



travelista

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

→ The resounding success of Sir Terence Conran's Boundary Restaurant, Rooms & Rooftop in Shoreditch was inevitably going to occasion the arrival of other buzzy hotels to the farther reaches of **EAST LONDON**. Here's the first to

give it a run for its money: **Town Hall Hotel & Apartments** (www.townhallhotel.com; from £204) debuts at the end of this month in Bethnal Green, in a defunct 1930s civil building with a painstakingly restored neoclassical and Edwardian frontage, and interiors reconfigured to house 98 studios and apartments sparsely and tastefully furnished with original contemporary Scandinavian pieces. The jewel in Town Hall's crown promises to

be its restaurant, **Viajante**, which will feature local chef Nuno Mendes (who has been delighting intrepid foodies for the past year at The Loft, his private dining club on Kingsland Road) at the helm.

→ **MILAN**, too, has seen the gentrification of edgy neighbourhoods, such as Tortona, in part as a result of the annual **Salone Internazionale del Mobile** (April 14-19; www.cosmit.it). The iconoclastic designers who've popularised the Fair have a provocative new place to stay: **Maison Moschino** (www.hotelphilosophy.com; doubles from €484) is housed in an 1840s train station on the Viale Monte Grappa, with 65 rooms and suites designed in



Above: **Maison Moschino** in Milan is true to the aesthetic of fashion designer Franco Moschino.

firm keeping with fashion designer Franco Moschino's surrealist-absurdist aesthetic. Beds are upholstered in swathes of crinoline like extravagant ball gowns, and birch trees grow from floor to ceiling in fantastical canopies. Should a respite from the swell of Fair attendees prove necessary, an 18th-century villa on the shores of **LAKE COMO** has just become available to let.

Villa Giuseppina (www.sjvillas.co.uk; €3,570 per person per week, based on a group of 14) sits on the lake's western shore overlooking the town of Bellagio. Seven bedrooms, two large living rooms, a dedicated family floor and a discrete spa and sauna are all the work of the design team at Etro. There's also a Riva yacht and a host in the form of Silvano Giralдин, former maître d' and manager at Le Gavroche in London.

→ In **ISTANBUL**, meanwhile, a hotel with history to spare is making a conspicuous comeback. **Pera Palace** (www.pera-palace.com; from €250), built in 1892 as a (very luxe) way station for passengers on the *Orient-Express*, will reopen on the 30th of this month with its unique-to-Istanbul hybrid



Above: the seven-bedroom **Villa Giuseppina** on Lake Como. Below: the bar at **Town Hall Hotels & Apartments**, London.





Above: A Banyan Tree Cabo Marqués villa. Below: The Freedom, eco-cruiser barge Zambezi Queen cruises the Chobe in Botswana.

air for a couple of years now in **ACAPULCO**, which in your mother's day far surpassed both the Costa Careyes and the Riviera Maya for glamour (now climbing out of the louche decline into which it slid for the better part of the 1980s and 1990s). In a noteworthy vote of confidence, **Banyan Tree Cabo Marqués** (www.banyantree.com; from \$762) opened some two weeks ago just at the edge of town. The all-villa resort replicates the model that's served it so well on the Riviera Maya – namely, a pitch-perfect marriage of austere elegant Asian design and hospitality standards with the warmth and colour that typify Mexico.

→ Those for whom a destination's coolness quotient falls squarely under the "Couldn't Care Less" heading might prefer the American West with its perennially appealing assets of space, clean air and majestic nature. In **MONTANA**, all are exploited to the fullest at **The Ranch at Rock Creek** (www.theranchatrockcreek.com; from \$825 per person sharing, full board), which takes the US's "glamping" phenomenon to new-heights luxury.

Opt for the comforts of the lodge – complete with a full-service spa – or the tents (white-canvas pavilions with hardwood floors, fireplaces and vast four-poster beds). All guests can pursue archery, river rafting, fly fishing and trail riding on the 6,000 pristine acres surrounding the ranch.

→ Or exchange the wholesome heights of Big Sky plains for the exotic ones of northern **BOTSWANA** – viewed from the comfort of a fully appointed five-star barge. **The Zambezi Queen** (www.zambeziqueen.com; from £1,200 per person for a two-day itinerary, sharing) cruises the Chobe River along the banks of Chobe National Park. Expect a feel-good factor along with the luxury: solar panels provide all hot water and

some power; propellers and a water-jet drive propulsion system have been calibrated by The ZQ's owner, a former engineer, to do minimal damage to the riverbed; and the twice-daily game viewing excursions – whether from a speedboat or Land Cruiser – emphasise the conservation aspect. +

of art deco, art nouveau, neoclassical and Ottoman flourishes fully restored. It remains to be seen whether it can compete at the level of the Ciragan Palace or the Four Seasons Bosphorus, but its location in Beyoglu – an electric mix of boutiques, cafés and lounges still juxtaposed with the odd gritty kebab stand – is assuredly its calling card.

→ There has been "conspicuous comeback" in the



Above: The Loft at The Ranch at Rock Creek, Montana, is housed in a converted 19th-century barn.



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