



**Full-Throated Response**  
We asked a fashion historian to demystify the choker's past **D2**

# OFF DUTY

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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Saturday/Sunday, August 27 - 28, 2022 | **D1**

**The Incredible Edible Eggplant**  
Our new favorite way to cook it **D9**



WHEN DESIGNERS TURN SHRINK

## How Does Her Lamp Make You Feel?

When couples' aesthetics clash, their interior designers often employ therapy-like techniques to find stylish compromises. Here's how to handle each other's décor dreams with care.



**HOME WRECK** If one half of a couple prefers, say, the Flame lamp from Parisian ceramist Jean Roger (left) while her more restrained partner covets something as minimalist as Manhattan artist John Sheppard's Mountain lamp (right), can they find a happy medium? Yes. **See page D4.**

By KATHRYN O'SHEA-EVANS

**M**Y HUSBAND James and I are decorating our new vacation house in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado and have taken on so much more than we can chew that we're choking...mostly because I've been a rude co-designer. Years of writing about decorating have turned me into the Joan Rivers of home décor, minus the comedy. He wants wood, leather and black metal. If I don't get white upholstery, one too many throw pillows and patterns as dainty as the pinnules on a maidenhair fern, I will perish.

When James texts me an image of a chair or light to consider, it's often more masculine

than I can bear—and I'll text too brusquely why I hate it. My behavior is not OK, especially because my spouse is one of the kindest souls on earth.

I'm not the only person whose style clashes with her partner's as painfully as pink paisley and tartan plaid. "Disagreements between couples on residential projects is the leading reason our studio decided three years ago to pursue more hospitality and commercial projects," said Dallas, Texas, designer Jean Liu. "Maybe we were unlucky, but we realized how unequipped we are to handle marital strife."

It wouldn't hurt an interior designer to bone up on strategies for couples-conflict resolution. In a 2021 survey by Houzz, a website and online community dedicated to home improvement and decorating, 11% of the couples among the 75,470 U.S. respon-

### DÉCOR WARFARE

According to Houzz UK's 2022 Renovations and Relationships Survey, 16% of the 1,250 people polled who finished a renovation in the last 5 years considered separating during the process.

dents declared they found it challenging to work with their spouse on a renovation. In the Houzz U.K. 2022 Renovations and Relationships Survey, 16% of 1,250 respondents said they considered separating during the renovation process.

When it comes to cohabitated spaces, the stakes are high, in part because your home is "an expression of who you are and your personality," said Boston family therapist Terrence Real, author of "Us: Getting Past You and Me to Build a More Loving Relationship" (Goop Press, 2022).

Los Angeles designer Kevin Klein has found that when working with couples, disagreements are as unavoidable as shipping delays. Consequently, during initial consultations, Mr. Klein asks clients how they'll handle any impasse that might arise. "They al-

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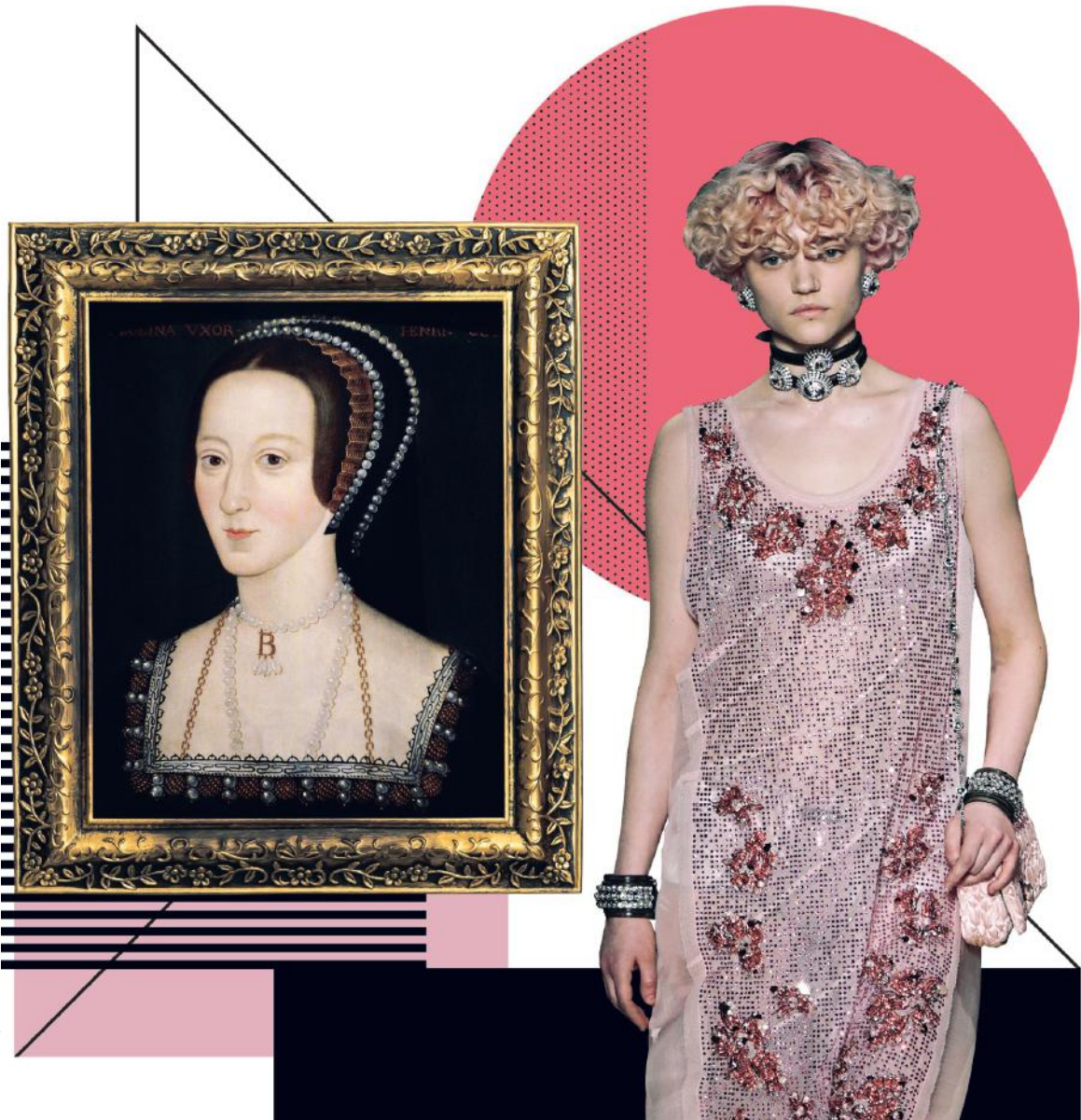


### TRIP-WORTHY TIPPLES

A traveler's guide to some of the best bars and cocktails in the world **D6**



# STYLE & FASHION



GETTY IMAGES; MATT CHASE (ILLUSTRATION)

**NECK, PLEASE** From left: A 16th-century portrait of Anne Boleyn in her pearl 'B' choker; a model in a crystal take at Miu Miu's fall 2022 show.

Chokers were a form of fashion-cum-political theater in the aftermath of the French Revolution, when the aristocratic street-style stars known as the Merveilleuses wound narrow red ribbons around their necks to hint at the guillotine that had dispatched their families and friends. Slender ribbon chokers, often in black, regained vogue during the 1860s and '70s. The ballerinas Degas painted wore them, and Alexandra, Princess of Wales, donned one for an 1865 photograph.

A few decades later, Alexandra had upgraded to extra-wide "dog collars" freighted with diamonds. She favored designs that stretched from the base of her throat to just

**The choker bisects the neck, a part of the body that is both graceful and uniquely vulnerable.**

under chin, and like other women who could afford such impressive bling, had hers custom-made to ensure a close fit. Cartier, a prime supplier of jewels to Gilded Age royalty and robber barons alike, used lead replicas of clients' necks to construct its chokers.

Like Anne Boleyn before her, Alexandra allegedly relied on chokers to camouflage a physical imperfection: a scar in her case, a boil in Anne's. Neither claim has ever been substantiated, but they perpetuate the idea that chokers harbor secrets.

It's a theme explored in Washington Irving's 1824 story "The Adventure of the German Student," set during the French Revolution. The titular character becomes enamored of a mysterious woman in a black-velvet-and-diamond choker. The pair pledge their devotion and he takes her to his lodgings. The next morning, he leaves her briefly, and, on his return, finds her dead. A police officer identifies her as a woman who was guillotined the previous day. He reaches to untie her choker and her head rolls to the floor.

Memory plays an important role in fashion. One of the most famous examples of this is Christian Dior's New Look of 1947, which was inspired by the designer's Edwardian childhood. The motif of the girl whose choker held her head in place has resurfaced a few times since Irving wrote his tale, including in two children's books, the 1970s-era "Ghostly Fun" and 1984's "In a Dark, Dark Room and Other Scary Stories." It's had time to infiltrate the childhood memories of generations of readers—and perhaps influence their accessory choices, too.

