

# LUXURIOUS ROAD TRIPPING

## America's alabaster cities revisited

Writer: Rocky Casale



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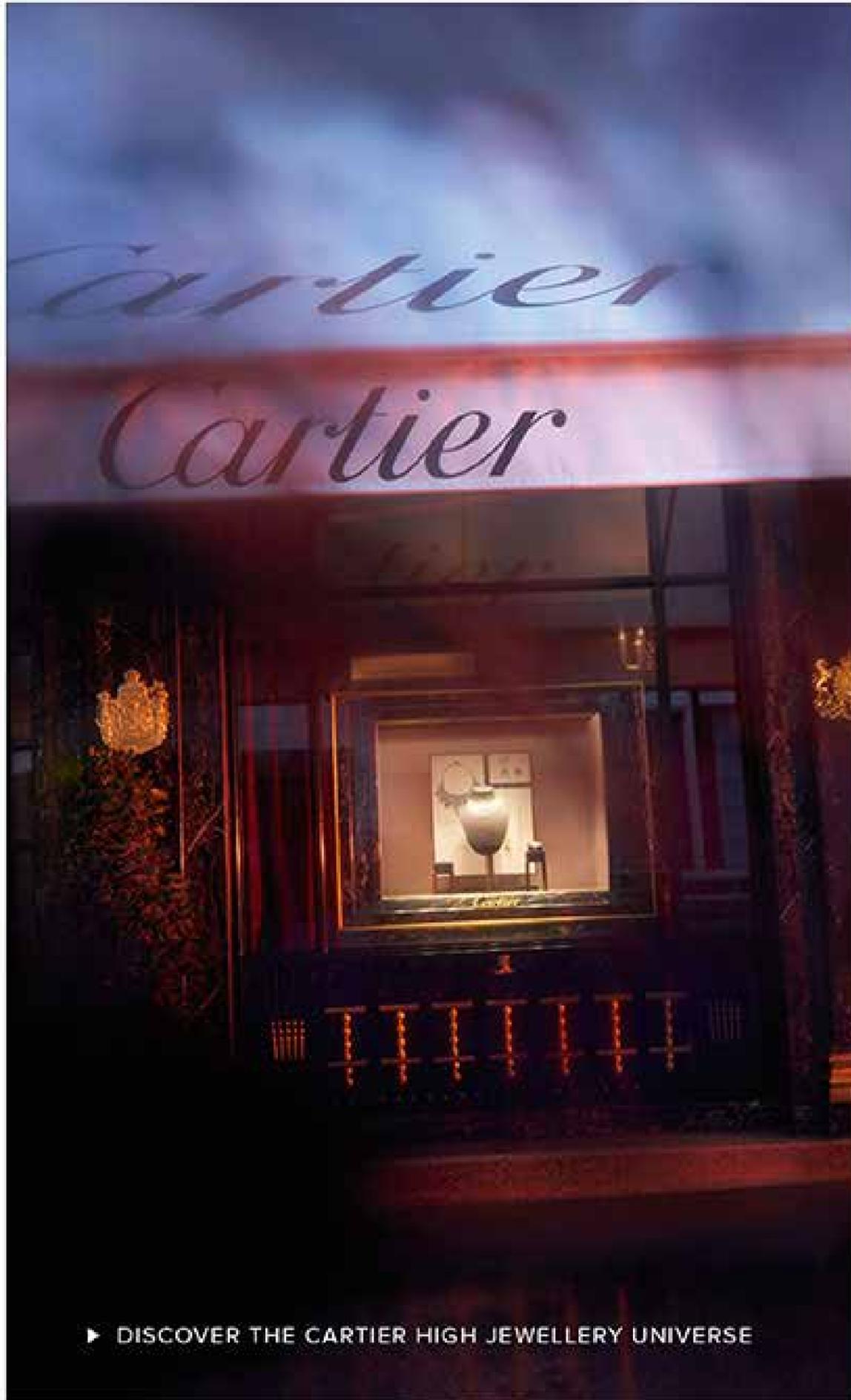
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America's most spectacular natural assets and vibrant and creative cities are best experienced by car. A great American road trip is a national right of passage, and increasingly more enjoyable with a clutch of fabulous restaurants, bars, and luxury hotels where travellers can recharge in style after a long drive. For those who have driven many times across the massive plains and deserts and mountains of the continental U.S., it's often wiser, and always more sumptuous, to do your homework and forge a lavish expedition, let the destination be what may.

