

HOTELS / GLOBAL

Fine vintages

Our pick of stop-overs this week takes us to a former palace in Lisbon and a hotel outside Stockholm that (unexpectedly for Sweden) makes its own wine. For more hotel recommendations, our book *The Monocle Guide to Hotels, Inns and Hideaways* is out on 21 June.



Image: Joana Pires Ochoa

OLD AND NEW:

Palácio Belmonte, Lisbon

The 15th-century Palácio Belmonte is a listed national monument and one of the first stop-overs to showcase quiet Castelo neighbourhood to the east of Lisbon's throng. In 1994, it was bought by ecologist Frédéric Coustols, who with his wife Maria Mendonça turned it into a hotel. Ancient stone busts sit alongside contemporary works of art, and this combination of old and new continues throughout the 10 suites. **Chloé Ashby** *palaciobelmonte.com*



Image: Kristoffer Johnson

HOME BREW:

Winery Hotel, Stockholm

Its far-flung location may be tough on guests who like to be in the thick of things (it's a 20-minute drive from the city) but the Winery Hotel is worth a stay. The 184-key affair makes some 8,000 bottles of wine a year thanks to the founders' vineyard in Tuscany. Enjoy a glass in one of the hotel restaurants, overseen by Michel Jamsi and chef Markus Gustafsson. The building is industrial with exposed brickwork but the rooms have soft accents by designers Southeast. **Josh Fehnert** *thewineryhotel.se*



Clockwise from top: Brass candle holders by Arno Wolf; Tobias Hilbert; Grimsel is on a quaint street in the old town; fine ceramics abound; the showroom is airy and homely; still life



Basel's retail scene keeps one hand on its heritage and the other pointed towards the future



BASEL / SWITZERLAND

The art of retail

Gallerists and curators are flocking to Basel this June for its annual art show. But it's also home to a range of boutiques that mix the best in modern and traditional Swiss retail.

WRITER *Melkon Charchoglyan* PHOTOGRAPHER *Samuel Zeller*

Art Basel starts on June 14 and we've nipped past the best boutiques in town to create retail rundown while you're here. Now Basel's retail scene keeps one hand on its heritage and the other pointed to the future. Altstadt Grossbasel glitters with trusty toyshops, antiques specialists and centuries-old jewellers. A few streets along you'll find modern design studios following in the footsteps of Switzerland's great makers, from Hans Coray to Hans Hilfiker (the latter designed the Swiss railways clock now made by Mondaine). Speaking of which, isn't it time you saw this city for yourself?

1. Arno Wolf

Designer Florian Hilbert was a chef before he traded his kitchen for a classroom and studied industrial design at Basel's FHNW. With his brother Tobias (pictured, left) he established the handsome design studio Arno Wolf, named after their grandfather. The brothers' studio shares a space with their architecture practice Hilbert Architektur. The pair's designs, which range from woollen throws and brass candleholders to crystal tumblers, are primarily made in collaboration with craftsmen in east Germany, where the brothers were born. But Basel and Switzerland remain their creative muse. "The provenance of an object carries great importance in Switzerland," says Florian. "More so than in Germany, where people tend to focus on the finished product."



2. Grimsel

If you measure the merit of a shop by how much of its stock you want to have in your home, Grimsel is as good as it gets. Opened in 2014 by graphic designer Alexa Früh and interior architect Bettina Ginsberg (pictured, Ginsberg on right), the elegant showroom is filled with Artek tables, Anvia lighting and many more pieces from makers around the world. "The things you see have all found us in their own different ways," says Früh. There are vintage items alongside the new stock, as well as dozens of smaller gems such as Grimsel's own throws, designed in collaboration with Tessitura Valposchiavo. *grimsel.net*

futon mattresses laid out, with fluffy quilts and rice-filled pillows. A combination of the hot onsen water, the saké at dinner and the comfortable set-up leads to most guests having the best night's sleep they can remember. **9.** Breakfast may be served in a public room. For Japanese guests, it will comprise grilled fish, *natto* (fermented soy), sharp *umeboshi* (pickled plums) and rice. The western option will likely be white toast with an egg, salad and a cup of coffee; don't make requests for granola and soy milk. **10.** Remember that prices quoted are generally per person. Don't book for a whole week. For most Japanese, one night at a *ryokan* does the trick.

