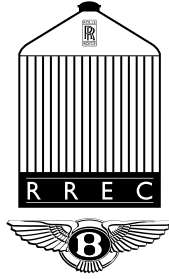


*120 Years of
Rolls-Royce*





*120 Years of
Rolls-Royce*

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ST JAMES'S HOUSE

WELCOME



Dear Enthusiasts,

I would like to start by thanking everyone involved in creating the Club's yearbook, particularly as 2024 has been a very special year in the history of Rolls-Royce.

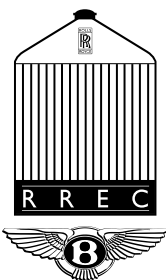
On 4 May 1904, Henry Royce and The Hon Charles Stewart Rolls met one another for the first time. To celebrate this significant moment in history, Club members drove from as far as Switzerland and from all around the UK to enjoy an anniversary dinner in the company of friends at the Midland Hotel in Manchester. The hands of friendship reached across the Club and I am told that it was a celebratory evening of camaraderie and much laughter. It gives me great personal delight to hear our Club members share their stories and their memories.

In June 2024, continuing with the 120th anniversary celebrations, the Club was delighted to welcome Rolls-Royce Motor Cars back to the Annual Rally and to host the "rally of all rallies" at Burghley House, Stamford. It was a magnificent event that was enjoyed by members from around the world and, as ever, powered by a team of hard-working volunteers. Many of the organising committee were Club member volunteers, whose contribution was significant. We thank them for their hard work and efforts.

Over the Annual Rally weekend, there was a wide selection of cars available for our members to enjoy. Car models ranged from a brand-new Spectre through to the 1905 Rolls-Royce 10hp "Little Sue", which I was privileged enough to be driven in. Special thanks go to the Club members and Foundation trustees who were involved in creating the truly memorable 120th-anniversary marquee.

I hope you enjoy reading the specially curated articles within this yearbook, which cover a wide range of fascinating stories. The 100th anniversary of Bentley's first Le Mans win was a notable moment in history, as was the emergence of the Phantom, Silver Cloud and Silver Shadow models.

As we move into 2025, we look forward to creating more opportunities to promote enthusiasm for the Rolls-Royce and Bentley marques.



Claire Seymour
Chief Executive Officer, RREC

23MD	Designers Hall, The	Kotiyagala Resort	Revana Vineyards
820 Spirits	Domaine de Vieux-Mareuil	KRM Yacht	Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection, The
Abelé 1757	Dornier Seawings	Kulik Selzer	Riverside Luxury Cruises
Acala	Dr Raluca Hera Haute	L Mansion	Rose Carvalho
AcARRE	Couture Skincare	L'Estelle en Camargue	Roula Rouva Real Estate
Adamas	Dugladze Wines and Spirits	Lady Primrose Fragrances	Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours
Agitator Whisky	Elena	Lemon Brothers	Sheltair Aviation
Alan Scott	Elena Gail Haute Weddings	Leni Mountain Appartements	SilverBell Global
Alta Badia	Elit'Avia	and Chalet	Six Senses Residences Courchevel
Ameela	Elite Garden Studios	Leverden	Sixty3 London
Aranyani	Elizabeth Harvey Design	Lex Designs	Soneva
Ark-Shelter	Elli K Beauty	Londoner Macao, The	Spottswode Estate Vineyard
Art of Cryo	Eton Shirts	Lou Hansell	and Winery
Artep	Eve Lom	Lufthansa Technik	Studio Palatin
Aspen Vodka	Familia Martínez Bujanda	LUX* Mauritius	Studio Saxe
Astomeria	Flouwer Co	Luxury Key	Suitman&Co, The
Atelier Marcu	Forte Village	Madame Veuve Point	Tamarind Hills Resort and Villas
Aurelia Yeomans	Franck Deville	Magnom Properties	Tandberg Miller Design
Avant Garden	Francone Bespoke Taps	Maison de L'Asie	Tavo
Barn's	Freywille	Manutea Tahiti	Thomson Carter
Baszicare	Global Air Charters	Manutti	Three Peaks
Berghoferin Fine Hotel	Golden Door	MayaJules Mezcal Artesanal	TiN5
& Hideaway	Gourmet House Caviar	Meshkati Hair Centre	Tokyo Station Hotel, The
Bering Yachts	Gritti Palace, The	Mile High 69	Tourism Saskatchewan
Boss & Co	Gryphon Audio	Morelli's Gelato	Treca
Brass Monkey	Gudbjørg Simonsen	Morelo	Unique Aircraft
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Care.e.on	Hahnenkamm Lodge	Newby Teas	Valor
Casoro Jewelry Safes	Hanacure	Nijma M Fine Jewelry	Van Dang Fragrances
Catellani & Smith	Harmonist, The	Nouvel Héritage	Vielleard & Francheteau
Cayo Levantado Resort	Hooker Furnishings	Open Sea Institute	Villa Ardore
Charles Girardier	Hotel Le Fontanelle and	Outopia Outdoor Kitchens	Villa Casablanca
Chatham Created Gems	The Club House	Palazzo Fiuggi	Vispring
and Diamonds	Hovdenak Distillery	Palm Beach Motor Yachts	Vitricca Iannazzi
Cheetah Plains	Icehotel	Páramo	Voodoo Yachts
CHSLDBEAUTY	Îcône Interiors	Penthouse.ae	Whisky 1901
Citizenship by Investment Unit	Imkan Properties	Phoenix Yacht Management	Whisky by Time
Clearwater Bay Golf & Country	Istria Tourist Board	Pierre Ocenac	Wolfcraig Distillers
Club, The	Ivy & Duke	Plasencia Cigars	Wossa
Coffee of Grace	Jastam House	Poonawalla Group	
Cold Life, The	Jets 100	Prisoner Wine Company, The	
Cole & Son	Kamba African Rainforest	R.Evolution	
Concord Private Jet	Experiences	R/terior Studio	
Coya Restaurant	Kelsey Cornish	RangeCraft	
Deeper Japan	KNESKO	Rare Champagne	

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

It is hard to appreciate the impact that the first fledgling motor-car companies had on the world around the turn of the 1900s, let alone how genuinely game-changing the introduction of a certain Rolls-Royce was 120 years ago.

The combination of the Hon Charles Rolls's quest for quality and driving pedigree and Sir Henry Royce's enduring effort to "strive for perfection" resulted in a luxury motoring marque that quickly established itself as the finest in the world – a name synonymous with the very highest of standards.

The company's success also spoke of its founders' willingness to push the boundaries of what was possible in their day, to be brave, bold and innovative. It is a principle that has sustained over the course of the marque's history and inspired those who have taken up the mantle of the Rolls-Royce name, as well as countless others who have endeavoured to meet Royce's challenge to "take the best that exists and make it better".

The articles in this book tell the stories of the company founders' origins and of the marque's incredible 120 years; of design excellence through the decades, from the early experimental models to the newly minted Rolls-Royce Spectre. It also marks such memorable moments as the centenary of Bentley's first Le Mans victory and the RREC's own celebrations of its much-loved motor cars.

Collaboration lies at the heart of the stories in this book, and of its very production, and we would like to thank all those who have provided their energy and expertise in its creation, not least the sponsors acknowledged opposite. Without their valuable contributions and financial support, this 120th-anniversary publication would not have been possible.

St James's House



ST JAMES'S HOUSE

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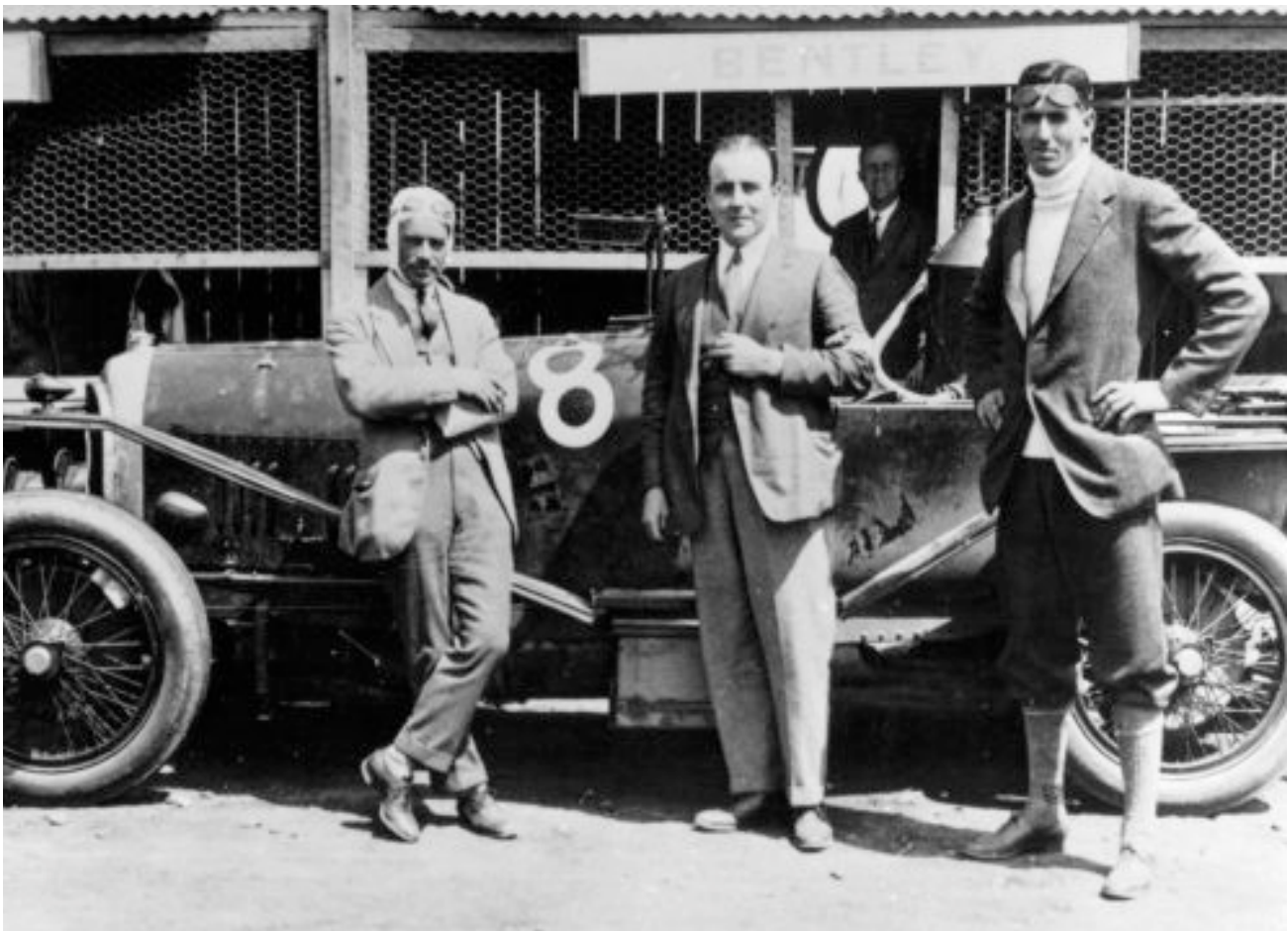
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*1.
Driven
by passion*

*MARQUES OF
DISTINCTION*





L.F. FRONT	L.R. REAR	R.L. REAR	DIVISION
RAISE	RAISE	RAISE	RAISE
LOWER	LOWER	LOWER	LOWER

SLAP
BLIND

100
50
0
50
100

L R

AN ENDURING SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE

*FOR THE PAST 120 YEARS, THE
NAME ROLLS-ROYCE HAS BEEN
SYNONYMOUS WITH THE VERY
FINEST IN LUXURY MOTORING.
RAY MASSEY CHARTS THE ORIGINS
AND EVOLUTION OF “THE BEST
CAR IN THE WORLD”*



ROLLS
RR
ROYCE

Rolls and Royce. The two names are as linked as horse and carriage – though perhaps the “horseless” variety of carriage is more apt. The landmark meeting of Rolls and Royce in Manchester on 4 May 1904 would herald the start of a legendary automotive partnership whose spirit has endured through generations of Rolls-Royce cars for 120 years, and will likely continue for many more.

What brought the two men together to form what today might be called their “start-up” was a shared love for, and a fascination with, the automobile, a cutting-edge invention then at a pioneering stage of development, akin to the early days of the internet or the mobile phone before the smartphone.

Socially speaking, it was an unlikely meeting of minds. Frederick Henry Royce came from an impoverished background, the youngest of five children and with minimal formal education. A gifted engineer, he had his own company, Royce Ltd, in Cooke Street, Manchester. The Hon Charles Stewart Rolls was a well-connected, Cambridge-educated aristocrat and super-salesman, running a car dealership in Fulham, west London. He was underwhelmed by British cars and desperate to find a game-changing vehicle to stock and to make his name for posterity.

MANCHESTER UNITED

It is often said that Royce’s inspiration for becoming a luxury carmaker was his frustration with faults in his second-hand 10hp two-cylinder Decauville, which he bought in 1902 and used for commuting. In fact, it wasn’t faulty; it was a highly regarded model and among the best then available. It just wasn’t what Royce thought the best could be.

Andrew Ball, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Head of Corporate Relations and Heritage, confirms this. “Royce chose the Decauville precisely because it was an excellent, state-of-the-art machine, with the express intention of dismantling it, analysing every component, then producing

his own car from scratch,” he says. “Any reasonably competent engineer could have upgraded a badly built, substandard product. It took a genius of Royce’s stature to, in his own words, ‘take the best that exists and make it better.’”

After pulling his Decauville apart and studying it in detail, by April 1904 Royce had designed and built his first petrol engine and constructed his first Royce 10hp car. Leaving the Cooke Street works on the new car’s first test run to cheers from the workforce, he was so pleased with its performance that he drove it without mishap to Knutsford in Cheshire some 15 miles away.

Enter Henry Edmunds, a shareholder of Royce Ltd and a motoring pioneer who drove one of Royce’s first 10hp cars. Edmunds realised Royce’s car was exactly the high-quality, British-made model that his friend Charles Rolls, a fellow member of what would become the Royal Automobile Club (RAC), was looking for.

On 26 March 1904 he wrote to Rolls, recommending the new Royce car. But there was an impasse. Royce was unwilling to take the time away from the factory to travel to London to demonstrate the car to Rolls, and Rolls claimed to be too busy to leave London and travel to Manchester to see the car. Eventually, the deadlock was broken and Rolls agreed to make the journey north.

The official Rolls-Royce Motor Cars media booklet produced to celebrate the first 100 years of the marque notes of the historic meeting on 4 May 1904, “The dining room of the Midland Hotel, Manchester was the setting for the two men to take stock of each other. The meeting went well considering their totally dissimilar backgrounds and the two men hit it off immediately.” There is a slight wrinkle here. Edmunds’ book *Reminiscences*, the sole eyewitness source, records the meeting as taking place at “the Great Central Hotel at Manchester”, which doesn’t exist, leaving observers to conclude he meant the Midland.

Edmunds writes, “Both men took to each other at first sight, and they eagerly discussed the prospects and requirements of the automobile industry, which was still in its early infancy. Mr Rolls then went to see for himself the Royce car; and after considerable discussions and negotiations on both sides it was decided to form

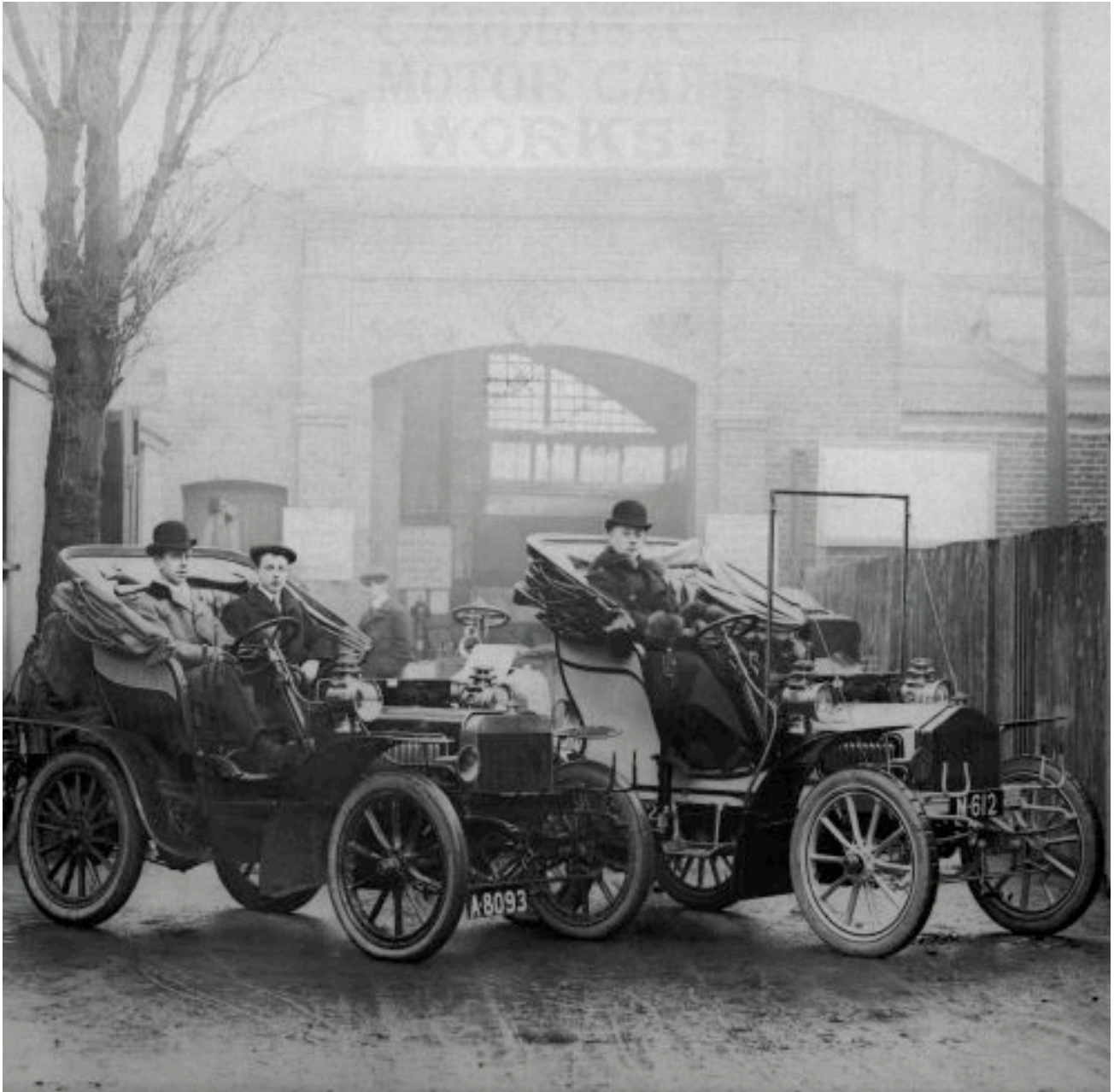


Previous page | The Spirit of Ecstasy – a symbol of motoring excellence since 1911

Far left and left | Co-founders Charles Rolls and Henry Royce

Below | An advert for the new Rolls-Royce car at the 1904 Paris Salon





Above | The first Royce 10hp (left) and the fifth Rolls-Royce 10hp pictured outside CS Rolls & Co motor car works before departing for the 1904 Paris Salon

“Both men took to each other at first sight, and they eagerly discussed the prospects and requirements of the automobile industry”

HENRY EDMUNDS



a separate concern in which the name of Rolls was conjoined with that of Royce, forming the compound which is held in the highest regard today.”

Returning to London, Rolls told his friend and colleague Claude Johnson – who would go on to become Rolls-Royce’s Commercial Managing Director – that he had met “the greatest motor engineer in the world”. Within months, Rolls agreed to sell all Royce’s cars. It was also agreed the new vehicles would be known as Rolls-Royce motor cars. The first, the Rolls-Royce 10hp, was unveiled at the Paris Salon in December 1904 and Rolls-Royce Ltd was formalised in 1906.

Demand for Rolls-Royce cars was such that the company’s line-up quickly expanded from the original twin-cylinder 10hp to include three-cylinder 15hp, four-cylinder 20hp and six-cylinder 30hp models. Royce even produced the first ever V8 passenger motor car, with a safety twist. It was known as the Legalimit because its 3.5-litre engine was governed to keep it below the then 20mph British speed limit. Only three were made and it remains the only Rolls-Royce model of which no examples survive.

THE SILVER GHOST MATERIALISES

The legendary Silver Ghost was initially the name of an individual car but went on to describe an entire model range. First built in Manchester and launched in 1906, it was also the first model to be awarded the soubriquet of “the best car in the world”, which Rolls-Royce retains to this day. The car was originally simply called the 40/50hp. At its heart was a new six-cylinder 7,036cc engine, which would be increased to 7,428cc from 1910. The chassis was initially made at Royce’s Manchester works, with clients commissioning bodywork from an independent coachbuilder.

The original Silver Ghost was a car chosen in 1907 by Johnson, by now Rolls-Royce’s publicity-savvy Commercial and Managing Director, who ordered a 40/50hp for use in demonstrations. The 12th

car off the line, chassis number 60551 and registered AX 201, was painted silver, adorned with silver-plated fittings and dubbed the Silver Ghost to emphasise its supernatural quietness and smooth ride.

The motor car was widely exhibited by Rolls-Royce at auto shows, and its performance was as impressive as its looks. In the 1907 Scottish Reliability Trials, the Silver Ghost covered 2,000 miles of continuous travel without an involuntary stop and immediately afterwards completed 15,000 miles non-stop, driving day and night except Sundays, to set a new world record for continuous travel.

DERBY DAYS

As sales of the Silver Ghost increased, the capacity of the Manchester factory to cope with demand proved inadequate, and in March 1907 Rolls-Royce acquired a factory site in Nightingale Road, Derby. In 1912, the Derby factory gained the public-facing, two-storey Marble Hall, now a Grade II-listed building.

Tragically, the partnership between Rolls and Royce ended prematurely two years after the Derby move, with the death of Rolls, aged just 32, on 12 July 1910. His Wright Flyer crashed at an air show in Bournemouth – he was the first Englishman to die in an air accident. His name, however, was assured for future generations.

The following year, sculptor Charles Sykes designed the iconic Spirit of Ecstasy bonnet mascot. His muse was Eleanor Thornton, secretary and lover of the second Baron Montagu of Beaulieu, a friend of Johnson and the late Rolls. In the same year, Royce unveiled a new Silver Ghost, known as the London to Edinburgh type. It was designed for the prestigious RAC’s flagship reliability trial, a return run of around 800 miles between the two capitals with cars locked in top gear from start to finish. The unmodified car, chassis number 1701, won the event at an average speed of 19.59mph and averaging an unheard of 24mpg. Later that year, fitted with a lightweight



Opposite | The CS Rolls & Co stand at the 1906 Olympia Motor Show

Above | The Silver Ghost re-enacts the Scottish Reliability Trials of 1907

Below, left | 40/50hp production at the firm's Derby site in 1911

Below, right | Employees stream out of the Derby factory in 1943





Above | A 1912 London to Edinburgh type Silver Ghost light tourer

Below, left and right | The car's beautifully crafted interior detailing

Opposite | The Alpine Trials team gathers in London in 1913





streamlined body, it achieved 101.8mph at the Brooklands circuit in Surrey, the first Rolls-Royce to exceed 100mph.

Further sporting triumph followed for the company in 1913, when four of its cars dominated that year's 1,600-mile eight-day Alpine Trials through the Alps and Silver Ghosts took first and third place in the subsequent Spanish Grand Prix. The Alpine performance prompted production models of the competition cars, formally named Continental but known as Alpine Eagles.

As the First World War loomed, aero-engine production got under way at Derby. The luxury car market had collapsed and the company turned to helping with the war effort. Its first major contribution was the production of air-cooled Renault aero engines under licence and the development of its own liquid-cooled V12 200bhp aero engine – the Eagle. The first Rolls-Royce armoured car, based on the Ghost chassis, was built in 1914 and in September of that year all available chassis were requisitioned to build armoured cars. All car chassis production stopped in 1917 to concentrate on aero-engine production. It is estimated that only around 120 armoured cars were built in the First World War. In comparison, 4,681 Eagle engines were produced, with at least 500 smaller Falcon V12 aero engines also made at Derby.

Owing to increasing ill health, in 1917 Royce moved to his beloved Elmstead home in West Wittering, Sussex, where he lived and worked for 16 years.

TWENTY IS PLENTY

It has been said that no car exemplifies the Roaring Twenties better than the 20hp “baby” Rolls-Royce, known as The Twenty. Faced with falling sales of the grand Silver Ghost during the post-war slump, Rolls-Royce introduced this smaller, more affordable “owner driver” in 1922. It cost around 40 per cent less than the Ghost and effectively

ended the company's one-model policy. Powered by a straight six-cylinder 3,127cc engine, top speed was about 62mph, with later models managing 70mph. As the baby grew, it was revamped, including for three years from 1936 as the powerful 25/30hp with a 115bhp 4,257cc engine and a top speed of around 80mph.

The 1920s also saw the development of Phantom to replace the ageing Silver Ghost, with work carried out in great secrecy. Launched in 1925, the flagship 40/50hp Phantom had a 108bhp 7,668cc straight-six engine and a top speed of 85mph. It was manufactured both in Derby and at Rolls-Royce's US factory, which was acquired in 1921, with some 3,514 built in total. Four years later came the Phantom II, the product of Royce and his design team in West Wittering, with an improved engine and chassis, a 92.3mph top speed and contemporary body styles produced by Park Ward and Barker.

As with the original 10hp, Royce was creating a car for his own use, using modern styling and a lightweight sporting body. It would become the forerunner of the legendary Phantom II Continental. The Phantom III came along in 1936, the first V12 7,340cc Rolls-Royce. It was the last big pre-war model and its production in Derby ended with the outbreak of war in 1939.

During the Phantom era, Rolls-Royce also bought its potential rival, Bentley Motors after it went into liquidation in 1931, a victim of the Great Depression. And, for his services to British engineering, Royce was made a baronet in June 1930, becoming Sir Henry Royce. The engineering genius would continue to work on engineering designs until his death, aged 70, in 1933.

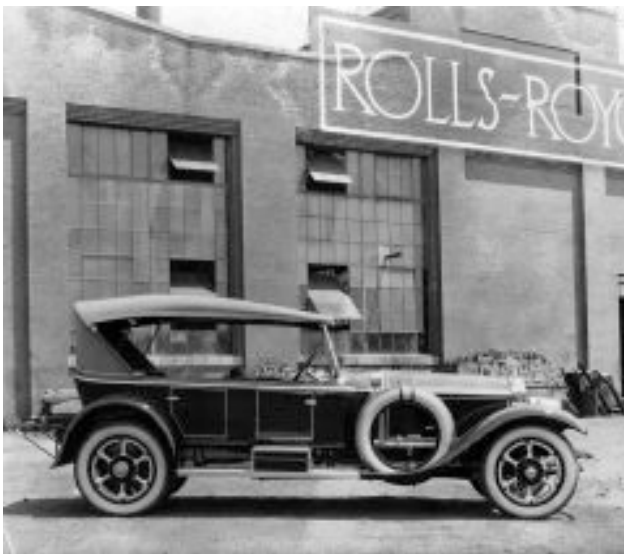
That year, Rolls-Royce changed the colour of its famed “double R” badge from red to black. This was not, as is often stated, a mark of respect for the late Royce, but because Royce had thought the red sometimes clashed with coachwork colours selected by clients. And so the innovation continued. Built for just a year from 1938, the coachbuilt



Right | A 1926 model
20hp with Hooper light
saloon body







Opposite | A 1933 Phantom II with sedanca de ville body by Barker

Top | A brochure image of the last pre-war Derby model, the Wraith

Above | A Silver Ghost outside the company's Springfield site in the US

Wraith, with a 4.25-litre engine and body styles from Park Ward and HJ Mulliner, was available as a touring saloon and limousine. It was the last new model made at Derby, with 491 built before the war halted car making, and production switched to military Rolls-Royce aero engines.

BORN IN THE USA

And what of the US factory? To capitalise on booming car sales in the US and to help ease a backlog of orders, in 1921 Johnson set up a Rolls-Royce manufacturing plant at the former American Wire Wheel plant in Springfield, Massachusetts – the city where the first American petrol-powered vehicle had been built.

Production began immediately of an American Silver Ghost, and 1,703 Ghosts as well as 1,241 Phantoms were built there over a decade. The American styling, while luxurious and painstakingly engineered, added a distinctive and jaunty transatlantic flare to the marque. Bodies for American assembly were generally supplied by Brewster & Co in Long Island City, New York. However, unlike its British-built counterpart, the American vehicles could be ordered with factory bodywork, usually by Brewster, which was itself acquired by Rolls-Royce.

The company's US branch was said to be “one of Johnson's few regrets”, as American customers wanted a car “right now” complete with coachwork. “Some engineering design changes were incorporated for ease of maintenance throughout the US,” noted Rolls-Royce. “The body styles differed enough to be easily identified from their European sisters.” Two-seater convertibles with “rumble seats” and roadsters with no side windows were among the most striking and sporty styles. Sedanca de villes also proved popular.

The plant closed in 1931, another victim of the Great Depression, although the company continued selling old stock and Derby chassis with Brewster coachwork until 1935. In all, a total of 2,944 Rolls-Royces were built in the US, not including those started in Derby and completed there.

ALL CHANGE AT CREWE

After the end of the Second World War, the Derby plant continued as the centre of aero-engine production. From 1946, however, car making moved to Crewe, where the government had earlier set up a wartime “shadow factory” for Rolls-Royce to boost the manufacturing of aero engines, which included 166,000 Merlin engines for the legendary Spitfire fighter plane.

The first new post-war Rolls-Royce model was the Silver Wraith. The earliest chassis was produced in 1946 and by the end of that year, the first two cars were completed, bodied by Hooper. A total of 1,883 were manufactured up until production ceased in 1959. But the most significant change came in 1949 with the Silver Dawn. This was the first Rolls-Royce to be sold with a standard pressed-steel body, though a few rare collectable examples were created by specialist coachbuilders.

Until then, Rolls-Royce had produced only “rolling chassis”, with engine and drivetrain, while a specialist coachbuilder made bodywork to the customer’s specification. But Ernest Hives, Charles Rolls’s former chauffeur, who had joined Rolls-Royce in 1908 and risen to become a director and General Works Manager following Royce’s death, realised that this traditional process could not continue. He appointed WA Robotham, who had studied the American automotive industry, to look into how to make the leap.

The centenary media book comments, “The company was initially cautious. It didn’t know what the public reaction would be to the first non-coachbuilt cars. But they were well received and demand for the Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn, launched in 1949, was strong, especially in America, and a new market emerged at home, too.” A total of 785 Silver Dawns were built until 1955, with the 4,257cc six-cylinder inline engine enlarged to 4.5 litres by 1954.

At the same time, for five years from 1950 Rolls-Royce produced its flagship Phantom IV, specifically for royalty and heads of state. Just 18 were built, powered by a straight eight-cylinder 5,677cc engine. For 32 years from 1959, Phantom V and VI coachbuilt V8-powered cars were available to anyone with the money to buy them.

The Phantom V was sold from 1959 to 1968 and mechanically mirrored the V8 Silver Cloud II, with most featuring Silver Cloud-style body work from Mulliner Park Ward. A total of 516 were built, and owners included John Lennon, who had his repainted in a yellow, canal boat-style pattern. The Phantom VI, based on the Silver Shadow, followed, and stayed in production until 1991. Early examples had rear-hinged coach doors until these were banned for reasons of safety. They would not return until the launch of the new-era Phantom in the 21st century.

STUDIES IN SILVER

From the rock ‘n’ roll mid-1950s to the middle of the Swinging Sixties, Rolls-Royce produced three elegant Silver Clouds: I in 1955 with a 4,887cc engine, 106mph top speed and a new pressed-steel body (Prince Rainier and actress Grace Kelly received one as a wedding gift from “the people of Monaco”); II in 1959 with a 6,230cc V8; and III from 1962 to 1966 with a lower bonnet line and twin headlights, more power and a top speed of 117mph.

Launched in October 1965, the V8-powered, 115mph Silver Shadow I was considered the most significant and technically advanced model since the Silver Ghost. Having taken 11 years to develop, under the codename “Tibet”, it was the first to use a monocoque or single-cell construction and contained luxurious cutting-edge technology including electric windows, seat adjustments, fuel-filler flap, aerial, air conditioning and heating, as well as power-operated disc brakes and self-levelling coil-spring independent suspension. The upgraded Silver Shadow II, with



Above | A Silver Dawn, with standard pressed-steel body, in production at Crewe in 1950



“The company was initially cautious. It didn’t know what the public reaction would be to the first non-coachbuilt cars”



“The battle for the ownership – and soul – of Rolls-Royce proved worthy of a blockbuster novel, with as many plot twists and turns”



Opposite | The very first Phantom IV was presented to Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh in 1950

Left | The elegant Silver Cloud I – the first of three models to bear the Cloud name

Below | Ernest Hives at his desk at the company's Nightingale Road works in Derby

black “energy absorbing” bumpers replacing the traditional chrome, followed from 1977 to 1981. In total, 34,611 Silver Shadows were sold between 1965 and 1981.

In addition, from March 1966, the styling department at Crewe produced an elegant two-door coupé derivative of the Silver Shadow, initially as a hard top and then as a convertible, coachbuilt by Mulliner Park Ward. In 1971 these two models were enhanced and renamed Corniche, with upgrades following until 1995.

The next two-door coupé was the Camargue, designed by the Italian Pininfarina styling house from 1975 to 1986. As Britain grappled with decimalisation and entry into Europe’s Common Market, it was the first Rolls-Royce designed to metric dimensions, and featured split-level air conditioning. At £29,250, it cost nearly double the price of its Silver Shadow sibling.

ROLLS-ROYCE OR BUST?

The dawn of the 1970s proved a turbulent time for Britain and in 1971 Rolls-Royce went into receivership. Two years later, it was formally divided into two companies – the nationalised aero-engine business (subsequently reprivatised in 1987 as Rolls-Royce plc), and the car business, which was sold to British defence firm Vickers in 1980. Significantly, the legal rights to the name Rolls-Royce remained with the aero-engine firm, which would have an effect on future events.

Under Vickers, in 1980 a new range, codenamed Project SZ, was introduced as two sibling models: the Silver Spirit and the Silver Spur, which featured a four-inch longer wheelbase and improved suspension, but otherwise shared the same underpinnings as the Silver Shadow. Upgrades and variants continued until the end of the decade, and a Silver Spur limousine, stretched by up to 42 inches and including an armoured version, was built from 1982 to 1999.

The penultimate Rolls-Royce model to be built at Crewe was the Silver Seraph, effectively the first all-new Rolls-Royce since the Silver Shadow more than 30 years earlier. Developed with BMW, it was powered by the Bavarian firm’s 5.4-litre V12 engine. The last off the line at the Pym’s Lane site was a new Corniche, from 1999 to 2002. The first Rolls-Royce of the new millennium, it shared many styling cues with the Silver Seraph but had a V8 engine.

Then in 1998, Vickers decided to sell. And all hell broke loose. The battle for the ownership – and soul – of Rolls-Royce cars proved a corporate slug-fest worthy of a blockbuster novel, with as many plot twists and turns.

BMW acquired the right to manufacture Rolls-Royces in July 1998. But getting there was a roller-coaster ride. After an intense bidding war, Volkswagen boss Dr Ferdinand Piëch (a scion of the



Porsche family dynasty) was certain he had successfully outbid and outsmarted his fellow German by trumping BMW's final £340 million offer for the entire company, both Rolls-Royce and Bentley, with a £479 million bid of his own.

But he had overlooked one key fact. Aero-engine company Rolls-Royce plc still retained ownership of the Rolls-Royce brand and naming rights – including signifiers such as the pantheon grille, the Spirit of Ecstasy figurine and the “double R” badge. And this amounted to a veto on who could own the car arm.

I was one of the privileged few who attended the hastily assembled “lock-in” press conference at the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in London in July 1998, when the two competing German suitors, BMW CEO Bernd Pischetsrieder and Volkswagen's Piëch, announced the historic deal to divide Britain's automotive crown jewels between them. The deal had been thrashed out the previous day at a golf course in Lower Bavaria – a venue chosen by the two “to keep the meddling lawyers out” – with two senior German politicians in attendance.

Significantly, Rolls-Royce plc's urbane and canny Chair, Sir Ralph Robins, had always wanted the car brand to pass to BMW, his partner in a jet-engine business, and told Piëch he had no option but to hand the Rolls-Royce brand name to BMW. Volkswagen contented itself with Bentley and the factory in Crewe. However, it continued to build both Rolls-Royces and Bentleys as the steward of both brands until the official handover of Rolls-Royce production to BMW on 1 January 2003. The new company, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Ltd, was established officially as a member of the BMW Group, and Rolls-Royce and Bentley were officially separated after 71 years.

All three key players – Pischetsrieder, Piëch and Robins – beamed at the London press conference and performed a three-way handshake

for the cameras. BMW acquired the brand and naming rights to Rolls-Royce motor cars for £40 million and set about looking for a suitable place in England to build the next generation of Rolls-Royce cars under its stewardship.

GLORIOUS GOODWOOD

My own first sight of what would become Rolls-Royce's new factory on the then Earl of March's Goodwood estate near Chichester, West Sussex came on a wet and windswept day. Along with Lord March and Rolls-Royce's communications chief Fred Fruth, I gazed down from the top of a rain-drenched muddy hill to a sodden plot of land below. This was where construction was planned of the new environmentally friendly boutique factory at the heart of Project Rolls-Royce. It was not an inspiring start. But in August 2001, work began and by June the following year the first new pre-production Phantoms were being hand-built under BMW's stewardship at a plant that was still under construction.

A key factor in choosing the Sussex location was that the area around Chichester, and thus Goodwood, had a supply of craftspeople who were used to hand-crafting luxury yachts – skills that could be harnessed for Rolls-Royce car production. It also didn't hurt that Goodwood was near Sir Henry Royce's West Wittering home and design studio. The site's links to a charmingly persuasive Earl with a passion for all things automotive, who hosted both the Goodwood Festival of Speed and the Goodwood Revival, no doubt helped seal the deal.

Work on the first new-era Phantom – the seventh generation – began, as with the original, confidentially. At a top-secret studio near London's Hyde Park codenamed The Bank after the building's former use, a team led by design chief Ian Cameron got to work, while a modelling studio called The Bookshop was set up in Holborn.





Opposite | A Silver Cloud III with twin headlamps, 1965

Above | A Silver Shadow is prepared for display, 1966

“From a modern perspective, 1904 can feel impossibly distant. But it was an age of unprecedented invention, in which many of the things we take for granted first appeared”

Welcome to Crewe.
The home of Rolls-Royce and Bentley.



The result was the first Rolls-Royce Phantom under BMW. It was a strikingly luxurious model with monumental looks and proportions, powered by a 453bhp 6.75 litre V12 engine, matched to a six-speed automatic transmission that enabled 0 to 60mph acceleration in a more than adequate 5.7 seconds, up to a top speed governed at 149mph.

For the first time since the early days of the Phantom VI, the Phantom's rear coach doors opened outwards from the back for graceful ease of access. The retractable Spirit of Ecstasy could be lowered out of sight at the touch of a button and self-centring wheel hubs ensured the Rolls-Royce badges were upright at all times. The future path was set.

Since then, the Goodwood plant has expanded from 350 to 2,500 staff and produced more than 65,000 cars. They include two 21st-century generations of the flagship Phantom limousine (2003, with the eighth generation in 2017); the driver-focused Ghost (2010 and 2014); the brand's first SUV, Cullinan (2018 and 2024); the Phantom Drophead Coupé (2007); the Phantom Coupé (2008–16); the powerful Wraith fastback (2013–23); and the open-top Dawn drophead convertible (2015–23). This activity culminated, from late summer 2023, in the start of production of Spectre, the first all-electric Rolls-Royce.

Reflecting on the significance of the first 120 years, Rolls-Royce's Andrew Ball says, "From a modern perspective, 1904 can feel impossibly distant from our own times. But it was an age of unprecedented invention, innovation and technological progress, in which many of the things we take for granted first appeared. Rolls-Royce was born into this extraordinarily dynamic, creative world and would go on to shape it profoundly and irrevocably."

Ray Massey is the Motoring Editor of the Daily Mail. Photography kindly provided by Rolls-Royce Motor Cars and Bonhams, www.bonhams.com



Opposite, top | AX 201 sits alongside a unique two-door Corniche – the last car to come off the Crewe production line

Above | (left to right) Sir Ralph Robins, Bernd Pischetsrieder and Dr Ferdinand Piëch shake on the marque's future

Opposite, bottom | A Silver Spirit receives its final polish before a Paris auto show, 1980

Below | Rolls-Royce CEO Tony Gott presents the new Goodwood Phantom, 2003



A PASSION FOR SPEED

*BORN INTO THE ARISTOCRACY,
CHARLES ROLLS'S FASCINATION
WITH MECHANICAL MATTERS
WAS NO FLEETING FAD, BUT
RATHER FUELLED BY A FERVENT
DRIVE FOR HIGH STANDARDS...
AND HIGH SPEEDS*





Previous page | Charles Rolls at the wheel of an early Mors motor car, c.1902

Left | Rolls became an accomplished cyclist, with his love of speed beginning on two wheels

Opposite, top | The future Rolls-Royce founder heads up "The Cambridge Quad", 1895

Opposite, bottom | Royce in the driving seat of a motorised Bollée tri-car

Although Charles Stewart Rolls was blessed with enormous wealth, he was no playboy motorist, but rather a man who, throughout his tragically short life, sought the highest automotive standards. What more he could have achieved had he lived to a mature age we can only ponder.

From the age of eight, Rolls was enthusiastic about mechanical devices that could be driven, especially if, by the standards of the day, they were fast. At that early age he had already experienced the joys of speeding down hills, more or less out of control, on a "high type" bicycle, and wrote that he had even more fun tearing down hills in "a superannuated bath chair". "My ambition, however, was to arrive at the Golden Gates on wheels", Rolls went on to write of his headlong dashes.

Rolls was also keenly interested in electricity, to such an extent that, by the age of nine, he had connected an electric bell from his bedroom to the stables and he soon persuaded his father to install an electric plant at the family home, The Hendre. Rolls is said to have supervised the work, and The Hendre became the first house in the county of Monmouthshire, Wales, to have a complete electrical-powered supply to various bells, lights and other assorted implements.

Was it this shared appreciation of mechanical and electrical matters that, even before their famous meeting, played an important part in the relationship between Charles Rolls and Frederick Henry Royce – individuals from the different ends of the social spectrum – in what was to become the world-famous coupling of two names on land, sea and air – Rolls-Royce?

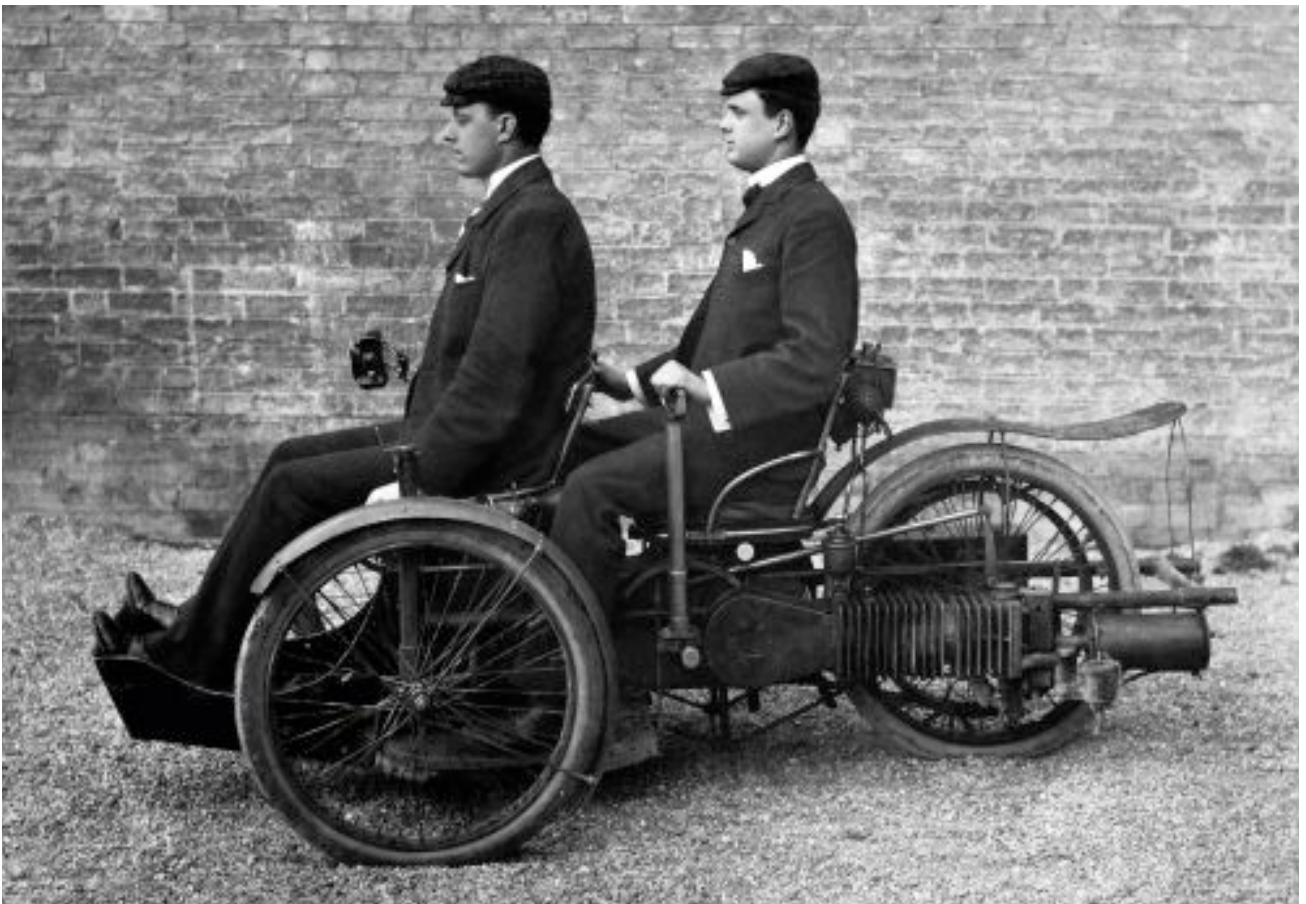
LEADING THE WAY

Before Rolls purchased his first car, he had achieved a considerable measure of fame as a bicyclist. In later years, when he drove in the inaugural 1000 Mile Trial, from London to Edinburgh and back, in April 1900, *The Bicycling News* wrote: "Rolls is the safest, though speediest scorcher of them all." He had a great determination to be in the lead and drove in a fast and furious manner as, it has to be said, did many of his fellow competitors. It may have been called the 1,000 Mile Trial, but the participants all regarded it as a race.

Rolls purchased his first car in Paris in October 1896, a second-hand 3¼hp Peugeot Phaeton. He bought it with his savings and a substantial loan from his father, Lord Llangatock, and it was said to be the first car ever to be based in Cambridge. More cars soon followed as Rolls sought better performance, including Bollée and De Dion-Bouton motor tricycles.

He soon became a publicly renowned motorist – this in an era when people would, and did, wait for hours by the roadside to see a motor car pass by. Indeed, any journey carried out by a motor car was a major news story, presented in a variety of styles by the various newspapers of the day. Many people were against these "infernal machines", which threatened the horse trade, and to begin with there were only a few publications in favour of the automobile. This dislike of motor cars extended to the infamous "red flag" rule and the lesser-known restrictions on the sale of benzene or benzoline by the horse-drawn lobby. This fuel was soon to be called "petrol" by one of the motor spirit's main suppliers in Britain, Messrs Carless, Capel and Leonard, a name that became synonymous with all brands of gasoline in Britain.

None of these restrictions, rules or regulations dampened Rolls's enthusiasm or his passion for speed. However, he constantly strove to find a better-made car, believing that much better design and manufacture would bring the benefits of reliability together with









controllability. In those days, a motor car that could cover 300 miles without a major mechanical fault was an ambition, rather than an actuality. Rolls deplored the fact that owners were more interested in the “painting of the body and wheels rather than to the degree of strength and mechanical proportions”.

A RACING START

December 1897 was the real start of Rolls’s entry into the motor trade, as that is when he bought the winner of the Paris-Marseille-Paris race, an 8hp Daimler-powered Panhard and Levassor, for £1,400 – a considerable amount of money in those days by any measure. Rolls was racing because of his love of adventure and speed, and to aid him in selling and promoting cars to Britain’s wealthy. His first major trip was from Cambridge to The Hendre, which took two days and 11 hours. This was considered a fast and furious pace to be driving in his car, which was painted scarlet – a choice of colour that did not please his mother, Lady Llangattock, at all.

In 1899, Rolls began his motor-racing career in earnest with his entry in the Paris-Boulogne race. He finished fourth in the tourist class. Next came greater success with a second place in the Paris-Ostend, and his third motor-car race, Bordeaux-Biarritz, was accompanied by reports in the British press that, “the Hon CS Rolls is one of the entrants in the Touring Class for the Bordeaux-Biarritz race to be held over Saturday and Sunday”. This was followed by a report in the October issue of *The Motor Car World* that, “The Hon CS Rolls on his 8hp Panhard and Levassor came in fourth, not withstanding that he had a puncture on the way”.

Rolls continued racing a selection of cars with varying degrees of success until, on 26 February 1903, he gained the distinction of setting a new record for the flying-start kilometre on the Duke of Portland’s drive at Clipstone in Nottinghamshire with a time

“Rolls deplored the fact that owners were more interested in the ‘painting of the body and wheels rather than to the degree of strength and mechanical proportions’”





Previous pages | Automobile Club members parade their vehicles in front of Rolls's family home, The Hendre, c.1900

Opposite, top | Rolls on his way to winning the gold medal for best amateur in the 1000 Mile Trial, 1900

Opposite, bottom | Rolls in his 80hp Mors, in which he set a new record for the flying-start kilometre in 1903

Above | The participants of the first 1000 Mile Trial gather during the 14-day event

Left | The automobile enthusiast stands alongside two motor cars and a De Dion-Bouton motor tricycle



Left | The CS Rolls & Co showroom facilities at Lillie Hall, London, 1903

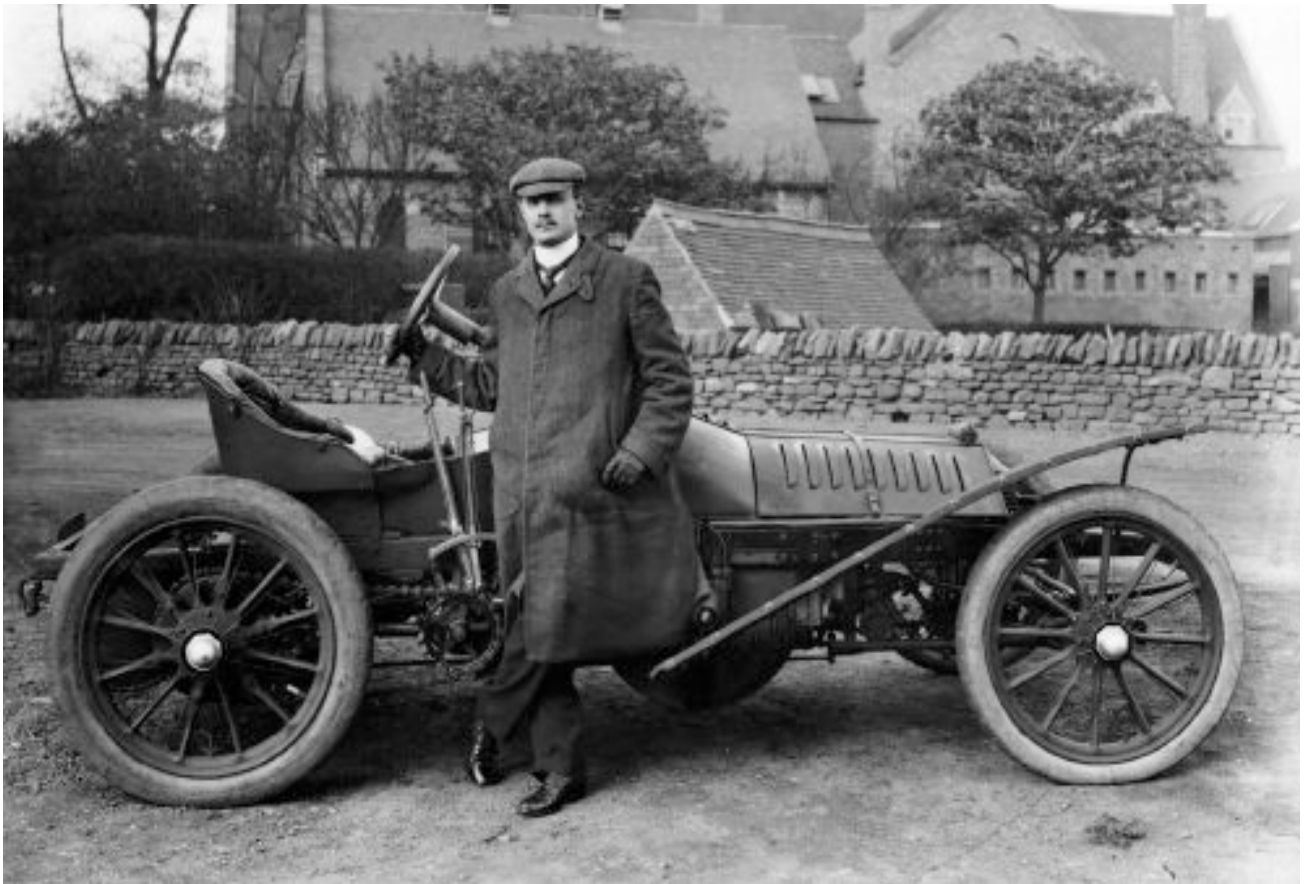
Below | Well-heeled guests gather at Rolls's Lillie Hall premises

Opposite, top | Rolls with a 1905 Wolseley four-cylinder racing car

Opposite, bottom | The CS Rolls & Co stand at a trade fair in London, featuring Panhard and Levassor motor cars, 1903

“By 1903, Rolls’s business was expanding rapidly, aided by an increasingly excellent reputation in all matters automotive”





of 27 seconds. The equivalent to a speed in excess of 80mph, he beat the previous best time, set by Henry Fournier, by a margin of two seconds. Rolls had acquired an 80hp Mors from Fournier and no doubt the mechanics at his motorworks and garage at Lillie Hall in Fulham, London played their part in preparing the motor car for the feat. It is known that Rolls had extra weights placed over the rear wheels to avoid wheel spin and gain extra traction, and he modified the bodywork to lessen the drag.

In May 1903, Rolls drove a 90hp Panhard in the three stage Paris-Madrid race, but upon reaching Barbezieux in southwestern France he was forced to retire with engine trouble. The engine had parted from the chassis, probably caused by massive vibrations. Rolls had been making good time, starting in 36th place and moving up to sixth before retiring – a brave effort. Road racing was banned in many countries following this race, owing to the high number of fatalities that included bystanders and competitors alike. Many of Rolls's contemporaries turned to reliability trials and rallies for their continued motoring experience, though these events frequently turned into barely disguised races on roads.

A MEETING OF MINDS

By 1903, Rolls's business was expanding rapidly, aided by an increasingly excellent reputation in all matters automotive. Showrooms were opened that year at 28 Brook Street, just down the road from Claridge's hotel in London's Mayfair.

Claude Johnson, the Secretary of the Automobile Club (later to become the Royal Automobile Club) and future "hyphen in Rolls-Royce", joined forces with Rolls late in 1903. Rolls wished to sell a top-quality British car and discussed this matter with Henry Edmunds, an Automobile Club member who was a director of Mavor & Coulson, manufacturers of electrical cables, and also of WT Glover & Co, which also made cables and on whose board sat Ernest Claremont.

Claremont was a partner of Frederick Henry Royce's and these two, during a business meeting, also discussed the cars that Royce was making. This conversation was brought to Rolls's attention and led to their first meeting. As the story goes, Rolls and Royce met on 4 May 1904 at the Midland Hotel in Manchester. The car that Charles saw and which impressed him was probably the second Royce motor car made. Rolls agreed to take and sell all the cars that Royce could make.

The December 1904 edition of *The Autocar* carried an advertisement for CS Rolls & Co for the "first, simple, silent Rolls-Royce". Rolls-Royce motor cars made their international debut at the Paris Salon, also in December 1904, and history was made.

This article is an abridged version of a feature written by Rodney Lewis.



*“MAKE IT
BETTER”*

*HENRY ROYCE’S WORK ETHIC
AND MISSION TO PERFECT THE
ART OF CAR MAKING WERE
ROOTED IN EARLY HARDSHIP
AND A DETERMINATION TO
MASTER HIS TRADE*



Frederick Henry Royce was born at Alwalton Mill near Peterborough on 27 March 1863 as the youngest of five children. His father, James, was a miller, and he and his wife Mary were renting the mill from the Dean and Chapter of Peterborough. Suffering from ill health that affected his work, James was getting into financial difficulties around the time when his son Frederick was born. So, he mortgaged his lease for Alwalton Mill to the London Flour Company, which then employed him.

In 1867, James was still working for the company but moved to London, leaving his wife and debts behind. Sadly, he died in abject poverty in a poorhouse in 1872, when he was just 41 years old and young Frederick was nine.

Royce's early years of poverty had a profound effect on the rest of his life. Following the death of his father, he moved to London with his mother, where she struggled to make ends meet. To increase the family income, the young Royce found work selling newspapers for WH Smith, firstly at Clapham Junction and later at Bishopsgate Station. A little later, he worked for the Post Office, delivering telegrams in Mayfair. He was getting paid one half penny for each delivery he made.

As a boy, Royce was already taking an interest in mechanics. At the age of 14, he persuaded an aunt on his mother's side of the family to pay £20 per year so that he could become an apprentice at the Great Northern Railway locomotive works in Peterborough. Determined to make up for his lack of formal education, he also took evening classes in English and mathematics in his spare time.

A BRIGHT SPARK

Royce's apprenticeship provided him with invaluable skills in mechanics. However, after three years his aunt was unable to continue offering financial support, so, at the age of 17, he had to urgently seek employment elsewhere. He soon found work with Greenwood & Batley, a firm of toolmakers in Leeds, who paid him the grand sum of one penny per hour. Royce only stayed with the firm for a short while.

By his late teens, he began taking an interest in electricity and its applications. He secured a job with the Electric Light and Power Company in London and worked long hours in its factory. He became totally absorbed in his work, shunning recreation and neglecting his diet – a lifestyle pattern that was to stay with him for the remainder of his life.

In addition to his long working hours, Royce continued to strive to improve his education. He attended lectures and college classes on electrical engineering organised by the City & Guilds of London Institute, where he impressed his tutors. Royce also made impressive progress at work and, at the tender age of just 20, was promoted to chief electrical engineer of a subsidiary firm, the Lancashire Maxim-Weston Electric Company. The company specialised in theatre and street lighting in Liverpool, and he was given technical responsibility for a large municipal project in early 1884: the complete installation of an arc and incandescent lighting system for several streets in the heart of the city. The project was a success.

Royce was beginning to grow in confidence as he gained experience and acquired more knowledge in electrical engineering. However, his progress was halted when the company failed and was liquidated. Once again, Royce found himself unemployed.

STARTING OUT

By the age of 21, Royce had managed to save £20 from his several years of paid employment. He decided to use his capital and knowledge to set up a small electrical and mechanical engineering company, FH Royce & Co, in Manchester in 1884. Shortly after the foundation of the company,



Previous page | A 1901 portrait of Henry Royce, aged 38

Above, top | A young Royce, pictured in 1879 at the age of 16

Above | Royce's partner at FH Royce & Co, Ernest Claremont



Top and left | The FH Royce and Co workshops in Cooke Street, Manchester

Above | As Royce Ltd, Royce and Claremont expanded their range of electrical products

Royce met Ernest Claremont, who also had electrical experience. Claremont purchased a partnership in the company for £50. The association between the two men was to last many years. Claremont would go on to become Chairman of Rolls-Royce Ltd, and he and Royce would also become brothers-in-law.

Initially, the works were located at Blake Street, Hulme, but the need for expansion prompted them to occupy a number of premises in the surrounding area. By December 1888, FH Royce & Co was operating from workshops in Cooke Street, Manchester. The company started out making simple electrical devices such as bell sets, fuses, switches and bulb holders. Profits were used to experiment with more complex electrical devices and pursue more ambitious manufacturing projects, and soon the company was producing dynamos and electric motors, and later winches and cranes.

Royce's attention to detail and engineering excellence ensured that every product he made was a considerable improvement on those of his competitors. Royce dynamos were widely used in cotton mills, factories and ships, and the company enjoyed considerable financial success. Royce cranes went on to be in great demand both for local use and for export, with no fewer than nine cranes sold for use on the Manchester Ship Canal. The company also undertook complete electrical installations of large private houses and factories.

However, Royce's innovative output, combined with the rapid expansion of the company, took its toll. He was totally engrossed in his work and rarely took breaks during the long working days. He often forgot to eat meals and slept little. While Claremont dealt with the sales and business aspects of the company, Royce was very much the workaholic technician and, as a result, his health deteriorated.

LIMITED SUCCESS

In June 1894, Royce and Claremont converted their business into a limited company called Royce Ltd. The money generated was used to extend the product range and build larger dynamos and electric cranes. Orders poured in, and the new firm increased its reputation for quality and reliability. In October 1897, the orders in hand amounted to £6,000; 12 months later, they amounted to £20,000. By 1899, the company's share capital was £30,000.

The firm's financial success during the 1880s and 1890s provided both Royce and Claremont with sufficient funds to purchase houses and get married. The two partners married sisters – the daughters of Alfred Punt, a London printer – in 1893. Royce married Minnie Grace Punt, and the couple built a grand house in Leigh Road, Knutsford, Cheshire, which, of course, had its own electrical power and lighting installation. The house was designed by Alfred Waterhouse, a leading architect who was responsible for several notable buildings including the Natural History Museum in London and Manchester Town Hall. A plaque was placed on one of the gable ends of the house. It was dated 1898 and bore the initials "FH" for Frederick Henry and "MG" for Minnie Grace beneath a more flamboyant "R", the symbol by which Royce was known.

Despite the house being large and grand, the Royces called it Brae Cottage – an understatement that was characteristic of Royce, who always played down his achievements and success. Minnie ran the household and looked after Royce, who was still a workaholic and needed prompting to eat and rest. At Brae Cottage, Royce added gardening to his many activities, often working in the garden under electric light because he was invariably at his works during the day.

FH Royce & Co, followed by Royce Ltd, enjoyed rapid expansion and financial success for 15 years. However, towards the end of the century, the business suffered a severe downturn. The second

Below, left | The crane assembly workshop at FH Royce & Co



Below, right | A Royce crane on display at the RREC's headquarters



Opposite | Brae Cottage, Royce's home in Knutsford, Cheshire



“Royce’s early years of poverty had a profound effect on the rest of his life”



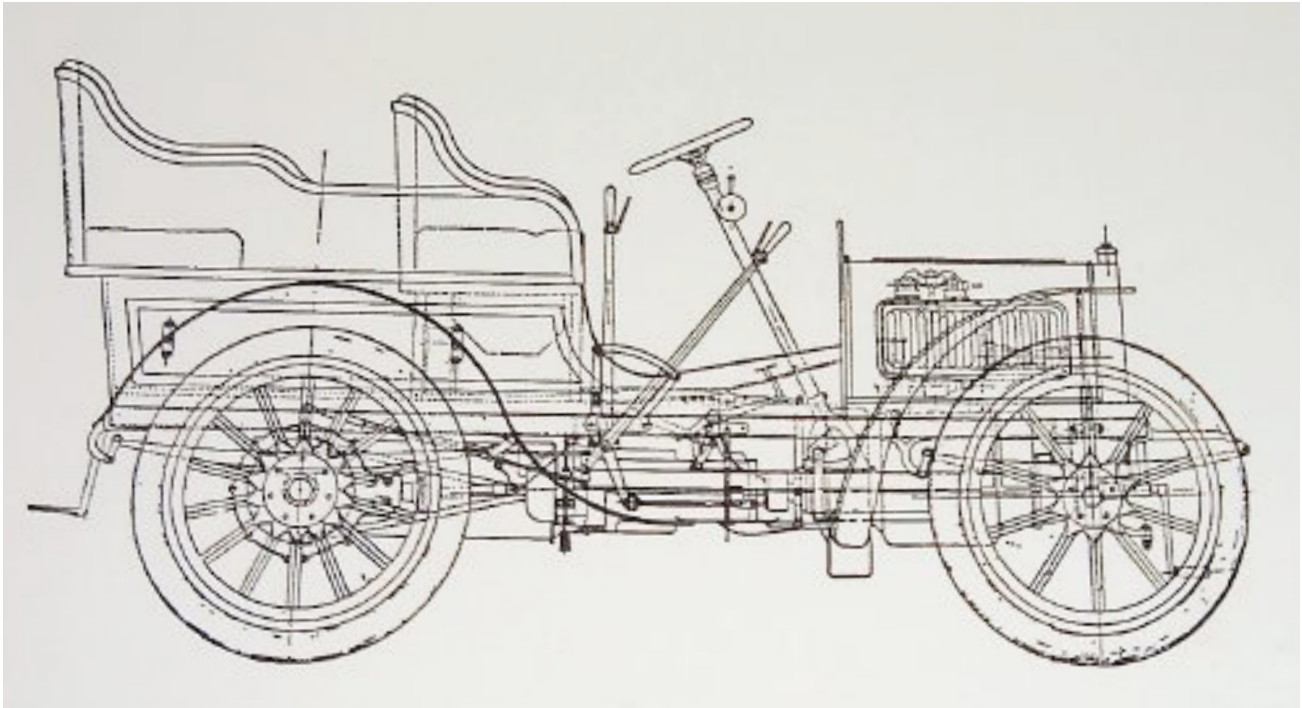


Top | The French-built Decauville 10hp automobile

Right | The first Royce car, pictured in Cooke Street, Manchester

Opposite | A schematic of the first Royce 10hp motor car





“Royce’s attention to detail and engineering excellence ensured that every product he made was a considerable improvement on those of his competitors”

Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902 caused a slump in trade and there was less demand for Royce’s products. The adverse economic conditions were exacerbated by the large influx to Britain of cheap, mass-produced electrical components, motors and cranes from abroad, primarily from Germany and the United States.

A NEW CHALLENGE

Unwilling to compromise the standards of production and quality of his products to match his competitors’ lower costs, Royce began to look for other technical projects to which he could apply his electrical and mechanical skills. Around this time, he acquired his first motor vehicle, a De Dion-Bouton quadricycle, which ignited his interest in the possibilities for the future of the motor car.

Royce’s ill health continued, and in 1902 he collapsed as a result of exhaustion from overwork. Minnie persuaded him to accompany her on a holiday to South Africa to visit her relatives. The couple were away for ten weeks and by the time they returned to Britain, Royce was mentally and physically refreshed. He was ready for a new challenge.

Having bought an English copy of the French book *The Automobile: Its Construction and Management* by Gérard Lavergne (likely to have been on his South African holiday reading list), Royce would have been aware that legislation in the UK had held back developments in automobile engineering compared with its neighbour across the Channel. So, it is no surprise that his logical mind selected a French motor car, a Decauville 10hp, for in-depth study to assess the business prospects of producing an automobile.

Although the Decauville was a good car for its day, Royce had purchased a second-hand one. It was delivered to the London Road

Goods Station, Manchester, where he collected it. Sadly, it failed to start and instead had to be ignominiously pushed to Blake Street, where it was repaired.

Royce subsequently used the Decauville for some time to familiarise himself with its characteristics. It was noisy and suffered from vibrations. He became dissatisfied with the detail of the car’s design and decided to completely dismantle it and make detailed drawings of each part. He wanted to examine them in depth and modify each part to improve the car.

ENGINE OF INVENTION

Royce informed the board of Royce Ltd that he intended to build three prototype cars. Ernie Wills was appointed foreman of the car project, and two young apprentices, Eric Platford and Tom Haldenby, were drawn in to help. There was insufficient room at the company’s Old Trafford works, so Royce and his team set up shop at its original Blake Street premises.

The Royce 10hp engine was first tested on 16 September 1903, and its first run took place on 1 April 1904. Three weeks later, Automobile Club member Henry Edmunds borrowed the car and entered it into the Sideslip Trials in London. On the first day of the trials, the Royce car covered 145.5 miles at an average speed of 16.5mph and proved exceptionally quiet, as well as extremely reliable.

Edmunds persuaded his friend Charles Rolls to travel to Manchester to meet Royce and examine the Royce car. Late that same night, Rolls roused his colleague Claude Johnson from his slumbers and announced: “I have met the greatest automobile engineer in the world.”

This feature includes extracts from articles by Julian Spencer and Tony James.

2. *Great escapes*

*DESTINATIONS
OF CHOICE*





THE PHANTOM RISES

*ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO,
A SERIES OF SECRET PROJECTS
WERE UNDERWAY, THE RESULTS
OF WHICH WOULD SHAPE THE
FUTURE OF ROLLS-ROYCE CARS
FOR DECADES TO COME*



By 1920 the once groundbreaking Rolls-Royce 40/50hp, or Silver Ghost as it came to be known, was starting to show its age. The car had been introduced in 1907 and revived after the First World War, however, the company realised that more engine power was needed to keep up with its competitors.

“Since 1911, besides becoming materially bigger, cars had become disproportionately heavier,” observed Rolls-Royce designer Ivan Evernden. “This fact, together with tyres of large section and lower pressure, caused an increase in road rolling resistance.

“Even more important was the fact that the wind drag of the car had increased enormously due chiefly to the increase in the frontal projected area,” he added. “The front wings had grown to envelop the wheels, headlamps had risen to add to the frontal area of the taller radiator and the higher bonnet and scuttle. Also, there was little improvement in the aerodynamic form.”

A number of projects were explored to deliver more engine power and improve the chassis. Secrecy was vital, so these were given “EAC” nomenclatures. It has long been thought that EAC stood for the intentionally misleading codename “Eastern Armoured Car”, but this has not been verified.

COVERT DEVELOPMENT

The major areas of development were improved suspension and transmission, four-wheel brakes and a more powerful engine.

Previous page |
The distinctive front profile of experimental car 17EX

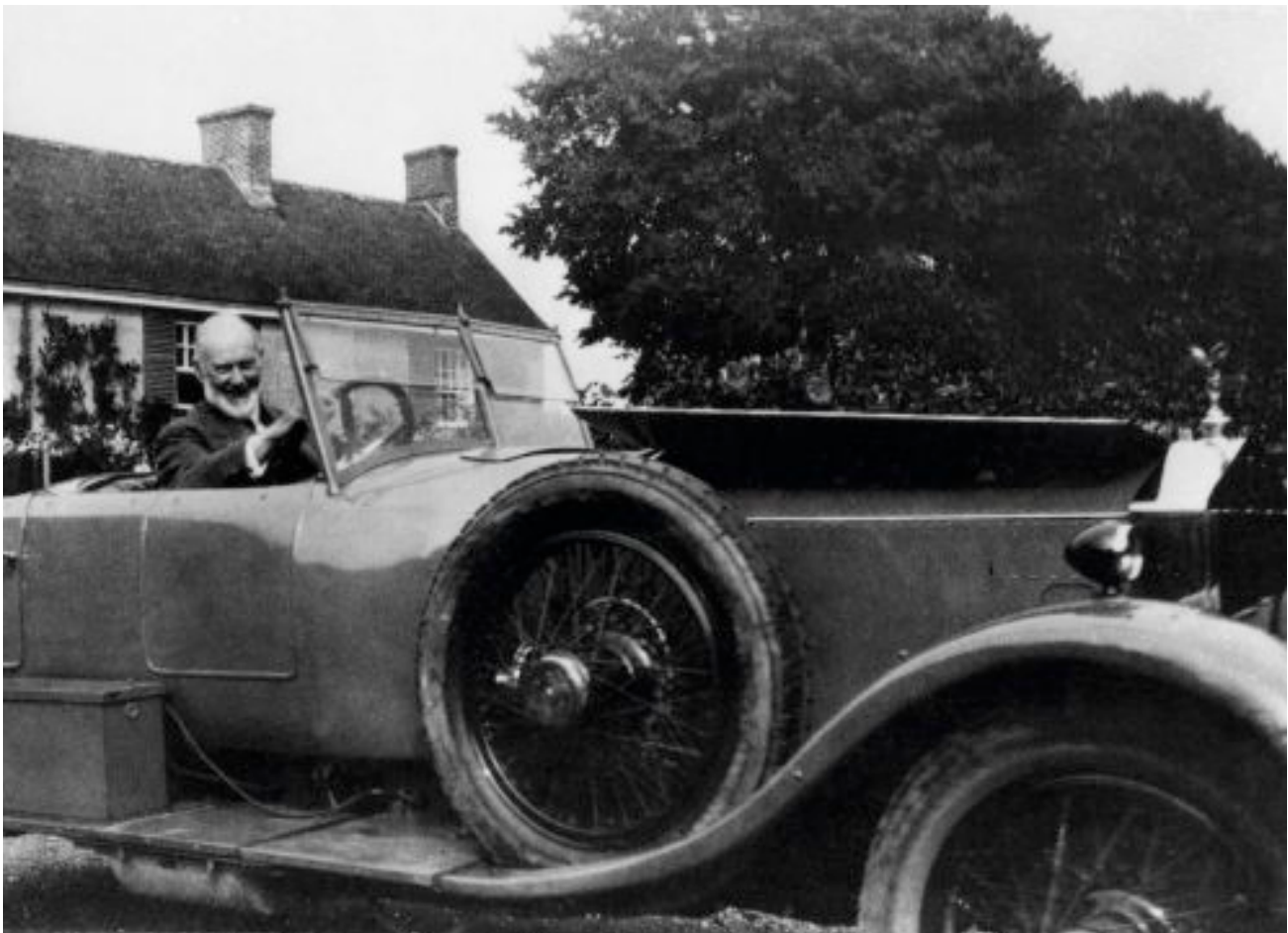
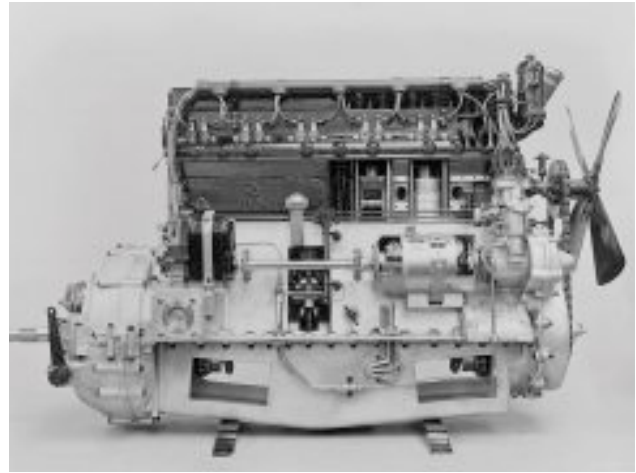
Below | A sectioned Phantom I pushrod-operated overhead valve engine

Below, bottom | Henry Royce at the wheel of his personal car, 46PK, in West Wittering

Opposite, top left | 12EX in its incarnation as a transport for aero engines to RAF Calshot

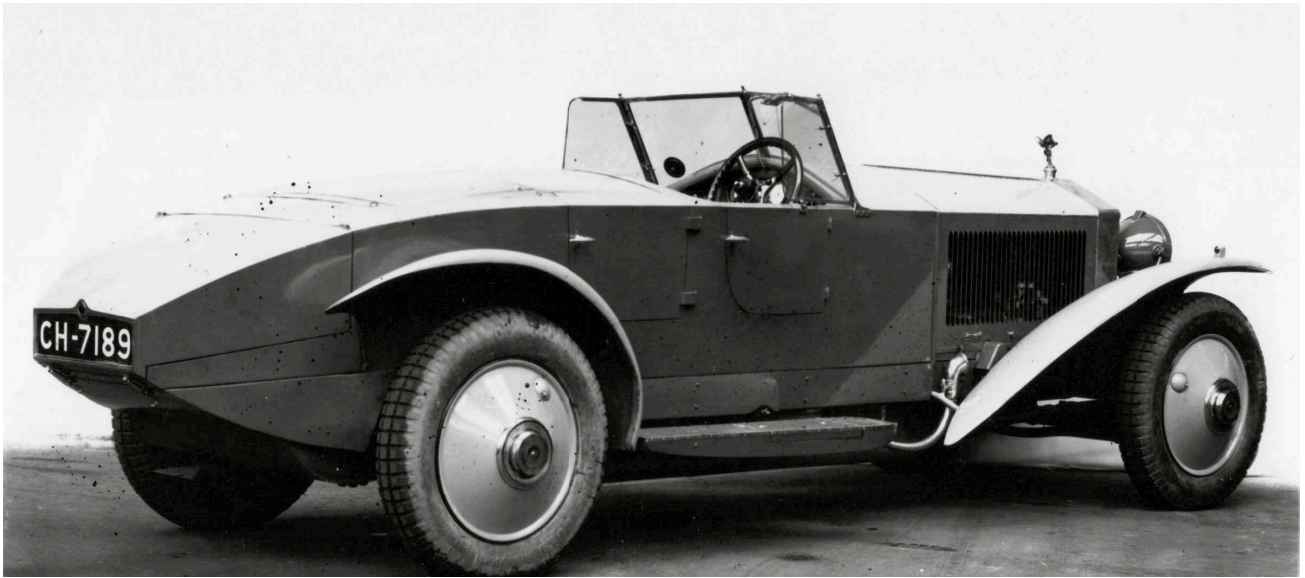
Opposite, top right | Experimental car 10EX, which was on the road by late 1925

Opposite, bottom | The open sports bodywork of 10EX, on show at an RREC rally



“A number of projects were explored to deliver more engine power and improve the chassis. Secrecy was vital”







Opposite, top | 15EX, which features bodywork by coachbuilder Hooper

Opposite, middle | The body of 16EX was produced by Barker

Opposite, bottom | 17EX's styling includes a rear windshield and removable top

Left | 17EX, the last of the experimental series developed in the 1920s

EAC I had an overhead valve engine, half-elliptical rear springs and an open propeller shaft, similar to the 20hp engine, which was also being developed at that time. EAC II also had the overhead valve engine, plus four-wheel brakes and chassis changes, and EAC III was basically the standard chassis and engine with four-wheel brakes. Work on EAC I was subsequently shelved and the emphasis was put on the other two projects.

Three 40/50hp production chassis – 93NK, 46PK and 48PK – were converted to EAC II standard. The first of these to take to the road was 46PK, which was consigned to West Wittering in December 1923 as Henry Royce's personal car. The other two chassis, meanwhile, carried out routine endurance testing in France.

Further improvements were introduced as EAC VI, which evolved as the standard 40/50hp chassis with the overhead valve engine and radiator with shutters. Two experimental cars were built to this standard, 7EX and 8EX, the former replacing 46PK as Royce's personal car. EAC VI was approved for production towards the end of 1925 and was given the name the New Phantom. It would go on to be known simply as the Phantom and, retrospectively, the Phantom I.

Yet more modifications were incorporated to create what would become EAC VIII. Experimental car 12EX was built to test this derivative and many improvements were introduced to production from 1926 onwards. 12EX was finally converted into a light truck to transport aero engines to RAF Calshot for the R engine Schneider Trophy aircraft; it continued in this transport role until 1936.

THE NEED FOR SPEED

Suggestions that Rolls-Royce cars were increasingly old-fashioned and of poor performance had been circulating for some time prior to the launch of the new model and, anxious to dispel any such criticism, Royce decided to build a Sports Phantom. This was experimental car 10EX and was running by the end of 1925, fitted with an open sports body.

Tests at the motor-racing circuit in Brooklands, Surrey, showed only a moderate gain in top speed so further improvements were made to both engine and body, including stowing the spare wheel inside an extension to the rear of the body. The final top speed showed an improvement of 15mph over the standard car.

"The object of preparing this chassis is that, if speed merchants in the form of English peers or Indian Rajahs or others doubt the capacity of the Rolls-Royce Phantom I, this specimen, which we should be able to repeat, can be tried by them," said Royce at the time. "We have no thought of making a freak machine or to depart from the smooth and silent model, but we do think that the owners of the smooth and silent models within their large bodies capable of 80mph will be pleased to know that the same chassis and engine when fitted to a touring car will be capable of 95 to 100mph."

Although Royce was pleased with both the appearance and performance of the car, he suggested that to achieve the whole objective would require more cylinders, probably 12 like the company's aero engines, but he hesitated to put this to the board at the time and went no further with the idea.



Right | 17EX in its full present-day glory





*Left and opposite |
A Springfield Phantom I,
bodied by Brewster
& Co in 1931*

ONGOING IMPROVEMENTS

EAC XIV boasted an improved specification, incorporating a number of features from the Brooklands testing, and was approved as the production Sports Phantom. Three experimental cars, 15EX, 16EX and 17EX, were built with similar bodies by three different coachbuilders – Hooper, Barker and Jarvis, respectively. The first production Phantom I chassis were delivered in May 1925. However, in accordance with the company’s normal policy of continuous improvement, a number of modifications were introduced throughout the life of the model; some minor, some more significant and visible.

Two lengths of chassis were available, with the longer wheelbase version being extended by 7.25 inches. From early 1927, the straight-sided tyres gave way to well-based wheels and tyres. Friction-type suspension dampers were replaced by hydraulic types, initially on the front axle then shortly afterwards on the rear. A higher-ratio rear axle became optional to improve fuel consumption.

The two most visible modifications to the Phantom I model were introduced in 1928. An aluminium cylinder head replaced the earlier cast-iron version and, instead of the 12 sparking plugs all being on the same side of the engine, there were now six on each side. The vertically mounted radiator shutters fitted in front of the radiator were removed and incorporated flush within the front face of the radiator, thus giving a more pleasing appearance, similar to those on the company’s later 20hp engine.

By the time it had ceased production, more than 2,200 Phantom I chassis had been built at the Derby works. However, a modified version continued to be built at the company’s Springfield works in Massachusetts, principally for the US market, and was known as the Springfield Phantom I. It replaced the Springfield Silver Ghost, which continued to be produced into 1927.

STATESIDE PRODUCTION

The Springfield chassis were fitted with left-hand steering that necessitated changes to the engine, with the result that the ancillary components were fitted on the opposite side to those on the Derby chassis. The electrical system operated from six volts and a number of components were sourced in the US. Features not seen on the Derby chassis until later in its production run included thermostatically controlled radiator shutters and a centralised chassis lubrication system.

Although the fitting of specialist coachwork was still an option, most Springfield Phantom I chassis were equipped with one of a range of styles by the New York-based coachmakers Brewster & Co – mainly of the more sporting variety for the US market. Production of the Springfield Phantom I continued until 1931 when the Rolls-Royce works became a victim of the Great Depression, along with most other luxury US-made marques. A total of 1,241 were built.

Work on the EAC XIV Sports Phantom had stopped in April 1928 in favour of the EAC X Super Sports, which was to become the Phantom II. Although the Derby Phantom I was replaced in 1929 by the Phantom II, there was no equivalent Springfield version. However, a number of Derby-built Phantom II chassis were built with left-hand steering and fitted with US-built coachwork.

For some, the Phantom I lacked the charm of the earlier Silver Ghost and the performance and more modern look of the later Phantom II. But there is no doubt that it is a magnificent motor car in its own right – one that established a new lineage that led Rolls-Royce into the modern age.

This article was originally written by the Rolls-Royce expert, author and enthusiast Ian Rimmer. It includes photography kindly provided by Bonhams, www.bonhams.com.

“There is no doubt that the Phantom I is a magnificent motor car in its own right – one that established a new lineage”



Moroccan magic

The palatial L Mansion in Marrakech is the perfect backdrop to intimate gatherings, from private holidays to weddings

A spectacular city of mosaics, red stone and minarets, Marrakech, Winston Churchill once said, “is simply the best place on earth to spend an afternoon.” Marrakech was founded almost a millennium ago, which makes the 35 years it took to complete L Mansion seem like the blink of an eye. This guest palace and event space is a sumptuous retreat in the city, decorated in the finest tradition of Moroccan craftsmanship and surrounded by gardens filled with olive trees, jasmine and the scent of orange blossom.

The mansion was built by the father of Lamya El Manjra, the General Manager and owner, who began managing the property after completing her studies in the US. “He always loved his grandfather’s house in Fez and wanted to create something that was just as special,” says Lamya.

Although the mansion was originally designed and built as a family home, Lamya decided to hire it out as a guest palace rather than turn it into a hotel. This enables her team to focus entirely on the needs of a single client and their guests, ensuring visitors have full run of the indoor and outdoor spaces, while being treated to the best of Morocco’s famous hospitality. Lamya’s dream was that the small number of people from around the world who were fortunate enough to stay there would experience the Moroccan lifestyle at the highest level. “When we receive guests, they feel as if they are being greeted by a friend. We make them feel very special, as if they are in their own palace.”

L Mansion has ten spacious suites in the main building, and a lobby that is rich in beauty and detail, art and antiques, with lavish ceilings that required “the skills of artisans from all over Morocco”. There is also a separate four-bedroom villa in the grounds, with two lounges, a kitchen and private garden. All guests have use of the extensive spa, which includes a traditional hammam, sauna, steam rooms and a massage and beauty parlour, and an indoor pool complete with marble columns and mosaics. In the gardens, a beautiful tiled terrace wraps around a large swimming pool.

Both the garden and pool, the latter having a “catwalk” running through the middle, and the opulent lobby, create the perfect setting for events. Weddings are a speciality, but L Mansion is also hired for fashion shows, filming, corporate events and press launches. The in-house chef provides delicious feasts and lunches, often prepared with fruit and vegetables from the gardens.

The location feels like a genuine secret. It has magnificent views of the Atlas Mountains and is very secluded yet safe, with VIPs as neighbours. Despite this, the 27-hole Royal Golf Marrakech – where Churchill and President Eisenhower played occasional rounds – is just five minutes away, and it is a short drive to discover the charm of the old city. The hospitality team is happy to make suggestions, book reservations and plan excursions. An hour from the mountains, two hours from the beach and a few hours from the desert, it is easy to explore this magical land. “You will always be surprised in Morocco,” says Lamya. “Every visit is different and there are always new things to discover.”

L Mansion delivers whatever guests want – offering an “à la carte” service. But for many who come to disconnect from the hustle and bustle of Europe or North America, it is enough to simply relax in the splendour of the guest palace.

www.lmansion.com







The Caribbean dream

Villa Casablanca in prestigious Sandy Lane, Barbados, offers every amenity to make it the ideal home away from home

The exclusive Sandy Lane resort in Barbados is synonymous with luxury – but what Evlyn Mondo wanted to create with Casablanca was a place where guests feel comfortable. “As soon as the gates open, the reaction is always the same. People say they already feel at home. It is so pretty, serene and secure.”

The Canadian-born director has run this little corner of paradise for the past six years. Casablanca is a handsome 7,000-square-foot villa on a two-acre estate that can host up to 14 guests. There are five bedrooms, each with an en-suite bathroom and patio access. A separate 2,500-square-foot cottage contains two further bedrooms with en-suites. “We offer two options when guests rent the villa,” says Evlyn. “Sometimes they want the villa but not the cottage, so we adjust the rate.”

Tucked away on a cul-de-sac with no passing traffic, Casablanca offers total privacy. The villa has its own fully equipped gym, a 58ft infinity pool, gazebo and private tennis courts that accommodate paddle tennis as well as the conventional game. A short walk away is The Old Nine golf course, which includes a club house, bar and tennis courts. The elegant Sandy Lane Estate Beach Club is also nearby, where Casablanca visitors have exclusive access to a private cabana. Casablanca’s concierge service can help guests book beach activities, such as catamaran cruises, kayaking, windsurfing and more.

“There is also an area inside the house with a bar and a TV, where you can gather and have fun,” says Evlyn. “Anyone can easily occupy themselves just staying at the villa and visiting the beach club.” The smart television is connected to Apple TV streaming, offering more than 300 channels. There is also a substantial private library and access to thousands of international newspapers and magazines through digital subscription. The villa is stocked with board games, and it even has an electric piano. Golf is available on request, as is yoga instruction and massages for those who want to relax.

The housekeepers at Casablanca take care of all laundry while guests are staying at the villa, so visitors can minimise the luggage they bring and enjoy a stress-free vacation. Housekeeping services are included, and guests also have a butler, concierge and private chef on hand. The villa’s team of expert staff are well-practised

in ensuring that guests have “the perfect holiday,” says Evlyn. Casablanca’s chef certainly conjures that perfect holiday magic when he whips up gourmet meals. Guests can sample anything from fresh pastries and hand-cooked omelettes at breakfast, to a barbecue or the catch of the day for lunch and three-course world-class cuisine for dinner. Evlyn recommends the fresh fish caught on the island and the Bajan macaroni pie, but anyone staying at Casablanca can eat whatever they wish. “The chef will prepare it and families can relax knowing everything is taken care of,” says Evlyn. “Most people cancel their restaurant reservations after two nights at the villa.”

Sunset cocktails and canapés can also be provided, and the team stocks the fridge in advance with any snacks, treats and drinks that guests request. Those who do venture out can enjoy quality shopping and fine dining in Holetown, a five-minute drive away, or arrange excursions further afield through the villa’s management and concierge service.

Although most guests choose to relax and get away from it all at Casablanca, the cottage has facilities to enable remote working. This includes a desk, WiFi,



“We make guests feel that they are on the best vacation of their lives”

printer and video-conferencing camera for those who need it, while the five-metre table under the gazebo is perfect for a corporate meeting. The two lounges, bar and media room make ideal locations for brainstorming sessions or for extending discussions over drinks and snacks.

Parties and weddings are accommodated with advance planning, with the team organising the decor and entertainment. “We make bespoke vacations,” says Evlyn. “People tell us what they want and we do our best to meet their requirements.” This includes a VIP arrival service from the island’s Grantley Adams International Airport. Guests who book this are met right from the plane and go through customs separately, before being taken to a



waiting taxi with their luggage without having to queue. Evlyn estimates that guests who take advantage of this service can often be in the villa within 45 minutes of landing – an impressive feat, considering that the taxi ride itself takes 25 minutes.

