BRIEFING... Travel & hotels
ROOM AND BOARD.

An architectural revival in Hong Kong, a breath of fresh air in Beirut; a hideaway in Porto and a forest retreat in New Jersey; just some of our finds that are both off the beaten track and resolutely on the mark.

HEADY HEIGHTS

The Murray

New hotels in Hong Kong tend to be within a mixed-use development so The Murray stands out in more ways than one. The 336-room flagship in Wynn Hotel’s Niccolo brand takes up all 25 storeys of a 1960s tower in the centre of the city, with views over Hong Kong Park and the botanical gardens. Foster and Partners oversaw the interior redesign of the building, which was built by Ron Phillips almost 50 years ago – his ahead-of-its-time eco-friendly design originally housed British colonial government officials.

Come June the hottest location will be the rooftop restaurant and alfresco bar (a rarity in Hong Kong). When it opens, Popinjays will serve cool drinks alongside contrasting views in Hong Kong. (When it opens, Popinjays will serve cool drinks alongside contrasting views in Hong Kong.)

FORM AND FUNCTION

Hotel Koé

If you’re looking for somewhere to stay in Tokyo you might consider Hotel Koé, a new opening at the middle of Shibuya. It’s on a busy crossroads with a bustling café on the ground floor, while the serene guest rooms are higher up, away from the hubbub. The look is modern Japanese, with a grey palette and beds on low wooden platforms. Rooms run from compact to generous and guests are free to use the private lounge, where green tea and cocktails are served.

RIGHT AT HOME

Ann Siang House

Property developer Ashish Manchharam (see page 84) – known for reinventing old neighbourhoods – opened his latest hospitality venture in March. Ann Siang House includes a café, pizza joint, wine bar and craft brewery. The 26-room stopover is designed for business travellers and those on longer stays. There are larger suites outfitted with kitchenettes (despite the fact that no one cooks at home here) and plenty of shared space for mingling.

CABIN FEVER

Lokal Hotel

DORCHESTER, USA

It may not always be sunny in Philadelphia but, thanks to Chad and Courtney Ludman, you’re sure to get a good night’s sleep. They co-founded Lokal in 2017, with six sharp apartments in a former gallery in Old City. In December they opened a second location: a revamped A-frame cabin in Dorchester, New Jersey. Nestled in woodland, the three-bedroom cabin was made with California redwood in the 1960s and updated by the Ludmans with modern Scandinavian touches. Take a kayak out on the river then kick back in the hot tub.

CREATURE COMFORTS

Beit al Tawlet

BEIRUT

Food writer Kamal Mouzawak and womenwear designer Rabih Kayrouz are behind Beirut’s newest guesthouse, Beit al Tawlet. It sits above Mouzawak’s farm-fresh restaurant of the same name and it’s the fourth guesthouse from el Tawlet. It sits above Mouzawak’s farm-fresh restaurant of the same name and it’s the fourth guesthouse from el Tawlet. The feel is comfortable and relaxed. “It’s like you’re living in our house,” says Mouzawak. “But we want guests to feel as if it’s their home too.” The décor feels 1970s (in a good way), with rattan furniture, plenty of greenery and playful lampshades.

LAKE ESCAPE

Cabanes des Grands Cépages

AVIGNON, FRANCE

The 10 wooden huts – each encircled by pinewood poles – making up the Cabanes des Grands Cépages were designed to blend in with their surroundings. Short piers connect each floating room to the reed-covered banks of the Lac de la Lionne, a turquoise lake in Avignon. Inside, the wood-clad cabins feature the essentials – a double bed, bathroom and minimalist lounge – and some also have a hot tub for a splash of indulgence.

BEST FOR REST

Maison Bergdorf

INTERLAKEN, SWITZERLAND

With a stable of Bern-based apartments already under their umbrella, business partners Marko Beerlin and Stéphane Houlmann set sights on a pretty 1897 chalet in the alpine village of Interlaken. After testing the waters with a pop-up in 2015 they opened the night-bedroom Maison Bergdorf. The décor is a fetching collection of restored wallpaper and crazy floors, antique lamps and tapestries, much of it found in a friend’s inheritance lot.

PORTO BRIMS WITH... 

Porto

PORTO

Those who want to stay in Porto brims with art, architecture and wild partying, then this is the place to be. There are vintage pieces, a generous courtyard and an honesty bar where you can share a port and tonic before exploring the lively surroundings. The five suites boast plenty of space and comely wooden beds.

Ann Siang House

SINGAPORE

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Maison Bergdorf

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