

INTERNATIONAL Traveller

FOR MODERN EXPLORERS

*See the
world
like an
insider*

READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

*YOUR
ULTIMATE
ESCAPES
REVEALED*

*WHAT YOU
HAVE TO KNOW
ABOUT
ARMENIA*

*Steve Jacobs'
idyllic
island home*

ISSN 2200-274X



772200 274000
JUNE 2017 AUST \$9.95 INC GST

CAPITOL OF

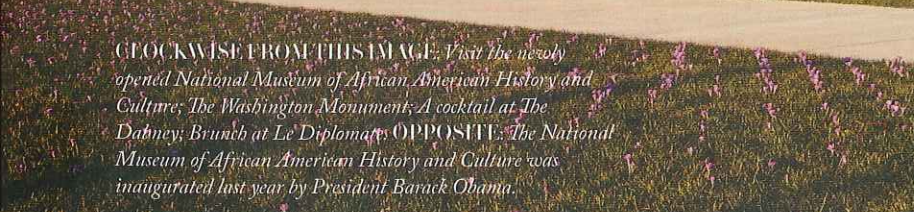
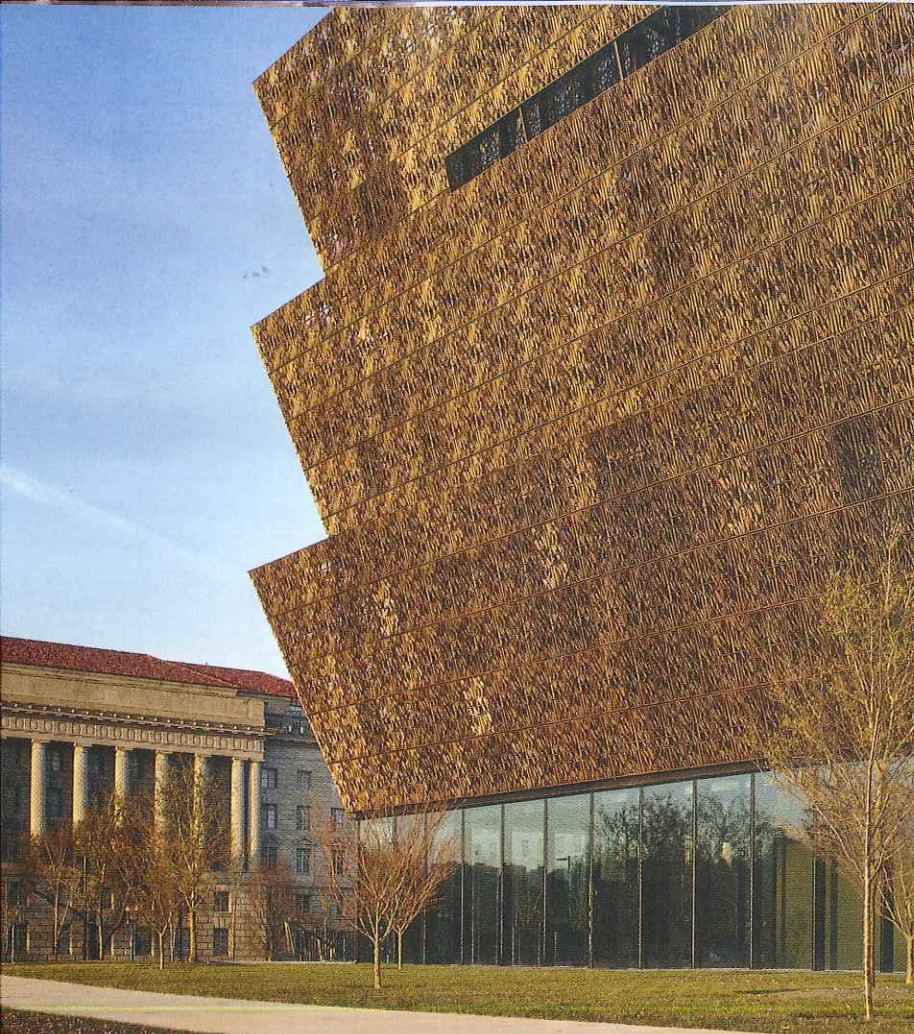


CULTURE

THIS PAGE: A view of the Capitol Building from Downtown DC. OPPOSITE: The Lincoln Memorial at the National Mall; Blossoms in springtime.



