

KRUG



THE HOUSE OF KRUG: BEHIND THE BUBBLY

BY JEN POLLACK BIANCO

IN 1843 AN OUTSIDE-THE-BOTTLE THINKER NAMED JOSEPH KRUG ESTABLISHED A CHAMPAGNE HOUSE WITH THE INTENT OF TAKING SPARKLING WINE TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

HE SUCCEEDED. FOR SIX GENERATIONS, Krug's golden liquid deliciousness has created a loyal following of superfans the family-run brand embraces and calls "Krug Lovers."

Located in Reims, France, the House of Krug is not open to the general public. So scoring a private tour made me feel like Charlie winning a golden ticket and a visit to Willy Wonka's Chocolate factory, but way more fun because it involved adult beverages instead of Oompa-Loompas...



My immersion into the Krug universe started at 10 in the morning when my tour guide (and Krug's International PR manager), Blandine de Navacelle, popped open a bottle of Krug Grand Cuvée, and poured me a glass. "French Breakfast," she called it. That's how they roll in Reims. So I learned about Krug's five prestige cuvees while day drinking and touring Krug's private cellars. After tasting the vintage 2000 I could say the words "bright, brioche finish" without sounding like a tool.

Brewing some of the world's finest bubbly requires both old school artisanal craftsmanship (each bottle is turned by hand daily during the fermentation process) and the latest in technology (the metal wine vats looked like something straight out of Walter White's meth lab on *Breaking Bad*).

It takes a tasting committee (yes, that is a real occupation) and a blend of about 120 different sample wines and 20 years to make each bottle of Grand Cuvée. Seeing the attention to detail and human element involved explained why Krug is so exceptional.

In 2011, Krug began adding a six digit Krug ID on each bottle's label. Entering the Krug ID into the brand's website lets Krug Lovers learn more about the story behind those very bubbles. Cheers to that! -Jen Pollack Bianco



PHOTO BY JEN FULLACK-BLANCO



PORT ANTONIO, JAMAICA

BY JEN POLLACK BIANCO



LISTEN TO BANKS

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO SEPARATE the island of Jamaica from its musical roots. Bob Marley may have died in 1981, but his music still rivals rum as one of Jamaica's biggest exports. But this Caribbean island has more to it than rastas and reggae. The island's music scene-- including rocksteady, ska, dancehall, and mento-- are all thriving in Jamaica's hip and happening Portland Parish.

SHUFFLE

Most international flights land at Kingston's Norman Manley Airport. From there, hop on a puddle jumper for a scenic 20 minute flight over the Blue Mountains to the Ken Jones Air Strip in Port Antonio. Or drive 2 hours along the island's northeast coast. "Portie" is just out of the way enough to keep out the all-inclusive mega resorts.

PAUSE

The sleek and stylish Trident Hotel is fit for Rock Royalty—it's where Beyonce and Solange Knowles bunked during a recent Girls Trip. The Trident has spectacular sunset views that pair nicely with rum punch.

Spend your day lounging by the gorgeous infinity pool sipping on a Dread Rider (made with apple and cinnamon infused Jamaican rum, fresh ginger and lime). After dark, it's all about Mike's Supper Club. At this glamorous and modern speakeasy you can listen to local jazz musicians while dining on excellent jerked yellowtail.

Don't miss having lunch at Dickie's Best Kept Secret, a funky yet fantastic ramshackle restaurant that clings to the coastline. It's hard to decide which is better at Dickie's: the spiny lobster or the sea views.



PLAY

Spend an afternoon drifting down the Rio Grande River on a bamboo raft. Floating vendors will sell you a Red Stripe for only \$3. Stop mid-float for an unforgettable lunch made by Belinda. Her chicken fricassee, crayfish, and rice & peas make incredible use of the island's flavors.

Hit the waves at Boston Beach, where the surf is gentle and \$25 will buy an hour-long lesson (including board rental). After having worked up an appetite surfing with the locals, head to the Boston Jerk Centre, the birth place of the Jamaican Jerk cuisine. The jerked pork, cooked on a grill made from a split oil drum, is particularly flavorful.