## All Choked Up

Four fitted necklaces that range from playful to blingy to somewhat reminiscent of Anne Boleyn's ominous style



### CANDY COLLAR

In rainbow-hued beads, this one won't conjure a guillotine victim. \$120, [RoxanneAssoulin.com](#)



### BLING RING

Twinkling rhinestones give this shimmering version a glam edge. \$2,290, [YSL.com](#)



### STRAPPED ON

This crystal-adorned choker has an adjustable leather collar. \$625, [MiuMiu.com](#)



### PEARLY FRIGHT

A freshwater-pearl iteration not unlike the one Boleyn wore. \$396, [CatbirdNYC.com](#)

FASHION WITH A PAST / NANCY MACDONELL



## The Choker's Tight Hold on Fashion

**IN HER FEMINIST** retelling of classic fairy tales, "The Bloody Chamber," author Angela Carter imagines a gift that Bluebeard, the murderous husband in a 17th-century French story, presents his young wife: "a choker of rubies, 2 inches wide, like an extraordinarily precious slit throat." It's a shocking image. And yet it hints at the transgressive appeal of this type of necklace, which bisects a part of the body that is both graceful and uniquely vulnerable. Chokers emanate an undercurrent of unease, like the whiff of decay in an expertly blended perfume. And right now, also a dollop of nostalgia for the 1990s, when everyone from Lenny Kravitz to the cast of the '96 film "The Craft" wore them.

Brands such as Tom Ford, Miu Miu and Saint Laurent have signaled their belief in the neck-hugging style (see their recent collections), as have

social-media stars like Emma Chamberlain. To May's Met Gala, Ms. Chamberlain wore a vintage diamond choker that, like a jewel in a fable, appeared to have been looted from a royal treasury. The YouTube star's accoutrement, a loaner from Cartier, piqued the internet's interest.

But chokers are not just formal accessories. New York jeweler Roxanne Assoulin, who's been making them for 40 years, she said—including ones for Perry Ellis during Marc Jacobs's early-'90s stint at the label—sells a candy-colored option (right). She prizes chokers' versatility. "If I'm feeling playful, I'll wear a bunch of little ones. If I'm feeling dramatic, I'll wear one, maybe in black."

Black may well be the hue most associated with chokers. Manet chose the color for the ribbon that, in his 1865 painting "Olympia," festoons his otherwise naked subject's

neck. Leigh Plessner, chief creative officer of Brooklyn jewelry brand Catbird, noted that "art history is full of women in chokers," calling "Olympia" a chief reference. As a nod to this, when launching its bestselling Sweet Nothing choker in 2013, her brand called it "a little 1890s, a little 1990s."

Though chokers were particularly visible in those two decades, the basic design dates to antiquity. The earliest versions were amuletic, intended to protect the neck. This concept failed spectacularly in the case of one famous 16th-century wearer, Anne Boleyn, whom extant portraits depict wearing her signature "B" choker. That she continued to refer to her maiden name with that prominent initial even after marrying Henry VIII suggests an independent, even contrary nature. She was beheaded in 1536, on Henry's orders.

## Let's Get Weird

Reality bites, which is perhaps why so many designers are going surreal

**AN EYE ROLL** is an understandable reaction when a fashion editor proclaims "Surrealism is trending!" Sporting wares that straddle reality and the subconscious—or have abstract nipples, like the Alaïa dress at left—might seem fit for only the kookiest style insiders. But the surreal look has gone mainstream-ish. Recently spotted in London: Kylie Jenner in a vintage fall 2007 Comme des Garçons skirt and jacket adorned with 3-D hands that grasped her hips and chest.

Her outfit recalled the work of Italian designer Elsa Schiaparelli, who, after launching her brand with a trompe l'oeil sweater in 1927, collaborated with surrealist artists like Salvador Dalí (the melting clock guy) and Man Ray (known for painting airborne lips). In her 1934 line, a handsy jacket, cape, bag and belt featured the appendage, too.

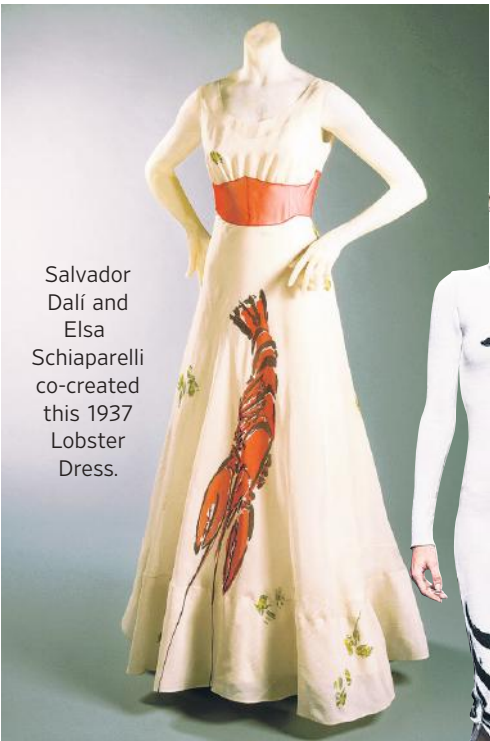
Since becoming creative director of Schiaparelli in 2019, Daniel Roseberry has thrust the label back into view. You may have seen his outsized earrings—a curious combo of gilded fingers and teeth—on Beyoncé at the 2021 Grammys; Kim Kardashian wore his emerald gown with a molded, Hulk-ish bodice in 2020. He fuses anatomy, wit and sexual innuendo as a homage to Elsa's original take on surrealism. He and his team, he said, "talk a lot about

'psycho chic.'" That is, fashion that's "a little unhinged without going over the edge." Novices who prefer to be more hinged, he said, can start with an uncanny bag or bauble.

In surreal fashion, "humor is very important" as long as there's something deeper—and darker—beneath the surface, said Olivier Gabet, curator of "Shocking! The Surreal World of Elsa Schiaparelli," at Paris's Musée des Arts Décoratifs (through Jan. 22). A shining example: a 1937 Schiaparelli dress (left) that has subversive undertones thanks to a strategically placed lobster, painted by Dalí.

Fall collections from Loewe, Y/Project and more also nodded to the style philosophy. London jewelry designer Solange Azagury-Partridge's Hotlips ring (right) has been a surreal fan favorite since 1995, rendered in silver or gold and available coated in various hues of enamel. She called it a "visual pun."

The early surrealists could easily have used the same term. "Everything was a double entendre," said Darius Himes, international head of photography at Christie's auction house. He said surrealism is "a rejection of what makes sense in order to pursue other means of finding happiness." Maybe not so kooky after all. —Katharine K. Zarrella



Salvador Dalí and Elsa Schiaparelli co-created this 1937 Lobster Dress.



This garment's trompe l'oeil face, nipples and navel were inspired by Picasso's ceramics. Alaïa Dress, \$6,500, [gagosianshop.com](#)



Earrings, \$300, [Agmes NYC.com](#)



Chiara Ferragni in a Schiaparelli top with rosette 'breasts' at the Paris haute couture shows in July.



Loewe's fall 2022 dress is adorned with faux balloons that look like they're about to burst.



JW Anderson Top, \$190, [Farfetch.com](#)



A jacket with 'ears,' a 'nose' and an 'eyeball.' \$7,800, [Schiaparelli.com](#)



Solange Azagury-Partridge's Hotlips Ring, \$285, [Shop-US.DoverStreetMarket.com](#)



Man Ray's 1924 'Le Violon d'Ingres' drew \$12.4 million at Christie's in May.

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART (LOBSTER DRESS); GETTY IMAGES (FERRAGNI); CHRISTIE'S IMAGES (MAN RAY)









**WIN-WIN** In a living room by Los Angeles designer Rydhima Brar, one partner wanted a super-graphic '70s-esque wall treatment. The other wasn't sure. The solution: removable wallpaper.

## Truce or Consequence

*Continued from page D1*

ways look at me cross-eyed, like 'What are you talking about?' But that moment inevitably comes six months down the line, when we're doing relationship counseling rather than designing."

Real-estate developers Ilana and David Duel credit Mr. Klein for steering them through their own renovation harmoniously. "It's really hard between husband and wife to make decisions," said Ms. Duel. "You can spend hours and hours on just the tile." She longed for an all-white house with light wood floors, while Mr. Duel and Mr. Klein sought to maintain the 1930s abode's Spanish character. Today, such unlikely roommates as a boxy, white marble coffee table—a nod to her taste—and drippy Murano crystal sconces—a reflec-

**'When you come home after a long day, you don't want to address these design decisions. It's not sexy.'**



In this Brooklyn dining room, designer Rozit Arditi bridged the gap between a wife's love of neutrals and a husband's desire for color.

tion of Mr. Duel's—are shackled up happily in the couple's living room. "If you decide to hire a designer, know that they're much better at designing than you are," she said.

In case you don't have the coin to take on a personal interiors pro, video design consultations offered by websites like the Expert, billed by the hour, can yield affordable tiebreaker advice. Decorist's new service, for example, lets you book a 30-minute Zoom session with a pro for \$59.

Whether hiring an expert or going it alone, Mr. Klein recommends you set up "office hours," as he puts it. "When you come home after a long day, you don't want to address these design decisions," he said. "It's not sexy; it doesn't feel

right." Dedicating specific chunks of time to the process, periods when you're both well-rested, is a better way to hear the other person's side, he says, "than while you're sitting in bed together watching TV."

Another sanity-saving strategy: Choose décor that's easily swappable. When Los Angeles designer Rydhima Brar's client sought a swashbuckling 1970s-inspired graphic wallpaper, her other half didn't find it shagadelic. The peace offering? Removable wallpaper they could switch out if he still balked down the line. Ultimately, he was into it.

Pictures, in these situations, are worth a thousand exhausting negotiations. "Most people don't

have the vocabulary to define their style," said New York City designer Rozit Arditi. Gray Walker, a designer in Charlotte, N.C., often asks client couples to "pin" images of things they like on Pinterest boards, an easy ask, and then seek compromise with the help of those visual aids. "I have found that hearing both parties and giving each person a bit of what they want is the way to go without conflict," she said.

