

FEBRUARY 2026

LUXE BEAT

Nobu Hotel Los Cabos
Winter Escape

Oh! Darling
The Potlach Club

Colorado Classic:
The Lodge at Vail

Cappadocia





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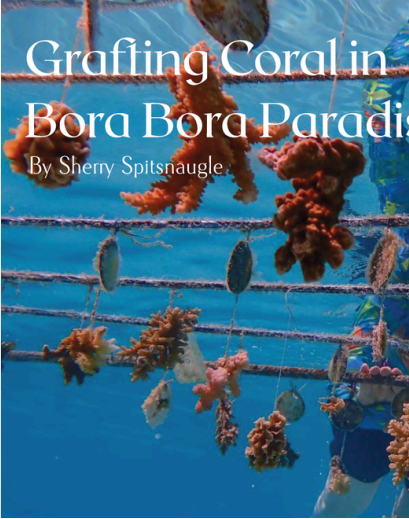
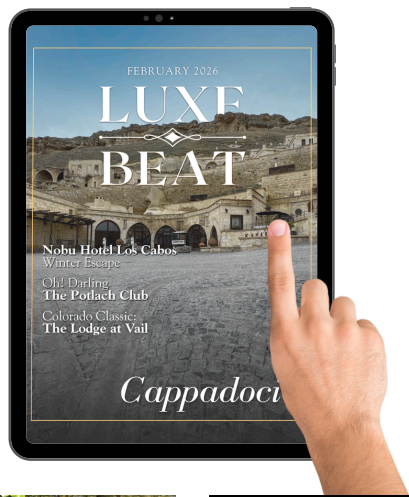


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WITH MY GOOGLES fixed and my leg flailing, I struggled to stay afloat in a shimmering blue lagoon. The postcard-perfect scene was a stark contrast to the chaos of my first experience in the lagoon. I was in Bora Bora, French Polynesia, and I was about to embark on a journey that would change my perspective on the world. The lagoon was a masterpiece of nature, with its turquoise waters and white sand beaches. I was in good luck, as the weather was perfect. The lagoon was a masterpiece of nature, with its turquoise waters and white sand beaches. I was in good luck, as the weather was perfect. The lagoon was a masterpiece of nature, with its turquoise waters and white sand beaches. I was in good luck, as the weather was perfect.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

February beckons us to seek warmth—whether nestled in Vail's powder-dusted peaks, basking in Los Cabos sunshine, or discovering the otherworldly landscapes of Cappadocia. This issue celebrates the art of winter escape and the intimate pleasures that make cold-weather travel irresistible.

We're exploring historic gems like Hotel Bethlehem and Little Rock's Capital Hotel, where stories linger in every hallway. You'll discover cutting-edge hospitality at Tempo by Hilton Times Square and uncover emerging travel trends shaping where discerning travelers will venture in 2026.

For February's romantic spirit, we've curated chocolate destinations to satisfy your sweetest cravings, Valentine's cocktails to toast the season, and wine journeys from London's urban cellars to Valpolicella's family vineyards. Bourbon Steak New York and tributes to Julia Child remind us that great dining is always worth celebrating.

Whether you're planning a Pacific Northwest retreat at The Potlatch Club or a Central Coast escape to Paso Robles, this issue offers inspiration for wherever wanderlust leads you.

Here's to discovering your next unforgettable journey.

Cheers!


Sherrie Wilkolaski
Publisher & Editor in Chief



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LUXE BEAT
MAGAZINE

PUBLISHER & EDITOR IN CHIEF
Sherrie Wilkolaski

EXECUTIVE EDITOR EMERITUS
Maralyn D. Hill

COVER PHOTO
Michele Herrmann

DESIGN
Liliosa Rev Samar

CONTRIBUTORS
Michele Hermann
Jill Weinlein
Tim Cotroneo
Kurt Jacobson
Debbie Stone
Merilee Kern
Robin O'Neal Smith
Mira Tempkin
Debbie Stone
Merilee Kern
Laurie Wilson
Theresa St. John
Kevin Pilley
Katherine Gannon
Kathy Condon

COLUMNISTS

California Dreaming
Jill Weinlein

Oceanviews & Fairways
Tim Cotroneo

Taste of Travel 2
Kurt Jacobson

Put a Pin in It!
Debbie Stone

The Luxe List
Merilee Kern

Curious Kathy Condon
Kathy Condon

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MARCH 2026 ISSUE

As winter fades and spring arrives, this month's issue celebrates the beautiful diversity of luxury travel in all its forms.

