



Capella Ubud, Bali; Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono



its classic finishes and palette and his true understanding of style.

**Bugbears** Insufficient robe space; I want a place to fully open my suitcase so I can keep clothing packed and then use as needed.

**What's next** A large private residence and a two-level duplex, both in Bangkok.

■ studiodaminato.com

#### STEWART ROBERTSON AND FELICITY BECK

**Co-founders and directors, Bar Studio, Melbourne**

**Past projects** Rosewood properties in Beijing, Phuket and Phnom Penh; The Westin Perth; Park Hyatt Sydney; renovation of Grand Hyatt Seoul.

**Favourites** Stewart: Of ours, probably Rosewood Beijing because it just works and is a great reflection of our studio's focus on creating residential comfort in high-end hotels. Trunk Hotel in Tokyo has a perfect set-up

for a family — a quirky set of bunk beds, great stereo and an outdoor balcony. Felicity: My most memorable stay was at Hanare in Tokyo, a tiny speck of a guesthouse that engages travellers at a personal, neighbourhood scale.

**Bugbears** A lack of soul and character; a space that does not leave a sensory memory. But also designs and in-room technology that aren't intuitive.

**What's next** The newly opened Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono, Japan. Upcoming projects in Australia, China and Japan and, in 2021, Ritz-Carlton Melbourne. We're also looking forward to seeing the realisation of our first collaboration in Europe.

■ barstudio.com

#### MARK BITHREY

**Founder and creative director, B3 Designers, London**

**Past projects** For 17 years we've worked on projects specialising in hospitality and recently won a platinum OPAL (Outstanding Property Award London) for our interior design of The Prince Akatoki London. Being challenged to bring Japanese design and hospitality ideals to the West End of London while meeting the modern traveller's aesthetic expectations allowed us to capture a sense of theatre and escapism in the hotel.

**Favourites** I am a big fan of The Hoxton hotels, and a favourite is The Hoxton Amsterdam. The group breaks the rules of what a typical guestroom should look like, makes bold statements of individualism, and creates spaces that make you feel you're having an "experience". I love designs incorporating existing older elements of buildings, such as original wall panelling behind beds.

**Bugbears** Complicated lighting fixtures, showers in the tub, bathrooms where you have to negotiate between the door, toilet, basin and shower. I get bothered about space to store luggage. I sometimes consider taking my own pillow as many hotels offer pretty but puffy pillows ... style over substance.

**What's next** A couple of luxury hotels that share common spaces at Frankfurt airport and a room redesign project in Europe for an Australia-based apartment hotels group.

■ b3designers.co.uk

#### MARC HERTRICH AND NICOLAS ADNET

**Co-founders, Studio Mhna, Paris and Shanghai**

**Past projects** Club Med Alpe D'Huez, French Alps; Club Med Rio Das Pedras, Brazil; Maison Astor, Paris; Movenpick Mansour Eddahbi, Marrakech.

**Favourites** We love boutique hotels; guestrooms should be secluded, spacious and inviting, like a cocoon, with discreet and friendly staff. This is true luxury.

**Bugbears** Faux luxurious materials, too-small bathrooms, lack of space and poor soundproofing.

**What's next** Two projects under way in Lausanne, Switzerland, and Nice, France, plus resorts in Mauritius and South Africa.

■ studio-mhna.com

and feature a separate living area and guest powder room; from \$750, twin-share.

■ fullertonhotels.com

**MORE FOR LESS** Crowne Plaza Melbourne on the Yarra River has a three-for-the-price-of-two offer for bookings by July 31. The hotel, which has undergone stage two of a multi-million-dollar refurbishment, has a new restaurant, Japanese-influenced Yugo. From \$183 a night, standard room; \$245, deluxe room; for travel to December 30. Meanwhile, Sydney's newly renovated Crowne Plaza Coogee Beach also has a three-for-two deal from \$218 a night on weekends, with breakfast and parking.

■ melbourne.crowneplaza.com  
■ coogeebeach.crowneplaza.com

**GO WEST** Roadtrippers heading way out west can stay at the quirky White Cliffs Underground Motel for one night for \$149 a room, twin-share, including continental breakfast, and get a second night at half price when the property reopens on July 1. The

town of White Cliffs, population fewer than 200, is in the opal mining fields 250km northeast of Broken Hill.

