

Condé Nast Traveller

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**SPECIAL
ISSUE**

THE HOTLIST

OUR PICK OF THE BEST NEW HOTELS IN THE WORLD

THE INSIDE TRACK ON
EUROPE'S SECRET BEACHES

TUSCANY
MEXICO CITY
MALAYSIA
PUGLIA FOOD

EXCLUSIVE
THE HIGHS AND
LOWS OF THE BILLION-
DOLLAR POKER
KINGS OF CHINA

HIDDEN TURKEY

DISCOVER THE TINY BEACH VILLAGE WITH THE GROWING REPUTATION

DON'T MISS
THE DEFINITIVE
GUIDE TO THE
MOST SPECIAL
PLACES TO STAY
IN VIETNAM

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SWEDEN

ETT HEM, STOCKHOLM

The name means 'a home', which is just what this 12-room townhouse looks like. If, that is, your home has an enviable collection of modern art, a marble hammam in the basement, a walled garden and exceptionally friendly staff. The 1910 building was entirely stripped before being refurbished with beautiful panelling that frames a pitch-perfect mix of objects assembled by British designer Ilse Crawford, including Scandinavian classics (a Pelican chair here, a Papa Bear chair there) and lots of stuff from chic interiors store Svenskt Tenn. With so few rooms (the largest is a duplex with a free-standing tub in the bedroom), it's easy to kid yourself you really do live here, especially when the chef asks if you'd prefer to eat in the kitchen, dining room or orangery. A short walk from the centre, it's great for those who want to spend as much time relaxing in their hotel as they do exploring the city. **FLASH POINT** There's nowhere more beautiful, stylish or comfortable in Stockholm. +46 8 200590; www.ettthemstockholm.se. Doubles from about £390





MOROCCO PALAIS NAMASKAR, MARRAKECH

The best time to arrive is at dusk. Log fires crackle, candle-lit lanterns line the pathways, and a cocktail – they do a very good mint-and-vodka number – beckons. Could this be the loveliest of all the recent hotel openings in Marrakech? Instead of miles of hand-carved detailing and meticulous mosaic work (impressive but everywhere), designer Imaad Rahmouni, a protégé of Philippe Starck, has gone for something altogether more current. Yes, there are gold domes and towering stone arches, but here they are combined with low-slung, cubist villas straight from the LA hills, with industrial, steel-framed floor-to-ceiling windows and private pools. The smaller rooms, still vast, are set around a slate-lined waterworld of plunge pools. For Sunday brunch, oversized cushions are scattered around the lawn, bottles of the palest pink rosé pause in silver ice buckets and everyone reclines like Romans. Tables are laden with oysters and glistening smoked salmon, great wheels of cheese, crunchy salads and still-warm breads. And that's just the starter. **FLASH POINT** It's part of the Oetker Collection of hotels (Le Bristol Paris, Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc), so you know you're in for some tremendous, heel-clicking service. +212 5 24 29 98 00; www.palaisnamaskar.com. Doubles from about £510

USA WYTHE HOTEL, NEW YORK

In a former barrel factory just over the bridge from Manhattan, this is the first serious hotel in the hipster-thronged Williamsburg neighbourhood. The Wythe's raw, industrial look fits its big bones perfectly, with exposed brick, mosaic and tiled floors and rough-hewn wood ceilings. Rooms have a minimal, loft-style look and wow views of the Manhattan skyline through the floor-to-ceiling windows. The stripped-back look continues in the white-tiled bathrooms, with windows in the walk-in showers so you can keep an eye on that view as you wash. There's no room service, so snag a table at the hotel's Reynard restaurant, a capacious, friendly spot staffed by a good-looking, inked-up bunch. Dishes include delicate broccolini with pine nuts, mint and yogurt, and a superb, lardon-studded oyster-and-clam stew. The rooftop bar was the place to be last summer, with queues around the block. Let's see what happens this year. **FLASH POINT** Brooklyn's scene is more exciting than Manhattan's, and the Wythe is slap bang in the buzziest bit – a perfect Williamsburg pied-à-terre. +1 718 460 8000; www.wythehotel.com. Doubles from about £150



INDIA SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, MUMBAI

There aren't many hotels that can attract a sophisticated clientele with a buffet restaurant. But Indian cultural events often revolve around a buffet (think of those glorious wedding feasts), and the Shangri-La's new Seven restaurant is like Fresh & Wild, Cecconi's, Chutney Mary and Yo! Sushi rolled into one: a humming food hotspot offering beautifully prepared treats made to order by specialist regional chefs, from shot glasses of crayfish salad and plates of sushi to wood-fired pizzas; children will adore the dessert buffet, with its chocolate fountain and ice-cream cones. Other than lantern-covered walls and a soaring staircase in the atrium, the only design surprises are bathrooms with glass walls, so bathers can soak in city views, and a circular fridge bar dispensing fine wines by the glass (not easy to find in Mumbai). On the rooftop veranda, guests lounge around the pool sipping tea, before retreating to the spa – one of the city's biggest – staffed by angel-fingered therapists. **FLASH POINT** Most of Mumbai's hotels are grand old institutions; this feels contemporary and fresh. +91 22 6162 8000; www.shangri-la.com. Doubles from about £170



PHOTOGRAPH: ADRIAN GAUT

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**ECUADOR
MASHPI LODGE**

A 'cocoon in the clouds' is how the naturalist founder of this lodge has described it. Set in isolated splendour in a private, 3,000-acre reserve in the Ecuadorian cloud forest, it is surrounded by howler monkeys, pumas and every shade of hummingbird. There are aerial gondolas and bicycles to ride through the forest canopy, waterfalls and rock pools to swim in, and night walks into the verdant forest. Nature is visible from every window – trees bang against the glass, colourful birds flash in front of you. The interior design does not try to compete with such splendour: the 22 bedrooms are elegant but simple, with slate floors and sleek lines; luxury comes with the service: cold towels and homemade pink lemonade after jungle walks; the laundry service that picks up your dirty clothes and leaves them cleaned and pressed for the morning. It is also in the fruits of the jungle you find on your table: manioc-crust red tuna; a salad of palm hearts; ishingpo sauce with your steak; soursop mousse latticed with dark chocolate.

