

Summer 2022



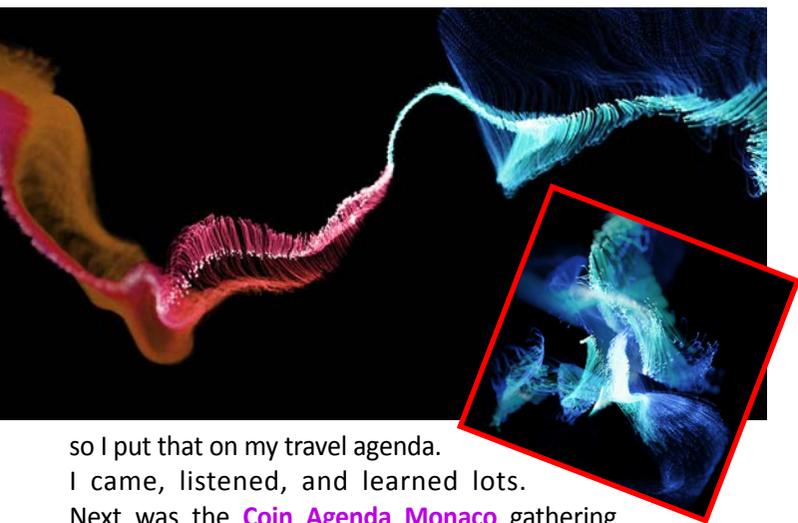
Hallelujah! Traveling is finally fun again!  
No more Covid tests and complicated entry forms to fill out.  
Just grab the good old passport and GO!

The world is once again our oyster.  
I like to travel the shoulder months, avoiding the big  
summer crowds.  
May and September are my months of choice for crossing  
the pond to Europe.

## MONTE CARLO Principality of Monaco

I always prefer to mix business with pleasure while traveling.  
Monaco was my initial port of call.

First were a few conferences followed by the F1. As a Baby  
Boomer, I'm putting extra effort into not being left behind  
in the new digital world. The first ever metaverse conference,  
**Meta Entertainment World Summit** was being held in Monaco,



so I put that on my travel agenda.  
I came, listened, and learned lots.  
Next was the **Coin Agenda Monaco** gathering  
where I stretched my brain muscles more, followed by the  
second annual **Monaco Streaming Festival**. I networked with  
all sorts of international digital and film folks including one of  
the Netflix founders. I've got my own show concept in  
development so stay tuned.



Finally, it was time to unplug and watch the **Monaco Grand Prix**. Forget talking while the F1 engines are roaring in the background. Sipping and smiling is more par for the course. I watched the race from the **Hotel de Paris** terrace with magnums of rose wine, then upgraded to jeroboams of Crystal champagne at an After Party.

Monaco F1 Villa Party video: <https://vimeo.com/741455091>



Formula 1 weekend kicks off with the annual **Amber Lounge** event where the drivers take to the runway for charity before hitting the track the next day. The weekend concludes, post-race on Monday, with an unofficial final booze bash at **Anjuna Beach Club** for those still in the party spirit.

**Hope Excellence Luxury Magazine Articles:**

**Metaverse:**

<https://www.excellencemagazine.luxury/business/metaverse-meets-monaco-for-the-meta-entertainment-world-summit/>

**Coin Agenda:** <https://www.excellencemagazine.luxury/business/fourth-annual-coinagenda-europe-coming-to-monaco-may-23-25/>

**Amber Lounge F1 Charity:**

<https://www.excellencemagazine.luxury/dolce-vita/lifestyle-en/amber-lounge-get-ready-for-a-mix-of-fun-fashion-fuel-formula-1/>



Miami has a car culture, but Monaco's got us beat with Batmobiles and glittery golden exotics as well as Rolls-Royces, Ferraris and Bugattis on the streets. The **Monte-Carlo Casino**, and **Hotel Hermitage** hotel always have some show-offs parked out front.

I took a few short-day trips from Monaco including an afternoon walking around **Beaulieu-sur-Mer** which literally means "beautiful place on the sea" and **Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat**, an exclusive alcove overlooking the Mediterranean Sea.



Back in Monaco, I checked out the **Monte-Carlo Country Club** with a member friend for lunch. Lastly, I was invited to the vernissage for the "Newton Riviera" provocative photo exhibition showcasing Helmut Newton's French Riviera images. It is on display til November in the beautiful **Villa Sauber** presented by the **Nouveau Musee National de Monaco**.



Before leaving Monaco, I took an afternoon up to **Roquebrune-Cap-Martin** to tour the new **Maybourne Riviera** hotel, spectacularly set on a cliff overlooking Monaco. This is probably one of the most impressive hotel sites I have ever seen. The unique property was acquired by the Qatari royal family and completely transformed into this shining star above the Principality of Monaco. Everything is custom designed organically to fit impeccably alongside and within Mother Nature. Starchitects, famous designers, renowned artists and Michelin chefs all came together to leave their magic mark on this masterpiece. Obviously, money was no object with an endless royal budget.



**Maybourne Riviera videos:**

**Official Video Tour:** <https://vimeo.com/741457653>

**Pool:** <https://vimeo.com/741456394>

**Ceto Bar:** <https://vimeo.com/741456072>

**Le 300 Bar:** <https://vimeo.com/741455187>

**Spa Love Package:** <https://vimeo.com/741456495>

**Bed & Bath with a View:** <https://vimeo.com/741456572>



## MALLORCA - Spain



I popped over to Mallorca for a magazine party following the F1 weekend. I was invited by my German friend, Volker, Publisher of **World Economist**. He was hosting the event at a beach club in **Palma de Mallorca**, Spain called **Anima**. Another German friend, Martina from Monaco joined me. We stayed at a hip new boutique hotel with a rooftop pool called **HM Palma Blanc**. Mallorca/Majorca is a popular German destination; thus, it was time spent with my homies here. It was a short and sweet weekend, but we managed to cram in all the necessary perks and places. From the beach club party to a tapas restaurant in the old town to brunch on the beach and a quick pitstop at the ritzy marina, **Puerto Portals**.



