

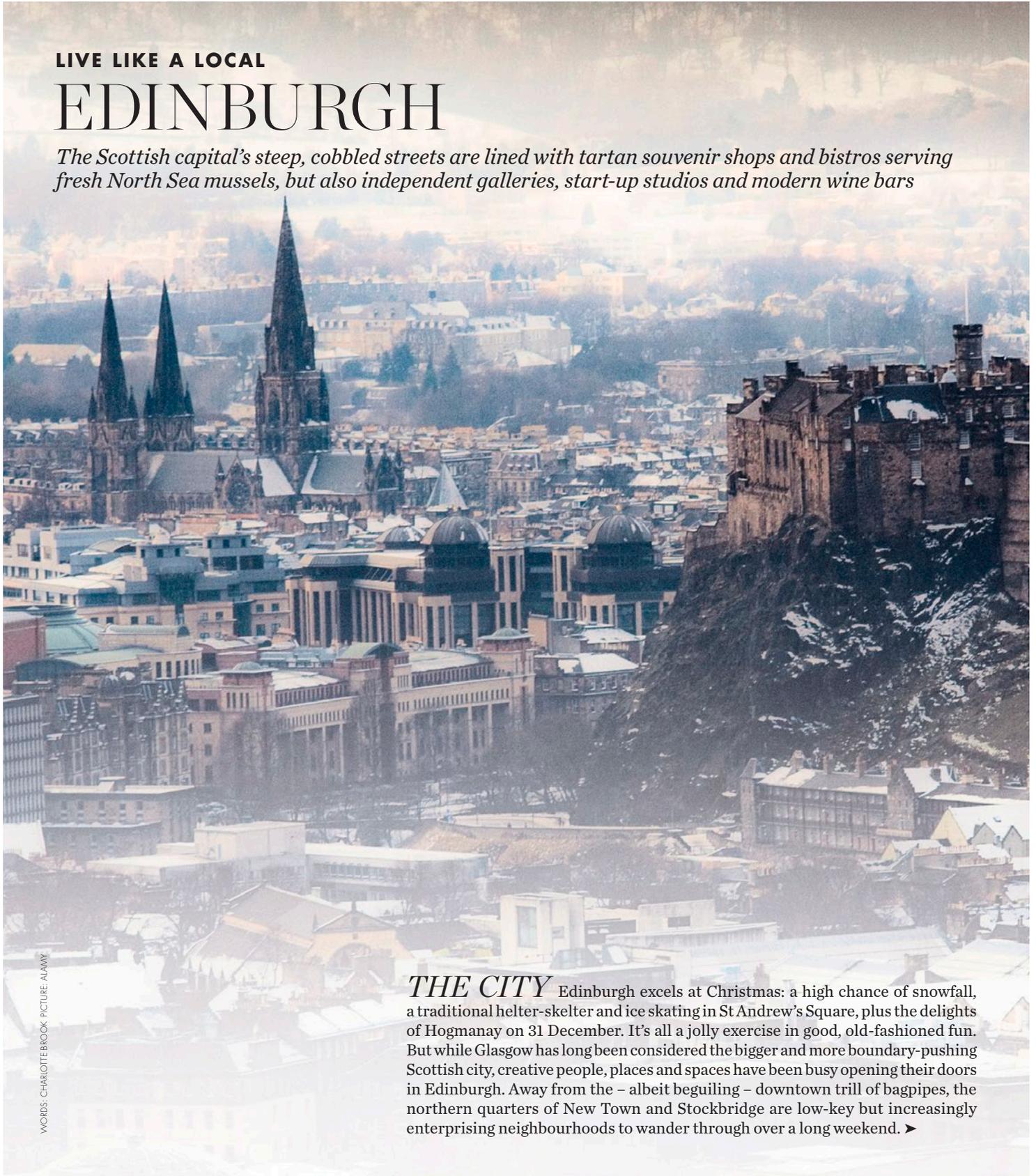
ESCAPE

HOTELS • RESTAURANTS • GARDENS • GETAWAYS

LIVE LIKE A LOCAL

EDINBURGH

The Scottish capital's steep, cobbled streets are lined with tartan souvenir shops and bistros serving fresh North Sea mussels, but also independent galleries, start-up studios and modern wine bars



WORDS: CHARLOTTE BROOK PICTURE: ALAMY

THE CITY Edinburgh excels at Christmas: a high chance of snowfall, a traditional helter-skelter and ice skating in St Andrew's Square, plus the delights of Hogmanay on 31 December. It's all a jolly exercise in good, old-fashioned fun. But while Glasgow has long been considered the bigger and more boundary-pushing Scottish city, creative people, places and spaces have been busy opening their doors in Edinburgh. Away from the – albeit beguiling – downtown trill of bagpipes, the northern quarters of New Town and Stockbridge are low-key but increasingly enterprising neighbourhoods to wander through over a long weekend. ►