FLASH POINT For the first time the natural wonders of Ecuador are within reach of eco-conscious smart travellers. Utterly sensational. +593 2298 8200; www.mashpilodge.com. Two nights from £835 per person, all inclusive

**SWITZERLAND
THE ALPINA GSTAAD**

The first big five-star hotel opening in the Swiss Alps for a generation caused a Christmas sensation. It took 15 years to complete and cost £240 million – and it's not hard to see where the money went. Ingenious design ensures, for example, that cars remain invisible; each of the 56 rooms has a fireplace and a balcony with mountain views; furnishings include antique chests, cowbell lamps and wood panelling reclaimed from old barns. Swimming outdoors in the snow in the heated pool is pure joy; there is also an indoor pool in the Six Senses Spa (try the QMS oxygen facial for an instant lift). If Gstaad is famous for its chalet life – Valentino and Claudia Schiffer are regulars – it is to the Alpina's Restaurant Sommet that fun-lovers now gravitate, to feast on Marcus Lindner's Catalan-influenced food. There is also innovative Japanese at MEGU (the asparagus in okaki crumble is sensational) and Swiss Stübli for fondue and raclette. **FLASH POINT** The Palace hotel has ruled the roost here for so long, but the Alpina's spa, sushi and sassiness inject Gstaad with a new cool. +41 33 888 9888; www.thealpinagstaad.ch. Doubles from about £450



www.designer.com



CHINA

PARK HYATT NINGBO RESORT & SPA

Park Hyatt's first hotel in China is built in the style of a traditional village on the shores of Dongqian Lake in Ningbo, a newly emerging country area that everyone is talking about, two-and-a-half hours' drive from Shanghai. Getting here is part of the experience. After wending through the foothills of Mount Fuquan, past cloud-laced terraces growing fragrant white tea, you cross a stone bridge amid swirling mist and fire torches. It feels like passing into a Chinese fable. From the outside, the whitewashed buildings with sloping black roofs and winged gables create a classical Chinese hamlet scene against a backdrop of forested mountains and a vast lake. Inside, tradition gives way to contemporary splendour, with gallery-worthy art installations by local artists adorning the long marble halls. In the rooms, large windows and balconies frame the lake, landscaped ponds and gardens. Ningbo's famed seafood and Zhejiang dishes such as Dongpo pork are served at the Seafood House restaurant, and there are traditional tuina massages in the Yue Hu Spa, set in its own Taoism-inspired, 10-villa sanctuary. **FLASH POINT** A genuinely calming retreat within striking distance of one of China's fastest-growing cities. +86 574 2888 1234; www.ningbo.park.hyatt.com. Doubles from about £170



MOROCCO SELMAN MARRAKECH

Of the three hotels designed by Jacques Garcia in Marrakech (the others being La Mamounia and Delano Marrakech), the Selman is by far the most dramatic. The 56-suite contemporary palace sprawls across 15 acres, with 16 equally lavish stables to house the thoroughbred Arabian steeds of hotelier Abdeslam Bennani Smires. Although the public spaces feel like an OTT stage-set – soaring black marble, monster chandeliers and formal satin furnishings in the colours of Quality Street wrappers – the lavender- and jasmine-scented gardens around the 80-metre pool are wonderfully soothing and the roomy suites blessedly tasteful. This isn't a put-up-your-dusty-boots kind of place; it's a glam theatre in which to slip on a bejewelled kaftan and embroidered babouches (having been pummelled in the country's only hammam-style Henri Chenot spa). Shimmy along dark passages to the lamp-lit bar for a cocktail, then indulge in rich French food in the theatrical dining room. At the outdoor restaurant, Le Pavillon, elegant couples pick at light Mediterranean lunches then lie beneath date-laden trees by the pool. There are glorious sunset views of the Atlas Mountains from the roof-terrace bar, a reminder of the adventures to be had all around you. **FLASH POINT** Bold, elegant and relaxing at the same time? That's some achievement. +212 5 24 45 96 00; www.selman-marrakech.com. Doubles from about £310

PUERTO RICO DORADO BEACH, A RITZ-CARLTON RESERVE

On the island's exclusive north shore, this fantastic new hotel was known as Su Casa in the 1920s, when it was the estate of Clara Livingston, an adventurous American heiress. The cowgirl-turned-aviator (Amelia Earhart was a friend) later sold it to Laurance Rockefeller and it became a tropical frolic spot for the international demi-monde of actors and politicians. History has not been swept aside. The original Su Casa is now a utopian four-bedroom villa furnished with antiques (including Livingston's original Spanish dresser), updated with hi-tech toys and marble bathrooms. Rooms at the hotel have outdoor showers, light-sensor valet cupboards and black-granite bars stocked with sufficient spirits for a blinding round of cocktails. The sea is never far away, whether you're lounging on a Bill Bensley pool chaise or sipping on José Andrés's coconut, jicama and quinoa ceviche in Mi Casa restaurant. The sight lines are Rem Koolhaas-clean. As you listen to birds chirp in Spa Botánico's treehouse treatment rooms, a thought alights: here you are among the privileged few. **FLASH POINT** A new level of luxury has arrived in the Caribbean. This is now the place to beat. +1 787 626 1100; www.ritzcarlton.com. Doubles from about £575

PHOTOGRAPH: MARKUS KIRCHGESSNER