RECORD

Traveling with your band? Arcade Fire rented out the atmospheric Trident Castle and stayed there while recording *Reflektor* right on the property. Non-musicians can check it by having Sunday brunch at the Castle.

Less than 10 minutes away, the vibe is all work and all play at GeeJam Hotel & Studios. Drake, Gorillaz, No Doubt, and Amy Winehouse have all recorded here. I stayed in the The Drum & Bass Suite-- located

underneath the room where Snoop Dogg changed his name to Snoop Lion while working on his reggae album.

GeeJam's Bush Bar comes alive at night. The Jolly Boys— a "boy band" made up of septuagenarian mento musicians perform here regularly. In addition to folk music, the Jolly Boys do fantastic covers of Winehouse's "Rehab" and random 80s tunes.







JEN POLLACK BIANCO

TINTO 1884 LENS / D-TYPE PLATE FILM

OGGL.ME/LAX2NRT





SANTA BARBARA CALIFORNIA

BY JEN POLLACK BIANCO



DURING CALIFORNIA'S MILD WINTER I like to go on a road trip with my dog, Scarlet. This year's destination: Santa Barbara. It's gorgeous and an easy two hour drive from Los Angeles.

FIVE STAR OR FUNKY LODGINGS

Santa Barbara has lots of pet friendly lodging options. Scarlet and I spent a night basking in the classic luxury of the Four Seasons Biltmore, where our cottage came with a dog bed and pet bowls. The hotel even offers a VIP (Very Important

Pet) spa treatments like in-room doggy massage and room service selections.

Then we spent a few nights in Santa Barbara's "Funk Zone" staying in a renovated vintage 1973 Airstream Sovereign at the Santa Barbara Auto Camp. Hipsters will love these pimped out motor homes situated in an 80 year old trailer park. The Santa Rosa Suite goes for \$179 per night and features a claw foot bath tub. Each Airstream also comes with two beach cruisers if you want to explore the area on two wheels—the Old Santa Barbara Mission is only a mile away.



HIT THE BEACH

Arroyo Burro Beach has an off leash area for dogs and their humans. Located in the Tony Montecito area, Butterfly Beach is a narrow stretch of coastline that has spectacular sunset views and is a favorite of many locals (and their dogs).

FEAST & DRINK

Several restaurants allow dogs on their patios. If not, Santa Barbara's temperate climate made it pleasant for my dog to hang out in the car.

Scarlett Begonia, located just off State Street, has a cute pet-friendly patio and serves organic cuisine. It's a great pick for breakfast and lunch.

Located in a renovated former fish market in the Funk Zone, The Lark offers a menu focused on shared plates of Santa Barbara's best local produce. They serve killer cocktails like the Blood & Smoke (made with mezcal, blood orange, chile, lime and egg white) for \$12.

The Terrace of the Dining Room at El

Encanto is a gorgeous secluded spot up in the hills. It's worth going for lunch or a drink in their sexy lounge. Their wine list is seriously impressive. If wine isn't your thing, try one of their signature cocktails like the Pulp Fiction, made with Buffalo Trace bourbon, fresh mint, figs, and Fever Tree Ginger ale, for \$15.

You don't go to Norton's Pastrami for the atmosphere. This deli is a dive, but their Mom's PLT sandwich with crispy pastrami and chipotle mayo on sourdough is a delicious bargain at \$8.99.







PHOTO BY JEN FOLLAACK BIANCO



ST. LUCIA

BY JEN POLLACK BIANCO



If islands were supermodels, St. Lucia's voluptuous peaks and lush curves make it the Caribbean's answer to Kate Upton. With sandy beaches and picturesque harbors, St. Lucia is hot destination for hipster honeymooners and couples looking for adventures beyond working on their suntans.

SEXY SLEEPS

Book a Colonial chic cottage at Sugar Beach, a Viceroy resort, where you can ride a jitney to the beach and spend your day drinking cocktails served in coconuts. Their Rainforest Spa is nestled in a UNESCO World Heritage Site and features treehouse huts for treatment rooms.

If you want a more untamed vibe, head to Ladera Resort, where you'll sleep

under mosquito netting and wake up to stunning views of the Piton mountains. The rooms are all missing a wall—leaving guests exposed to the elements... and star-filled skies.

