

# The New York Times

## 36 Hours

HELSINKI

The Finnish capital, long known for design and the sauna, now adds a renewed waterfront and a thriving coffee culture.

By INGRID K. WILLIAMS

Four years ago, Helsinki basked in the international spotlight as the 2012 World Design Capital. Since then, the Finnish capital has quietly continued its pursuit of excellence in design, contemporary arts and urban planning. Construction cranes are active across the city, but the long-term vision has already started paying dividends: a renewed waterfront, renovated museums and revived industrial spaces. Meanwhile, local talent is fueling a blossoming coffee scene and injecting fun back into the Nordic kitchen. (Note that many restaurants close in July.) This wave of progress has even spread to outlying neighborhoods, where recent openings range from cultural complexes to the most traditional Finnish attraction, the sauna. Now every corner of this cool Nordic city is heating up.

### Friday

#### 1 4 P.M. > LOKAL DESIGNS

Alvar Aalto admirers looking to brush up on present-day Finnish creativity should visit Lokal, a shop and gallery opened in 2012 by the photographer Katja Hagelstam to showcase local art, craft and design. New exhibitions are unveiled every few weeks in this innovative space, which recently featured blurry landscapes by the photographer Onerva Utriainen alongside a feathered wall hanging and painted acorn-shaped matryoshka dolls. Browse the adjacent retail section to find handcrafted accessories and housewares, such as woven birch-bark clutches and delicate porcelain cups from the ceramist Nathalie Lahdenmaki.

#### 2 6 P.M. > STEAM BATH

Prepare to strip down to steam up at Kulttuurisauna, a Zen-like public sauna that opened in 2013. Sauna is a cornerstone of Finnish culture, but you'll also spot Japanese influences woven throughout this minimalist space, which was designed by the architect Tuomas Toivonen and the artist Nene Tsuboi, the couple who now oversee day-to-day operations. Inside, saunas are separated by gender, and nudity is the rule in the toasty chambers. After sweating it

out on the wooden benches, grab your towel to cool off in the outdoor garden beside the Baltic or follow the fearless Finns for a dip in the frigid sea. Entrance, 15 euros; towel rental, 4 euros, about \$4.45.

#### 3 9 P.M. > FRENCH CONNECTION

Find the inconspicuous inner-courtyard doorway of Baskeri & Basso to enter what feels like an old-fashioned supper club. The restaurant opened last November in a former industrial space with industrial pendants above the bar, and ample candlelit ambience. Chalkboard menus list diverse small plates, which recently included melt-in-your-mouth beef cheeks, and burrata with basil and mint. And don't miss the excellent natural wines; start with pét-nat, the French sparkler, and then move on to a lively Sextant Bourgogne Rouge. Finish the feast, as in France, with cheese, perhaps an aged Comté. Dinner for two, about €100.

#### 4 11:30 P.M. > SPEAKEASY SIPS

A little sleuthing is required to find Trillby & Chadwick, a cocktail bar that opened in 2014 with an unusual theme: a Prohibition-era speakeasy masquerading as a detective agency. There's no sign, but the bar's well-lit doorway and blacked-out windows are easy to spot. In the foyer, announce your arrival on the antique telephone, then wait to be escorted to a table in the parlor where a concise menu of creative cocktails, each with its own illustrated back story, recently included the refreshing "Lucky to Be Alive" (Tanqueray, Aperol, lemon, pink grapefruit, yuzu and tonic; €14).



#### 5 11 A.M. > BRUNCH STORY

Start the morning along Helsinki's renewed waterfront, where the 19th-century Old Market Hall reopened in 2014 after an impressive renovation. Inside the handsome brick building, browse dozens of wooden stalls — greengrocers peddling potatoes and local cranberries, fishmongers selling seasonal fish roes — before arriving at the central atrium and its new cafe and restaurant, Story. This sunny space serves every-

thing from fresh pastries and fruit pies to hearty plates made from market ingredients, such as a morning egg scramble with cold-smoked salmon and caviar (€8.30), and a sublime salmon soup with creamy, dill-flecked broth and tender chunks of potato and fish (€12.80). Order at the counter before snagging a table by the windows, which overlook the new 130-foot [Finnair SkyWheel](#) across the harbor.

#### 6 1 P.M. > ART HUNT

The design capital is equally focused on art, and its strong roster of museums will soon include a new building for the Amos Anderson Art Museum, already under construction and scheduled to open in 2018. Until then, visit the original location, where the current "Helsinki Noir" exhibition plunges

visitors into an eerily compelling crime drama. A fictional tale, set in 1930s Helsinki, is told through paintings, installations and an accompanying novella for visitors to read, turning the passive act of observing art into an interactive game of detective (through January 2017; admission, €12). No less impressive is the Helsinki Art Museum Tennis Palace, which reopened last fall after an extensive expansion and renovation (€10). Look for exhibitions from rising Finnish artists and, later this year, a color-splashed retrospective from the Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama.

