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THE TRIP

Oxford as you've never seen it: The 'uncomfortable' history of the city.

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THE FEAST

Doing her part to avert a new

Cold War, Darra Goldstein shares Russian warmth, and recipes

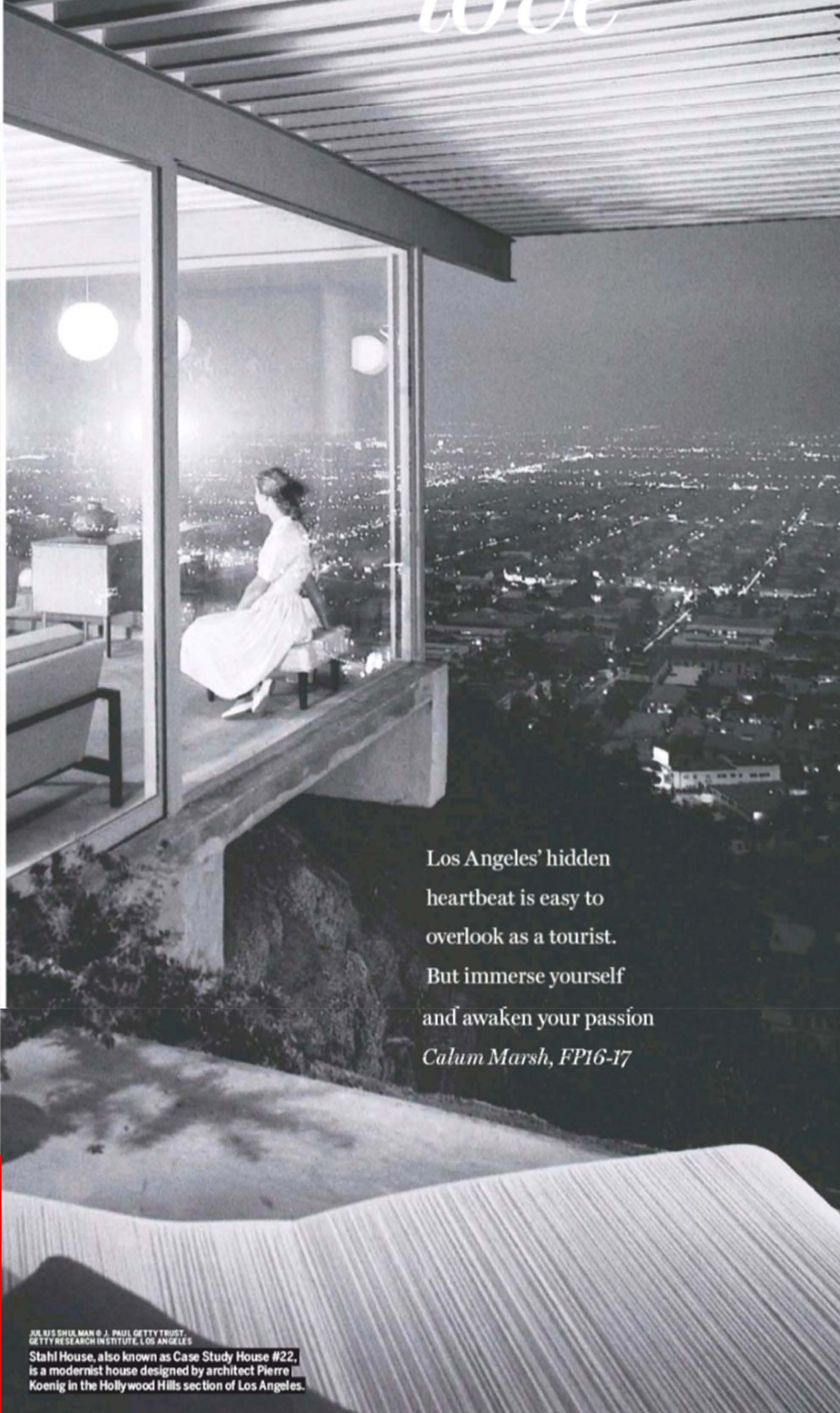
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THE TOUR

A sampling of the complex, comforting food of Tobago

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falling in *la la love*



Los Angeles' hidden heartbeat is easy to overlook as a tourist. But immerse yourself and awaken your passion

Calum Marsh, FP16-17

JULIUS SHURMAN © J. PAUL GETTY TRUST
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Stahl House, also known as Case Study House #22, is a modernist house designed by architect Pierre Koenig in the Hollywood Hills section of Los Angeles.

food & drink



Tobago's cuisine

Rich ethnic influences coalesce on this island idyll
 Claudia McNeilly

is as
complex
as its
history

Photos by Alexa Fernando

The hideaway island of Tobago, nestled on the eastern edge of the Caribbean Sea, worlds away from the hustle and bustle of mainland Trinidad, has some of the best dining in the Caribbean.