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## Denver and Boulder, Colorado

It's always a treat to begin in Denver, the mile-high city, where there are plenty of chic hotels, award winning restaurants and countless bars and artisan craft beer breweries to try out. Conveniently located in the heart of city, the Ritz Carlton, Denver is reputed as one of the city's finest hotels for its luxury high rise suites that overlook the city and distant Rocky Mountains. Check into their Luxury Suite, a palatial space complete with a fine dining room, living room, and bathrooms clad head to toe in sleek marble. The Ritz is home to Denver's best spa that is beloved for its innovative wellness treatments. Try their Microbrew Ex'beer'ience, a full body

exfoliation incorporating hops and malt sugar, and a Vichy shower that soothes muscles while you sip a local Great Divide Brewing Co. lager. But save your appetite for dinner at The Edge, an opulent and progressive steakhouse inside the Four Seasons Hotel. Their Executive Chef Simon Purvis, whose pecan wood grill turns out toothsome entrees like giant Wagyu Tomahawk steaks or miso-glazed black cod. And if you're in Denver for the weekend, you might want to make your way out of the city for brunch at River and Woods for their challah banana cream pie French toast and Bloody Mary's with thick slices of maple cured bacon.

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Courtesy of The Ritz-Carlton, Denver.

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## Santa Fe, New Mexico

Santa Fe is around a six-hour drive south of Denver, and the landscape morphs from endless sawtoothed mountains to rolling hills and the arid expanses of New Mexican desert. The city is a warm and immaculate haven for artists, among them was landscape artist, Georgia O’Keeffe. The Georgia O’Keeffe museum in Santa Fe is small but well-appointed with some of her finest works, and details at length the story of her creative career. Check into the Inn and Spa at Loretto, located in the centre of town. They have a huge fire roaring in the lobby bar where people gather on cosy couches and sip jalapeño margaritas. Their two-story penthouse suite, the only one in Santa Fe, has five huge terraces that offer some of the best bird’s eye views of adobe populated city. Walk over to La Fonda On the Plaza for an aperitif at their lively Bell Tower Bar. Most people have a drink a here before making their way downstairs to La Plazuela, a stellar Mexican restaurant in an open-air garden atrium. Chefs make some of the best table side guacamole in the city here, and their tequila flights are phenomenal.

*Spa Loretto  
Santa Fe*



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La Fonda On The Plaza, Santa Fe



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*La Fonda On The Plaza, Santa Fe*



