

TRAVEL + LEISURE

Editors'
Choice
Awards

It List 2020

The Best New Hotels

in the World

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Wagons of fresh produce at Puglia's Borgo Egnazia resort, page 80.

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A suite at the Château du Grand-Lucé, a historic estate in France's Loire Valley. The hotel is one of 72 winning properties on our 2020 It List (page 15). Photograph by Roberto Frankenberg.

LETTER *from the Editor*

I FIRMLY BELIEVE that when you check in to a hotel, you get to drop not only your physical baggage, but a bit of emotional baggage, too. Gone are the worries about doing the laundry and getting dinner ready by 7, and, heaven forbid, making the bed. You are in the hands of an entire team of professionals, and they've got your back.

The beauty of hotel living is that you can also pretend to be another person: a better, slightly more mysterious version of yourself. At least, that's what I do. I order both jasmine tea and black coffee from room service in the morning (because why not?) and occasionally just have french fries and champagne for lunch.

Is this indulgent? Absolutely—and that's the point. The best hotels make you feel spoiled and nurtured, safe and also seamlessly connected to the outside world. Our annual hotels issue is packed with properties that do all these things with grace and style. Check out the It List, our editors' choice awards of the best new hotels of the year. These places, which include a Loire Valley château (this month's cover star) and a series of lodges in Bhutan, are all compelling.

Elsewhere in the issue, our executive editor, Flora Stubbs, visits the highly anticipated Newt in Somerset, in England. It's a brilliant restoration of a centuries-old estate that looks to the past yet still feels thoroughly modern. Peter Jon Lindberg journeys south to Costa Rica's Arenal region, where the new Nayara Tented Camp takes glamping to the next level. In Miami, Boris Fishman discovers inspiration at the Betsy, an unlikely cultural hub on a busy strip of South Beach.

Of course, staying in a hotel is also about the people you're staying with—or without. Jancee Dunn discusses the virtues of a solo stay, while Andrew Sean Greer brings his twin brother along on an epic, karaoke-fueled birthday journey to Japan. I took my own family with me to Puglia, Italy, which I write about in this issue. The hotels we called home that week tugged at my heart because they were the backdrop to my son's first introduction to Europe. We were all bigger, happier, and better-fed versions of ourselves on that trip—no doubt because we'd left a lot of our baggage at the front door.



Jacqui and her son, Bobby, in front of the pool at the Oberoi Rajvillas in Jaipur, India.

FROM MY TRAVELS

Who takes a four-year-old to India? Apparently, I do! My family's most ambitious adventure to date went off without a hitch thanks to the expert guidance of **Rose Thomas** (rthomas@greaves.tvl.com; 224-765-4545), a T+L A-List advisor who set up child-friendly activities like feeding rescued elephants in Jaipur. We began at the iconic and welcoming **Oberoi New Delhi** (oberoihotels.com; doubles from \$280) before spending a Christmas Eve filled with

caroling, mulled wine, and the most decadent buffet at the **Oberoi Amarvilas** (oberoihotels.com; doubles from \$945), in Agra. We also toured the Taj Mahal, where my iPhone was "blessed" in the waters of the central fountain (it still works). Then we were off to the **Oberoi Rajvillas** (oberoihotels.com; doubles from \$635), in Jaipur, for peacocks and beautiful sunsets. At the **Leela Palace Udaipur** (theleela.com; doubles from \$605)—voted the No. 1 hotel in our most recent World's Best Awards—Bobby made a new friend in our patient butler, Nimisha Solanki. And at the **Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai** (tajhotels.com; doubles from \$410) we had one last family dinner at Shamiana—the city's first 24-hour coffee shop, now a modern restaurant that was packed on a Monday with locals enjoying a night out.

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TRAVEL + LEISURE

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L I S T - 2 0 2 0

The Best New Hotels in the World

Our annual guide to the essential hotel openings (and reopenings) of the year took us to 32 countries in search of the unforgettable—from a spring-fed resort in Taiwan with the world's most luxurious bath to a West Texas escape that feels like a supersize Donald Judd sculpture. For the full collection of 72 hotels, go to tandl.me/it-list.

EDITED BY LILA HARRON BATTIS & JOHN WOGAN

The Oberoi Marrakech, which one editor checked out on a long weekend, has fragrant gardens and private swimming pools for each villa.

Hotel
Château du
Grand-Lucé
Loire Valley,
France

THIS NEOCLASSICAL château has had many lives in the past century alone: as a military hospital, a sanatorium, a forgotten government holding, and until 2017 the passion project of an interior designer, who lavishly restored the 18th-century landmark. Now, thanks to the new owners, the hoteliers behind Utah's Washington School House, travelers can join the ranks of Mozart, Rousseau, and Voltaire, all of whom stayed at the 80-acre estate in its heyday.

