

CHANINTR LIVING

Holiday 2022



THEODORE ALEXANDER



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Holiday 2022

Another year gone by and another one where I wish I had a switch to control the speed with which moments have passed. Fast forward over the stressful and nail-biting chapters, slowing down moments where we're lazing around gardens in Como and Tuscany, adding a few more minutes in the Therme Vals, stretching out a day of perfect weather in Paris, and pressing pause to enjoy the foliage in upstate New York and Kyoto. This all sounds a bit decadent, but rest assured we are pros at mixing high and low and tacking on a few days here and there to our work trips. Without these sojourns, the journals would be terribly boring.

Although it may sound crass given the state of the world, being able to actually travel again for both work and pleasure has made life so much more fulfilling and inspiring. It reminds us of how important it is for us to move forward, to restore, to reinvent and to take risks despite all the challenges that ravage us.

May we all have the opportunity to enjoy our holidays, embrace life and pursue our passions and purpose in the New Year.

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CHANINTR
GPF WITTHAYU, TOWER A, 18TH FLOOR
93/1 WIRELESS ROAD, LUMPINI, PATHUMWAN
BANGKOK 10330 THAILAND
CHANINTR.COM
TEL: +662 015 8888
EDITOR@CHANINTR.COM

DESIGN BY
CASESTUDY
CASESTUDYOFFICE.COM

COVER
A.J. WITH GIFT ON HEAD, CHARLESTON, SC, 2000
BY RODNEY SMITH

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FOODIE FOR THOUGHT

The world of food can be overwhelming, which makes purchasing gifts for foodies especially difficult. We've helped narrow it down to some of our top picks from 2022. From the cookbook we've revisited the most this past season to the latest kitchen gadgets and more, take a look at what we think would make the perfect gift for food lovers this new year.

Via Carota Cookbook

One of our favorite restaurants in Manhattan that we visit time and time again is **Via Carota**, a West Village institution by veteran chefs Rita Sodi and Jody Williams. Their cookbook, which was just published last October, features more than 140 recipes for impossibly flavorful, vegetable-centric Italian dishes, like their Fresh Pasta Squares with Fava Pesto and Meyer Lemon Risotto, along with beloved Via Carota dishes like the Insalata Verde. In the words of fellow American chef and restaurateur Alice Waters, "These are recipes that I want to eat all the time."

