

Memos

AIRLINE AND TRAVEL INFO FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

Come for the Cod, Stay for the *Kokoro*

Luxury retail and restaurant brands are increasingly venturing into hotels and residences

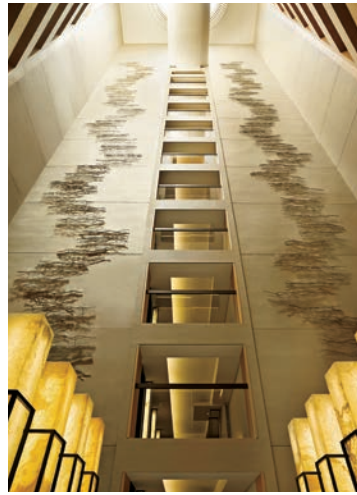
By Kyle Beechey

▶ **AT ONE POINT** you went to Bulgari to buy diamonds, Gucci for loafers and Restoration Hardware for an ottoman. But now you're as likely to shell out additional dollars for a stay in one of Restoration Hardware's guest suites or lunch at Gucci Osteria. Wanting to give the client more isn't new. Over the past decade,

the new way to bring the client "more" has been through hospitality.

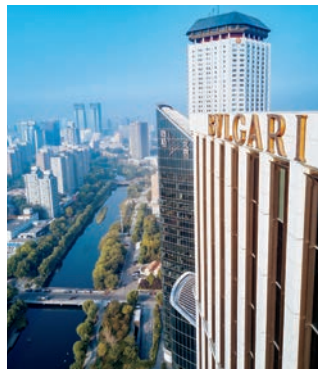
From diamonds to turn-down, there's no service quite like Bulgari's, and the brand was one of the first to explore hospitality. "We wanted to create a holistic experience for our clients. Hotels were the choice because of their complete-





ness,” says Bulgari group executive vice president Silvio Ursini. A Bulgari hotel doesn’t instantly scream diamonds, but it does feel like the pinnacle of sophisticated luxury that the brand is built upon. “Doing a hotel as a jeweler doesn’t mean we need to put gold on handles,” Ursini says. “It’s about the philosophy.”

Further proof is a brand like Nobu, already in restaurant hospitality and expanding with hotels and residences. As 30-year veterans of the restaurant industry, savvy founders chef Nobu Matsuhisa, Robert De Niro and Meir Teper wanted to dive deeper and transform the restaurant into an all-encompassing experience. “The goal was to bring the brand’s culture and service to the hotel sector and create a holistic 24/7 experience,” says Rachael Palumbo, VP of global hotel brand marketing for Nobu Hospitality. The brand has latched on to the central philosophy of *kokoro*—a somewhat untranslatable Japanese expression meaning heart, spirit or essence—to guide



CLOCKWISE
FROM TOP LEFT:
Gucci Osteria,
Florence, Italy;
The Upper House,
Hong Kong;
Bulgari Hotel Beijing

the way. “At Nobu the connection between emotions, feelings, spirit and soul is at our core,” she says. “Over the past 30 years, we’ve cultivated our loyal following through personalized service. It is about making our guests feel at home.” Nobu accomplishes this by creating an intimacy throughout that includes minimal Japanese design, serene lighting and tea upon arrival. There’s also a multitude of inclusive dining options, including cheeseburgers and Caesar salads, for those who crave something beyond the signature miso black cod.

As for the “why” behind this rapid turn, it could be the dominant spending in the luxury travel market. “Millennials are predicted to represent 80 percent of luxury purchases by 2030,” says Kristina Snaith-Lense, a veteran of the hotel industry and general manager of Hong Kong’s The Upper House. Millennial spending has gravitated toward experiences and they’re traveling more than boomers. Brands are appealing to this demographic.

BOOKS

***Billionaire, Nerd, Savior, King: Bill Gates and His Quest to Shape Our World* by Anupreeta Das**

(out 8/13)



• For her portrait of the Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist, Anupreeta Das interviewed employees of Microsoft and the Gates Foundation, plus academics and figures in the nonprofit space. And while she’s interested in his relationships with the likes of Warren Buffett and ex-wife Melinda French Gates, Das also takes a longer-lens look at billionaires in America—and the ways in which they control media narratives.

***The Bookshop: A History of the American Bookstore* by Evan Friss** (out 8/6)



• From Main Street mom-and-pop shops to e-commerce giants, bookselling in America is a microcosm of centuries of economic trends. Evan Friss mines letters, diaries, archives and interviews for this look at bookstores throughout American history, starting with Benjamin Franklin’s shop and continuing all the way to Amazon. Along the way, he slows down to zoom in on attention-grabbing marketing ploys and publicity stunts—such as the elephant who signed books at Marshall Field’s in Chicago during World War II.

—NICHOLAS DERENZO