



November 18, 2011

Word of mouth

By Jane Mulkerrins

ALSO CHECK OUT

Sushi and cocktails in the heart of SW1
Nothing screams British quite so much as Beauchamp Place in Knightsbridge. But spicing things up is Kumo, a slick new sushi and cocktail bar. Head chef Yuka Aoyama, formerly of Nobu, serves up delights such as warm beef sukiyaki salad and hibatchi sea bass fillet. The cocktail list is Japanese-infused, too, and the red and black décor is seductively oriental. The well-priced sharing menus make it a top spot for a group dinner. *Dishes from £7.95, sharing platters from £10 per person; Tel: 020 7225 0944, www.kumoknightsbridge.com*

Punch above your weight at The Mark
On New York's Upper East Side, it seems that ladies who lunch are now ladies who punch. The popular Punch Fitness



kickboxing and martial arts studio has expanded into The Mark, to offer on-site sessions and personal training at its 24-hour fitness centre. Guests can sign up for boxing, kick-boxing, jiu-jitsu and muay-Thai as well as mixed martial arts. It beats counting out the miles on the cross-trainer before that conference call. *Rooms from £298 per night; Tel: +1 917 720 2729, see www.themarkhotel.com*

METRO word of mouth

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Check in to a Shanghai surprise



Andaz expansion goes east. It says something about global power balances that the Andaz brand – Hyatt hotels' boutique arm – is expanding beyond its existing London, New York, Hollywood and San Diego sites into the heart of the tiger economy, in Shanghai.

The 28-storey, 307-room hotel is in the city's Xintiandi district, by old French Concession, where traditional Shanghai meets the bars, restaurants and boutiques of the new.

Although the hotel is a very modern high-rise structure, it's on a small street lined with sycamore trees and across the road from traditional Shanghai houses,' says Wilson Lee, the hotel's general manager. 'We're

THIS WEEK: Andaz looks east with its first hotel in Asia, a new sushi bar for Knightsbridge, and New York's The Mark hotel packs a punch
BY JANE MULKERRINS

embracing that cosmopolitan local flavour, with local art on show in the hotel, and the Hai Pai restaurant, whose French and Chinese cuisines reflect the city's history and culture.'

The hotel is also hosting a salon to give guests a chance to experience Shanghai's culture, with art talks, music and cooking classes. And there's an expansive pool and 24-hour gym to work off the pastries from the hotel's Eclair patisserie. Construction is still under way

on some parts of the hotel, including the bar, the spa and the Garden Studio, which is a spectacular-sounding events space with a glass pavilion surrounded by water, two outdoor terraces and a glass lift descending straight into the ballroom, so guests can make a grand entrance. Sneaking off early in secret might present more of a challenge, however. Rooms from £164 until Dec 29, from £217 thereafter; Tel: +86 21 2310 1234, www.andaz.com

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TRAVEL DOCTOR

AFTER all the upheavals this Spring, are Red Sea resorts safe to visit this winter?

Jamie, Portsmouth

The Foreign Office does not warn against travel to Egypt but as in any foreign country, be alert and explore wisely.

There are two options for a Red Sea trip. Dahab has a wide range of places to stay and the best is Le Meridien at the southern end of town. You'll avoid over-crowding and over-priced excursions in Dahab but the diving isn't as great as Marsa Alam or Sharm el Sheikh. There are rooms at every price-point and service level in Sharm el Sheikh, but remember that Egypt is not just a fabulous beach. There

are plenty of cultural and historical excursions that are a short drive away.

Alice Agar, co-founder, Sally and Alice (www.sallyandalice.com)



FOLLOWING the loss of my grandmother to Alzheimer's, I would like to raise money for the Alzheimer's Society by going on a charity expedition. What is your view on charity travel companies?

James, Cardiff
Charity travel companies normally pay 50 per cent of the fee charged to the charity concerned, with the other half used to pay for your trip.

Discover Adventure is unique in giving 60 per cent to the charity. It also offers a self-fund option – you pay for the cost of the trip and raise money for the charity on top, so that all the money raised goes to charity. To reassure your friends and family that it's all in a good cause, I'd recommend the self-fund option. Discover Adventure offers cycling and trekking challenges worldwide, with highly experienced leaders.

Jonathan Bryan, managing director, Discover Adventure (www.discoveradventure.com)



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