The Pilot Hotels team sourced archival French wallpaper for most of the 17 rooms and reupholstered antique furnishings in lush fabrics by Pierre Frey, Jean-Paul Gaultier, and Christian Lacroix. There's no check-in desk; rather, guests are welcomed as they enter the courtyard gate. From there, it's off to embrace timeless pleasures, like strolling through manicured gardens dotted with statues given by Louis XV, swimming in the fountain turned pool, and savoring *pains au chocolat* and other Gallic specialties at the restaurant Le Lucé. chateaugrandlucé.com; doubles from \$531. — LAURA ITZKOWITZ





SHISHI-IWA HOUSE KARUIZAWA, JAPAN

The mountain resort town of Karuizawa lies about 90 minutes north of Tokyo by train, but feels much farther. It's a fitting home for one of Japan's best new getaways: a 10-room sanctuary designed to stimulate creativity in an isolated, rural setting. Pritzker Prize-winning architect Shigeru Ban prioritized the preservation of the densely wooded site: the two-story timber building was carefully angled to eliminate the need to cut trees while maximizing the views of surrounding greenery. Ban also designed the custom furniture for the spare, monochrome guest rooms, which provide a tree-house-style setting in which to bliss out. shishi-iwahouse.jp; doubles from \$363.

— CATHERINE SHAW



Palihouse Miami Beach

THE MID-BEACH stretch from 23rd Street to 63rd Street continues its ascent as one of the city's hottest neighborhoods with the October opening of Palihouse Miami Beach.

It's the latest venture (and first on the East Coast) from the L.A.-based Palisociety, which has brought its colorful, whimsically retro aesthetic to a restored Art Deco gem from the 1940s. My guest room felt more like a studio apartment, complete with a kitchenette, vintage oil portraits, and antique rugs. For food

and cocktails, there's Greenbrier Swim & Social, which essentially uses the entire hotel as its dining room—servers would bring me a breakfast wrap, kale salad, fish tacos, or a bottle of rosé whether I chose to lounge poolside or hang in the light-filled lobby. The hospitality is on-point and breezy, and though the property isn't oceanfront—it's on Indian Creek, two blocks away from the sand—you can request beach butler service, which includes chairs, umbrellas, and picnic lunches, all laid out at the water's edge. palisociety.com; doubles from \$250. — JOHN WOGAN



THE REST OF THE IT LIST **AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST** Al Bait Sharjah, U.A.E.; Jao Camp, Botswana; Lekkerwater Beach Lodge, South Africa; Magashi, Rwanda; One&Only Gorilla's Nest, Rwanda; Singita Kwitonda, Rwanda **ASIA** Aman Kyoto, Japan; Chow Kit, Kuala Lumpur; Hotel de la Coupole, Vietnam; JW Marriott Marquis Hotel Shanghai Pudong; Raffles Singapore; Rosewood Hong Kong; Taj Rishikesh Resort & Spa, Uttarakhand, India **AUSTRALIA** Mount Mulligan Lodge, Queensland **CARIBBEAN** Ambergis Cay, Turks and Caicos; Eden Rock, St. Bart's; Finca Victoria, Puerto Rico **CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA** Cirqa, Peru; Kachi Lodge, Bolivia; Nayara Tented Camp, Costa Rica **EUROPE** a.d. 1768 Boutique Hotel, Italy; August, Belgium; Belmont Cadogan, London; Britannia Hotel, Norway; Casa Maria Luigia, Italy; Finca Serena, Spain; Hotel de la Ville, a Rocco Forte Hotel, Rome; Lily of the Valley, France; Masseria Torre Maizza, a Rocco Forte Hotel, Italy; Mezzatore, Italy; the Newt in Somerset, England; Palacio Solecio, Spain; Plage Palace, France; Parilio, Greece; the Standard, London; the Stratford, London; the St. Regis Venice **NORTH AMERICA** Asbury Ocean Club, New Jersey; Blackberry Mountain, Tennessee; Canyon Ranch Woodside, California; Captain Whidbey Inn, Washington; Casa Adela, Mexico; the Times Square Edition, New York City; Equinox Hotel, New York City; Four Seasons Hotel Lanai at Koele, a Sensei Retreat, Hawaii; Juana Bautista, Mexico; the Lodge at Blue Sky, Auberge Resorts Collection, Utah; MacArthur Place Hotel & Spa, California; Maison de la Luz, New Orleans; Santa Monica Proper Hotel, California; Shinola Hotel, Detroit; Soho Warehouse, Los Angeles; Sofitel Mexico City Reforma; TWA Hotel, New York City.

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF PALISOCIETY; HIROYUKI HIRAI/ COURTESY OF SHISHI-IWA HOUSE