



Bosphorus bliss SUMAHAN, ISTANBUL



It's said that in Istanbul your status is determined neither by the size of your terrace nor the sleekness of your car, but by your view – or lack thereof – of the Bosphorus. And while the sultans of Topkapı Palace may have been up to their eyeballs in panoramas, for most citizens of this enormous city, waterfront space is as rare as it is enviable.

Sumahan, however, is right on the strait. Once a family-run distillery, it's now the most exclusive haunt on the city's Asian shore. With just 24 rooms, it showcases the blue ribbon of waves that slosh through the Turkish capital. Swish double rooms have entire walls of windows, with beds and couches facing out so you can watch boats come and go, and the sun rise or set. You're even given binoculars through which to

gaze at the ant-like cars that speed over Bosphorus Bridge, or watch guests arrive at the hotel's new Tapasuma restaurant via its private dock.

That private dock, by the way, is where you can board Sumahan's own shuttle boat, which will take you across the Bosphorus to Sultanahmet or Taksim throughout the day – a blessing given Istanbul's gridlock streets; plus it's great fun. You can come back to explore the quaint local fishing village, Çengelköy, or laze in the private hammam before dining at the hotel restaurant, Tapasuma. Opt for Turkish-style tapas, or moreish lamb shoulder, washed down with cocktails, as the Bosphorus laps at your feet. *AM*. Doubles from £278. sumahan.com

We take in the view in Istanbul and Beirut, while a up and hide out. Back home, it's time to cosy up

Places

MANHATTAN HIDEAWAY The Lowell, New York

Tucked down a quiet residential street between Madison Avenue and the string of glitzy five-stars on Park Avenue, The Lowell is a haven for well-to-do Manhattanites and diamond-dripped Hollywood folk who wish to stay incognito. And it's clear why this hotel is the pick of hideouts for the rich and recognisable. As you're guided through a darkened, library-style lobby and ushered into an elevator, there's no need to don a baseball cap and shades to avoid other guests. From dining and personal training sessions to in-room massage, you really don't have to venture from your suite at all. Log fires and inviting sofas make for a lavish comfort cave,

while the rooftop penthouse has a 360° terrace with an adjoining room for the nanny or bodyguard, depending which A-lister is in town. The hotel's Post House restaurant, renovated this summer, is an all-American surf 'n' turf serving up beautifully cooked lobster and a range of potent cocktails. If you're here at the weekend, brunch in the main restaurant, The Pembroke Room, leaves you wanting for nothing. Yes, eggs Benedict still features, but wading through the likes of duck and pomegranate salad, saffron red snapper, and strawberry gourmandise is a far more exciting way to spend a lazy Sunday. And if you get the urge to explore then

you're only a block away from Central Park, and a stroll to Picasso and Pollack in the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art or Dior and Donna Karan at Bloomingdale's. Just don't forget your shades when you step out. *JB*. Doubles from £500. lowellhotel.com

