

GENTRY

HOME

JULY/AUGUST 2018



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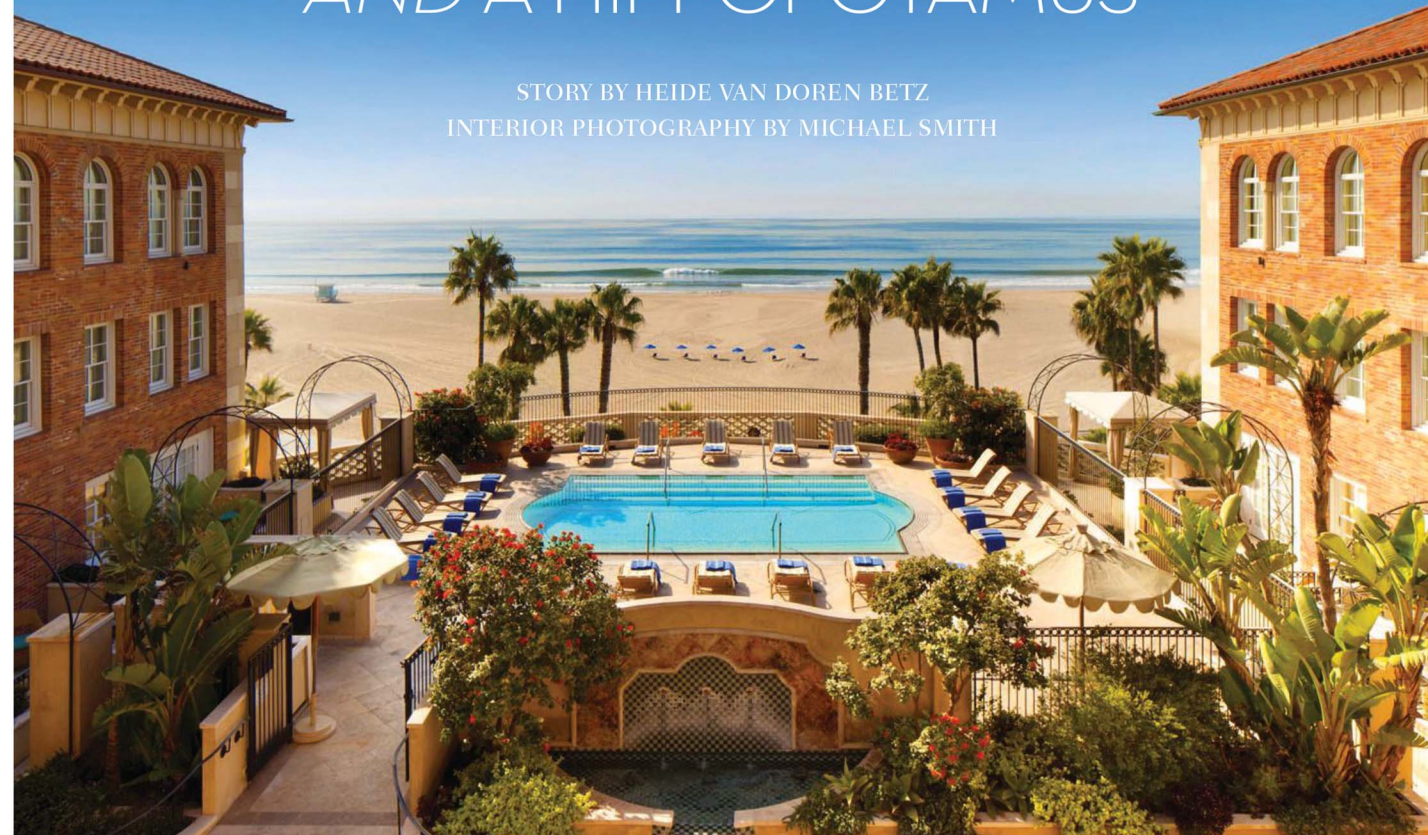
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24 HOURS WITH . . .

Kelly Finley of Joy Street Design

A LUXURIOUS SEASIDE HOTEL, AN ANCIENT VILLA, ROMAN EMPERORS, EGYPTIAN PHARAHOHS, QUEENS, AND A HIPPOPOTAMUS

STORY BY HEIDE VAN DOREN BETZ
INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL SMITH



Spend an art-filled weekend at Casa del Mar, located on the beach in Santa Monica, and enjoy insider access to the treasures at the Getty Villa and Getty Center.

The Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) from Santa Monica to Malibu is filled with sun, sandy beaches, surfer waves, sunsets, renowned restaurants, shopping, five-star hotels, and a great museum.