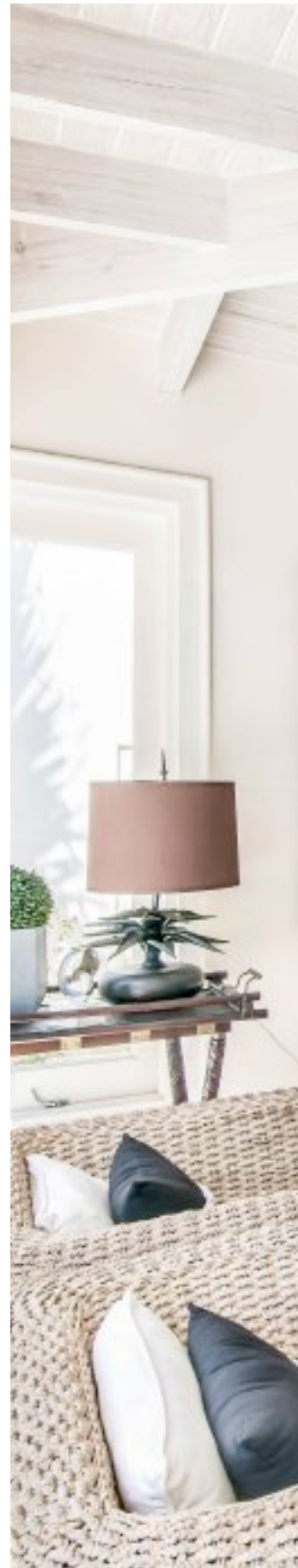
Evlyn brings her guests some of the best experiences to be found anywhere in the world. “I travel a lot, and every time I see something we think our clients would enjoy, or that would make a difference to their holiday, I learn from it and apply it at Casablanca,” she says. The latest addition is access to luxury rare wines from one of the best wine cellars in the world. These can be flown in specially at the guest’s request. For a true taste of Barbados, the chef at Casablanca has worked with a renowned mixologist to devise a tasting menu of local rums – another offering available on request.

Popular times to visit Casablanca include Christmas, especially for British and Canadian visitors, but Barbados enjoys 30C temperatures all year round, even in the rainy season. “There is a period when it rains more than usual, but it is very pretty then, so guests often say they don’t mind if it rains for an hour a day,” says Evlyn.

Casablanca has guests who rebook immediately after their stay, while some have gone there for four years in a row. Evlyn puts such success down to one thing: Casablanca makes guests feel special. The villa has a “family-style management”. This means that every member of staff has a role in the success of Casablanca, and they all work together as a team to ensure that guests have the best experience possible.

“It helps that people feel at home when they are away from home,” says Evlyn, “and we work very hard to make guests feel that they are on the best vacation of their lives.”

www.casablancabarbados.com

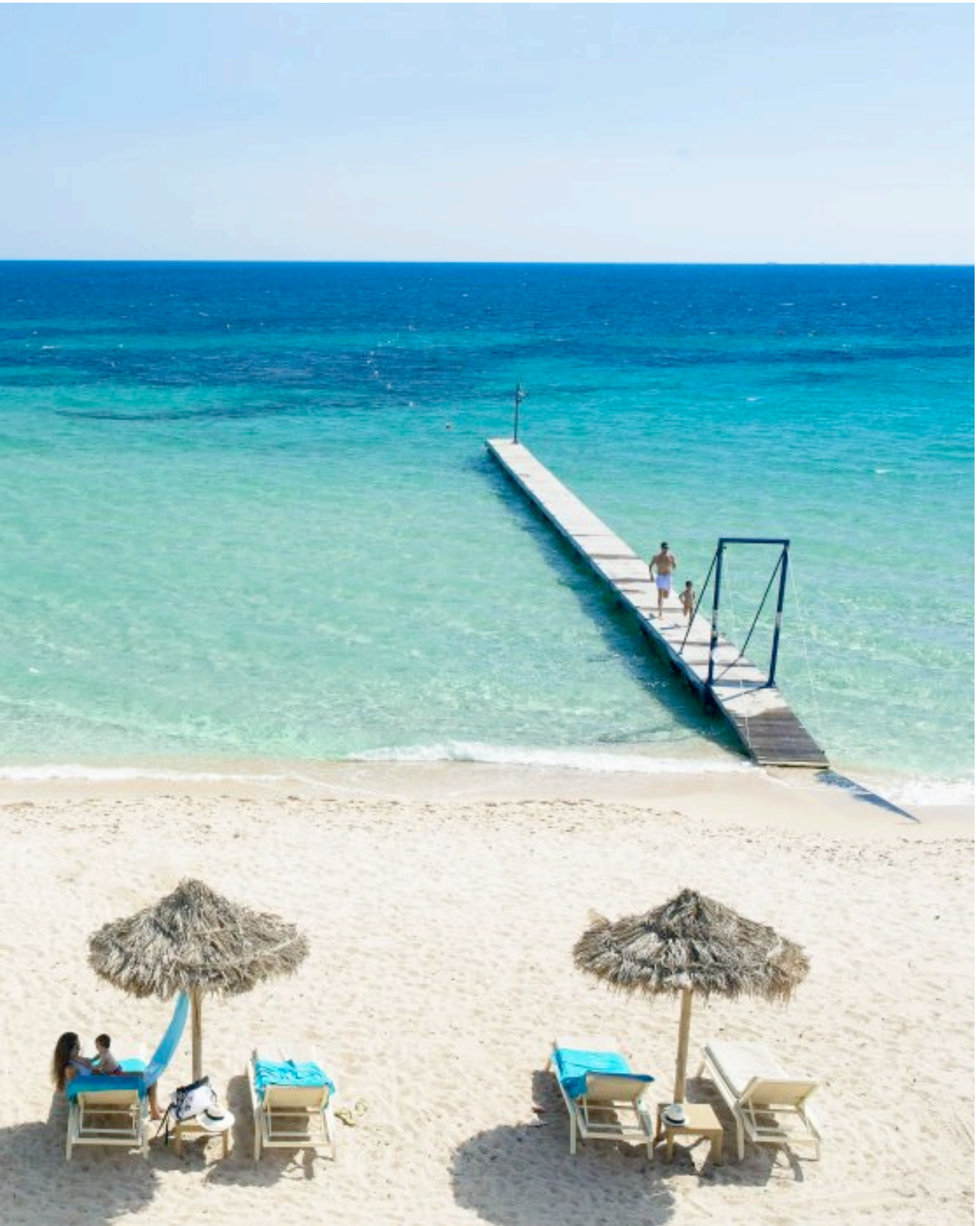




The good life

Palazzo Fiuggi and Forte Village blend traditional Italian hospitality and timeless wellness for the best of la dolce vita







The subject of Michelangelo's health has been surprisingly well covered by academics. One thing that has emerged in research is that the great artist suffered recurrent kidney stones, for which he was prescribed the medicinal water of Fiuggi, taken from a spring in the hilltop town an hour from Rome. The legendary mineral water renowned for its healing properties since antiquity has made the spa town the natural location for Italy's foremost wellness retreat, Palazzo Fiuggi (above).

Palazzo Fiuggi is the sister to Forte Village (previous pages and opposite) on the Italian island of Sardinia, named the World's Leading Resort for 25 consecutive years at the World Travel Awards. Both properties are run by Lorenzo Giannuzzi, the CEO, who has been a master of high-end hospitality for decades. The Art Nouveau Palazzo Fiuggi (originally Palazzo della Fonte) was built in 1913 and for decades was one of Europe's finest luxury hotels, admitting guests such as Pablo Picasso, Ingrid Bergman and Sophia Loren, who came to admire its white marble, gilded mosaics and Murano chandeliers. Lorenzo was General Manager there in 1988 (at this time, the property was part of the Forte Hotel Group owned by Charles Forte) and had the idea of turning the hotel into a spa.

"I thought this was a fantastic healthy venue space, with its amazing healing water, located in an incredible verdant valley," says Lorenzo. "I wanted to create the healthiest place in Italy. In order to make it the pioneer in

the wellness segment, we hired the most renowned health specialists in Italy." But before the spa was up and running, Lorenzo was offered the position of Managing Director for the group's Caribbean and Western Atlantic operation. His successor abandoned the plan, as he considered it to be too technical, opting for a more standard fitness centre instead. Circumstances in Lorenzo's career then gave him the opportunity to accomplish his extraordinary project in 2019, when the palace went for up for sale and the Forte Village Group bought it. To further enhance the strong connection of the property with the destination, it was renamed Palazzo Fiuggi and the hotel's concept was developed around the two key elements that make the area unique: the incredible benefits of the Fiuggi thermal water; and the location at 700 metres above sea level, which is the ideal altitude for transformation with its clean and pure oxygen-rich air. "We invested a substantial amount of money and turned it into a cathedral of health with an extraordinary team of doctors and therapists. It is orientated especially towards longevity, weight loss, general detox and problems around sleep," says Lorenzo.

The hotel originally had 153 rooms, but now there are 102, providing ample space for 160 guests. The former conference centre is a 6,000-square-metre wellness and medical spa with 39 treatment rooms and the most innovative technologies for diagnostic testing, retinal scanning and measuring brain health. Guests have access to thalassotherapy pools, Roman baths, a private spa, indoor and outdoor pools, and extensive fitness equipment.

“The hotel and resort are two different versions of paradise and customers at both will enjoy an unforgettable experience”



The wellness programmes combine scientific treatment with exercise and holistic approaches to health, curated around each individual's needs. Traditional Italian hospitality is an essential part of the experience. “We use food as medicine,” explains Lorenzo. “It's not ordinary food. We choose only the best ingredients and have a menu created for us by one of the best chefs in the world, Heinz Beck, who has a three Michelin-starred restaurant. It is very healthy and tasty food, able to activate cellular pathways linked with anti-ageing, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant processes, to help guests to detox and lose weight. It is perfect because people can eat healthily while enjoying their meals.”

The diet includes the restorative Fiuggi waters, as prescribed by the medical staff, who also take blood and do other tests for comparison when guests leave. “Our philosophy is to deliver tangible results.”

At the start of Lorenzo's career, he worked at Forte Village on the southern coast of Sardinia. He returned there 30 years ago when he became Managing Director of this luxurious resort of 116 acres, which he developed into a destination in its own right with eight five- and four-star hotels, 13 villas, 11 swimming pools, 20 restaurants, a concert arena and more than 30 luxury shops, on a site surrounded by luscious subtropical vegetation. A rainwater harvesting system sustains the resort, storing enough water to fill more than 140 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

The Children's Wonderland caters for children, while there is a Leisureland for teens. The former features a real

Barbie House as playhouse, a miniature village, pools and a circus, while the latter has dance floors, bowling alleys and a go-kart track. “Forte Village is a paradise for children; they never get bored,” says Lorenzo, “and adults have an unlimited number of high-level activities to choose from, so literally no one has to compromise.” A core aspect of the offering is sporting masterclasses with expert coaches – whether that is Real Madrid coaching a football academy, a rugby academy with England world cup winners Martin Johnson, Austin Healey and Will Greenwood, or a fencing academy led by Olympic champions. There are 13 tennis courts, basketball courts, netball and a cycling academy with Swiss champion Fabian Cancellara.

A similar commitment to perfection is why both venues appeal to clientele who take their children to Forte Village for a family holiday and then spend a week at Palazzo Fiuggi alone with their partners to decompress, recharge and engage in self-care. “Many of our guests discover the palazzo after visiting Forte Village and vice versa,” says Lorenzo. “Forte Village is a unique proposition with things to do for every member of the family, while Palazzo Fiuggi provides a healthy space for people to get in shape and enjoy the wellness and the treatments. Both have won multiple awards. The hotel and resort are two different versions of paradise and customers at both will enjoy an unforgettable experience.”

www.palazzofiggi.com
www.fortevillageresort.com

Naturally splendid

At Cayo Levantado Resort, guests can immerse themselves in a uniquely sustainable wellness retreat on a tropical island paradise

On an island off the coast of the Dominican Republic is an extraordinary Caribbean wellness resort where sophistication exists in perfect harmony with sustainability. The all-inclusive, high-end Cayo Levantado Resort, which reopened in 2023 following an extensive \$50 million refurbishment, is as devoted to the health of the island and the local marine ecosystems as it is to the wellbeing of its discerning guests.

Upon arriving at Cayo Levantado Resort via a short boat ride or helicopter flight from the mainland, visitors are struck by the natural beauty and elegance of the island. “The island’s fauna and flora are integral to the transformative experience we offer our guests,” says Julio Perez, Chief Operating Officer. “In recognition of this, we want to act as a guardian and advocate for these rare and vulnerable ecosystems.”

With closer investigation, the full extent of the resort’s commitment to sustainability is revealed. The resort employs a biologist who is dedicated to improving the island and marine environments, which includes the replenishment and future-proofing of local coral reefs and mangroves. “Our watersports and aquatics department works closely with him, to deepen guests’ enjoyment of the water by enabling them to observe some of his marine projects.”

During the renovation, Cayo Levantado Resort worked with local suppliers and craftspeople – not only to source the new, but also to restore and repurpose the old, to avoid unnecessary waste and to preserve the resort’s authentic sense of place. “To us, sustainability also means investing in the community,” says Julio. “So we work closely with local businesses and align with government training programmes that teach young people the skills needed to work in hospitality, as we want to continue to source locally and to employ local people.”

To this end, the resort operates as sustainably as possible. It has introduced solar power, overhauled its energy consumption and uses LED lighting and individually controlled air-conditioning units. A review of the plumbing has led to a reduction in water usage, and an atmospheric water-generating plant produces 5,000 litres of drinking water a day from the moisture in the air. Grey water processing and a biodigester are used to turn waste into nourishment for the resort’s herb and vegetable gardens.

The care for the environment is mirrored in the resort’s sensitive design and guest offering. The 218 luxurious suites and villas comprise junior suites in the main building, suites with private plunge pools in the tropical gardens, and indulgent beachfront adult-only suites. Among the resort’s communal facilities are two swimming pools, fitness

facilities, tranquil yoga spaces, a spa, and a holistic centre named Yubarta in the heart of the island.

The resort’s five restaurants and eight bars each offer a distinct culinary experience, with a variety of cuisine and cultures represented on nutritious menus featuring ingredients sourced locally. From the casual Jaiba beach bar to poolside à la carte dining at Carey International Restaurant, there is a dining option for everyone.

Every guest is made to feel special throughout their stay. Resident wellness experts are on hand to curate personalised programmes that follow a choice of four transformative paths: Restore, Refresh, Relax or Renew. The aim is to reinvigorate mind, body and soul through exercise, meditation, activities and nutrition. There is also a fleet of ambassadors, “each of whom is assigned to look after only a handful of guests,” says Julio. “This provides each individual with round-the-clock service, from booking to departure.”

www.cayolevantadoresort.com







A historic stay

The Tokyo Station Hotel is an island of calm in the bustling Japanese capital, and a place for guests to relax in style

In the heart of Tokyo, close to the Imperial Palace, stands The Tokyo Station Hotel. This illustrious and striking building has been serving visitors to the Japanese capital since 1915, when it was constructed as a home for eminent guests arriving at Tokyo Station Marunouchi. The luxury hotel, the pride of Tokyo, is officially named an Important Cultural Property of Japan. “We are the only building with this qualification where you can stay in the whole of Japan,” says Chitose Yagi, Executive Assistant Manager.

There is a British element to this most Japanese of places. Tatsuno Kingo, the architect, trained in London and introduced classic British architectural styles to Japan. Today, the red-brick Tokyo Station Hotel has 150 rooms, ten restaurants, bars and cafés, and a spa. It combines heritage with luxury through a £250 million renovation, which included the restoration of a floor and domes that were destroyed in the Second World War. The hotel had previously survived the 1923 Great Kantō earthquake, making it a building of miraculous longevity in central Tokyo. Maintaining the British connection, the renovation included interior design by Richmond



International, a British company that specialises in transforming historic properties into luxury hotels.

The hotel is connected to Tokyo Station Marunouchi, making it an ideal place to stay for anybody planning to explore Tokyo or travel around Japan. From the hotel, it is just 30 minutes to Haneda Airport and an hour to Narita Airport. With the Imperial Palace so close, the hotel has welcomed numerous distinguished guests, some of whom stay at the palatial 173-square-metre Imperial Suite. The family of the Imperial House of Japan itself has even used the suite when attending functions at the hotel.

The hotel's ten restaurants and bars include Blanc Rouge, offering French fine dining with a Japanese twist, as well as several Japanese restaurants and Bar Oak, which specialises in popular Japanese whiskey. The hotel has a series of versatile function rooms, while its spa is centred around the Japanese concept of *omotenashi*, which translates as "wholehearted hospitality". Another favourite spot is The Atrium on the top floor where the breakfast buffet is served in the gentle natural light that pours in through the ceiling window. "Our buffet has more than 100 items and guests often return just because they want

to try more of them," says Chitose. "We also have long corridors as the building is longer than Tokyo Tower is tall. We have created a small gallery there with 100 artworks related to trains, Tokyo Station and the hotel history. Forty of the artworks have a QR code through which you can learn more."

The Tokyo Station Hotel has a carbon-offset programme that is automatically applied to all rooms and suites at no additional cost. It is, as far as Chitose is aware, another element that makes the gracious hotel unique. A sense of calm pervades the space, a world away from the million people who pass through the nearby terminus each day. Inside the hotel, there is only peace amid the elegance, which aligns with the hotel's chief philosophy. "We aspire to be the happiest hotel," says Chitose. "We prioritise wellbeing for our staff because enhancing their pride and happiness naturally creates a positive experience for our guests, which then creates loyal visitors to the hotel who cannot wait to return. That makes us very happy. It is a positive chain."

www.thetokystationhotel.jp

Super cool

Among the frozen art of Sweden's famous Icehotel and the permanent Icehotel 365, guests are guaranteed an out-of-this-world experience

Every winter, in a Swedish village 200 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle, the original, world-famous Icehotel is reborn. It first opened in 1989, and each year since, it is recrafted to a different design by designers, architects and artists using thousands of tonnes of snow and ice taken from the pristine waters of the nearby Torne River. Guests check in from December to April, but come springtime, the ephemeral hotel and its ice sculptures melt back into their natural surroundings.

Near the winter hotel is the permanent structure, Icehotel 365, open all year round. Built in 2016, it also has rooms sculpted from ice and snow, kept at -5C during the summer thanks to sustainable, solar-powered technology; but the difference is that they come with warm bathrooms and saunas. "The two hotels can work hand in hand for those wanting to discover an ice experience but who also want the warmth and comfort of a private, heated bathroom," says CEO Marie Herrey. "I can guarantee both offer out of this world experiences."

One unforgettable way to arrive is on a pre-booked dog sled from the airport in Kiruna, Sweden's northernmost city, through enchanting forests and along frozen trails. Upon arrival, guests – who have come from some 80 countries and have included the King of Sweden – are invited on a tour to find out more about the hotel. Those staying in the Icehotel's 50 or so "ice rooms" at a temperature of -5C are advised in advance to dress warmly for maximum comfort, but the hotel provides extra clothing if needed, along with thermal sleeping bags. Each room is a truly unique work of art, ingeniously crafted with an ice bed covered in reindeer skins and unique sculptural decoration.

Icehotel 365 features nine Deluxe and 11 Art Suites. It is also home to the legendary Icebar, which serves drinks "in the rocks" from glasses sculpted out of river ice, and an ice art gallery. One of the most popular activities for guests is creating their own sculptures at the ice sculpting studio, which are then displayed around the hotel. Another popular experience is a snowmobile trip to view the northern lights and enjoy a "wilderness" dinner. "Dinner has never tasted so good anywhere," says Marie. "It's a moose stew, and after being out in the cold, you come into this warm cabin with a big fire. You get a three-course dinner, take the snowmobile home and hopefully see the northern lights."

Icehotel guests also have the opportunity to experience a traditional sauna. "It's a very old building from the 1600s, where we show you the proper ritual of taking a Swedish sauna," says Marie. "It includes hot tubs under the stars; you go from warm water down to the river, where you take a bath in the ice."

For summer visitors, activities include fishing, canoeing, cycling and hiking tours, all under the midnight sun. The hotel is constantly developing new ideas, and plans are currently underway to hold a padel tournament with a court made from ice, and offer a new electric snowmobile service that is not only better for the environment but quieter, too, so guests can fully immerse themselves in the peacefulness of the Arctic. "Our guests are amazed at how quiet it is here," says Marie. "It's like a meditation; when you fall asleep, you hear your own heartbeat. It's a very beautiful feeling."

www.icehotel.com









Authentic French luxury

Domaine de Vieux-Mareuil's four quintessentially French properties combine the intimacy of a private estate with the finest hotel services

Laëtitia Morlat returned to her hometown in the Dordogne in 1999 with a desire to pour her experiences into Domaine de Vieux-Mareuil, a unique collection of luxury properties that showcases everything she has learned about service and interior design from a life spent travelling around the world. There are four properties in the collection, each of which has a special meaning for Laëtitia and they enable her to share her love of the region with guests who come from across the globe.

"I love every property because each one contains a part of my soul and my spirit," says Laëtitia. One is the house in which she grew up, another is where she spent her honeymoon. "They all mean something, so I wanted to do something very special with all these properties while restoring them for the enjoyment of future generations. Every property has its own story and I want my visitors to be able to feel that when they are with us."

Each of the homes is beautifully restored, with immaculately decorated, refined interiors. The larger estates include Château de Chanet, with 11 guest rooms across three buildings in vast landscaped grounds; Domaine de Lavy, with nine guest rooms in two houses and a panoramic view from the grand terrace; and Domaine de Bagatelle, two independent residences with eight guest rooms, set amid green parkland and surrounded by forest. The smaller accommodation, La Roussie Villa, is a four-bedroom authentic farmhouse for up to eight people that was once the family home of Laëtitia's parents. All four have comprehensive facilities such as heated swimming pools, padel and tennis courts, and a private chef for custom dining experiences.

"These are private homes with the services of hotels," says Laëtitia. Her hand-picked team seek to provide the level of service found at the finest luxury hotels. This includes transfers to Bordeaux and Bergerac airports, an unpacking service, a concierge service, waiting staff, chefs and housekeeping. While many guests choose to simply relax and enjoy the facilities of each home, Laëtitia has utilised her local knowledge to create bespoke experiences for guests, including food and drink tours, cultural outings and entertainment for children. The properties are ideally situated for excursions – they are near the charming village of Vieux-Mareuil; Brantôme – known as the Venice of the Périgord; and Mareuil, a town complete with a medieval castle.

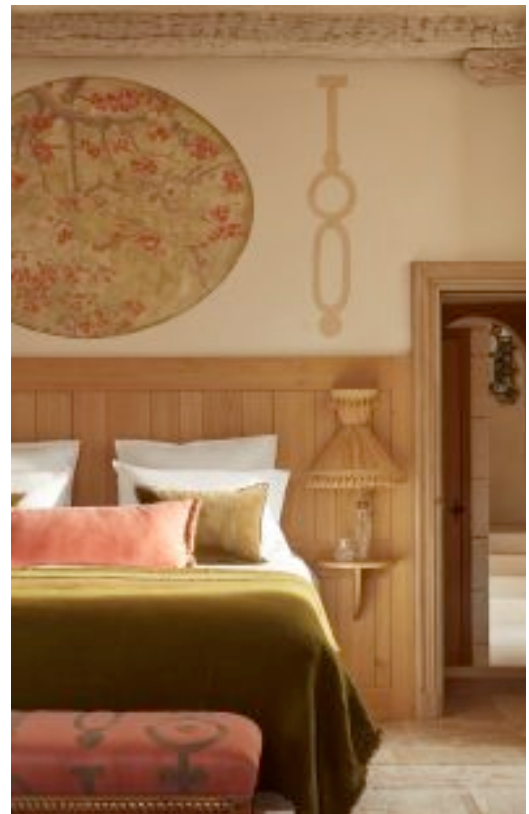
Laëtitia is committed to safeguarding the environment around Domaine de Vieux-Mareuil, which she does by protecting the surrounding forests from development and

minimising the use of plastic in the homes. The properties' gardens provide the fresh vegetables and food is sourced as locally as possible.

The Domaine de Vieux-Mareuil collection is perfect for spectacular weddings, family celebrations and luxury corporate retreats. Château de Chanet has facilities for seminars, an offering that is being expanded to the other two larger properties. Laëtitia is also planning to open a spa at Domaine de Bagatelle. This is all part of her determination to maintain the highest standards as she pursues a vision of hospitality that combines the best of the luxury hotel experience with the security and seclusion that comes from private property rental.

"I am so proud to welcome people into my town," says Laëtitia. "We want to continually update and invent new experiences, and ensure the properties are always in their best condition. I love sharing them and making sure each guest experiences a unique holiday curated just for them."

www.domainedevieuxmareuil.com



A life extraordinary

From rooftop fitness to barefoot luxury, LUX Mauritius offers four unique resort locations that dare to be different*

The island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean is a world of its own, drawing on diverse cultures, an abundance of natural beauty and a tropical climate, as well as the legendary Mauritian hospitality. These qualities define LUX* Mauritius and its four luxury resorts, as does the stylish and spirited environment it creates, and the experiences that immerse guests in local culture. “Our mantra is ‘help people to celebrate life,’” says Ashish Modak, Chief Operating Officer of Europe, the Middle East and Africa at The Lux Collective.

A Mauritian-born global luxury hospitality group set up in 2011, The Lux Collective has expanded to include destinations in the Maldives, Zanzibar, China and Réunion. “Our luxury flagship brand, LUX*, has four unique offerings in Mauritius, but what binds them together are our guiding principles of service culture and the promises we make to our guests,” says Ashish. “We want to make each moment matter because we understand that a holiday is precious.”

Sharing a philosophy of excellence, the four resorts all have an outstanding LUX* ME Spa and wellness offering, alongside the Beach Rouge beach club and kids’ club, PLAY. However, their creative approach to luxury sets them apart. Instead of importing roasted coffee, the LUX* Belle Mare resort installed a roastery in its café, Maison LUX*, and made it a feature of the visitor experience. Guests see and smell coffee being freshly prepared, and the resort creates its own bespoke blends. “The experience for the guests is unsurpassed,” says Ashish. “We apply this thinking across all our resorts in our activities, food and wellness.”

Each individual resort offers a uniquely distinctive experience. LUX* Grand Baie (opposite, bottom left), the flagship resort, has a boutique feel in an urban setting. Its Asian restaurant, Ai Kisu, is one of the best on the island, and there is an emphasis on health and wellbeing. The four-storey wellness and fitness complex features treatment rooms, pools, a Turkish hammam, laconium, sauna, multi-sensory hydrothermal circuit, a functional fitness area with 12 workout stations and two running tracks.

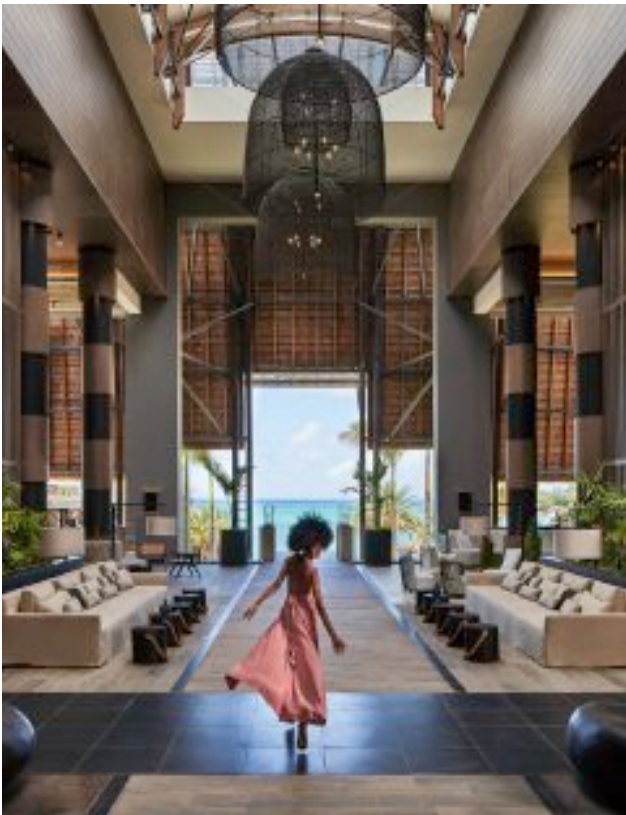
Located on a picture-postcard beach to the east of the island is LUX* Belle Mare (opposite, top), where minimal meets tropical, with a relaxed beach house feel. It has a strong family focus and outstanding restaurants, including the all day Mondo, contemporary Indian gem Amari by Vineet and Duck Laundry, a gastronomic Chinese restaurant specialising in Peking Duck. LUX* Grand Gaube (opposite, bottom right) is a retro-chic

tropical retreat tucked away on a peninsula bordering two coves, ideal for outdoor activities on and offshore. With live cooking stations at The Palm Court, award-winning Peruvian cuisine at INTI, authentic Creole flavours at Banyan and Turkish delights at Bodrum Blue, there are gourmet surprises at every step. LUX* Le Morne (below) is on the wild southwest coast. Guests can get close to nature, spot dolphins and whales and watch the sunset, overlooked by the majestic Le Morne Brabant mountain, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Maintaining the island’s biodiversity is crucial to the company. It bans single-use plastics and promises a carbon-free, eco-conscious stay at its hotels for a small voluntary contribution through the signature groupwide sustainability project, Tread Lightly. And for those who cannot choose between the four extraordinary locations, a combination package allows guests to experience two or three resorts on a single trip and the best that luxury offers.

www.luxresorts.com





A passion for luxury

Carefully restored while keeping true to its roots, Villa Ardore in the heart of the Tuscan countryside is the ideal luxury retreat

At Villa Ardore in the Chianti region of Tuscany, Californian couple Christian Scali and Stephen Lewis have created the ultimate destination for those looking for an exceptional experience. The approach by car is nothing short of enchanting. After driving through a tunnel of trees in a forest, the views open to reveal the villa and a breathtaking vista of the surrounding hillsides and vineyards.

A renowned lawyer in the high-end automotive sector in the US, Christian shares his passion for cars with guests, often incorporating luxury, classic or motor sport events, such as Le Mans, La Dolce Vita, the Monaco Grand Prix and Cavallino Classic Modena, into the villa's offering. "In addition to attending these events, our guests can tour the region in beautiful cars, visit iconic locations and enjoy food prepared by Michelin-starred chefs," he says.

Christian and Stephen opened the exquisite 16th-century villa in 2023 after extensive renovation, having lavished it with the same meticulous attention to detail, craft and design that one would find in a luxury marque. The result is a private, peaceful, home-from-home retreat, with sumptuous furnishings, modern amenities, and beautiful indoor and outdoor entertaining spaces. "We have created this level of luxury that is extremely high, but without in any way sacrificing the authenticity of the location," says Christian. It has all the comforts of a resort but the privacy of a private home.

The villa offers exclusive stays, with eight guest suites, but it is also perfect for wedding parties of up to 60 people. It is a 50-minute drive from Florence airport and only 15 minutes from Castellina-in-Chianti, famous for its cobblestone streets, historic buildings, fine dining restaurants, boutiques, art galleries and surrounding vineyards. The area is a popular holiday destination, but those who stay at the villa get a much deeper experience than most, with a warm welcome from the local community. "Because we both have Italian heritage and live locally during the winter, the community is important to us, and our embrace by the community extends to our guests," says Stephen.

The local relationships Christian and Stephen have developed are evidenced throughout the villa, in the design by Florentine architect Massimo Pierattelli and in the impeccable finishes and furniture crafted by local artisans. Meanwhile, car and racing enthusiasts benefit from partnerships with Italian car dealers. Itineraries such as La Dolce Vita include touring through the scenic countryside in a Ferrari, Lamborghini, high-performing



Abarth designed by Lapo Elkann, or a funky vintage Fiat 500. As well as gourmet meals from head chefs, there are visits to vineyards and olive oil tastings. The Cavallino Modena offering is another means of immersing guests in Italy's rich automotive heritage and food, with a visit to the hometown of motoring legend Enzo Ferrari.

Villa Ardore is deeply connected to the local environment, too. Water comes from a well, solar power is being installed, and rainwater is collected for the gardens, where the villa's own produce is grown.

Facilities include a heated infinity pool and poolside bar, fire pit and luxurious Roman spa, complete with sunken Whirlpool, sauna, steam room, sensory shower and rejuvenating treatments. A 500-bottle wine cellar, individually curated cuisine and an expert concierge service complete the picture. The love the owners have lavished on Villa Ardore endures throughout, and transcends to restore the wellbeing of guests.

www.villaardore.com



Home on the slopes

At Six Senses Residences Courchevel in the French Alps, the luxury ski experience extends from the slopes to the spa

“Six Senses Residences Courchevel is not a hotel experience but a living experience, a luxury home space,” says Manager Itziar Bilbao. “Here, it is all about snow and relaxing, about disconnecting from stress. To reconnect with yourself and with others is so important, and Six Senses does it so well.”

Six Senses, the luxury resort, hotel and spa brand, opened Six Senses Residences Courchevel in 2015, bringing ski-in/ski-out private apartments with the personal touches of a hotel to the heart of one of the most exclusive ski resorts in the French Alps, Courchevel 1850. The highest in altitude of four satellite villages in the vast Three Valleys ski area, Courchevel 1850’s prestige is such that visitors including royalty and film stars are drawn to its pristine slopes, Michelin-starred restaurants and boutique shops housed in traditional wooden chalets that sparkle after dark.

Properties range from two to five bedrooms, including the ultra-spacious Prestige Residences. Furnished as warm, contemporary homes with woollen textiles, natural wood and a palette of soft greys and blues, the accommodation comes with open-plan kitchens for informal entertaining or family meals, comfortable lounge areas, private terraces and sleek polished-stone bathrooms.

The apartments benefit from a 24/7 concierge service. Three weeks before arrival, the resident concierge liaises with guests about their requirements, from restaurant reservations to favourite food for stocking the fridge. “In their daily life our guests are cash-rich but time poor. This is why it is so important to have everything ready,” says Itziar.

Check-in takes place in the Six Senses Residences over a glass of wine, with a chance to review all holiday plans and reservations. The concierge team covers everything from booking ski lessons to spa treatments and husky sledding, and can arrange alternative experiences to skiing such as hot-air-balloon flights and driving piste-bashers. “You can have a beautiful day even if you don’t ski,” says Itziar. And this includes the spa, which “is the perfect place to relax after a day’s skiing or before going out to dinner”.

Six Senses has built its reputation on the quality of its spas and wellness centres. The Six Senses Spa Courchevel is a peaceful, reviving space, designed with wave-like shapes inspired by fresh snowfall, complete with a pool, relaxation lounge, juice bar and yoga studios. Each Six Senses Residence booking includes a spa credit and guests can indulge in treatments such as the arnica and ginger hot oil massage, which is exclusive to the Courchevel spa and targets aching muscles, joints

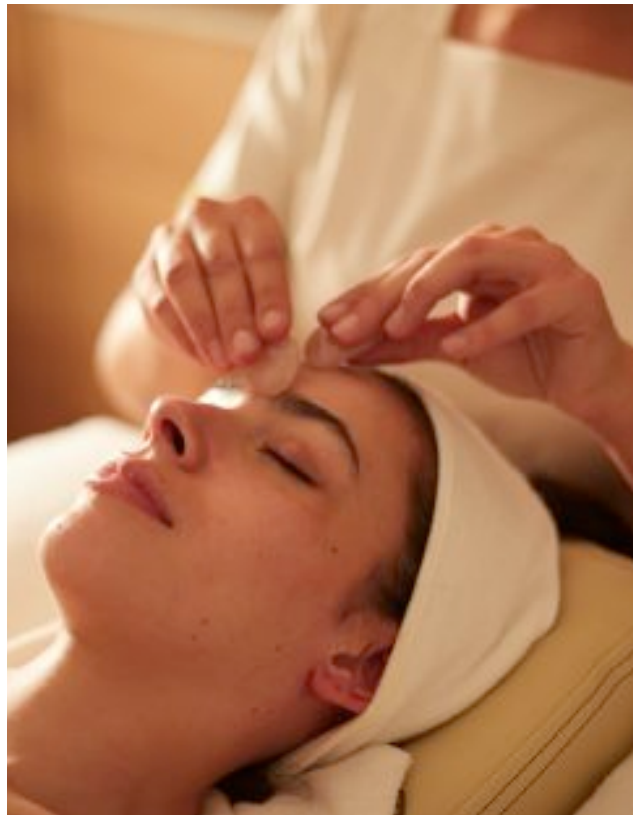
and sports injuries. If staying in is more appealing, guests have the choice of sushi from Sumosan (the contemporary Japanese restaurant and bar has its first Alpine opening at Six Senses Residences) or booking a private chef for the evening.

At Six Senses, wellness goes hand in hand with sustainability and connecting with the local community. “Sustainability and wellness are a way of life here at Six Senses,” says Itziar. Proceeds from the sale of the Six Senses handmade mascot, Monty the Chamois, go to the company’s Sustainability Fund. This, in turn, funds the non-profit One Tree at a Time, which helps to protect mountain environments, teaching people locally how to repair and upcycle skiwear.

Exceptional skiing and après-ski are excellent reasons to visit Courchevel 1850, but it is the ease of the Six Senses Residences Courchevel and the expertise of its concierges that lead so many guests to return.

www.sixsenses.com





A taste of Tuscany

At Hotel Le Fontanelle and The Club House, Tuscany's charms combine with refined hospitality, a range of activities and breathtaking views

“**W**hen our guests arrive at the property, they immediately feel they are in a different world,” says Phoebe Farolfi, General Manager of Hotel Le Fontanelle and sister hotel The Club House, two five-star luxury hotels located in Chianti, around 20 minutes from the medieval city of Siena and 90 minutes from Florence. “Everything slows down and they can enjoy peace and quiet and take the opportunity to focus on their own needs.”

The two hotels attract guests who want to explore both the myriad charms of the area and Tuscany's famous food and wine, and also discover a range of inspiring activities. Chianti is a region that distills the serenity of wider Tuscany. Here, visitors will find perfect medieval hilltop towns amid gentle green hillsides and acres of vineyards. “Our clientele is really engaged with food, nature and the arts, and has that desire to recharge, through the tranquillity of our location, our wellness offerings and our culinary expertise,” says Phoebe.

The estate's story began in 2006 when Giuseppina Bolfo, the aunt of Nicola Vercellotti – the CEO and Phoebe's husband – launched the five-star country house-style Hotel Le Fontanelle. This involved carefully renovating a 13th-century farmhouse in the hills of Castelnuovo Berardenga, maintaining its stone exterior, and adding refined terracotta paving and oak-beamed ceilings in classic Chianti style. The hotel welcomes families, friends and couples to its 36 elegant rooms and suites.

Following this success, in 2022 the family launched the new brand, Fontanelle Estate, together with the 15-room, adults-only hotel The Club House, set in a restored 18th-century manor house a few kilometres from Hotel Le Fontanelle. The Club House follows identical principles of outstanding service and luxury accommodation but on an even more personal scale, with a wellness focus. “It is perfect for guests who want to enjoy what Tuscany has to offer, but also to explore our extensive wellness offer,” says Phoebe.

At The Club House guests have use of two tennis courts, a driving range and putting green, yoga and meditation studios. “Our activities also include cooking classes, Vespas and e-bikes,” says Phoebe, “and we are planning to launch a tennis academy and a yoga retreat.” Further afield, guests can go on guided tours and even rent a Ferrari.

The Wellness Sanctuary spa at The Club House hotel offers a comprehensive range of facilities, including a hydrotherapy pool, experiential showers and a tepidarium with salt mist. Treatments include holistic therapies and wellness rituals using oil blends made from Tuscan herbs.

Over at Hotel Le Fontanelle, guests can experience the two pools, Jacuzzi, sauna, Turkish bath and relaxing treatments.

As might be expected in Tuscany, considerable attention is spent on the food. There are three restaurants and two bars across the two properties. For true gastronomes, The Club House offers the one Michelin star restaurant Il Visibilio with a 17-course blind-tasting menu and Osteria Il Tuscanico with its Tuscan delicacies, while Hotel Le Fontanelle's La Colonna serves contemporary Tuscan cuisine. The estate also includes the Vallepiciola winery, which guests can explore on regular daily tours or cellar tastings. The vineyard's wines are available in the restaurants alongside others from Tuscany and Italy.

“People stay here for four or five days to visit the area and enjoy our hospitality,” says Phoebe. “They love buying artisanal ceramics, local wine and olive oil – we try to anticipate every wish. The estate is an ongoing and exciting growth experience for our guests and ourselves, as we are always introducing new ideas, services and experiences.”

www.fontanelleestate.com





The wow factor

Tamarind Hills Resort and Villas in Antigua is a rare chance to buy into a genuine Caribbean paradise

The leeward side of Antigua is a remarkable spot – a seemingly endless series of sandy beaches and cliffs overlooking the coral-blue seas. Here, the hills are covered in tamarind trees, originally imported from Africa and Asia but now well-established in the Caribbean, with the sweet and sour fruit used in the native cuisine. This unique tree also gives its name to Tamarind Hills, an exclusive coastal community of private properties that provides residents with access to first-class resort-style amenities within a secure, gated development spread across more than 20 acres of prime hilltop land.

“The vision was to develop and build a boutique estate of privately owned residences with Caribbean resort facilities,” says Director Ronald Manser, who developed the project alongside his business partner, co-Director Poonam Agarwalla. “We now have 63 properties and a range of amenities, with more still to come. So many owners tell us that this is their dream home in their dream

location, completely safe with the best facilities. The air and sea are so clean and pure, it really is a perfect location.”

On the southwest coast of the island, a 30-minute drive from the airport, Tamarind Hills’ luxury properties range from contemporary studios and one-bedroom suites to impressive five-bedroom villas, each with flexible, open-plan living spaces and magnificent west-facing ocean views. Every property is privately owned and fitted out to meet the desires and needs of the owners, with modern kitchens, air conditioning, ceiling fans, high-speed internet access and a concierge service.

Many residents regard Tamarind Hills as a Caribbean retreat, retiring here for several weeks a year and renting it out as a holiday property for the rest of the time. A rental management and maintenance programme is available for all properties.

The challenges of developing on Antigua were considerable. “Almost everything had to be imported,” says Poonam. But at Tamarind Hills, everything is possible. For one resident, the developers sourced and erected a special crane to haul a heavy pizza oven into place, such was their determination to fulfil the owner’s dream of having a pizza oven in the kitchen.

The homes offer breathtaking views of the Caribbean, as well as access to the white sands of Ffryes and Darkwood beaches. The villas have private pools, but Tamarind Hills offers exclusive resort-style facilities to everyone, including a beach club with a saltwater swimming pool, two restaurants, bars and waterfront cabanas with full service. Safety and peace of mind are paramount, and 24-hour security ensures owners and guests can sleep easy. Alongside spa treatments, there is a well-equipped gym, yoga and Pilates instruction and professionally guided hiking tours.

Further discreet development is planned, including a wellness retreat and half a dozen luxury villas on the ridgetop, a prime spot overlooking the rest of the development. The Tamarind Hills wellness retreat will have all the facilities for guests to detox to a prescribed plan over a relaxing and revitalising seven-day stay.

For those who got there first, Tamarind Hills has a magnetic appeal. “For homeowners, our main attraction is the location,” says Ronald. “This is one of the few places in the Caribbean where people can own a freehold on the waterfront and be connected to a resort. That is a unique proposition, making this such a rare opportunity. We provide people with the chance to own their own piece of paradise.”

www.tamarindhills.com





Reuse and revitalise

Elena has built a growing network of luxury resort spas on a philosophy of rejuvenation and repurposing

Turning coffee grounds into body scrubs, smoothing out coconut shells for use in massage, boiling down orange peels to create sweets. These are not the kind of practices that you would expect at an average spa. But Elena is far from average. Founded in the Maldives in 2015, Elena spas can now be found in luxury resorts and hotels across South Asia – but the company faced unique challenges in its early days.

Due to the remoteness of the Maldives, many of the essentials for a local spa had to be imported and all waste removed by boat. In an era of environmental consciousness, the management team wanted to reduce its reliance on overseas products and services as much as possible and set to work finding innovative ways to repurpose waste. Sustainability became the focus of the company's business model, which included the appointment of a Sustainability Ambassador and sourcing products from local artisans, farmers and manufacturers, with every bit of waste scrutinised.

"We decided to have a 360-degree approach to our products and to live sustainably every day," says Heidi Grimwood, Elena Vice President. "From a corporate level all the way down to the resort level, we're very conscious of it. Nothing is wasted and our guests love that. Our team is always coming up with new ideas and concepts of what to do." Such is Elena's singular focus that it is the only company in the Maldives to be accredited by the global network Sustainable Wellness, an organisation that recognises successful, long-term sustainability practices. Five of its properties have achieved gold standard.

The wellness pioneers behind the brand design ultra-luxurious spa and wellness retreats for hotels and resorts, and the company is expanding. It started out with three spas but will soon be opening its 13th, as it grows across India, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Its unique Wellness Your Way programme is the principal attraction at its resorts, where guests can determine their own level of immersion into the wellbeing services on offer. The choices range from yoga, meditation and Zumba to sound healing, reiki and healing remedies, as well as the traditional spa offerings of massage, reflexology, and sauna and steam rooms.

At the Ozen Reserve Bolifushi spa in the Maldives, clients are invited to complete a pre-arrival consultation as part of the Wellness Rejuvenation package. Every requirement, down to the last glass of sparkling kombucha, is noted. A full consultation with an ayurvedic doctor awaits guests on arrival to curate their nutrition and

wellness experience. Heidi thinks this personalised approach is the secret to the brand's success. "I have a deep-rooted belief that there are different entry levels to health and fitness, and that each client should be treated as an individual. We invite our guests to tell us how they're feeling, and we start them on a wellness journey based on them exclusively, rather than following a standard route."

Guests are also encouraged to take a little piece of the Elena spa experience home with them through educational workshops. They learn how they can delve into their own kitchen cupboards to create their favourite skincare treatments, with an emphasis on natural ingredients and little to no waste. "We provide our clients with everything they need through education, fun and treatments," explains Heidi. "We show them everything about our 360-degree approach to wellness and sustainability, so they can achieve the results they want."

www.ele-na.com







Treetop oasis

Elevated high above a national park, the luxurious Kotiyagala Resort is a lush sanctuary from which to explore Sri Lanka

Deep in the heart of Yala, Sri Lanka's second largest and most visited national park, is Kotiyagala Resort, a jungle sanctuary unlike any other in the region, or indeed the country. Built in 2024, Kotiyagala Resort, with its stunning views of the Indian Ocean, seamlessly merges supreme luxury with the natural wilderness of the bordering safari park, all while ensuring minimal environmental impact.

The 12 villas, which range from one to three bedrooms, and the four one-bedroom suites are elevated 15 feet above the forest floor, and the whole resort is accessible via a walkway that makes guests feel as if they are strolling through the canopy of the trees. Each villa features a private deck and pool, offering stunning views of the surrounding natural wonders. "The decks look straight out at the wildlife," says Shakun Bulathsinhala, a director of the hotel, "so even from the pools, you see a lot of it. When the resort was being constructed, we wanted to ensure that the wildlife, which includes elephants, wild boars, sambar and a variety of birds, was not disturbed and continues to visit their areas. This is why the villas were constructed above the jungle floor."

While the rooms and villas that comprise the seven-acre Kotiyagala Resort place guests near the exotic mammals and birds it is home to, the elevation of the resort simultaneously offers an unrivalled sense of peace and serenity, so all that is heard is the gentle rustling of leaves and calming birdsong. "From the get-go," says Shakun, "we wanted to create something that was both elevated and sustainable. It does not impose on the wild, and thereby respects the environment."

The villas and the Presidential suite are also the height of luxury, combining contemporary design with rustic charm. The Presidential suite is the only villa that offers a lower deck with a view of the lake, submerged by the forest floor. They all feature opulent beds, rain showers, deep-soaking tubs and modern amenities such as 55in HDTVs. For guests who need to work remotely, a dedicated workspace is available. However, Kotiyagala Resort is primarily a place to unwind, offering guided safaris and nature walks, as well as relaxation in the resort's exclusive and serene Ayurveda Spa, where ancient practices meet modern luxury.

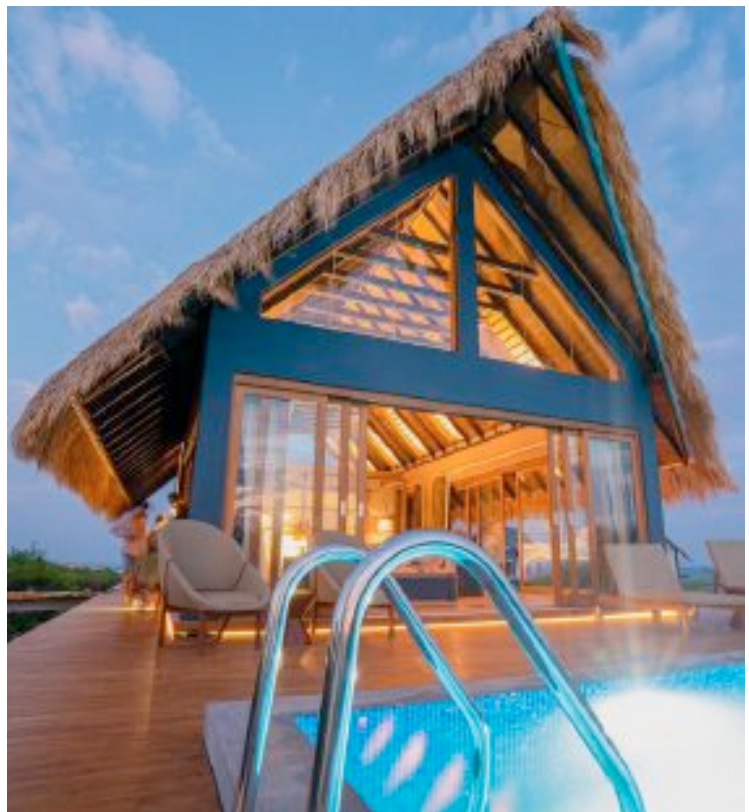
The property also features unique amenities such as the Storm Room, a darkened space with a hot tub where guests experience the sensory sensation of a storm with splashing water and strobe lighting. There is also a cooling and invigorating Ice Room and a state-of-the-art

gym that offers jungle views through its floor-to-ceiling windows. The restaurant features personalised dining with Sri Lankan and international cuisine served in a magical setting surrounded by trees.

While guests may be reluctant to leave the resort, Kotiyagala encourages exploration of Sri Lanka's wonders. Tours can include visits to lush tea plantations, the famous Ella waterfalls in the mountains, and the iconic Nine Arches Bridge. Additionally, guests can venture to the coastal city of Galle, a Unesco World Heritage site renowned for its historic fort, sandy beaches and seafood, or the crystal-clear waters of Hiriketiy Beach, all around a 90-minute drive away.

"Our goal" says Shakun, "is not only to welcome guests into Kotiyagala or Yala, but also to showcase the entirety of Sri Lanka. We want our resort to serve as a base for guests to discover the island's beauty while enjoying luxury and the exotic wilderness here."

www.kotiyagala.com



The mountain air

Alpine scenery and luxury make for a perfect all-seasons retreat at the family-run Leni Mountain Appartements and Chalet in the Austrian Tyrol

The Austrian Tyrol is a spectacular part of the world, with outstanding natural beauty capable of rejuvenating the mind and body at any time of the year. It is also the idyllic home of Marco Arnold and his family, who live in the prominent ski resort of Sölden on the Italian border and are devoted to bringing refinement to the rugged outdoors. They are the owners of Leni Mountain Appartements & Chalet, as well as a popular mountain café and bar and the local Cervo Restaurant.

“Sölden is famed for world-class skiing, but it also has fantastic hiking, downhill mountain-biking and lots of other outdoor activities in summer, for all ages and abilities,” says Marco. For those seeking sun, fresh air and mountain scenery, there are 30 kilometres of signposted hiking trails, well-maintained trails for mountain bikes and e-bikes, as well as guided rock climbing.

Sölden’s extended tourist season, from winter to summer, is the result of a concerted effort by the community to sustain local businesses and employment for the next generation, an initiative close to Marco’s heart. “My parents are in hospitality, so I’ve grown up in this sector. I trained at a prominent establishment in nearby Innsbruck and returned to Sölden to establish my own offering, which I now run with my wife and three daughters. We’re all passionate about preserving the region’s beauty and way of life, so we’ve always done everything we can to support the natural environment and our community.”

Though rooted in Sölden, Marco enjoys travel and is well versed in luxury tourism. This, and his illustrious training, is reflected throughout the Leni Mountain provision. Marco’s approach embodies the true meaning of hospitality. He and his family take genuine pride in helping their guests to get the most from their time in the Tyrol. “We’re always evolving to elevate the experience for our guests,” says Marco.

The family started the business in 2016 with their traditional, standard ski-in ski-out apartments for between two and 12 guests, which they plan to upgrade in line with their luxury offering. In 2020, they opened the luxurious four-bedroom summer chalet. This private hideaway is on a mountain high above Sölden, with breathtaking panoramas of the valley from the balconies, terraces and spa. The latter, complete with sauna and loungers for relaxing, overlooks the chalet’s beautiful and environmentally friendly natural swimming pool. The spacious wooden interior comes with a cosy fireplace and large dining table where guest can enjoy a private lunch or dining experience. The family’s newest accommodation

is an all-seasons luxury lodge, comprising four different-sized apartments and an indoor pool.

Marco’s concierge service, with his local knowledge and connections, is second to none and takes care of requests that range from excursions to thermal pools to reserving a table at a sought-after restaurant. Chalet and lodge guests have transfers to their residence, well-equipped accommodation and help with everything they need to ease themselves into mountain holiday mode. In addition to their own kitchen, they have access to private chefs and personalised catering packages, as well as spa treatments and wellness experiences, from massages to private yoga classes.

“Our guests want for nothing when they stay with us, and that is what sets us apart,” says Marco. “We offer the quality of a leading hotel, in private, elegant and authentic alpine accommodation, with a devotion to service that can only be provided by a family-run business.”

www.lenimountain.com





Peak perfection

Award-winning Hahnenkamm Lodge is the pinnacle of comfort and privacy, enviably located above one of Austria's most exclusive resorts

Belgian-born Natacha Coorevits had built a successful career as an entrepreneur. As such, she always knew how important it was to value the time spent with family and friends. In 2011, her life path changed when she had the opportunity to buy a plot of land in the picturesque Alpine town of Kitzbühel, Austria, where she had lived for 25 years. It was a chance to realise a dream of running her own ski lodge. “We had always enjoyed skiing and hiking on those mountains as a family, and my children were learning to ski there,” says Natacha. “Because of my own travelling experiences, I could see exactly what people need on a trip away.”

Natacha opened Hahnenkamm Lodge in 2015. The exclusive chalet, 1,645 metres above the town, accommodates up to 12 people in five suites. It was designed from scratch with amenities for both relaxing and skiing, and as such has been recognised as Austria's Best Ski Chalet in the 2019 World Ski Awards and every year since. In 2023, the chalet was named by the same awards as one of the top three in the world.

What makes Hahnenkamm Lodge stand out from the rest is that it feels at one with its Alpine environment. There is no road in front of the chalet, meaning guests have the luxury of direct access to the slopes for a genuine ski-in, ski-out experience and all the facilities this requires, from equipment storage to a lift. The chalet is also just 50 metres from the thrilling Hahnenkamm downhill racecourse. The location is “unrivalled,” says Natacha. “If you are out at 8am, you will be the first one on the slope and there is a beautiful light over the whole valley as you ski down.”

This chalet's mountain panorama is unbeatable, too – to be enjoyed from the expansive terrace of the lounge and dining area, and from every suite. With a sociable bar and cosy fireplace, Natacha has created the perfect space where family and friends can get together. But guests can also retreat to their own suites with a book. “We want people to enjoy privacy and being away from distractions in their own little hideaway.” The emphasis is on helping people enjoy quality time. A games console is available for children, for instance, but the team checks before arrival if the parents want it shut away so that children can spend time with their families. It is no wonder that although the minimum stay is four days, many guests choose to stay for a fortnight.

The traditional, rustic feel of Hahnenkamm Lodge belies its modern comforts, which include a luxurious spa area. A steam bath with light therapy and fragrances,

a Finnish sauna, a relaxation area with loungers and a massage room enable guests to unwind after a day on the slopes. Within this relaxing ambience, there is a massage room and also a small fitness space.

A private chef is on hand to serve up everything from breakfast to candlelit dinners accompanied by fine wines. The menu is adapted to guests' preferences, whether that is hearty Austrian fare or Italian, French or Asian. A butler, lodge manager and housekeeper make up the rest of the team and organise additional services such as childcare, yoga classes, ski lessons and guided tours.

In the summer, visitors head out straight from the chalet on the extensive hiking trails, while a network of cycle trails is suitable for both e-bikes and mountain bikes. The nearby lake offers a refreshing dip. Whatever guests choose to do, the experience “is very customised,” says Natacha. “This is one of the things that makes us special.”

www.hahnenkamm-lodge.com





Best-kept secret

Soneva welcomes a new retreat into its family of barefoot luxury resorts, Soneva Secret, on an untouched island in the Maldives

Soneva is renowned for its luxurious resorts in the Maldives and Thailand where a commitment to sustainability is as important as the wellness experience. “We like to inspire our guests and give them a little bit more than just a holiday,” says General Manager Josje van Engelen. “They will have a chance to reset the mind, enjoy the healthy and delicious food and reach a deeper level of relaxation.”

The Soneva group of resorts was founded in 1995 by the British hotelier and barefoot luxury pioneer Sonu Shivdasani and his wife, Eva. Soneva Secret, on the remote island of Haa Dhaalu in the Maldives, opened in 2024 – the newest addition to the fold. It joins Soneva Fushi and Soneva Jani, also in the Maldives, Thailand’s Soneva Kiri and the luxury yacht *Soneva in Aqua* that sails the Indian Ocean. “We are always evolving,” says Van Engelen. “Many of our guests come back every year to experience our new ideas and see life from a different angle.”

Soneva’s sustainable approach might not be immediately obvious to guests, but it runs through every aspect of the operation at each resort. Soneva Secret, for example, is 90 per cent carbon-free and powered predominantly by solar power. The group’s Waste to Wealth scheme repurposes items – turning them into glass dishes or artwork, while aluminium tins are melted down and made into doorknobs and handles. Food waste is composted and almost all other waste is recycled, so very little leaves the island to be processed elsewhere.

“When we bring guests to our Waste to Wealth centres, they often take that knowledge back home with them and approach waste differently,” says Van Engelen. Soneva also educates people in local communities to recycle rather than burn waste, and waste is reduced on all resorts by avoiding hotel products such as disposable slippers; this is also part of Sonu’s “barefoot” approach, in that shoes should be left at home so guests can fully relax.

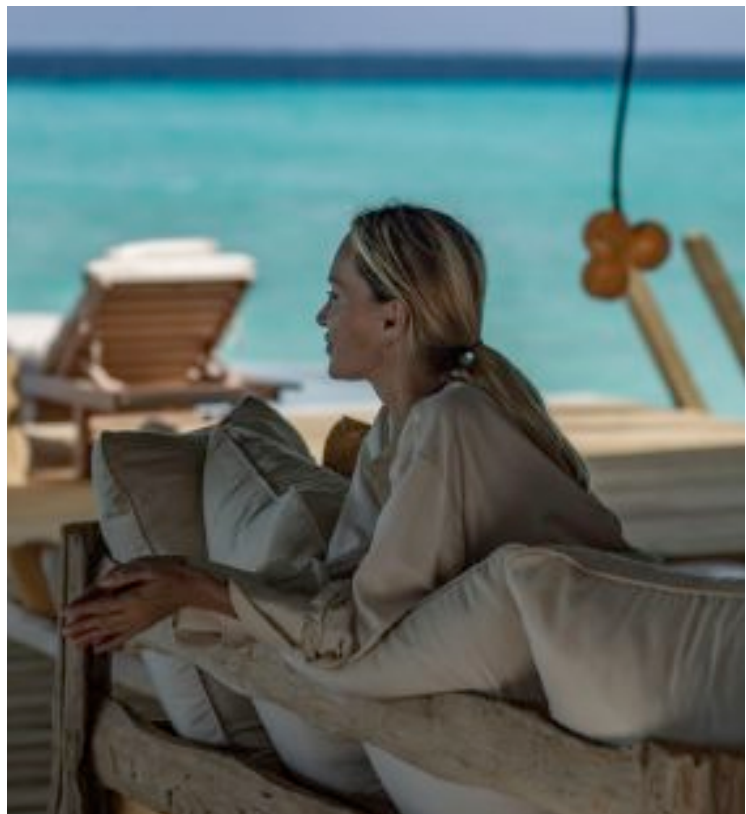
Through the Soneva Foundation, the group helps to restore wildlife and its habitat. In 2022, the foundation launched a large-scale project to regenerate 20 hectares of reef at Soneva Fushi. Nature gives the resorts “a unique sense of place”, and natural, local materials are incorporated into the designs, with rooms created around existing trees rather than removing them. “You know when you are in the Maldives, because you can feel that in the property,” says Van Engelen.

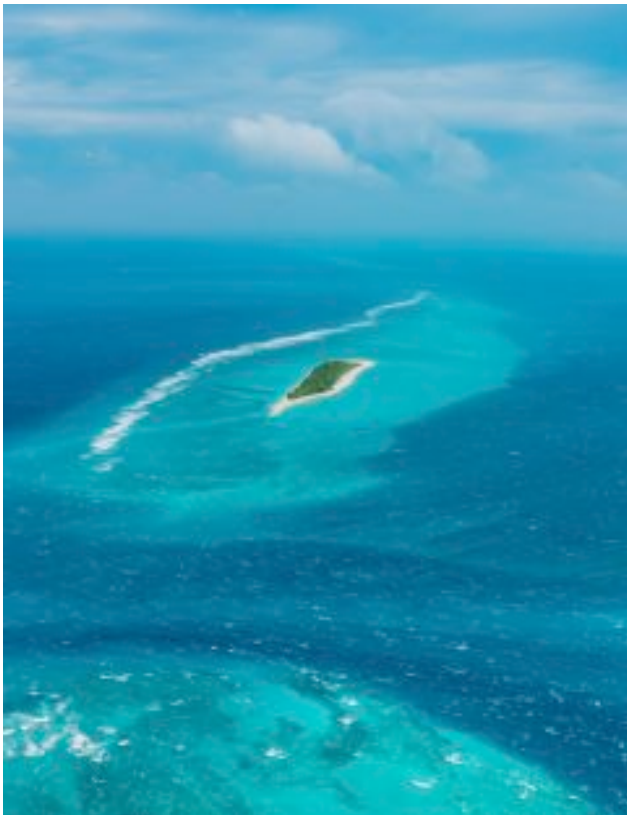
This reconnection with nature is at the heart of Soneva’s wellness centres and spas, from the soothing

settings to the treatments, which include ayurvedic and naturopathic practices and Chinese medicine. “We don’t offer regular spa treatments or facials,” explains Van Engelen. “Soneva offers a unique, holistic approach, combining the new world and the old world.”

While each location has its own qualities, Soneva Secret stands out for its remoteness, 40 kilometres from the nearest resort. Among this untouched beauty, guests can swim alongside manta rays, dolphins and turtles. “It is like the Maldives was 20 years ago,” says Van Engelen. Yet guests can visit a nearby island to sample authentic Maldivian culture and cuisine, or use the services of a private chef, while a “barefoot guardian” and “barefoot assistant” – a butler and housekeeper, respectively – attend each of the 14 overwater and island villas. “The natural beauty of the island along with the personal service at Secret means we can create unique, rare experiences for our guests.”

www.soneva.com





The Venetian experience

The Gritti Palace is at the heart of Venetian high society; drawn to its historic beauty and 21st-century conveniences

The Gritti Palace overlooks the Grand Canal in Venice and is sumptuously appointed among some of the city's most renowned landmarks, but this historic five-star hotel has long been a destination in its own right. Cultural icons and global "cosmocrats" gather here to relax and enjoy the uniquely glamorous and artistic ambience that has thrived at the palazzo for centuries.

"The Gritti Palace enjoys an excellent location in this beautiful city, but it's the hotel's place in the community and in the hearts of our guests and team members that makes it particularly special," says Paolo Lorenzoni, General Manager. "These relationships have developed over many years, some spanning several generations of a family."

Since 1475, the building has continued to evolve, from the residence of Doge Andrea Gritti to a fashionable retreat for prominent writers, artists and stars of stage and screen. Today, the hotel is an exclusive destination within The Luxury Collection brand. "Throughout this

evolution, the relationships have remained as integral to the fabric of this elegant building as the revered artwork and antiques that adorn it," says Paolo.

The personal touch is seen throughout the hotel, from the friendly, attentive service to the meticulous renovation in 2013, which created 82 luxurious rooms, many with beautiful views of the Grand Canal; 11 are individually styled signature suites that pay homage to important Venetian events and notable guests of the hotel and palazzo, including Ernest Hemingway, Somerset Maugham and John Ruskin. Local artisans and craftspeople restored the hotel to its original charm and elegance, discreetly infusing it with luxurious modern comforts and technology, while superior flood protection has been integrated to safeguard the building for guests and future generations.

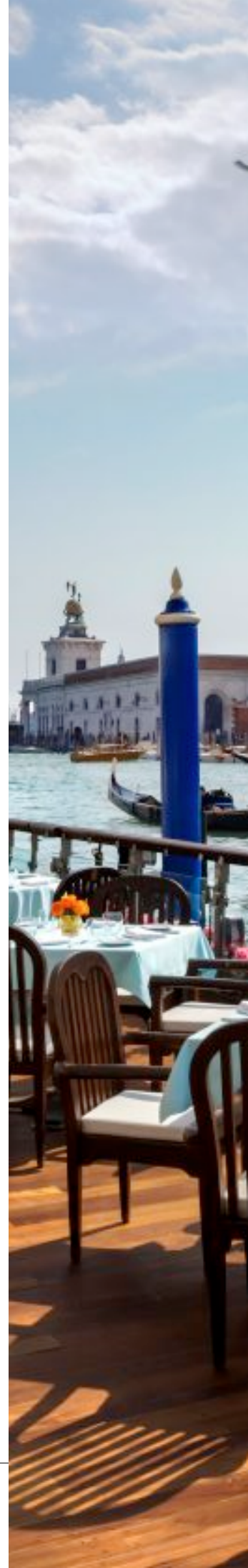
The Gritti Palace's local, ethical approach to cuisine draws on its place in Venetian society, with fresh produce from the city's markets, growers and fishermen expertly crafted into traditional Italian dishes with a contemporary twist by Executive Chef Alberto Fol and his brigade. In addition to the renowned Club del Doge Restaurant and Grand Canal-side dining terrace, the hotel's world-class culinary offering includes the popular Gritti Epicurean School, where guests enjoy cookery classes, wine tasting and a private chef's table experience.

The hotel's connection to the local community is evident in its fervent support of cultural projects. This involvement has led to reciprocal opportunities, enabling guests to immerse themselves in Venetian culture through exclusive activities such as bespoke artisan workshops or magical after-hours experiences in iconic venues. By putting people at the heart of the hotel, The Gritti Palace has received hundreds of positive reviews and messages of thanks written to members of staff.

"The Gritti Palace has a prestigious heritage among high society, and young trendsetters still choose to eat, drink, celebrate and stay here because the hotel not only endures, it evolves," says Paolo. The hotel has a state-of-the-art gym, an elegant Sisley Paris-branded spa, along with event and experience spaces, and an Aquariva Super speedboat for the exclusive use of guests. The Riva Lounge and Bar Longhi are where the influential come to enjoy cocktails against a backdrop of captivating sunsets and sophisticated nightlife.

"Venice is an ancient city, but it is also creative and innovative," says Paolo, "so it continues to attract the cultured elite. The people making history today can usually be found at The Gritti Palace."

www.thegrittipalace.com





At peace in the Camargue

L'Estelle en Camargue offers a journey back in time and total immersion in luxury, culture and wild nature

Set within a protected natural area of Provence in the South of France, L'Estelle en Camargue invites guests to switch off and experience harmony with nature. Rich in culture and history, the area is famous for its wild horses, bulls and colourful flamingos. It was during a holiday 30 years ago that hotelier Philipp Genner first fell in love with its unspoilt beauty – and later an opportunity arose to run a hotel in this idyllic spot.

Philipp took over the management of the hotel in 1995. “It is a resort where you can find peace,” he says. “Guests can get away from it all and enjoy the quiet here, in a good ambience. We have a piano bar and a sundeck – there are many places to just be present.”

Located on the outskirts of the village of Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, in the region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, the hotel has 20 rooms and suites and a two-hectare estate. The individually decorated, spacious guest rooms are all on the ground floor with sliding doors that open onto private patios overlooking the hotel's lake, or onto terraces within the Mediterranean garden by the pool. From here, visitors are well positioned to soak in the panorama of the beautiful and tranquil Camargue marshlands.

With large windows and terraces, the hotel's dining options are also ideal for enjoying the views during breakfast or lunch. Chef Sven Fuhrmann treats guests and local diners to Provençal flavours and refined cuisine in gourmet restaurant La Table de L'Estelle, and provides a buffet brunch packed with delicious French pastries, cheeses and cold meats. There is also a bistro for informal lunch and a Sunset Lounge bar that hosts music events.

The hotel's heated outdoor infinity pool, which is open from April to October, and hot tub are perfect for relaxing. Further facilities include a tennis court and a pétanque court. Guests can take a leisurely walk on the beach, which is just two kilometres away, or opt for a more energetic excursion, discovering local wildlife on horseback or by opting for a 4x4 adventure. The village is known as the “cradle of gypsy culture”, and in early spring guests can experience the local festival complete with traditional music and ceremonies. An ornithological park, which lies at the village entrance, is ideal for spotting interesting bird species. Compared with some tourist spots in the South of France, the area is not heavily built-up or developed, and a trip there can feel like a journey back in time. The hotel occasionally holds special events for guests, which in the past have included a celebration of Rolls-Royce's centenary year.

With a staff of 30, L'Estelle en Camargue aims to offer the same level of service found in much larger hotels. Attention to detail is paramount, and everything is kept to a high standard while retaining a personal touch. The hotel also operates sustainably where possible, avoiding waste and providing charging points for electric vehicles.

While L'Estelle en Camargue is a luxurious five-star hotel, Philipp says that it has simplicity at its heart and the feel of a guesthouse. Visitors often praise the team's friendliness, competence and passionate commitment, along with the beauty of the location. In the future, he hopes to offer “continuous improvement” through small changes, such as the interior of the rooms.

“We have found our niche, and we want to keep our philosophy,” he says. “Guests from everywhere are welcome, and we always do our best to offer an unforgettable stay.”

www.hotelestelle.com





The ideal hideaway

Berghoferin Fine Hotel & Hideaway in the Dolomites is discreetly refined, and a delight for the culturally savvy

The charming remodelling of the Berghoferin Fine Hotel & Hideaway in Italy's South Tyrol took its inspiration from far and wide. The textiles and colourful patterns and prints of Viennese architect Josef Frank brought an eclectic, homely approach to the interior and its handcrafted furnishings. From England came the refined style and atmosphere of a private club or country manor, while high-quality local materials such as the warm Swiss pine added a sense of place.

A love of art and culture is threaded throughout this private estate, 1500 metres high in a secluded hamlet among the spectacular scenery of the Dolomites. When it was built in the 1960s, the Berghoferin had some 30 bedrooms, but the current owners wanted to provide the sort of personalised, bespoke service that is only possible in a small hotel. The property was transformed into a boutique hotel of 13 individually decorated suites. Most have two bathrooms, south-facing patios and balconies, providing expansive personal space for guests to relax and refresh while soaking up the breathtaking panorama of the surrounding peaks.

Elsewhere in the hotel, there are lounges, a library and the all-day Zeno's bar – all with quiet corners, nooks and crannies. “There is always somewhere to hide at hotel Berghoferin,” says the hotel's spokesperson – perfect for curling up with a drink or a book. There are hundreds of books available to guests, fiction and non-fiction, classic and contemporary.

The hotel is designed for a clientele that appreciates the finest elements in life, and this is apparent in its fine dining restaurant, the Saligen. Here, the owners are constantly innovating an already outstanding offering. Sustainable produce is at the forefront of the restaurant, with the hotel building close relationships with local winemakers and suppliers. Ingredients are sourced from many small producers operating nearby. The menu itself is a showcase of traditional dishes with a contemporary touch, influenced by the unique Alpine and Mediterranean cuisine of the region. The accompanying wine list celebrates the acclaimed vineyards of the Dolomites, introducing guests to some of the finest wine in this corner of northern Italy.

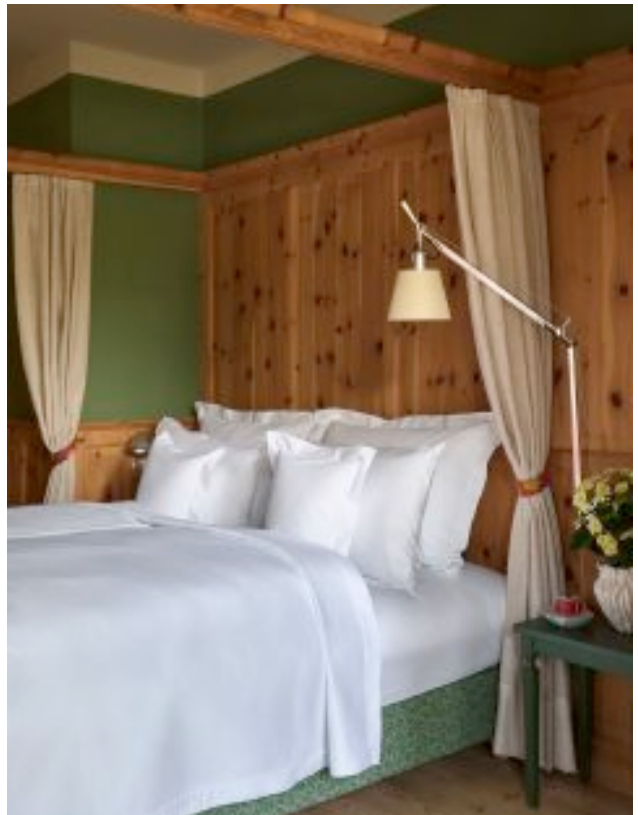
Guests come from across the world, from the US to the UK and Scandinavia, to experience the hotel's exceptional service and discretion, and to unwind from their busy lives in seclusion. Many use the hotel as a base to explore the surrounding mountains – in a landscape so beautiful it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site – with hikes in the

morning or visits to picturesque villages, followed by an afternoon of relaxation in the hotel spa. The Lido Alpin Pool & Spa, designed with a retro Palm Springs vibe that makes the most of the glorious views, features, among other amenities, a solar-heated outdoor pool, a private sauna house, a Swiss pine banya with a wood-fired stove, and also a gym and a cosy room with a fireplace. Massages and treatments are available *en plein air*, as is lunch on the terrace at the Berghoferin's Gastrothèque Alpine.

The Berghoferin is not a flashy or ostentatious place, rather “it is for people who appreciate those classic qualities such as privacy, respect for others, a love of arts and culture, and appreciation for fine food and wine,” says the hotel's spokesperson. “We are a bit old school and definitely under the radar – an ideal place for people who want to escape in a space that feels like a private home but with the services of a five-star hotel” – and where they can take comfort in the calmness of nature.

www.berghoferin.it





Opening a new door

With a track record of transforming lives in a week, Southern California's Golden Door is a health and wellness experience like no other

For over 75 years, the Golden Door retreat in Southern California has been a haven for guests seeking respite from their troubles – embracing a rejuvenating self-care routine from the moment they step through the golden doors into the serene Japanese ryokan-inspired lobby.

Kathy Van Ness, the Chief Operating Officer and General Manager, emphasises Golden Door's mission. "We aim to guide you in caring for yourself, allowing your mind and body to carry you further. In just seven days, we believe we can change your life – a sentiment echoed by the hundreds who attest to the transformative impact."

Nestled near San Diego amid rolling mountains, Golden Door spans 600 acres of lush landscapes, which include meticulously manicured gardens, bamboo forests, koi-filled ponds and citrus groves, as well as extensive hiking trails. This natural beauty serves as the backdrop for a diverse array of spa treatments, fitness classes, activities and therapy sessions, providing guests with a crucial opportunity to hit the reset button.



The resort is underpinned by a philosophy that encourages visitors to see the world in a different way. This ethos has been in place since Golden Door was founded in 1958 by "Godmother of Wellness" Deborah Szekely. Back then, the exclusive retreat welcomed Hollywood stars such as Elizabeth Taylor and Natalie Wood, and it continues to draw on its rich history, attracting an elite clientele – among them celebrities, CEOs and entrepreneurs.

The allure of the retreat extends beyond luxury, though, with daily five-mile dawn hikes offering an invigorating start to each day and fostering a renewed sense of wonder and gratitude.

Golden Door accommodates up to 40 people, with weekly stays for women or men only and a few co-ed weeks throughout the year. The programme is tailored to each guest. Before arrival, they discuss their desired outcomes, which shapes the personalised activities scheduled to their own timetable. The communal aspect is reserved for dinner, where, on the first day, everyone gathers at the same long table for introductions. Subsequently, guests form smaller groups, which enables them to mingle and create friendships, culminating in the emotional farewell on the final night.

The renowned cuisine, often sourced from the retreat's grounds, has become so legendary that Golden Door opened the Golden Door Country Store nearby to cater to enthusiasts of its granola, broths and fresh bread. The surplus organic vegetables benefit the local community.

Sustainability is a cornerstone of Golden Door's values, with a commitment to support both the community and the environment. Plastic bottles are eschewed, and the resort actively lobbied to preserve a nearby mountain, securing the land to safeguard it for the community's future. Profits from Golden Door contribute to children's charities, aligning with the company's ethos of investing in people for a better future.

As Van Ness says, the essence of Golden Door lies in its soul and purpose, encouraging guests to ponder the broader questions of their life's direction and legacy. When guests leave, they often claim it to be the best experience of their lives.

www.goldendoor.com





A symphony of triumphs

The Clearwater Bay Golf & Country Club is committed to delivering the highest value to its members and the community

A private members' club on the spectacular Clear Water Bay Peninsula in Hong Kong has brought new meaning to a good round of golf. Those who play the award-winning 18-hole course at The Clearwater Bay Golf & Country Club rave about the superb course condition, the satisfying challenge and the stunning coastal scenery, all of which make for a truly exceptional experience.

The 3,000 locals who have secured coveted membership of its facilities benefit from – and contribute to – this world-class club. “The Clearwater Bay Golf & Country Club is the result of decades of commitment – to the site, to our members and to the community,” says Peter Downie, General Manager and Director of Golf.

Under his leadership, the magnificently appointed and well-equipped club has attained the prestigious Platinum Club of Asia-Pacific status and been named as one of “The Best Golf Courses in Every Country” by the global industry publication *Golf Digest* in its bi-annual review in 2016, 2018, 2020 and 2022 respectively. “The club’s founding objective was to provide top-notch yachting, recreation and dining services in a friendly manner that consistently exceeded the expectations of members, guests and visitors,” says Downie. “It is thanks to the incredible partnership between our fantastic staff and members that we have achieved this, and so much more.”

Founded in 1982, The Clearwater Bay Golf & Country Club is a not-for-profit organisation, with all income reinvested responsibly for the benefit of members and the local region. In 2004, for example, Peter oversaw the construction of a reverse osmosis plant at the club to irrigate its 320 acres of land. Chairman Jack Wong is thrilled with its far-reaching effects. “Not only has the golf course thrived, but local ecosystems have flourished, too, especially migrant birds, butterflies and bees,” he says. In addition, the club is looking into using food waste as fertiliser. Sustainable energy is also a focus, with the aim of eventually achieving zero carbon emissions, so the club has a positive impact on the environment.

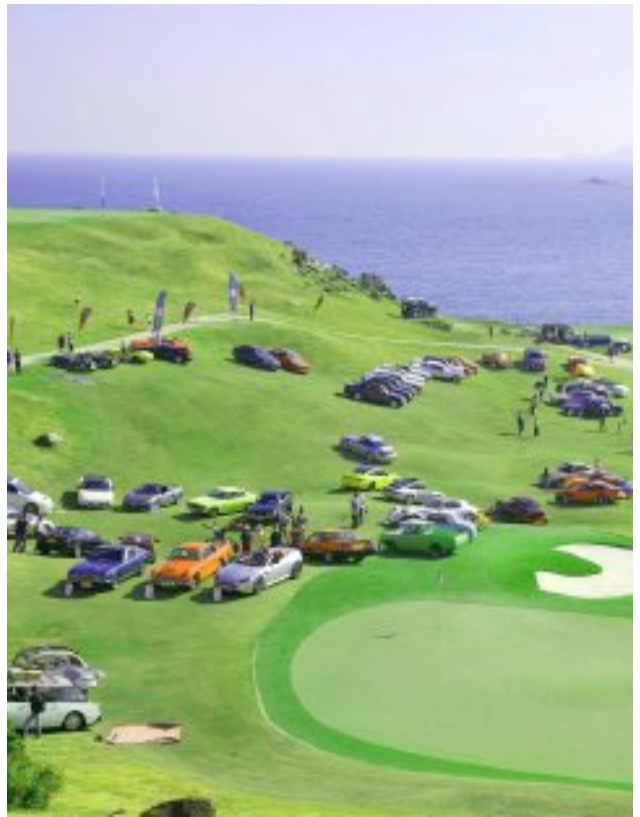
The establishment of the Community Outreach & Charity Programme in 2003 reflects the club’s commitment to philanthropy. The club and its members have contributed £21 million to charities and good causes since its inception, primarily through this programme, which is guided by four pillars: family, wellness, neighbourhood and environment. “We’re privileged to have such a compassionate membership,” says Jack. “They support us hosting public events, including sailing, sport and

golfing experiences for young people, and wellness and social sessions for the elderly. They also get involved in fundraising themselves and contribute to initiatives such as donating golf clubs and sports equipment to communities in need, locally and further afield in South East Asia. Members are fundamental to the special nature of the club – as are the 250 staff, who create a relaxing, restorative and welcoming home away from home for members and their families.

In 2024, Peter was awarded Master Manager status by the Professional Golfers’ Association, making him one of only 63 individuals to receive this accolade. “I’ve gathered a very talented and committed group of individuals and together we’ve created something transcendent,” he says. “It’s our offering of fabulous food, service and recreational facilities that, set against a breathtaking natural backdrop, render such a great symphony of triumphs for our members and community alike.”

www.cwbgolf.org





A Seychelles sanctuary

Enveloped in a lush garden with private access to a pristine beach, Jastam House in the Seychelles is a tropical paradise

When Shana Inch's parents made a short stopover in the Seychelles on their honeymoon, they fell in love with its untouched charm and decided to build a home there. Twenty-five years later, Jastam House stands as a testament to their adoration for this tropical archipelago in the Indian Ocean. A majestic villa hidden away among palm fronds, it is a place where guests come for privacy, luxury and relaxation.

"The property was a coconut plantation back then, and completely deserted," says Shana, who now co-owns Jastam House. "We had to build everything from scratch."

Located a stone's throw from the Indian Ocean on the island of Mahé, a 20-minute drive from the capital, the colonial-style residence hosts up to 12 people. It is surrounded by a lush garden with 150 endemic species of plants and more than two dozen exotic Coco de Mer palm trees. "My father has a passion for botanical gardens," says Shana. "He wanted to create his own Garden of Eden. It has taken about 20 years to flourish."

From the garden, guests have direct access to a one-kilometre stretch of white sand beach, or they can also relax in total seclusion by the pool. "You are not allowed to build anything taller than a palm tree in the Seychelles, so the house is completely hidden from view on both beach and roadside," says Shana.

Guests have the run of the two-floor house, comprising three bedrooms, a Moroccan-style lounge, a billiards room, library, large terrace and an upstairs office, and can eat in either the formal dining room or kitchen. A two-minute walk from the house along the garden's winding stone paths, there is further guest accommodation – three fully equipped bungalows with views of the surrounding greenery and outdoor showers.

A team of 20 staff, including a private chef, are on hand to cater to guests' whims. Many have been a part of Jastam House since the beginning. This adds to the homely feel, as does the owners' hand-picked collection of African and Oceanic art as well as colonial-era antique furniture that decorate the house and give it a unique character. "It really is a family home," says Shana. "People appreciate that personal touch and getting to know the history of Jastam House."

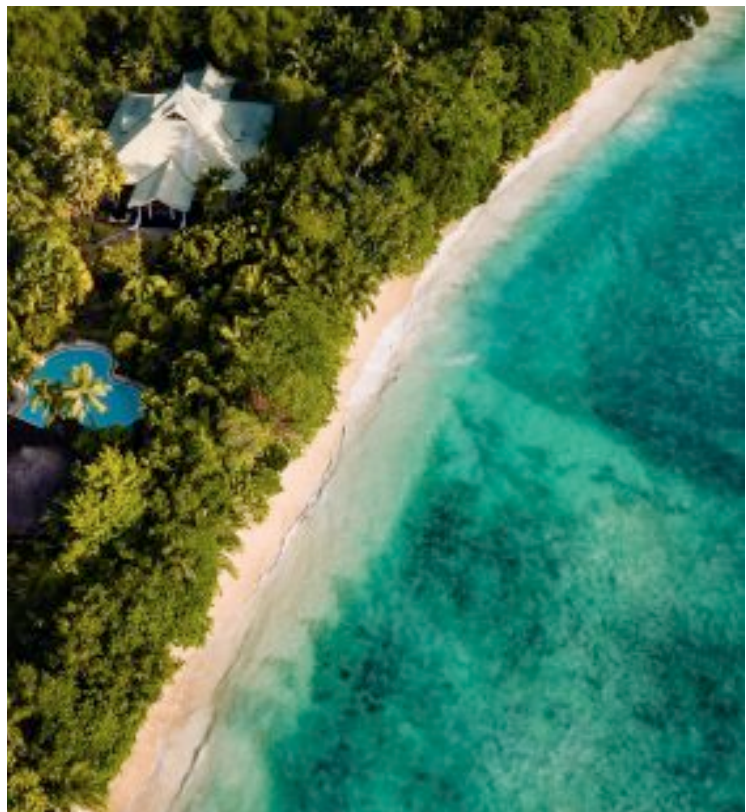
Both inside and outside, the house provides a choice of formal or relaxed options for dining and entertaining. The garden's wine cellar offers an array of prestigious

wines, and there is a substantial whisky collection. The private chef uses fresh, organic ingredients in his authentic creole cuisine and is happy to cook fish that guests have caught themselves on fishing trips.

A gym overlooking the green grounds is the ideal spot to work off the calories. Massages and private Pilates or yoga classes are also available, while a surfing instructor is ready to help guests master the waves. Other activities include boat trips, snorkelling, diving, kitesurfing and ziplining.

The pristine natural environment that surrounds the grounds of Jastam House is home to many rare plants and species of wildlife, such as birds, lizards and tortoises. "One of my favourite things to do is go on one of the many beautiful hikes on the island," says Shana. "You can visit a waterfall, or trek to the top of the island's peaks and see views over the entirety of Mahé. It is a unique and special destination."

www.jastamhouse.com









Macao calling

The Londoner Macao resort has recreated the charm of the British capital and its world-famous hospitality in a glittering corner of Asia

Few cities embody luxury quite like London, from the refined clubs of Mayfair and St James's to the bespoke tailors of Savile Row and Jermyn Street. Yet on the vibrant Cotai Strip in Macao, known as the Las Vegas of the East, The Londoner Macao has reproduced not only this high-end ambience, but also breathtaking recreations of London's famous landmarks, including a life-size Big Ben, as well as British icons of hospitality and design. "We are excited to promote Macao and introduce our latest integrated resort, The Londoner Macao – a tribute to the beauty and history of London. We invite you to come discover the best of it in Macao," said Grant Chum, Chief Executive Officer and President of Sands China Ltd, the resort's owner and operator.

The themed resort includes shopping, dining, health clubs, spas, outdoor swimming pools and entertainment. The most iconic of its five hotels, The Londoner Hotel, opened in 2021 and features a spectacular facade modelled on the Houses of Parliament, which transforms into a backdrop at night for a dazzling light and sound show. Once guests step inside, they will discover a light-filled atrium echoing the Victorian Crystal Palace that housed the Great Exhibition. Further London touches range from elegant interiors that reference Claridge's hotel to statues.

There are some 600 spacious luxury suites at The Londoner Hotel, all with foyers, separate living spaces and large bedrooms. Chesterfield sofas and leather armchairs are complemented by paintings and photography to provide a bright, contemporary feel. The most luxurious of the suites are the 14 exclusive Suites by David Beckham, Macao's first celebrity-designed suites. While they are created in collaboration with the renowned London

interior design company David Collins Studio, they embody Beckham's personal taste, as well as his experience of staying in the world's finest hotels. In 2021, they were named Best Hotel Suite in Asia Pacific at The International Hotel & Property Awards.

A Londoner himself, Beckham is on hand (via a hologram) to take guests on a virtual black cab ride, after which they can climb on board an original 1966 London bus parked in front of the resort or imitate the Beatles at the famous Abbey Road zebra crossing. For a touch of royal grandeur, the hotel lobby houses a perfect replica of the Diamond Jubilee State Coach recently used during the Coronation of King Charles. The British theme continues at Churchill's Table and the Gordon Ramsay Pub & Grill; for Chinese cuisine, there is Zhou Xiaoyan's two Michelin-starred The Huaiyang Garden, while Michelin-selected restaurant The Mews serves Thai, and Chiado offers authentic Portuguese fare. In addition, hotel guests have access to exclusive club The Residence – a series of stylish lounges, dining rooms and a bar that draws on classic London homes and British heritage, from royalty to West End theatres and the arts. The rooms are the ideal spot to enjoy international buffet breakfast with signature dim sum, afternoon tea, drinks and evening cocktails.