TROPICAL EATS

If you don't stay at Ladera, you definitely need to come for dinner at Dasheen. Guests have first dibs on the best chairs in the bar, which features a spectacular open air view of Pitons at sunset. Local musicians play live music in the bar at brunch and dinner and the food is top notch but not stuffy. There are squirt guns on the tables to fend off local birds who might want to sample your island sugar cane shrimp.





HOT CHOCOLATE

St. Lucia grows a lot of cacao and exports it to chocolate companies abroad. On the island, Boucan restaurant focuses on "cacao cuisine." The chocolate-infused daiquiri isn't overly sweet and the cacao martini is almost as memorable as the views.

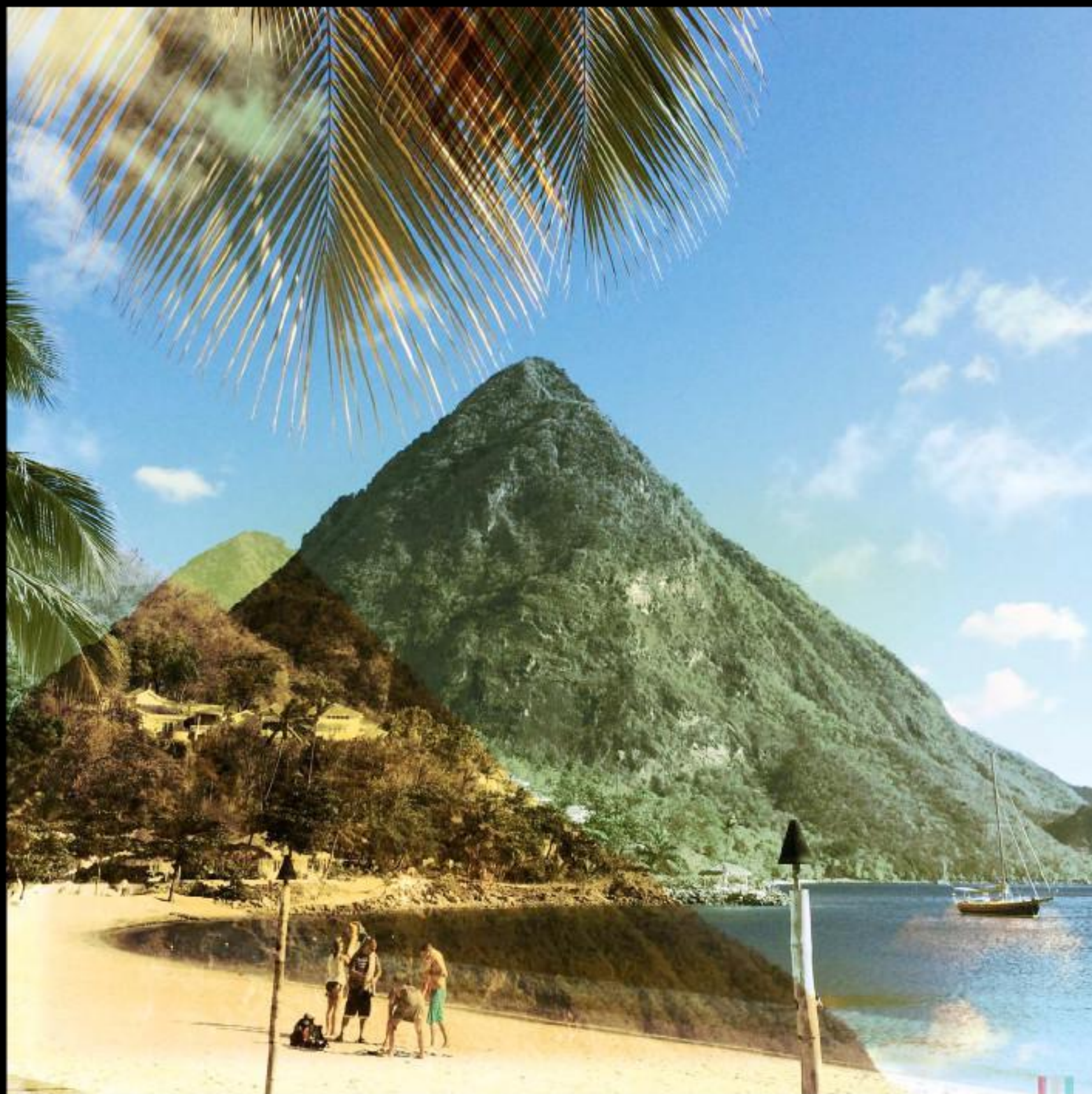
DRIVE-IN VOLCANO

If you get bored at the beach, head to Soufriere Hotwire and go ziplining between

