

DEPARTURES

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2014

THE 122 PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW THIS YEAR
HUNT for the \$100 MILLION APARTMENT

YOU MOVING HERE FULL-TIME?

I HAVE 19 HOMES.
I MOVE ALL THE TIME.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

IT'S BREATHTAKING!

...LATER THAT DAY

\$98 MILLION.

WHAT'S THAT,
IN RUBLES?

...THE NEXT
AFTERNOON

DIDN'T YOU JUST BUY A
LOFT IN TRIBECA?

THERE ARE TOO MANY
LAWYERS DOWN THERE.

THIS IS NICER. I'LL GIVE
TRIBECA TO MY SON.

OH, GOD. IF MY WIFE
SEES THIS, I'LL HAVE
TO BUY IT.

YOU HAVE NO KIDS, WHY SUCH
A BIG APARTMENT?

WHY NOT?

I'LL NEVER HAVE TO
SAY "MINE'S BIGGER"
AGAIN.

IF I PAY \$100 MILLION, WILL IT
SET A RECORD?

I CAN BUY
MY OWN PENTHOUSE
WITH THE COMMISSION!

IF YOU EVER DECIDE TO SELL
YOU CAN DOUBLE YOUR MONEY!

OFFER ME \$1 BILLION AND
WE'LL TALK.

The pool at the Fellah Hotel, in Marrakech, and one of the property's villas (below)

13 THE REAL MARRAKECH

The Fellah offers a hyper-authentic modern Morocco hotel experience—with a focus on local arts and culture.

It's Sunday brunch time at the Fellah Hotel, a 20-minute drive outside of Marrakech, and the scene is lively. Guests are lounging around the pool on sun beds made from local woods with rough, natural cotton cushions. Drinking coffee in the open-sided restaurant, which spills toward the pool, is the Fellah's owner, Redha Moali, with a shaved head and harem pants. He's with a Spanish academic and a Parisian curator. Other artists, writers and Casablanca socialites, dressed more Acne than Hermès, snack on Moroccan food cooked up in a poolside shack by Touco and his wife, Bahija, locals from the adjacent Berber village, Tassoulante. None of the staff wear uniforms; Touco has on old Ray Bans and, at 53 years old, looks insouciantly hip. Beyond the pool is the hotel itself (plain architecture with traditional *tadelakt* plaster walls, wood fires

in suites, vintage furniture left over from when Morocco was still a French protectorate) and its gardens (austere, peppered with cacti, with donkeys and goats occupying wooden corrals). Farmland surrounds the property's 11 rural acres.

The scene bears zero resemblance to the clipped lawns in the Palmeraie palm grove, on the other side of Marrakech, or the opulent pool at La Mamounia, where the comfortably chic have always gathered—men in their Vilebrequin bathing suits, women reading *Paris Match* from behind large Perrin frames. But then the Fellah, which translates as “peasant,” was built with the notion of upsetting Moroccan cultural clichés. “Modern Morocco is totally



different from the Orientalist tradition," says Moali, "even if the tourism industry likes to support that impression."

A former banker of Algerian descent raised in Paris, Moali is using the Fellah to illustrate the energy of a 21st-century Islamic country for what it is, as opposed to souks, belly dancers, Islamic fundamentalism and the fit-for-royalty ambiance of the Palmeraie.

For the Fellah is more than a hotel. It is a place where artists from all over the world come to work on five-month residencies through Moali's establishment of UNESCO-supported Dar al-Ma'mûn, a nonprofit arts center that occupies one of ten villas on the grounds. During their stay, artists are given access to Dar al-Ma'mûn's contemporary glass-walled library of some 9,000 texts. Locals pop in to learn to read. There are visiting lecturers who deliver weekend sessions in multiple languages in subjects ranging from poetry to the influence of the diaspora on North African art.

While Moali's cultural efforts are admirable, for service-sensitive guests, there are, admittedly, elements that grate. The policy of 100 percent local employment in the hotel is commendable, but it means the polish is hardly Swiss. The design has some oddball feng shui in the high-ceilinged suites. And in the land of slow-cooked meats, the almond tagine, more crunchy than succulent, tastes like a misfire in "contemporary Moroccan cuisine."

But these are kinks, and Moali, who lived in Geneva for ten years, is enough of a sophisticate to work them out. Our advice therefore is to take the Fellah on its own terms—a place where the on-the-ground community, from the local village to the Moroccans who drop by, is learning to embrace the new Maghreb, the thinkers, critics, contemporary artists and photographers who create the Fellah's particular, and convincing, personality.

Rooms start at \$195; Route de l'Ouïka, Tassoulante, km. 13; 212/5250-65000; fellah-hotel.com.



40/40 VISION

London's Oliver Goldsmith and L.A.-based Oliver Peoples eyewear brands share more than first names and cult followings: The founders of each inspired their next of kin to create eyeglass lines. **Claire Goldsmith's** namesake collection (15 All Saints Rd., London; clairegoldsmith.com) references her great-grandfather's classic British style with colorful updates to frames, like the Bailey (top, \$445). **Garrett Leight California Optical** (165 S. La Brea Ave., L.A.; garrettleight.com) was started by the son of Oliver Peoples' Larry Leight. Glasses like the GL x TL No. 2 (right, \$450) are vintage-inspired.



15 / A MIDAS TOUCH

Aurélie Bidermann has been dabbling in precious metals for years, plating her lace cuffs and feather necklaces in 18-karat gold. With her new 50-piece collection, the French designer is making her metalwork the main attraction while incorporating colored stones such as pink tourmaline, ruby, sapphire and rubellite, all of which are shown in her *Eléphant de Mariage* necklace above (\$28,080). aureliebidermann.com

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A Real Roman Holiday LA REGOLA 67, a recently opened three-suite bed-and-breakfast just steps from the Campo de' Fiori, is a place where guests can do as the Romans do. It's run by a fashionable and well-connected pair of Italians (he's from Rome, she's a Puglia transplant) who create tailor-made, in-the-know itineraries composed of visits to obscure historic sites, opera openings, local food markets and off-the-radar exhibits at favorite galleries. Rooms start at \$250; Via di Santa Maria in Monticelli, 67; 39-34/2944-3921; laregola67.com.