



Miles & Miles

READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

The Best Resorts in the World: 2021 Readers' Choice

BY CNT EDITORS

October 5, 2021

For our 34th annual [Readers' Choice Awards](#) survey, registered voters weighed in on their favorite resorts around the globe. As the world has begun to reopen and readjust, the results reflect the kinds of properties you longed to visit when you couldn't travel and the ones you returned to first once you could. More than 800,000 of you filled out our survey, and while we're always curious about where you've been and where you're going, we're especially excited to learn about the truly memorable places that sparked your imagination and stayed with you when travel seemed out of reach. Here are the [50 resorts you loved](#) most this year.

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\$\$\$ | 🏡 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2019, 2020, 2021

It's not like **Bali** needed another hotel, especially around the island's teeming spiritual hub of Ubud. But the notoriously inventive Bill Bensley envisioned something wholly divergent for this 10-acre patch of jungle north of the city on the Wos River: a fanciful take on a tented camp pitched by early-19th-century spice traders. This is hotel as theater: On arrival, visitors receive a survival kit (sunscreen, insect repellent, a map), plus a carved walking stick to help pick their way over the suspension bridges leading to 22 black canvas tents with saltwater plunge pools. Bensley's light-footprint approach (not a single tree was felled) means the camp blends seamlessly into its backdrop, the tent walls porous to the hooting birds of the jungle. It's ideal for those looking to approach Bali in a more conscious way—staying here is like returning to the island's former wild self.

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49. Shinta Mani Wild — Ou Dak Koteh, Cambodia

\$\$\$ |  READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2020, 2021

Suddenly, there is a very big reason to stay on in Cambodia after seeing the temples at [Angkor Wat](#). Roughly halfway between the capital, Phnom Penh, and the south coast are 850 acres of protected private land hosting a flamboyant new camp. Opt to arrive by zip-line, landing next to a waterfall with huge double sun loungers in vivid greens and yellows, driftwood statues of life-size elephants, and 15 tented rooms, some with rolltop bathtubs on the riverside deck. While staying here, join anti-elephant-poaching patrols or explore the hardwood forest between the Southern Cardamom and Kirirom national parks by mountain bike and kayak. There are seemingly unlimited spa treatments, a sensational 100-foot-long pool, and a daily menu under brilliant chef Patricia Yeo, who uses foraged greens, mushrooms, and fruits from the forest. Shinta Mani Wild opens up an entire region to the jetset, with style and a firm focus on the environment.

MAKE A RESERVATION

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Courtesy Triple Creek Ranch

HOTEL

48. Triple Creek Ranch — Darby, Montana →

\$\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

Just 75 miles south of Missoula, **Triple Creek** nevertheless manages to feel like it's in its own world. With 25 log cabins looking out onto the Bitterroot Mountains, all-inclusive Triple Creek pairs upscale rusticity with isolation—we're talking exposed log walls, slate bathrooms, and private hot tubs. Fill your days with horseback riding, hiking or snowshoeing, a fly-casting clinic, archery, or tennis, or simply relax by the pool.

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47. COMO Bhutan, Uma Paro and Uma Punakha — Bhutan



\$\$\$ |  READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2021

The Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan is home to two magical destination retreats by COMO, each of which offers its own unique pleasures. In the Paro Valley, the intimate **COMO Uma Paro** melds Bhutanese craftsmanship with signature COMO amenities—especially those centered around wellness. You're in a prime location for hiking and exploring the natural wonders around you, not to mention trekking to visit nearby Buddhist temples. About a three-hour drive away, the 11-room **COMO Uma Punakha** sits at the farthest edge of the Punakha Valley, offering guests views of terraced rice fields, the temple of Khamsum Yuley Namgay, and snowcapped Himalayan peaks. The restaurant Bukhari, so named for the traditional Bhutanese fireplace, might be the best place to savor these vistas. Park yourself on the outdoor terrace, preferably by a smoking, standing fireplace, for a seasonally driven dinner made with local organic ingredients—red rice, hand-ground buckwheat flour, apple cider vinegar, and hand-molded farm cheese.

HOTEL

46. andBeyond Sandibe Okavango Safari Lodge (Nxabega Okavango Tented Camp, Xaranna Okavango Delta, and Sandibe Okavango Delta) — Botswana →

\$\$\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2021

Luxury safari outfitter andBeyond operates a trio of lodges in Botswana's Okavango Delta, each with their own unique appeal. Set on a private concession, adjacent to wildlife-rich Moremi Game Reserve, [Sandibe Okavango Safari Lodge](#) features a striking series of decks, indoor/outdoor lounges, pathways, and curved, wooden rooftops—all inspired by the nests of golden weaver birds—that make this a safari experience far from the ordinary. [Xaranna Okavango Delta Camp](#), meanwhile, is secluded on its own island (arrival is by motorboat most of the year), and water lilies, hippos, and frogs provide inspiration for its playful decor. Nearby, Nxabega Okavango Tented Camp comprises nine tented suites that look out on mopane woodlands and flooded grasslands, offering unparalleled access to Botswana's famed wildlife.

