

WASHINGTON FLYER

ON THE GO IN THE DC AREA
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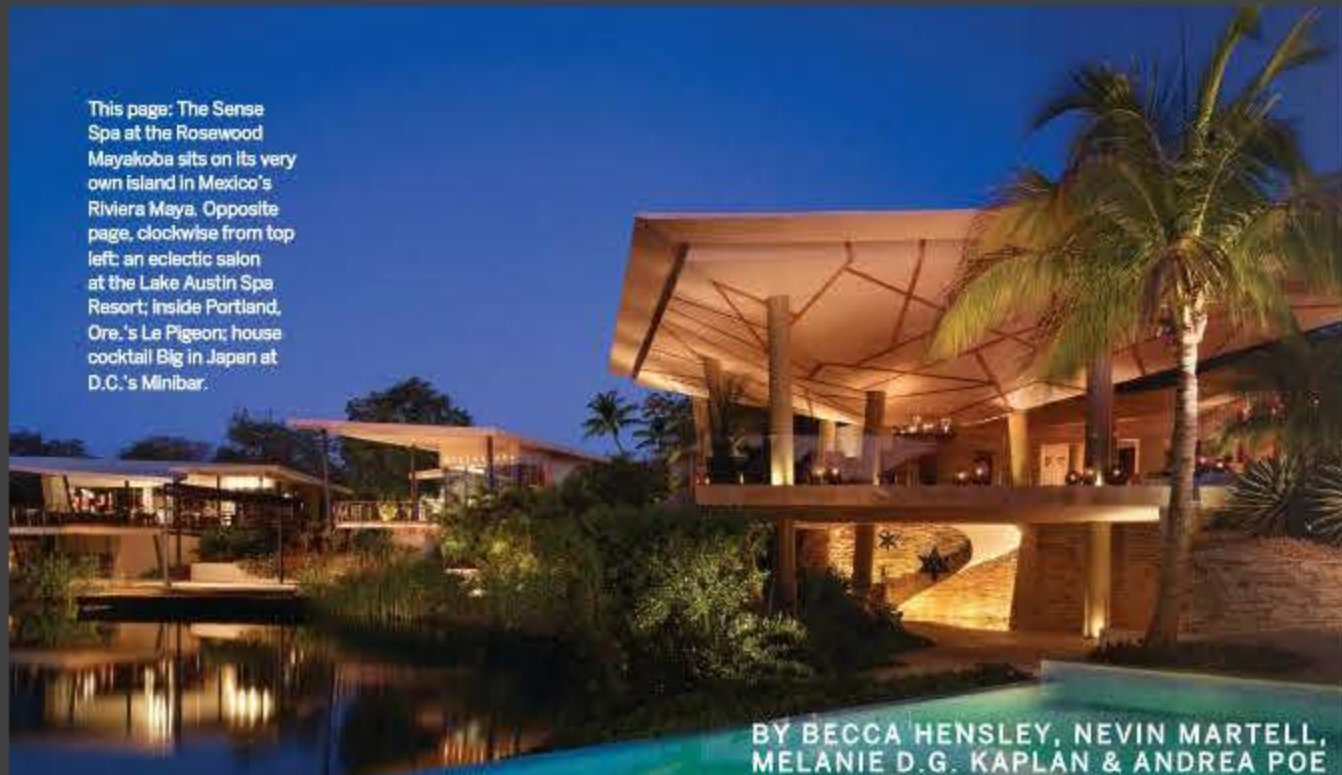
Shop To It!
D.C.'s BEST SMALL STORES

VIVA ITALIA!
Red-Sauce Restaurants Rev Up D.C. Dining

BRIGHT IDEAS
Top Holiday Light Shows

AREA MAPS INSIDE!

This page: The Sense Spa at the Rosewood Mayakoba sits on its very own island in Mexico's Riviera Maya. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: an eclectic salon at the Lake Austin Spa Resort; inside Portland, Ore.'s Le Pigeon; house cocktail Big in Japan at D.C.'s Minibar.



BY BECCA HENSLEY, NEVIN MARTELL, MELANIE D.G. KAPLAN & ANDREA POE

Perfect Landings

Our 50 favorite destinations on the planet — all a mere non-stop flight away from D.C.

WE recently asked a bunch of famous folk — actors, superstar chefs, pro athletes and the like — what they love most about traveling. Their answers were all inspiring (see them scattered around this story), but it was

Alfre Woodard who summed up our *amour* for travel most succinctly: "I love to travel because I want to see what's over there," says the veteran actor. "I want to talk to whoever's over there. And I want to eat what they're cooking over there. I want to dance with them!" With that devotion to discovery in mind, we present the Travel 50 — five top-10 lists detailing out-of-this-world hotels, resorts, restaurants and destinations accessible via non-stop flights from Washington's airports. Indulge your wanderlust.

BEST SPAS

1 **Lake Austin Spa Resort**, Austin, Texas. lakeaustin.com

You don't have to pack much when you plan a trip to Lake Austin Spa Resort. Most guests never don more than a bathrobe — even when staying for a week. Far enough from downtown Austin to vanquish the frenzy of urbanity, this destination and day spa on the banks of Lake Austin draws its inspiration from nature and the nostalgia of childhood summer weekends at the lake. A patchwork of gardens, pools, floral-lined trails and cottages, the resort's centerpiece is its immense spa building, which exudes shabby lake-shack chic. Adorned with a medley of bone china, fluffy pillows, quilts and rocking chairs, the spa teases guests to relaxation as they await an appointment in one of its 30 treatment rooms. With two restaurants and a French chef committed to locally grown cuisine (including herbs and vegetables from the spa's own garden), Lake Austin turns out fresh, wholesome meals. While day clients can't resist the spa's ministrations, overnight guests take advantage of luxuriously appointed rooms that face the lake. For overnights, activities abound — from stand-up paddleboarding to sculling to cooking courses. But it's the vast, innovative spa menu, listing more than 100 treatments, that preoccupies all. Try the



What's your favorite U.S. city and why?

