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50 hotels every man should stay at before he dies

From Australia to Newfoundland, these are the finest boltholes in the world

Words: [Joseph Bullmore](#)

The best moment of any hotel experience comes just after check-in, and just after the trip up in the ornate lift, and just after the handing over of the heavy-set keys, and just after the bell-hop has escorted your luggage (magicked, it seems, from nowhere) to your room.

Jump on the bed, hark at the view, take your shoes off amid the pillowy carpet/ reclaimed concrete/ mahogany floorboards, boggle at the steep-sided bath, and ogle the local lager in the hidden minibar. Good hotels manage a unique trick – they transport you completely while always making you feel at home. And the following 50 examples are worth visiting for that specific reason, among many others. They are set out in no particular order and with no algorithm at work beyond our own experiences, some highly informed hearsay and the fairytales of others (though they start in the UK and fan out slowly from there). See you at the bar.



Claridge's, London, England

Claridge's, London, England, London's most glamorous and best-loved stay, Claridge's has become a byword for singular service, exquisite hospitality and old-world sparkle. The hotel most other Mayfair hotels want to be when they grow up.

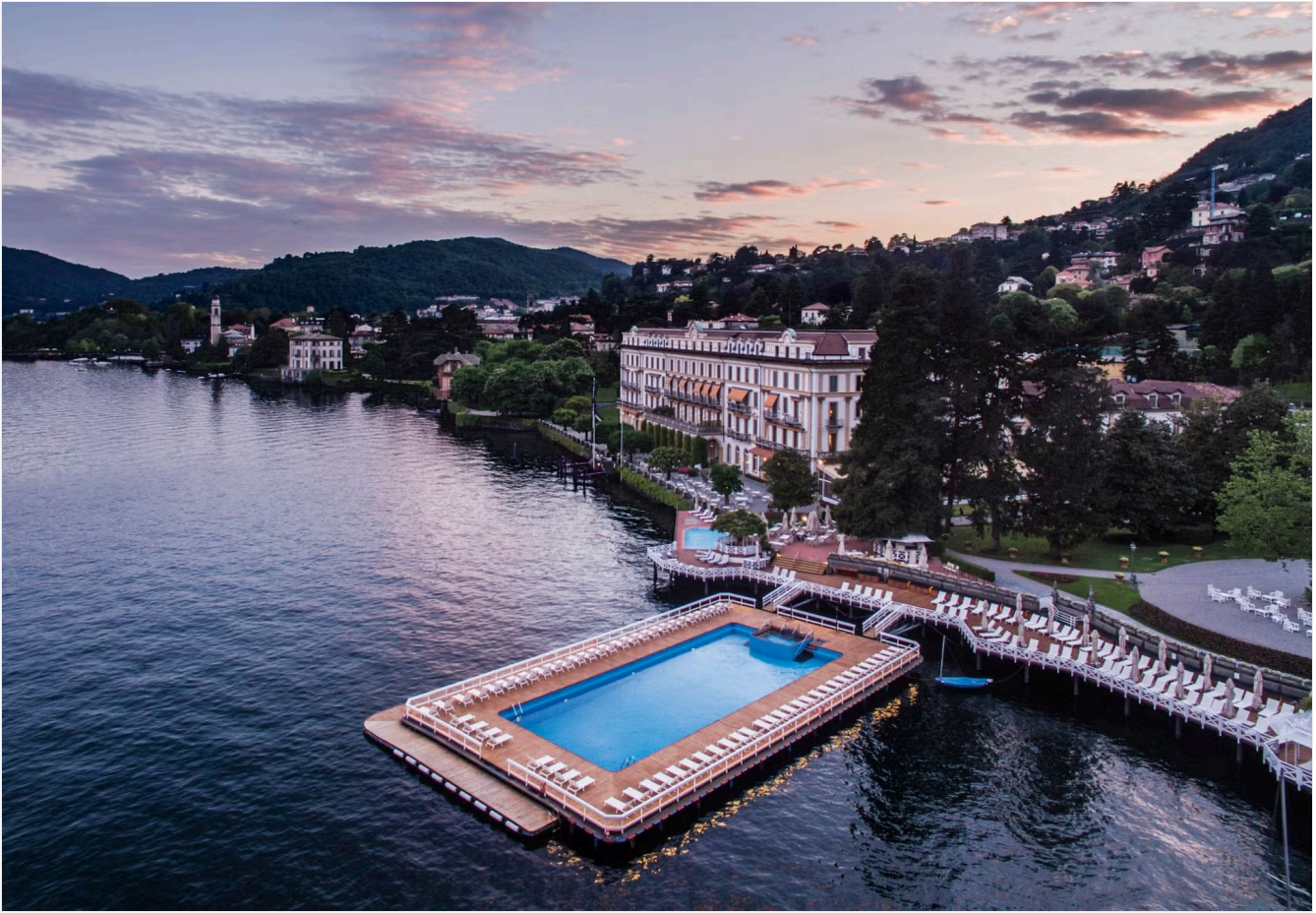
The Dorchester, London, England, The Park Lane juggernaut, where Elizabeth Taylor and Brigitte Bardot once

laid their heads, offers a pretty fine release from your emails and your deadlines, less a building with rooms than a breakout from reality. When you drag your case through the revolving door, the landscape in front is exactly what you imagine when you picture the high-art of London hospitality: a lobby large enough to fly a kite under; the elegant flow of sharply tailored service people; and at the back is Liberace's mirrored piano.