Beneath the surface, Washington, DC is a city thriving with a unique history and culture, diverse food scene and some of the most beautiful architecture in the USA. DC-native Shayla Martin goes beyond politics to share the best of her home town.



CLOCKWISE FROM THIS IMAGE: Visit the newly opened National Museum of African American History and Culture; The Washington Monument; A cocktail at The Dahney; Brunch at Le Diplomate; OPPOSITE: The National Museum of African American History and Culture was inaugurated last year by President Barack Obama.



When I was growing up, a lot of people didn't set foot in Washington, DC after dark. The city saw most of its inhabitants during the hours of seven in the morning and six in the evening. By 1980, the city's population had dwindled, with most wealthy residents opting to move out to the cookie-cutter suburbs of Virginia and Maryland in search of what they couldn't find in the city: lawns, good schools and safety. Despite being the headquarters of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Drug Enforcement Administration, the nationwide crack epidemic of the 1980s and '90s took a strong hold in Washington, increasing violent crime and earning the city the moniker 'murder capital' of the United States.

By 1995, much in part to the federal government's renewed interest in its city, DC recorded less than 400 homicides for the first time in years and the decrease in violence has, for the most part, continued. As with most major cities that were touched by the war on drugs, when the drugs left, in came gentrification. Housing projects were replaced by mixed-income developments, with a smattering of sparkling new condos to lure in the young, six-figure-making population of the mid-2000s.

It's been said that 'if you build it, they will come,' and DC has been building and on the rise ever since, its dark glamour depicted by Hollywood producers in TV shows like *Scandal* and *House of Cards*. But there's something these shows don't get quite right. Sure, DC can be the playground for dirty politics, but Hollywood has completely missed the distinct and vibrant feel that DC has cultivated over the last 15 years. Travellers still hoping to check out the US capital, but who may have been put off by the antics and policies of its newly elected reality TV show star-turned

president, can be thankful that DC is so much more than politics. Walkable neighbourhoods, a buzzing creative scene, some of the best restaurants in the world, one of the '52 Places to Go in 2016' according to *The New York Times*. This is not the DC I grew up with, but I think I like it.

While getting into all the nooks and crannies of DC during a holiday would be impossible, you can dive beneath the surface if you hit certain neighbourhoods. Perhaps the best way would be to divide the city between old and new: the tried and true places that have been doing it right for decades, and the new wave of DC-based designers, restaurateurs and culture-pushers.

DOWNTOWN/SHAW

In the late 1990s, Downtown DC, bordering the National Mall, was a mass of office buildings and parking lots. Head there now and there's a healthy mix of new and old to discover.

History buffs can check out the restored Ford's Theatre (fords.org), where President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in 1865, or wander the famed and free Smithsonian Institute's collection of museums. In September 2016, the highly anticipated National Museum of African American History and Culture (nmaahc.si.edu) opened to much pomp and circumstance, including a ribbon cutting from President Barack Obama. Charting the role of the African American population in American history, exhibits cover the slavery years, the Civil Rights Movement and Obama's historic election.

Break for lunch at DC's answer to Rodeo Drive, CityCenterDC (citycenterdc.com). The retail and residential complex is home to the highest-end retailers like Hermès, Jo Malone and Salvatore Ferragamo, plus cult-favourite restaurants like Momofuku CCDC (ccdc.momofuku.com). Slide up to a communal table for a plate of juicy pork buns. >>

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: Momofuku CCDC is a cult-favourite eatery; Seek out the locals' haunts on Blagden Alley; The lively Eastern Market; Eat local and seasonal at The Dabney; Downtown Washington is undergoing a regeneration; Shop deep-south styles at Billy Reid. OPPOSITE: Visit the classics including the Jefferson Memorial.