A colourful reimagination of Buckingham Palace's Changing of the Guard ceremony takes place in the hotel lobby six days a week, combining special effects and LED screens with bearskin-wearing "Scots Guards" and trumpeters. Alternatively, guests can indulge in retail therapy at the resort's upscale mall, Shoppes at Londoner, where the 150 fashion and lifestyle boutiques conjure up the feel of London, adding to the extraordinary experience.

www.londonermacao.com

3.

*Flawless
elegance*

*FASHION AND
JEWELLERY*





STYLE AND SUBSTANCE

*JOHN BLATCHLEY'S PASSION FOR
CAR DESIGN RESULTED IN SOME
OF THE MOST ELEGANT MODELS
IN THE HISTORY OF MOTORING.
DAVIDE BASSOLI PAYS TRIBUTE
TO THE CREATOR OF THE SILVER
CLOUD AND THE SILVER SHADOW*



JF0 290



Previous page | A 1956 model of the refined, John Blatchley-designed Silver Cloud

Left | The Rolls-Royce designer's initial sketch of what would become the Silver Cloud

Opposite | Blatchley works on a quarter-scale model of a Park Ward touring limousine for the Phantom V

John Blatchley was a 12-year-old pupil at a Chesterfield boarding school when he was diagnosed with rheumatic fever. "I was more or less a total invalid for three years," he said. "So I missed out on a proper education." Those bed-ridden teenage years were not wasted, however. While he was being cared for at home by his mother, Blatchley began drawing and building cardboard models of fantasy car designs. This boyhood fascination developed into an ambition to become a motor-car stylist.

Born John Polwhele Blatchley in London on 1 July 1913, his passion for design, coupled with his natural artistic flair, led Blatchley to study at the Chelsea College of Aeronautical and Automobile Engineering in London and later at the Regent Street Polytechnic.

In 1935, Blatchley's impressive portfolio of drawings was shown to car stylist AF McNeil, Chief Designer of the Chelsea-based coachbuilders Gurney Nutting. As well as serving several members of the Royal Family, Gurney Nutting had many famous and high-profile customers such as Sir Malcolm Campbell, who commissioned the company to build the body for his famous land-speed record-breaking Bluebird. McNeil saw great potential in Blatchley, and went on to become his teacher and friend for many years.

When McNeil moved on to another coachbuilding firm, James Young, Blatchley was appointed Chief Designer at Gurney Nutting at the age of just 23. "It was a wonderful learning process," said Blatchley. "We rarely made two car bodies alike. I would make a 1:16 scale drawing and the car would be completed in just six weeks." He produced many elegant car designs for Gurney Nutting and his talent was widely admired.

AERO DESIGN WORK

At the outbreak of the Second World War, a large number of coachbuilding firms went bankrupt, Gurney Nutting included. Because Blatchley had a heart condition he was not deemed fit enough to join the armed forces, which meant he had to find a reserve occupation.

He did this at Rolls-Royce in Hucknall, Nottinghamshire, where the company's Aero Design headquarters were located. He immediately showed his talent by redesigning the engine cowling of the Spitfire aircraft to improve its aerodynamic qualities – a development that represented no small contribution towards the war effort.

Blatchley received help in obtaining his job at Rolls-Royce through his contact with John Spedan Lewis, founder of the John Lewis Partnership. Lewis was a good friend of the parents of Blatchley's wife, Willow, even holidaying with them. As a Rolls-Royce owner, he recommended Blatchley to the company, and, fascinatingly, even tried to get him to work for John Lewis.

The story goes that Lewis heard about a stylish jacket that Blatchley wore to work. In the make-do-and-mend spirit of wartime Britain, Blatchley had retailed the jacket from a well-worn tweed coat that his mother-in-law had tried to throw away. Impressed by Blatchley's resourcefulness, Lewis promptly offered him a job as a clothes designer on double the wage he was earning at Rolls-Royce.

It was only when Blatchley mentioned the offer during a routine medical check-up that a doctor advised him a job in retail might be too stressful for someone with a heart condition. An alarmed Blatchley had second thoughts – besides, his boss, Arthur Robotham, was so horrified at the prospect of losing such a talented designer that he offered to match the salary proposed by John Lewis. It could be said that Rolls-Royce has that doctor to thank for the Silver Cloud and the Silver Shadow!

“Blatchley caught wind that Rolls-Royce and Bentley were designing a post-war range. Rolls-Royce had never built bodies for its cars, so the company needed experienced coachwork designers”





“The styling team was still headed by Evernden, but Blatchley soon emerged as the most talented designer”

Opposite | The Silver Cloud standard saloon in an early photograph from 1955

Right | The Styling Department in Crewe, (left to right) Cecily Jenner, John Blatchley and Bill Allen, work on a model of the Phantom V



CLAN FOUNDRY DAYS

While working at Hucknall, Blatchley caught wind of rumours that Rolls-Royce and Bentley were designing a post-war range of models. Rolls-Royce had never built bodies for its cars, so the company needed experienced coachwork designers. Blatchley showed his portfolio to the Styling Department team, who were impressed and welcomed the young designer with open arms. So, in 1946, Blatchley moved to Clan Foundry at Belper in Derbyshire, home of the Motor Car Division's Experimental Department headed by Ivan Evernden.

The new range of cars would have a standard steel body built by the Pressed Steel Company of Cowley, near Oxford. They would then be assembled, mounted on the chassis, painted, trimmed and finished in the Rolls-Royce factory in Crewe, where the Merlin engines had been built during the war.

At Clan Foundry, Blatchley saw the prototype of the future Bentley Mk VI at an advanced stage, almost ready to be passed over to the Pressed Steel Company. The styling of the Mk VI body was designed by Evernden, but Blatchley was a little bemused by the shape of the prototype, which he thought lacked elegance and sophistication. Blatchley arrived too late in the process to radically change the car's styling. However, he was able to make some design enhancements to the window lines, the horn grilles and the roof. Of more significance was Blatchley's design of the Mk VI's entire interior, the style and quality of which compared favourably with the achievements of the best coachbuilders.

A few years later, Blatchley was given the chance to work on developing the exterior design of the standard steel models, including designing the larger boot for the Bentley R Type and the Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn. His major tasks were to increase the luggage capacity of the saloons and to modernise the styling of the cars before a completely new range of standard steel saloons could be introduced.

Blatchley redesigned the boot and tail end to give a more balanced appearance to the car. He also altered the run of the car's waistline so that those cars painted in the increasingly popular two-tone colour schemes had their rear wings included in the lower of the two colours. This gave the illusion of extra length to the car and provided it with more balance in its styling.

DESIGNING THE "NEW LOOK"

After the Second World War, a new Rolls-Royce Styling Department was established at Duffield Bank House in Derbyshire, a Georgian property near Belper that had been used by Rolls-Royce before the war as short-term accommodation for important customers. The department started work on designs for a completely new range of standard steel saloons. The styling team was still headed by Evernden, but Blatchley soon emerged as the most talented designer. The first design was called DBH – the initials of Duffield Bank House – but remained as a quarter-scale model only (apparently the model was fitted with dummy number plates bearing Blatchley's initials, "JPB"). Other design concepts followed, with names such as "Farnham", "California" and "Estoril", their styling largely dictated by the company's desire to use common components across the range of its new models.

A more developed design project was given the name Mark VIII (or "New Look" as it was referred to in the factory). The design was no larger than the other vehicles being manufactured at that time but used the internal space more intelligently. In formulating his designs, Blatchley was influenced by American styling, particularly by cars such as the Packard Clipper. His objective was to give the car a semblance of tradition in details such as the radiator and the bonnet, but to have the wings incorporated into the rest of the body to give a more modern feel.



The end result was innovative in its styling, but lacked the personality required by Rolls-Royce. Blatchley's later work on his designs of the Mark VIII would eventually become the Silver Cloud. However, the Mark VIII itself was too advanced for its day to be accepted by Rolls-Royce, especially in the treatment of the wing line.

At one board meeting, Blatchley showed the drawing of the Mark VIII to the Chairman, Ernest Hives. "I spent years working on one full-size mock of the New Look car," said Blatchley, "only to be told when it was finished to put it on the bonfire." He remembered Hives telling him, "Blatchley, you design the car around the radiator!"

THE CLOUD TAKES SHAPE

In 1951, the Styling Department moved to Crewe, where the Silver Dawn and the Mk VI were being produced. Blatchley was made Chief Stylist, which was a big promotion, but he had to give the board of directors a quick and acceptable alternative to the unsuccessful Mark VIII project. The Bentley Mk VI "Lightweight" design, recently introduced by HJ Mulliner, was one example of a modernised body design for the Styling Department to consider.

But Blatchley knew exactly what he wanted to create. He had the entire design in his mind and drew some sketches. When he showed these to the Managing Director, Dr Frederick Llewellyn Smith, he immediately received a positive response and was asked to prepare a definitive design for the next board meeting. On a piece of grey card, Blatchley traced the lines of a car that would become one of the most beautiful in automotive history. Apart from some minor details around the boot, the bumpers and the side lamps, the shape of the future Silver Cloud was born. The design was given the code name "Siam".

At the next board meeting, everybody agreed on the beauty of the new project and Blatchley was given the task of preparing a quarter-scale model. His staff included designers Bill Allen and Cecily Jenner, with the latter succeeded by Martin Bourne, and in 1955 the successful Silver Cloud and S Series models were launched.

PARK WARD VARIANTS

Three years earlier, Blatchley had also become the Chief Stylist of Park Ward, the coachbuilding company that had been taken over by Rolls-Royce in 1939. There were initial problems in reorganising the department, due to the different approaches adopted by Blatchley and the coachbuilder's co-founder Charlie Ward, who was assisted by chief draughtsman Peter Wharton. However, Blatchley's more methodical approach had a positive effect, in particular with the R Type Continental chassis. Park Ward introduced very elegant drophead and two-door saloon variants which, with altered dimensions, were also used on the S Type Continental chassis. These cars had a new lightweight frame, based on aircraft design techniques, which weighed around 40 per cent less than those of previous models.

Blatchley also designed the Silver Cloud Long Wheelbase and the Phantom V on behalf of the Willesden-based coachbuilder. Much of the former's design was based on his experiences with the California and Estoril projects. An adaptation of the Pressed Steel Company's body shell, four inches was added to the original's length and Blatchley moved the rear quarter-lights from the windows to the rear pillars, giving the whole layout a feeling of lightness.

The Phantom V was introduced in 1959 and was fitted with the new V8 engine. A "parade" car designed to be driven by a chauffeur, its styling was brand new and the body was made entirely of aluminium. Updated in 1962, it was given larger rear pillars and the upper part of the body was revised. In fact, the entire Rolls-Royce



Opposite | A Park Ward touring limousine Silver Cloud with long wheelbase chassis

Above | A Bentley Continental S Type sports saloon, also bodied by Park Ward

“On a piece of grey card, Blatchley traced the lines of a car that would become one of the most beautiful in automotive history”



Opposite | A 1979 Silver Shadow II with bespoke Brewster Green paint scheme

Right | Blatchley in his later years alongside one of his elegant creations, a Silver Cloud



and Bentley range was given a style update in October of that year with the introduction of twin headlamps – a move that Blatchley was hesitant about initially but which he later preferred.

MONOCOQUE DESIGN

In 1954, even before the Silver Cloud had been launched, Blatchley had already begun work on a new generation of cars that employed monocoque technology, whereby the chassis and body were integrated. The project would herald a radical technical revolution at the Crewe factory. The time had come for Blatchley to design a car with straight flanks and with wings that were incorporated into the body. The prototype designs were named “Tibet” for the Rolls-Royce and “Burma” for the Bentley. The two projects merged to become the SY project, which subsequently became the Silver Shadow and T Series of cars. Launched in 1965, these models would remain in production for 16 years, becoming the most successful ever made by Rolls-Royce in term of sales.

Blatchley’s styling of this new range was influenced by a number of factors, including some of the other departments at Crewe. The monocoque construction and all-independent suspension required a body design with specific characteristics to accommodate the new technology, and the Sales Department team had asked him to reduce the car’s dimensions but provide more space in the cabin compartment and luggage area. In addition, they wanted the car to have an improved touring range, which meant larger fuel tanks.

For the Silver Shadow range, Blatchley’s team was also instructed to design coachbuilt drophead and fixed-head coupé bodies for HJ Mulliner and Park Ward. The Chief Stylist was determined that the design of these cars should follow his previous styling of the Silver Cloud closely, and under Blatchley’s supervision, his colleague Bill Allen designed the drophead and

fixed-head coupé versions with arching rear wings. These models were renamed the Corniche in 1971 and were so successful that they remained virtually unchanged until 1995.

A LEGACY OF STYLE

In the early 1960s, following the Silver Shadow project, Blatchley was sent to the British Motor Corporation (BMC) in Birmingham to work on a joint project called Bentley Java, based on the classic Austin Princess. Studies were undertaken using the Austin-engineered central portion of the Vanden Plas Princess with Bentley body panels in the front and rear. The idea was to produce a Bentley car in much larger quantities than had been done previously and at a considerably reduced production cost. Although one prototype was built, however, the project was withdrawn. Blatchley described that period and working with Alec Issigonis – the celebrated designer of the Mini and the Morris Minor – as “ghastly”.

Blatchley retired in March 1969 and never went back to work at Crewe. He and his wife moved to the seaside town of Hastings where they bought and restored a 16th-century cottage. He rarely talked about his time at Rolls-Royce with anyone in his new hometown – to such an extent that he even had a friend who owned a Corniche but didn’t know that Blatchley had designed the model.

It was not until the mid-1990s that Rolls-Royce and Bentley authors persuaded the former Chief Stylist to talk about his career. Blatchley had lived his boyhood dream of designing wondrous motor cars and was rightly proud of his achievements, but always remained modest. He passed away peacefully in February 2008, leaving a legacy of two unforgettable car designs: the Silver Cloud and the Silver Shadow. They are witness to his wonderful sense of style.

This article includes photography kindly provided by Bonhams, www.bonhams.com.



Making art wearable

Incorporating Viennese craftsmanship and the inspiration of famous artworks, Freywille's brilliant, enamelled jewellery wins the hearts of art lovers

Freywille is renowned for the fine quality of its enamel jewellery handcrafted in Vienna. By bringing together the skills of artists, goldsmiths and experts in enamelling, the brand creates beautiful, wearable pieces of art, with wonderfully vibrant designs inspired by some of Europe's greatest and best-loved painters.

"People who love a famous artist can have a piece of jewellery that offers a permanent reminder of their favourite works of art," explains CEO Friedrich Wille, who has been running the company since the death of its founder, the Viennese designer Michaela Frey, in 1980. "Much of our work consists of homages to famous artists, which inspire us to make completely new designs of high artistic value at a very high standard, always using fire enamel on 18-carat gold or 24-carat gold-plated mountings."

The jewellery encompasses earrings, bangles, rings, bracelets, pendants and necklaces. Alongside the jewellery range there are elegant accessories such as watches, silk scarves and fountain pens. All feature the vibrant artwork in homage to famous artists, while a second design collection interprets motifs from subjects including ancient Egypt, classical history, folklore and philosophy.

Freywille was founded by Michaela Frey in 1951. Over the years, she refined the art of enamel ornamentation, developing new enamel techniques for finer and more precise work. Friedrich was Co-Director and worked with Michaela during the 1970s as the company accountant. When he took over in 1980, he worked alongside his wife, Simone Gruenberger-Wille, to develop modern, artistically demanding designs in complex shapes.

Freywille is headquartered in the centre of Vienna in a former piano factory, once the family home of its founder. It has 35 boutiques around the world, including a flagship store in Piccadilly in the West End of London. "London is our European spearhead," says Friedrich. "It is extremely important. The store is in a very good location on Piccadilly, near the shops of St James's, the jewellers of Bond Street and galleries such as the Royal Academy of Arts.

"We want to concentrate on a small number of countries and focus our investment to win the hearts of the locals. We have already won many new customers in London as a result. We have even introduced a new design, the Piccadilly, inspired by our location."

Freywille often connects with museums or artists' estates to find inspiration for their own designs. The

company's experts then immerse themselves in the lives and works of the likes of Vincent van Gogh, Gustav Klimt, Paul Gauguin, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Alphonse Mucha, Claude Monet and Friedensreich Hundertwasser to fashion the collections dedicated to these artists. Equally brilliant in colour, other pieces come with names such as Magic Sphinx, Ode to Joy of Life, and Folkloric Masterpiece, in homage to these themes. Designs appear in miniature on the jewellery, watches and fountain pens, as well as in larger format on silk scarves, all made with the finest materials.

"Our capacity is to make new works of art," says Friedrich. "Our skills are unique. We use a very fine enamel process that creates a fine quality for our artwork, and it will look the same many years later. Our speciality is that we make artworks that you can wear, and which will live forever. This wins the hearts of people who love culture, love art and love to be different."

shop.freywille.com







Bespoke beauty

Budism Couture, a modern Cape Town maison, makes garments that are true to the traditions of French haute couture

The story of Budism Couture began when Budi Adj, a gifted designer, began making dresses for close friends. As word spread, the workload increased to such an extent that his partner, Philipp Althof, who worked in finance, jumped in to help with the growing business. Fast-forward to today and Budi, Creative Director, and Philipp, the label's Director, work out of an immaculately restored 240-year-old heritage building in Cape Town, South Africa, where they make exquisite dresses. "We believe in the age-old tradition of savoir faire and couture," says Budi.

Budi and Philipp founded their label in Hong Kong in 2014, but met more than 20 years ago in Singapore, where Budi was a student and Philipp worked in finance. Philipp was born in South Africa, of German descent, while Budi was born in Indonesia and raised in Singapore. Budi intended to study medicine but was increasingly drawn to the arts after a teacher recognised his potential. Budi moved to London to study fashion at Kingston University and the London College of Fashion. Philipp joined him in London, to study for an MBA and work in the city, before the pair moved to Switzerland and then Hong Kong, where Budi worked for the Hugo Boss brand between 2008 and 2012.

In Hong Kong, Budi was invited to design a friend's wedding dress. "Budi had never made a wedding dress before, but from then onwards the dining table became our workplace," says Philipp. "Budi made his first dress, then a dozen more." From the outset, Budism Couture had the high standards for which it became renowned, sourcing the finest fabrics and French embroidery. The breakthrough moment arrived when Budi was invited to design an elaborate and ambitious dress for a society wedding attended by more than 3,000 guests. When people saw the photos, word got out that the dress was by a new and unknown house. It made their reputation.

By then, even Philipp had been seduced by the world of high fashion. "Budi was designing this amazing dress, working every day and night," says Philipp. "One time he fell asleep and I carried on sewing all night. When we showed the dress to the client, she was in tears. As a banker, you don't make anything tangible, you deal only with numbers. There is no emotion involved. For this

dress I had done just a few stitches, but seeing the effect was incredibly moving because we had created something meaningful together."

As the business grew, Budi and Philipp relocated to South Africa. Their historic property, a landmark in Cape Town, is in the cultural hub of Heritage Square. The meticulous restoration by Peerutin Karol Architects blends modern aesthetics with time-honoured craft, including a 350-year-old fanlight made of Burmese teak, a bespoke wrought-iron gate with hand-crafted roses, and a grand, sculptural steel staircase with a ribbon-like design that connects the salon with the ateliers above.

They also established close relationships with some of Europe's most distinguished and respected craftspeople who provide the exceptional fabrics, embroidery and other fine decorative skills that turn their ideas into reality. The brand's garments are made entirely by hand using artisanal dressmaking techniques. "Our clients describe these bespoke creations as being on par with the highest level of French haute couture," says Budi. "We understand the pursuit of perfection, that desire to use only the best materials and the best skills to make something that is truly unique and timeless."



“We believe in the age-old tradition of savoir faire and couture”

“We take our time to ensure each client experiences absolute perfection. Our clients love the way we support centuries-old artisanal businesses and keep historic crafts of dressmaking and embroidery alive.” While upholding tradition, the house innovates with new materials, such as textiles that are steamed with metal vapours to create a remarkable 3D effect. Budism Couture has also developed its first shoe collection after years of research into shapes, designs and quality.

The same extraordinary attention to detail and design aesthetic goes into every garment. A Budism Couture dress can take several hundred hours to create. Clients often need only one fitting, and Budi and Philipp travel



to clients wherever they are located. Budi sees his work as a collaboration between himself, the client and the best artisans in the world. “As visionaries and tailors, we create the overall design and shape, and make sure it works as a whole, while our collaborators do the fine decorative work using traditional skills handed down over centuries,” says Budi. “Every detail is intricate and incredibly beautiful.”

The “Angel” gown epitomises a Budism Couture creation. Made for a Cinderella-inspired wedding, it required the skills of some 26 artisans and took 3,500 hours of embroidery to make thousands of miniature flowers with 250,000 sequin petals, while around 30,000 Swarovski crystals adorned the Italian lace. Formal evening gowns are a forte, but Budism Couture makes couture clothes for every occasion – cocktail dresses and daywear, as well as accessories and shoes. Inspiration takes many forms. The elegant “Angel of the Valley” dress was inspired by hand-painted heirloom porcelain featuring lily of the valley flowers. French embroiderers used beads, sequins and custom-made flowers to create a striking work of art, the garment’s focal point.

The ambition that Budi and Philipp have for their clothes extends to their dreams for the business. “We are the first couture house in Africa, but we are very international as most of our clients are in Asia, Europe and the Middle East,” says Philipp. “We intend to grow organically on strong foundations as we train our employees to have the skills required to compete with the best couture houses in the world. Couture is so special and it is a privilege to be part of it. We transform dreams into reality, and it’s not just the final product that should impress; the painstaking artisanry and hand-sewing skills associated with genuine haute couture are equally remarkable.”

www.budism.com





Pure brilliance

Chatham Created Gems and Diamonds has a dazzling history as an early pioneer of luxurious lab-grown gemstones and diamond jewellery

Although it might seem a modern concept, efforts to create gemstones in a laboratory have preoccupied chemists for over a century. The French chemist Henri Moissan had attempted to grow diamonds in a laboratory in the 1890s, and Carroll Chatham was just a boy in 1920s San Francisco when he tried to emulate Moissan's experiments in his parents' garage – an attempt that ended in a big bang. Chastened but determined, Carroll went on to become a chemist. By 1936, he had succeeded in creating emerald crystals. He established his company in 1938 and in the following decades produced other lab-grown gemstones, including rubies, alexandrite and blue sapphires.

In 1965, Carroll's son Tom joined his father, developing the business to supply faceted lab-grown gemstones to buyers. Tom became President of Chatham Created Gems and Diamonds, and in the 1990s achieved his father's ambition of creating lab-grown diamonds. Today, the company is renowned as a pioneer in its field and produces more than a dozen types of gemstones, seven of which are offered in different shades. "We constantly experiment with new gems, and just announced the purple sapphire," says Mónica McDaniel, Chatham's Vice-President. Showcasing the stones are Chatham's classic and contemporary jewellery collections, which include fine jewellery.

Chatham has refined the expertise and technology to create flawless lab-grown gemstones and diamonds. The process duplicates what occurs in nature, so the stones possess the same chemical, physical and optical properties as their mined counterparts. They are cruelty free and more affordable than earth-mined stones, with breathtaking colour and quality. Chatham's master cutters execute unique cuts, including the Onion, Flame and Century – all virtually impossible to recreate with mined stones.

"We allow our gemstone crystals to form naturally within a controlled environment over the course of a year," explains Mónica, a trained gemologist. "The end result is a rough crystal with natural faces." Around 80 per cent of the rough crystal is then cut away to deliver maximum clarity and a colour that meets the company's very high, predetermined standards.

Chatham sells its cut gems and jewellery to independent retailers and also direct to customers. "We are always introducing new products or redesigning existing ones to meet contemporary trends and fashions," says Mónica. "We take that very seriously, as we are in the business of colour." The colourful gems include alexandrite, an exceptionally rare stone that naturally shifts in colour from a bluish teal in daylight to a reddish purple in incandescent



light; sapphires in blue, pink, champagne, purple, yellow, white and a peachy salmon known as padparadscha; emerald; ruby; opal in white, crystal or black; aqua-blue and Paraíba-coloured spinel and chrysoberyl. "Colour is a powerful tool. It is a form of self-expression and evokes emotion," explains Mónica.

Then there are the diamonds – flawless, glittering and with a reassuring, ethical provenance. These gems are highlighted in the company's own jewellery designs, such as the Legacy Collection, launched in 2024. Designed to be statement pieces, Legacy features lab-grown stones that are larger and heavier than others and set in 18-karat gold. The collection showcases the brilliance and beauty of precious lab-grown gemstones – perfect miracles of science.

The diamonds are investment pieces, too. "They have real emotional value and can mark a special moment in time," says Mónica. "A piece of jewellery is timeless, and it can be passed down through the generations alongside the story that goes with it. Gemstones are the touchstones of life."

www.chatham.com



A technical journey

Páramo pioneers high-performance, waterproof outdoor gear and leads the way in both its reuse and recycling

The páramo is an area in the Andes between the upper limit of the forests and the lower limit of the snowline, a wet and windy climatic hotspot where the temperature can suddenly fluctuate from below freezing to 10C.

It was here that British chemist and entrepreneur Nick Brown first tested his new, unique fabric system, Nikwax Analogy. This offered waterproof performance using an environmentally friendly PFAS-free treatment, as used in his already established Nikwax waterproofing brand.

Nick founded Páramo Directional Clothing in the UK in 1992, naming it after the region that helped nurture its creation. The company now ethically manufactures some of the toughest technical clothing in the world. “Traditional waterproof jackets generally use a membrane,” says Páramo CEO, Richard Pyne. “They don’t let water in, but they also don’t let liquid water out, so the wearer can get very hot and sweaty.”

Páramo’s high-performance jackets, fleeces and trousers are inspired by the way mammals stay dry. Mammals have a very dense coat, with fur covered in natural oils and an overlayer of long guard hairs. With Páramo’s clothing, Nikwax acts like the oil, while the inner fabric mimics the dense fur, moving liquid water away from the wearer. An outer windproof layer provides additional protection, deflecting wind and rain, similar to guard hairs.

The clothing is so effective in keeping out the rain and cold that as well as casual hill walkers, winter sports lovers and nature enthusiasts, it is used by mountain rescue teams and members of the British Antarctic Survey. It was even approved by Sir Ranulph Fiennes for his 2013 expedition “The Coldest Journey”, the first attempt to cross Antarctica during the polar winter.

Páramo is headquartered in East Sussex, but the clothing is made by its long-term ethical manufacturing partner in Colombia. The Miquelina Foundation is a social enterprise for women and was founded by Sister Esther Castaño Mejía. Páramo has worked with the foundation for more than 30 years. Over that time, it has supported around 10,000 vulnerable women, giving them refuge, employment and training to learn life-changing, transferable skills. It also helped the factory gain accreditation from the World Fair Trade Organisation in 2017. Following Nick’s retirement in 2022, both Páramo and the Miquelina factory are now employee-owned businesses in which all partners have a vested interest.

As part of Páramo’s efforts to reduce waste, customers are asked to send their garments back to the company, or take them to one of its stores for repair, reuse or recycling. Páramo’s recycling scheme cares for those garments at the end of their usable life, ensuring they do not end up in landfill. Through an innovative process, they are turned back into usable fabric of the same high quality.

In 2024, Páramo took this sustainable approach to the next stage and launched two new jackets – the Halkon 360 and Aspira 360 – which use chemically recycled polyester made from post-consumer and textile industry waste. “We are excited to offer people a really sustainable option without sacrificing quality,” says Richard. “We can’t change the world on our own, but together with global corporations we can start to create the shift needed. The possibilities become vast. We want to think radically, never settle for mediocre and always push ourselves to improve, ensuring that we do things better at every stage of the journey.”

www.paramo-clothing.com





Tale of two cities

Nouvel Héritage's jewellery comes with "gently disruptive" touches – an inspired fusion of New York street style and Parisian elegance

When Camille Parruite was growing up in France, the jangling of her grandmother's bangles was a familiar sound. Her mother, meanwhile, managed a jewellery-making workshop. Those early connections to jewellery provided inspiration when, in 2015, Camille set up her own jewellery business, *Nouvel Héritage*, in both the US and France where she divides her time.

"I grew up in an environment where jewellery was very important," says Camille. "When I moved to the US to study, part of me was missing my French side. I really respected what my mother was doing, promoting French craftsmanship, and I wanted to contribute to that."

Nouvel Héritage combines the skills of French artisans with Camille's love of detail and playful energy to create jewellery that highlights the best of new and old worlds. This is epitomised by the brand's Mood Collection, which features timeless yet contemporary bangles, rings and necklaces that evoke the emotions of a modern day. Encompassing work and play, the pieces come with names such as Business Meeting, Brunch in NY, Dinner Date and Cocktail Time, and make a statement whether worn individually or together.

The jewellery is handcrafted in the successful family-owned workshop in France that Camille's mother set up in 2004, and which now employs hundreds of people with *savoir faire* in the industry. It was important to Camille that her jewellery would not only be desirable, but also made responsibly and sustainably. The workshop takes such matters seriously. It belongs to the Responsible Jewellery Council and is transparent about its practices, using ethically sourced materials, recycled 18-karat gold and certified, conflict-free gemstones and diamonds. Employees benefit from the produce of on-site vegetable gardens and beehives. Training is provided, too, to help people develop artisan skills.

Camille's craftspeople offer their input in the designs, which combine the streamlined style and edginess of New York with the inherent detail and classicism of Paris. "Paris and New York could not be more different," says Camille. "Paris is like a museum. Everything is old and beautiful, with incredible detail. Then in New York, everything is modern and a bit edgy."

This modern and edgy approach is seen in the Mood Collection's bangles, where clasps are loosely modelled on safety pins to reference punk fashion. Another example can be seen in the Latch Collection of barrel-shaped pendants and chains, in gold, rose gold and white gold. Studded with diamonds they have a sophisticated appeal, while closer



examination reveals they are modelled on shoelaces and hoodie cords, bringing a playful twist to the design. It is all part of the company's "gently disruptive" approach, providing a fun element and creating a story that can be passed down through the generations.

As well as online, the brand is available from over 30 high-end jewellery stores and luxury clothing shops throughout the US (not only in New York, but also destinations including Texas, California and Florida) and in France and Geneva, Switzerland. In the future, Camille plans to open dedicated stores to celebrate the brand and ensure it has full control over the experience enjoyed by its customers.

Nouvel Héritage's popularity in the US and Europe spans across age groups. Sometimes mothers and daughters will share an item of the brand's jewellery or buy matching pieces. As for Camille, she is continuing the family heritage in the French jewellery business, bringing her own modern, idiosyncratic touch to everyday dressing.

www.nouvelheritage.com





Safe and sound

Luxuriously designed and independently security-certified, Casoro Jewelry Safes are at the cutting edge of fine jewellery and watch safes

Nancy Bryan and her husband, Shep, have been producing safes for 30 years, initially offering traditional options and expanding in 2012 to offer custom jewellery and watch safes tailored for clients who desire a bespoke product. Durable enough to survive fire and burglar attack, the safes are functional and elegant. “We innovate by incorporating unique materials and offering designs that suit the client’s primary estate and seasonal residences,” says Nancy.

Casoro transcends merely accommodating jewellery by incorporating reliable watch winders alongside other valuables. Customers need only articulate what they wish to protect and how they want those cherished items placed. With such attention to detail, Casoro has built a following of global repeat and referral business. Many of Casoro’s customers had previously hid jewellery around their home or had forgotten what they owned since it was out of sight. “When your jewellery is displayed beautifully and your timepieces are wound, you are more apt to wear and enjoy your collection,” says Nancy. “The safe gives customers much-needed peace of mind.”



Over the years, and with the input of its discerning customers, Casoro has refined its safes and built considerable expertise in this niche market. Casoro's California-built safes offer the very best craftsmanship, pass through several stages of quality control and are independently verified by globally trusted safety organisations. UL (formerly Underwriters Laboratories) tests for burglar protection and Edison Testing Laboratories tests for fire resistance. The uniquely handcrafted suite comes in various sizes and colours, with luxurious interiors including carbon-fibre lining, exotic wood cabinetry, programmable watch winders and flush-mounted LED lighting. Casoro ready-to-ship and custom-built safes can also be shipped globally.

Layering security provides the best protection, and to that end Casoro can integrate safes with home-alarm systems and is working on technology for additional layers of security. "The team works closely across an ecosystem of architects, builders and designers, as the safes look and function their best when they are incorporated into the decor right from the beginning of the project," says Nancy.

Customised luxury safes are a relative newcomer in the safe industry and demand is strong. "With sophisticated burglaries in high-end neighbourhoods on the rise,

homeowners are waking up to the fact that they need a safe, but don't know how to evaluate the security various safes provide," says Nancy. "This is where Casoro can help, educating and guiding clients to safes that provide convenient organisation, as well as the protection they need and that their insurance companies require."

Casoro also assists in evaluating the best location for the safe and provides guidance on structural strength considerations involved in staircases, floors and wardrobe systems. "For many customers, stepping up to a quality safe is an easy decision when just one piece of their jewellery costs as much as the entire safe or when it's mandated by insurance," says Nancy.

The company partners with insurance companies to ensure its safes offer the appropriate level of security as mandated by underwriting. "We are collaborating across every element in the residential safe security landscape to provide white-glove service from design through delivery and installation," says Nancy. "We always think about what is best for our customers."

www.casorojewelrysafes.com

Modern opulence

Nijma M Fine Jewelry takes its design brilliance from both the classic and the cool, for a modern everyday allure

Elaina Mansour fondly remembers a dazzling necklace that her mother wore whatever the occasion – a bright blue topaz pendant with a thick gold bezel around it. The piece made such an impression on Elaina as a child that she developed a lifelong fascination with jewellery. “It complimented her green eyes and was a true reflection of everything about her,” says Elaina. “She wore it every day.”

Those cherished childhood memories formed the roots of Elaina’s own luxury collections for Nijma M Fine Jewelry, a jewellery company that she set up in 2022 in Toronto, Canada, after a successful career as a naturopath. Blue topaz and recycled 14 karat gold feature predominantly in her designs, although she takes a notebook with her wherever she goes to scribble down other sources of inspiration.

From a Lebanese family, Elaina understands how important jewellery is to Middle Eastern culture. “Jewellery is celebrated in our culture, but it’s not just about adorning yourself with attractive necklaces, rings and watches,” she says. “Jewellery connects people – think about an heirloom or a gift you buy for a special occasion.”

Elaina describes her pieces as “modern opulence”, in that they are fashionable and distinctive but can be worn every day, with everyday outfits. Care is taken to ensure each bracelet, ring, earring or necklace is practical as well as beautiful and will comfortably fit the wearer. Above all, they are maximalist in style, creating a feelgood look. In some designs, motifs such as the evil eye, moons and stars – symbolic of offering spiritual protection – are set in recycled gold, while others include chains that run across the whole hand or connect rings to separate knuckles.

“I believe that magic comes from duality – bringing two different ideas or concepts together,” says Elaina. “It’s about matching timeless classics with something unique that has a sense of modern cool about it.” There are plays on harmony and balance in spiral earrings, and clusters of diamonds set in an asymmetrical ring. Spirals, for Elaina, mean “growth, creativity and inspiration”, while the bold shapes of the rings make them brim with personality. There is nothing bland about any of the pieces, which all carry a sense of individuality. “The same piece can be worn by two different people. It could mean two different things to them, and they can express it and wear it very differently.”




Elaina’s diamonds are sourced from small multi-generational suppliers and sustainable mines, and are certified by the Responsible Jewellery Council, which set the standards for sustainable supply chain practices in the jewellery industry. Her designs are brought to life by a production team in Montreal, who first create 3D images of them so that tweaks can be made before manufacturing. The final works are available online at Nijma M Fine Jewelry, but there are plans to sell them through stores. Elaina aims to reach a wider audience with the latest collection – sleek, modern designs based around Canadian diamonds that are reverse-set to showcase them from a different angle. “Diamonds sparkle according to the way they are cut,” says Elaina. “But if you flip them, you see this brilliance that we are not used to looking at.”

It is fitting that the name of the company, Nijma, is the Arabic word for star. “Jewels aren’t just accessories, they are stories waiting to be told.”

www.nijmamfinejewelry.com







The face of sustainability

The enterprising owner of Upper District proves that luxury fashion can be a positive force for social and environmental change

Karly Gramlich may be the CEO of a luxury Canadian fashion brand but come the autumn she can be spotted behind the wheel of a combine harvester. For Karly, this is part of her “unconventional” background in fashion. The daughter of a farmer, she was raised among the wheat fields outside Edmonton, Alberta, but is also the founder of Upper District, a label that creates sustainable and ethical fashion for women who “have earned luxury”.

“I still love to go back to the farm to help at harvest time,” says Karly. “It’s an unusual skillset and customers appreciate the authenticity of the story. It resonates with people who admire and respect my journey, while my farming background inspires the fashion company through the focus on sustainability.”

Karly launched Upper District in 2017 after reaching a crossroads in her mid-twenties. Having studied science, she worked in healthcare but decided to pursue her passion for fashion. Without contacts or experience in the luxury sphere, she approached business her own way; educated in the importance of the environment through her rural upbringing, she built sustainability into Upper District from the onset. Clothes are made in Italy from ethically sourced material, and the company works with Positive Luxury, sustainability experts for the global luxury industry, to offer clients complete transparency. Upper District’s environmental impact is monitored, as is the social responsibility of its entire supply chain to ensure an adherence to stringent workplace conditions.

Karly applies this approach to packaging as well as textiles, determined to only work with the best of the best, all while supporting gender equality and cultivating a positive culture for the next generation of female leaders.

Karly herself has been lauded for her leadership skills in paving the way for environmental and social change, which is why her face has appeared no fewer than four times on billboards in New York’s Times Square. In 2023, she appeared as one of the “Most Influential ESG Leaders”.

Pieces are designed to last, and Upper District encourages resale and recycling as part of its business model. “We have created a circular economy that works for us and the environment,” says Karly. “Our impact tracking shows us which pieces are used the longest and which have the most demand in resale. That helps refine our production. We want to show that sustainability and capitalism can co-exist.”

Versatile and created to be worn in the office or out on the town, Upper District clothes are designed by Karly and her team for the millennial woman who identifies with the brand’s story and relates to the challenges that need to be overcome when pursuing a goal. “We outfit women to provoke and evoke the confidence that is required as they navigate the challenges which come with striving towards their goals,” she says. “That is my story, and it’s unusual in luxury so it really resonates.”

Already working with a network of partners that includes international conglomerates, Upper District has established a formidable reputation in the sustainable luxury space. Its stylish designs will be found on the racks of leading department stores in North America, including The Bay in Canada and Saks in the US. Beyond this, Karly’s ambition is to bring her story to a worldwide audience that admires Upper District’s unique capacity to dress women with confidence – without harming the planet.

www.upper-district.com

Tailor-made service

The Suitman&Co brings a contemporary edge to custom-made suit-making with its mobile tailoring service and keen eye for style

For Sholom Sandler, ensuring his clients look amazing is always a priority. Impeccable style and unparalleled service are woven into every aspect of his personalised mobile tailoring business, TheSuitman&Co, which caters to clients in London and has customers from all over the world.

Sholom was studying finance when he became disillusioned after a disappointing experience with a tailor. As a perfectionist with a passion for fashion, he realised he could offer a better tailoring service. In 2022, he paused his studies to launch TheSuitman&Co. “Our goal is to create a truly pleasurable experience, right from the comfort of our clients’ offices and homes,” he says, “with a commitment to personalised service.”

From the outset, Sholom was meticulous in his pursuit of quality. He tried out more than ten different ateliers before finding the perfect match for the level of craftsmanship his company required. His uncompromising standards are reflected in the fabrics sourced exclusively from esteemed British and Italian mills and merchants.

Sholom’s approach to suiting is modern and aligns with the resurgence of the suit, which is often worn differently today – paired with white trainers and a T-shirt, or a sports jacket over jeans. Pockets that were once reserved for blazers are now key details on many of his suits. His philosophy centres on honouring British suiting heritage while involving the client in the process. Sholom first asks about the occasion for the suit, then narrows it down further according to the dress code and timing. “Our passion and knowledge of fabrics, and our obsession with selecting the right materials for the body type, occasion and climate, are key to delivering the best advice to our clients. It’s about discovering exactly what the client needs, listening and using our expertise.” Each suit takes four to six weeks to produce, plus up to a week for minor adjustments if needed.

The company’s growth has been organic, fuelled by word of mouth from clients who appreciate the undivided attention and sartorial advice offered in the comfort and convenience of their own space. In an era dominated by digital interactions, Sholom stresses the significance of tangible luxury experiences. “Face-to-face interactions are invaluable,” he says, highlighting how personal connections forged through physical consultations are a hallmark of the service. However, thanks to social media, some new clients are ordering custom-made garments for the first time. “Many clients



are requesting style options they’ve seen online that can’t be bought off the rack.”

To achieve the rapid success and national growth envisioned for TheSuitman&Co, Sholom has partnered with Solomon Benzaquen. Solomon was a loyal customer, but recognising his love for the sartorial world, energy and “hustle mentality”, Sholom immediately saw the potential for a partnership.

For both of them, environmental responsibility is an integral part of the business. From operating fully electric vans to creating timeless pieces that minimise fashion waste, they encourage conscious choices that resonate with clients. Looking ahead, Sholom envisions plans to introduce multiple vans servicing new markets. “Our journey has only just begun,” he says, emphasising his commitment to quality with the mantra that underscores every decision at TheSuitman&Co: “If I won’t wear it, I won’t offer it.”

www.thesuitmanandco.com





Fitting tribute

Inspired by the uncompromising standards of its founder, Sweden's Eton Shirts has fashioned a global business based on technically perfect tailoring

In 1948, two Swedish brothers were driving through the Berkshire town of Eton on their way to a meeting and noticed the many smartly dressed young men – almost certainly Eton scholars – on the streets. The brothers, who worked in the family shirt-making business, were impressed. They decided that Eton, an international byword for quality, would make the ideal name for a new shirt – and the product proved such a success that, in 1950, the company was renamed Eton Shirts.

Based in Gånghester, around 45 miles from Gothenburg, Sweden, Eton makes over a million shirts each year for customers across northern Europe, North America, China and Japan, while maintaining its founding values of quality, craftsmanship and innovation. “Our strength is in our quality and delivering something that can be worn for a long time,” says CEO David Thörewik. “Some aspects of style never change. Our customers know what they will get in terms of fit, fabric and feel. They trust us, and we don’t take that trust lightly. We make sure we respect it and have earned it. That is our daily fuel.”

The company that became Eton Shirts was founded in 1928 by Annie Pettersson, a skilled seamstress in Gånghester who was looking for a way to provide extra income for her family. Annie had high standards and a simple mantra: “Never hand over a shirt until you are completely satisfied with it.” This philosophy saw the company grow over the decades, particularly following the introduction of the non-iron 100 per cent cotton shirt with signature twill, which was launched to great acclaim at Harrods in 1992 and remains an iconic product.

The company makes “technically perfect” shirts in four different fits – super-slim, slim, contemporary and classic – to suit personal preferences and any body size. There are no manufacturing shortcuts, and the company uses the finest materials – cotton, silk, Tencel, wool – to ensure consistency of quality. There is the option to have the length and sleeves customised, or select a preferred collar, cuff or monogram. While the focus is on formal and casual shirts, the collections include overshirts, T-shirts, vests, beach shorts, and accessories such as ties and pocket squares created in collaboration with some of the best artisans in Europe.

The high standards the company has when it comes to manufacturing is an integral part of its heritage. It is also about creating products that are

sustainable. “That means they are well made and will never go out of fashion,” says David. “We talk a lot about how we can make our shirts last longer, so they are in the wardrobe for many years and never look old.”

The brand has achieved much success in overseas markets. Having made significant headway in the North American market, the company has opened its second store in New York, while its non-iron shirt was the only European item to pass a stringent quality test in one high-end Japanese store. The brand is also expanding its in-store offering through the “endless aisle” retail concept, which means if any of its products are not available on the shelves, they can be acquired and shipped direct to the customer. “This is a market where customers can buy anything they want from anywhere in the world,” says David. “We want to exceed expectations and give them something better than they ever imagined.”

www.etonshirts.com



Artistic movements

Patrick Ulm's luxury timepiece brand is inspired by – and named after – one of Switzerland's greatest master watchmakers

Patrick Ulm was already a watch enthusiast before he visited the Greenway Estate, a National Trust property in Devon that was once Agatha Christie's summer home. The doyenne of murder-mystery fiction owned the house for almost 40 years, and rooms are filled with the author's personal effects and items that inspired characters and plots in her novels. In the morning room, Patrick was drawn to a case filled with Christie's collection of watches, particularly a fine pocket watch featuring a beautiful miniature of a young woman. He discovered it had been made by an 18th-century Swiss watchmaker called Charles Girardier.

"Charles Girardier is recognised as one of the finest pocket-watch creators of his time, with a very special style of theatrical art," says Patrick, who decided the name of Charles Girardier should live on. In 2018, he revived the brand – and just two years later, Charles Girardier won a prestigious Grand Prix de l'Horlogerie de Genève prize for its first collection. Since then, Patrick has launched several collections and one-off pieces. Although his own background is in finance and family banking, he drew on the expertise of his cousin, a watchmaker, to create the unique timepieces that do justice to Charles Girardier's name and legacy.

Girardier was famed for his pioneering movements and applied his love of crafts such as enamelling and portraiture on the watch faces, while his automaton-like dial animations included, for example, the appearance of deer scurrying across a dial. Many of Girardier's signature elements were brought to life by Patrick and his team. "They inspired our own collections as we integrated these elements in our products. There is always something moving or animated on our wristwatches," says Patrick. At the same time, the collections have revived long-lost watchmaking techniques and machinery, too.

The 1809 Tourbillon Signature Mystérieuse features hundreds of diamonds and 24-carat silver foil strips with an animated "CG" monogram, while the CG 8080 has asymmetrical hands that continuously form the figure eight in the small-seconds dial – which Patrick describes as a "riff on the theme of infinity and eternal movement". The company has also created a one-off piece as a tribute to the artist Jackson Pollock and his famous "action paintings", mixing enamel with metals and firing it at the watch face. "It was completely original," says Patrick.

The latest collection, which is more contemporary while still reflecting the heritage of Girardier, is a limited



edition of 100, including pieces designed exclusively for the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club. The design is more classic and horological, maintaining the artistic craftsmanship approach. "We took the date display directly from one of the original pocket watches," says Patrick, "but the piece is more mechanical than decorative – it gives us another area to explore, and we have other new ideas in the pipeline that are more classic but retain that sense of craftsmanship."

It has been a strange and fascinating journey from the Greenway Estate to the pinnacle of contemporary Swiss watchmaking – a story with plot twists that Agatha Christie herself would have been proud of. For Patrick, the focus now is on continuing to build on the legacy of Charles Girardier by doing great work in his name. "That is our motivation," he says. "We always want to do something special in honour of a great watchmaker."

www.charles-girardier.com



Touch of genius

Alan Scott's menswear collection features an innovative luxury cashmere that moves with the wearer, like a bird in flight

When Alan Scott received swatches of a new fabric from an Italian textile producer, he quickly realised they were a game-changer. For a fashion designer, it was like discovering the Holy Grail. The material combined the unique feel and properties of cashmere, yet with elastane, so it moved naturally and luxuriously in tandem with the body. "The moment I touched the fabric, I saw the potential," says Alan. "It opened up so many possibilities that I began to sketch designs."

This "stretch cashmere" is now an exclusive feature of Alan's luxury menswear line, which he launched as an eponymous British brand with a pop-up shop at Harrods in London, in 2023. "Harrods said they had never seen anything like it. They realised it was bringing something new and exciting to luxury fashion. When we opened the shop, customers were buying items as soon as they touched them because they could immediately tell this was very special."

Alan entered the world of fashion from art school, having honed his drawing skills by sketching the birds of prey that his father trained as a falconer in the north of England. Upon graduating, he took his final portfolio of designs to New York, where he landed his first job in the industry with fashion designer Donna Karan. In 1990, aged just 22, he was invited by the designer to design and launch a menswear line. At this point, he first began his working relationship with Italian textile innovator Ermes Ardizzone, now in his late eighties, who has dedicated his life to perfecting stretch cashmere.

Cashmere is the ultimate luxury material, possessing unique qualities of comfort and temperature moderation. It is combed by hand from the long, soft fibre of the stomachs of cashmere goats that live at least 1,500 metres above sea level in Mongolia, making it a rare and precious natural resource. In combination with elastane, cashmere becomes even more remarkable. "The stretch quality provides greater comfort and flexibility and has greater recovery, so it retains its shape," explains Alan. "It will move more naturally, so when you wear it, you can feel it."

Previous attempts to create stretch cashmere had always failed, as the elastane could not withstand the brushing required to create the finish of the cashmere, but Ermes had developed and patented a solution. Alan has exclusive use of the textile, which he develops into everything from coats with a leather feel to

jeans with the look of indigo denim, all produced by RWE Italy in Naples. The revolutionary collection attracted international attention even before its Harrods launch, having been documented by accomplished fashion photographer (and rock star) Bryan Adams.

Looking ahead, the Alan Scott collection will expand into accessories made by Tivoli Group SpA in Florence, as well as into womenswear, while Alan is developing relationships with retail partners and high-end distributors worldwide. The appeal of the designs is clear: Alan brings his remarkable eye for detail to modern pieces that offer the wearer comfort, style and more.

"We are unique, combining luxury and innovation with fashion, and providing a timeless sense of heritage with a contemporary twist," he says. Meanwhile, the movement and freedom of the falcons that he first sketched all those years ago are now represented in the feel and fit of his clothes.

www.alanscott.co.uk





Timeless jewellery

Rose Carvalho's eternal jewellery collections are both stunning and cerebral, drawing inspiration from the universe and psychoanalysis

The Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung conceived the term “collective unconscious” as he sought to understand how it was that unconnected ancient civilisations around the world shared certain symbols and myths. Inspired by such traits inherited by mankind, Brazilian jewellery designer Rose Carvalho creates symbols in her beautiful handmade collections that resonate with individuals across the globe.

“I create my collections with specific themes and concepts,” says Rose, who has a studio in the trendy, upscale neighbourhood of Leblon in Rio de Janeiro. “First, I choose a symbol and study how it manifests in the collective unconscious. I then create a design for the entire collection. At this point, I define the material: whether I’m going to use white or yellow gold, gems or diamonds or both.”

Rose came to jewellery design from over a decade in textiles and fashion. Suitably for Rio’s culture and climate, she had specialised in beachwear, relishing the opportunity it provided to create freely without having to follow international trends. Her meticulous, perfectionist approach saw clients liken her to a jewellery maker, something that ultimately prompted her to study jewellery and goldsmithing, in which she found her true calling.

The boldness of Rose’s designs rapidly caught people’s attention as she developed unique techniques of finishing, texture and setting and cutting of stones. She works with a team of artisans on collections that include rings, earrings, pendants, bracelets and necklaces, crafted in yellow or white 18-karat gold and featuring high-quality Brazilian gems and diamonds that are carefully and ethically sourced.

Her eye-catching work began with the Lenses Collection, which took inspiration from the “mandala”, a form of sacred geometry, or circular patterns, used by many ancient cultures to represent the universe. Rose became intrigued by mandalas, not only through the writings of Jung, but also through those of German physician and wellness expert Ruediger Dahlke, who has explored how they can be used as a form of guidance to alter the unconscious, or for harmonising energy flow and improving relaxation. “For this collection, I cut Brazilian gemstones, transforming them into lenses, and inside them or under them are shapes of mandalas, or elements of the universe, such as stars, planets and meteors,” explains Rose. “They magnify and distort, creating stimuli.”

Further collections draw inspiration from the universe, too. The Stardust Collection features stardust-like gold powder on jewellery. Colors of the Universe is an Art Deco



design that draws on the colours of nebulas and planets by using precious gems, including ametrines, tourmalines and topazes, alongside diamonds and 18-karat gold. The Cosmos Collection explores the way the bodies of the universe are perceived. “Stars and planets shine in the sky in several dimensions, giving the sensation of proximity and distance,” says Rose. “I use diamonds of many sizes. Giving them different ‘heights’ is a very special execution process that involves many stages of assembly.”

Rose Carvalho collections, made with impeccable craftsmanship and guided by Rose’s innate creativity, have been shown at prestigious galleries in Europe. The brand also makes bespoke work for clients who like “customised, unique pieces, many of them illustrating, in some way, their most intimate moments and their life stories,” says Rose. “This is a part of my work where I feel very stimulated by the challenge of making exactly what my client wants and dreams of.”

www.rosecarvalho.com



Artistry of the hanger

A masterpiece of engineering, elegance and sustainability; Lou Hansell's garment hangers have been described as the finest the world has ever known

The road to “the world’s finest garment hanger” began with a young Lou Hansell starting out in one of his father’s clothing shops in the US. During his downtime, Lou studied fashion and design magazines to ensure he was on top of trends. Decades later, with a successful career as a businessman and entrepreneur, that fascination with beauty never left his mind.

Lou took note that no matter how on-trend and captivating the homes displayed across the glossy pages of magazines were, no one ever dared show the inside of their closets. “That’s because most closets look like a hurricane has gone through them, with cheap, mismatched wood, metal and plastic hangers and clothing smashed together,” he says. “I wanted to create something that would suit a closet filled with capsule wardrobes and couture collections.” With that passion, he set out to create a hanger that would elevate this space into a place of beauty and protect investment pieces for years to come.

This passion led Lou to work with a design team in the UK that had experience with manufacturers such as Ferrari. Imagined to replicate the human form as the ideal shape for protecting clothing for maximum wear, more than 200 different designs were considered. “We eventually settled on one that is very far from simple,” explains Lou.

Sharing the same fondness for beauty and sustainable design, Lou partnered with Pamela Kugel, an accomplished businesswoman with an automotive background from Ford and the same entrepreneurial DNA. A co-founder and now CEO, Pamela worked alongside Lou in assembling an expert global team to take on the challenge.

“The work was incredibly intense and inspiring,” says Pamela. “We had to ensure the hanger encapsulated both exquisite form and function. This required a relentless effort from our team to seamlessly integrate an organic design with complex engineering.”

Without compromise, their sketches and prototypes turned into Class-A surfacing and an engineering concept with more than 20 parts. Computer-aided 3D design and virtual simulation optimised the precision, achieving moving gaps with tolerances of 0.1mm, without any visible fixings. Today, six sigma practices control ten processes required to build each hanger, alongside 200 in-process critical measurements to deliver the quality the team envisioned.

Materials selection was just as deliberate for the team, with the highest level of quality and sustainable properties at the forefront. And, creating luxury ethically meant finding suppliers who held the same belief in all of their practices. “Together, the team pushed boundaries to

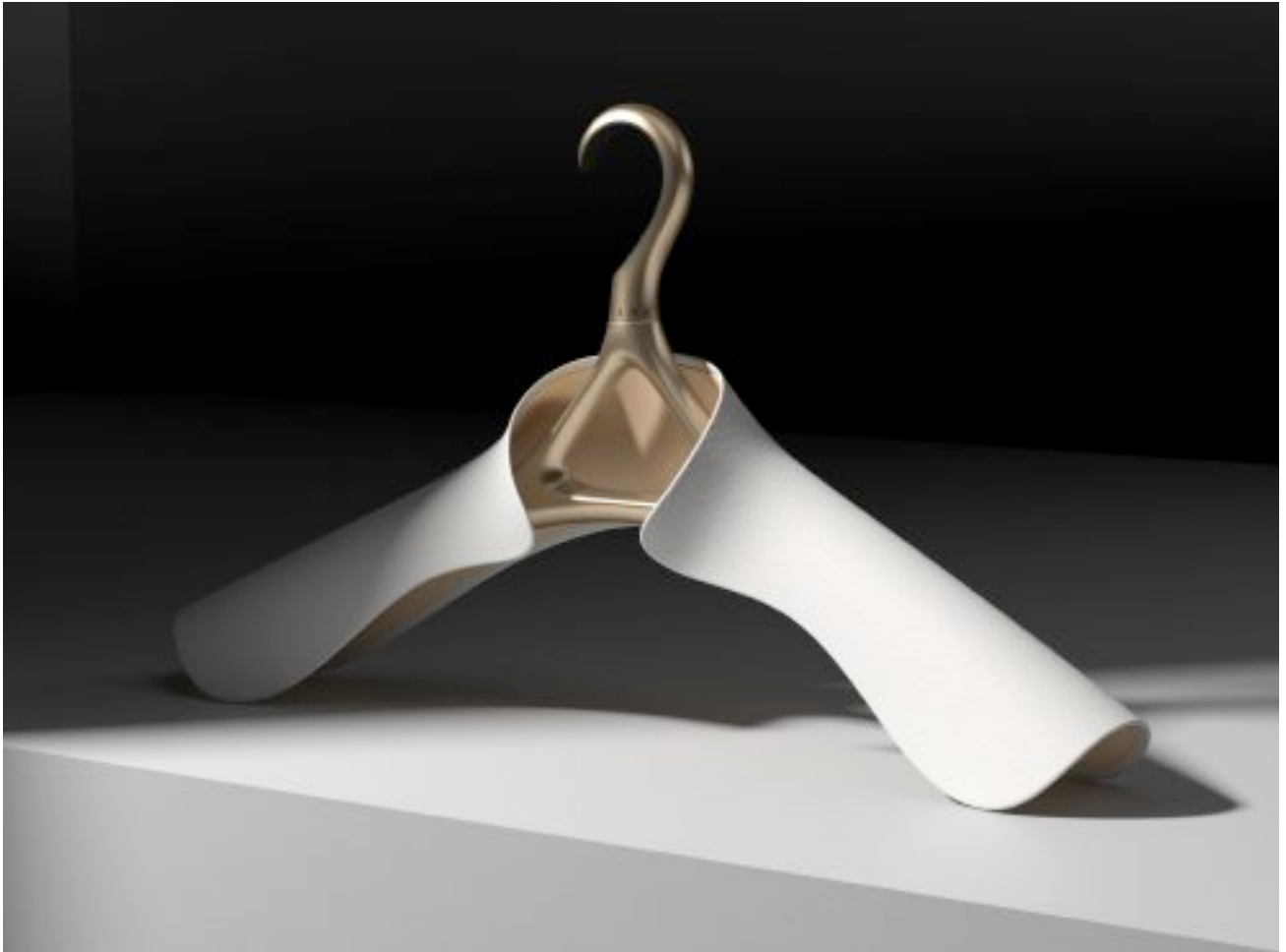


transform a household item into a hidden luxury that is environmentally conscious,” says Pamela.

Beneath each hanger’s sculpted form and inner working, another detail is tucked inside. As the hook rotates through four lock-in positions, a distinct sound, or voice, is heard. This voice requires a measured balance between eight intricate components, synchronised perfectly to create “the voice” of luxury. The final mark of perfection is a unique serial number to celebrate the 15 hours of artisan craftsmanship put into each piece.

What started out as a young man’s aspiration has transformed into something extraordinary, compelling Lou to put his name on a product for the first time in his career. In 2021, *British GQ* summed up the journey to create the world’s finest garment hanger: “What Lou Hansell has achieved is unlike any hanger you have ever seen or used before. These are truly the Rolls-Royce of garment hangers.”

www.louhansell.com



Elemental beauty

Aurelia Yeomans' fine jewellery shows a deep reverence for earth's natural phenomena and an artistry that connects humankind

“**H**umans have been fashioning raw elements into adornments ever since we first walked the earth,” says award-winning Australian jeweller Aurelia Yeomans. “It’s this connection to a craft so ancient and yet still so relevant today that most inspires me. It’s an art form so rich in expression and meaning that it has the capacity to transcend all borders and cultures.”

In her Melbourne atelier, Aurelia crafts beautiful and sustainable fine jewellery that seems to spring from the earth. “I’ve been captivated by the magic of the natural world since I was young, growing up in the rainforests and mountainous regions of Australia,” she explains. “The Australian earth has a powerful, deep resonance. Over time, I’ve learned to listen to the land and draw inspiration from the forms and the frequencies running through it.”

Raised in a family of artists, musicians and goldsmiths, Aurelia has been surrounded by art since a young age. Classically trained in goldsmithing in Germany and fine art in Australia, she fuses traditional and cutting-edge methods and materials to create innovative jewellery that reflects her unique voice and brand, which she launched in 2018. “I’m working in a field with unending creative potential,” she says. “I love to surprise the viewer by juxtaposing modern and ancient materials such as steel, gold and diamonds, while also communicating a deeper concept that elevates a piece beyond its pure aesthetic or functional purpose.”

Aurelia’s signature collections and bespoke designs are inspired by the underlying frequencies and intricate structures of the natural world. “Geometries and vibrational patterns are everywhere in nature,” she explains. “This can be seen in shells, the exquisite crystalline structures of ice or the extraordinary visual patterns generated by sound, which are observable in cymatics. I’ve been curious about these natural phenomena for some time and being able to translate that into precious materials gives another layer of depth to the meaningful stories jewellery can hold.”

Aurelia’s approach represents a kind of modern alchemy, transforming raw, elemental materials into deeply considered works of art. Her Ancient Earth Collection embodies this spirit, sculpting textural rivers in metal surfaces to reference the earth’s rocky forms and flowing currents of energy. This close bond with nature is also reflected in Aurelia’s commitment to transparent, sustainable practices. “We’re merely custodians of this earth,” she explains. “I believe it’s our responsibility to leave a beautiful legacy for the next generation.” Aurelia

works with 100 per cent recycled and refined precious metals, and uses beautiful, quality gemstones from reputable, sustainable sources.

Her unique talent has attracted national and international recognition. Aurelia won the Debbie Sheezel Enamelling Award in 2011 and has been a finalist for several other international prizes, including the 2016 Alliances Legacy Award in France. Her works are in public and private collections, and she has created several significant collections for the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia.

Aurelia treasures the timeless artistry of her craft, and the role jewellery plays in the lives of her clients. “Jewellery is a profound expression of our collective human history,” she says. “It’s both a luxury and a necessity, as it’s a covetable object that also holds incredible talismanic powers. It can be a spiritual guide, a work of art and a legacy. As an object infused with meaning – jewellery has the capacity to connect us and tell a thousand stories.”

www.aureliayeomans.com





4.
*Bespoke
habitat*

*PROPERTY AND
INTERIORS*





SPECTRE HITS THE ROAD

*AFTER THE EXHAUSTIVE TRIALS,
FIRST GLIMPSES AND FANFARE
LAUNCHES, ROLLS-ROYCE'S MUCH-
ANTICIPATED ALL-ELECTRIC
COUPÉ ARRIVED IN STYLE THIS
YEAR. WORDS BY RAY MASSEY*



It has been many years in conception, development and testing, but over the past 12 months deliveries to customers of the new Rolls-Royce Spectre have been well underway. The marque's first fully electric production model represents what the luxury carmaker has hailed as "the dawn of a bold new era" – just in time for its 120th anniversary celebrations.

Following Spectre's official unveiling in California's Napa Valley last year, client deliveries of the zero-emissions electric super coupé commenced in the fourth quarter of 2023, sparking a busy year of events and debuts across all regions of the globe as the first production models reached their new owners and hit the road.

BESPOKE BEAUTY

In April of this year, Rolls-Royce presented a striking bespoke commission called Spectre Escapism at Auto China 2024 in Beijing. The car's two-tone exterior is finished in a celebratory Lantana Red that takes inspiration from the vivid tones of the Lantana flower, whose vibrant bloom is believed to bring good luck. By way of contrast, the upper section and coachline are rendered in a more subdued Tempest Grey, while a softly illuminated Spirit of Ecstasy figurine is a highlight.

Large 23-inch, seven-spoke, part-polished wheels have centres painted in Lantana Red to match the main chassis colour. The interior's Starlight Headliner features 960 fibre-optic "stars" in a sunset hue along with eight white "shooting stars" formed with 192 fibre-optic lights.

In late June, the new electric Spectre made a significant appearance at the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club's own Annual Rally and

Concours d'Elegance at historic Burghley House in Lincolnshire. It joined other examples of the current Goodwood portfolio – including Phantom, Ghost and Cullinan – along with hundreds of members' modern and classic Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars on display in front of the 16th-century stately home.

The Spectre on display featured a two-tone exterior, pairing Morganite for the lower section with the contrasting upper level in Gunmetal. The illuminated grille and uplit Spirit of Ecstasy mascot were in keeping with its all-electric powertrain. Its striking interior colour palette matched Grace White primary leather with an Ardent Red secondary shade that extended to the carpets. Seat piping was in Peony Pink, while the wood veneer was open-pore Tudor Oak with Canadel door linings.

"We were delighted to support the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club's Annual Rally again this year," said Andrew Ball, Head of Corporate Relations and Heritage at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, "especially as we celebrate the 120th anniversary of the marque in 2024.

"We've always enjoyed working with the RREC, whose knowledge and love of historic Rolls-Royce motor cars is unparalleled. They are crucial custodians of the marque's rich heritage, which continues to inform and inspire so much of what we do at the home of Rolls-Royce at Goodwood today."

The newly unveiled examples of the company's contemporary bespoke craft and cutting-edge 21st century technology "underlined the continuity between the motor cars designed and built by Henry Royce himself and those we're creating for today's clients," added Ball.

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

That same month, a Spectre was displayed on the Thames-side lawn of the prestigious Hurlingham Club in west London, where Rolls-Royce clients were invited to enjoy one of the most sought-after



Previous page | The Rolls-Royce Spectre arrived on the road this year, marking a new chapter in the company's celebrated 120-year history

Left | Ray Massey was one of the very first to experience the groundbreaking new model

Opposite, top and bottom | The one-off Spectre Escapism at Rolls-Royce's Goodwood home









Previous pages |
The new all-electric
coupé makes an
appearance at the
RREC's Annual Rally

Left and below |
Semaphore signals
Rolls-Royce's extensive
bespoke offering

Opposite | Spectre
gets put through its
paces during cold-
weather testing
in Sweden





“Rolls-Royce dubbed the latter part of the global testing process their ‘finishing school’, during which the new Spectre was ‘taught’ how to become a true Rolls-Royce”

highlights in the sporting summer season – a day at The Hurlingham Club Tennis Classic.

“Rolls-Royce Motor Cars is fortunate to have personal relationships with its clients around the world, and an intimate understanding of the unique and remarkable world in which its patrons live,” the company said. “It is therefore fitting that the marque serves a gentle presence at some of the world’s most luxurious locations and events, where existing owners and those wishing to learn more about the brand can enjoy the Rolls-Royce experience in a different, yet highly appropriate setting.”

At the Goodwood Festival of Speed in July, hosted by the Duke of Richmond just a stone’s throw from Rolls-Royce’s factory, the company showcased a new Spectre among a collection of its bespoke motor cars. Presented in two-tone Peony Pearl and Black Diamond, the car joined others ascending the venue’s famous Hillclimb course during the festival’s Supercar Run.

As summer reached its peak in August, Rolls-Royce unveiled the attention-grabbing Spectre Semaphore, a “one-of-one” bespoke commission that made its global debut at The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering, during Monterey Car Week.

The car’s eye-catching exterior coachwork is finished in Bespoke Semaphore Yellow – the colour from which the commission took its name – inspired by the informal elegance of coastal California. This is further enhanced with a unique swirling artwork on the bonnet called

“Marbled Pain Spill”, which alone was the product of more than 160 hours of design, development and production. “To create this motif, Rolls-Royce craftspeople applied silver lacquer and multiple layers of clearcoat for a seamless finish,” the company revealed.

Semaphore’s contemporary interior features digital instrument dials that match the exterior’s vivid yellow paintwork, while a clean, high-gloss painted Cashmere Grey wood incorporates a subtle metallic finish infused with silver mica flakes that sparkle under direct light, matching grey accents in the fabric material. A combination of Lemon Yellow and Citrine Yellow is used across the seats, Starlight doors and above the instrument panel.

TRIALS AND TRIUMPH

Rolls-Royce’s journey to electrification, culminating in the arrival of Spectre, has been a long road. In 2011, the company produced an experimental one-off electric prototype – based on a Phantom – called 102EX, which I drove around Sussex. But it was before its time and the experimental model’s battery range needed to be addressed. This was followed in 2016 by the futuristic concept car 103EX.

They were important steps, but essentially a lead-up to Spectre, Rolls-Royce’s first production electric car, which after years of development and refinement underwent final gruelling all-weather testing in extremes of freezing Arctic cold, burning African heat and in the more temperate climate of the Côte d’Azur in the



“Rolls-Royce always aims to produce in its cars a magic carpet ride, and with Spectre it has electrified it”



Opposite | The new car receives a warm reception in South Africa

Above | Ray at the wheel of Rolls-Royce's emissions-free model

South of France, where many of its high-net-worth customers will no doubt relax and drive it for real. Valued clients have had their input, too, to ensure Spectre really does drive and feel like a Rolls-Royce.

The sweeping, aerodynamic fastback has a streamlined Spirit of Ecstasy at its prow that has been specially shaped and wind-tested over 830 hours to reduce air resistance. Clients can even specify an illuminated version as an option.

I have been privileged to both follow and participate in Spectre's progression in detail over the years. I rode shotgun in the passenger seat of a camouflaged early test version on the edge of the Arctic Circle, as it underwent severe cold-weather testing around the remote Swedish town of Arjeplog.

I flew 6,000 miles to drive a near-production model in South Africa, where Spectre was undergoing hot-weather trials towards the end of its global 1.5 million-mile testing programme – equivalent to circumnavigating the world 62 times.

Rolls-Royce dubbed the latter part of the global testing process its “finishing school”, during which the new Spectre was “taught” how to become a true Rolls-Royce with refined manners and “waftable” acceleration. “Crucially,” the carmaker stressed, “it is a Rolls-Royce first and an electric car second.”

Last year, I was also given the chance to drive the sleek, green, emissions-free coupé at its official global launch on the West Coast of

the US – Rolls-Royce's biggest market – more than 5,000 miles from where it is built at the firm's high-tech factory in Goodwood, West Sussex.

There I encountered an additional important, though informal and quite unofficial, challenge that was imposed by the company's engineers called the “champagne test”. They reason that, however rough the roads, the marque's “magic carpet ride” must be so smooth that a passenger sipping champagne does not spill one drop from their glass. As they put it, “Refinement goes far beyond numbers.” I tried it for myself in California, and it works.

AN ELECTRIFYING EXPERIENCE

Prices for the new Spectre start at around £330,000, but few will pay that. Instead, the high level of bespoke options so beloved of Rolls-Royce customers means a typical outlay is likely to be closer to £500,000.

Powered by a mighty 584hp electric motor and battery configuration that propels the near three tonne vehicle from 0 to 60mph in just 4.4 seconds up to a top speed limited to 155mph, Spectre also has a significant full-charge range of up to 329 miles – enough to drive from London to just north of Newcastle.

It is Rolls-Royce's most aerodynamic motor car ever and has a presence and size similar to that of the earlier petrol-powered Phantom Coupé. Indeed, it is described by the company as that car's spiritual successor. It is also the first production Rolls-Royce coupé to run on 23-inch wheels in almost 100 years.



Left | Spectre's sleek, restrained dashboard and controls

Opposite | On the road during hot-weather trials in South Africa

So, what is it like to drive? Impressions can be deeply personal, but for what they're worth here are mine.

The low-riding, luxury super coupé is truly electrifying. It has real road presence and is surprisingly big for such a sleek-looking car. This is thanks to clever design, which – as with some cunningly designed clothing – makes it look slimmer and lighter than it actually is, taking inspiration from nautical design, high-end tailoring and contemporary art.

At around 1.5 metres, the laser-welded, aluminium, rear-hinged doors are the largest pillarless coach doors ever fitted to a Rolls-Royce. Normally, there is a button for the driver to press so that the door closes automatically. But with Spectre, you simply press your foot on the brake, and the door silently and elegantly swings shut and seals you in.

The snug cockpit with its smart digital dashboard is sophisticated, restrained and relaxing without the need for whizz-bang flashing lights or sci-fi styling to proclaim its electric-car credentials. First and foremost it is a Rolls-Royce. In the driving seat, Spectre feels cossetting, low and sporty. Yet there is also a surprising amount of room for two passengers in the rear, thanks to clever design and the slightly lie-back positioning of the seats, as I found to my own surprise and delight when being driven.

Switch on the ignition and there's a calm, faintly perceptible tone as the motor springs to life. Rolls-Royce even used the strains of a professional harpist to create just the right ambience. Driving Spectre is the easiest thing in the world. There is no clutter of dials and buttons, and even the digital dials are designed to look analogue. The car does most of the work for you, leaving you to enjoy the experience.

Spectre is sure-footed, nimble and amazingly responsive. Rolls-Royce always aims to produce in its cars a magic carpet ride, and with Spectre it has electrified it. Acceleration is phenomenal – but also seamlessly smooth and controlled. You will not feel your neck snap back, despite its awesome power. Owners will need to watch their speed if they want to keep their licence, as exceptionally fast can seem rather relaxed.

Charging the 102kWh battery to 80 per cent using a 195kW (DC) charger takes 34 minutes, or 95 minutes using a less powerful 50kW (DC) charger. A full charge on a 22kW (AC) charger takes five hours 30 minutes, so can be done while at home or in the office.

Spectre's cobalt-lithium batteries also double as 700kg of useful sound deadening. But because silence can be disorienting and even make you feel queasy, engineers have had to carefully allow for some controlled, natural ambient noise. It's an exceptionally delicate balance, but it works. And now Rolls-Royce customers and owners can experience it for themselves.

A PROPHECY FULFILLED

Rolls-Royce says its cars are perfectly suited to electric power and points out that in 1900, Charles Rolls actually prophesied an electric future for a clean, noiseless motor car. Astonishingly, it was more than 120 years ago that the motoring pioneer wrote in a magazine article: "The electric car is perfectly noiseless and clean. There is no smell or vibration. They should become very useful when fixed charging stations can be arranged."

Former Rolls-Royce CEO Torsten Müller-Ötvös, who took up the top job in 2010 and led the company's electrifying transformation, described fulfilling its founder's prophecy as "an audacious promise kept". Spectre had been the highlight and pinnacle of his career, he said, noting, "We hope Rolls-Royce's founders – the Honourable Charles Rolls and Sir Henry Royce – will be looking down with approval. Fingers crossed."

At Spectre's Californian launch, Rolls-Royce said that the car proves that battery-electric technology "has entirely come of age, and can be successfully deployed at the very apex of automotive excellence, luxury and performance". The company also added with an almost chilling degree of finality: "Rolls-Royce will never again produce a new model with an internal combustion engine."

That's quite a statement, and one that certainly brought me up sharp and took a few seconds to fully absorb. Here's to the next 120 years. *Photography kindly provided by Rolls-Royce Motor Cars.*



“We hope Rolls-Royce’s founders – the Honourable Charles Rolls and Sir Henry Royce – will be looking down with approval”

Model home

Ark-Shelter has reinvented prefabricated buildings with its modular, mobile spaces that offer both flexible living and bespoke architectural design

As architecture students in Ghent, Belgium, Michiel De Backer and Martin Mikovčák connected through their interest in mobile structures: fully finished, modular living spaces that are self-sufficient, leave no footprint on the natural environment and can be expanded or moved.

Michiel and Martin's shared passion led them to set up Ark-Shelter in 2015. The company's modular, architect-designed units or cabins, known as Arks, combine the efficiency of factory prefabrication with a high-end finish and tailored detailing. They are designed for expandable living or off-grid country escapes, or stacked for office space and even perched on city rooftops as bespoke work or play areas. "It is not just a product, it is a building system. We are architects and it starts there," says Michiel. "We really listen to a customer and ask, 'What are your priorities?' And we have the design freedom to provide this service to customers in an industrial way."

Along with their team of craftsmen, the pair create spaces that are unique, durable and restful to live in. The warmth of the pinewood, which is certified for sustainability by the Forest Stewardship Council, lends to the qualities of the calm, minimalist designs – and means the structures are 95 per cent recyclable, which is in line with the architects' ecological ethos.

Made off-site, Ark-Shelter bypasses traditional house-building techniques, avoiding the problems of spiralling costs and delivery timeframes and the complexities that come with structures with foundations. At the start of each project, Michiel and Martin spend time talking to the client. Once the design is approved, the client promptly receives a quote. Production time depends on the size of the unit, whether it is one or two storeys, and how many modules and bathrooms it has. A single cabin takes three months to build, before it is transported to the location and set up in a day. The cabins can also come with furniture and furnishings, offering every detail from a wood-burning stove to bedding.

The possibilities of design and use are endless, and the architects aim to accommodate any request. When one client wanted a sauna but did not want the disruption of building it inside their top-floor apartment in Bratislava, Ark-Shelter designed a cabin with three glass walls for the rooftop, which had to be helicoptered in. "It was a very special cabin using glass connections that can only be made using specialist machinery in the factory," says Michiel. Other projects include a "floating" restaurant on a pontoon on a lake, modular ski lodges and fully furnished hotel rooms.

A signature feature of Ark-Shelter cabins is their floor-to-ceiling windows, which keep the interiors light-filled and connect with the views outside; thanks to the modular design, they can be configured towards the view the client chooses. Each module is also thermally and acoustically insulated, and is hooked up to water and electricity supplies or fitted with solar panels.

Ark-Shelter operates from Belgium and Slovakia and has showrooms in the Netherlands and Spain, with plans to expand into the UK and Scandinavia. Whatever the country, the sales and design team take care of local permissions, logistics, transportation and installation.

As families grow or when the work-life balance shifts, Ark-Shelter cabins can be added to, combining the sleek precision of prefabrication with the personalised touch of architect-designed living. "High-end, high-quality and really personalised, that is always our vision," says Michiel.

www.ark-shelter.com







Visual pleasure

With decades of expertise in visual culture, Kulik Selzer curates everything from decorative art to reference libraries

In the early 2000s, Babette Kulik and Michael Selzer ran the literary salon The Society Club in the heart of Soho, London. It staged book launches, hosted photography exhibitions, provided a bolthole for the Booker Prize jury and established itself as a slice of old, bohemian Soho in a rapidly changing city.

In 2016, looking to move on to the next challenge, the couple launched Kulik Selzer – an arts and design trading and curation service. If The Society Club had provided a forum for discourse around the creative arts, Kulik Selzer dug deeper, using the pair’s backgrounds in publishing, fashion, style and fine-art curation to trade in a more tangible version of beauty. “The aim was to have a business where we were building libraries for private clients and buying and selling decorative design,” says Michael. “Babette has the most incredible eye, while I do a lot of the research behind the items we buy in terms of authenticity, provenance and history. The idea was just to keep growing and to buy the things we loved that were beautifully decorative, well made and unique.”

It is clear that passion, whether for art, photography, writing or design, underpins every area of the business.



The ethos might be precise and rarefied, but there is a sense of excitement involved, too. “Life is beautiful and these things are beautiful, but you don’t have to be precious about it,” says Babette.

While Babette and Michael’s tastes sometimes vary, a dominant influence on their aesthetic is modernism. The crisp, early 20th-century utilitarian beauty of Art Deco also features strongly. The pair acquire their pieces from auctions and private sellers; anything mass-produced is off limits. Michael specialises in reading the market with an artistic eye, anticipating trends, exploring art history for neglected eras or creators and buying accordingly. To this end, he is beginning to turn his attention to the 1980s and 1990s, looking for art and design from the recent past that will endure and maintain value.

Babette’s knowledge of publishing is at the core of the company’s library service, and is where her love of design, visual flair and literary expertise converge. She curates and assembles collections for personal libraries or commercial spaces that range from a couple of hundred to thousands of books. While the libraries serve as a reference source, Babette believes they also

have an aesthetic value. She takes a hands-on approach to installing the libraries in person and ensuring that the books are treasured in their new home.

Kulik Selzer sells its carefully sourced furniture, lighting and decorative objects by appointment from its gallery in Shoreditch, east London, as well as online. But the company has taken on projects everywhere, from the Bahamas to Brazil. And with a focus on the US, Babette and Michael, with their long-term friend and advisor Jennifer Moores, have opened a showroom in Rancho Santa Fe, San Diego, California. This is not without its challenges, partly due to the sheer size of the pair’s collections. “We shipped so many books and pieces of furniture to our new location, it was difficult to know where to start,” says Babette. “We have thousands of books, as we are constantly adding to our reference library.”

California will seem a long way from Soho but, for a company interested in ever-evolving cultural signifiers, it feels appropriate. Kulik Selzer has an eye on the past, but a foot in the future, too.

www.kulikselzer.com

Greek island idyll

With over 20 years of industry experience and annually awarded service, Roula Rouva Real Estate is Greece's premier luxury real estate agency

When the makers of the popular 2016 TV show *The Durrells in Corfu* – based on Gerald Durrell's classic memoir of Greek life – came to Corfu scouting for locations, they went straight to the office of Roula Rouva. Roula is the island's legendary estate agent, who has been advising clients on buying and selling property in Greece for more than 20 years. Her unbeatable knowledge of the local market made her a hit with the show's production company, which ended up subletting space in her office as they were visiting so often.

Roula Rouva Real Estate was set up in 2003 and has a team of 50. It is now a member of the prestigious Forbes Global Properties, an international network of select real estate brokerages that connects buyers and sellers to the world's most exceptional properties. But Roula fondly remembers her first sale, a derelict roofless barn bought by a couple from the UK for €35,000. "It is where it all started.



It had a view of the sea and was a very good investment for them." Her biggest deals now include hotels and premium estates that can have a value of more than €30 million.

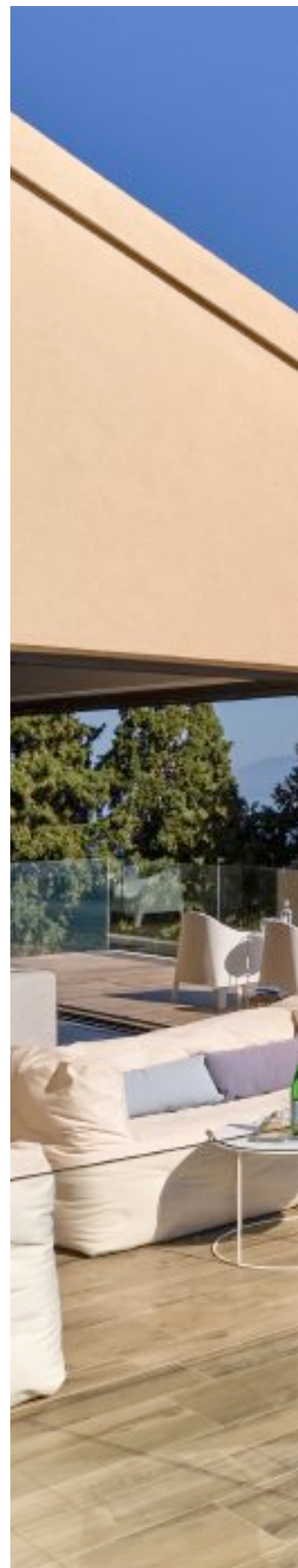
The agency works across Greece, along with its extensive partners, dealing with prime investment and residential projects, whether it is a bespoke villa in Mykonos or a historic mansion in Athens. Other locations include the desirable northeast coast of Corfu, nicknamed Kensington-on-Sea, which is as attractive as it was when Durrell wrote his famous book. The island is a magical place, filled with the scent of pine trees, pretty villages and sun-drenched beaches, and is rich in ancient history and culture. At the same time, it boasts exclusive hotels and marinas with all their quality facilities.

A one-stop shop for property, the company offers bespoke services with specialists who understand the demands and expectations at the high end of the market. Roula is proud of the work they carry out for clients, as recognised by the European Property Awards: the company has received awards every year from 2016 in the categories of Best Real Estate Agency Greece, Best Real Estate Marketing Greece and Best Website Greece; it was also among the three best in Europe for Best Real Estate Agency and Best Website, while also winning the Luxury Lifestyle Awards' Best Luxury Real Estate Brokerage in Greece for six consecutive years. "We work to international standards, are multilingual and always evolving," says Roula. "And our warm testimonials from our clients say how much we look after them. Our agents leave their mark on the hearts of the people they work for."

Most Roula Rouva clients are international, seeking to buy a holiday home, but the company can also help with builds. Its development arm assists those who have bought land and want a trusted partner that can navigate the complexities of construction. "We do everything from buying a small piece of land, to off-market transactions that are worth multimillions," says Roula.

Purchasing land or property in Greece brings an additional benefit – the Golden Visa. This residence permit gives those who invest in real estate in Greece the right to live there for an initial five-year period, which can be extended afterwards. The scheme also provides the right to travel freely within the Schengen Area for investors and their families, as well as the benefits of European citizenship such as healthcare. "We want to find the right property for our clients and satisfy their desire for a better future," says Roula, "and be here as their trusted partner and adviser for life."

www.rrcorfurealestate.com







The dream outdoor kitchen

Outopia Outdoor Kitchens elevates the al fresco dining experience with elegantly engineered designs that have all the mod cons of a high-end interior brand

In the world of interiors, outdoor living is the hot topic that is exciting architects and designers. It is driven, in part, by the post-pandemic trend for entertaining at home and seeking wellbeing in the open air, but also through innovation in design and the refined products of luxury lifestyle brands such as Outopia Outdoor Kitchens. “We started with a vision to engineer, design and produce outdoor kitchens at the highest level, with the capabilities and options that exist in the super brands of interior kitchens,” says Arik Klein, Outopia CEO.

Outopia is a subsidiary of the EMKA Group, set up in the early 1950s in Israel by a family of industrialists, of which Arik is the third generation. Outopia has drawn on the group’s expertise in manufacturing and engineering to produce state-of-the-art outdoor kitchens with facades in a modern, minimalist European design. The facades are made of a groundbreaking patented aluminium that has a honeycomb structure. This makes the kitchens durable yet light enough to be installed on balconies or penthouse terraces, with the strength to support high-end appliances, including integrated fridges and freezers, pizza ovens, grills, wine coolers and ice machines.



The aim is to “elevate the cooking experience to a professional level and the hospitality experience into an art form,” says Arik. “We wanted to produce an outdoor kitchen that allows people to enjoy their passion for cooking as they do in an indoor kitchen in terms of design, comfort and varied usage options.” As part of the brand’s holistic design concept, customers are encouraged to think about how they like to entertain, for example having a separate cooking and entertaining area, or a bar with pouring taps for beer and soda; and to consider who they entertain – friends, family or business associates.

The kitchens are intended for those who appreciate the very best design and quality, so there is an exquisite attention to detail. The finish of the cabinetry is seamless: Otopia has a patented method of assembly using concealed connectors so there are no unsightly fittings on show, while the use of top-notch hardware means soft-close drawers and integrated handles or doors open at a touch. In another first for outdoor kitchens, Otopia makes hanging or tall cabinets, as well as shelves. Add to this the range of colours, including two-tone combinations, and facade types (a solid or slatted effect), and the possibilities of look and feel are endless. This provides a blank canvas for designers to create unique

kitchens, whether the project is the terrace of a contemporary apartment in Miami, a landscaped patio in greater London or the garden of a rustic villa overlooking the sea in Tuscany. “There is an emphasis on in-depth planning and personal tailoring to the customer’s needs,” says Arik, “with the possibility of combining elements of a bar or a dining table, for a perfect hospitality experience for the host and guest.”

The company’s designs enable customisation to almost any requirement. Configurations such as C or L shapes come with or without counter seating areas, and there are standalone islands and wall-mounted units. For a harmonious connection to the kitchen’s environment, the colour and material of the facades can be applied to walls, planters or benches, continuing the interior design language.

Otopia has a network of distributors across the US. In the UK, the official business partner is Alfresco Kitchens, who have a flagship showroom in Chiswick, west London. There are plans for further expansion and developments, applying cutting-edge materials and influencing new outdoor trends in this flourishing industry.

www.outopialiving.com
www.alfresco-kitchens.com



Hallmark of quality

With The Designers Hall, two sisters are bringing their popular signature style to residences and buildings across the Gulf region

Sisters May and Noha Al Hammadi first began to explore their love of interior design by testing new ideas and concepts in their family home in Saudi Arabia. Their shared passion for the principles of “modern simplicity grounded in the classics”, then took them on a path to refresh interior design throughout the Middle East with the opening of their design studio, The Designers Hall.

Founded in 2014, The Designers Hall specialises in high-end residential, office and hospitality projects, all of which are stamped with May and Noha’s signature style, encompassing clean lines, classic proportions, exceptional quality and meticulous attention to detail in an unwavering pursuit of excellence. “We have consistently strived to provide innovative design solutions to our discerning clients,” says May.

Their first major commission came when they were invited to design a royal suite for the Al-Hammadi Hospital in Riyadh – an opportunity that led to numerous offers from impressed visitors. In 2022, The Designers Hall was named Best Luxury Interior Design Studio in Saudi Arabia at the Luxury Lifestyle Awards – a testament to its success in bringing imagination and talent to the fore through its fresh approach to design. It is also testament to the sisters’ ability to meet their clients’ expectations and stay ahead of the competition.

“In a market that is experiencing a growth in interior design firms, we remain committed to prioritising our clients’ needs and ensuring that the spaces we create are not only aesthetically pleasing but also functional and impeccable. We understand the importance of marrying beauty and practicality in our design concepts,” says May.

The Designers Hall has branched out with a successful home accessories line called Soft. It was launched in 2015 to offer a full styling service and provide the personalised, finishing touches to a space, from elegant vases for eye-catching flower arrangements to picture frames and decorative cushions. Soft also forms an integral part of the company’s objective to take more control of entire projects, from procurement to final design, creating a one-stop shop for unique and timeless furnishings and furniture that will complement the studio’s designs and people’s homes and have huge appeal.

In 2023, The Designers Hall established D Gallerie, a luxury furniture and home accessories showroom in Riyadh, which showcases a range of carefully sourced, international designer brands. The showroom enables the design studio to curate an interior look that caters to its diverse clientele, which now includes real-estate developers, architects, designers and private clients who are seeking

quality furnishings. Here, they can also browse some of the world’s finest furniture brands under one roof, such as Jonathan Charles, Arteriors, Woodbridge and Hooker.

The sisters see D Gallerie as their first step towards their goal of establishing a dedicated Design Centre building by 2030. “Over time, we have observed a growing demand from individuals seeking consultation services and bespoke furniture solutions,” says May. “This led us to envision a comprehensive design centre where clients can be inspired and access a curated selection of furnishings all in one location.”