WHERE TO STAY Eden Locke (2), a new 'aparthotel', brings the elegant, edgy feel of Lower Manhattan to a traditional sandstone Georgian townhouse. Designed by New York-based practice Gryzwinski+Pons, it features a cool café, craft beer and cocktail bar, but the serviced studio flats' fully equipped marble kitchens (stocked with T2 tea, coffee and wholegrain Rude Health granola) are a perfect solution if you prefer to retreat and cook your own meals (from £140 per night; lockeliving.com). Another clever conversion is Dunstane House (3), a Victorian villa that interior designer Hannah Lohan has transformed into a chic-but-cosy hotel with a mix of contemporary and chintz, featuring great British touches such as Jane Churchill peacock wallpaper and Orkney tweed chairs (from £174 per night; thedunstane.com).

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH Begin Sunday with an espresso at one of Scottish coffee sourcer Artisan Roast's two cafés (artisanroast.co.uk) before heading to Stockbridge farmers' market for a freshly-baked croissant and to choose from all manner of locally-produced ingredients, from fresh langoustine to Perthshire leeks or a slab of ewe's cheese (stockbridgemarket.com). Italian delicatessen Valvona & Crolla, which TV chef Nigella Lawson makes a beeline for whenever she's in town, is a purveyor of everything from artichokes and cured Milanese salami to handmade amaretti biscuits (valvonacrolla.co.uk). Walk along Edinburgh's 'river', the Water of Leith, and call in at Quay Commons, a new waterside kitchen curing meats, cooking stews and, at this moment, steeping homemade panettone, ready for Christmas (quaycommons.co).



WINE AND DINE Wine bar Smith & Gertrude recently opened behind a navy-painted façade in Stockbridge village offering 'wine, cheese and company' – a glass of Catalan cava and a bowl of Marcona almonds is a good way to see in the early evening (smithandgertrude.com). Try Timberyard for dinner: the former Victorian theatre props warehouse (and timber yard), now run by Andrew and Lisa Radford and their family, is warmed by wood-burning stoves. The couple cook clever combinations such as cod, coastal herbs and white asparagus, or buckwheat, raspberry and crème fraîche pudding (timberyard.co). Similarly seasonal and inventive is the menu at The Gardener's Cottage, an 1836 lodge in Royal Terrace Gardens where guests sit along communal tables in a whitewashed dining space (thegardenerscottage.co). Wildcard: for an off-the-wall dinner, head up to Old Town and check out The Witchery, a famously gothic banqueting room (thewitchery.com).

ARTS AND CULTURE In Edinburgh, you can see modern makers, mid-century art and Georgian splendour, all in a weekend: Custom Lane is a design studio that holds regular exhibitions and open days. Just Shapes, an exhibition/workshop hosted with design brand Tom Pigeon, runs until 21 January. Plus: the café's cakes, made by vegan company Grams, are a delight (customlane.co). Visit the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art to see 'A New Era: Scottish Modern Art 1900-1950', then wander the landscaped gardens to spot works by Rachel Whiteread and Barbara Hepworth (nationalgalleries.org). The Georgian House (1) is a typical 18th-century Robert Adams townhouse, restored to showcase the original owners' art and furnishings (nts.org.uk).

SHOP Both New Town and Stockbridge are excellent for homeware hunting. 'If you like an old-fashioned Aladdin's Cave, this is for you,' says Unicorn Antiques of its emporium in a former dairy on Dundas Street. They are not wrong – from old Murano glass chandeliers to salvaged trestle tables, door knobs and the odd kilt, so long as an item is 'old, curious or useful', they'll stock it (unicornantiques.co.uk). For colourful clothes and tableware by independent makers, visit Dick's (dicks-edinburgh.co.uk). Just around the corner at Pad Lifestyle's airy store (5), big-name designers sit beside independent artisans, such as young Scottish painter Hatti Patisson's textiles (padlifestyle.com). Buy a big bunch of Scottish blooms (including thistles, veronica and seedheads) and bars by Edinburgh chocolatiers Coco wrapped in graphic papers in florist Narcissus (narcissusflowers.co.uk), and jumpsuits or Japanese ceramics at Biscuit (biscuit.clothing).

ESCAPE THE CITY A stride up the ancient (dormant!) volcano of Arthur's Seat (4) – about two hours' round trip – is the way Edinburghians have blown away the cobwebs for centuries. Or take a 30-minute train along the coast to the sandy beaches and fresh lobster shacks of North Berwick. Ideally, plan a day trip around a secret cinema or pop-up dinner hosted by cook and photographer Amanda Farnese Heath in a walled garden or warehouse (for events and dates, visit themadmarchare.com). Planning ahead? Head to the sculpture park, particularly landscape architect Charles Jencks' contoured lawn and lakes, at Jupiter Artland – so-called for its out-of-town location in Edinburgh's 'orbit' – when it reopens in May (jupiterartland.org). 10

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