

100 BEST CRUISE SHIPS IN THE WORLD

Condé Nast **Traveler**

TRUTH IN TRAVEL
FEBRUARY 2013

**FLORIDA
NOW!**

**THE BEST
OF EVERYTHING
BEACHES, BEDS,
DINING, SHOPPING,
AND MORE**

14-Page Pullout Guide

FRANCE'S FABULOUS ISLE

(The food, the wine, the surf!)

SOUTH AFRICA'S NEW PLAYGROUNDS

(The glitz of Cape Town, Durban, and Joburg)

ENGLAND'S WILD GLORIES

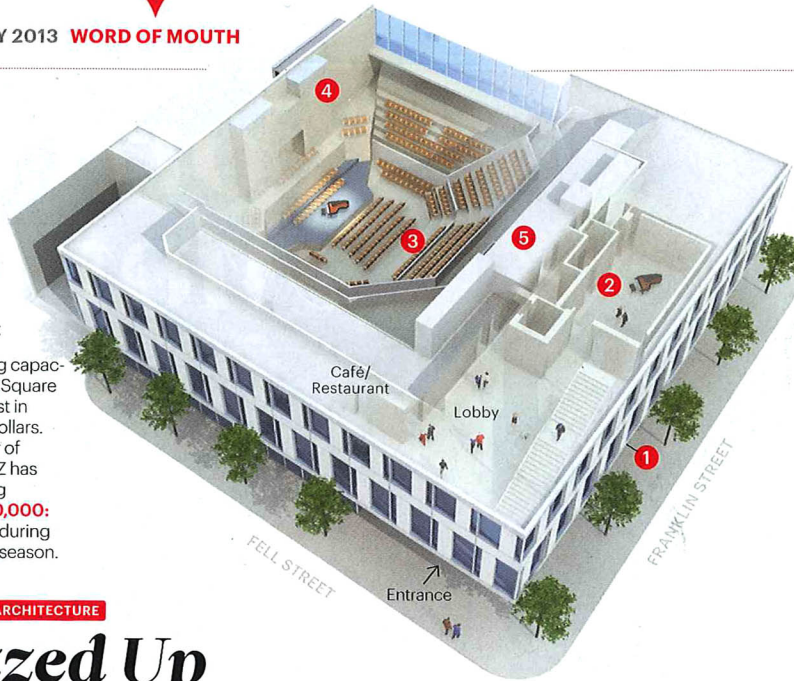
(Bloody good fun in Scotland, too!)

Maidens Cove,
Cape Town, with
Table Mountain
in the distance.

PLUS

**FAR-OUT ESCAPES IN
SWEDEN, ISRAEL,
AUSTRALIA, AND INDIA**

CONDENASTTRAVELER.COM



SFJAZZ BY THE NUMBERS
700: Seating capacity. **36,000:** Square feet. **64:** Cost in millions of dollars. **30:** Number of years SFJAZZ has been staging concerts. **30,000:** Tickets sold during the fall 2012 season.