"After my hometown of New York City, I'd say New Orleans. The food, the music, do I need to say more? It's a gorgeous city with so much heart and soul."

— *Cyndi Lauper, music industry icon*



Mardi Gras in New Orleans.

BEST HOTELS

1 **The Pierre on Fifth Avenue**, New York City. tajhotels.com/pierre

2 **The Peninsula**, Chicago. peninsula.com/chicago

3 **Chateau Marmont**, Los Angeles. chateaumarmont.com

Yes, there are luxe amenities like a heated outdoor pool, chauffeured limos for the asking and Frette linens for babies. But what really draws guests to this unique property is its history, which is perpetually in the making. Built in 1927, the hotel is a hangout for the crème de la crème of Hollywood — on any given night you're sure to spot a megawatt movie star (not that you'd allow yourself to stare). James Dean and Natalie Wood met at the Chateau when doing a read-through of *Rebel Without a Cause*, and once upon a time, Doors singer Jim Morrison made a precarious climb from the hotel roof to his room using a drainpipe. Book one of the secluded hillside bungalows if you're staying, or if you're just there for the night, order up an extra-dry martini at the ultra-glam Bar Marmont next door.

4 **The Palazzo**, Las Vegas. palazzo.com

5 **Hotel Plaza Athenee**, Paris. plaza-athenee-paris.com

6 **Claridge's**, London. claridges.co.uk

One of the best-loved hotels in the world, Claridge's has been able to stay current (e.g., Gordon Ramsay restaurant) without erasing its roots. Updates like a black-and-white marble floor and an 800-piece glass chandelier haven't altered the feeling that you've stepped into an elegant apartment residence, as opposed to a huge hotel. Although the hotel certainly caters to the jet set (it offers airport pickup in a Bentley), the luxury here isn't trendy or flash-in-the-pan. Choose a classic room to be surrounded by furnishings that nod to the Victorian and Edwardian eras, or opt for more modern environs in an Art Deco unit. Both have big bathrooms and walk-in closets. Tea at Claridge's is the stuff of legends, and reservations are made months in advance to secure a spot. Held in the foyer, an Art Deco inspired room defined by mirrors and arches, finger sandwiches and fruit-spiked scones are made with organic ingredients, and guests can select from more than 40 types of tea. Swoon.

7 **Jamaica Inn**, Ocho Rios, Jamaica. jamaicainn.com

8 **Shangri-La**, Tokyo. shangri-la.com/tokyo

9 **Burj Al Arab**, Dubai. jumeirah.com

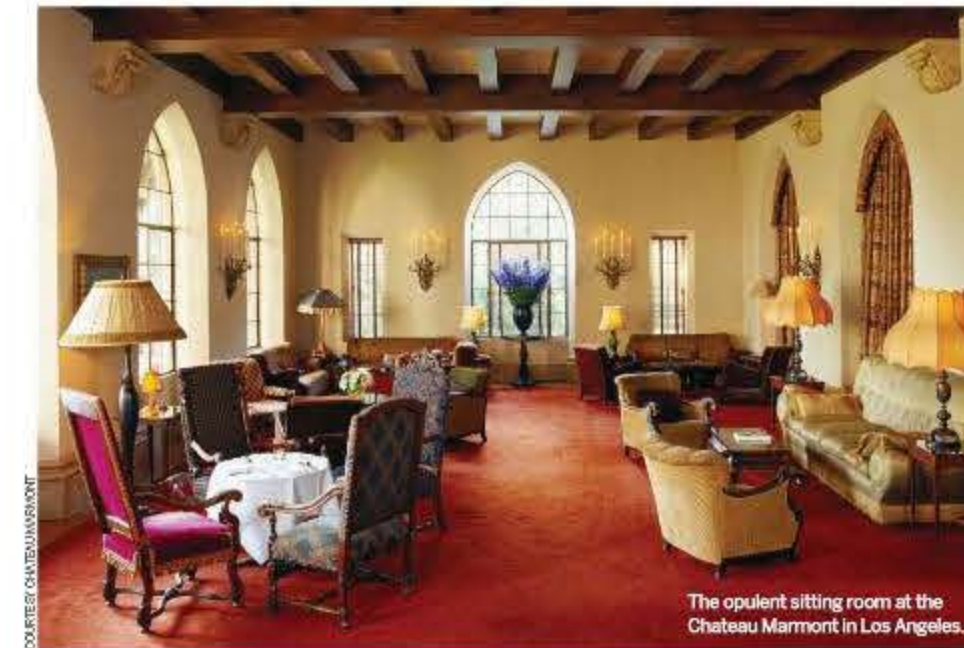
10 **B.O.G.**, Bogotá, Colombia. bogofotel.com



What's your indispensable travel item?

"When I'm sitting in coach, I never fly without my portable camping stool. You would not believe how much more comfortable it is to have your feet up in that cramped space!"

— *Maria Bello, actor and activist*



The opulent sitting room at the Chateau Marmont in Los Angeles.

The stately lobby at Claridge's in London.

