

World
service
Global

Preface

We check in to the cosiest rooms with views, celebrate much-needed city-stays plugging a gap in their host markets and take a lesson in positivity from the fittingly philosophical Athenian hospitality trade.

**The Black House**
Borgarnes, Iceland

North of Reykjavik just before the Snaefellsnes peninsula, this home is in the 18th-century Icelandic style: small windows, pitched roof and thick walls. Surrounded by fjords and volcanic peaks, the timber cottage is painted black in a colour derived from volcanic tar. It can accommodate four guests and was decorated by designer Rut Káradóttir. "There are few opportunities for travellers to stay in this kind of house in Iceland," says owner Kristinn Arnarson. — DEP boutique-homes.com

Archive Homestore and Kitchen
Ramsgate, UK

In a Victorian-era archway in the seaside town of Ramsgate on the Kent coast, eastern England, you will find Archive Homestore & Kitchen. The woody, Scandinavian-influenced space is set around a long communal table and stuffed with tasteful one-off mid-century pieces that are framed by birch plywood (the flush finishes come courtesy of a local carpenter).

Created by Naomi Grady and her architect husband Scott in October, the space also doubles as a convivial café. Brands on show include Mini Empire, Jane Foster Designs' mid-century-inspired cushions and cheerful characters, and Forlife's hardy teapots and tea jugs. — JAF archivehomestore.co.uk

**Senato Hotel**
Milan

The scarcity of chic lodgings for business travellers and weekend trippers in Milan has been more than adequately addressed by the opening of the 43-room Senato Hotel. Situated steps from the city's famed shopping district, the property occupies a converted early 20th-century family residence that has been tastefully remodelled by architect Alessandro Bianchi.

Rooms have ergonomic beds, oak parquet flooring and grey-white Carrara marble bathrooms. Understated public spaces are outfitted with custom furnishings, including brass lighting handmade by Milanese craftsmen. The bar proudly serves Lombard wine, beer, cheese and cured meats. — IC senatohotelmilano.it

The Capra

Saas-Fee, Switzerland

With just 14 suites, The Capra is more of a hideaway than a hotel in a busy Alpine resort. The newly opened gem nestles in the idyllic setting of Saas-Fee, a snowy Swiss commune 45 minutes from Zermatt in the heart of the Alps. The hotel's snug chalet-like feel is heightened by an abundance of warm, felty fabrics and wools alongside wood and rustic furniture. The views across several 4,000-metre-plus peaks of the Valais are stunning and perfectly framed by almost every window in the hotel.

Award-winning chef Oliver Glowig has created a modern Italian menu with a distinctively Swiss touch for the hotel's La Locanda restaurant, while The Capra's laidback bar is good for a *vin chaud* or an après-ski bite. — DEP capra.ch

**The Dispatch**
Future travels

April 2016

1 In March, Rebata, a subsidiary of Japanese railway company Keio, opened the Hatchi hotel in Kanazawa. The renovated office near Higashi Chaya district is now a five-floor hotel with rooms and bunk beds (some women-only) targeting budget travellers. It's a refreshing change from the bulldoze-and-rebuild ethos that rules here. thesharehotels.com

2 With more than 500km of coastline, the Netherlands is an underrated place for a seaside sojourn. In April the coastal village of Kijkduin in Den Haag provides a good reason to decamp to the Dutch coast: the opening of the Haagse Strandhuisjes, 20 white-painted wood cabins on the beach. haagsestrandhuisjes.nl

3 The Aman hotel opened in Tokyo in 2014 but has its sights set on the countryside next. The brand's first onsen resort in the Ise-Shima National Park in Mie is called the Amanemu – and opens this summer. amanemu.com

**Monsieur Ernest**
Bruges

Bruges has long needed a more laidback destination for guests who don't want to be treated like tourists and Monsieur Ernest may well be it. This newly opened hotel is housed in a 14th-century building that was once both a home and a brewery, where features including an original wooden staircase and high ceilings remain intact and integral to the hotel's historic feel.