HOTEL

45. C Lazy U Ranch — Granby, Colorado →

\$\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

This Colorado dude ranch offers a family-friendly version of the American West experience, with horseback riding, white water rafting, fly fishing, ice skating, skiing, and sleigh rides. On 8,500 acres, the ranch does it all, pairing programs for kids with luxurious spa treatments for adults. Log cabins have been renovated in recent years, and with their indoor, heated riding area, visitors can ride horseback year-round.

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Eschewing traditional safari motifs, this trio of private villas in [South Africa's](#) Sabi Sands Game Reserve is all about clean lines and ultra-modern design: Think raw concrete, rusted steel, statement blown-glass chandeliers, and colorful works of art, including portraits by Loyiso Mkize. A similarly forward-thinking approach to sustainability means the property is equipped with solar panels, a greywater recycling system, and a fleet of electric Land Cruiser safari vehicles. Prowling the surrounding landscape as stealthily as leopards, the cruisers allow guests to get surprisingly close to the Big Five, which are easier to encounter here than almost anywhere else across Africa.

Courtesy Six Senses Bhutan

HOTEL

43. Six Senses Bhutan (Thimphu, Punakha, Paro, Gangtey, and Bumthang) — Bhutan →

 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2019, 2020, 2021

Six Senses is the latest of the global hotel heavyweights to land in [Bhutan](#), and its culturally considered approach is a natural fit for a pristine kingdom that has been largely unchanged for centuries. The wellness-focused “hotel” is actually a

Bumthang, which features a peaceful design aesthetic inspired by the surrounding forests. Of all the outposts, rustic and intimate **Punakha** is the standout. The lush rice paddies and traditional farmhouses of the low-lying countryside inspired the Himalayan-wood living room and bar that cantilevers dramatically over the pool. There is a spa and 16 calming all-wood suites split across four pale-buttermilk buildings (plus a trio of villas), all with a bukhari stove and sliding glass doors that open onto a deck where the forest-clad mountains appear almost close enough to touch.

Courtesy The Bodrum EDITION

HOTEL

42. The Bodrum Edition — Turkey →

\$\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2021

and villas are decorated in warm neutrals which draw your eyes outdoors toward the bright colors of the blue Aegean Sea, the green garden, and the vibrant pink bougainvilleas. Peruvian chef Diego Muñoz runs the two onsite restaurants, which pair Turkish and Latin American influences, while a Turkish hammam is, of course, the centerpiece of the resort's spa.

[MAKE A RESERVATION](#)

Powered by Expedia

Courtesy Dorado Beach, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve

HOTEL

41. Dorado Beach, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve — Puerto Rico →

\$\$\$ | 🏆 GOLD LIST 2020 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

spaces. Rooms are bookended by beach-facing terraces and outdoor showers, and museum-quality art is scattered on tree branches. But it's the Spa Botánico, a tropical wonderland that's much more than the usual cluster of treatment rooms, that really sticks to Rockefeller's approach. After visiting, you'll remember the 95-year-old ficus at the entrance most clearly. That or the tree house in the canopy where you had the greatest massage of your life.

[MAKE A RESERVATION](#)

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Courtesy Nanuku Auberge Resorts Collection

HOTEL

40. Nanuku, Auberge Resorts Collection — Pacific Harbour, Fiji →

\$\$\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

water rafting, treks through waterfalls, surfing, and cage-less bull shark diving. Guests can also help rehabilitate Nanuku's private coral reef by assisting in coral and mangrove planting with the resort's marine biologist. At the end of the day, watch the sun go down at the on-site restaurant, which serves up fresh seafood caught right in Beqa Lagoon, along with South Pacific specialties like ivi chestnuts and peach palm hearts.

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DOOK

HOTEL

39. **Thorntree River Lodge** — Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, Zambia →

\$\$\$ |  READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2020, 2021

bush walks, sunrise and sunset cruises, catch-and-release fishing, and rhino tracking by foot. On a good day you only have to go as far as your tent's front deck to come face-to-face with crocodiles, elephants, and the noisy local crew of hippopotamuses, who cut through the stillness of this lavish experience with their grunts and growls.

[MAKE A RESERVATION](#)

Powered by Expedia

Courtesy Royal Champagne Hotel & Spa

HOTEL

38. Royal Champagne Hotel & Spa — Champillon, France →

\$\$\$ |  READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2019, 2020, 2021

only destination spa), one that's as golden and whimsical as its namesake sparkler. Blonde wood and glass walls render the whole triple-deck interior Champagne-colored and the golden-leafed sculpture hanging in the atrium is truly lovely. Very large bedroom terraces, plus indoor and outdoor pools all offer panoramic views of the world-famous (and now UNESCO World Heritage-listed) vineyards, while the top-floor bar has access to the cellar's 257 different Champagnes, as well as views that look over the vineyards.

