

renegade

game changers | thought leaders | rule breakers | style makers

COLLECTIVE

ISSUE 14

HOW TO
GRIEVE
IN THE
DIGITAL AGE

BILL CLINTON

remembering
ROBIN WILLIAMS

THE WOMAN
TIPPED TO LEAD
THE UN



RYAN
GOSLING

TALKS FALLING,
FAILING &
MOVING ON



NOMAD

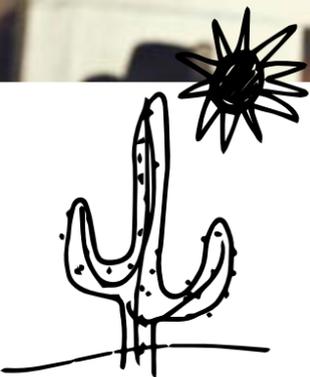


PHOTOGRAPHY: BEN FITCHETT

THE WILD WILD WEST

Hip meets the Wild West in BROOKLYN as the TREND towards more INTIMATE travel EXPERIENCES continues to spread around the world.

WORDS SERENA RENNER



Lyon Porter is no stranger to hotel rooms. He spent his previous life as a professional hockey player moving to around 15 cities in 10 years. He'd often start his residency at the same kind of monotonous maze of hallways and doors, where it's not uncommon to lose yourself, let alone your room key. "I know what it's like to wake up in a city and not be sure where you are or what your room number is," laughs Lyon.

So years later, when he had the chance to buy an old building in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, he designed a bed and breakfast whose top priority is making guests feel at home.

From the outside, Urban Cowboy looks like just that – a home – albeit a wood-paneled mountain estate on an otherwise brick-and-clapboard street. Only a bright red door, an oversized arrow and a shield-shaped sign with the word "cabins" hints at the alternate universe that lies behind the facade. When Lyon – who now works for the forward-thinking Manhattan real estate firm Town Residential – first saw the place, he knew it was the one.

"It had a front porch with a front yard and a big blue spruce tree," he says. "It had a structure built out back. I pulled myself up through the drop ceiling and I found four extra feet of ceiling height with brick fireproofing and wooden beams. 'That's it,' I said. 'I'm buying this building.'"

What to do with it was another question, but

inspiration soon came during a surf trip to the artist colony of Maderas Village in Nicaragua. The "virtual bohemia" specialises in the curation of experiences and people.

"I was telling someone that I bought a building and I said, 'I'm opening a bed and breakfast in Brooklyn.' It just came out."

Renovation of the US\$1.34 million property started with the structure out back. Lyon's version of a virtual bohemia was an Adirondack-style cabin that would bring the mountains to Brooklyn. He decided to cover the entire space with wood: rough-hewn white pine on the floor, herringbone yellow pine for the ceiling and recycled wood siding for the interior walls. Then he got to work with fixtures and furnishings – worn leather sofa here, claw-foot tub there, antique pot-belly stove front and centre, and heaps of Pendleton and Beacon blankets that he collected in a 20-foot U-Haul, which he drove from Cleveland, Ohio, to the Adirondacks to New York City.

He calls the aesthetic a mix of Navajo design with a bastardisation of Americana. Really, though, he just built his "ultimate man cave".

"I did what I wanted and didn't ask anyone," he says. "A cowboy does what a cowboy wants and lives his own truth."

For the main townhouse, he enlisted the help of his friend, interior designer Renee Mee, and the duo set out to create an indoor-outdoor oasis, inspired by the likes of the Metal Shutter House

PHOTOGRAPHY: BEN FITCHETT, MIKKI BRAMMER / PORTRAIT: KRISTINA WILSON



condominiums in Manhattan. They blew out the front and back walls on the parlour floor and added garage doors, resulting in a huge communal space that can be rolled up to the sky on both ends. It's rustic yet industrial with professional-grade Viking appliances as well as a wood-burning stove. Four elegant bedrooms upstairs – a gramophone chandelier hanging between them – continue the country-meets-city vibe.

Quirky memorabilia is mixed throughout the B&B from a wooden picture of Bon Jovi that matches the cabin walls to family artwork and a cigarette holder stocked with American Spirits that came from Lyon's great grandfather, George Hale Lyon; the letters GHL are engraved at the top.

Such personal touches, combined with the opportunity to share space with locals and travellers even just for one night, exemplify the difference between a hotel and a home, Lyon says. He likes to host dinner parties, pop-up restaurant events, yoga classes and arts and crafts with friends as well as hotel guests, which could be foreigners or staycationers. He tinkers with the mix and watches the magic: what he considers a version of authentic New York that people are searching for.

"Yeah, you're in a hot tub in a backyard staying in a cabin, but I think people find the spirit of it authentically Williamsburg," says Lyon.

"People like to come together around the campfire. They leave with a glimpse of what it might be like to live in the neighbourhood." 🍷

I did WHAT I WANTED and didn't ask anyone. A COWBOY does what a cowboy wants and lives his OWN TRUTH.



GIDDY UP!

LYON ON HIS INSPIRATION FOR URBAN COWBOY'S STYLE...

> Maderas Village, Managua, Nicaragua

A bohemian boutique hotel and surf retreat on Nicaragua's Pacific coast, "Maderas Village is all about the cowboy life," says Lyon. "They have created a vibe and community that is amazing, specialising in the curation of people, which I really respect." The community makes crafts, records music at an on-site studio, hosts events and celebrates the Nicaraguan lifestyle of surf, sun and howler monkeys.

> Dartbrook Rustic Goods, Keene Valley, New York

"I sourced a lot of the décor for Urban Cowboy at this great shop in the Adirondacks," says Lyon. Dartbrook sells its own collection of wooden benches, tables, chairs, hutches, beds, you name it, plus antiques, woven pillows and taxidermy. The folks behind the store also run a lodge, which is a true reflection of the Adirondack wilderness.