**About the writer:** Fiona Wilson is a *ryokan* regular and Monocle's Tokyo bureau chief.

**Coming soon:** MONOCLE's Quality of Life-themed July/August bumper issue offers a reliable run-down of the cities worth visiting for work, play and inspiration.



Address book:

**TO STAY:**  
**Les Trois Rois**  
The regal rooms are decked with refurbished antique furniture and marble details but the hotel feels welcoming rather than haughty throughout.  
8 Blumenrain, 4001  
+41 (0)61 260 5050  
*lestroisrois.com*

**TO SEE:**  
**Fondation Beyeler**  
A Renzo Piano-designed museum – with Patagonian stone walls and a glass roof – that's sunken into the soil.  
101 Baselsmuse, 4125  
+41 (0)61 645 9700  
*fondationbeyeler.ch*

**TO EAT:**  
**Volkshaus Basel**  
The man who gave hotel helvetia (see page 14) and helvi diners to Zürich is also behind this one-stop restaurant, which opened in 2012.  
12-14 Rebasse, 4058  
+41 (0)61 690 9310  
*volkshaus-basel.ch*

3. Anna Castiello

While many jewellery shops in Switzerland tend to be a little forbidding, Anna Castiello's minimalist atelier feels young and approachable. Basel-born Castiello (pictured) trained as a jeweller here two decades ago and, after a stint as a gallerist in New York, returned to open her own shop. Castiello's tastefully polychrome pieces are inspired by her travels. She has a penchant for Vietnamese jade, which she buys alongside myriad other precious gems – ready for inspiration to strike. "We jewellers have an obsession when it comes to stones," she laughs. While she has a ready-to-wear collection, many of her works are made-to-measure and clients have been known to trust her taste entirely, leaving instructions as minimal as "surprise me". *annacastiello.com*



4. Kleinbasel

Homegrown fashion designers in Switzerland are sadly few and far between but Basel's couture doyenne Tanja Klein (pictured) has been going strong since 1994. She studied dressmaking in Basel and lived in Los Angeles in the late 1980s before returning to establish her own bespoke atelier. Decades later, the focus is more on ready-to-wear for both men and women. Klein's sunken-level shop sells leather goods, simple dresses, coats and tops for women, and smart-casual wear in earthy tones for men. It's a charming brand that makes everything in Switzerland and, we hope, will spur on some more young designers. *kleinbasel.net*

Clockwise from top left: While most designs are bespoke, there are some ready-to-wear pieces; Anna Castiello; Klein has a penchant for the glittery; Ooid's sleek showroom; Tanja Klein outside her shop

5. Ooid Store

After years in the printing and advertising industries, Marianne Mumenthaler decided to give fashion a go. With the help of Swiss interior designer Luiz Albisser, in 2014 she opened Ooid Store, which focuses on men's and womenswear but eschews the big names. Hanging inside are shirts by Studio Nicholson, rucksacks by Ally Capellino and colourful pants by DemyLee NY. Ooid's focus on quality international brands is a welcome injection to Basel's retail scene. *ooid-store.com*



