



NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

THE UK'S #1 TRAVEL MAGAZINE

TRAVELLER

UK EDITION • OCTOBER 2022 • £5.10

NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.CO.UK/TRAVEL

TOKYO

EXPLORE THE COOLEST NEIGHBOURHOODS
IN THE WORLD'S MOST ELECTRIC CITY

+ NEW YORK
PRAGUE
TORONTO

WINNERS
REVEALED
HOTEL
AWARDS
2022

BELIZE

DISCOVER REEFS, RAINFOREST
& ANCIENT RUINS

KENT

ART & HISTORY COLLIDE AT
THE EDGE OF ENGLAND



ALSO: DORDOGNE • DUBROVNIK • ECUADOR • LOCH LOMOND • NAMIBIA • NIGERIA • TENERIFE • TRONDHEIM

NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

TRAVELLER

HOTEL AWARDS

2022

AFTER A CHALLENGING FEW YEARS, TRAVEL IS FINALLY FINDING ITS FEET AGAIN – AND THE WORLD'S HOTEL SCENE HAS NEVER LOOKED BETTER. WE'VE SEARCHED THE GLOBE FOR THE VERY BEST NEW HOTEL OPENINGS, FROM AN ANCIENT FORT RESTORED TO ITS FORMER GLORY TO AN INNER-CITY RETREAT GLISTENING WITH GLAMOUR

THE WINNERS

Grand Redesigns
THE LANGHAM, BOSTON

City Slicker
GLENEAGLES
TOWNHOUSE,
EDINBURGH

Good Egg
WILDERNESS SAFARIS
DUMATAU,
BOTSWANA

Love Shack
THE ROOSTER,
ANTIPAROS, GREECE

Boutique Break
ARISTIDE HOTEL,
SYROS, GREECE

**Leave the World
Behind**
EXPLORA EL CHALTÉN,
ARGENTINA

Comeback Kid
SIX SENSES FORT
BARWARA, INDIA

On the Money
THE GOODTIME
HOTEL, MIAMI

Design Den
HOSHINO RESORTS
KAI POROTO, JAPAN

Gourmet Getaway
CASA DI LANGA, ITALY

Wellness Wonder
JOALI BEING, MALDIVES

Lord of the Manor
CASHEL PALACE
HOTEL, IRELAND

Snow Queen
HOTEL DE LEN, ITALY

Castaway
SUSSURRO,
MOZAMBIQUE

THE JUDGING PANEL OF TRAVEL WRITERS

JULIA BUCKLEY
LEE COBAJ
EMMA GREGG
LAUREN JADE HILL
FRANCISCA KELLETT
JAMES LITSTON

JOHN O'CEALLAIGH
PÓL Ó CONGHAILE
NICOLE TRILIVAS
& THE NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELLER
(UK) TEAM

GRAND REDESIGNS

After a serious sprucing up (and plenty of investment), these big-name hotels are back and better than ever

★ The Langham, Boston
A two-year closure and a \$200m (£166m) transformation later, this historic Massachusetts hotel is firmly back in business. The Langham is set in the glorious surrounds of the former Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, completed in 1922 in the Financial District. Fitting for a city that wears its history with pride, the building's storied touches remain intact, including the murals of the founding fathers, the soaring ceilings and marble floors. But it's far from old-fashioned. Additions include a Boston-centric, contemporary art collection, a lobby with grand fireplaces and revived guest rooms and suites in soothing duck-egg blues, including the new Chairman Suite penthouse, with its own baby grand piano. As far as renovations go, this one's right on the money. From \$595 (£485). langhamhotels.com

RUNNERS-UP

BELMOND SPLENDIDO MARE, ITALY
Reopened last summer after an 18-month facelift, the 14-room Belmond Splendido Mare in Portofino has had a complete overhaul from Paris-based Festen Architecture. There's still a strong sense of la dolce vita here, with locally crafted materials taking centre stage. The mid-century furnishings nod to Portofino's 1950s heyday, while Liguria's colourful houses are echoed in the mustard and sienna bathroom tiles. There's also a delicious new gourmet restaurant, DaV Mare, right on the famous Piazzetta waterfront. From €650 (£549). belmond.com