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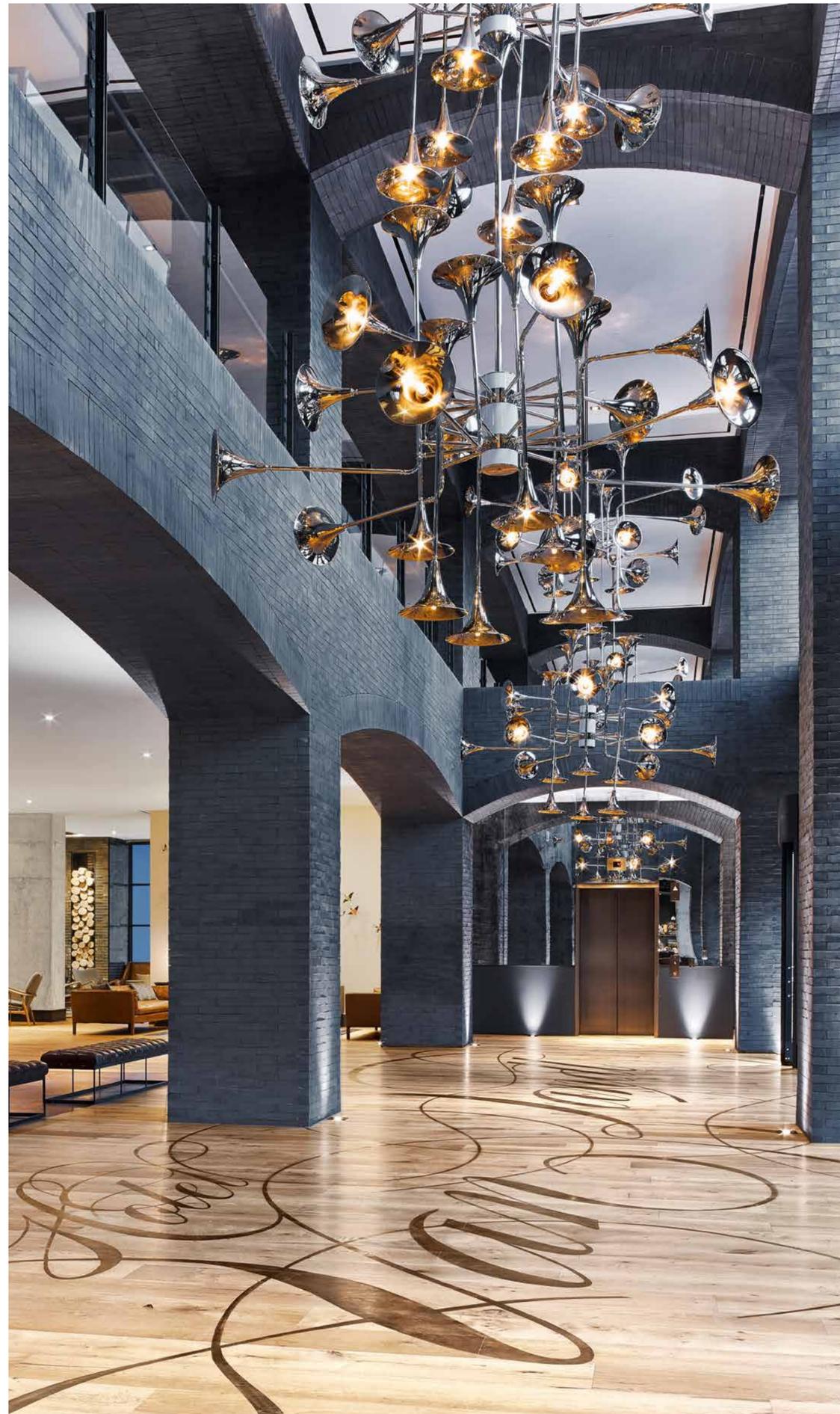


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*Kimpton hotel lobby*

## Austin, Texas

There is something incredibly youthful and joyous about Austin; its nightlife, its music, its people are what make the city a dynamic hive of creatives. It's not an easy drive from Santa Fe (about 14 hours to be exact), but completely worth the effort. The city is awash with new hotels, but in particular, the Four Seasons Hotel and Hotel Van Zandt Kimpton. At the Four Seasons, check into their presidential suite which has a sweeping view of Lady Bird Lake and downtown Austin. It's great for bigger parties that want privacy, or a meal prepared in the room's butler's kitchen or brought up from Trio, the hotel restaurant that makes the best Texas omelette in Austin. An entirely different vibe exists at the Hotel Van Zandt Kimpton. Its more music focused,



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*Presidential Parlor at  
Four Seasons Hotel*

and rightly so located as it is next to the Austin's bar and live music hub, Rainey Street. Geraldine's is the hotel's main bar and restaurant with an outdoor pool and live music most nights of the week. Ceviche tacos, huge ribeye steaks with bernaise sauce, and a laundry list of amazing Austin inspired plates are on the menu. But explore the city, too, and drop in at Péché, Austin's distinctive absinthe bar with decadent snacks like gruyère and duck confit mac and cheese, and more substantial offerings like bouillabaisse. The absinthe selection is extensive, and they also have a good small batch vodka and gin offering.

