

THE HOT LIST

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Including 42 under \$250

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Istanbul
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London
Costa Rica
Holland
Buenos Aires
San Francisco
Melbourne
Portugal
and more**

**BUSINESS
BRIEFING**

*Travel Secrets Every
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COLLECTOR**

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LOVES HER NEW HOMETOWN**

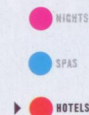
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THE 14th ANNUAL

HOTEL LIST

THE YEAR'S 134 TOP NEW HOTELS (INCLUDING 42 UNDER \$250 A NIGHT)

SHOWING AMAZING RESILIENCE, the art of hotel innovation is flourishing. Across the globe, hotels are still opening in strong numbers. We combed through the thousands that debuted in the last year, then bedded down anonymously at the most compelling candidates. A robust 134 properties spread across a record 55 countries won a place on our list with their blend of strong style, skillful service, state-of-the-art technology, and transporting aura. They're a diverse group, ranging in size from a three-suite gem in Lisbon to an eco-forward 4,004-room showstopper on the Vegas Strip, and in cost from \$130 a night at a boldly designed Mexico City tower to \$3,600 for a slice of the good life on a South Pacific isle once the private retreat of Malcolm Forbes. As more hotels strive to soar above the competition, the bar for excellence, too, climbs—although price tags don't. Nearly a third of this year's list offer rooms for less than \$250 a night, so there's no time like the present to ride the wave of good fortune.



Up in the air: The alfresco living room of Casa da Árvore, at Uxua Casa Hotel, in Brazil.

To best play out the fantasy that you too have a home in Trancoso, book the one-bedroom Seu Pedrinho, the two-bedroom Gulab Mahal, or the three-bedroom Zé e Zilda, all of which face the square (55-73-3668-2277; doubles, \$449-\$589).



CANADA

The Keefer, Vancouver

 The Keefer is much cooler than you are. The four-suite hotel is a boon to shabby Chinatown, and a good indication that the area is becoming hip again. Intended as a high-end apartment building (until the housing meltdown), these super-luxe pads are available for the night, the week, or indefinitely. High-maintenance guests should head elsewhere: There's no turnaround service, 24-hour room service, or other typical hotel amenities. But for scenesters with deep pockets, this is the place to hang your hat. Each 2,400-square-foot dwelling has two bedrooms, three bathrooms, a modern kitchen, a living room (complete with a punching bag), and a TV so large it might be classified as a mini movie screen. It's tempting to want to throw a blowout party here, especially if you book the penthouse, whose roof deck has a sexy lap pool with a transparent bottom looking into the suite. The decor manages to be chic and well balanced despite the air of playful excess: Retro paintings in lollipop hues and oversized prints of old boxing photos (all by Canadian artist/writer Douglas Coupland) are juxtaposed against unfinished blond-wood floors and matte-gray walls. By contrast, the bedrooms, with their white-and-silver aesthetic, seem almost dull. No matter, you're here for the party. **WHICH ROOM TO BOOK:** The penthouse, with its aforementioned roof deck and pool (604-688-1983; suites, \$686-\$2,452, with a three-night minimum). 

CARIBBEAN AND ATLANTIC

The Viceroy, Anguilla

 Upping the chic quotient on laid-back Anguilla, the Viceroy Hotel Group's first island outpost is as sleek as a gin martini. The main building, a highlight of this 35-acre resort, mixes modernist planes and angles, an allée of towering palms stretching toward the sea, and a sumptuous array of natural materials—juxtapositions of marbled stone slabs, whorls of exotic woods, matte sheets of metal, sinuous and spherical ceramic objects. The 166 rooms, done in a pale palette, feel comfortable and are artfully arranged. Distressed mirrors provide a surface for sconces, the furniture is low-slung (dark leather in public areas, soft beiges in rooms), chairs are



of woven jute and bent wood, and lots of driftwood is displayed. It's evident that much thought has been given to framing vistas that are either open or through glass, including the centerpiece dark-granite infinity pool, beside which you can enjoy cocktails while gazing out onto the sea. The waterfront villas are steps from the broad, soft-sand beach of Barnes Bay; swimming, however, is easier at the resort's other beach, on Meads Bay. Many finishing touches were still being worked on at the time of our visit, but even in the early weeks the friendly, attractive staff were eager to please. **WHICH ROOM TO BOOK:** Each spacious Rooftop Studio suite comes with a plunge pool and a private terrace for sunbathing au naturel (888-622-4567; doubles, \$695-\$1,195). 