DON'T MISS THESE FAVOURITES

UNION MARKET 40 creative food vendors come together under one roof in the NoMa neighbourhood. unionmarketdc.com

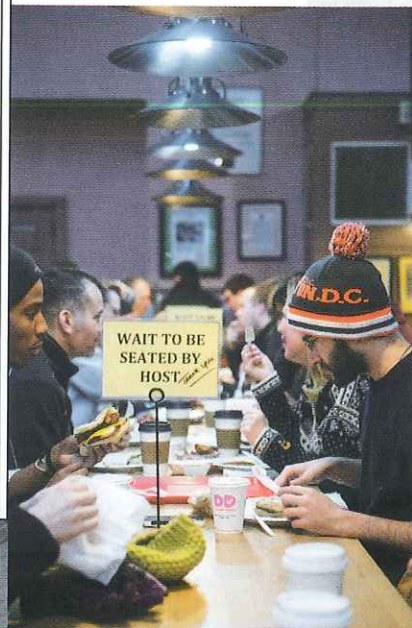
H STREET CORRIDOR An energetic corridor filled with hip bars, live music venues and restaurants.

Maketto, a menswear shop-meets-Asian restaurant, is a standout. maketto1351.com

SUBURBS Arlington National Cemetery and Old Town

Alexandria are must-see stops just outside of Washington.

NATIONALS STADIUM If you visit during April and November, try to catch a Nationals baseball game. washington.nationals.mlb.com



After spending the afternoon shopping, head north to the edge of the Shaw neighbourhood to find blink-and-you'd-miss it Blagden Alley, where the favourite restaurants of in-the-know locals reside. Start with drinks in the cosy Spirits Library of the Columbia Room (columbiaroomdc.com), a lounge with expertly crafted cocktails. Head downstairs for dinner at The Dabney (thedabney.com), where ingredients are sourced from farmers and purveyors of the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States, prepared over a wood-burning flame. The menu is tweaked daily, but expect highly seasonal dishes made with fresh root vegetables, hearty soups and the finest meats.

Round out the night at the legendary 9:30 Club (930.com) with an intimate performance from today's top alternative, pop and hip-hop artists.

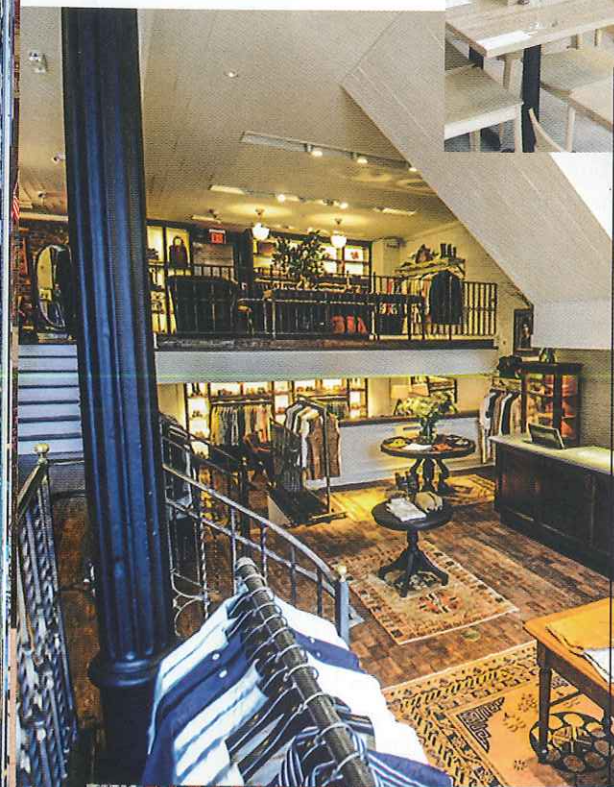
LOGAN CIRCLE/U STREET

West of Shaw is the Logan Circle neighbourhood, where the main drag of 14th street is lined with DC's hottest eateries and home décor stores. If it's the weekend, start the day like a local with brunch at Le Diplomate (lediplomatedc.com). The French brasserie gives major Paris vibes with subway-tiled dining rooms, gorgeous crown moulding and arguably the best steak tartare this side of the Atlantic Ocean. Walk off brunch with a stroll up 14th street, stopping to admire the quirky vintage home furnishings at Miss Pixie's Furnishings & Whatnot (misspixies.com) and the futuristic-looking light fixtures at Urban Essentials (urbanessentials.weebly.com).

