

Six of the world's best hotels

A selection of the most exciting places to stay in 2017

La dolce vita in Tuscany

Hotel Il Pellicano, Tuscany

Perched on Tuscany's wild Monte Argentario peninsula, with "breathtaking" sunset views down the coast, this "spring-to-autumn haven of dolce vita luxury" has been a "clubbish, word-of-mouth" kind of place ever since it opened, back in the 1960s, says Lee Marshall in *The Daily Telegraph*. Recently, it has acquired a Michelin star and added a small, well-run spa – without losing its "insider cachet". The town of Porto Ercole (popular with the Roman yachting set) is nearby, but guests rarely leave the hotel's grounds, where the distractions include a beach club, two restaurants (the formal Il Pellicano and the "laid-back, al fresco" Pelligrini), a tennis court and a heated seawater pool. The decor in the 50 rooms is understated and "old-school", though the hotel attracts a pretty "hip" clientele. *Doubles from £345. +39 0564 858 111, www.pellicanohotels.com.*



Comfort and charm in the Cotswolds

The Painswick, Gloucestershire

The village of Painswick is as pretty as they come, with its Cotswold stone and glorious views over the Slad Valley, and this 18th century Palladian pile is its grandest building. Reopened last year as a 16-room hotel by the Calcot Collection (owners of two other fine Gloucestershire hotels, Calcot Manor and Barnsley House), it has history, warmth and charm in spades, says Stephen Bleach in *The Sunday Times*. The key is simplicity – there's nothing "innovative" here, just lots of care and good taste. Rooms have big beds, fluffy duvets, fluffier towels, digital radios and Neom products. The common areas have blazing fires and "fall-asleep-comfy sofas". And there's a well-stocked games room, a decent restaurant, a beautiful garden and terrace, and great walking country all around. *Doubles from £119. 01452-813688, www.thepainswick.co.uk.*



Doing the Victoria Falls in style

Matetsi River Lodge, Zimbabwe

Set in a 123,500-acre private concession beside the Zambezi River, this new lodge offers both good game viewing (lion, leopard and cheetah) and easy access to Victoria Falls, less than 25 miles downstream. What's more, it's "brilliantly run" and as "hip as anything", says Tatler. There are 18 freestanding bungalows with private plunge pools, their vaguely brutalist exteriors belying cool and comfortable interiors with "perky abstract art" and Danish furniture. The food is "as fine as you'll get anywhere in Africa", and there's a spa and a 25-metre-long riverbank lap pool. But the "real stars" are the staff, from the excellent barmen to the highly informed guides who take guests on safari drives, kayaking expeditions, fishing trips and more. *Expert Africa (020-8232 9777, www.expert-africa.com) has an eight-night trip from £5,100, including flights.*



A traditional inn in a Tokyo high-rise

Hoshinoya Tokyo, Japan

Traditional inns, or *ryokan*, are popular across Japan, but Tokyo never had many, and none at the top end of the market. That changed last year, with this city-centre opening from Hoshino Resorts, says Danielle Demetriou in *The Japan Times*. Occupying a tower block with an elegant black latticed facade, its 84 rooms all embody the *ryokan* ideal, with low beds and tables (for in-room dining), tatami-mat flooring, seasonal *ikebana* (flower arrangements), and kimono-style outfits for guests. Plentiful modern twists include glass walls around the deep, square black baths that can be frosted at the flick of a switch. There's an *onsen* (hot spring bath) on the top floor with a skylight "for stargazing", and a ten-table basement restaurant serving "nature-inspired" cuisine on "conceptual ceramics" by Ryota Aoki. *Doubles from £615. +81 50 3786 1144, www.hoshinoresorts.com.*



A hilltop oasis in Rio

Vila Santa Teresa, Rio de Janeiro

Belle-époque gates open onto a huge country estate on Santa Teresa hill, in crumbling, colourful old colonial Rio. It's the city's answer to Primrose Hill, but it is in private hands – those of the Monteiro de Carvalho family. Now, the modernist mansion at its heart has opened as a guest house, and staying here, it's easy to imagine all this is yours, says Condé Nast Traveller. Everything is tailored to your requirements – from the check-in times to the wine orders – and there are just seven bedrooms, filled with antiques and oversized sofas "primed for siestas, all soft colours and sunlight". Menus change daily, with an emphasis on de Carvalho "family favourites", and there's a large pool with a mind-blowing view across the city to Guanabara Bay. *Miraviva (020-7186 1111, www.miravivatravel.com) has a four-night trip from £1,550pp, including flights and transfers.*



Rustic chic in New Zealand

The Farm at Cape Kidnappers, New Zealand

Commanding fine views of snow-capped Mount Ruapehu and the vineyards and orchards of Hawke's Bay, this "rustic-chic" retreat "delivers the whole New Zealand package" – glorious landscapes, wonderful farm-to-table food, good design – on a grand scale, says Condé Nast Traveller. Its farm-like buildings perch dramatically on a grassy ridge overlooking a "superb" 18-hole championship golf course, and feel as if they have been there forever (though in fact they're only ten years old). There are 22 bedrooms and a single self-contained holiday let – all featuring lots of tweed and leather, and artworks made from farm equipment (old tractor seats, metal cartwheels, wooden grain boxes) – and the restaurant is excellent. *Doubles from £1,045 half-board. +64 6 875 1900, www.capekidnappers.com.*

