

BEST AIRLINE SEATS — WHO HAS THEM, WHERE THEY FLY

Condé Nast Traveler

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

MAY 2011

124
Best New
Hotels in the
World (Including
40 under \$300)

The Hot
List 2011

21 Top Restaurants
40 Sensational Spas

BEIJING
Insider's Guide
to the World's
Wildest City

CARIBBEAN'S
Sleeping Beauty

THE SEXIEST
PLANE
IN THE SKY



TIBET TODAY: At the St. Regis Lhasa Resort

A 45-page special section.

15th Annual

Hot List

2011

The Year's 124 Top New Hotels

Including 40 under \$300 a night*

EVERY HOTEL IN THIS LIST won its place the old-fashioned way—by earning it. After scrutinizing nearly a thousand of the hotels that opened worldwide over the past year, we selected a couple hundred of the most promising candidates, then checked into each one—anonymously, of course—trying out the beds, testing the staff, tasting the food. Finally, 124 properties ultimately won us over. Spanning 43 countries and six continents, this year's Hot Hotels are

an eclectic group, from tree houses to farmhouses, and they range in size from a three-suite safari camp in South Africa's leopard-rich Londolozi Private Game Reserve to a glossy 2,995-room tower on the Vegas Strip. The cost per night also runs the gamut—from a mere \$75 for a groovy room above a white-hot gastropub in Chicago's boho Logan Square to \$2,040 for a private three-story *riad* with a rooftop plunge pool and a butler in the heart of Marrakech. Despite the diversity, the hotels share a common standard in their artful blend of high style and a strong sense of place. Now that we've completed our white-glove test (and even ferreted out exactly which room to book), all that's left for you to do is make a reservation.

Wait! There's more. Look on the following pages for:

THE HOTTIES Those little details that elevate our favorite new hotels from likable . . . to lovable.

THE ONES TO WATCH Another year of reviewing may have wrapped, but the hotels haven't stopped opening. A number of notable properties debuted just after our press deadline, or are slated to open soon. Our Truth in Travel policy means that we inspect a hotel by staying the night as any traveler would—we do so incognito. As you read this, our editors have already begun a new cycle of reviews, and this year we're offering a sneak peek at some of the places on the radar. A few may land a spot on next year's Hot List; others may not make the cut. For our predictions on the next wave of great new hotels, check out our roundup of the Ones to Watch.

PLUS

P. 129 **Hot Spas**

40 blissful
new places to relax
and recharge

P. 143 **Hot Tables**

Top chefs pick
their favorite new
restaurants



Hot Hotels

ARGENTINA

Algodon Mansion, Buenos Aires

🏠 Housed in a 1912 French classical villa in the capital's embassy-studded Recoleta district, this ten-room property underwent a three-year renovation. The result is visually impressive mise-en-scènes that exude a quiet sense of wealth, favoring discreet technology and imported woods over glitz and gold. Throughout the restored interior of Slovenian oak parquet and Belle Époque plasterwork are sumptuous yet understated modern fittings. The ample rooms are artfully decorated with ebony- and-leather furniture, silk curtains, and suede wall fabrics, and the bathrooms are fitted with 80-jet showers—in the larger suites, bathtubs feature underwater speakers. The staff's formal attitude is tailored to please visiting power brokers and local Recoleta gentry, who are appointed a personal butler and soothed by a free massage on arrival. And traveling chief executives looking to impress clients will find little to disappoint in the walk-in humidor lined with Spanish cedar, the rooftop plunge pool edged in teak, or the French-inspired restaurant with its ox-blood acrylic walls and scarlet leather banquettes. **WHICH ROOM TO BOOK:** The Royal Suite's 1,300-square-foot floor space is lavish; smokers should book the second-floor Ambassadeur Suite for its outside terrace (54-11-3530-7777; algodonmansion.com; doubles, \$485–\$3,000). 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

UNDER \$300 Fierro Hotel, Buenos Aires

🏠 54-11-3220-6800; fierrohotel.com; doubles, \$206–\$300. 🍷🍷🍷

UNDER \$300 Luma-Casa de Montaña,

Villa La Angostura
🏠 Perched on a steeply sloped lakeside lot a mile from Villa La Angostura's chinked-log cabins and gourmet food stores, the eight-room Luma overlooks some of the most compelling scenery in Nahuel Huapi National Park: lake waters of deepest azure, untouched forests of southern beech, and serried, snowcapped peaks. Within the handsome sandstone building are pleasantly sparse furnishings, iron radiators, pastel-shaded walls of distressed plaster, beams of rough-hewn cypress, and old-fashioned bathrooms with claw-foot tubs. The chatty, well-traveled staff give the place a lived-in feel. After preparing a generous breakfast of cherries, tartlets, and homemade scones, they send guests out to cast for trout, saddle up for a foray, or simply gaze at the Andean condors soaring overhead. Evenings are spent by the stone fireplace in the open sitting room or in the cozy, candlelit restaurant, where guests take afternoon tea or dine on locally caught shrimp or fish. **WHICH ROOM TO BOOK:** Each one commands the same sylvan view, but to breathe Patagonia's

