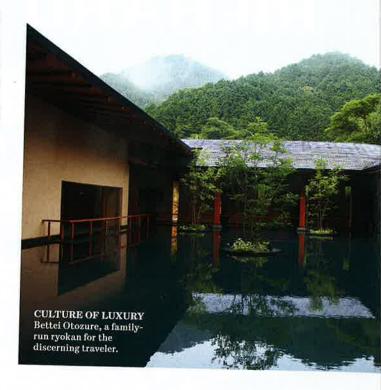


LIBATIONS

A TASTE OF HISTORY

The trade in vintage spirits has long been overshadowed by a heated market for fine wine—a discrepancy that Londonbased consultant Edgar Harden first noticed in 2008, when a wealthy British family hired him to auction off their wine cellar but "just get rid of" a case of 1960s Gordon's gin. "When I opened a bottle, I was blown away," Harden recalls. "It had an incredible smoothness, citrus nose and flavor." After discovering that almost nobody was handling the field of rare spirits and liqueurs, he launched Old Spirits Company, which deals in bottles heavy with historical mystique—Havana rum that Hemingway might have savored, exotic absinthes, Jazz Age red vermouth and vodkas suitable for early-Bond period martinis. This sensual pleasure is key to Harden, who used to work for Christie's, in New York: "In art and antiques, I coveted each object, its three-dimensionality, its physicality," he says. "It's the same feeling with these bottles. I love their original labels—so much more gorgeous than today's their packaging, their weight and thickness."

The low profile of the trade ensures plenty of bargains for collectors. "You can go to the American Bar at the Savoy hotel in London and order a Negroni made with 1960s gin for £150 [\$225]," Harden says. "Or buy an entire bottle of '60s Gordon's for less from me." The historic aura surrounding vintage spirits seems to carry people back to more hedonistic times. In a major pop-culture coup, Harden acquired 176 bottles from the set of *Mad Men*—samples of which were recently served in New York's storied Players Club, at a retro cocktail party called The Salon. "The party's not over yet," Harden boasted the next day. "I still have more than 150 bottles from the series left." oldspiritscompany.com. —Tony Perrottet



HOT PROPERTIES

EAST MEETS WE

Ryokans offer an extraordinary window into Japanese cultusthe best of these traditional guest houses are located in rur and may lack English-speaking staff. A new wave of small and luxury hotels—led by the lavish Aman Tokyo, which open year—offer authentic Japanese food and design alongside framenities like gyms, private baths and Western beds. —Alice



∢KINNOTAKE, HAKONE

Located near Mount Fuji, in the famous hot-spring resort of Hak 90 minutes by train from Tokyo—Kinnotake is crafted from 10,00 trees; its suites feature private onsen baths, Western beds and sej tatami rooms, where kaiseki, or multicourse Japanese dinners, ar by personal attendants. Most unusual for a ryokan, Kinnotake had it's open until 1 a.m. kinnotake.com



◀BETTEI OTOZURE, NAGATO

On the western tip of Honshu island in Yamaguchi prefecture, B Otozure has hosted high-profile Japanese guests since its openin 2006. The family-run ryokan's design sensibility fuses traditions and tatami floors with Western beds and Le Corbusier chairs. Na mountain waters—thought to have healing properties—fill the p rotenburo (hot-spring baths) in each suite. otozure.jp



SUIRAN, A LUXURY COLLECTION HOTEL, KYOTO

Formerly the imperial capital of Japan, Kyoto is home to some of to country's oldest and finest ryokans. But few welcome children. The Suiran—located in the scenic Arashiyama district, on the grounds a temple—allows families to experience Kyoto under the expert gu an English-speaking concierge who can arrange everything from reservations to tours of Buddhist temples. starwoodhotels.com/luxt



ANDAZ TOKYO TORANOMON HILLS, TOKYO

Designed by Tony Chi and Shinichiro Ogata and occupying the to floors of a skyscraper, this 164-room hotel is a contemporary ode ditional Japanese craftsmanship: Its lobby is adorned with intricat wood latticework; its rooms feature graphically playful shoji wall also has a beautifully minimal gym and pool, a spa and an eight-se sushi bar with panoramic views of the city. tokyo.andaz.hyatt.com