For the living room of her clients' 1930s Georgian revival home in Charlotte, Ms. Walker navigated warring aesthetics by acknowledging each—installing a Chinese screen and timeworn Oushak rug for him, an antique obsessive, and a bergère uphol-

stered in faux fur as well as a minimal brick-red-velvet sofa for her, a fan of all things modern.

Seeking middle ground can lead to unexpected dynamism. When he first met his husband, Atlanta designer Vern Yip gravitated toward clean lines and Asian antiques. But his husband "brought a lot of European antiques into the picture that I never wanted and always felt kind of claustrophobic around," Mr. Yip said. The happy medium they found was far from middle-of-the-road. "He had this dining table that had a ton of carvings. It was really well made but very old European. And we paired it with these Brno chairs—black leather and chrome—and it just sang, you know? They gave

each other space."

Pulling a common nostalgic thread from a pair of clients' pasts helped PJCArchitecture find a design detente for the couple's lakeside second home in Indian Lake, N.Y. Rob Maher, a retired Metropolitan Opera chorus member, asked for something resembling a Japanese tea house, while his wife, Deborah Allton-Maher, a retired Metropolitan Opera dancer and attorney, longed for the lusciously loggy cabin in the 1981 film "On Golden Pond." After learning that the couple had toured Japan several times, the New York City architects found consensus in a shared memory of shou sugi ban (charred wood), a common feature of the country's temples. The bridging fix: The architects sided a modern Adirondack pitched-roof house with the material. "We loved it," said Ms. Allton-Maher.

Therapist Mr. Real's bottom line: "You can bully your way and get what you want in the short run. But you'll breathe in that solution in the long run, in your partner's resentment," he said. "If you frame it as a power struggle in which one of you wins and the other one loses, you both lose."

I didn't want my husband and I both to lose, so I (mostly) quit being a tyrant. I relented on two of James's desires, a pair of leather-and-walnut chairs and channel-tufted leather bar stools. And you know what? They look great next to my white bouclé sofa and the Deco-ish barrel armchairs I chose in a cinnamon velvet—and I think they're all destined to live happily ever after.

### The Mediator

A quietly graphic lamp blends the polarized aesthetics of two other fixtures

Too Minimal

Too Maximal

The Ideal Compromise?

From left: John Sheppard's simply faceted lamp would satisfy a minimalist's love of strong lines and neutral hues. The flamboyant fixture from French ceramist Jean Roger, in unobtrusive "Imperial Yellow," might suit a maximalist's definition of fabulous. Our compromise suggestion: Mark D. Sikes's lamp, a shape basic enough to supply geometric rigueur, but dressed up in a bright blue grid pattern that sassily extends from shade to base.

From left: Mountain Lamp 1 in Frost, \$1,100, [JohnSheppardStudio.com](#); Jean Roger Flame Lamp in Imperial Yellow, \$1,895, [Vintage Silk Sari Lampshade](#), \$680, [KrbNyc.com](#); Mark D. Sikes Ceramic Lamp Base, \$268, [Lamp Shade](#), \$128, [Anthropologie.com](#)



ADVENTURE & TRAVEL

THAT'S DEBATABLE

Is It Time to Say ‘I Don’t’ to Destination Weddings?

After a pandemic lull, far-flung nuptials are booming again. But are they a romantic way for attendees to see the world or more hassle than they’re worth? Two well-traveled guests argue it out.



JACOB STEAD

**YES** **THE LAST** destination wedding I attended began like a bad dream. Imagine: It’s fall of 2021. My dear friends are getting married in—oooh—Mexico City. I can’t wait. But when I try to check in for my flight, I find that the plane ticket I bought six months ago no longer exists. I have to book a new flight on the spot. It’s \$800. I land at CDMX alone. A sudden head cold convinces me I have Covid. I Google “mandatory quarantine in Mexico?” and wonder if I’ll even make it to the celebration I flew down to attend.

Good news: Soon after, a test gives me the all clear. “Negativo.” I rally for the rehearsal dinner, then the wedding. Bad news: My ex is there. Along with all of his friends.

In the end, OK—it was fun. But will I be anxiously awaiting the next exotic invite? Nope. The nightmarish logistical burden that falls on guests is reason enough for couples to steer clear of destination weddings. Then there’s the financial impact; according to a recent study by the Knot, guests who flew to a wedding in 2021 spent an average of \$1,270 all-in. Worse, these events are, plainly, a forced vacation where you have to spend a lot of intimate time with whoever else shows up. (Hello, high school acquaintances: Ready to make small talk for three days?)

That Mexico City wedding I attended last September was incredible from the perspective of the bride, Amanda Morrow, a 29-year-old New Yorker. As a historic preservationist, she had the thrill of marrying at Proyecto Público Prim, a stunning venue from the early 1900s in the Juárez neighborhood.

Some family members, more reluctant to travel during the pandemic, stayed home and others canceled at the last minute due to

Covid, so the majority of Ms. Morrow’s guests were 20-something friends. Fans of “Succession” might argue the couple got off lucky—if the show’s season three finale in the Italian countryside taught us anything, it’s that destination weddings that double as family reunions often end in catastrophe—but brides hoping for a more family-centered celebration might be disappointed. “If you’re the parents [of the couple]...are you comfortable paying for something you might not see?” said Rachel Jo Silver, founder and CEO of Love Stories TV, a global wedding media company. “Maybe a bunch of 30-year-olds are really excited to go, but can different generations attend happily?”

Then there’s the pressure of orchestrating a good time. “It’s a huge responsibility when you’re bringing everyone you love to a foreign country,” Ms. Morrow said. Couples can preempt some anxieties—say, by ensuring no-brainer transport between hotel and venue said Ms. Silver.

But some struggles are nearly unavoidable, said Ms. Morrow, such as navigating a system far different than that of the U.S. wedding planning industry, wire-transferring large sums of money to another country and doing all of this with the backdrop of the pandemic. Though none of her guests tested positive for Covid, the worry was ever-present. She and her partner put together a “huge email” detailing how to get a Covid test to re-enter the U.S. from Mexico, Ms. Morrow said, a bureaucratic challenge in 2021. “Then some airlines weren’t accepting [the tests], so some guests frantically had to take them in the airport.”

Bottom line: Despite their easy-breezy image, destination weddings are all but destined to be stressful soirees. —Grace Rasmus

**NO** **I RECENTLY HAD LUNCH** with a new friend. I like this person very much; she’s smart, interesting and real. She also has a pretty great life. We chatted about her lovely husband, their recent trip to Namibia, the stylish home they’re building in Palm Springs.

I’m not generally an envious person, and was happy to hear all of it. Then my pal mentioned that she’d just attended a septuagenarian couple’s wedding in Venice, Italy. I was so jealous, I nearly choked on my fig salad.

Plenty of people think destination weddings are selfish—there’s the cost, the hassle, the paid-time-off request. For these folks, such nuptials smack of obligation.

Dearly beloveds: It’s an invitation, not a jury-duty summons.

No knock on local weddings. Backyard nuptials, penthouse blowouts across town: They can be exceptional, full of love and fun. They can also be...efficient. Ideal for low-key couples who want to get hitched and (literally) call it a day, and guests who are Sunday-morning regulars at the gym.

Me, I adore a destination wedding. If you’re holding a distant event in hopes of winnowing the guest list, sending me an invite is playing with fire. I’ve happily traipsed to Chicago, Sun Valley, Napa, Cartagena, Bangalore and beyond—all in the name of other people’s love.

The data suggests I’m hardly alone: 79% of respondents told Priceline’s 2022 Wedding Travel survey that they thought wedding events were a great excuse to travel and 75% called them “once in a lifetime experience(s)” worth splurging on.

In recent years, “surprise trips” have become a trend; you give travel planners some parameters, and they pick your destination,

revealing it only on departure. I’d argue that destination weddings have some of the same appeal, an irresistible spin-the-wheel sense of possibility.

While some people only deign to travel to primo vacation spots, I’ll explore any place that lands in my mailbox. There are always discoveries to be made. I can point you to some stylish boutiques in Minneapolis and a killer coffee shop in New London, Conn.

A destination wedding lets you investigate the world while celebrating your friends and family. You get to travel with a purpose—but without having to attend a business conference. It provides structure and, if you’re lucky, good company. As I’ve gotten older, I’ve had fewer opportunities to just hang out with friends. But at weddings, we get to bond over bonfires and rehearsal-dinner barbecues.

Destination nuptials have given me many “firsts,” as well as group activities I would never have arranged on my own. I donned my first sari and fired my first shotgun (not at the same event). I’ve attended pig roasts and gone on trail rides.

Several years ago, I attended a wedding in Maine with my then-fiance. A ferry carried guests from the rehearsal dinner to the island where the ceremony would take place. A thick fog held things up, and made for a slow, dramatic passage through the harbor.

I stood at the rail, leaning back against the man who became my husband. Our boat pressed through the mist. The ride was an almost-too-easy metaphor, I thought, for the real life journey we were all on. Who knows where any of us are headed? —Sara Clemence

*Sara Clemence is a founder and part owner of an online travel company.*

Have Rings, Will Travel

Determined to take your vows on the road? Whether you’re looking for outdoorsy activities, dramatic beaches or cozy castles, these wide-ranging locales have something to delight couples—and guests—of every stripe.