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Written by: Michele Hermann

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BOURBON STEAK NEW YORK: A Restaurant That Refuses to Be Predictable

by Merilee Kern

You arrive at Bourbon Steak New York with expectations already set. Central Park South does that. So does the JW Marriott Essex House. Add Chef Michael Mina's name and the bar rises again. You anticipate polish. You expect control. You assume steak will dominate the conversation.

What unfolds is more layered. More deliberate. And far more interesting. Bourbon Steak New York does not behave like a conventional steakhouse. It uses

the classic, American steakhouse as its foundation, then expands outward with precision and intention. Tradition is present, but it never traps the experience. The restaurant feels confident enough to let multiple strengths share the spotlight.

The setting establishes this immediately. Located inside the historic JW Marriott Essex House, the restaurant carries an inherent sense of glamour and expectation.



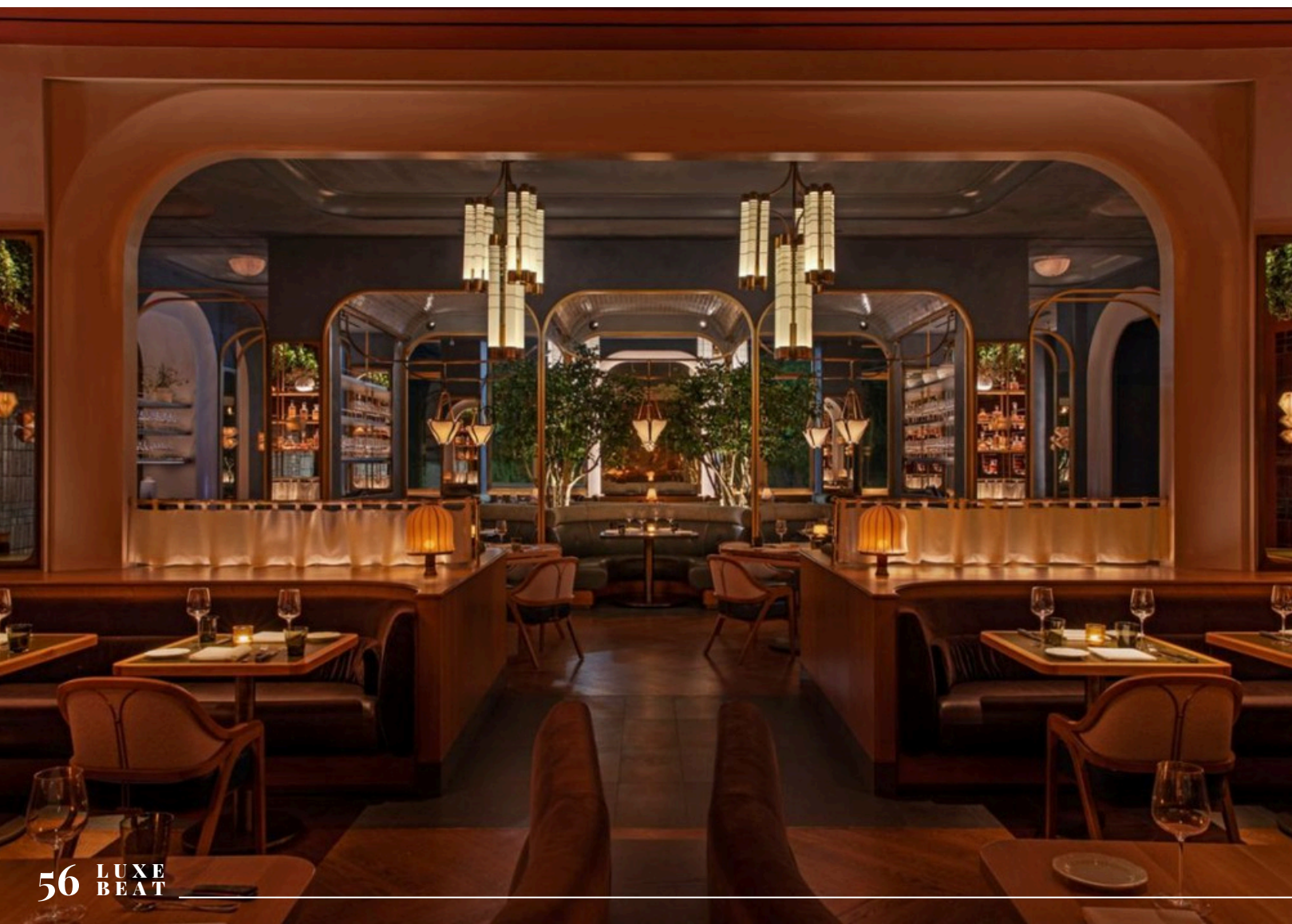
The Art Deco inspired design reflects the building's 1930s heritage through a modern lens. Mixed metals, fire kiln ceramic tiles, rich rust tones, and patinated finishes create a moody sophistication that feels appropriate for Central Park South. Greenery rises beneath vaulted ceilings and gathers beneath skylights, softening the room and lending warmth. You feel Old New York energy, but the space invites you to settle in.

