

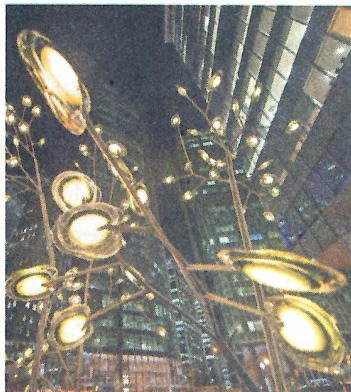
ON THE RADAR

SOUTH WOODCHESTER, ENGLAND

Van Morrison has played there, Sir Ranulph Fiennes has spoken there and now guests can spend the night at the Convent, a boutique hotel, performance venue and private members' club that has long been a hideaway for musicians and music fans. Formerly the home of a Poor Clares convent (resident nuns famously made communion wafers for more than 200 churches across England), the property is set on 22 acres in bucolic Gloucestershire. It's a central base from which to explore the Cotswolds, and you'll get the added bonus of having a farm-to-table restaurant, two bars and a live music venue on site. theconvent.net

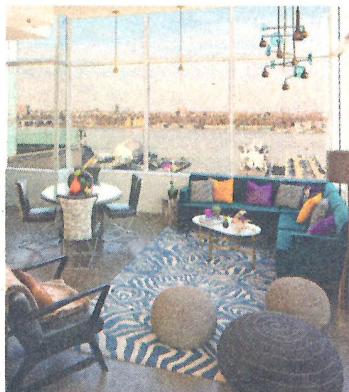


The Convent is a hotel, performance venue and private members' club.



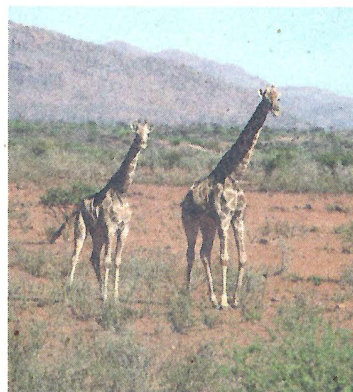
VANCOUVER

Local design collective Bocci is behind 16, a futuristic arboretum that has taken permanent residency at Fairmont Pacific Rim. Creative director Omer Arbel worked on the concept for almost a decade and now, measuring 30 metres long and nine metres tall, it's hard to miss. The abstract grove is comprised of stainless steel and layered, multi-hued glass. It's Bocci's largest public-art installation in Canada and follows on the heels of 57, a stunning stairwell light installation that recently made a splash at the reopening of Canada House in London's Trafalgar Square. fairmont.com/PacificRim



NEW YORK

Unobstructed Manhattan skyline views are a rarity, which is why Ink48's newly upgraded penthouse suite is one of the hottest rooms in the city. Dubbed the "Heaven Over Hell" suite (the hotel is in the heart of Hell's Kitchen), the uber-luxe two-storey bolthole boasts floor-to-ceiling windows, clear views over the Hudson River and a private, 205-square-metre terrace that can be set up for sunbathing, outdoor massages or starlit dinners. While it's designed for overnight stays – rates start at \$3,000 (U.S.) a night – it can also be rented out for private events. ink48.com



WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

H+I Adventures' mountain-biking safari is a decidedly unconventional way to explore the wilds of southern Africa. Pedalling through desert landscapes where giraffe, zebra and kudu are often seen grazing, riders get a rare opportunity to explore the country on two wheels. You'll have to be fit to conquer the terrain, but the rewards include an opportunity to cycle from the Skeleton Coast almost all the way to the Huab River (a popular watering hole for elephant and rhino) and a climb to the top of Big Daddy, one of the world's highest sand dunes. The 12-day trip includes accommodations, most meals, water and energy drinks, and the expert assistance of a guide/driver/bike mechanic. mountainbikeworldwide.com

Mercedeh Sanati,
Special to The Globe and Mail