CARTON HOUSE HOTEL, IRELAND
This was one of Ireland's finest Palladian mansions, and now it's on a mission to become one of its finest hotels. Just outside Maynooth, in County Kildare, Carton House was the long-time home of the Duke of Leinster, and is today the country's first Fairmont resort, thanks to a massive, multi-year renovation. Highlights of the five-star include the ornate Morrison Room restaurant, casual dining in the former servants' kitchens and the intimate Whiskey Library. The old house is still the centrepiece of the hotel, while plush modern wings house a pool, spa and the airy Courtyard Bar. From €360 (£300). cartonhouse.com



CITY SLICKER

These urban nests hit all the right notes for travellers and locals alike

★ Gleneagles Townhouse, Edinburgh

Think Gleneagles and images of the grand Scottish resort spring to mind: sweeping grounds, prestigious golf courses and Georgian facades. But the brand's new urban outpost offers an elegant foil to the country pile. The 33-bed Gleneagles Townhouse is a des res with a difference in the heart of the Scottish capital, featuring a private members' club, the all-day Spence restaurant and a roof terrace bar with views of St Andrew Square. The vibe is more flamboyant than the original Gleneagles (think Victorian chic with a dash of Wes Anderson), with pink and blue furnishings, chandeliers, cushions galore and dark-green bathroom tiles. You'll find a cryotherapy chamber and infrared sauna in the building's former vaults (it was once a bank), while the Lamplighters bar, which takes its name from a Robert Louis Stevenson poem, is a guest- and members-only haunt on the rooftop. Little wonder the hotel's tagline is 'a place to gather and be glorious'. From £330. gleneagles.com

RUNNERS-UP

HÔTEL MADAME RÊVE, PARIS
There has been a stream of chic new openings in the French capital of late, chief among them Hôtel Madame Réve, a bolthole in a former post office near the Louvre. You'll find bright, colourful artwork at every turn, and the 82 rooms ooze French modernist style, with walnut panelling and a 1970s mustard palette. But it's the communal spaces that make this such a class act: the grand, ground-floor cafe evokes a Viennese coffeehouse with its high ceilings and wrought-iron chandeliers, while the rooftop bar is a choice spot for an evening apéro. Be sure to linger over the cinematic views of the city skyline and the gothic detail of the nearby Saint-Eustache church. From €500 (£420). madamereve.com

PENDRY CHICAGO
A rebooted Gatsby-era landmark on Michigan Avenue, the 364-key Pendry Chicago is a study in art deco decadence – the gold-topped, 37-storey high-rise was built in 1929 as the regional headquarters for chemical company Carbide And Carbon, whose name still adorns the polished black granite. Interiors have an understated elegance, with rooms going big on white linen and white panelling. Elsewhere, expect the sort of spaces that F Scott Fitzgerald would have written about: the airy, sage-green brasserie Venteux; or Château Carbide on the 24th-floor rooftop, offering glasses of rosé, sushi and views over Chicago's Loop neighbourhood. From \$250 (£200). pendry.com

IMAGES: THE LANGHAM; GLENEAGLES TOWNHOUSE

Clockwise from left: Bedroom at The Langham Boston; The Langham reception desk; The Spence bar, Gleneagles Townhouse

Previous pages: Water villas at Joali Being

GOOD EGG

Be it a wilderness camp or an inner-city nest, these hotels stand out for their commitment to environment, community or conservation



Wilderness Safaris DumaTau, Botswana

In the wilderness of the Linyanti Wildlife Reserve, African elephants roam in search of water, food and partners. If they're impeded, catastrophic damage to entire ecosystems can ensue. Wildlife corridors such as Linyanti are therefore critically important, with low-impact safari camps like DumaTau playing a key role in preserving them, while also supporting research into endangered species, including African wild dogs. The intimate camp has just eight tented suites (each with its own plunge pool), where decor blends local acacia wood and hand-crafted mosaics. A powerful solar plant provides DumaTau's electricity, and even its menus are an experiment in sustainability: to minimise waste, guests are invited to create their own dishes from seasonal, low-miles ingredients. The wildlife-watching is, of course superb, with elephants a highlight. From £1,250. wilderness-safaris.com

RUNNERS-UP

OASYHOTEL, ITALY

The only hotel located in Tuscany's WWF-affiliated Oasi Dynamo nature reserve (about 40 miles from Florence), Oasyhotel ensures revenue goes towards conserving and cultivating the 2,500-acre reserve of dense woodland and Tuscan farmland. Long summer days here are spent horse riding, e-biking, cheesemaking or tracking wolves – or just unwinding in one of 16 minimalist, Scandi-style lodges, hidden within the tall grass. From €560 (£473). oasyhotel.com