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Courtesy Aman Resorts

HOTEL

made of Indonesian wood, float like water lilies on the central reflecting pool and are surrounded on three sides by floor-to-ceiling sliding glass walls that lead down to sunken dining areas and bedroom floors inlaid with teak. Opt for one of the Ocean Villas—the most private of all—and enjoy an infinity-edge pool, a private garden brimming with native island vegetation, and a dockside day bed, perfect for taking that much-needed cat nap.

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Photo by Will McGough

HOTEL

The Tierra brand has found a sweet spot creating otherworldly hotels in the middle of natural wonders, including rooms set alongside craggy mountains overlooking choppy bodies of water in Patagonia. But the [Atacama](#) property is undoubtedly the brand's lodestar, with its cowhide rugs, mud-brick walls, and rattan daybeds. It's tempting to just want to stay by the lap pool overlooking the sometimes-smoking Licancabur volcano. But the excursions, led by the hotel's incredibly well-informed guides, are the kind visitors won't want to miss—whether that's heading up to 14,000 feet pre-dawn to drink coca-leaf tea around natural geysers or stargazing with a local astronomer to see the Milky Way more clearly than anywhere else on the planet.

[MAKE A RESERVATION](#)

Powered by Skylark

Courtesy Airelles Courchevel, Les Airelles

embraces its winter-wonderland theme with a design scheme inspired by a 19th-century Austro-Hungarian castle. The folk murals, stained glass, and crackling fireplaces may evoke a scene out of the Brothers Grimm, but don't be fooled by the fairy-tale surroundings—this place is all about **over-the-top luxury**. That means an Hermès-designed horse-drawn carriage, a Rolls-Royce Cullinan car service, helicopter transfers to the airport, and a ski lounge brimming with gear by Bernard Orcel.

[MAKE A RESERVATION](#)

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Courtesy Auberge Resorts Collection

HOTEL

Tucked high in the mountains of Pérez Zeledon in southern [Costa Rica](#), this 864-acre property—the first Auberge Resort in Central America—brings glamour and luxury to an otherwise rugged terrain. Its 50 spacious casitas are decked out in dark wood and leather, and outfitted with sprawling terraces overlooking the mountains or San Ysidro Valley. There's a ton to keep nature lovers happy, including horseback riding, swimming, and a visit to the on-site organic farm. But there's plenty of fun to be had indoors as well. The resort has three excellent farm-to-table restaurants and the largest spa in Central America, which is equipped with its own hydrotherapy center.

[MAKE A RESERVATION](#)

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\$\$\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2016, 2021

The French [ski resort](#) of Courchevel 1850 is an adventurer's paradise, known for its challenging black runs and off-piste terrain. Inside the four walls of this nouveau Alpine lodge, however, interior designer Sybille de Margerie has created a cocoon of coziness—cashmere and furs, cuckoo clocks and fluffy sheep sculptures, with a warm signature scent of orange, cardamom, amber, and patchouli wafting through the halls. After a day out on the slopes, weary skiers can retreat to the hotel's Russian banya, hammam, or infinity-edge indoor pool. Or, better yet, spend a few hours traversing through the innovative tasting menu at chef Yannick Alléno's Le 1947, the only three-Michelin-starred restaurant in Courchevel.

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HOTEL

32. Four Seasons Resort Lanai — Hawaii →

\$\$\$ | 🍷 GOLD LIST 2018, 2020 🔥 HOT LIST 2017 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

There's **Hawaii**, and there's Lanai. Driving through Lanai City—still more plantation outpost than town—on the way from the airport to the hotel, there are none of the usual signifiers: no ABC Stores or shave ice stands or traffic lights. In 2012, billionaire Larry Ellison purchased 98 percent of Lanai, including this hotel, which he closed in 2015 for a major **overhaul**. Rooms were freshened up with teak and zebrawood; key cards morphed into waterproof wristbands, handy for late-night dips in the new pool. Nobu and Malibu Farm were clever additions—sashimi and salads are brilliant after sun and sea. But what really makes this hotel stand out is that there's no feeling of being on- or off-property. Every part of Lanai, from sunbathe-naked-empty Polihua Beach to the interior's Garden of the Gods, with otherworldly red-rock formations, feels all yours.

MAKE A RESERVATION

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HOTEL

31. Cottar's 1920s Safari Camp — Masai Mara, Kenya →

\$\$\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2021

On arrival at Cottar's Camp in your open-air Land Rover, you immediately feel you've stepped back in time. Cottar's is almost 100 years old, having been established by the grandfather of the current owner, Calvin Cottar, and today, it has the highest number of Gold Level guides of any safari property in Africa. The camp has great traditional interiors, full of campaign and colonial antiques and lined with kilims, cotton dhurries, and paraphernalia from decades of African safaris. There are nine tents in total (one honeymoon tent, four double tents, and four family suites), all with bathrooms, and some even have living rooms with fireplaces.

