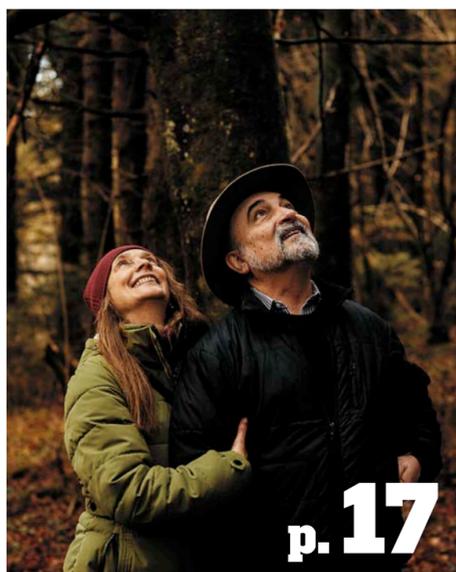


Companion 15



p. 17

Into the Wood

Mindfulness in Japanese: in the woods around Munich, together with Emma Wisser and Carlos Ponte, we practice 'shinrin-yoku' — that means bathing in the forest!



p. 16

Let's Eat Sunshine

Haya Molcho and her sons, the family behind eatery empire NENI, make us hungry for Tel Aviv's sun-drenched stories — with a recipe for a green shakshuka.



p. 22

Asking for Help

Kevin Braddock gathered all his strength to ask for help during a severe depressive episode. With his project 'Torchlight', he now encourages others to do the same.



p. 14

The Scent of Well-Being

Berlin's cult molecule perfumer Geza Schön opens the doors to his fragrance lab for us, while sharing his take on the power of scent in the wellness industry and beyond.

HAPPY VIENNA



Once again, Vienna has been named the most liveable city in the world. And that's not only thanks to the Austrian capital's horse-drawn carriages and Sachertorte chocolate gateau — Vienna's social-housing policy has made a demonstrable contribution to increasing resident satisfaction too. That's what we learn on a walk with architect and photographer Zara Pfeifer, who showed us the architectural pearls of her adopted hometown. Shops, museums, and Viennese café culture included.

p. 9



THE GREAT ESCAPISM

↳ [Activity Map, p. 24](#)



Good Night Sleep Tight

Getting a good night's rest has finally become cool, and so has a whole lifestyle movement surrounding it. For our sleep special, we met Jessica Hoyer from Hamburg, who made a beauty line that helps you fall asleep. And we talked to Lanserhof Medical Spa's Jan Stritzke, who knows all about the current state of dozing.

↳ [Special, p. 26](#)

25hours Things

25hours Hotels love all kinds of things. Special and unique things, cool and timeless ones. A selection of our favourites can now be found in the new online shop 25hours Things.

↳ [Products, p. 13](#)

Staying Sober

Alcohol-free drinking has recently gained traction in gastronomy, and has even arrived at the world of fine dining, in the form of innovative yet innocent drink pairings.

↳ [Cosmos, p. 4](#)

Night Fever

DJ Nicky Siano and photographer Bill Bernstein, who were trailblazers of the legendary Studio 54, took us back to an era of glitz, glamour, and hedonism.

↳ [Music & Playlist, p. 8](#)

Talking Wellness

For issue 15, our columnist Nina Kunz talks about the current omnipresence of wellness with a healthy dose of Swiss humour. Her conclusion? Bah humbug!

↳ [Column, p. 30](#)

Photographed by Bryan Adams

WINDSOR.DE

windsor.

Editor's Note

Voilà — the new COMPANION is here! For our 15th edition, we thought it was finally time to take a deep breath, relax, and put our feet up for a moment. Consciously taking time for oneself is becoming more and more important in the ever-faster hamster wheel of everyday life. It's little wonder, then, that the topics of wellness and health in our always 'on' society are on everyone's lips. To this we dedicate our 15th issue.

It was only after having put together our topics that we noticed that many of our protagonists have something in common when it comes to mindfulness: on the search for a small or large escape from life in the fast lane, they have ventured out into a new beginning and sought out fresh energy, all in their own way. Take Hamburg entrepreneur Jessica Hoyer, who, between long-haul flights, jet lag, and meetings, suffered from insomnia during her stressful career, until she decided that things could no longer go on this way — and developed a skin-care line that actively promotes falling asleep. Then there is the serious story of journalist Kevin Braddock, who finally asked for help during a major depressive phase and today wants to support others who struggle with mental health with his magazine and project Torchlight. In addition, we met partners Carlos Ponte and Emma Wisser, who took us on a so-called forest-bathing tour in the Munich hinterland, where, between needles, branches, and moss, they discovered a conscious way to live.

However, personal well-being is about more than just individual lifestyles. This is well known to Zara Pfeifer, whose home city of Vienna regularly lands at number one on the list of most liveable cities in the world — to which its architecture and housing policy contributes its part. In the District Tour of this issue, the architect and photographer guides us around her city, taking us on a tour through the architectural history of Vienna.

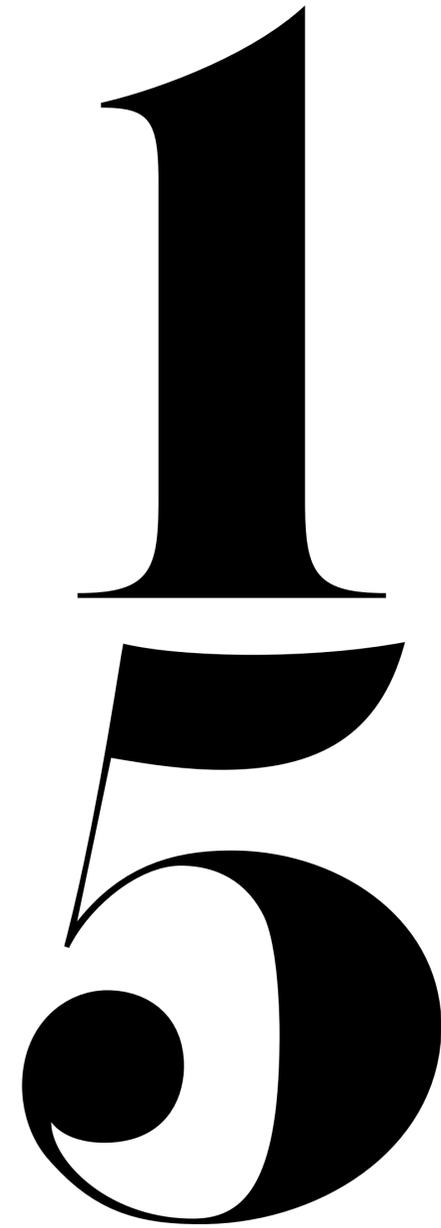
What else counts as well-being? Food, of course!

A spa retreat for the stomach awaits in the form of Tel Aviv and the Mediterranean coast's sun-kissed cuisine, with which Haya Molcho and her sons from the gastro empire NENI regularly pamper their guests in their restaurants. Wellness can also be understood in a more classy way. For instance, get out of the city and chill for a day! Whether in a sauna, nature, or an art experience — we have compiled a list of relaxing and inspiring spots around the 25hours Hotels in our Activity Map of this issue. And finally, we reveal just why wellness is ultimately humbug: our Zurich columnist Nina Kunz tells all.

Freunde von Freunden

The online magazine Freunde von Freunden has been portraying inspiring personalities since 2009, forming a creative and international community along the way. Over the years, we have also built a lively network of talented people in the 25hours Hotels cities of Hamburg, Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Vienna, Zurich, and Paris. Some of them have contributed to this 15th issue of COMPANION, which dives into the world of wellness and health. The diagnosis? Read on to find out more.

freundevonfreunden.com



Have fun relaxing

Yours,
COMPANION

Contributors

Eva Biringer



Based in Berlin, Eva — who uses the nom de plume Eva Perla when online — writes for newspapers and magazines such as Die Zeit, Zeit Online, Die Welt, FAZ, Der Feinschmecker, Effile, Der Standard, and Nachtkritik. She also enjoys travelling to places where there is fine natural wine. She has a particular love for Vienna, where she did this edition's District Tour together with photographer and architect Zara Pfeifer, for a variety of reasons: the Fächertorte in Café Demel, the bright winter skies, the nearby mountains, and the always functioning escalators in the underground.

instagram.com/evaperla

Manuel Almeida Vergara



It's more or less impossible to get Manuel Almeida Vergara out of bed. Writing texts, reading magazines, devising travel itineraries — the fashion editor and columnist for German newspaper Frankfurter Rundschau prefers to do all these things perched on a mountain of pillows with his legs stuck between tousled sheets. So he was the natural choice to write about sleep trends. Manuel explored the topic of nocturnal rest for COMPANION 15 and gave a few further articles in this issue his editorial touch. Without moving an inch from his bed, of course.

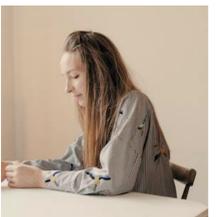
Sara Stefanini



There'll always be a hint of la dolce vita in the work of illustrator Sara Stefanini. Maybe it's due to her adopted city of Milan? It's from there that the Swiss native freelances for the likes of ETRO, Italian Grazia, and the ice cream parlour Eyeland. When asked about the main topic of this issue, Sara has a suitably cryptic response: to her, well-being means 'sharing beauty with people who matter'. Evidently, the circle of 'people who matter' has extended to us as well, thanks to Sara's contributions to this issue's Cosmos and Activity Map.

sarastefanini.com

Aimee Shirley

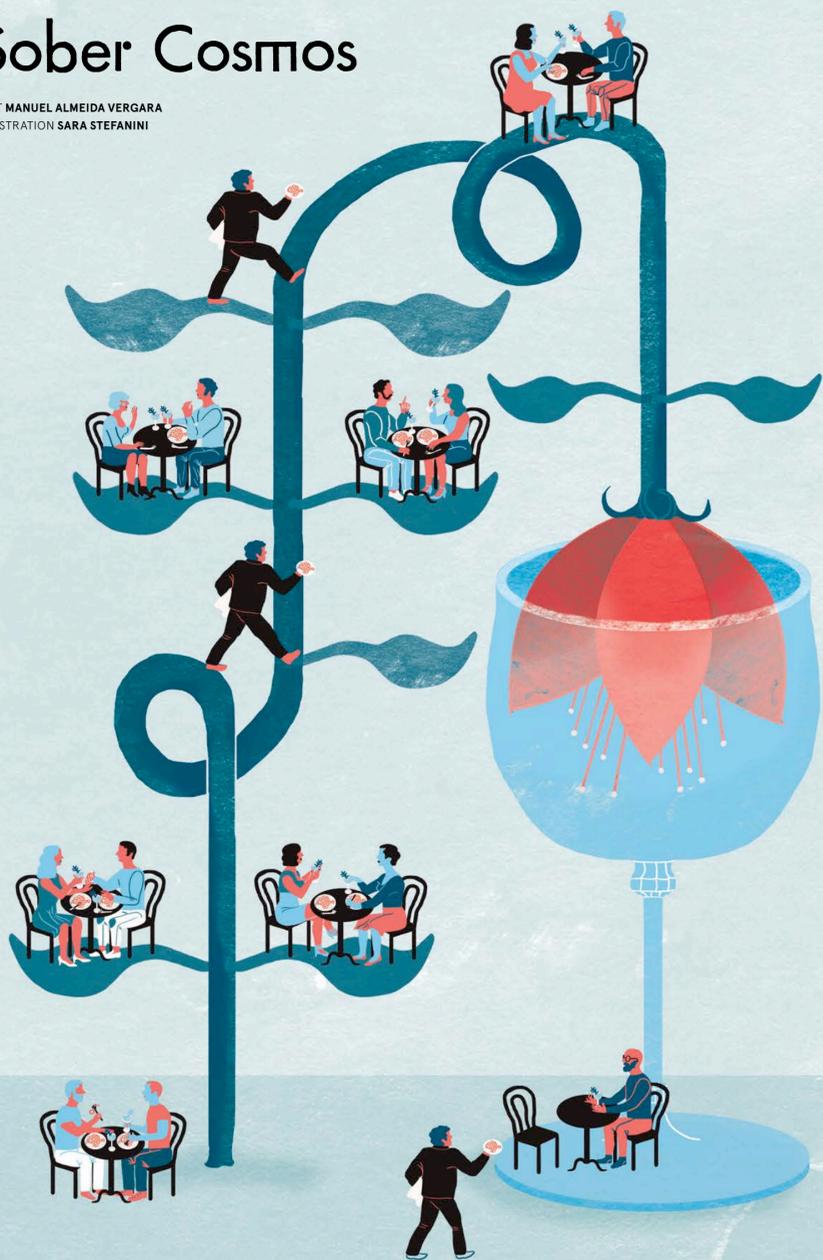


Aimee Shirley can't decide whether she prefers to live in Britain or cosmopolitan Berlin, but the dilemma doesn't really matter anyway. As soon as she loses herself in impressions, faces, and moments, she is satisfied. No wonder, then, that Aimee has become a photographer: her gaze lingers on the right moments and her images focus on details. Occasionally, COMPANION's and Freunde von Freunden's photo editor and the mother of two needs that in her everyday life as well. Then comes the moment when Aimee grabs her jacket and starts walking. In fact, that's a type of wellness ritual too.

aimeeshirley.com

Sober Cosmos

TEXT MANUEL ALMEIDA VERGARA
ILLUSTRATION SARA STEFANINI



Good food without fine wine? Currently unthinkable for many epicureans. But people are increasingly looking for soft drinks to accompany their food as part of a healthy lifestyle — staying sober is now a real trend, one that's eliciting a response from drinks manufacturers and eateries alike. Sebastian Frank from Berlin's Michelin-starred restaurant Horvath is a real pioneer. An interview about exquisite pairings that won't leave you tipsy.

Fine dining without wine — a bit of a tall order, don't you think?

Leaving aside the fact that there will usually be a designated driver at each table or that plenty of people are teetotal for religious reasons, there's also a section of society that is becoming increasingly concerned with maintaining a healthy lifestyle. You see it at organic food shops, where bottles of birch tree water or healthy lemonades line the shelves.

So your idea to offer alcohol-free drinks that meet fine dining standards was merely a response to this trend?

Not exactly. My wife was expecting at the time, and we

went for a meal in one of Germany's best restaurants. We kept noticing that there are hardly any alternatives to wine, even in the poshest establishments. It was my wife who came up with the idea.

A pretty bright one...

I wasn't all that enthusiastic in the beginning because I knew that it would take up a lot of my time. Drinks are like miniature liquid dishes, so designing a concept is extremely intricate. But my wife kept on pestering me, and so six months later we had our first alcohol-free drinks menu.

And can it keep up with the most exquisite merlot or sauvignon?

Wines complement or jar with our experience of flavours. The alcohol-free alternatives are no different. For instance, we can neutralise a certain harshness or make an aroma linger for a long time on the palate. To do that, we work with reduced vegetables and juices, and also use vinegar and oils. In the end, we might produce a radicchio juice with elderberry blossom oil and nutmeg, whey with Camellina oil, or a woodruff vinegar with vegetable juice and dill blossom.

Do real wine enthusiasts sometimes order the alternative now?

People still look down on the topic a little, but it is becoming increasingly interesting for

discerning eateries that take pride in their service. Let's be honest, the clientele that frequents our establishment doesn't usually come to stagger home blind drunk. Even the biggest wine connoisseurs now treat their bodies as a resource that needs to be managed carefully. So an evening without alcohol is making more and more sense.

↳ restaurant-horvath.de

TEXT MANUEL ALMEIDA VERGARA



Beat Your Inner Demons

HAMBURG OUTDOOR & ACTIVITY

A good coach counts for half of the training process! Though, even with Mieke Tasch at your side, there are still a few things you need to do for yourself. For the past five years, the Hamburg native has worked as a personal trainer and nutrition coach, and writes for magazines about the latest fitness trends. By now, she knows exactly how to tackle your inner demons: 'You can only stick with something if you have fun with it,' she says. Mieke has plenty of tricks up her sleeve for this: training in unusual locations, for instance, a healthy and tasty nutrition programme — and, of course, a sunny disposition. This is particularly beneficial when it comes to surviving the colder months, for which Mieke has a hot tip: 'In winter, stick to basic training,' she advises. 'That means that you optimise your energy supply by way of a goal-oriented training programme, so that you can increase your overall performance in the coming season.' So put on your trainers, get set, go!

↳ In-Shape Coach in-shape.coach



Travel Like a Greek Goddess

ATHENS FASHION & STYLE

Greeks are renowned for their expertise in beauty: at the end of the day, the Mediterranean country is said to be the cradle of aesthetics. Their finesse for attractiveness and symmetry is reflected in far more than their antique statues and well-formed busts. At Dimitra Goula, the secrets of Greek beauty are packed into little bottles and cans, and sold over the counter. Available both online and in their shop in Athens, their eponymous creams and tinctures, balms and sprays cater to every square inch of the body. Of course, beauty is about more than looks — a hypnotic scent is also an integral component of the Dimitra Goula skin-care range, all of which works wonders for your well-being, especially while travelling: 'Even just the smell of something familiar can immediately lead to a sense of emotional ease,' says founder Dimitra. 'So you should fill your luggage with creams, serums, and oils that radiate an aura of familiarity for you.'