Currently operating within Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, The Designers Hall aspires to expand its horizons and extend its design services to international markets. “Our vision is to establish our Design Centre, uniting local and international designers,” says May. “In this way, we can remain dedicated to fostering creativity, collaboration and innovation in the field of interior design.”

*thedesignershall.com
www.dgallerie.sa*



Place maker

When building new communities, Abu Dhabi's Imkan Properties anticipates what residents want, and that includes healthy living among nature

Under the considerate eye of United Arab Emirates property developer Imkan, 300 hectares of land along the beautiful Sahel Al Emarat coastline between Abu Dhabi and Dubai is being transformed into a premium development, AlJurf, which merges the tranquillity of its natural setting – forest, wildlife, turquoise sea and golden sand – with the sophistication of an international residential community. “We envision AlJurf as a place where heritage meets modernity, offering a luxurious and sustainable lifestyle deeply rooted in environmental preservation and wellness,” says Suwaidan Al-Dhaheeri, CEO of Imkan Properties.

Part of AlJurf's masterplan is SHA Emirates Island, the world's first “healthy living” island, which redefines luxury real estate through a focus on restorative wellbeing. The island provides owners with a range of wellbeing services right on their doorstep. These include doctors, therapists, personal trainers, yoga and meditation instructors, as well as chefs that specialise in healthy cooking.

Such a soulful environment is designed to enhance the lives of residents and visitors, and provide the ultimate city escape. Imkan's proposition is built on a unique research platform that identifies the desires of clients, helping the company to anticipate and understand people's evolving needs. This vision extends beyond property development. “We are place makers. We differentiate ourselves by creating holistic environments that nurture wellbeing and foster a strong sense of community,” says Suwaidan.

Imkan was founded in 2017 and is based in Abu Dhabi. As well as landmark developments in the UAE, it has a significant international footprint with 26 projects spanning two continents. These include the world-class residential and commercial Alburouj development in Egypt and Le Carrousel Mall, the first open-air shopping centre in Morocco. Other developments include Makers District in Abu Dhabi, the first neighbourhood in the UAE built to cultivate creativity, with a mix of residential, commercial and cultural spaces that encourage collaboration and entrepreneurship. By contrast, Nudra is a luxury beachside villa community within Saadiyat Island's Cultural District in Abu Dhabi. “Each project caters to a distinctive luxury lifestyle, based on unique customer segments, and reflects our commitment to excellence,” says Suwaidan. Investors in real estate can apply for the UAE's Golden Visa, which allows successful parties to live in the emirates without requiring an employer or UAE national to act as sponsor.

The projects seamlessly blend local heritage and aesthetics with global design principles, resulting in

unique spaces, as seen in the contemporary homes and landscaping of the AlJurf development. AlJurf exists in harmony with nature by foregrounding sustainability. “The masterplan incorporates eco-friendly building practices, sustainable materials and green infrastructure to minimise environmental impact. It emphasises coastal and marine ecosystem conservation, integrates renewable energy solutions and promotes a sustainable lifestyle among residents,” says Suwaidan.

In practice, this means AlJurf features nine kilometres of canal, as well as ponds and thousands of trees (many of which were kept in a nursery and then replanted). The villas are constructed with locally sourced stone and wood from sustainable sources, and come with solar-powered heating and electricity, as well as eco-friendly paint and energy-efficient appliances. “Every residence is meticulously crafted not only to harmoniously integrate with its environment, but also to leverage the natural surroundings.”

www.imkan.ae







A life of luxury

Penthouse.ae, luxury division of Metropolitan, connects global clients who come to Dubai with the most exclusive property in the emirate

In a prime position on the shoreline, Dubai offers beautiful beaches, a warm climate, a superior service-centric ethos, generous tax incentives and an opulent, dynamic culture. The attractions are so great that ultra-high-net-worth individuals from Europe and the US are joining expats from around the world in making Dubai their home, so much so that together they now comprise around 85 per cent of Dubai's population. "Dubai is an amazing place for high-net-worth individuals who are arriving in droves for lifestyle, business and investment reasons," says Nikita Kuznetsov, CEO of Metropolitan Premium Properties.

Metropolitan Group set up Penthouse.ae, the Dubai-based real estate agency, in 2022 in response to the surge in demand for ultra-luxury property in the region. The group itself was founded in 2008 and has well-established connections throughout the emirate. These connections, combined with a reputation for confidentiality and excellence, mean Penthouse.ae has exclusive access to future developments, property not available on the open market and the most prestigious homes. The company works with high-profile names, among them Dubai's



homegrown Amali Properties, with its extraordinary villas and branded luxury residences by Armani, Bulgari, Baccarat and Four Seasons. It also works with renowned architects, designers and developers, such as SAOTA, Foster + Partners, Nick Candy and Kelly Hoppen. Its ability to go above and beyond for its clients in the most sought-after locations makes Penthouse.ae stand out from others in the industry.

“We personalise our services to cater to the individual needs of each client, whether they are moving to Dubai, seeking business opportunities, looking to invest or simply visiting for enjoyment,” says Nikita. A team of 35 real estate specialists works diligently to assist clients in finding the ideal home, business space or investment property. Penthouse.ae can help a family relocate to Dubai, for example, by securing the most exclusive home, the best schools and business premises. It can also organise interior design and furnishings, utility contracts, bank accounts, visas and legal documents, while familiarising families with the local area, customs and suppliers.

A hub of international trade, tourism and investment, Dubai is a popular destination for an investment or vacation home. Clients consult Penthouse.ae on the evaluation, acquisition, sale and rental of real estate,

as well as on matters such as yield maximisation.

The company also provides a comprehensive property management service. It stands as a discreet, reliable and efficient local partner to its clients who are often very busy and reside overseas. These clients trust the company’s experience and expertise in Dubai’s real estate sector to maximise their benefits from the emirate.

Dubai is celebrated for its commitment to sustainable development. Its real estate market stands out globally for embodying the pinnacle of luxurious living without compromising the planet’s wellbeing. Developers use the latest technology to improve environmental sustainability and energy efficiency, integrating solar panels, water-saving devices and eco-friendly materials into buildings.

The United Arab Emirates’ goal of achieving net zero by 2050, along with Dubai’s 2040 Urban Master Plan – which includes the 20-minute city concept, in which residents can reach everything they need by foot or bike – means there are strategies and funding in place to reduce the country’s carbon footprint and promote sustainable living. This all makes the future of Dubai extremely exciting.

penthouse.ae

Revolutionary residences

Drawing on themes of shared spaces and environmentally sound principles, real-estate company R.Evolution is transforming luxury living around the world

Great buildings should aspire to transform lives and change the world – that is the ambition of Alex Zagrebelny, founder of real-estate company R.Evolution. His latest development, Eywa in Dubai, plays its part in that. “Eywa is a combination of ancient knowledge and advanced modern technologies that come together to create a new form of real estate,” says Alex. “I call it a next real-estate generation of 21st-century buildings.”

Eywa is a spectacular 19-storey building of 48 exclusive residences and two penthouse apartments that takes its place in the city like a gigantic tree, promising a new “Wild Luxury” experience in urban living. It was named the World’s Best Property at the International Property Awards 2024 in London, and for Alex it is the pinnacle of 25 years’ property experience that have seen him incorporate concepts which combine a connection with nature, ancient knowledge and modern science to create buildings that not only defy imagination, but also increase the wellbeing of residents. The name Eywa is itself an acronym of energy, youthfulness, wellbeing and ancient knowledge – the development’s four foundational principles.

Located on Dubai Water Canal in Business Bay, Eywa Dubai is inspired by the natural architecture of the banyan tree, the tree of life in many civilisations and which Alex’s vision applies to a luxurious apartment block. At the building’s base is a shaded portico of flowing roots, while greenery blossoms from pods and balconies spread throughout the exterior. Latvian-born Alex, who began developing properties in Riga and Jurmala in 1999 before taking on projects in Barcelona and Berlin, says that this Wild Luxury beauty draws on the healing power of nature. Inside, residents can choose from a range of apartments inspired by the floating islands from the film *Avatar*, all of which boast incredible views of “the mountains of the city”, Dubai’s dramatic man-made skyline.

Sustainability is at the heart of Eywa and directs decisions about materials and energy use, as well as ensuring the building is future-proof so it can meet the needs of residents for decades to come. For example, the glacier terracotta tiles provide insulation against the city’s heat and ensure the facade will not age. Such thinking helps to create a comfortable environment for people who have chosen to live in Eywa. In addition, twice a week, residents are invited to a culinary theatre performance or masterclass by a chef in one of the building’s communal spaces and to celebrate occasions such as birthdays. These areas include a library containing thousands of books.



“We create beautiful community spaces with amazing light and facilities for the Eywa tribe to meet and mingle,” says Alex. “We have secret places hidden throughout the property if people want to be alone to think, read and meditate. We create buildings that allow people to live longer, happier and more satisfying lives. Our buildings increase efficiency and are beyond aesthetic beauty.”

With the Eywa Tree of Life under construction, the marine-themed Eywa Way of Water will follow. The company also plans to build Eywa sites around the world, including in the Maldives, Abu Dhabi and Florida. Alex sees the core concept as applicable to all types of real estate – hotels, spas, residential or commercial property, schools and universities – and wants to share his knowledge and experience with other developers through Eywa Movement. He believes every city needs an Eywa, a source of inspiration and an ideal place to live.

www.byrevolution.com
www.eywa.ae



A passion for interiors

Los Angeles-based R/terior Studio provides colour-filled interiors that reflect the interests of each individual client

Whether it's a neighbourhood bar or a classic English country home, Rydhima Brar wants to know what truly excites you. As the founder of R/terior Studio in Los Angeles, a company that takes a different approach to most contemporary interior design by incorporating colour and storytelling into every project, she likes to ask unexpected questions when she sits down with a potential client. Rydhima quizzes them about their favourite movies, historical eras, holiday destinations, cocktails – anything that delivers an insight into their passions.

“I want to learn everything that will bring me some insight about the individual,” says Rydhima. “Something will always jump out. When you see the client talk suddenly with real passion about a subject, that's the element I will try to introduce to the design.”

Rydhima was born and raised in Kuwait to an Indian family, and it was here that she first began to take an interest in her surroundings. She noticed how the expat community would combine the opulent interiors of the Middle East – luxurious drapes, decorative tiling, deep carpets – with items, objects and materials that reminded them of their old lives. These elements acted as a connection to the past as well as a topic for future conversation, icebreakers that introduced a note of individuality to a property, the crucial elements that make a house a home.

Moving to the United States, Rydhima initially worked in marketing and analytics for banks and other financial institutions, but she did such an amazing job decorating her own home that people suggested she explored interior design as a career. When taking a sabbatical to raise her daughter, she met an interior designer at her mother-and-baby classes who agreed to act as a mentor. That was how she learned about the industry, combining this new knowledge with her natural eye for design and her experience in business to found R/terior Studio in 2020.

After several successful local projects, Rydhima's big break came when she was invited to participate in a show house in Massachusetts by an organisation that supported and amplified designers of colour. “I was invited to design my own room at this gorgeous bed and breakfast inn,” says Rydhima. “After that, I was placed on House Beautiful's list of the best new designers in America.”

Rydhima's own passion, to discover on a client's personality, results in designs as diverse as the retro “70s Project” or the elegant “Edwardian Beauty”. These are very different in appearance but share her instinct

for detail and setting, and her love of fine materials, furnishings and furniture. Rydhima is happy working in any type of residential project, from bachelor pads and beach houses to family homes and loft apartments. “There just needs to be a narrative,” says Rydhima. “That is what makes each project exciting. My look is about colour, storytelling, a global outlook and maybe an element of nostalgia, but otherwise I don't want to restrict myself.”

Rydhima also sells fine furniture from her network of suppliers via her website and recently designed her first chair, suggesting another possible avenue for her boundless creativity. She wants to expand beyond traditional domestic interiors into restaurants, bars, yachts and even classic cars. “I would love to design the interior of a luxury car,” says Rydhima. “I saw many customised cars when I was growing up in the Middle East and that would really be a dream come true.”

www.rteriorstudio.com







Extraordinary outdoor rooms

Elite Garden Studios is at the top of the tree when it comes to energy efficient, modern outdoor rooms

Elite Garden Studios is working to change the preconceived idea of a “garden room”, with much success. For Managing Director, Matt Forrest, a garden room should not be an afterthought that is cold in the winter and too warm in the summer, rather it should be crafted with the same care and attention as a room in a home. “We want to be able to say it’s a detached extension. And that must come up to scratch,” says Matt.

Manchester-based Elite Garden Studios was set up in 2021 with the goal of creating something different: high-quality garden studios that are beautifully designed and energy efficient, that can be used regardless of the weather outside. Every thought process and element of craftsmanship should be like building a quality extension “without all the planning permission and without being attached to the existing house,” says Matt.

To unlock the transformative power of the garden studio for year-round use, the company has borrowed from the expertise of its parent company, an innovator in conservatory insulation. The result is a unique,



cutting-edge insulation system that controls the temperature, minimises heat loss and helps to create a sustainable space. Called CHRIS (Comfort, Heat, Reflective, Insulation System), it ensures the studios are comfortable in all seasons and are extremely energy efficient. Six layers of materials – including aluminium foil and specialised membranes to control heat loss – line the studio walls and ceiling. This ensures a low U-value, a measure of heat-loss rating, locking in heat in the winter and reflecting heat in the summer, allowing the studios to remain at a comfortable temperature without much need for heating or air conditioning.

The function of the studios is wide-ranging, with the home office emerging as the most popular choice, says Matt. Some people want them for music studios, so they can produce music without worrying about noise transfer in their home, while others transform them into home gyms, children's play dens or home cinemas. The studios offer a versatile space to relax, be creative or entertain guests.

When it comes to aesthetics, Elite Garden Studios works closely with each client to create a visually beautiful space that suits their own taste and interior

style. Explaining the customer journey from first enquiry to completion, Matt stresses that each customer receives a personalised experience. After an initial consultation, the in-house design team visits the client's home to confirm the suitability of their chosen area for a studio. The client can then collaborate with the team to design their dream garden room, choosing everything from the style of the windows to the interior and exterior finishes. While some companies may only offer customers a set range of studios to choose from, "We don't do that as we are truly bespoke to the customer and what their needs are," says Matt.

What also makes a space by Elite Garden Studios so special are two factors: high-quality and value for money. The company strives to achieve the best product available. From the composite cladding to the structural framework, "all materials are premium, you can't get better materials at any stage than the ones that we use". At the same time, the aim is to enhance the owners' quality of life with a comfortable, bespoke, stylish retreat that is perfectly placed at the end of the garden.

www.elitegardenstudios.co.uk

A way of living

From London to Riyadh, Icône Interiors creates a design vision that reflects the modern, luxury lifestyle of its clients

“**E**very material is different. Every project is different. Every bit of stone comes from a specific block that can never be replicated.” As an overview of how Director Olivier Sartor views design – and, by extension, the work of his company, Icône Interiors – this observation works as a mission statement and as a perfect metaphor.

Launched in 2018, Icône has quickly established itself as a purveyor of bespoke, high-end domestic and commercial aesthetics, where style meets functionality. Its interior architecture and style are driven by a convergence of three factors: the space involved, the vision of its designers and architects, and the qualities (and careful sourcing) of the materials. The results are clean, contemporary and beautiful, with quality triumphing over quantity every time.

The company has conducted much of its work in the Middle East, especially in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, but it is now focusing on Europe, too; London, in particular. Olivier loves London for its exigence of quality and novelties that means a city that “is always in permanent reconstruction. This is why it is one of the best cities in the world,” he says.

For Olivier, the UK capital also acts as a stage for his high-end design and ability to meet client expectations. Whether the project is in Kensington or Westminster, he prefers to choose his own projects. “By which I mean more creativity, more time on each one,” he says. “It gives me a lot of flexibility and time to understand the client, and to choose the best material and artisans to translate our project from the idea to amazing reality.”

So, what can an Icône client expect? The process is detailed and precise, as the company never repeats designs. Everything is bespoke and designed according to the client’s requests and to reflect their personality. Icône’s team of multidisciplinary architects and talented designers start with the concept, before researching the materials and their influence on the final design. They oversee everything from lighting to joinery, bathrooms and gardens, while seeking the best suppliers. In terms of the furniture and fittings – whether it is a wardrobe, furniture or “more important, the unexpected” – Icône designs from scratch and has the pieces manufactured.

At the heart of this approach is the close collaboration with the client. Icône builds up a long-term relationship with weekly meetings and regular phone calls, until the client totally trusts the vision. “I usually say to clients at the beginning of the project that we are going to be a part

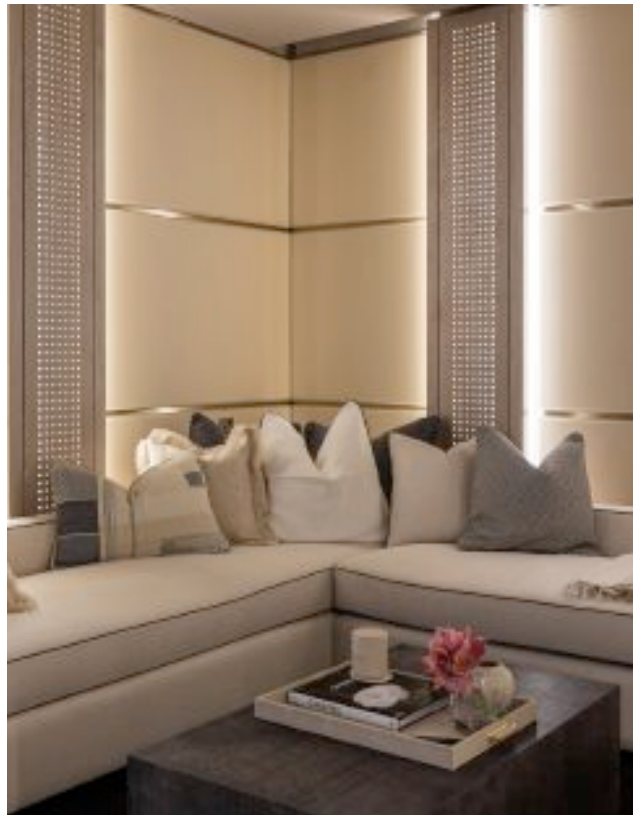
of their lives for a couple of years, if you include the design project, the manufacture and execution,” says Olivier. “You sometimes see panic in their eyes, but that is normal! Clarifications and explanations are also important.”

Icône’s unique spaces and unswerving attention to detail have caught the eye of the design world, with the company winning several awards for its interiors. The Private Villa Riyadh, for example, won Best Luxury Villa Interior Design at the Luxury Lifestyle Awards in 2022. Spread over four floors with a luxurious outdoor lounge and swimming pool, features include suede or marble wall finishes, a bespoke crystal chandelier, alabaster columns and sculpted wood panelling.

Scale is not a limitation: the company has designed restaurants, nightclubs and even an entire shopping mall. “It could be a small shop or it could be a palace. Any project is interesting if we can create a vision with the client.”

www.iconeinterior.com





Imagining the experience

French architects Vielliard & Francheteau speak of luxury living concepts: spectacular spaces where clients can share their collections and passions

From a headland overlooking the Mediterranean on the Côte d'Azur to the dramatic mountains of the Alps, breathtaking locations demand the best architecture imaginable – architecture that is creative, contemporary, stylish and discreet. Vielliard & Francheteau specialises in the design and build of such sophisticated but welcoming houses, villas and chalets, encompassing renovations as well as new builds.

The practice has offices on the French Riviera, in Cannes, Nice and the Gulf of Saint-Tropez, as well as in Lyon near the Alps. It was founded by architect, engineer and urban planner Thomas Vielliard in the early 2000s, with architect Jacques Francheteau joining in 2015. From the outset, Thomas, Jacques and their team of experts in exterior and interior architecture and decoration and design have specialised in high-end domestic architecture. They focus on location, security, comfort and discretion to showcase a unique idea of luxury living. “Each of our homes is built around unexpected and precious living spaces, which could be a wine lounge or an exceptional garage or a private spa,” says Thomas. “We call this our luxury living concept, designed to showcase our customers’ individual personalities and passions.”

For clients who are avid collectors of vintage wine, V&F designs custom wine lounges in place of the typical cellar. This enables the homeowner to celebrate their passion in a dedicated and comfortable space. Similarly, for collectors of classic cars or supercars, V&F redefines the traditional garage with an unexpected concept that combines state-of-the-art architecture with objets d’art. “These remarkable spaces fill the user with delight and allow them to share a passion with their guests,” says Thomas.

It was this ability to fulfil the wishes of an individual client that drew Thomas into the world of domestic architecture. He found it more rewarding than working for companies and public institutions, and he relished the chance to work alongside clients to create their dream home. As well as using architecture to showcase personal passions, V&F’s design philosophy ensures that each project takes full advantage of its natural location. Homes are designed to be a sanctuary from the hustle and bustle of life, drawing comfort and serenity from the relationship between indoor and outdoor spaces, paying close attention to the panorama and generous use of natural light.

Sustainability is uppermost in V&F’s architecture. The company works in partnership with local artisans to utilise traditional skills and, where possible, seeks to deploy novel materials. Through a judicious use



of materials and control of cutting-edge construction technology, the practice also aims to create minimal environmental impact. V&F’s design philosophy contributes naturally to this approach. “We try to design sober architecture, seeking an uncluttered and naturally elegant aesthetic. We insist on optimising space to eliminate wastage and create a virtuous architectural line. Luxury is not about ephemeral experiences; it is about sustainability and our designs embrace a sustainable perspective.”

The overriding aim is to make homes that evoke surprise and delight, not just at the first encounter but every day after that. “We believe our luxury living concept transforms every interior into something unique,” says Thomas. “We’re always excited by the infinite possibilities of architecture, and we find our reward in successfully interpreting our clients’ myriad desires, imagining an exclusive and refined art of living that suits them. By building the soul of a space, the experience follows.”

www.vf-architectures.com



Natural connection

Studio Saxe designs “barefoot luxury” homes and retreats that are at one with the rainforests of Costa Rica

Benjamin G Saxe’s career in architecture took off after a home that he designed for his mother won Best Private House at the World Architecture Festival Awards in 2010. He was then working for renowned architect Richard Rogers, but had spent his early years living with his mother on the streets in Costa Rica. Adopted by an architect while still a toddler, he had vowed not to allow himself or his mother to be in that situation again. “The reason I became an architect was to bring a better quality of life to others,” he says.

The award opened “every single door,” says Benjamin. His project, constructed from bamboo, was unique in the way it incorporated the natural world amid the Costa Rican rainforest. He designed the bedroom with a chimney-like ceiling that opened to reveal a perfect view of the night sky, so that his mother could gaze at the moon as she fell asleep.

After living in many different locations around the world, including Japan, London and India, Benjamin decided that if he set up his own company, it would be in his home country. At the same time, foreign investors were starting to build homes on the beaches in Costa Rica. “I realised this was an opportunity,” says Benjamin. “People were coming to improve their lifestyles and live more healthily, but they also had the economic means to build something really good. At the same time, I understand my country and I understand sustainability.”

Studio Saxe, which was founded in 2004, combines designs inspired by nature with a modern, global aesthetic. It is important to Benjamin that his buildings work in harmony with their environment. A multidisciplinary team work to make this happen, with bespoke creations that reflect the personality and values of each client and their location. “If you look on Pinterest, a lot of the architecture looks the same,” says Benjamin. “AI has made design even more generic. But we have discovered an architecture that was born from the place that surrounds it. Every project is unique and artistic.”

As more people gravitate towards the world’s cities (the UN reports that 70 per cent of the global population will live in urban environments by 2030), the craving for nature increases. Benjamin describes what Studio Saxe offers as “barefoot luxury” – buildings set in the natural landscape of Costa Rica that still have all the comforts of modern life such as Wi-Fi.

As well as unique homes, Studio Saxe designs wellness buildings and boutique hotels. One of his

hotels is designed like a treehouse so that it “floats”, with minimum impact on the ecosystem. Meanwhile, jungle pods set in thick rainforest and a sandy-coloured surf hotel on the coast manage to blend into their surroundings while retaining their individuality. The typical Studio Saxe client is conscious about the materials used to make their clothes and the ingredients in their food, says Benjamin, and it is no different for the supplies used to construct their homes. “We have a process of creating architecture that is about extracting what is beautiful about someone’s life.”

In recent years, word has spread and Studio Saxe has worked on projects in the Galapagos Islands, the UK and Australia. Wherever he builds, Benjamin believes sustainable architecture is achieved by adapting to the local conditions. “We are the bridge between two cultures.”

www.studiosaxe.com







Material world

Norwegian studio Tandberg Miller Design creates bespoke interiors that go beyond conventional notions of Scandinavian style

With 25 years of experience in the world of luxury design, Norwegian designer Ane Tandberg is well-honed in combining her aesthetic vision with the practicalities of everyday living. The latter is something she learned early on as a child, going on summer boating trips with her father. “I have always thought about the practical side of things as there is not much space on a boat,” says Ane. “You can see that in the detail of my designs.” And those designs include every type of property: residential, offices, boutiques, restaurants, spas, cabins in lakes and mountains, even a nightclub.

Ane studied interior design and history of art and architecture in London, before beginning a career in retail and marketing. She founded her Oslo-based, eponymous interior design company in 2000 after being invited to work on some offices and residential apartments. Within six years, she had enough work to make this her full-time job. She renamed the company Tandberg Miller Design and since then it has continued to grow, employing designers, architects and artisans.

Their skills have helped to turn the company into a powerhouse of interior design that creates unforgettable interiors. In 2023, the studio was named Best Luxury Interior Design Studio in Norway and was shortlisted for the International Design and Architecture Award. It also won Best Luxury Apartment in the Luxury Lifestyle Awards 2024 for a residential project in Oslo, which showcased meticulous attention to detail and expertly blended raw and natural materials.

The dark and hard materials that Ane pairs with the soft and tactile gives her style more of an international than typically Scandinavian appeal, and this has taken her work all over Europe. “My aesthetic is classic, a bit masculine but with feminine details,” she says. This might mean juxtaposing industrial steel with silk curtains, for instance, or bringing the colours of the ocean inside by using dark blue velvet upholstery. “I am interested in the combination of materials, balancing soft versus hard and drawing attention to different surfaces and textures. I want my interiors to have a ‘wow’ effect.”

Ane says that each project pushes her to her limits. The design process begins with a conversation with the client to understand how the interior will be used: whether they are entertainers or prefer their privacy, whether they enjoy reading and cooking, whether they work from home, and what artistic interests or hobbies they have. “I like to challenge myself and my customers

by finding new ideas, materials and design details,” says Ane. She then pairs this knowledge with design concepts inspired by her rich pool of suppliers and collaborates with craftspeople to conjure up highly personalised designs.

When it comes to sustainable practice, Ane believes that interior designers can really drive this by turning to natural and recycled materials. Ane strives to choose the most interesting high-end recycled materials for her clients. It is also about using materials that will last for a long time or reusing old materials in a fresh way.

This approach highlights how Ane is always looking ahead, seeking new ideas. Her ambition now is to expand on her company’s solid foundations, adding exciting new projects to its portfolio and opening overseas to build on the strong global reputation of this innovative Norwegian design studio.

www.tandbergmiller.com





Statue sanctuary

Avant Garden's impressive outdoor bronzes have turned gardens across the Channel Islands – and further afield – into sanctuaries of statuary

Nick Martel started Avant Garden around 25 years ago as a small boutique garden-themed shop selling pots, plants and sculptures. A native of Guernsey, he wanted to create something quintessentially English, but was also inspired by the creativity and flair of the flower shops he had seen during a spell in mainland Europe.

“As a child my everyday surroundings were plant nurseries and garden centres, as well as living on an old farm,” he says. The family kept a menagerie of animals – everything from cats and dogs to ponies, pigeons and chickens. Nick studied horticulture on nearby Jersey, then worked in the UK at large garden centres, creating extravagant seasonal displays, caring for plants and gaining a deep understanding of everything that can make a garden beautiful, from furniture to sculptures.

“I have always been at home surrounded by landscaped gardens, water features, ponds, statues and pots and planters of all shapes and sizes,” he says. “The surroundings were green and lush, and we always had access to natural props when creating displays in-store or in gardens,



borders or rockeries. My natural creativity was always allowed to be very bold and strong.” Incorporating works of art into such scenery became a particular passion for Nick.

Keen to create sculptures that balanced symmetry with unusual shapes, Nick first started to produce bronze “armillary sphere” sundials for Avant Garden. These eye-catching features – frameworks of rings displaying objects in the sky, often centred around the Earth – make perfect gifts, says Nick. “I found them quite fascinating, and very architectural for garden use.” Avant Garden now sells more than 600 bronze sculptures, including life-sized elephants, dogs, horses, three-metre-long alligators and “anything else you can imagine”.

They are ordered and shipped through the Avant Garden website to destinations as far afield as Australia, although the UK is still the company’s main market. And as well as holding residency exhibitions at some of the best-known hotels in Jersey and Guernsey, the company has exhibited at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, London Olympia and the Game Fair at Ragley Hall in Warwickshire.

“I now only sell sculptures made of bronze as they are totally sustainable and become special parts of people’s

lives,” says Nick. “They will last forever, making them so much more impressive the more you learn about them.”

The bronze sculptures are designed to be “popular classics” rather than limited editions, and are produced in batches of at least ten at a time. They include water features and water fountains, cremation urns and even a dragon that spurts water, appearing to breathe fire. Modern and abstract sculptures are available, as well as the lifelike recreations of human and animal forms.

The company opened a physical store, the Avant Garden & Home Shop, in St Peter Port, Guernsey, in 2024. Along with the bronze sculptures, it sells interior and exterior furniture and furnishings, plus a vast array of seasonal items and giftware. “They are all unique to us on the island,” says Nick. The distinctive range on sale includes luxury beanbags and sheepskin covers. The shop is designed to appeal not only to visitors but to locals, too – and with so many large, spectacular gardens dotted across their length and breadth, the Channel Islands would appear to be the perfect spot for a company like Avant Garden. Nick, for one, says it is a pleasure to work there.

www.avantgardenbronzes.com

Scandinavian sensitivity

Gudbjørg Simonsen's award-winning interior architecture connects clients to their homes and surroundings on a personal level, in Norway and beyond

As a young child in Norway, Gudbjørg Simonsen spent a lot of time playing with a doll's house that her father had built for her. However, it was the house that sparked her interest rather than the dolls. "I spent ages decorating it, painting the walls, sewing curtains, making furniture to put inside. I never had any interest in playing with the dolls, but I dreamt about making them a lovely home," says Gudbjørg.

For the past 20 years, making beautiful homes has become a reality for the Norwegian interior architect, who has risen to become one of the most successful in the industry in Scandinavia. With a focus on holistic design and space management, Gudbjørg's work reflects Scandinavian design elements, most notably the use of clean lines, minimalism and a connection to nature. "What sets me apart in the industry, I believe, is my goal for understanding the impact that our surroundings have on our emotions and wellbeing," says Gudbjørg.

From luxury apartment interiors in Norway – where most of her clients are based – to home spaces further afield, Gudbjørg has won numerous awards for her work. These include a win, in 2022, at the prestigious IDA Design Awards, or International Design Awards. "The awards aim to recognise visionary designers who push the boundaries of creativity and innovation, ultimately influencing the design world," says Gudbjørg. "I felt honoured that my interior design work was recognised, as winning an IDA Design Award is considered a significant achievement within the design community."

The award-winning penthouse apartment on the west coast of Norway is a prime example of how she turns to nature for inspiration. In this home, her use of a dark colour palette and materials that alter over time, without needing to be replaced, echo the harsh weather of the region and its changing coastal landscape.

Gudbjørg's environments go beyond aesthetics. She emphasises the importance of evoking positive feelings to enhance the overall experience. By having a deep understanding of the importance of surroundings, "I am able to create designs that resonate with my clients on a profound level," she says. "My spaces truly connect with people's emotions and contribute to their overall happiness and satisfaction."

The self-styled "independent interior architect" has offices in Stavanger and Oslo but also travels widely, working for clients globally. "There's something which is very appealing about Scandinavian design that makes it popular all over the world," says Gudbjørg. "I believe

it can be attributed to its timeless appeal, focus on functionality, and ability to create serene, uncluttered spaces. Its emphasis on natural materials and light also resonates with people seeking a sense of calm and connection to nature within their living spaces. Additionally, its versatility allows it to blend seamlessly with various interior styles."

Alongside creating spaces that are not only visually appealing but also practical and in harmony with natural surroundings, Gudbjørg is a firm believer in adding touches that are personal to her clients. "Our childhood homes, the ones we grew up in, play a significant role when we plan the way we want to design our own houses," she says. "So it's important to include traces from my clients' past, weaving them into their new homes, integrating or absorbing them. This doesn't always align with Scandinavian minimalism, but, to me, it helps create a special touch that preserves their memories."

www.gudbjorgsimonsen.no





Beautiful spaces

By working closely with clients, Malta-based Lex Designs has forged a reputation in luxury apartment interior design

Successful interior design is about more than simply having an exceptional eye for detail. It requires patience, commitment, dedication, understanding and professionalism – all qualities that Lexi Grech has demonstrated during her career working in residential and commercial design in Malta.

Lexi studied for a master's degree in interior design in Florence, before returning to her home in Malta. Here, she set up her business as a designer in 2018, determined to bring reliability and trust to the industry while creating beautiful and sophisticated interiors.

"I have worked on B&Bs, coffee shops, retail – all sorts of different sectors of the market but my work is mainly residential," says Lexi. "I can advise on every single aspect within each room of a house. My services are completely customised. I can simply design the general layout, or I can go into great detail by choosing the right materials, finishes and overseeing the full project."

Before starting to work for any client, Lexi makes sure she gets to know their style and what is most important to them. This enables her to offer a personalised project suited to their requirements. She then focuses on planning, functionality and aesthetics. Lexi stays at the forefront of the latest trends, providing clients with modern and creative ideas while delivering guidance and support. Her detailed technical drawings can also be supplemented by 3D rendering so clients have a full visual of the completed project.

Lexi endeavours to have a strong working relationship with clients and is particularly proud of her professionalism, always setting firm deadlines and delivering projects on time and within budget. She notes that meeting budgets and deadlines is not always straightforward, but she has found that good planning, excellent contacts and a good customer relationship will mitigate almost any problem.

"You need to be on the same page as them, so you can deliver exactly what they want. Communication is key," says Lexi. "That means that if I make a promise, I will keep it. I have an eye for detail so I can recognise things the customer otherwise might not see, and I always ensure that on every project the budget is met without taking shortcuts. It needs to look perfect without costing an arm and a leg."

Lexi works closely with trusted suppliers, too, located in Malta and Italy, and oversees every commission from start to finish. Her efforts have



been recognised at the Luxury Lifestyle Awards, winning Best Luxury Apartment Interior Design 2023 for her work on the Windsor Penthouse. With a sleek, minimalist aesthetic, utilising high-quality materials and meticulously selected pieces of furniture, the finished project is a cohesive space that exudes tasteful luxury.

While Lexi has her own design principles, she is careful that they do not dominate any project that she is working on. "I am happy to do different styles, anything that the client wants as long as it works. I have done boho chic, contemporary, Scandinavian, minimal, modern, and so much more," she says. "Some of my own style will always be there, but it is focused around what the client wants, particularly when it comes to colours and finishes."

"I don't want every project to look the same. I want each one to look as unique and special as it possibly can."

www.lexdesignsmalta.com



Towering ambition

Magnum Properties is pushing the limits of sustainable building, with the billion-dollar Forbes International Tower project in Cairo a beacon of best practice

“**W**e are developing a zero-carbon commercial tower in Cairo of such significance it could be likened to the building of the Great Pyramid of Giza. Egypt will once again host one of the most iconic architectural achievements humankind has ever seen,” says Maged Marie, CEO of real-estate developer Magnum Properties. Maged founded Magnum Properties, a subsidiary of Rawabi Holding Group, in 2021; its Forbes International Tower, developed in association with US business magazine and brand partner Forbes, is being built in the central business district of the New Administrative Capital in Cairo, at an estimated cost of one billion dollars. Scheduled for completion in 2030, the 250-metre tower will feature 50 floors of offices, retail space, a fine-dining restaurant, leisure facilities and six floors of subterranean parking, all powered via clean hydrogen, supplemented by solar panels. The 20,000- square-metre plot is to include a smart green space, Forbes Park. “The unique venture will showcase the best in sustainability, security, art, design and luxury.”

Magnum Properties has sought out some of the world’s leading experts to work on the tower, from US architects Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture (AS+GG) to landscape designers SWA. Other international alliances include Leonardo, an Italian aerospace, defence and security company, enlisted to deliver seamless physical and cybersecurity solutions; French artist Richard Orlinski, commissioned to create more than 50 sculptures for the tower and park; and HBA, a worldwide hospitality interior design firm, tasked with bringing levels of luxury previously unseen in a commercial building.

“We aspire to establish a new era for the built environment,” says Osman Ibrahim, Vice-Chairman and Group CEO of Rawabi Holding and Vice-Chairman of Magnum Properties, “through the use of renewable resources, smart technology and advanced construction methodology, all geared towards a future-ready tower that will nourish and sustain its inhabitants for a long time.” Magnum Properties is working with AS+GG Carbon Lab to obtain the highest level of certification in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), and with SmartScore and WiredScore on aspects including technology and innovation. It is also the first tower in the world to be officially registered for the International Living Future (ILFI) Zero Carbon Certification. The use of sophisticated technology, intelligent engineering and pioneering building materials is estimated to produce 58 per cent reduction in

embodied carbon and 74 per cent reduction in water use. Importantly, the tower aims to be self-sufficient with on-site generation and storage of solar power, and the use of hydrogen energy. “Our aim is for Forbes Tower to become a global model of best practice in protecting the planet and taking care of people,” says Maged. The tower and park are designed to optimise wellbeing – from the Wi-Fi-ready open spaces for outdoor working and leisure, to the water features, lighting and art installations.

As part of the project, Magnum has partnered with the humanitarian aid organisation UNICEF to deliver better internet connection and job opportunities for young people across Egypt. “We’re passionate about the Forbes Tower concept and its ability to inspire others to embrace sustainability, technological innovation and community wellbeing,” says Maged. “We hope to expand it to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.”

www.magnumproperties.com





Refined elegance

The quiet luxury and timeless charm of Sixty3 London delivers pared back yet sophisticated interior design

In the realm of high-end residential interior design, Sixty3 London has carved a niche that marries the past and present with an unparalleled sense of refinement. Specialising in what directors Charlotte Green and Ginny Griffin define as “quiet luxury,” their approach is an understated celebration of elegance, where every detail speaks of sophistication and timelessness without the need for overt displays of opulence.

Their portfolio spans an impressive array of projects, from the meticulous restoration of Grade I and II listed buildings to the sleek, modern lines of new-build properties, where they add their signature charm. Each project, regardless of its historical context or architectural style, is approached with the same meticulous attention to detail and commitment to excellence.

At Sixty3 London, interior architecture is more than just creating beautiful spaces; it is about crafting environments that tell a story. Every room, every corner, every piece of furniture is carefully considered to reflect not just the aesthetic aspirations but also the personal narratives of those who inhabit them. The design philosophy of the studio is grounded in the belief that true luxury is quiet, that it resonates more deeply through subtlety than through grandeur.

This philosophy extends from the architectural bones of a space to the final flourishes of styling. Sixty3 London ensures that every element, from structural changes to the selection of accessories, is seamlessly integrated. The process begins with a profound respect for the existing architecture and an understanding of the nuances that give each space its unique character. Whether preserving the intricate mouldings of a Georgian townhouse or creating expansive, light-filled rooms in a contemporary home, the integrity of the design is paramount.

Through a collaborative process with their clients, the studio team transforms spaces into homes that are both luxurious and liveable. During the concept phase, the team strives to understand each client’s habits, needs and desires, translating these into spatial layouts that enhance both function and form. Many designs feature bespoke elements, tailored specifically to fit the unique demands of the space and its occupants.

The final layer of the design process is styling, where Sixty3 London’s passion for curated, high-quality pieces truly shines. Launched in 2023, Sixty3 Styled is the online home accessories offering, which plays a pivotal role in this stage of the studio’s projects, providing a carefully curated selection of items that complement their design ethos. Each accessory is selected or designed for its ability

to enhance the overall aesthetic of any space, adding a layer of personality and warmth. This approach ensures that every item, from tableware to a statement vase or ornament, contributes to the quiet luxury that defines their work.

Throughout Sixty3 London’s projects, there is a constant dialogue between past and present, whether honouring the original features while incorporating contemporary comforts or creating spaces that are forward-thinking yet imbued with a classical style. “At Sixty3 London we are dedicated to creating interiors that are both beautiful and meaningful, spaces that quietly whisper of luxury and sophistication,” says Ginny.

This balance is at the heart of Sixty3 London’s design philosophy and is what allows the company’s work to transcend trends and remain enduringly relevant. “Our work is a testament to the belief that luxury need not be loud,” explains Charlotte. “It is found in the soft hues of a hand-finished wall, the comfort and beauty of a custom-made chair and the serene ambience of a well-styled room,” adds Ginny.

www.sixty3london.com





5.
*The
connoisseur*



*FINE FOOD
AND DRINK*



THE MAKING OF A MARQUE

*BENTLEY'S MOMENTOUS FIRST
LE MANS WIN 100 YEARS AGO
PROVED TO BE PIVOTAL IN
THE COMPANY'S SUBSEQUENT
RISE TO PROMINENCE, WRITES
ANDREW FEAVER*





O Bentley's first love was the steam engine, and it was as a "premium" apprentice at the Great Northern Railway works at Doncaster where he obtained his first taste of design and engineering. It would

shape the rest of his life. From early adventures on motorbikes, including racing in the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy, via working in the depot of the National Motor Cab Company in Hammersmith, London, he found himself taking on the car sales concession of Doriot, Flandrin et Parant (DFP) with his brother HM in 1912.

Determined to promote the business through racing and competition, WO took his tuned 12–15hp DFP to hillclimbs and to Brooklands, celebrating victories and records at that year's motor show. Following a visit to Monsieur Doriot, in Courbevoie, Paris, in June 1913, WO spotted on Doriot's desk a small souvenir paperweight made from aluminium alloy. Inspired by this new material, he trialled lightweight aluminium pistons in the DFP and found they offered a huge performance potential. When fitted to the new 12–40 DFP Speed model, they made for a very competitive sports car. This was followed by more racing and record-breaking, including a return to the Isle of Man for the TT; but all this was brought to a shuddering halt by the outbreak of war in the summer of 1914.

WAR EFFORT

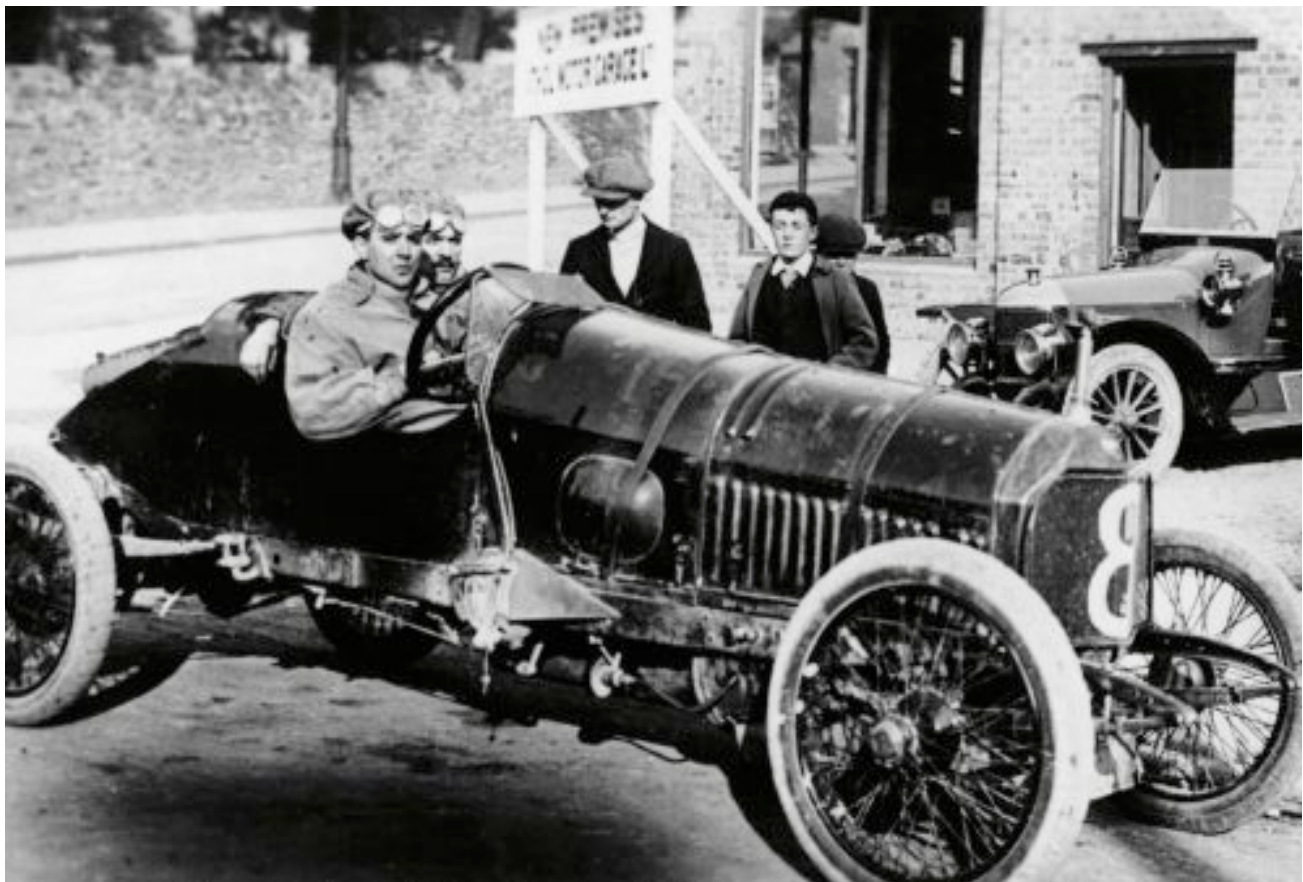
WO worked for the Admiralty during the war, sharing the knowledge and experience he had gained of the aluminium piston concept with

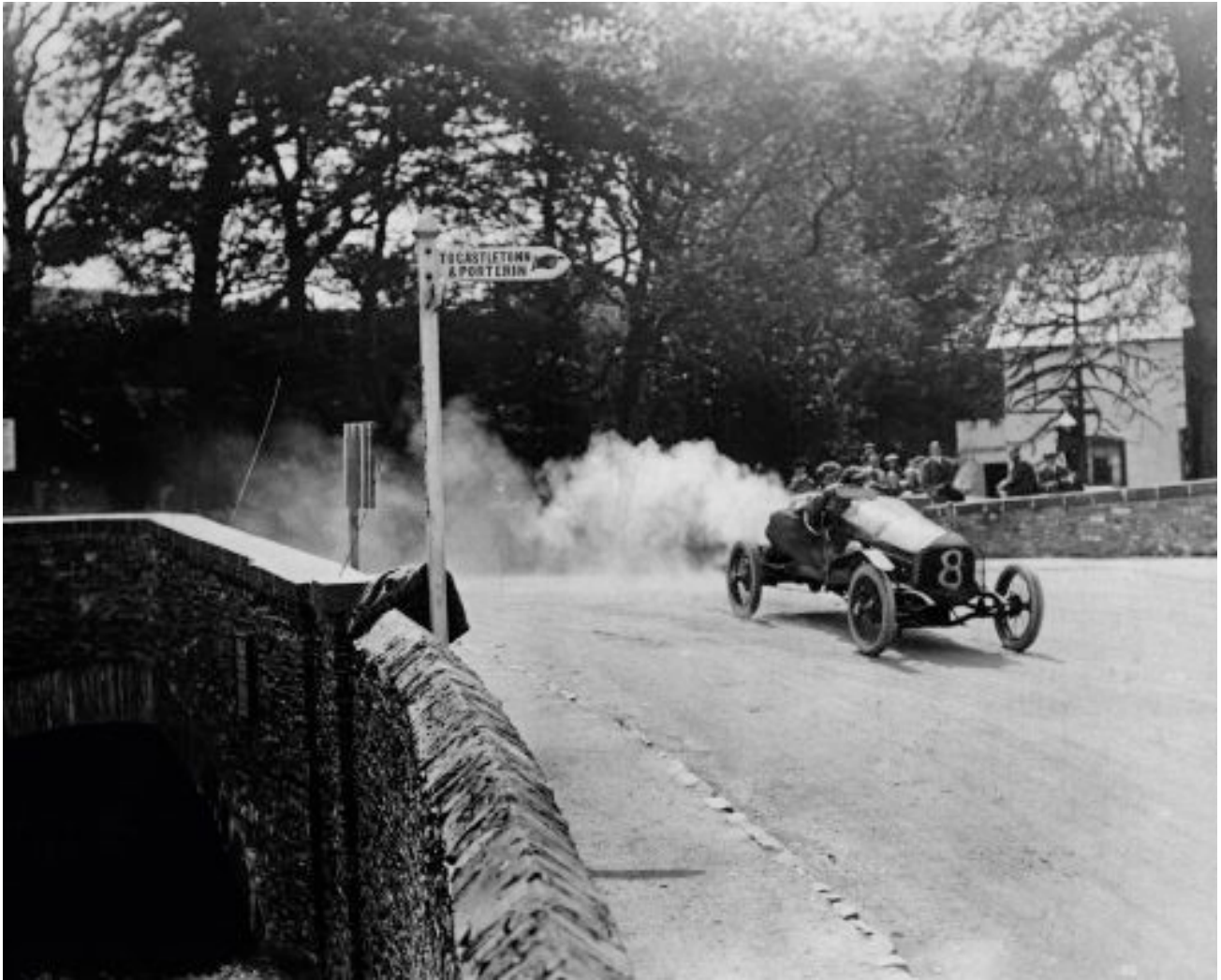
aero-engine manufacturers, as they sought maximum performance and reliability. His work included a memorable trip to see Ernest (later Lord) Hives, who was in charge of the Experimental Department at Rolls-Royce in Derby, where the company was building air-cooled Renault aero engines under licence and working on a new design of its own. Hives liked the aluminium piston idea, and it was implemented in Rolls-Royce's first water-cooled 200hp aero engine – the Eagle.

WO was also asked to improve the reliability of the Clerget rotary engine, built under licence by Gywnnes. But, having faced difficulties in getting his changes implemented, he went to Humbers in Coventry, where he met FT Burgess (who would later play a leading role in the design of the Bentley 3, 4½ and 6½-litre engines) and they developed what was to become the Bentley Rotary 1 (BR1) engine, producing 150hp. Thought by many Sopwith Camel pilots to be the pick of the engines fitted to the fighter plane, it was developed into the BR2, which went on to power the fledgling RAF's main fighter, the Sopwith Snipe.

A NEW VENTURE

With the war behind them, WO, Harry Varley (ex-Vauxhall) and FT Burgess sat down to sketch out their plans for a new car on 20 January 1919 in a small office on the top floor of a building in Conduit Street, London. With a new company bearing his name (Bentley Motors Ltd was registered on 18 January 1919), WO had every reason to be optimistic about the future. The post-war economy was booming, and with his brother HM still running the DFP concession with great success, money flowed in to support the new venture. But tragedy was to strike in March, when WO's beloved wife, Leonie, died during the Spanish flu pandemic. WO pressed on regardless, with the first 3-litre engine running by October, a stand





Previous page | John Duff (left) and Frank Clement celebrate victory in the 1924 Le Mans

Opposite | WO Bentley in the 12-40 DFP Speed model, a car that he developed, campaigned and sold successfully before the First World War

Above | Bentley drives the No. 8 DFP Speed model during the Royal Automobile Club Isle of Man Tourist Trophy race on 11 June 1914

Right | Bentley sits at the wheel of his 12-40 DFP single seater, with which he broke the Class B records at Brooklands in February 1914





Above | Clement at Brooklands in the 3 litre EXP2 secures Bentley's first win on 16 May 1921 in the Junior Sprint Handicap

Opposite | The teams, including the Bentley No. 8 car, battle each other and the wet conditions just after the start of the 1923 race

“WO always maintained that competition success would be the cheapest way of selling cars – ‘Win on Sunday, sell on Monday’”

at the first post-war motor show in November, and a road test of the first 3-litre prototype (EXP 1) by *The Autocar* appearing on 24 January 1920 – a little over a year since they had started. WO was further buoyed by the award of £8,000 from the government for his efforts in wartime aero-engine design and this contributed to the company's finances, as they went through the expensive business of turning the prototypes into production cars and setting up a new factory in Oxgate Lane, Cricklewood, north London. The first customer 3 litre was finally ready to be delivered in September 1921.

Frank Clement had joined Bentley Motors in those early days. Having raced before the outbreak of war with Straker-Squire, he was ideally suited to running Bentley's Experimental Department. He was always held as the company's number one professional driver and scored Bentley's maiden win, driving EXP 2 in the 1921 Whitsun meeting at Brooklands.

WO always maintained that competition success would be the cheapest way of selling cars – “Win on Sunday, sell on Monday” – as this would secure widespread media coverage and enhance the company's reputation. He planned to never enter a race he thought Bentley could not win, and in winning, do so at the lowest possible speed to preserve the cars and hide the true maximum performance from competitors.

“THIS STUPID RACE”

Bentley's connection to the Le Mans 24-hour race can be traced to one man – John Duff. Brave and enthusiastic, he became one of Bentley's London agents and in 1922, with a standard short chassis 3 litre Bentley that he had modified, he went to Brooklands to chase the D-class records. He comfortably took everything from the Three Hour to the 1,000 miles record at speeds of over 88mph and attracted more precious newspaper coverage. A few months later, he proposed entry

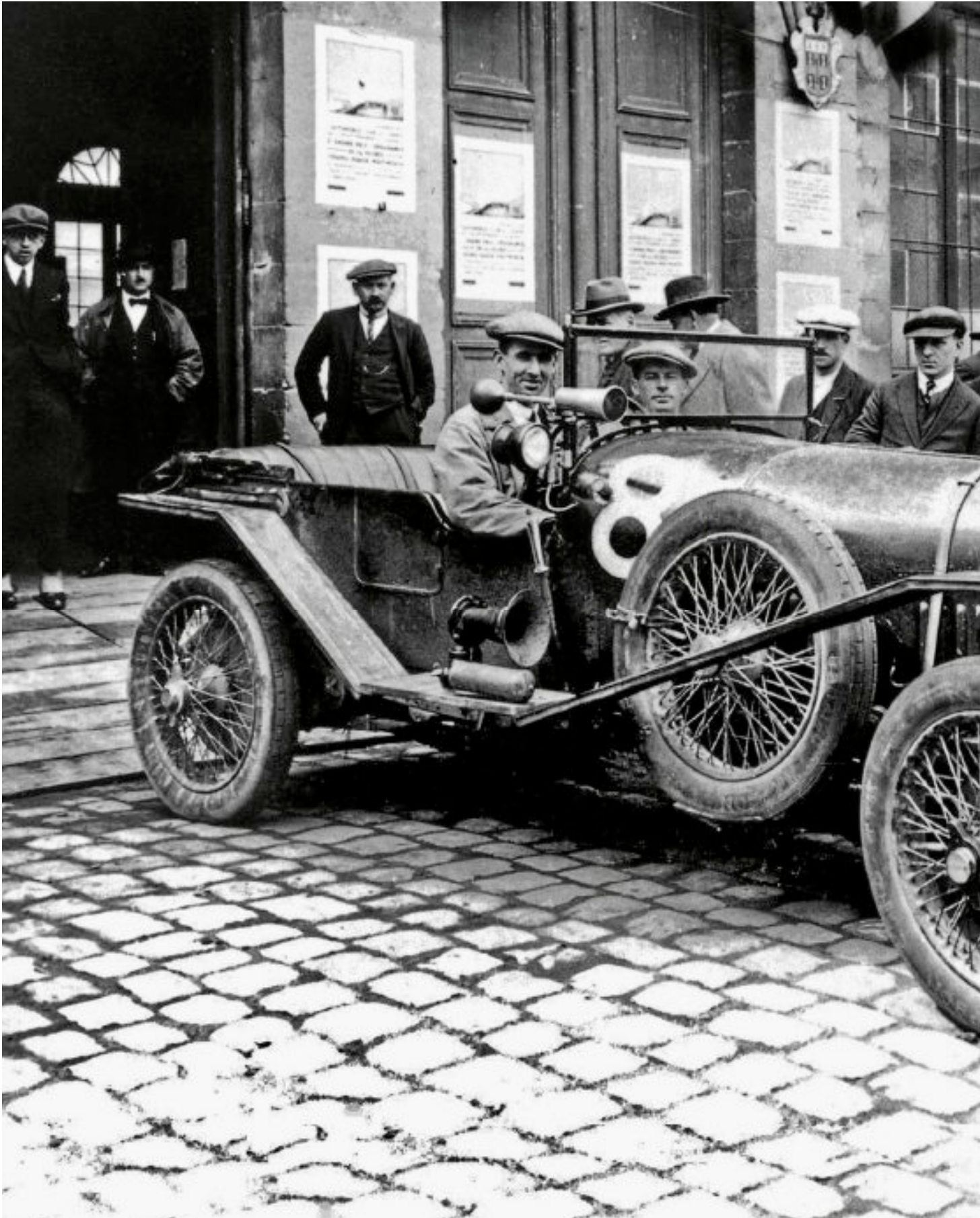
for the inaugural Le Mans 24-hour race of 26 and 27 May 1923, using his privately entered 3 litre Bentley. He asked WO for his support and blessing, which produced the response: “I think the whole thing's crazy. Nobody'll finish. Cars aren't designed to stand that sort of strain for 24 hours.” WO was very sceptical, but Duff was persuasive, and they finally agreed that Clement's Experimental Department should help prepare the 3 litre for the 1923 race and that Duff should be accompanied by Clement and two mechanics for the event. The race started on the Saturday, and by Friday morning WO was in a state of high anxiety; in the end, he gave in, drove to the sales showroom at Hanover Street and found AFC Hillstead, his Sales Manager. “Come on,” WO told him. “We've got to go and see this stupid race.”

The 4pm start of the first 24 hours of Le Mans began just after a hailstorm, in cold wind and rain. It was apparent that the quickest cars were the Chenard-Walcker team, the Bentley, one of the Excelsiors and one of the 2 litre Bignans. The roads were soon muddy and rutted, and as darkness fell, it was clear a number of cars had headlamp failures as water got into their acetylene and electrical systems.

Bentley, too, was suffering from lighting issues. In the dusk, a stone had smashed a headlamp. Not thinking to bring a spare, the team was sportingly offered one by the Chenard team, but the time needed to fit the lamp was deemed too long and the car pressed on, with one headlight working and the other intermittently. “By midnight, with the cars pounding past the stands with their lights on – my first sight of racing in the dark – I was quite certain that this was the best race I had ever seen,” said WO.

Later in the night, the Bentley had a very near miss while trying to avoid Paul Gros's Bignan, which had burst a tyre approaching Mulsanne corner. Both cars braked hard and swerved onto the grass, ending up only inches apart. Just after the half-way point, at 5am, the Chenard-Walcker of Léonard and Lagache had a two-lap lead over



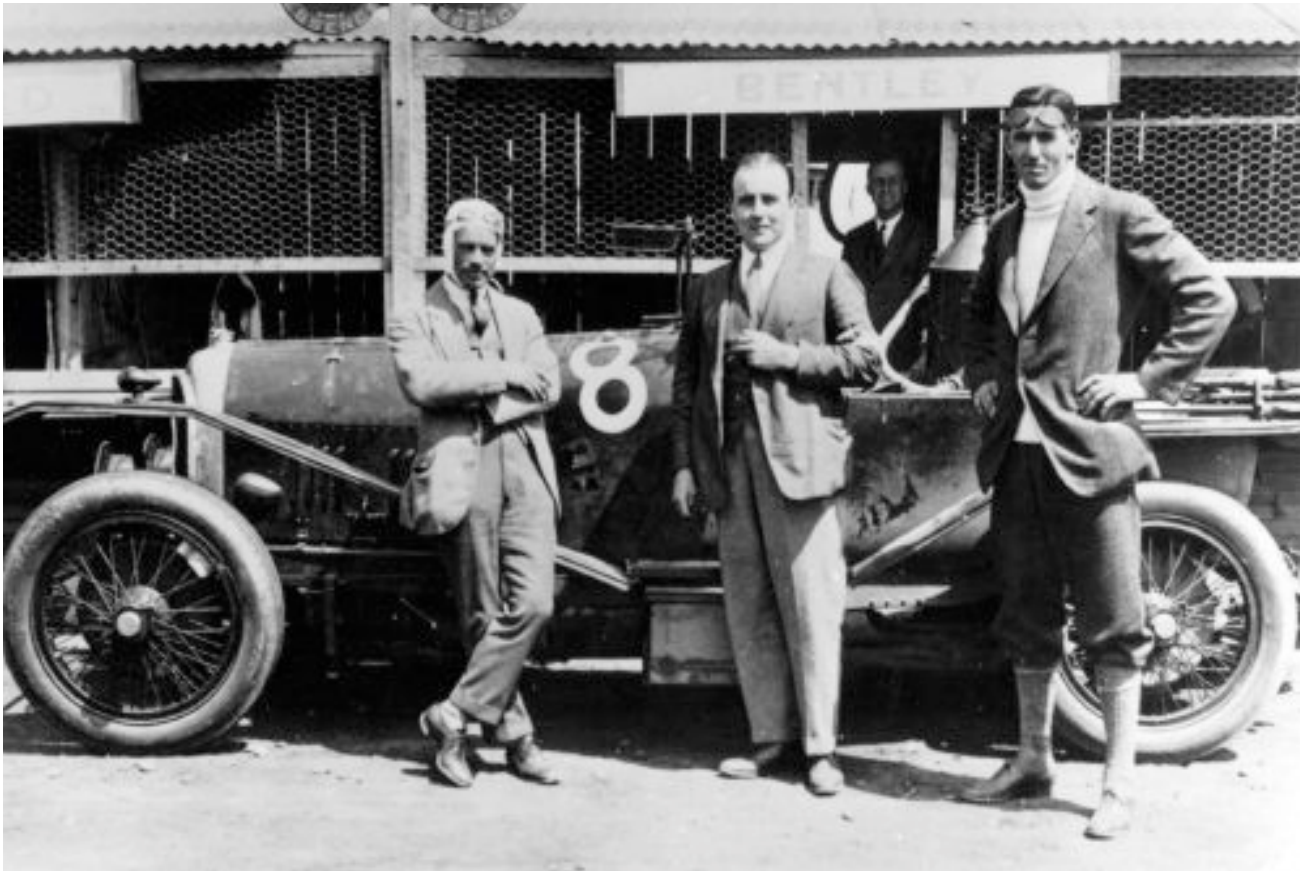




*“I think the whole thing’s
crazy. Nobody’ll finish.
Cars aren’t designed to
stand that sort of strain
for 24 hours”*

WO BENTLEY

*Left | Duff and Clement
in their 3 litre Bentley
at scrutineering, prior
to the 1924 race. Note
the mesh grilles fitted
to the headlights*



the Bentley (assisted by their car's better brakes), the other two Chenards and the Bignan. Superior pitwork by its well-drilled team gave all three Chenard-Walckers a three-lap lead over the Bentley in the early morning; but as the roads gradually dried out, the Bentley was able to put in quicker lap times. Then, just before midday, the Bentley came to a stop at Arnage after another stone hit it. This time, one had holed the fuel tank, bringing the car to a halt. Duff ran back to the pits and Clement went off with a couple of fuel cans and cycled back to the stricken car. Next to the track, he widened the hole and blocked it up with a wooden wedge, poured in the fuel and limped back to the pits. It was all rather touch and go – the hole was directly above the exhaust and a huge fire risk. Once back in the pits, he made a more robust repair with cork and soap. Three hours had been lost, but they were back in the race. Once fully refuelled, Clement set about chasing down the leaders, setting the fastest lap (nine minutes 39 seconds, at an average of 66.69mph). They finished a creditable fourth in their first attempt.

BACK ON TRACK

For the 1924 event, Duff was given full factory support and shared the first “works” Le Mans entry with Clement. This 1924 Bentley 3 litre (chassis no. 582, registration no. XT 1606, race no. 8) was to a new specification – and reflected what the team had learned from their first attempt in the race. The chassis was 9' 9½", fitted with a high compression engine with twin SU carburettors and now had four-wheel brakes, as well as wire mesh over the headlights and a coconut matting-wrapped fuel tank – both measures to reduce the risk from flying stones. As per the 1923 entry, the team opted to use the special long endurance Rapson tyres. This was all good evidence of racing spurring on development and how the mesh grills and leather straps fitted had a serious purpose in the toughest endurance event of all – they were very much not just for show!

Race conditions for the second Le Mans 24-hours race, on 14 and 15 June 1924, could not have been more different to the 1923 event. The hot, dry weather lasted over the whole race weekend, and the heat and dust were the greatest challenge for both cars and drivers.

The early pace was frantic – Philippe de Marne in the 3 litre Bignan smashed Clement's lap record from the previous year by 15 seconds. Cars began to fail due to the pace and the heat. After three hours, Lagache led in the Chenard-Walcker Type U 22CV, with Laly's Ariès second, then the three Lorraine-Dietrich cars all together, followed by the Georges-Irat and Duff in the Bentley. At 8pm, as dusk fell, soon after Léonard took over the leading car, the Chenard-Walcker caught fire just after the Pontlieue hairpin; the Ariès now led the field, and held that lead for nearly four hours, before expiring just before midnight with a blown head gasket.

It is in the small hours of the night – as those who have been to Le Mans well know – that mistakes happen which can change the course of the race. So it proved here, with De Courcelles in his Lorraine-Dietrich missing a turn in the darkness and hitting a wall with a glancing blow, breaking the front-right dumb iron. He nursed the car around the next couple of laps, before pitting for a makeshift repair, made by cutting off the damaged chassis section and bolting on a spare. The repair took him a couple of hours and dropped the car out of contention.

VICTORY AGAINST THE ODDS

All was not well for the Bentley either. Duff had to stop to fix an issue caused by a coachbuilder's staple, used to secure the wiring harness, which had fallen into the gear lever gate, jamming the mechanism and preventing him from selecting third gear. Spectators saw the car parked, with Duff's feet waving in the air, as he fished around to try to recover the errant staple. In all, some 40 minutes were lost, and matters were further compounded as the Hartford shock absorbers, using experimental duralumin for their backing plates and fitted to the rear axle, broke one after the other, making the car's handling wayward at speed.

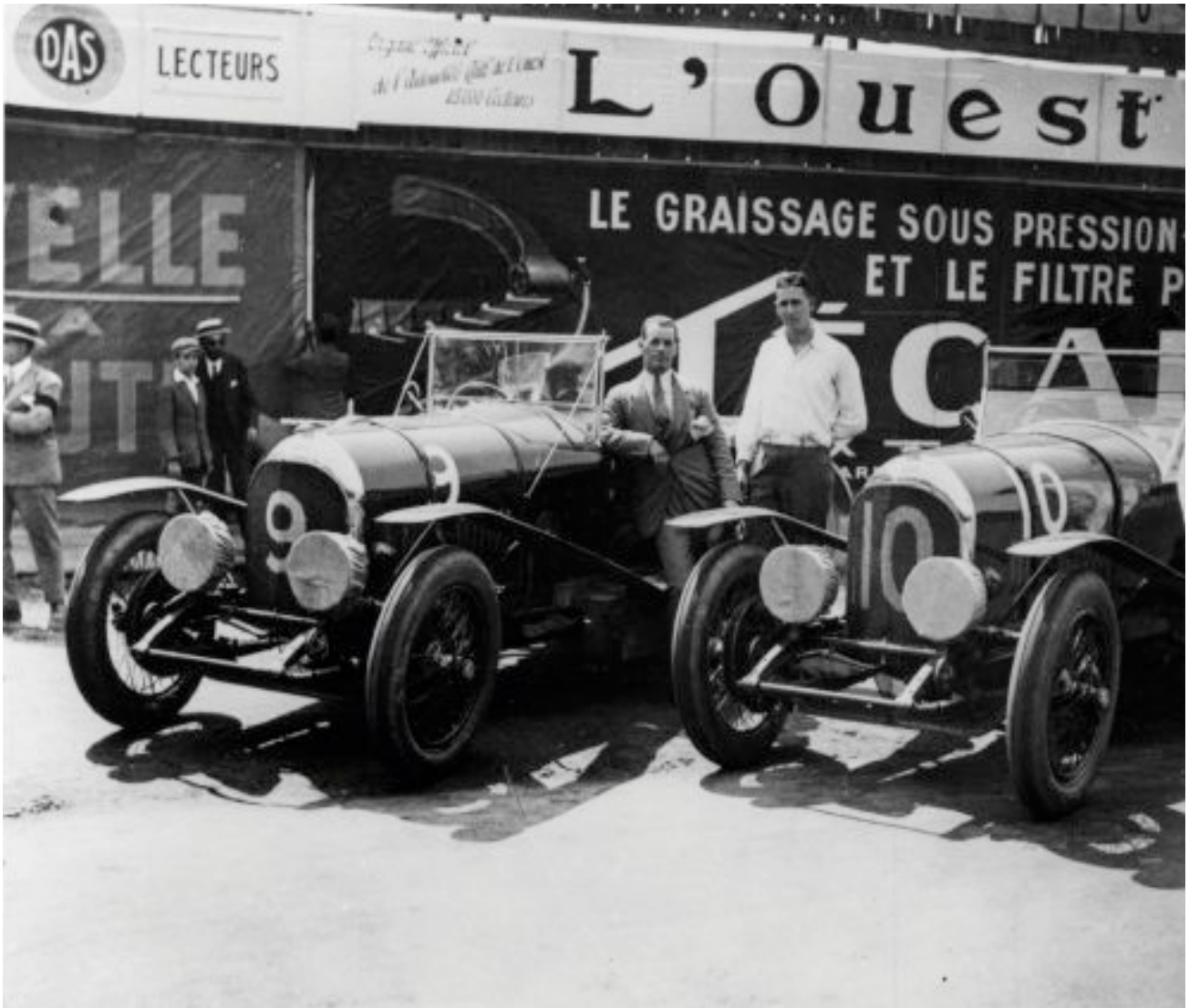
By 8am, after 16 hours running, the No. 4 Lorraine-Dietrich of Bloch and Stalter led the No. 8 Bentley of Clement and Duff by three minutes and 33 seconds, the cars being on the same lap. Duff pressed and pressed but struggled to close the gap. After an hour or so, the gap began to narrow by about 20 seconds per lap. At 9.15am, Bloch's tyre



Opposite, top | The 1924 Le Mans team of Clement, Bentley and Duff, with AFC Hillstead in the background

Opposite, bottom | Clement rounds the notorious Pontlieue hairpin during the 1924 race

Right | Duff at the wheel of the 1924 Le Mans-winning Bentley 3 litre



Above | Clement and Duff, pictured alongside Bentley cars No. 9 and No.10, returned to compete in the 1925 Le Mans

Opposite | Clement, in the 4½ litre Bentley No. 8, during the 1929 race. Bentley would go on to claim the top four spots that year

“By midnight, with the cars pounding past the stands with their lights on, I was quite certain that this was the best race I had ever seen”

WO BENTLEY

burst at the Pontlieue hairpin, which handed the lead to Duff in the Bentley for the first time. When Duff passed the start/finish line next time round, his lead was about one minute and 30 seconds. Bloch dug in and clung to the tail of the Bentley, the gap between the two cars varying by only a few seconds.

At 10.30am during the next round of pit stops, the No.4 Lorraine-Dietrich was found to have a second puncture, delaying the release of the car by three or four minutes. Clement replaced Duff in the Bentley and put in a series of fast laps. Stalter gave it everything in pursuit, but the effort proved too much for the Lorraine's engine and at 1pm the car coasted into the pits and into retirement, the engine having dropped a valve. The Bentley vs Lorraine-Dietrich battle, which had begun ten hours earlier, was over.

But there was to be drama during the race finale. Though happy with the performance of its Rapson tyres, Bentley decided on a precautionary tyre change for the rear wheels at 2.30pm. Disaster struck, as one wheel stuck fast on the hub and it took a painful 40 minutes of hammering to work it free. Incredibly, a needle file was found jammed into the hub splines – was it sabotage? Eventually fixed, the long stop had, however, left the Bentley very close to losing the race, as its final five laps, including pit stop time, would be well below its prior race average and were therefore not counted, according to the updated ACO (Automobile de l'Ouest) regulations. So, although Duff did five more laps over the last hour, they were not included. However, Bentley's lead was such that the 120 laps completed before the stop were just

enough to take the victory – by just one lap. Bentley had won the Grand Prix d'Endurance de 24 Heures!

The win was the first of five secured by the company between 1924 and 1930, cementing its place in the annals of sports car racing and creating the legend of the Bentley Boys. Bentley and Le Mans are so intrinsically linked that the stories from the Cricklewood era (1919–31) have continued to resonate through the marque's subsequent history. Without these wins and the attention they attracted, would Rolls-Royce have bought the ailing company in 1931? Would Eddie Hall (1950) and HSF Hay (1949–51) have entered their own Derby-built Bentleys at Le Mans in the post-war era? And would VW Group have funded Project Barnato, the three-year programme between 2001 and 2003 to win Le Mans for a sixth time? It all had to start somewhere and 100 years ago in the hands of Clement and Duff, Bentley did just that.

To mark the centenary of Bentley's first Le Mans win, the RREC produced a special commemorative display at the 2024 Annual Rally. Attendees were taken back to the morning of Saturday 14 June 1924 and had the opportunity to stand with Frank Clement, John Duff and WO Bentley in a recreation of the pits at Le Mans and share their dream of a first victory – and all that it would mean for the future. *Sincere thanks to Nigel Smith and the team at the WO Bentley Memorial Foundation who supported the research and production of this feature and to Dr Clare Hay for her editorial input. Additional photography kindly provided by Bentley Motors.*





SPOTTISWOODE

Exquisite vintage

Four decades of organic winegrowing have brought Napa Valley's Spottswode Estate Vineyard and Winery more than a taste of success

For Spottswode Estate Vineyard and Winery, 2024 was marked by two important new releases: the 40th vintages of both its Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, the 2021, and its Sauvignon Blanc, the 2023. This Napa Valley estate traces its roots back to 1882, when the beautiful Victorian home, formal gardens and 17 acres of wine grapes were established on the majestic Californian property. Over the years, it changed hands several times, and in 1910 it was sold to Susan Spotts, who renamed the property Spottswode in memory of her late husband. Then, in 1972, it was purchased by Jack and Mary Novak, who planned to turn the now 45-acre winegrowing estate with its well-drained alluvial soils into a winery.

Sadly, in 1977, Jack unexpectedly passed away. Mary, suddenly a single mother of five, was determined to keep the couple's dream alive – and in 1982, a century after the estate's beginnings, she founded Spottswode Estate Vineyard and Winery and began producing its first Cabernet Sauvignon. Today, this rich history remains central to how the winery operates. "Our wines are authentic expressions of time and place," says Beth Novak, President and CEO of the company, and one of Mary and Jack's daughters. "We've always made wine in a style that speaks authentically to where and who we are. It's a continuum. Each vintage expresses this special site, each is inextricably connected. I think for us to be able to carry this on today is quite remarkable. It's our why, and it makes us feel good about what we do."

Spottswode pays respect to its heritage and those who have played a role in it. In recognition of Sauvignon Blanc being Mary's favourite wine, the corner of the vineyard where its grapes are grown is named after her. When Mary passed away in 2016, Spottswode crafted its first Mary's Block Sauvignon Blanc – a very special wine made in extremely limited quantities (just 162 cases of the 2023 vintage were produced).

As well as celebrating the past, the vineyard is also focused on the future, maintaining and enhancing the natural environment that helps make its exquisite wines a reality. In 1985, it became one of the very first vineyards to farm its wine organically and received California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) certification in 1992. "Since becoming certified organic, we've never looked back," says Beth, "and we've added to that with biodynamic and regenerative organic certifications, and we are all-solar. Everything we do is centred on being exceptional stewards of our estate and our planet."

Spottswode was the first winery in Napa Valley to achieve B Corp Certification, which, as Beth puts it, means the company "operates for the greater good" and for "the optimisation of profit rather than the maximisation thereof". It produces some of California's most exclusive and exquisite wines, but never at the expense of those who help make it. "It's about taking care of your employees, as well as the place and the community. Everything we do is with a broad, holistic view."

The winery has been wholly organic for almost four decades – a fact that has been essential to its success to date – and will remain so for decades to come. It lives by its core philosophy: "Rooted in the land, protecting our planet". "We're very grounded in crafting what we believe in," says Beth, "and also being the change – and inspiring change – as we face climate change and look to the future of our multigenerational, family-owned winegrowing estate."

www.spottswode.com



French passion

Franck Deville's artisanal macarons are gastronomic masterpieces that bring together the natural ingredients and flavours of France

The grandson of a French pastry chef who passed on his savoir-faire, Franck Deville was always destined to follow a culinary path. He worked in some of the finest establishments in Europe, but when he put his delicate macarons on the dessert menu at his restaurant, Le Clos Fleuri, in southeastern France, life took a new turn. “One of our clients asked if we could make macarons for them – and that was the beginning of the adventure,” says Anne, Franck’s wife and business partner.

The delightful confections were such a success that Franck and Anne decided to focus solely on the macaron business, establishing Franck Deville in 2011. The macarons have proved popular with professional caterers, hoteliers and restaurants, as well as individual consumers. In 2020, the first Franck Deville store, Le Clos Deville, opened in Saint-Étienne. While the product is quintessentially French, exports make up 40 per cent of the business, and the macarons are now enjoyed in more than 20 countries, in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, North America and Australia.

“We only produce macarons and we are specialists in what we do,” says Anne. “What makes us distinctive is that my husband approaches his work as a chef. Every macaron is a gastronomic masterpiece.” She says this expertise and dependence on artisanal methods results in a macaron that is a cut above the typical processed version. The shells, for instance, are made in the same way as traditional French meringue, which lends a light and airy texture.

In addition, Franck is dedicated to the use of natural ingredients. He eschews texturing agents and artificial colourings, instead using natural alternatives such as cocoa powder, spirulina, curcumin and red fruit extracts. His fruit-flavoured macarons, which contain less sugar than most macarons, are made without gelatin or pectin. And many varieties of the macarons, including gingerbread and praline, are gluten free.

The choice of macaron spans from the sweet and savoury to the bespoke for special events. “Our quest is to create unique products and push the boundaries of traditional patisserie,” says Anne. Among the innovative flavours are the signature chocolate foie gras, Roquefort cheese and a classic cocktail collection featuring a raspberry gin.

Franck Deville has also launched a range of macarons made entirely from ingredients sourced in France, from the almonds to the egg whites that make the shell. For the fillings, Franck selected clementines from Corsica and lemons from Menton in the South of France. Other ingredients include blackcurrants from Burgundy, sweet French Mara des Bois strawberries and salted

butter caramel from Isigny-sur-Mer, Normandy.

Alongside using only the best ingredients, sustainability and reducing waste are priorities for Franck, who has innovated with seaweed to create products that can last up to 30 days when kept between zero and four degrees. The company also recycles 100 per cent of its biodegradable waste through the methanation process, which converts the waste into biogas, a renewable source of energy. All packaging is recyclable and to eliminate potentially harmful carbon black, the company has replaced black PET packaging with crystal PET.

During a ceremony at Le Clos Deville in 2021, Franck Deville was honoured with France’s prestigious Ordre national du Mérite (National Order of Merit), awarded to those who make significant contributions in areas such as culture and commerce. For Anne, this distinction recognises Franck’s gastronomic skills and unwavering passion “to create the best possible macarons for our clients”.

www.franckdeville.fr







Creating a coffee culture

Homegrown Barn's has transformed Saudi Arabia into the coffee capital of the Middle East, with drive-throughs, cafés and speciality beans

The drinking of Arabic coffee is a long-established custom in Saudi Arabia, at home and in traditional coffee houses. Some 30 years ago, however, there were few places that catered for those who wanted to obtain freshly made coffee – let alone speciality beans. That changed with Barn's, a modern coffee chain that has its headquarters in the commercial city of Jeddah and now has more than 700 branches throughout the kingdom.

"We started in 1992 when our founder visited a roastery here in Saudi Arabia that refused to sell him whole beans," says Abdulaziz Ashour, Public Relations Manager at Barn's. "They only offered him ground beans. So, he went away determined to establish a place where he could sell fresh coffee beans to customers in Saudi Arabia. That was the beginning of our story."

Growth was initially slow, but as interest in coffee steadily grew, Barn's was there to take advantage, providing an increasingly coffee-savvy clientele with exceptional quality at a reasonable price. A breakthrough came with the opening of Saudi Arabia's first coffee drive-through service, followed soon after by a concept store that fits in hospitals and shopping malls. Small sites and drive-throughs are the backbone of the Barn's enterprise, providing customers with an efficient, convenient and comfortable way to get their coffee. There are also flagship sit-in branches in select locations, and, in 2020, Barn's launched Barn's X, improving the café experience further with speciality coffee available in a refined yet relaxed and sociable setting.

"When Barn's was established, the concept was to offer fresh products – the freshest beans you could get in Saudi Arabia," says Ashour. "The freshness, quality, price and convenience of the drive experience made it very attractive to consumers. Today, Barn's stands out because of that dedication to quality. We handle all processes so they are at their finest, from the service to the beans that are roasted in our own factory."

Barn's places so much focus on the quality of its product that only the best beans make the grade. Green beans are imported from around the world before they are roasted at the factory under strict quality control. A similar approach is taken with service. Baristas are given regular training to make sure service remains consistently impeccable. This is essential for the drive-throughs, where each car is served within a three-minute timeframe, a challenging target that is met time after time with skill and pride.

Barn's is a beloved brand at home, having become one of the largest and oldest coffee shop businesses in Saudi Arabia. In 2024, however, the company began an exciting expansion to take its unique coffee experience beyond its country's borders. The adventure began in Bahrain, followed by outlets in the United Arab Emirates and Egypt. New branches follow the model established so effectively by Barn's in Saudi Arabia – where there are a mix of franchised and fully owned branches – but are altered where necessary to meet local tastes and habits. Outside the Gulf, Barn's is exploring options in Malaysia, the UK and the US, where coffee drinkers include a sizeable expat population who love the company's "Saudi coffee", made from green beans and cardamom.

By 2030, the company aims to have 1,000 branches worldwide. "We want to showcase the best of what we can do," says Ashour. "We want to demonstrate why Saudi Arabia is known as the coffee capital of the Middle East."

www.barns.com.sa







Winemaking heritage

With hundreds of indigenous grape varieties, Dugladze Wines and Spirits is showing the world what makes Georgian wine so special

When people think of Old World wines, they might not be aware that the nation with the longest history of wine production is Georgia. Wine was being made in the Caucasus 8,000 years ago in an unbroken tradition that continues to this day. One of the largest producers is Dugladze Wines and Spirits, based in the capital Tbilisi, which makes a range of unique Georgian wines, as well as brandy and vodka.

“My grandfather ran the biggest distillery in central Georgia during the Soviet Union era,” says Dimitri Dugladze, who joined the family business in 2019 as Brand Development Manager. “In 1991, when Georgia became independent, he privatised the company and it became a major Georgian wine and alcohol producer. That was our official birth, but the history of winemaking and technology goes back long before that.”

Dimitri studied in London, but he was raised in the vineyards of Georgia. “From childhood, I would visit vineyards and the harvest was so exciting,” says Dimitri. “I would accompany my grandfather to the pickings and see the winemaking process begin. As I got older, I was able to appreciate the wine as well and my passion for it naturally began to grow.”

Georgia has more than 500 indigenous grape varieties, many of which are used in winemaking. These grapes often have similarities with better-known varieties such as the Saperavi, which is like Malbec, or Rkatsiteli, which resembles Chardonnay. There is also the native Georgian amber wine, which the company makes from Kisi grapes. This is fermented in the traditional *qvevri* – a beeswax-lined terracotta pot buried underground, where the fermentation and ageing take place. The company’s goal is to introduce Georgian wines to the world, identifying the UK as a leading customer thanks to the adventurous tastes of consumers. The company’s amber wine will soon be stocked in a major retailer, with others to follow.

As tourists flock to Georgia, Dimitri believes that international awareness of this hidden gem of European viticulture will continue to build. One of the country’s strengths is the diversity of its climate, which enables the production of many types of wine. Dugladze Wines and Spirits operates on a vast scale, selling in the region of 25 million bottles a year to 30 different countries. It owns around 500 hectares of vineyards and has contracts with the longstanding, largest vineyards in different regions.

But the company wants to go a step further. “There are many different expressions of Georgian wine, but we try to play our wines down the middle, so they are approachable but they don’t lose their Georgian qualities,” says Dimitri. “Most of the wine we make is with Georgian grape varieties, so we need to help the customer to learn about wines they might not have heard of before. It is a process of education, but we already have hundreds of millions of people who enjoy our wines. We need to set the standard as high as possible and then hit that standard every time.”

The company believes there is an untapped market for Georgian wine among customers who crave something different and are ready to be challenged. Dimitri hopes that the success of Dugladze Wines and Spirits will open the door for other Georgian wine producers, so the country can become a leading exporter. After millennia as the wine world’s best-kept secret, Georgian wine is ready to face a new frontier.

www.dwc.ge



Feast for the senses

Coya Restaurant blends authentic Peruvian cuisine with a dynamic and contemporary atmosphere for a truly global clientele

Coya is a Peruvian restaurant that is far more than the sum of its parts. It is a culture, an atmosphere, an expectation. To dine there is a multisensory experience that is the result of passion, ingenuity and dedication. “Wherever you are in the world, when you step into Coya it’s like meeting with an old friend: welcoming, familiar, attentive, and you know you’re going to have a good time,” says Yannis Stanisiere, Chief Operating Officer at Coya Restaurant and Pisco Bar.

The story of the restaurant group began in 2012, when the first venue opened in Mayfair, London. Its winning formula is still at the heart of the concept today: top-tier chefs, a contemporary and upmarket take on authentic Peruvian cuisine and a world-class cocktail menu that revolves around Pisco and other Latin American spirits. All this is within a sophisticated Incan-inspired setting. Textured and vibrant, it features carved Peruvian wood panels complemented by richly detailed accessories that are enhanced by the amber glow of warm lighting. Lush foliage adds a layer of natural opulence.

Since its opening, the restaurant has matured into a delightful blend of food, drink, music, art and community. Globally, there are currently 12 Coya restaurants, plus Chanca by Coya, a dining and late-night club concept located in Dubai and recently Marbella. New Coya venues only open in exclusive locations where its clientele gather, such as Paris, Mykonos, Monte Carlo and cities across the Middle East.

In each city, Coya provides a tangible sense of place. Unique plates and drinks inspired by the locality are served along with traditional and fusion Peruvian fare, from light and healthy ceviches to anticuchos – grilled fish, meat and vegetable skewers. High-quality ingredients are ethically and sustainably sourced. “We’re passionate about maintaining the authentic provenance of our dining experience, so our head chefs travel to Peru for refresher courses and inspiration,” says Yannis. Alongside this, the mixologists at Coya’s Pisco Bar are continuously developing outstanding alcoholic and non-alcoholic cocktails, while frequently adding new macerado (fruits, spices and herbs macerated in Pisco) to their infusion library. In 2023, the brand released the world’s first bottled Pisco infusion, a passion fruit macerado that celebrates the most popular flavour of Coya’s signature cocktail, the Pisco Sour.

As well as evolving Coya through its macerado, the restaurant has created its own international music label, Coya Music – think electronic sounds infused with Latin influences, and a mix of downtempo, Afro and organic

house. Fans can download the latest releases or enjoy live sets from the resident and guest DJs in the restaurant or at special events, whether it is a beach party in Dubai or the opening of Miami Art Basel. Art plays an important role, too. The unique and captivating artworks in the restaurants change regularly; some become permanent installations, but they are all made by exceptional local or international artists. Coya connects with its communities, as well as guests, through art. “People are at the heart of everything we do, and we love bringing the community together at special events, celebrations, parties and live performances,” says Yannis. “When people come to Coya, we look after them as if they were guests in our own home.”

Coya is set to grow this vibrant lifestyle aspect, whether in new locations in Europe and the US or through further collaborations with the artisans and the craft of Peru. “We put our soul into perfecting the experience.”

www.coyarestaurant.com

www.coyamusic.global







Field to cup

Coffee of Grace celebrates fair trade with the farmers and women co-operatives that grow its speciality coffee beans

“One cup can help grow a country” is one of the mottoes of Grace Hightower. The founder of Coffee of Grace embraced those words after visiting Rwanda in East Africa, and emerged with a determination to answer a plea she had heard Rwandan President Paul Kagame make at the UN in 2010: “We want trade, not aid”. On her trip, she discovered the local coffee farms and soon immersed herself in the coffee industry, creating her company to bring the country’s speciality beans, often grown by women-led co-operatives, to the West.

“I was determined to create a business so Rwandan farmers could showcase the quality of their products,” says Hightower. “Until I went to Rwanda, I didn’t really know what it took to get a single cup of coffee from the field to the table – the complex process that gets each cup to our kitchens and the impact it can have on farmers.”

The US-based company launched in 2013, getting into Whole Foods and then moving to wholesale, supplying to hotels and restaurants. “It started to



catch on as we had great coffee and a strong story.” Coffee Of Grace produces five blends: the chocolately, full-bodied Karisimbi; Kivu, which is fruitier with a smooth finish; and the rich Silverback Espresso, all of which come from Rwanda. There is also a decaf variety and a Signature Series, with beans sourced from South American countries such as Peru, Costa Rica and Guatemala.

When she entered the business, Hightower feared she would not be taken seriously given her associations with Hollywood through former husband Robert De Niro, but she soon demonstrated her business nous and determination, as well as the experience that came from her own upbringing on a farm in Mississippi. Her commitment to the Rwandan farmers was to ensure they received a fair price for their coffee. For Hightower, that was only reasonable given the physically gruelling work the farmers had to execute, as well as the care they took with their work.