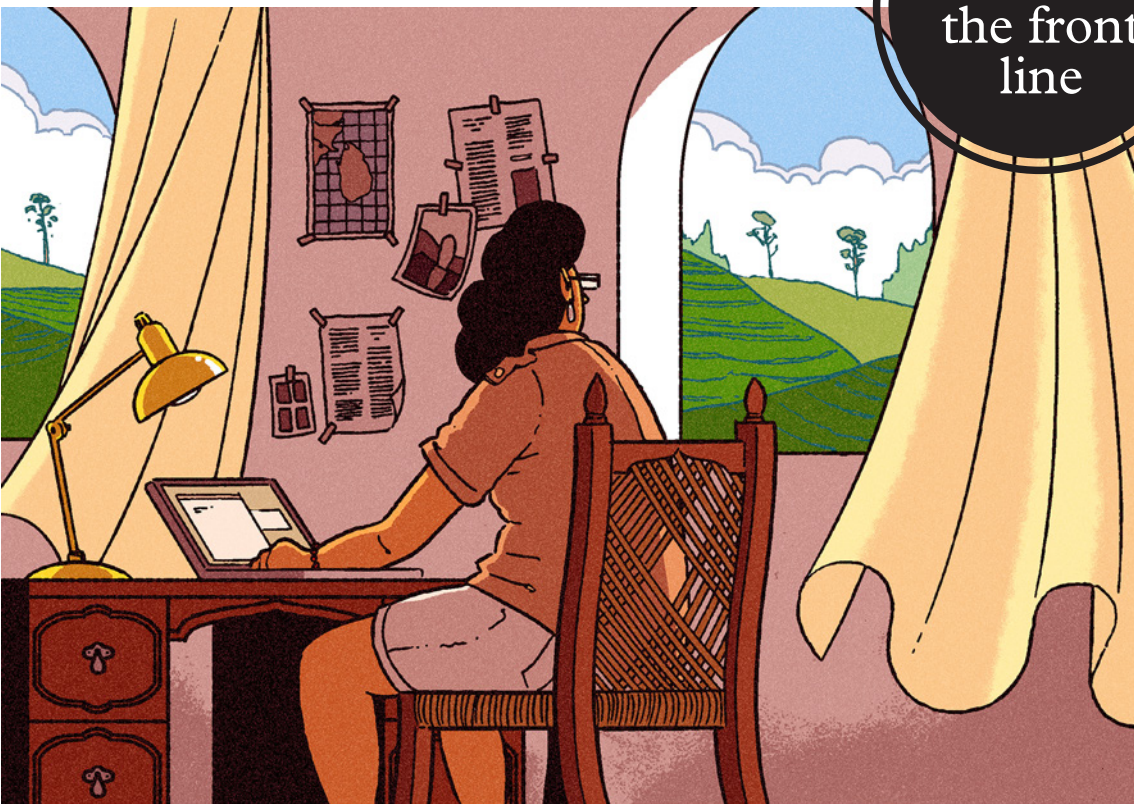
Image: Gine Folly

HOTELS / GLOBAL

Haven from the bombs

For the battle-hardened war reporter, a decent hotel can be a beacon of normality, a makeshift office and a source of much-needed whiskey.

WRITER *Janine di Giovanni* ILLUSTRATOR *R. Fresson*



Postcard from... the front line

In times of conflict, hotels can be a safe haven where war correspondents find a semblance of normality that allows them to keep working (and drink too much whiskey).

During the siege of Sarajevo, which ran from 1992 to 1995, room 435 of the Holiday Inn was my home. Life there consisted of zigzagging your way to the front door to avoid the hillside snipers who were taking aim at your knees, eating cardboard-flavoured food from humanitarian aid ration packs, writing by candlelight and drinking too much whiskey. It was wartime, which was miserable, but I was strangely happy.

Built in 1984 for the Winter Olympics in Sarajevo, the Holiday Inn wasn't a good-looking hotel. From the outside it was a mass of bright-yellow, Lego-like bricks. Inside it resembled a dorm in a third-rate university, with a stained purple carpet and dull plywood furniture. Nonetheless, even during the shelling, maids made up our beds and folded our sleeping bags on top. Along with the hotel restaurant's bow-tied waiters, they were a grim testament to the country's resilience.

When reporting in a war zone, your hotel becomes a strange haven, an essential sanctuary, an information depot. It may not have much water or electricity but it's a safe place where you can drop off your pack, remove your boots and flak jacket and tap away at your computer.

One of the most luxurious war hotels remains the American Colony Hotel in east Jerusalem. At the height of the first intifada ("uprising") in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the management was so in tune with what journalists needed that it installed an AP wire machine in the lobby. That way, reporters could continue to gather in the lemon-scented courtyard of the former pasha's palace and keep track of the West Bank clashes between Palestinian youth and Israeli security. At night they slept in well-kept rooms with Persian rugs laid out on beautiful dark hardwood floors and with antique furniture aplenty.

The al-Rashid Hotel in Baghdad was another hotel I called home while we waited for the US invasion that finally came in April 2003. During the Saddam Hussein days it was an oasis, with an admittedly slimy pool, a winding garden where I used to jog and a restaurant that served fresh juice in the morning – watermelon,

pomegranate or grapefruit. I left several bags of winter clothing in my room when I had to flee in a hurry. Today the hotel is part of the fortified Green Zone, behind barbed wire, walls and checkpoints.

