



## Monocle travel guide Global

### Preface

This month Monocle visits a new luxury retail behemoth in Milan, a Yemeni coffee outlet in Tokyo and a Copenhagen restaurant serving New Nordic food at affordable prices.



### Excelsior Milan

In a 4,000 sq m venue that used to house an old cinema in downtown Milan is Italian luxury retailer Gruppo Coin's latest venture, the Excelsior, a department store where fashion and food mix. Designed by French architect Jean Nouvel, the neon-bright building is a new landmark in the capital's centre, stretching from Corso Vittorio Emanuele to Piazza Beccaria, taking up two sides of Galleria del Corso.

The shop's top three floors offer clothing from brands such as Rag & Bone, Mackintosh and Borsalino while the basement is reserved for the Eat's Store, a food market and three eating spots: an elegant take-away, a bistro and a restaurant hosted by guest chefs. — SRT [excelsiormilano.com](http://excelsiormilano.com)

### Monocle's favourite department stores:

- 1) Shinsagae, South Korea
- 2) Mitsukoshi, Japan
- 3) Beymen, Turkey



PHOTOGRAPHER: GALIA CAMBIAGGI

### Fasano Boa Vista São Paulo State

Brazilian hotelier Rogério Fasano has created the ultimate country retreat set in Fazenda Boa Vista, a mere 10-minute chopper hop from São Paulo. "Brazil had hotels like this but they have disappeared. I wanted to recreate this concept," he says. Architect Isay Weinfeld has satisfied Paulistas yearning for a reconnection with nature by giving all the living areas (including the 39 rooms and suites) floor to ceiling windows with views of the Floresta Nacional de Ipanema natural reserve. Diners at the Italian restaurant enjoy views of the fresh-water lake, ideal for swimming in the late afternoon sun. — LH [fasano.com.br](http://fasano.com.br)



**Highlights:** Sundowners under the sibiruna trees at the 1930s vintage railroad wagon, the golf bar that sits on the first tee of Randall Thompson's 18-hole course. Other highlights include vintage horse-drawn carriages and six helpads.

### 45 Park Lane London

45 Park Lane, sister hotel to The Dorchester, opened its doors in September. Architect and designer Thierry W Despont has transformed the former Playboy Club into an Art Deco space full of cosy woody interiors. Each of the 45 rooms and suites have a verdant view of Hyde Park and original art works by artists such as Sir Peter Blake and Damien Hirst hang on each floor. — AK [45parklane.com](http://45parklane.com)

**Highlight:** Wolfgang Puck's signature steaks at restaurant Cut. They are grilled over hardwood and charcoal then finished to a crisp perfection under a custom-made broiler.



### Game on Sydney

Inside the city's revamped casino, The Star, three much-anticipated restaurants have opened: David Chang's Momofuku Seiobo, Stefano Manfredi's Balla and Teage Ezard's Black. [star.com.au](http://star.com.au)

### Colobockle Tokyo

At Colobockle\*, Japanese artist Michiko Tachimoto's art graces everything. It's in the children's books and on puzzles, lampshades and jewellery around the old house she and her husband, Tomoichiro Nagao, renovated in Tokyo's Nakameguro area. They opened the shop seven years ago to showcase Tachimoto's work, a mix of handsewn craft and collage illustration.

"Since kindergarten, I've wanted to create my own children's books," says Tachimoto. Handmade stuffed dolls lounge near books such as *Annie's Little Train*, and a glass case holds some of her collaborations with Disney and Lipton. Buyers can put their goods in the custom-fitting cloth bags that Nagao makes on a sewing machine at the back. — KH [colobockle.jp](http://colobockle.jp)

\*Footnote: Colobockle means "a person under a butterbur" (a native plant) in Ainu, the language of a tribe in Hokkaido.



### Q&A Paul Pairet, Chef, Shanghai

Paul Pairet, the French chef behind Shanghai's Mr & Mrs Bund restaurant, created what according to him is a multi-sensory eating experience with his 10-seat space called Ultraviolet. Machines pump aromas into the air and video screens and sound machines create a specific ambience to accompany 20 small-plate courses.

**Why engage senses other than taste?** The point is that all the senses influence the way we eat. The experience of eating a dish on a beach is not the same as eating it in Paris.

**How will the mood shift from course to course?** The scenarios will build with every course. First an apple wasabi disc is served with ringing bells, dark light and AC/DC music. There's also the Indonesian Gado Gado experience — I use the scent of kretek, a clove cigarette typical of Indonesia, and the durian. Those two smells are very typical of Indonesia to me.

