

TOWN & COUNTRY

APRIL 2026

The Vanderbilts Upstairs

Inside the Private Rooms of an American Icon



The Fancy
HOMESCHOOL
EPIDEMIC

CANDY
for Billionaires

THE REAL
ESTATE TRIAL
of the Decade

Remember the
LOUVRE HEIST?

47 Perfect
NEW HOTELS

Behind the
Hot Market for
DAMAGED GOODS

IS THAT FAT
ON YOUR FACE?
*Or Are You Just Happy
to See Us?*



T&C TRAVEL

The Oberoi
Rajgarh Palace
in Khajuraho,
Madhya Pradesh,
India.

NINTH ANNUAL HOTEL AWARDS

Our New Favorite Places

It's the yearly hunt: What hotels, of all that have opened around the world in the last 12 months, speak to us the most? We checked out historic piles and chic boutiques, lodges in the wild and beachy retreats. We settled on 47. Curtain up!

BY KLARA GLOWCZEWSKA, SARA CLEMENCE, AND THE EDITORS OF T&C

The lobby of the Orient Express La Minerva: atmosphere, elegance, and a healthy dose of Roman excess.



The Mandarin Oriental, Vienna

"I'd kill for any of the furnishings in this hotel. And it has the best wellness area of any five-star in Vienna."
—Gwen Kozlowski, Exeter International

The Charm of Old Walls

Did they build better back then? All around the world today, hotels have you sleeping in history.

ORIENT EXPRESS LA MINERVA Rome When the first Orient Express train was launched in 1883, it defined glamorous international travel. With the opening of the first Orient Express hotel—in a **17th-century palazzo** where 19th-century Grand Tourists once stayed—the brand is reviving that atmosphere without ever tipping into nostalgia (hats off to designer Hugo Toro). There is restored marble statuary, Murano glass, hand-painted ceilings, and specially designed furniture subtly evocative of Belle Epoque travel. The central lobby and bar, beneath a historic skylight,

are packed with actual Romans. The rooftop restaurant has what may be the best views in Rome (the Pantheon is right there), and you're steps from Gammarelli, historical maker of liturgical garments. There's always a phalanx of well-appointed holy men making their way past the hotel's front door.

MANDARIN ORIENTAL Vienna The city's First District is one of Europe's most walkable concentrations of serious culture: the Vienna State Opera, the Kunsthistorisches Museum, the Hofburg, and coffeehouses that have been

perfecting the art of the afternoon for longer than most cities have existed. Mandarin Oriental's first Austrian hotel is at the center of it all, in a former **1908 courthouse**. The Art Nouveau bones are intact, and the guestrooms nod to the style. And though most people don't visit Vienna to swim, the hotel provides good reason to change that: a 43-foot pool.

THE CHANCERY ROSEWOOD London From the rooftop Eagle Bar, which looks out over Grosvenor Square, to the subterranean Asaya spa, there's no corner of this **Eero Saarinen-designed former American embassy** that hasn't been remade for a cushy stay by David Chipperfield Architects. With eight restaurants and bars (including Europe's first Carbone) and a lobby teeming with well-appointed locals and travelers, it still feels like a refuge amid the bustle of Mayfair. American travelers might feel particularly at home: The building's former diplomatic life is reflected in vintage photos, and house-made peanut butter cups at turndown celebrate Yankee excellence.

THE CARLTON Milan Italy's fashion and design capital doesn't really need another five-star hotel, but what if there were one that was so fluent in the city's aesthetic that it couldn't exist anywhere else? *Benvenuto*. The Carlton has always had an unparalleled address—its oldest part is in a **19th-century neoclassical palace** that has an entrance from Via Senato and

ON OUR RADAR

You'll soon hear this name a lot: Ile de Bendor. This tiny private island off the French Riviera, just minutes by boat from the mainland, was the 1950s hideaway of pastis tycoon Paul Ricard. It is being transformed by Zannier Hotels into a three-enclave "village"—one of the Med's most glamorous revivals.

another from Via della Spiga. The recent renovation under Rocco Forte's ownership has taken it to new heights. The design borders on maximalist, but it stops short of too much. References to Gio Ponti and the strict geometry of 1930s rationalist architecture sit alongside animal prints, studded leather, and something approaching camouflage. Somehow it holds. Café Floretta, with its domed glass ceiling, is the kind of place that makes you want to dress for breakfast and stay through lunch.

