dell'Anima and L'Artusi, with an emphasis on biodynamic producers. Test your palate with an orange Riesling from Rheingau, a take on a style well suited to snacks such as radishes with anchovy butter. The approachable price point is reason enough to leave Manhattan; the happy marriage of cool and familiar is what keeps locals coming back. *From about £10; laloubrooklyn.com*

BAR DO COFRE SUBASTOR SAO PAULO

In what could easily be the location of a heist series, Bar do Cofre occupies a vault in the basement of a former bank, now Farol Santander, Brazil's Empire State Building. Check out the view from the 26th floor before descending below ground to the repository, lined with 2,000 safety-deposit boxes.

A maze divided by safe doors includes an area for crashing on mid-century sofas while munching fried manioc chips. Order The Hidden, a whisky and rooibos creation by Fabio La Pietra, creative director at older sibling SubAstor. In a city full of superlative drinking holes, Bar do Cofre's film-set ambience and world-class drinks are worth keeping under lock and key. *From about £6; subastor.com.br*

SUPER LYAN AMSTERDAM

Last year saw the Lyan pack open its first international outpost in a 17th-century house in Amsterdam. Every bit as innovative as you'd expect from cocktail master Ryan Chetiyawardana (Mr Lyan), the pink and purple space represents a fresh look at how people socialise. From 7am, early birds kick back in the glass-roofed garden.

The café is a great spot for brunch of beetroot *bitterballen* and a boozeless miso Lyan Mary, with Robin the cat for company. By night follow the neon glow into the bar, a futuristic-meets-Fifties playground. At the central station mixologists work with flair – buttermilk whey adds creaminess to a Rhubarb Daisy and banana bread whisky takes the Sour to a new level. There are also Cosmos on tap, alongside slams (shots with attitude). Mr Lyan may have gone global, but he's not taking himself too seriously. *From about £13; superlyan.com*

BAR MARILOU NEW ORLEANS

Short for Marie-Louise, this is a maximalist tribute to a Seventies French salon. Music is an eclectic mix of jazz and R&B, and on any night there will be a show of acrobats. A Warehouse District grande dame, set in the former law library of City Hall Annex, it is the first stateside venture from Paris-based Quixotic Projects and sister property of guesthouse Maison de la Luz. There are references to voodoo culture, classic touches laced with opulent, layered fabrics and flea-market finds. Drinks are eccentric – curious concoctions include La Maison Corn n' Oil, a mix of rum, falernum and bitters, and Holy Mountain, a frozen Suze-based libation available in three sizes. To eat there are crispy *pommes* Marilou with crème fraîche and caviar. Ready to call it a night? The hotel is accessed through a revolving bookcase leading to the private salon. *From about £5; barmarilou.com*

LIVE TWICE SINGAPORE

This wood-panelled den from the team behind Jigger & Pony – one of Singapore's most respected classic cocktail institutions – aims to transport drinkers to Japan at the turn of the 1960s. The interior is minimalist, with Falcon leather armchairs and a communal table. It feels like stepping into a Murakami novel, perhaps the bar he used to run before he quit to write. Playful creations are named after geishas. Spring Riot is a floral blend of gin, Merlet Crème de Pêche and sakura soda with a flurry of grated daikon mimicking cherry blossom. It's a bar first, but don't skip the beef katsu sando. As Nancy Sinatra says, you only live twice – one life for yourself and one for your dreams. This is a place for dreamers. *From about £15; livetwice.sg*

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