

The Contributors In The Issue

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WRITERS



SAMIA QAIYUM

Dubai, UAE

Samia is a travel and culture editor. She has contributed to The Travel Almanac, Condé Nast Traveller Middle East, Monocle, Kinfolk, Fodor's and National Geographic Traveller. A textbook third culture kid with a perpetual thirst for adventure, she has lived in five countries and travelled to 34 others – just don't ask her to define the word "home." In this issue, she uncovers the appeal of the Albanian Riviera (p 36).



MAHER ALNAMMARY

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Maher is a Saudi chef and the author of Saudi Coffee: The Culture of Hospitality. Published by Assouline. With a diverse range of culinary experiences – from Michelin-starred restaurants to luxury hotels, artisanal bakeries, and casual dining establishments – he reflects on the unifying role of food and cooking in Saudi culture, as ways to nourish bonds and share what unites us (p 138).



BECKY LUCAS

London, UK

Becky is a writer, editorial consultant, and former editor at Condé Nast Traveller, British GQ, Time Out Tokyo, and Time Out Dubai. She was also the launch editorial director of List. This month, she writes about the sophisticated co-working sector – one of members' clubs, chic hotels, art galleries, destination coffee shops, and collab studios – and lists five inspiring spots for the well-travelled, more multidisciplinary creative (p 86).



**ABDULLAH
ALKHORAYEF**

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Abdullah is a Saudi business leader working in varied fields, including real estate development and boutique interior architecture. His columns exploring changes in style, design, and culture in the Kingdom have appeared in a number of publications, including Hia, Esquire Middle East, and Marie Claire Arabia. In More at Home than Ever, he muses about the nature of home in a rapidly transforming Kingdom (p 58).



NADIA MICHEL

Texas, USA

Nadia is a Canadian-American writer. She served as Managing Editor at Official Bespoke, an award-winning, pan-Arab luxury publication. Her work has appeared in Condé Nast Traveler, RobbReport, and Sorbet. She is the author of 40 Lessons, a book featuring forty entrepreneurial stories from her podcast. Here, she explores London's Knightsbridge, and how the city's poshest neighbourhood is ushering in a quieter, gentler era of luxury (p 42).

In our photo essay this month, seven extraordinary photographers from around the world exercise their craft throughout the Kingdom. In Reasons to Return (p 94), each of these gifted visual storytellers paint a vivid picture of the heart and soul of the Saudi landscape, and share insights into what makes them want to visit again.

Collectively, their award-winning work has been featured by Architectural Digest, Discovery Channel, Apple, Adobe, and many more.

AN UNCHARTED NEW WORLD AWAITS



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THE NEW KNIGHTSBRIDGE

London's most exclusive neighbourhood has had its contentious moments, but this home of glitz and glamour is now ushering in a quieter, gentler era of luxury

— TEXT
Nadia Michel

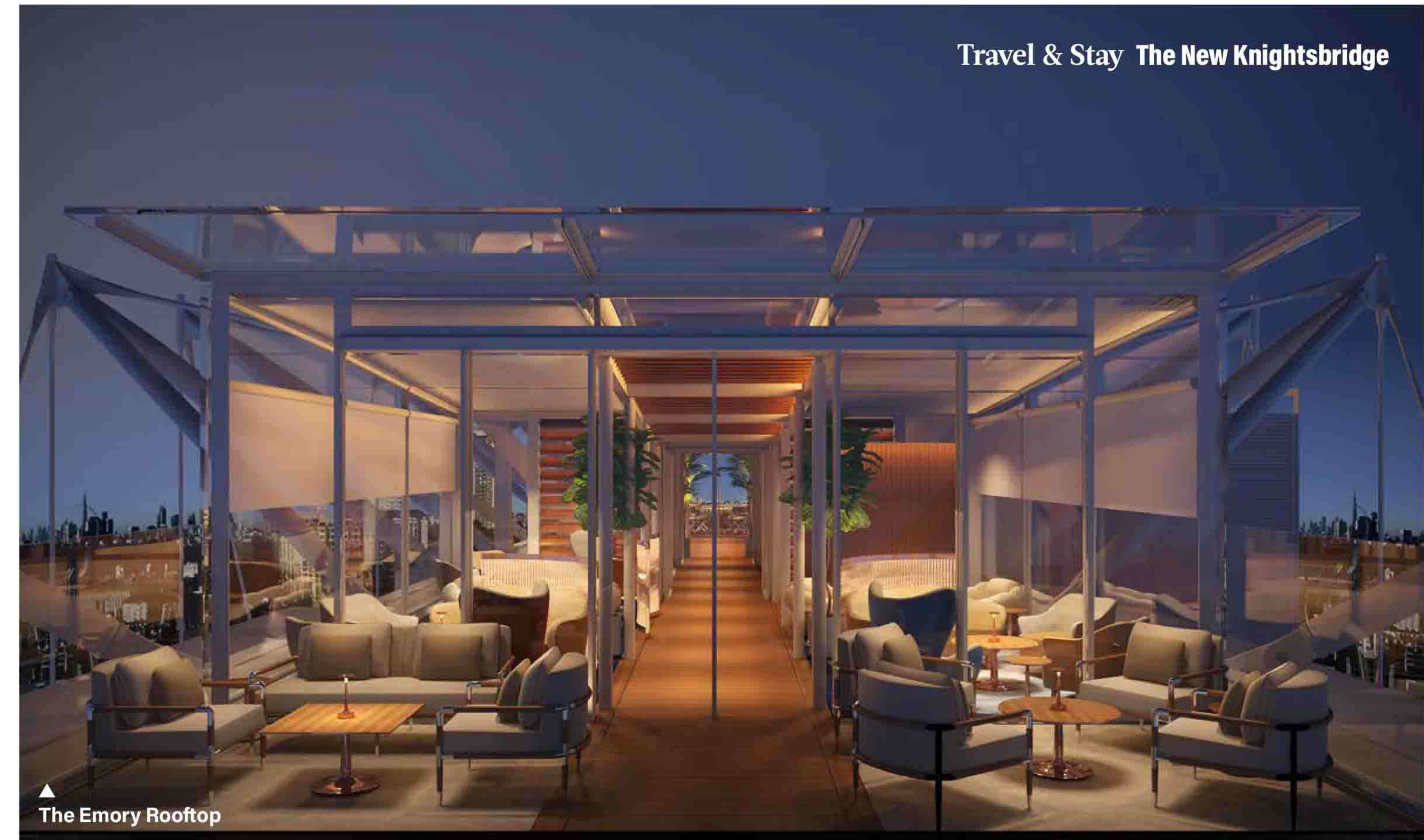
IT HAS OFTEN BEEN CALLED LITTLE ARABIA. Nestled amid the historical streets of central London, Knightsbridge has long been a bastion of opulence and refinement. This residential and retail district, located south of Hyde Park, is renowned as a hub for the world's foremost luxury brands, high-end boutiques, upscale department stores, fine dining establishments, and top-tier hotels. It is also where you will find the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Royal Albert Hall, and many other world-class museums and venues.