So yes, we proceeded to have a 3-hour lunch drenched with fine Italian wine. The best part was the price which barely put a dent in our credit cards. And even better was the spinning instructor we saw warming up on the dock below.



## CALA DEL FORTE, VENTIMIGLIA - Italy

Back in Monaco, I wanted to check out the Principality's new state-of-the-art marina called **Cala del Forte** in **Ventimiglia**, an Italian Riviera town just over the French border. My gal pals reserved a table at the new restaurant. They must have seen us coming as the bar was stocked to the brim.



Cala del Forte videos:

**Official Marina Tour:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zBb6O7LZmg>

**Sex and the City/Sex and Monaco:** <https://vimeo.com/741457605>

**Baia del Forte Bar:** <https://vimeo.com/741456767>

**Baia del Forte Welcome Swing:** <https://vimeo.com/741456855>

**Baia Del Forte Girls' Lunch:** <https://vimeo.com/741456913>



## MOUSTIERS-SAINT-MARIE - France



I've seen postcards of the pretty lavender fields in France and always wanted to visit them. June is when they are in full bloom, so I was in luck. I planned a girls' road trip. We headed towards the natural park of **Verdon (Parc Naturel Regional du Verdon)** listed by **UNESCO**. Our destination was **Moustiers-Saint Marie**, considered one of the most beautiful villages in France. It is a typical Provencal town sitting dramatically on a limestone ledge set below two cliffs and the side of scenic **Gorges du Verdon**. The Moustiers medieval church built in the 12th century has an impressive bell tower way up a hill. We took the walk up and were rewarded with a panoramic view and made our wishes with candles we lit inside the church with our offering. Pottery-making (fayence) is popular here with many shops and even a pottery museum. Besides a waterfall, there is also an **Alain Ducasse** Michelin restaurant. What more can you want within a tiny walled village?

We got lost several times enroute but were wowed when we arrived. We dropped our car and bags at **Hotel Belvedere** conveniently located within the historic village. Our room had a great view up to the church. After a nice lunch, with French friends, we took the '**Lavender Route**' across the **Valensole** plateau to see and smell the fields in full flower. We bought pot pourri lavender satchels and soap at a roadside stand. I'm sure my Victoria Secret drawer at home is happier for it.



This trip included an unexpected sightseeing surprise, **Gorges du Verdon** and **Lac de Sainte-Croix**. This is a river canyon about 15 miles long and 4 miles deep formed by the Verdon River, named for its surreal turquoise-green color. It is Europe's largest canyon and called the "**Grand Canyon of Europe**". It attracts hikers and climbers and white-water rafters. The Lac de Sainte-Croix is a leisure lake and reservoir created when the dam was built. It is a popular place to paddleboard, canoe, or kayak. We barely had time to dip our toes in this cool colored water before it was time to drive back to homebase in Monaco. This is a destination worth adding to your "To Visit" list.



We did take a quick pitstop along the way home, at **Domaine du Dragon** to stock up on rose wine. The owner personally greeted us with glasses of rose to taste. Who said, "Don't drink and drive with rose?" Wine not? Our trunk was fully loaded with several cases of the pink stuff ready and waiting for the next soiree.



**Moustiers-Saint-Marie videos:**

**Lavender fields:** <https://vimeo.com/741457225>

**Waterfall:** <https://vimeo.com/741457337>

**Vineyard:** <https://vimeo.com/741457464>

## EZE - France

I discovered a wonderful hidden gem along the Cote d'Azur positioned conveniently between Monaco and Nice called **Les Terrasses d'Eze**. It is an ideal oasis, to stopover for a few nights or a spa day. It is a great place to relax, unwind, unplug, and recuperate, especially after marquis events like the Monaco Grand Prix or Cannes Film Festival.



It sits high above the **Mediterranean Sea** offering spectacular panoramic views from **Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat** to **Villefranche-sur-Mer** and **Cap d'Antibes**. The hotel was cleverly designed like a tiered layer-cake so that each room has a sea view. The medieval village of Eze is just a stone's throw away. My timing was impeccable with the full moon over the Med while I was there.



My recommended routine at this 'recovery' location is to wake at sunrise, breathe in the fresh sea air, enjoy the buffet breakfast, meander to the pool for laps or lounging, followed by the self-service spa, then refresh and dine alfresco-style with fine French wines while watching the sunset. On day two, try venturing from this little oasis to nearby Eze to meander through the narrow passages shopping and taking selfies around each turn. Many local artisans sell their wares here. I bought some silver rings that were signed by the artists and a handbag made of cowhide sprinkled with silver paint. Art galleries are almost everywhere. I especially liked **La Gallery** showcasing funky fish paintings by a French artist. Also, try to snag a lunch reservation, at Michelin starred **Chevre d'Or** in Eze village. Eat, sleep, repeat...was my mantra for my two nights at Les Terrasses d'Eze.

**Les Terrasse d'Eze Walking Tour video:** <https://vimeo.com/741457014>

## BODRUM - Turkey Makakizi Hotel & Villa

Jetset spots, **St. Tropez**, **Ibiza**, **Mykonos**, and **Sardinia** - been there, done that, but never **Bodrum**. Bodrum is having its 15 minutes of fame nowadays with the scenesters. I beat the crowds, going in late June before the season officially started in July. I enjoyed 'Opening Parties' and roads without tons of traffic. This is the year to do Turkey! The currency is truly in foreigners' favor with about 18 Turkish lire to 1 dollar or euro.



I found my little slice of private paradise on the northern edge of the **Bodrum** peninsula overlooking the **Aegean Sea**. Just outside the tiny town of **Turkbuku** is a hip boutique hotel called **Macakizi** along with their private **Villa Makakizi** just a boat sprint away above "**Heaven's Bay**." Founded some 50 years ago by a Turkish mother and taken over by her son, Macakizi is still going strong. What started as a bohemian artist colony has transformed into a who's who jetset gathering spot. Ask any Turk what is "the best" hotel in Bodrum and the answer is always resoundingly, Macakizi of course!



