

## DEPARTURE INFO

From boutique hotel bliss in Milan to bijou, Tadao Ando-designed chic in Shikoku, plus grills and thrills at a Chicago steakhouse

### Top brass

#### SENATO HOTEL, MILAN

Slowly but surely, Milan's boutique hotel scene is heating up, thanks to chic new openings like the Senato Hotel. Run by the Ranza family – fourth generation Milanese entrepreneurs – the 43-room property unfolds within a five-storey neoclassical building that was once the family's private residence. Architect Alessandro Bianchi called on a host of local Milanese talent, from florist Rosalba Piccinni to metal lighting company Bottega Gadda, to build on his sleek but cosy interiors, which comprise an assembly of plush materials (marble, brass, handsome wood parquet flooring and rich velvet furnishings) in a discerning palette of matt black, bottle green and shimmering gold. In the inner courtyard, Bianchi has created a slate-grey stone pool of shallow water that smartly reflects the building's architecture. The boutiques of via Montenapoleone, Milan's top shopping destination, are just three blocks away. **JJ Martin** via Senato 22, tel: 39.02 781 236, [senatohotelmilano.it](http://senatohotelmilano.it). Rates: from €230



#### ■ CAFÉ CULTURE

Above, in the hotel's Senato café, architect Alessandro Bianchi's designs include a brass bar and lighting, crafted by Bottega Gadda

#### ■ LOBBY GROUP

Left, the intimate lobby, where Bianchi's made-in-Italy furnishings combine with green serpentine and white marble flooring



## Jungle beat

AMANERA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ←

A hitherto untouched stretch of land on the Dominican Republic's north shore, known as the Green Coast, is now home to the Aman group's 29th retreat, Amanera. Perched atop 60ft cliffs overlooking Playa Grande, the resort respectfully slots into its lush jungle surroundings. The 25 *casitas* feature designer John Heah's raw, organic interiors, with local stone, handmade Aguayo tiles, Dominican art and artifacts, and floor-to-ceiling views of the ocean and landscaped gardens. This is the first Aman with a golf course – ten holes and 370 acres designed by Robert Trent Jones, with a new clubhouse opening in the next six months – while the signature spa offers therapies inspired by shamanic healing. **Ella Marshall** *Auto. 5 Carretera Rio San Juan – Cabrera, Rio San Juan, tel: 65,6883 2555, aman.com. Rates: from £794*

## Suite serenity

SETOUCHI RETREAT AONAGI, JAPAN →

This Tadao Ando-designed, seven-room retreat has opened outside Matsuyama on Japan's smallest island, Shikoku. Built 17 years ago by the architect as a private guest house, the structure was later turned into a modern art museum before reopening as the Setouchi Retreat Aonagi. Ando has overseen each transformation, his signature approach remaining clear from the exposed concrete, white surfaces and straight lines throughout the space. Highlights include the Aonagi maisonette suite, for spectacular views of the Inland Sea, and the outdoor lap pool (pictured). Restaurant Minagi serves casual *kaiseki* (multi-course) dinners with an emphasis on local seafood. **Jens H Jensen** *794-1 Yanaidani-cho, Matsuyama, 799-2641 Ehime, tel: 81.89 977 9500, setouchi-aonagi.jp. Rates: from ¥36,000 (\$306)*



## Raising the steakhouse

MAPLE & ASH, CHICAGO ←

The traditional US steakhouse has had a facelift, thanks to hospitality entrepreneur Brian O'Connor's Maple & Ash in Chicago's Gold Coast district. An easy-going, ground-floor bar leads to a lounge (pictured) and dining room above, where a 12ft hearth grills meats, seafood and vegetables to perfection. Designed by local outfit Studio K, steel-framed glass doors, wood panels and leather and velvet seating nod to the sophistication and warmth of steakhouses past. Chef Danny Grant turns out seafood platters, salads and a variety of steak cuts, with toppings such as truffle butter and roasted bone marrow, while cocktails include eight interpretations of the martini. **Pei-Ru Keh** *8 West Maple, tel: 1.312 944 8888, mapleandash.com*