[MAKE A RESERVATION](#)

Powered by Expedia

Courtesy of Brasada Ranch

HOTEL

30. Brasada Ranch — Powell Butte, Oregon →

\$\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021

Set on 1,800 acres of high desert outside of [Bend, Oregon](#), this approachably luxe resort invites families to live out their cowboy and cowgirl fantasies, with abundant opportunities for horseback riding, hiking to nearby buttes, fishing in the (stocked) pond, and making s'mores under the stars. Accommodations include ranch house rooms and suites plus 65 cabins, which speak to rustic surroundings with cowhide fixtures, fireplaces, and lots of leather. The entire property is suffused with the scent of sagebrush and juniper, nowhere more so than at the impossibly scenic Brasada Canyons golf course, which offers views out toward the snow-capped Cascades.

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Expert Pick/Courtesy One & Only Palmilla

HOTEL

29. One&Only Palmilla — San José del Cabo, Mexico →

\$\$\$ | 🏆 GOLD LIST 2018, 2020 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

In the 1950s, Don Abelardo Rodríguez, son of Mexico's former president, had his choice of real estate in **Baja Sur**. He decided on the very tip of the peninsula, between the calm Sea of Cortez and the crashing Pacific, as the site for the area's first hotel of note, the 15-room Palmilla. Sixty-some years on, the luxury hotel set has moved in, and much at the Palmilla has changed—but not enough to keep nearly half of its guests from coming back each year. The hotel, which was taken over by One&Only in 2004, still has the best location. The hacienda-style rooms with wrought-iron chandeliers and updated mission-style furniture continue to embody the pueblo Cabo once was. But it still comes down to the service here, just like it always has—it's all about the small, thoughtful touches, such as the roaming masseuse who offers foot massages while you lie face down on a pool chair.

MAKE A RESERVATION

Powered by Skylark

Courtesy Soneva Jani

HOTEL

28. Soneva Jani — Maldives →

\$\$\$ | 🏆 GOLD LIST 2020 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

Soneva founders Sonu and Eva Shivdasani pioneered the kind of barefoot, souped-up Robinson Crusoe luxury the **Maldives** are now known for when they opened Soneva Fushi in these waters back in 1995. This latest update, spread across five islets in the northern Noonu Atoll, raised the bar again in 2016: a surreal collection of 25 enormous shingled neo-Victorian villas, some with wraparound slides plunging into a lagoon that's so impossibly lucid you can see colorful parrotfish, rays, and mottled nudibranchs from shore. Soneva's dedication to sustainability is so much more than the green varnish you get elsewhere, and here that manifests in its own recycling center, seawater pools, organic gardens, and an open-air cinema equipped with wireless headphones so as not to disturb the nesting turtles nearby.

HOTEL

27. Finch Bay Galapagos Hotel — Santa Cruz Island, Ecuador



\$\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021

If you've only ever visited the [Galapagos Islands by sea](#), this beachfront eco-lodge on the south side of Santa Cruz Island makes a strong case for getting your feet in the sand and sticking around for a while. Expect breezy porches strung with hammocks, a restaurant serving sustainable slipper lobster, and access to a mangrove-lined beach. The hotel offers plenty of excursions (including yacht tours and visits to a giant tortoise reserve), but one of the true joys of this place is simply wandering around the island. Exploring by foot means you'll have access to the Charles Darwin Research Station, the marine iguanas of Tortuga Bay Beach, and the crystal-clear swimming holes known as Las Grietas.

Courtesy One&Only Nyungwe House

HOTEL

26. One&Only Nyungwe House — Nyamasheke Nyungwe Forest Reserve, Rwanda →

\$\$\$ | 🔥 HOT LIST 2018 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2021

Set within a working tea plantation at the edge of the pristine Nyungwe Forest National Park, this luxury lodge with 22 suites is one of the most upscale hotels in **Rwanda**. Plus, it gives you easy access to the park's population of chimpanzees, monkeys, and other wildlife. The nature treks in Rwanda aren't your average roll-around-in-a-Jeep safari. They often involve hours of hiking, up steep volcanic slopes and on occasionally muddy trails. Which is to say, the people who are coming here are the adventurous types—albeit those who want to come back to a king-sized bed, full-service gym, and spa at the end of the day.

One&Only Gorilla's Nest

HOTEL

25. One&Only Gorilla's Nest — Ruhengeri, Rwanda →

\$\$\$ | 🔥 HOT LIST 2020 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2020, 2021

The name of this eco-minded lodge in [Rwanda](#) gives a clue to its raison d'être: the mountain gorillas. It may be the latest in a line of lodges to arrive in the foothills of the Virunga volcanoes, but the 21-room property delivers much more than great apes. Mountain biking, drumming, coffee tasting, and archery are all on the agenda, along with the prerequisite jungle pool and spa. Its stilted wooden lodges are tucked among the eucalyptus forest and bamboo (and, interestingly, 3,000 species of rose). This is Tarzan's treehouse meets high design.