The son, **Sahir** who runs the place now, invited me as his guest. Macakizi is my kind of place! The laid-back vibe, the chill music, the idyllic setting, the contemporary open-air design, the amazing amenities, gourmet Mediterranean cuisine, refreshing cocktails, the attentive, but not intrusive staff along with the cool owner and his General Manager, plus, the fabulous and famous guests, are the ingredients that make this a magical place.

Ofcourse, there is a huge hammam, as well as an outdoor spa treatment area plus an incredible sunbathing deck, the private Macakizi yacht, cool shops, gym, and pool. The newest addition is the glassed-in, multi-tiered indoor movie room overlooking the pool. It's perfect for watching F1 races, soccer matches or perhaps a romantic movie if you have the right companion in tow.



Macakizi is transitioning from a summer seasonal resort to a full-blown year-round destination to be enjoyed by the best of them. **Bill Gates** even hosted his last birthday party at Villa Macakizi.

The **Ace of Spades** is the Macakizi logo sprinkled creatively around the resort. It certainly deserves and "Ace" in my book. Bravo! Or 'Aferin' as they say in Turkish.

### Mackakizi Hotel videos:

Wall mural: <https://vimeo.com/741736649>

Hotel suites: <https://vimeo.com/741736485>

Lunch buffet: <https://vimeo.com/741736321>

Theater: <https://vimeo.com/745249964>

Water taxi: <https://vimeo.com/741736806>

### Villa Macakizi videos:

Private Beach Arrival: <https://vimeo.com/743774685/>

Heaven's Bay Welcome: <https://vimeo.com/743774826>

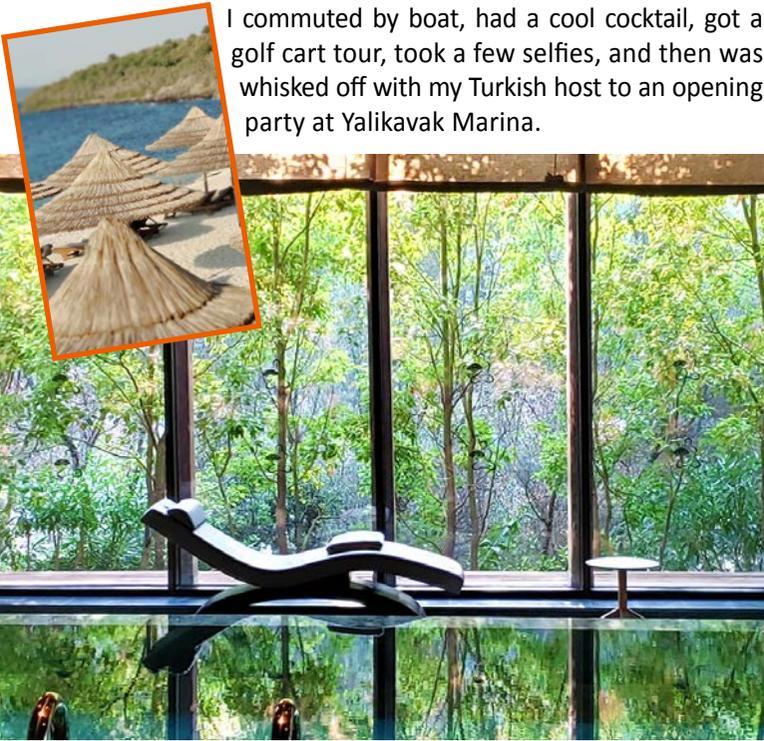
Terrace area: <https://vimeo.com/741739324>

Villa Wall art: <https://vimeo.com/741739529>

## Mandarin Oriental

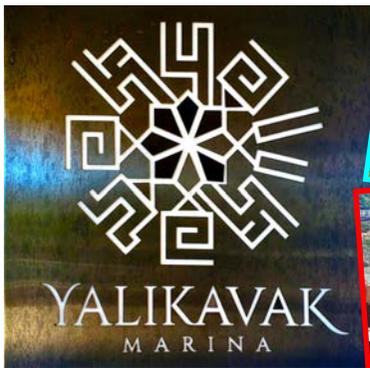
I took a tour of the nearby **Mandarin Oriental Resort** in Bodrum which is almost a mini city. It has its own beach club, a myriad of restaurants and shops, plus a panoramic view of the Aegean.

I commuted by boat, had a cool cocktail, got a golf cart tour, took a few selfies, and then was whisked off with my Turkish host to an opening party at Yalikavak Marina.



## Yalikavak Marina

I was wowed by **Yalikavak Marina!** And that's saying a lot, since I have seen some of the best of them around the world from **Monaco/Port Hercules** to **Capri/Marina Grande** to **Abu Dhabi/Yas** with 2 of the 3 hosting F1 races around their perimeters. Yalikavak is gated and guarded, but once inside is super welcoming loaded with shops, cafes, restaurants, and nightlife venues. It's cool and contemporary



with some of the best designer and sexy hospitality brands housed inside this exclusive marina. There's no need to have a superyacht to enjoy the atmosphere here. From sunrise to sunset, you will be entertained and amused. It will however, put a dent in your wallet with so many shops and places to wine and dine. But heck, remember it's currently about 18 Turkish lire to 1 dollar or euro so go for it!

Some of the sexy global restaurant brands are present like **Bagatelle**, **Zuma** and **Novikov**. Plus, endless others are here like Russian seafood restaurant **Sakhalin**, **Sait**, **Birds Restaurant & Club** with a cabaret show and Turkish **Nusr-Et** for meat lovers that includes the chef/owner's whacky tableside service. Fashion stores include a multitude of brands from **Gucci**, **Prada**, **Valentino**, **Dolce & Gabbana** to **Chopard**, **Hublot** and more. We hit the **Loro Piana** store opening party followed by a private dinner at Zuma at sunset.



## Bodrum Shopping

I headed to **Bodrum Central** for a discount designer shopping spree. They have a mini version of the Istanbul **Grand Bazaar** here. We walked into a designer shoe shop and walked out with several pairs. My shoe wardrobe now includes two new **Christian Dior's**: sneakers and thigh-high boots. Heck in Miami, the boots will look good with shorts since we no snow, right?