Chef Michael Mina has described Bourbon Steak as his love letter to the American steakhouse. In New York, that idea feels lived in rather than theoretical. The menu operates around three guiding pillars: product, technique, and presentation. You experience them with every course. Premium beef and seafood anchor the menu. Seasonal ingredients from local purveyors shape its edges. Presentation adds ceremony without tipping into excess.

The most unexpected expression of this philosophy appears in the seafood program.

While Bourbon Steak is widely known for steak, the kitchen treats fish with equal reverence. The Market Fish menu allows you to select both the fish and its preparation. Each dish is finished over an open wood fired flame and presented tableside. It is a moment of restrained theater that reinforces the care behind the cooking. Seafood here is not an alternative or afterthought. It stands as one of the restaurant's defining strengths and reflects Chef Mina's long standing reputation for elevating seafood with the same precision he brings to beef.

Tableside presentations shape the rhythm of the meal. These moments serve hospitality rather than spectacle. Michael Mina's Tuna Tartare is mixed tableside and served with toasted brioche. Seafood and caviar carts create a sense of ceremony. The Lobster Pot Pie arrives with intention. Desserts such as Valrhona cocoa nib chocolate fondue and the Tower of Warm Beignets bring warmth and movement to the close of the meal. Each interaction invites you into the craft, turning service into storytelling.



The Duck Fat Fries establish the restaurant's tone before the first order is placed. They arrive instead of bread service. Complimentary. Seasoned with pastrami spice, herb and garlic, and truffle. Crisp on the outside and fluffy within, they balance indulgence with familiarity. Their accompanying sauces nod to Americana, delicatessen flavors, and steakhouse nostalgia. Their arrival signals generosity and a sense of play that carries through the evening.

During my visit, the menu revealed its range with clarity.

The Lobster Roll reimagines a familiar idea through a more luxurious lens. Pristine lobster is gently poached to preserve sweetness, then tossed in warm spicy garlic butter. Caviar adds salinity and polish. The dish feels indulgent without excess, rooted in balance. Cavatelli Cacio e Pepe draws from Italian tradition while remaining firmly grounded in steakhouse comfort. Pecorino coats the pasta. Cracked pepper adds bite. The option to add white truffle allows guests to tailor the dish to the moment, reinforcing the menu's flexibility.

Black Truffle Mac and Cheese delivers nostalgia elevated through technique. A blend of premium cheeses is baked until the top caramelizes and turns golden. Black truffle adds an earthy aromatic note that transforms a deeply familiar dish into something more refined without losing its soul.

The Center Cut Filet Mignon reflects the restaurant's commitment to precision. Like all of the meats, it is butter poached to maximize flavor, then paired with classic accompaniments such as Béarnaise, horseradish crusts, or truffle butter. Guests are invited to customize, reinforcing the idea that luxury here is personal rather than prescriptive.

Sides matter. Crispy Brussels Sprouts arrive balanced by caramel vinaigrette and pomegranate seeds. Onion Soup Gratin offers deep umami through caramelized onions, black truffle, four cheeses, and garlic baguette.

**Each dish carries weight
without crowding the
table.**



Sourcing underpins every decision. For beef, the team tested more than fifty cuts to arrive at a final selection that includes American, Australian, and Japanese Wagyu, such as bone in Wagyu New York Strip and A5 Striploin from Hokkaido. Seafood sourcing reflects the same rigor, with shellfish and caviar selected daily. Seasonal produce comes from local farmers and purveyors whenever possible. Every ingredient must meet standards of flavor, consistency, and integrity before reaching the menu.