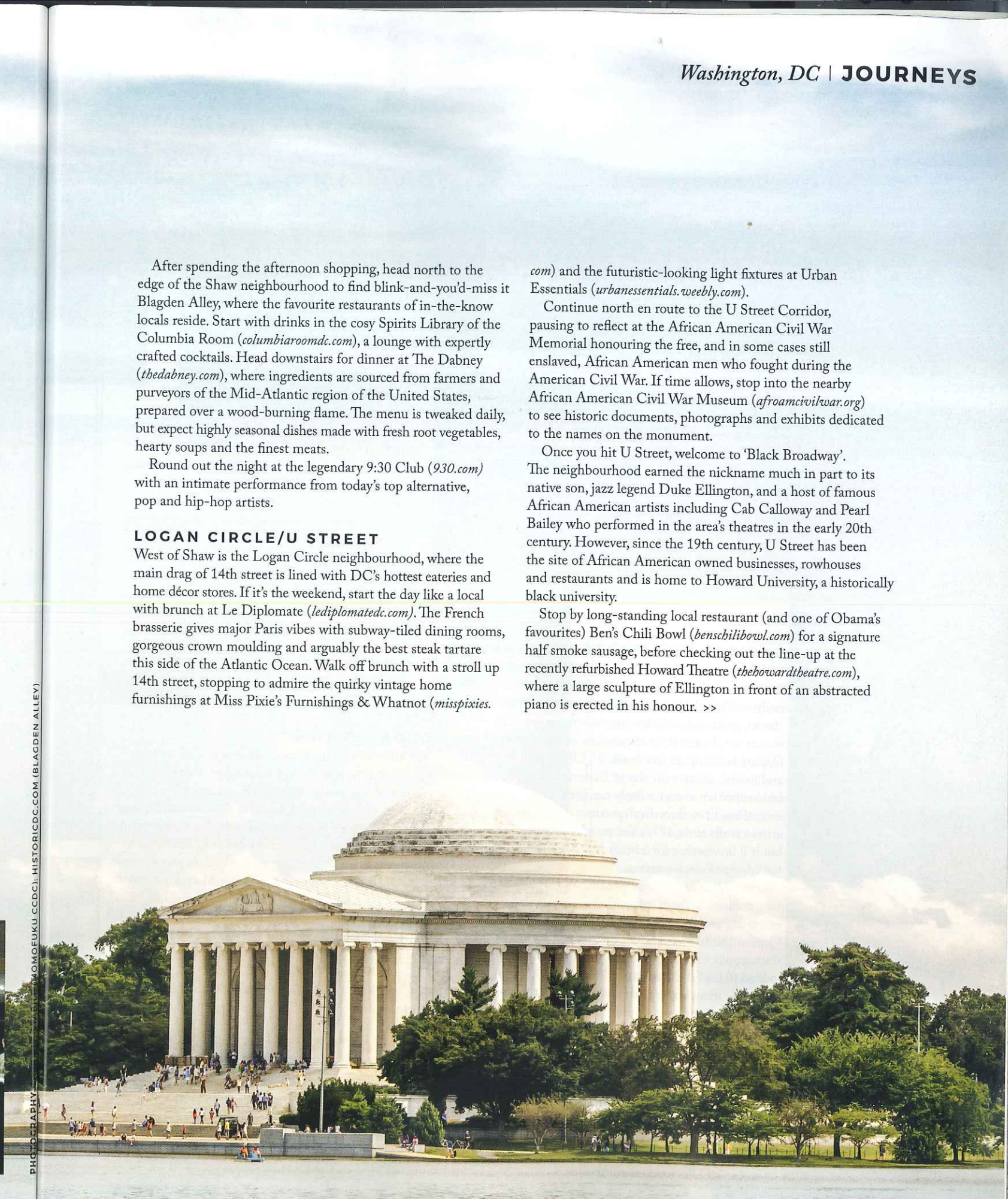
Continue north en route to the U Street Corridor, pausing to reflect at the African American Civil War Memorial honouring the free, and in some cases still enslaved, African American men who fought during the American Civil War. If time allows, stop into the nearby African American Civil War Museum (afroamcivilwar.org) to see historic documents, photographs and exhibits dedicated to the names on the monument.