Rooted in those commitments to fairness and quality are Hightower’s five pledges: to regularly visit farms to verify there are no chemicals or pesticides in use; to personally manage freight, from farm to roastery;

to ensure all partners meet the highest standards; to support farmers with education and access to resources; and to make payment determined by quality and relationships, rather than the commodities market. “The quality is important,” she says. “Whenever I visit Rwanda, I see how particular the Rwandan farmers are about what they are doing. I feel a duty to share that approach with the rest of the world. Everything is done with such care and love.”

For Hightower, there is more to come. She is seeking new coffee-producing partners, particularly women-led co-operatives, and wants to open a coffee shop in New York. This would enable her to complete the final link in the chain by offering customers a cup of coffee that might “help grow a country”, as well as help people grow closer to home. “I would like to hire staff with neurodiversity, like my son who is autistic and works in a bakery that has the same model,” she says. “That community that is full of very talented, passionate and hardworking individuals” – just like her dedicated and spirited coffee farming partners

www.coffeeofgrace.com

Cigars with soul

Plasencia Cigars has honed the quality of its premium cigars over five generations and a history of resilience

In a tireless 160-year quest to produce the highest quality tobacco, not even two revolutions and crop failure could deter the Plasencia family. One of the world's largest tobacco growers and cigar makers, Plasencia increasingly uses organic-certified tobacco grown in Nicaragua and Honduras to make 40 million cigars each year. Among them is its flagship branded cigar, Alma Fuerte, the product of a ten-year ageing process using the best crops.

Alma Fuerte's distinctive hexagonal shape pays homage to Plasencia's commitment to working sustainably with nature. "We can learn a lot from nature, such as the hexagonal shape of the honeycomb," says Néstor Plasencia, Board Member. "It is nature's most efficient shape, and we are the only company that makes a hexagonal cigar. It shows that we are not above nature, we are part of it."

Néstor works alongside his father, Néstor Plasencia Sr, and his brothers and sister who make up the fifth generation of the family business. There have been more than 150 tobacco harvests since Plasencia was founded in 1865 by Don Eduardo Plasencia, who left the Canary Islands to grow tobacco in Cuba's Vuelta Abajo region. The family stayed in Cuba for 100 years before moving to Nicaragua following the Cuban Revolution. Fifteen years later, revolution came again, and the family fled to Honduras, but another setback occurred when blue mould ravaged the crops. The 1980s were challenging, but the family never missed a harvest and by the 1990s they were reaping the rewards, eventually returning to Nicaragua while retaining land in Honduras.

The company first utilised its expertise as tobacco growers to sell tobacco and make cigars for other brands. Eventually, Plasencia put this knowledge, experience and passion into crafting its own cigars, too, under the slogan, "Light up your soul". Over the years, Plasencia's cigars have been highly rated, with the Reserva Original Corona ranked top 25 by Cigar Aficionado in 2022. The Alma series, including Alma del Fuego, is immensely popular, as are commemorative cigars such as the Cosecha 151, created from the outstanding 151st harvest.

Plasencia's success comes from the strength of its organic and biodiverse farming methods. The company reduces water use by 50 per cent and introduces cover crops such as beans, corn and sunflowers, which return nitrogen to the soil and enrich the tobacco. The best tobacco is chosen, aged and rolled by hand into Plasencia cigars with the best quality wrappers. The final product can then be enjoyed in lounges, hotels and homes across the globe.



"We are the only company in the world to produce organic-certified tobacco for premium cigars," says Néstor. "We understand how to take care of our crops, we understand the cycle, we know how to enrich the soil and how to get the best tobacco with the most flavour. But we are always learning. It's never boring as every harvest is different."

Plasencia's philosophy involves nurturing people as well as the land. The company provides education for local children and those of the workers in its fields and factories. This is accompanied by the ongoing study of agriculture to further understand the mysteries of the soil. "Enriching the soil is what drives us, and we want to do that in a sustainable way to leave the land in better condition for the next generation," says Néstor. "We love our planet and want to take care of it. As the fifth generation of Plasencia, we are just getting started."

www.plasenciacigars.com



A rare experience

With only 14 vintages created in 40 years from the best terroir, Rare Champagne is the epitome of refinement

Marie Antoinette as the queen of France famously loved the finer things in life, so it is no surprise that she inspired one of the world's great champagnes. When Florens-Louis Heidsieck was invited to present his prestigious cuvée at Versailles in 1785, he declared it "worthy of a queen". The tradition of Marie Antoinette as muse continues with Rare Champagne, which until 2018 was bottled under the illustrious Piper-Heidsieck and is now an independent brand.

"The history of this wine is unique," says Émilien Boutillat, Chief Winemaker at Rare Champagne. "It is very special. There is a tiara on the packaging as a tribute to Marie Antoinette, who remains our muse. And the bottle is also unique, a special shape that is a tribute to the historic bottles when the glass was blown by mouth."

Rare Champagne is made only with the finest grapes from the greatest vineyards after the most exceptional harvests. This is why there have been only 14 vintages since 1976, and why Rare Champagne is frequently named the best champagne of the year on those precious occasions when it is produced. "The hint of tropical fruit and minerality, the touch and texture and the silkiness of the bubbles are our signatures."

Émilien is following in the footsteps of Rare Champagne's former Cellar Master, the legendary Régis Camus, and has the responsibility of identifying those special vintages that pass the brand's rigorous standards. The blend is unusual, dominated by Chardonnay, with 30 per cent from Pinot Noir, and always selected from the only very best terroir in Champagne. "There is no compromise," says Émilien. "We decide our blend by blind tasting and only bottle when we have the perfect champagne. That is my call. I choose the volume depending on the quality we have. I can only do this when Mother Nature allows me."

The exclusivity of Rare Champagne is matched by its approach to partnerships, with the brand working with like-minded artists who share a philosophy of perfection. In 1997, the house created a blend called Le Secret, bottled in 1,500 magnums and stored until 2017. Historic French jeweller Mellerio was then invited to decorate ten of these magnums with sapphires, emeralds, rubies and diamonds set in a gold bow studded with 510 diamonds. Only a handful of these extraordinary magnums are still available.

Rare Champagne holds special experiences in locations such as the gardens of Paris's Palais Royal or the Peninsula New York's rooftop, complete with champagne tastings



and cuisine by chefs of Michelin-starred establishments. Rare Champagne Director Maud Rabin sees the luxury community as a family and relishes working alongside partners to create these memorable occasions. "We are the only house in Champagne that does not have a pre-prepared programme. When we receive guests, we adapt a luxury experience just for them," says Maud. "It is always very exclusive."

As a product that relies on weather, soil and grapes, Rare Champagne works to protect the natural environment and is one of the first two wineries in the region to have received B-Corp Certification. At the same time, the brand is constantly innovating, making improvements in the vineyard and in the winemaking process. "We want to increase the potential, the ageing, the longevity, the style, the elegance and the quality," says Émilien. "So once you have seen our bottle, you will remember it; when you have tasted it, you will never forget."

www.rare-champagne.com





Discovering caviar

Gourmet House Caviar, a family-run establishment with over five decades of expertise, embraces the idea of making the culinary delight, caviar, accessible to all

While caviar has long been synonymous with exclusivity and luxury, Ali Mahmoudi, the proprietor of Gourmet House Caviar, believes that the captivating culinary narrative behind this delicacy has an enduring appeal that deserves broader recognition.

At the Gourmet House Caviar & Deli in Notting Hill, west London, Ali invites customers to explore the world of refined seafood and its origins. “Through our deli and caviar bar, we share over 50 years of combined caviar expertise, passed down from my late father’s generation,” says Ali. “Customers can engage with our team and indulge in caviar tasting sessions, all while enjoying convivial surroundings and sipping champagne.”

Both in-store and online, patrons can explore the range of delicacies at Gourmet House Caviar, spanning seafood, truffles, cheeses, nuts, oils, drinks and chocolates, as well as gifts and accessories. The deli also offers a caviar afternoon tea, inspired by modern French cuisine and complemented by champagne.

Ali expresses his eagerness to introduce more people to the pleasures of caviar, sharing innovative recipes, drink pairings and presentation ideas at the deli and caviar bar. “We are passionate about what we do and love sharing our experience and expertise, whether our customers are seasoned caviar connoisseurs or novices.”

Established in 1965, Gourmet House Caviar transitioned to Ali’s leadership when he was aged 25, following his father’s passing. Under Ali’s stewardship, the company has expanded globally. He manages a complex international supply chain that reaches outlets in London, Dubai, Los Angeles, Hong Kong and Lisbon, as well as fine dining establishments worldwide.

Caviar has a fascinating story. The term “caviar” originates from *khâvyâr*, a Persian method of curing fish eggs, known as roe, in salt. It is said that caviar received royal acknowledgement from Edward II, King of England, in 1324, with sturgeon deemed a royal fish. Traditionally, caviar was sourced from wild sturgeon as the fish eggs produced the highest quality caviar.

Today, wild sturgeon faces endangerment due to overfishing in both the Caspian Sea and Black Sea. As a result, there has been a shift towards using caviar from sustainable, farmed sources. Gourmet House Caviar actively participates as a member of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, which is committed to preserving wild sturgeon stocks. “We see ourselves not just as purveyors, but as guardians of

ethical and sustainable caviar production,” explains Ali. As part of this promise, Gourmet House Caviar aims to educate customers about caviar sources so they can make informed purchasing decisions.

Gourmet House Caviar directly sources its produce from farms, assigning a unique identification code to each caviar batch to ensure authenticity and full traceability throughout the supply chain. “This approach allows us to offer competitively priced, ethically and sustainably farmed caviar, making it accessible to a broader audience.”

Ali’s mission to raise awareness about caviar and its origins is central to his operation. The company is now exploring the health and wellbeing benefits associated with consuming caviar. This includes examining the possibility of creating supplements derived from caviar oil. “Even now,” says Ali, “there is still much more to discover about caviar.”

gourmethouse.com





Breaking the rules

*Napa Valley's The Prisoner Wine Company
crafts luxury blended wines that are free of
the constraints of conventional winemaking*

When The Prisoner Red Blend came onto the wine scene in 2000, it made a name for itself as a complex blend of some of California's rarest grape varieties. "We bought a lot of the grapes that people weren't paying close attention to," says Bukky Ekundayo, General Manager of The Prisoner Wine Company in St Helena, Napa Valley.

Napa Valley is more closely associated with Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay; the Red Blend, however, was based on Zinfandel. "We have a mindset of pushing boundaries, seeing value in grape varieties that are grown with the more celebrated grapes and maximising their potential," says Bukky. The wine's eye-catching label, inspired by a Goya etching titled *Le Petit Prisonnier*, made it stand out, too; artistry and design are core to the company and its loyal customers not only look forward to each new wine, but also eagerly await the piece of artwork that adorns each bottle.

When The Prisoner was first produced, it was not usual for blends to be the flagship wine for any winemaking company, and this also made The Prisoner unique from



the beginning. “Since then, we have led what is more than a trend – a movement – towards what is now an established category within the wine industry, and we have seen red blends become popular across a number of price points,” says Bukky. In addition to The Prisoner, The Prisoner Wine Company portfolio of brands includes Unshackled, SALDO, Blindfold and Domaine Curry. The Prisoner label is a reminder “to continue to push boundaries and remove the constraints the industry might otherwise keep one in”.

The Prisoner Wine Company’s Director of Winemaking, Chrissy Wittmann, and her team work with more than 100 growers in northern California to produce a wide range of wines, including white, rosé and sparkling, all with a bold and innovative approach to flavour and design. “We didn’t start off with an estate with our own farmed vineyards,” says Bukky. Rather, it was a “creative idea”.

Today, that network of family growers and vineyard managers amassed by the company work to match the taste profile of The Prisoner Wine Company’s portfolio of wines. By bringing together fruit from vineyards with different soil compositions and sun exposure, the finished

product is always a rich and diverse blend. Visitors to the company’s headquarters in Napa Valley are welcome to try the wine themselves at tastings and experiences during which they can expect unconventional pairings and flavours inspired by Asian cuisine.

While The Prisoner branding commands attention, it serves to highlight the company’s mission to fight social injustices in society and create social change, specifically prison reform. Corrections is an annual limited-edition wine series from The Prisoner. The series blends art and wine to raise awareness around mass incarceration. Each release features label artwork by an artist who has experienced the criminal justice system and uses their creative expression to spark conversations about reform. A portion of the proceeds benefits an organisation dedicated to supporting justice-impacted individuals.

“One of the most compelling statistics is that one in three Americans has a family member that was impacted by the criminal justice system,” says Bukky. “The degrees of separation are quite small. We are proud that we have lent our voice to something meaningful.”

www.theprisonerwinecompany.com

As good as wine

Acala's premium sparkling tea with natural, organic ingredients gives the same indulgence of a fine wine without the alcohol

Martynas Žemavičius worked for two decades as a sommelier and wine trader for some of London's most exclusive restaurants, but life changed when he started a family. "When my wife got pregnant, she couldn't drink. To support her I stopped as well. After 20 years working in the wine industry, wine was a big part of our lives."

The couple often felt left out as friends visited vineyards or shared a bottle of Bordeaux over dinner. Water was not the same. Martynas wanted to put his years of experience in developing his palette, knowledge and contacts to good use. "I decided to solve our problem by creating tasty non-alcoholic drinks that would be stylistically as similar as possible to fine wines, in bottles that would look very much the same."

When Martynas co-founded Acala in Lithuania in 2020, he quickly realised he was not alone in his search for alternatives to alcohol. "The desire for non-alcoholic

drinks with exceptional aromas and flavours is a global issue," says Martynas. "People who drive to a night out, pregnant women, people with young children and those who simply want to face the next day with a clear head are all keen to discover alcohol-free drinks."

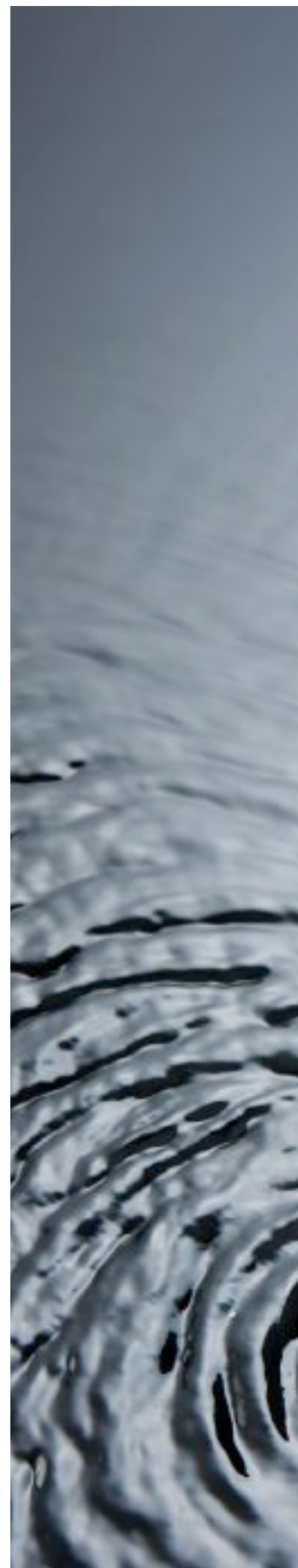
Often, they are poorly served by the options available. "We tried all the non-alcoholic wines we could find," says Martynas. "Some of them, we threw away before we finished, they were so horrible." Many non-alcoholic wines have stripped the flavour along with the alcohol and add sugar to compensate. The taste of Acala drinks, however, has been developed with wine lovers in mind. "If you enjoy a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, you will find our sparkling tea contains the same flavours – gooseberries, lemongrass and rhubarb – and it has the same acidity and dry taste."

The Acala team go through a painstaking process of matching flavours to specific wines. They deconstruct each one, isolating the taste, colour, acidity and aftertaste, and mimic these with tea, fruits and other natural, organic ingredients. Even when a perfect match is found, it must still complement the other elements. The team then tries the blend with food to see which flavours combine best. They have produced six flavours so far: a white blend, a red blend, a rosé, a mulled wine, a Spritz and a Mimosa.

Acala sells around 500,000 bottles a year. They can be found in Michelin-starred restaurants, gourmet stores and high-end hotels including Kempinski and Mandarin Oriental. "We need those gastropubs, prestigious hotels and Michelin-starred restaurants, but they also need us," says Martynas. When people choose degustation menus at exclusive venues, they often need a high-quality non-alcoholic option to go with it. "If they are spending hundreds on a meal, they want to be able to experience all the smells and tastes. That might not be so easy if they have 12 small glasses of wine with every dish." While restaurateurs have a broad selection of wines to choose from, the same cannot always be said for soft drinks. Acala fills this gap in the market.

Martynas believes that people enjoy the social and gourmet aspects of drinking, but do not necessarily always need alcohol. Increasingly, even places such as car showrooms treat their customers to Acala sparkling tea instead of champagne. "Most of our clients enjoy wine, but life is all about balance, and our premium soft drinks get that balance right."

www.drinkacala.com





A floral flourish

Infused with edible flowers, Flouwer Co's handcrafted foods bring together creativity, flavour and bite-sized moments of luxury

As a child, Theresa Halliburton spent a lot of time in the garden with her mother, and now shares her same passion for flowers. Kristen Kapoor, a self-confessed Martha Stewart fanatic, is usually found with her nose buried in a cookbook or food magazine. Their shared connection, however, is rooted in their enthusiasm for cooking and enjoying lively gatherings – often accompanied by a well-crafted cocktail. The business that sprouted from this intersection of interests between these two friends is Flouwer Co. Its handcrafted staples, made from garden-grown ingredients, elevate the everyday home dining and entertaining experience.

What began in 2019 as more of a passion project – supplying their flagship floral crackers to local hotels and restaurants – quickly blossomed into a high-growth food and lifestyle company that now offers a wide range of specialities, including floral-infused Artisanal Crackers, Cocktail Cubes, Finishing Sugars, Garnishing Salts, as well as items for the home and garden. Kristen and Theresa also want to encourage people to tap into their creativity in the kitchen and garden through their Flouwer Co blog, *Bloom Appétit*, which provides recipes, gardening and entertaining tips featuring Flouwer Co products. “By putting edible flowers into everyday products, we can elevate the simple moments in our lives,” says Theresa. “It’s a fusion of our passions, and flowers have a unique way of being both simple and beautiful, luxurious and completely natural.”

The growing of edible flowers has further benefits that Theresa and Kristen hope will encourage more farmers to consider planting them as a supporting crop. “It encourages biodiversity, supports organic, sustainable farming practices and is pollinator-friendly, which increases crop yields,” says Theresa.

Flouwer Co sells packets of edible flower seeds so customers can also enjoy the experience of growing their own edible flowers. “We want people to embrace edible flowers in their lives, to grow them and experiment with them in their recipes at home,” says Kristen. Flouwer Co’s partnership with the non-profit One Tree Planted means that a portion of all sales from their Cocktails and Garnishing line goes towards global reforestation efforts.

What initially began as a two-woman venture without any prior experience or contacts in the food industry is now a flourishing team of 20 women, and counting, at the company’s factory in Denver. “We are so lucky to have such a great team of artisans who all share our passion for both food and flowers,” says Kristen. Flouwer Co has

also opened a brick-and-mortar shop in Denver’s West Highland neighbourhood, where the company sells its full range of products and those from emerging artisans.

Flouwer Co products are widely available throughout the US, and the founders have made recent inroads into the UK and Europe, through their global website and local stockists. There have also been some recent impressive wins that have helped raise the company’s profile. At the 2023 Specialty Food Association’s Soft Awards, held in New York City, Flouwer Co Artisanal Crackers, Orange Blossom Cocktail Cubes and Classic Floral Garnishing Salt all took home the gold medal in their respective category.

For Theresa, it was clear that the judges were impressed and understood what she and Kristen were building with their brand. “It’s really important to eat beautifully and have those simple moments of luxury in your life on a daily basis,” she explains, “rather than just on special occasions.”

www.flouwerco.com







Toast to good health

*The renowned cardiologist who founded
Revana Vineyards and three iconic wineries
cares for his vines as if they are his patients*

When Dr Madaiah Revana first visited Tuscany, Italy, he not only fell in love with the wine but returned to the US determined to develop a vineyard and winery that would rival the world's greatest. In 1997, he first established his name in California's Napa Valley with Revana Estate, and years later with Alexana Estate in the Dundee Hills in Willamette Valley, Oregon. Here, he embedded the same philosophy in farming and winemaking that he employed at Napa, this time seeking to produce Pinot Noir and Chardonnay befitting the great domains of Burgundy.

What makes Dr Revana's story remarkable is that he came to the US from India in 1973 with only a few dollars in his pocket. Today, he is an internationally renowned cardiologist in Houston, Texas, and shares the same passion for winemaking as he does for healthcare. "My heart is in wine and it's also in cardiology," he says. "I love taking care of my patients and taking care of my vines."

Dr Revana believes that the meticulous nature required of a cardiologist is a good skill match for the



wine business. “I understand the principles of winemaking and the processes. Most of winemaking is biochemistry, which is the same as medicine.” His high standards and attention to detail also come into play. “At our vineyards, we have the best winemakers because you need the right people to ensure the best quality.”

Each wine conveys a distinct sense of time and place. Napa Valley is famous for its Cabernet Sauvignons, and the ones produced by Revana are rated as among the highest in the region. The Willamette Valley is one of the rare wine regions of the world capable of producing complex Pinot Noir. Since it was established in 2005, the Alexana Estate has 55 planted acres on 18 different soil types, which produces exciting and complex wines. There are 11 varieties of Pinot Noir, two different varieties of Chardonnay and one Pinot Gris. The land is farmed by hand – part of the sustainable practice to promote soil health and biodiversity, while encouraging consistent and exceptional grapes. Alexana’s Head Winemaker, Tresider Burns, seeks to capture the diversity and richness of the soil and terroir in his wines. These include the flagship Pinot Noir, with the 2021 vintage receiving a score of 95 points from Wine Spectator.

“What is very important is the sense of place in our wines and how we connect to people when they come to visit the winery,” says Dr Revana. “We have a beautiful view from the tasting room, and we have great staff who have come from five-star hotels. Our customers come and we take care of them. We take pride in that.”

Alexana wines are available in the world’s finest restaurants and have been served at the Savoy in London, as well as several of the city’s Michelin-starred restaurants and throughout Europe. This is a testament to the exceptional quality and character of the consistently outstanding Pinot Noir, alongside the Signature Chardonnay.

Dr Revana’s wine portfolio also extends to Argentina where, in 2008, he opened the winery Corazón del Sol in the magnificent Uco Valley, Mendoza. Next, he hopes to come full circle and obtain a vineyard in Tuscany, where his love for fine wine originated. “When I am not in the operating room, I am thinking, reading and talking about wine,” he says. “In the next few years, we will be making even better wines. I believe our greatest are yet to come.”

www.alexanawinery.com

A woman's work

Madame Veuve Point's internationally acclaimed Burgundy wines were first produced in 1904 by an inspirational female winemaker

The story of Madame Veuve Point wines is one of a pioneering female spirit. In 1903, life was hard for female winegrowers as few in France believed that they could do the job as well as a man. But Jeanne-Marie Point – recently widowed with a four-year-old son who she promised to educate – continued to work on the family estate in Burgundy.

When Jeanne-Marie presented the first wine she vinified alone at the St Louis World's Fair in the US in 1904, she won the Grand Prix. This accolade brought her recognition at home and abroad. "Taking advantage of improvements in transport, US buyers were soon coming to her village, Vergisson, to buy more of her wines, and the French then began to take her seriously, too," says her great-great-granddaughter, Géraldine Point.

"This was the start of a grand success story for Jeanne-Marie, who was known as Madame Veuve Point – and her son Benoît eventually took on the business until his death aged 97," says Géraldine. By that time, her pioneering backstory and journey to the US had faded from memory.

This all changed in 2015 when Géraldine decided to pick up the family torch. "I was determined to bring Madame Veuve Point's inspiring feminist story and incredible wines back into the popular imagination," she says. A certificate she had been left by Benoît, her great-grandfather, was used to prove Madame Veuve Point's win in 1904, which helped verify the story.

In the summer holidays as a child, Géraldine helped her great-grandfather with winemaking. Now an international wine seller, and with the help of her husband who also works in the wine business, she began operating out of a vinification centre they had in Beaune, Burgundy, to produce Madame Veuve Point wines.

Géraldine uses grapes from the family-owned Madame Veuve Point vineyard, and works with local growers and with grapes from 35 AOP (Appellation d'Origine Protégée) wines. All wines are vinified, aged and bottled in Beaune, ensuring control across every stage of production.

Géraldine's favourite is the Pouilly Fuissé with its flinty notes and hint of acacia. "One American visitor called the Volnay Premier Cru 'bewitching'," she says. The Volnay won Platinum at the Decanter 2022 World Wine Awards. This is one of many international wins since Géraldine revived the wines, each bottle bearing Madame Veuve Point's famous brooch as the label's crest.

The wines are now sold across the world, from Canada and Scandinavia to the Caribbean, mostly in restaurants and wine cellars. "Each time we have a new customer, it brings me joy. I'm proud to do this for my family," says Géraldine. Jeanne-Marie showed "you can move mountains for the love of your family. This is conveyed with each of our bottles, through to the tables and wine tasters of the world."

Géraldine is driven by the adventures of her great-great-grandmother. "There's the passion for Burgundy wines and the terroir, the knowledge or art of preparing great wines; but this story of my great-great-grandmother is also very powerful. It shows that by doing your utmost and trusting your own worth, it is possible to find the right path to overcome life's difficulties."

As for Jeanne-Marie's posthumous success, Géraldine believes she would be proud. "She was very humble and hardworking, and we work hard, too. Maybe it's in our blood."

www.madameveuvepoint.com





La dolce vita

From the British seaside to the Middle East, family-owned Morelli's is enamouring the world with its authentic Italian gelato

Creamy, rich and indulgent, Italian gelato is one of the great affordable luxuries in life. Among the Italians who brought it to the UK over a century ago was Giuseppe Morelli. He moved to the UK from southern Italy in 1907 and sold scoops of handmade gelato from a bicycle, eventually joined by his young son, Mario. Made from his family recipes from the 1890s, Giuseppe's artisanal produce was always a cut above the rest.

In 1932, Mario moved to Broadstairs in Kent and opened an ice-cream parlour, Morelli's, on the seafront. Refurbished in the 1950s and renowned for its striking Art Deco frontage and vintage Lloyd Loom chairs, the parlour became an iconic local institution that is still treasured today, with the manager, Chris, now in his 50th year of employment.

While the business has expanded over the years, with a store along the coast in Whitstable and one in the historic Apple Market in Covent Garden, London, it remains very much a family affair. Mario's great-granddaughter, Bibi Morelli, is now the fifth generation to be entrusted with the business, with each generation playing their part in the evolution of the brand. "Our customers love the timelessness of Morelli's Gelato," says Bibi. "It's nostalgically familiar."

Elements of the look and feel of the original Broadstairs parlour are reproduced in other stores, from the purple, pale pink and cream colour scheme to the use of Venetian glassware and silver tableware. As well as scoops, Morelli's serves other treats such as a range of spectacular sundaes, shakes, waffles and crêpes, and its own brand of Kilimanjaro coffee – all of which capture the high-class essence of the Morelli's experience.

"Our gelato is a little decadent, something to indulge in," says Bibi. "It's an aspirational and luxurious product, but a scoop is still affordable. Whether somebody is spending £3.50 on a single scoop or £10 on a Knickerbocker Glory, we want to evoke that sense of childhood joy. Gelato is not just a word, but an emotion. The happiness people feel when enjoying our products is something we cherish."

Morelli's produces fresh gelato on each of its premises, every single day. From the pistachios to the cocoa beans, only premium natural ingredients are used. Gelato contains significantly less fat than typical ice cream, giving a more intense flavour; churned more slowly, it also has a denser, richer, smoother texture. The fact that its gelato is made daily allows Morelli's to experiment with flavours that are served alongside the classics or made in personalised batches for

customers. Bespoke flavour requests have included pear and parmesan, Campari and orange, Marmite and even a gelato for dogs. Morelli's also takes its classic ice-cream bicycle cart to special occasions throughout the UK, from large weddings to parties and corporate events.

For over a decade, Bibi has been introducing the Morelli's brand around the world. The business's qualities – spanning from the recipes to the first-class service – are carefully maintained in the franchises. Alongside various stores in Dubai, openings are planned elsewhere in the Middle East, and two stores opened in Uzbekistan in 2024. "All our partners align with our traditions and values in terms of the quality and the history of the brand," says Bibi. "Our customers and our partners are very proud of this heritage, which has defined us and blessed us with a longevity of 117 years."

www.morelligelato.com





Centuries of savoir faire

Abelé 1757 is the fifth oldest champagne house in the Champagne region of France and continues a 250-year-old tradition of artisanal winemaking

Deep beneath the ground under Abelé 1757's charming mansion in the French Champagne region of Reims are two kilometres of wine cellars. Dug by hand from the raw rock, chalk and limestone, this dark underground labyrinth consists of 30 galleries that are all connected by a long corridor. At a depth of 20 metres, this is the ideal environment for the conservation and ageing of precious bottles of champagne, providing a constant temperature and stable humidity levels.

"It is a centuries-old laboratory that transforms every year into a workshop of creation," says a spokesperson at the winery. "When we tell our history there is always a sparkle in the eyes." Indeed, there is a great appreciation for history at Abelé 1757, the fifth oldest champagne house.

The house was founded by wine merchant Théodore Vanderveken but took its name from Henri Abelé, Vanderveken's great-great-grandson. By then, the house had already demonstrated a capacity for innovation: Henri's grandfather, Antoine de Muller, invented the riddling table by drilling a kitchen table with angled holes in which to insert the bottles to ensure the sediment is collected at the neck. This revolutionised the method of making champagne. Later, the house would develop the practice of freezing the bottle, so the frozen plug of sediment can be removed, which is the process of disgorgement still used in champagne-making today.

Experienced Cellar Master Etienne Eteneau now oversees winemaking, focusing on the elements that once ensured bottles of Abelé 1757 were served at royal palaces across Europe. They were even taken on the Titanic's prestigious, if fateful, voyage. Craftsmanship is at the heart of this boutique house. "We operate on a human scale – we don't launch new vintages every harvest; we are focused on craftsmanship and *savoir faire*; and at every step there is a human hand."

To achieve such a high level of excellence and consistency in the wines, the house uses the grape varieties Chardonnay (the backbone of Abelé's signature style), Pinot Noir and Meunier. Grapes are carefully selected and hand-picked during the harvest at perfect maturity. Then they are gently pressed and kept for several months in small stainless-steel vats, which amplifies their complexity. Going beyond the established rules of winemaking, Abelé 1757 ages each of its champagnes for three years or

longer, and for a minimum of ten years for its Prestige cuvée, named Le Sourire de Reims. With patience, the alchemy occurs as the wines gain in richness, depth and aromatic complexity. Brilliantly bright and exuding elegance and a delicate effervescence, they give the sensation of a satisfying frisson with a rich, silky texture and subtle notes.

Understated yet refined, Abelé 1757 strikes a welcome chord among champagne enthusiasts. It is about taking time to savour the champagnes. "Patience and time...", in the words of the 17th-century French poet Jean de La Fontaine. For Abelé 1757, time is an ally, an inspiration and an emblem. It is like a thread that has woven through the ages and is the common denominator of all the house's wines, combining epochs of history with today and a know-how that the house has tirelessly demonstrated for more than two and a half centuries.

www.abele1757.com





Soul-stirring teas

Newby Teas is a labour of love for Nirmal Kumar Sethia, whose luxury leaves preserve culture, heritage and health

“**T**ea is a spiritual drink,” says entrepreneur and philanthropist Nirmal Kumar Sethia. “If you can understand tea with sincerity, you know who you are and what this life is all about.” Nirmal is Chairman of the highly acclaimed luxury tea brand, Newby Teas. He is also the indomitable force at the heart of the N Sethia Foundation, which supports medical research and disaster relief, the education of underprivileged children and the preservation of culture, among other good causes. He is also responsible for the Chitra Collection, the world’s largest privately owned collection of historic teawares. The commonality between all these endeavours, he says, “is love and gratitude”.

Nirmal has had an interest in tea ever since he was a young apprentice in the industry, but life and enterprise led him down another path. He founded London-based Newby Teas in 2000 after receiving encouragement from his late wife, Chitra, to follow his passion. “I’m grateful

to have been able to do so, as I’m blessed with so much and can now conserve the culture, heritage and life-enhancing properties of drinking fine teas,” he says. “It is my responsibility to share this with others.” Ultimately, Newby Teas is a labour of love. Testament to Nirmal’s dedication are the thousands of cups of tea he personally tastes each year, alongside the curation of the Chitra Collection, which contains thousands of exquisite objects, some of which date back to the 10th century BC.

Newby Teas offers an array of hand-picked loose-leaf and biodegradable bagged tea collections, as well as a selection of teawares and gifts. Flavours span citrus, floral, malt, spiced and sweet notes. Leaves are sourced exclusively from plantations in the best tea-growing regions of northern India, including the Himalayas, and from select areas in China, Taiwan and Japan. “They are only picked in the first or second flush and, crucially, we then swiftly and carefully preserve them to avoid contamination and retain their quality, flavour and health-giving properties,” explains Nirmal. The teas are also tested and certified by the European Food Safety Authority, the US Food and Drug Administration and Eurofins Agroscience Services. “Every stage is critical to the creation of a high-quality tea that improves, rather than damages, health. No other tea brand is as committed. It is an expensive, time-sensitive process with a limited production, so the motivation has to be selfless.”

Alongside this attention to quality, Newby Teas focuses on sustainability and ethical sourcing. Fifty per cent of the power at the preservation centre in Kolkata, India, is renewable, and it offsets emissions in the country, for example, by investing in hydroelectric power. The company is also a member of the non-profit Ethical Tea Partnership, which safeguards tea workers’ livelihoods and working conditions.

The brand grows through recommendation by those who share Nirmal’s reverence for luxury teas – and there are many worldwide. It is served in Michelin-starred restaurants, high-end hotels and at its own boutiques in Abu Dhabi and Switzerland, and stocked at Selfridges and Harrods in the UK. As a mark of approval, the tea has earned more than 140 accolades to date, including many awards from the Global Tea Championship. This makes Nirmal happy, but he is simply grateful for the opportunity to continue in his purpose, celebrating health, culture, relationships and knowledge. As he says, “The essence, character and life-enhancing qualities of the finest teas are gifted to us by Mother Nature.”

www.newbyteas.com





A taste of Spain

Familia Martínez Bujanda is the custodian of a Spanish winemaking heritage, but it is also adapting to a changing world

Adrián Martínez Bujanda is the fifth generation of his family to dedicate his future to winemaking, which began in 1889 with his great-grandfather Joaquín Martínez Bujanda. The winery – Familia Martínez Bujanda – has five estates spread across Spain’s historic winemaking regions. “The fincas all have the same philosophy,” says Adrián, “making excellent wines with our own vineyards located in privileged enclaves.”

Finca Valpiedra, Viña Bujanda and Cosecheros y Criadores are in the Rioja region; Finca Antigua in La Mancha, and Finca Montepedroso in Rueda. Each estate has its own character and brings the personality of its *terroir* into the taste of the wines through a unique combination of soil, climate, altitude and winemaking technique. The results are wines that are subtle and elegant, with an emphasis on fruit rather than oak in the flavour. “When you work with your own vineyards, you can control 100 per cent of the quality,” explains Adrián.

Familia Martínez Bujanda is a member of *Grandes Pagos de España*, an association of the most prestigious wineries in Spain. While the commitment to quality has not changed in over a century, the winery is now producing organic wines, largely in response to climate change. The La Mancha winery is now one of the largest organic estates in Europe, with Finca Antigua celebrating its first officially organic-certified vintage in 2022. Finca Montepedroso, meanwhile, is in the process of applying for organic certification, and Finca Valpiedra has already produced an organic vintage. With zero residue from synthetic products, their organic wines are not only healthier to drink, but also put less chemical pollution into the environment, improving soil quality.

Familia Martínez Bujanda also takes measures to protect biodiversity. At Finca Antigua – one of the most important flora and fauna reserves in Spain – a 40,000 cubic metre rainwater reservoir is used in the production of wines. Solar panels are also deployed in the wineries to provide sustainable power.

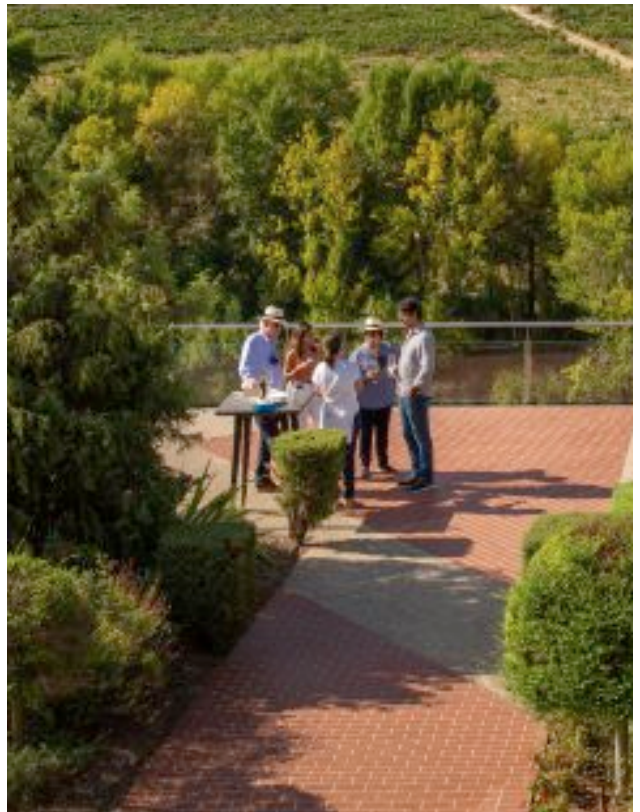
More than 70 per cent of Familia Martínez Bujanda wines are exported to 75 countries, including the UK, the US, China, South America and the Scandinavian countries. Production is large-scale, with Finca Montepedroso producing 100,000 bottles a year, Finca Valpiedra 300,000 and Finca Antigua around 250,000. Adrián, who is responsible for exports to the UK, Ireland and South America, says there are still opportunities for expansion. “Africa is a continent where the market is not very mature. In the future, we would like to at least explore that possibility.”

The vineyards are set in spectacular countryside, making them attractive places to visit. Finca Valpiedra lies between the historic wine-producing towns of Cenicero and Fuenmayor, famous for their ancient stone walls. Finca Antigua is in Los Hinojosos, part of the route of Don Quixote, with its windmills and wheat fields that have barely changed since the days of the great Cervantes. Finca Montepedroso is in the protected production municipality of Rueda, where wine is thought to have been produced since Roman times and is made exclusively with the autochthonous, or native, grape Verdejo, which is resistant to both cold and drought.

Familia Martínez Bujanda encourages visits to the wineries. “It is important for people to see the steps that go into making wine – the vineyard, the harvest, the vinification,” says Adrián. Familia Martínez Bujanda is proud to preserve this age-old heritage while protecting the environment, as it aims to go into its sixth generation of wine production and beyond.

www.familiamartinezbujanda.com







Spring fresh

From its source in southern Austria's magnificent Lavant Valley to the tables of Hollywood, Wossa fine water aims to make it big

The Austrian team behind bottled water company Wossa have big plans for their bottled water brand. Confident in the superior quality of their still and sparkling water, their ambitions include product placement in Hollywood films – “I think that for an Austrian company to go to the US is a huge step,” says CEO Rainer Hofmeister – and a presence at the 2025 World Expo in Japan.

“Here in Austria, we still think it’s normal to have such good water,” says Rainer. “But when you think about it, and especially if you travel a lot, you notice that the water quality in many countries is not as good as it is here, and that is what makes it so special.”

Wossa is already served in 10 per cent of the best restaurants in Austria, and aims to achieve the same mark in restaurants around the world. It is a member of the Fine Water Society, and the accolades it has received confirm the superiority of its products. At the Luxury Lifestyle Awards 2024, the brand was named best premium water in Austria; and both the still and sparkling bottles were chosen by fine water connoisseurs to take Gold in its category at the Taste and Design Awards in the same year.



The prize-winning water is bottled at the foot of the mountains in the Lavant Valley, Carinthia, an area known for its outstanding beauty. Wossa is the word for “water” in the local dialect, and the name was specifically chosen to communicate the Austrian origin of the brand. The spring itself, Marmorquelle (Marble Spring), is found in the heart of a 300-year-old farmstead, where the water is naturally filtered by the marble rock that encases it before gravity directs the flow straight into a custom-built facility. No external pumping machinery is needed, and the water is bottled by hand. This natural process, from source to bottle, helps to preserve the water’s unique taste, which is round and soft. The low minerality content is “easy on the palate,” says Rainer, “and so it works perfectly with seafood, fruity desserts and sushi, for instance, because it’s all a light taste.”

The spring is a precious resource for the region, and sustainability is a number one priority. “We are careful not to use all the water of the spring, and we take only what is needed,” says Denise, Rainer’s daughter and Wossa Partner. “We know what the limit is, and we never go over it. And if we don’t use the water, it just

flows straight back into nature.” Also with an eye on the environment, Wossa packaging is made using sustainable materials that all have their origin in Austria, including the high-quality thick glass bottle, aluminium and wood cap, and paper label.

While Wossa’s elegant bottles are found in Michelin-starred restaurants, luxury hotels and exclusive clubs, the company has also branched out into still and sparkling water in sleek, recyclable aluminium cans. This upmarket approach to canned water is already proving popular, and there are plans to expand the range with the addition of flavours that showcase the best of Austrian nature.

The creation of meaningful partnerships is on Wossa’s agenda, too. High on its celebrity wish list are Arnold Schwarzenegger and the chef Wolfgang Puck, who was born just an hour away from Marmorquelle and is based in Los Angeles. “We want to show the world how incredible Austrian water is,” says Rainer. “To have important Austrians presenting our products would be amazing.”

www.wossa.life

6. *Touring and exploring*

*LUXURY
TRAVEL*





TOURER DE FORCE

*WITH THE INTRODUCTION
OF THE FOURTH-GENERATION
CONTINENTAL GT SPEED,
BENTLEY HAS UNLEASHED
ITS ULTIMATE VISION OF
HYBRID HORSEPOWER,
WRITES RAY MASSEY*





The launch of the new Continental GT Speed in June 2024 provided a bolt of Bentley-style bravura to the company’s somewhat mixed financial results for the first six months of the year. “Despite a challenging first half of 2024, our half-year results provide a platform to remain focused on delivering our key strategic initiatives and investment plans, including the transformation of our product portfolio to fully electric in the years to come,” said Member of the Board for Finance and IT Jan-Henrik Lafrentz.

“We do remain cautious and anticipate continued difficult trading conditions in some key markets,” he added, “however, we are seeing a great deal of optimism for the recently launched Continental GT Speed and expect this to have a significant, positive impact on our order bank numbers later this year and early in 2025.”

The company’s cautious approach was fuelled by six-month figures of a £217 million operating profit (down 33 per cent on £325 million for the same period in 2023) and global sales that were 23 per cent lower than those of the same period in 2023.

A POWERFUL STATEMENT

Not to be dispirited, the unveiling of the new Continental GT Speed was accompanied by a new record for an electrified top speed “underwater” – a spine-tingling 208mph, set while driving through the longest and deepest subsea road tunnel in the world.

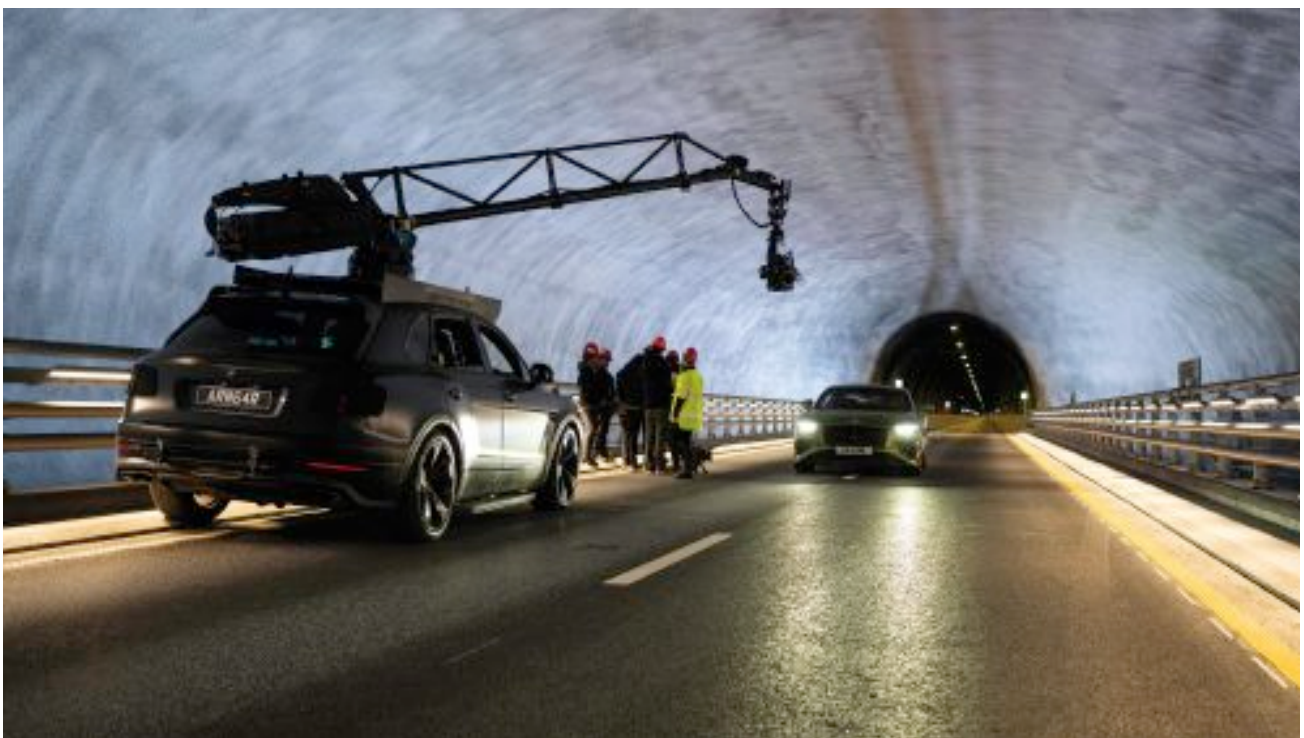
Hailed as “the most powerful Bentley ever”, the fourth generation British-built grand tourer is also one of the greenest Bentleys to hit the road. The petrol-electric plug-in hybrid Continental GT Speed

“The new Continental grand tourers are driven by a powerful 771bhp plug-in hybrid setup”

Previous page | Bentley’s new fourth-generation Continental GTC Speed

Above and opposite | The Continental GT Speed blends supercar performance with everyday usability





Opposite | The Bentley sets a new speed record in Norway's subsea Ryfylke Tunnel

Right | The team at Crewe proudly present the new Continental GT



coupé and its convertible GTC Speed sibling ride on 22-inch wheels. Both restyled two-door four-seat variants are described as “ultra performance hybrids” matching a twin-turbocharged petrol engine to a powerful electric motor that gives it up to 50 miles of emissions-free electric-only motoring.

To make a splash, Bentley set out to establish a new speed record “not formally attempted before” at the Ryfylke Tunnel in western Norway’s Rogaland county – at 8.9 miles in length, the world’s longest subsea tunnel and also the deepest of any kind in the world, descending to 292 metres below sea level.

Running on second-generation biofuel and charged with electricity from a renewable source, the new convertible Continental GT Speed accelerated from a standstill to its 208mph top speed in 33 seconds. Bentley noted that the record attempt was carried out with the help of both the Norwegian highways authority and police, adding, “Several runs were completed for filming, in doing so establishing a new unofficial speed record for a car in a tunnel.”

It added that ahead of the attempt, “rounds of engineering analysis and simulation evaluated the airflow around the car at high speed in an enclosed tube to ensure safety”.

HYBRID PERFORMANCE

The two new Continental grand tourers are driven by a powerful 771bhp plug-in hybrid setup combining a 592bhp twin turbocharged 4.0-litre V8 petrol engine with a 187bhp (140kW) electric motor with a 25.9kW battery mounted behind the rear axle. This combination powers the Continental GT Speed coupé from 0 to 60mph in 3.1 seconds and to 100mph in 6.9 seconds, with a top speed of 208mph. Power is delivered through an eight-speed dual clutch automatic transmission (with manual paddle override) to all four wheels.

The Continental GTC convertible version is only a fraction of a second behind those times, accelerating from rest to 60mph in just 3.2 seconds and to 100mph in 7.2 seconds, with a top speed of 177mph. The convertible’s seven-bow fabric roof system – available in seven exterior colours, including tweed – can be deployed in 19 seconds and at speeds of up to 30mph.

The new plug-in hybrids replace the outgoing GT Speeds with their mammoth 6.0-litre twin-turbocharged W12 petrol engine, which provided 650bhp (121bhp less in total than the new V8 plug-in hybrid cars) and for the coupé version took 3.5 seconds to reach 60mph (0.4 seconds slower than the new V8 hybrid).

Although using greener technology, the new plug-in hybrid Continental GT Speed coupé averages only 27.4mpg – though this is still an improvement – and CO₂ emissions are down to 29g/km, with a matching test-cycle fuel economy of 217mpg. Its total range of 534 miles is enough to get from London to the golf at St Andrews in Scotland, or just short of Aberdeen – although only 50 miles of that trip could be in electric-only mode. The cabriolet GTC Speed is only fractionally behind with an electric-only range of 48 miles, average fuel consumption of 26.6mpg, CO₂ emissions of 31g/km (and test-cycle economy of 202mpg) and range of 521 miles.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Some 68 per cent of the components are new compared to the outgoing model. Bentley says that the new model also marks “a bolder design DNA” with clean, modern detailing taking cues from the marque’s exclusive coachbuilt Bacalar and Batur limited-edition models.

It is also the first mainstream Bentley to feature single headlamps since the 1950s, representing “the biggest revision to the face of the Continental GT in two decades”, in the company’s words.

“Not since the S2 of 1959 has a mainstream, non-coachbuilt Bentley had single front lamps,” notes the carmaker. “But the change brings a more determined expression to the face of the GT.”

The headlamps – each of which has 120 separate digitally controlled LED elements to give graduated illumination to suit conditions – also feature a new horizontal “eyebrow” with a deep crystal-cut diamond pattern at the top of the lamps. The LED system, with improved fade out, also avoids the perception of “black holes” in the field of vision.

The four-seat interior offers the option of what Bentley refers to as “wellness seat technology” and air ionisers for a more relaxed and refreshing drive, plus quilting and a dark chrome finish. The car’s driving characteristics are enhanced by a new chassis system and “the best Continental GT ride comfort to date”, according to its makers.



“The new model marks ‘a bolder design DNA’ with clean, modern detailing taking cues from the coachbuilt Bacalar and Batur limited-edition models”



Full electric mode can be used at speeds of up to 87mph, and with 75 per cent throttle, and the battery can be fully charged in under three hours using a fast charger, or in around eight and a half hours using a domestic home charger.

Improvements to suspension, damping, anti-roll technology, brakes, weight distribution, electronic stability and active chassis control make for a dynamic driving experience, says Bentley. The rear of the car has also been redesigned, with tweaks to the bumper and exhaust pipes, extended taillights and a more aerodynamic boot lid.

THE BABY “BLOWER”

It would be remiss not to also mention the unveiling of the Bentley Blower Jnr in August 2023 for production this year.

A smaller, fully road-legal electric replica of the marque’s most iconic fire-breathing Bentley racing car, it comes at a fraction of the original size but with a hefty £108,000 price tag. Measuring just 3.7 metres in length and 1.5 metres in width, it is an 85 per cent scale recreation of the original supercharged 1929 4½-Litre “Blower” Bentley and was created in conjunction with specialists at The Little Car Company (now Hedley Studios).

The zero emissions Blower Jnr was inspired by Bentley’s historic Team Car No. 2. Powered by a 15kW (20bhp) electric motor, it has a top speed of 45mph and an expected range of 65 miles. Crafted entirely by hand from materials that match the original, the Blower Jnr features tandem seating for two adults (with the driver in front and the passenger directly behind), as well as dedicated luggage space in the back. The 99 First Edition models that were produced – featuring the Union Flag – sold out quickly, and Bentley subsequently announced a run of 250 more cars, which includes a wider range of personalised options for customers.

“The result is a vehicle that will have even experts looking twice,” said the Crewe-based luxury carmaker of the scaled-down classic. “It is crafted by hand to the same standards as any Bentley and adorned with beautiful details all inspired by the original Team Car.”



Opposite | The grand tourer’s features include single headlamps with a distinct “eyebrow” and high-tech interior fittings

Above and below | The Bentley Blower Jnr is a scaled-down version of the marque’s supercharged classic



The magic of flight

With its focus on and commitment to leisure and business passengers, US-based Global Air Charters is reshaping the travel experience by private jet

The luxury service provided by Global Air Charters (GAC) is much more than flying people from A to B; it is about bringing a boutique travel experience to private aviation. “We want our passengers’ flight to be just as memorable as their holiday on the beach with the turtles in Fiji,” says CEO Michael Vanacore-Netz, by way of example. From scheduling to catering and ground transportation, the journey is bespoke and personalised for every passenger.

“Our belief is summed up in our company motto: ‘Above exceptional. Beyond expectations’. We want to be 11 out of ten,” says Michael. If anyone is able to achieve this, it is Global Air Charters. Its multi-skilled team provides the perfect mix of service and style, such as a cabin attendant who is renowned for mixing margaritas on flights to and from Mexico. Employees have hospitality connections across Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East, while Michael is an experienced pilot with three master’s degrees relating to aerospace and management. Such is his aviation expertise that he has written the Level Flight Safety Standard for Fly Compliant LLC and helped develop a risk assessment tool that measures the safety of flights and has been adopted by dozens of operators.

The entire GAC team focuses on the journey leading to the destination. “How our guests get there is just as important as getting there,” says Michael. “GAC truly delivers on that concept.” The experience of flight plays a central role. From the moment passengers ascend the jet’s staircase, crew members welcome them aboard. Comfortable seats in a climate-controlled cabin provide the ideal setting for guests to enjoy catered meals, hand-crafted cocktails and in-flight amenities including Wi-Fi, with a discerning dedication to concierge service.

“Our commitment to hospitality extends across our company,” says Michael. GAC empowers employees to do what is best because guests are treated like family. “Anybody can move you from here to there,” he says. “We take care of you before take-off and after arrival.” Repeat passengers are a norm thanks to this exceptional level of service. “We make sure that their vacation starts as soon as they step foot on the aeroplane. They can turn their phones off and unwind.”

In addition to leisure travel, GAC transports business executives from private or public companies across America and around the world. “If they’re having shareholder meetings, for instance, we’ll be the ancillary support, flying people to their board meetings,” explains Michael. GAC separates itself from competitors simply by doing what others will not. “Our firm specialises in saying ‘yes’ when others say ‘no.’”



The company has supported missions for NASA and the US government. In the pandemic, GAC was the only US-registered civil aircraft allowed to fly to Iraq and it is a source of pride that it flew cancer patients out of Ukraine after the Russian invasion. In addition to these wide-ranging services, the company sources, manages and sells private jets on behalf of its clients.

Since its founding in 2007, GAC has expanded strategically, increasing staff from six to more than 70. In 2023, it acquired a maintenance facility, allowing it to integrate operations and develop revenue streams. Global Air Charters continued its growth course in 2024 by engaging the acquisition of an airline. Upon closing the deal, GAC will complete a trifecta of aviation excellence comprised of a charter operation, a maintenance division and an airline. “From cargo operations, to maintenance, to bespoke charter flights, to airline travel – this combination makes us a bit of a unicorn in the industry.”

www.globalaircharters.com





Close encounters

Kamba African Rainforest Experiences offers visitors the chance to be at one with the earth's most precious and beautiful ecosystem





The Odzala-Kokoua National Park in the Republic of the Congo is a landscape barely touched by humanity. Located in the heart of the Congo Basin – the second largest rainforest in the world – the park is home to a vast array of wildlife, including western lowland gorillas, forest elephants and hundreds of bird species. Among those fortunate enough to experience the rich biodiversity of the region are the 200 to 300 annual guests of Kamba African Rainforest Experiences, which operates the only private lodges in the park.

The Congo Basin is often referred to as “the lungs of Africa” because it stores more carbon per hectare than the Amazon. Kamba’s commitment to conserving this precious land and raising international awareness about the park is reflected in the company’s sustainable tourism model. “Our guests learn that, just by coming here, they are part of the conservation process, as some of the income goes directly into protecting the park while also creating jobs for local people,” says Kristina Plattner, one of Kamba’s Managing Directors.

Founded in 2013, Kamba was conceived by Sabine Plattner, Kristina’s German-born mother, who became fascinated by the Congo rainforest. Sabine worked as a primary school teacher in Germany and became involved with an organisation that looked for private investors who could help protect the ecosystem where the state could not afford to. “My mother explored the Congo in canoes

with nothing but peanuts and live chickens for food,” says Kristina. “She was fascinated by the rainforests and wanted to do whatever she could to protect the ecosystem.”

Eager to help in any way that she could, Sabine initially focused on education and research, initiating the Early Childhood Development and EduConservation programmes through Sabine Plattner African Charities. But she soon realised that one of the best ways to support the rainforest was to provide local people with the chance to work in ecotourism, instead of being drawn into poaching and logging. All employees at Kamba undergo hospitality training and some serve as local guides, while the long-term goal is to have the lodges staffed entirely by local people. Sabine’s original idea to foster education and research continues unabated through philanthropic partnerships with nearby preschools, primary schools and universities.

Kamba has three lodges located in different parts of the national park. By spending several nights at all three sites, travelling between locations by foot and boat, guests gain a full understanding of the rainforest’s diversity. All three lodges are extremely well equipped and comfortable, with modern amenities such as electricity, hot showers and internet access, plus in-room massage treatments, fire pits and delicious cuisine. More importantly, each lodge provides a unique window into a different environment, allowing guests to immerse themselves in the local ecosystem and obtain a first-hand view of the abundant wildlife in the Congo Basin.

“Guests come for the gorillas, but they also reconnect with nature and with themselves”



Experiences available to guests include trekking to see the gorillas and kayaking. “The rivers are like the blood vessels through the lungs, and sometimes we have to leave the kayaks and walk through wetland,” says Kristina. “Everybody loves it as they walk past elephants and buffalo, with monkeys hanging from trees and fish swimming round your ankles. People say their inner child comes out as they get wet and muddy for the first time in years.”

Ngaga Lodge is a two-hour drive on dirt roads through savannah and rainforest from a private airstrip at Mboko. It is hand-built in a local style, with wraparound decks that overlook the trees, and windows covered by screens so that guests can fall asleep to the symphony of the rainforest – the sound of birds, frogs, monkeys and insects. The main deck built high among the towering trees enables guests to enjoy a morning coffee surrounded by playful monkeys and colourful birds.

Many of Ngaga Lodge guests are here primarily for the chance to observe families of western lowland gorillas in their natural habitat. Visitors feel privileged at the opportunity to get close to these extraordinary primates, and many describe the encounter as life-changing. While the lodge accommodates 12 people, only four at a time can visit each of the three habituated gorilla groups, a measure of respect for the privacy of the gorilla families. Other experiences organised by guides include night drives and night walks, or trips to nearby villages where guests can see how Kamba is supporting the local communities through education, employment and opportunity.

Next is the spectacular Lango Lodge overlooking a *bai* (jungle clearing), where elephants and buffalo gather to drink and wallow in the water. Guests can forage for jungle fruit, go on guided tours of the ecosystem or explore the waterways by kayak or riverboat. The third lodge, Mboko Lodge, sits on the edge of the forest as it transitions to the savannah. The area is frequented by the local hyena and monkey populations, with waterways that teem with life. Guests stay in spacious, canvas-sided bungalows tucked under the trees along the banks of a river, while the dining and lounge pavilion provides commanding views over plains that are dotted with the extraordinary cathedral-like mounds created by termites.

Walking through the rainforest provides a safari experience unlike any other. Kristina says it resembles a cross between the Amazon and the Everglades. Guests not only encounter some of the world’s largest mammals, but also beautiful and fragrant plants and flowers, buzzing insects, reptiles and so much more. David Attenborough and Ben Fogle have filmed in the area, which is a testament to the unparalleled level of access it offers to unspoilt nature.

“Guests come for the gorillas,” says Kristina, “but they become fascinated by the flora, the insects and the life surrounding the lodges. They reconnect with nature and with themselves – and rediscover that part of their character that has been tucked away since adolescence.”

www.kambaafrica.com

Exploration in style

Bering Yachts designs vessels for safe and comfortable adventures on the ocean that epitomise the luxury lifestyle

When Alexei Mikhailov was growing up in Siberia, he was obsessed with the sea. He would make models of boats and learned to fish at a young age. His home was the city of Magadan in the far northeast, which sits on a sliver of land between two bays overlooking the Sea of Okhotsk. Water is part of the culture in Magadan, with thriving fisheries and a bustling port. After a career as a businessman and entrepreneur in Russia and the US, Alexei is now once more immersed in his passion for the sea as the founder of Bering Yachts.

The explorer yacht maker designs robust steel-hulled vessels that have cruise ranges of thousands of miles, so owners can travel in complete comfort and safety. “I believe the high-end lifestyle of the future will be boats,” says Alexei. “We are creating steel-hulled self-sufficient boats that allow owners to visit destinations that no other tourist can reach. And you can explore the ocean with total freedom, from the South of France or the Caribbean to a remote fjord in Norway.”

Today, Bering Yachts has its global headquarters in the US, with offices in Germany and Australia. The company’s story, however, began back in 2007 when Alexei started building boats one at a time for individual clients. Although he had set up several successful businesses in industries from freight to fishing, Alexei did not intend to become a boat builder. But he soon discovered his approach made Bering Yachts a popular choice among those who wanted to travel long distances across the seas in style.

The company offers a diverse range of vessels, from opulent yachts that exceed 24 metres to the smaller explorers. Built to superyacht standards, these vessels of less than 24 meters offer unparalleled levels of comfort – a home away from home – for discerning owners. At the same time, their long range and robust construction mean that they can access remote anchorages and hidden coves that larger vessels cannot reach. Extensive fuel capacity and efficient hull design enable long-range cruising and extended voyages, as does self-sufficiency, empowering owners to venture further for longer. Dual power sources ensure such uninterrupted freedom; advanced watermakers transform seawater into freshwater; spacious freezers help to keep provisions preserved for weeks or even months off-grid; and there is ample storage.

Alexei himself can vouch for the safety of a Bering yacht. He was once caught in seven-metre waves during a monsoon in the South China Sea, but not for one second

did he feel in danger. “Even inexperienced sailors feel safe in our boats,” he says. “It is something intangible.”

Manufacturing takes place in a state-of-the-art shipyard in Antalya, Turkey and also in Burgas, Bulgaria – two maritime cities that specialise in shipbuilding. Bering Yachts fully controls the production of each vessel, designing and manufacturing the unique steel hulls that redefine durability, efficiency and sustainability.

To expand its community of yacht lovers, Bering Yachts also builds vessels for charter. It offers full management and maintenance, so clients can hand over responsibility for issues such as insurance and crewing, and focus instead on enjoying their yacht. “We started a media channel to celebrate the community of people who understand that yachting is the most luxurious form of life that is available,” says Alexei. “We show people how to travel off-season and off the map, exploring places that are a bit out of the way while enjoying a luxury lifestyle.”

www.beringyachts.com









Ruling the waves

From leisure vessels to superyachts, Gulf Craft has brought luxury yacht-building prowess to the Middle East

In 1982, the United Arab Emirates was still a young country with a population of just over one million. That year, Mohammed Hussain Alshaali founded Gulf Craft, determined to bring the art and craft of boatbuilding to his home country. Since then, the company has grown in scale and ambition to become one of the most respected yacht manufacturers, building vessels of all classes and sizes for customers on every continent. “I see Gulf Craft as a vivid example of the development of the UAE,” says Mohammed. “We couldn’t have done this if we were not in the UAE. The infrastructure and the international trade network have helped us to grow our business around the world.”

Gulf Craft employs 1,400 people in shipbuilding facilities in the Emirate of Umm Al-Quwain and the Maldives, along with an Experience Centre in Dubai. There are six brands under the Gulf Craft umbrella, each specialising in different facets of the boating market. These include Majesty Yachts, for superyachts between 60ft and 175ft, and Nomad Yachts, which caters to the growing number of boat owners who want to explore the ocean on longer cruises. Renowned British naval architect Andrew Wolstenholme designed the latter, ensuring the highest standards of comfort, craftsmanship and performance in any sea condition.

Building on a legacy of pearl divers and sailors, Mohammed – whose father captained his first ship at 19, journeying from the Gulf to East Africa – introduced his first imported boat to the Middle East from the US. At the time, he was a UAE diplomat before becoming Minister of State for Foreign Affairs; by 2008, he was focusing on Gulf Craft full-time and is currently the company’s Chairman. In the early days, he wanted the UAE to have its own boatbuilding industry, but the road there was difficult. Every single item had to be imported: stainless steel from Taiwan, handrails from the UK, acrylic windshields from Louisiana. Gradually, Gulf Craft began to develop its own manufacturing infrastructure, training staff and learning about sales and marketing. Today, the company manufactures most elements internally, with 400 staff working in the joinery department alone.

The company launches three to five new vessels each year, a continuous model of reinvention that has earned admirers worldwide. Award-winning innovations include the heat-recovery system introduced to the Majesty 120 superyacht, winner of the Eco Award at Boat International’s Design and Innovation Awards in 2023. The system repurposes the heat generated by the engine, using it for climate control and water heating. Gulf Craft continues

to explore other sustainable options, and in 2019, it unveiled a solar-powered Nomad range.

Alongside working towards such innovations, Gulf Craft places great emphasis on building relationships with clients and delivering excellence, whether they are buying their first 50ft boat or a superyacht worth several million pounds. “We work alongside our clients for several years and learn about their families, their lives, their hopes and dreams,” says Mohammed. “That is something I really cherish. We are catering to very special customers and each boat has a unique personality and individual sense of design and craftsmanship.”

Mohammed is proud to have played such a substantial part in making the UAE one of the few places in the world to have met the high standards demanded by owners of superyachts. In the future, he wants Gulf Craft to rise even further – to become the most important name in the exciting and exacting world of international yachting.

www.gulfcraftgroup.com



Hospitality at sea

The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection redefines the cruise experience by bringing the elegance of the legendary hotel brand to luxury yacht vacations

The Ritz-Carlton brand is synonymous with luxury and service. Discerning guests can experience its renowned expertise thanks to The Ritz-Carlton's presence around the world. Now there is a new way to experience the brand's unwavering passion for excellence: aboard a superyacht. "The collection harmoniously blends the refined elegance of The Ritz-Carlton with the relaxed freedom of a yachting vacation, delivering unparalleled and highly personalised experiences that redefine luxury at sea," says Jim Murren, Executive Chairman and CEO of The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection.

The onboard experience mirrors the legendary comfort and service of The Ritz-Carlton hotels. Each suite features a private terrace and floor-to-ceiling windows, resulting in "some of the most spacious accommodations on the waters," says Jim. "The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection's yachts hold among the highest staff and space ratios in the industry." The collection's first yacht – the 190-metre *Evrima*, an ultra-luxury superyacht – was launched in 2022, setting a new standard within the category with 149 spacious suites that accommodate up to 298 guests. *Evrima* explores the Mediterranean and the Caribbean, with its intimate size granting access to coveted destinations, from Saint-Tropez to Saint-Barthélemy. Among five exceptional onboard dining options is S.E.A., by chef Sven Elverfeld of Aqua, the three-Michelin-starred restaurant at The Ritz-Carlton, Wolfsburg, in Germany.

By summer 2025, The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection aims to have more superyachts on the ocean, with the 241-metre *Ilma* (448 guests in 224 suites) and the 242-metre *Luminara* (452 guests in 226 suites) becoming part of the fleet. *Ilma* will join *Evrima* in sailing the Mediterranean and the Caribbean, and will also explore the North and Baltic Seas, visiting countries including Norway, Denmark, Iceland and Sweden, which marks a first for The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection.

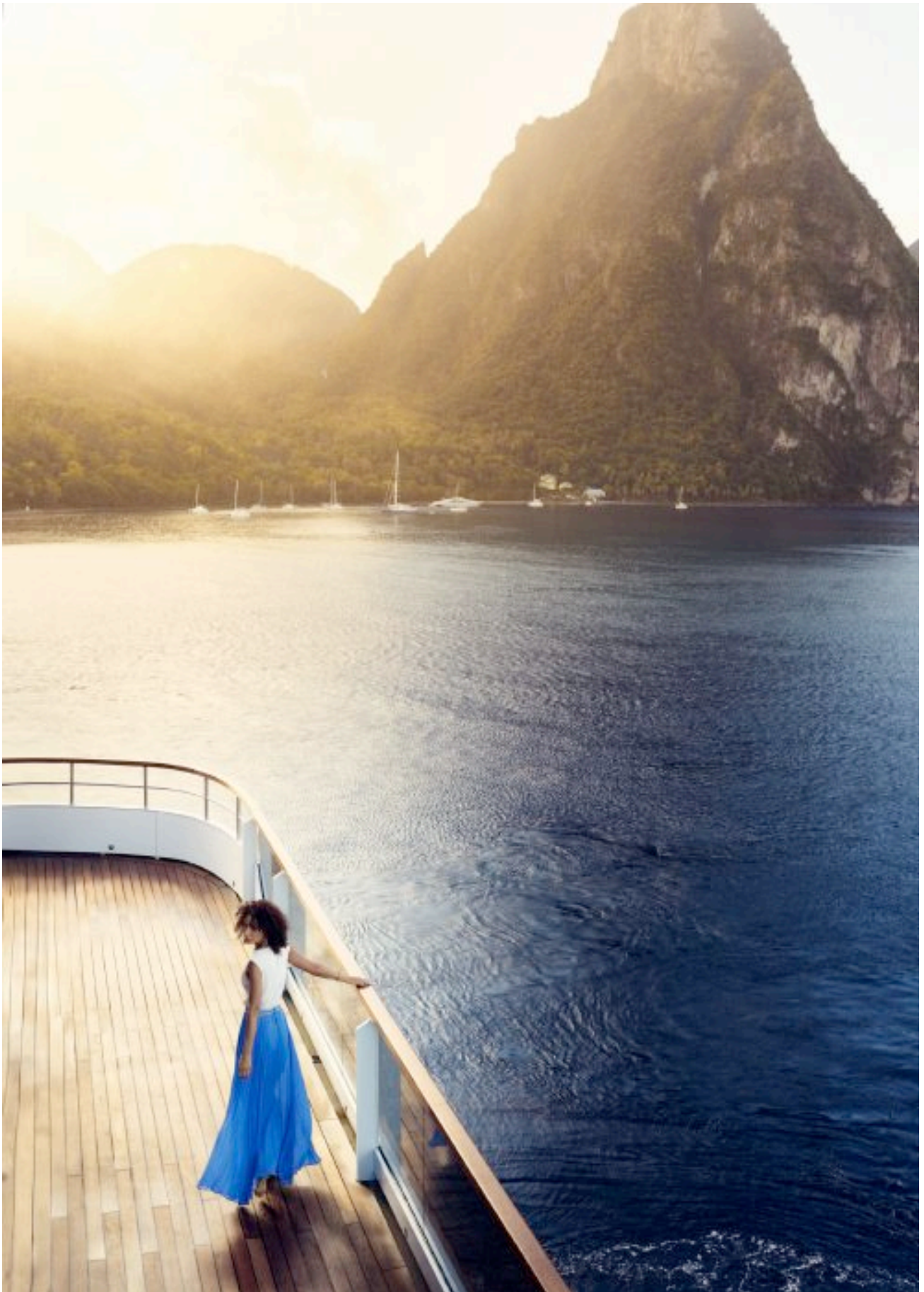
The yachts are available for private charter, and voyages typically range from five to ten nights, allowing for more time in port. Guests are invited to immerse themselves in an array of programmes both onboard and ashore, with a choice of excursions. In the Caribbean, these include a visit to a dormant volcano on the island of Saint Kitts, a helicopter ride over the spectacular seascape of Saint Lucia, exploration of the crystal-clear waters of the Virgin Islands, or a scenic hike to Dominica's magnificent Milton Falls. "Each journey is meticulously designed to create unforgettable memories for our guests," says Jim.



The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection is already attracting a new demographic to luxury cruises, with guests having an average age of 54, around a decade younger than is typical of such holidays. Jim estimates that around half of these guests are enjoying their first cruise. They are tempted on board by The Ritz-Carlton name, the exceptional service, Michelin-standard dining and best-in-class spa treatments from ESPA and 111SKIN. "The onboard experience is distinguished by world-class dining, an extensive wine collection and the renowned Ritz-Carlton Spa."

There is an understanding that no two guest itineraries are alike. "We collaborate closely with everyone to tailor their voyage to their preferences," says Jim. "Guests may indulge in a fine dining experience at S.E.A., enjoy cocktails poolside taking in magnificent views, or make the most of our extended time ashore to discover global cultures. Whether aboard or ashore, we ensure that every moment is memorable."

www.ritzcarltonyachtcollection.com



High drama

Alta Badia manages to sustain the natural majesty of the Dolomites, while welcoming tourism from far and wide

“**W**e like to say we combine a German sense of order with Italian flair,” says Roberto Huber, Director of Alta

Badia, a tourist organisation that promotes, protects and preserves one of Europe’s most stunning natural destinations. From its central position in the Dolomites – a mountainous region in northeastern Italy that became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2009 – the area of Alta Badia is the perfect starting point for a range of outdoor experiences.

A growing number of visitors from across the world are being drawn to Alta Badia, which covers some 15 square kilometres and has around 6,000 residents in its six charming villages. As well as the outstanding beauty of the region’s majestic peaks and dramatic valleys, people come for the values upheld and shown by the local people: hospitality, sustainability and immense pride in their Indigenous Ladin culture and language.

Alta Badia’s villages follow strict rules for sustainable tourism, as recognised by the UN’s Global Sustainable Tourism Council, which prevents large-scale development in the area. Instead, hospitality comes in the form of smaller businesses owned and managed by locals, which, Roberto says, provides “a direct, intimate touchpoint between natives and visitors”. The latter are also encouraged to travel by public transport rather than car. “We believe in what we do and have pride in what we have. We feel like guardians of our home, so we ask people to follow rules to help protect our amazing heritage.”

There are plenty of activities throughout the year. In winter, skiers can explore 130 kilometres of local piste connected to Europe’s biggest ski resort, the Dolomiti Superski, which is home to the celebrated Sellaronda ski circuit. After a day on the slopes, the local gourmet restaurants, one of which is Michelin-starred, offer an impressive choice of cuisine for refuelling.

In summer, there is camping and hiking across a landscape that is undisturbed aside from the welcoming mountain huts that offer a pitstop for food and drink. Twice during June, the roads are closed to cars for official bike days, while July’s road-bike Maratona dles Dolomites sees thousands of cycling enthusiasts drawn to the challenge of Alta Badia’s steep inclines. Families are encouraged to visit the area and take the cable car to the top of the mountains, where among the fun parks children can learn about the natural environment.

“We tell our guests, bring your children from the cities so they understand what nature is and why it’s important to protect it.”

As Roberto explains, this is not a party destination. Instead, it is a place to appreciate natural beauty and bask in harmony with it. “We find that most of our guests are out for the majority of the day. They come back for a good meal and a glass of wine, then go to bed early so they can make the most of the next day.”

Roberto’s plan for the future of Alta Badia is to embrace new technologies that help with the mission of sustainability, while championing the centuries-old traditions for which the region is renowned. It is a delicate balancing act of welcoming tourists to the area while further reducing their impact on this beautiful setting. “We want people to come, enjoy the Dolomites, protect and support them,” he says, “and preserve them for future generations.”

www.altabadia.org







The great escape

With its dark-sky preserve, vast landscapes and vibrant cities, Saskatchewan offers a rich and rewarding experience for visitors

Human-sized towns, planet-sized space: that is the unique promise of Saskatchewan. The vast, spectacular but sparsely populated Canadian province sits between Alberta and Manitoba, and borders the US states of North Dakota and Montana. From the so-called badlands in the prairie-rich south to the dense boreal forests of the distant north, Saskatchewan is one of the few unexplored areas of the western world. Visitors can camp beneath gigantic skies or explore the numerous rivers, reservoirs and lakes. Around every bend, adventure awaits regardless of where you are in the province.

“It’s a place of beautiful nature and small, walkable cities,” says Jodi Holliday, Travel Media Consultant for Tourism Saskatchewan. “There are so many things to do, so many places to eat and drink, and so much to see. Our parks are amazing and ideal for anything outdoors. We have over 100,000 lakes and waterways, so there’s water everywhere.” In fact, Saskatchewan derives its name from the Cree word for “swift flowing river”.

Among the province’s cultural must-sees is Wanuskewin Heritage Park, a meeting place for the Indigenous peoples of the Great Plains for thousands of years. The park has been short-listed to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is home to an award-winning visitor centre. In 2019, experts successfully reintroduced bison to this ancient prairie land as part of a complex conservation campaign that has involved restoring native grasses. Having almost become extinct in the late 1800s, these remarkable animals are now starting to thrive in this habitat.

Wanuskewin is located to the north of Saskatoon, one of the province’s two major cities. Saskatoon is a university town with a young population and an exciting food scene. Around 275,000 of Saskatchewan’s population of 1.2 million live there, with a further 230,000 in the provincial capital, Regina – named in honour of Queen Victoria at the suggestion of her daughter, Princess Louise. Saskatchewan’s third largest city, Prince Albert, also upholds that royal connection, as does the Prince Albert National Park, one of the province’s many areas of natural beauty. Grasslands, Saskatchewan’s other national park, is in the badlands on the southern border with the US.

The name badlands comes from the fact that it was once considered a challenging environment to live in or travel through, but this should not put off visitors as the area is “immensely beautiful,” says Jodi. “The eastern part of the Grasslands National Park is the darkest dark-sky preserve in Canada and has been named one

of the quietest places on earth. It is a great place for night-sky photography.”

Wildlife abounds in Saskatchewan, including almost 400 bird species, bears, bison, elk, deer, wolves, foxes and the pronghorn antelope – one of the fastest land mammals in North America. Visitors looking for a tasty treat will delight in the small, native saskatoon berry which is made into desserts, jams, jellies and sauces, and is a cornerstone ingredient in many of the province’s restaurants.

The Mounties – the Royal Canadian Mounted Police – have been defending the law across Canada since their formation as the North-West Mounted Police in 1873, and they still train in Regina. The capital also boasts a statue of Queen Elizabeth II on one of her favourite horses, Burmese, a gift from the Mounties. It is a permanent reminder of the connections between Britain and Canada in this unforgettable corner of the world.

www.tourismsaskatchewan.com



Wings of desire

Lufthansa Technik fulfils bespoke cabin design briefs for VIPs who benefit from the pinnacle of aviation expertise

For more than 70 years, Lufthansa Technik has risen to the challenges set by clients, finding innovative ways to ensure they travel in luxury in bespoke cabins. “We do whatever the customer wants within the parameters of what is allowable by the authorities, as safety is still the most important element,” says Fabian Nagel, Lufthansa Technik’s Head of Sales VIP and Special Aircraft Services. “We do our utmost to create whatever they desire.”

The origins of German airline Lufthansa date back to 1926, but it was dissolved after the Second World War and re-established in 1954. Its engineering section, Lufthansa Technik, was spun off from the main company in 1995. As the technical department of the airline, the latter was responsible for repairs and maintenance, but today it carries out most of its business outside of Lufthansa. “We are serving around 25 per cent of the world’s aircraft population, which makes us the number one for independent maintenance, repair and overhaul services,” says Fabian.

The company employs 23,000 staff and has more than 30 facilities in three continents, plus “flying spanners” – engineers who can be despatched to any part of the world when a project needs immediate attention. But all the bespoke cabins are built by German engineers in the Hamburg headquarters to ensure they meet the highest standards. Clients have requested everything from a marble bathroom to veneers from a specific tree of sentimental value, while the trend to set up interiors for gaming means taking a smart new approach to sound systems. Kitchens are also popular, and Lufthansa Technik has developed a fully enclosed frying pan that meets safety regulations. Many cabins have double beds, or mini spas with steam showers and aromatherapy.

The goal is to make the plane as luxurious and welcoming as a house or yacht. This includes the lighting. “We have star displays in our internal lighting as standard,” says Fabian. “It can be any star map that is important – the stars from when clients, their children or their favourite racehorse was born – and then switch between them. We also have Mecca pointers, so our passengers know where to pray while in the air.”

Lufthansa Technik understands the importance of creating a luxurious and personalised experience for its clients, who often want the livery or furnishing of a plane to match their classic car. While exact matches may not always be possible due to safety regulations and unique materials, the company is dedicated to finding



the best solutions using the finest leathers or veneers and aircraft paint that withstands extreme conditions.

In addition, part of the fascination about bespoke cabins is that they provide an incubator for top-notch onboard technology. Many ideas first employed in VIP cabins, from TV screens to mobile phone reception, have now made their way onto ordinary commercial aircraft. To keep VIP interiors more than one step ahead, Lufthansa Technik is constantly innovating: in 2024, it won Red Dot Design Awards for both cabin and sound system design.

Lufthansa Technik thinks about state-of-the-art inflight entertainment holistically, beyond classic screens and speakers. Fabian predicts that the next big innovation will be large-scale projections that span the cabin ceiling to create an immersive experience, ranging from underwater themes to open skies, architecture and even a flying disco. Alongside marble bathrooms and steam showers, such luxuries continue to be the preserve of VIPs.

www.lufthansa-technik.com/vip



Dynamics of design

Palm Beach Motor Yachts' V-Warp Technology is a qualitative leap in boat-building know-how that creates vessels with a difference

With his penchant for perfectionism and a provenance in performance yachting, Mark Richards was always a boat builder destined to make waves. The founder, CEO and Chief Designer of Palm Beach Motor Yachts, Mark has grown his company from a single boat shed near Palm Beach in Sydney, Australia, to become an international entity with a reputation for luxury motor yachts with truly exceptional performance.

Extreme situations drive innovation, and Mark is no stranger to life at the cutting edge. He is a record-breaking match racing champion with decades of experience on the water, sailing in situations where infinitesimal improvements in weight, balance and speed determine a winner. Among his achievements, he has won the Sydney to Hobart yacht race nine times. "I've raced boats since the age of six and I did my boat building apprenticeship at 17, so racing and building boats have always been huge parts of my life," says Mark. "My first boat-building brief was to create a beautiful, traditional sailing yacht from America's Cup-grade materials."

The first Palm Beach Motor Yacht entered the water in 1996 and that brief still resonates. "Our boats are strong, powerful beasts hiding beneath impeccably elegant designs and beautifully appointed interiors," says Mark. Organic growth transformed Palm Beach Motor Yachts from the beachside boat shed into an organisation that employs 1,000 staff across offices in the US, Europe and Singapore, and at the company's 63,000-square-metre boat-building yard in Malaysia. Production is high-end, rather than high-volume, with 25 to 35 boats produced each year, exclusively made to order. Mark is closely involved in every design. "Nothing gets

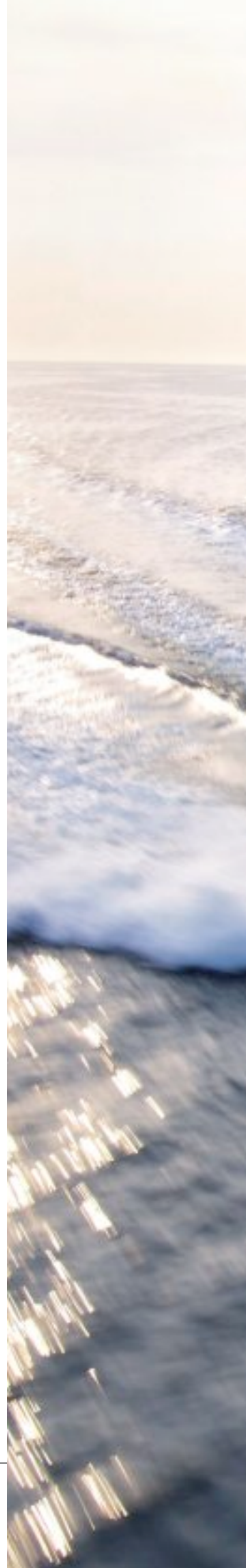
built until the customer is happy with every element of their chosen design and specification," he says. "We always go the extra mile and I've never been able to say no."

Palm Beach is renowned for its customer service. Mark set the bar so high from the outset that exemplary service has become second nature to the team and is equalled only by the performance of the boats. "When I'm designing a boat, my background in racing means I'm always thinking about things like balance, cutting, weight distribution, speed and fuel burn," says Mark. "Our boats can use up to 60 per cent less fuel than their counterparts. That efficiency isn't just about saving money, it's about increasing range, which could make the difference between a 300-mile range and a 1,000-mile range – at speed."

This extraordinary performance stems from the company's proprietary, hydrodynamic V-Warp Technology, which reduces hull drag while adding buoyancy, stability and lift, enabling the boat to reach "plane" speed with minimal energy and effort. This is coupled with the extensive use of carbon fibre to reduce weight, while refined construction techniques maintain rigidity to the extreme. The result is the soft ride, ease of handling and outstanding fuel efficiency that is drawing savvy boat owners from around the globe to Palm Beach Motor Yachts' door.

"A comment I hear frequently from customers is that our boats are just so different – they move differently through the water, and you can see the difference just by looking at them," says Mark. Whether in the dock or out at sea, Palm Beach Motor Yachts are distinctive, from their superbly engineered and striking design through to their special place in the seafaring adventures and memories of discerning customers and their families.

www.palmbeachmotoryachts.com





The dream boat

In its boundary-breaking vision, Voodoo Yachts applies hydrofoil technology to a luxury yacht to create multipurpose craft with speed

Mitch Pachoud, Director of New Zealand-based Voodoo Yachts, recounts vividly the epiphany that led his father, Dave, who co-founded the company, to create a flawless boat. “It came from him being out there for the third straight day of perfect weather in the middle of another ocean crossing thinking, ‘we could be doing any speed at all, if only we had the capability and range’, something that didn’t yet exist.”

Coming from decades of boat-building and design experience since he opened his shipyard in 1987, Dave set out to create a yacht that combined the best of all worlds. His vision was to create a yacht that combined absolute luxury and utmost quality with high speeds, extreme fuel efficiency and adventure capability, which would enable people to traverse oceans and reach destinations in ways previously considered impossible.

In 2010 the Voodoo Yacht prototype was conceived, and with it the birth of a new class of yacht – the high-speed, hydrofoiling expedition cruiser. Since then, the company has built a range of vessels, varying in size from 60ft to 100ft, each uniquely capable of handling difficult ocean conditions and combining high performance with onboard comfort and a sense of “hovering” above the water.

The pivotal breakthrough for the company was in its unprecedented application of hydrofoil technology to luxury motor yachts. The exceptional fuel efficiency of the “Xpedition Wing” – developed by Voodoo Yachts’ engineers – enabled the boat’s hulls to be propelled at speeds of up to 50-plus knots, easily outdistancing other, less efficient boats. Voodoo Yachts’ craft also use sustainably sourced materials for their airy, attractive interiors – sustainability is a watchword for them. “We lead the way already in terms of fuel efficiency, to apply it to interiors is a logical next step.”

As proud New Zealander “boaties”, the Pachoud family has the ocean in its blood. The Voodoo Yachts team spends a lot of time on its boats, rather than in offices, developing new ideas in research and development, always looking for improvements. “We’re breaking boundaries, pushing forward as far as we can, regardless of what the rest of the market accepts as possible,” says Mitch. “The adventurous yacht owner puts their trust in people who lead, who have a spirit of adventure and pioneering themselves. We understand them better than someone just building a boat in a factory.”

They believe this passion transmits to their customers. “Our clients tend to be discerning people who value their freedom to live life on their terms and, to them, our yachts

offer that – you have more options than with other yachts, to go fast, to go far,” he says. “And our boats are battle-hardened in the sort of rigorous weather you find in the South Pacific – we’ve proven their capability in serious conditions over the years.” Strength and engineering work seamlessly behind the scenes of a luxury yacht of the highest class.

Moreover, Voodoo yachts are adaptable: usable for luxury cruising, scuba diving or more onerous ventures; and high levels of customisation are available. Mitch cites one client looking to explore The Kimberley, in northwest Australia. “It’s a beautiful, rugged and isolated place, but has unique boating challenges. There are 12- to 14-metre tides and the landscape changes dramatically between them. They need to be able to set the boat on the ground for servicing, to land and refuel a helicopter onboard and they wanted it to be the fastest yacht we ever built. Well, we build it and they’re going to have a lot of fun with it.”

www.voodoooyachts.com







By land or sea

With its Seastar flying boat, Dornier Seawings is staying on course for the future by embracing its heritage

“Our planes are reminders of the past,” says Ana Alvarez Muñoz, Head of Sales and Marketing at Dornier Seawings, a company that engineers and builds the Dornier Seastar amphibious aircraft. “The vintage feel of our planes is a good selling point. It’s like when you are driving an old car; you are somehow in a different era.” Yet this comes with “features of the future” – the use of state-of-the-art, corrosion-free materials.

Based in Wessling, Germany, Dornier was originally founded in the mid-1910s by Claudius Dornier, who was responsible for the construction of huge, all-metal flying boats, including the record-breaking 1924 Wal (“Whale”). The Dornier Museum, located in the city of Friedrichshafen, offers a comprehensive overview of the company’s manufacturing legacy. Claudius’s son, Claudius Jr, first devised the Dornier Seastar in the mid-1980s, but it would be many years before Dornier Seawings was able to secure adequate financing to realise its vision of a Dornier flying boat for the 21st century.

By 2017, the company had received sufficient funding from two state-owned Chinese enterprises, headquartered



in Wuxi, Jiangsu province, to build a prototype of the craft through a joint venture. While finance, as well as part of the manufacturing base, is provided by China; the technical know-how comes from Germany, with its skilled engineers, design knowledge, and experience gathered from thousands of flying hours over some 100 years.

