



# wallpaper

## MAKING IT

Verner Hinniger snapped the flight crew on the Falklands run (page 178)



This is a short story about why the good times aren't always good for all. Let's start with some assumptions. Life is sweet at the moment: property prices are up, you're wearing nice shoes, you're still doing OK on the stock market, your partner still loves you, you're looking really thin this spring. In short, the developed world is a pleasant place to be circa 2000. For the travel industry this means more passengers flying at the front of the plane, higher occupancy rates, more people experimenting with private air travel, bigger bar tabs, time to renovate! If there's one phrase that sends a shard of fear through our heart it's, 'Oh you'll love the room, we've just completed our \$50 million renovation.' Oh no we won't. It's no longer enough to roam the world trying to unearth the new, the undiscovered, the forgotten and the unloved for an adoring readership. As an editorial organ we now have to be preservation lobbyists, aesthetic terrorists and have direct lines to UNESCO's world heritage desk. Sure there are plenty of people who want cheap cherry veneers, new burgundy wall-to-wall with a paisley border, Triffid-esque bouquets at reception and a bar with more brass. Thankfully, we don't know them. There's little question that the seen-it-all traveller wants seamless service but this doesn't mean it should be executed in an environment that was engineered in Houston and reinterpreted in Amman. Moving forward, smart hotel marketing-speak should be about restoration rather than renovation – the former promising something authentic and hopefully familiar, the latter threatening you with the prospect of off-the-rack modernism and some scary surprises from the world of light fixtures. For our summer Wanderlust\* issue we've given you our top 25 travel choices for 2000 (page 155), a new take on the future of flight (page 035), a modern view of Kyoto (page 204) and a host of despatches from destinations we feel fit with the current climate. Most importantly we've scoped out sites and spaces that should be experienced before the builders are called in. We welcome your travel tips at [wallpaper\\_mag@time-inc.com](mailto:wallpaper_mag@time-inc.com).

## CONTRIBUTORS

### HADANI DITMARS



For our Baghdad feature (page 230), the Vancouver-born Lebanese-Canadian Hadani Ditmars had a frantic fortnight in 42°C Iraqi heat, shadowed by a government minder: followed by a return to a full-on snow storm in Ottawa. Ditmars' Middle Eastern roots have brought journalistic sojourns in Jerusalem, Beirut and Tehran. Her third trip to Baghdad was memorable for its aesthetic focus. 'It was a nice change. Usually I come here to cover bombings, not the Bauhaus.' Having contributed to *The New York Times*, *The Independent* and *Vogue*, Ditmars is currently preparing a book on Iraq called *Dancing in the No-Fly Zone*.

### MONSIEUR Z

The mysteriously monickered Monsieur Z (real name Richard Zielenkiewicz) has added colour to this month's issue by making access to the Nine Gates of Hell (page 115) look almost desirable. After a lifetime in commercial graphics, Z took a course in 3D animation and broke out on his own. The Strasbourg-based designer and illustrator has since become a global commodity, with agents scattered from Paris to Japan. In the past, he's worked in animation, video and graphic design, and he claims to have a passionate love of harmonious hobbies like avant-garde architecture and electronic jazz. Currently working on his forthcoming website, Monsieur Z is a name to be reckoned with.

### TIM CLARK



Our executive editor is more than a dark horse. All enquiries into his past are met with a blank stare and suddenly affected deafness – or at least we think it's affected. Nevertheless, we can tell you this: Nigeria-born and a classically trained musician, Clark joined us from *Arena* back on issue 26, where he wielded the whip and built his sinister reputation. A veritable gourmet, with a terrifying taste in sake, he has held club nights in Soho, slaved in restaurant kitchens, played piano on stage and been stationed as *redacteur en chef* in Paris. Now, the tyrant of Lancaster Place can usually be found hurling undeserved abuse at his long-suffering Mac or igniting irritating interns with his desk-mounted flame-thrower.