OBEROI RAJGARH PALACE **Khajuraho** Most travelers' first trips to India encompass the "golden triangle" of Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur. With the arrival in Khajuraho of the Oberoi—in a crenelated **350-year-old fort cum royal residence**—the city's complex of 25 medieval Hindu temples, with their thousands of high-relief figures, has become a must. Also

but Amsterdam is reclaiming its identity as a serious cultural hub. A stellar example is Studio Piet Boon's decadelong transformation of the **17th-century Palace of Justice**, right on Prinsengracht Canal. The building's grandeur remains, but the 134 rooms are warm and inviting (suede walls, embossed velvet, marble with veining that mirrors the movement of the canal water outside), and five "Houses" are tucked into architectural remnants, including a canal-level retreat. There are works by Dutch artists throughout, rotating exhibitions in the Gallery, daily art tours, and De Tuin, a garden by landscaping superstar Piet Oudolf.

COLLEGIO ALLA QUERCE **Florence** High above the city, in an **1868 school for boys**, this Auberge Collection property blends classic Italian charm (sweeping views of the Duomo, excellent pasta at La Gamella restaurant, a gym with a frescoed ceiling) with all modern comforts. It's a short ride by car to Piazza della Signoria and all the other Florence attractions, but staying put isn't a bad idea. Local singers are enlisted to score soundbaths inside the historic theater, freshly made pizza is available from the poolside Il Bosco, and cocktail hour comes with a wink as inventive drinks are served in Bar Bertelli, which was once the headmaster's office.

SON ERMITA & BINIDUFA **Menorca** This has always been the quiet Balearic island; its northern interior, in particular, moves at a pace that feels almost defiant. These twin **18th-century fincas** (from the Vestige Collection), on a 2,000-acre private, mostly wild estate, sit in the middle of all that. There are guided walks, mountain-bike tours, yoga platforms, exquisite gastronomy, and, coming soon, two glamorous bars. But what you might love most is the wonderfully sun-dulled feel of it all—the best of the Mediterranean. **T&C**

“It's Oberoi's first true palace hotel and a major opening for India.”
—Dennis Pinto, Micato Safaris

close by is Panna National Park, which has a thriving tiger reserve. If you're not rewarded with a sighting of one of the elusive beasts, the hotel itself is consolation enough: interiors that retain the magnificence of their history; two restaurants; two pools; daily yoga and meditation; and a tent spa on the palace's natural lake, to which you'll be conveyed by boat, maharaja-style.

ROSEWOOD **Amsterdam** The city once had a lopsided reputation, with bachelor parties overshadowing the canal houses and the Rijksmuseum,

One of thousands of carvings (including highly erotic ones) at India's Khajuraho temples.



The Baronessa suite at the Splendido.

RETURN OF THE GRANDES DAMES

*Everyone needs maintenance.
Mission accomplished.*

▲ BELMOND SPLENDIDO Portofino

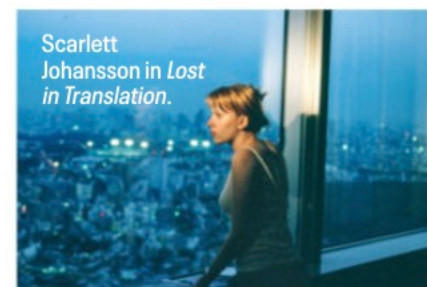
The archetype of Italian Riviera glamour is lighter and brighter, and it has Italy's first Dior Spa. The unbeatable views are unchanged.

BRENNERS PARK-HOTEL & SPA

Baden-Baden The most famous hotel in Germany's most famous spa town has au courant facilities, seriously refreshed Beaux-Arts interiors, and an expanded menu of Black Forest adventures.

WALDORF ASTORIA **New York** It's been eight years, but the Art Deco queen is back, and we are grateful to once again meet up in the Peacock Alley bar. (Res recommended.)

THE DORCHESTER **London** Some suites, the penthouse, and the rooftop pavilion are pending, but the time is right to celebrate. The new social spaces—such as Vesper Bar and Artists' Bar—are outstanding.



▲ **PARK HYATT** **Tokyo** The minimalist elegance that etched this hotel in film history remains: the New York Bar and Grill, the views from the top of Shinjuku Park Tower. Spaces and materials have been softened, the technology updated, the hotel, er, translated for a new age.

ON OUR RADAR

The Imperial Hotel, founded in Tokyo in 1890 to host foreign dignitaries, is Japan's Ritz. The brand's first new hotel in 30 years, the Imperial Hotel Kyoto, is opening in a protected 1936 theater in the Gion geisha district. Expect a showcase of Japanese heritage and craftsmanship, and superlative service.