The Seastar in full flight is an impressive sight, sailing through the air with the grace of a migrating seabird and capable of landing on water or land. It is a luxury experience, but also a versatile one, suitable for private, corporate and governmental applications. The planes come with an executive six-seat configuration that can be customised to include air conditioning or a different cabin layout, while the nine-seat design is for commuting, or travelling to resorts or remote tourist destinations that are unreachable by road.

“We are in a niche market. Our customers require very specific, exclusive experiences,” says Ana. “With an increase in luxury travel in the Middle East and South East Asia, and the infrastructure already launched in Saudi Arabia and the Maldives, we are offering something different. We also offer a good service for pioneers and adventurers, particularly in North America and Australia.”

One particular advantage of the Seastar’s versatility is that clients could arrive in Monaco or Dubai, for instance, and the Seastar would be waiting at the airport, ready to go on to resorts in the middle of nowhere, 200 kilometres away. There is no need to travel by road to make the transfer. Seastar also has the potential to reach places that are off the beaten track without damaging the environment. “We want to preserve existing ecosystems. So, if you visit the Amazon, you don’t need to build a huge infrastructure there that harms the forests,” says Ana.

The Seastar is a cut above in terms of performance, safety and operating costs when compared to conventional aircraft. Its unique composite airframe, made of layers of carbon and glass fibre, is durable and low maintenance in comparison with metal craft. And its fuel-efficient flying-boat shape handles like a powerboat for take-off and landing, including in rough seas.

With the elegance of a bygone era in aviation, plus a technically reliable, stable experience, Dornier Seawings is building on its rich past to secure its future. “We have this Dornier mentality and this Dornier heritage – a confidence.”

www.dornierseawings.com

Taking the helm

Phoenix Yacht Management has brought about a sea change for luxury yacht owners by ensuring their journey is pure leisure

For all the sun-dappled delights of the Bahamas, French Riviera or Dubai, a luxury-yacht owner knows there is plenty to organise before setting sail. There is the destination and route to consider; crew to appoint and train; permits, insurance and certificates to secure; provisions and supplies to stock; and machinery to commission, run up and check. The administrative burden can be overwhelming, even for an experienced captain and crew.

This is where Phoenix Yacht Management comes in. Founded in 2022 by Yousuf Al Hashimi (below left) and Ian Harris (below right), the Dubai-based company offers 360-degree yacht-management services. The pair bring a powerful combination of maritime expertise and dynamic management to Phoenix. Ian has an extensive maritime background, starting with the Royal Marines and the Royal Navy before moving into the commercial sector as a chief engineer for oil and gas companies. He later transitioned to the superyacht sector, overseeing the delivery of some of the largest vessels afloat.

Yousuf has specialised in facility operations and management, playing a key role in developing major sports infrastructure in the United Arab Emirates. In 2012, he was awarded Best Male Entrepreneur in Dubai by the Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Establishment.

Phoenix handles all aspects of yacht management, covering operational, technical, financial and legal matters. The company also oversees large refits and provides charter and sales services. Additionally, it manages crew recruitment and training, to ensure the seamless operation of luxury yachts worldwide. In practice, this involves a series of meticulous processes tailored to the bespoke needs of each owner. Phoenix is involved with vessels all over the world – from the UAE to the Maldives, and from France to the Caribbean.

“Managing yacht operations for diverse clientele requires a keen understanding of regional nuances,” says Yousuf. “Our approach involves tailoring our services to meet these expectations, ensuring efficient operations and providing personalised experiences that align with the region’s culture.”

This also means maintaining a large database of highly skilled crew members who not only meet technical qualifications, but also possess cultural sensitivity and service excellence tailored to each region’s specific demands.

Phoenix acknowledges the importance of first-hand experience. Its staff has an excellent track record in vessel management, as well as possessing significant onboard experience. All operational, technical and interior managers have served as captains, chief engineers or chief stewardesses in the yachting sector, so they understand day-to-day operations, which enhances communication with the crew and expedites decision-making processes.

Ian envisions a future where the company assumes even greater control over its operations. He is particularly enthusiastic about new builds. “As an engineer, this is both the most challenging and the most exhilarating part for me,” he says. “Whether integrating a cryochamber or installing a helicopter pad, we strive to achieve these goals. Our aim is to deliver the superyacht that its future owner has envisioned.”

Another important challenge is green technology. “Shipyards are investing in the development of new technologies, especially new propulsion systems,” says Yousuf. Similarly, suppliers are adopting eco-friendly practices, including the use of sustainable and recycled materials.

Whatever the venture, the needs of clients will always be at the heart of Phoenix, with a service that is both comprehensively efficient and personally tailored to every project or owner. Ultimately, says Ian, the bespoke touch is the company’s lifeblood. “It is about recommendations, from the crew, from the captains and the owners. When you succeed, it is because of that.”

www.phoenix-yachts.com





Passport to paradise

Antigua and Barbuda's Citizenship by Investment Programme is the golden ticket to live and work in this coveted Caribbean destination

The citizens of Antigua and Barbuda feel like they live in paradise. The Caribbean island nation offers access to more than 350 tropical beaches and the population of less than 100,000 shares all the amenities of a modern, well-connected society. Since 2013, the government of Antigua and Barbuda has invited people from across the world to become its citizens through the Citizenship by Investment Programme, which, among other benefits, provides visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to around 150 destinations worldwide.

The programme was launched in October 2013 and had its first applicant the following month. "Anyone, 18 years and older, who can meet the investment criteria, and is of good character, is eligible to apply. The minimum investment is US\$100,000 and we have four different levels depending on how much people invest," says CEO Charmaine Quinland-Donovan, the first woman to head the Citizenship by Investment Unit (CIU). "People seek citizenship because they love the islands – the beaches, the sunshine, the service and the sophisticated society."

During the Covid pandemic, remote workers were invited to stay there. "That attracted scores of people who wanted a respite from lockdown in their home countries," says Charmaine. "Many of them fell in love with Antigua and applied to our programme."

The programme is not the only, or the first, to have been introduced in the West Indies, but Charmaine highlights the professionalism of the Antiguan system, which endeavours to process applications efficiently but thoroughly. The CIU takes its duty seriously to vet applications to ensure they meet the necessary standards. New citizens are asked to spend at least five days in Antigua over the first five years of their citizenship, but, of course, many stay, buying properties and businesses on the islands; some local taxes are waived if they choose to invest in real estate or start a company.

The income generated by the programme enables Antigua to have some of the best modern educational facilities in the West Indies, such as at the University of the West Indies. The country's medical infrastructure is also supported by revenue earned from the programme, which includes procuring medical equipment and retrofitting facilities, such as the infectious disease centre created during the pandemic. Real estate projects – from luxury apartments to resorts and bespoke private villas – are directly financed by the programme, too. So critical are the operations of the CIU to the national economy,

that it was the only non-essential government department permitted to remain open throughout the pandemic.

Antigua is a well-established tourist destination that has attracted the elite for over six decades, with locals offering a friendly welcome. The country is a melting pot of different cultures, and events, supermarkets and restaurants reflect this international atmosphere. "We are used to meeting people who have the best taste, so we know what they expect and can give them excellent service."

As citizenship is an emotive issue, the CIU ensures that when individuals apply under the programme, they feel at home and are dealt with professionally and in keeping with the warmth and hospitality that the islands are so well known for. "This is an attractive destination. We have our natural beauty, excellent facilities and daily international flights," says Charmaine. "People can have a high standard of life while enjoying sunshine and the sea. That is what makes our islands so special."

www.cip.gov.ag







Bringing visions to life

Luxury Key and Elena Gail Haute Weddings work hand in hand to organise exclusive Mykonos holidays and a stylish big day

“I follow my clients and my passion for first-class experiences, and that opens the door into unexpected avenues,” says Elena Gail, owner of Luxury Key, winner of the 2024 Luxury Lifestyle Awards. The villas and concierge agency finds luxury property for rent or sale for her distinguished guests – from wealthy entrepreneurs to supermodels – on the beautiful Greek island of Mykonos. Elena’s career path has also seen her create her wedding planning business, Elena Gail Haute Weddings, arranging unforgettable weddings and event celebrations at the most exclusive venues in Athens, Mykonos and the rest of Greece. “We started by offering villas for rent and sale for our premium clientele. They would then require concierge services and in the end wanted us to stage events for birthdays and anniversaries. These got bigger and bigger until I was asked to design and plan my first wedding,” she says.

Elena has over 18 years of experience in high-end hospitality, with milestones including senior positions at Starwood Hotels and Resorts. She founded Luxury Key in 2015, and now offers a portfolio of more than 700 outstanding properties on Mykonos (one of which is shown right), with many exclusively managed by the company.

The process of matching a prime traveller with the ideal villa begins with a personalised video consultation to understand their individual preferences. Fortunately, there are many spectacular properties to choose from on the island. “Villas have been increasing in scale, ambition and design,” says Elena. “Everything here is extraordinary.” And this includes the exclusive venues and restaurants that Luxury Key provides access to through its bespoke itineraries and concierge service. This core part of the company also encompasses everything from transfers by private jet or helicopter, to the hiring of security guards, personal trainers and dedicated villa staff – butlers, chefs and waiters – as well as yacht charters, childcare and spa treatments. Anything is possible; but staying on top of it requires excellent organisational skills. “If you are hosting 20 people in a villa in Mykonos, this is already an event,” says Elena.

The same uniquely personalised approach has evolved at Elena Gail Haute Weddings for the wedding design. As with Luxury Key, the process begins by obtaining detailed knowledge of a couple’s likes, from their favourite perfume to their interior style, fashion choices and most meaningful destinations. Once Elena understands their vision and themes, as well as their favourite music, flowers and decorations, she can craft a bespoke wedding experience. “Our process not only broadens the couple’s perspective

on what they truly appreciate, but also ensures that the final celebration intimately reflects their essence.”

Her weddings are so stylish they have featured in *Vogue*. One wedding in particular stands out. “We had wedding events at the Athens Four Seasons and Nobu Matsuhisa Athens with the lovely couple Tas and Shani Costi,” says Elena. “It was spectacular. We blended fashion and art with retro Greek elements such as plate smashing with one thousand plates.” While many of the weddings are in Greece, Elena organises them in other destinations, too. Each wedding incorporates local touches and local suppliers as key elements.

For the future, Elena will let the whims of her clients guide her as she discovers new and unanticipated areas to add her unique touch. She hopes to introduce her love of art into both businesses – underpinned by the same creativity and exceptional service.

www.luxurykey.com

www.elena-gail.com





The sky's the limit

Built on family values, Sheltair Aviation operates a growing network of aviation services for private jets in the US

President of the largest privately owned aviation network in the US, Lisa Holland treats her company like a family. This, she feels, is one of the key attributes behind the success of Sheltair Aviation, which manages more than 4.8 million square feet of aviation-related properties at 21 airports. Sheltair has permanent hangar space in Florida, Georgia, Colorado and Texas, where it operates concierge services, fuelling and ground handling, and can assist with aviation property development, management and leasing. All of this is done with a focus on customer care, ensuring expectations are exceeded every time.

“We are a family business,” says Lisa. “We treat our customers like part of that family, and we treat our employees like family, too. I know if somebody is getting married or having a baby or if their child is about to graduate. We try to get to know our employees on a personal level because happy employees offer better service, and that ensures our customers are happy as well.”

Sheltair has more than 500 employees. It was founded in 1963 by Lisa's father, Jerry, a former medic in the US Air



Force who moved into construction and real estate after entering civilian life. He branched into the aviation market after he acquired hangars at Fort Lauderdale Airport. Since then, the company has continued to grow by acquiring more fixed-based operators (FBOs) – permanent spaces at airports that provide aeronautical services for business and private aviation, such as fuelling, hangaring, parking, rental and maintenance. This enables Sheltair to service the growing business aviation market in the US, assisting for a variety of reasons one might find private travel convenient, from company CEOs to Hollywood legends to humanitarian missions.

Sheltair's base is Florida, where it has 12 FBOs. It has further FBOs in Texas, Georgia and Colorado. "We have 4.8 million square feet of hangar space and are always looking for land to build more hangars as private aviation continues to grow," says Lisa. "We have hangars for long-term or short-term use. We look after pop stars who are playing at shows in the area, we deal with presidents and we handle charter flights for sports teams coming in and out of Florida and other states."

Since taking over the company in 2020 from her father, Lisa has ensured Sheltair offers support for the local

community and charitable causes that are important to herself and the aviation industry. This includes providing free hangar space for ecological rescue missions and hosting network days to encourage more women to get into aviation. During the holiday season, Sheltair encourages passengers and employees to make a donation to a favourite charity. "On top of that, I am very focused on health and wellness, so we have healthy snacks and foods for pilots and customers."

Lisa's son, Kai Seymour, is now working at the company in a managerial role. Lisa hopes that Sheltair will move into a third generation of family ownership to retain those values and principles that have already brought such success.

"We offer exceptional service and commitment," she says. "We are family-owned and that matters. We are not a corporation or conglomeration run by institutional funds, so we can pivot quickly as there aren't layers of management to get through to make a decision. This means we can give our customers the solutions they need straight away. Our focus is customer satisfaction."

www.sheltairaviation.com





Wanderlust at its best

In a little more than ten years, German motorhome manufacturer Morelo has won over thousands of customers with its luxury home-from-home vehicles

There is more to the perfect motorhome than the vehicle itself. “We build everything around the customer,” says Morelo’s Sales Manager/Authorised Officer, Sven Stadthaler. “We want to make our customers happy by welcoming them to a family they’ll always feel part of.”

Morelo, founded in 2010, is Europe’s leading manufacturer of luxury motorhomes. Its vehicles are based on superior quality and excellent comfort levels. Exteriors are modern and sporty, and interiors are a perfect balance of design and practicality. “You don’t need to see a Morelo logo to recognise our motorhomes,” says Sven.

Central to everything the company does is its motto, “Welcome home”. “Anyone could be a Morelo owner one day, so all are welcome,” says Sven. “We love what we do, and we want to share that passion with everyone.” Owners belong to a family that extends far beyond the purchase of a motorhome. “It’s all about the customer journey. You’re part of the family from the start.”

Each customer is supported while they choose their vehicle and the specifications are fine-tuned. Even once

the vehicle is with its new owner, the company stays with them to take care of any after-sales needs. “And there’s a great Morelo community of fellow campers; we have a VIP club and our Facebook owners’ page has almost 14,000 followers.”

The Morelo family is growing fast, with more than 4,000 vehicles delivered to customers so far. The company enjoys fruitful relationships with dealerships across Europe and is particularly proud of its partnership with its exclusive UK dealer, Nottinghamshire-based Premium Motorhomes. “The UK market is huge for us, and no one knows this market better than them. We love working with its team because they share our vision,” says Sven.

Looking to the future, the brand is expanding its production base with a second manufacturing plant that will bring down delivery times and make it easier to fix prices for customers. “We want to grow the company,” says Sven. “But we want to grow for the right reason, and that reason is always putting customers first, so we can help them enjoy the Morelo lifestyle.”

www.morelo-reisemobile.de

*“It’s all about the customer journey.
You’re part of the family from the start”*

Deep inside Japan

Deeper Japan takes visitors beneath the surface of the country's cultural heritage for the ultimate in authentic, immersive travel

Far away from the bright lights and bustle of Tokyo, a simple blacksmith's forge sits among the sweeping rice fields of central Japan. Here, swords made for warriors centuries ago are still handcrafted today. The forge is not in any guide book, nor on social media or any tourist map. But with the bespoke travel company Deeper Japan, visitors can walk through its doors to experience this rich and ancient culture up close.

During a dedicated masterclass with the swordsmith himself, Deeper Japan's guests learn about the history and philosophy behind this traditional craft, as they watch the craftsman create a *katana* samurai sword using methods that have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. It is just one of more than 200 bespoke travel experiences that Deeper Japan arranges across the country with performers, chefs and artisans, covering all aspects of Japanese culture.

The company was founded in 2018 by Hikaru Ishikawa, who had a mission to take travellers beyond the usual tourist hotspots. Hikaru grew up in Austria but struck on the idea after returning to live in Tokyo. When old friends came to visit, "I started to think of all the people who visit Japan but don't have someone with local insight who can help to curate authentic experiences," he says. "Of course, people want to go to all the famous sights. But many visitors don't want to stop there; they want to go one step further, beneath the surface of what most tourists see."

Deeper Japan's guests have the opportunity to take a first-hand look inside the kitchens, distilleries, studios and workshops of masters that are rarely open to the public. "There are so many incredible local artisans all over Japan, but they are hard to access; you can't find them online and they're often unwilling to let outsiders in unless a relationship of trust is built beforehand."

The company offers access to elements of Japanese heritage that have been actively sustained for generations, from calligraphy and ceramics to masked performance and martial arts. For Hikaru, such curated experiences represent the essence of what travel is all about: the joy of discovery. "All parts of Japan have different tastes and different histories to explore. Take sushi. What most people recognise around the world as sushi is actually based on a variety historically local to the Tokyo area." Step outside Tokyo, he adds, and sushi varies drastically. Not just the culinary arts,

but all crafts and cultural practices can vary regionally, resulting in a depth of nuance that is only truly felt through travel.

The immersive cultural travel provided by Deeper Japan does not just teach about differences. While exploration might reveal new things to eat, or different forms of spirituality and crafts, "wherever people are from," says Hikaru, "a lot of what we do – and what we love – is similar. Whether that's good food or beautiful art."

Above all, Hikaru hopes to keep local traditions and heritage alive, not only in Japan but in locations around the world as well. With plans of expansion to additional countries using the service model perfected in Japan, he wants to support skills and crafts that have been passed down for centuries elsewhere. "We have to have diversity in our cultural heritage and this type of travel supports this."

www.deeperjapan.com







Redefining private aviation

Elit'Avia covers every aspect of private aviation management and charter with an impeccable service tailor-made to the client

A private jet is more than just a means of transport. These days, a jet can serve as an office or apartment, providing passengers with all the comfort and convenience they require while travelling, be it for business or pleasure. Few people understand this as well as Michel Coulomb, CEO of Elit'Avia, an industry leader in every area of private aviation, from sales and acquisitions to aircraft management, charter and technical oversight.

“My background is aviation,” says Michel. “I used to be a pilot. I decided to go into aircraft management because I realised that as a pilot, I was already managing aircraft for private individuals.”

Michel founded Elit'Avia in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in 2006, and it now has its European headquarters in Malta, with an office in New York to handle its burgeoning North American interests. Having flown more than 50,000 flight hours since its inception, it has achieved the most rigorous international accreditations that represent the gold standard of private aviation safety.

The company operates a mixed fleet of 25 aircraft, with types including Gulfstream, Boeing, Bombardier,



Embraer and Cessna. It specialises in ultra-long-range business jets that can transport up to 19 passengers as far as 11,000 kilometres non-stop. This means Elit'Avia serves every corner of the world: Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and North and South America. Aircraft are managed on behalf of companies and private individuals. "We have carefully positioned ourselves as a boutique company, which allows me to have direct access to the client," says Michel. "That means I can focus on what each client requires to ensure that we can provide a tailored aviation experience."

Such is the breadth of Elit'Avia's expertise in aviation, the company not only operates, leases and charters aircraft, but also provides a full-spectrum of aircraft management services, such as regulatory compliance, security and safety management, crew training, insurance and concierge services. Many clients take advantage of all these services, given the company's depth of experience. "We have all the departments required for the operation of an aircraft, so we can support an aircraft 24/7 and throughout its entire lifecycle," says Michel.

The recruitment process for Elit'Avia employees is just as rigorous as the rest of the company's operations.

"We want our clients to feel secure and comfortable as there is a direct relationship between pilot and client," says Michel. Whatever the client's need, Elit'Avia staff provide a service that is discreet, personalised and effective. "We respect our clients' confidentiality and that is a very important part of what we offer. An aircraft performs a variety of functions and is a very private space for some people."

Elit'Avia takes its climate impact seriously and continues to lead the way in promoting sustainability. It takes action to ensure it is doing its part to minimise environmental impact. A testament to this is the company's industry-first Green Jet Card programme that ensures the carbon neutrality of every charter flight – at no cost to the customer. Additionally, Elit'Avia voluntarily measures, tracks and offsets its emissions across its operations on a yearly basis, investing in environmental projects worldwide to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.

"We aspire to be the Hermès of aviation," says Michel. "This is an experience and if somebody has enjoyed the experience that we provide, they will return."

www.elitavia.com

Cruising ahead

For KRM Yacht, Turkey's premium superyacht refitter with a reputation to match, the bigger the boat the better

Kerem Baser has always loved to tinker. As a child in Turkey, he constantly modified wire-controlled cars, extending the wires and increasing the voltage or dismantling his bicycle to upgrade it. Today, he pursues this passion on a grander scale as a marine engineer and the founder of Turkey's first professional refit facility: KRM Yacht.

The company refits, rebuilds and modernises superyachts and classic yachts. Since its establishment in 2010, it has developed its capacity to do so. Kerem has built a team of over 100 staff, who have completed more than 200 projects at KRM Yacht's facility in Tuzla, Istanbul. "We have just started assembling our new 900-tonne travel lift, the biggest in Turkey," says Kerem. "It arrived in 28 containers from Italy. It's three times larger than our previous lift, increasing our capacity from 45 metres to accommodate up to 70 metres."

When Kerem first began refitting yachts in Turkey, he worked alone, putting in long shifts in the boatyard. He aimed to meet the standards he encountered while studying in the US. Recognising that Turkey had no specialists in refitting, he established KRM Yacht. To avoid contractor issues, he hired specialists and developed in-house teams for every task, from painting and mechanics to project management and interior design. With a carefully chosen network of suppliers, KRM Yacht provides a complete refit service for yachts up to 70 metres. "We are the first and only professional facility in Turkey specialising in superyacht refits and rebuilds," he says.

In 2023, KRM Yacht was named Best Superyacht Refit Yard at the Superyacht Business Awards. It has since become a sustaining member of the International Council of Marine Industry Association (ICOMIA) Superyacht Refit Group, recognising its exceptional services and strict environmental standards. KRM Yacht has also earned ISO 9001, 14001 and 45001 certifications through globally renowned assurance authority, LRQA. These accolades are the result of hard work, inspiration and strategy.

Clients come to KRM Yacht from all over the world. Many discover the beauty of the Bosphorus coast, with the Black Sea and Mediterranean nearby. The marina in which the company's main facility is based is easily accessible from the international airport, with excellent local facilities, including hotels, restaurants and shopping, for clients who wish to monitor progress in person alongside real-time updates on their vessel's condition through the "View Your Yacht" feature. Opting for a refit in Turkey delivers high-quality results while adhering to a reasonable budget.

Beyond cost, refitting is a more eco-friendly alternative to new builds, making it a responsible choice for the environment. It is also ideal for owners who wish to preserve their superyacht's historical value and cherished memories.

"When customers see our ongoing projects and our workshop, they trust us," says Kerem. This accounts for KRM Yacht's impressively high ratio of returning clients, exceeding 90 per cent. Despite such success, he still has big ambitions for the business.

"I want to build my own facilities to accommodate the world's largest yachts," he says. "We currently hire marina space of 35,000 to 40,000 square metres, but I aim to build a 100,000 to 120,000-square-metre shipyard with larger offices, hangars and workshops for even bigger projects." The new 900-tonne crane is the first step on this journey, as KRM Yacht reinvents the yacht refit industry and sets new standards for luxury vessels.

www.krmyacht.com







Coastal beauty

With its pristine beaches, rich heritage and thrilling gastronomy, Istria is a destination that delights visitors year-round

The Croatian peninsula of Istria is shaped like a heart – and visitors have been falling in love with it for centuries. According to mythology, when Jason and his Argonauts reached Istria, they found such a paradise that they never wanted to leave. Many of today's tourists feel the same after they have explored Istria's beautiful countryside and romantic beaches, or indulged in its many cultural and culinary treasures.

"Guidebooks say Istria is the new Tuscany," says Denis Ivošević, Managing Director of the Istria Tourist Board. "It is an ideal destination for culture lovers or fine food enthusiasts. It is very popular among people who enjoy active holidays because of the amazing locations for outdoor activities, but also among visitors who enjoy sunbathing on beautiful beaches."

Istria is perfect for just about everybody, so it is no wonder the local motto is "Life as it should be". Fortunately, it has never been more accessible, with more than 40 European destinations, including London, Paris and Frankfurt, connected by direct flights to Pula – the region's largest town, and home to one of the



best-preserved amphitheatres in the Roman world. Over the centuries, Pula has been ruled over by the Romans, Ostrogoths, Byzantines, the Franks and the Hapsburgs, many of whom left their traces on the architecture and character of the city.

Whether staying in Pula or elsewhere, there is plenty of luxury accommodation to choose from – five-star hotels, villas and resorts invariably with breathtaking views of the Adriatic or rolling countryside. A visit to Istria is a reminder of the beauty of nature and all that it provides, including outstanding local wines, fresh seafood and some of the best olive oil in the world. Food lovers can dine in Michelin-starred restaurants, such as Agli Amici Rovinj and Monte, which are both in the charming harbour town of Rovinj, or take part in seasonal truffle-hunting experiences followed by tasting sessions. Visitors can also travel by helicopter between vineyards to enjoy some of the finest wines in Europe, or charter a yacht to explore hidden coves, pristine beaches and charming coastal towns.

Picturesque locations include Rovinj with its colourful houses and old town, the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Poreč, and the Pazin Pit, a series of caves and lakes that

were immortalised in a Jules Verne novel. The Brijuni National Park boasts abundant flora and fauna, Lim Fjord is rich in marine life, and Cape Kamenjak to the far south has 500 plant species amid beautiful bays and beaches. With water on three sides of coast, snorkelling is also a popular pastime in Istria, with the sunken Roman port of Cape Mede among the fascinating spots to explore.

For those who wish to simply unwind in peace and comfort, Istria has several luxury wellness retreats and spas that offer a tranquil escape, with holistic programmes including yoga, meditation and detox. These world-class facilities offer treatments that frequently make use of fresh local products, such as lavender, rosemary, grapes and extra virgin olive oil.

“Whichever time of year you choose to visit our beautiful peninsula, you will be able to take part in a traditional, healthy and sustainable way of life,” says Denis. “We live in harmony with nature, and this ethos helps to showcase our region as a year-round destination.” In Istria, locals are used to tourists who leave their heart behind, ready to pick it up again when they return.

www.istra.com

Bags for roaming

Made with recycled materials, Three Peaks backpacks tick every sustainable box, without compromising on style, durability or detail

A Christmas drink between two old friends took a part-time project to a serious business. “A lot of the best ideas come from chats in pubs,” says Kevin Matthews, Chief Financial Officer at Three Peaks, which produces highly functional, yet stylish and affordable backpacks and holdalls made from recycled materials. “I knew my friend Rob had started a business during lockdown, which he was running from his kitchen. I asked him how it was going, and I could see he had a passion for it.”

Three Peaks founder and Managing Director Rob Snelling had the idea for his company in 2019, but until his chat with Kevin in December 2021 he had only been selling one or two products from an online store and still worked full-time in another job. As Kevin was looking for a role after returning to the UK from Australia, the pair decided to go into business together.

Three Peaks now has a warehouse and office in the Vale of Glamorgan, southeast Wales, and sells its bags from its website. Practical details including waterproof materials and zips, hidden security pockets, breathable back panels and straps, padded laptop and tablet sleeves, and luggage straps to attach a bag to a rolling suitcase. “We used the first year as a learning curve to understand what people really wanted,” says Kevin. “They are overwhelmingly looking for hard-wearing, waterproof products.”

“Every day, we get comments on our social media or by email about features that people would like to see,” says Rob. For example, the Nomad Collection incorporates practical accessories, such as a boot bag or clothes packing cube, that fit neatly into a backpack suitable for travel adventures, as well as everyday use. “We really listened to the community when we created the Nomad range.”

The pair have found that customers feel as strongly about the sustainability of the items they buy as the durability. Three Peaks has used more than 180,000 recycled plastic (PET) bottles in the making of its bags – objects that would have otherwise gone to landfill. Its water bottles are made with sugarcane pulp and packaging is produced from recycled paper. The company donates 2 per cent of its profit from each purchase to Ocean Generation, an environmental charity focused on the protection and restoration of the world’s oceans and waterways, especially from plastic pollution. “We have over 20,000 followers on Instagram, where we spread the word about what plastic is doing to our oceans,” says Rob.

The bags themselves are recyclable, too, which meets the increasing demand from consumers for sustainable



products. The recycled materials that Three Peaks uses are all certified by GRS (the Global Recycled Standard), an organisation that also ensures good social and environmental practice.

“One of our other unique selling points over competitors is the compatibility of our accessories bags,” says Rob. Three Peaks washbags, water bottles and lunch bags can be clipped into larger bags for the perfect fit, meaning customers stick with the brand for an entire range. The company also has a diverse customer base, with some looking for outdoor gear while others opt for a bag for their daily urban commute.

The pair have not ruled out extending to international markets due to the rapid company growth and popularity of the bags. “Keeping the design streamlined and visually pleasing while incorporating all of the functional features is a tough design brief,” says Rob, “but I think we’ve achieved it.”

www.threepksgbr.com





Modern oasis

Cheetah Plains, a private game reserve bordering South Africa's Kruger National Park, has reinvented the eco luxury safari-villa experience

Although Japie van Niekerk had always dreamed of owning his own piece of South African bush, he had never intended to run a hotel. But when he acquired 500 hectares of land in the Sabi Sand, it came with a lodge that provided employment for dozens of local families. Eager to preserve the community's way of life, he created Cheetah Plains luxury safari villas, offering an exceptional, carbon-negative safari experience for guests who want to see South Africa's remarkable wildlife while enjoying total exclusivity.

"We constantly strive for perfection," says Japie. "We want to have the lowest impact on the environment while delivering the ultimate holiday of a lifetime for our guests."

Cheetah Plains opened in 2018 and has three spacious private villas, each with four guest suites, a swimming pool, lounges, wine gallery, chef's kitchen and fireside dining. They were designed by internationally acclaimed South African architect Stefan Antoni, who ensured no detail was overlooked and the sleek modern buildings had minimal impact on the environment. "Our villas are contemporary but very warm, not minimalistic," says



Japie. “We have a lot of glass as there are no neighbours, so you really feel as if you are part of nature. When we were designing the villas, I used virtual reality to ensure there were amazing views in every room.”

Solar power provides the power for the villas and lodge, and Japie commissioned the build of unique electric game viewing vehicles so guests could safari in complete silence without polluting the environment. For use by day or night, the zero-emission vehicles have heated and cooled seats and a range of 150 kilometres.

Each villa comes with its own staff, including host, butler, chefs, spa therapist and guides on local wildlife, who take guests to see some of the world’s most impressive species and explain how they fit into the wider ecosystem and biodiversity. “We are guests in their animal kingdom, it’s their bush and we are the visitors, so we always respect that,” says Japie. “When we go on foot, we get close to the animals and also see the insects, flowers, birds and smaller mammals.”

Back at the safari villas, guests have use of the gym or hair salon, or can relax with a massage or wellness treatment. There is a wine gallery and a sommelier who can arrange private wine tastings and pairings, so guests are able to experience the produce of South Africa’s finest vineyards.

For aesthetes, a cutting-edge contemporary art gallery presents notable work by international leading artists alongside rising talent from the global south, giving guests an exclusive opportunity to acquire artwork from the African continent.

To mark a memorable moment on safari, Cheetah Plains offers a “personalised diamond” experience, where guests have access to carefully selected, ethical quality stones and one-of-a-kind jewellery pieces. This also introduces a new notion of luxury and privacy in the wild.

Cheetah Plains has won several awards for its exceptional architecture, hospitality and sustainability, and was named Africa’s Leading Green Hotel 2023 at the World Travel Awards. “Everything we do is designed to support the environment and create an unforgettable holiday,” says Japie. At Cheetah Plains, the needs of the guests are paramount, “so you go on a game drive when you like and come back when you prefer. We love creating experiences, combining comfort and luxury with the wildlife and celebrating the majesty of the bush.”

www.cheetahplains.com

Partners in pioneering design

Unique Aircraft and Elizabeth Harvey Design have opened a new horizon in private aviation personalisation with their elegant cabin interiors

Warja Borges and Elizabeth Harvey have a unique partnership that puts them at the pinnacle of their profession. “The scale of our projects ranges from business jets through to aircraft from Boeing and Airbus,” says Warja. “Our clientele includes governments, heads of state, business leaders, large corporations and ultra-high-net-worth individuals.”

Warja and Elizabeth each have 24 years’ experience in VVIP aviation interior design and have combined this expertise to form a one-of-a-kind collaboration, the first of its kind in the industry. Warja, an interior architect, owns German company Unique Aircraft. Her impressive background in aircraft interiors, customisation and project management underpins her knowledge of aircraft engineering constraints, so much so that she excels at thinking beyond customary interior design methods. Interior designer Elizabeth founded Switzerland-based Elizabeth Harvey Design after ten years leading the award-winning Jet Aviation interior design studio. She possesses a highly creative and practical approach to elegant interior design solutions and has led the design of some of the most exclusive aircraft interiors flying today. Both have a high expertise in the cultural context of working with clients from across the globe and the detailed requirements involved in designing aircraft of all sizes.

The pair joined forces in 2021, sharing a vision that a design partnership is about co-creating ideas and a holistic approach. “Creativity, passion and extraordinary service have been the foundation of the partnership since its inception,” says Elizabeth. From customising a business jet interior to refurbishing a VVIP BBJ 777 and recently designing a Boeing widebody interior, their partnership has gone from strength to strength. “We tailor each project to the specific needs of the client and aircraft’s mission,” says Warja. This, they say, sets them apart in the industry.

“Pioneering excellence in private aviation is not born in a day,” says Elizabeth. Their experience gives them a profound knowledge of design rules and ergonomics, as well as an understanding of the constraints of each airframe, for an expert design response. “Even in their conceptual phase, our designs are already feasible, buildable and certifiable as a result of this extraordinary experience,” says Warja.

Both are passionate about sustainability. They innovate with lightweight technologies such as metal 3D printing and employ sustainable materials such as recycled carbon fibre. On a human level, they collaborate with artisans to preserve craftsmanship and champion techniques including hand carving and embroidery. The aim is to ensure traditions are

passed down to future generations. Onboard wellbeing is key to their thought process, too, “from the comfort of the materials to the effect of different lighting scenarios, to the deep understanding of how a passenger uses the aircraft, especially as the opportunity of flight times increases,” says Elizabeth. The entire passenger experience – encompassing comfort, ergonomics and functionalities – is considered. Boeing’s Demonstrator aircraft (below and opposite), for example, was designed to elevate business travel with its relaxed surroundings. “We take into account all parameters, including one’s senses and health, to optimise passenger and operational needs,” says Warja.

As the world enters a different era of travel, the partners are set on evolving their holistic approach through new innovations and technologies, and expanding partnerships with like-minded experts. For them, the future is now, striving for excellence in all aspects of aircraft interior design.

www.unique-aircraft.com

www.elizabethharveydesign.com







Romancing the riverside

*Riverside Luxury Cruises travels along
Europe's grandest watercourses with the
style and service of a small luxury hotel*

The Danube, the Rhine and the Rhône are among Europe's great rivers, three majestic blue corridors that run through some of the continent's most scenic and historic regions. Sightseers can experience the charm of these rivers and their landscapes with Riverside Luxury Cruises, whose intimate ships offer all the comforts and amenities of a luxury hotel.

"The river cruise seemed an ideal product for the luxury cruise market. The smaller ships mean we can really concentrate on providing outstanding service," says Gregor Gerlach, co-owner and Chairman of Riverside Luxury Cruises.

Gregor himself is immersed in the world of luxury travel. He owns a family of companies that includes the Seaside Collection of luxury resorts in Germany, Spain and the Maldives, including the Grand Hotel Residencia on Gran Canaria, and Seaside Finolhu Baa Atoll in the Maldives. He first contemplated entering the river cruise market in 2017 but was told it would take five years to build the specialist luxury ships he wanted. So when an opportunity arose to acquire five perfect vessels, it was a chance he quickly took.



Based in Hamburg, Germany, Riverside Luxury Cruises launched in 2023 and currently has three of those ships in operation: *Riverside Ravel* on the Rhône, *Riverside Debussy* on the Rhine and *Riverside Mozart* on the Danube. What makes the ships so special is that they meet the high standards of luxury desired by Gregor. This means that guest can enjoy spacious surroundings, while the large modern kitchens and enhanced accommodation for staff enable the company to provide immaculate service.

“The major change we made after acquiring these ships was expanding the sundeck and installing a barbecue station so people can enjoy the scenery as they travel,” says Gregor. “Guests cruise right through the heart of Europe, seeing some incredibly beautiful places. When we stop, they are right in the middle of a picturesque village, a vineyard or in the centre of one of Europe’s great cities.”

Riverside Luxury Cruises’s exclusive excursions are tailor-made for guests. Tours of the Rhône and Rhine, for example, can take in the vineyards of Moselle; Arles and Avignon in the French countryside; and even Germany’s famed Christmas markets. Those who wish to tour the Danube can travel from Austria’s spectacular river valley, the Wachau, a UNESCO World Heritage

Site, to the historic cities of Central Europe, such as Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest and Bucharest.

With 81 cabins on the *Mozart* and 55 on the other ships, the relatively small size of the boats creates a level of personalised service that elevates the experience into the luxury category. The stylish suites, most of which have floor-to-ceiling windows, sleep up to four and the largest is 82 square metres. There is a small spa on each ship for guests to indulge in a massage or sauna, or swim laps in the counter-current pool, while the fitness area is perfect for working up an appetite for lunch. Gregor is particularly proud of the food and drink that is served in the ships’ restaurants, bistros and upper-deck bars. Whether for a barbecue or fine dining, the chefs use high-quality produce and wines from the regions the ships are travelling through.

Above all, “we try to keep everybody happy,” says Gregor. “We have multi-generational guests such as grandparents with their children and grandchildren.” But a journey with Riverside Luxury Cruises is also about escaping from daily life, enjoying rest and relaxation in serene surroundings.

www.riverside-cruises.com





Jet-set lifestyle

Jets 100 makes private plane charters more accessible by organising VIP group tours to exclusive events worldwide

Ever since he began his first job as a commercial flight announcer at his local airport in Iran, Afshin Sajedi has been obsessed with travel. This fascination opened the door to a career as a tour operator and travel agent specialising in luxury travel. It has taken Afshin from Iran to Dubai to London and now Florida, where he runs Jets 100, a company that he believes has the capacity to “revolutionise private jet travel”.

The focal point for Jets 100 – which Afshin founded in 2022 – was that subset of clients who were used to travelling on private planes for short-haul flights across the US, but less keen to charter private flights at great expense for long-haul destinations such as London, Paris, Singapore or Dubai. To cater for this market, Jets 100 offers curated, memorable experiences that are timed around major events such as Formula One races, major golf and tennis tournaments, film festivals, fashion week and even the Olympics. Travel can be shared, which enables clients to use long-haul private jets at a fraction of the cost while maintaining the high standards to which they have become accustomed.

By maintaining exclusivity alongside affordability, Jets 100 has a unique offering. “Downgrading is always painful, particularly when you are used to a luxury experience,” says Afshin. “People have to use public terminals and go through customs, passport control and other security checks. There are delays and baggage goes missing. Even if travelling first class, it is a lot of inconvenience for clients who are used to flying private. We can reduce inconveniences by ensuring there aren’t too many people involved in the process as that is when things go wrong.”

As part of the Jets 100 membership, clients have access to exclusive private airports and executive terminals (FOBs). Jets 100 also takes pride in its relationships with the most exclusive five-star hotels in every major destination in the world. Alongside luxury transfers and event tickets, this all adds to the carefully tailored experience. The flights take place in the best and most luxurious private aircraft, such as Gulfstream and Bombardier planes, for unparalleled comfort and service, which includes gourmet dining. Parties are limited to 13 and trips are capped at ten days – perfect for professionals with busy lives and packed calendars. Afshin also explains that if people share a private jet to an event such as Wimbledon, it is naturally better for the environment.

Among the tailor-made journeys that Jets 100 has arranged is a vacation for a party of ten that included a flight from Australia, with stops in Paris, Monaco, New York, Los Angeles, Las Vegas and Hawaii. The company has additionally curated a series of trips from Miami into nearby parts of Central America and the Caribbean, including Costa Rica, Mexico and the Dominican Republic, and a trip to a private island in the West Indies with all-inclusive fine dining.

“There is no other scheduled private jet service that works on this scale,” says Afshin. “When you ask 100 millionaires what they would do differently, none of them would change their financial decision, but they would all try to have more memorable experiences. To do that properly, you need somebody who is an expert and who you can trust.” By using Jets 100, clients not only have seamless travel arrangements, but also enjoy VIP treatment for the entire trip.

www.Jets100.com

Friends in high places

With its family feel and industry standing, only the best will do for the clients of Concord Private Jet

Good business happens when people get together. President and founder of New York-based Concord Private Jet (CPJet) Neal Impellizeri understands that more than most, as he and his family specialise in bringing people together from all over the globe. They personally connect clients with the best private-jet operators and have developed multigenerational relationships, many spanning 17 years, with the business evolving naturally as a result.

Having set up the company in 2008, Neal, his wife and children are at the heart of a team of 15 who help clients buy, sell, lease and charter private jets. They take great pride in the rates that they offer their clients. Neal says that when he is asked why their charter prices are as much as 40 per cent lower than everyone else's, the answer is simple. "We don't spend our clients' money on anything other than providing them with the best possible service and the highest quality aircraft," he says. "And, when you focus on your clients and your business allies and allow your business to grow organically through recommendation, you don't need heavy investment or expensive marketing campaigns."

A former hedge-fund manager, Neal is well connected and understands the value of shrewd investment, service and strong alliances. For example, he has developed good relationships with Federal Aviation Administration-approved, Platinum Argus-rated operators in the US, which means he only contracts a luxury fleet of private jets that adheres to the highest standards.

His son, Assistant Managing Director Neal Impellizeri Jr, says this is key to the firm's peerless pricing. Alongside this, the company has invested in a share of a mid-sized jet and has helped clients acquire aircraft. "Through our leasing programmes with operators, we have been able to ease the cost of owning these aircraft and save clients as much as \$400,000 on their previous annual charter costs," he says. And through its programmes, CPJet and its clients also have access to other aircraft in an operator's fleet at extremely competitive rates. They can then pass on the savings and benefits to one-off charter clients and jet-card holders.

The company's jet-card programme, which has a ten-hour minimum purchase, has three staged payments – unlike other jet cards that require the balance upfront – so clients can hold on to their money, and the interest on it, for longer. The programme is all-inclusive, except for relevant US or international

taxes; and although the hours expire after two years, any remaining hours can be transferred to a new card. All costs are quoted upfront. "We also offer carbon-offset options with our jet cards, in partnership with Terrapass," says Impellizeri Jr. "Clients can opt to pay an additional two per cent on the cost of a jet card to support carbon-reduction projects."

While CPJet's prices may be lower than average, its service is always first class. "You can text or call at any time of the day or night and someone will respond – usually me," says Neal. CPJet takes care of the entire charter process, and if there is an issue with an aircraft, the team gets another to the client swiftly and for no extra cost. "Our business is about getting to know people and looking after them. Our service is personalised, and when we say our clients have become friends, it's true – and I don't settle for anything less than the best for friends."

www.cpjet.com







Taking the scenic route

Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours is not only about luxury, but personalised experiences in some of the world's most magical destinations

Picture the scene: it is evening on the Danube and, after a day exploring beautiful Budapest, dinner is served on board an ultra-luxury river cruise ship operated by Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours. Should a guest opt to dine in their spacious suite, they can press a button to open a floor-to-ceiling window, expanding their living space out to the balcony. The uninterrupted views transform the city into a glittering backdrop to a delicious, elegant meal. It is an unforgettable end to a perfect day.

“We call it the Sun Lounge,” says Nichola Absalom, Managing Director of Sales and Marketing at Scenic UK. “These are the details transforming the experience of river cruises for Scenic guests. We do things differently, with ultra-luxury ships that offer the best of guest experiences on rivers and oceans.”

Scenic operates luxury cruises on the major rivers of Central Europe, France and Iberia, as well as the Mekong in Southeast Asia. In addition, the company's two six-star 228-passenger ocean vessels tour the Arctic, Antarctica, the Caribbean, Europe and the Mediterranean, Asia and Australasia. These two Discovery Yachts, Scenic Eclipse



and Scenic Eclipse II, enable guests to enjoy access to tiny ports, hidden islands and extraordinary wildlife. “For these ocean vessels we use GPS dynamic positioning, which means they don’t need to drop anchor,” says Nichola. “This is very good for sustainability and gives us the flexibility to stop in shallow water if we want to do something different, like visit a colony of emperor penguins.”

Whether they are designed for the ocean or rivers, all Scenic vessels are custom-built with a focus on safety and comfort. There are multiple dining options on board, as well as spas and pools, plus luxurious suites that offer privacy and relaxation. Such innovation and excellence comes straight from the top. Founder Glen Moroney began running coach tours around his native Australia in 1986, before expanding into Canada and New Zealand. When he brought his business to the rivers of Europe in 2006 and worldwide oceans in 2019, Glen designed unique cruise ships to offer an outstanding boutique experience. “He saw that people are looking for a more personalised experience that takes them off the beaten track with an almost one-to-one service,” says Nichola.

One facet of this approach is a price that is truly all-inclusive. A Scenic cruise includes every meal, drink and

excursion. Furthermore, each cruise has at least one exclusive trip that no other cruise line can provide, such as a private concert by a professional orchestra in one of the most prestigious palaces in Vienna. The groundbreaking technology of the ocean yachts ensures seamless navigation around the world’s most remote locations, while the state-of-the-art helicopters and custom-built submersible offer unrivalled exploration at new heights and depths.

With so many itineraries on offer, the only real question is which one to choose. Seven-night river cruises are a popular option and tours can be combined, so guests can take back-to-back cruises on different rivers, or a short river cruise followed by a longer ocean trip. Wellbeing is an important consideration, with Scenic ocean vessels including therapy rooms, gyms, yoga and Pilates, as well as operating dedicated wellness cruises. “We continue to look ahead,” says Nichola. “Our goal is to create an ultra-luxury route to smaller, lesser-known destinations, providing a unique experience. This is not mainstream cruising, it is a personalised experience.”

www.scenic.co.uk

7.

*Radiant
living*

*BEAUTY AND
WELLBEING*





A RALLY TO REMEMBER

*THE 2024 RREC ANNUAL RALLY
AND CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE
WAS A SUN-KISSED TRIUMPH,
WITH MEMBERS CELEBRATING
CARS SPANNING ROLLS-ROYCE'S
GLORIOUS 120-YEAR HISTORY*





The English sunshine shone on this year's Annual Rally and Concours d'Elegance, adding to the general good spirits of all who attended. The traders came in large numbers this year, and the presence from both Rolls-Royce Motor Cars – who brought with them four glorious cars – and Bentley Motors – who brought three superb vehicles – was thoroughly appreciated by members.

The show kicked off on the Friday, with members turning up in their hundreds to see the anticipated trade stands for this year, and also to enjoy other events of the day, too, including the unveiling of a painting of AX201, completed by RREC Resident Artist Dawn Bosley, and also a seminar given by the East Midlands Chairman, Martin Carnell. Many members also attended the Hog Roast on the Friday evening, taking the opportunity to enjoy some delicious food and drink in the glorious evening sunshine.

EXPERT INSIGHTS

Saturday started with a fascinating talk by Ian Newham of Yuasa, followed by the Rolls-Royce and Bentley Specialist Association's (RRBSA) talk on "R-R horror stories", which was popular both with the crowd on site and those viewing the seminars via livestream globally. Other talks included "What car is that?" given by Club member Mermie Karger; the story of the resurrection of Fiennes Parts by Emily Anderson; and the making of 3D spare parts by Club member Joschka Roben.

The seminars were interspersed with live demonstrations of a Merlin engine, which thrilled the crowd gathered around to witness this amazing piece of engineering, and there were also driving experiences put on by the Club's Registers, which were thoroughly enjoyed, too. The afternoon was rounded off beautifully by singing

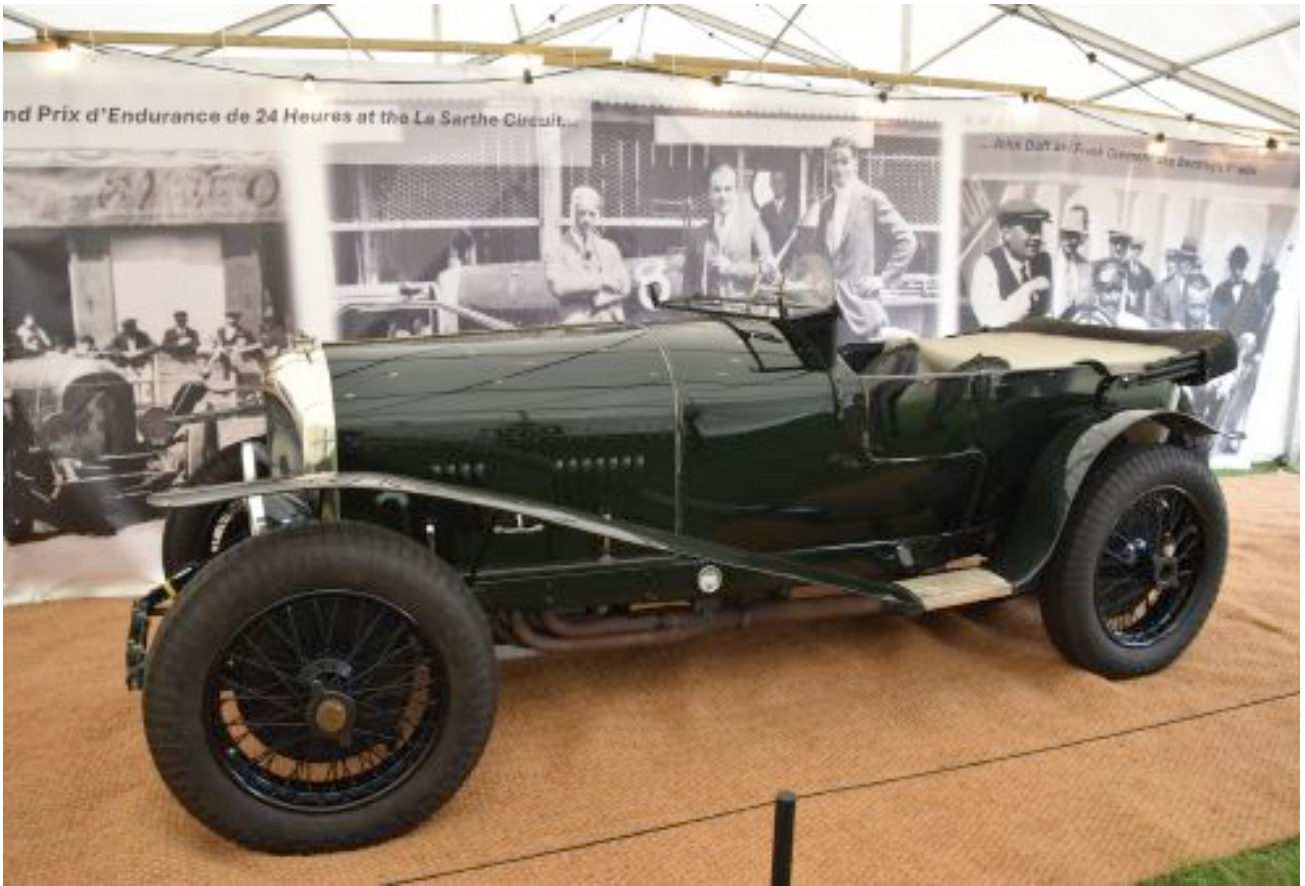
“As always, the jewel in the crown of any Annual Rally is the Concours d’Elegance”

Previous page | The impressive grounds of Burgley House near Stamford in Lincolnshire played host to this year's memorable RREC Annual Rally

Opposite, top | Ewen Getley's 1924 Bentley Blower in the Le Mans anniversary tent, which was organised by Club member, historian and author Andrew Feaver

Above | The cars were parked in the order they arrived, rather than by class, which made wandering around the site a real delight

Opposite, bottom | The 10hp Decauville of Andy Wood (from P & A Wood) in the 120th anniversary celebration tent, set up by Andrew Feaver





Right | The four Goodwood models – Ghost, Spectre, Dawn and Cullinan – that Rolls-Royce Motor Cars provided for the rally





Left, top | Ralph Bunger won the Michael Forrest Trophy for Best pre-1940 conservation, for his 1923 Rolls-Royce 20hp by Barker, which was driven to the rally from its home in Spain

Left, middle | Mark and Anita Luscombe won the Peninsula Trophy for the Chairman's Choice of Phantom in their 1928 Rolls-Royce Phantom I

Left, bottom | Guy and April Harris in their 1977 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow II, which won in the elegance class



Above | Chris Mott won the Sir James Cayzer Trophy for the most elegant Phantom III in his 1938 Rolls-Royce Phantom III

Right | David Wilkie came first in the Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud I and Bentley S1 class with his 1956 Bentley S1 Continental





duo the DreamBelles, who performed a selection of wartime songs, which had attendees dancing and singing along.

After the day's activities, a charity auction was held in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support, and members enjoyed a glass of fizz and some canapés while bidding on some fantastic prizes, including a full hospitality ticket to Salon Privé, a stay at the River Nene Cottages and tickets to the Goodwood Festival of Speed, among others. It was an exciting and fun evening, resulting in the Club raising more than £2,000 for a very worthy cause.

AN ELEGANT FINALE

As always, the jewel in the crown of any Annual Rally is the Concours d'Elegance, which got underway promptly on the Sunday morning. While the judges were busily inspecting the cars, members were treated to a talk from Rolls-Royce Motor Cars on the design of Spectre, a truly fascinating topic. Members were also later treated to the Dacorum Community Choir's singing, and the eagerly anticipated prizegiving.

This year, that included a celebratory lap of honour by the only surviving 10hp currently still on the road, SU13 (or "Little Sue" as she is known). Driven by Georgina Wood of P & A Wood, the car's owner, Sir Michael Kadoorie, was also in the vehicle, alongside Andy Wood and Club CEO Claire Seymour. It was a stunning display to round off a fantastic weekend.

Overall, Annual Rally 2024 was a huge success, with lots of positive feedback from the membership on the event. The Club would like to take this opportunity to thank the members for coming, and all of the volunteers who dedicated their time to supporting this event, be that as a judge, marshal, in the members' spares tent, during setup or breakdown, or on the Annual Rally committee. The dedication of all involved allowed the Club to put on a fantastic Annual Rally 2024, and we look forward to creating more wonderful memories and experiences at the International Rally in Germany in June 2025, and again at the Annual Rally at Kelmarsh Hall in Northampton in 2026.

Photography by Andrew Honour.



Opposite, top | Stephen Horne's 1932 Rolls-Royce 20/25 won Best in Show and the Peter Smith Trophy for the best 20/25

Opposite, bottom | Rajiv Kehr, Chairman of the new RREC Indian Section, in his 1936 Rolls-Royce 25/30 Gurney Nutting fixed head coupé

Above | The Concours d'Elegance took place on the Sunday and featured some of the finest examples of motoring excellence from the past 120 years

Right | Georgina Wood of P & A Wood at the wheel of "Little Sue" alongside RREC CEO Claire Seymour, with her uncle Paul Wood (rear left) and the car's owner, Sir Michael Kadoorie (rear right)





The daily ritual

Freshly handmade in small batches, CHSLDBEAUTY's botanical-based body and massage oils belong to an exclusive collection of effortless self-care essentials

After first meeting in a gym in Indiana ten years ago, it was inevitable that Arielle and Michael Tribby would bond over their mutual love of health and wellness. Their synergy also took them on a three-year journey to research, develop and test a range of holistic, purifying and healing beauty products. "Anything worthwhile takes time to sculpt, such as an idea, mentality or even a chiselled physique," says Michael.

This philosophy is behind CHSLDBEAUTY, the sustainable luxury brand they launched in 2023 after moving – creative studio and all – from Los Angeles to Austin, Texas. Each product in the small but carefully curated collection is rooted in the idea of "self-care that requires a simple routine, something you can ritualise as part of your daily schedule," says Arielle.

The Trinity Body Oil Set was the first product that the couple produced. The three oils, Elevate, Empower and Evolve, have three different purposes: for plumping; hydration and a healthy glow; and circulation. Other essentials include the Duality Massage Oil Set with Release and Recover oils to aid relaxation; a 100 per cent beeswax candle; charcoal and clay soap; and two "tools" – a body brush and gua sha stone for the face – that are used as part of an energising daily ritual that helps with circulation and lymphatic drainage.

The essence of the company is about quality over quantity, with small-batch products handcrafted for those who are really invested in their health. "We only use the best botanicals and we make a fresh batch every month," says Arielle. The powerful and ethical plant-derived ingredients are a "superfood for the skin", with completely natural fragrances, whether it is an oil with minty notes or floral or earthy undertones. "Just because something isn't synthetically scented, it doesn't mean that it doesn't have an aroma."

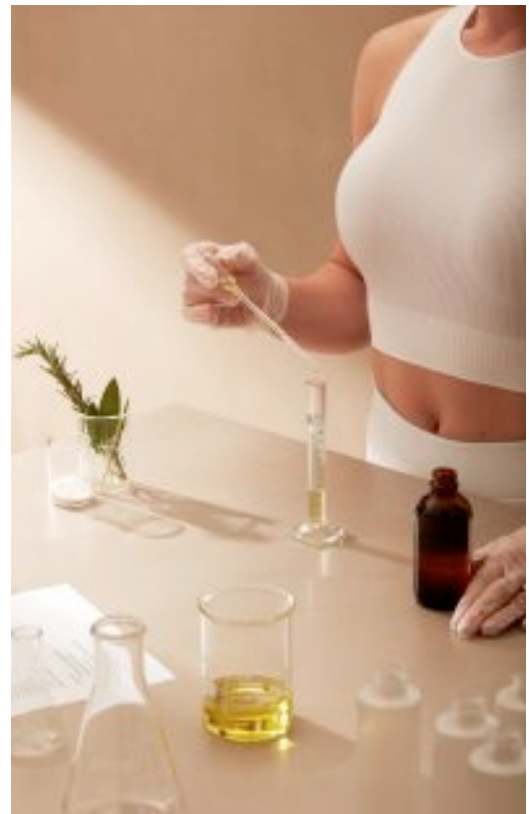
Each product is loved and used by its founders. "If we were going to create a vision, we knew we had to be the ones to broadcast it," says Michael. From product design to appearing as models on the company website, which employs their skills in running a photographic and film studio, they are the "face" of CHSLDBEAUTY. This hands-on approach ensures that they maintain control over the quality and making of their products, while enabling people to "truly connect with the soul of the brand". The website, for instance, aims to entertain and enlighten and show transparency about the provenance of ingredients and how they improve skin health. "We want people to see the brand and be immediately immersed

in an experience with these very powerful and potent natural products," says Michael, "and we want everything we do to be balanced for ourselves as well."

This includes the importance of sustainability, which underpins the brand. Proudly made in the US, the products are free of GMOs (genetically modified organisms), squalene (an oil often derived from shark liver), toxins, fillers, artificial colours and fragrances, and synthetic chemicals. Care is taken to ensure the packaging is plastic free, and there is a refill service for the candle, as well as the body and massage oils, which come in glass containers. A portion of sales is donated to the environmental non-profit One Tree Planted.

Arielle and Michael also offer a subscription and loyalty programme, and in the future "will continue bringing holistic solutions as part of the exclusive community," says Arielle, "while keeping a minimal 'essentials' collection with sustainability at the forefront."

www.chslbeauty.co





ameela rejuvenation
POLYMERISED POLYNUCLEOTIDE-BASED GEL

ameela face
POLYMERISED POLYNUCLEOTIDE-BASED GEL

ameela eyes
POLYMERISED POLYNUCLEOTIDE-BASED GEL

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ameela eyes
POLYMERISED POLYNUCLEOTIDE-BASED GEL

Quiet skin luxury

Ameela revolutionises aesthetic treatments by quietly restoring skin's natural vitality, working beneath the surface for lasting results

In a world where fillers and Botox dominate, Ameela offers something different: it does not just hide the signs of ageing – it regenerates. Founded by Linn Emilie, a visionary in aesthetics, Ameela represents the perfect blend of cutting-edge science and a commitment to authentic, timeless beauty.

“Everyone knows what fillers and Botox are,” says Linn, “but Ameela stands apart. It’s regenerative, it’s a biostimulator. This isn’t just skin deep, it’s about long-term skin vitality.”

At the heart of Ameela is a secret drawn from nature: injectable polynucleotides, sourced from wild salmon DNA. These are not just surface-level treatments; they stimulate collagen, boost elastin and attract stem cells, leading to deep tissue regeneration. For those who appreciate subtlety, this is skincare reimagined – skincare that whispers in the language of longevity.

Linn’s journey started in 2014 when she established Amedica, her first venture into medical aesthetics. Nearly a decade of research into regenerative medicine led to the creation of Ameela in 2023. For Linn, this is not just business, it is personal. “I believe in enhancing what is already there,” she says. “The goal isn’t to change how you look, but to preserve your essence, your real beauty, while making you look healthier and younger.”

Ameela embodies a quiet kind of luxury. The brand is for individuals who know that true luxury is not loud; it is for those who value elegance and precision and products that are refined, powerful and made to last.

“Ameela marks a new chapter in regenerative treatments,” says Dr Wassim Taktouk of the prestigious Taktouk Clinic in London. “Our patients, increasingly discerning, are drawn to it, because it delivers hydration, stimulates collagen and improves blood flow. It’s quiet skin luxury embodied.”

Already used in more than 2,000 clinics across the UK, with expansion into the EU, United Arab Emirates, and the US underway, Ameela’s success is driven by its pure, natural formula and the expertise of its practitioners. Unlike other treatments focused on immediate results, Ameela works with the skin’s biology to create long-lasting change. It fights against the degradation of natural hyaluronic acid, collagen and fat tissue, keeping skin youthful from within.

In an era where authenticity is valued more than ever, Ameela’s philosophy resonates with those who seek a natural, untouched elegance. “Even though you see

immediate effects,” says Linn, “we recommend two to three treatments with three weeks in between, followed up every six to eight months to optimise your skin’s regenerative process.”

For men, this has been a game-changer as well. Increasingly, they are turning to Ameela for its ability to enhance vitality without the tell-tale signs of treatment. Whether used under the eyes, along the jawline, or even for stimulating hair growth, the results speak for themselves. “Men love the brand because you can’t tell anything has been done – you just look healthier and younger.”

By neutralising free radicals and reducing inflammation from environmental stressors, “it restores life to skin, making you look quietly confident, undeniably radiant and effortlessly timeless,” says Linn. For those who know that true luxury is an investment in yourself, Ameela is the answer.

www.ameelaskin.com



Cold comfort

Brass Monkey designs bespoke ice baths for homes and spas, and has quickly built up a dedicated following

For some, ice baths deliver an exhilarating dose of the body's many psychological and physiological responses to cold exposure. Extreme cold prompts a "flight or fight" response, which involves the release of chemicals that increases blood flow to the muscles, raising blood pressure, while the feel-good factor of a plunge in cold water is well documented for mental health. "The beauty of ice baths is that you don't need to stay in them long to reap the rewards of cold exposure – most people build up their tolerance slowly over several weeks, from just a few seconds to a couple of minutes; that's all you need," says Danyl Bosomworth, co-founder of UK ice bath brand, Brass Monkey.

The former digital marketing agency owner discovered the benefits of cold water immersion when, suffering with crippling burnout, he embarked on a soul-searching journey. This led him to a life-changing retreat in Poland, where he practised breathing exercises and cold water therapy under the guidance of the most well-known proponent of cold exposure, Wim Hof. Later, during the 2020 Covid lockdown, a desire to recapture that experience sparked a eureka moment for Danyl. "I began to struggle with my mental health again and was desperate to recapture the sense of elation and energy I'd experienced on the Wim Hof retreat, but I was trapped in my own home. After much persuasion, I convinced my wife to let me turn our chest freezer into an ice bath. It was a rudimentary set up, but it did the trick."

While sitting in his ice bath in his garage in Leeds, Danyl began to think that even without a lockdown, it can be difficult to find a safe and clean natural environment for a cold-water dip. "I also knew from the retreat that the colder the water, the faster the benefits are felt. Although a cold shower or bath are beneficial, the experience is dramatically heightened by an ice bath so, in that moment, I decided to find a way to make the experience and the benefits more accessible to everyone."

Joined by his brother Dale and friend Chris Soames, Danyl launched Brass Monkey in 2021. Athletes, celebrities and influential health gurus were among the early adopters of Brass Monkey ice baths and several were so impressed with the quality that they invested significantly in the company's future. By 2023, Brass Monkey had a 10,000-square-foot manufacturing site, more than 40 employees and customers in more than 20 countries.

According to Danyl, what sets the company apart is its uncompromising approach to its patented technology

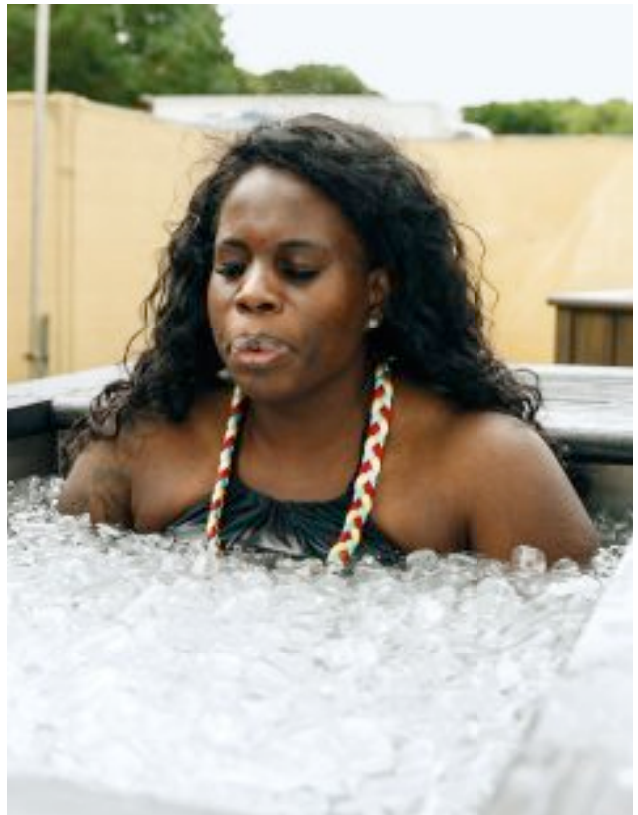
to create ice. "From the start, we have striven to exceed the benchmark for excellence. We're now on our third-generation model and we continue to pioneer new standards of quality and innovation in the industry, and to further refine our offering by extending our range and reach."

Brass Monkey's product quality and bespoke customisation service has positioned it in the luxury sector. Alongside the ice bath, there is an ice plunge – both available in hundreds of finishes for indoors or outside – or a wooden barrel.

"We're also developing solutions to liberate access, including an app and online content to guide people to natural cold-water experiences, and a new entry-level product," says Danyl. "I'm still driven by that moment in my chest freezer, so our mission will always be to bring the health benefits of cold exposure to as many people as possible."

www.brassmonkey.co.uk







**ROUGE
AVENUE**

PINK PEPPER, JASMINE
& CEDAR

THOMSON CARTER
London

EAU DE PARFUM
50ML | 1.7FL OZ

A lasting impression

Thomson Carter is a proudly British perfumier that is changing the industry by crafting scents with longevity

Thomson Carter founder Connor Martin wants his fragrances to evoke cherished memories, just as he remembers his mother Jacqueline's dressing table heaving with luxury scents. "She had more than 50 bottles, and loved how they made her feel," he says.

Connor launched Thomson Carter in 2023 on the second anniversary of his mother's death, as an acknowledgement of her positive influence on him. The brand has already been featured in glossy publications including Vogue, Vanity Fair and GQ. Thomson Carter's range of eau de parfum, formulated for women, men or unisex, is designed to stand the test of time and become part of customers' lives, in contrast to many fleeting trends in perfume.

"If you look at today's world of fragrances, you have budget brands on one side and high-end designer brands on the other," says Connor. "But with many of the budget brands, the unboxing experience is terrible." Thomson Carter's scents, meanwhile, are both affordable and created to be treasured, with packaging designed for the dressing table, just as Connor's mother kept her beloved perfumes on display. For example, a 50ml bottle of fragrance comes with a silk pillow; Connor explains this goes back to Egyptian times, when jewels were displayed in the same way. Customers also receive a luxury bag they can use for toiletries. "It creates a gifting experience, much better than a cardboard box you later discard, and it reduces waste," he says.

While ingredients are sourced from Asia, France and the Middle East, the scents are made where Connor lives in Northern Ireland. This supports local industry and helps to reduce the products' carbon footprint. Each one comes with a magnetic lid to create an airtight seal for increasing the longevity of the scent and ensuring the fragrance will not leak. A slow-spray mechanism, such as might be found in a luxury fragrance, creates an experience to savour. Indeed, the fragrances are crafted to last for an entire day. "We wanted to create something that will put you in a good mood for the next five or six hours," says Connor. "People don't only wear fragrances for themselves, they want others to experience their signature scent."

Three carefully selected ingredients are blended to create the complex layers. "We do not mass-produce fragrances; each is purposeful and only released when perfected," says Connor. For anyone unsure which one to choose, there is a Fragrance Finder tool on the Thomson

Carter website. Woody, floral and citrus combinations are recommended for women, for instance, based on the answers. "Before they even smell the fragrance, the customer is intrigued," says Connor.

Customers can buy the scents online, but there are plans for a physical store, too. There are also opportunities to sample Thomson Carter eau de parfum in 10ml sizes, including a trio set, or in 2ml as part of a Fragrance Discovery Kit. By offering a trial at an affordable price, the company has seen more brand awareness, explains Connor. The fragrances are already popular in the UK and Europe, with half of current sales in the former and the rest in Germany, the Netherlands and the Republic of Ireland.

As Thomson Carter looks to the future, it will evolve to include new product categories. But, says Connor, this will always be "while maintaining our commitment to quality, craftsmanship and timeless elegance".

www.thomsoncarter.com



Healing powers

With its high-tech cryochambers, Art of Cryo brings the age-old benefits of cold therapy to private homes, spas and gyms

Art of Cryo's modern cryotherapy chambers take cold therapy to the next level, immersing the whole body in sub-zero, cold, dry air for short periods of extreme stimulation. The German company has perfected the technology, creating a range of high-performance chambers called Vaultz, which are suitable for private homes, spas, gyms and hotels, as well as medical facilities and professional sports organisations.

"There are so many benefits," says Rainer Bolsinger, Chief Sales Officer and Chief Marketing Officer. "The therapy originates from the medical field and the first users were hospitals and rehabilitation centres. It started as a way of dealing with chronic pain, but was quickly expanded to work in areas including sports recovery, stress, wellness, skincare and sleep conditioning. It is a systemic treatment: a stimulus triggers a response."

The company is part of L&R Kältetechnik, which, established in 1991 and based in North Rhine-Westphalia, has a three-decade legacy in designing and manufacturing cryochambers. Vaultz are beautifully designed to offer whole-body treatment at defined temperatures and customisable durations, typically between 90 seconds and five minutes. Using the brand's unique software, treatment is tailored towards the individual, according to factors such as age, skin type, sleep patterns and BMI, so duration is carefully controlled. The technology performs a full-body scan that generates a precise avatar to the millimetre, and measures the body's inner parameters, sleep behaviour, breath analysis and other metrics to give direct feedback to treatment results and personal longevity development. The customer owns the data, which can be an aid to discussion with medical professionals.

Art of Cryo has three product lines, together known as Tec-Spa Module. Vaultz cryochambers are at the core and represented by the single Vaultz systems V1 and V1 Lux, for one person; Vario Vaultz, a luxury spacious solution for up to six people, with a V2 or V3 system (a two- or three-room configuration); and Unical Vaultz, which is custom-tailored to individual needs, ranging from the world's largest Vaultz V12 to equestrian Vaultz solutions. All Vaultz are state-of-the-art systems with features that include an intercom system with music playback and light-guided breathwork in the treatment room, video surveillance for safety, and the automatic defrosting of key components overnight for self-maintenance.

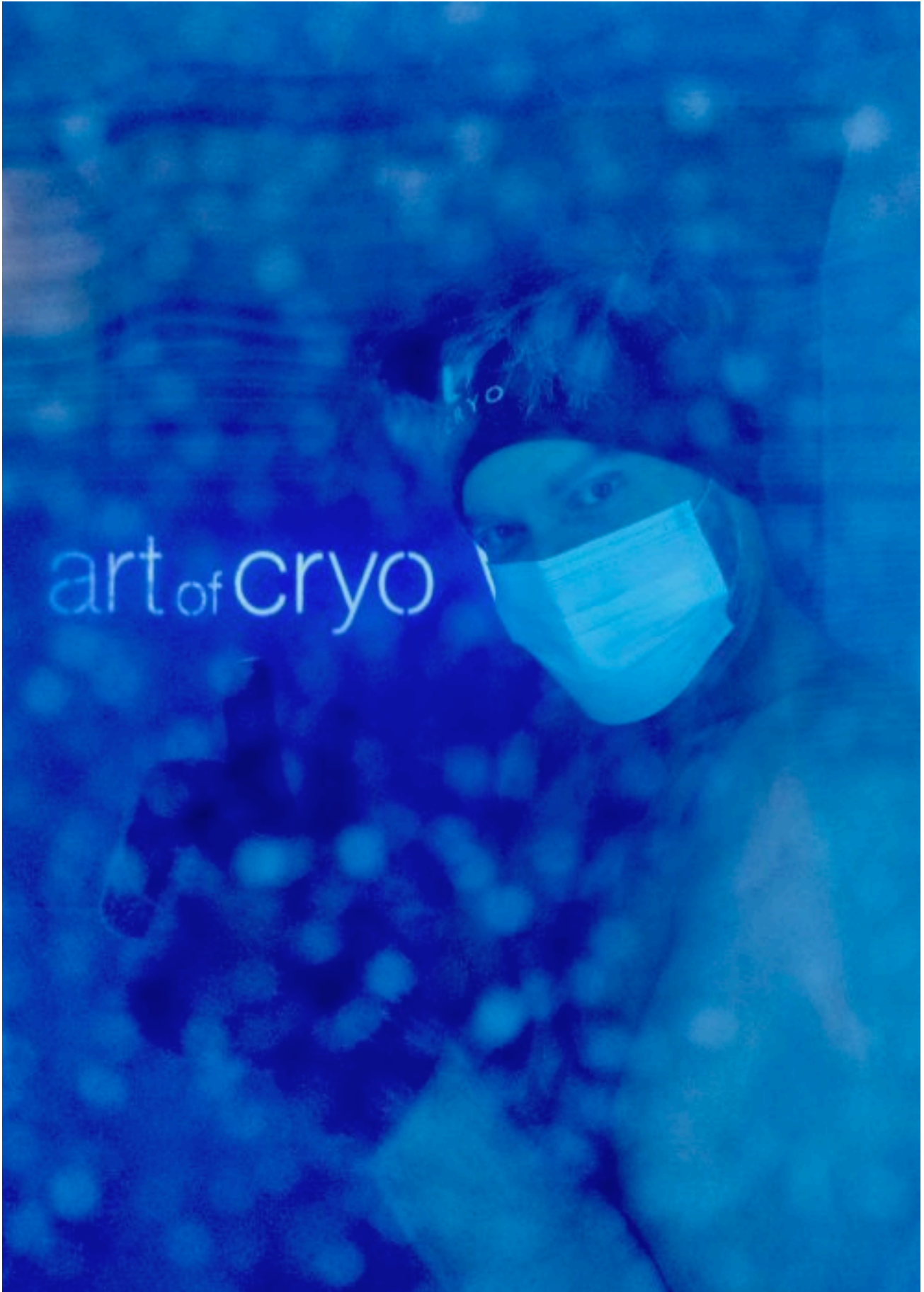
Among the next generation of multi-wellbeing devices is the Multi Cryo-Hacking System, which offers sensory stimulation through a unique combination of far infrared, oxygen ionisation, light therapy, aromatherapy and sound



beats, serving as an ideal pre-cryo treatment. Meanwhile, the luxury carbon-fibre longevity booster, the Flow System, facilitates tissue regeneration, detoxification and beauty enhancement through alternating pressure applications.

Cryotherapy is already an established part of medical treatment and sports training, helping with regeneration and recovery, but Art of Cryo takes it to the next level. The products are used by some of the world's leading football clubs, rugby players and professional ballerinas, and are found in luxury hotels, medical institutions and spas. Private customers often opt for the Tec-Spa Module, while commercial users upscale and multiply the set-up to meet demand. "There is no limitation, and we focus on technology's effects and results, with a commitment to continuous improvement and digitisation," says Rainer. "Our objective is to remain the industry leader. Over the next few years, the benefits of whole-body cryotherapy will be as widely understood as saunas are today."

www.artofcryo.com



Force of nature

Skincare brand Elli K Beauty embodies the vibrancy and vitality of Arizona's desert landscape and its potent natural ingredients

The US has a variety of colourful and vibrant natural landscapes. Among them, the Sonoran Desert in Arizona stands out for its distinctive red sandstone hues, the result of iron-rich clay minerals. The breathtaking scenery and renowned healing power of this region underpins the vision behind skincare brand Elli K Beauty.

"We cherish the profound energy of Arizona's natural beauty," says a spokesperson for the brand. "Our focus is on harnessing what nature provides: the Earth's unconditional vitality and the all-healing power of nature."

The brand was inspired by artist Elli K's unique music and her healing time in Arizona. As her music reflected nature and aligned with the brand's vision, she ultimately became the music producer for the brand and decided to share her name with the company.

After years of research into the healing effects of plants from Arizona's deserts, Elli K Beauty was founded. Its revitalising, anti-ageing Time Reverse range features a mineral-rich formula inspired by the region's unique environment. "We are the only luxury beauty brand focused on the concept of Arizona," says the spokesperson. "We don't just sell an image; we incorporate patented ingredients from this distinctive environment." These ingredients include natural spring water from Sedona, iron-rich red mud and nutrients from an array of native plants, such as the saguaro cactus, echinacea and banana yucca. Each product, from the Essence Cleansing Foam to the Mud Cream Mask and the Double Ampoule, combines hydrating, antioxidant and anti-ageing properties to enhance the user's skincare routine.

The products' attractive coral-coloured glass packaging reflects the golds and pinks of the landscape and is made in Korea, a hub of advanced packaging technology. Even the Elli K logo, featuring a hummingbird native to the Arizona desert, connects to the local environment. Elli K Beauty emphasises the importance of maintaining the natural world through sustainable business practices. All products are certified cruelty free and packaging is eco-friendly and biodegradable. By respecting nature, Elli K Beauty helps users to thrive with access to the unconditional vitality and healing powers of the environment.

Alongside focusing on the concept of Arizona and its heritage, Elli K Beauty aims to provide a moment of calm in people's busy lives. The brand reduces the number of products and steps needed in daily beauty routines by ensuring each product is created with the



highest quality, nutrient-rich ingredients. The brand also encourages customers to use their routine as an opportunity for a moment of "ritual beauty" through Elli K Moments. This unique virtual space, accessible through the Metaverse and created with Unreal Engine, is located in the heart of Arizona. Once users enter this virtual representation they can experience the sensation of being at a luxury destination. Moreover, by listening to meditative music composed exclusively for this virtual experience, users can achieve a sense of inner calm beyond the effects of the skincare products.

"For our users, we have created music tracks that are both relaxing and stimulating. We call this Ritual Time. We want to create moments of ritual for our modern consumers by incorporating the ingredients, the music and our unique Meta space. By combining all these elements, we can enhance both inner and outer beauty."

www.ellikbeauty.kr

East meets West

By combining the best of Asian and Western skincare concepts, Baszicare aims to regenerate ageing skin

After spending several years using his knowledge of chemistry to formulate cosmetics for the beauty industry in California, Tony Sellers felt it was time for a sabbatical. Since boyhood, Tony had been captivated by the natural world around him and spent copious amounts of time outdoors exploring its beauty. At the same time, he developed a deep curiosity about Asia. Now he would combine his passions.

In the early 2000s, Tony set off on a tour of China, Japan, India and South East Asia. During his journey he found himself discussing eastern ideas of medicine, health and balance with locals, and discovered similar ideas across related, but disparate, Asian cultures. It was an experience that led Tony to found Baszicare in 2007. “I had several ideas and ingredients from traditional Chinese and Japanese medicines,” explains Tony. “I wanted to combine them with holistic ideas and Western concepts of skincare to create a more balanced way of looking after the skin.”

Developed for the luxury skincare market, Baszicare

products are designed for the revitalisation of maturing skin and are as natural as possible. “This is challenging from a chemistry point of view because synthetic ingredients are extremely simple, but formulating with purely natural ingredients presents a real challenge,” says Tony. “Our ingredients are clean, and efficacy tested for skin benefits.”

Actresses including Naomi Watts, Gal Gadot, Jessica Biel and Rosamund Pike have used Baszicare’s Artius Eye Vital Supreme and Roseus Floral Hydrating Toner as part of their red-carpet looks. The reinvigorating eye cream is formulated with a blend of plants from the ocean, North America and South America to minimise the appearance of lines and help eliminate eye bags, boosting eye-area renewal. The hydrating mist combines soothing rose water and specially sourced oils to replenish the skin’s moisture.

Baszicare products promote the skin’s natural healing and regeneration processes, “its amazing ability to care for itself”, with cutting-edge formulations combining Western technology with an expansive repertoire of “plant power” from around the globe. Notable ingredients include white truffle, seaweed, echinacea, American ginseng, dong quai (female ginseng), bamboo and astragalus root – all of which unlock nature’s rejuvenating powers to promote the skin’s natural glow.

“We have a patent-pending submission that uses a proprietary blend of plant extracts and natural ingredients to restore balance that can be lost as skin ages,” says Tony. “It’s about achieving a holistic as well as biological idea of balance – ensuring the skin is primed and equipped for the day.”

Baszicare offers a full range of skincare products – cleansers and toners, moisturisers, serums, treatments and masks. Artius Eye Vital Supreme is one of several products that target the delicate eye area. Arrigo Supreme Lifting Serum is a natural collagen booster, reformulated to improve skin firmness and elasticity. It provides an instant dewy plumpness that enhances contours, helps smooth the appearance of wrinkles and imparts a refreshed skin texture. The lightweight Allevo Satin Lift Emulsion “locks in” moisture at the skin surface for a lifting effect. Its luxury ingredients include edelweiss stem cell to minimise oxidative stress and support collagen formation, white lily to aid cell renewal, and rice extract to work against UV-induced damage. All products are available from the brand’s website and ship worldwide.

For Tony, Baszicare is about creating a state of balance that helps nurture the skin and provides the power for it to renew. “As you get older, your skin loses the ability to adapt. We replenish it with nutrients and target needs to help it regenerate for a picture-perfect, radiant complexion.”

www.baszicare.com





Nature and nurture

The natural simplicity of Eve Lom skincare endures for a new generation of women as it did 40 years ago

Modern skincare science has proved what the founder of one of the world's best-known beauty brands knew to be true more than 40 years ago. Raised with knowledge of herbal medicine before becoming a facialist to Hollywood's glitterati in the 1980s, Eve Lom has long understood the powerful combination of nature and nurture.

She harnessed both in her eponymous skincare range, which includes the renowned Eve Lom Cleanser balm – a product that sells at a rate of one every 30 seconds.

Such is Eve's standing in the cosmetics arena that in 2012 she was awarded an MBE for services to the industry. While she remains a passionate advocate for skincare and wellbeing, the Eve Lom mantle is today upheld by the brand's next generation of women who share her founding vision, among them Cherry Wen, Global Brand President, and Regine Barr, Vice-President of Product Development and Innovation. "The Eve Lom brand has an undisputed and enduring place in skincare history," says Regine. "We're honoured to continue Eve's legacy, so future generations can entrust the care of their skin to Eve Lom."

Eve grew up in Czechoslovakia and gained her knowledge of botanicals from her grandmother, a practising herbalist, who would take her foraging in the woods. Eve met her husband, the actor Herbert Lom, in the UK and they later moved to Los Angeles. Unable to adjust to life as an actor's wife, she developed her own career as a facialist in Hollywood. It was there that she witnessed the therapeutic effect of hands-on skincare treatments, which inspired her to open her own clinic upon returning to the UK in 1984.

Eve became frustrated with the limited results she saw from the skincare products at the time. This took her back to her botanical roots to create products that would offer her busy, high-profile clients multiple tangible skincare benefits from one treatment. In response to demand, Eve launched her eponymous brand in 1985, which took her groundbreaking, transformative spa-grade skincare to clients beyond her exclusive clinic – where she treated many skin types, and the faces of celebrities and royalty – into luxury stores and, ultimately, millions of homes.

The Eve Lom Cleanser endures as the star of a compact yet comprehensive collection that includes ultra-hydrating moisturisers, masks and healthy-ageing formulas. Free from harmful additives, the cleanser is made with aromatic oils, including eucalyptus and chamomile, and is famous for carrying out five tasks in one: it cleanses, hydrates, tones, removes make-up and exfoliates the skin, when used with another Eve Lom must-have, the extra-fine

muslin cloth. "The cleanser balm beautifully encapsulates Eve's founding aim. This was to provide her clients with spa-grade products formulated using multitasking natural ingredients that also have a beneficial sensory effect in their application, so skincare at home or on the go can be a very simple but holistic, nourishing and uplifting experience," says Cherry.

Eve believed that a regular skincare routine should be easy, enjoyable and effective. "Skincare has to result in proven, tangible effects, and this is only possible if you take an exceptionally considered approach to ingredient sourcing and product development," says Regine. This ethos is the hallmark of the Eve Lom healthy-ageing collection, Time Retreat, which includes a serum with a gentle retinol formula that illuminates and smoothes the skin, and a daily cream for a rejuvenating glow. As with all Eve Lom products, the range is garnering a loyal following and is prescribed by beauty editors all over the globe.

www.evelom.co.uk





Perfect harmony

The Harmonist is an elegant French perfume house whose bespoke fragrances borrow from one of China's oldest practices

The Harmonist comes in a beautifully proportioned, sculpted bottle that is pleasing to the eye long before its bespoke, tailored fragrances take hold of the senses. Launched in Paris in 2016 by its founder Lola Tillyaeva, it is believed to be the first *maison de parfum* to take its inspiration from the ancient Chinese philosophy of feng shui.

Feng shui balances the five elements that are the building blocks of the universe: earth, fire, metal, water and wood. "All the elements complement each other. They're everywhere in your body and your character. You can choose to believe it or not – but they make for a wonderful perfume," says Lola.

Born and raised in Uzbekistan, Lola has lived and studied all over the world and has now settled in Switzerland. Before becoming a perfumier, she worked as a diplomat, and as a philanthropist she carries out work for her foundation You Are Not Alone, which helps vulnerable children in her home country. But, she says, "When I gave birth to my daughter in 2011, it changed how I saw things. My work, which included preserving Uzbek heritage, was interesting, but I wanted to express my creativity."

With Lola's deep understanding of, and passion for, feng shui and how it encompasses elements from colour to furniture arrangement, she realised that she could apply the principles to fragrance and create something that was not already on the market. So Lola approached Givaudan, the world's largest supplier of fragrances, and worked with one of the company's most celebrated "noses", Guillaume Flavigny, to conjure up her very personal range. "Everything we know about life, we take from the senses," she says. "I knew exactly what I wanted, and I knew immediately when I found it." Lola also received confirmation she was on the right track when her friends kept asking her for samples of her fragrances for themselves.

The Harmonist's 14 parfums, which include the fragrances in the Elements Collection, are sold in over 80 luxury retail stores worldwide and online across 13 countries. Additionally, customers can discover their own personal element on the brand's website by entering their date of birth. "It's a way of getting to know yourself better and improve your life," says Lola. "If you're fire, water will balance you. If you're metal, the earth can bring you resources."

The Harmonist's Sacred Water fragrance, with citrus, marine and wood notes, won *Allure* magazine's highly



competitive Best of Beauty Award in 2022. Like all the brand's luxury products, says Lola, "you don't need to use a lot to feel its energy, and it has great lasting power on the skin."

The next step is an exclusive launch in London at the high-end department store Harrods. Further plans include expanding to Dubai, while looking forward to celebrating the brand's tenth anniversary in 2026. For the diplomat-turned-perfumier, the biggest reward, though, has come from both men and women who tell her how her fragrances make them feel. "When they say they feel happy, sexy and empowered, it's a wonderful thing," she says.

Lola herself can attest to such a positive reaction to the fragrances. "Once, a lady passed me in the corridor. She chased after me and asked, 'What perfume are you wearing?' She didn't know it, but it was the greatest compliment."

www.theharmonist.com



Tales of the unexpected

Perfumery Maison de L'Asie highlights countries in Asia, while telling stories about life through evocative compositions of fragrance

The luxury fragrances of Maison de L'Asie have a unique narrative focused on Asia, highlighting the continent's heritage, philosophies and culture. "I wanted to be the first perfumery coming from the Asian market because no one expects perfume to come out of this part of the world," says Elizabeth Liao, the house's founder and CEO.

Originally a connoisseur of the arts with her own art advisory business, Elizabeth first discovered niche fragrances while visiting Italy. A decade later, when she found herself struggling to express the grief of losing her mother, she returned to perfume in search of solace. Quietly experimenting with different aromas and the stories and memories they evoked brought the consolation she had been looking for. In 2021, she launched her brand.

For Elizabeth, it was an instinctive approach for her to start her company this way. "It was the first time in my life I couldn't really articulate myself, and the perfume was about trying to capture something beautiful, a celebration of what was. I've always been drawn towards film and music, art and storytelling, and it brought me to question whether there were more stories to be told about life that I could do through perfumes."

