

Condé Nast Traveller



APRIL 2018 £4.40

European round-up

THE EDITORS' LIST 2018

OUR FAVOURITE AFFORDABLE NEW HOTELS

*From only
£80 a night*

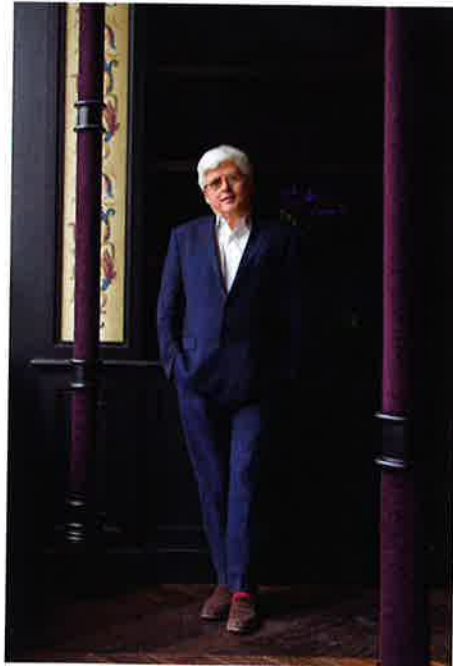
**AUSTRALIA'S
FOODIEST CITY**

**EPIC TREKKING
ON THE
HIMALAYAN
PLATEAU**

**THE FRESHEST BEACH
HIDEAWAY IN MALIBU**

**UNDER THE RADAR
CARIBBEAN**





DRAMA KING

DESIGN MAESTRO JACQUES GARCIA'S HOTEL COSTES HAS BEEN PARIS'S MOST DECADENT ADDRESS FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS. NOW HE'S TRYING TO PULL OFF THE SAME TRICK IN LONDON WITH A BLOOMSBURY SHOW-STOPPER

'I've got a passion for Oscar Wilde,' says Jacques Garcia, sitting in what will be the lobby of the L'oscar. 'To us French, he is a reflection of what the Victorian era was about – having a classical rigour while embodying the craziness and debauchery.' Garcia is a master of mixing a reverence for the historical with a theatrical bohemian opulence. His Hôtel Costes loosened up the haughty Parisian hotel scene when it opened in 1995; and it's still a red-velvet favourite. Since then Garcia has, among many other things, renovated the Palace of Versailles, revived La Mamounia in Marrakech and designed houses for the Sultan of Brunei. Earlier this year he debuted his Italy-meets-Old Hollywood vision for NoMad Los Angeles. 'But in London I wanted it to be profoundly English,' says Garcia. 'When I was a teenager, I'd come to England to see the big castles, because you kept everything. In France, the beautiful houses were emptied during the Revolution. So that traditional English style, I know: the colours, the fabrics...' Set in a former Baptist church HQ, the L'oscar, however, is Britain gilded through a French romantic's lens: peacock feathers fan across silk screens, halls are deep purples. There are Lalique butterfly taps in bathrooms, an onyx bar that glows from the inside and a chandelier that funnels seven floors down through the original staircase, lit by hundreds of glass birds. The building has the most beautiful bones, including a soaring octagonal chapel, soon to be the restaurant. 'I fell in love with the 19th-century architecture straight away,' says Garcia. 'And within minutes I knew how it would look, how to make this marvellous base sublime.' He believes L'oscar is London's Costes moment: small, sexy, scene-shaking. He might just be right. FIONA KERR *L'oscar opens this spring. loscar.com*