**Could the technology distract from the food?** The goal is to the contrary — not to distract, but to focus. I can send a single light onto your dish, perfectly centered on your plate — you've never focused so much on food before. — JB [paulpairet.com](http://paulpairet.com)



### Aldo's Vinoteca & Restoran Buenos Aires

Argentina's most famous sommelier Aldo Graziani has created a wine cellar in Buenos Aires that runs as a restaurant yet retains its wholesale prices. Aldo's showcases 500 of the country's top wines. "My aim is to open up a discussion where wine becomes the main protagonist," says Graziani. — LH [aldosvinoteca.com](http://aldosvinoteca.com)

### Aldo's top Argentinian wines:

- 1) **Manos Negras Torrontés 2011** A fresh, aromatic white wine from San Juan.
- 2) **SonVida 2008** One of Mendoza's best cabernet sauvignons (produced by former Reuters correspondent and UN diplomat David Smith).
- 3) **Calypso Malbec 2008** Outstanding value for what is a top quality wine from Bodega Montevejo.

### Grill Market Reykjavik

Iceland's culinary wunderkind, Hrefna Rósa Sætran, met her kitchen partner Gudlaugur Frímansson at the Fish Market, her first restaurant in Reykjavik, in 2008. The chefs' bond bore fruit and two years later the Grill Market was opened in the busy Lækjargata street in a rebuilt cinema that had burned down. Decorated by designer Leifur Welding, the two-floor restaurant's main attraction is the extreme-temperature coal grill. Custom-made by the London-based Clay Oven Company, it reaches temperatures upwards of 1,200C, imparting an earthy flavour to the meat and fish. — JBA [grillmarkadurinn.is](http://grillmarkadurinn.is)



PHOTOGRAPHER: BJÖRN ARNÁSSON



### Magasand Madrid

Using a portmanteau that combines the words "magazine" and "sandwich" (the two most important elements in this diner), Mariano Caverio has launched the second Magasand cafeteria, this time in the classy Salamanca district of downtown Madrid. In charge of the design is Mexican architect on the rise Juan Carlos Fernández – creator of the first Magasand in the Alonso Martínez area – who chose Arper and Matière Grise tables to furnish the new joint. Clients can enjoy a flatbread sandwich while reading the latest issues of *Monocle*, *Apartamento* or *Fanzine 137*. — SRT [magasand.com](http://magasand.com)



### Mocha Coffee Tokyo

Yemen native Hussein Ahmed and his Japanese wife, Maiko Miyake, opened Mocha Coffee in February in a cosy glass-walled space in Tokyo's Daikanyama district. The Middle Eastern mocha bean varietal they serve (hardly heard of in coffee-crazed Japan) is lightly roasted and drip-brewed. To source his coffee Ahmed spent three years visiting villages in the Yemeni mountains, where farmers cultivate just 50 coffee trees on average and dry their beans inside the berries. "We track every bag of beans from the farm. It's expensive but it's also very high quality," he says. — KH [mochacoffee.jp](http://mochacoffee.jp)



### Restaurant Listings Moscow

Moscow has long been famed for restaurants serving stomach-turning food at eye-watering prices but a new generation of chefs is revolutionising cuisine in the city. Chef Ivan Shishkin is one of four partners who set up the basement bar and bistro Delicatessen (pictured) in a courtyard off Moscow's Garden Ring Road. The restaurant offers liqueurs and bitters made using cherries, currants and berries that grow wild in the Russian woods, and it serves hearty soups such as Tuscan ribollita.

A regular traveller, Shishkin says he got used to eating affordable food made with locally sourced ingredients when he was overseas. "For too long restaurants in Moscow have been either very bad or bank-breaking expensive," he says.