## Bodrum Beach Clubs

Being in Bodrum pre-season, the beach clubs were not 'happening' yet. Besides, once you are at Macakizi, you never want to leave! **Macakizi Beach Club** attracts the best of the best! **Mandarin Oriental Bodrum** overlooking **Paradise Bay** has the new **Lucca Beach** and **Living Room** run by our Miami nightlife impresario, **Eric Milon**, the creator of the original South Beach Living Room. Signature cocktails are de rigueur like Turkish fig margaritas and satsuma coolers created by award-winning mixologists. The **Edition Bodrum** rocks on Fridays with weekly beach parties and VIP cabanas. **Indigo Beach Club** in the **Lujo Hotel** and **Folie Restaurant & Sea** at the **Mett Hotel & Beach Resort** are a couple more to consider. International DJ's and saxophonists get the beach parties started here for the scenesters.



## ISTANBUL - Turkey

If you ever wanted to visit Istanbul, this is the year to do it. Did I already mention **18 Turkish lire to 1 dollar or euro**? Items sound expensive, but when you do the math, they are a pittance. I felt guilty haggling with vendors, but that's part of the fun.



This was my first time in Istanbul. The city was different than I expected but has colorful character. The sights, sounds and smells were mesmerizing. Several times a day, the mosques get filled and prayer chants are heard for miles. The streets are wall-to-wall packed with people at all hours creating a chaotic frenzy mirrored by the birds above going crazy in the sky. Street vendors are everywhere selling just about everything and anything. One guy even had a scale on the street for people to weigh themselves. Drinking tea is a national past-time. You see people idling on stools sipping their glass containers filled with Turkish tea and smoking lots of shisha from elaborate

silver pipes. Kabobs are the local snack along with gyros followed by sweet and sticky, baklava in all shapes and sizes. I bravely fought through the crowds one day in the **Taksim** shopping area ending up by the water where the birds seemed to be right out of the famous **Hitchcock** film, "**The Birds**." I hired a guide to take me to the **Grand Bazaar** and am glad I did. It is an overwhelming place.



Street scene: <https://vimeo.com/741735915>

Flutist: <https://vimeo.com/741735643>

Bird madness: <https://vimeo.com/741735211>



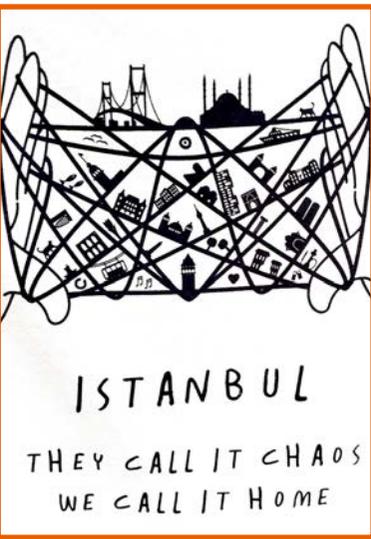
I also experienced the other end of the spectrum, where the wealth is in Istanbul. I was invited for lunch at the **Ciragan Palace Kempinski Hotel**. There was a buzz about the palace because one of the most prominent Turkish families, **Sabancı** was having a wedding there that evening. We leisurely dined waterside at the **Bosphorus Grill** watching the parade of boats going by all afternoon. The chef prepared special home-made mezze starter dishes followed by grilled octopus, complimented with tasty Turkish white wine.

Ciragan Palace drone video: <https://vimeo.com/745248520>



One night we treated ourselves to a fine dining experience at **Sunset Grill and Bar**. This is a glamorous spot on a hilltop with panoramic views overlooking the Bosphorus. Afterwards, we checked out the rooftop lounge at **Bebek Hotel**. Getting from place to place is a long journey, not in distance, but in time with wall-to-wall traffic everywhere at all hours.

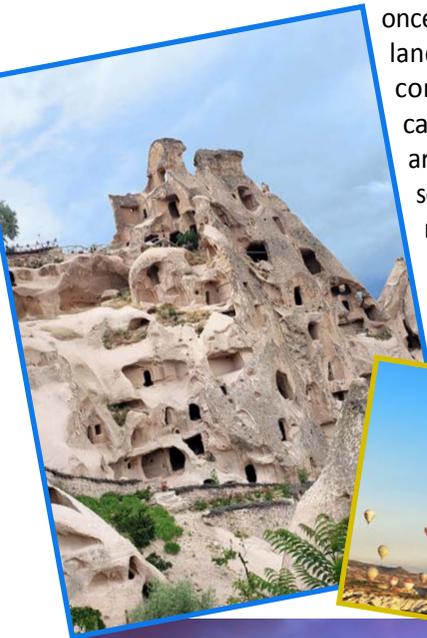
Sunset Grill and Bar video: <https://vimeo.com/741739251>



For me, Istanbul is a multi-sensory experience, but too darn packed. I have been to China three times to **Shanghai, Beijing** and **Guangzhou**, and lived in **NYC** for years, but **Istanbul, Turkey** takes the cake. Nowhere have I seen such nonstop chaos 24/7. As I left for the airport at 4am to catch my flight, it seemed like 8pm on the streets. The people were still out and about. What I did love about Istanbul was the kindness of all the people and the great service. The hospitality was tops, even beating out Switzerland. My next Turkish stop was in a more remote place called Cappadocia.

## CAPPADOCIA - Turkey

**Cappadocia** is hard to describe in words...it's not only a mystical, magical place, but a 'feeling', like being inside a real-life fairytale land. It should be on everyone's bucket list. The scenery is surreal, food sublime, and hot air ballooning a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The landscape is sprinkled with tall cone-shaped rock formations called "**fairy chimneys.**" There are **cave-dwellings** everywhere, some housing churches, but many now are converted into hotels. Staying in a cave hotel is a must! **UNESCO** even awarded **Cappadocia** as a **World Heritage Site**.



Three to four million years ago, erupting volcanoes formed these pointed structures across the landscape. There are also several underground cities. The area is known now as a wine-producing region offering flavorful varieties. Today, music festival producers have discovered the rock enclosed spaces are spectacular natural venues. Destinations weddings are also a dream come true here.