One of Santa Monica's famous beachside hotels, the historic Casa del Mar, is the official hotel partner of the Getty Villa's temporary exhibition, *Plato in LA: Contemporary Artists Visions*, as part of the reinstalled Villa. The hotel is offering guest packages that include parking at the Villa, cocktails, a catalog, and more. "Since the owners of the hotel love art, we wanted to partner with an art institution," relates Casa del Mar General Manager Charlie Lopez-Quintana. "What better place than the Getty Villa, only six miles away. The temporary modern exhibition, *Plato in LA*, is something that has never been done before. This intrigued us."

The cathedral ceilings and floor-to-sky windows are legendary in the Mediterranean-inspired architecture. The spacious lobby, recently redesigned by renowned interior designer Michael Smith, and the Terrazza Lounge are favorite hangouts for visitors and locals enjoying cocktails and dining with a spectacular panoramic backdrop of sandy beach and shimmering ocean.

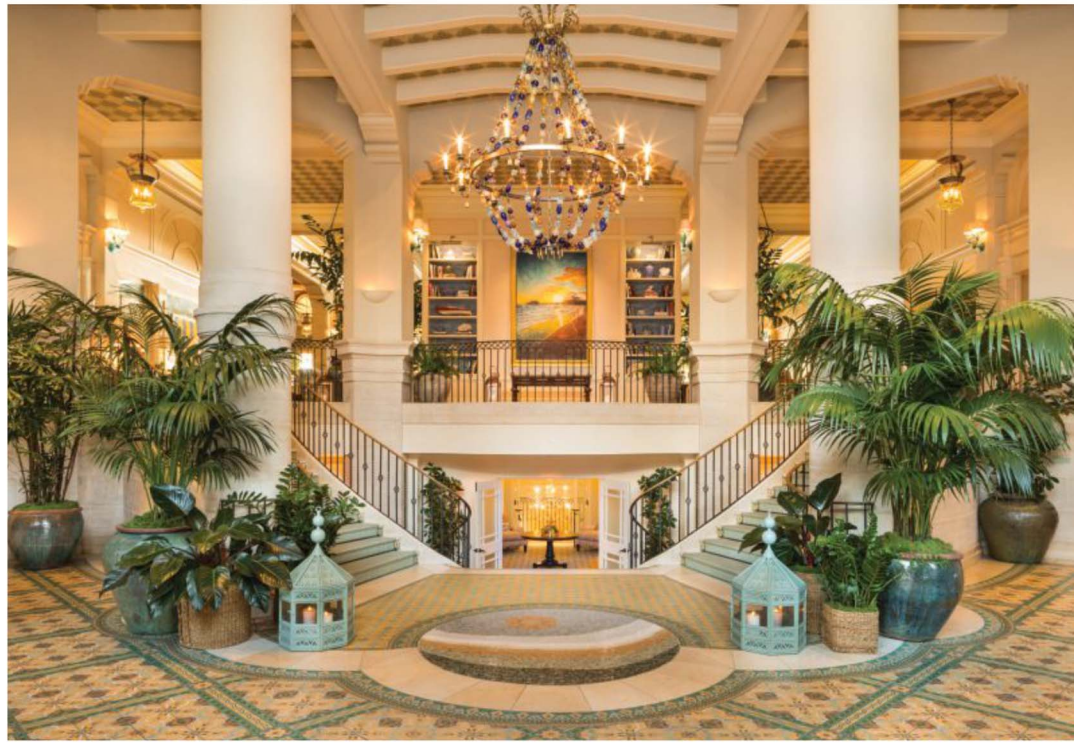
This is the perfect spot for your weekend stay to visit the re-installed Getty Villa treasures. But, if you choose to do nothing and just breathe in the relaxation, fine dining, and natural splendor of the Casa del Mar, good for you.

However, just a quick trip up the coast, art lovers can bask in the glory of the Getty Villa. The Villa (on PCH, Malibu) is a replica of the Villa Dei Papyri in Herculaneum (destroyed by ➔

The cathedral ceilings and floor-to-sky windows are legendary in the Mediterranean-inspired architecture. The lobby, (right) recently redesigned by Michael Smith, and the Terrazza Lounge (below) are favorite hangouts for visitors and locals enjoying cocktails and dining with a panoramic backdrop of shimmering ocean and sandy beaches.

