

LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

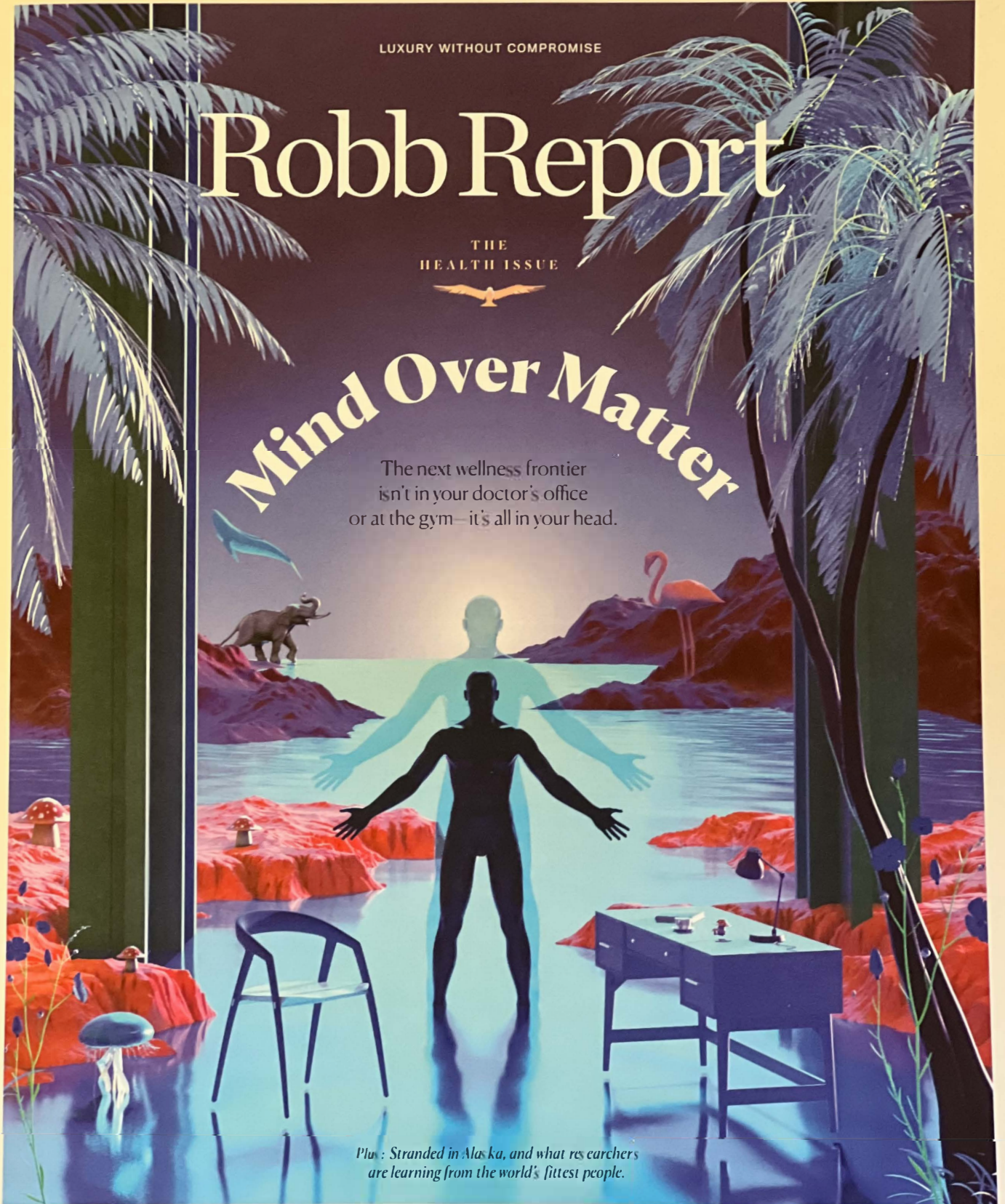
Robb Report

THE
HEALTH ISSUE



Mind Over Matter

The next wellness frontier
isn't in your doctor's office
or at the gym—it's all in your head.



*Plus: Stranded in Alaska, and what researchers
are learning from the world's fittest people.*

AUGUST 2022

THE GOODS

THIS MONTH'S WHAT AND WEAR



Living La Vida Local

Now a new boutique hotel, a transformed 1940s mansion lets you immerse yourself in Mexico City's charming Polanco neighborhood.