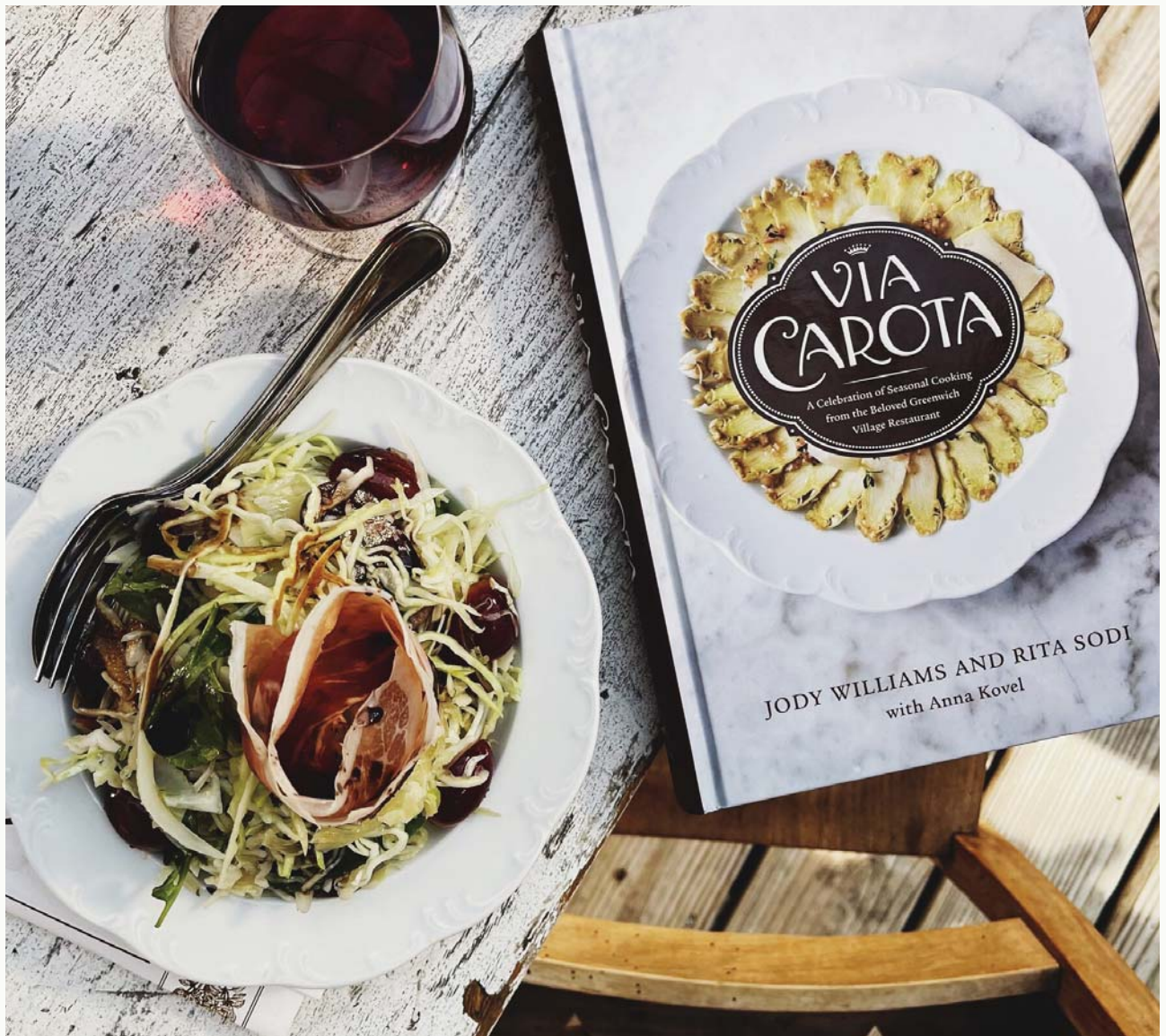


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK TIMES



PHOTO COURTESY OF FOOD32

Capabunga Cheese Vault

Most home cooks will store their leftover block of cheese by wrapping it in plastic, sealing it in a Ziploc or throwing it into a tupperware — in other words, whatever they have lying around their kitchen. And while most of the time, those methods are OK, the cheese vault is a game changer, especially when it comes to storing prized artisan cheese. The vault allows the cheese to “breathe” and eliminates excess moisture as it ages. It’s a simple and practical reusable storage that your friend will love you for.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DWËLLZA

Dwëllza Oil Dispenser & Sprayer Set

This oil dispenser set went viral for getting rid of all the annoyances that come with a typical bottle of EVOO: no over-pouring, kitchen mess or greasy grip. The zero-drip sprayer has a delicate mist that helps even out coverage and gives you more control without any risky propellants that you might find in other store-bought cooking sprays. Meanwhile, the oil dispenser has a graduated oil reservoir for precise measurement. Simply press the button to squeeze the oil into the reservoir where the teaspoon and tablespoon measurements are clearly labeled on the bottle. Once you have your desired amount, pour the olive oil. It’s that easy and now you can follow your recipe to a tee.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GIMBER

Gimber

In our last issue, we wrote about the popular trend of alcohol alternative beverages around the world. **Gimber** happens to be one of the most unique non-alcoholic beverages we’ve tried to date. It’s all natural and organic, with no ingredients “your grandmother has never heard about.” A tasty blend of ginger, lemon, herbs and spices, the golden elixir is both delicious and nutritious. Have it solo or mix it to create your own mocktail, cocktail or hot drink.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SAINT-LOUIS

Folia Wine Glass

Fancy food lovers — those who get excited about fine dining — will appreciate the quality and impeccable craftsmanship of **Saint-Louis’s** Folia wine glass. Inspired by the forest surrounding the French crystal brand’s factory, the collection is characterized by a cut that begins at the very top of the foot and blooms at the stem. It’s the perfect sparkle to add to the table to elevate the dining experience at home.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DANSK CASSEROLE

Dansk Casserole

Since the 1950s, **Dansk’s** cookware has been lighting up kitchens with its retro-inspired shapes, bright colors and minimal Scandinavian style. While every product in their line is nice to have, their casseroles are essential for every home cook. Why? It performs and delivers: The pot’s triple-enameled carbon steel can evenly cook any soup, stew or ragu. It’s oven, stovetop and even freezer safe. What’s more, it’s also a beauty. With its sleek, vintage design, it’s as pretty on the stove as it is on the dinner table, where the ingenious lid also doubles as a trivet. Choose from a myriad of colors to gift your loved ones.

IN VOGUE PICKS

The best gifts often come with planning and thought, which is why we've put together our picks for fashion items that are worth considering as presents for your most fashionable friends and family members throughout the rest of the year. Let's call it a cheat sheet for when you want to splurge on your loved ones no matter the occasion — be it their birthday, Valentine's Day, anniversary, or just because.

Panthère de Cartier

It's amazing how timeless **Cartier** pieces are — only growing in popularity as the years pass. The Panthère is an icon. An object of desire and fascination, everything about this symbol exudes defiance, power and freedom. She is charged with a magnetism that reveals one's strength of character. Perfect for a fierce individual whose daring with their style.



Fêtes en Hermès

For those who have it all, give the gift of exclusivity. This year the Fêtes en Hermès gift set features a special Cheval de fête scarf designed by Jan Bajtlik. Bedecked in new colors for the occasion, the design was inspired by Polish school posters from the '50s to '70s. The vibrant emblems and abundance in details are an ode to freedom and the festive season. The gift box also comes with **Hermès**' line of luxury toiletries — only in selected retail outlets worldwide.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HERMÈS

Paul Smith Candle and Diffuser

Following the introduction of **Paul Smith** Home earlier in the year, this candle and diffuser set stems from some of Paul's most treasured memories in an attempt to harness the designer's love of color and bold design. The collection boasts four scents, each based on the designer's most evocative memories: Botanist, Bookworm, Early Bird and Daydreamer.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAUL SMITH



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B E R N H A R D T



Loewe Fringe Bucket Bag

Loewe's quality leather takes center stage with this small bucket bag that's been based off the works of Galician artisan Álvaro Leiro's reed basket design. Crafted entirely from calfskin tapes woven in a cross-cross motif, the bag highlights both the fine material and the high craftsmanship needed to create this luxury "it" bag. It's fun and summery — perfect as a statement piece for social events but casual enough for solo trips to the grocery store.

