

FINANCIAL TIMES

how to spend it

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KEEPING IT SURREAL

travelista

Wander woman Maria Shollenbarger
fast-tracks international intelligence
on where to be and what to see

→ Soho House world domination: regardless of how you feel about it, it's essentially happening. With a second New York club, on Ludlow Street, having debuted in

June, and Babington House refurbished earlier this year, now the lens turns to **SPAIN**, where **Soho House Barcelona** (www.sohohousebarcelona.com; from €220) opens this month in the Barri Gòtic. Along with the requisite clubhouse and 57 rooms, there will be an outpost of Ceccconi's restaurant, a full-service Cowshed spa and gym, and a rooftop terrace. Also imminent: Kettner's Townhouse – the reinvention of a Soho restaurant stalwart – Soho House Mumbai and a “beach house” in Malibu (cue the favour-calling rush across the Pacific Standard time zone).

→ **PANTELLERIA**, the exclusive island that had a recent star turn in Luca Guadagnino's

A Bigger Splash, is now home to a retreat created by the owners of Coste Ghirlanda, a premier producer of this island's cult Zibibbo wines. The 20 suites at **Sikelia** (www.sikeliapantelleria.com; from €400) were artfully fitted into a centuries-old complex of dammusi (the traditional domed stone houses) by the Milanese architect who designed Giorgio Armani's house here. Pantelleria is closer to Tunisia than Sicily, which is evident in Sikelia's cuisine (replete with African spices and inflections) and its spa, set to open next year in a Moorish-inspired pleasure garden. Up in the similarly sought-after surrounds of **POSITANO**, meanwhile, the owners of **Villa Treville** (www.villatreville.com; from €800)

have taken over an old restaurant with rooms on tiny Laurito beach, reachable only by boat or steps and already home to Da Adolfo, the favoured trattoria of jet-setting foodies. **Le Sirene at Treville Beach Club** (www.trevillebeachclub.it; from €450) has eight stylishly simple accommodations (think bright white and cobalt blue, with tall French doors), a jovial beach scene by day, and by night, fine dining at the water's edge – a pared-down but still chic counterpoint to its elegant sibling.

→ In **NEW YORK** and **LONDON**, new is old before you know it, and a shiny hotel or restaurant that seems destined for perennial glory can instead fade into obscurity (or ignominiousness) before a year's out. So when an *âgée* old favourite is imbued with buzzy new life in precisely the right way, it's worth spreading the word. In the heart of **KNIGHTSBRIDGE**, a host of thoughtful – and supremely tasteful – renovations has brought **The Berkeley** (www.the-berkeley.co.uk; from



Above: **Le Sirene** offers fine dining at the water's edge and eight bedrooms. Below: the living area of the **Treehouse Suite** at **The Ranch** at Laguna Beach, California



Above: a room at the new **Soho House Barcelona**, opening this month





Above: Sikelia, housed in a centuries-old complex of dammusi on Pantelleria. Below: the bedroom of the Penthouse Suite at the reinvented Lowell, Manhattan

£390) back into the game: suites reimagined along slick Zen lines by John Heah and Helen Green; the Blue Bar reinvigorated (without sacrificing David Collins's original genius); and a new entrance, courtesy of Richard Rogers' Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners. On **MANHATTAN**'s Upper East Side, meanwhile, **The Lowell** (www.lowellhotel.com; from \$520) reopens next month after its

own reinvention by Michael Smith (the Obamas' choice for White House decor), with the restaurant, Majorelle, and its bar also completely redesigned and under the aegis of Charles Masson, of La Grenouille fame – about as elder-statesman of New York fine dining as it gets.

→ Laguna Beach is one of **CALIFORNIA**'s loveliest enclaves, with clement weather, excellent restaurants, and art events and festivals almost year-round. Tucked into woods thick with oaks, pines and eucalyptus above the Pacific, **The Ranch at Laguna Beach** (www.ranchlb.com; from \$350) is the town's first luxury resort to open in 13 years, thanks in part to the strict zoning and preservation laws that have kept the area so beautiful. The ranch retains the vibe of the homestead that stood here in the early 1900s, with low wood cottages, elegant Spanish-colonial furniture and tiles, and one of the largest organic gardens in southern Orange County (which in the Golden State is really saying something). Golfers will like the nine-hole course deftly engineered into the surrounding canyon, while sunbathers are just 350m from one of California's best-loved beaches.

→ For a metropolis so strong on culture, food and style, **MELBOURNE** is historically thin on original luxury hotels. Enter QT, the brazen design-driven company that's made its mark in Sydney (most recently with its slick Bondi Beach hotel). **QT Melbourne** (www.qthotelsandresorts.com; from about £135) debuts this month on Russell Street, where the city's financial nexus meets its famous network of buzzy laneways lined with galleries, renowned cafés, restaurants and one-off shops. The design is long on steel, stone and raw timber – anti-luxury materials, here combined to striking effect.

→ After **The Gainsborough** (www.ytlhotels.com; from £285) finally opened last year in **BATH** – thereby almost single-handedly recasting the patrician Georgian spa town (and Unesco World Heritage Site) in the eyes of discerning escape-seekers – it was only a matter of time before the competition arrived. Next month, the former Carfax Hotel will launch in its new incarnation as **No 15 Great Pulteney** (www.no15greatpulteney.co.uk; from £150), a 31-room conversion of three townhouses that promises both great bones (Grade I listings throughout) and great interiors (the work of Martin Hulbert, who has serious country house hotel form, being the man behind the designs at Barnsley House, Chewton Glen's treehouses and Cliveden). →



Above: the Collins Room at the Berkeley, Knightsbridge

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