### CLAUDIA ENGLMANN

You'd think that a trip to Capri to style this month's Mediterranean moment would be sun-drenched and serene. Unfortunately for Claudia Englmann, April in Capri means storms and egg-sized hailstones. Judge for yourself how the team braved the breezes (page 246). Englmann is currently a fashion editor at German *Cosmopolitan*, but manages the odd spot of freelancing on the side, including work for Italian *Vogue* and *Interview*. She once spent a brief moment studying architecture in Florence, but now confines her building ambitions to admiration for those modernist masters Richard Neutra and John Lautner.

### VIVIANA RULLO



Snatched from the jaws of London Fashion Week, native New Yorker Viviana Rullo joins the *Wallpaper\** team as bookings editor – the crucial fixer charged with minor details like getting the models onto the plane. After a spell producing shows and forecasting fashion for Fifth Avenue's finest, she crossed the Atlantic and has ended up in Queen's Park, where she lives with her boyfriend and a couple of cats. Bringing an extensive list of contacts gathered from six years of freelancing, Rullo is the glue that binds our shoots, be they in Lebanon, Russia or California.

### BEN FREEDMAN

Describing himself as a freelance producer of 'special projects', Ben Freedman has a history of pulling the right strings and subtly shifting the scenery in order to make things happen. Lured to New York by naivety, ('I came to the States to put a movie together and within a week I was a waiter'), Freedman soon found work on Marc Singer's forthcoming documentary *Dark Days*, the Sundance Award-winning tale of New York's subterranean community. He has subsequently found an admirable niche producing high-profile photo projects. After helping arrange Christopher Griffith's American epic, *States*, we called on Freedman to fix up our chopper shots (page 220) – cajoling the coastguard and eking favours from corporate big boys.

### WERNER HINNIGER



In the relentless quest for travelling excellence, photographer Werner Hinniger braved the stiff upper lips at RAF Brize Norton for our Best Long Haul (page 178). The Berlin photographer was taken up in a Tristar, as the RAF's finest tailed him in Tornados for a spot of in-flight refuelling. Since his days as an assistant, he's graduated to the heady heights of advertising, shooting for clients such as BMW and Deutsche Post. He divides his time between his Hamburg studio and Berlin, but is also suspected of going underground to avoid demanding editors.



# CARRY ON BAGHDAD

It's been bombarded, tyrannised, starved... and then stalked by CNN. Nevertheless the Iraqi capital's still trying to pass for normal. Hadani Ditmars gives the city a full check-up

photographer **Hadani Ditmars**







**BAGHDAD**, a city whose history spans both the glories of caliph Haroun Al-Rashid's reign and the deprivations of a 10-year-old embargo, is not a place for the casual tourist. This is a city with a serious past and a tenuous future, a place of Abbasid palaces and malnourished children, of 1001 nights and 5,000 square km. To be one of the 5 million people here is to feel the dizzy collision of these simultaneous realities.

Of course, you would never know this from watching CNN; you would imagine Baghdad as a place populated only by Saddam Hussein and Brent Sadler, by the Republican Guard and American television cameramen. You would think of missiles lighting up the night sky and angry Iraqis shouting at rallies. But you wouldn't think of Bauhaus architecture, now, would you?

In fact, Baghdad's modern architecture is as worthwhile as its more ancient examples, revealing between them the full story of 20th-century Iraq. This takes in a wealth of buildings, from the Ottoman-style houses of the early part of the century through to English influence – the British troops arrived after the First World War – the elegant villas of the 1930s and 1940s when King Faisal reigned, to the post-1958 revolution edifices (more than a little reminiscent of Stalingrad); the golden age of the 1970s, when oil was nationalised and money grew on palm trees, to the 1991 'Desert Storm' bombardment and a decade of impoverishment and sanctions, when construction came to a halt.

But now, with the smell of money in the air, as thousands of foreign companies descend on Baghdad hoping for some lucrative government contracts, and the new 'smuggling class' of 'embargo cats' (as the sanctions profiteers are called) working up an appetite for lavish new villas, there is an odd new construction boom afoot. Odd because this is still a city with nightly power cuts, an infant mortality rate that has doubled in a decade, and the omnipresent

threat of bombardment from American planes and Iranian missiles. This is a place where the dramatic devaluation of the dinar means that, in a country that was once one of the wealthiest in the Middle East, exchanging even US\$30 (the hard currency of choice) now results in a few plastic bags full of Iraqi notes; a place where medicines for the cancers which have multiplied since Gulf War bombings left uranium in the soil and water, are out of reach for most Iraqis; and where antique shops are full of treasures from old Baghdadi families that have left or retreated into quiet misery.