TREAT THE TECH ENTHUSIAST ON YOUR LIST

Shopping for tech gifts can be overwhelming. With the ever-changing landscape of tech gadgets, it can be difficult to know which gifts are worth buying. Fortunately, there are plenty of great tech gifts to choose from this year. No matter your budget, you can find the perfect gift for your loved ones. We've highlighted some of the hottest tech gadgets and gifts on the market.



Apple AirTag

With international travel picking up, many people are gearing up for a trip abroad. With all the hustle and bustle of packing and preparing for a trip, it's easy for things to get lost in the mix. This is where an **AirTag** can come in handy. The AirTag is a small, portable device developed by Apple that can be attached to items like luggage, keys or bags. Using the Find My app on your Apple device, you can track the location of your AirTag and find your lost items.

Unlike satellite navigation devices, AirTags do not use satellites for navigation. Through Bluetooth signals coming from other anonymous iOS and iPadOS devices out in the world, AirTags are automatically located on a map within the Find My app.

Whether you're a frequent traveler or simply want to keep track of your belongings, an AirTag can surely provide peace of mind and make your travels a little less stressful.

Lumen

Health is always at the forefront of many people New Year's resolutions. For those looking for something fitness-related, look no further than the **Lumen**, a device that claims to be the "world's first portable device to measure, track and analyze your metabolism." Traditionally, these types of measurements would require a team of nutritionists and/or scientists to analyze, but Lumen asserts that this can now all be done in just three minutes. With a single breath, the breathalyzer analyzes (through a single breath) whether our body is burning fats or carbs for fuel.

A CO₂ sensor and flow meter are used by Lumen to determine CO₂ concentrations in a breath. The device is connected to an app that provides detailed feedback for the user. As a result, users will be able to indicate what type of fuel their body is currently using (carbs vs. fats). Through tracking metabolism, sleep, nutrition and fitness data, users are then able to determine what adjustments to make according to Lumen's recommendations.

Check out the Lumen breathalyzer for a convenient and insightful way to track progress.

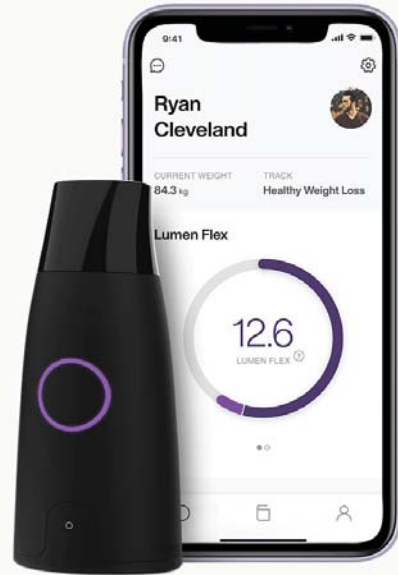


PHOTO COURTESY OF LUMEN



PHOTO COURTESY OF OURA HEALTH

Oura Ring

Another health-measuring gadget on the rise is the **Oura Ring**. Using the Oura Ring, you can track a bunch of data about your body and gain a clearer understanding of how it's functioning. In addition to measuring your sleep stages and heart rate, the ring also measures breathing rate, skin temperature, heart rate variability and several other metrics.

Primarily a sleep tracker, the app rates how well you slept. In addition to determining how much deep sleep, REM sleep and light sleep you're getting, it can also learn about your sleep patterns and provide specific recommendations on how to improve your rest quality (such as avoiding specific activities that could disrupt sleep, like a late night coffee).

You can also use the ring to keep track of your activity during the day to determine if you're hitting your goals or if your body needs more recovery time. By monitoring your temperature trends, it can also help a user learn and visualize their menstrual cycle. Also included in the app is an audio library for meditation sessions, as well as other cool features and perks.

Overall a perfect gift for health-conscious people looking to improve their quality of life.

