

BLACKBOOK

WHERE TO GO NEXT

TRAVEL

WHAT TO KNOW NOW

SUITE
TALK

Urban primer

WHAT WAS UP, HAS COME DOWN

A host of hotel openings in the Big Apple offers opportunities to stay in the increasingly hip downtown, says CJ HUGHES

As Manhattan's centre of gravity continues to shift from Midtown to downtown, its magnetic pull grows stronger: this year, the High Line park is expanding, the Ground Zero museum is opening and dozens of hectares of new parkland are blooming on Governors Island. And, visitors can now stay nearby, like at **The High Line Hotel** (thehighlinehotel.com), on Tenth Avenue in Chelsea, across from the park of the same name. Tucked inside neo-Gothic buildings on the campus of the General Theological Seminary, the 60-room property offers hardwood floors and decorative brick fireplaces; outside is a leafy courtyard that's on par with that of an Ivy League university.

A different kind of courtyard – lined with Moroccan tile, like something glimpsed on a shopping trip through a North African souk – greets arrivals at **The Broome** (thebroomenyc.com), a 14-key property in SoHo. The penthouse boasts a private 32sq m terrace and an additional private balcony, and the furnishings all come from local boutiques such as Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams. More of a modernistic touch has been deployed at the **Hotel Hugo NYC** (hotelhugonyc.com), a recently constructed 20-storey tower on Greenwich Street in the emerging Hudson Square neighbourhood. Its 122 rooms sport chrome fixtures and walnut panelling, while travertine walls adorn the lobby. Up

on top, Bar Hugo, a two-level lounge, crowns the roof. It is history that guided the look for the new penthouse atop the **Greenwich Hotel** (thegreenwichhotel.com), a few blocks away at 377 Greenwich; actor and owner Robert De Niro, under pressure from city officials, restyled the top floors to better fit with their historic TriBeCa setting. The dazzling result, from the design team of Axel Vervoordt and Tatsuro Miki, boasts 631 square metres of indoor and outdoor space, including four fireplaces, a spa pool and pergolas draped with wisteria.

Other properties are springing back to life with new looks and features, like André Balazs's **The Standard, East Village** (standardhotels.com/east-village), which has given a new visage to the Bowery's one-time Cooper Square Hotel. More countrified than the first go-around, with brick walls and ample plantings, the hotel also now houses the restaurant Narcissa, named for a cow on Balazs's upstate farm, which provides eggs and produce. Meanwhile, **The Ludlow Hotel** (ludlowhotel.com), a long-stalled project near Katz's Delicatessen on the Lower East Side, has also finally been resuscitated. Developed by Sean MacPherson (a profile of whom begins on page 54) and Richard Born, the team behind the Marlton Hotel and other boutique properties, the 187-room Ludlow will soon add the restaurant Dirty French, for those who want an alternative to pastrami. And farther down the line, a long-delayed **Four Seasons** (thirtyparkplace.com), between City Hall and the World Trade Center site, is set to debut in 2016. Guest rooms will grace the lower floors of the 80-storey tower, designed by Robert A M Stern, and apartments will fill the top.



From left: baby back ribs with manzanilla olives, carrot escabeche and agave glaze at Chavez; classic decor in a Driskill bedroom



AUSTIN NOW!

The liberal Texas capital boasts a bevy of new outposts to eat, drink and stay – in style. BY NIGEL TISDALL

QUAFFING AND SCOFFING

It's one of the fastest growing cities in the US, with 110 people moving in every day. Politicians, entrepreneurs, conference-goers, budding Willie Nelsons, university students – they all want to be fed, and fed well. And Austin's restaurant and bar scene is responding with verve. Raising the game on the East Side, **LaV** (lavaustin.com) opened in March with an all-female culinary team serving superlative French wines and Provence-inspired dishes in a high-ceilinged dining room adorned with champagne bubble-like lights and a huge, dreamy painting of lavender fields. Sensing the boom times, restaurateurs from other US cities are also moving in. After debuting in Las Vegas, **Due Forni** (dueforni.com) recently opened a Downtown venue that presents a tough but delicious choice between Roman (cracker-thin) and Neapolitan (robust) pizzas cooked in a duo of brick ovens. Meanwhile **Capital Grille** (thecapitalgrille.com), which runs a string of powerbroker steakhouses across the nation, has opened in the Warehouse District with live music and wine lockers for regular guests. Austin's old guard is joining this shootout. In January local Shawn Cirkiel launched his fourth city dining spot, **Chavez** (chavez-austin.com), in the lakefront Radisson Hotel, featuring a contemporary southwestern