A short hop along the Ring Road is Ragout, a bar and café serving up a modern twist on Russian food, with surprising dishes such as beetroot and black bread ice cream and rabbit with wine-

steeped apricots. Another newcomer is DoDo, which has won over diners with its outdoor terrace – during winter it offers warm delights such as sea-buckthorn and chocolate mousse. — RJ

### Address book

**Delicatessen**  
20 Sadovaya-Karetnaya  
+7 495 699 3952  
[newdeli.ru](http://newdeli.ru)

**DoDo**  
21/2 Petrovka Street  
+7 903 105 1010  
[dodoproject.com](http://dodoproject.com)

**Ragout**  
69 Bolshaya Gruzinskaya  
+7 495 662 6458  
[caferagout.ru](http://caferagout.ru)



PHOTOGRAPHER: MAX SHER



PHOTOGRAPHER: AYLA SEKLINE



### Cop this Italy

Francis Ford Coppola's latest resort (the sixth in his worldwide hotel chain) is scheduled to open this December in his grandfather's town of Bernalda in southern Italy. [coppolareorts.com](http://coppolareorts.com)

### Radio Copenhagen

Arguably the most anticipated restaurant opening in Copenhagen in recent years is Noma co-founder Claus Meyer's Radio. This restaurant marks an important development in the much talked about but rarely eaten (at least by the mainstream public) New Nordic food movement – it aims to offer food with a similar local, seasonal perspective, but at lower prices than Noma. "We want a broader public to eat here," Meyer has said of this simple, pared-down space. "People kept asking me to make a restaurant where they could actually get a table." — MB [restaurantradio.dk](http://restaurantradio.dk)



PHOTOGRAPHER: ENOK HOLSEGAARD

### Villa Maya Sri Lanka

Tourism has picked up in Sri Lanka and new hotels are popping up fast. Villa Maya opened in the spring of 2011 and is owned by Niki Fairchild, a successful international interior designer from Singapore and graduate of the Parsons School for Design in New York. Together with the Sri Lankan architect Pradeep Kodikara, she turned a dilapidated old colonial bungalow dating from the late 19th century in the coastal area of Tangalle into an intimate hotel. Villa Maya has five exceptional rooms divided between the old house and the new wing. "In the design there are hints of the Dutch and British influences of Sri Lanka but not with too much heavy colonial furniture. It had to be very fresh and modern in atmosphere," explains Fairchild. — DP [mayatangallesrilanka.com](http://mayatangallesrilanka.com)



## E

### AIRLINE Flights of fancy



## Low riders, high ideals Costa Rica

### Preface

The windows are huge; you're cruising at an altitude low enough to allow you to gape in wonder at the pristine Costa Rican landscape below... Do you *really* need to read the inflight magazine?

### Writer

Gabriel Leigh

Nature Air is a small, sustainable Costa Rican airline with five Twin Otters plying the Central American skies, connecting difficult-to-reach regions of natural beauty in Costa Rica to the capital San José. The first carbon-neutral airline in the world, Nature Air offsets its carbon emissions by financing reforestation projects in the country. It also serves coffee sourced from small plantations and employs a different artist to paint each of its aircraft.

The airline has its own flight school, and its 20 pilots are all Costa Rican except for one, a German expat. On these short flights, most from 20 to 40 minutes in length, there's no inflight service. There is a bilingual inflight magazine, *Landings*, but most passengers prefer to look out the window.

Alex Khajavi, founder and CEO, bought the existing Travel Air in 2001 and turned it into Nature Air. He's an investment banker turned eco-tourism consultant, a shrewd businessman with a conscience. "We open those areas closest to the national parks where previously there were no roads," says Khajavi. "If you look at our yields, we beat everybody. The challenge is deciding how much money we can spend to bring the world along with us, and be a catalyst."

Nature Air also has two international routes so far, to Managua, Nicaragua and Bocas



del Toro, Panama. "People look at us not so much as a transport airline, which we are of course," says Khajavi. "But the gift we give is that awe, that service, that fun, with big windows and a path of flight that gets you a little closer to the volcano." — (M) [natureair.com](http://natureair.com)

### Nature Air facts

**Home base:** San José, Costa Rica's Pavas Intl Airport (a smaller airport close to city)

**Fleet:** Five De Havilland Twin Otters, one Beechcraft King Air E90

**Seating:** 19 seats per aircraft

**Number of pilots:** 20 (19 Costa Rican, 1 German)

**Total number of staff:** 150

**Destinations:** 15 (13 within Costa Rica, 2 international)

**Number of passengers per year:** 110,000 (2010)

**Newest destination:** Managua, Nicaragua

**In-flight magazine:** *Landings*

**Frequent Flyer programme:** "Premium Pass"

**On-time rate:** Rainy season 94 per cent, dry season 96 per cent

**Major selling point:** En-route sightseeing potential, thanks to huge Vistaliner windows and a cruise altitude of 11,000 feet

**Most unusual passenger:** A dolphin – in a bathtub