Mt. Vesuvius' eruption in 79AD), built from original plans found at the site. The Villa houses the collection of ancient art begun by its benefactor, J. Paul Getty. Along the olive tree-studded path to the Villa Museum is a plaque that says it all: "One could say, 'Go to Pompeii and Herculaneum and see Roman villas the way they are now—then go to Malibu and see the way they were in ancient times.'" —J. Paul Getty, *Los Angeles Times*, 1974. It is, indeed, a sight of magnificence and splendor.

After years of research, the Getty Villa has re-installed its extensive, world-famous collections of ancient art chronologically. Why? It all seemed perfectly exhibited thematically (you know, Gods and Goddesses together in a gallery). The answer: Because Greece did not exist alone!



Exhibited in a broader artistic and historical context, objects are in relation to their place in history and culture. The visitor now takes a stroll through history to see the evolution of the Classical World—geometric, archaic, classical, Hellenistic, roman—in relation to the cross-cultural influences between Greece, Rome, and other Mediterranean Countries, the Middle East, and Asia. "Although there is no one correct way to install a collection, the Getty masterpieces now shine in a way they did not before; they have the prominence they deserve," says Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. As you enter the Villa's first floor (with the stunning interior peristyle with copies of sculptures from the original *Villa Dei Papyri*), the galleries are devoted to Neolithic, Bronze Age, and Greek Art.

Don't miss the spectacular life-size *Orpheus and the Sirens*, the touching *Young Girl Holding Doves*, and the *Lansdowne Hercules* in all his splendor. An extraordinary exhibition of outstanding portraits, *Palmyra: Loss and Remembrance* (April – May 2019), is on loan from the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek Copenhagen. This is a fortunate and unique opportunity to see exquisite, dramatic, and realistic (mostly funerary) portraits from the ancient Syrian City of Palmyra, a city that has inspired artists and architects since the Renaissance. Palmyra was mostly destroyed in 2015 /2017. You saw the pictures, I am sure. These tender portraits are inscribed with the name of the deceased and then—"Alas." How touching, how sad.

The Etruscan Art Gallery, re-installed by Curator Claire Lyons, has 86 works of art (from about 1,400 in the Getty collection). "There are very few galleries devoted to the art of Etruria," says Lyons. Among the highlights are a *Head of Medusa*, staring at the visitor from above, and an elegant *Bronze Candelabra* used for banquet and funeral rituals.

Next, head up the marble stairs to the second floor to see ➔





the art of Rome. The elegant Boscoreale Gallery showcases frescoes from an ancient Roman Villa outside Pompeii, rarely displayed. Curator Mary Hart says: "Unlike the grandeur of the Villa dei Papiri (Getty Villa), Boscoreale was a working farm, and the walls were still richly decorated with frescoes and mosaics."

Everybody loves the ancient coins and gems. "In antiquity," curator Kenneth Lapatin notes, "cameos, jewelry, and coins were worn on the body or held in the hand, so they could easily be raised to the eye, shared, and admired for their beauty and artistry."

For the Gem and Coin Gallery, an iPad display allows visitors to easily select a coin, zoom in to admire it, flip the side, and read a detailed description.

A first-time temporary exhibition space on the second floor explores the influence of the classical world in modern times. For instance, *Plato in LA: Contemporary Artists' Visions* features contemporary artists' works influenced by the philosophy of Plato. Plato contemplated how to live a good life and the nature of reality. Highlights include Jeff Koons' *Play-Doh*, a heap of multi-colored playdough (a pun on Plato). "Koons takes this mundane and ordinary object and gives it the importance that makes it more real than the real thing," Timothy Potts says. The tag reads, "[This sculpture] transforms the material used by children into an eidos of its own, the ideal Form of Banality." Just in case you →



Guest rooms (above) at Casa del Mar are designed with a seaside-inspired color palette and offer breathtaking views of the Pacific. The lobby cabanas (left) are wonderful havens for intimate celebrations or private meetings.



must have one, a similar Koons playdough sculpture was just sold at Christies for \$22,812,500.

At the Getty Villa, you can spend an hour or a day. Don't forget the herb gardens, the pool and loggia, and marvelous food court with outside seating overlooking the villa, amphitheater, and magnificent Pacific Ocean on the horizon.

After the dizzying display of treasures, your room at Casa del Mar will welcome you back with the soothing ambience of a

beachside estate. I asked Charlie Lopez-Quintana why this hotel is so popular. "Our friendly and refined service and the unique environment with the most stunning public space on the beach make this the best choice for a business or pleasure stay," he replied. "No matter what, time at the beach is rejuvenating."