Maison de L'Asie is based in Singapore, but it works closely with collaborators from the town of Grasse, "the capital of perfume" in the South of France, drawing from the elegance of classic French perfumery. Each collection, which comprises three fragrances, is approached thematically and presented as a "chapter". Chapter one, titled "The Origins: Where does it all begin?" is about nostalgia and identity using a combination of floral and musky tones, with Singapore as the topographical background. Chapter two, "The Illusion of Paradise: What lies beyond utopia?" invites a search for the meaning of utopia through the heady coconut scents of Indonesia; three, "The Dance of time: Who are we?" questions the meaning of time and entropy in Thailand through androgynous scents; and four, "Transcendence: What path are we seeking?" culminates with transcendence in the spiritual landscape of India through the aromas of bitter orange and patchouli. A fifth chapter is currently under way.

The unique aromatic blends and stories presented within each collection encourage the wearer to connect with their own lives. "The fragrances are a slow conversation you have with your skin," says Elizabeth. "The signature of the perfumes is that the scent really opens up the more you wear it, encouraging you to look within. It's not linear, which is quite a different approach."

Alongside its perfumes, Maison de L'Asie has a Home Collection featuring luxury room fragrances and candles, while a sample collection enables people to discover their favourite scent. The brand has stockists in Singapore, North America and throughout Europe, but has wider ambitions to become a global luxury lifestyle brand, creating collaborations with designers and launching a premium perfume range. The importance of highlighting countries in Asia through the brand's storytelling approach weaves through all its projects and sets the fragrance house apart from its peers.

"With Maison de L'Asie, it was a two-pronged mission," says Elizabeth. "I wanted to create a meaningful experience with the perfumes and push the boundaries of artistic creativity; and I really wanted to offer a bolder voice and a new interpretation of Asia. It's about perfumes of an unexpected Asia, and I don't see anyone else doing this."

www.maisondelasia.sg



Star quality

Hanacure skincare launched with an “instant facelift” treatment that has propelled the brand into the limelight in the US and beyond

With its roots in Hollywood, Hanacure was created to deliver professional-level results, for anyone to achieve at home. With just the core essentials, fewer steps and a high concentration of proven ingredients to ensure efficacy, the unisex luxury brand pioneered the minimalist, “less is more” movement in the skincare industry. It is the brainchild of Jamie Kim, a long-time professional make-up artist, and co-founder Will Chen.

“My clients didn’t always enjoy having multiple different kinds of products used on their face before they even had their make-up applied,” says Kim.

After hiring an in-house chemist, the team concentrated on product development for two years and launched their innovative The All-In-One Facial in 2017 to immediate cult status, winning several consecutive awards. Customers said that Hanacure’s product had the same effect as a visit to the spa, while eliminating the need for expensive and time-sapping multi-step procedures. Fans have included Hollywood stars such as Demi Moore, Drew Barrymore, the Kardashians, Eva Mendez, Michael C Hall and more, with the brand frequently trending on social media.

Drawing inspiration from the lotus flower submerging nightly into “murky depths” and its pristine re-emergence each morning, the founders wanted their brand to symbolise rebirth and the protection of the skin’s purity from outside elements. To achieve this, the product line incorporates unusual and exotic botanical extracts, such as the Ruby of the Forest mushroom, which can only be sourced from government-protected forests. Peptides (short chains of amino acids), known for their anti-ageing, anti-inflammatory and collagen boosting properties, are also key ingredients.

“We are big believers of peptides and we include a high concentration of them in our formulas,” says Will. “Similar to the precious metals used in jewellery, peptides come in different qualities. There could be formulas that contain lower-grade peptides that are diluted, or ones that have undergone a refinement process but are still limited in purity. We source the highest-grade peptides possible for cosmetic use in our formulas – types seen in pharmaceuticals or for clinical studies.”

Applying its well-honed expertise, the company has gradually expanded its range with the ultra-hydrating lightweight Nano Emulsion Moisturiser and the Microphol Cleanser. After three years of development, a face cream formulated with seven powerful peptides was introduced in



2024, for post-surgery use as well as general maintenance for healthy-looking skin.

The scientific research and production takes place in South Korea, where Hanacure maintains a state-of-the-art laboratory and manufacturing facility. “We are one of the few companies that manufactures their own products. We have total control over the process, which means we can guarantee quality and stay ahead in terms of innovation.”

Available online and in leading US department stores, Hanacure has customers all over the world, being suitable for all ages, skin types, pigmentations and conditions.

“The market might create different branded experiences to appeal to different demographics separately,” says Will. “However, what is most important to us is that all of our products are tested for all skin types, including those that are sensitive, and contain no harmful ingredients. This way, we ensure the purity of our formulations and have products that live up to their promises.”

www.hanacure.com





Skincare to go

Model Madison Headrick's skincare kit, Care.e.on, offers convenience and promotes eco-friendly practices, revolutionising the way we approach skincare during travel

American supermodel Madison Headrick makes looking good easy, but she is open about how the model lifestyle can wreak havoc on her skin. “A lot of people may not realise how demanding modelling is – physically and mentally. For example, last week I was on six flights in five days, and I think I managed to sleep in a bed on just three nights,” she says. “When I’m not fully rested, my skin can start to suffer with dehydration, dark circles and acne.”

This is hardly ideal when she needs to be at her best for a photoshoot. “Representing a brand’s vision is a lot of pressure,” says Madison, who has worked in the fashion industry for more than ten years. Her experiences of the negative impact travel can have on her skin explains why she set up her own skincare brand, Care.e.on (pronounced “carry on”), with all products formulated and filled in California. She launched the company in 2022 with a five-piece kit of essentials designed specifically for those on the move. The kit is airport security-friendly and allows for a vital moment of self-care amid the chaos of travel. “It doesn’t matter if you’re flying economy or



business, no matter what, you can have this moment of self-care and feel good.”

The En Route Essentials kit treats users of all skin types to four revitalising products: Hydroboost Highdrating Pads, Flying Highdration Mask, In the Clouds Facial Mist and Cleared for Takeoff Hand Sanitizer. Ingredients include soothing and relaxing lavender oil extract, hydrating aloe, and cucumber extract and caffeine, which work together to help reduce puffiness and inflammation. The handy kits come in a mesh zipper pouch for stowing until needed in cabin luggage, or a gym bag or car glove compartment. Madison has ensured that the Care.e.on range is affordable, transparent, cruelty free and sustainable, as part of her commitment to reducing waste in the beauty industry. “It was important to me to have super-effective products and high-quality ingredients that are green, with sustainable packaging and an eco-friendly message,” she says. “That is a hard combination to do.”

Orders are sent out using compostable mailers, while sugarcane and recycled materials are used in the product packaging, which “was inspired by my dreamy Americana childhood in touch with nature,” says Madison. Having inherited an “entrepreneurial spirit” from her father,

she is ambitious about her brand. A new, larger kit is in development, and she wants to eventually make the products available on the high street and at airports. They are currently sold online and in select hotels and stores.

Madison’s successful fashion career has given her impeccable contacts and in-depth knowledge of skincare and beauty, while her international business studies course at New York University has proved useful. Care.e.on was launched exclusively in *Vogue* and has garnered press the world over, with a network of influencers creating the necessary buzz. Care.e.on has caught the eyes of many, but has also appeared as a favourite travel necessity on the social platforms of supermodels and celebrities, such as Maya Jama, Candice Swanepoel, Ashley Benson, Imaan Hammam, Nicky Hilton, Lily Aldridge and Simon Huck.

By removing the stress from flying, Madison is keen to change how people view travel. “Some of my most exciting life experiences have been made possible by travel,” she says. “One modelling job on an Icelandic glacier was an unforgettable experience. Travelling and experiencing new cultures can be life-changing.”

www.careeon.com

Beauty inside and out

Renowned clinic 23MD leads a holistic and innovative approach to medical aesthetics and wellness, redefining beauty from the inside out

“**W**e were one of the first to take a holistic approach to health and beauty,” says Dr Suha Kersh, co-founder of 23MD, the renowned clinic at the forefront of cosmetic medicine and wellness since 2015. Both she and her husband, Dr Martin Galy, an expert in bioidentical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT), have built a reputation for providing high-quality care to a discerning clientele, while staying true to their patient-first philosophy: listening closely to what they need and giving honest, transparent advice – always with the goal of helping them achieve the best outcome.

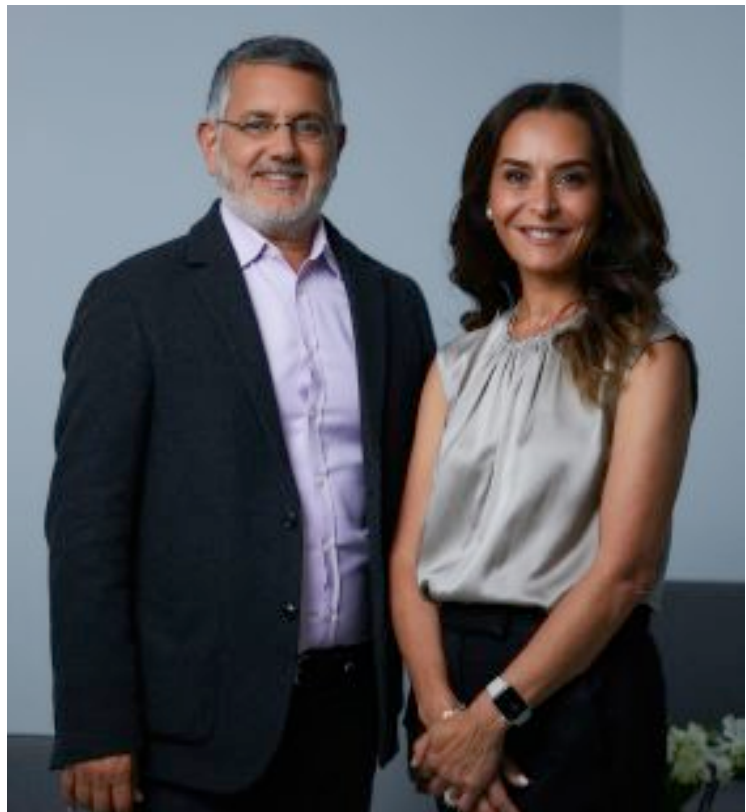
23MD’s flagship clinic is discreetly located in Chelsea, London, and has recently expanded to a stunning new location in Dubai. Dr Kersh and Dr Galy believe that beauty and wellness are inseparable. This belief inspired their 360-degree approach, combining aesthetic treatments with wellness and hormone optimisation to create beauty from the inside out. “This concept immediately resonated with people,” says Dr Galy. “We’ve seen a huge impact, and it’s been rewarding to help people feel and look their best.”

The 360-degree approach is about creating harmony between the inside and outside. 23MD believes that true beauty starts from feeling balanced and healthy within, which naturally shines through to someone’s appearance. By blending the art of cosmetic medicine with expert hormone optimisation, 23MD promotes physical health and beauty through holistic care, helping patients achieve hormone harmony and a radiant, confident look.

Dr Kersh is also celebrated for her “4D” approach, which views the face as a whole, rather than focusing on just one area. Her method is comprehensive and straightforward, assessing skin health, wrinkles, volume loss and overall wellbeing. Her goal is to restore patients’ confidence while preserving their natural features. “As a cosmetic doctor, it’s important to enhance someone’s natural beauty without changing the essence of who they are. I want my patients to feel refreshed and revitalised, not like they don’t recognise themselves after treatment.”

A pioneer in regenerative medicine, Dr Kersh focuses on natural, rejuvenating technologies that help restore and refresh; and her work in cellular regeneration has positioned 23MD as an industry leader. “It’s a journey of regenerative health,” she says. “We use treatments like Botox and fillers sparingly, only to refresh once a year, not to create something unnatural.”

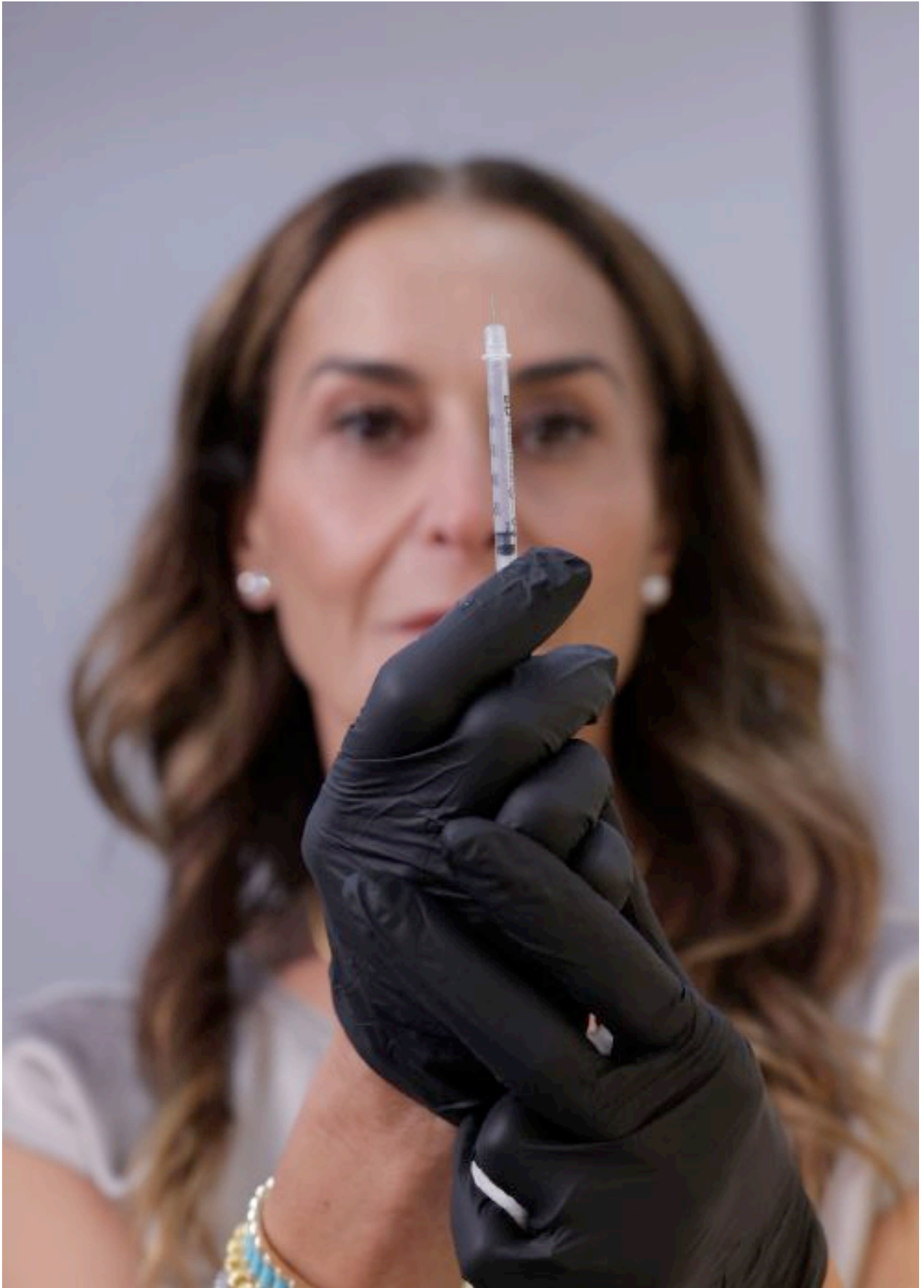
Dr Galy’s expertise in BHRT has also earned him a stellar reputation; he is often referred to as “the hormone



whisperer”. Having started his career as a GP, he recognised that many common health issues were rooted in hormonal imbalances. At 23MD, he prescribes bioidentical hormones, which are chemically identical to human hormones, helping to restore natural balance safely. “One of the benefits of restoring hormonal balance is healthier skin,” he says. “Oestrogen plays a key role in collagen production. We’ve found that women on oestrogen treatments often require fewer cosmetic procedures. We were pioneers of this concept.”

23MD is committed to staying ahead of the curve, only offering treatments that genuinely work, rather than following industry trends. “Patient advocacy is at the core of everything we do,” says Dr Galy. Each patient receives a personalised treatment plan tailored to their unique needs, so they feel comfortable with every decision. By blending aesthetics with wellness, Dr Kersh and Dr Galy help their patients shine inside and out.

www.23md.co.uk





The joy of scent

Van Dang Fragrances is a mindful, luxury fragrance brand, built on ethical principles and an olfactory passion

“**B**e in the now is our brand mantra,” says Kim-Van Dang, founder of Van Dang Fragrances. “It is about being present and mindful, appreciating each other and the beauty of each moment.”

Launched at Bergdorf Goodman in New York City in spring 2022, the made-in-Colorado brand comprises seven scents, each designed with an intention beyond aromatic pleasure. “For example, our orange blossom fragrance Solaire is designed to help you greet each day with openness and positivity,” says Kim. Others, such as the sandalwood scent Buddhapada, aim to provide a feeling of calmness, purification and transcendence.

Van Dang luxury fragrances are available in five formats: perfumes in dark violet glass with custom gold caps; candles and reed diffusers in handmade porcelain vessels; room and linen mists in UVB-blocking bottles; and crystal meditation sets featuring a porcelain pedestal on which to place your crystal (choose from seven stones), plus scented oil. The concept: place a drop of oil on your crystal to charge it, then breathe in the scent while setting your intentions for the day.



Kim's love of fragrances was nurtured as a child sneaking perfume spritzes in her mother's boudoir. Her parents – both educated in Paris – met back in their native Vietnam, where they built one of South East Asia's top advertising agencies, only to be forced to leave Saigon in April 1975 as the city fell. Kim landed in a San Diego refugee camp and grew up in a Los Angeles suburb.

Her parents' success made a deep impression on her. "I watched them build a business a second time: a printing shop in Orange County that served the local Vietnamese community. I could see what is possible with aspirations, a strong work ethic and the people you love around you."

Kim began her career in beauty journalism at renowned trade publication *Women's Wear Daily*. In 2007, after six years as Beauty Director at *InStyle* magazine, she established her own branding consultancy. She also jumped at the invitation to study with master perfumer Ron Winnegrad at New York-based International Flavors & Fragrances.

Sharing her passion for fragrance is Kim's husband and business partner Anthony Roberts – a sommelier by training. Van Dang products are inspired by their personal experiences, such as the time they attended

a Palm Springs art fair, got lost in the California desert and chanced upon an orange grove in bloom.

"We love going to museums and looking at architecture. Design is integral to our DNA," says Anthony. "With candles, few brands do something creative or original; a lot is mass-produced." Responsible for the design of everything "visible", he ensures that Van Dang candle vessels are not only aesthetically pleasing – glowing from within, like a lantern – but also ingeniously functional, with a lid to keep the dust out and a built-in base to prevent candle heat from damaging your furniture.

Their ethos extends to good business practice. The farmers who supply their fragrance oils – from Bali to Brazil – sign a pledge to practise sustainable cultivation methods without pesticides. In return, Van Dang offers them fair-trade pricing, so they can have a living wage.

"That's the reason we do this," says Kim. "We're all here to support each other. Our purpose is to bring beauty and joy to people through fragrance and design. We are here to remind you to literally stop and smell the roses."

www.vandangfragrances.com



Journeys into wellbeing

Through its luxury body care, Leverden engages the senses to transport the customer restoratively and culturally to beautiful natural places

Helen Lee's busy life in New York made it impossible for her to bring her mind, body and spirit to a place of peace. This led the co-founder of luxury body care brand Leverden on a search for simple healing practices. "It was pretty clear that I needed to hit the brakes," she says. "While seeking out natural healing methods, I also decided to backpack across South America and South East Asia to find refuge." Throughout her travels and experiences at Ayurvedic and shamanistic retreats, Helen discovered that, ultimately, the simplicity of nature and ritual restored her sense of wellbeing.

Leverden's other co-founder, Soyoung Cho, also recognised the therapeutic power of self-care, through her experience as an athlete. After hard workouts and training, she would seek out therapeutic relaxation methods. "I wanted to create a brand that combined Helen's discoveries of healing traditions from various communities with my understanding of the mind-body connection, as someone committed to holistic wellness."

Both founders set out to design products for a brand that could recreate healing rituals in the comfort of the



home, infusing their experiences. A long-standing friendship of 20 years turned into a business partnership, and Leverden was launched in 2022.

The core product in each body care collection is a scented candle, developed in collaboration with celebrated perfumers such as Christophe Laudamiel and specifically crafted to bring the soothing aromas of nature into a space. To begin the healing ritual, the customer lights the candle, inhales the scent and is invited through a “portal” into the red sands of Namibia, Morocco’s Valley of the Roses, the mountains of Peru or the bamboo forests of Korea, the latter being the brand’s signature collection as Helen and Soyoung are Korean in origin.

“The portal is our symbol and our mission is to cultivate wellbeing and spirituality through the lens of beauty,” explains Helen. “Our products are about the rituals that can support the balance of mind, body and spirit. Each of our collections is infused with stories to transport you to other people, places and perspectives.”

The ritual continues with Leverden’s curated Spotify playlist, a soak in the bath with the scented bath salts and body wash, finishing with a rejuvenating massage

using the body lotion. This nurturing practice aims to maintain wellbeing on a long-term basis.

For the future, Leverden is looking to expand its market, across Europe and the US. Helen, now based in London, is testing the water in the UK. The company ships globally, however, taking care to use sustainable packaging. As part of this circular approach, products are designed to be recycled or repurposed. The candles, for instance, are housed in a container that can find new life as a planter, while other Leverden products are presented in reusable canvas pouches.

For the pair, it is also important to give back. Contributions from sales of the Bamboo Forest Collection are made to not-for-profit One Tree Planted, which champions sustainability and ecological practices. And in homage to the Namibian origins of the Bushman fragrance, Leverden has donated to the Cheetah Conservation Fund, which helps both the country’s wildlife and Indigenous populations. “Leverden is about wanting customers to not just enjoy the products, but to feel different after using them,” says Soyoung, “and for the stories behind the collections to resonate with those who appreciate travel and cultural exploration.”

www.leverden.co

Connecting across seas

The Open Sea Institute for psychiatry, coaching and wellness offers fresh and fertile soil for personal growth, with the elite expertise required by high-level executives and their families

The more time that Denise and Louis Joseph, a mental health expert and psychiatrist respectively, spent around CEOs and entrepreneurs, the more they realised that great wealth and achievement are no bar to unhappiness and dysfunction. “These individuals are very focused and live in rarefied bubbles but face the same psychospiritual trials as anyone else,” says Denise.

The Josephs also realised the outsized impact working with these groups could have, given their significant influence on culture and society. “We identified the universally human need to access support and seek for meaning, and knew that we could accomplish something broader by influencing the influencer, so to speak,” says Denise. This thinking led them to set up the Open Sea Institute (OSI), in West Palm Beach, Florida, in 2019. The bespoke, discreet psychiatry, wellness and coaching practice used the then radical telehealth technology to support individuals, families and organisations.

“Our organisation was born from an adherence to butterfly effect theory,” says Denise. “We believe in the cumulative and dynamic effect of change in reference to human beings and the systems we create to govern our lives. The healthier we are – the more aware, the more at peace – the better systems we create.”

OSI works primarily with highly mobile, high-profile individuals in demanding careers, for whom time is a luxury, from finance industry professionals to politicians and elite athletes. OSI also serves to transform the culture of mediocracy back to revolution in the mental health care industry. This is a founding principle at OSI. “Our methods are proprietary and are developed based on research, intuition, instinct and results; and they are informed

by psychodynamics, biochemistry, eastern philosophy, epigenetics, quantum physics and sound medicine.”

While Denise came to coaching through a career that took unlikely turns in law, fine art and high-dollar political fundraising, Louis is a psychiatrist with much leadership experience. As Chairman of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health in the Mayo Clinic Care Network, he helped reduce child suicide through a regional initiative encompassing schools, businesses and faith-based communities. Louis and Denise now join forces to provide psychotherapy, medication management, substance use intervention and organisational consulting.

OSI supports all psychological ailments, including psychosis, addiction, anxiety, depression, stress and developmental disorders. OSI’s arms in addictions, executive performance, wellness and beauty, and family, couples and life transitions coaching serve a growing need for individuals and corporations looking to transcend traditional barriers to excellence, happiness, youthful appearance and vitality.

As early adopters and innovators of the telehealth approach, the Josephs believe it can really democratise communication and care. “Early on, we grasped tele-technology’s power to connect people across oceans of difference – physical, cultural and political,” says Denise. “Our worldwide engagement is seamless because of this.”

The Open Sea Lodge at Nantahala Water Mountain, in beautiful forest in the ancient Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, is OSI’s physical presence. At the lodge, the institute offers in-person programmes in OSI Eco Medicine – that is, clients are expertly guided to experience harmonisation with nature and self.

www.opensea.institute



Back to the roots

Beauty brand AcARRE taps into nature's ecosystem to produce minimal all-in-one products for the skin and scalp

Tracey Hicks-Kearse's friends and family knew that, as an expert in the science of cosmetics, she was the right person to ask about products to improve their skin, hair and scalp.

But so many people asked the same question that eventually she realised there was a gap in the market and, drawing on her African and Pacific Islander ancestry with its approach to the use of natural ingredients, it was one she was uniquely placed to fill.

Based in the US, Tracey had studied and trained as a chemical engineer before starting a career in the cosmetics industry, where for over 20 years she tested and developed products for some of the world's biggest brands. In the 2010s, after yet another person asked for her help with their skin, Tracey set to work, perfecting her own formula derived from her extensive knowledge of chemical compounds, but also her deep conviction that working with bio-based (natural) materials was beneficial for both people and the environment. "I wanted to create a brand that supported our entire ecosystem, as well as making people feel and look better," she says.

Her answer lay in using ethically and sustainably sourced ingredients, engineered around her understanding of the microbiome, the communities of microorganisms including essential bacteria that live in different parts of the body. "People are starting to understand more and more about how this controls the gut and our digestive system, but it also has a part to play in our entire bodies," says Tracey. "And it's crucial for the health of the skin."

Tracey comes from a family of successful businesswomen, from her grandmother to her mother and aunts, which she attributes to her can-do attitude to work, so in 2018 she took a big leap and founded AcARRE (pronounced "Ah-care"), which she operates from the state of Maryland. The range offers two main products: Beauty Edit is a multiuse treatment oil, which works as an essence, serum and hydrator for the skin, scalp and hair; Beauty Refresh is a multiuse treatment powder that works as an all-in-one cleanser, exfoliant and moisturiser. Both are designed to balance the skin's microbiome, restore it to its natural state and create a healthy scalp and skin that looks smoother and more luminous. Tracey oversees the manufacture of these products in small batches, which not only ensures their quality, but also fulfils her commitment to helping protect the environment.

Despite the initial challenges of establishing a business during the pandemic, the brand's client base

has grown dramatically in the US. Men and women have enthused about the product, as well as people of different skin tones. With her African American roots, the chemical engineer-turned-entrepreneur is delighted that her products have found a diverse clientele so quickly.

Key to the success of the AcARRE range is its dual purpose for the skin and scalp. This lightbulb moment in the development of her products came soon after the launch of the business, when Tracey was about to become a first-time mother. Life suddenly got even busier. "I'm a chemical engineer, an entrepreneur and a mother, so I'm a busy woman, and I know I'm not alone," she says. "I wanted to create something people can use wherever they need it for maximum benefit."

Fundamentally, Tracey wants to keep things simple while advocating the use of natural, environmentally sound ingredients. "And I want to help the environment. Everything is beautiful when it's in balance."

www.acarre.co





High-performance healing

SilverBell Global offers multi-disciplinary healing for people struggling with the stresses of achievement culture, wherever they are

Money, it is said, cannot buy happiness. Neither can it insulate people from mental health struggles, eating disorders or substance use issues. Natasha Silver Bell knows from personal experience how easily these battles can derail a person's life and how challenging it can be for ultra-high-net-worth individuals to find discreet, compassionate support within the context of their multifaceted lives. Natasha founded SilverBell Global in 2012 to bring immersive, effective healing to clients wherever they may be – at work, home or any location.

Conscious that many outwardly successful families feel shame when admitting they need help, Natasha has seen this interaction compounded by what she calls “the toxic achievement culture”, which affects younger generations and high-achieving executives alike. This relationship of impossible expectations and misaligned self-esteem makes a compelling case for SilverBell Global's compassionate, non-judgemental approach.

“We create an architecture of opportunity around each client, with a strong foundation forged from our signature multidisciplinary approach, clinical planning and strategy,” says Natasha. With robust collaborative networks of highly trained specialist companions working in partnership with psychologists, psychiatrists, nutritional therapists and diagnostic clinicians, multi-disciplinary LifeTeams are tailored to tackle the exact issue a client is facing. Team members on the ground are selected both for their professional expertise and lived experience. “There is an unspoken language when we sit down with someone sick and suffering. We are saying, ‘I understand’, because we do.”

The scaffolding SilverBell Global erects around clients and their loved ones is there for a reason – to create openings for connection and inspiration. “Everyone likes to wake up with purpose,” says Natasha. “We explore what motivates someone to feel full of life in the morning.” She gives the example of a 17-year-old from a prominent family. When his LifeTeam discovered his deep respect for his grandfather, a helicopter pilot, they helped him regain his sense of purpose by getting his helicopter pilot's licence.

Natasha's hand-picked global team is based in New York, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Florida, London, Dubai, Sweden and France, providing a seamless and real-time connection with each client's care programme. SilverBell Global also works with former US Navy Seal Thad Turner, when families are unable to contact a loved one they fear is in trouble. “We have people who can fire up the jet and go across the



world to find them,” says Natasha. “Sometimes the family put their hands up and say, ‘We don't know what to do’, but we do. We put a creative plan in motion.”

Natasha welcomes new treatment methodologies, combining traditional healing with the latest clinical developments. In 2025, she will bring together best-in-class clinicians for a UK health and wellness retreat at The Falcon Hotel in Northamptonshire, hosted by Lord and Lady Northampton of Castle Ashby. Natasha also sits on the boards of addiction and mental health organisations, and is a co-founder of Youth Prevention Mentors and the Inservice Foundation, which helps people on lower incomes.

At the core of each of Natasha's endeavours is a concern for the wellbeing of an individual in need, irrespective of birth or circumstance. “Overcoming adversity is how my company was created,” she says. “We have a heart and soul to what we do. We are not driven by the bottom line; we are here to be the solution.”

www.silverglobal.co.uk



Taking the plunge

Once the preserve of elite athletes, cold plunging is now available to all, thanks to *The Cold Life*

“**I** think, post-Covid, people are more attentive to their health than they were five years ago and they are also willing to invest more time and resources into their health,” says Kyle Ponton, an advocate of cold therapy and CEO of The Cold Life, the Miami-based manufacturers of cold plunges. “Ultimately, your doctor can only do so much for your health. People need to be in tune with their bodies. Cold plunging has skyrocketed in popularity because we have seen its benefits; how it can combat recovery, for instance.”

An entrepreneur since founding his first company aged 18, Kyle had been selling healthcare products for those suffering from conditions such as hypertension and diabetes. However, he found himself developing a passion for preventative measures, “for how to get ahead of diseases, rather than for reactive healthcare”. Cold therapy was one such measure. Kyle had taken up cold plunging two years before founding The Cold Life in 2022, albeit with a crude prototype cold plunge set up by his business partner, Samuel Maxwell. “We did it for several days before thinking there must be a better way than spending hundreds of dollars on ice and everyone sharing the same water.”

With the help of designers and engineers, the pair devised the Ultimate Plunge, now endorsed by world-renowned biohacker, Gary Brecka. It is based on the same principle as a thermos flask to enable insulation and to allow the user to stand inside. Moreover, it has an aesthetically pleasing appearance, so that it sits well in a residential or commercial environment, from a luxury home to a high-end boutique studio.

Of course, not everyone might consider plunging into cold water a “luxury”. However, Kyle says its benefits are immense. Cold plunging has long been practised by elite sportspeople but is now more widespread. “We understand more about what the therapy can do for you from a biological, health standpoint,” he says. “Some people, including myself, now do this as a life practice. I do it to relieve stress and for endorphin release. It also helps with inflammation. If you’re running or cycling, it helps you get back out the next day.”

Other advantages of cold plunging can include a mental clarity boost, increased metabolism and weight loss. The Cold Life has athletes among its clients, many of whom are in their forties, fifties and sixties, who use it to aid recovery by reducing inflammation and relieving muscle soreness. Naturally, as with those about to undertake any fitness programme, there are caveats.

Kyle recommends that beginners check with their doctor first, then advises easing into cold therapy gradually, beginning perhaps with cold showers, then gradually upping the periods of time spent in the cold plunge to enable the body to build tolerance.

Kyle has witnessed a rapid expansion in cold plunging. “Compared to five years ago, interest in cold plunging is up 1,000 per cent,” he says. He also cites a local studio that added a cold plunge to its customer package and saw takings increase by \$4,000 in a month.

The Cold Life sources parts and manufactures its cold plunges exclusively in the US, but is looking to expand internationally, first to the UAE, then the UK, where the company is already talking to distributors. Kyle’s aim is to establish cold plunging as part of an overall wellness culture. “Our ultimate goal is to see cold plunging become as common as doing a workout.”

www.thecoldlife.com





Divine vision

Aranyani handbags embody the heart and soul of India, making them treasured possessions that last a lifetime

The story behind Aranyani – the India-based luxury handbag atelier with a boutique in Mayfair, London – is one of divine inspiration. The brand’s name and ethos derive from a legend about Hindu god Shiva and his wife, Parvati. “They asked a wish-fulfilling tree for a daughter and were delighted when they were presented with a gorgeous baby in a basket brimming with beautiful flowers,” says Haresh Mirpuri, Aranyani founder and Creative Director. “They named her Aranyani and declared her goddess of the forest. I established my atelier to create handbags that deliver the same sense of delight, embody positive energy and honour the natural world.”

With an extensive background in clothing and textile manufacture, Haresh founded his company in 2016 in the southern Indian city of Bengaluru, where he has his atelier. His Aranyani handbags represent the most exceptional Indian craftsmanship – elegant designs in finest-quality leather, hand-decorated with precious

gemstones, 24-karat gold gilding and embroidery. The team’s 22 craftspeople have undergone a two-year apprenticeship with artisans from Europe’s finest fashion and luxury brands. “They are highly respected craftspeople,” says Haresh. As such, they have a strong connection to each bag they make. Each handbag is assigned an authenticity card with a QR code linked to information advising the owner not only about the handbag’s care, but also the story behind it and the name of its maker.

The bags are handmade in limited quantities – with no waste and a minimal carbon footprint. For Haresh, this pairs with his long-held mantra of “hands in society, head in forest”, the belief that true luxury comes with an acceptance of responsibility. He adopts a mindful and respectful approach to both business and environmental stewardship, so that Aranyani benefits “every soul intertwined with our destiny”, which encompasses employees, customers, community and nature. Haresh ensures his craftspeople receive private medical insurance and high salaries. Aranyani also supports the local community; it works with organisations to deliver essentials to vulnerable people, helps to develop schools and provides skills training. In addition the atelier is completely plastic free, a Net Zero development that incorporates rainwater harvesting and water recycling.

The intention is that when customers hold an Aranyani bag, “we want them to understand what it embodies – the respect and reverence that has been shown in every step of its creation”. This includes the carefully selected gemstones, chosen for their specific physical and spiritual qualities, and the sustainable leather, which is sourced solely from the discarded skins of animals raised for meat or milk but honoured for their sacrifice. “Handbags are not merely vessels for carrying things, they are beautiful, treasured possessions,” says Haresh. “More than that, they are beside a woman at all times, with her through all she enjoys and endures, so our handbags are created with meaning and purpose, to be her ally.”

Aranyani’s Mayfair boutique – all sustainable materials, natural tones and the warmth of a genuinely customer-centric service – offers another thoughtfully considered connection to the brand. Here, customers view seasonal collections, discuss bespoke commissions and can see the quality up close. “Quality is a prerequisite in a luxury handbag,” says Haresh. “Beyond that, it’s about personal choice. By choosing Aranyani, customers can pair quality with something profoundly meaningful: the embodiment of positive energy in their life and beyond.”

www.aranyani.com







Behind the science

The physician founder of Dr Raluca Hera | Haute Couture Skincare has harnessed the scientifically proven benefits of potent natural ingredients to transform skin health

A practising gynaecologist with clinics in Zurich and Bucharest, Dr Raluca Hera was always fascinated by anti-ageing medicine and, having carried out molecular research, a science-based approach to skincare.

As someone with sensitive skin, she also knew the importance of using the right skin products to avoid flare-ups. "In my 30s I decided to change my diet, skincare routine and lifestyle," she says. "I started researching the topic and read a lot about reducing inflammation, hypersensitivity and reactive skin, and balancing body and skin on a molecular basis."

Combining her medical expertise with clinical research and practice, she founded Romanian skincare brand Dr Raluca Hera | Haute Couture Skincare in 2013. The range includes cleansers, serums, toners, hydration masks and moisturisers, and products formulated for men. "I wanted my products to be completely natural and very clean, yet high performance," says Dr Hera. "I studied how concentrations of different ingredients work on each layer of the skin and how they exert therapeutic benefits. The result is very pure and precise."

By using "completely natural" and "highly active" ingredients, the skincare absorbs well. "We are talking about 70 per cent absorption versus 40 per cent absorption for synthetic skincare," says Dr Hera. She is so confident in her brand's unique formulations that they are the only products she uses on her own skin.

Dr Raluca Hera | Haute Couture Skincare also creates bespoke preparations for the individual needs of clients. "Everybody has unique skin and a unique beauty. As we work in small batches, we are able to customise products. We can handle the needs of almost every person and create a routine for them so they feel good in their own skin."

Dr Hera is proud that many customers are loyal to the brand after experiencing it for the first time, and are attracted to its commitment to sustainability. The brand only sources from manufacturers with traceable supply chains and uses recyclable glass packaging. "The glass is biophotonic, which means it preserves the bioenergy by protecting the product from light damage," says Dr Hera.

Dr Hera's private clinics in Switzerland and Romania offer treatments for dermatology and ageing, which enables her to ask patients for feedback. This helps her learn more about what people need and refine new products. It also means she can provide a "holistic service" to clients. "I am striving continuously to educate customers and make them aware of the necessity of having a healthy skin routine, which is the cornerstone of wellbeing and health in general,"

she says. "People often focus on buying a high-quality moisturiser and neglect the steps needed to prepare the skin first, which includes the use of cleanser, toner and serum." Protection of the skin against UV rays is also a priority for Dr Hera's products, which usually include an SPF, along with vitamins that nourish the skin. Products are formulated by a team of ten specialists who strive to innovate with new anti-ageing and regenerative ingredients.

The skincare is available in Europe and the US, and Dr Hera is looking to expand into the Middle East and Asia. The company also produces formulas used in other brands that are household names in Romania. There are plans to extend the men's range, as well as create a range of supplements that support good skin health. "I'm really proud of these products, and of the brand's signature values I have been able to accomplish: empowerment, excellence, innovation, integrity, health," says Dr Hera. "I couldn't live without them."

<https://heramedical.ro>



The height of elegance

Created for a distinguished clientele, Lady Primrose Fragrances has stayed true to its heritage while embracing the future

Sometimes, something becomes such an integral part of your identity it is hard to imagine life without it. So enamoured was Michelle Balaz with Royal Extract, Lady Primrose Fragrance's trademark perfume, that it became a fundamental element of what she terms her "fragrance repertoire" for years. She had first discovered it as magazine publisher travelling to Dallas, Texas, where the brand was based. But when, in 2020, Michelle found out the company was closing, she informed her sister, who was an avid wearer of Lady Primrose's Tryst. Her sister had one simple response: "Are they selling the company?"

It was not the first time the company had been asked that question, but the answer was always no. It did not trust anybody to continue its legacy. But fuelled by her love for Royal Extract, Michelle was determined, and in 2021 – after promising to keep the employees, the Dallas location and the formulas honed from centuries-old perfume recipes dating back to 1677 – she and her sister became its new owners with Michelle also serving as CEO. While she may be its new "face", she has ensured Lady Primrose remains true to its original, luxury vision.

Although she obtained it from two ladies who had purchased it in 2006, it was originally started by heiress Carolyn Rose Hunt in 1990. An astute businesswoman, Hunt was the founder of Rosewood Hotels, which once owned the magnificent Lanesborough in London, for which she created her own bathroom amenities rather than outsource them. "That's how Lady Primrose was born," says Michelle, "and how two of the original perfumes – Tryst and Royal Extract – came to be. Royal Extract was a part of the Lanesborough bath amenity and fragrance programme for 25 years."

Michelle's aim in acquiring the company – beyond always having the perfume of her dreams – is to honour its core demographic and history, and reposition it to attract new customers. While Lady Primrose remains the height of elegance and tradition, it is also looking forward. With some of its fragrances already using neutral bases, Lady Primrose introduced its first men's scent with Gentlemen 1677 cologne, which has since evolved into a range that includes candles, beard and face oil, soaps and shower gel. It complements all the brand's fragrances, which, in addition to Tryst and Royal Extract eau de parfums, includes Momentous, Celadon and Necture – ultra-fine blends as elegant and distinguished as they are subtle.

Lady Primrose makes everything from soaps, hand wash, bath salts and lip balms to dusting silk body powders,

room sprays and reed diffusers. It all combines to create an essence that Michelle loved so much that – to quote Victor Kiam on Remington shavers – she "bought the company". She has ensured the attention to luxury and detail remains at its heart. The body creams, for example, come in a jar with a Victorian era-inspired ornate lid, the bath gel in whimsical decanters that are designed to keep. "Regal, refined and reminiscent" defines Lady Primrose Fragrances.

"We position ourselves as a boutique fragrance-forward company," says Michelle, "because all of our collections start with fragrance. Everything has a story and is a gift within a gift. The idea is to reuse, repurpose, refill. So while you experience these incredibly styled fragrant offerings, you're also treating yourself to something very beautiful and reminiscent that will look gorgeous on any vanity."

www.ladyprimrose.com
www.gentlemen1677.com





City-proof skin

Two Hong Kong siblings are developing sustainable skincare products specifically formulated for urban pollution

Nicholas and Karen Chow are the sibling duo who co-founded Hong Kong skin-health brand TiN5 in 2018 as a premium skincare designed for hot and humid climates and city pollution. The concept came to Nicholas while studying luxury brand management in Switzerland. “I was fascinated with the prevalence of European luxury brands in the market when most of their clients were Asians and predominantly Chinese,” he says. “A lot of the brands are not really designed for Asian climates. Hence, Hong Kong has a high percentage of individuals with skin concerns such as dermatitis, eczema, rosacea and sensitivity.”

Nicholas’s passion to create a brand with purpose to empower people with healthier skin is shared by Karen, who as a cosmetic scientist and the lead scientist at TiN5 formulates the products. She, too, noticed the effects of climate on the skin, especially when she was studying in York where the air is drier. “I realised that humidity, temperature and environmental aggressors affect my skin routine and concerns,” she says. To combat external aggressors such as urban pollution, the pair focused on creating TiN5 as a function-oriented brand capable of strengthening and restoring the skin barrier. This led to the development of their proprietary ingredient, Cellura, which utilises biomimetic nanotechnology to strengthen the skin barrier, using scientific methods inspired by nature.

The duo launched the brand in 2023 at the Rosewood Hotel, Hong Kong. It was the labour of three to four years of research, but also 30 years of a family legacy in medical research and the beauty industry. Nicholas and Karen’s father, who was a doctor and stem cell researcher, manufactures skincare products, supplying wellness spas and salons in Hong Kong. Together, they named the brand TiN5, as “Tin” translates as “days” in Cantonese, and the “5” refers to the five days it should take to experience the benefits of the skincare. Tin is also the middle name of the family’s five siblings.

In response to increased awareness of skin disorders following the pandemic, explains Nicholas, and after receiving customer feedback, TiN5 formulas are designed to be lightweight and wearable for all skin types. The serums and creams aim to soothe, repair and rejuvenate damaged, sensitive or inflamed skin. “We focus on the texture to make sure they work in summertime, springtime, fall or winter”; unlike many other countries, Hong Kong does not have a proper winter so the light, non-greasy formulation is popular with customers.

Such attention to detail is seen in the efforts the siblings make to ensure TiN5 is clean and sustainable. They avoid using some common skincare ingredients, which they have labelled “The Dirty Ten”. These include petroleum, parabens and other chemicals that are either harmful to the body, not made sustainably or end up as toxins in seas and rivers. “Everything we have formulated is safe for your skin and safe for the environment,” says Nicholas. And as they control their own manufacturing, they can be highly transparent about their formulations, producing small batches and even personalising products for high-end customers.

TiN5 has a retail space and treatment centre at 235 Nam Cheong Street in Kowloon. Nicholas and Karen have also set their sights on going beyond Southeast Asia, bringing their skin solutions to cities around the world and innovating for a changing climate.

www.tin5skin.com





Rooted in innovation

The Meshkati Hair Centre in London has advanced the art of hair restoration, underpinned by 30 years of scientific practice

Amy Meshkati is a renowned hair restoration specialist held in high esteem by her clients – celebrities, diplomats, entrepreneurs and the super-rich, many of whom just call her “Amy”. They flock to her discreet clinic, The Meshkati Hair Centre, in Belgravia, London, when seeking hair loss and hair thinning treatment.

Amy’s interest in tackling hair loss began in 1985, when she was studying biology in Paris. “I was doing research on alopecia after I encountered a young girl with the condition who was eager to find a cure,” she says. “There was nothing which could specifically help kids.” Treatments for adults, meanwhile, were often very crude attempts at hair transplantation, with techniques that often resulted in scarring the backs of patients’ scalps. So after studying hair restoration, Amy set up her own clinic in Paris to offer a more effective range of hair loss treatments that were grounded in research.

A visit from a British pop star who shall, Amy insists, remain unnamed, proved transformative. “I did a procedure for him and, back in England, he said during a magazine interview that he had ‘met Amy in Paris’.” That recommendation led to visits from a dozen more celebrities. The clinic’s phone was barely in its holster before the next call arrived.”

In 2016, Amy opened her London clinic. Here, treatments start with a consultation to assess the extent of the problem and how best to fix it. First, the health of the scalp is assessed. If Amy and her team think the hair loss is at an early stage, they recommend personalised treatments. These include the Exosome treatment, which naturally regenerates the hair follicles, repairs tissue and revitalises the scalp; and the Platelet Rich Plasma therapy, which encourages hair growth and density by using the patient’s own plasma to obtain a five-times-higher concentration of platelets. Another anti-hair-loss treatment, a new take on mesotherapy, strengthens hair follicles by nourishing them at the root. There are also pills and a serum that clients can apply. “Sometimes I just advise this if I feel it’s enough,” says Amy.

For more advanced cases, surgical and non-surgical treatments are available. The non-surgical Nanoprocure is developed at the Meshkati laboratory in collaboration with practitioners and researchers. Clinicians take hair samples from patients and the treatment starts by identifying substitution hair through a “DNA-Matched” process. The hair is distributed across the scalp over a period of three or four days. The surgical solution for hair loss at Meshkati, the Follicular Unit Extraction (FUE),

combines meticulous precision and artistic mastery with cutting-edge techniques. Hairs are grafted with optimal density and precision to sculpt a natural-looking result that works with the client’s facial features. To ensure the result has longevity, a specialist applies a healing molecule (adenosine triphosphate) and platelet-rich plasma, conducting follow-up Biophotonic LED treatments. They monitor the result over six months, creating a supportive and holistic experience.

Recovery times for most of the procedures are minimal, with patients pursuing normal activities almost immediately. Amy often travels to clients’ homes, whether they are in Saudi Arabia, Singapore or the US, for post-op check-ups. “If they cannot come to London, we still give them the best possible service,” she says. The combination of cutting-edge treatment and trademark compassion chimes with Meshkati’s overall mission. “We always put the concerns and the problems of our clients first.”

www.meshkati.co.uk





Extracts from the sea

Made with freshly harvested seaweed to luxury standards by local female producers, Mwani Zanzibar's skincare is pure, ethical and healing

Seaweed may not seem an obvious choice for the key ingredient in a luxurious skincare product. But its healing properties are well-known in the coastal regions of East Africa, says Klaartje Schade, who founded luxury skincare brand Mwani Zanzibar along with co-founder Andrew Anthony. Klaartje comes from Zimbabwe and spent many childhood days on the Tanzanian island of Zanzibar witnessing how the local women happily made skin salves and compresses out of the latest batch of harvested seaweed. Returning to the island later in life through voluntary work, Klaartje could see the untapped potential of this healing practice.

Looking first for scientific proof of its anecdotal healing properties, Klaartje and her team carried out rigorous in-vitro testing of the seaweed, which soon confirmed its effectiveness – what the Zanzibari women already knew. Testing revealed high antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, as well as its significant impact on activating and toning skin cells. These exceptional qualities were harnessed and refined, leading to a patented formulation called MW Macroalgae Extract, the first formula of its kind. Its effects are so powerful, only small amounts are used in the products, which include a face cleanser and mask; face and body skin superfood; Macroalgae and lemongrass soap; and Macroalgae, cinnamon and turmeric soap.

The word “Mwani” is Swahili for seaweed. Farming this plant is nothing new to the inhabitants of this archipelago but is so poorly paid that it is mostly left to the women known as the Mwani Mamas to harvest the crop, leading to a cycle of poverty. Klaartje, however, could see a different future, one where the women could thrive financially and become their own bosses. This future was sealed in 2019 when Klaartje changed the not-for-profit organisation she was working with into a successful international skincare brand.

It was quite a shift from the typical charity model seen in Africa, evolving into a company focusing on high-quality, science-backed products. “We wanted to deliver something that was exceptional and to surprise people with a whole different narrative about women from this region. Through selling this product, we’ve turned that narrative upside down. Suddenly, the women of the island are deciding their own future.”

Based in the Zanzibar village of Paje, the brand runs a five-year training programme for the Mwani Mamas to become independent producers of the luxury skincare products. During their training, the company employs



the women full-time, paying them fair wages for their work. Eschewing the route of mass manufacturing, the Mwani Mamas make each of the products by hand to ensure their artisanal quality. They cold press the soaps and cure them for nine weeks before they are ready.

All ingredients are sourced naturally and locally where possible. The seaweed is farmed in cycles and without the use of machinery, which encourages biodiversity and longevity for the crop. Implementing these long-term sustainable practices, from harvest to end product, epitomises the brand. And the Mwani Mamas are having a positive impact, not just on their lives, but on the environment. “Everybody feels they’re part of something bigger than themselves. Our whole model is about giving back to the local area and society,” says Klaartje. “Seaweed has a lot of potential in terms of healthcare and skincare benefits, but also in environmental and climate mitigation. It’s amazing to think what this crop can do.”

www.mwanizanzibar.com



High vibrational beauty

The gem-infused skincare products from KNESKO are formulated to relax the mind, rebalance the spirit and rejuvenate the skin

Imagine treating your skin to a decadent treatment infused with genuine gold, diamonds, or amethyst that gives your skin a radiant glow from the inside out. This is the signature result of the KNESKO experience, a high-vibrational skincare brand that elegantly bridges the gap between cutting-edge active ingredients and holistic wellness.

“We combine science and spirituality, and we do it in a premium luxury way,” says co-founder Lejla Cas, a celebrity aesthetician and product formulator with more than two decades of experience in the beauty industry. “There’s nobody like us out there that places an emphasis on highly effective, scientific formulations that are also charged with balancing Reiki energy.”

Lejla co-founded KNESKO with her husband, Sean Nezhad, in 2012, starting with the now cult-favourite collagen masks. The brand has since expanded into several different categories of skincare, body care and facial tools – all featured in five-star spas and resorts around the world, championed by make-up artists and aestheticians, and used by celebrities worldwide.

KNESKO is renowned for its results-focused skincare that bridges cutting-edge science with the ancient wisdom of holistic healing. As a Reiki master and healer, Lejla charges every product with Reiki energy to instil emotional wellness. “Our brand intention is to spread love and kindness, to give people an experience with KNESKO that is more than skincare, it’s self-care,” she explains. “We see our brand as an enlightened pathway to beautiful skin and a glowing soul.”

Each collection is formulated with KNESKO’s proprietary Gemclinical Technology, infusing gemstone particles into their formulations to optimise ingredient efficacy while balancing chakras. Gold Repair focuses on lifting and intuition; Diamond Radiance brightens and enlightens; Green Jade Calm soothes skin and heightens gratefulness; Amethyst Hydrate replenishes moisture and protects; Rose Quartz Antioxidant targets environmental damage and fosters love; and Black Pearl Detox visibly retexturises and grounds.

“Each collection includes a mantra and meditation ritual card that guides you through a daily self-care ritual,” explains Lejla, “as KNESKO encourages people to ‘give themselves the gift of time,’ to find that me-time – whether it’s 20 seconds or 30 minutes.” It also includes mantras that resonate with the chakra the stone activates. So the mantra for Rose Quartz is ‘I am love’.

Along with providing intentional moments for the customer, KNESKO feels strongly about making

a positive social and environmental impact. The brand follows strict ethical sourcing of ingredients, uses recycled materials and its warehouse runs on 100 per cent renewable energy. KNESKO also partners with environmental organisations, including 1% for the Planet, One Tree Planted and the Women’s Earth Alliance. “Empowering people and protecting our Earth is really important to me,” says Lejla. “I left my country as a civil war refugee. Having overcome that but seeing others struggle, I wanted a brand that empowers people and respects our planet, too.”

Lejla sees KNESKO as an accessible luxury. “It’s for everyone who wants to take care of their skin and understands the importance of consistency. The more you use KNESKO, the better your skin will look,” she says. “Each collection has a different benefit, but it is also for those hoping to find ways to disconnect from this plugged-in world. KNESKO is good for the skin and the soul.”

www.knesko.com





Clean and pleasant

Kelsey Cornish's natural and vegan soap and skincare are handmade in Cornwall with care and a conscience

Standing on the wide, golden expanse of a Newquay beach on the north coast of Cornwall, the sea spray and sunshine casting their spell, the connection with nature is tangible. The Kelsey Cornish range of small-batch, handmade soap and skincare is evocative of this vibe, embodying the warmth and wellbeing of a seaside holiday and championing the purity of ingredients.

Hand-cut blocks of soap – among them, marbled Charcoal; Geranium and Pink Clay; and the warm, woody Cypress Fir and Cedarwood – come neatly wrapped in simple paper sleeves. The blend of nut butter, plant oils and natural plant extracts make these soaps, as well as bath salts, body butters and shampoo bars, nourishing yet deliciously perfumed, and planet and vegan friendly.

Founder Karen Gough launched her Newquay business at home from her kitchen. Here, her interest in making soap using the traditional cold soap process, coupled with her veganism, led her to experiment with new recipes and infusions that did not contain animal extracts. She also refused to use palm oil, which is widely used in commercial production, and wanted to create something that was as plastic free as possible.

In making a product that was as equally kind to the skin as it was to the environment, Karen taps into the growth of consumer awareness about how cosmetics and skincare are made. The rise in popularity of vegan cosmetics is driven by those consumers with consciences who like to know exactly what goes into their products.

Kelsey Cornish soaps are made in small batches to ensure quality, as well as meeting all UK and EU cosmetics regulations. Ingredients such as litsea, a sweetly citrus-scented oil derived from the Asian Mountain Pepper tree,

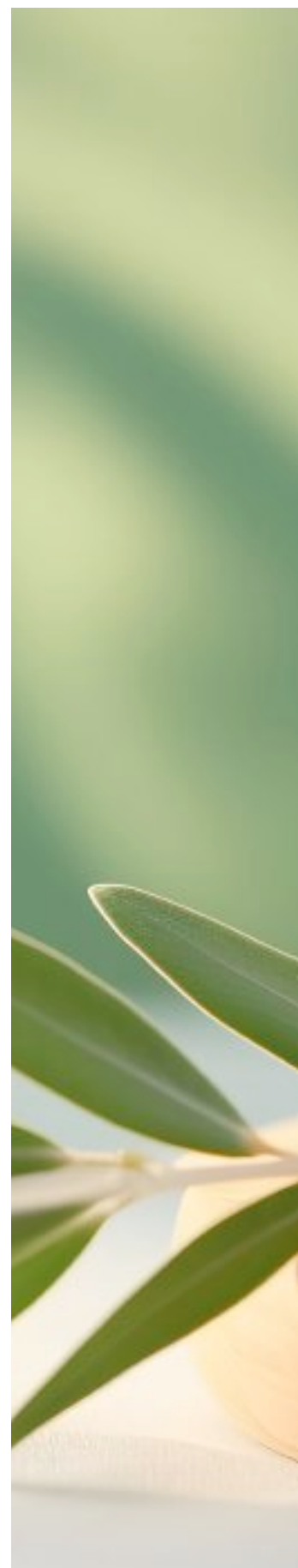
suggest a perfumer's skill when it comes to combining plant oils. For Karen, this all started with her passion for creating natural skincare products using the highest quality, sustainably sourced ingredients.

The origins of soap making, in general, can be traced back thousands of years to the Babylonians. Even today, when using traditional methods and natural ingredients, as Karen does, there is something of the ancient alchemist's art about combining lye (an alkali used in the making of natural soap), nut butter and perfume. When mixed, the lye causes a heat reaction called saponification, which binds the ingredients. Once poured into a mould, the soap is cooled over a period of 48 hours, before it is cut to shape.

Kelsey Cornish ingredients are all carefully chosen. Soaps are sometimes blended with refined cosmetic clays to purify the skin, while crushed herbs or oatmeal are stirred in to provide gentle exfoliation. Ingredients are also chosen for their moisturising qualities and suitability for sensitive skins, with none of the products containing parabens or sulphates. The shampoo bars use no water in production and come in lightweight, reusable aluminium tins; being solid, they are the ideal, spill-free holiday shampoo. Shaving soap such as Rosemary, Peppermint and Lavender come in reusable tins, too, minimising waste.

Though available online, Kelsey Cornish is a feature at some of Cornwall's vibrant artisan gatherings, such as the Fowey Christmas Market, which keeps the brand connected to its Cornish roots and values. To meet the demand, production now takes up a good deal more than her kitchen table, yet Karen's passion for her products and principles is still rooted in the natural beauty of the Cornish coast that inspires her.

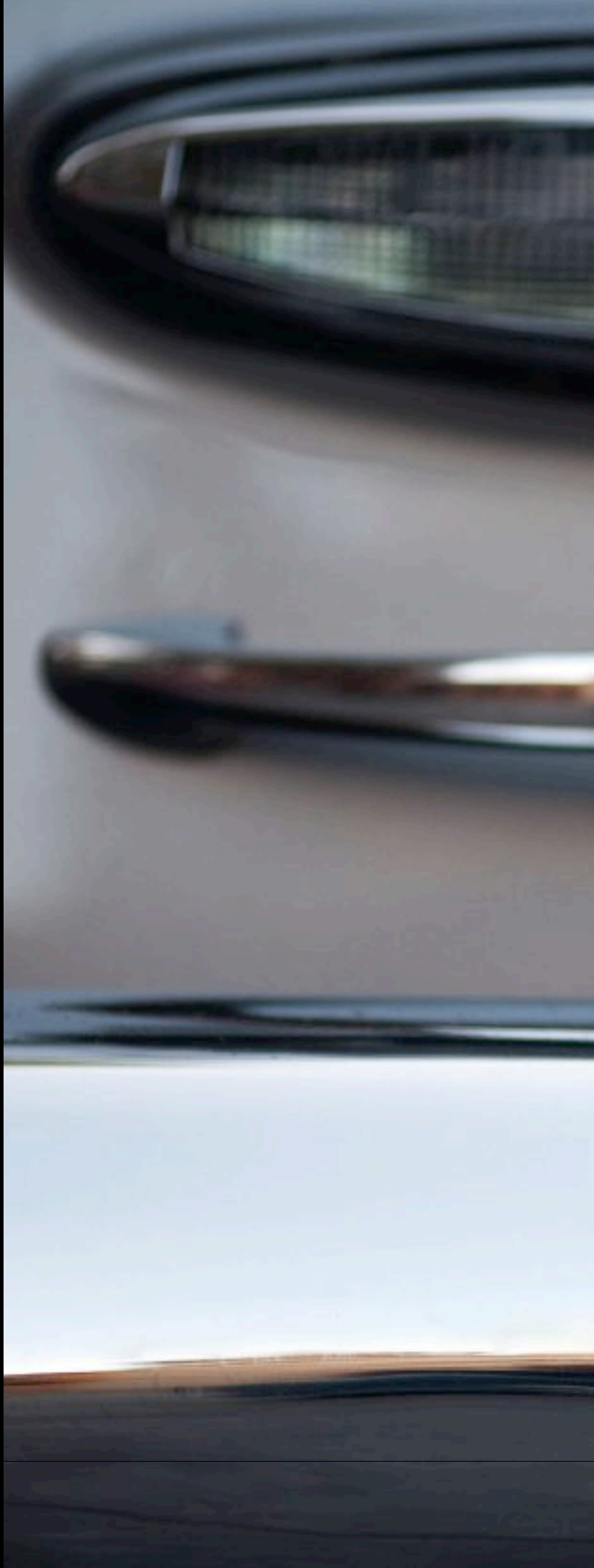
www.kelseycornish.co.uk





8. *Creative thinking*

*DESIGN AND
ENTERPRISE*





A RECORD OF SUCCESS (AND SUCCESSION)

*FOLLOWING A YEAR OF
CHANGE AT BENTLEY MOTORS,
THE LUXURY CARMAKER IS
PRIMED FOR PROGRESS, SAYS
RAY MASSEY, PROPELLED
BY A NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE
AND PRODUCTION PLAN*





ne of the thrills for which Bentley can always be relied on is dramatic performance, and the marque certainly delivered high drama in what proved to be a near record-breaking and tumultuous year, as it embarks on the transformation to being a fully electric car company.

Just three days after longstanding Chairman and CEO Adrian Hallmark celebrated the company's second best-ever financial results on 19 March 2024 – driven largely by increased levels of personalisation – he announced that he was leaving the Crewe-based company to head up British rivals Aston Martin.

Or, put another way, amid levels of secrecy worthy of MI6, Hallmark stunned the luxury car sector by announcing that he was leaving the manufacturer that provided James Bond with his original “Blower” Bentley in books and, fleetingly, in early movies, for the firm that put 007 on the big screen in a gadget-laden, bullet-proof DB5.

Thankfully, Hallmark's departure proved a civilised affair, with Bentley's German owners at the Volkswagen Group thanking him whole-heartedly for the work he had done in getting Bentley to where it is today – ready to make the great leap forward towards the next big chapter of electrification. That said, the timetable for switching to full electric-only production has been delayed slightly, following an internal restructuring that sees Audi overseeing the electrification of the group's luxury brands.

Noting that he had taken on the role of Chairman and CEO of Bentley Motors six years earlier “in a challenging business situation”, they announced that, “Adrian Hallmark is leaving Bentley Motors at his own request and by mutual consent. During his time as CEO, leading new luxury models were launched and the strategic aim was formed of making Bentley the most sustainable brand of luxury vehicles by 2030.”

And here's a little personal insight. Some days ahead of official publication of the marque's pending results, I was part of an exclusive but embargoed Zoom internet briefing with Hallmark about the company's finances. I've known him for decades and, despite him battling a head cold, I couldn't help notice how thoroughly relaxed he appeared and sounded. So when, a few days later, I got an early nudge that his departure was imminent, a large penny dropped.

DRIVEN BY BESPOKE

In what proved to be Hallmark's last official appearance, the outgoing CEO revealed that “jaw-dropping” levels of personalisation had helped Bentley to sell a total of 13,560 cars in 2023, earning revenues of £2.52 billion and operating profits of £506 million. That is the company's third highest level of sales and the second highest operating profit in its history.

“Bentley owes much to Adrian Hallmark. Under his leadership the company has taken important steps towards an electric future”

GERNOT DÖLLNER

Previous page | Bentley's outgoing Chairman and CEO, Adrian Hallmark

Right | The marque's most powerful sedan ever, the new hybrid-driven Flying Spur







The Bentayga SUV was the biggest-selling model in 2023, accounting for 44 per cent of sales, followed by the Continental GT and GT Convertible, at 31 per cent, and the Flying Spur, at 25 per cent. The marque's top markets were the Americas (28 per cent); China (22 per cent); Continental Europe (18 per cent); Asia Pacific (16 per cent); the UK (9 per cent) and the Middle East (7 per cent).

Bentley's personalised commissioning division, Mulliner, experienced a 43 per cent increase in business over 2022, with three-quarters of customers exploring the company's 46 billion (correct, billion) bespoke option configurations. A record 70 per cent of buyers spent on personalised "extras" with a combined cost of more than £39,000 per car. "Demand for personalisation is through the roof," said Hallmark. "People are keen to express their own tastes and preferences."

Expenditure on bespoke Bentley features ranged from interior wood trim to tailored exterior paint. One customer even asked for wood from his own forest to be used as interior trim, while another who paid the base £2 million for a limited-edition Bentley Batur then spent around £400,000 more adding personal touches including levels of carbon fibre trim never before envisaged. Another who spent more than £250,000 on a Bentley Continental GT then spent almost as much again on personalisation.

THE ELECTRIC SWITCH

The personalisation boom is helping boost profits at a time when the firm is undertaking the biggest revolution since it was founded – the transition to being a fully electric car brand. Bentley is already at "full speed" and "fully committed" to the switch to electric and, with five pure electric vehicle (EV) models planned over five years, as Hallmark said, "All the investment is locked and loaded."

That investment amounts to more than £2.5 billion over eight years to complete the company's transition to fully electric car production – including a new high-tech EV production centre and a new £140 million state-of-the-art Paint Shop.

However, the launch of the first of its five electric cars has had to be postponed by a year – from 2025 to the end of 2026 – for a combination of technical reasons and lower than expected customer demand, fuelled by the shortage of public charging points, Hallmark explained. To bridge that gap and reduce "risk", Bentley is putting a greater emphasis for an extended two-year period on plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV) until 2031–32, when the full Bentley lineup will be electric only. As Hallmark added, the extra time would allow Bentley to use improved battery technology to ensure a range of more than 370 miles while earning income from hybrids during the slightly delayed transition.

“Demand for personalisation is through the roof. People are keen to express their own tastes and preferences”

ADRIAN HALLMARK

Opposite | As part of its extensive bespoke offering, the luxury carmaker expanded its range of satin paint finishes to 15 colours earlier this year

Below | Bentley has invested heavily in electric car production, although the launch of the company's first fully electric model has been postponed to 2026





Above | The W12 assembly and research teams gather at Crewe to bid farewell to the celebrated powertrain

Left | Bentley's new performance-focused V8 hybrid engine

There had already been an “uptick” in demand for hybrids, he confirmed – an interest tweaked, no doubt, by a previous social media post of the CEO achieving 65mpg on his daily commute in a Bentayga hybrid that went viral.

THE W12 BOWS OUT

One major departure at Bentley was accompanied by another swan song in 2024, as the company marked the making of the last ever hand-built, high-performance 12-cylinder engine at Crewe in July, following 20 years of production. As the last W12-powered Bentayga, Continental GT and Flying Spur cars rolled off the factory line, a pivotal chapter in the marque’s history came to a close.

More than 100,000 6.0-litre, twin-turbo W12s have been produced over the two decades since the engine was introduced in the original Continental GT in 2003. Each engine took around seven hours to build and required the meticulous assembly of 2,600 separate components. Bentley said the decision to cease production was in line with the company’s Beyond100 electrification strategy aimed at making it a global leader in sustainable luxury motoring.

The W12 is being replaced with an ultra-high performance 771hp hybrid powertrain that combines a powerful V8 combustion engine with advanced battery technology and low emissions of just 29g/km.

“The W12 has played such an important role in the history of Bentley that it was only right for us to celebrate the engine’s retirement with those linked to this powerplant,” said Andreas Lehe, Member of the Board for Manufacturing, at its Crewe send-off. “The engine’s introduction helped change the face of the company almost overnight and so will go down in history as a true game-changer.”

A NEW CHAPTER

The past year has certainly felt like the end of a chapter at Bentley and, inevitably, the start of a new one. Announcing Hallmark’s departure, Audi CEO Gernot Döllner, who is also responsible for the Progressive brand group that includes Audi, Bentley, Lamborghini and Ducati within the Volkswagen Group, said: “Bentley owes much to Adrian Hallmark. Under his leadership the company has taken important steps towards an electric future as a luxury car manufacturer.

“In his six years as Chairman and CEO, he has made his mark on Bentley Motors, and along with his team in Crewe has successfully pushed ahead the development of the company,” he added. “On the path to carbon-neutral electric vehicles in the luxury segment, he has taken important steps towards the long-term success of the company.”

Hallmark’s replacement, who took over as Chairman and CEO on 1 July, is former Porsche engineering development chief Frank-Steffen Walliser. “I am approaching this job with great respect and looking forward to having a team in Crewe that has shown impressive performance over the last few years,” said Walliser, who developed the 918 Spyder super sports car and was previously Head of Motorsport at the Stuttgart-based company. “The continuing transformation of the automotive industry will be a major task for Bentley as well, a task that I am happy to take on with the team. I am convinced Bentley will continue to set standards in the luxury segment in the future.”

On the appointment of Walliser to the top job at the British company, Döllner commented: “Bentley is getting an experienced engineer with distinct product and technology expertise and entrepreneurial experience, who brought brand-defining models to the streets at Porsche. His many years of experience and knowledge of the luxury segment will be invaluable.”



Above | Hallmark, pictured at Bentley’s Heritage Garage

Below | The company’s new Chairman and CEO, Frank-Steffen Walliser



History of innovation

Cole & Son's luxury wallpapers are inspired by its profound design heritage, as seen in the London flagship store and archive

As soon as Marie Karlsson walked into the site in north London where Cole & Son, a storied designer of premium wallpaper, had its offices, she “fell in love with the company”. It was an auspicious start to a working relationship that would see Marie become Cole & Son's Creative and Managing Director and use her skill and passion to return the brand to the highest pinnacle of taste and luxury.

Founded in 1875 by John Perry, an innovative artist and resourceful businessman who produced wood blocks that were used to make hand-printed wallpaper, the company has decorated the walls of some of the most famous buildings in the world – Kensington Palace and the Houses of Parliament, among them. The company was renamed Cole & Son during the Second World War, and it has a rich heritage that earned it a Royal Warrant under Queen Elizabeth II in 1961 – but Marie wanted the brand's extraordinary story to be even better known.

“I felt nobody had really explored this undeveloped diamond,” she says. “With this incredible history and so many treasures, I didn't want it to be hidden in a corner of London. I wanted to reimagine Cole & Son as a luxury design house acclaimed around the world.”

Marie was born in Iran but raised in an idyllic village in Sweden, where she came to realise that she had a passion for art and design, but also a desire to be a leader – making business decisions and inspiring a team. After developing her skills at art galleries, she began working for a Swedish investment group that owned many brands. “Cole & Son was in my portfolio,” says Marie, whose history with the company goes back to 2011.

One of Marie's chief objectives was to rehouse Cole & Son in a more prominent location. This was achieved in 2023 with the opening of a new home in Chelsea, in Jubilee Place just off the King's Road. The flagship building – which, fittingly, was originally a wallpaper factory – now incorporates offices, a design studio, an archive library and a glorious 200-square-metre gallery with ample floor-to-ceiling space that is ideal for displaying the brand's vast portfolio of wallpapers and fabrics. The headquarters doubles as an inspiring space for anybody seeking to transform their home using luxury hand-painted wallpaper.

The invitation-only archive library contains hundreds of designs, wood blocks and archival documents, some of which are three centuries old. Although John Perry started the business in the late 19th century, he was a collector of design pieces that were old even for his time. Whenever he learned of competing wood-block manufacturers that were about to close down, he would purchase their archive of printing blocks and incorporate it into his own archive. Cole & Son can therefore call on centuries-old designs that showcase not only the company's own history, but also the broader history of British interior design.

“We have around 1,400 ‘living’ designs and many more sleeping in the archive,” says Marie. Some of the wood blocks that John Perry would buy in the early days were very beautiful, such as the “Hummingbirds” design that was chosen by Queen Mary in 1920 to decorate Queen Victoria's former bedroom in Kensington Palace.







“We see wallpaper as an art and the wall as the canvas”

At Jubilee Place, Marie wanted to create a room where people could enjoy the journey of wallpaper since industrialisation. “We can show these pieces and help people to identify designs that would suit the scale and height of their own rooms, large and small,” she says.

The beauty, complexity and skill of Cole & Son’s artisanal work is breathtaking. A design such as “Hummingbirds” originally required 24 different blocks to reproduce the vibrant colours. The wallpaper was particularly popular in the austere post-war years, as it introduced a welcome dash of exotic colour. The striking repeat pattern of “Palm Leaves” is just one of the classic designs from this era.

“Some of our designs are quirky or playful. That started quite early, the desire for the unexpected. We can make something very elegant, but we try to liven things up by adding little secrets. We like popping in the unexpected, little treats that even the owners might not spot for years.”

Cole & Son’s wallpaper is suitable for every home, believes Marie. “It will make you feel a bit better, a bit happier. We see wallpaper as an art and the wall as the canvas.”

The company’s range runs from premium to ultra-luxury – the latter is for customers who want everything designed from beginning to end, with the final design hand-painted on raw silk. “But it doesn’t matter who you are; when you walk in here you get exceptional service and that, for me, is the epitome of British luxury,” says Marie.

While Cole & Son has a rich history and uses traditional methods, it also has a contemporary outlook that includes collaborations with designers such as Gucci, Vivienne Westwood, and Stella McCartney. McCartney’s “Fungi Forest” toile de Jouy print of mushrooms and toadstools not only epitomises the company’s aesthetic, but also touches on the company’s focus on a sustainable future as the wallpaper is made mainly of renewable fibres.

Cole & Son now wants to take this emphasis on sustainability into new areas. “I would love to see Cole & Son doing car interiors in vegan leather,” says Marie. “There is a lot we can do. We want to become increasingly bespoke. You could come to our beautiful archive in Jubilee Place, and together we can deliver the most extraordinary interiors with whatever design and material you decide.

“We are a brand with history and a brand for tomorrow. We want to be a company that people can relate to and look up to.”

cole-and-son.com



A century of home

For 100 years, Hooker Furnishings has been producing high-quality homewares – and making a similarly solid contribution to society

In 1924, Clyde Hooker Sr wanted to help the residents of Martinsville, Virginia, who were going through tough economic times. To create jobs and boost business in the area, he set up the company that would become Hooker Furnishings – and it is now one of the largest publicly traded furniture companies in the US.

Clyde Sr led the company through turbulent times, including the Great Depression and the Second World War. “He created a lot of the culture and philosophy we keep up today,” says Jeremy Hoff, the current CEO. “He was a philanthropist, and our employees still give their time and money to help organisations such as The Grace Network, a social enterprise. I think it is one of the reasons we have been here for 100 years.”

Clyde’s son, Clyde Hooker Jnr (who, as a four-year-old, had pulled the cord on the steam whistle that signalled the company’s first day of production) became president of the company in 1960, and during his tenure sales increased from \$4 million in 1961 to \$251 million in 2001. New collections are always being added as the company grows, and it now has 12 business units – from upholstery manufacturing to contract furnishings – and 14 brands, as well as a growing global presence.

Hooker Furnishings sells a wide range of products, including wood, metal and upholstered furniture and outdoor furnishings, as well as lighting and decor. The company has a reputation for a traditional look and style catering to the US market, but that is changing. “As we develop, we are curating furnishings for a variety of design styles, tastes and lifestyles around the world,” says Jeremy.

The company strives to be at the forefront of innovation, technology and creativity. “We have a history of evolving when we have to,” says Jeremy. Products are sold through showrooms and trade fairs to retailers and interior designers, who then sell to the consumer. Not having leases on stores has made Hooker Furnishings resilient and, since Jeremy became CEO in 2021, its agile approach has helped it survive disruptions, such as pandemic-related supply-chain delays.

Around 30 per cent of Hooker Furnishings’ sales come from domestic production, much of which can be customised to the taste of the client. The company also imports furnishings from factories around the world and, although the headquarters remains in Martinsville, it now has distribution centres in China and Vietnam, as well as other US locations. “One of our biggest strategic initiatives right now is to grow our international business,” says Jeremy. That includes Europe, and the

UK specifically. Hooker Furnishings is expanding its global design and merchandising approach, with experts in each market ensuring the company offers furnishings that resonate with the unique needs of those customers. “If we get ahead of the trends in Europe, that help us stay ahead in the US as well.”

Jeremy believes Hooker Furnishings has every chance of being as successful across the pond as it has been for the past century in its home country. “We like to be a straightforward company to do business with,” says Jeremy. “We are product-centric, but also customer-centric, and that has served us extremely well. We listen to our customers and make sure we are easy to deal with.”

Hooker Furnishings’ centenary is marked this year. To celebrate this and the tradition of philanthropy that dates right back to its founder, the company is launching a project called 100 Acts of Kindness, working with retail partners to give back to society in a variety of ways.

www.hookerfurnishings.com





The road to excellence

Yohan Poonawalla has amassed one of the world's most illustrious car collections, while being Chairman of one of India's most successful and philanthropic conglomerates, the Poonawalla Group

Adopting Sir Henry Royce's maxim "strive for perfection", billionaire Indian industrialist Yohan Poonawalla has established and guided many businesses to success. He is Chairman of the Poonawalla Group, which was founded in 1946 and operates in diverse sectors, from engineering, real estate, finance, biotech, horse racing and breeding, to the Poonawalla family's world-renowned Serum Institute, of which Yohan is a shareholder. With an emphasis on quality, innovation, dedication and customer support, the group is one of India's most respected organisations.

The group includes Intervale Poonawalla, which manufactures valves for the oil and gas industry and exports to 46 countries across Europe, North America, South America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East; and El-O-Matic India, which makes pneumatic actuators and valve automation systems for valve control. Both have helped advance Indian and international engineering while ensuring safe and effective performance.

Yohan comes from an entrepreneurial family, and as such he pursues a wide range of interests in addition to his role as Chairman. As an automobile aficionado, he has assembled India's finest collection of classic Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars, alongside running the family's renowned stud farm and carrying out pioneering work with his eponymous foundation. In 2022, he received the prestigious award AsiaOne Person of the Year for Global







Leadership and holds many other honours. “The awards bear testimony to our companies focusing on various businesses like engineering, finance, exports, real estate, investment and horse breeding,” says Yohan. “Our vision has always been to strive for excellence by constantly pushing our boundaries and taking every challenge as an opportunity to meet our business goals.”

Poonawalla Stud Farms is one of the Poonawalla Group’s most successful enterprises and was set up in 1946 by Yohan’s grandfather, the late Soli A Poonawalla, with a dozen mares and one stallion. It produced the Group 1 Indian 2000 Guineas winner, Fitzcall, and is now Asia’s leading thoroughbred stud farm, having won 15 Champion Breeders’ Awards and bred some 383 All-India Classic winners, including winners of ten Indian Derbies and 71 Indian Classics. Horses owned and bred by the group have won races in Hong Kong, Singapore, the US and Malaysia, as well as back-to-back wins at the Dubai World Cup.

Yohan is also involved in various philanthropic activities, funding and supporting schools, hospitals and public gardens. “Through the Yohan Poonawalla Foundation, we aim to give back to society,” he says. The foundation is well known for improving access to education and healthcare for the underprivileged in Pune, in the state of Maharashtra, where the Poonawalla family lives. Donations encompass the state-of-the-art Zavaray Poonawalla Cancer Building, for the treatment and care of cancer patients, and centres of education, including

the Soli A Poonawalla Memorial High School and Shri Sant Gadge Maharaj School.

The Poonawalla Group supports several corporate social responsibility initiatives in Pune, among them the Poona District Leprosy Committee, which for decades has played an important role in eradicating the disease. “We have been involved in various philanthropic activities, and I feel privileged to carry on the legacy to make our surroundings a better place to live,” says Yohan. “While we all strive to excel and create wealth, giving back to society is equally important. This is because it is that same society that we make our own living with.” The group created Pune’s Gool Poonawalla Garden in Salisbury Park, providing ongoing maintenance, and has contributed towards the widening and resurfacing of the Hadapsar Road, now known as the Soli Poonawalla Road. It also helped fund a new modern police station in Pune. Further investment projects include sports grounds development and sponsorship of the Indian mixed martial arts team for all-India and world championships.

Yohan’s wife, Michelle, a successful businesswoman, artist and Managing Director of both Intervolve Poonawalla and El-O-Matic India, has been personally involved in projects in Pune, too. Through her interior design company, Michelle Poonawalla Design Studio, she supervised the renovation of the historic Pune Turf Club, a building visited by Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip during their visit to India in 1961.

“Our vision has always been to strive for excellence by constantly pushing our boundaries”



Yohan has a major stake in six different companies that aim to revolutionise green industry, from advance GPS systems to defence. One of the enterprises has the potential to save billions of gallons of water by eliminating leaks without a major uphaul of infrastructure and at the same time improve water hygiene. Another is applying advanced green technology to transform the packaging industry, while elsewhere Yohan has the patented technology to convert waste and polluting plastics into valuable petrochemicals. He also has interests in a high-tech beverage company, producing healthy herb and spice-infused drinks and premium water.

Success in business has enabled Yohan to indulge in his passion for vintage and classic cars. The Yohan Poonawalla Collection, based in Pune, is India's most diverse collection of Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars, including the most historically significant cars, from pre-war to post-war, classic and modern bespoke. Assembled over many years, the collection is a labour of love for Yohan, Michelle and their children Tania and Zayan, who have inherited their father's love of motor cars. With a focus on provenance and pedigree, it is also an august curation of royal cars from around the world.

The collection comprises a series of phenomenal Phantoms, which includes 17EX, the iconic 1928 Sports Phantom I Experimental Prototype, a one-off car coachbuilt by Jarvis of Wimbledon. Considered one of the most important Rolls-Royces in existence today, 17EX is steeped in history, distinct in design, unmatched

in character and unrivalled in provenance. The extraordinary car was conceived and developed under the direct supervision of Sir Henry Royce. Mindful of Bentley's success at Le Mans, Rolls-Royce wanted to build a rival sports car that could break the 100mph barrier. Following extensive testing, including by Royce himself, 17EX was delivered, new, to Sir Hari Singh, the Maharaja of Kashmir, in original experimental condition. Jarvis had a reputation for building sportier bodies, including the record-setting Bluebirds, for the "King of Speed" Sir Malcolm Campbell. For 17EX, the coachbuilder designed an aerodynamic body, applying techniques from the aircraft industry to achieve reduction in weight. With free-floating arched wings and painted in Campbell's favourite Saxe Blue, the car looks breathtakingly beautiful. Its six-cylinder one-off enlarged 7.8-litre 25EX engine was given a thorough redesign with higher compression and bigger bore, resulting in greater torque. Other features of the car include streamlined torpedo coachwork, twin windshields, duck-tail and a polished bonnet top. 17EX won the top prize, the Best in Show award, in its first outing with Yohan at the 2024 Valletta Concours in Malta and then at the Icons Concours in Mallorca. The victories were all the sweeter coming in the milestone anniversary of Rolls-Royce's 120th year.

17EX resides in the illustrious company of other Phantoms, such as 140MY, the 1933 Phantom II, which was owned by Sir Malcolm Campbell. The car featured in the Great Eight Phantoms Exhibition organised by



“One of the most recent acquisitions is a historic Range Rover that belonged to Queen Elizabeth”

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars for the unveiling of the Phantom VIII in 2017. 140MY was one among the seven generations of Phantoms assembled to represent the flagship model's success and durability. 3CM37, the Maharaja of Panchkote's 1937 Phantom III by Park Ward, was the first Phantom acquired by Yohan. 5LCG25, the 1962 seven-passenger enclosed Phantom V Limousine by James Young, once owned by the Emir, founding father and first president of Qatar, and the star car of the 1962 and 2023 Geneva Motor Shows, is a highlight, having completed the 1000 Miglia race in 2023 in the United Arab Emirates with Yohan at its wheel. PGH116, a 1979 Phantom VI Limousine by Mulliner Park Ward, was the flagship demonstrator, and used by Queen Elizabeth on various state visits.

Also noteworthy are two Goodwood Phantoms. The Phantom VII from 2005 was the first car delivered in India after Rolls-Royce's return following a hiatus of almost 50 years; it will be joined by a 2024 bespoke EWB Phantom VIII, the last Phantom produced with a privacy suite, with unique features such as the Poonawalla coat of arms, flagstuffs, a highly creative console and the Spirit of Ecstasy in gold. Other notable cars include a bespoke James Young-bodied 1949 Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith Tourer that belonged to the maharajas of Mysore and Bharatpur; a 1927 Rolls-Royce 20hp Tourer by Barker, previously owned by the Nawab of Sachin; a 20/25hp; a 25/30hp; a trio of Silver Clouds, one of which was the President of India's; Silver Shadows; Silver Spurs; and several Goodwood-made cars, including a pair of Phantom drophead coupés and a Sapphire Edition Phantom VII.

The collection is also home to award-winning Bentleys, including the famous “Rhubarb and Custard Car” 1949 Bentley Mark VI, coachbuilt by Hooper for the Maharaja of Mysore, and a one-off 4¼ Derby-built all-weather Bentley by Park Ward with a disappearing top, delivered new to Prince Moazzam Jah Bahadur, son of the Nizam of Hyderabad. This is in addition to four Flying Spurs and a centenary edition Bentayga. Cars from marques such as Ferrari and Lamborghini are also part of the stable, alongside the Popemobile, a 1964 Lincoln Continental Convertible used by Pope Paul VI, who later gifted it to Mother Teresa, and a 1958 Mercedes-Benz 190 SL owned by the Maharani of Jaipur, Rajmata Gayatri Devi. One of the most recent acquisitions is a historic Range Rover “OU16 XVH” that belonged to

Queen Elizabeth and was used during the US state visit to the UK in 2016. After landing at Windsor Castle in the Marine One helicopter, President Obama took a seat in the car next to its driver, the Duke of Edinburgh, while First Lady Michelle Obama sat in the back with the Queen. The pictures of the scene were shown on TV networks worldwide.

In 2023, Yohan became the first Indian to feature in the global ranking of Top 100 Classic Car Collectors of the World and was the first from the country to win the prestigious Classic Car Ambassador of the Year Award in 2023. The same year, he was named Collector of the Year by the Geneva International Motor Show Qatar. Furthering the celebrated legacy of his forebears while adopting the group's core values, Yohan Poonawalla has successfully created a niche for himself as both a tall business leader and prominent collector of sought-after classic cars.

www.poonawallagroup.com
www.yohanpoonawalla.com



Brilliant creations

Italian brand Catellani & Smith has put a new spin on lighting design with its celebrated contemporary collections

While running a lighting shop in Bergamo, northern Italy, during the 1980s, Enzo Catellani began experimenting with his own designs. After presenting his first creations to the public at the Ambiente lighting fair in Frankfurt, he unexpectedly received around over a thousand orders. “Success came suddenly, without warning,” says Enzo. So, in 1989, he set up Catellani & Smith to meet this demand.

By using Smith in the company name, Enzo led people to believe his partner in the business was a London architect called Logan Smith, when in fact it was the name of his beloved horse. Enzo’s invention was just a way to give the company credibility in the beginning – and to deflect some of the focus away from Enzo himself. “I like to play down my creations, but I am someone who loves what he does.”

Despite his inherent creativity, Enzo does not see himself as either an artist or designer. Nevertheless, his work – from spectacular moon-shaped installations to delicate clusters of bulbs that resemble trees – has graced many exhibition spaces and buildings, both residential and commercial, from New York to Milan. Four two-metre-diameter versions of his iconic Fil de Fer lighting – a woven aluminium sphere lit from inside by small bulbs to exude a magical atmosphere – hang from the ceiling of the historic café of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Merging the worlds of art and design, the same striking design has appeared on stage in performances, for instance, by Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli. Catellani & Smith lighting can also be found in Michelin-starred restaurants and in prestigious hotels across Europe. As a mark of the company’s excellence, it has won the prestigious Italian industry award Alta Onorificenza di Bilancio in 2021 and 2022.

Whether large installations or compact table lamps, Enzo’s pieces emphasise soft, natural light and organic forms. Some play with shadow effects, such as his PostKrisi Collection, a series of pendant, table and wall lamps characterised by fibreglass shades, with fringed edges that play with the light on the wall. By keeping abreast of new technologies, Enzo, renowned for his lamps shaped like branches that can be moved by hand to create different shapes, was one of the first to experiment with LED for “emotional” lighting.

While production has increased significantly since the company was founded, each of Catellani & Smith’s

lights is still made with the same care and attention as those first versions. They are all created in Italy, by hand, in attractive workspaces on the banks of Lombardy’s Serio River. By producing the pieces without the use of energy-intensive machinery, bespoke examples can be tailored for specific events or settings, and existing designs are continually updated technically. The company’s commitment to craftsmanship has never wavered, even while it has grown from one man into a team of 65.

The German market was one of the first to embrace the brand in Europe, with others soon following, and Catellani & Smith lighting is now sold in 62 countries. One of the reasons for its success, says Enzo, is that he has followed his own style and developed timeless designs rather than bend to the vagaries of fashion. “Every lamp is given all the time it takes to be well made,” he says. “Because beautiful is subjective, but perfect isn’t.”

www.catellanismith.com





Brass beauty

Francone Bespoke Taps combines British design with Italian craftsmanship to create traditionally styled brass fittings for the world's most luxurious bathrooms

A 1920s Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost would catch anyone's eye, but the eye of Paolo Francone, founder and Director of Francone Bespoke Taps, would linger longer than most. His attention is naturally drawn to detail and to the exquisite. His admiration of precision engineering and his own design flair underpin his company's collection of luxury brass bathroom fixtures, including customisable brass taps, showers, towel rails and associated accessories.

"Like luxury automotive engineering, our traditional brass fixtures represent flawless functionality expressed in timeless, beautiful designs," says Paolo. "Italian craftsmanship, British design and the purity of the brass in our fixtures mean our pieces endure, with a charm that evolves over time like a classic car, to be enjoyed by generations to come."

As well as the customisable pieces, Paolo and his team offer a made-to-order service and enjoy receiving almost any brass-based bespoke request, including mirror frames and other ornamental features. "Pure solid brass is a stunning accent in any space – and it's always a joy to work with a client on a striking bespoke design with their choice of finish and engraving," he explains.

