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# Word of mouth

## PARK & RIDE

Pull up to the bumper, baby: Miami is driving everyone wild

'It's not only exciting, it's red hot,' says Tom Wolfe about Miami, the setting for his new novel, **Back to Blood**. The city is in the middle of a cultural boom: **Art Basel** returns in December with its most ambitious line-up to date, along with **Design Miami** (www.designmiami.com), this year housed in a huge, inflatable, Pan-pipe-like art piece; next winter sees the opening of the **Miami Art Museum** (www.miamiarthemuseum.org). Even the city's car parks are having a makeover, with big names queueing up to give them a lifestyle edge. First was Herzog & de Meuron's **1111 Lincoln Road**, now an unlikely party venue; next up is a space-age spiral by Zaha Hadid in **Collins Park**. Also, if the rumours are true, the USA's first **COMO** hotel opens in spring; until then, park yourself by the beach at the renovated Art Deco **James Royal Palm Miami** (www.jameshotels.com/miami) or on a bunk at **Freehand** (www.thefreehand.com), a hipster hostel from the folk behind the Ace hotels. You'll be drafting your own plotlines before you know it. **VICKY BAKER**



Clockwise from above: Tom Wolfe; 1111 Lincoln Road car park; the James Royal Palm Miami

**FREEZE!** That's not bison breath, but steam rising from a geyser in snowy Yellowstone Park, made even more impressive by the sub-zero air. Visiting the park in winter is a very different experience from summer: there are virtually no other people, and a safari 'big five' would be bison, elk, grey wolf, moose and mountain goat. You can add the red fox to your tally, too, which lands jaws-first in the snow as it hunts for undercover rodents. Learn more from naturalist Kurt Johnson on Spring Creek Ranch's new winter safari (www.springcreek-ranch.com; until 13 March, doubles \$1,450 for three nights) or on a tailor-made trip with Audley Travel (www.audleytravel.com).



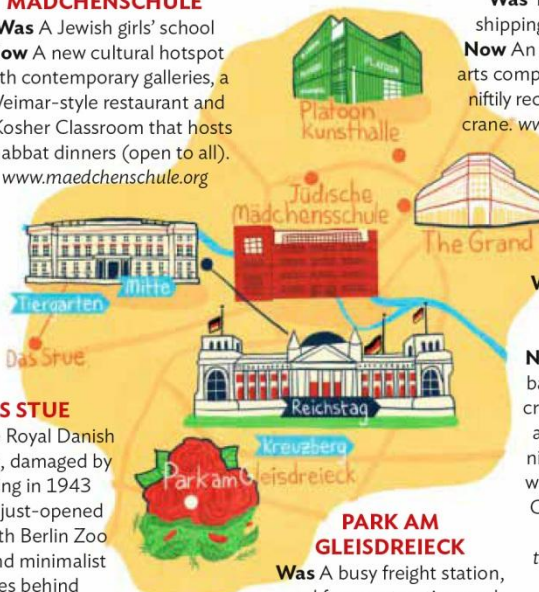
## REINVENTING BERLIN

### JUDISCHE MADCHENSCHULE

**Was** A Jewish girls' school  
**Now** A new cultural hotspot with contemporary galleries, a Weimar-style restaurant and a Kosher Classroom that hosts Shabbat dinners (open to all).  
www.maedchenschule.org

### PLATOON KUNSTHALLE

**Was** Thirty-four shipping containers  
**Now** An experimental arts complex that can be niftily reconfigured by crane. www.platoon.org



### DAS STUE

**Was** The Royal Danish Embassy, damaged by bombing in 1943  
**Now** A just-opened hotel with Berlin Zoo views and minimalist spaces behind the grand façade, including a cocktail bar, a spa and a Spanish restaurant.  
www.das-stue.com; doubles from €250

### PARK AM GLEISDREIECK

**Was** A busy freight station, used for construction work at Potsdamer Platz  
**Now** Berlin's ground-level 'High Line': a green-turfed park with a rose garden and skating. A second section, the West Side, opens in 2013

### THE GRAND

**Was** A 19th-century community school for poor children  
**Now** A restaurant and bar with leather sofas, crumbling plaster walls and a ballroom-style nightclub that draws a well-tailored clientele. Order a Mozart's Old Fashioned. www.the-grand-berlin.com  
**RUTH STOKES**