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Cover story

New bites of the Big Apple



So what's new in New York? In such a fast-paced city it can be near impossible to keep up, writes **Lance Richardson.**

Before it was New York, it was New Orange, and before that, New Amsterdam. It has always been "new" something, a city obsessed with newness, with novelty and progress, the capital of the New World. One street in New York goes through greater transformation in a single year than some European neighbourhoods do in a decade.

This can be bad – the furious urge to remake, like successive drafts of a work in progress, has led to the destruction of some truly stunning buildings, as well as increasing rents as affordable spaces are pulled down to satiate a voracious market addicted to luxury. But on the upside, it also means the city is never boring. Just when you think New York is getting old, it has a costume change and comes out dazzling.

So, what's next? Where is the next best hotel, the most fashionable museum? What's the latest food



trend, now Dominique Ansel has given away his recipe for the half-croissant half-doughnut "cronut"? People are always lining up for something in New York. Here are a few new places to start.

THE HOTELS

New York is on target to have more than 105,000 hotel rooms by the end of the year. To put that in perspective, most hotel rooms are designed for at least two

occupants, so, come December, the city will be capable of housing at least a quarter of a million visitors every single night – and that's not including the hundreds of apartments on Airbnb. Travellers

have never had more choice when it comes to places to sleep in the city that never sleeps.

The trendiest new Manhattan option is The Ludlow, on the Lower East Side. Built in a once-derelict factory, the Ludlow attempts to mix the neighbourhood's unmistakable culture – grungy yet artistic – with international trimmings such as silk floor rugs from India, and Moroccan lamps.

Balconied rooms also offer a perspective on the Manhattan skyline that is very different from the familiar silhouette of Midtown, making this a welcome alternative for anyone looking to find an offbeat experience. Not that there is anything wrong with Midtown, though. Indeed, the 10 blocks beneath Central Park continue to boom with some of the most coveted new addresses in the city. Chief among these is One57, a wavy glass monolith with a penthouse that recently sold for more than \$100 million. For those of us who are not Russian oligarchs or hedge-fund tycoons, the new Park Hyatt New York occupies the first 25 floors of the building and offers 210 lavish rooms.

This is the most luxurious New York hotel to open in years – expect miles of marble, museum-grade artwork, fresh flowers in the suites, and a pool with underwater music curated by Carnegie Hall. For a slightly cheaper alternative, check out the nearby Viceroy New York or Quin Hotel, both of which opened their doors in the last year.

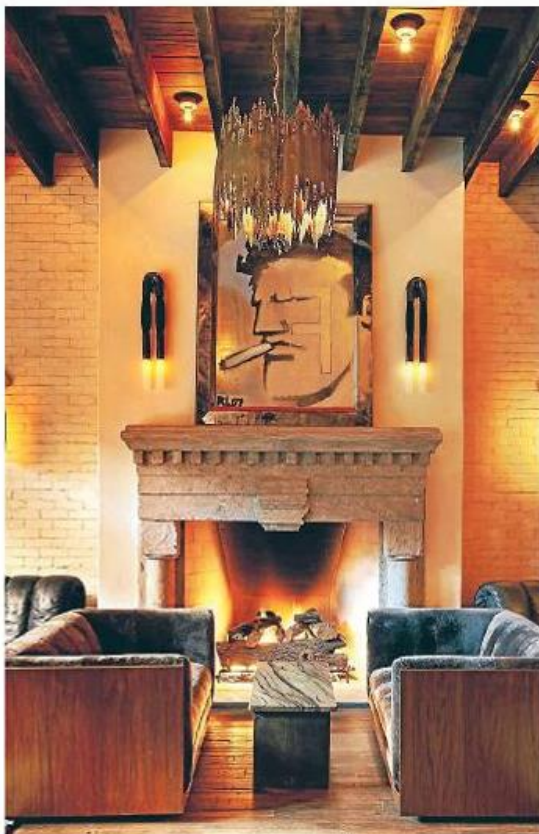
Travellers wanting to stay in the centre of the action will be happy to hear that Times Square is getting a



hotel upgrade, too. The Knickerbocker was opened by John Jacob Astor in 1906, and became a haunt of Rockefeller and F Scott Fitzgerald; the martini is rumoured to have been invented here. After a massive multimillion-dollar renovation, the hotel will launch some time before December, at which time it will become the premier address in the "crossroads of the world" - particularly for its expansive rooftop bar.