Still the nouveau riche must have their villas and life must continue as normally as possible. Take the recent elections, for example. Despite their remote connection to democratic principles, voter turn-out was high. Polling stations were festooned with balloons and streamers and signs in Arabic saying 'Welcome Guests'; the ambiance was more funfair than electoral. When I asked a young writer why the Iraqi people – caught between a rock and a hard place, between crippling sanctions and an unyielding regime – even bothered to turn up and vote at all, he replied, 'People here need to pretend that their lives are normal, that they have some control over their circumstances. They need to feel that things here are like they are in the outside world.'

The tension between things as they pretend to be and things as they are often threatens to boil over. The first night I arrive in Baghdad, Alaa, one of the more colourful of the Ministry of Information's minders (mandatory companions for all journalists in Iraq), invites me to a party at the Sabeen club.

The Sabeens are an Iraqi religious sect who, while neither officially Christian nor Jewish, are actually followers of John the Baptist. The main risqué attraction of their club is that alcohol can be purchased and consumed on the premises, a rarity since public drinking was banned in 1993 in a bid to reduce crime.





**STREET THEATRE** Above, Market traders beneath a poster of Saddam in Tyrolean mode. Above right, cars enjoy little chance of repair with sanctions blocking new parts at the border. Opposite page, commercial buildings in the shopping district



**THE** club itself is fairly typical of post-revolutionary 1960s architecture: a square building with the ubiquitous portrait of a benevolent-looking Saddam Hussein gracing the entrance. In Baghdad, the president has as many guises as Lord Krishna, including one in a Tyrolean outfit and another with a Panama hat and a (presumably Cuban) cigar. (In contrast, the likeness of his arch-nemesis, George Bush, has been confined to the tiled entrance of the Al-Rashid Hotel, where the words 'I am criminal' are spelled out below the former president's face.)

Alaa and I sit with the club's president, also a benevolent looking patriarch, and his family. His 19-year-old daughter, who is soon to depart for Germany where her Iraqi fiancé lives, sits beside him. Her name is Ishtar and she looks like a film star.