↳ Dimitra Goula dimitragoula.gr



FRANKFURT FOOD & DRINK

Seasoned With Chutzpah!

'All you need is chutzpah,' says top chef Yossi Elad. 'The more colourful, the better.' The perfect slogan for all areas of life, at the new Bar Shuka restaurant in Frankfurt's 25hours Hotel The Trip, it is applied to more than just the menu. Yossi has surrounded himself with chefs from Palestine, Pakistan, and Ghana. Together, they plate up a culinary tour of the Middle East. Think dishes like homemade pita bread with magnificent spicy spreads, white tahini, or a succulent Jerusalem kebab. A little slice of Frankfurt has also made it onto the menu: the Hessian classic Grüne Sauce is made with Mediterranean herbs here. Which is quite fitting. 'Tel Aviv's dining culture is an amalgamation of Arabic dishes, memories of recipes prepared by Jewish grandparents, and culinary trends from all over the world,' says James Ardinast, who manages further concept restaurants in the Bahnhofsviertel district with his brother, David. And since no good dinner in Frankfurt can exist without good drinks, you can reach the Speakeasy Bar through a hidden door in the inner courtyard. There you'll find a well-curated selection of exclusive sake, Japanese whiskeys, and cocktails.

↳ Bar Shuka barshuka.com

BRING ON THE WATER

HAMBURG HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Water is healthy, beautifying, and, above all, a basic human right — because nothing can live without it. Unfortunately, it is not a given that people all over the world have access to the elixir of life. Whether local droughts or the privatisation of water sources are to blame, the Hamburg-based non-profit organisation Viva con Agua spearheads creative projects to help people in areas lacking in water. Through education, collaborations, or simply collecting recyclable drink containers at festivals — the main thing for the activist organisation is that they make an effective contribution. Of course, they also have fun along the way: 25hours Hotels supports Viva con Agua as well. Check out your room for more information on current projects.

↳ Viva Conagua vivaconagua.org



INSTANT RELAXATION

WORLDWIDE HOSPITALITY & RETREAT

Everyone needs their own on-and-off switch. A little button you can press when it all gets too much. Since such a device is yet to be invented, we can rejoice in the fact that Six Senses exists. At the hotels and resorts run by the hotel group, switching off and winding down is part of the package. What unites each of their establishments across the continents are especially elaborate spa and wellness facilities. The best treatments, the most effective fitness trends, and holistic

nutrition programmes are compiled from all over the world and combine to create personalised services. And then, just like that, all of the rest is quickly forgotten.

↳ Six Senses sixsenses.com



CONSCIOUS FLOATING

DÜSSELDORF ART & ENTERTAINMENT

It doesn't always have to be an extended spa weekend — there are a lot of other quicker ways to escape the daily grind. Like a visit to the museum, for instance. The 'In Orbit' installation by artist Tomás Saraceno at Düsseldorf's K21 — on through to the end of 2019 — whisks you away to a different, challenging world. An accessible net construction spanning around 2,500 square metres has been installed at a vertigo-inducing height in the plaza of the building, giving the impression that it is floating. Courageous art lovers clamber around in astronaut garb, high above the heads of the museum's guests. An exploration of one's own limits, somewhere between fear, curiosity, and thrill seeking, crawling and scrambling through the surrealistic landscapes can be an experience to expand your consciousness. Just remember, no spitting allowed! However, there are also guests who laze about nonchalantly in any of the five 'spheres': air-filled balls hanging 20 metres above the ground. Who's up to the challenge?

↳ K21 Kunstsammlung NRW kunstsammlung.de



Wishing on a Star

VIENNA ART & ENTERTAINMENT

The playground season is now long behind us — not to mention the outdoor pool season. That doesn't mean, however, that you have to hide away at home with the children all winter. How about counting stars, for example? Both the Vienna Planetarium and the Kuffner Observatory have plenty of activities for children. Grown-up stargazers will find a lot to do in these spaces too. The planetarium offers a 'Tour of the Solar System', and at the observatory you can explore

'Secrets of Faraway Worlds'. Drop by to while away the hours, marvel at the wonders of space, and learn something new. Before you know it, it will be time for sandboxes and water slides once again.

↳ Planetarium vhs.at/de/e/planetarium

Curated Cinema

PARIS FASHION & STYLE

With 20 screens, almost 3,500 seats, and around 1.8 million visitors a year, mk2 Bibliothèque in the 13th arrondissement is the third-largest cinema in Paris, and it is especially inviting on frosty winter days — even if you're not interested in seeing any of the numerous silver screen masterpieces that are shown here. That's because the in-house mk2 Store has opened at the cinema, offering a wide range of products, from t-shirts to side tables, with avant-garde and spirited designs. Curated under the watchful eye of creative director Clarisse Demory, the product range at the concept boutique for cinephiles pays homage to the film industry. Its own mk2 Editions product line comprises exclusive and original editions which are often designed in collaboration with artists and other creative thinkers. As such, their collaboration with

Berlin- and Paris-based label Bless, which saw them adapt the iconic N°60 Pillowrow chairs, provides the ideal foundation for a home cinema — a refined assortment of pillows on an Artek frame, with fine wool upholstery by Kvadrat. Their Oluce 'Magistretti' lamps have already appeared on screen in the classic film 'My American Uncle' by Alain Resnais. And wasn't the actress just on screen wearing the casual Japanese Subu slippers? Like the silver screen classics that inspire their creation, the design pieces and accessories at the mk2 Store will surely soon become cult favourites in their own right.

↳ mk2.mk2.com/mk2-store



Creative Family Clan

ZÜRICH FASHION & STYLE

An old German proverb tells us that 'a clear conscience is the best pillow', and that is truer than ever in the age of fast fashion and discount clothing lines. More and more customers are turning to sustainable and ethically manufactured clothes. But does it always have to be a scratchy hemp beige monstrosity? Not at all: with enSoie, Zurich has become home to a label which has understood how to combine eco-friendly approaches and social awareness with discerning designs since 1979 (while its actual textile roots date back to 1894). You can see its heritage in the fine knitwear designs, the foulards with magnificent prints, the well-made leather accessories and quirky jewellery. A recent addition to the product range is a beautifully designed cookbook containing the recipes of the founder's family. Little wonder, as the minds behind enSoie include founder Monique Meier and her entourage, who are skilled in a wide range of artistic disciplines. Her husband is Dieter Meier, for instance — yes, the one from the band Yello. Their daughters have also joined the company, and together they have established a small empire in Zurich. In addition to a shop, an archive, and a children's boutique, they also run a café.

↳ [Ensoie ensoie.com](http://ensoie.ensoie.com)



A Queen's Fit

COLOGNE FOOD & DRINK

A pack of ciggies for the Queen? A beer for the road for William and Kate? Not exactly. Nevertheless, Köski Royal is certainly deserving of its blue-blooded name. That's because the little shop at Kirschburgerstrasse 247 in Cologne is something of a queen amongst kiosks. Instead of instant coffee from a machine, exquisite specialty coffees are served here, and mundane sandwiches are replaced by the best baked goods in the city. Owner Charlotte Mielß also stocks international delicacies, healthy juices, and specialty beers in her store. Her inspiration for Köski Royal wasn't the typical neighbourhood kiosk in Cologne, but rather the 'Köskü', a centuries-old tradition of small shops situated in lavish palaces across Turkey. So if the Queen does happen to drop by, this shop is well prepared. Unless she actually wants some cigarettes, that is — Köski Royal doesn't sell any. It's better for the skin anyway. And for your health, of course!

↳ Köski Royal [instagram.com/koeski_royal](https://www.instagram.com/koeski_royal)

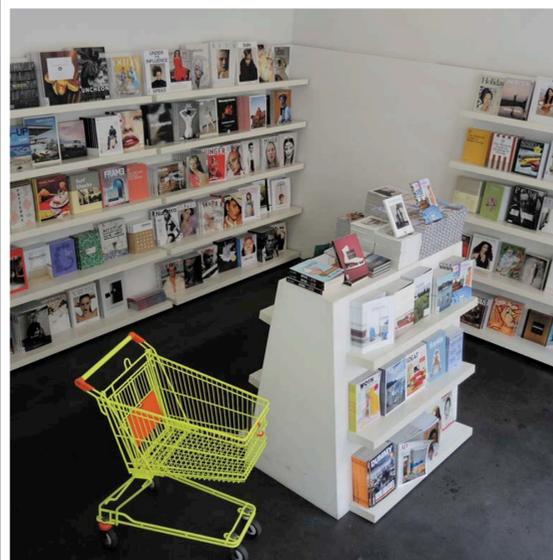


Travel Takeaway

MÜNICH ART & ENTERTAINMENT

Frequent fliers, champions of train travel, and masters of procrastination have found their salvation in the Bavarian capital in Soda Books. Because what's the most important thing on a long flight or stressful train journey — or even just for an afternoon on the couch? Something to read, of course! Soda has options aplenty: highbrow magazines and stylish indie fanzines cuddle up together on the shelves of the small shop. The magnificently curated range covers more or less all creative disciplines, from fashion and architecture to illustration and culinary arts. By the way, there's a Soda store in Berlin too!

↳ Soda Books sodabooks.com



Naples in Neukölln

BERLIN FOOD & DRINK

It's hard to picture, yet under overcast skies and on its grey streets, Berlin is a true Mediterranean holiday paradise. At least when it comes to dining, that is: over the last two years, a wealth of Neapolitan restaurants have fired up their pizza ovens in the hip Berlin district of Neukölln. But why specifically Neapolitan food? And why in Neukölln? Nobody can say exactly. But who cares about the 'why' when you're being served steaming-hot pizza with a typically Neapolitan thick crust and succulent toppings? Especially in the drearier months, a culinary day trip to warmer climes can truly work wonders. Flit off to the south and then come back to, for instance, Monella on Weichselstrasse (pretty interior), Gazzo on Hobrechtstrasse (fermented dough), or W Pizza on Fuldastrasse (drinks, drinks, drinks). For the record, the Neapolitan pizza trend started at Zola in the district of Kreuzberg before making its way over to the neighbouring area of Neukölln. Why? Again, it doesn't matter — the point is there's pizza!

- ↳ **Monella**
[facebook.com/monellaBLN](https://www.facebook.com/monellaBLN)
- ↳ **Gazzo Pizza**
gazzopizza.com
- ↳ **W Pizza**
wpizza.de
- ↳ **Zola**
[facebook.com/zolakreuzberg](https://www.facebook.com/zolakreuzberg)

NIGHT FEVER

TEXT SILVIA SILKO

The fashion, music, and worldly feel of the 1970s disco era captivate imaginations to this day. DJ Nicky Siano was spinning the turntables back then, while the photographer Bill Bernstein prowled the legendary Studio 54. The trailblazers take COMPANION back to an era of glitz, glamour, and hedonism.

'Not today, pal.' Bill Bernstein got thoroughly fed up with hearing this standard response from bouncers, indicating yet another failed attempt at gaining entry to Studio 54. It's one of those ironic twists of fate that Bill ended up becoming one of the legendary club's most revered chroniclers. The photographer finally made it into disco's holiest of holies during a highly official event: it was 1977, and a massive knees-up had been planned in honour of Lillian Carter, mother of President Jimmy Carter. On the guest list of the black tie event was the crème de la crème of New York's high society, seated at white-clothed tables. The media was in a frenzy. Bill shot the event for the Village Voice, a weekly mag — and hid in the corner of the club after dinner.

Eventually, the assembled VIPs retreated elsewhere, and the dancefloor was opened for Studio 54 regulars: New York's party animals. 'I used up all the film I'd brought with me that night,' Bill remembers. The evening marked a coming-of-age moment for him — and not just as a photographer. 'I was kind of into the flower power scene,' he says. 'But I never really noticed how hippies rigidly followed a set of rules as well. You had to look, speak, and behave in a certain way. Disco was different. The people there were truly liberated.'

New York City could be a dangerous place in the late 1970s. Criminality was at an all-time high, the public coffers had been bled dry, and the politicians were out of their depth trying to deal with the city's problems. There was a pervasive sense of uncertainty hanging in the air, and discrimination against minorities was rife. 'Gay people couldn't just go out on the street and be who they were,' says Nicky Siano. 'They would have been killed in the precincts of New York.'

Nicky grew up in New York and was hailed a wunderkind of disco from its earliest days. He played his first gig at the age of 16 and quickly earned a reputation as the best DJ in town. His style was different, and the tunes he played came from the underground scene of whomping soul and funk. After opening Studio 54 in April 1977, club Svengali Steve Rubell hired Nicky as the resident DJ. So Nicky was there in the thick of things, unlike photographer Bill Bernstein, who tended to visit the club as an observer. 'The club was a place

for people to be who they truly were,' he says. 'Gay, bisexual, or trans? Fetishists? Come on in! Were you from Latin America? African American? Everyone was welcome, and nobody had to be afraid.'

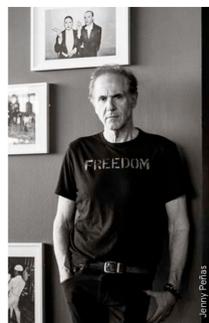
Nicky and Bill were merely acquaintances at the time, not friends. But today, they often look back together on an era that revolutionised clubbing with its flamboyant looks, sounds, and rhythms. Bill's photos — which also adorn the walls of Monkey Bar at 25hours Hotel Bikini Berlin — testify to his fascination with the characters that populated New York's underground party scene. An evident fan, he portrayed a subculture in which inhibition was the only sin — in full awareness of the bleak New York reality that awaited clubbers at the end of the night. Excess, wild dance moves, and raw sex embodied this spirit of unleashed hedonism.

One of Bill's most famous pictures shows a couple on a swing. Sporting the briefest of shorts, a man sits astride his partner as they swoosh above the heads of the revellers below, completely oblivious and ecstatic. Like many of the party-goers that Bill photographed, they remain unaware of the man with the camera. 'Times were different back then,' says Bill. 'The club wasn't full of people taking selfies with their smartphones, and as a photographer, I was just part of the inventory.' It's important for him to emphasise that no one was posing for him. 'The punters at Studio 54 had attitude and aura — whether or not I was there. Even the motifs that look staged were actually snapshots,' he says. 'And if they did throw poses, it was for each other, not my camera.'

The tumultuous party of the New York disco movement was over as quickly as it began. 'Commercialisation killed everything,' says Nicky. 'Soon it was all about money, and the bouncers started picking the crowd. The idea was to create a legend — but above all, to make millions.' Fascination with the glamorous dancefloor world soon flipped into hype, and the revolution began to devour its children. Washed-out musicians and the blight of drugs are just a couple of the shadows that even the prettiest disco ball would cast. 'Everyone knew that we might end up playing with fire,' says Nicky. Parties and drugs became an escape from reality, and it was easy to lose touch, especially as a young, celebrated DJ. 'You need to look after yourself, and above all learn what really matters in life,' he adds. 'It's about the people you love, and your health.'

Studio 54 shut down in 1980, just three years after it opened. It was the beginning of the end for an entire era. But the mood of the club, its 1960s roots, and the role it played in the LGBTQIA+ movement in the decades to come continue to reverberate today, with people of all sexual orientations publicly demanding that their rights be respected. 'The age of disco played a part in that as well,' says Bill, adding, 'I am convinced that the strong sense of community and liberation that pervaded the clubs gave people courage.' When Bill speaks of his pictures and the 1970s, you can tell that he remains utterly fascinated with the scene. 'It was a special time,' he says. 'Its legacy persists to this day.'