Most of the 28 rooms overlook the canals; in summer guests can have breakfast outside on the terrace by the water. "Our guests love discovering lesser-known Belgian beers," says owner Jeroen Vandewalle. "Our bar is hidden in one of the oldest corners of this patrician's residence." — DEP monsieurernest.com

**Bomontiada**
Istanbul

A former Ottoman-era brewery that sat fallow for 25 years, Bomontiada's cavernous brewing rooms and brick archways have been turned into a series of restaurants, a nightclub and Alt, a subterranean space for exhibitions and performance. Try the prawn *manti* – a seafood skewer on Turkey's yoghurt pasta – at Kilimanjaro, or go for Turkish wine and home-cooked Anatolian food at Delimonti. Microbrewer Populist has eight craft beers on tap. — CL bomontiada.com

**The Citizenry Studio**
Dallas

The Citizenry was started for people who want "fewer, better pieces they'll treasure for years", says Carly Nance, who cooked up the idea for the homeware shop with business partner Rachel Bentley. Founded as an online seller, it opened a retail space in 2015. "Sometimes it takes touching the product to really understand the artistry behind it," says Bentley of an inventory that includes hand-loomed Peruvian alpaca blankets and Argentine leather chairs. — RH the-citizenry.com

Flux Conditionings
Tokyo

Each member of the team behind Flux Conditionings, a smart new gym in Tokyo, could give a masterclass in their chosen discipline. Shokei Matsui is a karate instructor who took just one year to become a black belt before becoming the youngest-ever karate world champion. Kosuke Kitajima is a multiple Olympic gold medal-winning swimmer and Kashiwa Sato, an award-winning art director, completes the line-up. Matsui is also president of Kyokushin Kaikan, a karate organisation with more than 12 million members that was looking to open a children's dojo (martial-arts training centre) in Daikanyama. After teaming up with swimmer Kitajima and business partner Noriko Okubo, the idea emerged to start a dojo

with a combined martial-arts training facility, gym and pool.

One of Matsui's students was the son of Kashiwa Sato. Could the celebrated designer, they wondered, be persuaded to take on the interior? Sato jumped at the chance. "I've looked up to Kyokushin karate since I was a child," he says. He did the logo too. The dojo – traditionally an unadorned space – was at the heart of the project. "The dojo is what it should be," says Sato. "I used wood, which is the root of Japanese architecture." Yukiko Niimura, whose family has run a restaurant in Kagoshima since 1933, runs the ground-floor café, which serves organic Japanese food. With a mouthful of Niimura's Kyushu pork with rice and miso soup, all the pain from training will seem worth it. — FW flux-conditionings.com





Independent hotels
Paris

The Paris hotel scene has long been dominated by extremes: big brands intent on building stately pleasure domes or grottier smaller stays. But there's finally something stirring in the independent hotel market, and a dozen or so smaller places have opened in the past six months, capitalising on the closures of The Ritz, Crillon, Lutetia and Plaza Athénée – all recently closed for renovations.

The Hôtel Grand Amour is a 42-room guesthouse from hotelier Thierry Costes, restaurateur Emmanuel Delavenne and graffiti artist André Saraïva, who has styled the edgy interiors of this 10th-arrondissement stopover. The walls bear artwork by Helmut Newton and Keith Haring, bathrooms are kitted out with Hermès toiletries and the staff uniforms were designed by Maison Kitsuné.

Then there's Le Pigalle, a 40-room space named after the once-dicey suburb a few minutes south of the Sacré-Coeur. Here the offer changes from pâtisserie-fresh croissants each morning to a humming bar come nightfall. Don't miss barwoman Gwladys Gublin's spicy speciality, the Pauvre Chérie (meaning "poor darling"). It's made with gin, peppercorns, sage and bitters.