[MAKE A RESERVATION](#)

Courtesy Kokomo Private Island Resort

HOTEL

24. Kokomo Private Island Resort — Yaukuve Levu Island, Fiji



\$\$\$ | 🔥 HOT LIST 2018 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2020, 2021

From the minute your seaplane, manned by a barefoot pilot, lands on this blissfully untouristed **Fijian island**, you're in for a vacation that will be hard to top. Ever. So many moments stand out: snorkeling with sharks at the Great Astrolabe reef; checking out the on-island farm; eating coral trout sashimi for breakfast. The departure experience—when the entire staff assembles to sing traditional farewell Fiji songs (with gusto)—is very emotional.

MAKE A RESERVATION

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Brandon Barré/Courtesy Fairmont Chateau Whistler

HOTEL

23. Fairmont Chateau Whistler — British Columbia →

\$\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

At the foot of North America's largest **ski resort**, a majestic chateau rises out of a forest of snow-capped trees. Steps from the new Blackcomb Gondola, it's hard to imagine a better location for skiers. Fairmont tend to feel very storybook and old-school, but a recent renovation added some contemporary flair. The addition of Alpine Suites brought a sexy and spacious room category to the premises—each of these rooms comes with spa showers, a fireplace, and sprawling mountain views.

MAKE A RESERVATION

Powered by Skylark

Courtesy andBeyond

HOTEL

22. andBeyond Bateleur Camp — Masai Mara, Kenya →

\$\$\$ | 🏆 GOLD LIST 2019 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2019, 2020, 2021

Guest feedback was taken very seriously when andBeyond rebuilt its flagship camp in early 2018, which is likely why the designers didn't make any unnecessary updates in the redo. Nothing was changed for the sake of change: vintage silver, crystal decanters, leather armchairs, and extravagantly deep sofas were reused, recycled or reupholstered, while old-world maps and brass fittings were added. New to camp is a family suite, gin bar, and safari boutique stocked exclusively with home-grown designer labels. The Mara Triangle is the sharp edge of **Masai Mara safaris**, and not just during migration season. On any given day, the open plains are thrumming with elephants, giraffes, zebras, jackals, and lions. Being in a private concession means guests can also go out on night drives, have silver-service bush banquets accompanied by deeply resonant Maasai chanting, and the chance to do a walk or trail run with a Maasai guide.

Courtesy Soneva Kiri

HOTEL

21. Soneva Kiri — Koh Kood, Thailand →

\$\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2020, 2021

Soneva Kiri, on the still pristine Koh Kood, is among the most exciting resorts in all of **Southwest Asia**. Guests land on a private airstrip on neighboring Koh Mai Si and then take a short motor boat ride to a jetty jutting into a pretty cove. The resort sprawls over the island's northern tip, and butlers shepherd guests over the manicured grounds by electric cart. Virtuously constructed from sustainable eucalyptus logs, native bamboo, and treated pine, the 36 villas are multi-structured complexes spacious enough for an entire family and appointed with a dressing area, a separate dining deck, indoor and outdoor showers, and a private infinity pool. Chef Khun Benz spearheads the resort dining—including inside a bamboo "Treepod" served by a waiter on zip line—which matches dishes with a dizzyingly long wine list.

MAKE A RESERVATION

Powered by Expedia

Courtesy Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company

HOTEL

20. Zadún, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve — San José del Cabo, Mexico →

\$\$\$ | 🔥 HOT LIST 2020 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2020, 2021

The high-stakes Cabo hotel scene has been particularly frenetic for the past few years, with fresh openings from big-name players like [Four Seasons](#), [Montage](#), and [Viceroy](#). Amid the fray, Ritz-Carlton managed to seek out a 20-acre plot for its fourth reserve, overlooking the indigo Sea of Cortez and built partially on the sand dunes. Suites feel both comfortable and considered, with vast living rooms featuring blue-and-white textiles, objets d'art from local artisans (woven leather baskets, painted pottery), and terraces with firepits. But it's the staff that truly make the place stand out: remembering favorite breakfast tables and knowing the right chaise lounge around the enormous L-shaped pool at which to drop off each swimmer's margarita. In one of the world's most elevated hotel towns, Ritz-Carlton shows that the bar can always be raised.

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HOTEL

19. Live Aqua Beach Resort Cancún — Mexico →

\$\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2021

Done up in a relaxing palette of **Caribbean** Sea blues, sandy beiges, and cumulus-cloud whites, the 371 rooms at this adults-only, all-inclusive resort are designed to set minds at ease at every turn. The hotel occupies an enviable strip of real estate on the Zona Hotelera waterfront, but guests won't need to wander far to occupy time during their stays: The 11 bars, restaurants, and cafés include such standouts as Sea Corner for ceviches and tropical cocktails, while spa treatments draw on the aromas and ingredients of the region, including avocado, cocoa, and coffee.