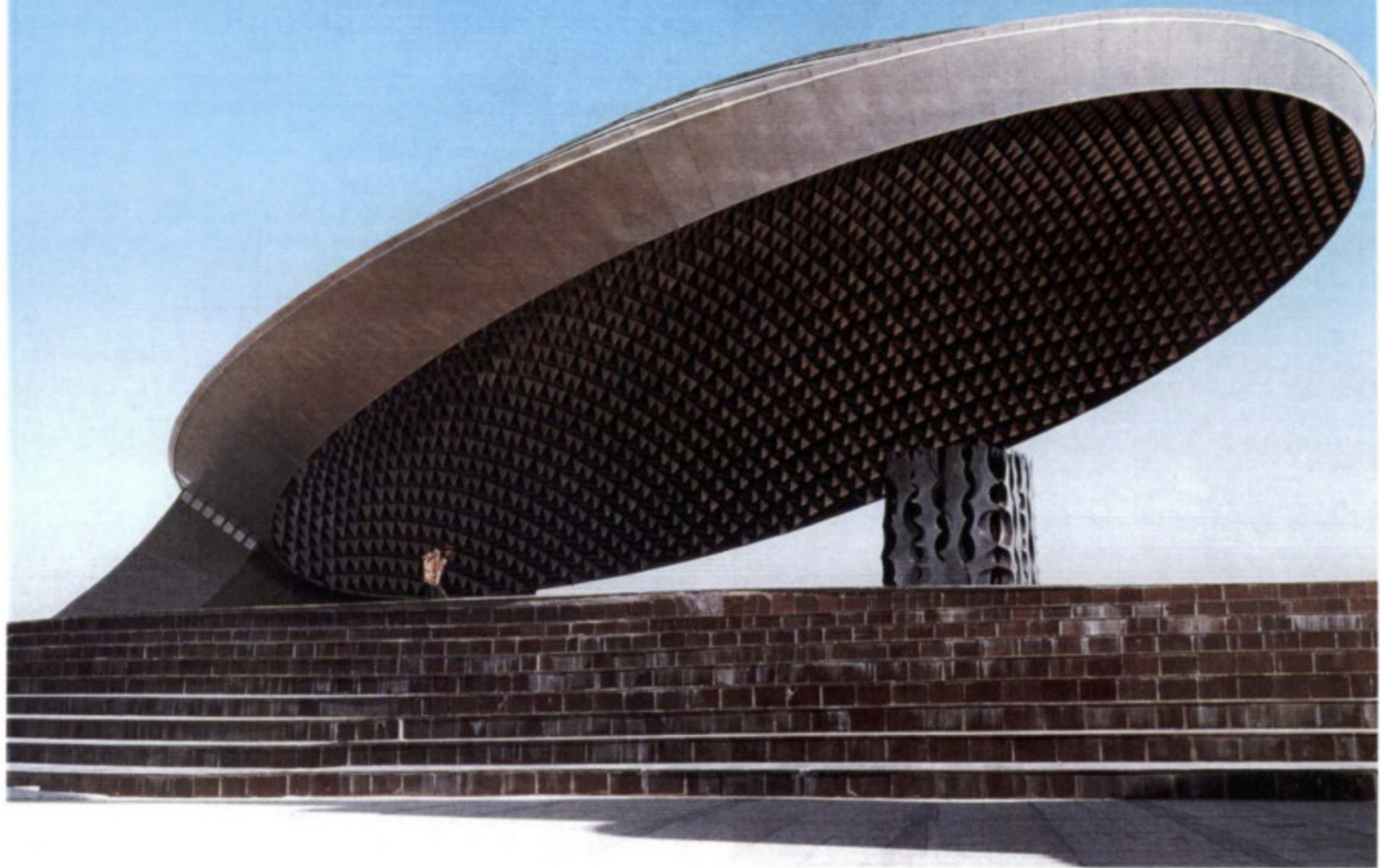
Everyone drinks whisky on the rocks and eats salted pistachios. Soon plates of kebab and bowls of hummus and salad arrive. On a makeshift stage a famous Iraqi singer croons *maqam* – traditional Iraqi love songs – as couples get up to dance.

Among the club's respectable-looking, middle-aged married couples, several pairs of handsome young men dressed in tight jeans also begin to dance. I sense a mild disturbance in the room as the club's president leaves our table and goes over to where the same-sex couples are shaking their shoulders and moving their hands and hips in a serpentine arabesque. After a few friendly but stern words from the benevolent patriarch, the male couples disperse, some holding hands as they leave the dance floor. I assume the worst.

But after a quick introduction to the poet Abdul Razzaq Abdul Wahid, who sits at the adjoining table with his family, I'm not entirely sure what might be going on. Abdul Razzaq, whose glory days were in the Swinging Sixties, assures me that 'No, no, it's not what you think. This is not about homophobia. Those boys are only

'THE BOYS ARE ONLY DANCING TOGETHER BECAUSE THEY ARE TOO SHY TO ASK A GIRL TO DANCE,' SAID THE POET





dancing together because they have no sisters and they are too shy to ask a girl to dance.'

Minutes later, another boy couple gets up to dance. After a brief exchange of words between one of the boys and a man dancing beside them with his wife, some fisticuffs are exchanged. In the blink of an eye, the one-on-one confrontation has exploded into a violent free-for-all, as friends and family members on both sides join in. On the dance floor there is blood and broken glass.

'Just ignore it,' says Alaa, desperately trying to look unruffled. 'It will all be over soon.' The president of the club and some security men move the scuffle out to the hallway. The band continues to play throughout and more married couples get up to dance. Alaa asks me to pose with Ishtar for a photo in front of the stage. Underneath the sounds of oriental drum and keyboards, I can hear screams and police sirens: noises that even Stalinist architecture cannot contain.