Tucker's Point Hotel and Spa, Bermuda


 Perched high over historic Castle Harbour, this newcomer fits its tony surroundings to a tee. (Residents of the exclusive Tucker's Point enclave include Michael Bloomberg and Ross Perot.) The 88-room hotel (whose guests get golf privileges at the private Mid-Ocean course) is tastefully accoutered with a British manor meets Palm Beach look: Horse prints and porcelain china are displayed on walls, floral draperies frame tall windows, chairs are plump with fringed cushions. An aura of formality shrouds this hotel, with its chandeliered public rooms and palm tree-lined courtyard complete with a croquet lawn. Dining is a high point, ranging from casual but well-prepared noshes poolside

to jackets-required affairs at The Point, whose wall murals depicting nineteenth-century ports were transplanted from the Sky Club in New York City's Pan Am building. The well-designed rooms, equipped with a built-in desk, a big terrace overlooking Castle Harbour, a soaking tub separated by a sliding door from the bedroom, and a free mini-bar stocked daily with water and soft drinks, are finished with preppy details such as a cotton gingham bed skirt, an armchair upholstered in houndstooth fabric, and a padded foot stool. There's a small spa and four swimming pools of various sizes, including two that front the resort's stunning private beach whose distance from the hotel is its only drawback, requiring a ten-minute trolley ride. **WHICH ROOM TO BOOK:** Numbers 8 and 14, on the third floor of the main Manor House, have larger terraces than other Superior rooms; 14 has a daybed as well (866-604-3764; doubles, \$590-\$850). 

Baoase Luxury Resort, Curaçao

 5999-461-1799; suites, \$425-\$485, with a three-night minimum. 

Gansevoort Turks & Caicos, Turks and Caicos

 Fronting a wide, uncrowded swath of Grace Bay's white sand beach, the Gansevoort blends Miami Beach-style chic with Providencia's easygoing sybaritism, making it a snazzy addition to the island's throng of luxury resorts. The service is deftly balanced between attentiveness and unobtrusiveness, from

the gracious front desk staff to the congenial beach crew. Housed in three gleaming-white buildings oriented toward the water, the 91 rooms are bright and generously proportioned, designed using clean lines and containing practical details such as sliding wood panels above the headboard that can block out extra sunlight, big terraces with a glass perimeter that maximize water views, and a well-equipped kitchenette (you probably won't use it much, as room service is prompt). A stunning infinity pool, with iridescent turquoise tiles, wide loungers (some set on wood platforms in the water), and chillax music emanating from speakers, is the resort's focal point and can happily accommodate lolling couples, families with wading toddlers (thanks to ample shallow areas), and lap swimmers. The indoor/outdoor Bistro Bagatelle, separated from the pool by a trellised path, offers an extensive menu ranging from lunchtime mahimahi tacos to roasted pork porterhouse for dinner. The small Exhale Spa's three treatment rooms each come with an outdoor shower. **WHICH ROOM TO BOOK:** Deluxe Beachfront Studios are 150 square feet larger than the standard category Deluxe Ocean View Studios and have private terraces that look onto both the pool and the sea (649-941-7555; doubles, \$460-\$600). 

CHILE

The Aubrey, Santiago

 Built in the bohemian barrio of Bellavista, the 15-room Aubrey was once the patrician home of a Chilean railway magnate. The 1927 mansion retains its terra-cotta roofs, overhanging eaves, and exposed beams, but a lengthy restoration by two former London bankers has seen its austere wood paneling and heavy beams brightened by wingback chairs, crystal chandeliers, and fresh flowers. Many of the spacious rooms have a balcony, a private patio, or original parquet flooring, and all are soundproofed and slickly furnished with Tom Dixon lamps, leather chairs by Chile's Santiago Valdés, and mosaic-tiled walls. Outside, water cascades from stone arches in the cobbled, fern-filled courtyard, where award-winning Valparaíso caterers Pasta e Vino serve well-prepared Italian dishes, Ionic columns edge a heated outdoor pool, and two turreted towers (one kitted out for

UNDER \$250