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CONNECTIONS

LIVE | TRAVEL | CONNECT

MAGAZINE

CHICAGO | IBIZA | COSTA RICA

#Proud2BMe

Connexing

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Connexions Magazine Issue 20: **Deluxe Life**, features luxurious destinations. We traveled all over the world and had lots of fun photo shoots in Oslo, Norway, California, Maui, Connecticut, Lima, Peru and Florida where Connexions Magazine visited the Diplomat Resort & Spa for an unforgettable photo shoot with Lithuanian Model Paulius Paražinskas. And on location aboard the Starlight Charter with French Model William Rootpeter.



Cover Photo by: Xioyer Sandoval

Model: Martina Marić

Location: Xioyer Sandoval Studios in NYC

Croatian Model Martina Marić is the muse for our annual PRIDE issue and the #Proud2BMe campaign, which is the theme of this year's international calendar of pride events and parades.

We take a look at the First Amendment and the so-called religious-freedom laws, as well as what has become to be known as the *bathroom-laws*.

What is the meaning of PRIDE and why do we celebrate it as a community?

Read #Proud2BMe article on page 60.

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Connexions Magazine, the Travel & Lifestyle magazine for the LGBTQ Traveler since 2010, is a proud member of the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association, National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association, Gay European Tourism Association & National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, as well The travel Media Sponsor of HRC Greater New York.

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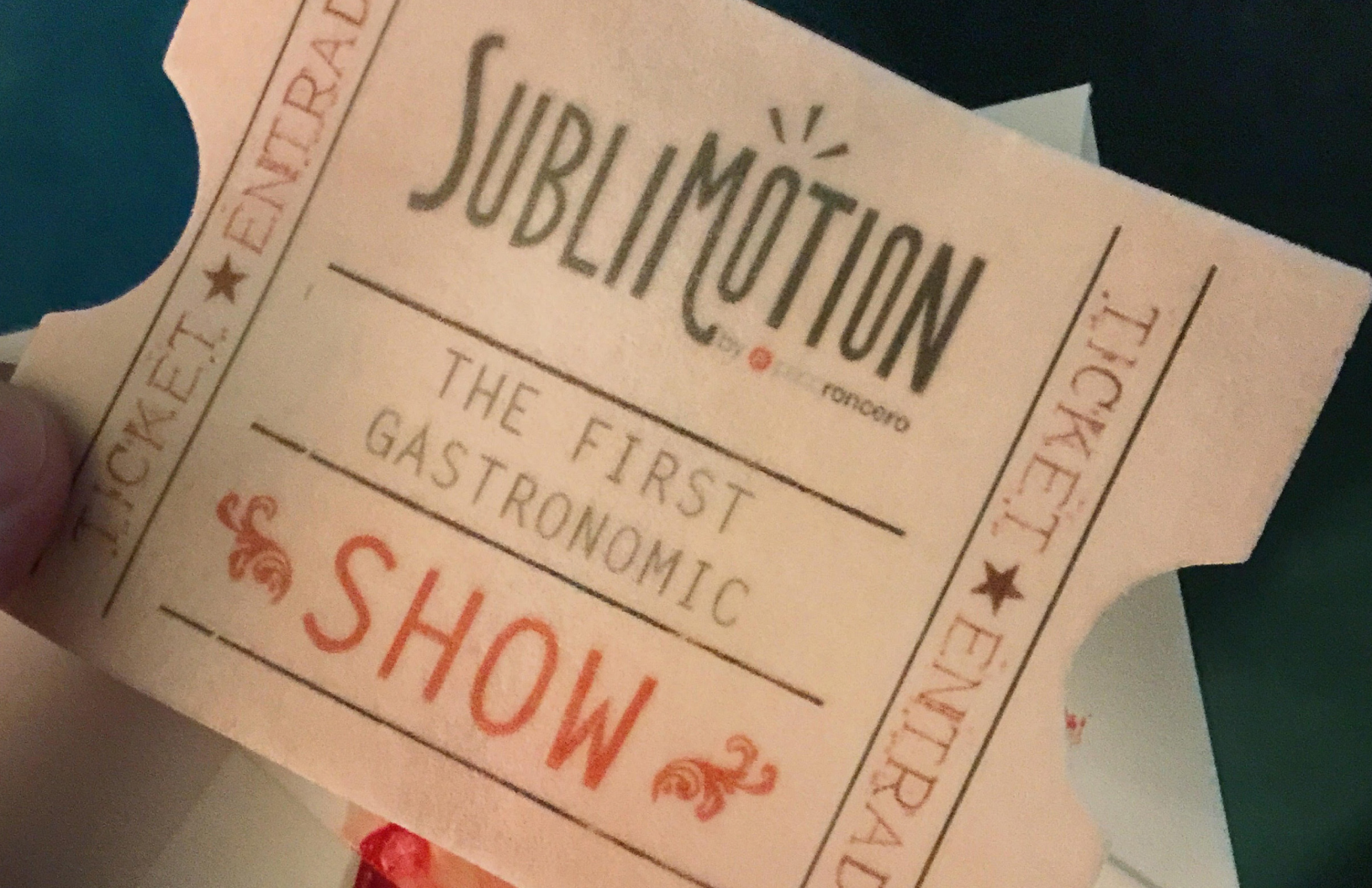
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“THE WORLD’S MOST EXPENSIVE” RESTAURANT

Written & photos by: David Duran

Ok, so it might not be *the most expensive*, but it's on the list for sure. The difference here is that I really wouldn't consider this place to be in the same category as restaurants, only because it's so much more than that.