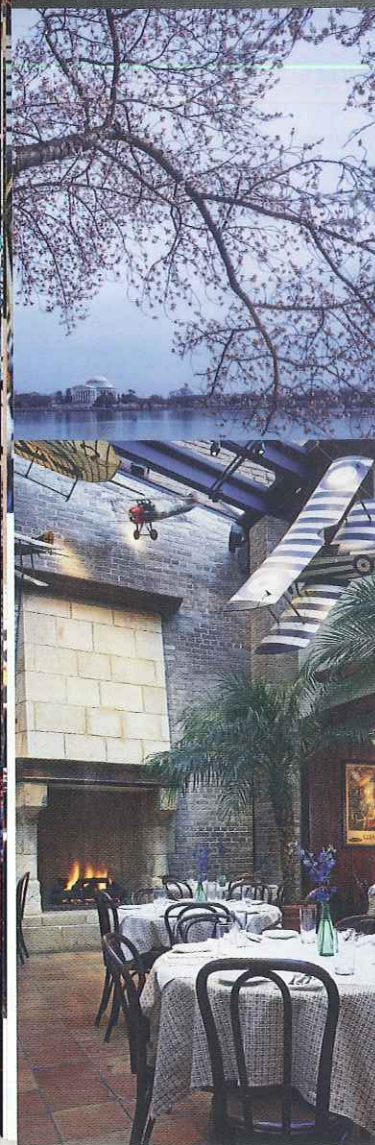
Once you hit U Street, welcome to 'Black Broadway'. The neighbourhood earned the nickname much in part to its native son, jazz legend Duke Ellington, and a host of famous African American artists including Cab Calloway and Pearl Bailey who performed in the area's theatres in the early 20th century. However, since the 19th century, U Street has been the site of African American owned businesses, rowhouses and restaurants and is home to Howard University, a historically black university.

Stop by long-standing local restaurant (and one of Obama's favourites) Ben's Chili Bowl (benschilibowl.com) for a signature half smoke sausage, before checking out the line-up at the recently refurbished Howard Theatre (thehowardtheatre.com), where a large sculpture of Ellington in front of an abstracted piano is erected in his honour. >>



PHOTOGRAPHY: MOMOFUKU CCDC; HISTORICDC.COM (BLAGDEN ALLEY)





CAPITOL HILL/EASTERN MARKET

If Washington, DC is considered an insider town, well this is its insider neighbourhood. Gorgeous multi-million dollar townhouses line quaint brick-laid streets, peppered with dive bars where government secrets are shared, all in the shadow of the imposing Capitol building. In this hood, it's OK to play both local and tourist, so start the day at Eastern Market (easternmarket-dc.org), a lively marketplace offering everything from farm-fresh produce and flowers to artisan crafts since 1873. You may have to wait in line, but it'll be worth it for a lump crab cake sandwich from the Market Lunch counter.

Once full, it's time to see American democracy in action. Head to the Capitol Visitor Center desk for a same-day pass to see Congress in session at the U.S. Capitol (visiththecapitol.gov). If Congress isn't in session during your visit, then be sure to reserve a spot for a guided tour of the intricately designed building to learn about the whispering gallery and the secret tunnels that run underground.

For eats, make like a lawmaker and head to Bullfeathers (bullfeathersdc.net). The no-frills tavern offers basic American cuisine but has been a longtime favourite of lobbyists and Capitol Hill staffers for decades. After dinner, follow the crowd to the unmarked speakeasy, Harold Black (haroldblackdc.com), accessed by a secret sliding wall. Its hush-hush vibe and strong cocktails make it a fun place to make some new loose-lipped DC government friends.



THE NATIONAL MALL

While you're in town for the funky neighbourhoods and best in food/design/shopping, try not to forget that Washington, DC is one of the most powerful and historic cities in the USA. Don't miss out on the classics in and around the National Mall.

WASHINGTON MONUMENT It's worth the wait in line for an elevator ride to the top of the monument.