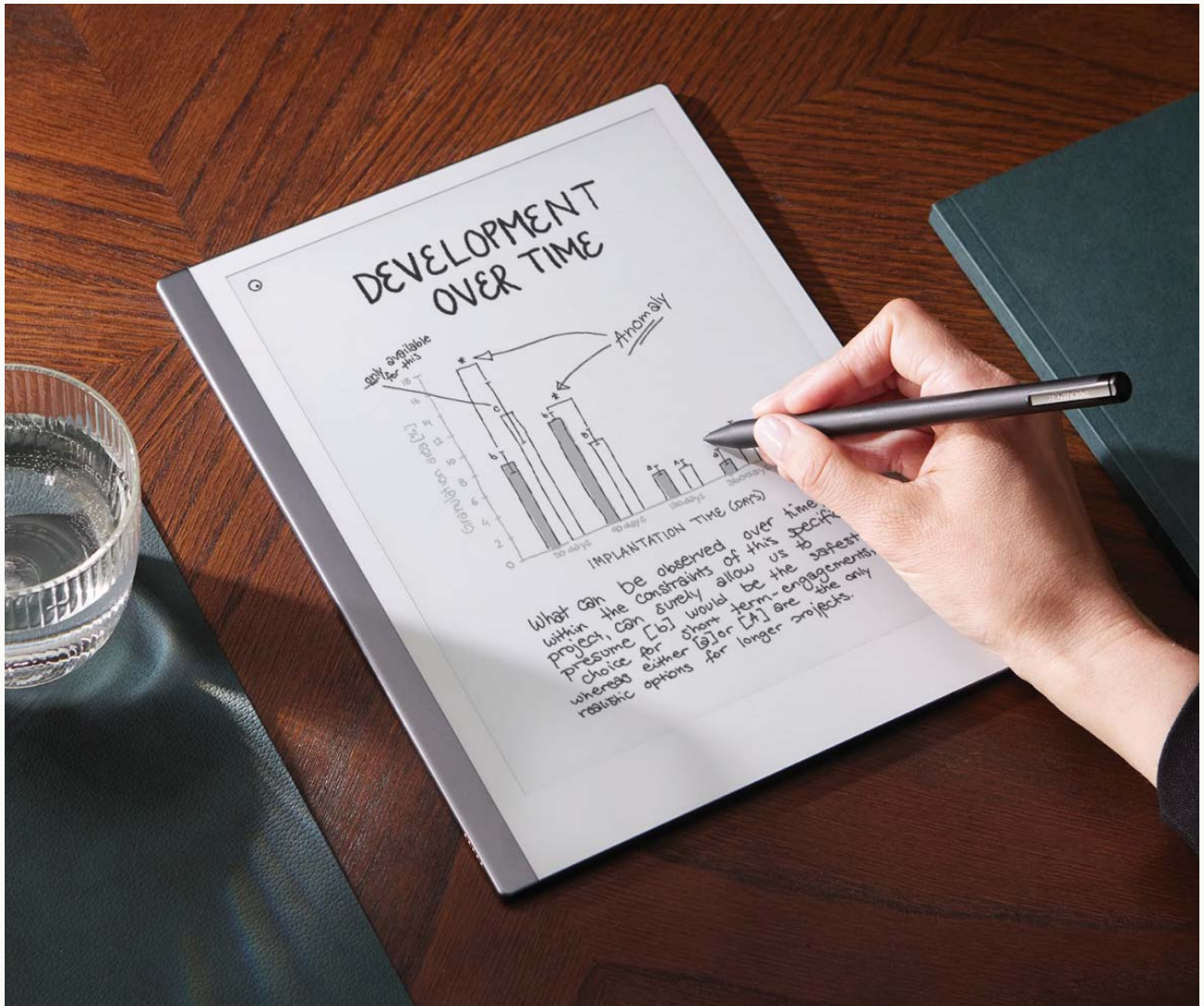


PHOTO COURTESY OF REMARKABLE

reMarkable

There's a good chance you've seen the eye-catching ads on Instagram for **reMarkable** tablets. As people increasingly use tablets and screens for writing and taking notes, the reMarkable restores the classic writing-on-paper feel. In this way, despite replacing notebooks and printed documents, it retains a sense of the old for those who crave or prefer it.

Featuring a paper-like surface for writing and reading, the tablet has no glare or backlight (and is readable in the sunlight). Due to the absence of notifications from social media and apps, the tablet allows you to stay focused, and the only functionality of the Wi-Fi is to sync notes and documents. The reMarkable 2, its latest model, allows users to take handwritten notes, read and review documents and convert handwritten notes to text.

With unlimited pages and folders, you can also properly store and organize all your notes, as well as sync and access your files across

different cloud platforms like Google Drive and Dropbox. You can make notes on existing documents and PDFs, and share your tablet into a digital whiteboard and share your ideas on the big screen, amongst other features.

It was six years in the making for the team behind reMarkable to develop technology that mimics the tactile nature and immediate response of paper. It claims to be the “world’s thinnest tablet,” which allows for a more paper-like experience that fits just like a notebook in your bag.

The tablet has a very straightforward and clear objective to accomplish, without any bells and whistles. It's ideal for those who like to keep things old-school.

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TOP PICKS FOR THE DESIGN-OBSSESSED

If you have someone on your gift list who loves design and furniture, you're in luck. There are plenty of amazing gift options to choose from that are sure to delight even the most discerning design aficionado.

From beautifully crafted seating and stylish lamps to stunning mirrors and inspiring books, there's no shortage of gifts that will appeal to design lovers. And the best part is that these gifts don't just look great — they're also practical and functional, making them perfect for everyday use.

Whether you're shopping for a design-savvy friend, a fashionable relative or a design-obsessed colleague, there's a gift on this list that is sure to please. Read on to discover our top picks for holiday gifts that celebrate design and furniture.