AT the Gropius-designed University of Baghdad, architecture department head Dr Husam Al-Arawi is shaking his head. 'I try to tell my students,' he begins, 'what it was like here in the 1970s, but they just can't relate to it.' This was a time before many of Dr Al-Arawi's students could even talk, when the oil boom meant subsidised education and health care, and the government gave young home-seekers a free plot of land and building materials. It was a time before eight years of war with Iran and 10 years of economic struggle, before martyrs and malnutrition. His colleague, Janon Khadim, a lecturer in the department complains that 'students today, they have grown up with little education about their heritage'. With the embargo also preventing any influx of books, educational materials and new technology, Khadim says young people depend on their elders' knowledge, both to understand their past and to shape their future.



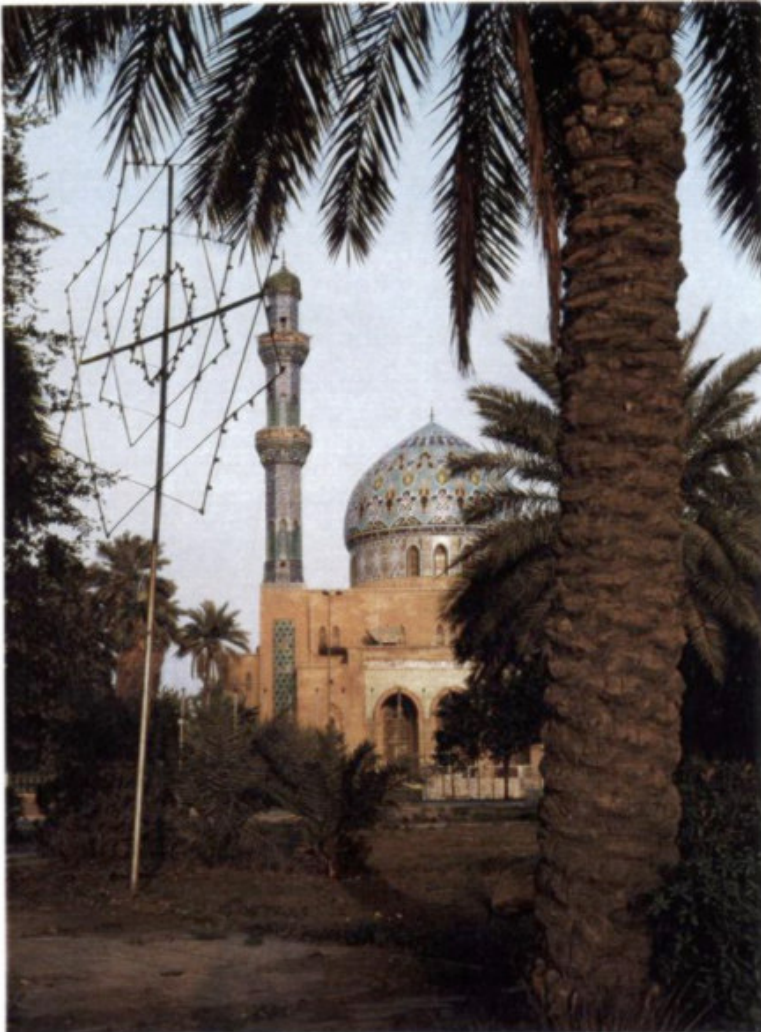


NICE BUSHES *This page*  
Baghdad University wa  
designed by Gropius  
*Opposite page, top, Iraq*  
tribute to the unknow  
soldier. *Below,*  
post-Desert Storm take o  
propaganda tiling at th  
Al-Rashid hot

UNDER THE SOUND OF DRUMS AND KEYBOARDS  
I CAN HEAR SCREAMS AND SIRENS; NOISES EVEN  
STALINIST ARCHITECTURE CANNOT CONTAIN







**CITY BLUES** *Opposite page, top, the view from Al-Rashid hotel could pass for Miami. Below, Saddam's son Ouday Hussein casts his vote in front of the assembled press and TV cameras on election day. This page, top, a 20th-century Baghdadi mosque, designed along classic Islamic lines. Below, popular actress Madame Shada Salem poses between takes on a new TV series, 1001 Arabian Nights*