Once an exclusive stomping ground for British high society, Knightsbridge's character has changed over the last few decades, in part due to an influx of GCC nationals who brought with them their distinct outlook on life. While the area's reputation remains anchored in luxury, it has seen a significant shift – with Khaleejis now forming a substantial part of its discerning and increasingly diverse clientele. It wasn't always so.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE TRANSFORMATION

Until the 1970s, Knightsbridge was primarily for affluent Londoners. It was (and remains) the capital's most expensive address, which was one of the draws for newly wealthy Arab investors looking to put significant sums of cash into stable and prestigious real estate. This unprecedented liquidity came because of a sharp increase in the price of oil during that decade, following a US embargo and two energy crises – one in 1973 and the other in 1979.

Arab investment stimulated London's economy, attracting even more luxury retailers, restaurants, and hotels, which in turn created jobs. The growing number of foreigners in Knightsbridge were redefining the neighbourhood – as early as 1976, a New York Times article reported on the different spending, communication, and lifestyle habits many of the new residents displayed.



▲ The Emory Rooftop

PLUSH HOTEL CHOICES

Of course, a lavish visit to London warrants posh accommodation. During the 1980s, the spot was Knightsbridge Palace. The hotel catered to its clientele with Michelin-starred dining and sumptuous rooms. Upon entering the hotel's lobby, guests would be welcomed by a grand chandelier and meticulously curated art pieces, creating an immediate sense of luxury and indulgence. Heads of state, ambassadors, and high-ranking officials were among the distinguished guests throughout the 1980s, until the hotel closed its doors in the early 2000s.

By the 1990s, one of the most iconic landmarks was The Lanesborough. Originally built as a grand home in 1719, the property was renovated into a luxury hotel incorporating as much of the original facade as possible. Madonna, Joan Collins, George Bush Sr, Bianca Jagger, Cher, Johnny Depp, and Mariah Carey were among the many celebrities who stayed at The Lanesborough during its early days. Stevie Wonder once played on The Library Bar's piano. Today it hosts one of the city's most regal afternoon teas and the hotel's acclaimed The Lanesborough Grill serves a sophisticated take on British classics like coronation crab salad, beef wellington, and dover sole.

TAKING ON THE QUIET LUXURY TREND

For a growing number of people, luxury is now less about grandeur and more about simplicity – sleeker design, efficient service that fulfills your every wish but without all the extraneous formalities. In recent years, the concept of luxury has undergone a profound transformation. The era of loud displays of wealth has given way to the enchantment of "quiet luxury." This understated elegance emphasises exclusivity, privacy, and personalised experiences.

Restaurants in Knightsbridge have embraced the ethos of quiet luxury with fervour. Michelin-starred establishments like Dinner by Heston Blumenthal and Zuma have redefined fine dining, offering intimate settings that elevate the act of eating into a sensory journey. The focus has shifted from flashy decor to attentive service and refined culinary craftsmanship.



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OSBORNE SAMUEL
SEAN HENRY
The Way It Will Be