Pagode Sofa

Menu

An elegant masterpiece by the husband-and-wife designer duo Tove and Edvard Kindt-Larsen, the Pagode Sofa is unknown to most. Avantgarde and artistic for its time, its low, almost flat, armrests and beautiful V-shaped legs make it light and precise in its design language — and give the sofa a contemporary look. Taking its name from Asian architecture, it is expressive and unique in its simplicity — much like the temples it refers to. First presented to the world in 1956, today it remains a striking piece of design.







Eames Lounge Chair and Ottoman

Herman Miller

Famously described as “a special refuge from the strains of modern living,” the Eames Lounge Chair and Ottoman is one of the most significant designs of the 20th century. Unparalleled craftsmanship and rigorous attention to detail made it a fixture in homes across the world.

This fixed-height chair has a molded veneer seat and back shell; the ottoman has a molded veneer shell. Both the chair and ottoman have foam cushions with leather upholstery and a black enameled base with polished aluminum accents. The chair has a swivel mechanism.



Half Dome Overhang Lamp

Kettal

Half Dome is a great mount with endless variations of lighting and sky situations and seasonal characteristics; the many images reflect the varied creative responses to this remarkable granite monolith. The moonlight has a particular size of diameter as people imagine it. The dimension of Half Dome light follows our image of the moonlight size. This outdoor light, suspended over the structure, seems to be the moonlight.

–16–



Coco Accent Table

Chanintr and Co

Designed by Barbara Barry, the Coco Accent Table – Bronze is small but mighty. This pint-sized piece features eclectic metal legs, hand-crafted into stalks of bamboo and a Nero Marquina polished marble top. Variations in the marble’s natural veining render each table unique.



CH24 Wishbone Chair

Carl Hansen & Søn

The timeless icon of modern Danish design and the very first model Hans J. Wegner designed exclusively for Carl Hansen & Søn in 1949, the CH24 or Wishbone Chair, has been in continuous production since its introduction in 1950.

When designing the CH24, Wegner chose to combine the back and armrest into a single piece. To give stability to the steam-bent top and ensure comfortable support, Wegner developed the characteristic Y-shaped back that the Wishbone Chair is named after and a form that is uniquely its own.



N-CT01 Coffee Table

Karimoku Case Study

With its construction being based on the many facades and doors that you find in shrines, temples and traditional architecture all over Japan, the various wooden parts of the sofa table are intentionally spaced and leveled with high precision, making the furniture piece light in its appearance. The spacing between each element lets the light travel through to make for an organic, living piece of furniture. The stone top carries references to the minimalist designs by famous, Danish designer Poul Kjærholm.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RIZZOLI

The Ultimate Bath

Barbara Sallick / Rizzoli

“**The Ultimate Bath**” by Waterworks co-founder Barbara Sallick is a beautifully illustrated guide to the most luxurious bathroom designs. Featuring contributions from top architects and interior designers, including Nate Berkus, Suzanne Kasler, Commune Designs and many more, the book showcases a range of stunning bathrooms, from grand and high-style to bold and colorful. With its emphasis on timeless design and function, “The Ultimate Bath” is the perfect inspiration for anyone looking to create their own dream bathroom.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RIZZOLI

Deeda Blair: Food, Flowers, & Fantasy

Deeda Blair / Rizzoli

In her first book, “**Deeda Blair: Food, Flowers & Fantasy**,” style icon and preeminent hostess Deeda Blair invites readers into her home and shares her inspirations and recipes for creating unique and personal table settings and floral arrangements. With six fantasy meals, over 80 recipes and evocative photographs, this book is a must-have for anyone looking to add a touch of fantasy and enchantment to their entertaining. Collaborating closely with design writer and tastemaker Deborah Needleman, Blair also shares personal anecdotes and helpful serving suggestions, making this book a valuable resource for anyone looking to develop their own unique and envied style.

STOCKHOLM'S HOME AWAY FROM HOME

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AT ETT HEM,
THERE ARE NO MENUS;
IT IS A CONVERSATION
BETWEEN THE CHEF AND YOU.

When it comes to hotels, like many things, we usually end up mixing a bit of high and low. We would prefer to stay in a clean and cozy 3-star over a wannabe 6-star. The mistake has been made too many times of paying a fortune to end up smothered by useless cover-up decoration, vinyl accessories and nauseating scents waiting to fumigate us at each turn.

As you can guess, we have an aversion to “glam for the sake of it” but definitely fall weak for luxurious stays that make us feel right at home. Whether it is London's Chiltern Firehouse's perfect scale, most beautiful bar and warm service; The Bowery Hotel's dark, antique-filled interiors and burning fireplace during the New York winter; Rome's Villa Spaletti Travelli's monogrammed linens, Ginori china and open bar in its living room; or, finally, Stockholm's exquisite **Ett Hem**, to which we have dedicated this article.

These favorites of ours have the fingerprints of their owners all over them. They exude a very rare element of homeliness that the boutique or super luxury categories have a hard time replicating.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MAGNUS MÄRTING

Ett Hem, meaning “a home” in Swedish, was a groundbreaking property in this category when it opened in 2012. It began as a restoration project, transforming an old Arts and Crafts-style building into a 12-room hotel. The owner, Jeannette Mix, knew exactly what she wanted and who she wanted to design it — none other than Studiollse. Her goal was to replicate the original homelike experience to create a true home away from home for visitors. Founder and creative director of Studiollse, Ilse Crawford, delivered on the brief. The end result is an intimate experience that pays respect to the Arts and Crafts architecture as well as the spirit of Swedish design, all while bridging the time gap to offer something that is very much today.