LEONARDO DICAPRIO IS A STUDENT HEARTTHROB AND CELINE DION BELTS OUT TITANIC'S THEME SONG ON SHEBAB TV



'This new generation,' she explains, 'they have no connection to history.' Khadim relates how, on a recent class trip to the ancient city of Hatra in the north, her students were more interested in sleeping in the car than visiting the ruins. But with the nature of globalisation being what it is, they do have great knowledge of Western pop culture; Leonardo DiCaprio remains a constant heartthrob, and Celine Dion belts out the *Titanic* theme song on Shebab TV – the new channel patronised by President Hussein's son, Ouday – more often than would seem healthy.

**TODAY**, Dr Al-Arawi has offered to take us on a tour of his vast city. So far, our guide has been an affable minder named Kais, who communicates with us in broken Spanish throughout. Kais is from the old school of Iraqi minders, who never let you photograph anything without written permission in triplicate; somehow Iraqi society manages to be both incredibly chaotic and at the same time retentively bureaucratic.

When Al-Arawi and Kais speak together in Arabic, you can hear in their accents and see in the way they move, the difference between the old Baghdadi families and the petit bourgeois Baathists who supplanted them in 1958. Now, however, the power of both classes is gradually being usurped by wealthy sanctions profiteers.

But it is thanks to them that Dr Al-Arawi still has work, apart from his teaching at the university which, on a state salary in dinars, is now conducted virtually on a volunteer basis. Predictably, the profiteers' penchant is for the garish, but Dr Al-Arawi tries his best in the new cultural jihad between taste and money. 'They like everything to be brand new,' he explains as we head off in our gleaming white late-1970s Buick. In sanctions-weary Baghdad, full of run-down old bangers with broken windshields and with spare parts blocked at the border, our car is considered a luxury.





THERE IS SOMETHING  
ALMOST MODERN ABOUT THE  
USE OF LIGHT AND SPACE



WE take a perfunctory cruise past Tahrir or Liberation Square, to check out Jewad Selim's 'Monument of Liberty'. According to an official guide book published in 1982 (the most recent I could find in Baghdad) the work, unveiled in 1961, depicts 'the struggle of the Iraqi people in the dark days before the 14th July 1958 Revolution, for liberty, peace and prosperity'.

We then go on to Al-Rashid Street, where the 1920s and 1930s style buildings are reminiscent of Lawrence Durrell's Alexandria. Alas there is no seaside and there are no Justines lingering at the chai-houses, only barefoot kids recycling the scrap metal they find between crumbling buildings. We wander through the old bazaar, where carpet sellers practise their best English phrases – 'Lady come and see, only look, only look!' – and semi-feral mongrels prowl the winding alleyways where *sufi* shrines meet antique jewellery shops.

Dr Al-Arawi leads us to the Mustansiriya School, built in the 13th century during the reign of the 37th Abbasid caliph, Al-Mustansir Billah. There is something almost modern in its use of light and space, with long corridors, rounded corners and high ceilings. Dr Al-Arawi proudly reminds us that 'Iraq was the birthplace of architecture' – as the first arch was designed and built by the Sumerians.

After leaving this part of town, where residents live much as they did a century ago – with the possible exception of electricity (when it's working) and the occasional telephone line – we head towards Al Mansour. The reality here is much more late 1970s and 1980s, with its wide streets and neon shop and restaurant signs. From an architectural viewpoint, the 1990s seem to have by-passed Baghdad completely, but perhaps it would be Arrassat Al-Hindya, where posh new restaurants serve weird variations of *escalope al limone*, stores are full of widescreen TVs and smuggled perfumes. New art galleries have sprung up here and the same CD of Julio Iglesias





