

DESTINATION ♦ US

ART VS SCIENCE

It's known as Space City, but Houston also has a cultural scene that's out of this world

COLIN VICKERY

If Aussies have heard of Houston it is most likely because of the failed Apollo 13 Moon mission and those memorable words: "Houston, we have a problem." Texas's fourth-largest city, population 2.2 million, is home to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Johnson Space Centre – location of mission control. Space nuts can tour the Johnson Centre but I'm in Houston for a different experience. What a lot of people don't know about the city is that it is one of the world's best arts destinations. Houston is awash in oil money and a lot of that has been channelled into

the arts. This city has its own Museum District – a collection of 19 world-class cultural institutions all within a short distance of one another. Just as impressively, it has a vibrant theatre scene. The downtown theatre district is home to nine professional arts organisations including the world-renowned Houston Ballet.

HERE ARE 10 TOP PICKS:
THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
1001 BISSONNET ST

Houston's leading art institution is so big it takes up more than 100 galleries across two buildings. Don't miss the Monet Water Lilies, a breathtaking



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THAILAND

from **\$4190**
2 Adults & 2 Kids U/12

ALL MEALS & DRINKS INCLUDED!
Holiday Inn Resort Krabi ★★★★★
7 nights from

\$1590 per adult

- Fly Thai Airways International with 30kg luggage, food, drinks and entertainment
- Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily
- Return airport transfers
- Free Wifi
- 7 nights in a Premier Garden View, twin share
- 2 kids under 12 stay, play & eat free when dining with parents
- Drinks including local beer, local spirits, select local cocktails, free flow soft drinks
- 1 May - 31 May, 30 Jul - 10 Sep & 17 Oct - 31 Oct 17. Excludes block-out dates.

BALI

from **\$5790**
2 Adults & 2 Kids U/15

COCKTAILS & BEACHFRONT BLISS!
Holiday Inn Resort Bali Benoa ★★★★★
7 nights from

\$1790 per adult

- Fly Garuda Indonesia with 30kg luggage, food, drinks & entertainment
- Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily
- Return airport transfers
- Kids U/15 eat FREE when dining with parents
- 7 nights in an upgraded Benoa Partial Ocean View room, twin share
- Drinks including local beer, local wine, selected cocktails & non-alcoholic beverages
- 8 Oct - 12 Dec 17 & 18 Jan - 28 Feb 18. Excludes block-out dates.

FIJI

from **\$5880**
2 Adults & 2 Kids U/16

FOOD & DRINKS, ALL SORTED!
The Naviti Resort ★★★
6 nights from

\$1990 per adult

- Fly Fiji Airways direct to Fiji with 23kg luggage, food, drinks & entertainment
- Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily
- Return airport transfers
- 2 kids U/16 stay & eat FREE FREE kids club (5-12yrs)
- 6 nights in a Garden View room, twin share. ADD 1 night from \$190pp with all meals & drinks
- Bay cruise, Coral viewing cruise, a massage and more!
- Drinks including local beer, house wine, local brand spirits, soft drinks & non-alcoholic cocktails
- 24 Jul 17 - 16 Mar 18. Excludes block-out dates

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Important Information: Must be booked by 28 Apr 17. Prices shown are a guide only, please contact one of our Holiday Champions for an exact quote on the dates you wish to travel and any conditions that may apply. Prices are per adult and include airfares, all taxes, transfers & twin share accommodation (maximum 2 children per room unless stated otherwise). Kids eat free when dining with adults - some conditions may apply. Hotel specials have varied travel dates, block-out dates & high season surcharges may apply, especially during school holidays. Prices are also subject to change without notice due to currency, tax fluctuations & fuel surcharges. **Fiji:** Airfare is valid for select departure dates 24 Jul - 16 Mar 18, based on low season travel, block out dates apply. All Inclusive meal plan is valid during resort venue operating hours only, guest must be 18yrs or over to consume alcohol. **Bali:** Airfare is valid for selected departures 1 Sep - 15 Sep 17, 8 Oct - 12 Dec 17 & 8 Jan - 28 Feb 18, based on low season, subject to availability. All Inclusive meal plan is valid during resort venue operating hours only, guest must be 18yrs or over to consume alcohol. Max children per room is 1 under 15 years. **THAILAND:** Airfare is valid for selected departure dates 1 May - 22 Jun, 3 Jul - 31 Oct 17, based on low season, subject to availability. All Inclusive meal plan is valid during resort venue operating hours only, guest must be 18yrs or over to consume alcohol. HT126

DESTINATION ♦ US

Bonnard, Seurat, Manet and Picasso. But there is so much more, including the astonishing Glassell Collection of Pre-Columbian, Indonesian and African gold.

MFAH.ORG

**THE MENIL COLLECTION
1533 SUL ROSS ST**

This permanent display of treasures owned by John and Dominique de Menil takes up an entire neighbourhood. The main collection includes major Surrealist works by Max Ernst and Rene Magritte, as well as contemporary masters Andy Warhol and Robert Rauschenberg, and is housed in a sleek structure designed by architect Renzo Piano. Across the road is a whole building dedicated to Cy Twombly. Nearby Richmond Hall is filled with a massive Dan Flavin light sculpture.

