

# Atlas

December 2017

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Beijing

# In with the old

With its high-concept architectural tropes, an archly monickered restaurant called The Pink Rabbit and a vibe-y rooftop bar, it's no wonder that Vue has already established itself as Beijing's destination design hotel, since opening last month. What is surprising, however, is its distinctive look. In a city increasingly known for its skyscrapers, this new mini-resort is housed within a historic building in the hutong district of Houhai and its style is pure heritage. *Hutongs* – the charming traditional courtyard residences of old Beijing – had been on their way out, slowly making way for splashy condos, but Vue, designed by Singapore studio Ministry of Design (MOD), is showing how they might enjoy an alternative second life. Earlier this year, Chinese architect Zhang Ke of ZAO/standardarchitecture transformed a hutong into a slick micro-hostel (for which he won the 2017 Alvar Aalto Medal, the coveted Finnish architecture award). It's a welcome shift in Beijing, says MOD's Colin Seah: "Hospitality design is increasingly culture specific." It used to be all about being flashy, he adds, "now it's about fun".





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*Los Angeles*

## LA's new, \$1,000 dinner

Jonathan Gold, one of the most powerful food critics in the US, has a new favourite restaurant. And guess what: you probably won't like it. Or so he says in his recent review. Set in a weird "exoskeleton building" in Culver City, chef Jordan Kahn's Vespertine is an experimental restaurant where, for the most part, you won't know what you're eating. The space has the severe air of *The Handmaid's Tale* and a tasting menu for two costs over \$1,000. But that's not why you won't like it, says Gold. It's just that's it's so, well, odd. In terms of the traditional restaurant experience, "you may as well be on Jupiter". Still, that didn't stop him ranking it number one on the *LA Times*' recent annual 101 best restaurants list. Don't not go, he advises. Just don't expect a taco. "Know what you're getting into."  
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