LINCOLN MEMORIAL Try to spot the engraving on the ground that depicts where Martin Luther King Jr. stood during his 'I Have a Dream' speech.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL Go at night when the stark white statue stands out against the inky night sky.

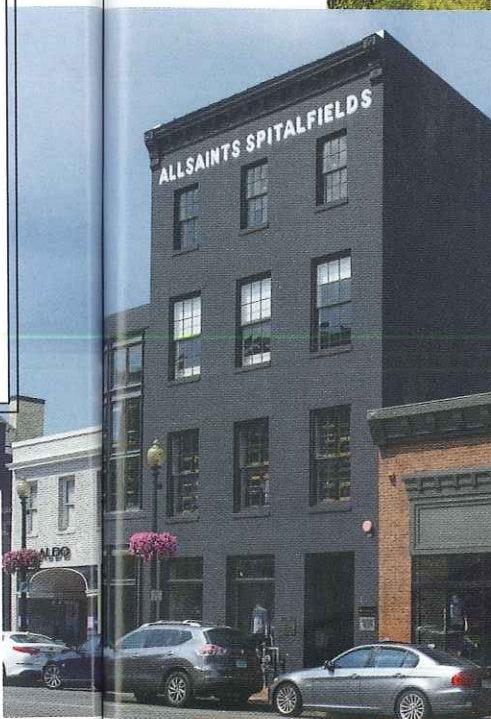
THE WHITE HOUSE Tours of the White House are not currently being facilitated for foreign nationals, but make sure to check in with the Australian embassy in Washington for any updates before your trip; usa.embassy.gov.au

GEORGETOWN

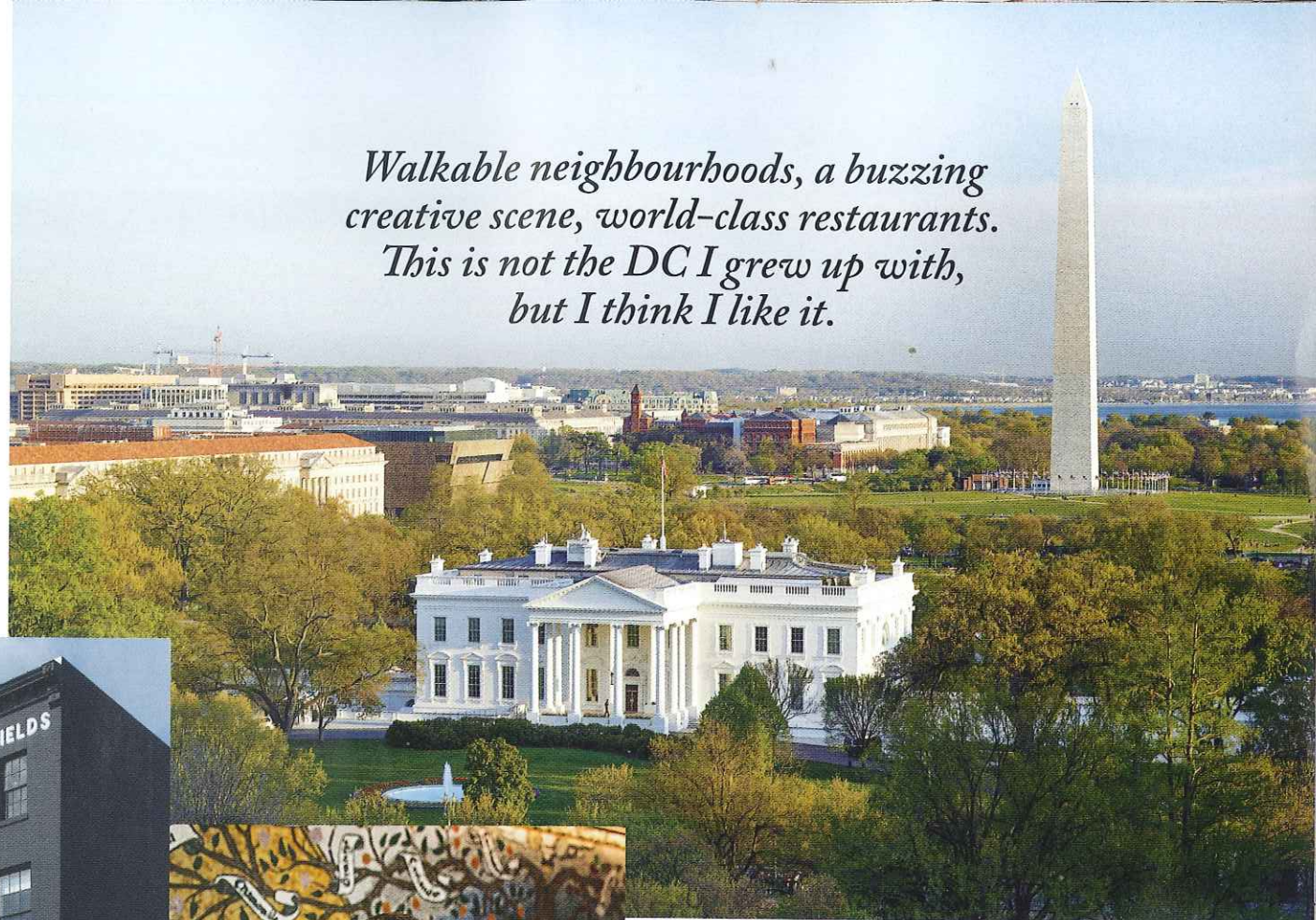
The affluent neighbourhood of Georgetown seems to have stood the test of time, maybe due to the fact that it's completely inaccessible by DC Metro. Hop in an Uber and ask to be dropped off at the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal (or C+O Canal to locals) for a serene stroll down by the Potomac River. Afterwards, head over to historic Clyde's of Georgetown (clydes.com/georgetown) on M Street for brunch and a Bloody Mary. Post-brunch, pop into Martin's Tavern (martinstavern.com) on Wisconsin Avenue, to see the booth where then-senator John F. Kennedy popped the question to Jacqueline Bouvier in 1953. The couple lived in Georgetown during the years before JFK became president.

