



© La Carmina

MEET THE MAKERS

OFFBEAT ADVENTURES

WITH LA CARMINA

Emily Lovell speaks to La Carmina: fashion, travel and culture blogger, TV host, author of three books, travel journalist, and TEDx speaker.

La Carmina began her award-winning, offbeat travel and alternative fashion blog in 2007 as a creative outlet while studying at Yale Law, and since then her colourful adventures have taken her around the globe to 70+ countries. With a passion for exploring underground and fringe subcultures and communities, and getting to know the people who are a part of them, La Carmina introduces us to weird and wonderful travel experiences in a meaningful and compassionate way, through blogging and writing for publications worldwide, TV hosting and production for major networks, and through her own travel series too.

With travel being such an integral part of La Carmina's career, I was keen to chat about the impact of the global pandemic on her work while much of the world was in lockdown. Luckily for us, La Carmina has been finding 'pockets of devilish fun' to enjoy and share closer to home now that the world is opening up once again, with new adventures on the horizon too.

Thanks so much for taking the time to chat to me! As someone whose

career is focused on travelling across the globe, how did you stay positive and inspired when the travel industry came to a grinding halt? What did you find most challenging?

To be honest, I'm not very positive about the state of the world. Rather than being falsely optimistic, I'd rather be aware of the scientific facts, and be prepared and realistic about the hard future ahead of us. (Climate change, unrest, and other difficulties are inevitable – it's just a matter of how quickly things collapse, where, and in what manner. This is the challenge we all face, whether we accept it or not.) Unfortunately, I think that travel will be more difficult and restricted going forward. I'll do my best to take windows of opportunity to travel when it's safe, possible and responsible. And I'm more grateful than ever for these 'pockets of devilish fun' whenever they are able to take place.

Have you found that your focus has shifted to other areas of work, and have you discovered any new passions that you'll continue with?

© La Carmina, lacarmina.com and @lacarmina, and photographer Joey Wong



© La Carmina, lacarmina.com and @lacarmina, and photographer Joey Wong



© La Carmina

I pivoted to freelance writing for a number of publications, which had a lot of positive results. I've been able to write about topics that I love, and add new bylines: such as an Osaka article for Time Magazine, a travel story about devilish destinations worldwide for The Daily Beast, and a Goth decor guide for Architectural Digest. I've been receiving great feedback for these stories, including a Society of American Travel Writers award last year for a personal essay about traveling in Brazil with author Elizabeth Wurtzel (*Prozac Nation, Bitch*). TV hosting and production work remains shut down, but I've been able to film remotely for my 'Satanic Show + Tell' web show, for The Satanic Temple TV. It's been fun to catch up with old friends, like Evan Michelson and Ryan Matthew Cohn of Oddities, and have them share their devilish possessions on our program (you can find it at www.thesatanictemple.tv).

I enjoyed seeing you getting creative at home and sharing balcony fashion shoots during lockdown! Tell

us about some of your more recent fashion shoots now that it's possible to collaborate in-person again.

I've been based in Vancouver, BC since spring 2020. I had to get creative and use a remote app on my DSLR, to self-shoot on my balcony and outdoors! After receiving the vaccine, I was able to travel to a few places with low Covid counts this summer (Hawaii, San Diego, LA, Salem, NYC). I loved reuniting with my frequent travel companion and photographer, Joey Wong, in New York City. We felt inspired in NY Chinatown, and did a fashion shoot with a kimono and fan, amidst the colorful signs and strings of lights. We also shot at the Yayoi Kusama exhibit at NY Botanical Garden; we were particularly inspired by her Obliteration greenhouse filled with red sticker flowers.

Your first local travel trip post-lockdown was to Victoria, BC - how did it feel to be able to travel again, albeit closer to home?

That trip was in summer 2020 and I followed British Columbia's guidelines, which permitted safe local >>>

CLOSER TO HOME

"I also did a local trip to Kelowna, BC - wine country! I loved going to vineyards and doing tastings, and seeing another part of the province. I've also taken the opportunity to explore places near Vancouver for the first time. These include going up the gondola to Squamish Mountain, and driving an hour to visit a pumpkin patch and haunted corn maze with friends."

MEET THE MAKERS **OFFBEAT ADVENTURES WITH LA CARMINA**

All photos this page © La Carmina



SOCIAL MEDIA

Check out La Carmina's social feeds with the username @lacarina, where you can find out the latest on her Satanic Temple TV episodes, and see some amazing flashback photography to her world travels. Here's to plenty of new content soon!

>>> travel within the province back then. It felt strange to take a ferry and stay in a hotel for the first time since Covid hit. Everyone was figuring out how to handle it – there was safety glass at the check-in counter, hand sanitizer stations everywhere, no room cleaning service, and QR codes instead of menus. We've become used to these protocols now, but they were new and felt odd at the time. To my relief, the hotel and places I visited did a great job with precautions, and I felt safe during every part of the journey.

You've kept the international travel inspiration alive and kicking on your blog by sharing posts from friends worldwide, but where in the world will you be making a beeline for once international travel opens up again?

As soon as it's possible for me to return to Japan, I will be there. I never expected to be barred from my beloved country for so long, and can't wait to return to see my close friends. (I have a Japan to-do list that grows longer and longer... I used to go once or twice a year, so it's been hard to be away for so long.) I'm also

keen to visit Hong Kong and see relatives, once it is possible.

And finally, tell us what we should look out for in the coming months – do you have any exciting projects in the pipeline that you'd like to share with our readers?

For the first time since 2019, I'll be going abroad – I secured a dream press trip to Valencia, Spain in November! I'll be writing about the creative food and travel in Valencia, as well as hopping around to a few other cities in Spain. Part of me doesn't believe that it is happening, as you never know with the world these days... I'm more grateful than ever for opportunities like this, and can't wait to share my alternative adventures with my audience.

You can always find my updates on @lacarina social media (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter), and www.lacarina.com/blog – I've been blogging since 2007, and until the world collapses, I'll keep on sharing my stories there! ●