BY SANDRA RAMANI

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Given Mexico City's population density, it's no surprise that visitors and locals alike cite leafy, airy Polanco as their favorite neighborhood to escape to. Set near Chapultepec Park and the main Paseo de la Reforma thoroughfare, the elegant area is home to upscale shopping, diverse restaurants, intimate parks and quiet side streets lined with historic mansions and apartment buildings. And it's these streets that real-estate investor and developer Octavio Aguilar, a 25-year resident of Polanco, walks when looking to spot his next project. Since the early 2000s, Aguilar has sought out buildings that have been historically designated and protected, which he then restores to their original glory while finding a new purpose—an office building, for example, or boutique.

So when Aguilar heard that a stunning 1940s private residence facing Lincoln Park, built in what was once called the California style—that is, with plenty of Spanish colonial revival elements—might be available, he worked to ensure the mansion's then-owner felt comfortable he'd be leaving it in the right hands. Once the home was purchased, Aguilar says, his team worked to "strip it to the original era, getting rid of many things that had been added over the years, and bring it back to life." During the three-and-a-half-year process, there were some thoughts about what this standout space could become; at one point, there was even talk about it being rented to the Danish Embassy. "But then suddenly, I thought this has to be a place where people can stay," Aguilar says. "This has to be a place where people can come and live the Polanco experience."

Aguilar calls the new 19-room boutique hotel "more of a passion project than a business" and claims "there's no other [accommodation] in town that can give you this sense of place." Indeed, his love of architecture, art and design, as well as his lifetime of travel, fueled every part of the property, from the handmade mattresses and the incredible green-hued marble in the entryway to the world-class art and photography in the rooms and public spaces, much of which comes from Aguilar's private collection. Furnishings include custom-made pieces by award-winning industrial designer Héctor Esrawe, noted cabinet maker Alfonso Marina and mother-daughter interior-design duo Monica Romo and Monica



The library, featuring walnut furniture by Héctor Esrawe



LEFT TO RIGHT: A wrought-iron gate welcomes you to the sanctuary of Casa Polanco; a lush sundeck, which can double as a dining area.

Novelo. "I didn't want things from hotel providers," Aguilar says. "I wanted people who made things for homes."

Having never operated a hotel before, Aguilar enlisted the expertise of Hamak Hotels, which manages several boutique luxury properties around Mexico, to bring his vision to life. The mandate: It should feel like a private home. To that end, there's no traditional restaurant; instead, popular neighborhood chef Martha Brockmann has created an all-day menu that guests can savor anywhere from the rooftop terraces down to the ground-floor conservatory. Rates, starting from around \$560, include a generous breakfast with hot and cold options—"and you can come down in your bathrobe to enjoy it," as one staff member is quick to note—as well as a late-afternoon tea hour with snacks, teas and wine. The library is stocked with an honor bar for when you want an after-dinner tequila, and in the morning, a carafe of coffee or tea and some treats are

left outside your door as a pre-breakfast "eye-opener." Taken together, it gives Casa Polanco a true private-club feel.

Rooms are spread between the original mansion and a seamless contemporary addition and vary in size and view, but all have 600-thread-count Egyptian cotton sheets, Bang & Olufsen sound systems, rainfall showers and a complimentary minibar with drinks and chef-made morsels. Book the Lincoln Park Suite, which has a large furnished terrace overlooking the green space.

The team can also organize private experiences around town (partnerships are still being finalized) and arrange yoga and Pilates sessions at the hotel as well as massages in the rooftop spa cabin. Our favorite touch: Guests can even browse a selection of menus from prime neighborhood restaurants, order in a meal, and the staff will pick it up, plate it and serve it—just like staying at a friend's house.

5 to See in Polanco



The space at Xinu

CULTURE

Museo Nacional de Antropología (MNA): Designed by architect Pedro Ramirez Vázquez and featuring 23 different sections with 18 permanent displays and 6 temporary collections. Limited time? Focus on the settlements of the American continent, including the dawn of the Mesoamerican cultures.

raw botanical materials native to remote parts of the continent. Pink pepper, marigold, cedarwood and more hearty tones help create rich scents that highlight artisan techniques.

DINING

Mandolina: Martha Brockmann's down-to-earth eatery transports you to a dreamy corner of the Amalfi Coast with a comfy-chic atmosphere and a menu of Mexican and international favorites (think chilaquiles, French dip, empanadas and gourmet grilled cheese).

RETAIL

Xinu: Translated as "nose" from the tonal Otomi language (still spoken in certain parts of Mexico), this high-end fragrance line uses