ROOM2 CHISWICK, LONDON

Sustainability doesn't mean sacrificing style. That's the message at Room2 Chiswick, a self-styled 'green retreat' that claims to be the world's first hotel built to fully account for its carbon footprint (including construction). Inspired by West London's 19th-century Arts and Crafts heritage, the 86 rooms were designed in collaboration with local artisans, while all the bespoke furniture was made within 10 miles of the property. Sustainable details also include carpets made from recycled fishing nets. From £156. room2.com



IMAGES: TEAGAN CUNIFFE; THE ROOSTER

LOVE SHACK

Tucked away in unforgettable locations, these honeymoon-worthy hideaways are where luxury and privacy reign supreme



The Rooster, Antiparos, Greece

This might just be the ultimate Aegean retreat. You'll find just 16 individual cottages tucked into the dunes on a quiet beach on the tiny isle of Antiparos, a speck in the Cyclades. Inside and out melt into each other, with a freshwater pool (and outdoor shower) in each private garden, and the sea glinting in the distance. This is a wild, back-to-nature kind of place — the gardens are landscaped with traditional Mediterranean scrub, the hotel is surrounded by 30 acres of untouched coastal land, and there's even a nudist beach around the bay. Not that this is a busy beach destination; the only people you're likely to bump into are the fishermen bringing their daily catch to the restaurant, where it's served with a Greek salad made using produce from the hotel's own farm. From €700 (£592). theroosterantiparos.com

RUNNERS-UP

BORGOSANTANDREA, ITALY

Slotted into a cliffside on the Amalfi Coast, right above the tiny fishing hamlet of Conca dei Marini, Borgo Santandrea offers blow-the-budget honeymoon bliss. The hotel fuses a mid-century aesthetic with an unmistakable Mediterranean feel, with and details include hand-painted, blue-and-white tiles made by local artisans. Each of the 45 rooms, along with the three restaurants and two bars, has heart-stealing sea views. Make your way (by lift, no less) to the hotel's street-level garden terrace or private beach stashed below the cliffs. From €1,500 (£1,250). borgosantandrea.it

PALMA RIAD HOTEL, PALMA DE MALLORCA

The Majorcan capital is no stranger to sumptuous townhouse hotels, but this new, adults-only addition — arranged like a riad, encircling a pretty, palm-shaded patio with a pint-sized plunge pool and glowing lanterns — almost seems purpose-built for romantic getaways and honeymoons. Each of the 11 individually designed, seductive suites offers its own treasures in well-worn velvet, jewel-toned fringe and swirling carpets, but be sure to tear yourself away for a large coupe of cava in the Morokko Bar. From €340 (£290). palmariad.com



Bedroom at Landscape Camo, The Rooster

Left from top: Wilderness Safaris DumaTau; sightings board at DumaTau

LEAVE THE WORLD BEHIND

Need to get away from it all? Look no further than these far-flung escapes, where full immersion in nature is guaranteed

★ Explora El Chaltén, Argentina

Escaping it all has never been so spectacular. Set within Argentinean Patagonia's 14,000-acre Los Huemules Conservation Reserve, this knockout riverside property (which was prefabricated off site and then assembled in situ to reduce environmental impact) offers a gateway to one of the world's most spectacular wildernesses. The promise of what's to come glints through guests' bedroom windows, with the rugged grandeur of the Eléctrico Valley, the dazzling Marconi Glacier and a string of jagged peaks all on show. To encourage exploration, bilingual guides lead expeditions each day, be that trekking through Los Glaciares National Park or climbing nearby mountains. Hearty, restorative meals await back at base, all made with the freshest produce sourced from local farmers. From \$1,920 (£1,568), including board, transfers and excursions. explora.com

RUNNERS-UP

SIX SENSES SHAHARUT, ISRAEL

Deep in the Negev desert, above the Gulf of Aqaba, this is an unforgettable foray into the wilderness. Camels wait by the entrance to take you out for a ride, 4x4s are on hand for alternative off-road outings, and Hummer buggies are available to whisk guests round the sprawling resort, making it feel even more epic. Every suite and villa has its own pool, grafted into the landscape. The views are spectacular, but nightfall brings an even deeper immersion into nature, with prime stargazing on offer. From \$850 (£695), B&B. sixsenses.com

