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Sweater Dilemma
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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

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Home Is Where the Concierge Is

Luxury hotel brands are starting to rent vacation houses too, tempting travelers who want the services of a known hospitality name but the space and privacy of their own digs

By CHRISTIAN L. WRIGHT

THE VACATION-rental market is white hot right now. All those delayed weddings, scuttled family reunions and muffled milestone celebrations created a pent-up demand for travel that's suddenly gushing like a geyser. If Christmas 2022 seems far away, think again: Top travel advisers report that "festive" bookings are already going gangbusters, 10 months in advance—whether it's multiple-family groups determined to converge in a big ski chalet in Gstaad or three generations planning to alight in a teak and shingle hideout in sunny St. Barts. This is a very rich pie, and luxury hotel brands want a piece of it. And so they're moving into the market with seaside villas, cosseted bungalows and grand lodges that promise space and privacy, yes, but all the deluxe hospitality trappings, too.

Last year, after a few planned trips fizzled, Jay Ruderman, a Boston-based philanthropist, took his family on vacation to California. They settled into a Tuscan-style four-bedroom house at the Resort at Pelican Hill in Newport Coast, which gave

him, his wife and their four teenage children the intimacy of home with the seamless efficiency of a hotel. "They took care of everything—how we wanted the house set up, what we wanted stocked in the kitchen, restaurant reservations, activities," said Mr. Ruderman. "For us, a house makes for a better family experience."

The home-hotel hybrid trend emerged pre-pandemic, but the boom in demand for free-standing houses has accelerated development and options. According to the property management platform Gusty, interest is now 129% higher than 2020 and 30% higher than 2019. Montage recently opened a new resort in Big Sky, Mont., with a collection of two- to six-bedroom residences, and One & Only Moonlight Basin will open there in 2024 (put your bid in now to buy a private home; then put it into the rental pool when you'd rather be in Mallorca).

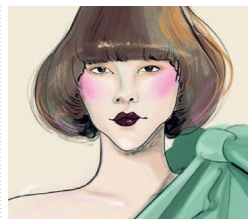
Mandarin Oriental has invested in and partnered with the expensive home-sharing membership company StayOne, offering branded "exclusive home" packages at eight of StayOne's 3,500 properties. First up, a three-night wellness retreat at a private 600-acre Georgian estate in the Cotswolds with spa treatments from Mandarin Ori-

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DESIGN & DECORATING

Color the Lines

To reinvent your interior without renovation, say pros, paint the window trim and millwork—anything but white

BY YELENA MOROZ ALPERT

HOW OFTEN do you think about trim? Chances are, rarely. Probably because white woodwork is the default—timeless but tiresome. Colorful, contrasting millwork, on the other hand, is the swizzle that transforms interiors with a whisk of a paintbrush, say design pros. Swap white trim for black, and voilà, a salon of sophistication. “The trim makes the space fully decorated,” said New York interior designer Tara McCauley, who upgraded her apartment by underscoring pale aqua walls with teal-blue baseboards. Philadelphia interior designer Glenna Stone pulls trim color from art, a rug or a pillow for cohesiveness—a design tactic she adopted in about 20% of her projects this year. Mrs. Stone sees contrasting trim as a way to differentiate your interior from the rest of the world’s. “It adds in a dash of the unexpected,” she said.

Standout trim has an illustrious history—George Washington’s Virginia quarters,

Mount Vernon, are a famous case in point. “In 18th-century America, trim was an indication you could afford a higher level of craftsmanship,” said Kirsten Moffitt, materials analyst for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation’s Conservation Department in Williamsburg, Va. Color on chair-rail, wainscot and cor-nices called attention to the woodwork and wallpaper,

‘The pretty color keeps the eye traveling the room.’

said Ms. Moffitt. It elevated an interior as well as distinguished a prestigious parlor from lesser, utilitarian rooms.

“The pendulum is swinging back,” said Ms. Moffitt. Hierarchy and separation are replacing all-white open plans whose architecture doesn’t delineate function, and highly visible woodwork is playing a part.