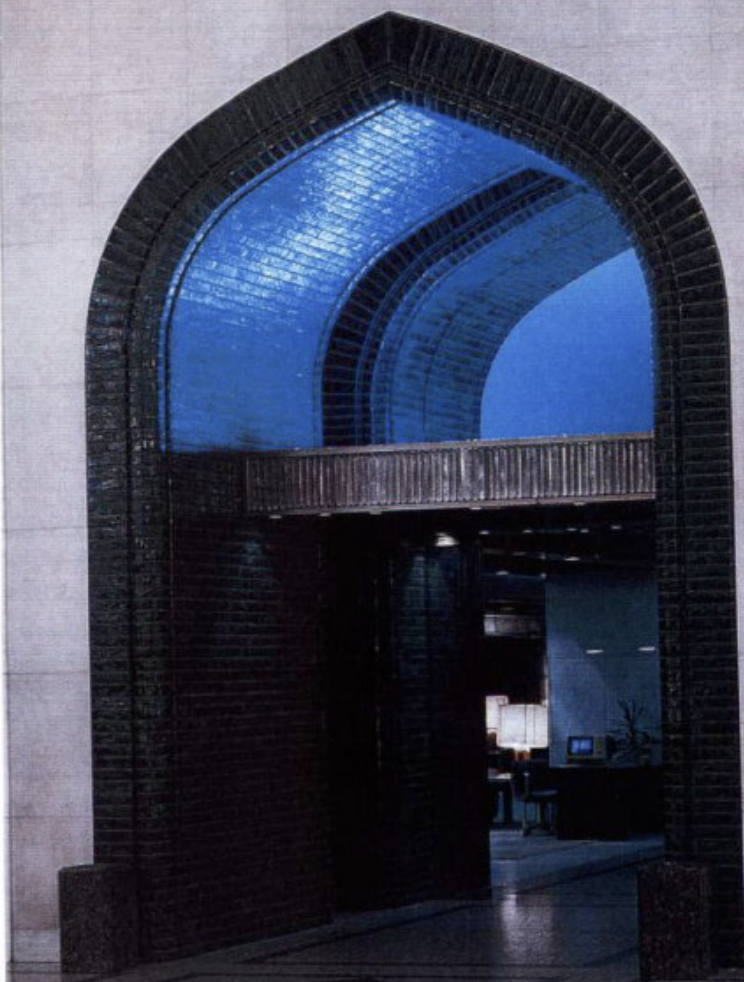


**MODERN TAKES**

*This page, with its high ceilings and use of space and light, 13th-century Abbasid architecture seems almost modern.*

*Opposite page, top, the museum of the Iran-Iraq war is a shrine to collected war memorabilia and foliage display. Below, Saddam Hussein on election day*





AL JAWAAB  
BANQUET HALL  
CASINO  
HIGHT CLUB  
CONFERENCE  
RESTAURANT  
AL ZABIB  
RESTAURANT  
DRAWING

'IRAQ WAS THE BIRTHPLACE OF ARCHITECTURE,' BOASTS DR AL-ARAWI - THE FIRST ARCH WAS DESIGNED AND BUILT BY THE SUMERIANS



PLAYING TO THE GALLERY *This page, Saddam graces the walls at the city's Art Centre. Since the embargo, a hundred new private galleries have sprung up – and not all the pictures are of the cherished leader. Opposite page, at the Al-Rashid hotel, the international language of hotel glamour – marble floors and chandeliers – comes complete with a youthful portrait of the president*







**CHECK MATES**

*This page, clean and serene, the Babylon hotel. Opposite page, from top left, poet Abdul Razzaq Abdul Wahid says the siege has inspired his writing; outside the Al-Rashid hotel: the football stadium during a friendly*





## BEST OF BAGHDAD

Baghdadis generally do not refer to a place by exact address, but by reference to neighbourhoods and famous buildings. Think Tokyo but without the maps on business cards. You will need a good driver who knows his way around.

### BEST HOTELS

The Al-Rashid in Karradeh Maryam, favoured by journalists, oil executives and secret agents, offers good-sized rooms, comfortable beds and alleged spy cams in the bathroom. Service is friendly, the gardens are lovely and a handsome tennis pro is on hand year-round to help you with your backhand. A dip in the swimming pool can be followed by a \$4 therapeutic sports massage by Amir. Try the fresh pomegranate juice and tread lightly (depending on your political disposition) on poor old George Bush, inlaid in the entrance floor. A few minutes away, the Al Mansour hotel in Salihiya is slightly less luxurious, but offers a Thursday night disco as well as a simultaneous mass wedding. You can gaze at

brides in identical white confections as they head upstairs with their grooms and families, or boogie the night away with peroxide queens in leopard print. Be prepared for a thorough frisking on the way into the disco. And about those hotel beds – apparently the mattresses have been energetically worn in.