➤ nicksiano.com
➤ billbernstein.com
➤ reelartpress.com



Portraits of Bill Bernstein (top) and Nicky Siano (bottom), 2018



Playlist

- 1 Love Is the Message
MFSB
- 2 Girl You Need a Change of Mind
Eddie Kendricks
- 3 You're the One
Little Sister
- 4 The Love I Lost
Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes
- 5 City Country City
War
- 6 Melting Pot
Booker T. & the M.G.'s
- 7 Give It Up or Turnit a Loose
James Brown
- 8 Doing It to Death
The J.B.'s
- 9 (Don't Worry) If There's a Hell
Below, We're All Going to Go
Curtis Mayfield

The Origins of Disco Sound

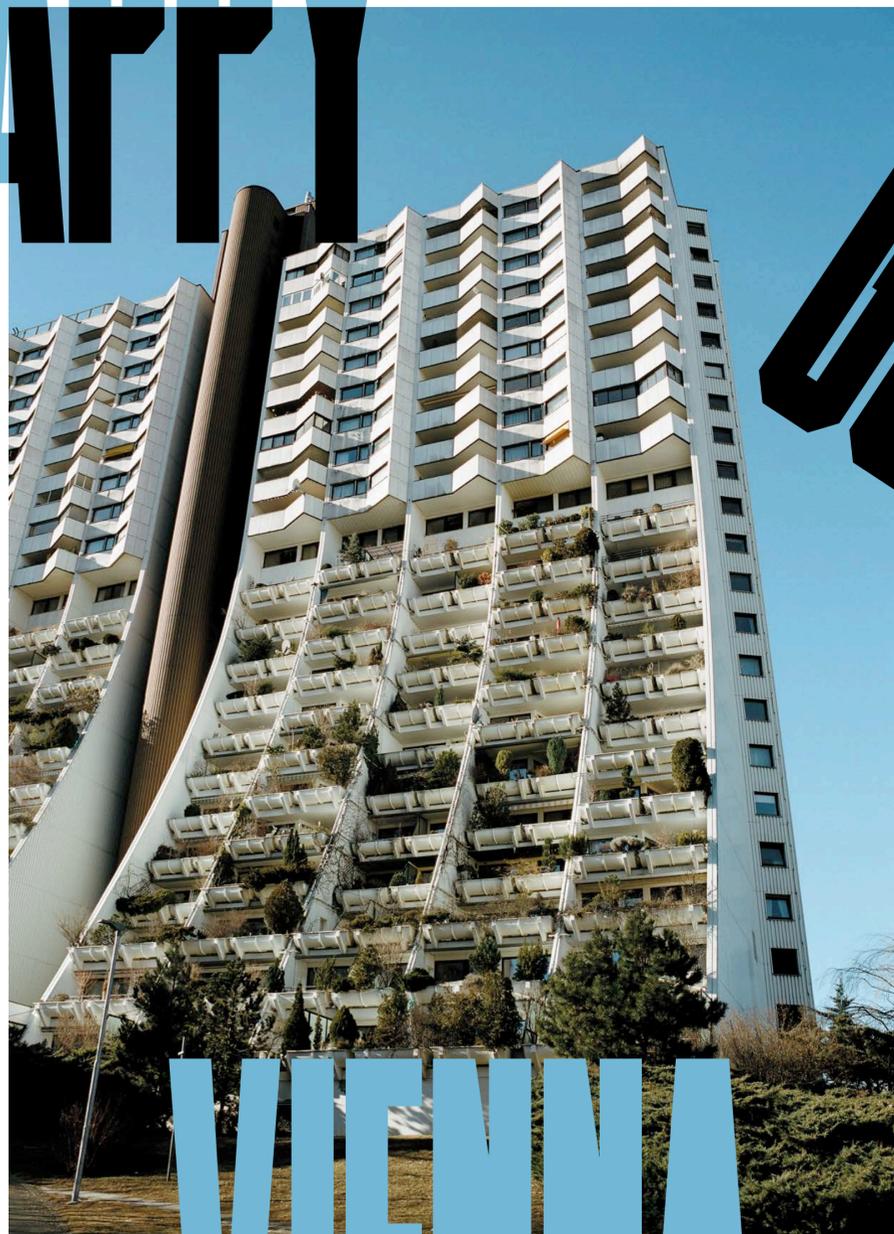
By Nicky Siano

Listen to the playlist on:
➤ 25hours-hotels.com/en/companion-journal/the-origins-sounds-of-disco



Taken from: DISCO: Photographs by Bill Bernstein published by Reel Art Press.

HAPPY HAPPY

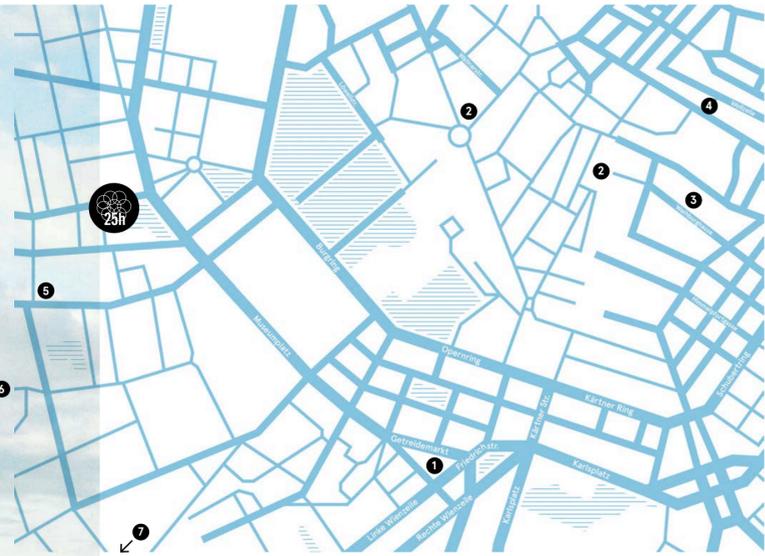
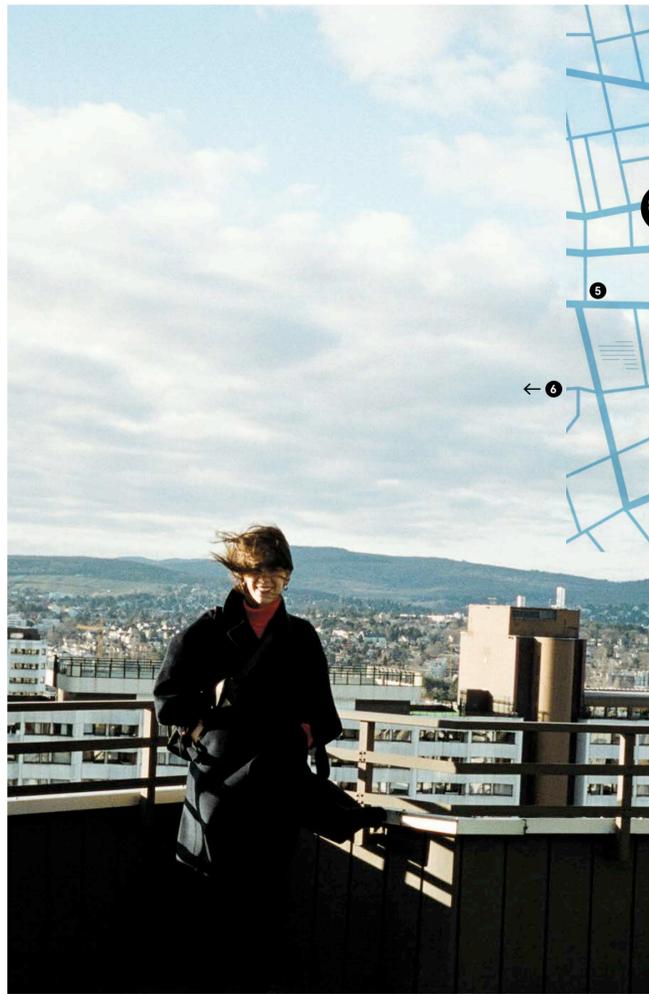


VIENNA

TEXT EVA BIRINGER — PHOTOS ZARA PFEIFER

Once again, Vienna has been named the most liveable city in the world. Horse-drawn carriages, Sachertorte chocolate gâteau, 'Küss die Hand' — really now? Oh yes, says Zara Pfeifer. Thirteen years ago, she came here from Cologne to study and, bar a few short hiatuses, has stayed ever since. She took COMPANION on a walk to share a quick tour of the architectural history of her adopted home. Zara knows a thing or two about architecture — she completed a bachelor's degree in the subject at Vienna's technical university, followed by a master's at the Academy of Fine Arts. Today, she works as an artist and freelance photographer. Zara explains what makes Vienna such a great place to live in using the vivid example of the

Alt-Erlaa housing estate, which she recently immortalised in her photography book 'Du, meine konkrete Utopie' (You, My Concrete Utopia). Though located a little out of the centre, its residents are quintessential Viennese locals — pragmatic with a well-developed sense of community. Surveys have confirmed this observation: Vienna's social-housing policy has made a demonstrable contribution to increasing resident satisfaction. Zara realises something else during our walk through the city centre: many Viennese buildings were ahead of their time. Even indulgent world weariness has a place here, as does time-worn traditions and the current zeitgeist. The locals have a term for that: *mélange*.

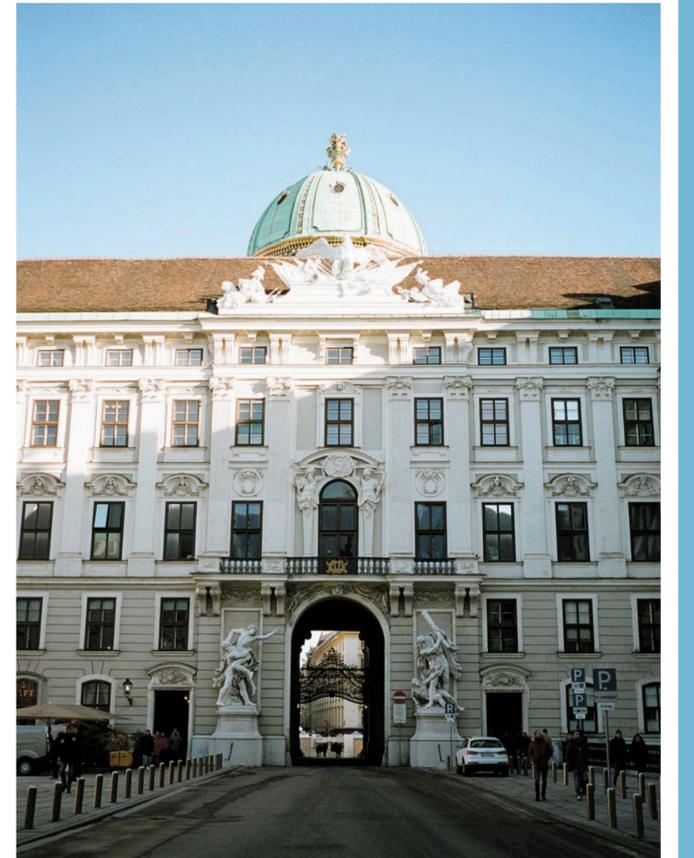


LIVEABLE

CITY
IN EUROPE

MOST

THE



7

Alt-Erlaa

We take the underground train to get to our last stop: Alt-Erlaa. Harry Glück received harsh criticism for this satellite town, which was built between 1973 and 1985. People thought the alleyways were too dark, the common rooms too soulless due to a lack of windows, and the housing blocks and resident demographic too homogeneous. Yet, contrary to all expectations, Alt-Erlaa has since emerged as a flagship project. Zara gushes over the 'Wohnpark TV', the on-premise bridge club, and the Freddy Quinn Museum, as well as over the residents who traipse up to the rooftop pool in their slippers, noting, 'We're all the same in swimming costumes.' Indeed, Vienna's social democratic-housing policy, with lots of shared structures and residential estates like Alt-Erlaa, has made a decisive contribution to its residents' quality of life. The price per square metre for accommodation here is far below the average for a big city. You can apply for one of the 3,200 rental properties. On average, it takes three years to receive your first offer. For Zara, who once lived at Alt-Erlaa for several weeks, this is an opportunity she is seriously considering. Because there is one thing you'll find here for certain: happiness.

↳ [Underground stop Alterlaa](#)

- 1 **Vienna Secession**
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- 2 **Loos Bar**
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Michaelerplatz 3
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1 **Vienna Secession**

Our tour kicks off with a Viennese classic that has well earned its title and is one of the most beautiful art nouveau buildings in Vienna, within walking distance of Zara's alma mater. The impressive entranceway bears the inscription 'Der Zeit ihre Kunst, der Kunst ihre Freiheit' ('To every age its art, to every art its freedom'). The Secession Building was built in 1898 by Joseph Maria Olbrich as a venue for exhibitions and collections for the up-and-coming bohemian art scene centred around Gustav Klimt. The population at the time was disappointed by how new and out of place the building looked compared to those surrounding it. Today, the Secession hosts rotating exhibitions showcasing the work of international artists. One special feature is the view from the cupola, which is not usually accessible to visitors. It was renovated only recently, a process during which some of the gold leaf went missing. 'Went missing', or 'was stolen', as others would say. 'Gl'adert' as Viennese would say.

↳ [secession.at](#)

2 **On the Trail of Adolf Loos**

Adolf Loos is a cult figure in Vienna. 'Ornament and Crime' was his most famous book, and its title says it all. The art nouveau movement was despised by the architect, despite the fact that he was of its time. In Vienna, he designed several buildings, including a cosy bar which is named in his honour. Despite its tiny 27-square-metre size, Loos Bar's mirrored walls give the impression that it is much larger. In times gone by, the toilets in the basement had a corridor leading straight into a brothel. To this day, the cocktails are still well stirred, including the signature drink, a champagne spritzer. A mere few metres away, you can find the Looshaus, which is one of the most important architectural works of the Viennese Modern Age and today houses a bank. Apart from some flowers, its facade is completely without decorative elements — an architectural choice which was seen as a declaration of war against the convention of historicism at the time. Its lack of dripstones above the windows earned it the name 'the house without eyebrows'. It's said that Kaiser Franz Joseph ordered certain windows at Hofburg to be boarded up to spare him the sight of the eyesore.

↳ [loosbar.at](#)

3 **Kleines Café**

No website, no email address, not even a phone number. This café, located in the first district, knows that visitors will find it anyway. That's due to its sandwiches, for example, which are served even past midnight, when the tourists make room for the odd regular. Architect Hermann Czech was responsible for the café's interior furnishings. The 'toilets that have become necessary' weren't added until 15 years later, in the mid-1980s. To this day, you can see the less exposed side of the local coffeehouse culture, with people sitting around for hours reading magazines and leading discussions fuelled by the house wine. People smoke in here too, of course. Is it true that the tiles were originally grave slabs? 'Could be,' says the waiter. You could ask the boss, who comes into the café for half an hour each lunchtime. In person, of course.

↳ [Franziskanerplatz 3](#)

4 **Indie**

What's black on the outside, as colourful as a butterfly on the inside, and looks totally out of place in the untidy setting of the first district? That would be the concept store Indie. Built in the 1970s by Austrian industrial designer Carl Auböck, it originally served as a printing shop. Vienna gained another scandalous building. To this day, some of the metal furniture designed by Auböck is still found in the shop, and mirrors are known to have been nicked right off the walls. All this was told to us by managing director Harri Cherkoori, whose excellent Viennese humour is somehow also conceptual. The same goes for the complex story of butterfly catcher Eugène Le Mout, whose extensive collection of pyjamas inspired the store to carry sleepwear from the label Praline Le Mout. Apart from that, Indie also sells Novesta trainers, Royalties socks, clothing from the Viennese label Rudolf, bags made from recycled plastic by Facteur Céléste, miniature rocking horses, scented candles, and some things that are pretty and serve no purpose whatsoever. And butterflies.

↳ [instagram.com/indie_vienna](#)

5 **Significant Other**

After browsing, we carry on our tour — with some more architecture, of course. And art. 'As a freelance artist, you are quite privileged in Vienna,' says curator Laura Amann, referencing the relatively large amount of support available. 'Together with her partner Jen Kratochvil, she has been running the Significant Other gallery for the past year and a half. Their exhibitions, she explains, focus on architecture from an artistic perspective, adding that 'in doing so, we want to circumvent the conventional hierarchies.' For Jasmina Cibic's 'Everything We Do Today Will Look Heroic in the Future', the duo set up an exhibition space that reached right up to the street and was covered over and over again with drawings of an insect with the unsettling name 'Hitlerkäfer' (Hitler bug). Moving to Vienna was a conscious decision for Laura and Jen — taken on one hand for the freedom afforded by its low cost of living, and for its up-and-coming arts scene on the other. Then there's the fact that people know each other here — always a plus.

↳ [significantother.art](#)

6 **Berliner Restaurant**

Art galleries, third-wave coffee shops, boutiques for baby clothes: there's nowhere in Vienna that resembles Berlin more closely than the hip seventh district — above all because this is where Zara's favourite Turkish restaurant is located, which, as our next destination, is a welcome change of scenery. Because food makes you happy, of course. As a regular at the restaurant, she is greeted warmly by the staff. She orders the 'Berlin Breakfast' with olives, a fried egg (over easy, just for her), sigara böreği, sheep's cheese, and honey. The ayran is homemade, so you can forget about the alternatives like Berliner Weisse beer. We enjoy a Turkish tea at the end of the meal, on the house, of course. Why does this venue bear the intriguing but confusing name Berliner Restaurant? That's because the owner also operates Berliner Döner just next door, which is one of the best kebab shops in the city.

↳ [berliner-restaurant-grillspezialitaet.business.site](#)

TALKING BUSINESS

Yearning for Comfort

TEXT CELINA PLAG

Rooms are becoming ever more comfortable, both at home and in hotels. Thomas Tritsch could write the book on this topic. Together with architect Sabine Mühlbauer, the artist founded Morgen Interiors in 1998. The creative studio acts as a liaison between the disciplines of architecture, design, art, music, events, and handicrafts. Creating spaces you're happy to spend time in is one of Morgen's core competencies — one which the team demonstrates time and again in both

private and public projects across Europe. For example, at the freshly renovated 25hours Hotel The Trip in Frankfurt, the concept for which Morgen Interiors worked in cooperation with Frankfurt-based artist Michael Dreher. In a talk with COMPANION, Thomas discussed the requirements of cosy design, the importance of well-being in hotels, and why the uncomfortability of travelling will continue far into the future.