It is not only the design and hardware though that makes a place this special. The food, beverage and style of service also have to fit the concept very well. At Ett Hem, there are no menus; instead, it is a conversation between the chef, who tells you what he has, and you, who tells him what you feel like eating. You can have your meal in the living room, dining room, kitchen, greenhouse or

out in the garden, if the weather provides. After a few visits we know that breakfast and dinner are not to be missed. They were our best meals in Stockholm. The service is also very simple and friendly and staff will go out of their way to make you feel at home, like drawing out detailed maps of how to get somewhere.

This past fall, we had the chance to go back and see the newly renovated extension. Another 10 rooms and more public areas have been added by taking over the buildings next door. The connection is ideal as it offers guests more living and garden space to roam. An additional kitchen, dining and even meeting rooms have been added as well. The design, as can be expected, is left in its precise execution and balance. It is so difficult to do a good extension when such a precedence had been set with the first wing but they have truly pulled it off with seeming ease.

We highly recommend Ett Hem as a destination in itself or on a stopover to Europe or the U.S. Stockholm itself is also beautiful and full of delightful surprises.

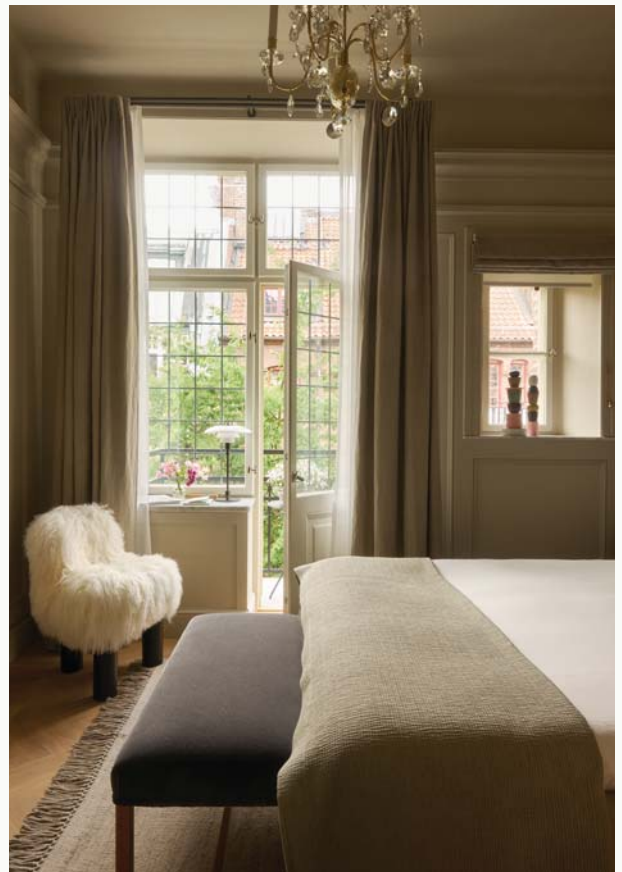




PHOTO COURTESY OF TRAVEL + LEISURE

PRIVATE OPULENCE IN NYC

RHGUESTHOUSE.COM

Upscale American interiors brand RH (formerly Restoration Hardware) knows a thing or two about living well, which is why it came as no surprise when the company expanded from the retail business into the world of hospitality this fall. Set in a striking 1887 triangular loft building in New York City's Meatpacking District, **RH Guesthouse** welcomed guests for the first time in September 2022.

"What we're trying to do is to create a new market for travelers seeking privacy," RH Chairman and CEO Gary Friedman said. "I think there's going to be a desire to find your place, to be in that place that's special to you that gives you that level of privacy, exclusivity and luxury that you just can't find anywhere else."

Many of the hotel's planning, policies and concepts were conceived to create this private bubble for guests. There's a strict no-social media policy; the hotel only boasts six rooms and three suites; and there are no public events on site. You won't even find a lobby here — just a discrete private entrance with a 24-hour concierge.

But that's not to say guests lose out on the amenities of bigger properties either. The six adults-only rooms are 500-square-foot each, and the suites span two floors, covering 1,000 square feet. In Manhattan, that's a rarity even for five-star hotels. Each accommodation type also features two bathrooms, bespoke furnishings, architectural lighting, a private gym and soundproof

windows. And your typical minibar has been replaced with charcuterie, crudités, berries and a fresh baguette. For design geeks, the little details in the decor and fittings make all the difference: think Italian linens, floor-to-ceiling European white oak, Tuscan travertine, Italian merino wool velvet upholstery and stainless steel accents to name a few.

Upstairs, guests have access to a private rooftop dining terrace with a 40-foot infinity pool and panoramic views. Downstairs, The Dining Room (also open to the public) serves a curated menu of comfort classics like a whole branzino cooked over Japanese charcoal, rotisserie chicken and Australian wagyu rib-eye; and the intimate Champagne & Caviar bar, hidden in the cellar on a subterranean level, is perfect for those craving luxurious bites.