I arrived at my hotel, **Hanedan Cappadocia Suites**, a cave hotel in a sleepy town called **Mustafapasa**. I was wowed by the hotel setting carved into the rocks thousands of years old. I toured the grounds and then the suites, with some even having their own indoor pools carved into the caves. I absolutely loved my cave suite filled with so many antiques including an old dial-up phone. I had to sign my life away, swearing not to steal anything. My suite had a big modern tub, perfect for a bubble bath so I indulged. My stay at Hanedan Suites was so tranquil and peaceful, with only the sounds of the bees buzzing and the Muslim prayer chanting on cue during prayer times.

### Hanedan Cappadocia Suites videos:

**Official video:** <https://vimeo.com/745245661>

**Hope arrival:** <https://vimeo.com/745250058>

**Exterior tour:** <https://vimeo.com/743762299>

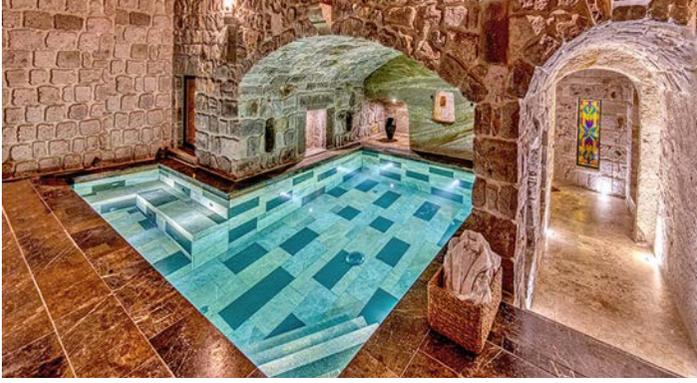
**Suite tour:** <https://vimeo.com/745243189>

**Prayer time:** <https://vimeo.com/743761466>

The week after I left Hanedan Cappadocia Suites, they hosted **Echoes from Agartha** music festival there. Not a bee buzz to be heard at Hanedan then...just young ravers reveling in the thousands of years old rock formations to the pulsating beats from DJ's on rock pedestals.

**Echoes from Agartha 1 video:** <https://vimeo.com/743762281>

**Echoes from Agartha 2 video:** <https://vimeo.com/743762256>



I ventured to the town of **Uchisar**. There I got a tour of **Museum Hotel**, a **Relais & Chateaux Luxury Cave Hotel**. It has one of the best viewing vantage points for watching the hot air balloons rising in the sky across this unique landscape. It's the world's first 'living museum concept hotel' with priceless antiquity everywhere. It has a regal atmosphere, and the suites are a bit posh. There is a beautiful tiled outdoor Roman pool and grand terrace. There I sat mesmerized by the view, while having a date dessert and Turkish tea with my new peacock friend showing off nearby. The hotel is a favorite among the local birds who also like to hang out here. I cannot blame them. Massage tables are in an open-air room framed with the view. The chef even offers Turkish cuisine cooking classes for those wanting to recreate his menus at home.

**Museum Hotel videos:**

**Museum Hotel Official video:** <https://vimeo.com/741738445>

**Drone video:** <https://vimeo.com/741736867>

**Pool & Garden:** <https://vimeo.com/743761799>

**Spa:** <https://vimeo.com/745249849>

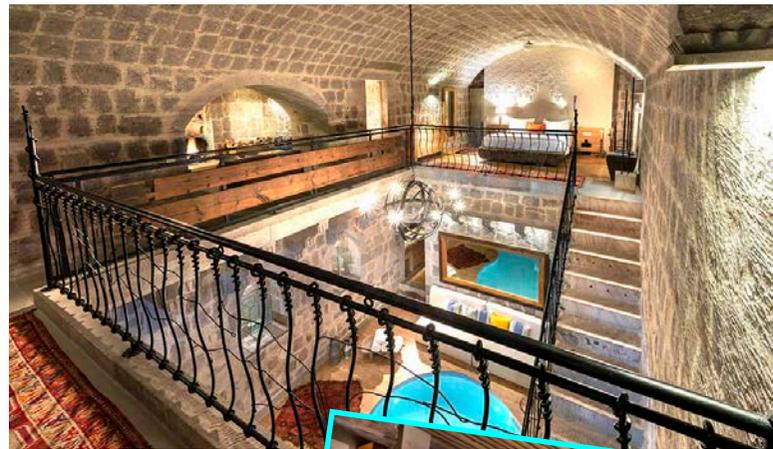
**Peacock:** <https://vimeo.com/745249728>

One day, I hope to return to Cappadocia for my very own destination wedding. The Museum Hotel has the most enchanting and unique outdoor wedding space imaginable on **Love Hill**, a hidden oasis, just above **Love Valley**. I will walk down 'the aisle' there to say, "I do". That is of course, after Mr. Right proposes to me in the candle lit **Cavo**, a romantic wine cave. Then, we can consummate the marriage in one of the honeymoon suites and live happily ever after. **Cappadocia is a land of fairytales** so a girl can dream, can't she?

**Museum Hotel wedding site on Love Hill video:**

<https://vimeo.com/741738775>

From Turkish teatime to dinner time, I was ready for my next tour at **Argos Hotel**, a village unto itself also in Uchisar. I strolled my way over, checking out the colorful rugs for sale along the street. My Argos tour guide, **Aslihan**, quickly became my new best friend in Cappadocia as we walked around. A cave "castle" sits on the property and even an entire underground city. They have a cave theater for movies and meeting presentations as well as an elaborate wine cellar with long tasting tables. I tried a white and gave it a thumbs up. Then we toured the guest rooms tucked inside the cave walls. The unofficial "**Hope Suite**" called the **Splendid Suite**" complete with a kidney-shaped pool is the one for me. Warning to management: "If I move in, I may not move out." We wrapped up the tour with dinner at **Seki Restaurant**, which ended up being



one of my absolute best meals in all of Turkey. Add Seki to your dining list when in Cappadocia. Prior to entering the restaurant, we passed through the **Seki Lounge**, a perfect place to chill and have a few cocktails with a view. The



restaurant has both indoor and outdoor seating on a huge terrace with views over **Pigeon Valley**. Seki is an award-winning restaurant with award-winning wines from their own vineyard and fresh produce from their organic garden. The chef masterfully presents the dishes like tasty works of art. Starters include choices like broccoli tartare with avocado, octopus carpaccio and Turkish beef pastrami served in parchment paper.