Georgetown is also one of DC's best neighbourhoods for shopping, sporting boutiques that would impress even the most discerning fashionista. Hit up AllSaints for butter-soft leather jackets, Billy Reid for styles from the deep-south and if you can't commit, visit one of the few brick-and-mortar locations of web-based Rent the Runway (renttherunway.com/stories/georgetown).

Later, spend the twilight hours strolling the picturesque grounds of Georgetown University (georgetown.edu), the oldest Catholic and Jesuit university in the United States. *IT*



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: There's more to DC than politics, but you can't avoid the White House; Seek out the Spirits Library at the Columbia Room; Enjoy an expertly crafted cocktail; Shop at AllSaints. OPPOSITE FROM TOP LEFT: Rowhouses in Georgetown; An Obama favourite; The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial; Clyde's of Georgetown; Cherry blossoms in spring.



Walkable neighbourhoods, a buzzing creative scene, world-class restaurants. This is not the DC I grew up with, but I think I like it.

DETAILS

GETTING THERE

Qantas and Virgin Australia flies to Washington, DC via Dallas and LA respectively from Sydney; and via LA from Melbourne.

STAYING THERE

The Hay-Adams An elegant hotel on Lafayette Square that sports the tagline 'where nothing is overlooked but the White House'. Enjoy incredible city views, plush linens and make sure to tuck into a corner booth at the subterranean bar, Off the Record; hayadams.com

Four Seasons Washington, DC

A chic and stylish property located within walking distance to all of the major attractions in Georgetown. Better yet, if you can't bear to leave the room, unwind in the deep soaking tub; fourseasons.com/washington

Mason & Rook Feel like a true local in this boutique hotel from the Kimpton Brand on a tree-lined street in the heart of Logan Circle. Styled more like a swanky apartment complex than a hotel, enjoy spacious suites, a rooftop pool and an innovative cocktail bar; masonandrookhotel.com

Capitol Hill Hotel Steps from the Capitol, this contemporary building blends seamlessly with the charming brick rowhouses and historic structures on Capitol Hill. It's a great value option with breakfast included; capitolhillhotel-dc.com