

## The Condé Nast Traveller Middle East Gold List of hotels in 2018

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FOUR SEASONS PRIVATE ISLAND AT VOAVAH, MALDIVES

Game-changing hotels and resorts for discerning travellers

**T**here are hotels we like and there are hotels we love. The next few pages are dedicated to the latter. These properties have, over time, only gotten better. They satisfy our deep and diverse yens – to be pampered, to escape, to feel at home, to be inspired, to feel relaxed, happy, surprised. And they do so consistently. These are the places where we can kick off our shoes and lay down our heads without a care in the world.

### **BEST FOR: Tan Feet, Outdoor Showers and Afternoon Naps Under a Palapa**

Some beaches make you want to wear a Valentino dress to dinner, while others require little more than a bikini and a cover-up. Here, the properties we love that satisfy every beach fantasy

### **Cheval Blanc Randheli, Maldives**

The rare Maldivian resort where the beach villas outdo those over water; of all the megawatt luxe resorts in the area, it wins for most elegant. [chevalblanc.com/randheli](http://chevalblanc.com/randheli)



CHEVAL BLANC SPA PAVILION

### **Eden Rock - St. Barths, St Barts**

Cliff views don't come much better than at this hotel perched on a bluff above sparkling waters. Dinner at Jean-Georges' aptly named On the Rocks is a romantic affair. [oetkercollection.com](http://oetkercollection.com)



EDEN ROCK - ST. BARTHS

### **El Nido Resorts' Pangulasian Island, Philippines**

Forty-two pitched-roof villas on alabaster sand along protected waters teeming with damselfish – and you get sunrise and sunset views. [elnidoresorts.com/pangulasian-island](http://elnidoresorts.com/pangulasian-island)



EL NIDO RESORTS' PANGULASIAN ISLAND

### **Four Seasons Private Island at Voavah, Maldives**

This is the spot for a totally OTT friends or extended-family getaway, with seven bedrooms that sleep 20, spread across a five-acre slip of an island. You'll also have your own private overwater spa and dive centre, and exclusive use of a 19m yacht. [fourseasons.com/maldivesvoavah](https://fourseasons.com/maldivesvoavah)



OUTDOOR DINING AND POOL AT FOUR SEASONS PRIVATE ISLAND, VOAVAH

### **Halcyon House, Cabarita Beach, Australia**

Yes, it's an Instagram darling, but it's more than a beachy Aussie photo op with its house restaurant that does some of the best room service and breakfast anywhere – plus there's a tennis court and a spa on the way. [halcyonhouse.com.au](https://halcyonhouse.com.au)

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HALCYON HOUSE PAPER DAISY LOUNGE

### **Hotel Esencia, Tulum, Mexico**

Jungle meets white-sand beaches at this tucked-away, under-the-radar spot. Unwind at the spa then spot sea turtles by the shore. [hotelesencia.com](http://hotelesencia.com)



HOTEL ESENCIA MASTER SUITE BEDROOM

### **Laucala Island, Fiji**

This private island is a Polynesian paradise, with 25 villas set among coconut trees and tropical gardens, horse riding, golf, amazing diving and just about every other water sport ever invented. [laucala.com](http://laucala.com)



LAUCALA PENINSULA VILLA

### **Malibu Beach Inn, California**

Every one of the 47 rooms and suites face the ocean, with balconies from which to enjoy the crashing of the waves. Cocktails on the private beach are a must. [malibubeachinn.com](http://malibubeachinn.com)

### **Nihi Sumba Island, Indonesia**

An eco-surf dream with green architecture, 560 untouched acres of jungle and a legendary left-breaking wave you'll have all to yourself. [nihi.com](http://nihi.com)



NIHI SUMBA MARANGGA PRIVATE POOL

### **North Island, Seychelles**

From the moment you chopper in, everything is personalised on this private island with twice as many staff as guests. Large pool villas all lead directly on to the beach. [north-island.com](http://north-island.com)

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NORTH ISLAND VILLA, SEYCHELLES

### **Soneva Fushi, Maldives**

More jungly than others in the archipelago, this resort has a refreshingly unfussy vibe; everyone is barefoot and rides bikes on the winding paths that seem designed to help you get lost. [soneva.com/soneva-fushi](https://soneva.com/soneva-fushi)