menu backed up with a raw bar and cocktails that include a formidable smoked cherry margarita. Texan bar maven Bridget Dunlap has likewise spearheaded the rise of the city's newest nocturnal playground, Rainey Street. Opened in March, her latest good-times magnet is **Container Bar** (austincontainerbar.com), a stack of seven colourful shipping containers with themed interiors from burnt wood to winter snows.

BEDDING DOWN

Housed in a majestic 1910 Greek Revival mansion, **Hotel Ella** (hotellella.com) is the latest boutique property to open in an accommodation explosion that will see 2,000 rooms added to city stock by 2016. Here, a recent multimillion-dollar makeover has created an opulent, art-filled 47-room bolthole just a few blocks from the University of Texas campus. For a stay in the heart of Downtown, **The Driskill** (driskillhotel.com) was built by a cattle baron in 1886 and has bags of historic character with 189 rooms – last year it was unobtrusively taken over by hotel giant Hyatt. Also new to the fray, **Lone Star Court** (lonestarcourt.com) is a quirky former motel in The Domain development with 123 retro-inspired rooms, a food-truck court and live music nightly.



A MOVABLE FEAST

Dishing up tasty delights from shiny Airstreams and vintage delivery vans, food trucks are a big hit with Austin's young, free-thinking crowd – in March, a permanent park, The Picnic, opened on Barton Springs Road. Foodies can track down more gourmet trailers with the **AustinFoodCarts** app (austinfoodcarts.com), then rustle up their own snacks back home using the new Austin edition of Tiffany Harelik's cookbook **Trailer Food Diaries** (trailerfooddiaries.com). Now, how many is that for Lucky J's waffle breakfast tacos?

CULTURAL CACHE

THE RE-REINVENTION

Miami's Design District is in the throes of yet another seminal shift – will the new developments change the business of art?

JENNIFER M WOOD reports



From top: Dan Colen's *The Big Dipper*, part of the *de la Cruz Collection*; a glimpse of the Design District's immaculate new look

Call it the Basel Effect. Ever since the world's preeminent art show staked a claim on South Beach, art has become one of Miami's major exports. And its impact has expanded to once-blighted neighbourhoods in Miami proper, like Wynwood, where commissioned street art from Shepard Fairey and Invader has replaced plain graffiti.

Also swept up in the gentrification is the Design District, a stretch of former urban wasteland that is home to an array of art spaces, including the education-focused de la Cruz Collection, home to the personal art collection of Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz; not-for-profit Locust Projects, which invites 25 local teenagers to create a site-specific installation each summer; Art Lexing, a provocative gallery for emerging Asian artists; and the self-dubbed "un-gallery" Swampspace. These spaces share real estate with more than 100 other creative businesses, including the high-end design showrooms that give the area its name and boutiques with well-heeled names like Louboutin and Vuitton.

From inside these spaces, it feels like business as usual. Outside, it's a different story. "Within the next 12 months, we'll have an additional 40 brands open in the District, unveil several meaningful public art installations, and complete a number of architecturally significant buildings," says Craig Robins, the developer who injected new life into the neighbourhood when he purchased its flagship Moore Building in 1994 and who is in the midst of another massive reinvention.

In a suntanned sea of dreamers, Robins is a doer. Having carefully curated the current resident roster, the \$1bn renovation will see the Design District rival both Fifth Avenue

and Rodeo Drive as a major shopping destination with more than two dozen new retailers – including Tom Ford, Zegna and Givenchy – setting up shop.

As important to Robins as the names on the storefronts are the spaces that frame them. "We're mindful that the Design District acts as a context for the creative expression of some of the world's most exceptional luxury brands, as well as galleries, showrooms and restaurants, and we're committed to bringing in collaborators like Sou Fujimoto, Aranda\Lasch and Johnston Marklee to make sure the District is defined by innovative and meaningful architecture," says Robins, who has also commissioned installations by John Baldessari and The Buckminster Fuller Institute.