Meanwhile, the Hôtel Mathis reopened this January in Paris's eighth arrondissement and the inexpensive but elegant Coq Hotel Paris opened back in November. — DHZ
hotelmathis.com

Notable newbies

01 Coq Hotel Paris
Out on a limb in the 13th but a spot to watch as the bourgeois bohème continue the gentrification of Paris.
coq-hotel-paris.com

02 Le Pigalle
Valéry Grégo already owns a number of hotels in the Alps but this Festen Architecture-designed gem is meticulously art-directed by Studio Be-pôles. There's even a pole-dance show each Thursday.
lepigalle.paris

03 Hotel Providence Paris
Opened in October, this homely space has an open fireplace, *Pointe de Hongrie* floors and views across Montmartre.
hotelprovidenceparis.com

04 Hôtel Grand Amour
Opened in November on the Rue de la Fidélité in the 10th (its sister the Amour is in nearby Pigalle). Eyes peeled for the erotic rugs made by Pierre Frey.
hotelamourparis.fr

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Q&A
John Consolas
Founder, Alice Inn
Athens



Architect John Consolas worked in London, New York and Bucharest before he opened the Alice Inn in a 1920s neoclassical townhouse, tucked away on a narrow sidestreet in the Plaka district of Athens at the foot of the Acropolis. We learn about his approach and take the temperature of the Hellenic hospitality scene.

Q How does an architect become a hotelier?

A It doesn't require a big skill set but it's more intuitive: anyone can do it by having the right attitude. I have always felt more comfortable looking after people and having a one-on-one relationship with them than just having a strictly professional one.

Q What is Alice Inn's philosophy?

A Every guest has unique needs so we make sure the books in rooms are interesting. We bake cakes daily because nothing takes you home more than the smell of a baking. I even walk guests to the taverna. Preparation for the guest is everything.

Q Is the Athenian tourism industry weathering the current economic woes?

A We have had tourism here for millennia; even Julius Caesar stopped by to do a little sightseeing. It's quite a robust industry and the city has actually benefited from the publicity brought by the financial crisis. But hoteliers and restaurant owners are now shifting their values to provide a more authentic, genuine and unpretentious service. — NS
aliceinnathens.com



Leon 16
Brussels

Located in the Dansaert district, B&B Leon 16 is surrounded by galleries and restaurants. On the first floor, the Ernest suite has a spacious bathroom with freestanding bath and a private terrace, while the ground floor Alfons suite is a Scandinavian-influenced affair. "We found the house in 2013 and rebuilt it as a place where we can host people in a personal way," says Annelies Veys, who runs the hotel with husband Karel Dierickx. — DEP
leon16.be



Hotel Emma
San Antonio

The one-time brewery that now houses Hotel Emma in San Antonio, Texas, has also been a drycleaner, garage and ice-cream factory at various points during its history. The 19th-century building was recently renovated by designers Robin Standefer and Stephen Alesch of Roman and Williams architects. Located in the walkable Pearl district, the 146-room hotel's warm hues, aged plaster walls and 3,700-volume library reflect its peerless Southern hospitality.

Rooms feature guayabera robes by Dos Carolinas, coffee from Merit Roasting Co and Malin+Goetz products. Chef John Brand's food is also a worthy reinterpretation of Southern fare that's served here with a worldly refinement. — MDB
thehotellemma.com



Marktgasse Hotel
Zürich

The junior suite of the newly opened Marktgasse Hotel in Zürich's Niederdorf district has perhaps the best view in town: its vast terrace that looks out over the city to the mountains is, weather permitting, an ideal spot for an alfresco breakfast.

Marktgasse is actually the restoration of two former inns, led by Basel-based architecture firm Miller & Maranta. The result is a spectacular and lively 39-room alternative to the city's more conservative stays. Older features such as wood panelling sit well with lamps and furniture from the likes of Flos and Cassina. Appreciative murmurs have been heard about Baltho, the intimate bar with a restaurant specialising in hearty, uncomplicated food. — DEP
marktgassehôtel.ch