TEMBO PLAINS CAMP, ZIMBABWE

The latest camp from National Geographic Explorers at Large Dereck and Beverly Joubert is the first in Zimbabwe to join the Relais & Châteaux group. It's a shining example of conservation in action: its Sapi Private Reserve used to be hunting territory but have now been painstakingly rewilded for the ultimate natural escape. Guests can borrow professional-quality cameras, while the camp's green ethos extends to the kitchen, where bush chefs conjure up superlative vegan dishes. From US\$895 (£746), full board, including activities. greatplainsconservation.com



BOUTIQUE BREAK

Stellar service, elegant design and just a handful of sumptuous rooms make these blissful boltholes truly stand out

★ Aristide Hotel, Syros, Greece

Sleepy Syros isn't as high-profile as its neighbours Santorini or Mykonos, but therein lies its charm. Presiding over this Aegean ideal is Aristide Hotel, a nine-suite retreat within a rosé-pink neoclassical mansion with marble staircases and Doric columns. It's aimed squarely at those seeking a quieter, more intimate stay, but is also eye-candy for design-minded travellers, too: walls are draped in portraiture and figurative art, while the ice-blue pools are built from sun-bleached stone. The food is a similarly appealing affair, with dishes often featuring local cheeses and courgettes — plucked from the vegetable garden, served on a palm-shaded patio. Creative cocktails are served on the rooftop, best sipped at sundown overlooking the Aegean. From €240 (£203), B&B. hotelaristide.com

RUNNERS-UP

FARMHOUSE 58, SOUTH AFRICA

Aimed at art-lovers and bookworms, this rural guesthouse and retreat near Krugersdorp is a refreshing take on a boutique hotel. Rather than focusing on all-out luxury, it cocoons guests in an atmosphere of calm. Decor is refreshingly minimalist, with polished cement floors, exposed pipes and cosy, pared-back rooms. The restaurant keeps things simple, too, using the organic kitchen garden's daily harvest. Nature is a gentle companion: look out for the zebras, which can often be seen nibbling the lawns after dark. From R457.50 (£23), B&B. farmhouse58.co

SUBLIME LISBOA, LISBON

Secreted away behind an elegant facade near Praça do Marquês de Pombal, this 15-room bolthole feels more like the private abode of a long-lost (and extremely well-heeled) relation than a hotel. Each room is individually styled in modern-classic fashion with muted primary colours and geometric wallpaper; several come with balconies or private terraces spruced up with greenery. The boutique property is also home to Davvero, a stylish, Mediterranean-style restaurant, complete with marble bar tops and an outdoor terrace. From: €235 (£199), B&B. sublimelisboa.pt

Clockwise from above: Seating area at Aristide Hotel; hiking in Los Huemules Conservation Reserve, Argentina; bedroom at Explora El Chaltén

COMEBACK KID

Check into these former landmarks, given a brand-new lease of life as dazzling hotels that honour their heritage



Six Senses Fort Barwara, India

It took almost 10 years to create this rambling hotel in Rajasthan, but that's a drop in the ocean when you consider the building itself is a 700-year-old former royal fort, 60 miles south of Jaipur. Ancient domes and temples now form awe-inspiring common areas in the 48-suite property: the ayurvedic spa, for example, is set within the original women's palace, and intimate yoga sessions are hosted atop the fort's soaring sandstone ramparts. Roses bloom among vegetables in the hotel's bijou garden, and there are two pools to cool off in. The action continues outside the soaring fortress walls; the Six Senses team are returning the hotel's surroundings to their original glory by rewilding forests to the east and restoring a nearby sacred lake to its former beauty. From INR 63,168 (£650), B&B. [sixsenses.com](https://www.sixsenses.com)

RUNNERS-UP

ROSEWOOD SÃO PAULO

Much of this property is housed in a restored former maternity hospital, the birthplace of more than 500,000 Brazilians. Rosewood's revitalisation of this much-loved building is the centrepiece of Cidade Matarazzo, a spread of early-20th-century buildings that have been transformed into upmarket shops and homes. The Rosewood is packed with stunning works of art, handsome cocktail bar Rabo di Galo evokes the atmosphere of a 1930s jazz club, and the rooftop infinity pool is the place to while away the sultry São Paulo days. From BRL2,800 (£450). [rosewoodhotels.com](https://www.rosewoodhotels.com)

MATILD PALACE, A LUXURY COLLECTION HOTEL, BUDAPEST

Things don't get more lavish than this landmark hotel – a former royal residence that blends baroque and art nouveau interiors with modern accents. Matild Café & Cabaret evokes the grandeur of early 20th-century coffeehouses, while Hungarian haute cuisine comes courtesy of Wolfgang Puck at Spago. Don't miss The Duchess secret library and rooftop garden, which was inspired by rumours Archduchess Maria-Klotild requested a hidden rooftop bar for the original 1884 design. From €450 (£380), B&B. [marriott.com](https://www.marriott.com)

