



THE GALLIVANTER'S GUIDE[®]

LONDON



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SETTING THE BENCHMARK FOR HIGH-END TRAVELLERS

A NEW BREED OF SMALL INDEPENDENT HOTELS.

With the high-end trend towards independently owned and managed hotels, this month, we go in search of London's new breed of small properties. In fact, the idea really started with Tim and Kit Kemp's Firmdale Hotels back in 1985, which enriched hitherto unexplored areas of London with a cluster of exquisite boutique properties, starting with the Dorset Square Hotel and gradually expanding the concept over the years to The Covent Garden Hotel, Ham Yard, Soho Hotel and so on. London offers a plethora of distinct neighbourhoods, and in this issue, we look at independent hotels in Chelsea, Bloomsbury and Mayfair; all of which offer totally different experiences of the Capital.

L'Oscar, Bloomsbury.

Owned by the fledgling Triangle Hotels & Resorts, which is, apparently, an International consortium, L'Oscar is the first hotel in what is intended to become an hotel brand.

At present, it is still finding its feet, but the hard product, designed by Jacques Garcia, is a splendid tribute to the bohemian, free-thinking Bloomsbury Group of the early 20th Century, that included the likes of Virginia Woolf and EM Forster; with Oscar Wilde having close ties to a number of its members. So, although the hotel is named for Wilde, it is really more of a



The extraordinary cigar terrace, covered by a custom-made tree sculpture, at L'Oscar

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READ BY THE WORLD'S TOP TRAVELLERS IN 42 COUNTRIES, SINCE 1991.



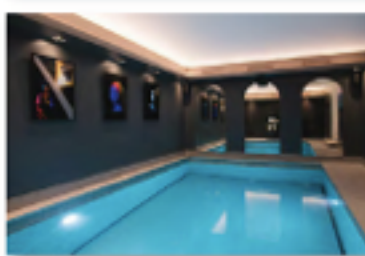
GALLIVANTER'S Gossip



THE COMPLETE REDESIGN of the suites at the authentically renovated Art Nouveau gem, **Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace**, Budapest, which overlooks the Danube, is finally finished and the result is even better than I expected (see right, Buda Castle Presidential Suite, #305).

EVERYONE HAS BEEN WAITING FOR something small and gorgeous in Kyoto, so you will be pleased to hear that **Aman Kyoto** is finally set to open on 1st November this year. Set in three two-storey buildings, with traditional onsen baths, the interior look is very much in keeping with Aman's other Japanese properties.

ELYN DAUDE, WHO SPENT MANY YEARS at Four Seasons George V and The Peninsula Paris, has just opened a very different Parisian hospitality concept. Set in the city's posh 16th arrondissement, which is home to the Bois de Boulogne, **Maison Montespain** is a small private residence with a palace-hotel attitude. With just five guestrooms, served by Baptiste, the house butler, this residential abode also has a heated rooftop terrace, a spacious dining room and even a heated indoor pool and gym (see right). If you are interested in accessing the Maison's unusually private website at maisonmontespain.com just email me for the password. Yes, it is that discreet!



ON HAWAII'S BIG ISLAND, **Rosewood** is set to renovate and manage the iconic **Kona Village**, which closed in 2011 after the tsunami. The resort is scheduled to reopen in 2022, with 150 rooms and suites.

EX PRESIDENT OF FOUR SEASONS, and now President of Equinox Hotels, Chris Norton, announced that **Equinox Hotel New York**, at Hudson Yards, the first hotel in the group, will open this coming June. Frankly, after watching the video on the hotel website, which features model, Naomi Campbell, I was speechless. This is easily the most disturbing and irrelevant hotel video I have ever seen. Decide for yourself at equinox-hotels.com.

THE BIG HOTEL CHAINS CONTINUE TO SWALLOW THE MINNOWS; the latest being **InterContinental Hotels Group**, which just bought **Six Senses Hotels, Resorts, Spas** from Pegasus Capital, for a reputed \$300 million. Watch out for their Costa Rica resort, which is currently under development and is owned by Canyon Equity (Amangiri). It is rumoured that this could become the group's new flagship, with rates to match.

SET ON 99 ACRES OF ORGANIC FARMLAND AND VINEYARDS, between Rome and Florence, the 8-suite, 12th Century **Castello di Vicarello** in Tuscany is the antithesis of a chain hotel. Owned since the 1970s by Aurora and Carlo Baccheschi Berti, the suite to go for is the newly renovated 2-storey **Villa Chiesina**, which has its own wine cellar and overlooks one of the hotel's two outdoor pools. castellodivicarello.com

FROM THIS MONTH, we have changed our **Mailing House**, so hopefully, you will receive **The Gallivanter's Guide** a little sooner, although judging by the numerous problems that postal services are facing throughout the world, I am still keeping my fingers crossed. Do let me know how it works out!

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