



* Lay down your head at one of Dallas' cool new hotels.

Dreaming in the Big D

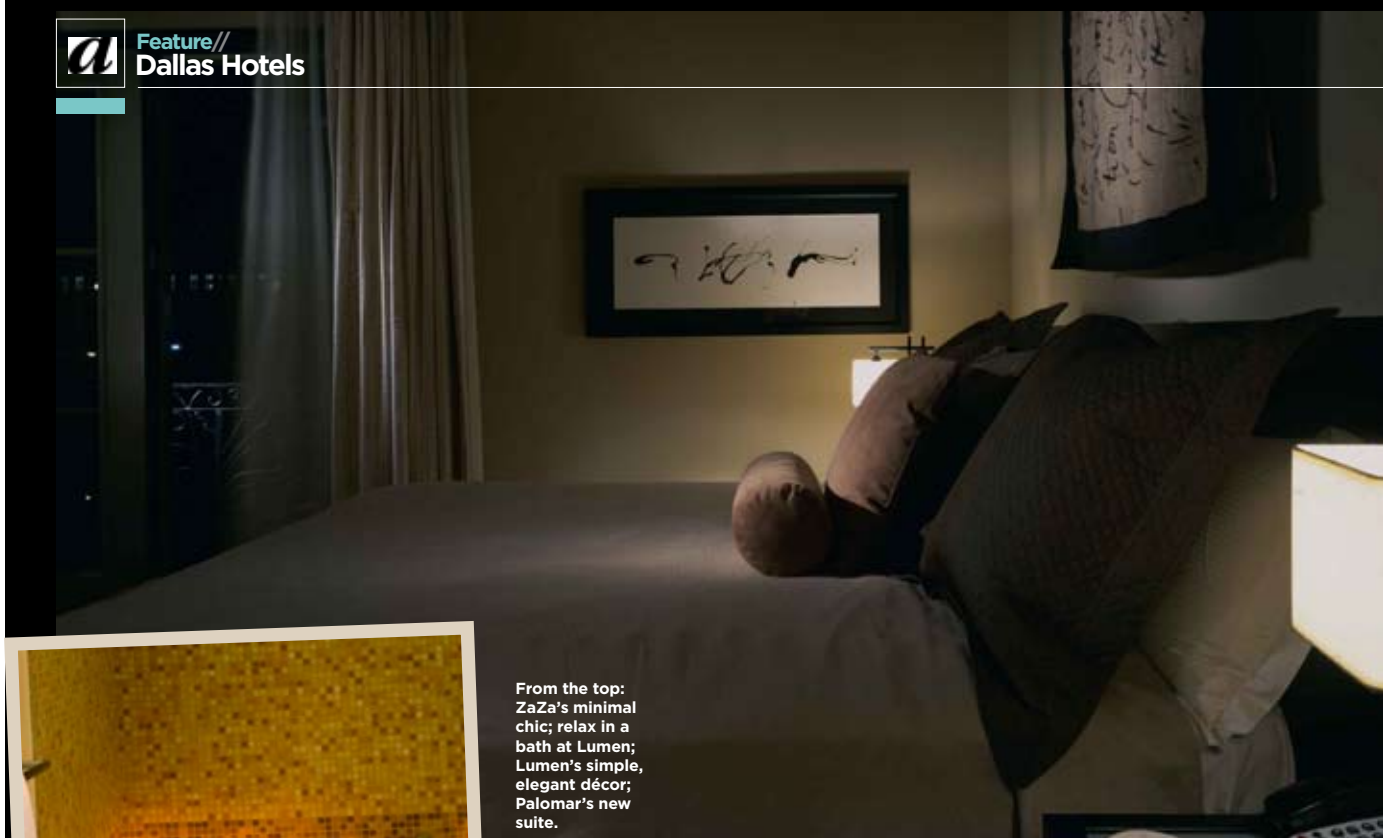
Dallas is growing by leaps and bounds and is on its way to becoming Texas' hottest city, especially in terms of its arts scene.