Here, seven trim trends that will give your interiors definition, depth and fanfare.

Simplify the Complex

To bring continuity and calm to the room shown above right, interior designer Nicole Salvesen, of London’s Salvesen Graham, carried a bubbly blue across a fireplace mantel, wainscoting, built-in shelves and windows. “This room is a study—you don’t want to create too many different contrasts,” she said of the space in the Surrey, England, home of Claire Vero, founder of skin care company Aurelia London. The monochrome unifies and simplifies the ornamented millwork, which includes details such as inset panels and spiral pilasters.

Raise a Gloss

Unlike semi-gloss, which is the standard finish for painted architectural woodwork, high-gloss adds drama.

“It’s that glossy, lacquered finish that puts it over the top,” said interior designer Marc Goldberg, who used lustrous jet-black pigment against snowy matte walls in a Long Valley, N.J., house. Stacked black-and-white photos in noir frames draw the eye up to the ceiling’s elegant edging, said Mr. Goldberg, founder of local design firm Interiors Matter. He chose to soften the high contrast of the window frames, also shiny ebony, with silver-gray linen curtains.

Herald the Next Room

“Framing can either accentuate a threshold or hide it,” said Liza Curtiss, principal at Le Whit in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Trim painted the same color as an adjacent room disappears. In a hallway papered in Clarence House’s Tibet Tiger in black and jade, the de-



OF A PEACE In the Surrey, England, home of Claire Vero, founder of skin care company Aurelia London, designer Nicole Salvesen used a rich baby blue in the reading room to unify architectural elements. “It makes the room feel more calm,” she said.

signer painted the doorway leading to an obsidian-hued living room a recessive black. Similarly, in a kitchen clad in a yellow, leafy Morris & Co. pattern, Nashville interior designer Stephanie Sabbe outlined both a doorway to a small office (and the office itself) a contrasting dusty teal. “What you see is the inside, like taking a bite of an apple,” Ms. Sabbe said.

Echo the Décor

In a 1750s home, Mrs. Stone hung antiquated documents as art then tinted the trim a creamy hue that matched the artifacts. “It was a way to pull the room together but not in a way to attract [too much] attention,” she said. Enamored of a pattern on a dining chair’s slipcover, Caroline Brackett, an interior designer in Greenville, S.C., chose a powder blue found in the velvet print to highlight the room’s millwork, doorways, crown molding and wainscoting. “The pretty color keeps the eye traveling around the room,” she said.

Go With the Grain

One of Seattle interior designer Lisa Stator’s clients asked her to preserve the woodwork and craftsmanship noded to the historicism of the original owner, a prominent judge. As an antidote to the “gutsy and masculine” floor molding and corniced windows, Mrs. Stator restrained the palette to whites, beige and black and introduced interior design rich in midcentury curves and plush sheepskin throws. To modernize a period home, she said, “it’s important not to match [the furniture to the] era of the house.”

Try Tone-on-Tone

Decor without depth can feel flat, cold and uninspired, said interior designer Dan Scotti. He noted that in his East Hampton, N.Y., guest bedroom, shown bottom right, the gray-blue trim is 50%



Above: Philadelphia interior designer Glenna Stone matched the crown molding of a 1750s home to the creamy antique documents hung as art. Below: In his East Hampton, N.Y., home, Dan Scotti used a blue-gray 50% darker than that on the walls.

darker than the chalky lime paint on the walls. “Look closely at a piece of driftwood,” he said. “It comprises varying shades of soft grays, with bluish undertones.” He added that the rich color on the window sashes makes for better viewing. “White will stop the eye. The dark gray allows your eye to travel through the glass to the landscape,” he said.