The Fife Arms, Braemar, Scotland, Founded by the art tycoons behind Hauser & Wirth, The Fife Arms is a wonderfully detailed, completely imaginative and pleasingly traditional hunting lodge, set among the Cairngorms in dark mahogany, tartan finery, and jolly playfulness.

Lime Wood Hotel, The New Forest, England, A handsome country house in rambling grounds, this New Forest institution has blossomed into one of Britain's best-loved grand-dame hotels, thanks to its Georgian splendour, homely charm and Angela Hartnett's sublime kitchen.

La Colombe d'Or, Saint Paul de Vence, France, The Riviera as it once was, and as it should be. Hidden away, understated, family run and vaguely unknowable, La Colombe d'Or is scattered, un-showily, with incredible artworks from the masters of the 20th century – many of who would settle their restaurant bills with paintings. It is handsome and homely, and the pool looks good enough to drink.



Villa d'Este, Lake Como, Italy

Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc, Antibes, France, The grande dame to end all grand dames, and a spot for the truly interesting people of this world for 150 years. Commanding yet welcoming, elegant but relaxed, Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc is staffed by some of the loveliest people, and its walls still glow in the sunset like nothing else. The cabanas are the thing of legend, and the rock-slung swimming pool – yes, that one – deserves a modelling contract.

Le Sirenuse, Positano, Italy, John Steinbeck visited the Amalfi Coast in 1953 and wrote how “Positano bites deep. It is a dream place that isn’t quite real when you are there and becomes beckoningly real after you have gone.” And the most dream-like of all locations here, perhaps, is Le Sirenuse, with its arched balconies, white and terracotta walls, and creeping plants. It is still family owned and seems happily untouched by the modern age.

Il Pellicano, Porto Ercole, Italy, (Temporarily closed)
Embedded in a hidden cove somewhere between Pisa and

Rome, this Tuscan delight is made up of a few terracotta houses scattered on a rocky hillside. The best bit is the series of staggered natural-rock terraces – dotted with picturesque parasols – that lead to the water.

Villa d'Este, Lake Como, Italy, (Temporarily closed)

Indescribably elegant and impossibly stately, Villa d'Este is a towering, glowing monument to the Good Life that seems to rise from the waters of Lake Como. The landscaped gardens are truly unique, meanwhile the whole pool-floating-in-a-lake thing is mad and ingenious all at once. It's famous for its punchy negronis, too, which should be sipped on the lakeside terrace at sunset, sun-kissed and content.

The Gritti Palace, Venice, Italy, A 15th-century palazzo in one of the finest spots on the Grand Canal, The Gritti is an exquisite ode to Venetian luxury and craft, dotted with antiques, frescoes and rococo details. It is princely, enveloping and full of charm and grace. An eternal classic.

Abadía Retuerta LeDomaine, Valladolid, Castilla y León, Spain, Wine runs through this unique boutique hotel like lifeblood, soothing and caressing as it does so. The vineyards of the Ribera del Duero region stretch all around the central building, whose golden stones date back to the 12th century. Inside, however, there is modernity and ingenuity at every turn – not least in the kitchens of two-Michelin-starred chef Andoni Luis Aduriz, or in the inspired 'vinotherapy' treatments of the on-site spa.



Badrutt's Palace, St Moritz, Switzerland

Badrutt's Palace, St Moritz, Switzerland, Towering above the frozen lake up in oofy St Moritz, the decadent Badrutt's Palace keeps the spirit of the Jet Set alive and well. The Palace is a place of endless fun, friendship and character – this, after all, was the spot where arch playboy Gunter Sachs based himself during the winters (with a piece of bullet-proof glass installed in his room for a particularly spicy party trick), and where a giant elephant was once paraded into the ballroom for a 50th birthday celebration. A glittering jewel.

Istoria, Santorini, Greece, Istoria is sometimes said to be the world's most Instagrammable hotel – but don't let that put you off. A striking work of art as much as a lodging, it is a cool, white, organic, modernist place on the fashionable Greek island's calmer south-east coast. Once owned by an eccentric and wealthy Greek widow, it is a place alive with tales and a certain mystique – hence its name, which translates to 'story' in English.

Ca' di Dio, Venice, Italy, Set just beyond the tourist bustle of Venice's main square, Ca' di Dio overlooks the lagoon with its rich history dating back to 1272. Here, you can savour the timeless romance of the floating city with canal views and intimate gardens, finding refuge and tranquillity from the maze outside while enjoying a spritz and delicacies from the Veneto region.

Monastero Santa Rosa, Amalfi Coast, Italy, Perched high above the day-trippers, this crow's nest of a hotel is formed from a striking 17th-century monastery. The winding, terraced gardens are quite magical, with an infinity pool that hangs lazily above the ocean.