The company specialises in unlacquered brass. "It has an elemental beauty of its own that can be finessed by processes such as brushing, tumbling and polishing," says Paolo. "The final finish can be tailored by the client over time. Some clients allow their brass to age naturally – in keeping with a period home, for example – while others prefer to maintain a polished finish."

Although the company is based in Berkshire, its traditionally styled fixtures are crafted by artisans in Piedmont, an area of northern Italy renowned for brass craftsmanship. Paolo hails from the region and later moved to London, where he discovered his love of classic British design. He founded the business in 2011 to combine his two passions, sharing the artisans' expertise globally through his unique designs and the company's carefully curated online store and customer service offering.

The partnerships he has forged over the years provide an unrivalled connection between client and craftspeople, which is pivotal to the company's success in delivering customised products and specialised bespoke commissions on time and on budget for both luxury homeowners and corporate projects. "Our fixtures often form part of a wider interior-design scheme, so our clients may be design professionals or property owners. We work closely with them to ensure that we meet key points on their timeline."

Everything Paolo does is with the satisfaction and preferences of the user in mind. Regional variations in



plumbing, such as differences in technical specifications, are effortlessly addressed. This extends to the thought put into the installation literature for fitters and maintenance guidance for clients and housekeeping staff. For fixtures later in their lifetime, Paolo is also dedicated to offering a reconditioning service, "so their beauty and functionality can be sustained and enjoyed for as long as possible".

Paolo's passion for design and craft is rivalled only by his dedication to customer service. His background in marketing for major international brands has given him a unique insight into the customer experience. This is evidenced in the company's client-centric approach and the online store, which has been thoughtfully developed to enable clients to customise products in just a few clicks. Their bespoke commissions are typically delivered within a few weeks, in the brand's environmentally friendly and carefully designed packaging. As Paolo says, "Everything we do is to benefit our clients, their legacy and the planet."

www.bespoketaps.com



French class

Made entirely in workshops in France, Treca's beds embody craftsmanship, heritage and a spirit of innovation to create designs for today

For a luxury French bed company, Treca has extraordinary origins. When it was founded in 1935, the company was a supplier to the automotive industry, producing steel wire for vehicles at its Reichshoffen factory in Alsace. Owner René Moritz and his son, Victor, decided to transform those wires into mattress springs, a concept that the company says “revolutionised” bedding in France. The name Treca came from a combination of the family’s wire business and cable mill, *tréfilerie câblerie*.

By 1947, the company had bought the licence to equip Pullman carriages with seats – suspension expertise that also found its way into Treca mattresses. “By reinventing integral quilting, Pullman springs and even air spring pocket springs, Treca was able to turn mattresses into real pieces of art,” says Charles-Henri Déon, CEO of Treca.

During World War Two, the company produced 15,000 mattresses at its Beaugency factory in the Loire for the French army’s medical service. Following the liberation of France, Treca donated 6,000 mattresses to rural hospitals for wounded soldiers. By 1955, it was making all parts of beds, from headboards to bases, while also supplying automobile maker Citroën with car seats.

Such spirit of craftsmanship, innovation and attention to detail lives on today. Treca beds are made in the company’s historic workshops, using methods that have been passed down through the generations and updated with the latest technologies. Beds are custom-made to suit specific tastes and measurements, in a range of materials that will stand the test of time, from rare wools to French linen and natural silk. “From the precious fabrics we use to the smallest handstitched detail, we offer a bespoke approach to create a unique bed and provide a restful sleep,” says Charles-Henri.

The mattresses are made according to different comfort levels, from medium to extra firm, with round or straight corners. The bed bases and headboards are covered in materials such as velvet, linen or leather. “Customers can even supply their own fabric, enabling them to create an even more unique and distinctive feel,” says Charles-Henri. Treca collaborates with others that have proven expertise in their craft, including Pierre Frey for its fabrics, and Maison Sarah Lavoine and Charles Tassin for interior decoration.

The company recently embarked on the project of creating a “dream bed” in which the bed base, support mattress, comfort mattress and topper are presented in a single unit. The resulting Auguste Bed uses 30kg of materials in its mattress, including royal alpaca and



Arles merino wool for warmth and softness, and silk to ensure temperature regulation. Each mattress is tufted by hand for gentle support and to avoid any shifting of material in the production process. “More than 100 steps in total were required to create the Auguste bed,” says Charles-Henri. “Thirty-nine of our best craftsmen were involved.”

He adds that “nothing is left to chance” in creating comfortable beds at Treca, with an approach towards design and execution that is always meticulous. The company sources materials, such as the wool and wood, from as close to the French production sites as it can to reduce carbon footprint and support local economies, including the craftspeople who work within its workshops. “Expertise is our most valuable asset,” says Charles-Henri. And, with boutiques opening throughout France and recently in London, Treca aims to introduce its excellent craftsmanship to more and more people.

www.treca.com



TRECA
PARIS

Wired for sound

With its legendary audio equipment, Danish brand Gryphon Audio brings the excellence of high-end performance and design into the home

Gryphonista is the name that Gryphon Audio gives to the most committed fans of its Danish-made, high-end ultra-luxe audio equipment. Gryphonistas are people who love music and who demand only the highest quality of performance and service. Many will fall for the bold appearance before they even hear the incredible sound produced by the Antileon EVO mono power amplifier or the Trident II speakers. Some will delve deeper into the Gryphon catalogue to discover the astounding Apex amp or Kodo speakers. All will become Gryphonistas.

“For me, a brand is a promise,” says Rune Skov, Gryphon’s Global Sales Director. “It’s a promise of quality, performance and service.” That service encompasses building a close relationship with customers, knowing what they like, what they are looking for and finding out what excites them about Gryphon products. “Our customers love music, and they want the best of the best, so we take them by the hand. We visit their house, we make any changes, we do whatever is needed. That is a huge part of what we do. You are entitled to that level of service, support and respect if you are spending that sort of money,” says Rune.

The company was founded in 1985 by Flemming E Rasmussen, a distributor of some of the biggest brands in the audio industry who wanted to recreate the live music experience in the home environment. One day, he decided to make his own head amp, The Gryphon Head Amp (step-up amplifier), which incorporated a gold faceplate with dual mono and Class A specifications – “the first amplifier in the world with that topology,” says Rune. The amp became a hit in Japan. In 1991, it was followed by the breakthrough DM100, the forefather of all Gryphon amplifiers, which was also hugely successful in Asia.

Part of that success was because of Rasmussen’s eye for design. A trained artist and industrial designer, he styled his equipment to make a bold, sculptural statement. But most of it was down to performance. This remains the metric against which all success is measured at Gryphon. “Performance comes before anything else,” says Rune, who sees the company’s products as a cut above the rest. “I only see a very limited number of competitors.”

The bold, black design of Gryphon products is its trademark. “We have a very distinct design ethic that we call ‘Nordic noir’. It means that nobody is in doubt when they see a Gryphon. It is very masculine and

confident. Some might say it is almost decadent.

A Gryphon needs to be something you desire, like the finest watch or automobile. It will make you say ‘wow.’”

The focus on performance and exceptionally high standards of manufacture and design gives Gryphon its drive. The company has tripled in size over the past five years, with greater growth in North America and the UK. This is partly because of an increase in visibility as a result of enhanced communication and availability. Rune’s ambition is to have Gryphon’s amps, preamps, speakers, CD players and cables in the homes of the world’s VIPs. “We want to be in the homes of those people who appreciate the finest components that money can buy,” he says.

Although the brand is expensive, explains Rune, “we are not motivated by price. That’s because we want to see more Gryphon products out there. Nothing is better than seeing our products used and loved.”

www.gryphon-audio.dk





Magical rugs

Artep combines the great Italian eye for design with artisanal tradition to create rugs for modern lives and spaces

To enter the headquarters of Artep in the alluring city of Verona, Italy, is to step into an enchanting world of beautiful handmade rugs, custom-made for each client. It is a place of imagination, inspiration and craft.

“We have been doing one project for seven years,” says owner and CEO Riccardo Meglioranzi, who runs the company with his sister Sara and father Tiziano.

The rug in question is no ordinary rug, as it is able to change its own design through the chromatic stimuli of RGB lights. “When we illuminate the rug with this lighting system (red, green and blue), our eye perceives one design over the others,” says Riccardo. Artep is also working on a rug that heats a specific part of the room. “One of our goals is to connect the digital world with traditional skills.”

The company was founded in 1981 by Tiziano, who started working in a relative’s carpet shop after leaving school and realised he had a love for handmade rugs and carpets from Asia. His dream was to fuse this carpet-making tradition with the great Italian history of design, and so he formed Artep, the name being a contraction of “art in the carpet”.

The creation of the company’s entirely bespoke rugs stems from collaboration with the client who can have a completely personal design made in any material, size and colour. “We start with the client,” says Riccardo. “We talk about why they need the rug – what is it for, where will it go, who will live in the house? We create several virtual design proposals that we can place inside the house. Then we focus on the design and material until we have the perfect rug for that person. We want each rug to always have a special meaning.”

This approach has led to some spectacular woven works of art that are masterpieces in their own right, from striking geometric patterns in bright colours to technically brilliant designs based on photographic images of stars and galaxies. Artep has even made a rug that features a client’s own fingerprint. Such intricate detail on an immense scale is no boundary to the company’s creativity. Artep’s artisans weave tens of thousands of knots per square metre; the more detailed the image, the more knots required.

Clients can choose from over a thousand colours, as well as different textures and rug-making techniques, such as handknotted, handtufted or handwoven. Each piece is made by hand in India by many master artisans (everyone is specialised in a specific production phase), in a process that can take several months. Artep involves



the client during this stage as much as possible, taking video footage of their carpet being made, which is presented to them alongside a certificate and sample materials. The completed rug is finally installed by Artep in the client’s home.

The company also designs and makes rugs for high-end commercial projects – hotels, retail, offices – as well as jets and luxury yachts. One client requested a fully carpeted cinema room, while others have commissioned rugs for outdoor areas. For Artep, each challenge is a potential adventure and a chance to develop and demonstrate its skills while sharing a tradition that will live on in their products.

“Our mission is always to make our clients live a real experience when they are buying a product,” says Riccardo. “We want to turn retail into art, to making something special in the form of a rug that will live forever in the home and in the heart.”

<https://artep-italia.com>





The couture of cabinetry

A recipient of France's coveted heritage label, EPV, Atelier Marcu makes high-end furniture for prestigious clients all over the world

There is more to the work of cabinetmaker and furniture restorer Benoît Marcu than meets the eye. At first glance, his handcrafted cigar and jewellery boxes, chests and display tables appear quite simple, letting the grains of precious woods do the work. But push a button, slide out a drawer or remove a catch and these intriguing works open to reveal intricate mechanisms and hidden compartments that make his customers gasp with delight.

Benoît honed his skills as a child, helping in the workshop of his grandparents and parents, who built such mechanisms, or automata. "I already knew I would run my own company; I had no doubt about where my career would go," says Benoît. By the age of 16, he was working in some of the largest workshops in the French capital. In 1990, he founded Atelier Marcu, in Saint-Denis, Paris. The workshop specialises in the restoration of antique furniture, with a second department dedicated to the creation of cabinetry, including mechanisms and compartments.

From a maple jewellery box that unfolds to show the delicate artwork within, to a white ebony cigar box without any apparent opening that reveals its contents through a clever mechanism, Benoît's objects are not only full of surprises but are meticulously inlaid with marquetry and showcase intricate detail. "Clients are amazed by the precision, but I am, by nature, a perfectionist," he says.

Alongside marquetry, Benoît's work features materials such as veneer, coloured horn and bronze. He uses traditional techniques to create his own contemporary collections, and artworks and bespoke pieces for prestigious clients, with the design, prototyping and manufacturing all taking place in the same workshop. "In this choice of address, you can feel the method, the virtuosity, the wax and the hot glue," says Benoît. "Pieces are created or restored according to orders, for collections as prestigious and unforgettable as those of the Rothschilds at the time of the Hôtel Lambert."

Benoît recently completed a custom-made box for the Oceanographic Institute of Monaco and has made pieces for the Moroccan royal family. Public authorities, art professionals, antique dealers and private individuals recognise his skills in carrying out a perfect restoration or making exquisite furniture. A testament to the quality of the work, the workshop won the Rare Talent category at the 2023 Gala du Sommet du Luxe et de la Création in Paris.

Raphaël, Benoît's son, works alongside his father. "Raphaël has followed what I've done his whole life, and he has a different perspective, which is less technical and

more artistic," says Benoît. "It brings modernity to our approach and it helps me in my creations."

Benoît is a passionate environmentalist. "Nothing is wasted. Furniture restorers are inherently ecological," he says. He uses local materials in his works, as well as precious woods. A sculptural piece, the African-inspired Mabelé bureau, features burnt Douglas fir to evoke the devastation caused by deforestation.

Benoît is now focusing on the future of the company, its international development and sharing of knowledge with young craftspeople. In 2006, Atelier Marcu was one of the first companies to receive the coveted EPV (Entreprise du Patrimoine Vivant) label, a distinction from the French government to those who use and pass on traditional and high-tech techniques. Audited every five years, companies have to prove they are still true to their ideals and teach new generations. "The company won't stop the day I stop," says Benoît. "I want it to continue for years to come."

www.atelier-marcu.fr



Elegant outdoor living

Belgium-based Manutti is at the forefront of designing and making refined outdoor furniture, bringing luxury settings outside

When Rolls-Royce unveiled the Phantom VIII in 2017 to the press on the shores of Lake Lucerne in Switzerland, every element of the launch had to be perfect. This included the impeccable garden furniture on the hotel lawn, which was provided by Belgian specialists in outdoor luxury furniture, Manutti.

“That was a very prestigious project,” says Manutti CEO and founder Stephane De Winter. “We had to find loungers that were comfortable, contemporary and timeless. We work closely with other high-end brands and most of what we make is for people with refined and well-established tastes. They want something that is an investment, unique and iconic. It’s the very highest level of customer and that means we have to meet the very highest standards.”

Manutti was founded in 2002 by Stephane after a successful career in sales selling furniture fabric. In this role, he realised there was a demand for high-quality outdoor furniture that was not being met by existing designers. He aimed to resolve this by setting up a company, initially in his parents’ garage, to supply garden furniture to match the fine quality of pieces in a lounge or dining room. He named the company after his son, Manu.

Today, Manutti manufactures furniture from a variety of luxury materials, selected and tested for their ability to withstand the elements. The wicker and rope, for example, used on some of the chairs is UV resistant and water repellent. As well as dining chairs, Manutti makes outdoor dining and coffee tables, loungers, daybeds, sofas and accessories, such as lights, umbrellas and rugs. The designs are suitable for use for any occasion, night and day, and in any location, from poolside patio to urban roof terrace. Made with care, they combine traditional craftsmanship with the latest technology, and finishes can be tweaked to customers’ preferences.

“Since I started Manutti I wanted to focus on design and functionality, but it was also important that there was great comfort and that is something we have ensured from the beginning,” says Stephane. “The chairs need to be super comfortable so people can sit there for two or three hours. People tell us they don’t want to stand up again, and that means we are helping them really enjoy their lives with those who matter.”

Manutti has a production facility in Indonesia that can respond quickly to fluctuations in demand, new designs or changes in the industry. The company works



with external designers and has an in-house design studio, but Stephane also designs collections himself, drawing on his knowledge and experience.

Expert in blending art and utility, Manutti extends its design skills from homes to the luxury sphere, including resorts, hotels and the sleek confines of yachts and cruise ships. Its distinctive furniture and accessories are found across the world, in Europe, North America, Australia, the Middle East and South Africa, each piece bearing the hallmark of uniqueness, craftsmanship and close attention to detail.

Stephane, guardian of Manutti’s artistic heritage, says the company’s secret to success is time. The company takes time to get its designs right “as they need to last for a long time in all sorts of conditions”. Created with patience, each piece is made to endure beyond fleeting trends, bringing people together to share moments outside under the energising sun.

www.manutti.com





Premium pet protection

When travelling with pets, Tavo's ingenious car seat protection system makes life easy for the owner, and safe and comfortable for the companion

Few things make life as joyful as a pet. Almost everywhere and anywhere you go, it is much better if your loyal companion is with you. Tavo's premium range of pet car seats and carriers for the car and home are designed with this in mind, to ensure that dogs and cats travel in maximum comfort and safety. This purpose runs deep in Tavo's DNA; its parent company, Nuna, makes best in class premium car seats for babies, as well as strollers and prams.

"What inspired us in the very beginning was a desire to keep track and take care of our pets the same way that we do our children," says Sarah Keebler, Global Product Director at Tavo. "We wanted the pet to be able to travel and join adventures safely with the family." As with Nuna's range of baby gear, Tavo delivers luxury alongside unrivalled safety standards. Products are crash-tested at state-of-the-art facilities and benchmarked against the performance of equipment made to keep children safe. After such extensive development, Tavo entered the US market in 2023 and launched in the UK in 2024.

The Maeve pet protection system is the brand's first innovation and comprises a comfortable carrier for treasured pets, complete with detachable and washable liners and mattresses; an ISOFIX vehicle base for connecting the carrier firmly and safely to the car seat; and a stroller, called Roscoe, which is lightweight and foldable with one hand and comes with smart vegan-leather detailing and coffee cup holders. Available separately or as a complete system, the products are designed for a seamless transition from driving to walking, which makes doing daily tasks with a pet in tow a little bit easier. The equipment is useful for both young and old pets, especially if the latter struggle with mobility. "It really leans into pets with disabilities," says Sarah, "but also new puppies that you want to get acquainted with the world safely."

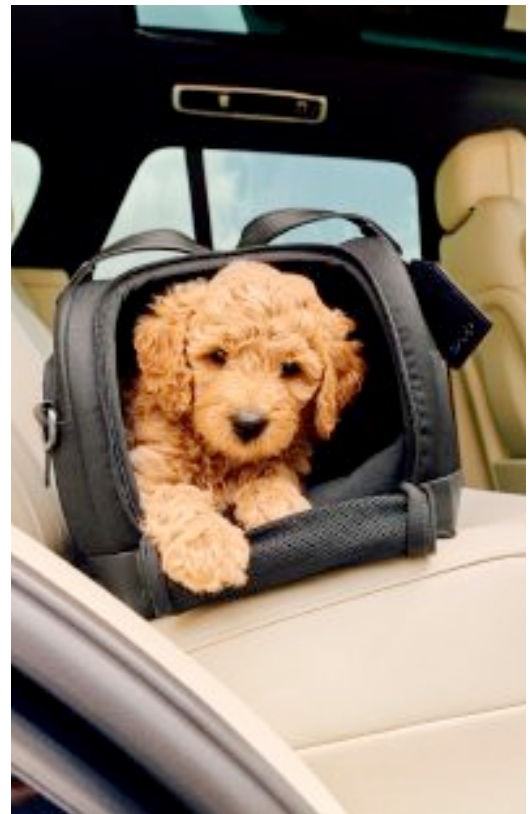
Though a relatively new venture, Tavo has exciting plans to extend its product range, while maintaining its dedication to safety. The next addition to the brand – one of many forthcoming in the next 12 months – is Dupree, a bespoke product for smaller pets that features, among other things, ventilated mesh panels and roll down doors with magnetic attachments for easy access. It is also an approved carry-on size for plane travel. "It's for smaller dogs up to 20lb," says Sarah, "and is designed for convenience, safety and

comfort, with integrated ISOFIX fittings so you can secure it into your car very simply."

The company has now launched its products in 27 countries, but despite this global growth and rapidly rising profile, it is not compromising its core values: the high quality that has always been part of Nuna's baby car seats and now Tavo's pet seats and carriers; the provision of safe luxury, and remaining at the pinnacle of both design and safety.

"Something that's really key for our company is innovation, engineering, simple designs and ease of use," says Helen Johnson, Tavo's Global Marketing Director. "The idea is to go anywhere together in maximum comfort and safety – for the pet and the other people in the car as well. We've taken the expertise that we have from decades of developing the most premium, safe child car seats and are now bringing that expertise to the four-legged family members."

www.tavopets.com



All American

Handmade in the US, RangeCraft's decorative kitchen hoods instil authentic American heritage in the heart of the home

For more than 50 years, family-owned RangeCraft has custom-designed and manufactured top-of-the-range range hoods for kitchens. Based in New Jersey in the US, the company takes pride not only in its homegrown, quality materials and craftsmanship, but also in the relatable family dynamic that its mother and son co-owners, Ramona Panus and David Podwyszynski, bring to their clients. "We don't want the process to feel transactional, so our clients can sense our passion," says David, Operations Manager.

For Ramona, RangeCraft's President, the kitchen is the most important part of the home. "Since the beginning of time, people have gathered around food. We try to create something that can be a focal point in a kitchen, where families get together and grow together," she says. "Our customers appreciate the beauty of our products."

The range hoods come in a plethora of styles, colours and metals, from ornate brass to blackened steel, or can be powder coated to match the colour of a customer's kitchen. Designed to embody both beauty and function, metalwork and artwork, they serve as a decorative centrepiece while offering technically brilliant flourishes, from professional-grade ventilation to a low noise-emitting decibel rating of 52. The range hoods span from traditional styles to modern and minimalist; they can even be adorned with Swarovski crystals. "I always say to our customers, whatever you want we will build it," says David.

RangeCraft shapes its metal range hoods around wood templates and assembles them by hand – every piece made this way is completely different. David stresses the importance of workmanship that has been passed down through the generations. "In the US, we are probably one of a handful of companies that truly work with old-world techniques," he says, "and this is something that is being lost in today's world."

From the outer shell to the ambient lighting, the company is unusual in that it supplies all of its range hood parts, which are delivered to customers' specifications by a US-wide team of engineers. RangeCraft now also supplies hoods to accommodate the burgeoning outdoor-kitchen trend and is increasingly creating bespoke designs for the hospitality and catering sectors.

When customers are not sure what they want, RangeCraft looks at their kitchen design and offers a solution through close consultation. This sets the company apart from its competitors. "With our experience, we can often see what kind of combination they need. We often



start with the basic shape and work out other features from there," says David.

RangeCraft is particularly well-known in the US among architects, designers, builders and developers who recommend the brand's range hoods to clients, "which means a lot to us," says David. RangeCraft sells its hoods to other parts of the world, too, including Canada and further afield, in Europe and Dubai. Ramona and David count celebrities and former presidents among their customers who are attracted by the uniqueness of the product for their kitchens. And although the hoods are high-end, says Ramona, they also sell many to people on more modest budgets who have chosen to invest in a high-quality hood made entirely in the US.

"We are proud that all our labour is still here in the US and our products are American-made," says David. "We want the heritage of American craftsmanship to be seen by the younger generation and to last into the future."

www.rangecraft.com





Sporting classic

World-renowned gun and rifle maker Boss & Co is as synonymous with innovation and its birthplace London as it was over 200 years ago

In every industry, there is a pioneer that is steadfastly dedicated to being the very best – free from compromise, forever pushing the boundaries of engineering, design and craft to elevate its products into the realm of artistry. In the world of gunmaking, that trailblazing brand is Boss & Co. For over 200 years, master craftsmen employed by London’s oldest gunmaker have invested up to 2,500 hours into the birth of each firearm, shaping and finessing the finest walnut and engraving intricate patterns.

Boss & Co was founded in 1812 by gunmaker Thomas Boss, and is now owned by Arthur DeMoulas. “Boss & Co has always held a unique allure for me and other aficionados in the gunmaking world,” says Arthur. “Over its two centuries of history, Boss has introduced countless world-first innovations, produced some of the most beautiful guns ever made and established an incomparable reputation for quality. These threads of beauty, quality and innovation form the foundations of our company today.”

Boss & Co guns are often described as “the racehorse of best guns”, admired for their slender shapes and



graceful curves. They combine impeccable craftsmanship and engineering with great artistry – perfect in both form and function. Every element is carefully considered, even to the point of crafting all-new innovations to slim down guns even further.

The Boss “Hammerless Ejector” of 1897, created by one-time Boss owner John Robertson, streamlined the guns beautifully. In 1909, Robertson innovated again, with the Boss “Over-and-Under”; it was the first British gun to place the barrels on top of one another and, undoubtedly, the most beautiful. Even today, the elegant design is unsurpassed and much copied.

Ultimately, it is impossible to get the Boss & Co look, unless it is a real Boss. The craftsmen scale the different elements to ensure they match flawlessly with each calibre. In the 1920s, a Boss sales pamphlet read: “The owner of a Boss gun should have the satisfaction of knowing he has the best gun that money can buy and no one has a better.” This is not just in terms of quality, but also in their innovation. The pioneering spirit of Robertson, who also created the Boss “Single Trigger” in 1893 (the world’s first reliable singer trigger mechanism), remains a guiding light for Arthur and the team.

A left-handed-shooter, Arthur brought the idea of creating a world-first, ambidextrous side-lever over-and-under gun to his gunmakers. Although complex to engineer and build, the Boss gunmakers devised a bespoke action to enable both left and right-handed users to shoot the gun, making it a truly generational heirloom. He named it the “1812 Edition”. Boss gunmakers also built the 1812 Edition in side-by-side configuration, requiring another completely bespoke action. Arthur then challenged them to do another world-first: an ambidextrous side-lever gun with a rising third bite – a third locking point on the gun for strength.

Each gun can be made for a 12, 16, 20, 28 or 410 bore, in a choice of over-and-under and side-by-side rifle configurations. “We offer more styles, shapes and gauges than any other gunmaker,” says Arthur.

Many believe gunmaking to be a waning art, but Boss & Co is at its busiest since before the Second World War, and is training the next generation of gunmakers. “Our success is dependent on the quality of our gunmakers. Some have built guns for more than four decades and their experience is invaluable to Boss & Co’s future.”

www.bossguns.com

Master stroke

With its tailor-made putters, Pierre Ocenac is on course to transform the game of golf for both amateurs and professionals

Important conversations can happen during a round of golf, such as one that took place in 2016 between a golfing legend and aviation engineer Pierre-Henri Aussenac. That on-course chat between two Frenchmen would eventually inspire an innovation that is now improving the playing experience of golfers everywhere.

“The champion complained that the vibration created when a putter strikes a golf ball, although subtle, affects its trajectory, leading to unreliable performance,” says Pierre. “I knew this could be addressed only by completely re-engineering the putter to create one that does not generate any vibration and gives intuitive connection between the golfer and the ball.” Pierre could not resist the challenge and, after four years of intensive development, he succeeded. His engineering and creative expertise, along with the experience of his wife, Céline, working with luxury brands, culminated in an impeccably finished, customisable, high-performance putter featuring patented zero-vibration technology. In 2020, the husband-and-wife team founded Pierre Ocenac, and brought the groundbreaking putter design to market, opening a showroom and atelier in France, and recently relocating to Florida.

All the putters in the Pierre Ocenac limited-edition collections pair the patented technology with customisable features. These include the purest Japanese shafts; heads crafted from a variety of precious woods or forged carbon fibre (technology used by luxury car makers and the aerospace industry) that are protected by a proprietary varnish; grips made from marine-grade leather sourced from the finest tanneries; and breathable head-covers that come in moisture-wicking cashmere. Pierre and Céline have carefully chosen every detail to provide the ultimate performance and an unrivalled sensory experience.

Although Pierre Ocenac began with a performance-focused engineering objective, the couple’s pursuit of perfection has led to a transformation in every aspect of the putter-purchasing experience. Each putter is tailored to the individual player, beginning with an analysis of their natural stance and style. “Clients can visit our atelier, or Pierre will visit them, to create their putter based on their physical and performance requirements,” says Céline. “They can commission unique embellishments, including embedded jewels, 24-carat gold accents and personalised messages or mantras.” The company also offers an entirely bespoke service for the design and engineering of putters to meet specific requests.

Pierre Ocenac putters are the result of years of intensive research and vigorous prototype testing, and each involves

a minimum of 30 hours’ craftsmanship. “Golf is about confidence, particularly on the putting green,” says Pierre. “When you hold a Pierre Ocenac putter, you know you can trust your connection with the ball. It’s seamless, you can feel it – the difference and the assurance are tangible.”

The engineer in Pierre never switches off. He is constantly sketching, making notes and chatting to golfers of all abilities. He already has his eye on the other clubs in the bag – and the bag itself. “Céline and I feel part of the team around the golfers we work with, whether they’re amateurs or professionals,” says Pierre. “We don’t just hand over the finished putter – we’re here to ensure it continues to perform for them as their game evolves.”

Their commitment has not gone unnoticed, with Pierre Ocenac quietly ascending from fledgling golf brand to discreet status symbol. As Pierre says, “Owners of a Pierre Ocenac putter will not settle for anything less than the best. It’s a sense of accomplishment.”

www.pierreocenac.com







Made with love

Family-run Ivy & Duke makes stylish, handmade dog beds using only British materials to ensure every pet can sleep in comfort

When Charlotte Taylor first brought home her Weimaraner puppy, Winston, she wanted to find the perfect bed for him – one that could support Winston's growing limbs and ensure a good night's sleep while also looking attractive enough to have in the home. Unable to find anything suitable, she founded Ivy & Duke, utilising her experience in the foam industry to create a line of premium dog beds designed for any breed and suitable for every stage of a dog's life.

"I now have two Weimaraners, Winston and Clementine," says Charlotte. "And they have a huge selection of beds to pick from. Getting Winston spurred me to create Ivy & Duke, but since then, he and Clemmie have also tested all the dog beds. There isn't one they haven't tried, and they have developed a very discerning taste."

Ivy & Duke is a family business that revolves around the principles of a love of family and pets, and a desire to make luxury animal bedding that is as practical as it is stylish. The beds, as well as accessories such as pillows and blankets, are handmade in Manchester, with all materials sourced from the UK. Each design comes in several sizes with 15 fabrics to choose from. Covers can be removed for washing and can even be purchased separately, while there are waterproof beds for puppies or working dogs.

"You can have a nice bed in herringbone or tweed for your living room and a more practical one in the utility room or for the back of the car," says Charlotte. "We are one of the few companies that produces completely handmade and British-made products, with every single part of the product down to the label created by hand. They are all covered by a fine waterproof inside liner so any moisture can be kept at bay."

Dogs spend more than half their lives asleep, and without the right support for their bodies, this can cause problems in later life. Cheap beds filled with fibre can quickly collapse, which is bad for the pet.

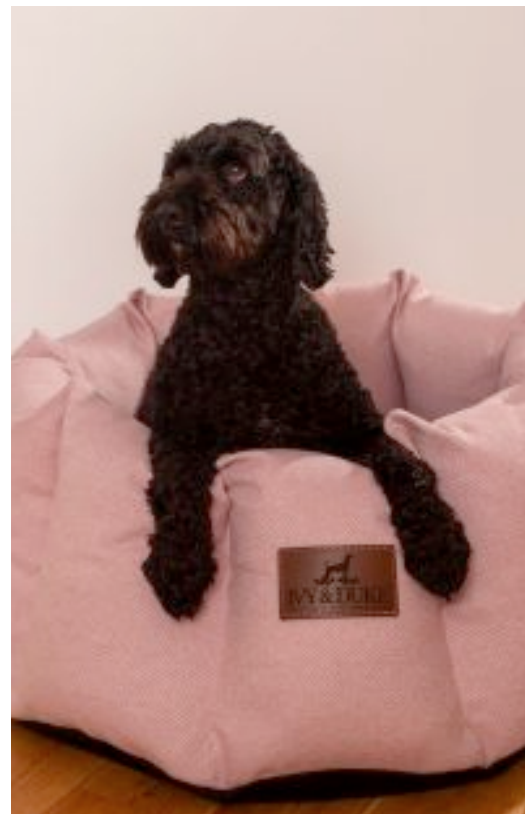
By contrast, all Ivy & Duke beds use superior memory foam. "That is really good for their joints," explains Charlotte. "As a dog gets older, it can develop rheumatism and arthritis. Foam is excellent at supporting them through this stage of life. It's about the comfort, the fabric and orthopaedic quality of our beds."

Other animals also appreciate Ivy & Duke beds. Customers sometimes send the company photographs of their cats enjoying a nap in the dog bed, while one customer, a farmer from Yorkshire, bought a bed for his pet pig. "His pig was getting old and had started sleeping in the house."

A large dog can happily sleep in an Ivy & Duke bed, too, because the designs can be custom-made for breeds such as Great Danes. This personalisation is why the company prefers to sell online or in person. "We have found it's difficult for a retailer to stock the full range as they are very large, and they need to be explained properly by people who really understand the product," says Charlotte.

"We have been approached by large retailers, but they want stock in bulk which means we'd have to compromise the quality, and we don't want to do that. Our approach is working for us right now, so it's good for us and it's good for dogs."

www.ivyandduke.co.uk



The art of illumination

Studio Palatin reshapes the splendour of decorative art of the past to create sculptural, contemporary lighting objects

“My fascination with art history, superb craftsmanship, luxury objects and collectables of past centuries form the foundation for my inspiration that guides my creative process,” says

Barbara Palatin-Doyle, founder of Studio Palatin. Barbara specialises in designing and producing small editions of unique and striking sculptural lamps and candle holders in exquisite materials such as porcelain, bronze and silver.

Barbara set up Studio Palatin in 2020 in Vienna, Austria, where she was born and raised. She had worked in finance in London before working as an artist and in the education team at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, where she specialised in the decorative arts of 17th- and 18th-century France. “The museum exposed me to superior art, which formed my deep understanding of luxury objects. It inspired me to look for ways to combine the essence of this style with the contemporary style I encountered in New York,” she says. “People admired the pieces in the museum, but were not able to imagine similar pieces in their homes as they felt they were outdated. I wanted to reproduce the high level of craftsmanship, but make the design relevant to today by taking classic materials and giving them a contemporary form.”

For her first lamp designs, Barbara sculpted waste packaging paper into abstract ergonomic shapes, which she reproduced in unglazed porcelain and turned into lamp bases, enabling her to light her own sculptures. Those lamps now feature her signature shades, made from high-quality Japanese Hosho paper, torn into strips and artfully folded, while each lamp showcases a finial, like an additional mini sculpture.

The Surculus wireless bronze lamps are streamlined – ridged and tapered, to be carried from room to room like candlesticks. This collection includes a three-piece set of candlesticks and a large floor lamp. Table lamps come in pairs, either matching or opposites – “yin and yang”. Organically shaped, the pieces invite to be touched and used. “It is important for me to create functional, tactile artistic objects that are used on a daily basis and have a treasured place in a home,” says Barbara.

The Charta biscuit porcelain collection has a matte finish and stands out with its white pristine surface that is cool to the touch. By contrast, the Surculus and Arbor bronze collections – all polished and patinated by hand – offer a richness in texture that is enhanced by the natural ageing of the material. “Stylistically, the bronze collection is of a mid-century or brutalist design, while the porcelain collection is playful with a Rococo twist,”

says Barbara. “My work straddles the gap between art and design, and it is magical to see how interior designers and clients place the pieces in traditional as well as contemporary interiors.” Studio Palatin works with design studios and private clients, as well as international platforms, and the collections are available online and through selected galleries in Europe, the US and the Middle East.

Barbara enjoys working with new materials and is currently experimenting with silver and cast glass. Her focus is on excellence, innovative design, valuable materials, superior craftsmanship and execution. The porcelain is produced by one of the oldest manufacturers in Europe, while the cast bronze bases are gilded with 24-carat gold. “I pour over every detail – the base, the cord, the plug, the switch,” she says. “It is a very intense process, from the design to the execution of each piece by hand.”

www.studiopalatin.com





Sleeping beauty

Vispring beds and mattresses are beautifully handmade in England from only natural materials, just as they were over a century ago

For more than 120 years, Vispring has used natural materials to handcraft luxury beds and mattresses for the world's finest homes, hotels, yachts and private aircraft. Elegant in its style and meticulous in its manufacturing, the company is a quintessential part of British heritage. "Our early mattresses were on *Titanic* and *Olympic*, the most luxurious passenger ships of their time, and our latest mattresses are on Princess yachts, so that gives you an idea of the strength of Vispring's heritage," says Clare Schifano, Global Marketing Director at Vispring.

Based in Devon, Vispring supplies mattresses to luxury hotel groups, including the Dorchester Collection and The Pig, and has a global presence in 59 markets through 600 retailers, including And So to Bed, RH and Harrods in the UK. In 2022, the company opened the flagship store on Regent Street in London, "so customers could get a much deeper sense of the quality of our materials, craftsmanship and bespoke services", and has a second standalone store at Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour.

Customers can trial beds and consult with Vispring's sleep experts on the selection, personalisation and care of the perfect mattress. "We spend a third of our lives in bed, so it's an important, highly individual purchase," says Clare. To enable couples to have a good night's sleep, there are dual-tension or zip-and-link mattresses, while luxurious mattress toppers and a sprung divan base add an extra level of comfort. The beds are made to order from the collections, or bespoke, and have a long lifespan – they come with a 30-year guarantee.

Vispring mattresses feature breathable, natural materials and superbly engineered layers of steel springs, "hand-nested" in calico pockets – a practice that has remained largely the same since the company was founded in 1901. Vispring – then known as the Marshall Sanitary Mattress Company – was the first to commercially produce the coiled spring mattress, developed by British engineer James Marshall to provide his bedridden wife with the utmost comfort and support. The same dedication to innovation and unparalleled comfort has endured, with the company winning the Queen's Award for Enterprise in 2012 and the King's Award for Enterprise in 2024. "But we're not resting on our laurels," says Clare. "We continue to innovate, particularly around sustainability."

Vispring's mattresses contain no artificial products such as plastic, polyester and foam, and no chemicals are used in the manufacturing processes. Beds are hand-stitched rather than glued, and made from materials such as alpaca wool, fine horsehair, organic cotton,

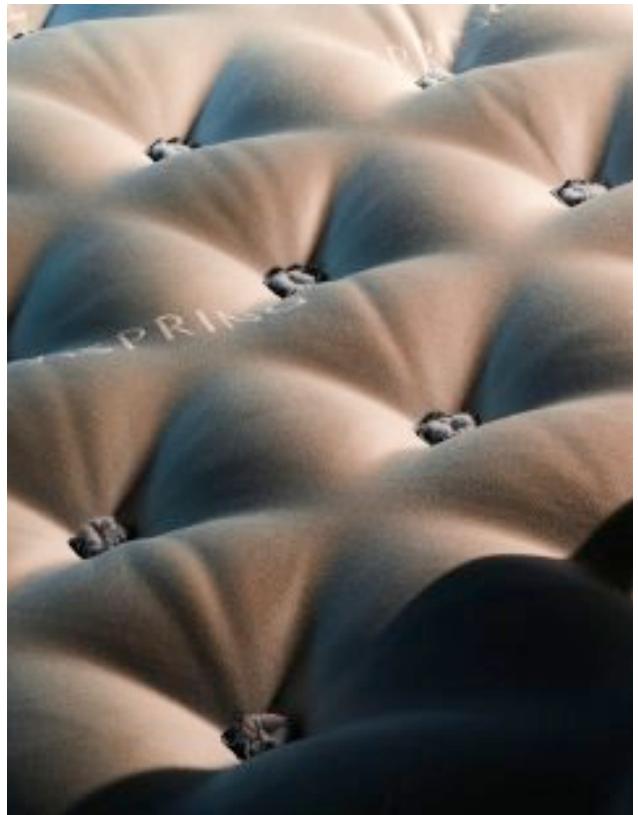
calico, tussah silk, bamboo and cashmere – 78 per cent of which is sourced from British suppliers. Around 400 tonnes of wool go into their making each year, including wool from Shetland and the Exmoor Horn sheep that roam the fields near the Vispring factory in Plymouth.

"We've long been an active supporter of British wool and are committed to environmental and community initiatives, as well as doing all we can to minimise our carbon footprint by taking a 'reduce, reuse, recycle' approach to our operations," says Clare. "We reduce waste by manufacturing natural and durable mattresses that can last a lifetime rather than heading for landfill after a few years, and we donate surplus products to charitable organisations who distribute beds to communities in need."

For customers, the luxury of a good night's sleep also comes from knowing that Vispring is doing all it can to ensure that others can sleep easy, too.

www.vispring.com







Character figures

Through decorative collage, Astomeria brings together history, culture and art on a range of modern objects for the home

The alstroemeria is known as the Lily of the Incas, a beautiful flower that is famous for flourishing in a classic English country garden. Rukiye Akdemir is based in Istanbul, but when she established her company, Astomeria, she chose to name it in honour of this gorgeous bloom. Rukiye identifies with the flower's striking colours, dramatic appearance and classic history – and seeks to replicate these elements in her decorative, handmade pieces for the home.

Rukiye set up Astomeria in 2021, and as both Creative Director and founder, she works closely with skilled artists in London and craftspeople in Turkey to create the company's range of vases, trays, plates and cups, which come in Plexiglass and porcelain. "I spent a long time finding the right people and I am so happy to work with them as our techniques are very hard to master – especially using Plexiglass, which is a very hard material to work with," says Rukiye.

The collage technique is used to represent a mix of different cultures and ideas, and to bring together a variety of characters from history. Each piece



incorporates an eye-catching and vibrant design. “We love to use colour,” says Rukiye. “We use traditional skills, but we want to look modern. For all our products we use special printing technologies that are very complex, and we combine a love of history with art and decoration.”

A cornerstone of the Astomeria design line is the Royal Crew: an imaginative collage of historical figures reproduced on porcelain plates and glass, on Plexiglass bowls in several different colours, and even on a three-dimensional painting to mount on a wall. The wild and wonderful range of real and fictional characters spans from the god Apollo and Queen Victoria to French princesses and Ottoman sultans. Intricate yet fun, it is a highlight of the collection, showcasing Rukiye’s determination to fuse disparate cultures in a thoughtful and imaginative way through her art.

“The Royal Crew series brings together the unique and influential figures of our universal heritage, building a bridge from the past to the present,” she explains. “When I started my business, I decided that I wanted to celebrate all sorts of different cultures. It can make people more connected as they share these different stories and traditions and styles.

We achieve wonderful collage designs in collaboration with our beloved Selman Hoşgör, a multidisciplinary visual artist based in London.”

Another key design is the magical Seronia, again reproduced on a range of objects in both porcelain and Plexiglass. This Art Nouveau-style artwork features an illusionary and ambiguous figure, accompanied by a mysterious crow and beautiful butterfly.

Since much of Rukiye’s inspiration comes from her love of history and art, on visits to London she spends days exploring the galleries and museums, and is as comfortable among the classic art at the National Gallery as with the contemporary pieces at the Saatchi Gallery. She is working towards having her own products in museum and gallery shops, as well as elsewhere in London – and the collections are already widely available online and in the best stores in Istanbul.

Through Astomeria, Rukiye aims to celebrate historical techniques with artworks that depict great figures and moments from the past. Whether rendered onto a vase, plate or tray, they are also guaranteed to start a conversation.

www.astomeria.com

Meet the maker

Vitricca Iannazzi is Andrew Iannazzi's East Coast studio, where he puts years of glassblowing experience into making practical glassware beautiful

When Andrew Iannazzi enrolled at Hartwick College, in Oneonta, New York, he was asked if he wanted to visit the art college's glassblowing studio. It was an invitation that changed his life. "It's pretty hard not to be enamoured by a liquid crucible full of molten glass," says Andrew. "That is pretty cool. When you stand in front of it for the first time and see this liquid sphere of glass being pulled out of the furnace – that's a real wow factor. And when you do it yourself the first time, it's quite special."

Having found his calling, Andrew immersed himself in glassmaking. Versatile, disciplined but with a playful and imaginative approach, Andrew produces a wide range of objects, from cocktail glasses and tableware, inspired by American tiki bar culture, to large-scale glass chandeliers commissioned for mid-century homes. His work combines traditional craftsmanship with contemporary design. His work is available directly from his website or, in Europe, through ABASK, an online store that celebrates the craftsmanship of a select group of makers.

Andrew set up his studio in 2015 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He named it Vitricca Iannazzi. Vitricca is a word he coined that combines the Latin for glass (vitrum) and factory/workshop (fabrica) to highlight his debt to the Italian tradition of glassblowing, as well as the fact he makes everything himself. Andrew takes two-dimensional technical drawings and turns them into 3D glassware using a variety of techniques, many of which he picked up in the first ten years of his career when he worked in numerous studios to develop his skills. He has honed a range of styles and techniques that span his versatile collections.

If he has specialities, they would be tableware and lighting. His tropical-style glasses and pitchers are highly popular, and he has developed a line of lighting based on the refractive quality of the Fresnel lenses used in lighthouses around the globe. "I am inspired by everything I see," says Andrew. "It comes from all around. I then take these infinite possibilities and place some loose boundaries and rules around them to provide direction and parameters for each collection. Imagining and taking inspiration from all around without some guidelines can become quite daunting and overwhelming otherwise.

"I am currently re-exploring canework, which is a traditional Italian technique involving the thinning out of glass colour into multitudes of glass threads. I am then using these threads to make a series of luxury water

bottles and canteens." Andrew enjoys making beautiful everyday objects, believing that a utilitarian or practical item such as a water bottle can be made with skill and care. This lets people see at close range those elements that give handmade craftwork such character.

While Andrew continues to learn new skills from glassmaking traditions around the world, he has ambitions to move in new directions. "In the future, I'd like to be doing more large-scale, one-off sculptures," he says. "I love the idea of being asked by a company or individual to make a unique sculpture that can sit in their lobby, home or corporate headquarters."

For now, he is working on one-of-a-kind lighting and more tableware – enthused by the fact that people can pick up, use and interact with his work. "It means they can establish a connection with it. If my work can interrupt a person's everyday life, in order to give them a new pathway of contemplation, then my work is complete."

www.vitriccaianmazzi.com





9.
*Distilled
luxury*

*HIGH-END
SPIRITS*





ROLLS
RR
ROYCE

ESTATE OF GRACE

*THE RREC WAS HONOURED
WITH PRIDE OF PLACE AT
THIS YEAR'S MAGNIFICENT
SALON PRIVÉ, SET WITHIN
THE STUNNING GROUNDS
OF BLENHEIM PALACE*



A variety of magnificent Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars took prime position at this year's Salon Privé on Saturday 31 August, claiming the stunning and grandiose Great Court at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire as their home for the day.

The Great Court at Salon Privé is offered to one or two prestigious car clubs each year, and this year – the 120th anniversary of Charles Rolls and Henry Royce first meeting and forming their celebrated partnership – the RREC had the privilege of occupying the glorious space to display 76 Club cars.

Members travelled from near and far to attend, with participants representing ten of the Club's 18 UK sections, including Central Southern, Wales and East Anglian. The Club cars on display were similarly varied, the oldest being a 1913 Silver Ghost, and the newest two 2024-registered Bentley Bentaygas. The cars, nestled on the cobblestone court, gleamed throughout the day despite the cloudy weather and attracted the attending Salon Privé crowds, as well as guests visiting the palace.

Of course, no Salon Privé show is complete without its concours, and this year Club members Richard and Diana Balsdon were selected as our judges' winners of the RREC Lockton Club Trophy. Their Camargue – a 1982 model in green – turned many a head as Richard drove it onto the Salon Privé stage to collect the trophy. A worthy winner.

The RREC would like to thank members who travelled to attend the show, many of whom stayed overnight locally to ensure they were at the show in time (some arriving as early as 7.30am). The Club will be in attendance at Salon Privé 2025 – hope to see you there!

Photography by Andrew Honour and Steven Murray.

“The Great Court is offered to prestigious car clubs each year, and this year the RREC had the privilege of occupying the glorious space”

Previous page | Paul and Paula Brazier arrive in style in their 1961 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud II Drophead Coupé by HJ Mulliner

Below | Rahmeez Younas's two Bentley Mulsannes – a 2016 V8 EWB (left) previously used to drive Queen Elizabeth II, and a 2017 V8 in Rose Gold, the only one of this colour in the UK

Opposite, top | The oldest cars in attendance, Bryan Stringer's 1925 Silver Ghost by Cassini & Tonolo (left), in the highly unusual colour of RAF Blue, and Pete and Susan Walton's 1913 Silver Ghost

Opposite, bottom | Pete and Susan Walton arrive at the Great Court at Blenheim Palace in their Silver Ghost









Left | The cars arranged around the edge of the magnificent Great Court at Blenheim Palace





Opposite, top | A pre-war and post-war Rolls-Royce arrive in convoy through the Great Court gates

Opposite, bottom | Chris Mott's RREC Concours d'Elegance-winning 1938 Phantom III (right) sits alongside Christopher Broom-Smith's 1937 25/30

Above | Steven Murray's 1953 Silver Wraith Limousine by Hooper looks suitably stately in front of the palace

Right | Richard Balsdon's Lockton Club Trophy-winning 1982 Camargue





Purely Peruvian

In rediscovering pisco, Adamas is taking a journey of tradition, innovation and distinctive flavours

The history of pisco in Western culture is a captivating narrative interwoven with tradition, innovation and a touch of nostalgia, tracing its roots back to pre-Prohibition America. This transparent Peruvian brandy adorned cocktails across the West Coast, earning acclaim from esteemed figures including Rudyard Kipling, who immortalised the pisco punch as “the glory of a tropical dawn”. Mark Twain sought solace in the embrace of pisco cocktails at San Francisco’s iconic Bank Exchange saloon. But despite its former ubiquity, pisco slipped into obscurity after the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, though it retained its allure in its native Peru.

At the vanguard of pisco’s revival on the global stage today stand Michael Meyers and Therese Corriente, the visionary minds who in 2019 founded Adamas Pisco in New York City. Leveraging Therese’s wealth of experience in high-end client management from the fashion and real-estate industries and Michael’s extensive background in importing South American fruits, the couple embarked on a mission to reintroduce pisco to the world. Their journey was fueled by a shared desire to offer a distinctive libation



for social gatherings and introduce the uniqueness of pisco to a wider market. “We talked to our friends and they were asking, ‘What else is there?’,” says Michael. “They were looking for alternatives to spirits such as vodka and tequila.”

For Michael and Therese, pisco, also known as white or unaged brandy, embodies the essence of purity and freshness as well as versatility. Adamas Pisco is a clear, light and smooth brandy with delicate notes of fruitiness and florals. “Whether sipped neat to appreciate its purity or served as a canvas for an array of cocktails, Adamas Pisco delights with its simplicity and charm, inviting drinkers to indulge in its unadulterated elegance,” says Michael, who describes the taste as akin to “a smoother and better version of an eau-de-vie”.

Unlike its brandy counterparts, pisco is neither aged in oak barrels, nor adulterated with water. Adamas Pisco is an authentic product, crafted from the original Quebranta vine grapes sourced primarily from the fertile lands between Ica and Nazca in southern coastal Peru. In a centuries-old Peruvian farming practice, the grapes are fermented in copper stills. In this way, Adamas honours the heritage of the land and encapsulates the taste of Peru in every sip.

While pisco enthusiasts cherish its purity when sipped neat, Therese explores its possibilities in mixology, crafting signature cocktails such as the Jubilee Cucumber Mint, a highlight of a Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts’ Club event of 2022 and various Hamptons soirées, alongside the Ménage à Trois, a blend of Adamas, champagne and lime juice. Through their innovative approach, they challenge conventional perceptions of pisco. “We are inviting drinkers to embrace its potential beyond the traditional pisco sour,” says Therese.

The name “Adamas”, derived from the Latin word for diamond, serves as a testament to the brand’s commitment to crafting a modern elixir that sparkles with both taste and aesthetic appeal. With its sleek bottle design inspired by the brilliance of a diamond, Adamas beckons enthusiasts to rediscover the allure of pisco, marrying tradition with contemporary flair.

Through Adamas Pisco, Michael and Therese have not only resurrected a forgotten spirit, but have reignited a passion for authenticity and heritage, enabling drinkers to savour the timeless elegance of Peru’s treasured spirit.

www.adamasreserve.com

Spirit of revival

By reinvigorating old production methods, Manutea Tahiti is breathing new life into the South Pacific's rum-making culture

The remote French Polynesian island of Tahiti, in the South Pacific, may not be as well-known for its rum as the West Indies, but the sugarcane that goes into Manutea Tahiti rum was growing in the South Sea Islands in 1000 AD, 500 years before it reached the latter countries. "Sugarcane is part of Polynesian cultural history," says Etienne Houot, Sales and Marketing Manager of the brand.

The preservation of old methods of production gives Manutea Tahiti its own identity. The rum is made from pure cane juice derived from fresh sugarcane, rather than molasses, and is produced in batches. The cane is collected by hand and crushed the same day, and no water is added to the juice. The taste is distinctive as a result. The white rum has very strong green, vegetable notes, with a fresh bouquet of mint, liquorice and anise.

Manutea Tahiti also produces aged rums in barrels, which can be savoured on their own, rather than as a mixer. "The aged rum is to be enjoyed at the end of a meal, perhaps with some dark chocolate or a cigar," says Etienne. The flavour is helped along with the use of oak barrels selected from craft distilleries and wineries. The rum aged in the barrels is sometimes mixed, to create a balance between the bourbon's toffee and vanilla notes and the wine's candied and red fruit notes. The Manutea Tahiti cellar-master also relies on a few Queen Tahiti pineapple wine French oak barrels, which give a unique and original taste to the rums.

Tahitian sugarcane, known as O'Tahiti, was the main variety cultivated in the world between 1820 and 1850, although it originated in Papua New Guinea. It was later superseded by more resilient, productive crops, but the Tahitian variety continued to flourish in the volcanic Polynesian soil. "Historically, the Polynesian people grew sugarcane in their gardens and used it as a sweet snack, to make fans or hats and as the basis for their medicines," explains Etienne. They made rum with it at the end of the 19th century, but this business had largely collapsed by the 1920s.

Some 70 years later, the founders of Manutea Tahiti started to experiment with reviving the traditional methods of Tahitian rum production on the tiny island of Moorea. Before then, the company made pineapple, ginger and orange brandies, sharing a site with a Tahitian fruit juice brand. Officially launched in 2015, Manutea Tahiti named its rum after the Manutea bird, a mythical creature said in Polynesian legend to have

been created by the gods of the wind and the sea to help sailors on the ocean navigate their way home. The bird features alongside an old migration sailing canoe on the labels of some of the rum bottles, while other designs show the vessel navigating by the starlight of the Southern Cross, as Polynesian sailors did centuries ago.

With a small and unique production whereby half of the rum is casked into barrels for ageing, Manutea Tahiti has helped put the South Pacific island back on the rum map. Ninety per cent of the bottles are sold locally while the remaining 10 per cent are exported abroad. Keeping a craft approach gives the guarantee of a perfect mastery of the rum quality. Just like the ancient Polynesian people before them, Manutea Tahiti and its team continually improve patience and observation to create a unique spirit and one of the best rums in the world.

www.rhum-manutea.com







Perfect pairing

At Wolfcraig Distillers, two of the world's most prominent master blenders are demonstrating the fine art of blending Scotch whisky

Whether assembling a luxury car or blending a premium whisky, the overriding aim is always the same – to bring together multiple elements to create something elegant and harmonious. This is what the master blenders have done at Wolfcraig Distillers, an independent bottler of premium Scotch whisky, based in Scotland.

“Every component part has to harmonise with the other. We want to develop this combination of luxury and excellence, so it tastes on the palate like a silk scarf feels on the skin,” says Master Blender Richard “the Nose” Paterson OBE. “This is about savouring and enjoying the balance of all the different rounded flavours.”

The legend of Wolfcraig itself has been one of union and collaboration since it was conceived in Scottish folklore. Back when Stirling stood as Scotland's capital, the legend tells of Norse invaders who crept through the cover of night, intent on ambushing a Celtic garrison. One of the invaders stumbled and trod on the paw of a sleeping wolf cub, which awoke startled and began to howl. This alerted the garrison to the threat, a battle



ensued, and the Celts emerged triumphant. The wolf became the “Protector of Stirling”– and with its Scotch whisky, Wolfcraig aims to “awaken the spirit” again.

Wolfcraig was born as a father and son partnership between the former CEO of Scottish beverage company Whyte & Mackay, Michael Lunn, and his entrepreneur son, Jamie. They dreamt of building an independent Scotch whisky brand that would contribute to the luxury category with first-class expertise, and so enlisted Richard to join the team. A globally renowned, third generation master blender with an illustrious career spanning over 50 years in the Scotch whisky industry, Richard relished the prospect of continuing his whisky journey with a new story to tell.

In the spirit of collaboration, Richard recognised the opportunity to bring fellow Master Distiller and Blender Ian Macmillan on board to create the ultimate partnership and make Wolfcraig truly stand out. It is rare that two master blenders would work together, bringing their individual styles and techniques to their craft. However, after 40 years of friendship, Richard and Ian marvelled at the potential of what their 100 years of combined experience would bring to the whisky world.

The pair began working on a series of exclusive small batch releases to showcase their wealth of knowledge. The ensuing, celebrated Hand-Crafted Series demonstrates the rich art and alchemy of blending Scotch whisky. To provide the backbone of this series, Richard and Ian utilised their longstanding contacts in the industry to access exclusive aged stocks, and launched with a 30 Year Old Premium Blend to set the benchmark for what is to come.

To bring these releases to the pinnacle of perfection, Richard is adamant about two critical factors: cask and time. “The cask is king,” he says. The type of cask and the quality of the wood is crucial to the making of a premium spirit, as is the time the spirit spends within it. Patience is paramount when waiting for whiskies to reach their peak moment for bottling. “That time, asleep, maturing, brings out something special in the whiskies. It cannot be hurried,” says Richard.

To mark Rolls-Royce’s 120-year anniversary, Wolfcraig has crafted a rare 33 Year Old Blended Malt Scotch Whisky, with the wish that every bottle is enjoyed in the special moments in life, moments that last a lifetime.

www.wolfcraig.com

Liquid legacy

With Whisky 1901's access to rare casks and the best distilleries, Scotch whisky investment is no longer limited to industry insiders

Whisky is a commodity that, when casked, tends to rise in value over the years until it is ready to be bottled. At this point an investor can bank the proceeds – and maybe keep a bottle aside as a souvenir of their good taste. To help people through this process is Scotch investment company Whisky 1901, founded in 2019 by CEO Aaron Sparkes.

Sparkes had already had considerable experience in the whisky investment market but felt there was room for a more focused approach to investment. “We only work with the top ten or 20 single malt Scotch distilleries, the best of the best,” he says. “We invest in casks at a young age and hold onto them before trading at a profit as the whisky matures. It is an investment, which means there are all the attendant risks, but the older a whisky, the more valuable it is. If you buy young and leave it to mature, you can bottle and sell it to make money.”

Ex-stockbroker Aaron's first memory of whisky is enjoying a dram of GlenDronach with his dad in Edinburgh, taken from cask 1901 – a number that remained in his mind. From his experience working with a leading firm in the industry, he knew how he could refine and improve an investment strategy. He then built a team of experts around him who shared his resolute focus on intelligent investment in only the most secure and experienced distilleries. To offer clients transparency through technology, he developed both an online portal for them to track their investments and the Whisky 1901 index with all relevant information about prices related to the sale of Scotch.

All Whisky 1901's casks are held in a single location, a storage facility around 45 minutes from Edinburgh. This ensures the company can monitor casks efficiently, receiving up-to-the-minute reports on ABV content and natural evaporation levels, so clients know the best moment to sell. Customers can visit the facility in person, and even enjoy a sample from their cask in the tasting room. As a whisky lover himself, Aaron understands that investment in such a commodity can have a physical and emotional component; it is important that clients are able to see, smell, taste and touch the liquid they are investing in. “You never get over the first moment you walk into a bonded facility and have that amazing smell,” says Aaron. “It's magical. I want every client to enjoy that feeling.”

At some point, the whisky cask needs to be put in a bottle and sold. Whisky 1901 undertook its first independent bottling in 2024, selecting a Glenburgie 1988, aged in a single bourbon cask. It won three awards, including a Global Scotch Whisky Masters Gold medal from The Spirits Business, demonstrating the quality of the company's holdings, as well as its ability to successfully bottle casks. “We won't be bottling just anything,” says Aaron, “we are bottling casks we feel are ready – extremely rare casks from the best distilleries. We are taking the same general approach as we are with the investment side, focusing only on the cream of the market. We don't want to cut corners.”

This approach towards excellence and sophistication continues the story of world-renowned Scotch, the most internationally traded spirit. Whisky 1901's private investors are not only investing in a sought-after cask of whisky, but also a piece of Scottish heritage.

www.whisky1901.com





Flight of fancy

Mile High 69 premium gin is an alluring blend of botanicals and the romance of luxury aviation

When Julica Renn told her parents she was planning to create a gin named after the legendary Mile High Club, they were a little shocked. Entry to the club is granted to anybody who has engaged in a mid-air romantic liaison – and as a licensed helicopter pilot, Julica thought it was the perfect name for her high-quality gin, Mile High 69.

“In the flying world, all the pilots talk about the Mile High Club,” she says. “It is rather cheeky. I don’t know if everybody knows what it means, but it is very funny for those that do.”

Julica comes from a distinguished family of winemakers and distillers. Her parents run the Hotel Burgunderhof, an organic hotel, vineyard and distillery at Lake Constance on Germany’s border with Switzerland. This is also where Julica distils her gin, perfecting its taste by combining fresh juniper with 18 other botanicals, including lime, elderflower and kumquat. Juniper is a protected plant, so most producers are unable to obtain fresh berries. Julica, however, has permission to collect the freshest juniper from woods in the nearby Alps. “That gives my gin a very special taste, as you can imagine,” she says.

Alongside sustainable production techniques, the striking bottle was an important element. Julica wanted to create something that would stand out on the shelves. She found a company in Germany that produces aluminium bottles for medicinal alcohol. With much perseverance and hard work, she was able to adapt these bottles to her branding for Mile High 69, creating an overall aesthetic that draws on the golden age of flight.

And, like the bottle, the gin’s name certainly catches the eye. Legend has it that the infamous Mile High Club can trace its history back more than a century, to 1916. As the story goes, two aviators – Lawrence Sperry, inventor of flight systems and instruments such as the autopilot and artificial horizon, and Mrs Waldo Peirce, the first amateur licensed female pilot in the US – became the club’s founding members in a Curtiss Flying Boat over New York, prior to landing (some say crash-landing) in the Great South Bay.

Julica says she choose the distinctive name for her brand because, “Well, if you are not in the club yourself, this is the next best thing. In fact, I think that when you drink my gin, it means you have joined the club.” In another subtle connection to the romance of aviation, each production run of Mile High 69 is limited to 1,852

bottles per batch – one nautical mile (the unit used to measure distance in flight) is 1,852 metres.

Julica also produces a powerful, flavour-packed dark rum and a quinine-free tonic water made with organically grown herbs – an ideal complement to her gin’s subtle flavours. The organic tonic water highlights the sustainable principles of the distillery, inherited from Julica’s pioneering parents, who refined their operations over four decades to set the highest standards for environmental protection.

The gin is widely available in fine hotels and restaurants across Germany and Switzerland, and around the world through international distributors. Mile High 69 has already received five top international awards, including Gold in the World Spirits Award 2018. Julica’s next target is to have the gin served in airports and on private planes – the best location, she feels, for anybody who wishes to indulge in the unforgettable experience of Mile High 69.

www.milehigh69.com



A matter of time

Through Whisky by Time, whisky enthusiasts have rare access to directly acquire Scotland's most prestigious product

When guests arrive at one of Islay's distilleries, they are invariably enraptured by centuries of whisky-making tradition amid the beauty of this remote Scottish island.

Such distillery tours are part of the relationship-building experience that Oliver O'Donovan of Whisky by Time offers his clients – investors and whisky cask collectors for whom his company creates customised investment portfolios. “The distillery is like an abbey, a holy place on the island,” says Oliver. “When you visit Islay or other regions, you really understand why these whiskies are so valuable.”

Clients see first-hand the time and effort that goes into whisky-making, using techniques that have been deployed for centuries. “Our clients meet the owners, they see the magic and they feel the love,” says Oliver. “The most precious commodity is time, and it takes a lot of time to create great whisky.”

Oliver founded his company in 2021, having already spent more than 15 years in the wine and whisky investment market. Along with his team of experienced brokers, he provides easy access to this growing sector: according to the Scotch Whisky Association, the industry's exports were worth £5.6 billion in 2023 with 43 bottles shipped each second to 160 markets around the world. Scotch whisky's export success story is such that it contributes some £7 billion to the UK economy.

After investing in an expertly selected collection of young casks, all Oliver's clients have to do is wait. The spirit needs to mature in oak casks for at least three years before it can be legally described as Scotch whisky, and some casks are aged for decades. This long timeline also means that whisky-making is a capital-intensive process, so distilleries are always seeking investors. Some of the advantages of investing in Scotch is that the product has a track record of repeatedly beating inflation, and profits are exempt from capital gains tax if the whisky is kept in a bonded warehouse like Whisky by Time's.

Whisky by Time's investors enter at the level they are most comfortable with. When they are ready to sell – usually after a minimum of five years – the company offers several exit strategies, including auctions, private sales and bottling for retail through an independent bottler. Oliver ensures clients always have access to the same account manager, who develops diverse portfolios based on holdings from distilleries in the five Scotch whisky regions: Highland, Lowland, Campbeltown, Islay and Speyside. There is also a premier client service that

includes reimbursement for storage and insurance costs, a Christmas hamper from Fortnum & Mason, an annual gift of aged whisky and invitations to tasting sessions, distillery tours and major sporting events such as racing, cricket and rugby.

“We really invest in that relationship between the client and broker,” says Oliver. “People used to have a proper relationship with their bank managers, they could pick up the phone and talk to them directly. I feel that's a dying art, and we want to restore that practice. I am out every week with a client because it allows us to build a relationship and a level of trust.”

The events laid on by Whisky by Time help its clients develop their own network of like-minded people, too. It is an approach that aligns with the way Scotch is consumed, as a tangible product to be shared and savoured on special occasions, to celebrate friendship and success.

www.whiskybytime.com







Magic in a bottle

The two brothers behind New Forest distillery 820 Spirits are finding innovative ways to make genuinely sustainable gin and rum

At a plant nursery in the New Forest, in Lymington, Hampshire, is a gin distillery surrounded by the sloes, blackberries, junipers and strawberries that go into its uniquely crafted gins and rum. Alongside this emphasis on locally sourced ingredients, what makes 820 Spirits really special is the research that distillery co-founder Tom Simpson has put into the botanicals.

“You get different flavours from different points in the distillation process,” says Tom, who has a master’s in chemical engineering and worked as head distiller in other distilleries for a number of years. “There is a lot of precision involved. We vacuum distil some of our botanicals at a low pressure and low temperature. It means you keep a real freshness to the flavours.”

820 Spirits was set up in 2020. It came about after Tom brought a batch of gins on a family skiing trip that he had distilled at work. They were so popular that he and his brother, co-founder Jonny, decided to produce them commercially. Within the first year, their gins were recommended in *GQ* magazine, and had won awards in the International Wine and Spirit Competition. Going



from strength to strength, the brothers opened their New Forest distillery – the new home of 820 Spirits – in 2023.

The drinks range includes a London dry gin, a pink gin, sloe gin, blackberry gin and chocolate orange gin. There is also a blended rum called The Dawes Rum, which the brothers created to celebrate the wedding of their friends who have been rum fans since their time in the Royal Navy. It was so well received at the event that the brothers decided to bring it to the masses.

The pink gin, which combines sweet strawberry notes with delicate cassia spices and Szechuan pepper, is named Miss Hanne’s Lymington Pink Gin after Jonny’s then fiancée. “We did a special bottle that said, ‘Miss Hanne, will you marry me?’,” says Jonny. “Thankfully, she said yes. One thing that is apparent is that Tom is a genius when it comes to creating spirits and different flavours.”

As a growing producer of spirits, the company retains a personal touch. This includes the spirits schools for people to design and make their own gin or spiced rum. They get hands-on experience of making the spirits and learn about their background history. By the end of the two-hour session, people will have enjoyed tasting a few different drinks and get to take home the personal bottle

they made. There are also cocktail classes with a focus on simple but spectacular drinks that can be made at home.

The brothers are intent on being as environmentally friendly as possible. Their distillery is powered by solar panels and uses several sustainable, energy-saving distillation methods – one of which is the cold distillation of botanicals, which is much less power-intensive since it does not require heat. In addition, water is sourced from a borehole on-site, and recyclable glass bottles come with biodegradable seals to avoid plastic packaging. The company is working towards complete self-sustainability with the juniper that it grows. “This is important, as there can be quite a lot of shipping involved with juniper, depending on where you get it from,” says Tom. “We have managed to get our carbon footprint exceptionally low.”

820 Spirits offers its spirits online and in local shops, bars and restaurants, implementing a refill pouch system to reduce waste. With its current success, the company is looking to expand into the US and increase sales in the UK. The brothers have high hopes for the company’s growth as customer recommendations spread.

www.820spirits.com

Fire and ice

The husband-and-wife team at the Hovdenak Distillery in Iceland use a “magical distillation process” to craft small-batch spirits with a difference

Hákon Hovdenak began creating craft spirits by experimenting in the Icelandic distillery he built with the help of “dear friends” in his home town of Hafnarfjörður, near Reykjavik.

But what began as a hobby has now led to Hovdenak Distillery winning awards from all corners of the world.

“Once I became good at making the spirits, I wanted to expand,” says Hákon. “I started trying out different herbs and spices and I came up with the recipe for our gin.” Since 2018, he and wife Brynja have run Hovdenak Distillery as a business, winning gold medals from The World Gin Awards, the Swiss Spirits Review and the International Wine & Spirit Competition, and consistently receiving 95 out of 100 from the International Drinks Specialists.

The combination of flavours in the gin, vodka and espresso martini is not the only thing that makes the spirits special: the products are extremely smooth. This is, in part, because of the “magical distillation process” from the still they built. The only one of its kind in the world, it comprises stainless steel pipes, a high-tech computerised system and a compact bottling line that springs into action at the touch of a button. Use of the scientific, vacuum distillation approach, in which distilling takes place at low temperatures, helps to impart the delicacy of flavour.

The quality of the water in Iceland is also key to the exceptional taste. “Some companies will have to hide the taste of the water they use with something else,” says Hákon. The distillery does not use a filtration process as the region’s drinking water is naturally filtered as it descends from the glaciers through the volcanic highlands. This makes the water the perfect pure base for spirits. Hákon and Brynja compare it to “drinking silk” because of the water’s uncommonly high pH, which makes it naturally alkaline.

The range includes the signature Stuðlaberg Gin, the first of Hovdenak’s creations, which has rich flavours of juniper berries, citrus, a hint of cardamon and a subtle taste of liquorice; the “silky smooth” Loki Vodka, crafted from hand-selected potatoes; and the Rökkvi Espresso Martini, a ready-made cocktail that combines the richness of cold brew coffee and the sweet notes of caramel and raw sugar with the pristine Icelandic water. “We have added pink and blue gins to the range and three rums, and we have one or two liquors coming,” says Hákon. “In our ten-year to-do list, we would like to produce whisky, too.”

Some ranges are limited edition – 1,000 bottles of Askur Aquavit, individually numbered, went on sale in 2023; its name was inspired by a legendary tree in Norse mythology to capture “the deep connection between the



mystical and the natural”. Although the distillery produces some 30,000 bottles a year, in small batches, it has the capacity to produce one million bottles and there are ambitions to expand internationally, starting with the US. In the meantime, Hovdenak spirits are found online and in high-end hotels such as the Marriott.

Hákon and Brynja take measures to protect the environment. They distill at a far lower temperature than is usual, tapping into the country’s abundant geothermal and hydroelectric energy as a heat source; and they participate in carbon offsetting schemes. Their dedication to a sustainable future has earned them the title of Sustainable Distillery of the Year at the 2024 Icons of Gin awards.

Even the bottles’ labels are handmade by the husband-and-wife team, who give tours of the building and tasting sessions for visitors. This personal touch, they believe, makes Hovdenak spirits more appealing to some than mass-produced beverages, and offers an exquisite taste of Iceland.

www.hovdenakdistillery.is



A zest for limoncello

Lemon Brothers' artisanal limoncello captures the essence of its origins, from the fresh lemons from Italy to the closely guarded family recipe

When Florian Wöhle married into a Swiss-Italian family, he was astonished to taste their homemade limoncello. “I couldn’t believe limoncello of this quality existed. I was so fond of this drink it became a joke within the family – every birthday and Christmas, they would give me a small bottle. It was the only gift I wanted.”

The grandparents of Florian’s wife, Amélie, had inherited an apartment in Sanremo on the Italian Riviera. It not only boasted commanding views of the picturesque town but had a garden where they planted their very own lemon tree over 30 years ago. Using their own lemons, grandparents Marco and Hedi sought, through trial, error and tastings, to settle on a recipe that would negate what they – and Florian – saw as the main flaws of ordinary limoncello: too sugary, too soft. Finally, they struck the right balance.

This family limoncello recipe would alter the course of Florian’s life. At the time, he was working as a police detective, but limoncello became an obsession for him. Now, he would be tracking down and identifying the perfect limoncello of his own, based on the original family recipe that Marco had revealed to him. Working at nights, weekends and during the holidays, he produced small batches – two, five, then ten litres. In 2020, upon marrying Amélie, he made 25 litres as a wedding gift for the guests. They appreciated, as had he, the perfect balance of alcohol, sugar, acidity and lemon, which distinguished it from the rest. “It’s weird how I ended up making limoncello – I used to find it too sweet and soapy, even,” says Florian. “I would take it because it was free at a restaurant, but I would not really enjoy it.”

In the meantime, Florian began to research the feasibility of setting up his own company, producing limoncello on a full-time basis. Together with his brother Joshua, who provided “moral support” and advised him on the entrepreneurial side of creating a brand, he founded Lemon Brothers in 2021. While the production is based in Vaud, Switzerland, the lemons, all organic and carefully selected, are from Italy. It is all part of the meticulous work that goes into making an artisanal limoncello. “We get all the lemons from the Amalfi Coast, and we peel each one by hand with family and friends. It’s a lot of work, and it has to be done perfectly so the batch doesn’t go bad,” says Florian.

Within a year, Lemon Brothers was producing 2,000 litres of its Limonceflo, selling to restaurants and specialist food outlets across Switzerland, including the



three Michelin-starred Restaurant de l’Hôtel de Ville in Crissier and several places praised by Gault & Millau. Florian submitted his version of the digestif to 11 international competitions, primarily for feedback. To his amazement, it won medals in each one, including Gold at the Luxury Masters in London and Double Gold at the Berlin International Spirits Competition, both in 2022. After this, Florian finally had the courage to resign from the police, in 2023, and start producing Limonceflo full-time.

On the back of its success, the company has expanded and Florian is currently seeking to enter the UK market. “I did a Christmas market in Geneva and found that the most enthusiastic clients were from Britain – so I’m very motivated to export it, especially since my co-founder and brother lives in London.” That said, Florian does not want to overgrow the company at the expense of its family, artisanal origins. “Sure, you can upscale, but it’s not like making beer; it’s a bit more complicated, but we’re getting there.”

www.lemonbrothers.ch



Limoncello

by Lemon Brothers

Fait main à partir de citrons bio d'Italie

PREMIUM

700ml | 35% ALC/VOL

Produit à St-Légier / SUISSE



Silver lining

Aspen Vodka and its Colorado distillery draw from the region's illustrious heritage and natural terroir to craft a luxurious spirit

When the world's largest silver nugget was retrieved from Smuggler Mine in 1894, it confirmed the legend of Aspen, Colorado, as a place of natural wonders. Miners flocked to the region's Rocky Mountains in search of treasure, much as tourists would later visit the town to experience its scenic surroundings. Those silver mines provided Matthew Patel with inspiration for Aspen Vodka, a luxurious spirit created in a unique, sustainable distillery located on the banks of the Roaring Fork River. It is, in essence, a liquid homage to Aspen's history and outstanding natural beauty.

"We are very precise in everything from fermentation to distillation," says Matthew. "The final step is filtration, and we use a new technique that combines activated carbon and silver to provide a smooth, rounded quality. Silver is such an important part of the story of Aspen. It was the silver mining that first made Aspen a town of stature, so it's great to include it in the making of our vodka and to reference it on our packaging."

Matthew came to vodka from an unusual background, originally practising emergency medicine. As a vodka lover,



he pondered why the US did not produce a homegrown premium version and pledged to fill that gap in the market, relishing the challenge he had set himself. He launched Aspen Vodka in 2021, creating its signature profile from local ingredients – the rich, smooth red winter wheat and the crisp, pure Roaring Fork River water that arrives at the distillery from the surrounding snow-capped peaks.

Matthew was determined to preserve the locality by constructing a distillery that would have minimal impact on the landscape while meeting the highest standards of sustainability in the spirit's production. In 2024, his approach was rewarded when the distillery received certification for having reached the highest standards expected by the US Green Building Council, becoming the first in its category to achieve this benchmark. The 18,000-square-foot space is fully electric and generates more energy than is consumed, and construction materials are eco-friendly and ethically sourced. Matthew and his team of engineers and architects are repeatedly raising the bar for environmental protection and stewardship at every stage of the journey. "We are entirely contained within our campus," he says. "We clean our waste with an on-site system, and it is so pure it can return to the river.

We have a circular mindset and in meeting those goals we are receiving third-party validation."

The drink itself has already received high praise in the industry as the Double Gold winner of the 2024 San Francisco World Spirits Competition. It is now available throughout Colorado and, after recent expansion, some of the most populous states in the US, including New York, Illinois, California, Texas and Florida. The new e-commerce platform on the company website also allows the vodka to be shipped nationally. "We want to grow slowly but steadily through a mixture of retail and hospitality, as well as online," says Matthew. At the same time, the distillery has ambitions to be known as the premium vodka in markets beyond the US border.

In building the distillery, Matthew has developed a product that embodies the terroir it comes from. Aspen's unique sensibility is reflected in the graceful packaging, and in the spirit itself – a taste of the fresh mountain air and the pure river water that can only come from this most remarkable of places.

www.theaspenvodka.com

Rebel with a cause

At its Swedish distillery, Agitator Whisky is challenging traditional whisky making with new methods and flavours, and built-in sustainability

Sweden may not be renowned as one of the great whisky-producing countries in the world, but that is starting to change among connoisseurs. This is thanks to the pioneering Agitator Whisky, a Swedish upstart that makes exciting new whiskies from a state-of-the-art distillery in the town of Arboga, in central Sweden. Founder and master blender Oskar Bruno describes Agitator as “a troublemaker... a sophisticated rebel”, one that produces creative and experimental whiskies far removed from the Scottish tradition.

“Scotch has to be made in a certain way to be classified as Scotch, but we have no such restrictions,” he says. “Most distilleries copy Scotland, but we wanted to do whisky in a Swedish way and that allowed us to take a completely different mindset.” They looked at what they could change to create a better spirit, including different methods and grains – barley, oats and rye – yeasts and types of wood. They defined what they wanted to create: a whisky that would be very drinkable after three years. “We then reverse-engineered the distillery to build it for specific flavours, picking the barrels, ingredients and methods based on that goal.”

Since the start of production in 2018, Agitator has become one of the bestselling whiskies in Sweden. In 2022, it won three medals at the International Wine & Spirit Competition. The award-winning Single Malt Whisky is an easy-going whisky drawn from four stills and made from 16 different flavours from wood and peat. It is aged in the barrel for between three and five years. Other distinct lines include the Argument series, which employs unique techniques such as ageing in maple syrup barrels to produce Argument: Lönnsirapsfat, or chestnut barrels for the highly acclaimed Argument: Kastanj. The Evidens series incorporates higher-end, more experimental spirits such as Svartvete, which uses black wheat to create a rich, roasted flavour reminiscent of stout.

When building the distillery, the team at Agitator ensured they met the highest standards of sustainability. A district heating network processes hot water, which is then returned to the network to heat neighbouring homes and offices. All energy is taken from renewable sources, while warm air from the distillery is piped into the warehouse to heat the premises during the winter. Distillation takes place under a process of vacuum distillation, which lowers the boiling point to make production much less energy intensive. At the same time, this gentle process



produces a better spirit, with more natural flavours obtained from the raw materials.

In 2023, UK wine and spirits merchants Berry Bros & Rudd selected Agitator as part of its collection of premium spirits made using sustainable methods – further confirmation of the international recognition that this groundbreaking distillery is receiving. Agitator exports to select markets in Europe and is available online.

The distillery produces some 300,000 bottles a year, yet it is only at one-fifth of capacity. Sweden’s “sophisticated rebel” has only just got started. “It’s not that we do it better, but we can do it in a different way that works for us and works for the consumer,” says Oskar. “We focus on the techy element of distilling, and we like to experiment to create a completely different experience. That allows us to step away from the traditional style and try all these new flavours, and to do it with confidence.”

www.agitatorwhisky.com



The spirit of agave

MayaJules Mezcal Artesanal is the modern embodiment of love, passion and adventure, dedicated to honouring the divine feminine within us all

In 2023, a new artisanal mezcal named MayaJules entered the spirits market, boasting a distinctly feminine flair in palate and panache. Renowned for its “subtle, approachable and less smoky” character, MayaJules has quickly garnered rave reviews and established itself among top restaurants and bars. It has won 14 top international industry awards, including The Spirits Business Tequila and Mezcal Masters 2024.

Co-founders Jules Marohl and Katina Aziz lead the feminine force behind MayaJules, alongside the Mexican women and men who craft the spirit. “Creating MayaJules has genuinely been an amazing journey of transformation and discovery,” says Jules. Katina adds, “Jules and I are devoted mezcal enthusiasts, but we both agreed that a more female-forward brand was missing from the market, so in 2019 we set about creating it.”

Their search for the perfect producers led them to the Oaxaca region of Mexico, where they were introduced to the most incredible, inspirational women. They included female distillers and those with influential roles in agave production, who worked with Jules and Katina to develop and produce a 45 per cent ABV blend that met their exacting brief: a perfect balance of the finest agave plants, sustainably farmed and foraged, from the sweetness of Espadín to the floral, fruity notes of Tobalá and the minerality of Tobasiche. The taste was to be bold yet rounded, retaining an equilibrium between the sweetness of the agave and a subtle astringency and smokiness.

During the development process, Jules and Katina not only learned about the Oaxacan women’s artisanal production of mezcal, but also their culture and communities. MayaJules is crafted by hand using sustainable methods passed down through generations. The brand’s producer practises seed propagation at its own nursery to help preserve the species and, for every agave plant used in the production, three are given to the distillers to replant. Given the long maturation period of agaves (seven to 35 years), it is vital that the mezcal is produced responsibly.

Jules and Katina minimise the brand’s environmental footprint where possible. The labels on each bottle are made from recycled paper, with a cactus-leather necktie that pays homage to the decoratively braided hair worn by Oaxacan women. The pair also try to inspire other women to take on leadership roles and have pledged support to Ella, Inc, a US-based programme that provides young women around the world with training on the initial stages of social entrepreneurship and introduces them to the essentials of creating ventures that have a meaningful impact on their communities. After developing their own sustainable



business ideas, the young women have the opportunity to win a cash prize to assist them in returning to their communities where they can implement their ideas. They also share their knowledge with those enrolled on the programme in subsequent years.

The name MayaJules pays homage to such women, as well as the women behind the brand. The name is inspired by Mayahuel, Aztec goddess of agave, and all she symbolises: passion, boldness and sensuality. The bottle reflects this essence, with “shoulders” symbolising the strength, independence and energy of womanhood. “MayaJules is the emergence of the goddess into today’s world,” says Katina, “honouring the divine feminine within us all.”

The pair emphasise that MayaJules is not only for women, but is “a sensual, softer take on a traditionally masculine drink, broadening mezcal’s appeal”. Whether enjoyed neat or in a cocktail, MayaJules invites everyone to “experience the essence of the ancient goddess in a modern world”.

www.mayajules.com



A drink for community

An artisanal, additive-free spirit, Valor tequila helps support the Mexican communities that make it with every bottle sold

“**W**e want to deliver a superior, sustainable product, so our primary focus is on quality,” says Christiane Maertens, founder and CEO of tequila company Valor. The world of tequila is highly competitive – the Mexican spirit is currently the fastest-growing on the market – but Christiane is undaunted. With more than 20 years of experience advising multinationals on how to increase their sustainability profile, she knows her vision sets her apart from the competition.

That vision is to create a community-led, sustainable tequila company that brings prosperity to everyone involved, including the *jimadores*, those who hand-harvest the crop used to make the spirit. When Christiane founded Valor, not many competitors were doing the same. “Tequila was the first alcoholic drink I ever tasted, and I love it,” she says. “But I soon learned there are deep inequities throughout the tequila-making supply chain. It’s a billion-dollar industry where most of the wealth remains overseas. I wanted to show what it looks like to embed local responsibility and sustainability into a successful tequila company.”

Valor tequila is made with just two natural ingredients: the mature blue agave plant and water. This is unusual for a spirit in which additives are often used to enhance flavour. In keeping with her sustainable, collaborative model, Christiane avoided the mass production route. Instead, she has chosen a traditional artisanal production process through a partnership with a family-run distillery, whose mission and values mirrored her own. “We do open fermentation so that the flavour profile comes from the natural environment, not from anything we’re putting into it,” she says. Unlike many other brands, Valor allows the agave to mature fully for six to eight years before harvesting, resulting in an exceptional taste.

Valor currently offers three types of tequila: the bright, refreshing Blanco, a warm, spicy Reposado and a rich, silky Añejo. These are available through the brand’s online store as well as at retail outlets in California, Florida, New Jersey and New York. Valor has also caught the attention of major organisations, including Walt Disney World, UN Women and the University of Guadalajara, a turning point for its visibility.

Alongside its ethical production processes, Valor has a philanthropic arm, the Gente Buena Foundation, which means “good people” in Spanish. Through the foundation, 10 per cent of the profit from each bottle sold is reinvested into the communities surrounding Valor’s distillery in Jalisco, Mexico. The foundation demonstrates the

positive impact that can be made in tequila-producing communities by deepening local investment, and partners with carefully chosen organisations in Mexico to co-ordinate community projects, such as ensuring water equity and availability. Water issues were particularly urgent in the area where Valor tequila is distilled and, through Gente Buena’s efforts, water access for over 2,000 local residents is now rapidly improving.

This type of collaborative effort is what Christiane felt was lacking in the industry and is key to Valor’s success. “I spent a lot of time learning about how good tequila is produced as well as about the communities that surround that production,” says Christiane. “Our brand is dedicated to delivering outstanding tequila to those who value quality and integrity. We believe that investing in responsible community development is the key to driving a successful ethical business model.”

www.drinkvalor.com





APPENDICES





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IMAGES

Adamas: Ophelia Lounge, 3 Mitchell Place, New York, NY 10017 (page 463); photography by Andre Silva Pinto and Aspet Manukyan (pages 462–63)

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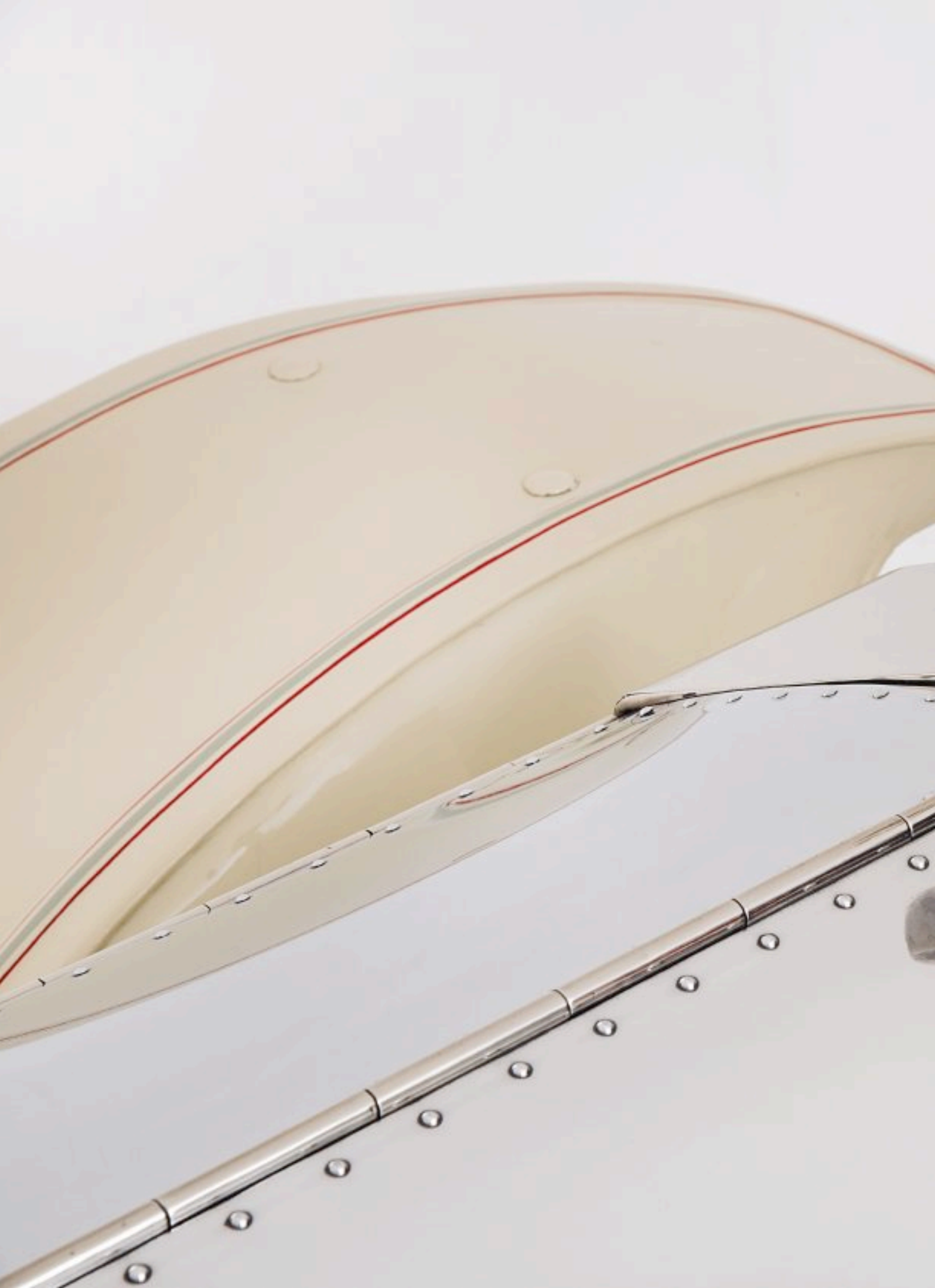
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