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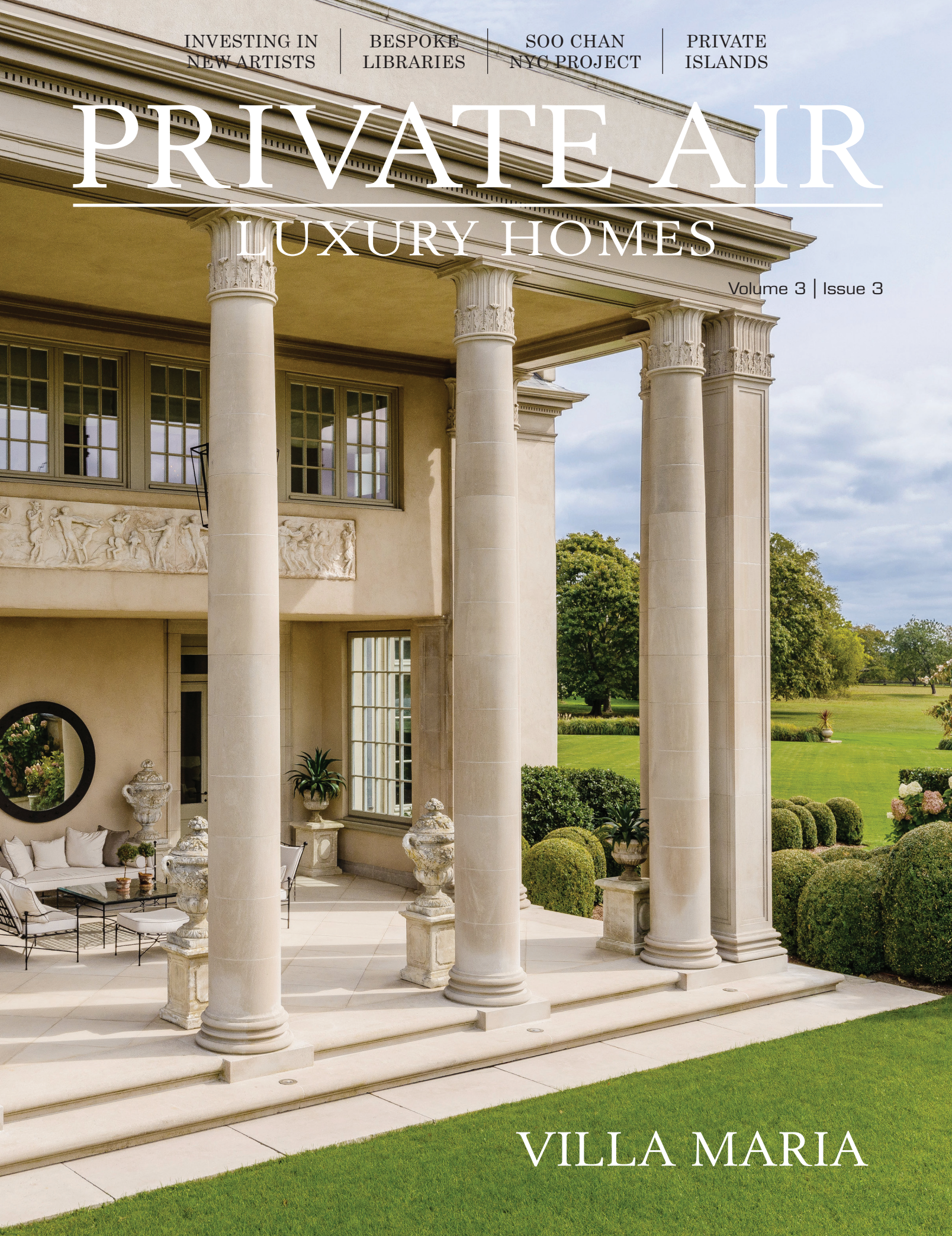
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## LUXURY HOMES

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VILLA MARIA



ROH photo by Rob Moore, courtesy of the Royal Opera House



# HIGH CULTURE HIGH ART

By: Danae Mercer

It's no secret that London has an impressive array of theatre options available. But what are the choices for those inclined to luxury? Here we detail three of our favorite venues with their unique high-end offerings.

## Royal Albert Hall

The exterior of the Royal Albert Hall is visually striking. Inspired by the architecture of Northern Italy, the enormous rounded structure looms against the backdrop of Hyde Park and South Kensington.

Inside you will find numerous luxury options. Several of the rooms are available for private hire. Particularly tempting is the 'Royal Retiring Room,' which is used by the royal family. Antique photos of their famous faces stare down over Rococo furnishings.

When it comes to actually viewing the theatre, we recommend going with one of the hall's top-tier private boxes. These can accommodate four to 12 people and offer a tempting private space. The view will make you want to carry your own discrete pair of binoculars – not to see the performance, but rather to peek at the boxes opposite! You can order from a customized selection of canapés, champagne, hot dishes, and a 'personal box host' through the hall's catering company, Rhubarb.

Keep an eye out for special luxury packages advertised alongside the hall's upcoming shows, such as the recent VIP Experience with the now-finished Cirque du Soleil. This offered a backstage tour and a chance to meet the cast.

## Sadler's Wells

Where the Royal Albert Hall whispers tradition, Sadler's Wells presents a slightly more modern atmosphere. "We are the ultimate destination for all things dance; a place where artists and dance companies congregate," explains Hamble Wallace, Head of Development. Think powerful, contemporary performances.

The luxury option here isn't about boxes – it's about becoming a patron. Patrons of Sadler's Wells pay an annual sum, which in turn provides exclusive access throughout the year to pre-show hors d'oeuvres and drinks, intermission libations, and invitations to post-show receptions with the cast. The events are personally hosted by Sadler's Wells CEO and Artistic Director, Alistair Spalding CBE.

Moving up another level, the 'Artistic Director's Circle Patrons have access to the artists behind the shows and an exclusive annual dinner with Spalding. Then there are the 'Avant Guardians,' a "small group of individuals very much part of the Sadler's Wells family, [who] provide ongoing support for the theater," says Wallace. These 'Guardians' are offered some of the best seats and meet with artists throughout the year.

It's also worth watching for the next Sadler's Wells Gala. On the rare occasion these occur, they tend to feature celebrity guests, impressive auctions, or other unique one-off details.

## Royal Opera House

It's impossible to talk about luxury theatre in London without a deserved mention of the Royal Opera House. From its airy atrium superb for pre-show drinks, to its luscious theatrical setting, the entire atmosphere is one steeped in opulence.

To view a ballet or opera in style, opt for the 'Royal Box'. Situated close to the right of the stage, overlooking the orchestra pit, the Royal Box gives you and five of your guests' fantastic views. You will also have access to the Royal Retiring Room and personal butler service. In case that's not enough, you can slip down stage side as the show finishes, to watch the performers take their curtain call.

Like Sadler's Wells, the ROH occasionally offers high-end celebratory galas. Purchasing a ticket to one of these will give you the chance to mingle with the cast, meet the artistic team, and chat with ROH directors, all over a post-performance dinner. ➤