### BEST RESTAURANTS

Babeesh, on Arrassat Al-Hindya in the nouveau riche part of town, offers a full menu of Western and Middle Eastern fare. The fresh lemon juice is excellent and the lamb chops dipped in honey and basil are delicious. Upstaging the menu, lounge singer Wania Yussef is a musical refugee from Baghdad's late 1960s and 1970s jazz cabarets, crooning 'Strangers in the Night' as UN workers and fake-Hermès-wearing Iraqis converse over dinner.

Also worth checking out is the nearby Il Paese, an Italian-style restaurant whose decor and escalope lean more towards the Austrian, and whose advertisement

seduces diners with the promise of a '24-hour generator'.

### BEST CLUB

The Sabeen club near the Al-Rashid hotel is private, but since it's the only place where one can publicly consume alcohol, an invitation here is much sought after. One word of advice: avoid the bathrooms. The bladder-holding will only heighten the 'anything can happen' atmosphere. To get to the Sabeen contact Alaa, the minder at the Press Centre in the Ministry of Information. He will be delighted to take you in return for a few back issues of *Vogue*.

### BEST SHOPPING

For antiques try the Al Wuswasi shop, opposite the entrance of Madrasa al Mustansiriya university. Owned and run by Abu Muheeb and his family for generations, every item comes complete with historic commentary. Choose from a selection of antique jewellery, prayer beads, carpets and other Baghdadi treasures. For Saddam Hussein

watches, the shops in the Al-Rashid hotel have a good selection, although you may find better buys in the bazaars. Check out the Karrada market on Thursday nights, the best place for contraband leather goods and clothing from Syria and Turkey. If you're in the market for big-screen TVs smuggled from Dubai or even real estate, Arrassat Al-Hindya is the place to go.

### BEST ART & MUSIC

Check out the Al-Rashid Theatre (opposite the Mansour Hotel) and try to catch a concert by the Iraqi Symphony Orchestra. The musicians are so dedicated to their work that performances have continued, unpaid, throughout bombings and sanctions. A hundred private art galleries have sprung up in the past two years – one symptom of the embargo is that artists no longer enjoy state funding and now rely on the private sector. Visit the INNA gallery on Abu Nawas or Dali Gallery in Arrassat Al-Hindya.

For more information, see *Travel resources*, page 256





seems to play everywhere. (There really are only so many times you can hear his version of 'Bamboleo' in 42°C heat.)

On the way to Al Mansour, we take a detour round the old race-track which is to be replaced by a giant mosque, then drive past a sports stadium designed by Le Corbusier in 1957, but only built in the 1980s. As we approach a fancy residential area we are surrounded by beggars at an intersection. 'This never happened before the embargo,' says Dr Al-Arawi tersely.

With its impossibly wide lots, sprawling villas and palm tree-lined streets, the neighbourhood is strangely reminiscent of a suburban Miami. This is where CNN correspondent Jane Araf lives; despite CNN's rather superficial TV version of Iraq, their status in Baghdad, according to one local wire service reporter, 'falls somewhere after the president, between the number two in command, Izzat Ibrahim, and deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz.'

**I**N this neighbourhood of the traditional elite there are many recent additions built by 'embargo cats'. We approach one particularly hideous villa, a pristine, limewashed miniature version of the White House, hoping to photograph it. A deaf-mute security guard hosing down his master's BMW mimes 'No photos,' pointing to the camera. Our minder Kais, who acts as if we've happened upon some state secret or something, barks out a gruff 'Vamanos!' and we are off.

An embarrassed Dr Al-Arawi tries to explain. 'They don't like their villas to be photographed,' he ventures, 'because they're afraid someone might steal the design.' ☆

