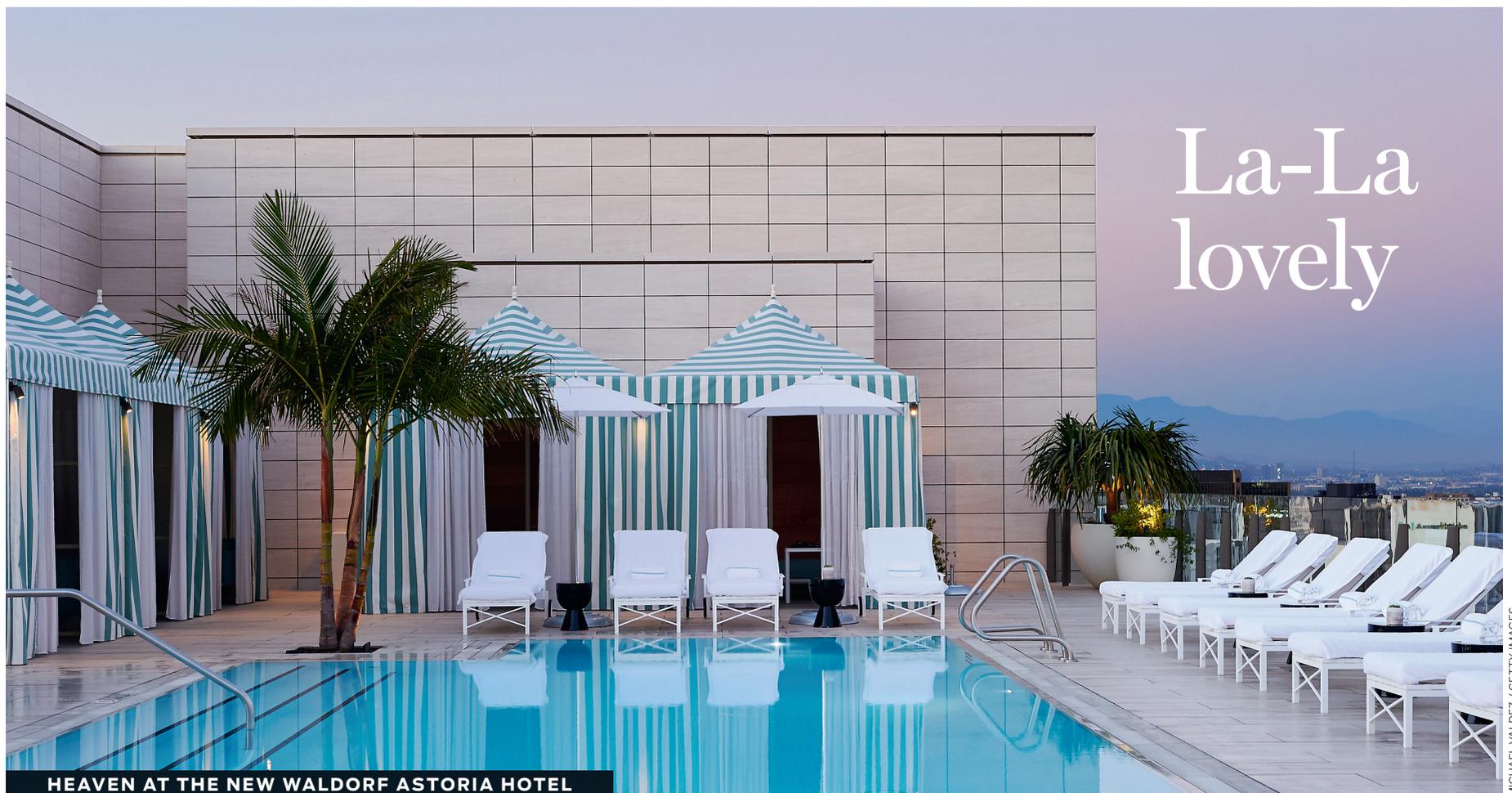


La-La  
lovely

MICHAEL VALDEZ / GETTY IMAGES

## Retail therapy for the bold and the beautiful.

As I sashayed along Rodeo Drive, I bumped into a bloke who was wearing a powder-blue uniform.

He wasn't a police officer, nor was he a parking inspector or a cabbie. The broad-shouldered dude with a friendly demeanour and innocuous name badge revealed he was a "Beverly Hills ambassador".

His job entailed hospitality, outreach and security. "I could walk you to your car, ask someone to stop smoking in the street, suggest some cool restaurants or perhaps help a homeless person," he elaborated.

Luxuriating in the knowledge I had three days in Beverly Hills (a well-heeled neighbourhood of Los Angeles), I had felt drawn towards this main drag for a lazy day of retail therapy. There's no need to be intimidated by the plethora of opulent retail spaces because, mostly, they're extremely welcoming.

I meandered past Michael Kors, gawked at Gucci and swooned at Swarovski.

*Personal shopping*

I turned to La La Luxe for a personalised VIP shopping tour, with a custom itinerary devised by the personable Courtnee Scully.

The three-hour retail frenzy included an enchanting trip to Jason of Beverly Hills (exquisite jewellery and watch boutique) where I learnt which superstar had bought which diamond trinket. For the record, songstress Katy Perry adores the syringe ring filled with teeny blood-red rubies and singer Rhianna is a fan of the hefty, revolver ring with rotating gun barrel.

Espresso coffee and shortbread biscuits were enjoyed as I perched on the pistachio-hued retro lounge at Prada and admired three levels of glorious fashion and wearable art.

Then I was led through Neiman Marcus (a shopping haven unto itself) to Bloom's Room, where the most exquisite pieces are sourced by stylist Catherine Bloom and showcased to a select few.

*Treat yourself*

At the newest hotel in town, the Waldorf Astoria, each of 170 rooms has extraordinary views, while a culinary highlight is the deliciously juicy lobster burger at The Rooftop by JG.

After that, I wasn't completely convinced I could drop a dress size, but I donned an apparatus that resembled a wired-up sleeping bag and lay down for twenty minutes at Upgrade Labs – a "biohacking gym". I did feel "lighter" and was tempted to try full body cryotherapy, but instead I finished at The Spa on Rodeo Drive, where I experienced my best ever massage. ●



ISTOCK

Never-ending spending on luxurious Rodeo Drive.

Words **DONNA DEMAIO**