[MAKE A RESERVATION](#)

Powered by Expedia

Courtesy Six Senses Zighy Bay

HOTEL

18. Six Senses Zighy Bay — Dibba, Oman →

\$\$ | 🏆 GOLD LIST 2019 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021

This far-flung hotel lies sandwiched between the dramatic Hajar Mountains and the warm seas off the northern Musandam Peninsula in the Sultanate of Oman. Each villa has a private pool, reed ceilings, rough stucco walls, and lamps suspended on ropes that reflect in the thick wood-framed mirrors. Outside, though, through the dense surrounding stands of palm, is a full-on luxe seaside hotel, with a pristine talcum-fine beach and a magnificent swimming pool set against a backdrop of towering pink peaks. Not surprising, given it's a Six Senses, many people come here for the spa and its bespoke programs of treatments and fitness.

[MAKE A RESERVATION](#)

Powered by Skylark

Courtesy Sensei Lanai, A Four Seasons Resort

HOTEL

17. Sensei Lanai, A Four Seasons Resort — Hawaii →

\$\$\$ | 🍷 GOLD LIST 2021 🔥 HOT LIST 2020 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2021

Hawaiian hotels may differ in size and price, but most have a pretty predictable common denominator, the **beach**. Which is why the opening of this hotel is such a major shakeup. For starters, it's 1,800 feet above sea level and a 20-minute drive to the nearest sandy stretch. Then there's the fact that it's on Lanai, the smallest and least-visited of Hawaii's inhabited islands. And it's an adults-only wellness retreat, meaning the usual lounging in the sun while alternating between shave ice and spam musubi snacks doesn't make it onto the daily schedule. All to say, Sensei Lanai, A Four Seasons Resort is about as niche as it gets. It's also quite possibly the loveliest spot to give mind-body wellness a real shot.

MAKE A RESERVATION

Powered by Expedia

Courtesy Cheval Blanc

HOTEL

16. Cheval Blanc Randheli — Maldives →

\$\$\$ | 🍷 GOLD LIST 2018 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021

It stands to reason that the **Cheval Blanc Randheli**, a relatively recent resort from luxury conglomerate LVMH (owners of Louis Vuitton, Céline, Dior, etc.), would set the bar high. The white sands and turquoise waters of the Noonu Atoll, in the northwest Maldives, are the backdrop for 45 one- and two-bedroom villas. As looks go, it doesn't get chicer than this, but the whimsical touches—turtles drawn in the sand along the path to the villa, thoughtful little notes from your butler left alongside the pitchers of fresh juice—are what truly give this place its character.

MAKE A RESERVATION

Powered by Skylark

Courtesy Le Barthélemy Hotel & Spa

HOTEL

15. Le Barthélemy Hotel & Spa — St. Barts →

\$\$\$ | 🔥 HOT LIST 2017 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

A relatively new addition to St. Barts' luxury hotel scene, and in keeping with the island's low-rise sensibility, Le Barthélemy is a sophisticated winner. Set between a lagoon and Grand Cul-de-Sac beach along the island's northeastern shore, the hotel is an education in understated elegance. Rooms are spare and enormous, with lots of wood and one or two pops of bright color—some even have small, rectangular plunge pools for mini-laps. The food at Aux Amis is unabashedly modern French, with attention paid to proper portions in the tropics: in other words, not too much. Water sports enthusiasts have an expanse of calm shallow waters for kayaking, kite-surfing, and snorkeling—a flotilla of a dozen sea turtles that survived the storms of 2017 remain in residence and are easily visible.

MAKE A RESERVATION

Powered by Expedia

Courtesy of Rosewood Little Dix Bay/KEN HAYDEN PHOTOGRAPHY

HOTEL

14. Rosewood Little Dix Bay — Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands →

\$\$\$ | 🍷 GOLD LIST 2021 🔥 HOT LIST 2020 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2020, 2021

Little Dix Bay—the work of the late billionaire conservationist Laurance Rockefeller, who first spotted the pristine beach on a sailing trip—set a new blueprint for Caribbean getaways in 1964. No white gloves and marble columns, instead something much more low key and low footprint. Following recent renovations, each of the 80 rooms and one- and two-bedroom suites and villas now has a mid-century-modern-meets-the-ocean vibe: lots of sleek lines, earthy colors and the original exposed stone walls, with plenty of driftwood, coral, and woven baskets on the shelves. Some have their own plunge pools and all are within steps of the hotel's half-mile white-sand beach. The food is exceptionally good, in part because of the on-site farm—a nod to Rockefeller's sustainable ethos—along with composting projects and reduced single-use plastics.