THE PARKS

New York is having something of a park renaissance. The Metropolitan Museum of Art has a



Start spreading the news: (Clockwise from left) the Big Apple; inside The Ludlow hotel walking the High Line. Photos: Alamy, Getty Images.

new plaza, with bosques of trees; Governors Island continues to expand, with new play areas, hammocks, and Little League baseball fields for the summer months; and Brooklyn Bridge Park has finally cleared construction equipment to reveal a stunning greenway with unrivalled views of Lower Manhattan.

But the standout park - and perhaps the standout attraction of 2014 - is the High Line, which opened its third and final phase in September, curving over working rail yards towards the Hudson River. While the first two sections of this elevated walkway are remarkable for their playfulness

and genius design, the third section - which cost \$36 million - embraces the area's industrial past rather than erasing it, with self-seeding gardens.

Taken as a whole, the High Line is a remarkable achievement of imagination. Walking its full length tells a story of the city - its grunginess, innovation and gentrification - that is nothing less than inspiring. Little wonder that town planners the world over have attempted to replicate it.

When it comes to museums and galleries, the most high-profile opening of the past year is the 9/11 Memorial Museum. Setting aside the endless controversy about the

appropriateness of having a gift shop selling cheese platters and T-shirts, visiting this place is a sobering experience.

Exhibition spaces show portraits of the deceased as well as mangled artefacts - including the "survivors' stairs", which many used to escape before the towers collapsed. Just as important to New York history is Ellis Island, an immigrant inspection station that processed millions of Europeans in the early 20th century. For the first time in 60 years, visitors can tour the unrestored Ellis Island Hospital, a ghostly complex of 29 ramshackle buildings that have been enhanced with installations by innovative artist JR.

And speaking of art, the superb Sculpture Centre, in Long Island City, has just overhauled its home in a former trolley repair shop, making a trip to Queens more compelling than ever. The Cooper Hewitt Design Museum is also finally preparing to reopen in December in the old Carnegie Mansion, after years of expansion.

THE ENTERTAINMENT

It can be difficult to keep track of all the events and exhibitions happening in New York at any one time, which is why a copy of *Time Out New York* or *New York Magazine* is an invaluable purchase straight off the plane. Nevertheless, a few things happening over the next few months are worth pencilling into the itinerary immediately.

The biggest show of the autumn and winter museum calendar is the cut-outs of Henri Matisse, on display at the Museum of Modern Art (until Feb 8). Promising to be "the largest and most extensive presentation of the cut-outs ever mounted", the show will sell out its timed tickets in advance.

Nearly as intriguing is Thomas Hart Benton's *America Today* mural, now on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (until April 19). Showing a highly stylised glimpse of America in the 1920s, the vast 10-panel work is reminiscent of paintings by Diego Rivera.

When it comes to theatre, the hot ticket is *The River* (Nov 16-Jan 25), an eerie one-act play by Jez Butterworth that is set in a forest cabin and also happens to be

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**FIVE MORE
NEW
MUST-SEES**

QUEENS FOR A DAY

After a \$69 million upgrade, the Queens Museum opened in 2012 with new exhibition halls, though the jaw-dropping diorama of the city remains untouched. The museum makes Flushing Meadows Corona Park a worthy destination for the first time in nearly 50 years. See queensmuseum.org.

HIGH TIMES

What makes the High Line Hotel most remarkable is not its superb Chelsea location, but the building, which was once the General Theological Seminary. This is a hotel for people looking for a tranquil escape in the middle of Manhattan. See thehighlinehotel.com.

GREEN AND GROWING

Perhaps the most under-appreciated recent park to arrive in the city is the Franklin D Roosevelt Four Freedoms Park, built at the bottom of Roosevelt Island. The last work of legendary architect Louis I Kahn, the triangular greenway takes visitors past the old smallpox museum. Take the tramway from Manhattan for added views. See fdfourfreedomspark.org.

FOR THE RECORD

As critics bemoan the death of the music industry, Rough Trade NYC opens a 1400-square-metre record store in a repurposed film prop warehouse in Brooklyn. The store doubles as a performance venue.

NIGHT MOVES

Also in Brooklyn, the Brooklyn Night Bazaar is a night market that unites independent vendors with chefs and musicians for a giant hipster party, complete with blacklight minigolf and table tennis. See roughtradenyc.com; bkbazaar.com.