**CHEBEAGUE ISLAND, MAINE**

There are risks to hosting a wedding on an island. But if you want to encourage guest bonding, this petite island—an hour-long ferry ride from Portland—is a charming way to do it. Because car ferries are infrequent, visitors mostly get around on foot or bike. If you’re throwing a small wedding, the entire guest list should fit in the island’s only hotel, the **Chebeague Island Inn**, which has 21 whitewashed rooms, a wraparound porch and a photogenic lawn that slopes down to Casco Bay. One note for would-be “shoulder season” brides: The hotel’s wedding season only runs from May through October. [Chebeaguelandinn.com](http://Chebeaguelandinn.com)



**EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND**

Look to Edinburgh to give your celebration that “Four Weddings and a Funeral” vibe, minus the funeral. Nobody will blink at your bagpipe band. Plus, direct flights depart from several U.S. cities. Once you get there, send guests out to explore the hilltop castle that lords over town, or to shop for camo or denim kilts at 21st Century Kilts. For a more bucolic feel, **Dundas Castle** is a 400-acre estate just 30 minutes from the city center and 15 from the airport. It has 17 guest rooms, a handful of cottages, and a 600-year-old stone keep that’s ideal for hosting a candlelit ceremony or intimate reception. [DundasCastle.co.uk](http://DundasCastle.co.uk)



**RIVIERA MAYA, MEXICO**

This stretch of coastline offers many of Cancun’s upsides—consistent sunshine, Caribbean beaches, easy access from the East Coast—but with fewer spring breakers.

**The Rosewood Mayakoba** has a variety of venues, including a white-sand beach, a rustic garden and a mission-style chapel. Accommodations range from studios with plunge pools to the enormous six-bedroom founders’ villa. The 620-acre Mayakoba development also contains three other five-star hotels, and there are more affordable options nearby. Between tequila toasts, guests can fish, explore cenotes, take a cooking class or play the Greg Norman-designed golf course. [RosewoodHotels.com](http://RosewoodHotels.com)



**ASPEN, COLORADO**

This mountain town is outdoorsy yet luxe, and its location near the middle of the country means that everyone on your bi-coastal guest list gets a fair shake. Aspen has an abundance of lodging, from top-tier hotels to independent vacation rentals that should suit a range of budgets. The five-star (and celebrity-favorite) **The Little Nell** has a mountaintop wedding deck with an 11,000-foot-high view of the Elk Mountain Range. Come spring the slopes near the inn are covered in wildflowers, and in fall the foliage turns a blazing golden hue. Powderhounds, of course, might just go for a winter wedding. [TheLittleNell.com](http://TheLittleNell.com)

ROBIN PROCTOR (THE LITTLE NELL); RYAN WHITE (DUNDAS CASTLE)



By Matthew Kronsberg

**AMBITIOUS TRAVELERS** tend to attack even sight-seeing with dogged diligence and intensity. Few antidotes counteract this habit better than a well-timed, well-placed, well-mixed cocktail. It can force the most intense vacationers to stop, sit and drink in their surroundings. Here, we highlight 10 refreshments (one alcohol-free) that pair exceptionally well with sticky August evenings, served by some of our favorite bars around the world. Many of the beverages call for ingredients you'd never find at your local grocery store (see: the speculaas-flavored gum syrup featured in the Flying Dutchmen), but that's the point: It's how these drinks express their home turf that makes them memorable.

1 **Old Family Recipe**  
*Tahiti Nui's Mai Tai*  
*Kauai, Hawaii*

In 1963, just four years after Hawaii became a state, "Auntie Louise" Marston and her husband Bruce opened Tahiti Nui in Hanalei, a beach town on Kauai's north shore. Their Mai Tai has since become legend. The Marston family still runs the Nui, slinging the two-toned, pineapple-garnished rum drink—a concoction originally devised, it's said, by "Trader Vic" Bergeron in Oakland, Calif.—but here made according to Auntie Louise's secret recipe.

**Best Seat in the House** You can make like George Clooney—who, in the 2011 film "The Descendants," sat at the bar, beneath the bamboo beams—or during daylight hours, enjoy a view of the mountains from a table out on the lanai.

**Prime Time** Evenings feature live music, often traditional.

**Sound Bite** Let purists scoff at pineapple on pizza. Here the King of Fruits is joined with ham or Kalua Pig on a garlic-butter-brushed pie. Just don't ask for "a Hawaiian." It's called the Mainland.

2 **Fruits of Labor**  
*Bar Ishinohana's Reimagined Moscow Mule*  
*Tokyo*

Beneath bustling Shibuya, in the basement of a nondescript office building, you'll find Bar Ishinohana, a dim den of tranquility. In bartender Shinobu Ishigaki's Reimagined Moscow Mule, vodka is mixed with raspberries and orange juice, then gets a herbal touch from lemongrass syrup, before being topped with ginger beer.

**Best Seat in the House** While customers crave bar spots to watch the expert mixologists work, the benefits flow the other direction too, said Mr. Ishigaki. "My guests have always been a great influence on me, and I feel that my cocktails would not have evolved without them."

**Prime Time** At least in Mr. Ishigaki's view, it's right when the bar opens (at 5 p.m. on most nights). "There is a tense atmosphere where the customers and bartenders have not yet relaxed, and I always find it a pleasure to have that kind of atmosphere in my bar."

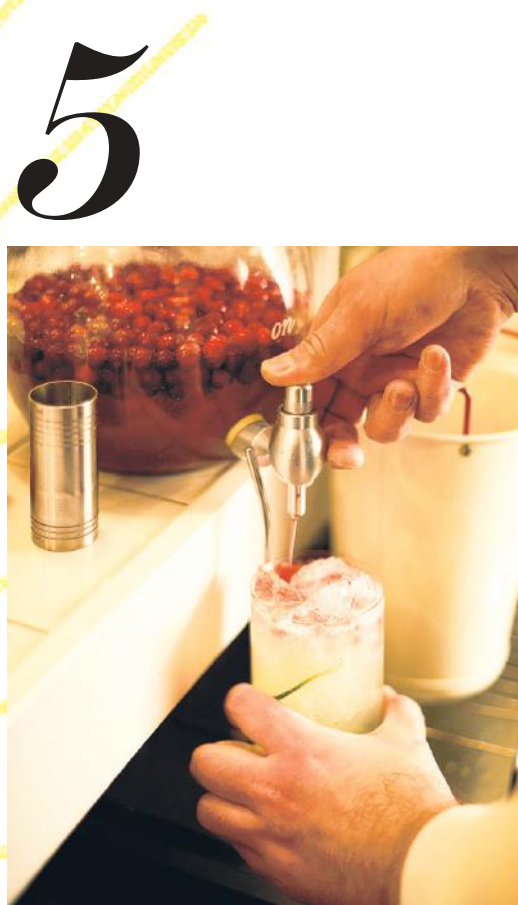
**Sound Bite** Mr. Ishigaki recommends the bar's Orangette—candied peels of Awaji Island oranges dipped in chocolate.

3 **Top-Tier Margaritas**  
*JG Skyhigh's Ginger Margarita*  
*Philadelphia*

Whatever the weather, the Ginger Margarita at this Philadelphia lounge atop the Four Seasons hotel will infuse you with a golden glow. Made with Arette reposado tequila, Cointreau, ginger and lime, it might, however, have trouble outshining the [Sir Norman] Foster and Partners-designed space: a 40-foot-tall glass walled atrium, perched 60 stories above the city.

**Best Seat in the House** For a premium view

Some of our favorite watering holes around the world—from a neighborhood local in Istanbul to a tiki bar in Kauai—expertly serve summer in a glass. Here, 10 (mostly boozy) refreshments to build an itinerary around, plus when to belly up to the bar and where to sit for the best view, service or scene.



of both the lounge and the city, general manager Adam Smith suggests you stake out a spot in the back right corner of the room, closest to the window.

**Prime Time** Come sunset, the light reflected from surrounding buildings fills the bar.

**Sound Bite** JG Skyhigh shares a kitchen with the Jean-Georges Philadelphia restaurant, which means cut-above bar snacks. Try the yellowfin tuna tartare with ginger soy sauce.

4 **Love Bird**  
*Topside's Hummingbird*  
*Baltimore*

As cities go, Baltimore has a disproportionate number of bird associations. Orioles in-

spired the name of the town's baseball team, Ravens are forevermore associated with Baltimore's favorite son, Edgar Allan Poe—and its football team. And at Topside, on the roof of Revival, a hotel in the Mount Vernon neighborhood, you'll find the Hummingbird, an alcohol-free, flower-garnished cocktail. Made with Seedlip Grove 42, lemon, orange bitters, falernum and hibiscus rooibos tea, it offers the complexity of a boozy drink without the slowdown.

**Best Seat in the House** It's hard to go wrong with any window spot that let's you take in the (humming)bird's-eye view of the Washington Monument, and even glimpses

of the Inner Harbor.

**Prime Time** "Sunset time wins this one," said Achraf Iraqui, the restaurant's director of food and beverage. "Guests absolutely love it, and it captures the magic of Topside."

**Sound Bite** Mr. Iraqui suggests yet another bird: duck breast, served with celery root purée and apricot jus.

5 **Real Madrid**  
*Savas's Moscow Mule*  
*Madrid*

In Madrid's Barrio de Lavapiés neighborhood, around the corner from the Teatro Valle-Inclán, is Savas, a snug space where red-painted pipes snake over art-adorned,

white walls. Its version of a Moscow Mule gets a splash of red, too, via a house-infused cranberry vodka, which also makes an appearance in the bar's Negroni Nordico made with vermouth, Campari and Akvavit.

**Best Seat in the House** "A small table just by the window," writes co-owner Gintautas Arlauskas. "You can see all what's happening in the bar and outside."

**Prime Time** Right when it opens at 6 p.m., if you want that window seat.

**Sound Bite** While only mini pretzels are currently on offer, they rival the drinks for intrigue: spiced with caraway seeds, smoked paprika and chili flakes.