THE HOTTIES

THOSE LITTLE DETAILS THAT ELEVATE OUR FAVORITE NEW HOTELS FROM LIKABLE... TO LOVABLE. ON THESE PAGES, OUR 17 HOTTIES



1 Best Bedtime Snack

The fresh sugar-coated doughnut holes at **turndown** in Watch Hill, Rhode Island's **Ocean House**. Talk about sweet dreams!

PAGE 125

2 Best Alfresco Shower

The copper-fixture rain shower, topped by a canopy of sea-grape leaves and just steps from the beach at **Turtle Beach Bungalows**, on St. Kitts.

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Key to Symbols

- 🍷 = Bar/lounge
- 🏖️ = Beach
- 🆓 = Free Wi-Fi
- 🏊 = Gym
- 🛀 = Pool
- 🧖 = Spa
- 🧖🕒 = Hot Spa 2011
- 🍽️ = 24-hour room service

- 🔥 = Hot
- 🔥🔥 = Hotter
- 🔥🔥🔥 = Hottest

For the full reviews of hotels designated **go** to cntraveler.com/hotlist

crisp air—at no extra cost—request one with a balcony (54-2944-495641; lumapatagonia.com.ar; doubles, \$280–\$330). 🍷🍷🍷

AUSTRALIA

UNDER \$300 Crown Metropol, Melbourne

🏠 There's something pleasingly left field about this gleaming high-rise that, at 658 rooms, is Australia's largest hotel. For one, there's the eye-catching art throughout, including a color-drip mural by Australian Noël Skrzypczak and seven large chestnut-wood spheres by Korean artist Jae Lee Hyo in the lobby. This hotel reflects neither the deep-carpet ultraluxury of the Crown Towers nor the business-like restraint of the Crown Promenade, the other two properties in the glitzy Crown Entertainment Complex. The Metropol verges on funky, with a staff whose professionalism belies the casual jeans-and-hoodies uniform. Rooms are outfitted with fun retro-inspired designer furnishings and have muted color schemes. Even the standard Luxe rooms feel spacious thanks to huge windows; there's no tub, however. Step up to a Loft suite for an enormous soaking tub, a separate living space with a dining table, and (perhaps excessively) three TVs. British chef Gordon Ramsay chose the first floor for the Australian outpost of his Maze empire, but the jewel in this Crown is on the twenty-seventh floor, where the pool and spa grant panoramic views of the city and Port Phillip Bay. **WHICH ROOM TO BOOK:** Loft 2436 is twice as big as one of the Luxe studios and has front-and-center city views (61-3-9292-8888; crownmetropol.com.au; doubles, \$295–\$340). 🍷🍷🍷🍷

The Olsen, Melbourne
🏠 61-3-9040-1222; artserieshotels.com.au; doubles, \$298–\$324. 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Saffire Freycinet, Tasmania
🏠 There's no point in trying to compete with a setting as majestic as the Freycinet Peninsula, with its powder-white beaches and iridescent-blue bays. Instead, the Saffire pays homage to its surroundings with a sweeping entrance—a jetty-like walkway flanked by waterfalls and rose-hued marble walls; an airy, stingray-shaped main building that mimics the undulating landscape; and 20 timber-paneled suites arrayed in a line, evoking waves breaking on the shore. The suites meld muted colors and clean lines with smart technology. Electronically operated blinds, for example, reveal floor-to-ceiling windows that frame views of picturesque Oyster Bay and the Hazard Mountains. **Luxury Suites** even have views from the bathtub. The service is a blend of informality and attentiveness, and guided activities include kayaking, quad biking, and visits to an oyster farm. Nearby are Freycinet National Park's walking trails; one leads to the ivory sands of Wineglass Bay, which ranks among the world's finest beaches. It's also tempting to stay within the Saffire's cossetting embrace, indulging at the spa (guests get one treatment gratis), building sand castles on Muirs Beach (shovels and pails provided), and dining on local seafood creatively prepared by Hugh Whitehouse, formerly of the Darley at Lilianfels, in the Blue Mountains. **WHICH ROOM TO BOOK:** No. 5, a Luxury Suite, is relatively secluded and has a particularly good view of the Hazards (61-3-6256-



MAO PLAYING
The art-filled Casang suite at Hong Kong's Hullett House.

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