



Being cutting-edge is fleeting, but staying cutting-edge is a full-time pursuit. Not even 15 years after the first **W HOTEL** debuted in Manhattan, the company is embarking on a \$100 million renovation on 11 of its North American hotels, including properties in Seattle, New Orleans, New York, Los Angeles, San Diego, **San Francisco** ➔, Dallas, Chicago and Montreal. Many of the renovations focus on the Living Room — the brand’s riff on a traditional lobby — and will be based on plans by rising design stars such

as Krause + Sawyer, Skylab Architecture, dash Design and Mars Culture. “Our guests have come to expect cutting-edge design,” says Carlos Becil, vice president of North American brand management, “and we’re committed to fueling the innovation to create a consistent experience for today’s global traveler.” Guests will notice stylish new signature bars and restaurants, upgrades to public spaces and even more attention to thoughtful details in guest rooms — all of which are sure to impress even the most discriminating jet-setters. —JENNIFER BRADLEY FRANKLIN



LAST CHANCE

You think of them as addictive entertainment. But here you come to see them as high-tech art. “The Art of Video Games,” which runs through September at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., explores the evolution of the medium over the last 40 years, from Pong to PlayStation and beyond, through still images, video footage and interviews with game inventors. Playable games include Pac-Man, Super Mario Bros. and Myst. www.americanart.si.edu
—JOSH SENS

{ FOOD }

Five Cheeses, One Way

The people of Wisconsin have been holding out on you. While you’re slapping cheddar between bread and baking Brie to gooey goodness, those badgers up north are selfishly stashing delicately wrapped artisanal cheeses. “The artisan-cheese movement is one of the hottest segments of the quality-food world right now, with Wisconsin at the epicenter,” says Peter Kordon, lead cheesemonger at Schoolhouse Artisan Cheese in Door County, Wis. “With artisan cheeses, the nose and palate of the cheesemaker makes decisions, [not the] time schedule.” To the dismay of Wisconsinites, here are five of the best-kept secrets in the state’s artisanal cheese arsenal:



Dante by the Wisconsin Sheep Dairy Cooperative
This semihard sheep’s-milk cheese has a mahogany rind, a golden interior, and a pastorally rich and nutty flavor.
www.sheepmilk.biz



Mobay by Carr Valley Cheese Co.
Layers of sweet golden sheep’s milk and tangy white goat’s milk are separated by grapevine ash in this delicate, rustic cheese.
www.carrvalleycheese.com



“Fish Bait” Gabrielson Lake by LoveTree Farmstead
This raw cow’s-milk cheese is illegal to sell for human consumption (it’s aged fewer than 60 days), but local “fishermen” who buy it as bait report that it has a nutty, buttery flavor.
www.lovetreefarmstead.com



Emmentaler by Edelweiss Creamery
A true Wisconsin treasure, this Swiss-style cheese is made into 180-pound wheels and has an intoxicatingly sweet, nutty and sharp flavor.
www.edelweisscreamery.com



“Reserve” Bandaged Cheddar by Bleu Mont Dairy
Made by the guru of artisan cheddar himself, Willi Lehner, who wraps the cave-aged, sharp cheddar in cheesecloth before its two-year aging process begins.
www.eatwisconsincheese.com

—KRISTY ALPERT