Clockwise from right: Library, The Goodtime Hotel; the pool at Strawberry Moon, The Goodtime Hotel; archway detail at Six Senses Fort Barwara



ON THE MONEY

Everyone loves a bargain, so we've singled out the best new hotels offering serious bang for your buck



The Goodtime Hotel, Miami

The name says it all. This partnership between Grammy-winning musician Pharrell Williams and hospitality mogul David Grutman and has brought a healthy dash of A-list hedonism to Florida's party city. The weekend DJ sets, indoor-outdoor gym and spa aside, it's the location that makes this such a steal: the hotel is just seconds from Ocean Drive's buzzy bars, swaying palms and art deco facades, but set back enough to bask in a fun, chilled-out vibe of its own. The 266 rooms are cool and breezy in decor, and many come with Atlantic views, although you'll no doubt spend most of your time soaking up the sun at Strawberry Moon, a restaurant and retro swim club and bar decked out in candy-floss pink and coconut-white tones. It's the place to be for Mediterranean-inspired poolside brunches, as well as evening cocktails, or to kick back on floral-patterned daybeds. From \$161 (£132). [thegoodtimehotel.com](https://www.thegoodtimehotel.com)

RUNNERS-UP

THE STANDARD, HUA HIN, THAILAND

A holiday hotspot for over a century, Hua Hin is hardly short of hotels, but The Standard's arrival last year is shaking things up. This isn't your typical Thai getaway: the bright, modernist main buildings have a Palm Springs vibe to them, with a delicious mango-and-cream palette in the guest rooms. The villas – built in a similar style – offer a more exclusive escape, tucked between banyan-dotted gardens and with private plunge pools. There are also three restaurants and an open-air spa, and Hua Hin's long sweep of sand is moments away. From THB3,150 (£73). [standardhotels.com](https://www.standardhotels.com)

MAMA LISBOA, LISBON

Mama Shelter has been honing its mix of affordability and fun since 2008, and its first Portuguese outing now inserts that signature mix into the hip 'hood of Príncipe Real. Guest rooms are small but come to life with locally inspired, maximalist design, from ceiling sardine prints to jungle-print sofas. Lounge like a Lisboaeta in the rooftop space, wake up with morning yoga or enjoy the evening DJ sets. Menus have subtle French flair and there are free in-room films. From €89 (£75). [mamashelter.com](https://www.mamashelter.com)



IMAGES: SIX SENSES FOR BARWARA; THE GOODTIME HOTEL



DESIGN DEN

One for design aficionados, this category champions the most striking stays conjured up by architects and interiors experts

★ Hoshino Resorts KAI Poroto, Japan

The forests and lakes of southern Hokkaido are an evocative setting for this ryokan-style hot springs resort, but it's the island's indigenous Ainu culture that's the main inspiration behind the 2022 opening, set outside the town of Shiraoi. The Ainu have long lived in harmony with nature, and so the outside is very much brought inside at the 42-room resort, with each room overlooking peaceful Lake Poroto and incorporating plenty of silver birch and fresh, stone hues. The most distinctive feature, however, is the striking, cone-shaped bathhouse (*sankaku-no-yu*) inspired by the architectural principles of *ketunni* (houses of the Ainu people). With sunbeams streaming through apertures in the roofs, you can bask in the dark, healing thermal waters of the lake. It's not the only hot spring facility, either: the *maru-no-yu* bath is set beneath a domed ceiling with a central oculus that creates an almost spiritual space, somewhere between ancient temple and underground cave. From JPY 31,000 (£190), B&B. [hoshinoresorts.com](https://www.hoshinoresorts.com)

RUNNERS-UP

CHISA BUSANGA CAMP, ZAMBIA

Although utterly serious about the environment, Green Safaris has a quirky, playful side, too, and their latest off-grid wilderness camp, Chisa Busanga, in Kafue National Park, proves it. Its ragged-edged, ball-shaped, treehouse-style rooms are inspired by the weaver bird nests that dangle merrily from trees and reeds all over Africa. Inside, you'll be snug as a baby bird, waking to views of the Busanga Plains. Low-carbon adventures await: there are guided bushwalks, e-bikes and the chance to tour in Green Safaris' electric safari vehicles, charged by the sun. One guest room also has improved accessibility, courtesy of an electric lift. From US\$700 (£570), full board, including activities. Open June to mid-November. [greensafaris.com](https://www.greensafaris.com)

