THE BILTMORE HOTEL, Miami
Art Basel is the big deal in Miami Beach, from 7–10 December this year, running in conjunction with the city’s Art Week, and will see 270-plus galleries exhibiting. The city’s Institute of Contemporary Art is due to open its doors in its new home in December, too. The weather’s at its best in winter, so don’t go until then. When you do, The Biltmore – the city’s most famous old hotel, the Jazz Age icon designed by the architects behind New York’s Grand Central Station – is the place to stay. Opened in Coral Gables in 1926, it was here that the original Tarzan, Johnny Weissmuller, was a swimming instructor at the pool (at 150ft by 225ft, still the biggest on the east coast of the US) – until he went off to Hollywood, of course. The Biltmore has surprisingly left it until this year to launch its first curated Art Week concierge packages. These give access to the Art Basel vernissages, exhibitions, and the parties and performances taking place throughout the city during the week, all accompanied by art expert Judy Holm, veteran of the Venice Biennale – as they should given that prices start at $60,000. That does include five nights’ stay for two in a suite, though. Yet The Biltmore’s most profound art treat is its rather wild Everglades Backwater adventure. Running from 9am to 5pm, from September to January, and run by Dragonfly Expeditions, this takes you on a thigh-high wade through the Everglades, an experience that culminates in a visit to the studio/gallery of 70-year-old Clyde Butcher, conservationist and chronicler of the area. Working with a large-format camera, Butcher is an enthralling photographer, the Ansel Adams of black and white nature photography in America today. The all-day tours cost from £648 each.

BOOK IT: Doubles from £249.

BROWN’S, London
Start delving into London’s art scene and you come across all sorts of potential treats and presents for special celebrations. That membership of the Royal Academy brings you unlimited entrance plus pre-opening viewings of all exhibitions, with America after the Fall: paintings from the 1930s running to 4 June and a major Jasper Johns from 23 September to 10 December. And all for £97 annual membership is one thing. Who knew, though, that by paying £230, the whole-group rate (normally charged for ten to 15 people), you could have a private tour – during regular opening hours – with an art historian at the National Gallery? Or a 90-minute tailor-made private tour of Tate Britain’s marvellous standing collection for just £210? Or an hour-long private lecture about a current Tate exhibition for £200? A stupendously good idea for a present, right? Tate Britain’s David Hockney exhibition runs to 29 May, after which the next big draw is Rachel Whiteread, from 12 September to 4 February. Hotelwise, The Connaught is so caught up in art they even put an artist’s easel with paints and brushes in some suites so that you can DIY, but really the best buy could be from Brown’s Hotel. Their regular Saturday morning art tours of Mayfair, led by the entertaining gallery owner, curator and agent Maeve Doyle, followed by lunch at Hix at the hotel, cost just a congratulate-yourself £65 each.

BOOK IT: Doubles from £475. roccofortehotels.com