I remember sipping cold beers in the garden of the American Colony Hotel during the first and second Palestinian intifadas, checking into the Fairview in Nairobi between assignments in Somalia and Rwanda and bedding down in Hotel Ivoire during the coup d'état in Abidjan. I can still taste the salty caviar and vodka served in the restaurant at the extravagant Esplanade in Zagreb, where I stood under a hot shower for the first time in six weeks after my stint in Sarajevo.

In Damascus, I stayed in surreal luxury. The Dama Rose, where UN monitors were also staying, hosted bachelorette Thursday afternoon pool parties, even while the acrid smoke was curling into the sky from dropping bombs in the distant suburbs. Then there was the Caravelle in Saigon and the Gandamak Lodge in Kabul. The list goes on and on.

When conflict ends, some war hotels assume second lives as places of leisure. In truth, journalists can't afford to stay in the American Colony Hotel anymore but diplomats and UN officials can. Today the Fairview in Nairobi is the first stop-off for tourists before they head out on safari in the Maasai Mara. These hotels are testaments to survival, physical memories of what their cities have undergone. The Holiday Inn in Sarajevo still stands, despite the snipers and bombings, only now it has a new name: Hotel Holiday. Two decades after the war ended, a group of us gathered there for a reunion and strangely it was the same – albeit a tad cleaner, with running water.

I wrote this from an old colonial hotel in Sri Lanka, a country that endured a 30-year civil. Here, high in the hills where tea is harvested, it's quiet; you can hear the birds and nothing else, let alone the dropping of bombs. Wars eventually end and, if they're lucky, the buildings that provided refuges for some remain.

**About the writer:** Janine di Giovanni is the Edward R Murrow fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. She is the author of *The Morning They Came for Us: Dispatches from Syria*.

Comment



House rules for the perfect stay in a *ryokan*

WRITER *Fiona Wilson*

A night in a proper Japanese *ryokan* (inn) is unlike any other hotel experience – and all the better for it. It's worth remembering that *ryokan* are the product of centuries of tradition; asking for services you'd find at a

generic hotel would miss the point entirely. Here are a few tips to ensure you make the most of this unique experience.

1. Check-in is unlikely to be earlier than 15.00 so don't turn up in the morning. And don't hang around when it comes to departure time; most guests leave soon after breakfast.
2. On arrival remove your shoes; the *ryokan* is a private space and relaxation begins by switching to slippers. You'll be greeted by the manager, known as an *okami* – usually a no-nonsense woman who is also likely to be a member of the family that owns the place.
3. It's often startling to newcomers: your room will be empty apart from a low table and a couple of legless chairs. Don't bother looking for the

beds, they're folded up in cupboards behind the sliding doors.

4. Don't look for the en-suite bathroom either – while your room is likely to have a lavatory, private bathrooms don't feature in traditional *ryokan*; instead, you'll bathe in a shared bath. If you're lucky enough to be staying somewhere mountainous this could also involve a soak in a mineral-rich outdoor hot spring bath.
5. Unless you're planning to head out (and Japanese guests wouldn't – they're here to relax), change into *ryokan* garb: a full-length cotton *yukata* robe, which will probably be folded in a basket in your room. If it's cold, there will be a jacket to wear on top; this is acceptable wear throughout your stay, including at mealtimes.
6. Bathing in Japan can be a baffling experience for novices. The rules,

however, are simple. On no account wear swimming costumes or trunks; before you enter the steamy bathroom, remove your *yukata* and put it in the basket in the anteroom. Head to the row of thigh-high showers at the side of the bath and sit on one of the stools – you don't go near a Japanese bath until you've showered and rinsed thoroughly: the bath is for relaxation, not washing.

7. After a bath, you'll go for what's likely to be an early dinner, served on the table in your room. Dinner is included in the cost. Don't expect to turn up at 21.00 and ask for dinner; *ryokan* run like clockwork and 19.30 would be late for a meal.
8. Once dinner is over, retreat for another bath while the beds are made up. When you re-enter your room it will be transformed – lights low and

5. Unless you're planning to head out (and Japanese guests wouldn't – they're here to relax), change into *ryokan* garb: a full-length cotton *yukata* robe, which will probably be folded in a basket in your room. If it's cold, there will be a jacket to wear on top; this is acceptable wear throughout your stay, including at mealtimes.

ITINERARY / MILAN

Subway Holiday | Milan M5

This week a southbound trip across Milan on the newest metro line, the driverless M5, takes in contemporary art, architecture and even some horse racing.