6 **A Salubrious Sip**  
*The Rooster's Basil Antiparos*  
*Greece*

If you're at the Rooster, an indulgent wellness resort on a small Greek island in the Aegean Sea, you're already on the path to relaxation, but a cocktail like the Basil nudges you further down that path. Anchored by pepper, basil and lemon-peel-infused vodka, with St Germain liqueur, local honey and juice from lemons grown on the hotel's farm, it is a sippable distillation of both summer and this place.

**Best Seat in the House** For cushy views of the land- and seascape, commandeer one of the couches at the outdoor bar.

**Prime Time** Just before twilight, according to the hotel's owner Athanasia Comninos when the bar plays "atmospheric sexy beats" to accompany what he claims are Antiparos's most beautiful sunset views.

**Sound Bite** Flatbread with prosciutto cotto, fresh tomatoes, artichokes, zucchini and fresh truffle—made with ingredients from the hotel's own farm.

7 **Conversation Starter**  
*Fahri Konsolos's Mardini*  
*Istanbul*

The stroll from the Kadiköy ferry terminals on the Asian side of Bosphorus through the neighborhood's narrow streets to cocktail

bar Fahri Konsolos is just far enough to work up a thirst. The lounge's name means "honorary consul," which co-founder Burak Ayaz said is a nod to discerning drinkers curious to learn what it takes to make a fine cocktail. Consider the Mardini, made with gin, lemon, pomegranate molasses and a simple syrup flavored with sumac.

**Best Seat in the House** Mr. Ayaz is quick to recommend a spot at the bar, where the team, himself included, "is really chatty."

**Prime Time** Come early if you want the counsel of a chatty bartender, or the quiet to contemplate your drink. After 8:30 p.m., said Mr. Ayaz, it can get crowded.

**Sound Bite** Small dishes of pickles and olives come with cocktails.

8 **Double Dutch**  
*Flying Dutchmen Cocktails*  
*Amsterdam*

The backbar of more than 800 spirits at Amsterdam's Flying Dutchmen Cocktails could nearly refill the Singel canal, right outside its door. Its namesake cocktail combines barrel-aged Bols Genever and orange bitters with flower water, lemon juice, and speculaas-flavored gum syrup.

**Best Seat in the House** A no-brainer, given that wall full of bottles and the expert hands at work: "At the bar," said co-owner Timo Janse.

**Prime Time** Though the bar opens at 5 p.m., "the coolest time to visit is after everything else in the city is closed. So during weekdays, after 2 a.m.," said Mr. Janse, when the crowd includes "the night owls of the city, and the drinks industry peeps looking for a few last good drinks."

**Sound Bite** Dishes of Japanese-style nut mix arrive with the drinks, but you're really not there to eat.

9 **The Literary Lion**  
*The Morse Bar's Coeur de Lion*  
*Oxford, England*

A favorite of author Colin Dexter's, this bar at the Randolph Hotel in Oxford was named for Dexter's Inspector Morse. What makes the Morse Bar appealing is easily detected: Wood paneling, a vaulted ceiling and palpable history. Summon some courage and try a Coeur de Lion, made with pineapple, ginger, apricot, dry vermouth and Sapling vodka.

**Best Seat in the House** Juan Tudela, the food and beverage director, recommends, "grabbing one of the low, winged armchairs and hunkering down, facing outward to the lobby, and watching the world go by."

**Prime Time** Aperitivo hour, said Mr. Tudela, when guests stop in for a pre-dinner drinks. "There's a sense of anticipation in the air."

**Sound Bite** The freshness of the Coeur de Lion finds its foil in rich, house-cured smoked salmon served with pickled cucumber and almonds.

10 **A Tiki Twist**  
*The Cleat's Farito Mojito*  
*Key Biscayne, Fla.*

With water views, salty breezes and toes-in-the-sand outdoor seating, right where No Name Harbor meets Biscayne Bay, the Cleat is Miami's most lyrically located beach bar. Its Farito Mojito (named for a nearby light-house) tweaks the Cuban classic with hints of guava and coconut.

**Best Seat in the House** If a band is playing in the tiki hut, set up at one of the nearby bar stools—where you can still chat without straining your voice while enjoying a clear view of the action.

**Prime Time** Though the sunsets are notable, Danny Gonzalez, who runs the bar with his family, said, "Call me crazy, but I also really like it when it's completely overcast and gloomy. I think it's almost just as nice as a killer sunset."

**Sound Bite** The fresh, tart ceviche. Or get a charcuterie plate for a salty counterpoint to the sweet drink.



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# EATING & DRINKING



**UPPER-CRUSTACEAN** On this deluxe summer sandwich, romesco verde and pickled onions complement grilled soft-shell crab. Find the recipe at [wsj.com/food](https://www.wsj.com/food).

## Get Your Claws In

On a sandwich or paired with summery sides, grilled soft-shell crabs make easy feasts

By KATHLEEN SQUIRES

**N**OW IS the time of year when blue crabs come out of their shells and steal the spotlight from their colder-weather counterparts. A seasonal delicacy, soft-shell crabs are the low-waste crustacean, eaten whole, (nascent) shell and all. Plus, they are wonderfully low-maintenance. No hammering, cracking or picking required.

Sweet, slightly briny and buttery with a satisfying crunch, soft-shells take to several methods of preparation. In restaurants, they are often deep-fried to highlight that crisp shell. Too much breading or batter can mask their innate crabbiness, however.

Soft-shell crabs can also be sautéed, though their penchant for popping in the pan presents a splatter hazard. To my mind, the simplest, safest and purest way to make them is to step outside and toss them right on the grill.

“Softies” arrive just in time for grilling season, in fact. Joe Gurrera, owner of Manhattan-based Citarella Fine Foods, a longtime soft-shell purveyor, tracks them every year. “They start in the Gulf in late March/

### Lemon and Old Bay Grilled Soft-Shell Crabs

*This simple recipe brings out the but-tery flavor of the crab. Serve with corn on the cob and tomato salad for a taste of a proper Maryland crab feast.*

**Total Time:** 15 minutes **Serves:** 6

**1 stick (4 ounces) unsalted butter**  
**2 cloves garlic, minced**  
**2 small shallots, minced**  
**Zest and juice of 1**

**lemon**  
**1 sprig thyme**  
**1 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning**  
**6 soft-shell crabs, cleaned**  
**Sea salt, to taste**  
**Ground white pepper, to taste**

**1.** Prepare a grill for high-heat cooking. Oil the grate well. Keep lid closed.  
**2.** Make the Old Bay butter: In a saucepan over high heat, melt butter. Add garlic, shallots, lemon zest and juice, thyme and Old Bay seasoning. Cook until fragrant,



about 2 minutes. (Don’t let the garlic brown.)  
**3.** Brush crabs with Old Bay butter and season with salt and pepper. Place crabs on grill, shell-side down. Cover grill and cook, 2-3 minutes (depending on size

of crabs). Baste crabs with Old Bay butter and flip. Grill until crabs turn red/orange and are cooked through, 2-3 minutes more.  
—Adapted from Gregory James, Inn at Perry Cabin, St. Michaels, Md.

early April, so you’ll find them in Texas, Louisiana, Alabama and Florida then,” Mr. Gurrera explained. “As the water gets warmer, they come up along the coast. So the next stop is Georgia. Then the Carolinas. Then Maryland and Virginia in the Chesapeake.” Climate willing, the season will last through September/October.

The soft-shells we enjoy in the U.S. each season are blue crabs, caught just as they

shed their hard shells. “Harvesters looking for soft-shells have to pull them out of the water at the right time, before the shell starts to become hard again,” said Mike Price, chef/owner of the Clam, in Manhattan. He recalled watching crabbers catch them when he was growing up in Maryland: “That’s where the bulk of operations are. There are whole towns in Maryland devoted to crabbing.”

At the Inn at Perry Cabin in St. Michaels, Md., chef Gregory James brings the flavors of a classic Chesapeake crab boil to his grilled soft-shell crabs with lemon and Old Bay basting butter. (See his recipe above.) His top tips for soft-shell success include buying fresh live crabs from a fishmonger and cooking them as soon as possible after they have been cleaned. He also stressed the importance of a clean, well-oiled

grill to prevent sticking.

Ridding the crabs of excess moisture before grilling is also key, according to chef Matt Brown of La Bodega by Curate in Asheville, N.C. Patting dry and setting them on paper towels will do the trick. His cooking method amounts to brushing them with oil, sprinkling with a little salt and pepper, then grilling over high heat. “Using high heat keeps them from sticking to the grill, and they will take on a nice char that accentuates the crab’s sweet and floral aspects,” he said. Mr. Brown particularly enjoys the way those flavors mingle with condiments such as romesco verde and pickled onions on a sandwich, as well as the tex-

**They are wonderfully low-maintenance. No hammering, cracking or picking required.**

ture the grilled crab provides.

At Maydan in Washington, D.C., chef Darnell Thomas likes to soak his softies in buttermilk before grilling. “I find holding them in buttermilk after cleaning and before cooking helps them stay fresh,” he said. “And the [sugars] in the milk help give a good sear.”

The best part of all these chefs’ recipes: Grilling the crab is the easiest step.

**Soft-Shell Sizes**  
The older the crabs get and the more they molt, the larger they become.  
**Whales** measure over 5½ inches across.  
**Jumbos** measure 5-5½ inches across.  
**Primes** measure 4½-5 inches across.  
**Hotels** measure 4-4½ inches across  
**Mediums** measure 3½-4 inches across.

