



## SWIM IN STYLE

## COMIC RELIEF

Fancy a swimsuit with a bit of 'Kapow!'?

Snap up this fabulous Lichtenstein-inspired one-piece and feel like a hero all holiday — cape optional (Piha Wow swimsuit; [pihaswimwear.com](http://pihaswimwear.com); £42).



## LONDON BITES

## Test the chef

Got an impressive catch of the day or a generous crop of garden veg? Put it to good use: posh Piccadilly hotel Café Royal wants you to bring your own ingredients to its Ten Room restaurant, where its chefs will use them to whip up an impromptu four-course menu. Bring up to four items, then relax with Champagne and canapés while the guys in white decide what to do with them. Utterly bespoke or a bit of a swindle? You decide ([hotelcaferoyal.com](http://hotelcaferoyal.com); from £70pp).

## HOTEL RIVALS

## Midtown minimalists

These two unconventional New York newcomers put you within comfortable distance of all the big sights, but will it be a town-mouse townhouse or a country-mouse nest with a view of the park?



## Marmara Manhattan

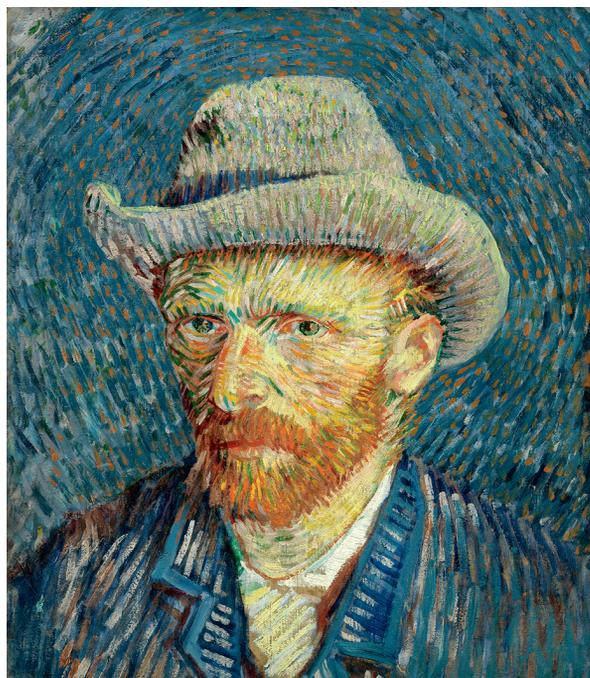
The vibe is... light, bright and white. Crisp white bedding, glass-cube showers and curvaceous design features seem at home in this '20s former architect's practice — jazzed up by glass blown in Brooklyn and bronze cast in New Jersey.

The locale is... trendy NoMad, level with the Empire State and nudging the cool-creative Flatiron district. Your fellow guests are... Well-heeled shoppers and theatregoers (department stores and Broadway shows are just steps away from the birdcage-shaped glass conservatory that serves as an entrance). Allow time to... float in the secret swimming pool in the basement, amid muralled walls and subdued lighting. Perfect after a hard day's sightseeing. Doubles from £360, room only; [park.marmaranyc.com](http://park.marmaranyc.com).

## 1 Central Park

The vibe is... luxury sneakily delivered in a chilled-out eco-hideaway. Headboards are sculpted from wood reclaimed from NYC water tanks, and there's a mini farmer's market in the lobby. Luddites beware — room service is ordered through an app.

The locale is... the park, of course — you're just one block away from its south side. Feel as if you've moved in by taking a morning jog, or nab a Citi Bike and pedal the 10km outer circuit. Your fellow guests are... glowing country types in the city, who'll rave about the mossy 'living walls', filtered water and in-room yoga mats. Allow time to... picnic, with a wholesome basket compiled by Cali-cuisine pioneer Jonathan Waxman. Doubles from £340, room only; [1hotels.com](http://1hotels.com).



## GALLERY-HOPPING

## Art of travel

Van Gogh, everyone's favourite tortured soul, is making an impression this spring...

## Mons, Belgium

The artist's sometime hometown hosts an exhibition focusing on his pre-painting years, spent here as a preacher ([bam.mons.be](http://bam.mons.be); until May 17, tickets £11).

## Oslo, Norway

Van Gogh goes head-to-head with Edvard Munch at Oslo's Munch Museum from May 7. See how their lives crossed over and ponder *The Scream* vs *Sunflowers* ([munchmuseet.no](http://munchmuseet.no); tickets £8.50).

## New York, USA

NYC's Met Museum brings together a little-known floral quartet of Van Gogh paintings, *Irises* and *Roses*, painted weeks before his death ([metmuseum.org](http://metmuseum.org); from May 12; tickets £16.50).