I knew when I was headed to Ibiza that I was going to indulge. I mean, the parties, the yachts, the people...the options were limitless.

What I didn't think I would be doing was carving out a chunk of my evening to be a part of a dining experience so exclusive that it requires reservations well in advance.

So you are probably wondering where this place is and why it's so over the top, right? If you've ever been to Ibiza, and were fortunate enough to stay at the **Hard Rock Hotel**, you know that the cloth wristbands there are pretty much everything. They

Travel: Ibiza

identify you to hotel staff but most importantly, differentiate you from other hotel guests, I mean, if you have the VIP one that is.

You might have noticed that some guests had a special one on their wrist but weren't really sure what it said or meant. **Sublimotion**. That's what's printed on that very special wristband, and that's the most coveted souvenir on Ibiza.

Hidden inside the Hard Rock Hotel Ibiza is Sublimotion, an experiential dining option that seat 12 guests each night. It truly is a production from start to finish beginning with a cocktail at renowned Chef Paco Roncero Estado Puro restaurant, located within the hotel. Chef Roncero is also the mastermind behind Sublimotion so it's only fitting you begin at his more accessible Spanish cuisine restaurant. Guests are then escorted to the front entrance, where a fleet of Range Rovers with drivers is parked out front to take guests to

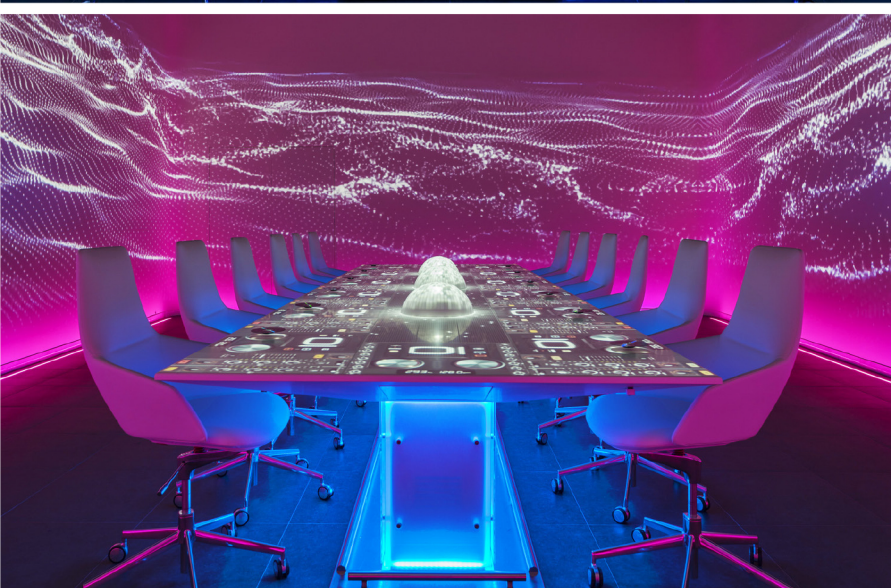
the next part of the evening. It's quite a show and a very mysterious one for onlookers to witness as the Sublimotion branded Range Rovers almost demand envious looks.

When we arrived to the private entrance, it mostly looked like the exit of a stage door at a Broadway theater or something. It was bizarre but in retrospect, fit perfectly into the evening of theatrics that would ensue. When the group entered, we were greeted with a personal invitation of sorts, a ticket sealed inside an envelope. When we were instructed to eat said ticket, as that was our first official course, I knew I was in for something I could have never imagined.

After years of research into the world of emotions in fine dining, 2 Michelin star Chef Paco Roncero presented Sublimotion to the world. The unique space he and his team created is a combination of culinary art and technological innovation coming



World's Most Expensive Restaurant



together to create a complete and unprecedented emotional experience.

Guests are left clueless as to the experience unless they have heard details from previous diners. Going in blind was the way to do it and although you might see these images and think, "oh, I've seen what it is now," take it from someone who once felt that way, you haven't.

Each of the many, many courses is a complete set redesign and costume change. The table looks different, the visuals on the walls transport you to someplace else, and your wait staff take on a whole new persona. From underwater adventures to Italian pastures to a carnival course that had me so confused, in the best way possible, beyond what you see and feel...what you taste will pretty much blow your mind when combined with this incredible setting that was purposely created to do just that.

The reality is, yes, it's expensive, but you are paying for a lot more than just a meal. When I try to explain to friends what this place is all about, I find myself lost in my thoughts and memories. I have flashbacks of farming for my own vegetables, massive balloons leading me to Ferris wheels placed on the table, a disco party and a virtual reality course that still has me confused as to how it actually worked... among other memories.

It's something that just can't be unseen. It's a dining experience that can't really set a new standard for dining because there really is nothing else out there that comes close to being like it.



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