#### 7 4 P.M. > SLAUGHTERHOUSE GANG

Since 2012, the ongoing redevelopment of a former slaughterhouse, Teurastamo, has repurposed the buildings for less gory business, including a coffee roastery, restaurants and a radio station. Begin an exploration of the complex at Jadelino, an artisanal gelateria scooping scrumptious flavors like salty peanut and creamy pistachio made with Sicilian nuts. Then head a few doors down to B-Side Bar, an appropriately industrial bar with exposed-brick walls, stacks of old records and Finnish beers on tap. Ask to try the spirits from the neighboring Helsinki Distilling Company, or walk across the courtyard to see if you can sample one at the source (the distillery's on-site bar is scheduled to open in late August).

#### 8 7 P.M. > KALLIO CHOW

North of the city center, the lively Kallio district was once dominated by sex shops and dive bars, but its hilly streets now also house vintage boutiques, countless coffee shops and some of the city's most exciting restaurants. Among the best is Doner Harju, a kebab shop that elevates the humble Turkish street food with its spiced lamb, which arrives thinly sliced on a plate piled

with creamy hummus, grilled vegetables, spicy chile sauce, fresh herbs and thick focaccia wedges (€15). For a slightly more formal meal, book a table at Kolmon3n, an intimate, two-year-old restaurant nearby where the seasonal menus highlight Finnish products, from reindeer tongue and roasted beetroot to buttery blini with Baltic fish roe. Two courses, €37.

#### 9 10 P.M. > BAR BEAT

Kallio and its immediate surroundings are not lacking in eclectic watering holes. Start a neighborhood bar crawl at Bar Molotow, a relaxed hangout with a fridge full of craft beers and some seriously bizarre décor, like a child-size mannequin equipped with a rainbow lei, a black helmet and a light saber. Then head to Rytmi, an endearingly dated cafe with worn red carpeting, rotating art exhibitions on the walls and music events late in the evening. Finish the night in the nearby industrial park that's home to Stadin Panimo, a microbrewery and beer pub with taps pouring seasonal offerings like the Cascadian Dark Ale.

## Sunday

#### 10 10 A.M. > MOMENT OF ZEN

It's easy to rush right past the Kamppi Chapel, an oblong windowless structure with curved spruce paneling that is situated near one of the city's busiest corners. Known as the "Chapel of Silence," this beacon of tranquillity was designed by the Finnish firm K2S Architects and opened during Helsinki's reign as the 2012 World Design Capital. Inside the sanctuary, savor a moment of peace in the mesmerizing space, where pale wood-paneled walls and ash-wood pews are awash in natural light streaming down from above, where a narrow aperture encircles the ceiling.

#### 11 NOON > CAFFEINE NATION

The recent proliferation of coffee shops and microroasteries in the Finnish capital means that you can now find a velvety macchiato or a steaming mug of light roast in every neighborhood. On a corner in Kallio, the pioneering coffee shop Kahvila Savy pulls perfect shots of espresso and sells beans from small Finnish roasters, like Turun Kahvipaahimo and Helsinki's own Good Life Coffee. In the city center, La Torrefazione is a cozy cafe and roastery that serves matcha lattes and French press in a narrow, second-story space. And in the waterfront Katajanokka district, the revered Swedish roaster Johan & Nystrom opened a new cafe serving their superior brews in an old brick warehouse with heavy wood beams and freelancer-friendly furnishings.

**12 2 P.M. > CULTURE FACTORY**

At the Cable Factory, a hulking limestone-brick factory complex, production has shifted from cables to culture. Located in the once-industrial west, this seven-story former manufacturing facility is today home to a mix of art studios, performance spaces, galleries, schools and museums. While exploring the site, don't overlook the Finnish Museum of Photography (admission, €8), which recently hosted an exhibition of poignant, politically themed photographs.

**IF YOU GO**

**1 Lokal**, Annankatu 9; lokalhelsinki.com.

**2 Kulttuurisauna**, Hakaniemenranta 17; kulttuurisauna.fi.

**3 Baskeri & Basso**, Tehtaankatu 27-29; basbas.fi.

**4 Trillby & Chadwick**, Kartariinankatu; trillbychadwick.fi.

**5 Story**, Vanha Kauppahalli, Eteläranta; restaurantstory.fi.

**6 Amos Anderson Art Museum**, Yrjönkatu 27; amosanderson.fi. **Helsinki Art**

**Museum Tennis Palace**, Eteläinen Rautatiekatu 8; hamhelsinki.fi.

**7 Teurastamo**, Työpajankatu 2; teurastamo.com.

**8 Doner Harju**, Fleminginkatu 23; donerharju.fi. **Kolmon3n**, Kolmas Linja 11; kolmon3n.com.

**9 Bar Molotow**, Vaasankatu 29. **Rytmi**, Toinen Linja 2. **Stadin Panimo**, Kaasutehtaankatu 1, Rakennus 6; stadinpanimo.fi.

**10 Kamppi Chapel**, Simonkatu 7; data.helsinginseurakunnat.fi/panoraamat/kampinkappeli/KK-27.html.

**11 Kahvila Savy**, Aleksis Kiven Katu 12; kahvilasavy.fi. **La Torrefazione**, Aleksanterinkatu 50; latorre.fi. **Johan & Nyström**, Kanavaranta 7; johanochnystrom.se.

**12 Cable Factory**, Tallberginkatu 1; kaapelitehdas.fi.