While many look forward to the District's relaunch in December (when Art Basel returns, not coincidentally), some local gallerists worry that the neighbourhood's art focus will shift. "The Design District is moving in a decidedly high-fashion direction, which leaves little room for the arts or small businesses," says Alicia Restrepo, co-owner of Etra Fine Art, who is planning a series of monthly group shows throughout the summer. "We're holding on and attempting to still keep a presence in the Design District in hopes that its roots in the artworld will not be forgotten."

For Robins – a noted collector himself – art is definitely part of the plan. He says there will be a full roster of local events, "ranging from our live performance series to the exuberant and packed week of Art Basel events. I think we've embarked on a trajectory where the cultural and commercial experiences will become even more rich and robust."

FOODIE FEAST

SUBLIME SUBSISTENCE AT LOS ANGELES' GRAND CENTRAL

Though it still has some way to go, downtown Los Angeles is now an increasingly irresistible destination in its own right. In addition to the Frank Gehry-designed Walt Disney Concert Hall and the long-established Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, new shops like Acne Studios and Aesop have recently opened as

well as an outpost of Ace Hotels – to say nothing of all the apartment blocks going up. But it's the culinary scene that's causing the biggest stir, and the culprit is the city's thriving, neon-lit food hall where, over the last few months, new upscale purveyors and stalls have set up to wide acclaim. And this spring has been no

different: the market has welcomed celebrated pizza maker Brad Kent's **Olio**, whose hallmarks are his handmade, thin-crust offerings fashioned from a blend of four flours. Also debuting has been the **Belcampo Meat Co.**, where a butchery shop and lunch counter showcase organic meats harvested from grass-fed herds and flocks of heritage-breed hogs, cattle, poultry and rabbits that highlight the company's farm-to-fork ethos. **Wexler's Deli**, meanwhile, is a new

10-seater and the brainchild of home-grown chef Micah Wexler, who brings to bear experience in curing, brining, smoking and pickling everything from corned beef and pastrami to Scottish lox and sturgeon. And lastly, Berlin natives Hardeep and Lena Manak continue to make currywurst converts with the first Downtown outpost of their already-successful **Berlin Currywurst** - proving, if nothing else, that at least Angelenos are culinarily adventurous. grandcentralmarket.com **FARHAD HEYDARI**



From left: the cowboy steak at Belcampo Meat Co; the facade of LA's Grand Central and its buzzy interior; Berlin Currywurst's sweet and spicy calling card

24 HOURS IN PORTLAND

A trio of local favourites showcase Oregon's most populous city



ACE HOTEL PORTLAND

The brand's signature lo-fi, lobby-centric hospitality is taking the country by storm. But the Ace is headquartered (spiritually, actually) in Portland. The hotel is long on creature comforts and welcoming furniture and short on reasons to seek the exit. A bountiful breakfast is laid out every morning in the Breakfast Room, after which you can drink flawless cappuccinos from the ground-floor Stumptown Coffee Roasters until it's time for a barrel-aged Negroni from Clyde Common, the restaurant and bar across the lobby. And there is no better way to wait out the inevitable rainstorm than with a stack of records and the turntable in your room. acehotel.com



LE PIGEON

Given a choice between the cosy communal tables and the ten-seat chef's counter, pick the latter. It affords a better view of chef Gabriel Rucker as he heats a knife over the blue flame of a blowtorch and carves paper-thin slices of chilled foie gras to serve with tart cherries, anise, and green and Marcona almonds. Rucker brought home the 2013 James Beard Award for Best Chef: Northwest. And to understand what sets chefs like this apart, here's his rationale for including crunchy, earthy and revelatory puffed farro in a recent salad: "I hate farro, and I like to try and cook the things that I hate."



BAILEY'S TAPROOM

The back bar looks like mission control, with its snazzy digital tap list awash in the Northwest's newest and best brews. Brace for bitter, potent pours - this is hop country, after all - and keep a close eye on the monitor. Kegs empty fast at this popular spot in a city of beer snobs, but digital sensors keep track of how much is left on each tap, so you won't miss the last snifter of triple IPA or vintage barley wine from local upstarts like Gigantic and Occidental Brewing Co. baileystaproom.com