### **Trisara Phuket, Thailand**

The food is enough to get us to this resort overlooking the Andaman Sea. It's super secluded, tucked into a quiet cove surrounded by palm trees. [trisara.com](https://trisara.com)



TRISARA RESIDENTIAL VILLA

### **Uxua Casa Hotel and Spa Trancoso, Brazil**

Set in the Hamptons of Brazil, a rustic-luxe feel is punctuated with vintage furniture and local folk art. Afternoons are best spent on the hotel's daybeds on the beach, a five-minute walk away. [uxua.com](https://uxua.com)

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### **Borgo Egnazia, Savelletri Di Fasano, Italy**

Possibly the loveliest breakfast buffet, with every charcuterie and cheese you could want, and access to super-in-the-know local advisers (instead of concierges) who can point you to authentic orecchiette con le cime di rapa. [borgoegnazia.com](http://borgoegnazia.com)



VILLA MERAVIGLIOSA AT BORGO EGNAZIA

### **Grand-Hôtel Du Cap-Ferrat, a Four Seasons Hotel, Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, France**

Classic Côte d'Azur glam with the best pool scene ever – dedicated sunglass desmudgers, an enormous saltwater pool absent any lap swimmers and the plushiest blue-and-white striped towels. [fourseasons.com/capferrat](http://fourseasons.com/capferrat)

### **Hotel Il Pellicano, Porto Ercole, Italy**

A morning swim followed by poolside tanning and spritzes takes you right into cocktail hour. It's like living in a Slim Aarons photo. [pellicanohotels.com/il-pellicano](http://pellicanohotels.com/il-pellicano)



HOTEL IL PELLICANO MASTER DELUXE SUITE

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### **Hotel Santa Caterina, Amalfi, Italy**

Etched improbably into the side of the mountain overlooking the Amalfi Coast, it's refreshingly old school, with brochure stands at the front desk and the kind of honest food you want to eat in this part of the world. [hotelsantacaterina.it](http://hotelsantacaterina.it)



**SANTA CATERINA JUNIOR SUITE**

### **Il San Pietro Di Positano, Italy**

Still the sexiest place to stay on the Amalfi Coast, full stop. [ilsanpietro.it](http://ilsanpietro.it)

### **Le Sirenuse, Positano, Italy**

Almost every memorable Instagram image of Positano's rooftops, domed church and deep-blue curve of the Mediterranean was shot from the light-flooded deck here. [sirenuse.it](http://sirenuse.it)

### **Maçakızı Hotel, Bodrum, Turkey**

At this little-known treasure it'll be just you and beautiful Turkish models and actors you won't recognise sunbathing and taking dips in the Aegean. [macakizi.com](http://macakizi.com)

### **Masseria San Domenico, Savelletri di Fasano, Italy**

Caught-in-time yet totally on point, with monogrammed mustard-yellow towels, an intimate three-stool pool bar set around an olive tree and simple al fresco lunches of grilled sardines and tomato salad. [masseriasandomenico.com](http://masseriasandomenico.com)





JACK'S CAMP TWIN TENT

**BEST FOR: Being lulled to sleep by the sounds of grunting hippos**

A few nights in the bush are going to be memorable no matter what, but the right property – in a spot-on location with expertly trained guides, good community relations and spaces that enchant during the idle hours between game drives – can make your trip life-changing. What comes to mind are places that plunk you into IMAX-like ecosystems, such as the sleek **andBeyond Sandibe Okavango Safari Lodge** ([andbeyond.com](http://andbeyond.com)) on Botswana's lush delta, home also to the new **Duba Plains**

**Camp** ([greatplainsconservation.com/duba-plains-camp](http://greatplainsconservation.com/duba-plains-camp)), whose tented suites have the copper-tub-chic expedition style of its gold-standard sibling, **Zarafa**

**Camp** ([greatplainsconservation.com/zarafa-camp](http://greatplainsconservation.com/zarafa-camp)). Or **Jack's Camp** (0027-11-326 4407) out in the Makgadikgadi Pans, with an Oriental-rug-lined tent surrounded by desert so silent you can hear your own thoughts. For deck viewing, there's **Jamala**

