



CASA DEL MAR Santa Monica, Los Angeles

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The Presidential Suite

WRAP IT UP

Destination prints feature in this range of silk scarfs, a collab between Qantas and label Bird & Knoll. The spontaneous shots make for beautiful and artful last-minute throws. Our favourite? Bondi Icebergs, of course. \$132 each, gantasshop.com.au; birdandknoll.com.

St. Peter's Square, Vatican City, Rome Sitting in absolute prime position on Santa Monica beach, with expansive views over the Pacific Ocean, Casa del Mar reeks of old-school glamour. If you're not into the new design-obsessed, minimalist Hollywood, this is where to head to ease into some good old Los Angeles style and superb service. The vibe is 1920s California beach club — it's all very Gatsby. The lobby is truly impressive, with a curving double staircase, soaring ornate ceilings, original mosaics and copper sconces sitting on mahogany pillars.

Casa del Mar is the perfect stopover spot, just 20 minutes from LAX — and in LA, that's practically next door. The hotel opened in 1926 but a thorough refurb in 2008 has meant the rooms are all luxe and modern, with oversized quilted beds that may make it hard to get up and explore the laidback neighbourhood surrounding you. Do anything you can to secure a seaside room for your own in-room sunset experience.

When we stayed here, transiting through LA after shooting in Mexico, the crew needed some time out before continuing home. An afternoon spent alternating between the rooftop pool and the sun-dappled Terrazza Lounge, a glamorous conservatory filled with delicate indoor plants and with breathtaking Pacific views (and great mojitos), eased our return to Australia.

hotelcasadelmar.com.

## DREAMING OF ITALY

When travel photographer Aline Coquelle and well-connected aristo Gelasio Gaetani d'Aragona Lovatelli decided to collaborate on a visual book tracking Italy's finest wine and the people who lovingly produce it, it was meant to be a celebration of Italian style. And they've succeeded in creating that. Revel in this beautiful journey. The Italian Dream: Wine, Heritage, Soul (Assouline), \$110, assouline.com.

Luxury concierge Melissa Martin

shares her three must-dos in the Eternal City

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PRIVATE-DRIVER PICK-UP: One must-do in Rome is to hire a private driver in a luxury chauffeured car to collect you after a long-haul flight so you can get straight to the hotel.

PRIVATE VATICAN TOUR: A sunrise excursion with your own private tour of the Vatican Museums, Sistine Chapel and St Peter's Basilica before the crowds descend is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. VISIT TIVOLI: About 40 minutes from Rome is Villa Adriana, a UNESCO World Heritage Site built by emperor Hadrian in the second century, AD — one of the world's purest examples of classical architecture. Also close by in Lazio are natural hot springs and a cluster of truly chic converted castles, if you feel the sudden urge to stay. italianalluretravel.com.

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