**Where to Order Online**  
**Citarella**  
\$12 per jumbo crab, [Citarella.com](https://Citarella.com)  
**Fulton Fish Market**  
\$95 per half-dozen jumbos, [FultonFishMarket.com](https://FultonFishMarket.com)  
**Cameron’s Seafood**  
\$125 per half-dozen whales, [CameronsSeafood.com](https://CameronsSeafood.com)

**Tips for the Soft-Shell Savvy**  
♦ When purchasing soft-shell crabs live at a fishmonger, ensure that they are alive and somewhat active. Crabs frozen and shipped overnight from reliable purveyors are fine, too.  
♦ You can ask your fishmonger to clean the crabs for you, but you must cook within a few hours of cleaning.  
♦ Store flat on a paper towel in the refrigerator until ready to grill.  
♦ Oil the grate well and set grill to high heat.  
♦ Grilling shell-side down first, before flipping, helps prevent sticking.

**How to Clean a Soft-Shell Crab**  
If you are going to cook soft-shell crabs soon after purchasing, ask your fishmonger to clean them for you. Otherwise, follow these three easy steps:

1. With kitchen shears, cut across the crab about a quarter-inch behind the eyes to remove its face.
2. Lift the shell to reveal the gills, and cut away the gills on either side.
3. Remove the apron on the underside of the crab, simply by lifting and pulling or cutting it off.



► Find a recipe for grilled soft-shell crab with baharat and red pepper potato at [wsj.com/food](https://www.wsj.com/food).

## SLOW FOOD FAST / SATISFYING AND SEASONAL FOOD IN ABOUT 30 MINUTES



**The Chefs**  
Ori Menashe and Genevieve Gergis

**Their Restaurants**  
Bestia, Bavel and Saffy’s, all in Los Angeles

**What They’re Known For** Rustic yet innovative Italian and Middle Eastern food that feels fresh but traditionally grounded. Pairing Southern California produce with global influences and lots of bright spices.

## Smoky Eggplant Purée With Marinated Tomatoes, Feta and Herbs

**AT SAFFY’S**, in Los Angeles, chefs and spouses Ori Menashe and Genevieve Gergis focus on homey dishes deeply rooted in memory. Take this eggplant recipe, their final Slow Food Fast contribution. “My grandmother cooked eggplants on the stove top,” Mr. Menashe recalled. At Saffy’s, he roasts his eggplants on charcoal. “It’s more delicate,” he said. “But the other way also works.

**Time** 25 minutes **Serves** 4

**4 Chinese or Japanese eggplants**  
**2 teaspoons Champagne vinegar**  
**½ clove garlic, finely grated**  
**¼ cup crème fraîche**  
**Leaves from 6 thyme sprigs**  
**¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more as needed**  
**Kosher salt**  
**Ground cinnamon**  
**¼ teaspoon sugar**  
**2 large heirloom tomatoes, cut into wedges**  
**20 cherry tomatoes, halved**  
**½ cup feta**  
**½ teaspoon nigella or sesame seeds (optional)**  
**1 tablespoon savory, marjoram or oregano leaves**

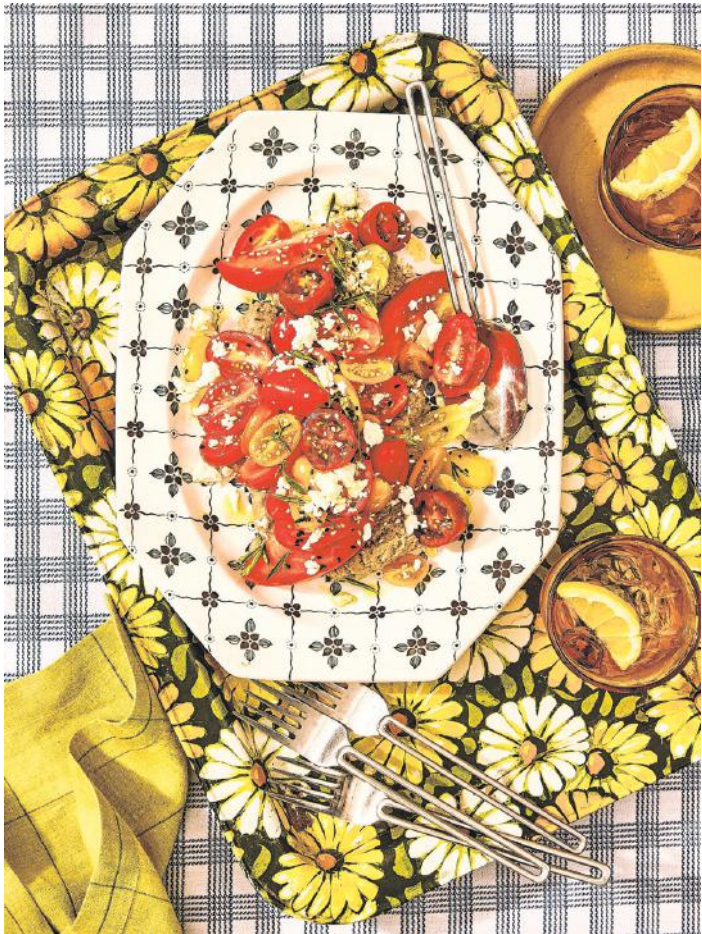
**1.** Light a charcoal grill. Once hot and burning evenly, nestle

And I like it because of the nostalgia.”

So choose the method that works better for you. Puréed and topped with a tomato salad, crumbled feta and a dusting of nigella seeds and fresh herbs, that eggplant will be smoky and delicious either way. “I like serving tomatoes with cinnamon, and the eggplant lets me do that,” Mr. Menashe said. “It ties everything together.” —Kitty Greenwald

eggplants directly into coals and roast, turning with tongs, until flesh is completely soft and skin chars in spots, about 10 minutes. Or, cook eggplants on stove top, directly on a burner, over medium-high flame, turning as needed to cook evenly.  
**2.** Transfer cooked eggplants to a large bowl and cover the bowl snugly with plastic wrap or a plate. Let eggplants steam 5 minutes. Uncover eggplants, peel away as much charred skin as possible (it’s OK if some sticks) and discard seeds.  
**3.** Transfer peeled eggplants along with any accumulated liquid to a blender or food processor. Add ½ teaspoon Champagne vinegar, garlic, crème fraîche, thyme and a pinch each of cinnamon and salt. Blend until smooth. With

motor running, drizzle in olive oil until fully incorporated. Taste and season with more olive oil or salt as needed.  
**4.** Make the tomato salad: In a large salad bowl, whisk together remaining vinegar, sugar and a pinch of salt. Gently toss in tomato wedges and cherry tomatoes. Taste and add salt as needed.  
**5.** To serve, spread eggplant purée across each plate to coat by about ¼ inch. (Left-over eggplant purée is great on toast.) Once tomatoes have marinated 2-3 minutes, use a slotted spoon to remove them from bowl so excess liquid runs off. Mound tomatoes on top of eggplant. Season tomatoes with salt and crumble feta over top. Garnish with nigella seeds, if using, and savory leaves. Finish with a drizzle of olive oil.



**GRILL GENIUS** Cooked on charcoal, eggplant picks up a delicious smoky char. Not up for grilling? You can get similar results on the stovetop.

AUBRIE PICK FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL; FOOD STYLING BY AMANDA ANSELMINO; PROP STYLING BY ANJIA RABEN; MATTHEW COOK (PORTRAIT)



EATING & DRINKING

Flake News

Delicate layers of phyllo pastry are easier to achieve than you might believe.

By Charlotte Druckman

RECENTLY, A WELL-MEANING person recommended Sharon Brenner’s “A Pie Project”—a digital cookbook devoted solely to Greek pies—specifically, the part where I could learn how to make phyllo dough from scratch. But I’ve always found the store-bought frozen sheets difficult enough to maneuver. That’s what I needed to learn how to do. You might want to do the same, because frozen phyllo can be one of the handiest ingredients to stock in your kitchen. It contains multitudes of one-pan recipes. When I spoke to cooks with phyllo fluency, they effused on the pleasures of the golden, shattering pastry and encouraged me to practice elementary doughmanship by sharing recipes involving fewer layers to fuss with.

Frozen phyllo can be one of the handiest ingredients to stock in your kitchen.

Ms. Brenner, an immigration lawyer in Los Angeles, told me of marathopita, a small, round, Cretan fennel pie filled with the vegetable’s fronds. Robyn Eckhardt, author of “Istanbul and Beyond,” recalled a pumpkin borek she watched a woman named Esen make in Erfelek, a small town in the Black Sea region of Turkey. The manti dish described by Selin Kiazim—the Turkish-Cypriot, London-based chef behind the restaurant Oklava and the cookbook of the same name—sounded similarly simple, and delicious: You fill the phyllo with (usually) mincemeat, roll it up and cut that roll into shorter cylinders. These “get stood-up in a buttered tray and baked until crispy,” she relayed via email. The little-known dish is served with a garlicky yogurt and tomato-chile butter. “Proper delicious stuff.”

Poopa Dweck, who wrote “Aromas of Aleppo,” a cookbook celebrating the flavors of Syria’s Jewish community, reminisced about the wedges of pistachio-filled phyllo soaked in rosewater syrup she first created when newly married. The Crete-born, London-based chef and author of “Aegean,” Marianna Leivaditaki, noted that while most of her native island’s pies are either sweet or, if savory, heavy on the meat and mincemeat, those she was taught are a showcase for seasonal greens—except the “kreatotourta,” traditionally a vehicle for unboned lamb and cheese. Whatever the recipe, the primary concern is to protect your phyllo from desiccation. It’s the reason you have to work so quickly. “Unlike puff pastry, [phyllo] dough has almost no fat,” Ms. Dweck explained. She recommended



TEAM LAYER Pistachio filling rolled inside sheets of phyllo and spiraled makes an easy yet striking pastry. Find the recipe at [wsj.com/food](https://www.wsj.com/food).