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Miles & Miles

HOTEL

13. Amanpuri — Phuket, Thailand →

\$\$\$ |  READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2021

The design at this resort on the Andaman Sea is "out of this world" according to guests, who stay in pavilions sprinkled among the hillside on the site of a former coconut plantation. Each pavilion has a large orchid-filled vanity in the bathroom, rattan furniture, and Thai silks. Common areas are fashioned from granite and hardwood. Dinner ranges from torch-lit barbecues on the beach to Nama, where Japanese cuisine is served. Work out in the glass-walled gym or join a daytime meditation session. For more beach bliss, the front desk can arrange private yacht charters to island-hop around the archipelago.

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Courtesy Angama Mara

HOTEL

12. Angama Mara — Great Rift Valley, Kenya →

\$\$\$ | 🏆 GOLD LIST 2021 🔥 HOT LIST 2016 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

Angama Mara, which opened in 2016 and sits on top of the Ooloolo escarpment overlooking the Mara Triangle, comprises two camps. Each one contains 15 suites with canvas sides and tented roofs, but they also have glass fronts, giving you gobsmacking, 180-views of the savanna, whether you're lying in bed or taking a shower. This is no traditional **safari** set-up: the sleek, Italian-inflected design gives the place a bit of cosmopolitan flair, as does a pavilion with a library, shop, fitness room, and infinity pool—all while embracing the wild surroundings.

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HOTEL

11. Morukuru Family, Madikwe Game Reserve (Owner's House, River House, and Farm House) — South Africa →

\$\$\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

The Big Five is the big draw across the continent, but at this **family-friendly lodge** on South Africa's fifth largest game reserve, you'll spot the Magnificent Seven—adding cheetah and African wild dog (an insider favorite for their strategic hunting abilities) as well hippo, rhino, prides of lions and the rest. It's a fittingly spectacular viewing lined up alongside the camp's equally spectacular accommodations: three free-standing luxury villas, each uniquely designed. (Think lots of raw blond woods in the Farm House; stone fireplaces and sink-into-'em couches over at the River House; and a staff of eight, plus an infinity pool and African artwork at the Owner's Home). And unlike many of the lodges across the region, Wi-Fi here is fast and available everywhere, meaning your 13-year-old won't have to wait until she's back in Johannesburg airport to upload her shot of leopard cubs to Instagram.

HOTEL

10. Hotel Paracas, a Luxury Collection Resort, Paracas — Paracas, Peru →

\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

Amid the ruins of the iconic Hotel Paracas that crumbled during an August 2007 earthquake, famed Peruvian architect Bernardo Fort-Brescia designed this new 120-room resort (part of Starwood's Luxury Collection) in the coastal desert three hours south of [Lima](#). Two-story white bungalows blend into the dune-filled horizon, contrasting the deep-blue waters of the Paracas National Reserve. While the bay is better for windsurfing, the daybeds at the glitzy pool scenes, where roving waiters fetch a steady supply of passion fruit sours and ceviche, have become the new it spot for Lima's well-to-do. The hotel makes a restful base for a slew of nearby adventures—you can do scenic flights of the Nazca desert geoglyphs in its private jet, yacht rides to spot Humboldt penguins on the Islas Ballestas, and pisco tastings at the Viñas de Oro distillery right at the resort.

MAKE A RESERVATION

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Courtesy Royal Malewane

HOTEL

9. Royal Malewane — Greater Kruger National Park, South Africa →

\$\$\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

It can be hard to make the Greater Kruger National Park—a popular destination for safaris that cover an area the size of Wales—feel exclusive, private, and intimate. But **Royal Malewane**, in Thornybush Private Game Reserve, manages to achieve that (and then some) with just six Luxury suites, two Royal suites, and the palatial six-bedroom, private chef-included Africa House. Twice daily game drives are led by expert rangers far from Kruger's crowds, which means you're almost guaranteed to be able to check off the **Big Five** before you leave.

MAKE A RESERVATION

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8. Anantara Chiang Mai Resort — Chiang Mai, Thailand →

\$\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

Anantara has upped the ante in this **posh town** on the Mae Ping River. The 84 sleek rooms, protected from urban noise by two sets of thick doors, have sweeping floor-to-ceiling views of Thai river life. (There are also 24 serviced suites just across the road, which are optimal for families or extended stays.) Daybeds indoors and out are a relaxing pleasure, as are teak chaises by the riverfront pool. The hotel wraps around the open-air restaurant, where an East-meets-West menu is served all day long—think a breakfast buffet, loaded with fruits and juices, and later, flavorful plates of Kashmir chili and Indian spice-marinated chicken. A wrought iron staircase twists up to the rooftop bar. If you're looking to spice up your staid vacation itinerary, activities worth booking include a Muay Thai kickboxing class and a sunset river cruise.