Following a walk on Santa Monica's famous Beach Promenade, enjoy cocktails in the Terrazza Lounge, everyone's favorite space in the hotel. And what's not to love: ferns, tiles, chandeliers, ➔





The main museum entrance hall at the Getty Villa. The building's design was inspired by the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum and incorporated additional details from several other ancient sites. It was designed by architects Robert E. Langdon, Jr. and Ernest C. Wilson, Jr. in consultation with archeologist Norman Neuerburg.

friendly waiters, and a great view of the beach and ocean. The menu features an outstanding selection of wines and craft cocktails, including the Penicillin, Blood and Sand, and Lillet Negroni, which will surely get you in the mood for some of the delectable small plates of seafood such as Yellowfin Tuna Poke, Grilled Octopus, crispy Calamari, or perhaps a pizza or a Filet Mignon.

An alluring addition to the adjacent lobby area are the Casitas, with their comfortable, semi-private, seductive seating for larger private parties enjoying cocktails and small bites. For a serious dinner, Catch (also with a gorgeous beach view) offers a creative menu overseen by executive chef Gemma Gray, who says: "We use as much of the incredible California produce, fish, and meat as possible, then I add touches from my country, Spain, such as herbs and vinegars to bring out the nuances of the flavors." The Chilean Sea Bass was poetry of tender flaky white fish with just a slight crust accompanied by ➔

smoked white asparagus and parsley sauce, and accented with Manila clams. Whole Main Lobster, Wild Swordfish, Rib Eye Steak, and Braised Short Ribs were a few more fantastic offerings.

Your spirit revived and body nourished, a return to your calming blue-and-white guest room with décor featuring a rich walnut bed with crisp white linens, chenille throws, and a bookshelf filled with novelties and books, is indeed the antidote to a state of visual overwhelm.

More Fabulous Art!

Are you ready to travel to 13 countries and visit 45 museums to see several hundred extraordinary objects? I think not!

So, it's off to the Getty Center to see a showstopper—a rare and stunning display of 200 world-class treasures in the exhibition *Beyond the Nile: Egypt and the Classical World* (through September 9, 2018). The exhibition explores the cultural relationships of the classical world with world-renowned treasures from the Bronze Age through the Roman Empire.

So, how much did the early ancient civilizations—Greeks, Romans, Phoenicians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Bactrians, and others—know about each other? Apparently, a lot.

Egypt was the prominent civilization in the area; the kingdom was powerful and wealthy with a prosperous economy and

renown for its invention of writing, knowledge of history, astronomy, mathematics, magic, and medicine. Egypt's pyramids were then (and are now) a wonder of the world. The builders and artisans of the temples and statuary were unparalleled. Egypt definitely exerted influence on its neighbors.

Then came Alexander the Great. He conquered Egypt in 332 BC (he was 24). Three centuries of Greek rule followed under the Ptolemaic dynasty. The Greeks and Egyptians mixed culturally, economically, and in religious practices. Egypt becomes a province of Rome after Cleopatra is defeated in 30 BC by the Romans.

Beyond the Nile: Egypt and the Classical World is a scholarly presentation depicting the artistic influences and connections of these cultures. But it's much more—it is visually stunning! Curated by Jeffrey Spier, senior curator in the Department of Antiquities at the J. Paul Getty Museum; Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum; and Sara E. Cole, curatorial assistant in the Department of Antiquities, this is a groundbreaking event in the study of ancient cultures inter-relationships.

The stunning *Sphinx of Pharaoh Amasis II* (570 – 526 BC) commands attention in the entry lobby of the exhibit. Amasis ruled Egypt for 44 years during a period of wealth and contact with Greece. The lion's body with Amasis' portrait of full cheeks, almond eyes, and full lips (the nose intentionally cut away) is typical of portraits of this time. His royal nemes headdress once had a cobra uraeus. Two striking male statues—one Egyptian (7th century BC), the other a Greek Kouros (6th century BC)—

stand at the gallery entrance. Here is the first “aha!” moment—you see the relationship and influence in the similar body posture of both figures; the Egyptian is rigid and authoritative, while the Greek is proud but more realistic.

Cleopatra, Julius Caesar, and Mark Anthony

I expected to see great objects when I learned of this exhibition, but the works of art displayed left me in awe.

A life-like portrait of *Julius Caesar* with marble eyes (1st century BC – 1st century AD), *Cleopatra VII* (51 – 30 BC) with ➔

The Getty Center features pre-20th-century European paintings, drawings, illuminated manuscripts, sculpture, and photographs from the 1830's through present day from all over the world. The museum's collection also includes outdoor sculpture displayed on terraces and in gardens. The large central garden was designed by Robert Irwin.