ESSENTIAL: ARCHITECTURE

Fazzed Up

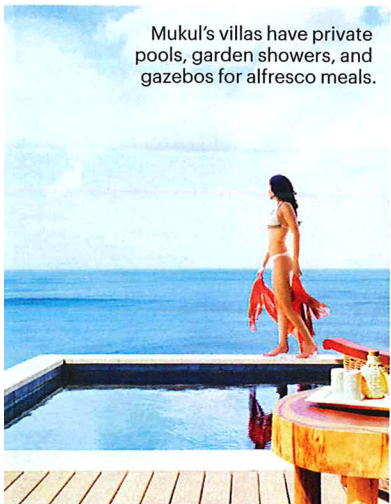
The world's first freestanding building dedicated entirely to jazz, San Francisco's just-opened **SFJAZZ Center** was built to enhance the strains of saxophonists, trumpeters, and more—Tony Bennett and Béla Fleck are scheduled to perform in the spring season—with high-tech acoustics, a streamlined concert hall, and strategically placed seats. In Hayes Valley, architect Mark Cavagnero's 36,000-square-foot three-story modern space includes these notable aspects: **1 LOBBY** Unusually for this earthquake-prone city, it's surrounded by full-length windows on the first floor. The lobby is flush with the sidewalk, "so when you walk down the street, you feel like you're in the space," says Cavagnero. It sits atop the Hayes River—which made construction complicated, although the river was left undisturbed. **2 ENSEMBLE ROOM** In a corner of the lobby, this glass-walled salon lets visitors watch musicians' practice sessions. **3 CONCERT HALL** The space is exceedingly flexible—it can seat 350 to 700—and, inspired by old New England meetinghouses, the audience sits above, behind, and to the sides of the performers. For even more intimacy, every seat is within 40 feet of the stage: The steeply ascending rows allow "musicians to see the faces in the audience," says SFJAZZ artistic director Randall Kline. **4 ACOUSTICS** Highly sophisticated speakers—high-frequency subwoofers that minimize distortion and let musicians easily hear one another onstage—are complemented by gray-green wooded slats on the walls and ceiling. Says Cavagnero, "Using just one material creates a focused space for listening." **5 ECO-ASPECTS** Natural ventilation—including a zero-noise under-seat cooling system—and skylights helped the building to earn LEED Gold certification (201 Franklin St.; 866-920-5299).

LISTEN TO A PLAYLIST FROM SFJAZZ'S FIRST SEASON AT CONDENASTTRAVELER.COM/ARTS.

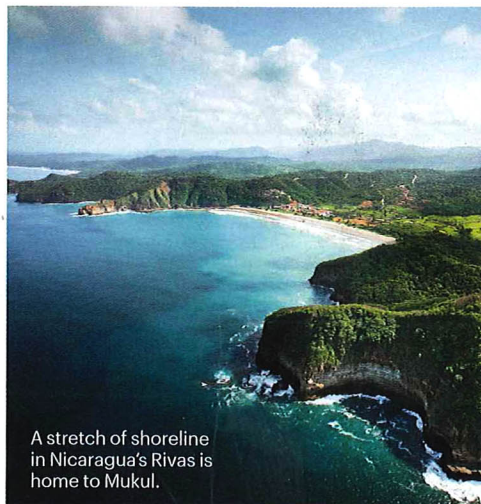
ESSENTIAL: OBJECT

Pack Mentality

Souvenir shoppers will struggle to find a more stylish—and helpful—accessory than this **Maison Martin Margiela red backpack**. Pack it flat in your suitcase, and then fill it with your acquired treasures for the flight home (ssense.com; \$2,075).



Mukul's villas have private pools, garden showers, and gazebos for alfresco meals.



A stretch of shoreline in Nicaragua's Rivas is home to Mukul.

ESSENTIAL: HOTEL

Nicaragua's New Wave

Long heralded as the next big thing in ecotourism, Nicaragua was, until recently, a destination for adventure travelers: Hotels were on the bohemian side, and the country hadn't yet transcended its recent revolutionary past. But that's changing with the arrival of the first ultra-luxurious resort: **Mukul**, the \$250 million passion project of mogul Carlos Pellas, opens this month on a pristine stretch of Pacific coast in Rivas. A one-percenter's dream come true, it has a six-casita spa, a David McLay Kidd–designed golf course, opulent oceanfront villas, and 1,670 acres of grounds—none of which displaced the monkeys, sloths, and iguanas who hang out around miles of hiking trails. Pellas, a kind of Central American Donald Trump, has created a resort that fellow multibillionaires can appreciate, and made socially conscious efforts: He granted micro-loans to beachfront shops and restaurants in nearby Gigante, implemented an on-site recycled water irrigation system, and replanted 1,500 trees removed during construction (505-852-99-829; doubles from \$550).

FYI

One of *Condé Nast Traveler* editors' all-time favorite travel staples is **Fresh's Sugar Tinted Lip Treatment SPF 15**. So we're excited that it's coming out in a new color, Petal, next month: The moisturizing lipstick alternative turns lips a pretty pink hue that doesn't overwhelm even pale complexions (sephora.com; \$23).