Banyan and mango trees on a working coconut plantation. Or take a hike through the rainforest to Diamond Waterfall and Botanical gardens, where you can soak in a naturally hot mineral bath warmed by the nearby volcano, Sulphur Springs. You can drive into the volcano, hike near the crater and get all kinds of dirty taking a mudbath. Sunset sails into Soufriere Harbour are also popular, and wildly romantic.







JEN POLLACK BIANCO
SALVADOR 84 LENS / BLANKO FREEDOM 13 FILM

GOURMET GLAMPING GETAWAY

BY JEN POLLACK BIANCO



IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A romantic foodie getaway that mixes the great outdoors and cuisine from Top Chefs, pack your cowboy boots and head to Montana. The Resort at Paws Up (pawsup.com) is located 45 minutes from the Missoula International Airport.

HAPPY GLAMPERS

From May through October, it's all about glamping in one of the luxury safari-style tents. You'll be not-so-

roughing it surrounded by western chic décor, wifi, ensuite bathrooms, and comfy beds. There are heated blankets to keep you toasty warm on cool Montana mornings. Each camp has a butler on hand to provide personal service... and help you up your S'mores making game.

TOP CHEF GRITS

Top Chef alumus Dale Levitski (of Chicago's Sprout and Frog N Snail restaurants) is currently the resort's Resident Guest Chef. He serves refined yet rustic cuisine at Pomp

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Restaurant, showcasing local flavors like elk, trout and quail.

During my visit, chef Dale Levitski held a Secret Dining Society farm-to-table dinner celebrating the best fruits, vegetables, and flowers from the local Farmers Market. All the produce was grown within 50 miles of Missoula.

Culinary highlights of the evening included Big Sky Pie made with leek, cheddar and truffle served with cauliflower crème fraiche and Montana mystery pear. The Dry Aged Picnic — rib eye served with huckleberry barbeque sauce and rainbow chard — paired exceptionally well with the bold 2005 Joseph Phelps Insignia Cabernet Sauvignon.

Paws Up features several foodie events throughout the year. This Columbus Day weekend, there's a sophisticated pie camp called Upper Crust. Next May brings Master Grillers, a weekend dedicated to deliciousness cooked on a open flame. In June and July, the Montana Long Table event celebrates the finest regional flavors. Master Chefs, a food and wine festival featuring several former Top Chef contestants, happens in September.

RUSTLE UP AN APPETITE

There are a lot of activities to choose from at Paws Up, but the Cattle Drive should not be missed. It is so much fun exploring the resort's 37,000 acres on horseback and learning how to move a herd of Corriente cows. The expert wranglers had me rocking cowgirl know-how by the time I headed 'em into the sorting pen. If you prefer horsepower to horses, take an ATV tour to nearby Garnet Ghost Town.

COWBOY POETRY SLAM AT THE CHUCK WAGON

Draft horses Pete and RePete pull a wagon full of guests to the banks of the Blackfoot River, where the Chuck Wagon Dinner takes place. I dined on western staples like tri-tip, grilled corn, and huckleberry cobbler and washed it down with Moose Drool Brown Ale. Cowboy poets provide the evening's entertainment under Montana's Big Sky.