MENIL.ORG

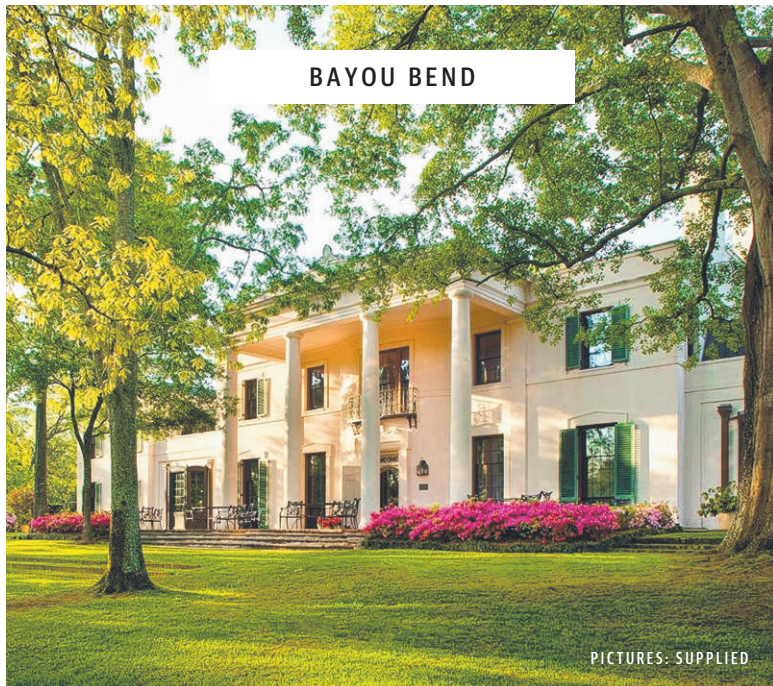
**ROTHKO CHAPEL
3900 YUPON ST**

The Menils also commissioned this sacred space featuring 14 massive dark canvases by abstract expressionist painter Mark Rothko. This is a place to take your shoes off, adopt the lotus pose, and sit in quiet contemplation. Barnett Newman sculpture *Broken Obelisk* stands in front of the chapel.

ROTHKOCHAPEL.ORG

**THE HOUSTON BALLET
WORTHAM THEATRE CENTRE**

Aussie boy makes good. Stanton Welch AM, former resident choreographer with the Australian



BAYOU BEND

PICTURES: SUPPLIED

Ballet, has been the artistic director of the Houston Ballet since 2003. During my visit, I see Welch's bold interpretation of *Madame Butterfly*. His *Cinderella* and *La Bayadere* are also justly celebrated.

HOUSTONBALLET.ORG

**JAMES TURRELL 'TWILIGHT
EPIPHANY' SKYSPACE
RICE UNIVERSITY**

Wow. That is pretty much the feeling you'll have as you gaze upwards through a central aperture in Turrell's massive pyramidal structure in the lead-up to sunrise or sunset. Turrell's

coloured-light sequence, which plays out across the pavilion's roof, interacts with the aperture's natural light to hypnotic effect.

SKYSPACE.RICE.EDU

**BAYOU BEND
6003 MEMORIAL DRIVE**

For 50 years, oil heiress and philanthropist Ima Hogg, "the first lady of Texas", collected rare American paintings and decorative arts. They are housed in her home where each room is devoted to a different style. The house is surrounded by nine different gardens

ESCAPE ROUTE

HOUSTON

GETTING THERE

Houston is Texas's fourth-largest city and is serviced by flights from Australia, via Auckland, by Air New Zealand.

STAYING THERE

Hotel Zaza (5701 Main St), a two-minute walk from the Museum of Fine Arts and central to all of Houston's main cultural attractions, is the pick.
hotelzaza.com

MORE

visithoustontexas.com

**HOUSTON GRAND OPERA
WORTHAM THEATRE CENTRE**

Ever since it was founded in 1955, the Grand Opera has mixed traditional works such as *Faust* and Verdi's *Requiem* with exciting new commissions such as the world premiere of *It's a Wonderful Life*, based on the classic Frank Capra movie.

HOUSTONGRANDOPERA.ORG

**CULLEN SCULPTURE GARDEN
MONTROSE BOULEVARD AT
BISSENET ST**

Across the road from the Museum of Fine Arts is this tranquil oasis. The gardens are created by sculptor Isamu Noguchi and include major works by Henri Matisse, Auguste Rodin, Louise Bourgeois, David Smith and Dan Graham.

**RIENZI
1406 KIRBY DRIVE**

The former home of philanthropists Carol Sterling Masterson and Harris Masterson III is now the setting for a knockout collection of European decorative arts, paintings, furnishings, porcelain and miniatures.

MFAH.ORG/RIENZI

My Top 10 list hardly scratches the surface of Houston's cultural drawcards. The Alley Theatre, Rice Gallery, Centre for Photography and Jung Centre stand with a batch of top-drawer museums dedicated to the Holocaust, health, natural science, African-American culture, contemporary craft and Asian heritage. There is also a 22ha zoo.

