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By Harriet Mays Powell

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## Lisbon

Frank Gehry, interesting artists, new hotels, the city's first day spa. Oh, and there's finally someplace cool to go besides the docks. BY TARA MANDY

Lisboans are optimistic about their city's emerging cultural relevance, despite the recent dissolution of **Frank Gehry's** much-hyped commission to redo the Parque Mayer Theater. Currently, all eyes are on minimalist **Álvaro Siza Vieira**, Portugal's most celebrated architect, who's restoring the formerly chichi blocks of the Chiado shopping district, destroyed in a 1988 fire. See his work at the **Siza Vieira exhibition** (April 8 to June 26) at the Serralves Museum in Porto, a few hours' drive north of the city.

House collector Frédéric P. Coustols spent a half-decade converting a fifteenth-century palace into Lisbon's chic-est

new hotel. The eight-suite **Palácio Belmonte** (351-21-881-66-00; from \$585) wows deep-pocketed guests with massive period pieces, Moorish spiral staircases, and views of Alfama's red-roofed houses. And later this spring, Lisbon's hippest neighborhood welcomes the **Bairro Alto Hotel** (351-21-340-82-88; from \$390). Behind the sunflower-yellow façade, designer Grace Leo-Andrieu's elegant style (think Paris's Montalembert) lends itself to comfortable but fashionable rooms and a funky bar and restaurant.

Lisbon's top contemporary-art collectors have been making regular appearances at the new all-night **Way of Arts** parties held at the

architecturally stunning home of 29-year-old dealer Gonçalo Leandro in Estoril, about fifteen minutes north of Lisbon (351-21-468-41-72). On the 22nd of each month, Leandro exhibits and sells mixed-concept works—lately, the hottest properties have been abstract paintings by local artist **Joana Bastos**.

Just a few years ago, spa culture was nonexistent in Lisbon. Then the five-star Lapa Palace debuted a La Prairie Art of Beauty center, followed by last year's opening of the decadent spa at the **Ritz Four Seasons**. Now, as of ten months ago, Lisbon finally has its first stand-alone day spa. **Le Spa**, located near the Amoreiras shopping center, is a minimalist-chic

introducing  
world of  
aphatic  
drainage, and shiatsu.

The trendy restaurant scene is finally moving away from the docks. Try **Estado Líquido**, Santos's new sushi lounge and bar, swathed in psychedelic swirls of orange and red, or the just-opened **Restaurant Eleven**. Located atop the Edward VII park, Eleven is aiming to earn Lisbon its first Michelin star with contemporary Mediterranean fare—olive-crusted lamb, tuna Azores—and stellar views of the St. George castle.

Before the 2 A.M. mass migration to John Malkovich's sprawling dance club, **Lux** (the hottest after-hours spot for three years running), locals crowd the small bars in Bairro Alto. Right now, **Café Suave** and **Clube da Esquina** are among the most popular, though scenesters will be lining up to get into the club beneath super-trendy fashion designer **Fatima Lopes's** boutique when it reopens (possibly later this year).

Though Lisbon's most prized souvenirs will always be exquisite tiles (try **Santa Rufina** and **Solar**) and fine port wines (hit the **Port and Douro Wine Institute**), any shoe fetishist will want an extra carry-on to bring home multiple pairs of the whimsical creations at **Happy Days**, a new shoe salon in Bairro Alto. Mixed in with local designs is a fantastic selection of hard-to-find Irregular Choice pumps, wedges, and flats.

Where have you traveled recently?  
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