Thomas Tritsch
Co-founder of Morgen Interiors

COMPANION: The Danes have a word for keeping cosy at home — the 'hygge' trend is currently making its way across the world. Where did this recently awakened need for a comfortable home come from?

Thomas Tritsch: I think the phenomenon is popular at the moment because it's being pushed by the industry. The need for comfort has always been there, and behind it is the human yearning for a feeling of well-being. Different eras had different ideas about what comfort looks like. 'Hygge' is simply the contemporary term for it.

How are interior designers and homeware providers reacting to the current movement?

I would think no one is untouched by the topic in some way. There's a big market for interiors, and it's currently flooded with products related to 'hygge', from cushions and blankets to comfortable sofas, right up to relaxing tea. Some of the products are good, but others are a little off the mark. By and large, it's manifested in a happy, eclectic mix of things from all over the world, far removed from any design paradigms.

Hotels also want to be able to function as a kind of replacement living room. How is it possible to create a sense of comfort in these spaces?

The same way you would at home! Comfort is first created in the mind by incorporating memories and desires. I don't think it should be any different for a hotel, other than that the materials used should be more hardwearing than in private spaces. Colour is very important too, of course. One of our goals is to leave no white space unpainted by the end of a project. In hotels, the lighting should be both warm and flexible. In general, the materials used should have a history and an authentic message. Think ceramic tiles, Berber carpets, reclaimed wood, or concrete.

You helped to design the newly renovated 25hours Hotel The Trip in Frankfurt, which tells the story of a trip around the world. What role does the subject of 'well-being' play here?

In the planning phase, well-being didn't play an important role. In any case, like with all of our projects at Morgen, we wanted to create intuitive spaces that people are happy to spend time in. At The Trip, a lot is conveyed via storytelling — the idea of comfort is conveyed using stories from all over the world. One lovely example is the Finnish sauna, which for some goes hand in hand with the idea of well-being. Though, some guests might feel more at home in the hidden Speakeasy Bar, sipping on a fine Japanese sake.

Furniture from past eras usually seems rather uncomfortable from a contemporary perspective. When was the idea of comfort actually invented?

Good question. I guess when the first person hunted an animal and took the cosy pelt back to their cave. [laughs] Oh yeah, and then came the fire! Comfy furniture probably came along a lot later.

On the other hand, there are currently a lot of young design labels whose lighter and more delicate designs may look pretty but don't seem particularly cosy.

The great thing is that anything goes nowadays — and at the end of the day, it's the mix itself that's interesting. A balanced combination of different styles ultimately makes for a nice interior. Good furniture, regardless of what design concept it's based on, will always find a buyer. In contrast, artworks disguised as furniture can be beautiful eye-catchers, which is the only justification they need. Personally, it annoys me when I order, say, a chair which doesn't turn out to be comfortable.

Do politically uncertain times also call for uncomfortable furniture, so that the comfort of the people does not induce inactivity?

An interesting thought — I think there is certainly something there. When it comes to comfortable furniture, I first think of a welcome counterpoint to our hectic and stressful lives.

That's how a balance can be struck. However, attack and retreat as a whole have nothing to do with inactivity.

Take the bench — be it at a bus stop, a train station, or a waiting hall in an airport. Why is waiting so uncomfortable wherever you go?

In Germany, at least, that is due to our German Bauhaus culture, a design concept that is now known to all and primarily cheap to produce. Elsewhere, in South America, for example, the history of design is rather different. There, waiting-room furniture is much more organic and looks a lot more comfy than ours.

Why do airlines still offer no comfortable options for sleeping in economy class too — even though, if you believe the innovative inventors, it could be done easily and even at no great expense?

It's still all about the profit. If economy class were more comfortable, fewer people would book business-class seats. There are precise calculations behind every decision, and at the end of the day, the main driver is maximising profits.

A very general question: which requirements must be fulfilled in design, especially when it comes to rooms, in order to make people happy?

Beauty makes people happy. So, too, do beautiful spaces. We need an aesthetically pleasing environment to unwind and feel free. Rooms like that give us a sense of security.

Is there a place in which you feel completely comfortable?

If things are going well and I'm feeling happy, I feel comfortable absolutely everywhere! Even the best design can't help if you're in a bad mood.

New Shop Online
25hours-things.com

Working Women

Eat Dust's workwear-inspired overalls show what power dressing looks like today. Unless you work at a bank, you can easily wear them to the office.

Women's Service Overall by Eat Dust, €299.00



Racing Ahead of the Pack

Time won't go any faster with the Autobahn wristwatch designed by Werner Aisslinger — but it will pass by more elegantly, thanks to its sapphire crystal glass, neomatik caliber, and date function, plus a touch of high tech!

Autobahn Neomatik 41 Date Sports Gray by Nomos Glashütte, €3,800.00



An Intercultural View

This one's for the globetrotters. These smart sunglasses by Danish label Han Kjøbenhavn are made of Italian acetate and feature Japanese hinges, as well as German-made Carl Zeiss lenses.

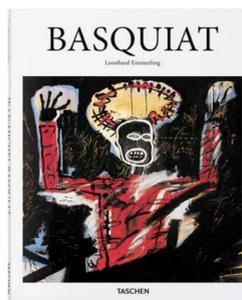
Drum BlackGold by Han Kjøbenhavn, €129.00



The Life of an Artist

A richly illustrated introductory guide from the Taschen publishing house reviews the life and work of formidable New York artist Jean-Michel Basquiat in pictures and words.

Basquiat by Taschen, €10.00



Let the Sunshine In

These wool-lined bright yellow deerskin gloves make life that little bit more colourful. The cosy lining keeps your fingers warm, even at five below zero.

Deerskin Wool Tricot by Hestra, €69.00



Hygge Deluxe

The perfect indoor shoes for winter evenings spent snuggled up by the fire have to be Birkenstocks: the cult classic Boston mule is now available with exquisite lambskin lining.

Boston VL Mink Lambskin by Birkenstock, €119.00



25HOURS THINGS

25hours Hotels love things — all kinds of things. Special and unique things, cool and timeless ones. Fun things, inspiring things, ones that spread happiness or tell enchanting tales. They're to be found at friends' places, simply by browsing, or during travels — and now they can also be found in the new 25HOURS THINGS web shop.

Here COMPANION presents a small selection, and there's plenty more to be found online.

My Cuddling Cat

All of Donna Wilson's creatures have their own name and personality. Take Ziggy, the lambswool cat: she likes hot dogs with mustard and David Bowie — and cuddling monsters!

Ziggy Cat by Donna Wilson, €49.00

Get the Dockers Look

Keen for something other than a plain white t-shirt, perhaps? Enter Dockers, with an artistic anchor print that's reminiscent of the rough charm of America's West Coast. Complete your stylish outfit with these slim, smart, flexible, and comfy Alpha chinos, which pick up where your favourite jeans leave off.

Logo Tee Paper White Graphic by Dockers, €25.00
Alpha Chino With Smart 360 Flex Slim by Dockers, €99.00



Everyday Buddy

This leather rucksack is just as beautiful on the inside as it is on the outside. And thanks to its practical compartments, there's plenty of space for everyday bits and bobs, as well as a 15-inch laptop.

The Great Rucksack by Craftory, €549.00



Conscious Travel Beauty

An environmental request and a care product in one: the sustainable, all-natural cosmetics by Hamburg-based label Stop the Water While Using Me! are now available in a practical five-piece travel kit.

Travel Kit by Stop the Water While Using Me!, €34.90



Don't Fear the Wind

The world's best sailing jumpers are probably made by Andersen-Andersen — zippable and made from the finest merino wool, woven on a family loom in Italy.

Navy Half-Zip by Andersen-Andersen, €319.00



Partners in Crime

You won't have to herd any cows or work on an oil rig wearing these feminine boots made of honey chinko leather. But their Wild West heritage makes them perfect for painting the town red!

Heeled Pecos Inez by Red Wing Shoes, €389.00



'Comfort is first created in the mind by incorporating memories and desires.'

The Science of Scent

TEXT ANNA DOROTHEA KER — PHOTO AIMEE SHIRLEY



Subtle and seductive, the aroma molecule Iso E Super was created in a laboratory in 1973. In 2006, the master perfumer Geza Schön bottled it pure to create Molecule 01 — a fragrance that fast gained a cult following the world over. Many more scents later, COMPANION visited Schön at his Berlin apartment and lab to get a whiff of the chemistry behind his ‘anti-fragrances’, and glean his take on the wellness industry’s obsession with nature (hint: it’s overrated).

COMPANION: Your first scent, Molecule 01, instantly became a success after its launch — although all you had to do was bottle its single ingredient, ISO E Super.

Geza Schön: I simply decided that this chemical was good enough to bottle on its own. Along with each of the four Molecule perfumes in the series, there is an Escentric fragrance which is an homage to the molecule. These fragrances contain more than one ingredient, and are my experiments to bring out the best of each molecule within a complex fragrance structure. So Molecule 01 has a velvety, slightly cedar woody, sexy amber-like note. It’s a complex scent, given that it’s made out of a single molecule.

To what do you attribute the Molecule series’ popularity?

Just one year ago, it was proven that the molecule ISO E Super stimulates one of our five pheromone receptors, which explains why people smell it on the street, run after you, and ask you what you’re wearing. I think that alone explains its success. I also think that these days, everyone’s longing for things that are simple and beautiful. The world is too complex and complicated already. Simple, striking solutions are the best. Molecule 01 embodies that.

Creating something so perfectly simple requires a wealth of expertise. By the time you were 13, you could identify over 100 distinct scents — blind! Was that down to talent or training?

The latter. I think that the way humans use their sense of smell is on a downwards spiral, as we’re so bombarded with images in our lives that we live almost purely visually these days. Of course we can hear and smell and taste and touch, but we watch and we look at things non-stop. This has overtaken our necessity to feel comfortable with using our sense of smell.

So the popular idea of ‘The Nose’ — a genius perfumer gifted with a highly acute sense of smell — is a delusion?

I think it comes down to the stage in your life at which you’re exposed to scent. Of course, if you’re growing up in Grasse in the South of France, which has a long history of fragrance, every tenth person probably works with smell, and knowledge is passed down through the generations. That creates a nearness, so you can get a sniff — quite literally — of how it all works from a young age. But I don’t know if I believe in the idea of a magical talent. Would Beethoven or Vivaldi have been great musicians had no one sat them down next to a piano or a violin? We all have a great capacity for creativity, and unless we’re given the opportunity to dive into an interesting and new topic, we won’t know if we’re good at something.

Where do you take inspiration from when creating new fragrances?

Any cultural phenomenon is a great starting point for a fragrance. It could be a country, a type of food, a texture, clothing, a book, a colour, a word, anything. It can also be a single product, like patchouli or sandalwood oil — a year ago, International Flavors & Fragrances (IFF), which provides me with ingredients, gave me the best ginger oil I’d ever smelled. I instantly thought, ‘I have to make a fragrance with that.’

What about synthetics?

These days, a new chemical is rarer than a new natural because every chemical has already been filtered and frozen and smelt over and over again. You can see this reflected in the market. It’s only around every five to ten years that a new chemical appears to which you say, ‘Wow, that’s new, we haven’t had that effect yet, let’s work with that.’ Back in the 1970s and 80s, there was a much wider range of input.

You also create scents for companies.

The concept in this case comes from the client. Once I receive the briefing, I let it sit with me, then come up with ideas which fit the client’s image and unique selling point. Ultimately, of course, the goal is that people will experience the scent and think, ‘That’s a nice smell!’ That’s difficult for places like hotels, as there are people coming from all over the world with different ideas of what smells good.

Yet there are some smells which have almost universally positive connotations.

To create a scent for a particular space, say, for a hotel or an open space where people come to fulfil a particular purpose, you need to work with associations. The scent of an orange is a very positive smell. The juice is healthy, light, and sweet. So we like that. The same goes for suntan lotions. There are only two or three types worldwide which have developed over the decades. Because we use this lotion in summer, by the beach or the ocean — and nobody hates being on holiday — this is an instantly good smell. It surrounds you when you’re having a good time.

What does happiness smell like?

That depends on the moments in our lives at which we appreciate smell. There are some which make us go, ‘Ugh, that’s disgusting,’ and there are others which are lovely, like, say, your grandmother’s kitchen, where she’d bake cakes and you’d spend time together. If, for example, you have your first experience with a certain fruit or vegetable when the circumstances just aren’t right — say, your parents just had a big fight — it does form a connection between that smell and the particular situation you experience it in. So of course

what happiness smells like to you depends on your socialisation.

The well-being industry in particular is obsessed with all that’s natural, which your Molecule perfumes are not. Is the importance we place on the ‘pure’ and the ‘natural’ overrated?

I think it’s been taken to the extreme, where people still believe nature itself is good, and that therefore naturals like essential oils must also be good. Well, no. [laughs] Some essential oils are very aggressive. Nature produces essential oils either to attract or as a warning. It doesn’t do a herb any good if we pick a piece of basil and eat it. If a bug takes a bite of a basil leaf, they’ll only do it once. There’s stuff in essential oils which could, in certain doses, be poisonous. That’s why you can’t say nature is generally better. Most chemicals are actually much gentler to our skin. Yet the image we have created of nature has pushed many companies to only use naturals. They’re raw, and some people like that. But they don’t necessarily create a better smell.

What role does scent play in your own daily life?

I wouldn’t use any scented candles, for example, given that I work with perfume every day. We cook every evening and then the whole flat smells of food, which is how I grew up. I also like the scents of smoke and wood when the fire’s on. But when I’m working, I prefer neutral environments in terms of smell, and of sound — I rarely listen to music while I’m on my own. I like the quiet. So I tend to not influence my work by being exposed to too much. I try to keep myself away from the things that could bombard my life even more.

What are you working on at the moment?

There’s quite a variety of projects, and plenty to do. Yet sometimes I sit back and think, ‘What other fragrances does the world still want? Don’t we have enough already?’ It can be frustrating, as it’s difficult to create something new that has mass appeal. That goes not just for fragrances but for everything. These days, our entire intake of substantive knowledge is being digitised, but not being intensified. Intensity comes from times when you really look at things and spend time with them, when you go into and read or listen or experience things.

If anything, the Escentric Molecules are an elegant antidote to that feeling of overload.

That’s a big part of why we created them. Back in the 80s and 90s, I had a lot of friends who didn’t wear perfume — they said, ‘Oh, that’s too much, sweet, fruity, powerful, strong — I’d rather smell of nothing than of this.’ I felt it would still be nice if they had an identifiable, personal fragrance surrounding them which would identify these characters in a simple way. That’s what the Molecules are perfect for. [laughs]

escentric.com



THE TASTES OF TEL AVIV

TEXT CELINA PLAG – PHOTOS NURIEL MOLCHO



Haya Molcho and her sons, the family behind eatery empire NENI, have written a new cookery book about the people of Tel Aviv and their culinary histories. And it has recipes too. The most important ingredient? Friends with whom to share what you make.

Israeli cuisine — there's no such thing, right? Ingredients and dishes enjoyed throughout the Levant that have long been favourites on tables across Israel, Syria, and Lebanon are living cultural hybrids that draw their influences from a broad variety of cultures, religions, local traditions, personal preferences, and individual biographies. This applies to Tel Aviv perhaps more than to any other place. The world converges in this city, where a wealth of different tastes produces a steady stream of fresh styles.

Tel Aviv is also the birthplace of Haya Molcho. The chef and gastro entrepreneur who made Europe hungry for a taste of the Levant has been intimately familiar with its loud, bustling neighbourhoods, aromatic street food, and the scents of exotic spices that waft over the local markets since her

childhood. In 2009, she and her four sons, Nuriel, Elior, Nativ, and Ilan, established the family empire NENI from their base in Vienna. Besides operating the Mediterranean restaurants in some of our 25hours Hotels, the company also has a line of food products and cookbooks — one of the latter was only recently released.

To write 'NENI Tel Aviv. Food. People. Stories', Haya and her sons set off on a journey of discovery through the lively and welcoming urban centre, during which they came across plenty of people with culinary tales to tell. The result is as much an homage to the city itself as it is a collection of recipes. It tells of an endless variety of aromas and tastes, and introduces the people who bring them to life: the chefs and bakers, the butchers and spice merchants, the purists and magicians, the trendsetters, artists, and aesthetes. The book's chapters are dedicated to these groups and their respective takes on the culinary culture that gave birth to the recipes between its pages.

Strictly speaking, 'NENI Tel Aviv. Food. People. Stories' is a collaborative project between the Molcho family and the people of Tel Aviv, who shared their stories with Haya and her sons. What do they all have in common? Spontaneity, for one, and an appetite for risk and improvisation. Each of them adheres to a healthy style of cooking, more or less, and they are all constantly on the search for fresh inspiration. This reveals itself in the taste of their dishes. Take the green shakshuka, for instance, the red variety of which is a staple of Israeli cuisine. It's a sizzling stir fry of tomatoes and aubergines topped with eggs, typically served for brunch. But it works just as well as a midnight snack.