This discipline allows Bourbon Steak New York to balance innovation with tradition. Italian influences surface in pasta. French inspiration informs gratin dishes. Tableside rituals anchor the experience in classic steakhouse culture, while global flavors and modern technique keep it current.

Many guests come here to celebrate milestones or meaningful travel moments. The signature experience is not singular. It is cumulative. Steak can define the meal. So can seafood. So can the theater of service or the rhythm of courses shared over conversation. What stays with you is the feeling of abundance, generosity, and choice.

Consistency matters to a New York audience that knows what it wants. Bourbon Steak maintains it through rigorous testing, daily sourcing, and disciplined execution. Evolution arrives through seasonality, refreshed sides, market fish selections, and a beverage program that emphasizes craft and ceremony.

Even the private rooms carry history. The marble mantels are vintage pieces rescued from the era when the Essex House first opened, adding a quiet layer of Old New York character.

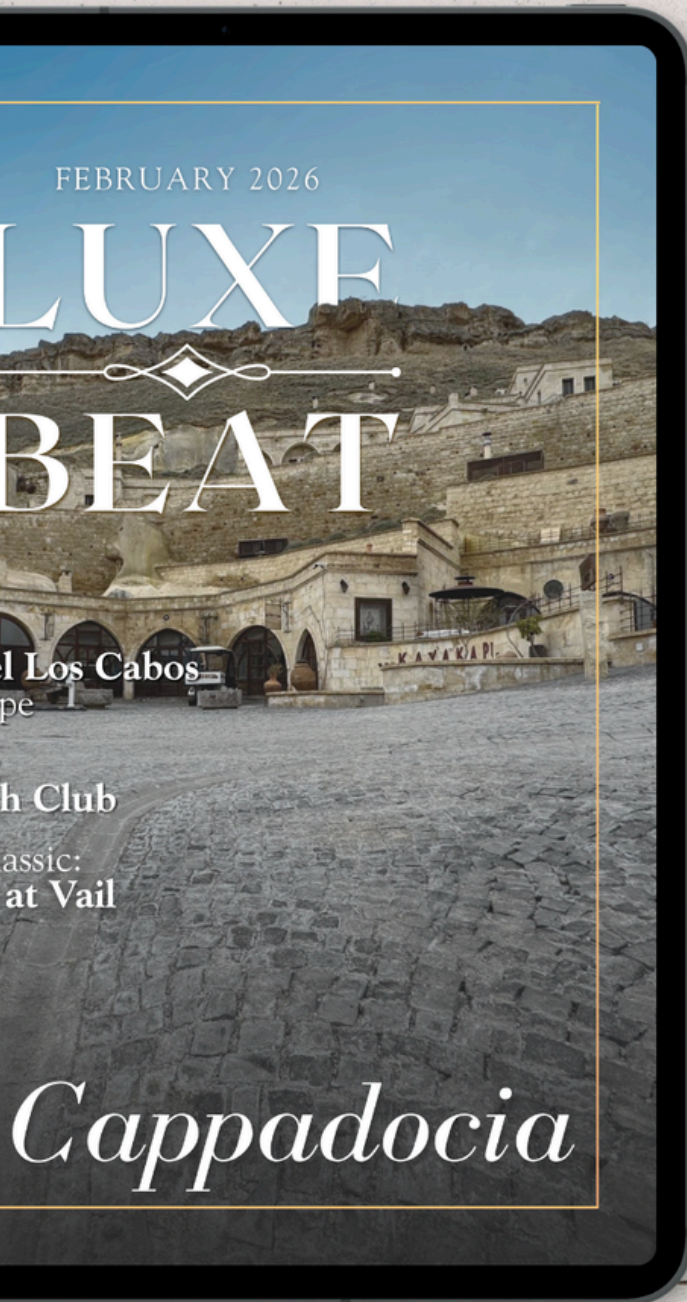
**Bourbon Steak New York does
not chase novelty. It sharpens
fundamentals. It respects
steakhouse tradition while
allowing it to breathe.**

You leave with the sense that the experience met you exactly where you were, then expanded your expectations slightly. That is the mark of a restaurant that understands both its craft and its city.





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