MAYBOURNE RIVIERA, FRANCE

Claridge's long-awaited Côte d'Azur cousin is manna for aesthetes. Designed by luminaries including André Fu and Bryan O'Sullivan, interiors are playful and unpretentious: in cheery cobalt-blue, squishy chairs envelop diners at Riviera Restaurant; while poolside sunloungers evoke the colours of an Aperol spritz. Other design delights are strewn throughout — most notably, the hotel's museum-worthy art collection, which includes pieces by the likes of Louise Bourgeois. Still, nothing rivals the view. Cloud-free days mean terraces face the impossibly blue Mediterranean, with dazzling superyachts delineating sky and sea. From €750 (£630), room only. [maybourneriviera.com](https://www.maybourneriviera.com)

Clockwise from right: Caesar salad at Casa di Langa; suite at Casa di Langa; guest suite at Hoshino Resorts KAI Poroto

GOURMET GETAWAY

Feast your eyes — and taste buds — on these delicious new openings, where food and flavour take centre stage

★ Casa di Langa, Italy

If you're travelling to Piedmont for all things truffle, then this is the place for you. At first glance, terraced down a hillside in the Langhe area, it feels more Californian than Italian, with rooms dressed in wood and local granite, and clean lines throughout. But step into restaurant Fàula and you'll be whisked back to the unmistakable cuisine of Piedmont, with gourmet takes on the region's dishes, from *ravioli del plin* and tomatoes stuffed with garlicky, anchovy-rich bagna cauda, to sashimi of Fassona beef. As for the truffles, they're everywhere — shaved onto your food, discovered on a truffle hunt and under the keen watch of the truffle concierge, who's on hand to help you choose the fungus of your dreams, then ship it home for you. From €455 (£385), B&B. [casadilanga.com](https://www.casadilanga.com)