The main courses ranged from vegetarian to meat or fish. A couple of their specialties included beef cheek casserole and 'Testi Kab'bi' local pottery beef kabob. I could not resist a bottle of Argos white wine to accompany my gastronomic meal. The Cappadocia region boasts one of the few terroirs in the world where grapes grow healthier due to the volcanic soil. The flavors are derived from the winds that shape the fairy chimneys along the Kizihrmac River. After finishing dessert and the last drop of wine, I was ready for dreamland.

#### **Argos Hotel videos:**

**Wine Cellar:** <https://vimeo.com/743762748>

**Hope Suite 1:** <https://vimeo.com/743762722>

**Hope Suite 2:** <https://vimeo.com/743762695>

### **Hot Air Ballooning**

Argos private driver took me to my "home" at Hanedan Suites at the stroke of midnight. My alarm got set for 2am for my early morning wake-up call to check ballooning off on my bucket list. Hot air ballooning at sunrise, with a 3am pick-up after a night filled with bottles of Turkish wine, was not an easy task. My alarm went off at 2am and I was 'not' ready to go. The wine was still dancing around in my head. But go, I did.



I came back to my cave suite, crashed for a few hours, and then took a walk into the town of Mustafapasa. I bought a few souvenirs and called it a day. Hanedan Suites bid me farewell with a little goody bag, but the memories of Cappadocia will live on for a lifetime.

**Hot Air Ballooning video:** <https://vimeo.com/745250126>

### **Cappadocia For All Seasons**

Cappadocia is a place for all seasons. I cannot wait to return when it is a winter wonderland with all the fairy chimneys covered with snow. What a sight to see. I will be back!

**Cappadocia Winter Snow video:** <https://vimeo.com/741739107>

### **ZURICH - Switzerland**

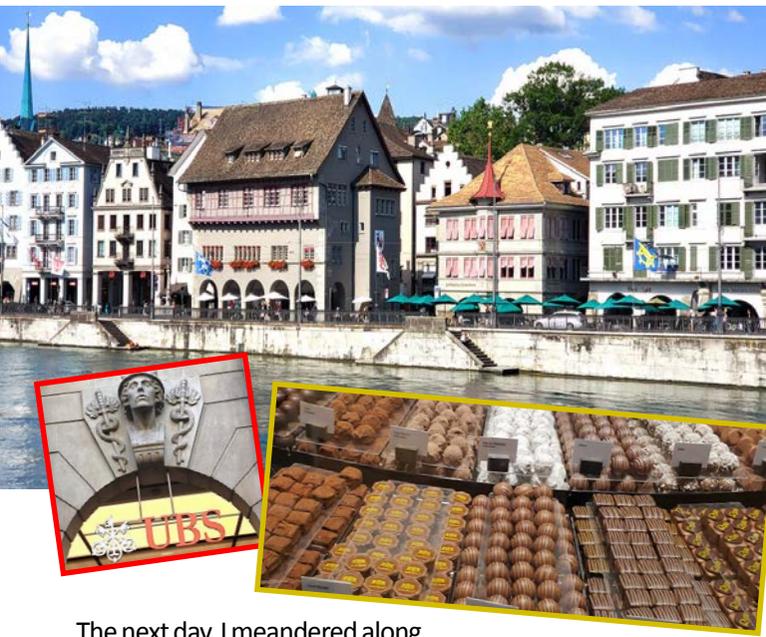
My final city tour on this whirlwind European trip was Zurich. It was my first time, so I arrived as a tourist. It's a very walkable city which makes sightseeing easy. You can literally go from one end to the other in almost no time. At a friend's suggestion, I split my stays between the lake and the "city". **Opera Hotel** was my landing point, just opposite the **Zurich Opera House** and a half block to the lakefront. I took long strolls along the lake and soaked up the sense of place.



We arrived at the ballooning site filled with fellow tourists. While I was getting ready to hop in the balloon, I discovered my phone had no more storage space. Panic set in as my balloon ascended into the sky. My balloon-mates offered to take photos for me. Luckily, I quickly cleared enough space to capture a few precious instagramable moments. Up up and away we went...



Locals were enjoying the warm weather, sunbathing, and taking dips into **Lake Zurich**. Musicians offered free pop-up performances on the grass. I passed the **Pavillon Le Corbusier** and saw many swans swimming. Tour boats are available for tourists, but I preferred to stay on foot. I bypassed the **Lindt** and **Sprungli** chocolate factory tours and I'm sure my waistline was glad I did.



The next day, I meandered along both sides of the **Limmat River** and into the **Old Town** and along the famous shopping street, **Bahnhofstrasse**. I saw the major sites like **St. Peter's Clock Tower**, the largest clock face in Europe, many elaborate water fountains with pure drinking water and lots of Swiss flags. What struck me most, was not all the watch and chocolate shops, but seeing **UBS** offices on almost every corner, like you might see a McDonalds in America. Zurich is truly the city of money and ranks as one of the most expensive in Europe. They even have a private money museum.

#### **Zurich videos:**

**Drinking Fountain:** <https://vimeo.com/743760087>

**Limatt River:** <https://vimeo.com/743761950>

In Zurich, what annoyed me the most, was how the bartenders do the wine pour...measuring by the ounce which barely provides a few sips for a lot of euros. After my first pathetic glass of white wine, I switched to a mango tequila cocktail at the **Bar Au Lac Terrace**, a popular watering hole at this swanky hotel built in 1844. I do not mind the Swiss being precise on the time, but not on my 'pour'.



I glimpsed inside **Kronenhalle**, a famous restaurant and bar where notables dine and hang out. I had dinner with my local Zurich based friend, Sonja at **Kaufleuten**. She insisted I order Zurcher Geschnetzeltes, the quintessential Zurich dish consisting of sliced veal strips covered with gravy and rosti potatoes. We shared a carafe of Swiss white wine to avoid the miniscule pours and served ourselves. Sonja also gave me a mini tour of her side of the lake with stops at **Fischer's Fritz**, a combo campground, and fresh restaurant with picnic tables lakeside and then **Seerose**, a bit sexier spot on the water.