With the island having changed hands 33 times in its history, Tobagonian cuisine is, shall we say, complex. Creole culture remains an integral part of Trini history and cuisine. The language once widely spoken across the island, the term Creole comes from the Spanish word *criollo*, meaning "of local origin," and refers to the mixture of early Europeans, Amerindians, Africans and Indians who contributed to Trinidad and Tobago's culture.

Dishes marry African, Creole, Indian and European flavours with an otherworldly supply of fresh local seafood from the surrounding Atlantic and Caribbean waters. Rock lobster, jumbo shrimp, blue crab, mahi mahi, barracuda, tuna and red snapper are often served Creole-style in a peppery tomato-based stew, simmered in local coconut milk curry or grilled and brushed with lime butter.

Getting to Tobago is about a 15-minute flight from the capital city of Port of Spain (round-trip flights start from \$50), making Tobago an easy daytrip destination for those visiting Trinidad. Eco-friendly Tobago is home to USDA-certified organic cocoa, banana, citrus and mango farms. It also has one of the oldest protected rainforests in the Western Hemisphere, with over 210 species of birds and centuries-old silk cotton trees.

Let your culinary travels begin at The Seahorse Inn Restaurant and Bar on the island's northwest coast. Open since 1994, the legendary eatery serves gently broiled local rock lobster, atop creamy fettuccini alfredo. Fettuccini alfredo is a popular dish throughout the island, thanks to its European heritage, but at The Seahorse Inn, it's made distinctly Trini with a touch of coconut oil and fiery diced peppers. A single order is generously served with five rock lobster tails, which are rounder and plumper than classic east coast lobsters. It's an unforgettable initiation into Tobagonian cuisine. Come hungry.

Tobago's signature dish is curry crab and dumplings, and the best place to try it is MissTrim's at Storebay Beach at Crown Point.



Tobagonian cuisine brings together flavours of European, African and Indian traditions.



Cooking curry at MissTrim's, with the sweet-and-spicy local wild shado beni.



Dishes take advantage of the freshest of seafood, be it lobster, shrimp, crab or fish.

Unspoiled beaches and ocean-front resorts spoil visitors.

Following her mother's recipe, chef and owner Meisha Trim simmers freshly caught blue crabs in local coconut milk, ginger and wild shado beni. Widely used to flavour countless Trini dishes, the shado beni spice gives the steeped crabmeat an addictive sweet and spicy flavour. Served atop fluffy steamed buns, the sweet and savoury coconut crab is so good you'll be tempted to lick the plate.

A trip to Tobago would be incomplete without macaroni pie. The island specialty combines the best parts of mac and cheese — gooey and stringy cheese sauce — with a baked golden crust and creole spices, including cayenne pepper, paprika and thyme.

Some of Tobago's best macaroni pie can be found at Jemma's Seaview Kitchen and Treehouse Restaurant, where the dish is served family-style at tables overlooking Tyrell's Bay Beach on the Atlantic Ocean. Jemma's macaroni pie is prepared with long hollow noodles that are similar to bucatini but provide more texture and bite than traditional-cut macaroni. Jemma's also specializes in other traditional Trini dishes, including breadfruit pudding, callaloo and rich caramelized plantain. Order one of each, plus the signature garlic-butter shrimp or freshly caught jumbo lobster.

For a break from all the indulgence, fruit produce stands are stationed all along the island's winding roads. The juicy guava, mango, passion fruit and pineapple are, of course, superior to anything you'll taste from the grocer at home. Be sure to sample the native fruits that we don't get here. Like sapodilla, a beige-skinned fruit that cracks open to reveal a sweet centre reminiscent of a gently poached pear. And balata, an orange-skinned berry with a lightly acidic, plum-like flesh. Soursop is also among the island's most delicious offerings. When ripe, the prickly, green-skinned fruit boasts a velvety sweet interior reminiscent of a Portuguese custard tart.

Conclude your Tobagonian culinary adventures at The Fish Pot on Tobago's western shore. The family-run restaurant serves a rotating selection of seasonal, locally caught fish, from barracuda to white-fleshed wahoo, grilled with lime butter or simmered Creole-style. But the house-made coconut cheesecake, baked with a fiery ginger crust and topped with golden toasted coconut is the real show-stealer.

If you find yourself not wanting to leave the island, accommodations at the historic Mt. Irvine Bay Beach Resort, a former sugar and coconut plantation, average \$200 a night, including a full breakfast buffet. The buffet alone is worth the stay, featuring a rich coconut bake and saltfish bajiol.

Weekend Post