



TRAVEL INSIDER

design *destinations*

Seeking interiors inspiration from design hotspots around the globe? Immerse yourself in David Prior's top six design cities of 2019



milan

With a bedrock of Baroque and gothic architecture, and newly appreciated brutalist buildings, Milan was polished up for the Expo 2015 fair, and the afterglow remains.

There is, of course, Salone del Mobile, the world's most important design and furniture event, with displays and product launches occupying palazzos and storefronts throughout town each spring. But Milan is now a year-round nexus for innovation and design, with major public works unveiled in recent times such as the Prada Foundation arts complex, conceived by Rem Koolhaas-led architecture firm OMA and built on the site of an ageing distillery.

Elsewhere, treasures can be found in such stores as Nilufar Gallery – the celebrated showcase of prolific dealer and collector Nina Yashar – and Dimore Gallery, a sensorial escape curated by American-Italian design duo Britt Moran and Emiliano Salmi.

athens

From the chaos of the global financial crisis, Athens has emerged as one of Europe's most vibrant cultural capitals, dynamised by artists and entrepreneurs.

To take the pulse of its arts scene, visit The Breeder, a former ice-cream factory converted into a gallery space showcasing emerging and established Greek artists. Major institutions have also reopened their doors, including the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center, a waterfront temple to the arts designed by Renzo Piano.

A newfound energy is coursing through the hospitality scene as well, in spots such as Papillon, a stylish bistro rendered by Thessaloniki-based Minas Kosmidis with touches of brass and marble. The storied Zonars restaurant is another hotspot – it has been revamped by K-Studio with walnut wood panelling and a gilded, Art Deco-inspired bar.

mexico city

Currently the most dynamic metropolis in the Americas, Mexico City is receiving its due as a creative powerhouse, earning the honour of 2018's World Design Capital.

It has long fostered an artistic tradition, including the brilliantly hued buildings of Luis Barragán, who fused hacienda elements with modernist influences to forge a uniquely Mexican aesthetic. A visual legacy is also writ large in monumental public murals by Diego Rivera and the Aztec-inspired modernist facade of the UNAM campus library.

Today, the Caravana Americana design fair showcases Latin America's emerging talent – it runs from March 8–10 this year. And some of the city's best wares are displayed in stores such as Omora Casa, a contemporary home-goods brand that integrates traditional craft and textiles, and Trouvé, which offers a mix of mid-century and modern furniture and designs.

aalborg

While Copenhagen is well documented as Scandinavia's design capital, the city of Aalborg in northern Denmark is gaining traction as a creative hub, with its shipyards, tobacco factories and distilleries giving way to inventive new buildings and arts projects.

One of the star sites is the Utzon Center, a museum and meeting place for architects designed by Sydney Opera House creator Jørn Utzon, the city's most famous son. With sculptural roofs that arc dramatically upwards, it features regular displays. The facade of the nearby Musikkens Hus concert hall is an amalgam of jagged and curvaceous lines.

Visit the old Aalborg Akvavit distillery, too, which is being transformed into a precinct for design and the arts, including the Harbour Gate development by Danish architect Bjarke Ingels.

jaipur

Known as the Pink City for its profusion of salmon-hued facades, Jaipur in India's Rajasthan continues its rise as a design destination, on the back of a centuries-old legacy of artisanry and craft-making.

For decorators on sourcing expeditions, the city can be difficult to conquer solo. It's best to find a local guide with great taste to lead you to the pick of market stalls and to rummage through textile hack catalogues in stores such as Ridhi Sidhi.

Increasingly, international names are putting down roots in Jaipur, adapting craft traditions to create new styles. On any given night, you'll meet interior designers from around the world at Bar Palladio, a Venetian-meets-Mughal confection by Danish decorator Marie-Anne Oudejans.

Hotel-wise, the pink Rajmahal Palace is a cacophony of patterned wallpapers that neither the imaginations of Diana Vreeland nor Wes Anderson could dream up.

kyoto

Long the aesthetic capital of Japan, Kyoto's rediscovery of traditional craft has made it a place of pilgrimage for design lovers. In the artisan studios of the city and its surrounds, a range of mediums such as indigo-dyeing, ceramics, lacquerware and basket weaving are being rethought and adapted for the 21st century.

Among the movement's guiding lights are Japan Handmade, a collaboration between Danish designers OeO and Kyoto craftspeople – and Sachio Yoshioka,

the fifth-generation master of a dye workshop, who keeps the traditions of cloth-dyeing alive for a modern clientele.

A rash of hotels will also open in Kyoto in 2019, including an Ace outpost by Japanese architect Kengo Kuma that embraces natural materials and light. **22**

David Prior is the founder of PRIOR, a travel service that delivers personalised trips that give access to insider-only experiences around the world. Check out prior.club.com.