Play With Wallpaper

In the main guest powder room of Ms. Vero’s Surrey home, Mrs. Salvesen highlighted the door and window frames, as well as the paneling, in a bold green to keep the room’s equally spirited way wallpaper from becoming oppressively exuberant. “Neither element is shouting,” she said of the visual balance. Surprisingly, Mrs. Salvesen chose a leafy hue not found in the multicolored paper. “This green is not exact—it is another layer to the room,” she explained. “If it was an exact match, it would have felt too graphic.” With more sober wallpaper, she added, millwork trickery can lighten the mood: “All-over wallpaper makes a room feel formal, but having a colored trim makes it look less stuffy.”





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BOUND TO IMPRESS
 Artful packets from Hudson Valley Seed Company and, from left, the dreamy 2022 catalogs from Johnny's Selected Seeds, Baker Creek and Fedco Seeds.

LOVE STORY

Seed Capital

How one writer has grown invested in spring's gardening catalogs, a cherished sign that winter is on the wane

By AMY MERRICK

ON PAGE 70 of the Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Catalog, a rakish gardener with a long white beard perches atop a tall ladder. Beside him a massive kale plant grows. A fulsome paragraph describes 'Walking Stick' as an extremely productive kale, a standout variety from antiquity capable of growing over 20 feet tall. I'm riveted, though I know in my heart I won't grow this enormous,

novelty kale in my small city garden. No matter, I earmark the page, emboldened, and move on.

Between January and March, I read seed catalogs like other people read novels. The volumes swamp household surfaces with their floriferous covers: thumbled, dog-eared, etched with notes. I consume them while dreaming of warmer days, resplendent flower borders and a heaving kitchen garden. In reality, my seed-growing escapades are primarily a floral affair involving terra-cotta pots and

a few diminutive, dappled borders. Baker Creek's 500-page Whole Seed catalog is a whopper that could keep me going several winters over. Thoughtfully styled and artfully lit photos—significantly more appealing than the banal shots in other catalogs—are laid out with the editorial flair of magazines. Smart, history-infused write-ups cover Baker Creek's inspiring range of global foods and vast selection of rare heirloom varieties. The dedication to seed preservation and education is staggering as is the catalog's reach

of over a million readers annually. If the Baker Creek catalog is coffee-table worthy, then the New England-based Fedco Seeds catalog is king of the nightstand. Its black-and-white line drawings are charming, and the writerly descriptions spout history, humor and wit. This reader recommends perusal with a hot bath and a glass of wine. The Johnny's Seeds catalog sits at the top of the pile for serious growers and hobbyists alike, with a vast selection, foolproof advice and indispensable seed-starting supplies. I

counted a staggering 125 unique tomatoes on offer, and I love to dip into its well-organized, utilitarian world of crop yields and size-comparison charts, a glimpse at growing gorgeous vegetables and flowers for market or pleasure.

Why bother with printed catalogs, now that seed companies trumpet those hopelessly appealing, magic packets online? "Looking through a seed catalog is a tradition of winter, circling things you want, turning the pages," said Jere Gettle, Baker Creek's founder. "Our catalog

A winter-weary soul has yet to be soothed by cuddling up to a website.

is more popular than ever because people are tired of everything being digital. They want to be able to sit down in comfort and look through a catalog in person."

I'm hooked on the tactile pleasure of curling up in bed on the coldest night of the year, bewitched by the existence of what Baker Creek calls simply Pink Dandelion, an impossibly darling wildflower from central Asia. A winter-weary soul has yet to be soothed by cuddling up to a website.

The earliest seed catalogs in the 18th century were simple, spartan price lists, some crossing oceans on a wing and a prayer, globalizing gardens in their wake. The golden age of the horticultural look book was the 1880s, according to Mr. Gettle, leaving our visual language forever imprinted with those cheery, colorful Victorian botanical illustrations and that singular seed-catalog style that is often reproduced, almost 150 years later. Studying these catalogs' hopeful pages, one can imagine for a moment that seeds always germinate, plants are always abundant and healthy, there are no slugs or pests, no late frosts, historic floods or crippling droughts. In their pages, all is well, and none of my garden dreams are out of reach, hundreds of beautiful, vital, vibrant seeds, and a garden's worth of bounty, all for just a few dollars a packet. Forgive me, though—I place my orders online.



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