As a leader in the luxury sector for decades, Friedman has been thinking about RH Guesthouse for about 30 years. "That's how long I've been traveling to really great places and asking myself questions like, why don't they have this? And why hasn't anybody thought of that?" The entire project was developed internally, with RH overlooking the architecture, designing of the space, restaurants, menus and guest experience. The final product is an unassuming, ultra-luxury home away from home in the Big Apple — and Friedman is sure guests won't find this level of taste and quality anywhere else.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE PENINSULA TOKYO



JOURNEY TO JAPAN

[PENINSULA.COM/EN/TOKYO](https://peninsula.com/en/tokyo)

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The world celebrated when Japan lifted its pandemic-era travel rules a few months ago — one of the last popular tourist destinations to do so. Since then, many have rushed to book winter getaways for a chance to visit the country again, longing to reunite with its food, ski slopes, hot springs, temples and shopping. If Tokyo is on your list this new year, we'd like to recommend **The Peninsula Tokyo's** special "Journey to Japan" room package.

Since opening in 2007 in the superbly convenient Marunouchi district — only minutes' walk away from the shopping capital of Ginza — The Peninsula Tokyo has ranked high on the list of five-star hotels in Japan year after year for its impeccable service and opulence. This season, the hotel introduces a package that is sure to please foodies who are ecstatic to return to the land of the rising sun.

The one-night "Journey to Japan" package includes a stay in any of the hotel's rooms, complimentary daily breakfast and, the

highlight, a set dinner menu for two from one of the three signature Japanese restaurants located within the property. Food lovers can choose from Sushi Wakon, which offers expertly crafted Edo-mae style sushi featuring seasonal ingredients sourced daily from the world-famous Toyosu Market; Mon cher ton ton Hibiya, a long-established teppanyaki restaurant known for using the choicest cuts of Kobe beef; and which serves remarkably light tempura from the freshest seasonal ingredients. The set dinner is valued at ¥60,000.

After so much time away from Japan, let The Peninsula reunite you with Japan's beloved food and culture in the most luxurious way it knows how. The "Journey to Japan" package is valid until February 28, 2023 and can be booked via the hotel's website.

BINGE-WORTHY TV FOR A VIRTUAL ITALIAN VACATION

Everyone daydreams of Italy, and why wouldn't you? The country is home to some of the most sought-after holiday destinations in the world and it's enough to incite a sense of forlorn longing in just about anyone. To temporarily ward off your wanderlust, transport yourself to Italy with some of these binge-worthy TV shows that will satisfy your cravings for pasta and desire for a Sicilian summer in no time.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NETFLIX



Chef's Table Pizza

Netflix's "Chef's Table Pizza" is a mouth-watering exploration of the world of artisanal pizza making. Featuring some of the most talented and creative pizza chefs from around the globe, the show offers a glimpse into the passion and dedication that goes into crafting the perfect pie.

Paying homage to the home of everyone's favorite carb dish, the Netflix series takes you to the streets of Rome and Naples, offering new insight into how two of the best pizzaiolos, Gabriele Bonci and Franco Pepe, practice their craft. Known for their innovative creations, both chefs have achieved legendary acclaim by pursuing philosophies like quality without compromise. Exploring this concept, "Chef's Table Pizza" takes you on a culinary journey around Italy to see where these famous chefs source their ingredients, uncovering the secrets behind some of the world's most delicious pizzas. So grab a slice and settle in for an unforgettable culinary adventure.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CNN

Stanley Tucci: Searching for Italy

Part of the blame for our recent insatiable desire to visit Italy over and over again can be put on Stanley Tucci. His CNN Original Series, “**Stanley Tucci: Searching for Italy**,” has the Academy Award nominee traveling through the many regions of Italy — including Calabria where his ancestors are from — to discover the dishes, their ingredients, the makers and the restaurants that define them. While the storytelling alone is enough of a hook, Tucci’s good looks, charm and decent Italian also add to the series, making it an enjoyable binge, especially when it first premiered during the pandemic while everyone was locked up in their living rooms and in much need of an escape. Now that the world has opened up, we recommend watching for travel inspiration before you book your next trip to the Bel Paese.



White Lotus: Season 2

HBO’s massive hit “**White Lotus**” for a second season with actress Jennifer Coolidge leading the cast. This time, the setting for the satirical drama is set in the south of Italy where The San Domenico Palace, Taormina, A Four Seasons Hotel, serves as the main backdrop. Between scenes of the five-star hotels — a glamorous beach club, spacious suites, terraces with sweeping views of Mount Etna and the Bay of Taormina — the show also gives you shots of the ocean, island, nearby towns and palatial villas that will have you Googling flights to Sicily in no time.

We dare say this second season outshines the first. If wit and humor are your cup of tea then buckle in for a wild ride. “White Lotus” will have you laughing, looking up theories and wishing you were spending a week in Italy.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF HBO MAX



REED IN SNOWSHOES NO. 1, LAKE PLACID, NEW YORK, 2008

ATTENTION: ART COLLECTORS, STOCK BROKERS, DAYDREAMERS AND THOSE WHO ALREADY HAVE IT ALL.