The Molcho family never tires of dreaming up new and different versions of shakshuka for lazy Sunday breakfasts. So why not create a green version with leek, spinach, and fennel? What's important is that the family shares its meals from a huge frying pan placed at the centre of the table. That way, everyone inches their chairs closer together to snaffle a chunk of sourdough to mop up the sauce. It's a bonding experience. However richly varied the different influences within Levant cuisine may be, a common thread nonetheless exists: in this region, people eat together. And as far as we know, it's a foolproof recipe for happiness.



GREEN SHAKSHUKA

SERVES – 4–6 PEOPLE

Ingredients

100 g	leek
30 g	butter
250 g	leaf spinach
25 g	parsley
25 ml	cream
	sea salt
1	small bulb of fennel
2	spring onions
1 tbsp	olive oil, plus more to drizzle on top
50 g	kashkaval, or alternatively semi-soft cow's milk cheese
20 g	parmesan, plus some more for garnish
6	eggs
	sourdough as a side

Preparation

Cut the leek lengthwise, then wash. Slice into roughly one-centimetre broad strips. Melt the butter in a pot, add the leek, and braise for around 15 minutes, until soft. Clean the spinach and trim the thick stalks. Place around 50 grams of the leaves to one side. Blanch the rest of the spinach (including the stalks) and the parsley for ten seconds in salted boiling water, drain, and douse briefly in ice-cold water. Press gently until dry.

Use a hand or immersion blender to blend the leek, boiled spinach and parsley. 75 millilitres of the water, and cream until soft and creamy. Season with salt. Cut the fennel into thin slices. Wash the spring onions and cut them in half (crosswise). Add some olive oil to a large pan and place on the hob over medium heat. Gently fry the spring onions and fennel for three minutes. Season with salt, then place to one side on a separate plate.

Add the remaining spinach to the same pan, together with one or two tablespoons of water, and stir until soft. Season with salt. Then spread the boiled spinach, fennel, and spring onions evenly on top. Coarsely grate the kashkaval cheese and parmesan, and sprinkle over the vegetables. Use a spoon to create six indentations, and break an egg into each of the dents. Season with salt (especially the yolk). Cover the pan and leave it to simmer for four to five minutes, until the egg white is firm but the yolk remains runny. Grate more parmesan onto the eggs. Drizzle with olive oil and serve with fresh bread.



Haya Molcho, Nuriel Molcho, NENI
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Diving into The Forest

TEXT FLORIAN SIEBECK – PHOTOS CONNY MIRBACH

Nature, awareness, deceleration, meditation: 'shinrin-yoku', meaning 'bathing in the forest', is a recognised treatment in Japan. It's also spreading to Germany as a by-product of the general mindfulness trend.

Why is it so popular? What does the bathing part involve? Accompanied by two guides, partners Carlos Ponte and Emma Wisser, COMPANION headed off to the Mangfall Valley, close to Munich, to test the waters and discover what this activity is all about.

Between the trees and wet earth, we learned something about the healing qualities of the forest — and about ourselves as well.



This particular day in December has a different quality to it somehow. It feels more like the tentative awakening of spring: the air is clear and the weather mild, as the sun glances gently through the treetops. Here in Upper Bavaria's Mangfall Valley, the forest is still surprisingly lush. There has hardly been any deforestation in the water basin around Munich, and the woodlands are left largely to their own devices. That's why everything looks so untouched — the way they were seen by the German poets of the early Romantic period, who perceived the forest as a place of longing and emotion.

We have come to experience the woods with all of our senses. To grow closer to ourselves, just a little, shinrin-yoku is the name of the Japanese method for this: bathing in the forest. 'In a figurative sense, it means absorbing the forest, enjoying it, placing oneself in a direct relationship with nature, the trees, wind, light, and soil,' says Emma Wisser. She is leading us through the woods with her partner Carlos Ponte. Bathing in the forest is an officially recognised form of therapy in Japan and the United States — but shinrin-yoku is still largely unknown here in Germany. Is it just a walk? Is it going to be strenuous? 'Bathing in the forest is not athletic at all. But neither is it a walk. It's actually more of a sojourn. We are in the forest, with the forest, and can allow ourselves to be surprised by what happens. How we feel, what we sense — the responses are always very personal.'

Shinrin-yoku was introduced by Japan's Ministry of Agriculture in the early 1980s. It started out as a marketing campaign: the idea was to encourage people to appreciate the forest, to recognise its beneficial effects, and to stop perceiving it merely as an economic resource. The ministry poured millions into researching the forest and its salubrious effects. Soon afterwards, the first centre for forest therapy opened its doors; these days, medical students at Japanese universities can even qualify as specialists in forest medicine. Here in Germany, forests cover almost a third of the land, making it one of the most wood-laden countries in the European Union. Now we are seeing the emergence of medicinal forests, especially in the rich woodlands of Mecklenburg-West Pomerania. Across both countries, it is said that the forest can alleviate physical symptoms and provide relief from emotional afflictions.

So here we are, ready to dive into the woods at the gates to Munich. Carlos and Emma have organised these tours for two years now, twice a week in summer and by appointment in winter. What brought them together was meditation, or more precisely, an app. Originally from Argentina, Carlos had worked as an IT forensics specialist in Canada, seven days a week, for decades. 'I had no life left,' says Carlos — so he

took up meditation. He discovered a meditation app that allowed him to communicate with like-minded people. And he kept coming across a photo of Emma, who runs a practice for mindfulness and self-compassion in Munich. Carlos and Emma started messaging, then talking on the phone, eventually arranging a date to cook together. When they discovered that they share the same birthday, Carlos dropped everything, sold his house in Calgary, and moved to Weyarn in Bavaria. 'We decided to work together on mindfulness, with a holiday component. European vacations with a mindfulness twist. Here we have space, peace, and nature around us,' explains Carlos.

Before setting off, we fortify ourselves with some minestrone that Carlos made. It's a half-hour walk from their home, across the fields and through the forest. We stop by a small waterhole, stretch, and do a few qigong exercises. Carlos tells us that the lungs contain half a litre of air that is hardly exchanged when we breathe normally. 'So now let's get rid of this Munich air! We take deep breaths in and out.'

To experience the woods, we need to open our spirits, dispel nagging doubts, and welcome nature in. 'It is also about becoming aware of a particular quality of the forest,' says Emma. 'There are no rules. It beckons everyone in. What would happen if we treated ourselves the same way that the forest does?' Carlos pauses between two trees. The portal to another world lies right here, he says: a world in which the spirit only perceives the forest, the here and now. The snapping of twiglets beneath the soft, damp humus, the tiny clovers eagerly stretching their leaves to the light. We are told to explore our surroundings by ourselves for a few minutes. 'Introduce yourself to the forest is Carlos' way of putting it. 'Let nature back into you. Disconnect.'

We experience the forest like children, tracing our hands across the bark and the lush verdant moss, breathing the clean air, and gazing up as the treetops sway in the wind. Far away we hear

the burbling creek at the base of the valley as our eyes delight at the manifold colours, still resplendent in the wintery woods: rusty red, purple, green, yellow. Hecticness and haste melt away. 'Just be there, just feel,' says Emma. 'And don't be shy: perhaps we won't chat all the time, but there is no need to walk in silence.' One of those quieter moments comes when we reach the banks and each of us takes a stick onto which we project our anxieties. Then we lob them into the water, letting go of the negative thoughts, just for one day. 'It's surprising, but the groups we accompany tend to bond,' muses Carlos. Afterwards, we wash our hands and faces in the ice-cold water.

Carlos tells us that the couple were once visited by a family from Brooklyn. Their seven-year-old daughter had never walked more than a few metres at home. The parents had given up, thought Carlos, who then said, 'Let's just see how far we get.' The child explored the forest transfixed, walked the whole path, six kilometres, without complaining once. Her parents were lost for words. What is this magic at play in the forest? Why does it slow us down? Is it a journey back to the primordial days of human existence?

Scientists around the world are investigating the psychological and physiological effects of shinrin-yoku. Their work began in the 1980s, when biologist Edward O. Wilson proposed the biophilia hypothesis, which describes the innate love that humans feel for all forms of life around them. It is part of our DNA — the result of an evolutionary process spanning millions of years. Swedish scientist Roger Ulrich discovered that hospital patients recover faster if there are trees outside their windows. And Qing Li, a Japanese researcher who has penned dozens of studies on the medicinal effects of the forest, determined that our blood pressure, cortisol levels (stress hormone), and heartbeat drop noticeably after only an hour in the woods.

The Japanese believe that forest air extends life. It's true: strolls through



'Shinrin-yoku means absorbing the forest, placing oneself in a direct relationship with nature, the trees, wind, light, and soil.'



woodlands strengthen our cardiovascular systems and boost our natural defences. Scientists at the Nippon Medical School have found that white blood cell activity can rise by as much as 50 percent after a few hours spent in the forest. Not only do these cells fight germs but they also help to prevent cancer. Qing Li believes that terpenes — messenger substances in trees — are responsible for this effect. Trees use these volatile organic compounds, known as phytoncides, to fight off pests and diseases. Scientists in Germany are now also investigating whether our forests, with their significantly different set of trees compared to Japan — oak and beech trees, instead of cedar and larch — could have similar effects.

Carlos digs his hands deep into the wet foliage. He holds it up to our noses. Everyone agrees that the fresh forest floor smells divine — although no one can explain precisely why. Is it the messenger substances? Memories of care-free childhood days? Although it has been demonstrated that inhaling phytoncides produces a calming effect, some scientists believe that the bouquet of aromas comprising terpenes, essential oils, and moist soil primarily reminds us of pleasant memories of ambling through trees. Collecting mushrooms with the family. Excursions with friends.

Our three hours in the forest are all about experiencing nature with all of our senses, discovering traces emblematic of our personal narratives. We stop in a glade. The sun sends tendrils of light across the fresh moss, and the scenery appears as perfect as a painting. We close our eyes and listen to the rest of our senses. We feel, hear, smell, and taste the forest. Clutching warm mugs of spruce needle tea, we set off to find a tree that especially appeals to each of us. 'Tea with a tree' is Emma's name for it. And it's entirely up to us whether we hug the tree, talk with it, gaze at it, or lean against its trunk.

'We are trying to find a balance between an academic and an esoteric approach. Mindfulness enhances the

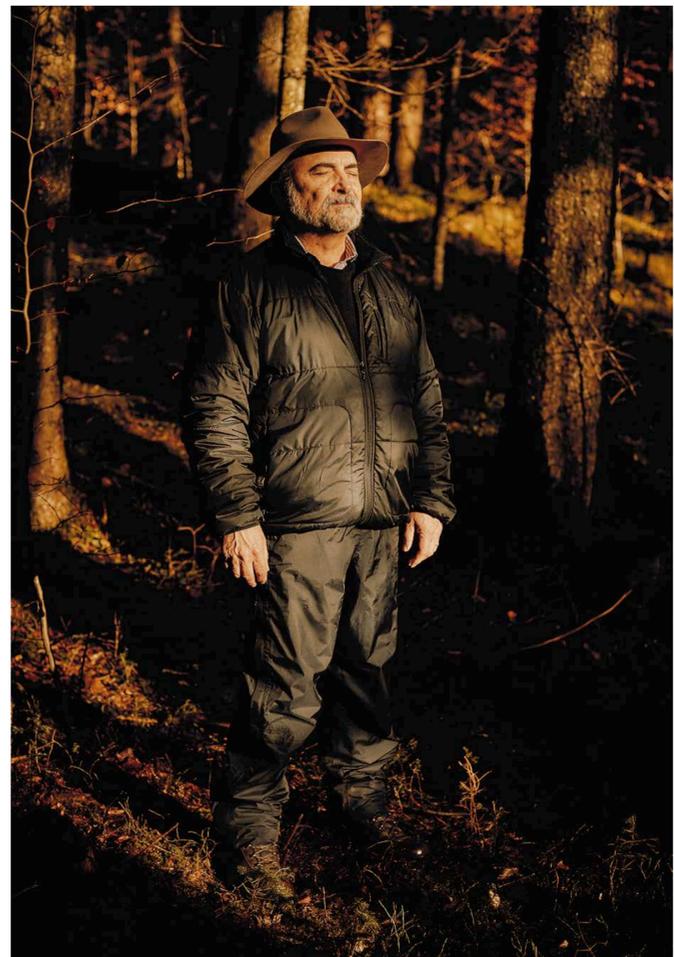
'Mindfulness enhances the effects of the forest. It's humbling to see that we're making a difference in people's lives, one at a time.'

effects of the forest. It's humbling to see that we're making a difference in people's lives, one at a time. It is rewarding, and a big responsibility.' Carlos recently returned from Japan, where he shared ideas about shinrin-yoku with the prestigious researcher Yoshifumi Miyazaki, and took time to visit the Akasawa National Recreational Forest, to which around five million Japanese flock every year. Forests play a significant role in Japanese history and mythology.

Not only is this nature-based mindfulness a blessing for the spirit — it's also one for personal growth. Towards the end of our walk, Carlos gives us a handout with tips on how to incorporate shinrin-yoku into everyday life — in the green lungs of the city — to take a little break from the rationalism, he-

donism, and materialism of urban existence. 'For 99.9 percent of history, human beings lived in nature,' says Emma. And even though around 1,300 square metres of forest would theoretically be available to each person in Germany, hardly any of us make use of it. 'We are all part of nature, even if we don't feel that way,' says Carlos before we leave the woods behind. 'This is not only a forest. This is home.'

[universe-mindfulness.com](https://www.universe-mindfulness.com)



A JOURNEY IN WOOL

IN COLLABORATION WITH MINI FASHION
TEXT MELISSA DRIER — PHOTOS JENNY PEÑAS



Wool is back in fashion's spotlight. As it should be — not only is wool an ultimately natural, biodegradable fibre, but nature's most hardworking and aesthetically versatile material is also an outstanding medium for style- and tech-driven innovation. These are all qualities that MINI values, which is what prompted a partnership with The Woolmark Company for the 'MINI FASHION FIELD NOTES' capsule collection. Together, they asked four international emerging designers — Liam Hodges (UK), STAFFONLY (China), PH5 (USA), and Rike Feurstein (Germany) — to challenge expectations of travel and create iconic wool pieces for today's urban travellers. Their talents are the perfect complement to MINI and The Woolmark Company's common focus on design, quality, and innovation. For COMPANION, fashion journalist and wool aficionado Melissa Drier goes on a personal trip of her own, offering insight into the inner workings of a life rich in wool.

About ten years ago, I found myself in a serious state of 'wool deprivation'. Don't try googling that as a medical condition. Still, my eyes and my skin were experiencing a severe deficiency as a consumer and fashion professional. For wool wasn't overly present on the streets, shops, or runways in those days. It had been pushed to the sidelines by a seemingly unstoppable flood of denim and casual cotton, micro-fibers, synthetic blend shells, and tech fabrics of all types.

The result: the world looked flat, and often still does. See for yourself. Stand on a well-trafficked corner and take a good look at the people passing by. Compare the colour density and how the light reflects off a parka with how it plays off a wool coat or jacket. Or contrast a cotton sweatshirt with a woollen sweater. The difference? Depth. Dimension. Diversity. I'd go so far as to suggest personality.

The tide has turned, thank goodness. My counting game still finds non-wool apparel outnumbering wool by more than ten to one, but wool is regaining its front-runner position among tastemakers and consumers in the know. These shifts come and go in cycles, but expanded efforts by The Woolmark Company have definitely spurred on much of wool's recent renaissance. The world's undisputed authority on wool has long nurtured talent and know-how in the

fashion and textile industries, from the respected International Woolmark Prize to educational programmes and, more recently, an exciting lineup of collaborations that underscore wool's myriad possibilities and properties.

The 2018 partnership between MINI FASHION and The Woolmark Company is a prime example; they initiated the 'MINI FASHION FIELD NOTES', a convention-challenging collaborative wool capsule collection that was first presented in Florence during the renowned Pitti Uomo fair.

The result? Four designer labels, most of whom are Woolmark prize alumni, expressed personal travel experiences through contemporary fashion pieces made of wool for the urban nomad. Celebrating their own transformative journey, Wei Lin and Mija Zhang of PH5 in New York imaginatively touched down in Miami Beach's Art Deco district for their jacquard wool mock turtleneck sweater. Liam Hodges from the United Kingdom channelled his experiences in the Big Apple as a kid and grown-up to design a jeans jacket in patchwork wool. Berlin's Rike Feurstein tuned into 'From Russia with Love' for her St. Petersburg-inspired wool trilby hat, while China's Shimo Zhou and Une Yea of STAFFONLY took inspiration from London's Greenwich

Park in their creation of a green wool trench coat, the stripes of which not only reference the Greenwich or prime meridian, but cleverly cite MINI's trademark bonnet stripes.