CLINK GLASSES AT TANK

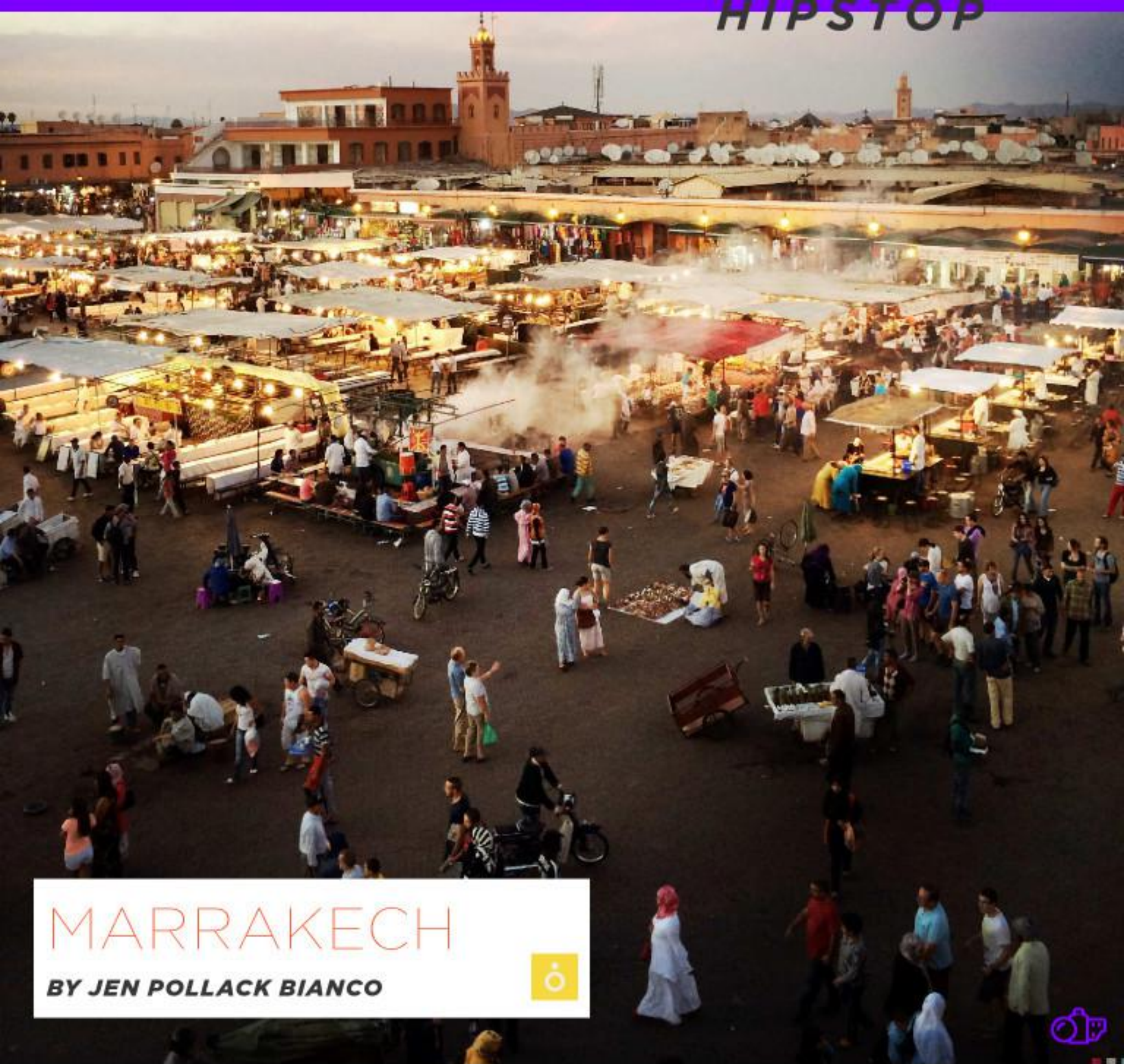
Tank is the on-site watering hole. Allen, the resident bartender, mixes a mean margarita (he's got a specialty menu of five). The Huckleberry Lemon Drop martini and House Made Artisan Sodas also won rave reviews.

WESTERN WINTER WONDERLAND

From December through January, book one of the cozy vacation homes and take part in winter activities like dog sledding and snowmobiling. Draft horses Pete and RePete get decked out in Santa hats and are on hand to give sleigh rides.







MARRAKECH

BY JEN POLLACK BIANCO



ROCK THE KASBAH

KNOWN AS THE RED CITY, Marrakech has a bohemian mystique that has been drawing the cool kids since Led Zeppelin and The Rolling Stones visited during the 60s. Equal parts gritty and glamorous—and only a few hours by plane from major European cities, it's never been easier to ride the Marrakech Express.