■ undergroundmotel.com.au

**THREE OF A KIND** Vivere Retreat, in Neerim South, West Gippsland, is inviting guests for two-night winter getaways in its three self-contained accommodation options, which look towards Victoria's Baw Baw Ranges. Included in the offer are a bottle of red wine, plenty of firewood and noon checkout. From \$650 for one bedroom; \$850 for two bedrooms; for travel by August 31.

■ vivereretreat.com.au

**ICE-OLATION** Tour operator Alpine Nature Experience is bringing back its overnight igloo experience, which involves a sunset snowshoe tour, cheese fondue dinner and a night in a heated igloo tent. Guests wake up the next day for a hot breakfast and skidoo ride back to base at Mount Hotham. From \$578 for two; June 25 to September 12.

■ alpinenatureexperience.com.au

## FAB FOUR

## UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES

Culture and innovation thrive in these Victorian hubs

LINDY ALEXANDER



### MELBOURNE — CITY OF LITERATURE

As the first UNESCO Creative City in Australia, Melbourne certainly lives up to its bookish reputation. A vibrant and diverse literary culture threads its way through all facets of city life, from institutions such as the State Library of Victoria (pictured), Australia's oldest public library, which attracts nearly 2 million visits annually, to popular events such as the Emerging Writers Festival and the Melbourne Writers Festival. Mel-

burnians are avid readers; they consume more magazines, newspapers and books per capita than any other Australian city. While Cole's Book Arcade (one of the world's largest bookshops in the early 20th century) is no longer, the city brims with other options. Readings is the locals' favourite, particularly for its specialty children's and young adult offerings, while collectors head to Kay Craddock Antiquarian Booksellers in the CBD.

■ cityofliterature.com.au

### BENDIGO — CITY OF GASTRONOMY

If you're going to travel to the heart of Victoria, it's best to bring your appetite. Bendigo is at the centre of a region, from the Macedon Ranges in the south and the Murray River in the north, that has been designated Australia's first City of Gastronomy. The area is home to more than 130 wineries and breweries, including Shedshaker Brewery and Taproom in Castlemaine, award-winning restaurants such as Masons of Bendigo (pictured), and charming country bakehouses like Blumes' Historic Bakery in Harcourt, where owner and baker Jodie Pillinger turns out perfect loaves from a wood-fired Scotch oven that's been in use for about 145 years. The City of Gastronomy covers the lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung, and there are plans to partner with traditional owners to restore in-



digenous food and fibre plants as a way to connect with the cultural and culinary heritage of the region.

■ bendigogastronomy.com.au



### GEELONG — CITY OF DESIGN

This waterfront city has a long history of design and innovation. Victoria's second-biggest metropolis was the birthplace of modern refrigeration in the 1850s, the Ford ute in the

early 1930s and Australia's decimal currency coins, which were designed by a local goldsmith and jeweller. These days, it only takes a walk through the city's heritage precinct to see how Geelong has embraced its historic civic and industrial buildings as well as its contemporary additions. The Geelong Library and Heritage Centre (pictured) is one of the city's most striking examples of modern architecture, with its soaring geodesic dome and stalactite-like glass entrance. Prior to COVID-19, free tours of The Dome were available at 11am each day. Smart design can also be seen on a smaller scale. The Malop Street Green Spine project is a new plant-flanked pedestrian and bike-friendly zone.

■ geelongcityofdesign.com.au

### BALLARAT — CITY OF CRAFTS AND FOLK ART

Ninety minutes' drive northwest of Melbourne, Ballarat has an abundance of artists and creatives who use their paintings, sculptures, tapestries, photographs and performances to tell local stories. The city is a colourful canvas, from the North Garden Indigenous Sculpture Park on the edge of Lake Wendouree and the central Sturt Street Gardens with its life-sized artwork of Ballarat-born humanitarian George Treloar, to provocative street art. Hopefully on the post-COVID comeback are a host of exhibitions, open studios and classes where visitors can meet the makers and acquire new skills. Past offerings have included art and empathy tours at the Art Gallery of Ballarat (pic-



tured), exhibitions exploring the legacy of the gold rush, live music performances, classes on handmaking paints using natural mineral pigments and learning how to weave Wadawurrung necklaces with the traditional owners of the region.

■ creativeballarat.com.au/art-of-making