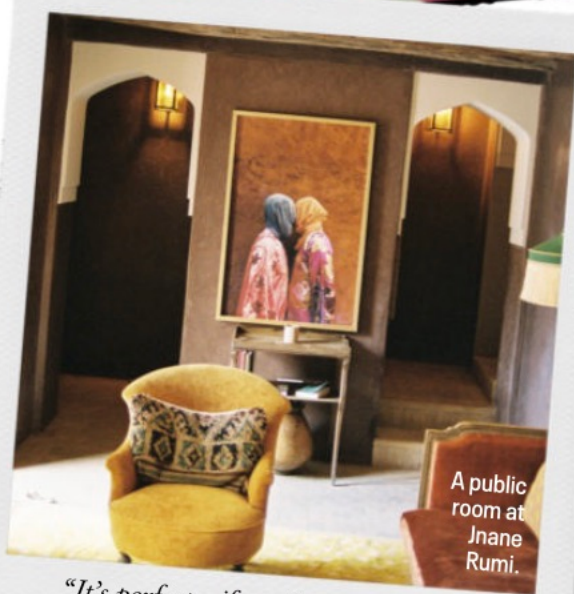
Small But Mighty

Sometimes you just want the intimate and the unexpected.

BRACCIALIERI Sicily This is the kind of place an indie filmmaker friend recommends, and you wish you'd found it first because, frankly, it would make you cool. Built in an ancient olive grove, it has none of the uniformity of a typical hotel. There are just three suites in the main house (two named for the geranium and tangerine wallpaper), one in the former kitchen, with its own pool, and six "eco-glamping" bungalows that look like summer camp throwbacks but are furnished with Vispring mattresses and Rivolta Carmignani linens. The city of Noto, a triumph of Baroque architecture, is close, as are charming villages, Mount Etna, and the sea.

JNANE RUMI Marrakech In this design-obsessed city, this is the most talked-about new hotel. A historic property in the posh Palmeraie district, it was remade by a Dutch art lawyer and his wife into an 11-suite jewel. The interiors, a mashup of European contemporary design and Moroccan elements, are dazzling, with no two rooms even remotely alike. The large garden has a pool and lounging and dining areas (the food is Moroccan with a European twist). Best: You can shop the medina all day and be right back here in 10 minutes.

AVANTIKA BY THE GANGES Varanasi The holiest city in Hinduism is unforgettable—albeit not for the faint of heart: a maze of alleyways, cremation



"It's perfect—if not for a first trip to Marrakech, then a romantic second or third. Everyone always comes back!"
—Michael Diamond, Cobblestone Private Travel

fires burning continuously, priests chanting, temple bells ringing, devotees descending the stone *ghats* (steps) to the river. This long-awaited 43-room hotel, from the parent company of Taj hotels, is directly on Ram Ghat, and it lets you take in the spectacle from a broad veranda—there is nothing like it in Varanasi. Booze and meat are not served in this holy place, but the vegetarian cuisine is exceptional, and there are daily yoga, meditation, and private sunrise and sunset boat rides.

CHESA MARCHETTA Sils Maria St. Moritz has long needed an intimate place to stay, removed from the theater of luxury that now dominates it. This nearby village, with credible galleries and a more discreet creative community, has lately emerged as the natural counterpoint.

Now, after a four-year restoration of a 16th-century building by Iwan and Manuela Wirth (of Fife Arms in Scotland), arrives 13-room Chesa Marchetta. It has a restaurant but lacks ski-in/ski-out access and the exhaustive amenities of larger hotels. But that is its strength. It is not trying to compete with St. Moritz but to quietly redefine what staying in the Alps can mean.

THE PINNACLE Kigali Rwanda and its mountain gorillas are the hot safari ticket these days, and leafy, tech-forward Kigali is one of Africa's rising design capitals. With this modern locally owned and operated hotel on 3.2 hilly acres with glamorous city views, you finally have a proper launching pad. The nine colorful rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows, and there's a large pool and, importantly, a members club, which brings convivial local energy to the restaurants and bar. You'll feel you've arrived. **T&C**

IF YOU HAPPEN TO FIND YOURSELF IN...

It's not easy to impress in a city. But these three hotels have people talking.



TAIWAN With **Capella Taipei**, André Fu, the genius of relaxed luxury in hotel design, has brought his brand of it to a city without much luxury at all. Huge windows, pools, world class dining (try Mizue), and a vibrant nighttime bar scene.