After trailblazing both sides of the city, I headed up the hill to **The Dolder Grand Hotel**, truly a grand dame. It was built in 1899 as a place for relaxation and regeneration for the people of Zurich. Today, it is a combo of a fairytale-like castle with turrets and gables alongside a state-of-the-art **Norman Foster** designed wing full of modernity. Here the old meets the new head-on. The hotel is like an endless art gallery loaded with contemporary and whimsical statement pieces everywhere. The back-story of how the art got there is legend among the locals. And people say Miami is a sunny place for shady people... well Zurich seems to have more secrets.



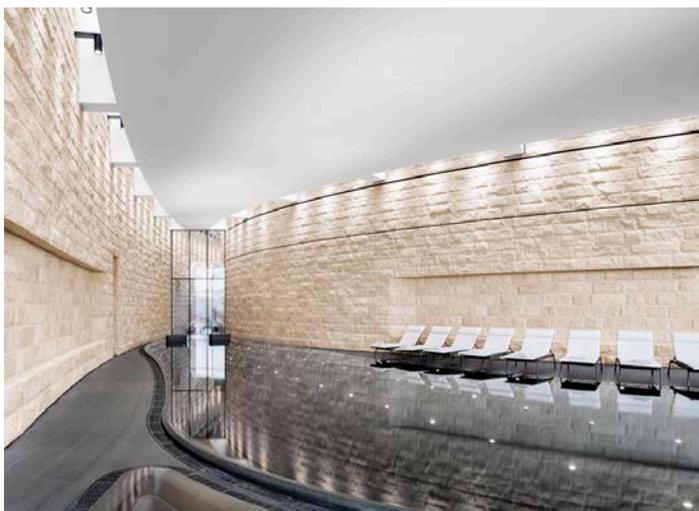
My dear friend, **Maria Elena**, who's Swiss husband is the visionary who brought Art Basel to Miami, joined me. The whimsical Saltz interior design mimics the Swiss alps with red neon lights and humorous art installations. It was the perfect artsy setting to reunite with my dear friend.



**The Dolder Grand videos:**

- Spa Pool: <https://vimeo.com/743760506>
- Spa Ice Paradise: <https://vimeo.com/743761181>
- Spa Meditation Room: <https://vimeo.com/743760237>
- Sculptures: <https://vimeo.com/745249574>

Now back to being "Princess for a day" at the **Dolder Grand Spa**. I got a tour of both the old and new wing and was dropped off at the spa for an afternoon of self-indulgence. This Norman Foster designed spa was awesome in every way, from the forever ceiling heights to the uniquely designed indoor pool to the outdoor panoramic terrace to the ice room, relaxation room, meditation room and outdoor hiking trail. I swam, relaxed, got chilled, showered, and then headed to dinner at **Saltz**, inside the hotel. I sprinkled some salt over my shoulder for good luck at the Saltz entrance art installation.



After discovering the more traditional and historic sides of Zurich, I was ready to experience the “New Zurich.” So I moved across town from the opera house to literally, the other side of the tracks to **25hours Hotel Zurich Langstrasse**. **Langstrasse** is known as the district that never sleeps. It was the home of Zurich’s Red-Light district, but now is the nightlife hub. Alongside Langstrasse headed towards the train station is **Europaallee**, a trendy new zone full of shops and restaurants for the newer generation.



**25hours Hotel Zurich Langstrasse videos:**

**25hours Langstrasse Room Tour:** <https://vimeo.com/743770703>

**25hours Langstrasse Trains 1:** <https://vimeo.com/743763035/>

**S25hours Langstrasse Trains 2:** <https://vimeo.com/743762900/>

**25hours Welcome:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pU072CQs6dg>

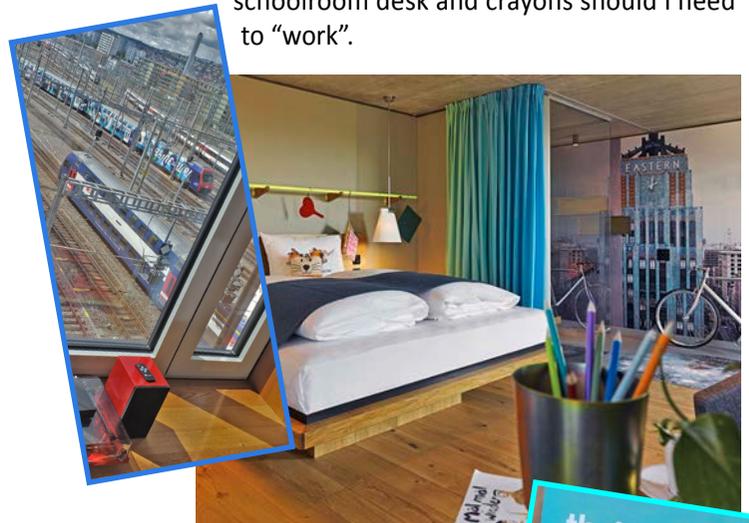
The 25hours hotel is perfectly positioned in this newly emerging neighborhood. It sits alongside the train tracks and Langstrasse. The staff here is hip and super friendly. The vibe is funky, kitschy, artsy, and fun. You really have to be alert to catch all the cool stuff on display. The bar has a tile porn wall plus signs saying, “I like it dirty” & “Drink More Champagne.” There’s a stairwell that says, “It’s fun without you” and an elevator that says, “I’m on my way to Cloud Nine”.