**Feta, Garlic and Poppy Seed Crisps**  
**Total Time** 35 minutes  
**Makes** 18-24 crackers

**7 ounces Turkish white cheese or feta, finely crumbled**  
**¼ cup poppy seeds or nigella seeds**  
**2 garlic cloves, finely grated**  
**3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted**  
**4 (18- by 11-inch) sheets phyllo pastry**

**1.** Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment. (The baking sheet must be big enough to allow the phyllo to lie completely flat.)

**2.** In a small bowl, mix feta, poppy seeds and grated garlic together.  
**3.** Brush parchment with a little melted butter and lay a sheet of phyllo on top. Brush top of phyllo with more butter. Scatter one third of feta mixture across phyllo in a thin, even layer. Place another sheet of phyllo on top, pressing down firmly. Brush top with butter.  
**4.** Distribute another third of feta mixture across phyllo in an even layer. Repeat layering and brushing, finishing with a sheet of phyllo on top. Place a sheet of

parchment on phyllo and another baking sheet on top of that. Push down firmly. Remove top baking sheet and parchment, and cut phyllo sandwich into any shapes you wish. (Rectangles work nicely.)  
**5.** Put the parchment back on top, followed by the baking sheet. Bake, checking halfway through, until golden brown and crisp, about 15 minutes. Remove top baking tray and parchment. Let crisps cool completely.  
—Adapted from “Oklava” by Selin Kiazim (Mitchell Beazley)

purchasing phyllo fresh, from a Middle Eastern grocer. But for many, that isn’t an option. So, let’s assume you’re going with frozen. Be sure to let it thaw it in the refrigerator overnight. Ms. Dweck cautioned against going straight from the freezer to room temperature. “Moisture will develop, causing the dough to stick together,” she said. While working with the dough, always keep it covered with a slightly damp cloth to keep it from drying out. “And don’t be afraid of using lots of butter or olive oil,” Ms. Kiazim said. “This brings flavor but also a delicious fried-like texture to the pastry.” She imparts a terrific trick for the crispiest layers in her recipe for feta, garlic and poppy seed crisps: Compress the layers using heavy baking sheets.

In Ms. Leivaditaki’s recipe for what’s called a pie but eats closer to a syrup-doused bread pudding, dried ribbons of phyllo soak in a custard-like batter; you don’t even have to unfurl the dough. And Reem Kassir, the Palestinian expert on Middle Eastern cooking, shared a brilliant baklava for beginners (spelled baklava in this case, as it is when referring to some Middle Eastern versions). Each of the pistachio-filled phyllo snails consists of a single sheet of phyllo, rolled cigar style, then spiraled, baked and doused in a floral syrup. Once you’ve executed these easy recipes, you might feel confident enough to tackle a traditional Greek spanakopita—or even make the dough yourself.




► Find a recipe for orange and broken phyllo pastry pie at [wsj.com/food](https://www.wsj.com/food).

IPA HAS BEEN the top-selling style of craft beer since the turn of the century. Drinkers can’t get enough of the fragrant, juicy hops varieties that provide that distinctive back-bone to IPAs—and now, to the burgeoning category of non-alcoholic drinks known as hop waters. “The first hop water batch was like nothing I had ever tasted: green, grassy, floral, citrusy and not especially bitter,” said Paul Tecker, a Southern California brewer. His love for hoppy IPAs made him wonder what the Columbus hops he was growing in his backyard would taste like by themselves, apart from the malt and other elements that round out a beer. Soon, local craft beer shops were selling what he labeled H2OPS. “It was not beer for sure, but something entirely different,” Mr. Tecker said. Today you can find over a dozen brands of hop water, most of which are exactly what the name indicates: water, usually carbonated, that has been generously hopped. Hoplark, based in Boulder, Colo., launched in 2018 as a line of hopped teas, inspired by a month when co-founder Dean Eberhardt stopped drinking alcohol. Hop waters followed in 2021. Many people, said Mr. Eberhardt, discover his hop water “on a sobriety occasion then transition to it being an all-day beverage.” Most Hoplark offerings focus on a single variety of hops. Each month Hoplark also offers a limited-edition release in its Hop Explorer Series, based on a lesser-known variety such as Meridian or

HALF FULL

**All Bite, No Buzz**

Hop waters deliver IPAs’ aromatic punch, minus the alcohol and calories



Triumph. Packaged in 16-ounce cans, the waters don’t just look like IPAs; they’re similarly aromatic and bracingly bitter, yet light and refreshing in body. Hop waters can help moderate consumption, whether as a way to take a break from alcohol or as something to alternate with boozy drinks in a drinking session. They typically have zero calories, as opposed to non-alcoholic beers, which

can also have a cloying sweetness. While some brands use just water and hops, others add flavors. HOP WTR offers Vitamin-C-fortified hop waters in flavors such as Peach, Lime and Mango, all hopped with the same blend of Citra, Amarillo, Mosaic and Azacca. “We really wanted to pay homage to the West Coast IPAs we loved,” said HOP WTR co-founder Jordan Bass. Lagunitas Brewing Co. is one of

the only major beer brands in the hop-water game. Since 2019, the Petaluma, Calif.-based brewery has sold Hoppy Refresher, dry-hopped with Citra, Ekuanot and Centennial plus a pinch of yeast, which, brewmaster Jeremy Marshall said, pulls out the hops’ aromatic terpenes. Lagunitas also makes cannabis-infused hop waters called Hi-Fi Sessions, available only at dispensaries in Colorado and California.

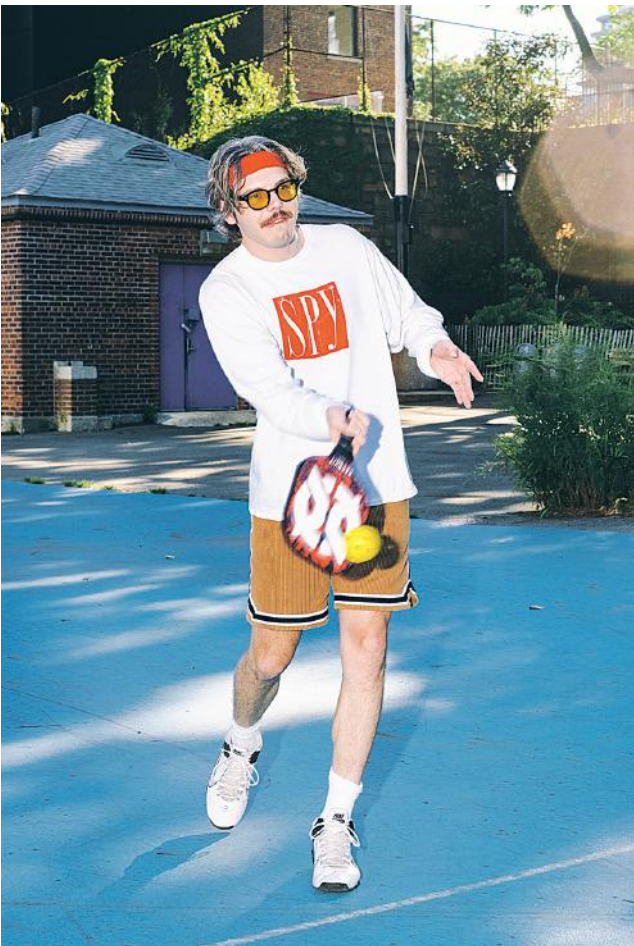
HIT REFRESH / TOP HOP WATERS TO TRY

- Lagunitas Hoppy Refresher** Dry-hopped with Citra, Equinox and Centennial and carbonated at Champagne-like levels, this hop water has notes of citrus, pine and even pink bubblegum.
- Hoplark Citra** Extremely aromatic on the nose, with hints of grapefruit on the palate, this one has teeth-chattering acidity and notes of lemon-lime, passion fruit and lychee.
- H2OPS Original Hop Water** Made with Northwest hops such as Citra and Mosaic, this is floral and a bit dank on the nose, with a piney, bitter finish.
- Lolo Hops Pomelo Sage** Bright notes of Citra hops are bolstered by zesty pomelo, balanced by piney, savory sage.

Even without infusions of cannabis, hop waters are taking hold in states where the substance has been legalized. In Oregon, in early 2021, Victoria Pustynsky launched the Lolo Hops line of herbal, bitter, spritzzy drinks conceived to work with the “California sober” lifestyle. “The cans fit into a cooler filled with beer,” said Ms. Pustynsky. “It doesn’t feel like a complete shift in your drinking.” —Aaron Goldfarb



# GEAR & GADGETS



**WORKIN' GHERKINS** From left to right, the author, Matthew Browne and Kelsey Waters take turns whacking the ball to each other at Squibb Park in Brooklyn Heights.

## Not Bored at All of Paddles

Once almost exclusively associated with retirees, pickleball has hooked fresh-faced, anxious millennials and Zoomers

By Sara Bosworth

**I** NEVER MEANT to become a pickleball player. It started off as a joke: my dad, my sister and I on an outdoor court built by some Eagle Scouts in Fish Creek, Wis., nestled against the parking lot of the local YMCA. It was summer 2020, and the three of us were filled with pent-up anxiety about the pandemic, especially the threat it presented to the 76-year-old among us. Whacking a perforated plastic ball back and forth helped.