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7. Singita Sabi Sand (Ebony Lodge, Boulders Lodge, and Castleton Lodge) — Sabi Sands Game Reserve, South Africa



\$\$\$ |  READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2021

Singita Sabi Sand includes three well-appointed options that provide an elegant base from which to bask in the natural beauty of one of South Africa's most renowned game reserves. Singita's founding property, [Ebony Lodge](#), sits surrounded by a grove of its namesake trees, with 12 suites inspired by old explorers' camps. [Boulders Lodge](#), meanwhile, was named after the ancient rocks strewn along the banks of the Sand River, and the 12 glass-fronted suites have artfully pared-down interiors, featuring fossilized tree stumps and other found objects. And [Castleton Lodge](#) occupies the ancestral home of Singita founder Luke Bailes. Its Cape Dutch charm, mullioned windows, antiques, expert safari guides, and longtime family staff remain—but the wine cellar, state-of-the-art kitchen, and full gym are all new.

MAKE A RESERVATION

Powered by Singita

Courtesy of Mashpi Lodge

HOTEL

6. Mashpi Lodge — Pichincha, Ecuador →

\$\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021

MAKE A RESERVATION

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Courtesy The Lodge and Spa at Brush Creek Ranch

HOTEL

Consistently rated one of the best resorts in the U.S. by our readers, [The Lodge & Spa at Brush Creek Ranch](#)—set on 30,000 acres amid the Sierra Madres—executes the luxury dude ranch concept with skill and style: think spotted cowhide chairs in the lounge, fur throws at the edge of knotty wooden king-sized beds, and yurts decked out with antler chandeliers and leather couches. For an upscale group getaway, book the nine cabins that make up the Magee Homestead—it comes with its own concierge service.

Courtesy Naladhu Private Island Maldives

HOTEL

4. Naladhu Private Island Maldives — Maldives →

\$\$\$ | 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

With only 19 expansive guest quarters in South Malé Atoll, this intimate resort provides a level of privacy and personal attention impressive even in [the Maldives](#). Weathered-wood accommodations come with a private garden and an

onboard private dinners. Dedicated butlers, or VGCs (very good chaps), exceed expectations with quiet, smiling service. With a location only a 30 minute speedboat ride from Malé's international airport, Naladhu represents the Maldives' most convenient exclusive destination yet.

[MAKE A RESERVATION](#)

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Courtesy L'Horizon Resort & Spa

HOTEL

3. L'Horizon Resort & Spa — Palm Springs, California →

\$\$ | 🍷 GOLD LIST 2016 🔥 HOT LIST 2016 🏆 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

L.A.-based residential designer Steve Hermann spent two years (and millions of dollars) turning the historic William F. Cody-designed L'Horizon into a luxurious boutique hotel. He didn't alter the footprint much—the main house

chic machined brass lighting and fixtures) and vintage (furniture from Percival Lafer, Mullhauser, Knoll, and Katavolos). And while it is a fun hotel, more private club than frat party, it's also a place for quiet indulgences: The pool is guests-only; unexpected treats are brought to your room every afternoon (could be a scoop of ice cream, could be a shot of tequila); and roaming poolside therapists offer complimentary foot and shoulder massages. Request a west-facing bungalow with an outdoor shower and watch the sun go down over the San Jacinto Mountains while shampooing.

[MAKE A RESERVATION](#)

Powered by Skylark

Greg Cox/Courtesy Morukuru Beach Lodge

HOTEL

Say you're more of a beach bum than a safari enthusiast—don't worry, South Africa *still* has you covered. Head to the intimate five-suite [Morukuru Family Beach Lodge](#) or the nearby four-bedroom [Morukuru Family Ocean House](#), about three hours east of [Cape Town](#) on the shore of the Indian Ocean. There are white sand beaches, of course, but also access to the De Hoop Nature Reserve with its zebra and bontebok and protected marine area. You can simply chill on the beach or by the lodge's pool, but we'd suggest letting Morukuru's friendly, attentive staff fill your day with game drives through the reserve, mountain biking, sandboarding, snorkeling, and more. Plan your trip during South Africa's winter (July-October) for prime southern white whale watching from shore, from the lodge's restaurant, and even from your bed.

Courtesy Uxua Casa Hotel

HOTEL

1. Uxua Casa Hotel & Spa — Trancoso, Brazil →

former creative director) has turned the hotel into a collection of rustic renovated casas, cottages, an intimate treehouse, and a tribal-inspired spa. All are cloaked by hummingbird-flecked tropical gardens and centered around a pool lined with green aventurine quartz, which, for those not up on their healing crystals, is said to be very therapeutic. Interiors are haute-boho: roomy indoor-outdoor sitting rooms and airy living spaces with dazzling-white walls and muslin-canopied beds, accented with lots of reclaimed wood, antiques, and vintage finds including brightly painted Virgin Mary statuettes. A decked path runs through mangrove forests to the beach, where there are enormous day beds for post-breakfast snoozing and a beach bar fashioned from an old fishing boat—just stay horizontal and another Caipirinha will soon find its way to you.

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