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Creative headspace

Partner and chief brand officer of trendy Ace Hotels, Kelly Sawdon, clues us in on Jamaica's top spot to kick back and relax, and where you can sail alongside dolphins. By Eunice Lew

Handpicked by Ace Hotel's founder Alex Calderwood after working with him on the first Ace property in Seattle, Kelly Sawdon is now the brains behind Atelier Ace. The in-house creative studio dreams up new concepts for the zeitgeist hotel chain, which means a typical day for Sawdon might involve zipping across the world to meet potential partners and clients.



Kelly Sawdon

What does it mean to be an architect of Atelier Ace?

I navigate between the business and the creative sides of Atelier Ace, Ace Hotel and our other projects. I work with our partners on creative substance and offer platforms for expression to collaborators, innovators and artists. I'm very fortunate to do work that I love, work that is an expression of love.

What encapsulates the Ace Hotel brand?

Ace Hotel is a space for sharing. We make places to house our favourite things, moments and people. We want them to be places where people feel comfortable, considered and culturally engaged.

What has Atelier Ace been up to?

We recently brought our farm-to-kitchen juice stand Lovage at Ace Hotel London Shoreditch to the Milan Furniture Fair. We've also previously hosted a pop-up shop at Isetan in Tokyo. In both instances, it was



Ace Hotel London Shoreditch



Pok Pok

DESTINATION HITS

❖ GOLDENEYE

Oracabessa Bay, Jamaica
Tel: +1 876 622 9007

❖ GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

www.nps.gov/grca/index.htm

❖ LOVAGE

Ace Hotel, 100 Shoreditch High Street
Shoreditch, London E1 6JQ

❖ POK POK

3226 SE Division Street
Portland, Oregon
Tel: +1 503 232 1387

exciting to engage cross-culturally with Tokyo and Milan, and develop friendships and alliances in new places.

Where is the best place to have a meal after a day at Ace headquarters in Portland?

I love Pok Pok. American chef Andy Ricker opened a little take-out window in his front yard, and the restaurant gradually took over the entire house. It has a laidback design with string lights and patio seating, and it's clear that most of the energy is filtered towards the food and flavours.

For a road trip across the U.S., which place of interest would you definitely hit?

The Grand Canyon National Park. It's a testament to the genius and wild beauty inherent in nature. It always makes me think about how little time we have to make an impact, and it leaves me reeling, humbled and inspired.

Where is your destination of choice for a guilty indulgence?

GoldenEye in Jamaica – it's made of magic. My friend Chris Blackwell, the visionary behind Island Records and one of the loveliest humans I've ever had the pleasure to know, helped develop the resort. The influence of music and Jamaican culture is palpable throughout the premises.

Aside from being stunningly beautiful and luxurious, GoldenEye also operates with a strong moral compass, and



GoldenEye

values culture, community and the environment. It's built on a lagoon that's been converted into a nursery for local fish, and on the other side of the island, there's a coral reef that Chris and the local fishing community have managed to revive. It had been slowly deteriorating due to overfishing, pollution and damage from boats. But Chris, with help from the community, worked to preserve the wildlife habitat there and ensure the livelihood of the fishermen.

What do you get up to outside of work?

I like to cook, and I think there's nothing better than having all the people I love in one place, breaking bread and telling stories. I also really love to sail, and I try to

get out on the water as much as I can.

What is a dish that your guests always request for when you host?

I would say my Asian-style BBQ chicken. Or dill and lemon roasted salmon, with a side of roasted carrots with mint and honey.

Where do you like to put to sea?

I grew up sailing with my dad and sisters between Southern California and Catalina, so that area holds a special place in my heart. While the waters aren't as warm and clear as the Caribbean or the Greek isles, they are ripe with wildlife. I can't tell you how many times I've seen dolphins playing around the boat's bow as I sailed, and we've even spotted whales breaching. **e**