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*Himalayan Salt Wall at Four Seasons Hotel*



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*Four Seasons Hotel Daytime View*



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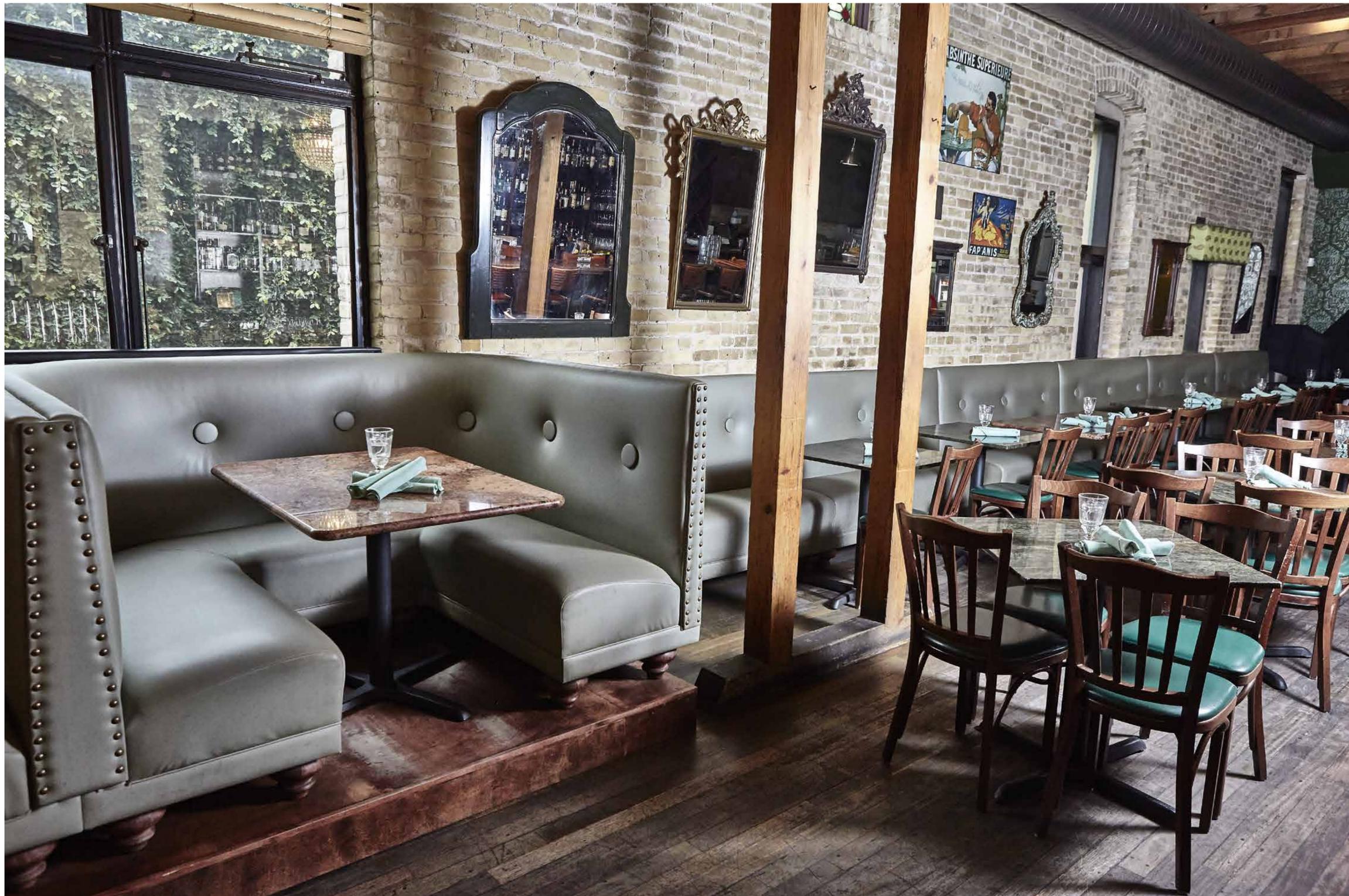
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*Ace Hotel, New Orleans  
Credit: Fran Parente*

## New Orleans, Louisiana

Make your way out of Texas to New Orleans, the creole capital and culinary mecca of the south. One of the newest and modish hotels in town is the Ace Hotel in the city's warehouse district. Their two-level Ace Suites are spectacular, with Romans and Williams fixtures and bespoke furnishings that echo the French Deco style of the building. As with all Ace hotels, their hip downstairs is a destination for locals and guests alike. The hotel's Seaworthy oyster bar, their New Orleans-inspired osteria, Josephine Estelle; and their lobby bar. But fun as the Ace is, New Orleans needs to be discovered. Check out the Garden District for some of the city's best restaurants, and sample the local creole cuisine: gumbo, jambalaya, and so on. Avoid the French quarter during the evenings at all costs, and do stop in at Turkey and The Wolf on your way out of town, one of the top restaurants currently in the United States.



