

# news + views

**J.K. PLACE  
CAPRI**  
The luxury  
hotel has  
picturesque  
views of the  
island's port.



## LA DOLCE VITA: ITALY

A couple shares highlights from their tailor-made trip.

**M**y husband and I had always wanted to spend a month immersing ourselves in Italy's culture, food, and natural beauty. On DEPARTURES' recommendation, we contacted Bespoke Italy, a unit of Bellini Travel, which also handles events and under-the-radar property rentals. During our four-week tour we explored places we couldn't have found on our own and met people who showed us what la dolce vita is all about! In Rome, we sat outside at the Hotel de Russie's courtyard garden restaurant, and the Dal Bolognese was a great traditional eatery. For atmosphere, nothing beats Vecchia Roma, set in a lovely square in the old Jewish ghetto.

In Capri, J.K. Place Capri overlooking the harbor remains the place to stay. We started the day with the hotel's tonic of lemon, ginger, and water, and celebrated the evening with its grand finale dessert: a "smoking" Vesuvio baba au rhum. Shopping in Italy is the ultimate experience, and we found the best buys on this island in the Bay



**OREADE RISTORANTE**  
Chocolate cake with mascarpone and cumin at Monteverdi Tuscany



**IL RISTORANTE**  
At the Bulgari Hotel Milano

of Naples: Colori di Capri offers belts, T-shirts, and button-downs in delightful colors. For exclusively Italian ready-to-wear, we discovered Ermanno Scervino and Farella. And for the finest Caprese jewelry and accessories, it's Grazia & Marica Vozza.

In Tuscany, the Hotel Il Pellicano's Michelin-starred chef, Sebastiano Lombardi, serves best-in-class cuisine. For special fun, we toured the sculptures of Niki de Saint Phalle's Tarot Garden. We spent a glorious night at Monteverdi Tuscany, an eco-chic boutique hotel in a 900-year-old hilltop village in the Val d'Orcia region. Its Oreade Ristorante is a special pleasure. Nearby: The Cecil Pinsent-designed Gardens of La Foce were not to be missed. In Rapallo, we devoured spaghetti *alle vongole* at the Lord Byron Restaurant in the Excelsior Palace Hotel. A true treasure trove was Gioielleria Ventura, a third-generation purveyor of rare Moro coral and other natural gems.

No trip to Italy is complete without a visit to Milan. At the Bulgari Hotel Milano, we dined at the stunning, high-gloss bar, then repaired to the restaurant to sample chef Roberto Di Pinto's reinterpretations of Italian traditions. We couldn't resist Luisa Beccaria, the Milanese concept go-to store for Milan's best-dressed women. It was all so incredible!

—Janine Gordon

NEW YORK, MEMBER SINCE 1976



The Menil Drawing Institute's gallery space in Houston

## HOUSTON'S ART WORLD EXPANDS

What to see amid the city's growing culture scene

**W**ith Houston's robust endowments and acres of green space, art appreciation has become a fervent pursuit in the metropolis. "The city has a strong history of collaboration," says Alison de Lima Greene, a curator of modern and contemporary art at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFAH). Together with the Menil Collection and Rice University's Moody Center for the Arts (MCA), the institution is part of an energetic trifecta of art initiatives in the city.

Southwest of downtown and adjacent to the Montrose neighborhood is a dynamic museum district, which includes the Rice Gallery, where Sol LeWitt's seminal installation *Glossy and Flat Black Squares*, a work originally created for the space in 1997, is on view until May 14. The gallery will move this fall to the university's new MCA, a \$30 million

glass-and-gray-brick-clad complex a mile away. Designed by Los Angeles–based Michael Maltzan Architecture, the MCA was conceived in the hope of fostering a cross-disciplinary approach to art through engagement with the university's constellation of schools, including engineering, science, music, and architecture. The building features project studios, a 150-seat theater, galleries, flexible teaching spaces, classrooms, and a café. Inaugural exhibitions include works by Thomas Struth, Diana Thater, teamLab, and Olafur Eliasson. The first artist in residence was Beirut-born Palestinian Mona Hatoum, who returns in October to exhibit work at the Menil Collection.

The Menil Drawings Institute—a state-of-the-art facility to store, archive, conserve, and exhibit drawings—will inaugurate its new building on October 7 with "The Condition of Being Here: Drawings by Jasper Johns." A catalogue raisonné

accompanies the retrospective, spanning the 86-year-old artist's prolific output of drawings in graphite, ink, charcoal, watercolor, gouache, and oil stick. Sharon Johnston and Mark Lee, also Los Angeles architects, designed the 30,000-square-foot pavilion, which will incorporate landscaping by New York–based Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates to help mask intense sunlight.

These venues will continue to expand with the transformation of the MFAH's own 14-acre campus, which will add three new buildings in the next two years: the Glassell School of Art (2018) and the Nancy and Rich Kinder Building (2019), both designed by New York architect Stephen Holl; an art conservation center by Texas natives Lake/Flato Architects is also scheduled to debut in 2019. In the interim, be sure not to miss Aussie Ron Mueck's sculptures on view at the MFAH (through August 13). —*Melissa Feldman*

### UPDATE

## RUBEN ALTERIO COMES TO THE HAMPTONS



**F**or 21 years the Argentinian painter Ruben Alterio, who is based in Paris and whom we profiled in our March/April issue ("In the Painter's Studio"), has been waiting to work alongside his friend Therese Mahar, whose T Gallery in Southampton opened May 10. "Ever since we met in Paris I have been affected by the exactness of her eye and her sensibility regarding my work," Alterio says. The show, entitled "21 Crowns," will be his first in North America. *July 1–August 10; tgallery.com.*

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