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New Hotels and Restaurants Around the World

October 21, 2007

In this issue: Bangkok, London, Paris, San Francisco, Seattle, Toronto....

In Paris, a Novel Hotel

Hotel Balzac. Have the butler unpack while you relax in the romantic lobby of this neoclassical 19th-century mansion, once owned by novelist Honoré de Balzac. The staff works hard to please, and each evening a harpist entertains a champagne-sipping international crowd in the lobby bar. The hotel is ideally located off the Champs-Élysées, near the Arc de Triomphe. But if it's food that draws you to Paris, book a table at the famed, three-Michelin-starred-Pierre Gagnaire restaurant in the hotel lobby. Pros: views of the Eiffel Tower from many rooms; near Metro; quiet. Cons: small bathrooms; no business center; no fitness center. *6 rue Balzac. www.hotelbalzac.com/. 80 rooms. In room: safe, refrigerator, DVD, Ethernet, Wi-Fi (some). In hotel: 2 restaurants, room service, bar, laundry service, concierge, public Wi-Fi, airport shuttle (fee), parking (fee), some pets allowed (no fee), no-smoking rooms. AE, DC, MC, V. €500*



In Toronto, Canadian Modern

C5. You can't miss the angular, Daniel Libeskind-designed "Crystal" addition to the Royal Ontario Museum as it juts and jabs over Bloor Street, and you shouldn't miss dining at C5, the starkly designed, unapologetically modernist restaurant on the addition's fifth floor. The cuisine is suitably arrayed in five courses, including one of the city's best cheese plates. The menu relies heavily on dishes built in layers, like succulent lobster tail nestled between tender brioche and a crusted poached egg, or moist black cod set atop lentil salad and under lobster hollandaise. Visitors also enjoy panoramic city views, while savvy locals know to arrive early for a drink in the stylish lounge. *5th Floor, 100 Queen's Park (enter from Bloor Street). 416/586-7928. AE, MC, V. No dinner Sun.--Wed. \$31.*

London's Tasty Touch

Texture. Both the design and food at this 60-seat restaurant are meant to focus on -- you guessed it --

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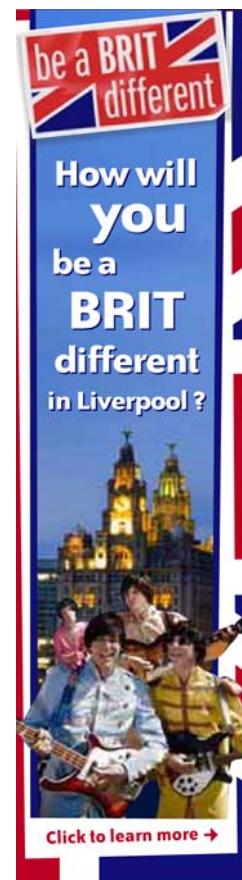
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texture. The décor is sleek and contemporary, with ornate crown moldings, angular suede chairs and artfully scuffed wooden floors. Diners choose from a reasonably priced lunch menu (£8.50 each) of dishes like Lancashire old spot pig served with a strip of crispy belly, and Icelandic cod with chorizo. For dinner, there is a three-course menu for £45, or a fish tasting menu for £55. And for that elusive texture of tiny bubbles, the restaurant also has an in-house champagne bar. *34 Portman Square, Mayfair. 020/7224-0028. AE, MC, V. Closed Sun. and Mon. A three-course tasting menu is £45.*

Riverside Dining in Bangkok

Sala Rim Naam. A can't-miss for *haute* Thai cuisine. The palatial setting, recently renovated, is located on the Chao Praya River. Diners from the Mandarin Oriental hotel's main property take a private shuttle across the river, just five minutes away. Inside the lavishly appointed teak-and-silk dining room, traditional Thai dancers provide entertainment during the set menu of local specialties like spicy chicken and coconut milk soup, steamed fish, and shrimp salad. Those seeking romantic river ambiance opt for the a la carte menu on the adjacent open-air pavilion. Lunch is buffet only. *48 Oriental Avenue, Bangkok. (Take the private launch from the hotel pier.) 662/659 9000. AE, D, DC, MC, V. Dinner is a set menu and cultural show, \$68 per person. A la carte items on the terrace, \$16.*

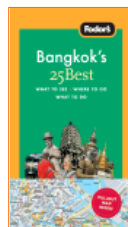
Seasonal Cuisine in San Francisco

Spruce. Chef Mark Sullivan adds to his lengthy list of successful Bay Area restaurants with a seasonally inspired menu that pays homage to his global adventures. Ingredient-conscious San Franciscans will appreciate the local, organically grown produce and the can't-miss menu items of turmeric-poached blue foot chicken and sweet corn and salt cod chowder. The spectacular 5,000-square-foot living room-like interior was formerly an auto barn that dates back to the 1930s. Want to soak up the scene without spending a ton of money? Cozy up to the bar for a scaled down menu or an intimate nightcap. *3640 Sacramento Street. 415/931-5100. Reservations essential. AE, MC, VC. No lunch Sat. and Sun. \$29*

Hi-Tech in Seattle

Hotel 1000.

Technology and luxury come together at the Hotel 1000, located in the heart of what is arguably America's most hi-tech city. Crafty touches like in-room body temperature sensors (good for preventing unannounced visits from housekeeping) and customizable electronic art complement indulgences like soaker bathtubs and body-coddling Thai linens. Reliable Wi-Fi, iPod docking stations, and hands-free VOIP phones are a plus for the business traveler, and the in-house BOKA restaurant satisfies with bold, inventive cuisine. Pros:



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House, Inc.

business-friendly facilities; great downtown location. Cons: complimentary television-based Internet works haphazardly; bar in BOKA can be raucous and loud. *1000 First Avenue. www.hotel1000seattle.com. 101 rooms, 19 suites. In-room: safe, refrigerator (on request), DVD (on request), Ethernet, Wi-Fi. In-hotel: 1 restaurant, 1 lounge (breakfast only), room service, virtual golf courses, gym, spa, laundry service, concierge, public Internet, public Wi-Fi, parking (fee), no-smoking rooms. AE, D, MC, V. \$275.*

Contributors: Cynthia Barnes, Stephen Beaumont, Hyon Jung Lee, Charyn Pfeuffer, Christina Valhouli

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