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Ace Hotel, New Orleans  
Credit: Logan Havens

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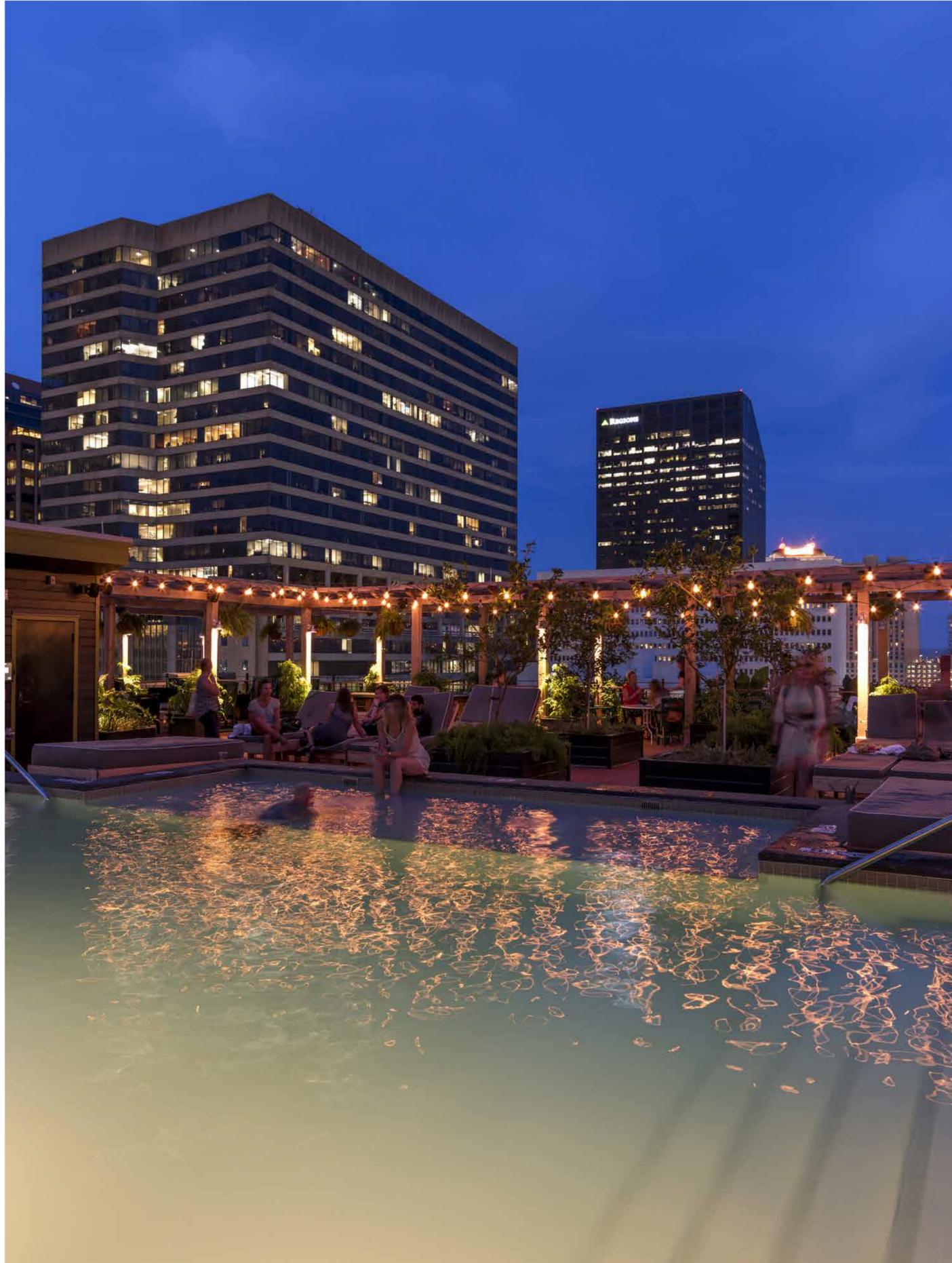
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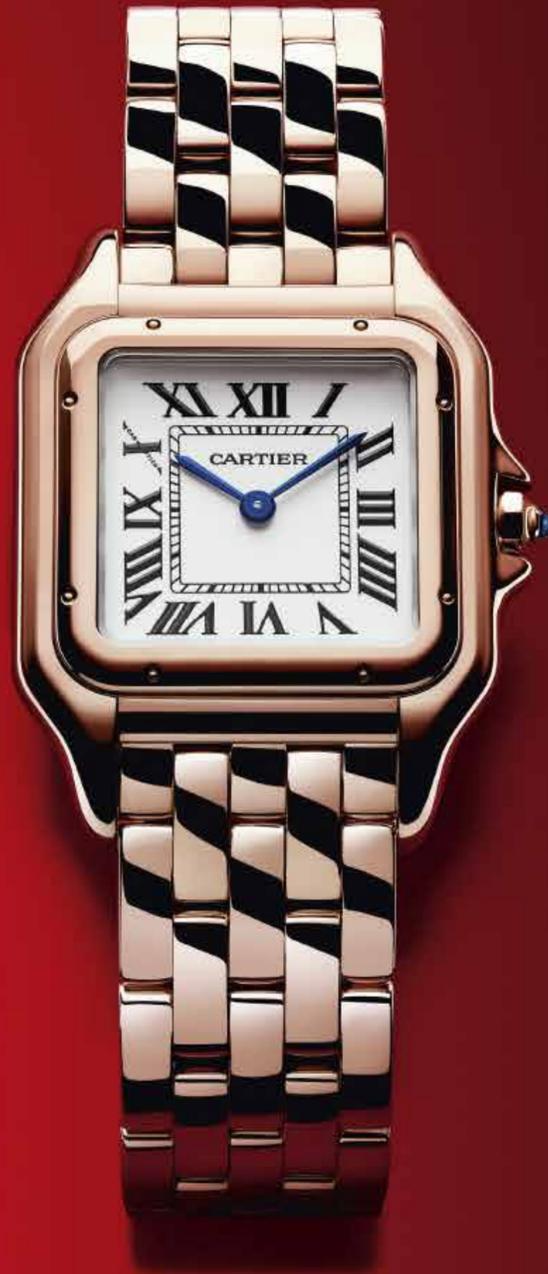
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## Nashville, Tennessee

Like Austin, Nashville is a young hot spot for all things music and food. And the city also has a rolodex of artistic and beautiful hotels. Two stand above the rest; the 21c Museum Hotel and the Kimpton Aerston. The former is as much about comfort as it is about quirky and thoughtful entertainment, packed as it is with over 10,000 square feet of museum space where new contemporary art, both permanent

and rotating collections, are installed. Ask for the Ourobros Mosquito Artist Suite, a sprawling and sumptuous apartment like space with fabulous paintings, photographs, video from the film Teenage Paparazzo, exploring the intersection of celebrity and identity and curated by Adrien Grenier. Gray and Dudley is the hotel's restaurant serves up brilliant Nashville influenced comfort foods like bayou la barre

*Henley Bar  
Credits Andrea Behrends*



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Hotel 21C



shrimp with Weisenberger grits and foraged mushrooms. Over near Vanderbilt University is the Kimpton Aerston Hotel, a chic Nashville hotel with the cosiest rooms in town. Book their King Executive suites, if anything for their palatial bathrooms and great views of the city. For dinner, you only have to go as far as downstairs to the Henley, one of the most sought after reservations currently in Nashville. Order their pumpkin seed risotto, and the best schnitzel in Tennessee.

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Henley Brunch  
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