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GO NORTH, GO SOUTH

It's about to be high season across the border—thrillingly wintry in **CANADA**, blessedly tropical in **MEXICO**.

Here are the choicest new ways to enter the heart of eight iconic terrains.

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IMANHA, NEAR PUERTO VALLARTA, SEE PAGE 88



VANCOUVER

CURATED CITY

GO FOR: All the new action in a trio of über-walkable neighborhoods

At last, a functional city for the urban minimalist.

If you like to catch a plane, hop on a metro, arrive at a hotel, toss your bag on the bed, and walk out the door into the epicenter of the local scene, get yourself to **downtown Vancouver**. You won't waste time weeding through the mainline or the suburban to get to the good stuff, because it's all here: a dense, meticulously edited collection of stellar shops, bars, museums, and hotels packed into a 1.0-mile radius. You need only plant yourself in one of three key districts (or opt for a night in

RENEE DEAR ARCHITECTS; PHILIP TODD; MARTIN TROSLER



DINING IN GASTOWN: At **L'Abattoir**, order the steak Diane or any of the seasonal fish; at **Chill Winston**, pair the pommes frites with the riesling blend from B.C.'s Okanagan Valley. **ROBSON SQUARE:** **Hawksworth Restaurant** is helmed by locavorem-obsessed chef David Hawksworth. **YALETOWN:** **Chambar** (try the moules congolaise) is part of Belgian chef Nico Schuermans's empire, which also includes **Café Medina** (get the waffles with fig-orange marmalade).

each, though, the former are worth the switch-up) to see it all.

Gastown, near Portside Park, is the city's fashion and design hub and the metro's Waterfront station delivers you to an ideal base, the **Fairmont Pacific Rim**, the hotel that the 2010 Winter Olympics built. It's achingly modern, with floor-to-ceiling glass windows throughout that overlook the spectacular snow-covered mountains surrounding the city. Watching the seaplanes and ferries glide around is mesmerizing, but snap out of it, because a few blocks away, Gastown awaits.

The neighborhood used to be a reupacking district, and the brick buildings and warehouses recall its New York City counterpart. Historic structures along Water and Camill streets house a collection of gastron-



pubs and restaurants. You'll also find the city's best boutiques here, including **Obakki** (architectural clothes in muted colors), **LynnSteven** (the changing-room walls are made from paperbacks; Danielle Steel features prominently), and **Inventory Stockroom** (heritage-inspired looks for men).

Six blocks away in **Robson Square**, the city's art epicenter and poshest district. Start with a trip to **Holt Renfrew**, Canada's oldest department store (the exclusive makeup counters alone are worth it). Then head to the

alone are worth it). Then head to the newly remodeled historic **Rosewood Hotel Georgia**, a majestic Georgian Revival with rooms as luxe as the hand-painted gold-leaf fleur-de-lis design in the lobby. It's packed with top Canadian art, including a custom installation by Rodney Graham. The

corner of Westhwy 10th district filled with pretty people, little dogs, leifs, and a Mini dealership. Check in to the design-centric **Opus**, a boutique hotel with one of the city's best bars, and, if you dare, head directly to **Beauty-Mark** for an appointment with fashion designer turned nail artist Christina Cuiwe (she has mastered falls' two-tone half-moon look). Then show off her handiwork over drinks at the ultra-stylish **Keefe Bar**, in Chinatown. Exhausted? Thought so. Now go rest on a beach in Mexico.

ELIZABETH VARNELL

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OPPOSITE: Downtown Vancouver's towering skyline against the North Shore Mountains. **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** Atrium dining at L'Abattoir in Gastown, the city's oldest neighborhood with its newest shops and restaurants; the spare concrete interior of Obakki; a window seat in a Gastown coffee shop; a Rodney Graham art installation at Hawksworth Restaurant in the Rosewood Hotel Georgia.

HAWKSWORTH RESTAURANT

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hawksworthcommunications