SINGAPORE The OG Raffles now has an all-villa sibling, **Raffles Sentosa**, on an offshore hillside. The soundtrack is cicadas and peacocks; you'll have a pool, a cabana, and a butler; and the drink of choice is the Sentosa Sling.



BANGKOK For your first time here, you should stay in a hotel on the river. Second time, at the new **Aman Nai Lert**, in the city center. The service is extraordinary, and you're near the city's top restaurants (some are in the hotel itself) and nightlife.

ON OUR RADAR

The French call Cap Ferret, on the Atlantic coast, the "anti-St.-Tropez": less yachtie glamour, more Parisian creative crowd. Its first five-star hotel, the 28-room neo-19th-century **Villa Colette**, is bordered by both the ocean and Arcachon Bay. It was designed by Philippe Starck; it opens later this spring.

Far, Far Away

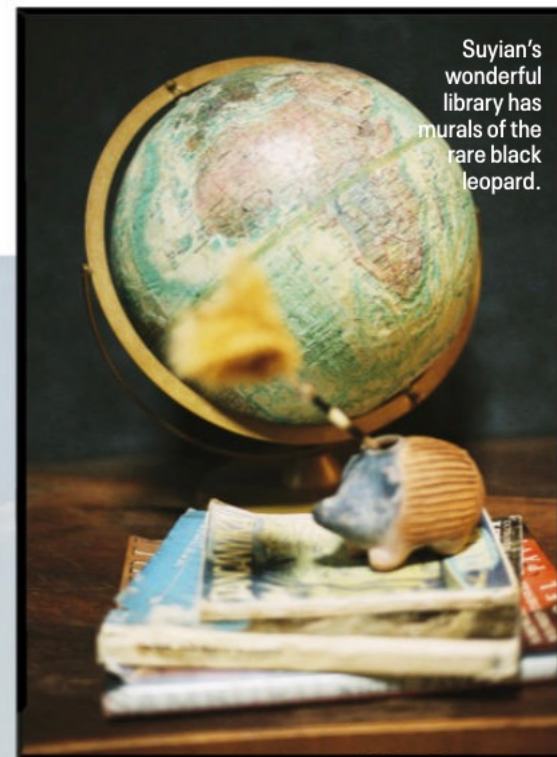
*Longing for respite from our cluttered, chattering world?
We have some laid-back suggestions.*

LAIKIPIA PLATEAU Kenya Sure, the Masai Mara has the Great Migration, but safari connoisseurs rave about Laikipia: its serene landscapes, rare wildlife species, near absence of vehicles, conservation-driven focus. And now, from one of Africa's most acclaimed operators, **&Beyond Suyian Lodge**, 14 sci-fi-like domed earth-tone structures on a hillside in a 44,000-acre private conservancy. You'll have forever views, plunge pools, a spa, fantastic food, and ancient rock art on-site. But don't even think about skipping a game drive; here is one of the few known populations of melanistic (aka black) leopards. Keep your fingers crossed.

UTTARAKHAND India Twenty years ago Jamshyd Sethna, the founder of Shakti Himalaya, set out to provide guided walks in the remotest areas of the Indian Himalayas with stays in luxuriously converted village houses. **Shakti Prana** is the latest evolution: seven glass-fronted wood and stone pavilions blending modernism and vernacular architecture, on a 6,300-foot summit. Hike ridges and rhododendron forests, then return to blazing fires, pashmina throws, and silk bathrobes. There are also yoga, a sauna, and meals by celebrity chefs.

TINAJANI CANYON Peru In this remote spot in the Andes you'll find out what "rugged luxury" means. Between Cusco, Lake Titicaca, and Colca Valley, the area teems with fantastical red rock spires and is genuinely, inconveniently remote. Each of **Tinajani's** six "campamentos" consists of two round tents, plus a private deck and hot tub. The hub is a 19th-century adobe farmhouse. Hike canyons, visit villages, see pre-Incan petroglyphs, ride horses, eat meals rooted in ancestral Andean fare, and feel all around you thousands of years of human history.

THORNYBUSH GAME RESERVE Greater Kruger When you arrive at South Africa's **Masiya's Camp**, the newest safari lodge from Royal Portfolio, you'll feel as if a fairy godmother has waved a wand. Gone are all things khaki: The six tents with decks and heated pools are pink, the furnishings are every color of the rainbow, and the art is by contemporary artists from across Africa. But don't let the maximalist vibe fool you. The wildlife sightings are



Suyian's wonderful library has murals of the rare black leopard.

epic, and the guides—another Royal Portfolio calling card—are outstanding. The camp's namesake, Wilson Masiya, was a certified Master Tracker, one of only 13 in South Africa.