'Field Notes' is another example of how MINI explores journeys on a mental and emotional level as opposed to a purely physical one, and works to reimagine travel by perceiving it as a state of mind — a gateway to pushing boundaries and allowing the outside world to influence what happens within. MINI believes that travelling is more than moving from A to B. Rather, it is a journey from one feeling to another, one culture to another, one perspective to another.

When it comes to fashion, and especially to wool, it is also fascinating to trace how your clothes join you on your personal journey from one nation to another, from one decade to the next. As these emerging designers prove, material and your wardrobe are deeply linked to the stations along that lifelong trip. And the same is true for my personal journey through time.

Before travelling back into my past, I'd like to point out that my prime connection with wool is aesthetic. Wool is a quick-change artist that can go from thick and bulky to almost gossamer thin, comes woven or knitted, solid or printed, textured or plain. Moreover, as a good mixer, wool blends offer no end of other looks and finish well for a range of textures and performance properties. It's easy to tailor and has excellent drape and handle, as well as a natural ability to insulate and protect. It is naturally breathable as well as odour resistant — attributes that make it an apt active and sports-oriented wardrobe builder for warm or cold weather.

As a fiber, merino wool has built-in elasticity, helping it stretch with you yet always bounce back to its original shape. It's static and stain resistant, naturally flame resistant, and provides good UV protection. Plus, wool lasts longer, needs less washing, and can be frequently recycled to extend its lifespan. When it does finally reach the end, it is truly biodegradable — all attributes that keep wool way ahead of the curve.

If nomen est omen, however, I am an exception. My middle name — which is my mother's maiden name — is 'Seide'. Meaning 'silk' in German. Then, too, I was born with eczema and my skin was ultrasensitive. However, studies now indicate that wool is not only good for the skin, but also therapeutic for eczema sufferers. Having happily worn wool next to my skin from childhood, I guess my instincts were ahead of the popular wisdom of the time.

It's my grandfather, William Seide, who was probably my key influence when it comes to wool. Funnily enough, he wanted to be a journalist, but my grandmother found this too uncertain a livelihood. A master tailor who worked near Kiev before emigrating to Paris and then New York around 1900, he was the sample maker for Ben Zuckerman till the company shuttered in 1968. Dubbed 'America's Balenciaga',

Zuckerman was a multiple Coty Award winner, and his sculptural, graphically textured wool coats and suits cost around 1,000 dollars in the 50s. I was too young to really grasp what my grandfather did for a living, but I remember being surrounded by beautiful clothes, and being told tales of how he kept my mom looking ultrachic throughout the depression.

I suspect I use clothes the way other people use favourite songs to map their personal biographies, and when I start running them through my mind, there are so many markers.

Early memories? My camel wool coat when four years old, complete with matching leggings. My plaid pleated wool skirt was another real favourite, worn the day we kindergartners had our outlines drawn on body-length sheets of brown paper, the task then to paint in our outfits. That I managed just fine, though my kindergarten teacher wasn't thrilled when I later drew a portrait of my family wearing no clothes at all. My mother loved it!

My parents set the fashion tone for me: two people with style who, despite a middle-class budget, prioritised clothes of quality. During my preppy spell, most of high school was an all-out wool orgy in Villager and John Meyer Shetland wool crewnecks, wool skirts, and dresses in Harris-like wool tweeds — always accessorised with wool knee socks. European style also exerted an influence on my teenage self. There were the English Oxford bag wool trousers from Bendels and the navy wool Anne-Marie Beretta coat that my uncle's in-house Saks discount made possible. Or the camel wool Krizia culottes, my first coup in Bonwit Teller's markdown shop, plus the mini dusty pastel wool sweaters from Luisa Via Roma.

College? Antiwar protests required different gear, mostly army-navy fatigues with a pair of navy wool sailor pants thrown in, or a British World War II nurse's cape in pigeon blue melton wool that I picked up in London. The 70s? Not such a pretty time — polyester double-knit, anyone? — though it was then that we discovered vintage, including tailored wool jackets from the 40s and 50s. As DNR's fashion fabric editor in 1977, I learned to love menswear woollens and, as fashion editor from 1980-85, the best wool looks the world had to offer.

I got married in a navy and white wool twill Armani suit in 1980, and when picking up my divorce papers three years later, arrived fortified by the spirits of Claudette Colbert, Miss Marple, and Kim Novak. Or rather, suits they might have worn. The grey flannel number was 'Vertigo' par excellence. On the way, I'd fallen into a yet unknown vintage shop in Soho, and couldn't resist buying all three.

The last 40 years? Let's check out some of the wool in my closet. Here the ratio is about seven to one in wool's favour. You'll find pieces from all eras — acquired vintage pieces, personal old-timers, designers you've never heard of, not too much colour bar weird reds, greens, and a stray orange, plus

a wacky plaid or two. In terms of outerwear, look for bold mohair plaid, boiled wool, a furry wool-beaver hair blend, or a houndstooth knit. Jackets include a boyish Glen check, an almost melton-weight wool fully adorned with passmenterie, a tailored knit, a wool-cashmere herringbone, with trousers and slacks in wool twill, a soft but beefy Japanese slubbed wool flannels, and wool jerseys.

Skirts run the gamut from chunky tweed, grey flannel pencil styles, asymmetrically shaped or knife pleated models, printed wool voile, wool lace, rough Shetland, and a spongy square weave. My dresses are currently taking time off on my other season rack in the form of a raw-edged wool voile, a tightly woven wool twill, and a vintage wool crepe. Sweaters are mostly heavy, with current favourites led by a merino-possum blend, a somewhat crunchy, tightly spun Merino, a rich wool-cashmere rib, and a rag wool rib.

I'm writing this at my country desk in an ancient Norwegian sweater, with my gardening wardrobe of old Pendleton shirts, Woolrich jackets, and a Pierre Cardin wool turtleneck that belonged to my father close at hand. And many old woollen friends floating through my mind, some still in my possession, others a mere memory. The moral of the story? Love your clothes and they'll love you back. And if you choose wisely, you'll have a wardrobe that lasts a lifetime.

↳ mini.com/fashion

MINI FASHION FIELD NOTES Capsule Collection



SHEER WOOL BLEND LOGO SWEATER
by PH5



WOOL DENIM JACKET
by Liam Hodges



WOOL BLEND COAT
by STAFFONLY



STRIPED WOOL JUMPSUIT
by PH5



WOOL TRILBY HAT
by Rike Feurstein

'Wool is a quick-change artist that can go from thick and bulky to almost gossamer thin, comes woven or knitted, solid or printed, textured or plain.'





Kevin Braddock gathered all his strength to ask for help during a severe depressive episode — then the journalist launched Torchlight, a project aimed at encouraging others to do the same. About a glimmer of light in the darkest moments.

Asking for Help

TEXT QUYNH TRAN — PHOTOS AIMEE SHIRLEY

The bleakest phase in Kevin's life started on a sunny day in August. Sadness is harder to bear when everyone else seems happy. Kevin Braddock had just quit his job. He sat at the bottom of a tall building where, until recently, he had helped to create the latest trends as editor in chief of a lifestyle magazine. Kevin seemed to have arrived at the top — which made his fall even harder.

The responsibility of sitting in the driving seat was too much for him, the writer. Adding to the stress were physical ailments, a chronic illness, and personal problems. Everything in Kevin's life seemed to be going wrong. Ending it all, the pressure, the stress — more and more Kevin became plagued by these thoughts. It is perhaps the darkest form of irony that, in his saddest moment, he was simply too drunk to put his self-destructive plan into action. He eventually posted a message on Facebook: 'Can someone who speaks German please come with me to the hospital?' Then came the three words that would change his life. 'I need help.'

The first responses appeared on screen in seconds, then came calls, and finally friends who went with Kevin to the hospital. The diagnosis: a depressive episode. Not the first one in his life, but certainly the worst. 'I had reached a point where I was willing to put an end to it all — or I'd have to ask for help,' says Kevin. 'Help arrived, and I'm truly grateful. My life has been turned on its head since then.' He is still healing, he says.

Instead of playing the role of editor in chief — the bon vivant — Kevin now seems thoughtful and reflective, willing to admit his weaknesses. And he's open as well, especially with others like him, because he has learned to ask for help. Men find that especially hard. Even today, many young boys are raised to be strong and confident, and to avoid weakness or fault lines in life like the plague. The man, the provider, the stronger sex — studies have shown that this social pressure is reflected in suicide rates, which are almost three times higher among men. Kevin wants to dismantle the traditional masculine image by showing the courage to be vulnerable.

To do this, he has created a beautifully designed magazine that clearly reveals his years of experience. He collaborated on the project with editor Emma Warren and designer Enver Hadzijaj — friends and colleagues who have accompanied Kevin on his journey. The result is Torchlight: A Publication About Asking For Help. It's Kevin's story, but also that of countless others who suffer from depression. Spread across 150 pages full of articles in the format of reports, journal entries, and streams of ideas, Kevin explains what it means to stumble and get back up again — to go from the

'Daily routines and regular tasks can help you bring structure back to your life and provide a few little anchors.'

beginning of the end to the end of a new beginning. 'Berlin' is one of the first articles. Divided into chapters, it describes the onset of depression in a sensitive, thoughtful, and profoundly literary style. By contrast, 'Spring Comes' deals with the return of hope, like the first rays of summer banishing the darkness of winter. One of the final features — 'Things that Work' — provides a 13-point guide of the things that helped him most. Number one: asking for help, of course! Eating, meditation, and love also feature, as does nature, a theme that connects the texts through photos of flowers and landscapes. Nature, as a vital source of vitality, in general played an important role in his recovery.

Kevin's healing process began with the basics — by quite simply taking a break. During this time, he moved from Berlin back to London to begin a course of long-term psychological counselling. He went hiking, took extended bike tours through the Pyrenees, regularly practiced tai chi, and spent plenty of time with his friends and family. Hitting rock bottom made him realise how many people he had in his life, how many friends were willing to offer him time and support. In the end, though, it wasn't just the support from friends or the

counselling sessions that got him back on his feet. It was also the time he chose to spend with himself that made a big impact. Kevin has created a set of Torchlight Practice Cards, tips for daily self-care that came to him during those periods of time. Divided into Idea Cards and Action Cards, they are intended to inspire the spirit and to encourage an active lifestyle — playfully, of course. 'Make a Game out of Getting Better' is the slogan of the cards. They are mostly simple things, but they can seem insurmountable to people in the throes of depression: learning the sun salute exercise in yoga, for instance, or calling old friends and relatives for no particular reason.

'One of my favourite cards is the instruction to make your bed every day,' says Kevin. 'At first it doesn't sound like much. But daily routines and regular tasks can help you bring structure back to your life and provide a few little anchors.' There's a joker in the set as well: 'Just do nothing.' To get better, for Kevin, this is important as well. 'Healing is hard work, so you need time off too,' he says with a laugh. Do depressed people walk through life feeling perpetually sad? 'That's a dumb cliché,' says Kevin.

His frankness is refreshing. It wasn't long after the publication of Torchlight magazine and the set of cards that Kevin started receiving invitations to give talks and workshops at schools, universities, workplaces, and festivals.

Other people with similar conditions now use the project's website to share their stories, their suffering, and how they have learned to live with the insidious condition. That's all despite Kevin originally having planned Torchlight just for himself, as a kind of self-reflection in the magazine format he knew so well, to support his healing process.

'Depression is an incredibly egocentric disease that drags you into an obsessive vicious cycle of self-destructive thoughts. And the 'me-ness' of it all makes you feel even more guilty and ashamed in the end,' says Kevin. At first it seemed self-indulgent to write about it. But after a friend told him that depression had driven his sister to suicide, Kevin decided to share his story. And to show others that they are not alone. Initially Kevin only told friends about the project, and printed just a handful of copies of the magazine and cards. He gave most of them to friends and acquaintances, while the tiny amount remaining was distributed by newsgagents in London and Berlin. The small print run flew off the shelves, so Kevin started a crowdfunding campaign to finance a second edition of the magazine. It took just three days to exceed the funding target.

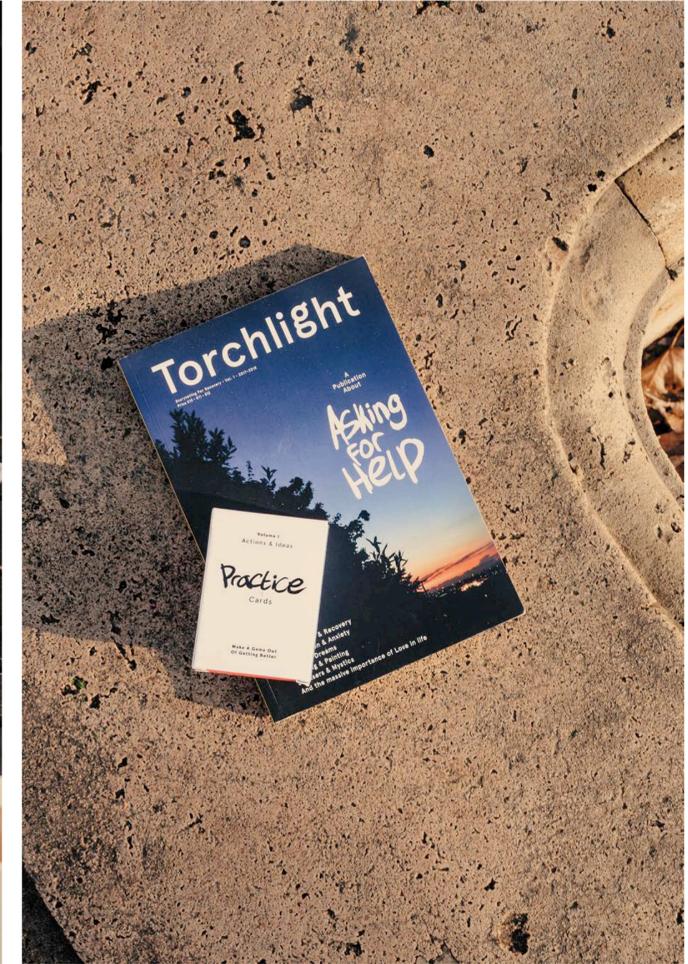
The success of Torchlight underlines the urgency of its topic in a way that only studies and surveys can otherwise achieve: around 350 million people suffer from depression worldwide, according to figures released by Germany's Federal Ministry of Health. Meanwhile, the World Health

Organization has warned that mental conditions will become the second most common type of disease by 2020. Those affected find it hard to find joy in everyday life.

With Torchlight, however, Kevin wants to show people that it can be done — and not just the people directly affected by depression. Everyone has darker days or periods. Torchlight is intended as an anchor in everyday life. All the same, he wants to emphasise that anyone experiencing the symptoms of a serious condition should consult a doctor or therapist.

Fighting depression has since become almost a full-time job for Kevin. He regularly posts self-help tips on his YouTube channel and on Instagram, and he will put out two new products — the second volume of Practice Cards and an accompanying guide to them — through crowdfunding in February. Alongside that he is working on other ideas for Torchlight, like a paperback adaptation that goes to print in May.

Kevin is doing better. But he still feels overwhelmed from time to time. Things get too much for him every now and then, and that's when they resurface, the thoughts about ending it all. Now, though, all of these things are outweighed by the knowledge that there are people around him who matter, who help him, and that there are moments of light in life, however dark things may seem. A crumpled-up Post-it is stuck to the back of his magazine. 'Pass it on,' it says.



'Healing is hard work, so you need time off too.'

Torchlight's Tips for Getting Better

Actions

Dance for ten minutes to three songs

Wake up, get moving, and loosen up. The happiness hormone serotonin is at its lowest first thing in the morning, but physical action helps it start to circulate. Dance like nobody's watching.

Plan it, buy it, cook it, and eat it together

Depression feeds off loneliness and isolation, so getting together and doing something collaborative is a good way to break the funk and get you involved with others.

Go for a walk with no destination

Most of the journeys we make are destined: they're about getting somewhere specific. But going for a walk with no destination is a way to get lost in the moment, allowing yourself to enjoy whatever you find.

Ideas

One day at a time: try living that way

One of the most effective ideas for recovery. Anxiety is often focused on the future — worries about what will happen tomorrow, next week, or next year. But staying in the day you're in helps take the sting out of it.

Marcus Aurelius: read a few of his 'Meditations'

With its emphasis on acceptance and self-reflection, the Stoic philosophy of the Roman emperor is very well suited to dealing with depression and anxiety.

Find out more about the latest crowdfunding campaigns and get your copy of Torchlight and the Practice Cards at torchlightsystem.com



THE GREAT ESCAPIISM

TEXT CELINA PLAG
ILLUSTRATION SARA STEFANINI

PARIS
The French Underwater Worlds

Time to get out of the city? Want to leave all your cares behind and immerse yourself in nature and culture? Always a good idea! COMPANION has put together some tips for excursions in the surrounds of our 25hours Hotels' cities to give you ideas for moments of mindfulness in the cold season.

