

how to spend it

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travelista

Wander woman **Maria Shollenbarger** fast-tracks international intelligence on where to be and what to see.

→ As autumn approaches, culture calendars in cities the world over begin to fill up. In **NEW YORK**, the Next Wave Festival kicks off on the 21st of this month at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (www.bam.org), presenting emerging talent from the US and abroad alongside stalwarts of the NYC modern performing arts scene. Hence Icelandic director Gísli Orn Gardarsson reinterprets Kafka with music by Nick Cave and Dirty Three violinist Warren Ellis; Julia Stiles leads in a classic Greek tragedy scored by experimental composer Ben Neill; and Laurie Anderson performs with a string ensemble complete with electronic puppetry. Tickets go fast, so secure yours now – and consider booking a suite at the new **Andaz 5th Avenue** (www.andaz5thavenue.com; doubles from \$435).

Directly facing the New York Public Library (though not the Bryant Park tents of Fashion Week, which starts on September 9, as they've now moved across town to the Lincoln Center), Andaz 5th Avenue offers a more opulent take on the brand's contemporary style and brisk, business-oriented service. And it's just steps away from the 4, 5, 6, B, D and F trains (which is how plenty of the city's great and good, who know better than to negotiate FDR Drive traffic at rush hour, get to BAM).

→ Culture of a different sort – centuries-old traditions of silk and cotton weaving, carving and dancing – reigns in **LAOS**. But in its former royal capital, the buzz is all about the new **Alila**

Luang Prabang (www.alilahotels.com; from \$204), a minimalist 23-suite retreat fitted into a heritage-designated French colonial palace. Alila's been in the spotlight in the past year as it debuted two stunning, contemporary resorts on Bali. The word is to expect more of the same vast, private suites and camera-ready public spaces here. And in **BANGALORE** next month, look out for the opening of the more buttoned-up **Alila Bangalore** (from Rs8,400; about £116); the suites in particular, with separate living areas that serve as office or meeting room, are ideal for those doing more work than play.

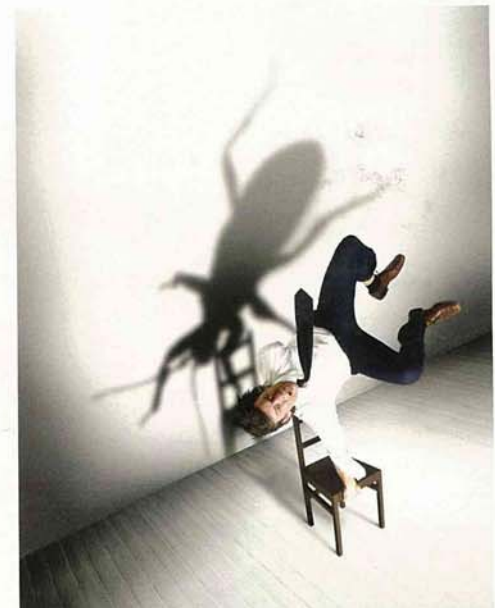
→ Business and leisure travellers in and out of **LONDON** this autumn will be pleased to learn of two new hotels with easy access to the city's main air-transport facilities, but still close enough to town to enjoy its attractions. Adjacent to the London Heliport at Battersea, **Hotel Verta**



Above: Hotel Verta on London's South Bank.



Above: a pool suite at Alila Luang Prabang in Laos. Below: Gísli Orn Gardarsson reinterprets Kafka's *Metamorphosis* as part of New York's Next Wave Festival.



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Above: the Oitavos hotel and spa is located on the coast just outside Lisbon.
Below: the lobby of the ultra-contemporary Devi Ratn resort in Rajasthan.

own Dorchester) will this month open its first country-house hotel. **Coworth Park** (www.coworthpark.com; from £276) intends to impress on several levels: the rich upholstered interiors (anyone who's visited The Dorchester's dazzling sugar-spun spa designed by the same firm will feel right at home); the eco credentials (a biomass boiler fuelled by wood from willows grown on the estate in sustainable cycles will produce the hotel's carbon-neutral energy); and proximity to the M3-M25 junction, meaning that Heathrow and Gatwick are as close at hand as Mayfair and Knightsbridge.

→ Then there's really getting away from it all. **TUSCANY**, often decried as too busy or too "done", is neither when the right areas are visited at the right times – the lower Tuscan Appennines, say, in late autumn, when **Val di Luce** (www.valdilucesparesort.it; from €162) will begin accepting guests. This Alpine-style spa-cum-ski resort is set amid pine and birch forests, just 100m from its own ski-lift and a short drive from other modestly sized ski resorts – though the light-suffused suites, billiards and games rooms, indoor and outdoor pools and saunas may deter you from many excursions.

→ Excursions are instead entirely the point in **RAJASTHAN**, with its beautiful rosy-hued cities. Now there's the thrilling new **Devi Ratn** (www.deviresorts.in; from £473). Sister to Udaipur's much-loved Devi Garh, it sits on the Agra road, outside Jaipur, with 60 suites and three two-storey villas with their own pools and gardens. It's a departure for the region, and won't be to everyone's taste: floors are herringbone alabaster and ebony, walls are lacquered red, or gold and silver; and all is angular, spare and resolutely contemporary.

→ Equally surprising in its modernity is the new **Oitavos** (www.theoitavos.com; from £316), a vast steel-and-glass cube

of a hotel and spa on the coast outside **LISBON**, on the family-owned Quinta da Marinha estate. Guests will enjoy access to a racquet club, equestrian centre and the Arthur Hills-designed Oitavos Dunes golf course. Whether in the generously proportioned rooms, the tea-house or the sushi lounge, the beautiful outdoors is exploited rather than competed with by wraparound walls of glass, white-tile floors and a décor almost entirely made up of shades of grey and white. ✦



Above: Coworth Park country-house hotel, near Ascot in Berkshire.

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For more international intelligence from Maria Shollenbarger, go to Travelista on howtospendit.com