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HOTEL PORTOFINO: AN ENGLISH PERIOD PLEASER



There is something genuinely comforting about a period drama. Perhaps it's the escapism we experience by looking into an era we don't live in, or an aesthetic that's unfamiliar to our own — or maybe it's the lavish production that often accompanies period pieces, offering endless hours of dreaming and distraction. For most of us, it started in 1981 with ITV's masterful 13-hour serialization of Evelyn Waugh's novel, "Brideshead Revisited," that tells the story of a wealthy, eccentric family who live in a home called Brideshead Castle. Sophisticated and hedonistic, "Brideshead Revisited" offers a glimpse into a bygone world of the English to an audience that was transfixed on the marriage of Lady Diana Spencer to the Prince of Wales the same year. The award-winning score by Geoffrey Burgon is in itself, a masterpiece.

Often overlooked, but of great importance to the period drama genre is the Oscar-winning "Gosford Park," a feature film made for theatrical release and directed by Robert Altman and written by Julian Fellowes. The whodunit storyline follows a party of wealthy Britons plus an American producer, and their servants, who gather for a shooting weekend at Gosford Park, an English country house. A murder occurs after a dinner party, and the film goes on to present Mr. Fellowes' view of the "upstairs/downstairs" relationship.

Originally planned as a spin-off to "Gosford Park," "Downton Abbey" has become one of the most popular period dramas of all time. The series, which first launched in 2010, follows the aristocratic lives of the Crawley family between 1912 and 1926. To date, it's the most watched television show on both ITV and PBS, and subsequently became the most successful British costume drama series since "Brideshead Revisited."

And of course, one can't speak of period dramas without invoking "The Durrells." The hit drama series is the story of Louisa Durrell, who moves her four children from England after the death of her husband. Life is cheap in Corfu, where the family takes up residence in a wonderfully ramshackle house that lacks electricity or other modern conveniences. The series is loosely based on the autobiographical trilogy written by Louisa's youngest son, Gerald Durrell.

The latest period costume drama is "Hotel Portofino," which tells the story of the Ainsworth family that has relocated from Britain to open an upscale hotel on the Italian coastline. Set in the breathtakingly beautiful resort town of Portofino, this new period drama is about personal awakening at a time of global upheaval in the traumatic aftermath of World War I and the liberating influence of Italy's enchanting culture, climate and cuisine on elite foreign travelers.

As one "Hotel Portofino" reviewer opined, "Like a perfect gin cocktail, the recipe for a blissful romantic costume drama, as laid down by Ismail Merchant and James Ivory in the 1980s, is quite simple. Pluck several English roses and place them in an Italian hotel — Florence, Venice, Rome, anywhere with gorgeous buildings and sun-drenched vistas. Since roses must have thorns, ensure there are assorted vinegary aunts and bibulous papas, as well as eccentric Americans, local aristocrats and — this last ingredient is most important — servants with British regional accents."

And as they say in England, "Bob's your uncle."

Season 2 of "Hotel Portofino" is in production and will premiere in 2023. Season 1 is streaming now.

DIRECTORY

BAKER

SIAM PARAGON, 3RD FLOOR, BANGKOK
T+662 129 4434

BARBARA BARRY

SIAM PARAGON, 3RD FLOOR, BANGKOK
T+662 129 4577

BULTHAUP

NOBLE SOLO THONGLOR, BANGKOK
T+662 714 9040

CHANINTR CRAFT

SUKHUMVIT 55, BANGKOK
T+662 059 7750

CHANINTR OUTLET

CHANINTR 61, SUKHUMVIT 61, BANGKOK
T+66 92 247 2107

CHANINTR WORK

WAREHOUSE 26, SUKHUMVIT 26, BANGKOK
T+662 059 7760

CHANINTR AND CO

SIAM PARAGON, 3RD FLOOR, BANGKOK
T +662 129 4577

HICKORY CHAIR

SIAM PARAGON, 3RD FLOOR, BANGKOK
T+662 129 4577

KRAVET

SIAM PARAGON, 3RD FLOOR, BANGKOK
T+662 129 4577

LEMA

NOBLE SOLO THONGLOR, BANGKOK
T+662 714 9040

LIAIGRE

NOBLE SOLO THONGLOR, BANGKOK
T+662 714 9040

McGUIRE

SIAM PARAGON, 3RD FLOOR, BANGKOK
T+662 129 4434

MINOTTI

NOBLE SOLO THONGLOR, BANGKOK
T+662 714 9040

SAINT-LOUIS / PUIFORCAT

SIAM PARAGON, 3RD FLOOR, BANGKOK
T+662 129 4577

THEODORE ALEXANDER

SIAM PARAGON, 3RD FLOOR, BANGKOK
T +662 129 4577

WALTER KNOLL

SIAM PARAGON, 3RD FLOOR, BANGKOK
T +662 129 4577

WATERWORKS

SUKHUMVIT 55, BANGKOK
T+662 059 7750

CAFÉ CRAFT

924 THONGLOR ROAD, BANGKOK
T+662 059 9892
CAFECRAFTBYCHANINTR.COM

CUSTOMER SERVICE

T+662 015 8888
CUSTOMERSERVICE@CHANINTR.COM
CHANINTR.COM

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