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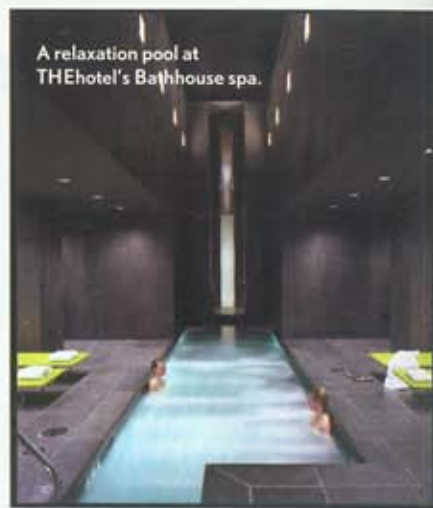
asia's cutting edge

ON THE MAP

A cluster of old brick factories near an out-of-use industrial canal in Shanghai—the once forgotten nook known as Suzhou Creek—has become the nerve center of the city's avant-garde scene. The area's top gallery, **ShanghART Warehouse** (Bldgs. 16 and 18; 86-21/6359-3923), is spread over two hangar-like spaces, both filled with experimental pieces. • Catch curators off duty at **Guolu Fang Kafei Guan** (Bldg. 16; no phone), where they sip caffè lattes while discussing their latest installations. • The two directors who oversee **Advance Design Gallery** (1/F Bldg. 17; 86-21/6298-6483) specialize in graphic design, photography, and Chinese poster illustrations. • The owner of **Art Scene Warehouse** (2/F Bldg. 4; 86-21/6277-2499), Sami Wafa, stocks his enormous whitewashed room with contemporary Chinese works from Chengdu to Beijing. • Kunming-born ex-factory employee Pian Zi explores urban themes through video displays and clever takes on traditional wood-block techniques at **Color Loft** (2/F Bldg. 4; 86-138/1882-0356). • Former MOMA veteran **Amy Wood** (86-137/9532-1267) is highly attuned to China's art world. She arranges tours to ateliers in the district, and has even been known to get fans into the Creek's increasingly wild opening-night parties. —ROB MCKEOWN

FASHION PLATES

SOUVENIR Christian Lacroix, who finds inspiration for haute couture looks on his global travels, has set his sights on the dining room table. Modeled after images from his childhood encyclopedias, the designer's six-plate Limoges porcelain accent set (877/728-4556; sets from \$375) interprets cultures and styles from six continents through whimsical sketches of women wearing "traditional" frocks. —CLARA OGDEN



A relaxation pool at THEhotel's Bathhouse spa.

A NEW VEGAS VICE

SPA Just when it seemed that Sin City couldn't get any more decadent, two hotel spas give pleasure seekers another way to indulge—away from the noisy casinos. Located in the Bellagio's just-completed Spa Tower, the **Spa & Salon Bellagio** (3600 S. Las Vegas Blvd.; 888/987-3456) is a serene retreat two floors above the Strip. Accented with stone and wood, the 65,000-square-foot facility emphasizes the healing properties of water: reflecting pools are carved throughout the space, a meditation room is enclosed by waterfalls, and there's even a "watsu" (water shiatsu) room. Therapies draw upon international traditions (Native American, Japanese, Thai), though some veer toward the bizarre—like the Egyptian Gold Treatment, during which gilded powder is sprinkled over the face and body. Down the Strip, the **Bathhouse** (3950 S. Las Vegas Blvd.; 877/632-9636) at THEhotel (the retreat within the expansive Mandalay Bay property) lives up to its name and has an equally subtle palette, with clean lines of stone and slate. Guests are encouraged to linger in the hot, cold, and warm pools before treatments, or to sign on for one of the Bathhouse's signature soaks. Spend a good hour in a warm tub and those gambling losses will seem a little less painful.

—ELIZABETH WOODSON