

Virtuoso Best Of The Best: A look at the hottest hotel trends awaiting luxury travelers this year

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Virtuoso's 2017 Directory features the world's finest hotels and travel experiences.

— VIRTUOSO — BEST OF THE BEST 2017 GUIDE TO THE WORLD'S BEST HOTEL EXPERIENCES



NEW YORK - **Virtuoso**, the global network of luxury travel agencies, has released the 2017 Best of the Best directory, featuring its exclusive collection of hotels and new experiential itineraries. The largest collection to date, with a record-setting 656 pages, includes 75 new properties, bringing the total portfolio to more than 1,150 hotels in 100 countries. Here are the top trends and insights seen among recent additions to the Virtuoso Hotels & Resorts collection.

Luxury Hotel Boom in Emerging Destinations: According to the 2017 Virtuoso Luxe Report, South Africa, Portugal and Colombia are among the hottest up-and-coming destinations this year. As a result, a new crop of luxury hotels and resorts are opening, such as South Africa's Tswalu Kalahari and Six Senses Douro Valley in Portugal, giving travelers more options in these emerging regions.

Hotel Lobbies that Really "Work": Hotels are continuing to reinvent the functionality of lobby spaces by creating ultra-cool lounges as places to meet, network and conduct business. The Palace Hotel in San Francisco offers a stunning historic court, with people on laptops gathering in a bar equipped with Wi-Fi and outlets. The new Four Seasons in downtown Manhattan offers lobby-specific amenities, such as laptops and interpreters for business meetings.

Hotels Bring the Destination to Life: To accommodate travelers' growing desire for authentic and adventurous experiences, hotels are increasing on- and off-property activities. Virtuoso has also responded to this demand by expanding Best of the Best to feature 76 pages of cultural itineraries, including sushi making with one of Tokyo's top chefs, camel rides along Erg Chebbi – the largest dunes in the Sahara – and nighttime safaris in Laos. Hotels immersed in the region's terrain also play an important role in attracting travelers. Those include Amanera Resort, recently opened in the heart of Dominican Republic's jungle, and the new Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba, based in Peru's Sacred Valley of the Incas.

Boutique Reigns King: The desire for personalized travel experiences and Instagram-worthy design continues to drive the popularity of boutique hotels. Of the 40 properties accepted into Virtuoso since June 2016, 60 percent have fewer than 100 rooms. New additions include Ted Turner's one-room Ladder Ranch in New Mexico, where guests will have outstanding wildlife-spotting opportunities on the 156,000-acre property, and at his 18-room Sierra Grande Lodge & Spa, also in New Mexico, guests can enjoy outdoor hot springs, which were first established by the region's Native Americans as a healing tradition.

Wellness 3.0: The rapidly growing travel niche is expected to hit \$680 billion this year. It is expanding 50 percent faster than the overall tourism industry and hotels are responding accordingly. Mii amo, a destination spa in Sedona, goes beyond traditional treatments by offering restorative therapies such as Reiki, a Japanese technique for stress reduction, and Clinique La Prairie in Switzerland is a pioneering medical retreat that combines cell therapy and holistic wellness.

Best of the Best is currently being distributed to the homes of 150,000 of Virtuoso's best clients, as selected by their advisor. To view the directory online, [click here](#).

Now celebrating its 25th anniversary, Virtuoso Hotels & Resorts is the longest running and most prestigious program available to travelers. Virtuoso provides guests with exclusive benefits worth up to \$450 per stay with value-added amenities such as spa treatments and rounds of golf when a visit is booked through a Virtuoso advisor.