My Summer of Anxious Pickleball turned out to be a data point for a much larger trend. The sport—a tennis-badminton-ping-pong hybrid

high-school gym classes. But when she looked for pickup games in Oakland, Calif., around five years ago, the only groups she found were for ages 55 and up. “I put it on the back burner, called it a day and found some other activities to get involved in,” she said. But once the pandemic limited her activity options, she asked her 61-year-old landlord whether she’d be interested in playing a couple rounds. Soon, they were at the net multiple times a week. “It was this beautiful little early pandemic [story],” said Ms. Thomas.

Since its invention in the mid-20th century, the sport has been the domain of what Mr. Lardinois calls an “active older adult demographic of

rules—serve underhand only, no hitting the ball before it bounces from the area closest to the net (“the kitchen”)—you can become a decent player without too much work. “It’s a sport you can easily become intermediate at right away.”

Mr. Kerauala learned the rules in preparation for a friend’s destination wedding in Hawaii last year. The venue came with a court, so the bride and groom taught their guests how to play ahead of time. After only one session, Mr. Kerauala “absolutely fell in love with the game,” he said. But when the newly converted guests arrived at the venue, they found the promised court replaced with a dance

days with a pickleball group for queer players.

Two years after my YMCA initiation, I started playing in Brooklyn, on a swath of blacktop in Squibb Park where kids practice bike-riding, Rollerblading and the like—that is, until the pickleballers showed up and took over. Court boundaries are marked onto the blacktop, and nets are BYO. Convincing my friends to play was only as hard as finding an enticing description of the game—“It’s like tennis, but easy. And free!”—and within a few weeks, I’d indoctrinated a shocking number of them, considering their average athletic prowess.

I’m no professional. In order to function, my broken net must be propped up on a yoga block and whatever book

I happen to have in my bag—and a gust of strong wind can knock the setup askew. I’m no good at volleys. After a game, I often offer my opponent the paddle’s face for a high five instead of sharing the preferred handle tap (both versions look equally dorky), and I only figured out a couple of weeks ago which side I’m supposed to be serving on.

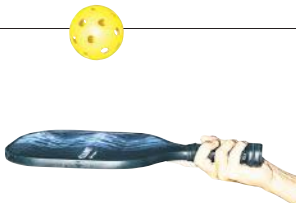
My laissez-faire attitude is increasingly rare in the pickleball world. As big names like Leonardo DiCaprio, the Kardashians and Bill Gates emerge as fans, and as networks like CBS and Fox add pickleball tournaments to their televised programming, the rest of the world has taken note. Cool-kid Canadian retailer Ssense now offers pickleball paddles, while

golf-inspired clothing brand Devereux touts a 13-piece pickleball capsule collection. Magazines run articles with headlines like “Can Pickleball Save America?” and “Pickleball Is Booming. Not Everyone Is Happy About That.” Debate about the sport’s merits flow.

Tune out the noise—or let the “thwack” of the ball do it for you. Sure, you can buy specialized shoes, enter a tournament and study a glossary to parse the meaning of terms like “dink shot” and “dillball.” As the sport has boomed, all of that has become more readily available than ever. But the blessing of pickleball is you don’t need to take it too seriously.

In fact, it is most fun when you don’t.

Convincing my friends to play was only as hard as finding an enticing description of the game—‘It’s like tennis, but easy. And free!’



popular among retirees—saw a participation growth rate of nearly 40% between 2019 and 2021, according to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association.

And a significant chunk of that growth was made up of players much younger than the sport’s usual crowd. Josh Lardinois, a member-services director at the Fish Creek YMCA, spotted the change himself the same summer I started playing. “There has been a generational shift,” he said. “[I’ve] noticed a lot more families, more 20-somethings, even high-school students.”

Mackenzie Thomas, 31, a senior product and marketing inclusion manager for a tech company, played pickleball in

60 to 65-plus.” Many people in this age group also play tennis, but the setup of pickleball makes it more accessible. You play with a slower-moving ball over a smaller area (20 feet by 44 feet, basically the space between the service lines of your standard tennis court), so you don’t have to run as fast or as far to return someone’s serve.

Now, new 20- and 30-something devotees are picking up paddles too. Karim Kerauala, a 33-year-old customer-success manager at a tech company, has become a five-day-a-week regular at the courts near his home in Brooklyn. Part of the reason pickleball has taken off, he said, is the game’s simplicity. Once you learn the basic

floor. Undeterred, Mr. Kerauala found a net at a nearby church, set it up on the dance floor and taped down some lines.

This sort of MacGyver mentality speaks to the character of pickleball. With paddles and a ball in hand, you can theoretically play anywhere, as long as you have something to use as a net, some rudimentary boundary-setting methods and a hard surface underfoot. Folks improvise in parking lots, tennis courts and driveways with blue painter’s tape, gaffer tape and sidewalk chalk. “It is innately a bit more community-centric than many other sports,” said Ms. Thomas, who now lives in Washington, D.C., where she plays on Fri-

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GEAR & GADGETS

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The \$2 Million Nevera Is Rimac’s Latest Lightning Bolt

**AS PURVEYOR** of the world’s mightiest road cars, either internal combustion or electric, Mate Rimac bestrides Disruption like a colossus. We are in Carmel Valley, Calif., at last week’s “The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering,” a day-long classic-car show/catered picnic on a golf course, liberally watered with Champagne. In recent years exotic auto makers have descended on the Quail, eager to reach wealthy buyers in its convivial atmosphere of lowered financial inhibitions.

to like him. His manner is easy and unaffected. He smiles a lot for a genius. The unofficial company motto is “get sh-t done.” A vegetarian himself, he wants to have sheep wandering the factory grounds to remind people of what they eat. Dude, is this dark-eyed beardster the dreamiest car executive since Bob Lutz? Investors seem to think so. Rimac Group claims to have garnered 700 million euros in the last two years of fundraising.

a man desperately in need of a bigger airport. Strangely, though, hypercars are just the side hustle. Most of the floor space, and the majority of the workforce to be, will be devoted to developing and manufacturing ultra-performance battery and hybrid systems for established auto makers, which has included Koenigsegg, Porsche and Aston Martin. As for the grand cru, estate-grown Nevera, Rimac will make about 50 per year, with no more than 150 total. “The Nevera is meant to show what is possible,” said Mr. Rimac.

battery pack and power electronics are arranged in an H-shape in the chassis, with the seat bottoms nestled in the hollows. Reinforced by its load-bearing battery, the Rimac’s chassis feels as rigid as a submarine hatch. Sightlines are excellent. Even loafing along, you are never not conscious of the four wicked-huge, carbon-sleeved motors in the corners (2x 226 kW at the front e-axle, 2x 450 kW at the rear). With more than a megawatt of power on tap,

Rimac engineers wisely focused on dynamic control and advanced owner-preservation systems. Mr. Zrnčević urged me to floor it while we were committed to a fast curve—which I did with some initial difficulty having to do with my monkey brain. Thanks to the car’s multiplexing array of sensors, cores and IMU’s—all exploiting the millisecond dexterity and precision of electric motors—the Rimac will instantly sort out the maxi-

mum optimum speed and, uh, do that as fast as the tires will allow. You just need to hang on. If there is a throughline between the cars on the fairway and Rimac, it’s the notion of provenance. The most coveted classics represent a time but also a place, a nativity, a spirit, from which the pure product came. By virtue of its origins in Croatia—a country without an automotive industry before Rimac—most of the technology in the Nevera is home grown—from motors and batteries, inverters and e-axes, to infotainment and connectivity systems, to the chassis system’s jillion lines of code. Rimac’s feat of technical boot-strapping makes the Nevera uniquely evocative, unlike the sterile narratives of corporate hypercars. Fifty years from now, I bet it wins all the trophies.

“The Nevera is meant to show what is possible,” said Mate Rimac. Possible? Sure, but still pretty hard to believe.

When I find Mr. Rimac (pronounced Ree-matz), he is chatting amiably with handshakers on the company stand, the automotive world at his feet. Last year came the somewhat startling news that his company, Rimac Group, was taking a controlling interest in Bugatti Automobiles from Porsche AG. Among the wares on hand: the new Bugatti W16 Mistral, which is expected to be the world’s fastest convertible, ahead of a 1,600-hp, quad-turbocharged pillar of fire. Perfect for those carefree drives in the countryside of Saudi Arabia. Later—after a nap and an espresso—I have a date with Rimac Automobili’s latest lightning bolt, the Nevera. Rimac claims the two-seater has the fastest quarter-mile acceleration of any globally homologated production car: a NHRA-worthy turn of 8.58 seconds and a trap-speed of 167.51 mph. Maximum output is a crisp 1,914 hp and 10,000 Nm of torque at the wheels. But for now Mr. Rimac and I can chill. I defy anyone not

It was known that Porsche—part of Volkswagen Group—needed to unload Bugatti, a costly artifact of chairman Ferdinand Piëch’s reign, which ended in 2015. But it was the damndest thing: “People kept buying Bugattis,” Mr. Rimac said, filling order books for the foreseeable. Example: All 99 of the W16 Mistrals to be built have already been sold, at prices above 5 million euros. That’s a tidy bit of business. Mr. Rimac’s intention is to maintain the brand-sensitive status quo at Molsheim, in Alsace, France. Bugatti will continue to build its cars at the atelier and receive guests at the nearby Château St. Jean. The organization will consolidate some operations—like research and development—at its new 200,000-square-meter, 250-million-euro campus, under construction outside of Zagreb, Croatia. Mr. Rimac promises the campus will be one of motor-ing’s classic destinations, like Ferrari’s Maranello or Lamborghini’s Sant’Agata. This is



Most of the tech in the Nevera is homegrown, including the infotainment systems.

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