**Madikwe** ([jamalamadikwe.com](http://jamalamadikwe.com)) in South Africa, whose five villas overlook a waterhole with more wildlife than you're likely to see on a drive, and **Somalisa Camp** (00263-9-23 4307) in Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park, where herds of elephant guzzle from the pool. You can't stay at **Sirikoi Lodge** ([sirikoi.com](http://sirikoi.com)), with its family-gathered heirlooms, without feeling linked to the land's history – and to its future, thanks to the exceptional rhino conservation work on Kenya's Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. **Segera**

**Retreat** ([segera.com](http://segera.com)), with its contemporary African art collection, makes you conscious of the continent's shifting identity, and lodges like **Bisate** ([wilderness-safaris.com/camps/bisate-lodge](http://wilderness-safaris.com/camps/bisate-lodge)) in Rwanda connect deeply with the local community, for whom safari tourism presents a new economy beyond subsistence. Then there are the places that completely channel the soul of their surroundings. Consider

Tanzania's **Mwiba Lodge** ([legendaryexpeditions.com/safari](http://legendaryexpeditions.com/safari)), where lions sunbathe on giant stone kopjes nearby; **Mikeno Lodge** ([visitvirunga.org/accommodations](http://visitvirunga.org/accommodations)) on the smoking crater of a volcano, beside which mountain gorillas thrive in the forests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Virunga National Park; and **Singita Pamushana Lodge** ([singita.com](http://singita.com)) in Zimbabwe and its sweeping views that remind you exactly why you came to Africa.



ANDBEYOND SANDIBE OKAVANGO SAFARI LODGE GUEST ROOMS

### **BEST FOR: A Room on a Lake**

#### **Grand Hotel a Villa Feltrinelli Lake Garda, Italy**

It's like staying at the lake house of that rich old Italian aunt with incredible taste you always wished you had. [villafeltrinelli.com](http://villafeltrinelli.com)

#### **Grand Hotel Tremezzo, Lake Como, Italy**

Stick to the classic lakefront rooms, the lounge chairs above the pool area and the bar-restaurant on the terrace, and you might believe the house Riva is yours. [grandhoteltremezzo.com](http://grandhoteltremezzo.com)



GRAND HOTEL TREMEZZO LOBBY

#### **Il Sereno Lake Como, Italy**

You'd only dream of staying in a high-Renaissance grand dame on Lake Como – until

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you set foot in the Patricia Urquiola-designed interiors (walnut, leather and nubby grey wool) of this always-sold-out 30-room gem. [serenohotels.com](http://serenohotels.com)

### **The Point, Saranac Lake, New York**

It's beautiful in summer, but we like it best in winter, when ice skating is followed by a proper cocktail hour and, if you're there over a Wednesday or Saturday night, a multi-course, black-tie dinner. [thepointsaranac.com](http://thepointsaranac.com)

### **Taj Lake Palace, Udaipur, India**

This impossibly romantic hotel seems to float on Lake Pichola and for years it seemed to rest on its laurels – but a new GM has tightened ship, making it as well run as it is dreamy. [tajhotels.com](http://tajhotels.com)



TAJ LAKE PALACE IN UDAIPUR

### **BEST FOR: Fresh air, fresh powder and fondue at 10,000 feet**

If you're a die-hard American or Canadian Rockies skier who can lean into chilli and hops for a week, head for **Montage Deer Valley** ([montagehotels.com/deervalley](http://montagehotels.com/deervalley)) in Park City, Utah for primo ski-in/ski-out positioning. Or the newly renovated, historic **Hotel Jerome** ([hoteljerome.aubergeresorts.com](http://hoteljerome.aubergeresorts.com)) in Aspen, which taps into cowboy fantasies. That is, unless you're a sucker for the old-world charms, historic lodges and après-ski culture of the Swiss, Austrian and Italian Alps like we are. In St Moritz, **Badrutt's Palace Hotel** ([badruttspalace.com](http://badruttspalace.com)) and **Kulm Hotel** ([kulm.com](http://kulm.com)), which are both on the lake, and **Suvretta House** ([suvretthouse.ch](http://suvretthouse.ch)), which is the one resort that has its own lift next to the property, tick every box in our fairy-tale Alpine dreamscape. As does **Gstaad Palace** ([palace.ch](http://palace.ch)) in Gstaad.