QUEENSTOWN New Zealand It may not be all that remote, but New Zealand feels far away even when you're near a town. **Roki**, a "lodge" on the city's Lake Wakatipu, caters luxuriously to that reality. Helicopters will whisk you over mountains to glaciers and hidden valleys; Land Rover Defenders will take you hiking, cycling, kayaking, or rafting (with snacks like lobster rolls and caviar). Who said remote had to be rugged? **T&C**

"I love everything Jamshyd Sethna does. This place completely reframes the experience of the Himalayas. —David Prior, Prior World"

Part of the walking circuit at Shakti Prana.

**ON OUR
RADAR**

Think of Explora's Patagonia lodges (in both Chile and Argentina) as base camps for adventure, with breathtaking views, exceptional guides, and great spas for après. The latest, **Explora El Calafate**, opens in December, creating a Patagonian circuit: a multistop trip of a lifetime, with Explora handling all logistics.

It Happens in Waves

Are you feeling oceanic? The perfect new places for days at the beach.

LES BASSANS Brittany Consider how many of your favorite French things come from Brittany: crepes and kouign-amann, the marinière you pack for summer holidays. Beurre! Yet for all its cultural capital, this coastal region has long flown under the radar. If you're looking for a fresh reason to visit, you'll find it at Les Bassans, the newest addition to the Fontenille Collection, which has chic and unpretentious

properties in France and beyond that have inspired cultish devotion. This 25-room gem occupies a restored 1930s villa on a stretch of coastline that is famous for its pink granite rocks. Every room has floor-to-ceiling windows and faces the sea. It's hard to look away.

NEKAJUI Costa Rica You'll love the architecture: soaring but cozy, with excellent views. You'll love the infinity pools and the spa, the attentive butlers and the lush landscapes. But these are things that pretty much all Ritz-Carlton Reserves are known for. This one is built into the cliffs of a quiet section of Peninsula Papagayo. (This is important, as there are more luxury hotels coming to this wildlife-rich "bio-development.") The biggest surprise is the food—it's fantastic. Seafood shines at



“It's the epitome of what Brittany should look and feel like.”

—Philip Haslett, *French Promise*

The view from a Les Bassans guestroom. Now imagine “the sound of waves and seagulls, the scent of seaweed and salt. Heaven.”

THE ABSOLUTE PEAK

The pamper quotient here is as high as the elevations.

ONE&ONLY MOONLIGHT BASIN

Montana How do you get to the slopes of Big Sky from O&O's first U.S. property? Via a heated gondola, natch. We also love: the cabin-but-modern architecture, the private decks with firepits and hot tubs, the host assigned to every guest to help organize things.

AMAN ROSA ALPINA Dolomites

What do you get when you fuse a third-generation family-run Italian resort with the Zen aesthetic of Aman? One of the sexiest hotels in Italy, with the beauty of the peaks around San Cassiano enhanced by serious gastronomy and a top-notch new spa.

ROSEWOOD COURCHEVEL

Jardin Alpin Rosewood's first winter resort occupies the village's highest slopeside stretch, its vibe is modern chalet, and its concierge will organize dawn and dusk runs. How about sunrise coffee overlooking Mont Blanc?

the four restaurants, naturally, though you're going to want to save room for the cowboy steak at Brisa on one of your nights.

KALKUDAH BEACH HOUSE Sri Lanka Few countries offer so much within easy reach: ancient Buddhist capitals, colonial forts, tea-covered highlands, wildlife safari areas, surfing beaches. This restored family home, set on a 25-acre coconut estate, has just five suites in two villas with pretty verandas, a pool, and lawns going down to a blissful stretch of Indian Ocean sand—just the thing after all your explorations. Luxe factor? This should give you an idea: The chefs hail from One&Only and Six Senses resorts in the Maldives. **T&C**

OUR METHOD To be considered, hotels had to have opened in the last 12 months and been nominated by T&C editors and/or our roundtable of 45 globetrotting travel advisors. We received 143 nominations this year and picked 47. You can see all the winners—with more photos, details, and names of the travel advisors who can plan your trips—at TOWNANDCOUNTRYMAG.COM/HOTELAWARDS2026. Bon voyage!

ON OUR RADAR

There's something about a desert island vibe with luxury trappings that hits a sweet spot. Voaara Hotels' first beachy compound, on an island off Madagascar, hits it. Up next, in December: Voaara Grenadines, on private Palm Island. There will be 25 bungalows and a villa. We have very high hopes.