

TOWN&COUNTRY

Miami's Hottest New Show Was Once a Helen Mirren Movie

Alan Faena is putting on an experiential production of the movie that first made Helen Mirren a star, Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover*.

by **LEENA KIM** SEP 18, 2019



MURRAY CLOSE / GETTY IMAGES

Master hotelier **Alan Faena** knows how to create an experience. Just look at his Faena Hotel in Miami Beach—since it opened in 2015 to much fanfare it's become one of South Beach's top attractions, not least of all thanks to its highly Instagrammable decor (think gold leaf, Damien Hirst sculptures, leopard prints—*The Great Gatsby* and *Moulin Rouge!* director Baz Luhrmann and his costume designer wife Catherine Martin were creative consultants). But the Faena brand isn't all style and no substance. Alan Faena happens to be a major cultural impresario, too.

His hotel is just one part of the \$1 billion behemoth that is the Faena District, which takes up a six-block stretch on Collins Avenue and contains a Foster+Partners-designed condominium, 43,000 square feet of event space in the Rem Koolhaas-designed Faena Forum, and the lush, velvet-strewn Faena Theater.



It's in the latter that Faena will stage his experiential version of *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover*, the 1989 film by Peter Greenaway that first made Helen Mirren a star. The provocative film, which revolved around a fictional upscale French restaurant called Le Hollandais, will be reimaged as an immersive production where audience members will move through the theater, the foyer, and the hotel's Saxony Bar (*Sleep No More*-style), and dine with the cast in the theater that will be transformed into Le Hollandais.

Faena spoke to *T&C* exclusively about the production, which opens on October 18.

What inspired you to create this production of *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover*?

Over the years I have found inspiration in the aesthetics, the symbolism and the drama of the film—and it influenced my own work as I was planning the Faena Districts in Buenos Aires and Miami Beach. I often find myself creating experiential environments that take influences from the visual language of the film. It felt like the perfect story for our next Faena Theater production.



ALAN FAENA'S VERSION OF *THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE & HER LOVER*.
FAENA THEATER

You're recreating the restaurant, Le Hollandais. Tell us about the menu.

The entire menu is a work of art. It will be a culinary experience unlike most—a story told through the meal. We are thrilled to have Michelle Bernstein on board to imagine dishes that excite the palette, ignite our tastebuds, and bring the story of the show to life on a visceral and personal level for each audience member. *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* will be a total sensory experience, and the cuisine is a key component.



A SCENE FROM FAENA THEATER'S PRODUCTION OF *THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE, AND HER LOVER*.

FAENA THEATER

Why did you decide to make this an interactive experience?

The Faena Theater is a space that encourages immersive and interactive experiences. It's already a work of art—when you enter, you're transformed by the environment. Our shows there often incorporate elements of interactivity and are known to really inspire and activate audiences in new ways. That said, *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* takes these qualities of immersion and transformation to a new level—the audience is encouraged to imagine themselves as part of the show and to take on various roles in the production. Our hope is that they are presented with new and exciting visual, musical, choreographic, and symbolic languages in this production that transform their experience of the every day. When a production is impactful, it becomes even more of a shared experience.

*Tickets to the new production of *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* at the Faena Theater are available [here](#).*