This 25hours hotel has an industrial feel to it. I was wowed when I walked into my corner room overlooking the train tracks. First, was a floor-to-ceiling glass shower right in the

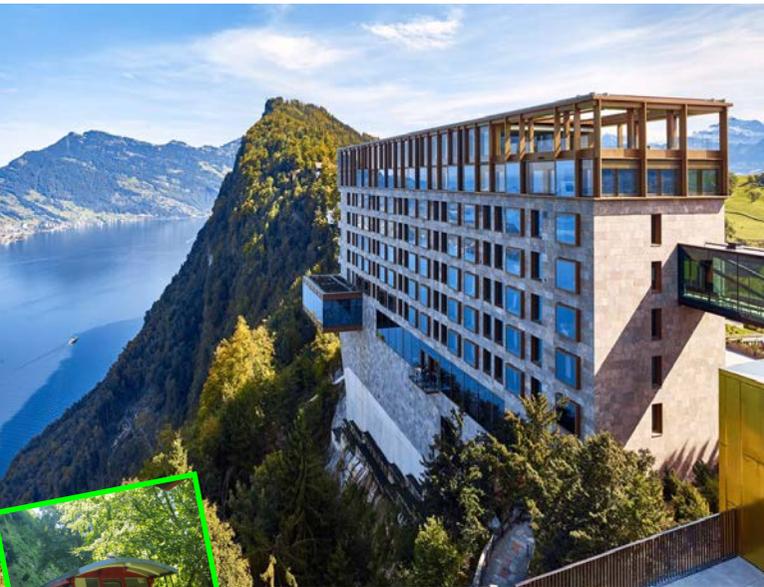


entranceway giving my neighbors across the street, a clear view if they were a voyeur. My bed was around the corner on an elevated level where my pillow greeted me with the phrase, “Let’s sleep together.” There was a 24/7 live ‘show’ outside my tall glass windows with the trains coming and going. But the rooms must be soundproof as I didn’t hear a peep. Oddly, watching the trains whiz by was relaxing and almost hypnotizing putting me into a trance for a deep sleep. My suite also happened to have a little red schoolroom desk and crayons should I need to “work”.



25hours is a concept hotel like no other. They are in off-the-beaten track locations in a variety of top European cities. Last time, I stayed at **25hours Museumsquartier Vienna**, near the museums. They offer affordable fun accommodations and even provide complimentary bikes and mini coopers upon demand. Plus, the mini bar is free with funky sodas, beer and chocolates. There is an amazing big buffet breakfast and eggs to order. Their hip hotel bars fill up with lively crowds at night. And their signature restaurants are always packed serving up a unique menu of good food. And the funniest hidden hotel items are their door tags with 25 tongue-in-cheek messages like, “Police crime scene, move on,” “Remember the movie hangover, this is worse,” “Please place an aspirin in front of the door and leave”. And the name is 25hours because sometimes 24 hours is just not enough...well said.





## LUCERNE - Switzerland

My last day, I decided to take a day trip to **Lucerne** to visit **Burgenstock Resort**. I was able to walk to the main train station, **Zurich Hauptbahnhof** (Zurich BH for short), which is the busiest train station in all of Europe with so many country connections. The trip was only about an hour by train. **Burgenstock Resort** arranged my boat and funicular transfer. The boat pick-up point was walking distance from the Lucerne station making for an easy transfer. **Lake Lucerne** is quite lovely providing for a very scenic commute with many instagramable moments to capture. The bright red funicular transported us to yet another world, that of Burgenstock, an amazing panoramic wellness center. We



snapped a few selfies on the observatory deck before heading to **Spices** for a memorable lunch high above Lake Lucerne. Our Asian-influenced flavorful meal ended with their signature 'surprise dessert' called "Above the Clouds". And what a surprise indeed! The delicious dessert dish arrived 'smoking' in a coconut shell filled with mango sorbet and was absolutely yummy. Afterwards, we took a walking tour of the hotel and amenities and were duly impressed. Next time, I want to spend quality time in Burgenstock's incredible infinity pool gazing out at the endless lake view far below. Ahhhh....to be continued! What a way to end my trip.



### Burgenstock Resort videos:

Boat: <https://vimeo.com/743762646>

Funicular: <https://vimeo.com/743762577>

Surprise Dessert: <https://vimeo.com/743762516>



## Magic Miami

I flew home on Swissair in time for our American July 4th holiday. Miami is always a great place to return to. It is a year-round paradise.

### Miami's Newest Hotspots

Miami has now however, become one of the most expensive cities in the world, probably toppling Zurich from its perch. But at least we get a better wine pour here in the Magic City. And we know how to truly party 24/7/365. **Gekko**, the brand-new Japanese steakhouse and lounge arrived onto the Miami scene with a star-studded grand opening party on August's full moon. **Sexy Fish** and **Dirty French Steakhouse** are just two of the other newest entries to Miami's dining scene. It's not everywhere where you have a topless mermaid in the bathroom. And **Michelin** has finally recognized Miami as a foodie town giving out their sacred stars to a few of our local chefs and their dining spots. **L'Atelier de Joel Robuchon** tops the list with 2 stars while ten got 1 star like **Le Jardinier**, **Cote Miami** and **Stubborn Seed** to name a few.



## Miami's Newest Condo Towers

Our Miami skyline is getting higher with even taller skyscrapers reaching new record heights. **Downtown** Miami's newest residential towers coming include **Waldorf Astoria**, **Baccarat**, **Aston Martin**, **Cipriani** and more. **Wynwood** will have **Nomad** while Midtown gets **The Standard**. And **South Beach** will have the tallest tower on the beach called **Five Park** while **Sunny Isles** is getting another car condo tower called **Bentley**. Contact me for details on these pre-construction developments. It is best to buy now and beat inflation.

There are a bunch of new buildings that are offering affordable, turnkey condos, coming fully furnished and allowing short term rentals. These are great choices for out-of-towners wanting a pied-a-terre in Miami, while earning rental income whenever not there themselves. **The Elser** is the only brand-new building ready now with furnished condos for owners to start earning rental income immediately. Elser's prices start in the \$600's. The others are in pre-construction stages with completion anticipated in several years. It is a good idea to buy now to be ready for the season. I am at your service to select your unit at The Elser, or any of the pre-construction projects or resales in Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and the Palm Beach areas.



**The Elser Brochure:** [www.ehopeinternational.com/ElserHotelandResidencesBrochure.pdf](http://www.ehopeinternational.com/ElserHotelandResidencesBrochure.pdf)

Before you know it, it will high season again in Miami. Hope to see my global tribe then, if not sooner!



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