SHEIK SLEEPS

Traditional Moroccan homes that have been converted into private hotels are called riads, and staying at one is a must.

Located within the ochre colored walls of the medina is the stylish and intimate Riad Farnatchi, with only nine suites. The staff is excellent and serves the best mint tea in town next to the gorgeous courtyard pool. It's also close to the not-to-be missed Maison de la Photography.



If you want to roll like royalty, stay at the opulent Royal Mansour. King Mohammad VI is the backer of this Moroccan Xanadu. The property boasts a library with a retractable roof for stargazing, three bars, and private plunge pools in every riad-style room. The only thing missing is a magic carpet! You don't have to be a guest of the hotel to dine at the French and Moroccan restaurants (both overseen by three Michelin star chef Yannick Alléno) or visit the exquisite spa and hamman.

FUNKY OLD MEDINA

Wandering the maze-like medina and shopping in the souks is an essential part of the Marrakech experience. Half the fun is getting lost... you'll eventually wind up on the main square, Jamaa el Fna. Your senses will be overwhelmed by the snake charmers, water carriers, and the exotic smells of the food stalls.



ARABIAN NIGHTS

For dinner, head to Dar Marjana, a magical restaurant located in a former Pasha's palace. Local Gnawas musicians set the mood while you drink and feast on endless plates of chicken tangine and pigeon pastille. Then the belly dancing begins.