Fancy a trip to the zoo, but not the wet, cold, or windy weather? A visit to Aquarium Tropical in the picturesque Palais de la Porte Dorée, just a short trip from the centre of Paris, is a delightful way to escape the potential boredom induced by nasty weather — plus you get the opportunity to marvel at the creatures inhabiting its fascinating underwater worlds. Luminescent coral, shoals of darting fish, lolling turtles and alligators from all over the world beckon guests into mysterious worlds. Only figuratively speaking, of course. Our favourite fish? 'La Demoiselle des mers du sud.' Its glowing blue and yellow markings are enchanting.

↳ palais-portedoree.fr

1

VIENNA
Sampling the Charms of Burgenland

Don't let its medieval name fool you: not far from Vienna, Burgenland satisfies even the most progressive of palates. If you know where to go, that is. Visit the Greisslerei delicatessen that adjoins the Taubenkobel restaurant — and the restaurant itself as well, of course. Run by the Eselböck family and their friends, the delightful eatery combines reinvented culinary experiences with seemingly forgotten flavours from the region. All of their offerings are made from the region's fruits of nature. Perched right next door, Greisslerei's Piedmontese delicacies provide stiff competition for the restaurant: the on-site shop sells delicious specialities and magnificent wines.

↳ taubenkobel.com

2

MUNICH
Meditating in the Kranzbach Forest

Meditation is an integral part of life in the Far East — and now also deep in the forests of Bavaria. Not far from Munich, the Meditation House — a kind of wooden pavilion in a forest glade — is connected to the Kranzbach hotel, just outside Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Commissioning Kengo Kuma, Tokyo's star architect, to lead the project certainly paid off: his artistic structures are always in balance with the surrounding nature. Built under the auspices of Studio Lois from Innsbruck, the Meditation House attracts guests looking to replenish their spirits, architecture enthusiasts, and yoga groups who book the hut for special sessions.

↳ daskranzbach.de/de/meditation-house

3

ZÜRICH
Keep on Running Around Zurich

Tobogganing, skating, skiing... The area surrounding Zurich turns into a paradise for winter sports fans as soon as the first snow has fallen. More of a runner? No problem: there's no such thing as bad weather, just bad equipment, says the crew behind the Swiss brand On Running. Its website showcases the most beautiful running routes in and around Zurich. From a three-kilometre jog around Lake Zurich to a 10K through Zurich Forest right next door — even in winter, gliding through the Alpine landscape is sports with benefits.

↳ on-running.com/en-de/c/explore-zurich

4

FRANKFURT
Red Wine Tourism in Rheingau

The Rheingau wine region near Frankfurt am Main is actually famous for its Riesling grapes. But the clocks tick differently in Assmannshausen, a hillside district of Rüdesheim: the red wine village and self-proclaimed 'Ace on the Rhine' is an outpost of pinot noir. Countless wine growers are strung next to one another along Lorcher Strasse, so red wine enthusiasts can sample their way from cellar door to cellar door. Wine tourism aside, the medieval town, with its magnificent panoramic views, has plenty more to offer, like the chair lift that, from March onwards, whisks guests high above the vines.

↳ assmannshausen-am-rhein.de

5

COLOGNE
Finding Nature in Hürth

What does a woolly pig actually look like? How about a racker? Put away your smartphone! Instead of googling funny animal pictures, a far better idea is to round up the kids for a visit to the Gertrudenhof adventure farmyard. Here, nature presents itself up close: besides enjoying the petting zoo, guests can pick up plenty of tips about (healthy) diets by trying their hand at sowing, harvesting, processing, and, of course, eating the crops. There are plenty of stalls selling tasty treats too, just like a regular farmers' market. So while the little ones are busy stroking the rabbits or running around the barn, parents can tuck into a tarte flambée or hot waffles in peace.

↳ erlebnisbauernhof-gertrudenhof.de

6

HAMBURG
Sweat Yourself Happy on Sylt

Sylt is just a stone's throw away from Hamburg and well worth a visit at any time of year. Not just for its brisk sea breezes and tasty fish sandwiches — neither are in short supply in the Hanseatic city — but rather because the island is a winter paradise for nature enthusiasts and wellness freaks. Both groups will find what they crave at Samoa, a beachfront sauna near Rantum. Tucked away in the heart of the dunes, the Finnish-style hut and steam room are perfect for guests wanting to warm up in winter. The panoramic window offers guests a calming view of the North Sea's waves while they sit back to sweat their troubles away. Once that's been achieved, brave souls can make the most of the opportunity and take a (very) refreshing dip in the water!

↳ strandsauna-samoa.de

7

DÜSSELDORF
Let There Be Light in Unna

The Rhineland is known for its art. For a pleasurable day out, there are plenty of museums and galleries within easy reach of Düsseldorf. A visit to the Centre for International Light Art, located just 80 kilometres away in Unna, is a great choice for winter. After all, light is a necessary remedy for the soul in the darker months of the year. Besides hosting temporary exhibitions, the centre shows illuminating works by celebrated artists like Christian Boltanski, Ólafur Eliasson, and Rebecca Horn, as well as pieces by James Turrell, the undisputed master of light art. Turrell is known for making rooms glow, not only in white, but also in the mesmerising tones of the rainbow.

↳ lichtkunst-unna.de

8

BERLIN
The Tropics of the Spreewald Forest

White beaches, crystal-clear waters, exotic plants: those who've missed out on booking a trip to the Caribbean this year can get that holiday feeling in the heart of Brandenburg, a short train ride away from Berlin and perfect for a day out of town. Set up in a former aircraft hangar, the Tropical Islands theme park entices visitors with the world's largest indoor rainforest — situated in what is also the world's biggest cantilevered dome. The expansive wellness and sauna area is equally record breaking and a wonderful place to lounge around doing nothing, without the massive carbon footprint of a long-haul flight. With a pleasant temperature of 28°C, the swimming areas feature a waterfall, grotto, and a huge slide. Prefer untouched nature? The nearby Spreewald Forest is a wonderful place in which to take a stroll!

↳ tropical-islands.de

9

Good

TEXT MANUEL ALMEIDA VERGARA

The nocturnal hours have become something of a status symbol: endless brands and technologies now focus on deep sleep, which reputedly makes us energised, healthy, and beautiful. But what happens if that gradual slide into the world of dreams remains inexplicably elusive? Jessica Hoyer from Hamburg founded the ByNacht brand to help people fall asleep. And to look better when they awake.

'Maybe the night was a little bit short, but I did sleep like a baby,' says Jessica Hoyer — her chirpy voice leaves you in no doubt. 'Actually, I never go to bed without having applied a combination of my products.' The products she's talking about are balms and serums, creams and oils — 13 different types in dark crucibles and bottles, for both men and women. ByNacht is the name they bear, referring to the label that the Hamburg-based entrepreneur founded roughly a year ago.

'I ran my own advertising agency for many years, managed VIPs, and generally worked way too hard,' she says. 'I was travelling all over the place, maybe 190 days per year. Every second day I was catching a plane or a train.' Jet lag on heavy rotation. Sometimes she woke up in the morning unsure of which hotel or even which country she was in. 'The fatigue was permanent, and I looked the way I felt,' says Jessica. 'Like a real time-zone zombie.' Despite all the success she achieved as a businesswoman in the advertising industry, her schedule pushed her to the brink of a burnout.

The nights became shorter, the anxious glances at the alarm clock more frequent. Just six hours sleep, then five, eventually four. 'That has no future, of course. You end up going bonkers,' says Jessica. 'I lost the ability to unwind. I was so tired and fatigued that I couldn't sleep.' She tried all kinds of remedies in the United States, to which she travelled several times each year on business. Among them were prescription drugs with melatonin that are not even approved in her native Germany. 'They help you get to sleep, but during the day you feel like you are living in a balloon, far too relaxed, completely zoned out,' says Jessica. So she went back to attending the next business lunch feeling jaded, and could barely stay awake for the meeting that followed. It was fairly probable that the folks on the other side of the table were equally zonked.

After all, a 2014 study by the Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute in Switzerland entitled 'The Future of Sleep' delved into what was happening in the beds of busy urban nomads: the study determined that, on average, people in Western industrialised nations are sleeping one hour less compared to 20 years ago. Moreover, 35 percent of the respondents stated that their sleep quality had deteriorated sharply — which can lead to cardiovascular problems, stomach com-

plaints, depression, and obesity. The chief executive, the manager, the doctor working shifts, the young mother — all of them need and want to sleep better but often find themselves unable to do so.

Jessica got fed up in the end — just like her mother. 'She is an aromatherapist, so she mixed a concoction for me.' Aromas? Bergamot and ylang-ylang? But isn't that just hocus-pocus, more for the esoterically inclined? Jessica certainly used to think so. But: 'The aroma balm helped me sleep like a log,' she says. From that moment, the entrepreneur was a true believer. She wanted to know and read everything about aromatherapy and how it can help people to sleep. She explored combinations, experimented, and consulted chemists and sleep researchers.

Her scepticism gradually gave way to curiosity, then interest, and finally to an almost diehard fascination. Then came the business idea: 'I spent seven years immersing myself in the topic, finding out what works, what doesn't, and what is essentially just quackery,' says Jessica. 'Eventually I wanted to see my ideas come to fruition.'

With ByNacht, Jessica has taken a holistic approach that consists of two phases: first, there are the balms and oils that not only help people to get to sleep but also to extend and intensify their deep-sleep phase. That's the period in which the body is, in a way, particularly productive. 'Collagen production and moisture retention only pick up during the phase of deep sleep. Lots of growth hormones are secreted as well,' explains Jessica. These are the hours in which the body regenerates and the skin becomes particularly receptive. So Jessica responded by adding nourishing creams and serums to her portfolio.

'You will only look good if you sleep well — that's still a key to success,' she says. 'Maybe without it you can get pumped and feel energised, then use makeup to hide the shadows under your eyes — but your skin will only benefit if you get good deep sleep.' Jessica developed the two-phase concept together with German cosmetics laboratories and the renowned sleep expert Rebecca Robbins from New York University. During this time she lived in fear that another company would sneak in ahead and launch a similar product on the market. Her concerns were not unfounded, as sleep has become a real hot topic. Startups with fine-



Carolina Herra

sounding names like Casper or Simba have launched mattresses that they claim are the perfect marriage between premium design and outstanding comfort. People are spending just as much time on the layout of their bedrooms as they are on the more public areas of their homes. Design journals like Architectural Digest print page after page with gushing reports on the master bedroom.

Fashion is catching up as well. Pyjamas and negligees that look as good in the pub as they do in bed have conquered the runway shows of luxury brands and feature heavily in the portfolios of high street labels. Digitisation is infiltrating our nocturnal hours as well. Apps and wearables, such as bracelets or rings that analyse our sleep, are taking the trend to extreme levels. All of a sudden, sleep is no longer a time-consuming, slightly bothersome necessity. It has become a status symbol that needs to be nurtured and fed. But no one seems all that bothered about the skin, the largest human organ.

'Your body will tend to sideline your skin as an unnecessary frill if you don't sleep enough,' says Jessica. 'It will first focus on regenerating everything else, so your liver and kidneys. Then it will detoxify your body and bring structure to your memories.' All of these things will be done before the body takes time to look after the skin. So it's not ideal if a short night between tousled bed linen simply doesn't provide the required time. 'In the lab, you can look at a cell and

see whether the person had a rough night,' says Jessica, referring to ByNacht's test phase. 'It's like smoking. For ages people thought that even one cigarette wasn't all that bad either.'

Jessica does not have a single secret weapon ingredient that she includes in the entire product portfolio. She is rather more concerned with creating a complex but sensible combination — even if doing so makes communicating the brand's message more difficult at times. 'Our label still needs to work hard to get the message across,' she says. 'And of course, I never get tired of explaining our concept.'

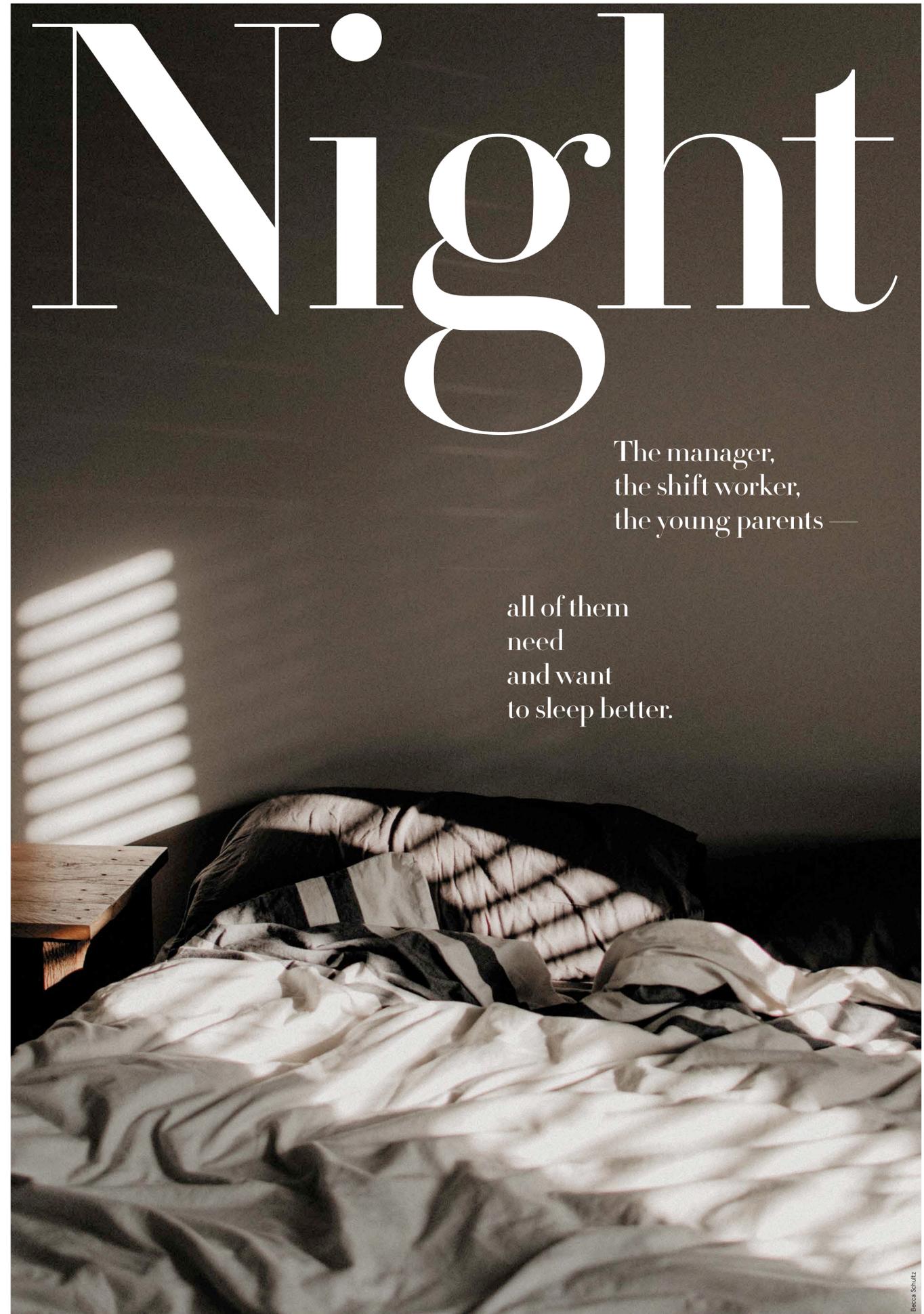
For Jessica, that concept consists of more than an optical effect. The key element, according to the young mother, is the ritual of looking after yourself for the half hour before you go to bed. 'That's 'metime', the moments I consciously take for myself. It's a good chance to reflect on the day.' Scientists share this view — namely, that regularity at the end of the day can improve the quality of sleep. Our bodies and spirits find it easier to unwind if we follow a particular rhythm. But what happens if we still can't get to sleep? 'Get up,' Jessica says dryly. 'Sometimes I open a window and let the fresh air in, dim the lights, and drink a mug of lavender tea. Then I just wait until tiredness comes, all by itself.'

bynacht.com

Night

The manager,
the shift worker,
the young parents —

all of them
need
and want
to sleep better.



Becca Schütz



Sleep Tight

TEXT SILVIA SILKO

The days when late risers were seen as layabouts are long gone. Instead, a newfound awareness for the importance of sleep is growing in our meritocratic society. Jan Stritzke is deputy medical director at the Lanserhof Tegernsee health resort, where he works with a programme which combines state-of-the-art technology with traditional naturopathy. An interview about the complexity of sleep, as well as a few simple tips for catching better Zs.



COMPANION: A few hours sleep per night or a power nap now and then – isn't that enough?

Dr. Jan Stritzke: People still underestimate the importance of a good night's sleep. Sleep is a phase during which our bodies regenerate. A very important aspect of fat burning occurs while we sleep. We reinforce what we have learned and process experiences. Young children need it to ensure healthy growth. Yet the medical community is peculiarly reluctant to accept the importance of restful sleep. Often it will take years until individuals receive a diagnosis of insomnia, let alone successful therapy.

A widespread problem. The number of people in the workforce who suffer from sleeping disorders has risen by over 60 percent since 2010. How do you explain that?