The 60-acre Arts District is chockablock with world-class museums, including the Nasher Sculpture Center and the Dallas Museum of Art, as well as other cultural institutions such as the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. The Arts District has injected a dose of life into the once-sleepy downtown over the past decade. And up-and-coming neighborhoods such as Uptown and Victory Park are also creating a buzz. But until recently, there hasn't been as much excitement about the local hotel scene. That is changing, thanks to the opening of the much-lauded W Dallas Victory Hotel & Residences (www.whotels.com) and several other highly anticipated

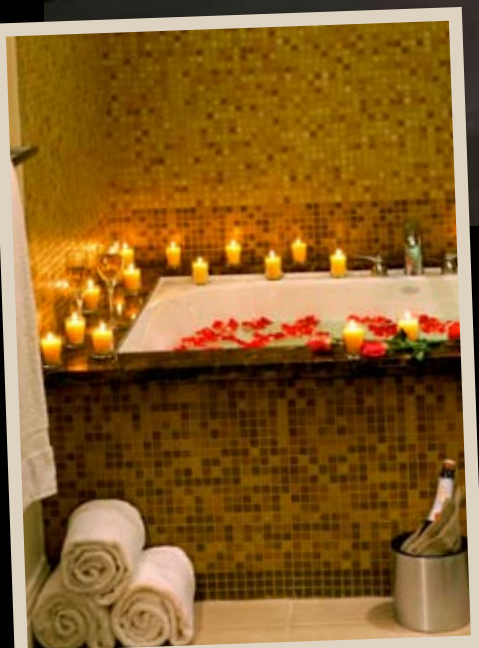
properties, which are sure to raise the city's profile even more.

Located in the Park Cities neighborhood, Palomar Hotel (www.hotelpalomar-dallas.com) is a few miles from downtown and just steps from Southern Methodist University. It is owned by the trendy Kimpton Hotel Group and, as with many Kimpton properties, the lobby is the focal point of the hotel. Some of the design elements include 26-foot windows, wood floors and immense fireplaces. The 198 rooms and suites offer stylish décor; the bold colors, mustard-yellow throw pillows and chocolate-hued carpeting with geometric patterns create a relaxing environment. Upholstered headboards, cube-shaped bedside lamps and plush chaise longues are some of the unique features (along with free wireless internet access, Nintendo on the plasma TVs, L'Occitane toiletries and fun zebra-print bathrobes).

The hotel's main restaurant, Central 214, features regional American cuisine. Guests can dine indoors or on the outdoor patio. There is also the Polynesian-themed Trader Vic's, where such tropical drinks as the mai tai will put you in



From the top: ZaZa's minimal chic; relax in a bath at Lumen; Lumen's simple, elegant décor; Palomar's new suite.



a festive mood. After a day of exploring the Spanish art collection at Meadows Museum and shopping and eating at high-end retail and dining/nightlife complex Mockingbird Station, unwind at Exhale, the mind/body spa with specialty massages like fusion and deep flow as well as yoga, pilates and acupuncture. Out on the terrace you'll find

on classic dishes, such as mac and cheese made with brie and truffles. Entrées include pan-seared filet mignon or grilled salmon with sides such as hand-cut french fries and garlic sautéed baby spinach.

And while not new, the design-conscious Hotel ZaZa (www.hotelzaza.com) in Uptown, a hip area near the Arts District, is one of the city's trendiest hotels (Jessica Simpson and Will Ferrell have both been spotted here). Its whimsical canary-yellow exterior gives way to 154 rooms, seven "magnificent suites" (ultra-luxury themed suites) and 16 concept suites including the Out of Africa suite,

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the swimming pool and private casitas (perfect for a private lunch or massage).

Also located in the Park Cities area near SMU, Hotel Lumen (www.hotel.lumen.com) is another newcomer to the Dallas lodging scene. This four-story boutique property has 52 rooms, decorated in warm, autumnal colors. Room accents include duvet-topped beds with cherrywood headboards and granite countertops in the bathrooms—some even have kitchens and terraces. A cozy spot to enjoy a laidback drink is Social, filled with red mohair banquettes and brass light fixtures. Try their house cocktails such as the French Kiss Martini or the Texas Peach. The cuisine from executive chef Josh Schwarzenberger (formerly of the posh Hotel Crescent Court) is New American and features twists

with carved wooden tribal masks, and the Zen suite, with a minimalist design and Japanese furnishings. And the hotel's Urban Oasis nightclub includes a swimming pool and has lights strung from the trees and comfy lounge chairs (in winter, the area is tented with a Moroccan theme), and attracts a great-looking crowd. If you haven't already dined downstairs in the ZaZa's signature restaurant, Dragonfly, why not order the crab nachos, lobster rolls and Kobe burgers from the light-fare menu while sipping on margaritas or Urban Coolers, a potent blend of rum, triple sec, pineapple and grenadine? There always seems to be something going on here, which is sort of the feeling you get when you visit Dallas these days. Now the hotel scene is part of that excitement as well. ✂

