



**Wrist Twists**  
These sinuous  
riffs on tennis  
bracelets are of  
the moment **D4**

# OFF DUTY

**Slumber for Overachievers**  
Tricks from  
CEOs who get  
competitive  
about sleep **D2**



FASHION | FOOD | DESIGN | TRAVEL | GEAR

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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Saturday/Sunday, January 10 - 11, 2026 | **D1**



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON; NATASHA LEE; MICHAEL CLIFFORD; KRISTEN FRANCIS

## The Rush to Unplug

Wearry of screens, wistful for rotary phones, Americans want ‘dumb’ rooms without digital distractions

By NORA KNOEPFLMACHER

**J**AMES AND ELLEN Patterson are hardly Luddites. But the couple, who both work in tech, made an unexpectedly old-timey decision during the renovation of their 1928

Washington, D.C., home last year. The Pattersons had planned to use a spacious unfinished basement room to store James's music equipment, but noticed that their children, all under age 21, kept disappearing down there to entertain themselves for hours without the aid of tablets or TVs.

Inspired, the duo brought a new di-

rective to their design team. The subterranean space would become an “analog room”: a studiously screen-free zone where the family could play board games together, practice instruments, listen to records or just lounge about lazily, undistracted by devices.

For decades, we've celebrated the rise of the “smart home”—knobless, switchless, effortless and entirely orchestrated via apps. But evidence suggests that screen-free “dumb” spaces might be poised for a comeback. Many smart-home features are losing their luster as they raise concerns about surveillance and, frankly, just don't function. New York designer Christine

*Please turn to page D8*

Clockwise from top left: Alfred, 11, takes a call in the refurbished phone booth in his family's Brooklyn, N.Y.

townhouse; a vintage piano commands a corner in Sara Kramer's screen-free former Los Angeles home; designer Zoë Feldman's unplugged sunroom in Washington, D.C.; an ‘analog’ music room that Molly Torres Portnof designed for her husband's vinyl collection.

## Inside



### JODIE FOSTER'S FOCUS

The actor's steel-minded approach to working, skiing, even napping **D3**



### A POST-HOLIDAYS RESET

You ate, you made merry. Now you need simple grub like this gorgeous granola **D6**



### MONTE CARLO ON THE CHEAP

A guide to Monaco for budget travelers with billionaire tastes **D9**



### MILES TO GO BEFORE YOU PUMP

Dan Neil ponders Hyundai's weird flex over this hybrid's maximum range **D10**



# ADVENTURE & TRAVEL



**NOT-QUITE-FREE WILLY** The oceanographic museum and aquarium is worth the \$26 fee.

laughed when I turned around and saw a smiling young priest in his long black robe. Never having had a holy lunch recommendation before, I sat at a terrace table of the newly opened Maison Soeurs and feasted on marinated roasted red peppers and mozzarella and paccheri with octopus ragù (\$40, including two glasses of wine and coffee). Full, I refused dessert, and one of the two sisters who run this place

**‘In Monaco, we love hotel-lobby restaurants because you can get a good meal without spending a fortune.’**

said, “Well, you could always walk the route of the Monaco Grand Prix if you need some exercise.” Hiking the roughly 2-mile course proved a surprisingly interesting workout. Seeing the hairpin turns up close revealed why the Grand Prix is one of the world’s most adrenaline-pumping races. Just after sundown, I arrived at the 602-room Fairmont Monte Carlo, cantilevered over the Mediterranean for superb sea views. At its lobby-bar restaurant, another steer from Andrea, I ordered *barbajuan*, a deep-fried ravioli stuffed with Swiss chard, and a cocktail

## Monaco for Low Rollers

In this principality on the Mediterranean—a playground for wealthy casino connoisseurs—a budget traveler beats the odds with an exquisite \$11 plate of pasta and affordably epic sea views

By ALEXANDER LOBRANO

**T**HANKS to the attention-getting power of Grace Kelly, a shrewd blonde from Philadelphia, the glittering Principality of Monaco has reigned as a top destination for high rollers ever since her 1956 marriage to its Prince Rainier. Ironically, until my recent visit there as a low-roller, I’d never taken a shine to it. “There’s a real place here that’s quite pleasant if you know where to find it,” insisted a childhood friend. So I gave myself a budget of around \$350 a day and skeptically set out to see if anyone not arriving by Lamborghini could have a good time in this tax-free Shangri-La on the Mediterranean. My first visit, in the 1980s, had been catastrophic. With no place to check my backpack, I wore it up to the Place du Casino, the forum for Monte Carlo’s slightly nihilistic glamour. Its crowd regarded me as if I were a hobo, a single Coke was \$10 and I promptly took the next train to Ventimiglia. This time, after arriving at Monaco train station, I strolled about 10 minutes to the 14-room, three-star Hotel Miramar—a favorite of yacht employees, according to a friend’s tip, with rooms starting at around \$240. Overlooking the main yacht harbor, my room’s view was splendid; its location ideal for someone who planned to get around by foot or bus. Like many, I’ve previously winced at hop-on, hop-off city bus tours,

