

FINANCIAL TIMES

# travel unravelled

MAY 13 2017



**NATIONAL  
SUPPLEMENT  
OF THE YEAR**

*how to spend it travel edition*

# the aesthete

India Mahdavi's bold, colour-infused interiors can be seen at Claridge's and hotels, bars and restaurants around the world

**My personal style signifier** is a silk/cashmere scarf. Because I work with colour all day, I tend to wear toned-down outfits with just a splash of brightness. I have the scarves made in Nepal in strong, deep-dyed shades – they are part of my collection, sold at Eden Being. I wear lipstick too: Red Passion by Guerlain [pictured]. Scarves from £325; edenbeing.com. KissKiss Shaping Cream Lip Colour, £27.50; guerlain.com.

**An unforgettable place I've travelled to in the past year** is Japan; it was amazing. We went to Tokyo, Kyoto and Hakone, but what really stuck in my mind were the art islands of Naoshima and Teshima. The experience of seeing the work of artists from Lee Ufan to Yayoi Kusama to Hiroshi Sugimoto was breathtaking. I was most amazed by seeing all five of Monet's *Water Lilies* in one room at the Chichu Art Museum; Tadao Ando's architecture gave them another dimension.

**And the best souvenir I've brought home** is a keyring from Naoshima that's a miniature version of Yayoi Kusama's huge pumpkin [pictured]. I carry it with me all the time.

**Next on my travel bucket list** is Cuba. What I find interesting is that it's parked in time. It's also a colour paradise – and I just drink colours.

**A hotel bar that blows me away** is Bar Hemingway [pictured] at the Ritz Paris. It's small and intimate and always full of interesting characters that you end up talking to. The head bartender, Colin Peter Field, is such an artist; his drinks take you all over the world with their flavours and aromas. I remember one that tasted so fresh, I suddenly felt like I was in Bora Bora. 15 Place Vendôme, 75001 Paris (+331-4316 3374; ritzparis.com).

**The last thing I bought and loved** was a dark blue cape with a scalloped trim from Red Valentino. It's a bit military yet very feminine – a wonderful mix. £438; redvalentino.com.

**And the thing I'm eyeing next** is a jumpsuit from Connolly in London. It's like a revisited mechanic's outfit in a dark denim-coloured fabric – the type of thing you can accessorise to look really cool and wear anywhere. £310; connollyengland.com.

**A recent "find"** is a place I go to for lunch called Maisie Café; it's in Paris but feels like LA, without the jet-lag. The food is super-healthy – vegan and organic, just what I feel like eating at the moment. Another discovery is Habit Cactus, which makes Velcro accessories you can stick

**"Cuba is a colour paradise – and I just drink colours"**

patches onto. I have a clutch with patches of a fried egg, a sardine, clouds and a bird. It's great fun. Maisie Café, 32 Rue du Mont Thabor, 75001 Paris (+331-4039 9916; maisiecafe.com). habitcactus.com.

**My three carry-on essentials** are a drawing book, coloured pencils and a tape measure – when travelling I often sketch new pieces of furniture and plans and send them to my studio. I find drawing relaxing.

**The one artist whose work I would collect if I could** is Louise Bourgeois. I love the way she worked with textiles and created

imaginary themes. Her sculptures [Spider and Maman pictured] are simply amazing, although to own one you would need a large amount of space.

**An indulgence I would never forgo** is a yearly detox at Palace Merano [pictured], in northern Italy, where they use exclusive toxin-elimination methods, as well as techniques to reactivate energy channels. The food there is delicious and the view of the Dolomites very soothing. Espace Henri Chenot, Via Cavour 2, 39012 Merano (+3904-7327 1000; palace.it).

**My jet-lag cure** is to avoid eating on the plane and drink hot water. But if that fails I take melatonin, which works for me.



From top: *Spider and Maman* by Louise Bourgeois. Bar Hemingway at the Ritz Paris. Guerlain KissKiss Shaping Cream Lip Colour, £27.50. Yayoi Kusama's *Yellow Pumpkin* in Naoshima, Japan. Palace Merano hotel and spa in northern Italy



**My favourite websites and apps** are NYTimes.com for an international vision of the world, and Vivino.com, an app that tells you about a wine from a picture of the label. I use Polamatic.com to turn photos into postcards, and Zen-brush.com to send messages with drawings to my friends.

AS TOLD TO VICTORIA WOODCOCK

FOR MORE OF INDIA MAHDAVI'S PERSONAL TASTE, VISIT [HOWTOSPENDIT.COM](http://HOWTOSPENDIT.COM)