Stress in the workplace due to rationalisation, intensification, the pressure to succeed, varying work hours, and frequent switches between time zones — these are just a few of the aspects of our modern world of work that can have significantly detrimental effects on how we sleep. Besides that, constant availability is a common feature of our working lives. This means that a clear distinction between our professional and personal lives is no longer possible. The lack of balanced leisure pursuits after work merely exacerbates the issue. We don't spend enough time exercising outdoors or enjoying family life, et cetera. This impacts negatively on our lives.

For a while, so many of our successful role models seemed to live by the motto 'I'll sleep when I'm dead.' Now, however, sleep is acquiring a new image, including in the boardroom.

Absolutely! People are beginning to realise that sleep is integral to a healthy lifestyle. Besides a healthy diet and sufficient exercise, preventative medicine is increasingly turning its attention to the pathologies of physical and mental stress.

New mattress concepts, teas, and many other products in the wellness industry have turned sleep into a lifestyle topic as well. Is it all humbug?

It's positive if society realises that good sleep is an essential factor for health. But you can't just write a prescription to remedy it. How often do we go to bed early and then spend the whole night tossing and turning? People need to approach the topic in a calmer way. We won't die from one rough night. But it is important to do something if sleepless nights become more frequent. That said, we all need different things. Treatment must address the specific sleeping disorder at hand.

You work with the Lans Better Sleep Programme 2.0 at the Lanserhof Tegernsee health resort: the idea is to use technology and naturopathy to create perfect sleep. Is good sleep really that complicated?

Yes and no. Sleep is very simple for people who do not have insomnia. After all, they practice it every night. But it can soon become overwhelming if you start having problems. There are tips from friends and relatives, or things in the media. The issue is complex. Often at Lanserhof we help by listening carefully, presenting a clear diagnosis, and then selecting a suitable therapy.

So good sleep is something we can learn?

I could give you a whole list of possible therapies. But very few of our patients manage to change their everyday habits completely. And if they do, it usually doesn't last long. That's not our goal, in any case. We aim to produce noticeable improvements by introducing small changes to the everyday routines of our patients. Besides that, we want to educate people — and solve their problems at a personal level.

↳ lanserhof.com

THE BAG IS BANANAS

IN COLLABORATION WITH QWSTION

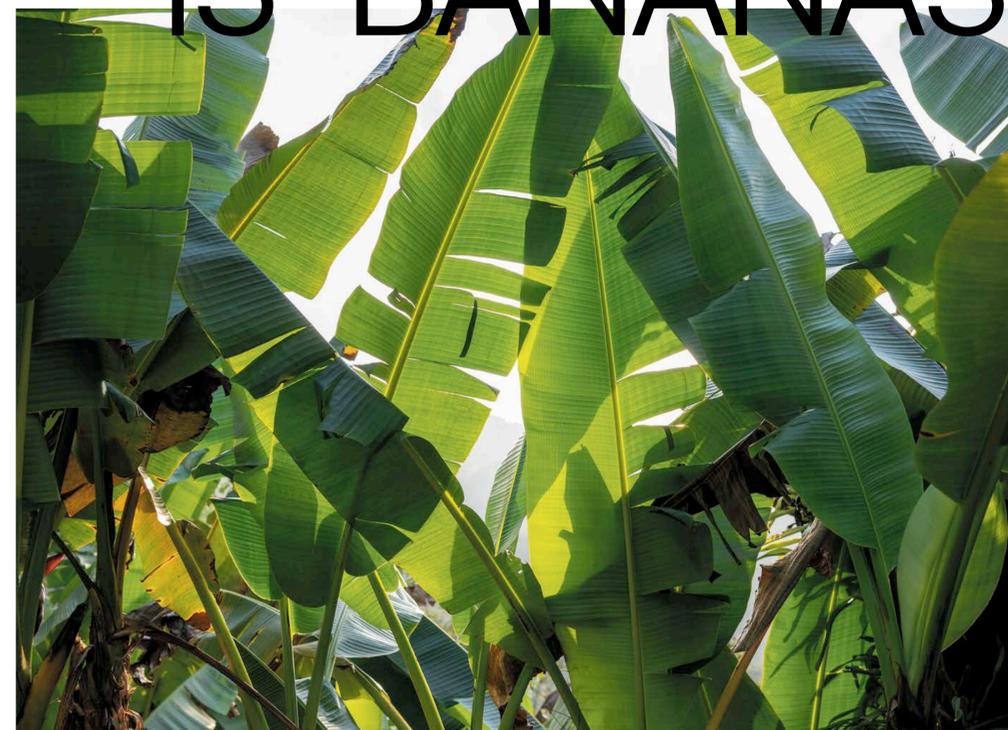
Zurich-based bag label QWSTION is known for its high standards of sustainability, which are constantly being challenged. Exemplifying this is their new collection, Bananatex® — made of banana plants. In conversation with Christian Paul Kaegi, co-founder and creative director of QWSTION, we learn more about this magical product of nature and its journey from jungle to bag.

What led you to make bags from banana plants?

The abacá banana plant's historical use, and the way it grows, immediately caught our attention. It's very resistant, doesn't require any chemicals or pesticides, and you can harvest it regularly — it just keeps growing. So, it's an ideal starting point for farming: you don't need any plantations or monoculture. It grows in its natural habitat. Colonial traders used to call the plant 'Manila hemp', as it has similar properties to European hemp, meaning it grows really quickly, has strong fibres, and requires low maintenance. These qualities have allowed it to contribute to reforestation in eroding areas of former Philippine jungle that were once clear cut for palm plantations. But we also fell in love with its botanical name, 'Musa Textilis' — can you think of any better name for a plant used for making textiles?

How does abacá fit into the trajectory of your textile development process?

We've been researching sustainable alternatives to synthetic materials since the beginnings of our brand, and over the course of this process we've experimented with linen, hemp, organic cotton, and bamboo.



Around three years ago, we heard of a species of banana plant called abacá, which is native to the Philippines and had been used for centuries to make exceptionally strong ropes. We started digging deep into the history of its use, how it's cultivated, and began to develop it into a textile together with our production partners in Taiwan.

What kinds of questions were you asking yourselves throughout the journey?

The starting point was to create something more sustainable than we've ever made before — which is the kind of question we ask ourselves constantly. What can we do to make our products even better? Lighter? More resistant? It's part of a continuous evolutionary process. For example, Bananatex® is really sustainable, but expensive to produce. So, what can we do to transform it into a product which is accessible? We aimed to create a pattern that is super simple and results in zero wastage when cutting the parts. Then, we developed a type of construction that was straightforward to keep the required amount of workmanship low, without compromising on quality. The questions will continue — there's always room for improvement. We're working towards making the fabric open source, with a view to providing a viable alternative to the plastic-based fabrics that currently dominate the bag market.

How are you ensuring ethical standards are upheld throughout the supply chain?

It's important to us to know precisely how and where things are made. Certifications are a helpful tool to start out with, but they only go so far. For bags, it's more or less uncharted territory. The Rainforest Alliance comes into play when you're using plants or woods with tropical origins, and there's GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) for cotton — both have good objectives, but ultimately over the years we've independently come to know what's most important to us in terms of ethics, and our own standards guide is what we now pursue.

Why has nobody developed abacá into a pure, technical fabric before?

Generally there are very few brands going this deep into research and development. It's a big investment — and a lot easier to use available fabrics, hardware, and other materials. In this case, the process from fibre to fabric is fairly complicated, which means it's expensive. Cost is often the most important driving factor in product development. If you look at the bag market, over 90 percent of products are made from synthetic, petroleum-based textiles, and that's pushed out many natural fibres like hemp, which actually used to prevail.

What potential does this fabric hold, both for QWSTION and beyond?

Bananatex® is the most sustainable, strongest, and most durable fabric that we've developed so far. The potential for harvesting it in the Philippines is still great, given that abacá is a plant that aids reforestation. On many levels it also contributes to creating an economic system for farming communities who might not otherwise have a lot of opportunities. Then the fabric is quite universal in the quality we've developed it, with its tear and water resistance making it ideal for products that need to be rugged, such as footwear or clothing. Even simply taking its potential for bags, our ultimate goal is for it to replace synthetic materials such as polyester and nylon. The main challenge is pricing. Our goal is to get Bananatex® to a level where it can be a viable and attractive alternative to synthetic, oil-based materials — and ultimately have a huge impact on both consumer behaviour and the environment.



↳ qwstion.com

The Truth About Wellness

Why thermal baths are no substitute for cough syrup and silence seminars are inherently absurd. (Self-)critical thoughts by our columnist Nina Kunz.

Stripped to its essentials, jogging is the opposite of pleasure. Your knees hurt because you never went to the bone doctor, the stitch in your side is like a red-hot poker, and the silly woman in the running app is constantly complaining, telling you to hurry up. To top things off, it's raining and you're in a foul mood.

I get it. You're outside enjoying nature. It's a good antidote to depression and it means you don't spend the whole day sitting down. But that's not what I'm thinking when I stumble along next to the river at the crack of dawn. Instead, I'm wondering when my thighs got so flabby. And, for heaven's sake, is that as fast as I can go? If I ever wanted to waste my time pondering the concept of jogging, I'd probably drone on for hours about the absurdity of neoliberalism and the fact that we mistreat our bodies in open-plan offices before spending 250 euros on running shoes — but thankfully the intellectual me politely declines to come along for the run, so all I actually think is: how great is this? A whole hour, just for me. Cathartic sweating.

But as soon as I'm back in the shower and my brain wakes up again, I can't help but wonder if I'm doing this because it feels good: thoroughly circulated extremities, a pumping heart. Or does jogging actually feel so good because it makes me seem like someone who does good things. Have I always been addicted to approval and determined to belong, whatever the price?

It's actually absurd that we need templates for things like love, life stories, or, let's admit it, wellness, which we dutifully set about reproducing. Wellness in 2019 is 'me-time'. It can be either active (yoga, tai chi, jogging, meditation, silence seminars) or passive (spas, Turkish baths, thermal baths, massages). But these cultural practices are not based on biomedical laws that require us to attend a session of detoxifying exfoliation in order to damn well relax. Detoxifying exfoliation doesn't work like aspirin or cough syrup. Wellness is a fad, a social norm, a paradigm — and therefore inherently absurd. We (or at least most of us) would probably see other things as relaxing if fate had dealt us different historical cards (and if wellness getaways weren't a thing).

It would be fair to ask why we care about how our perceptions of 'recreation and relaxation' came into being. But I'm far too complicated (not to mention unrelaxed) to embrace such a pragmatic approach. What I'm trying to say is the fact that the meaning of 'treating yourself' has become so generalised that there is a general understanding of the term is in direct conflict with any form of life experience, which, at least from my point of view, seems to work as follows: what relaxes me stresses you out. What you find calming drives me up the walls. So why do we hold tight to this clumsy version of well-being, wasting our money on overpriced bath salts or yoga gear?

If I think about wellness — the state of being well — here's what it is for me: getting up before anyone else is awake, making porridge, and reading the newspaper in bed; lazy days spent swanning around my flat, rearranging furniture, realising it looks stupid, and moving it all back again; meandering through flea markets on weekends to buy peculiar ceramic animals that I'd never put on display, creating disgustingly sweet desserts with my friends, and gossiping about the night before ('Him? With her?'). Wellness is a solitary walk spent listening to 'Mutations' by Beck and feeling the melancholy that I knew back in 1998, even as a teenager. Wellness is watching the news with my gran and staying out till sunrise, just because I want to. Wellness is subtle. Wellness is always in the here and now.

Nina Kunz, 25, is a columnist at Das Magazin, the weekly supplement of the Swiss newspaper Tages-Anzeiger, and a Ph.D. student at the University of Bern. She lives in Zurich, where she loves the curry at restaurant Kobal in Kanzeistrasse. As of late, she owns a houseplant.

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↳ dimitragoula.gr

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↳ gazzopizza.com

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↳ restaurant-horvath.de

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Weichselstrasse 17
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↳ monella.berlin

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↳ sodabooks.com

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↳ instagram.com/koeski_royal

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↳ kunstsammlung.de

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Hotel Das Kranzbach
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↳ daskranzbach.de

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↳ tropical-islands.de

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25hours Hotel The Royal Bavarian
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↳ sodabooks.com

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↳ mk2.com

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↳ taubenkobel.com

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Strandsauna Samoa
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Winter season:
Friday–Sunday 13:00–17:00
↳ strandsauna-samoa.de

UNNA, GERMANY

Centre for International Light Art Unna
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Opening hours depend on tour times
↳ lichtkunst-unna.de

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↳ berliner-restaurant-grillspezialitaet.business.site

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↳ instagram.com/indie_vienna

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↳ planetarium-wien.at

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Lanserhof Tegernsee
↳ lanserhof.com

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25hours Hotel Zürich West
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↳ ensole.com

Masthead

COMPANION is a magazine about the people who shape and enrich our cities.

↳ 25hours-hotels.com
↳ companion-magazine.com
↳ fvonf.com/tag/25hours

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MY 25 HOURS

Sleepless in Frankfurt

TEXT MANUEL ALMEIDA VERGARA

Long nights and little sleep? It's all part of the job for Ossy Hoppe. Despite (or maybe because of) that, a room in the 25hours Hotel The Goldman in Frankfurt was named after the industrious concert promoter and rock legend.

So far, Ossy Hoppe has missed out on plenty of sleep in his life. He spent years working for the management of illustrious bands like Deep Purple, founded promotion agencies, and organised festivals. Also on his résumé are collaborations with acts like Kiss and the Rolling Stones, Iron Maiden, Ozzy Osbourne, Metallica, Aerosmith, Guns N' Roses, Bon Jovi, and Bruce Springsteen. Ossy is considered a pioneer of hard rock in Germany. Long nights are more or less all in a day's work. 'I always did things a bit like Motörhead: 'No Sleep 'til Hammersmith', he says.

As a place that is entirely given over to good sleep and relaxation, it may seem ironic that a room in the 25hours Hotel The Goldman was dedicated to Ossy. But in fact it's quite fitting. After all, Ossy is constantly on the road and spends half his life in hotels. Born into a famous circus family and a survivor of countless world tours, he is well accustomed to travelling. So he knows what really matters in a hotel room. 'The most important thing is always the bed,'

he says. Naturally, the guests in his room at The Goldman in Frankfurt can look forward to one that's comfy. Also featuring oversized AC/DC and Metallica buttons on the walls, a rock star lamp, and the obligatory electric guitar, the room is a dream location not only for hard rock fans.

Ossy would gladly splash out on a night in his room at the 25hours Hotel The Goldman as a tribute to the famous artists he used to look after. Although, of course, rock stars and hotel rooms can be an explosive mix. Musicians who make insane demands and bands that smash entire rooms to pieces: Ossy is familiar with all of these stories — and more. But he remains tight lipped. 'I can't talk about that,' he says with a wink. So for a change of tack: 'Hotel California' by the Eagles or 'Heartbreak Hotel' by Elvis Presley — which is the better song to fall asleep to? 'I prefer a different one altogether,' says Ozzy. 'Ain't No Love in the Heart of the City' by Bobby Bland. 'Right, then: here's to wild dreams!



Ossy Hoppe



My Trip Around the World

TEXT MANUEL ALMEIDA VERGARA

Around the world in 80 days? From Frankfurt, it couldn't be easier. In fact, it's possible to do it much quicker there as well. For guests at the recently renovated 25hours Hotel The Trip, sleeping, feasting, and exercising feels like a globetrotting experience.

The dazzling lights of Asian cities, the dusty roads of Africa, deep oceans, and lofty mountains — the new-look 25hours Hotel The Trip opens a door to the whole world. Six floors at the heart of Frankfurt's trendy Bahnhofsviertel invite guests to circumnavigate the globe. Not only is this evident in the richly varied room design by artist Michael Dreher and the team from Morgen Interiors, but it is equally apparent in the culinary experience.

The restaurant Bar Shuka will delight guests with a modern take on Israeli-Palestinian-Oriental specialities. After the feast, a Japanese sake in the adjoining Speakeasy Bar is bound to go down a treat. And guests can drop by the new rooftop gym area a few floors above to work off — or sweat out — the calories. The Finnish sauna adds a Scandinavian touch to the already cosmopolitan feel.

Between the Oriental East and the Far North, space has

been created for other faraway countries as well: each of the six floors takes inspiration from a legendary expedition, with the design divided into the categories of Asia, Africa, the Tropics, the Antarctic, oceans, and mountains. For instance, the third floor follows the adventures of Heinz Helfen. A native of Cologne, he embarked on a two-year bicycle trip in 1951 that took him to more than 21 countries, despite setting off with only 3.80 deutsch marks in his pocket.

Inspired by the globetrotters' thirst for adventure, it seems almost natural that the hallways of the new 25hours Hotel The Trip are decorated with Iranian art, that the inner courtyard features French street art, and that the Studio 54 co-working space radiates New York glamour. Fittingly, Frankfurt's international airport is just a short taxi ride away, confirming the hotel's status as the ideal place from which explore the world.

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