but around \$29 for a 60-minute ride seemed worth it to get the lay of the land in this densely populated place. The tiny principality’s improbably distinctive neighborhoods surprised me, from Mareterra, the new billionaire’s row on six hectares of land reclaimed from the sea, to La Condamine, the buzzy downtown district that evoked New York’s West Village. At the latter, I hopped off the bus and headed for the Maison des Pâtes in the principality’s excellent covered food market. For \$11, I got a generous portion of *plin fonduta*, delicate pasta pouches stuffed with melted fontina cheese, and then idled over an espresso and a sugar-dusted *fougasse* pastry from Mitron, an organic bakery from three-Michelin-star chef Mauro Colagreco. Later, at Brasserie de Monaco,

the principality’s craft beer brewery, I dawdled over a pint of Blonde de Monaco and fell into conversation with Nils, a Danish skipper. He said he loved living in Monaco, and offered a tip: “You just have to constantly remind yourself that great wealth often makes people lonely.” Another tip, from my college friend Andrea, now a real-estate developer, brought me to the Hotel Metropole that night. “In Monaco, we love hotel-lobby bars and restaurants,” he’d said, “because you can get a good meal without spending a fortune and hours at the table.” Set in lush gardens off the Place du Casino, this 1889 property has just had its interiors overhauled. After we ordered—a smoked salmon club sandwich for me, steak tartare for him and two oak-aged Negronis—Andrea showed me the Andy Warhol, Francis Bacon and Picasso paintings that are the hotel’s pride. When I got on a local bus the following morning, most of the other passengers were neatly groomed women wearing the pastel uniforms of housekeepers and nannies. After an elegant older German-speaking woman and her companion left the bus, I was alone and the driver said, “She’s a princess from some country in Eastern Europe that doesn’t exist anymore.” I left the bus in front of the aquarium, L’Institut Océanographique de Monaco, a stunning 1910 beaux-arts limestone mansion perched on a cliff. I spent several hours spellbound by the



The Negroni Oaked, aged on-site at the Hotel Metropole.



Where the richer half lives: Monaco’s ritzy Place du Casino.

aquarium—don’t miss the octopus and jellyfish tanks—and the museum of the world’s oceans. After watching the changing of the guard at the candy-box-style Palais Princier de Monaco, home of Prince Albert II, I wandered into the narrow stone-paved lanes lined with pastel houses of the old town. I was reading a chalkboard menu, when someone spoke over my shoulder. “Eat here and have the octopus pasta. You can trust me.” I

made with a liqueur infused with the toasty flavor of socca, the region’s chickpea-flour pancake. Just as I was served, fireworks streaked the sky over Port Hercule; no one had told me that it was Monaco’s national holiday. My doubts dispelled, I realized I’d had a really good time without breaking the bank. Opulent and extravagant? Yes, but Monaco can also be a charming and affordable seaside getaway.

## A Showroom You Can Spend Your Vacation In

Ever wished your bedroom looked more like a luxury-resort suite? Hotel rooms with shoppable decor have made buying that lamp as easy as one scan of a QR code.

**MANY LUXURY** hotels let you buy the bathrobe or the fancy moisturizer in the bathroom. But a few spots go further, inviting guests to purchase the sofa they napped on, or coffee table where they ate breakfast. The concept of the shoppable hotel room dates to 1999, when Westin stocked its rooms with the Heavenly Bed by Simmons Bedding Company, which guests could then purchase at Nordstrom. Recently the trend has picked up pace—and it’s become a lot easier to buy something you like on the spot. In Philadelphia, the 50-room Hotel Anna & Bel tapped Anthropologie Home to design its Anna Suite, which debuted last April. The brand outfitted the two-bedroom suite (about \$1,000 a night) entirely with decor from its Spring 2025 collection, all available to purchase, including a jacquard woven sofa (\$3,298) and a pedestal dining table (\$1,198). “It made me want to rede-



orate my whole house,” said Nicole Schenk, a Philadelphia-based nurse practitioner who booked the suite for a staycation with friends. Schenk resisted the big-ticket items, but did purchase holiday mugs using the QR code on a card in the living room. Design Within Reach (DWR) made a foray into hospitality last April with a home on the vacation-rental platform Boutique. At Wave House, a restored Midcentury landmark in Palm Desert, Calif., guests could try—and shop—the brand’s Paul Smith Collection. That initial pop-up was so successful, DWR recently launched a new collaboration, this time with Piaule, a 50-acre retreat in New York’s Catskills. Visitors can buy some of the property’s furnishings, including seating by Herman Miller, through a dedicated page on DWR’s website. While some guests like to try before they buy, others are drawn in by the deals. Last November, the Newport Harbor Island Resort in Rhode Island

debuted a seasonal suite in collaboration with the brand Cozy Earth, with all the bedding, robes and candles available for 20% off. Guest rooms designed around retail turn other travelers off. Anne-Cecile Blanchot, a New York-based PR professional, said she chooses hotels to escape from home life: “I don’t necessarily want what’s in my hotel room to be items I can have at home. Then it’s not as transportive and special.” From a designer’s perspective, accommodations can sell products more effectively than showrooms. Danish design company Vipp sells modular kitchens, furniture, lighting and accessories. Guests can test-drive swivel chairs (from \$1,475), sleek trash cans (from \$270) and even whole kitchens (from \$19,000) firsthand in a portfolio of 13 bookable guesthouses around the world. “There are clients who will travel for that experience,” said co-owner Sofie Christensen Egelund. —Nora Walsh



A \$720 lamp for sale at Hotel Anna & Bel.