

Condé Nast Traveller

THE WORLD MADE LOCAL

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2023

HOLDING ON *to summer*

SUNSHINE AND FRESH THINKING, FROM TANGIER TO CALIFORNIA'S WINE COUNTRY

+
Style & DESIGN
SPECIAL

REDISCOVERING THE FRENCH LAKES • MILAN'S NEW CREATIVE BUZZ
THE SMARTEST BRITISH HOUSES TO RENT • ELEGANT OPENINGS ACROSS EUROPE

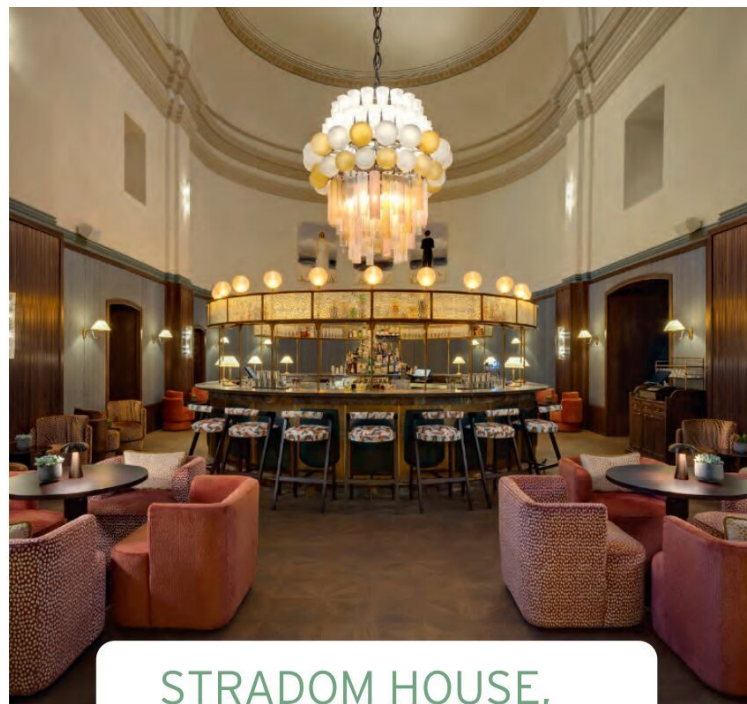
WHERE TO STAY

NEW HOTELS

EURO FLASH

FROM VENICE TO
COGNAC, QUIETLY
DECADENT OPENINGS
ARE SHIFTING THE
STATUS QUO





STRADOM HOUSE, KRAKOW

There's a stark linocut print in the lobby here, by local pop art sensation Wilhelm Sasnal, featuring a rising moon picking out the words "Pieprzona Młodość", which politely translates to "damned youth". Kraków may be easy to typecast as a museum piece, the well-preserved home of Copernicus and John Paul II, but it's also Poland's creative hot spot, with a kinetic art and design scene – and right now, plenty of those damned youth are making their way here. The city seesaws between the Baroque and Gothic pomp of the Old Town, mainly thronged by tourists, and the slouchy East Village vibe of Kazimierz, the historical Jewish quarter, where locals prefer to hang out. With blue trams trundling by outside, Stradom House, a former monastery, sits on an axis between the two, mixing architectural oomph with a downtown swagger. Given its size (a 20-metre pool is easily accommodated, as is a spa), it's surprisingly intimate. The lobby is hugged by the ethereal folds of a low-vaulted ceiling, with bold geometric tiles leading to the all-day bistro (tahini-dripped, vegetable-forward Israeli plates) and the dinky seafood restaurant (octopus yakitori on an aubergine roll; John Dory carpaccio; unmissable seaweed butter). The centrepiece, however, lies beneath the dome of the former chapel, now Hedwig's Bar: a chandelier that floats like a disco jellyfish above the circular counter, offering a neck-craning Sistine moment. Alongside contemporary works such as Sasnal's are op art-like fabrics, rugs riffing on 17th-century tapestries, mid-century bentwood furniture and wall lights inspired by the city's boxed nouveau door lamps. Safe to say there's nothing else like this in Kraków, or indeed Poland. A game-changer. RICK JORDAN *Doubles from about £150; stradomhouse.com*