RUNNERS-UP

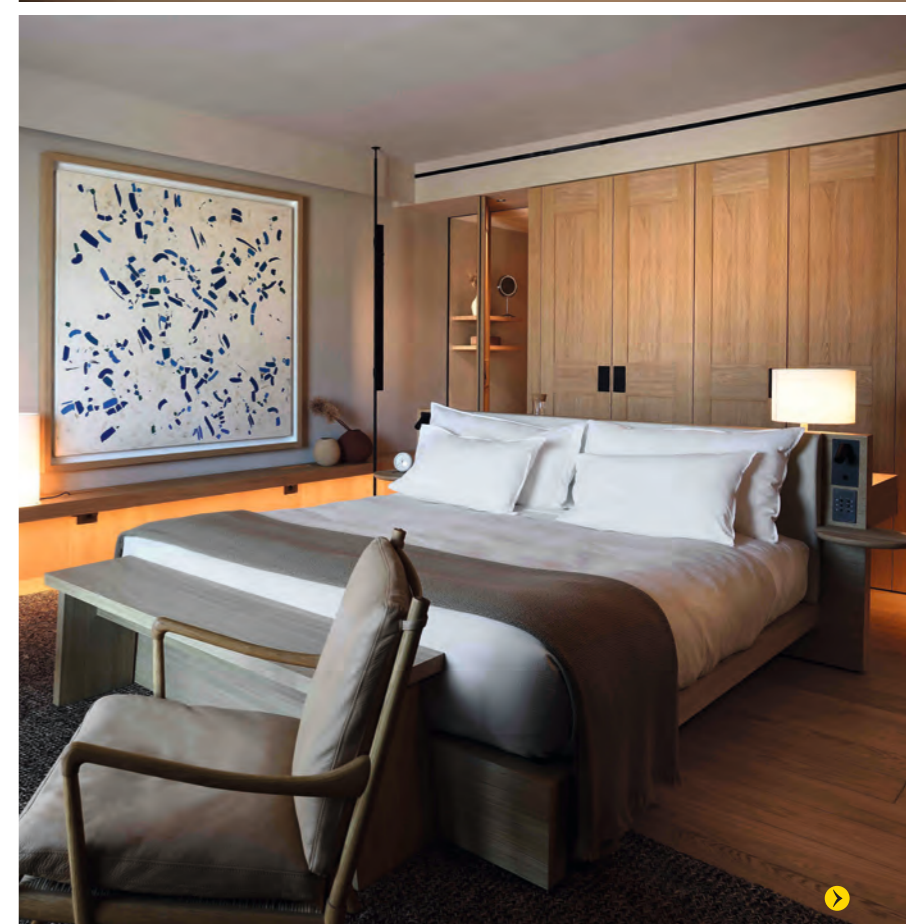
CASA SILENCIO, MEXICO

The founders of spirit brand Mezcal El Silencio are behind this six-suite retreat on the distillery's Oaxaca estate. Highlighting both modern and ancient building techniques, the hotel channels the landscape with recycled wood ceilings and polished Salvadorean stone, brought to life with local textiles. Through mezcal-making and -tasting experiences, you'll dive into traditions surrounding the spirit's creation and consumption. Dinners are shared around a communal table and cocktails make full use of the house spirits — go for a smoky paloma, made with grapefruit and lime. From MXN20,000 (£815), all-inclusive. [casasilencio.com](https://www.casasilencio.com)

NORDELAIA, ITALY

Barbecued cabbage, onion tart, pasta with anchovy dripping — there's something different about L'Orto, Nordelaia's gourmet restaurant. Its name, meaning 'The Vegetable Patch', should give you a clue, as this nearly zero-waste restaurant serves dishes revolving around local vegetables — plus fish from the Ligurian coast, 30 miles south. It's a ground-breaking move in meat-centric Piedmont, but it's not entirely pescatarian — chef Charles Pearce cooks with leftover juices and fat from the restaurant downstairs, which serves local classics. The setting's not bad, either — views of the vine-braided hills make a worthy distraction from the food. From €300 (£250), B&B. [nordelaia.com](https://www.nordelaia.com)

IMAGES: AKIFUMI YAMABE; PH MICHELE ALBERTO SERENI



LORD OF THE MANOR

These palatial piles have it all, from rambling grounds to opulent boudoirs

Cashel Palace Hotel, Ireland

This former archbishop's home in Cashel, set among the green hills of County Tipperary, has had a multi-million-euro revamp. Step past the log fires and period features of the reception rooms and you'll emerge into a walled garden, where views stretch over fields to the Rock of Cashel, the medieval castle that once served as the seat of the Kings of Munster. Glimpses of this grand heritage lie behind the hotel's transformation — regally decorated spaces with plush upholstery and lavish artwork. There's a slick pool and spa, too, a new bedroom wing and The Bishop's Buttery restaurant reboot, which already has gourmets whispering of Michelin stars. From €289 (£245), B&B. [cashelpalacehotel.ie](https://www.cashelpalacehotel.ie)



Over-pool villa at Joali Being

WELLNESS WONDER

From health retreats to tropical spas, these are the best hotels where you can switch off in style

Joali Being, Maldives

A honeymooners' haven of undeniable beauty, the Maldives nonetheless suffers from a certain uniformity — identikit resorts can be hard to tell apart. But that's not the case at Joali Being in the Raa Atoll, which, perhaps surprisingly, is the first resort in the country devoted to wellness in all its guises. Simply put, everything here is designed to do you good. That means meals are calorie conscious as well as delicious; the sprawling spa includes a Pilates facility and the island country's first cryotherapy chamber. You won't be short of expert assistance with staff members including PTs, naturopaths and nutritionists, and at The Learning Centre, hands-on classes cover everything from herbology to meditation practice. Throw in earth-to-table dining and elegant villas in calming cream tones and you'll never want to leave. From \$2,340 (£1,915), B&B. [joali.com](https://www.joali.com)

RUNNERS-UP

SIX SENSES IBIZA

The White Isle has entered a new, grown-up age with eco-luxe Six Senses, lazing across 20 sun-soaked acres on the isle's bohemian northern shores. Wellness programmes are offered in a 1,200sq-metre spa; veg-centric, farm-to-fork fare comes courtesy of chef Eyal Shani, and it's all powered by self-produced renewable energy. From €570 (£480), B&B. [sixsenses.com](https://www.sixsenses.com)

THE WOODWARD, GENEVA

Making the most of the Alpine air and soothing blues of Lake Geneva, this grand quayside retreat is busy making a name for itself as a Swiss sanctuary of calm. The 26 suites are decked out in stone and duck-egg blue hues, but it's the vast spa that beckons most, with a 21-metre pool, saunas, Swedish baths and treatments by luxury cosmetic brand, Guerlain. From CHF1,100 (£965), B&B. [oetkercollection.com](https://www.oetkercollection.com)