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- Highlights include:** Tiananmen Square, The Forbidden City, Great Wall, Giant Pandas at Chongqing Zoo & so much more

Web Search Ref: Yangtze0308

Tour Japan & Cruise back to Australia
Price from **\$4499pp**

Diamond Princess • 28 Nts • 13 November 2017

- Return flights from Melbourne
- 5 night / 6 day escorted tour** of Tokyo, Kanagawa, Yamanashi, Mt. Fuji, Lake Yamanaka, Shizuoka, Toyohashi, Kyoto & Osaka
- Highlights include:** Osaka Castle Garden, Fushimi Inari Shrine, Temples, Local Tea House, Lake Yamanaka, Mt. Fuji, Great Buddha of Kamakura plus so much more!
- 22 night cruise from Tokyo (Yokohama) visiting Simizu, Hong Kong, Nha Trang, Ho Chi Minh (Phu My), Singapore, Benoa (Bali), Darwin and Sydney
- All meals and entertainment onboard

Web Search Ref: PCLD1311T

All Inclusive Mediterranean
Price from **\$2399pp**

Norwegian Spirit • 14 Nts • 31 October 2017

- Return flights from Melbourne
- 1 night stay** in Rome
- 10 night cruise from Rome (Civitavecchia) visiting Mykonos, Piraeus (Athens), Rhodes, Santorini, Chania, Valletta, Messina, Naples, Pompeii and Rome (Civitavecchia)
- All meals and entertainment onboard
- FREE** Ultimate Beverage Package
- 1 night stay** in Rome

Also available departing 10 Oct 17 from **\$2899pp**

Web Search Ref: NCLSP3110

Argentina & Antarctica
Price from **\$5499pp**

Celebrity Infinity • 18 Nts • 19 January 2018

- Return flights from Melbourne
- 2 night stay** in Buenos Aires
- 14 night cruise from Buenos Aires visiting Ushuaia, sailing Cape Horn to Schollart Channel/Paradise Bay/ Gerlache Strait/ Elephant Island (Antarctica), Port Stanley, Puerto Madryn, Montevideo and Buenos Aires
- All meals and entertainment onboard
- Complimentary gratuities worth \$245pp**

Web Search Ref: CELIN1901

Quantum Japan and China Tour
Price from **\$2799pp**

Quantum of the Seas • 13 Nights • 25 August 2017

- Return flights from Melbourne
- 6 night escorted tour** of Beijing, Xian and Shanghai
- Highlights include:** Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City, Great Wall, Terracotta Warriors and so much more
- 6 night cruise from Shanghai (Baoshan) visiting Sakaiminato, Fukuoka, Kumamoto and Shanghai (Baoshan)
- All meals and entertainment onboard
- Complimentary gratuities worth \$105pp**

Upgrade to an Oceanview Stateroom from **\$99pp** or Balcony Stateroom from **\$269pp**

Web Search Ref: RCION2508

2018 New York, Bahamas & Las Vegas
Price from **\$2999pp**

Norwegian Breakaway • 15 Nts • 18 February 2018

- Return flights from Melbourne
- 3 night stay** in Las Vegas
- 4 night stay** in New York
- 7 night cruise from New York City visiting Orlando Beaches (Port Canaveral), Great Stirrup Cay, Nassau & New York City
- All meals and entertainment onboard
- FREE** Ultimate Beverage Package

Oceanview upgrade from **\$169pp** or Balcony from **\$339pp!**

Web Search Ref: NCLBRK1802

Ultimate Caribbean with New York and Niagara Tour
Price from **\$4499pp**

Vision of the Seas • 22 Nts • 18th October 2017

- Return flights from Melbourne
- 4 night escorted tour** of New York, Philadelphia, Washington and Niagara Falls
- Highlights include:** Statue of Liberty, White House, Niagara Falls and so much more
- 1 night stay** at Newark
- 14 night cruise from Cape Liberty visiting Labadee, Kralendijk (Bonaire), Willemstad (Curacao), Oranjestad (Aruba), George Town (Grand Cayman), Cozumel, Puerto Costa Maya, Yucatan (Progreso) and Galveston (Texas).
- All meals and entertainment onboard
- Complimentary gratuities worth \$245pp**
- 1 night** in Houston

Web Search Ref: RCIV1810T

India's Golden Triangle & Ultra Luxury Spice Route Cruise
Price from **\$5899pp**

Azamara Journey • 23 Nights • 17 November 2017

- Return flights from Melbourne
- 5 night / 6 day fully escorted tour** of Delhi, Agra & Jaipur including hotel stays, daily breakfast, transfers, English speaking guide plus much more
- Highlights include:** Delhi tours, Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Amber Fort and much more
- Flight from Delhi to Dubai
- 1 night stay** in Dubai
- 15 night all inclusive, ultra-luxury cruise from Dubai visiting Bombay (Mumbai), Goa (Mormugao), Cochin, Colombo (2 days / 1 night), Kuala Lumpur (Port Klang) and Singapore (overnight stay)
- All meals, drinks, entertainment & gratuities onboard the cruise
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Web Search Ref: AZAGT1811

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