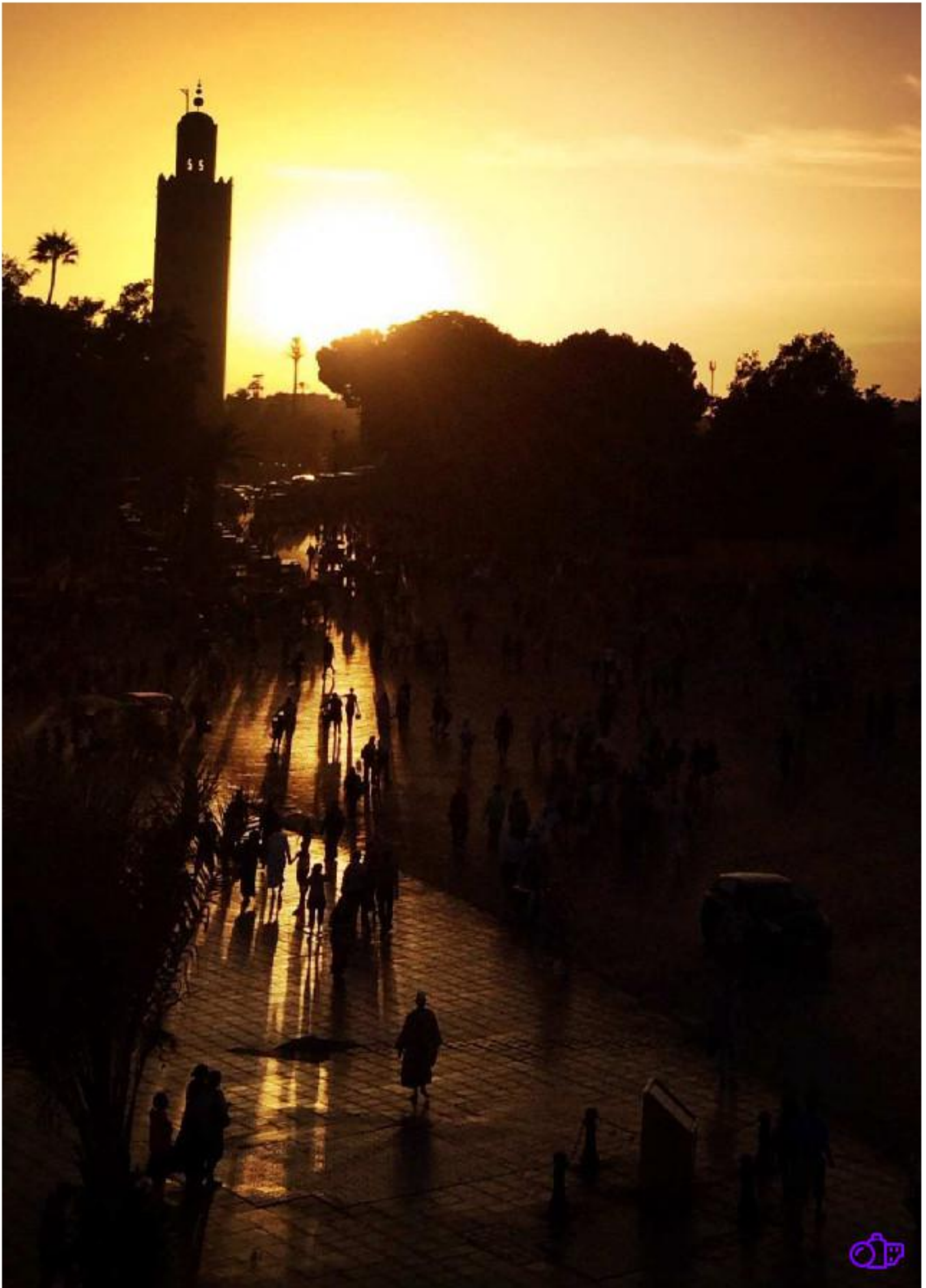
DESERT OASIS

Escape the chaos of the city and head to the nearby Agafay Desert and spend the day at the La Pause eco-resort. There you can ride a camel and visit a Berber village. Stay for a relaxing lunch served under a nomadic tent.











NASHVILLE TENNESSEE

BY JEN POLLACK BIANCO

IN THE PAST FEW YEARS, NASHVILLE, Tennessee has had a buzzy vibe that's exploded beyond the city's country and western crowd of yore and started to lure artsy types from the Austin/Portland scene. Curious, I headed to Music City to check it out for myself.

BUNK

I got to stay with a friend during my trip, but the Hutton Hotel is the city's most stylish and pet-friendly option. The brand new Omni is close to the Country Music Hall of Fame. Local fave, The 404 Kitchen, is set to open a boutique hotel

later this year in the LEED-certified Gulch neighborhood.

URBAN + COWBOY

Country music is still the main star in Music City, which counts Taylor Swift, Tim McGraw, and Dolly Parton among its residents (although that could also be because there's no state income tax in Tennessee). But rockers have a presence too-- the Kings of Leon and Motley Crue's Mick Mars also call Nashville home.

After checking out funky soul and pop band Alanna Royale rock out at the Mercy Lounge, I was impressed by the emerging local music scene.



MOTHER CHURCH OF COUNTRY MUSIC

Touring the Ryman Auditorium is a must for visitors. A church in its former life, the Ryman was the original home of the Grand Ole Opry. With killer acoustics that musicians love, the Ryman has been named one of the top 10 big room "Venues that Rock" by Rolling Stone.

GO HONKY TONKIN

I unleashed my inner Honky Tonk Woman by doing the rounds on neon drenched Music Row. Don't miss Tootsie's Orchard Lounge, which has an entrance on the alley behind the Ryman. It was good fun to yell and swig beer when the band called out to "hollar and swallow" at the iconic Robert's Western World. If you're hungry, \$5 will get you the Recession Special, a fried bologna sandwich and a PBR.

TRUE GRITS

Nashville has a thriving foodie scene. At City House, the menu changes frequently, but they always have a section dedicated to "pork snacks." Pinewood Social is part fine dining diner and part hipster bowling alley. It's all about communal dining at Rolf and Daughters. They serve Italian peasant food including fantastic homemade pasta in a beautifully renovated factory.

LIBATIONS

Nashvilians like their hooch... and brunch. Husk serves a next level Bloody Mary garnished with pancetta and pickles. The taxidermy-

filled Crying Wolf in East Nashville is a favorite of the local artistic community, who rave about the wolf burger and excellent happy hour. At Rumours East, a Sazerac with your choice of whisky or cognac will set you back only \$7.

I had a great 3 days in NashVegas. The locals were friendly, and prices reasonable. The happening music, and food scene were intriguing enough to make me want to plan a return visit, perhaps for the Bonnaroo Music Festival or a show at the Ryman.



