

Hot 100

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Are you looking for the latest and greatest in food, drinks and destinations? You've come to the right place. Our team of intrepid travellers and taste-testers has done the hard yards for you. Welcome to the Hot 100.

EDITED BY HELEN ANDERSON & PAT NOURSE WORDS MAX ALLEN, MAX ANDERSON, LYDIA BELL, FIONA CAULFIELD, GUY DIMOND, FIONA DONNELLY, LARA DUNSTON, GEORGE EPAMINONDAS, MICHAEL HARDEN, KENDALL HILL, EMMA HUTTON, BRIAN JOHNSTON, ANNA LAVDARAS, JOSEPHINE McKENNA, SHANE MITCHELL, JENI PORTER, LAKSHA PRASAD, MAGGIE SCARDIFIELD, EMMA SLOLEY, OLIVER STRAND, SAMANTHA TEAGE, MAX VEENHUYZEN & RILEY WILSON

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DEV SHREE, RAJASTHAN

INSIDERS' RAJASTHAN

First-time visitors to India inevitably dash about the desert state of Rajasthan ticking off forts and palaces. Old India hands, meanwhile, know the value of slowing down, and luxury home-stays in out-of-the-way places are the way to go. There's nothing homey, however, about the new batch of family-run forts, hunting lodges and small palaces opening their gilded doors. Among them is Ramathra, a grand 17th-century fort about four hours' drive south-east of Jaipur (ramathrafort.com). Owners Gitanjali and Ravi Raj Pal have six rooms and suites for guests, some with balconies and outdoor tubs, and six luxury tents set in gardens within the ramparts. On the banks of a small lake between Jodhpur and Udaipur, Shatrunjai Singh Deogarh and his wife Bhavna Kumari have opened Dev Shree, a luxe haveli with eight exceptionally comfortable rooms set around courtyards (devshreedeogarh.com). English interior designer Richard Hanlon and his friend Trish McFarlane, a diamond dealer based in London, have opened Bujera Fort in a village on the outskirts of Udaipur (bujerafort.com). It's a magical mix of Rajput fort and English country home, and attracts splendidly interesting guests who dip into the pool and the massive library, and ease from afternoon tea to bridge, followed by G&Ts and lavish dinners in a pavilion overlooking a marble pool.

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LAID-BACK CHEZ ACHATZ *Chicago chef Grant Achatz has had a lot on his plate this northern winter: revamping his fine-dining restaurant Alinea and simultaneously opening a new casual diner. While dinner at Alinea can cost \$800 for two and span 22 courses, Roister will be a far more affordable affair. Expect dinner for two for \$70. Chicagoans are atwitter at the prospect.*

BEING SHELLFISH

"It sounds horrible," says chef Clayton Wells. "But it works." Mixing shellfish with cheese is often considered a bad idea, but this burrata injected with shellfish oil, plated with a purée of salted konbu and served at the bar at Automata was an instant hit with Sydney diners. "How we got here, I have no idea," Wells says, "but it probably won't leave the menu." 5 Kensington St, Chippendale, NSW, (02) 8277 8555, automata.com.au



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THROWBACK TOKYO

Slip off your street shoes on entering Hoshinoya Tokyo, the latest addition to Hoshino Resorts' modern ryokan concept. As at rural Japanese inns, the public spaces and 84 guestrooms are lined with fragrant grass tatami floor mats and you wouldn't want to scuff them. Architect Rie Azuma's design features traditional-style bamboo furniture, sliding shoji screens and futon bedding reimagined to occupy the upper floors of a high-rise tower in the central Otemachi district, close to the Imperial Palace Gardens. In the spa, private hot-spring baths have open roofs for stargazing on clear nights. 1-9-1, Otemachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, hoshinoyatokyo.com

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ADVOCATE FOR OZ

One of the most influential people in the Australian wine scene doesn't even live here. UK-based Eric Narioo runs leading wine merchant Les Caves de Pyrene, and was one of the first to discover and support Australia's new generation of natural winemakers, and feature them at the annual Real Wine Fair in London. He is co-owner of some of the city's best natural-focused wine bars, such as Terroirs – bars whose ethos permeates many of the places to have opened here in the past few years – and is a partner in Melbourne's great new wine bar Embla. With his Australian-born winemaker wife, Anna Martens, he also owns vineyards and a winery, *Vino di Anna*, on the slopes of Mount Etna, a natural wine haven that has become a pilgrimage site for aspiring young grape-treaders and somms. lescaves.co.uk