RUNNERS-UP

THE RETREAT AT ELCOT PARK, BERKSHIRE

Just outside Hungerford, The Signet Collection's second property has all the urbane charms you'd expect from an 18th-century country pile: croquet on the lawn, landscaped gardens and a well-stocked whisky library. But it's full of judicious modern additions, too, with pan-Asian fine dining at Yu and a cabana-flanked pool. From £180, B&B. [retreatelcotpark.com](https://www.retreatelcotpark.com)

RAFFLES UDAIPUR, INDIA

Set on a 21-acre private island on Udai Sagar lake, India's first Raffles property is an idyllic base for travellers looking to decompress after a day exploring. Check out the Raffles Spa, where the pool offers prime sunset views, and guests can toast their stay with the Long Bar's signature Udaipur Sling — gin, guava and frangipani soda. From INR 45,000 (£465), B&B. [raffles.com](https://www.affles.com)

SNOW QUEEN

These piste-side pads dazzle with mountain views, excellent service and top-notch design

★ Hotel de Len, Italy
This bijou 22-room opening completely reimagines what was Hotel Impero, a faded landmark of upmarket Cortina-d'Ampezzo — one of Europe's oldest, chicest ski resorts, and host of the Winter Olympics 2026. Hotelier Aldo Melpignano has brought earthy, southern Italian charm to proceedings: out goes old-school luxury chintz and in comes playful, contemporary alpine design. The titular 'len' ('wood' in the local Ladin language), comes in vast, almost hypnotic quantities — much of it reclaimed — on walls, floors and furnishings in various hues and finishes, against which choice pieces of colour-popping decor contrast. Several rooms have balconies with Dolomite views, but you can savour the vistas from the airy rooftop spa overlooking village and slopes if yours doesn't. That's not all: two restaurants serve dishes that aim to draw on the best local, sustainable produce and there's a cafe-bar and an intimate speakeasy. From €255 (£215), B&B. hoteldelen.it

RUNNERS-UP

HOTEL ERINGER, SWITZERLAND

A hit opening on the Swiss slopes last season for its contemporary design, this modern chalet in Thyon-Les Collons comes with a first-floor restaurant and sun-trap terrace, as well as the Deck bar, which looks set to see some lively apres action this winter. From €180 (£150), B&B. en.eringerhotel.ch

DAS GERLOS, AUSTRIA

This sustainably minded 'modern hostel' in Gerlos is 100% powered by renewable energy. Slick, minimalist rooms come in earthy colours and natural fibres, and rates include organic breakfasts and afternoon tea on return from the slopes. From €75 (£65), B&B. dasgerlos.com



The pool at Sussurro

CASTAWAY

Whether for the idyllic views, powdery beaches or the peace and quiet, we've found the ultimate desert island-style escapes

★ Sussurro, Mozambique

There's a reason this looks like the island retreat of your daydreams — Zimbabwean-born owners Sarah Birkett and Adam Humphreys dreamt up the idea for six thatched bungalows on the edge of the Indian Ocean while working in Europe. On a sandy peninsula within the protected Bazaruto marine reserve, they've made their vision a reality. Sustainability is at the core of this barefoot, minimalist escape, run on solar power and fitted with locally crafted furniture, with pottery, artwork, woven rugs and antiques sourced from across the continent. Personal space is in abundance, too, with each calming, rustic-toned villa claiming ample space both inside and out. As for the food, it's hyper-local, with fruit and vegetables grown in the hotel's own garden and fish caught daily from the dazzlingly blue waters. From US\$ 1,195 (£988), all inclusive, including non-motorised activities. sussurro.co

RUNNERS-UP

HABITAS BACALAR, MEXICO

Habitas's opening on the jungle-backed shores of the Bacalar Lagoon in southeast Mexico, is a balm for the world-weary. Bed down in one of 35 neutral, luxurious tents, each with forest or lagoon views, and wake early for sunrise stand-up paddleboarding. Both the spa and restaurant, meanwhile, draw heavily on traditional Maya ingredients from the region. From US\$230 (£195). ourhabitas.com

MANGO HOUSE SEYCHELLES

Photographer Gian Paolo Barbieri offered his former home on Mahé to Hilton's LXR Hotels and Resorts group, who've transformed it into a secluded getaway of 41 contemporary rooms. Dine in one of the five restaurants, or while away the days on Anse aux Poules Bleues, one of Mahé's most ravishing beaches. From SCR7,953 (£500), B&B. hilton.com □