Eleven Deplar Farm, Iceland, Situated on the wonderfully named Troll Peninsula, Eleven Deplar Farm is a grass-roofed adventure destination of considerable charm. Harmoniously sewn into the sweeping green valley around it, this former sheep ranch is now one of the best places for wild-salmon fishing and heli-skiing in the world – and combines chic luxury with splendid isolation.



Le Bristol, Paris, France

Hotel Alfonso XIII, Seville, Princely by name and princely by nature, the historic Hotel Alfonso XIII is fringed by palm trees and drenched in old-fashioned opulence – much of the original 1920s décor remains, including marble floors, crystal chandeliers and wooden lifts.

Hotel de Paris, Monte Carlo, Monaco, Hotel de Paris has played backdrop to two separate Bond films over the years, which ought to tell you a great deal about its standing in the world. Cinematic, glamorous, decadent and fabled, it is a monument to Belle Epoque style, with a three Michelin-starred restaurant, and the world's largest wine cellar to boot.

Le Bristol, Paris, France, The first hotel in the French capital to be deemed a 'palace' (one notch above a five star), this is a true continental institution, situated down on the smart Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré. A bastion of Paris chic, it has bright, wide, marble-laden hallways and a famous covered rooftop pool – not to mention double rooms larger than your average Parisian apartment.



Amangiri, Utah, United States

Cotton House Hotel, Barcelona, Set in the neoclassical 19th-century building once home to the city's cotton-makers' guild, this unusual hotel is theatrical, playful and delightful – a lot like Barcelona itself.

Ett Hem, Stockholm, Sweden, Decked out in elegant woods, worn marble and the enveloping cosiness of velvet and leather, this is Scandinavian chic at its most inviting. Ett Hem translates to 'at home,' and the place is blessed with a welcoming, familiar atmosphere, thanks to its minute attention to detail and charming staff (you can have dinner in the kitchen among the working chefs, if you so desire).

Amangiri, Utah, United States, A striking idyll of luxury in one of the most jaw-dropping landscapes on the continent, Amangiri takes the world-renowned opulence of the Aman brand and places it harmoniously into the rugged rocks of the Utah desert.



Hoshinoya Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan

Hoshinoya Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan, A multi-level ryokan in the thick of the city's finance centre: Tokyo is just a wonderfully complex place. The flagship brand of a century-old hospitality group, Hoshinoya has become revered for its mixing of a the-way-its-always-been ethos with contemporary sensibilities. (Elsewhere in the brand, Risonare is aimed for families; Beb is for staycations.) At this outpost, shoes are kicked off at the entrance and stowed away in separate, neatly stacked boxes that are lined like safes on the wall; flooring made of tatami mats bleed into every corner, corridor and nook, offering a naturalistic lyricism; and water 1,500m below ground is pumped into the 17th-floor onsen. Tea ceremonies? Low-slung furnishings in guest rooms? Grilled fish for breakfast and Nippon fare at dinner? It is simply Japanese hospitality at its greatest.

Aman, Tokyo, Japan, Perhaps the greatest stay on Earth, this hub of the Aman brand is defined by a sense of stillness and purity. The lyricism is unrivalled.

The Silo, Cape Town, South Africa, The work of starchitect Thomas Heatherwick, The Silo is South Africa's hospitality gem, a five-floor bolthole defined by its angled windows and placed atop the country's finest art house, Zeitz MOCAA. Though the facade appears spartan and austere, the interiors are flush with colour and vibrancy.



Fogo Island Inn, Newfoundland

Qualia, Whitsunday Islands, Australia, An island hopper's dream. Sat on a peninsula at the northernmost tip of Hamilton Island, in the dramatically beautiful Whitsunday region, Qualia blends seamlessly into its wild surroundings. This is a truly special resort, often regarded as one of the best of its kind in the world, characterised by lush, exotic foliage, colourful wildlife and mind-boggling views over the Great Barrier Reef.

The Upper House, Hong Kong, This Jet Set bolthole was the first 'paperless' hotel in Hong Kong and retains the high-tech, super convenient edge that that implies. But it's characterised even further with traditional comforts and

beautiful touches, like the Thomas-Heatherwick-designed stone entrance wall, or the almost extravagantly spacious rooms with their truly exceptional views.

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modernist masterpiece. The home-made food – foraged locally and strictly seasonal – is absolutely delicious, meanwhile the socially conscious ethos of the place is a welcome bonus.

Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong, Long the beating heart of Hong Kong society, the famed Mandarin Oriental has a glamorous past, a towering reputation – and quite possibly one of the best locations in the entire city. The dining room is utterly glorious and the service is truly world-beating. A place of charm, atmosphere and fun.

Qasr Al Sarab, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Sat in the middle of the largest uninterrupted sand desert in the world, Qasr Al Sarab is an improbable, immersive and beguiling oasis, surrounded on all sides by mind-boggling, perspective-shattering views. Quite mad, entirely brilliant.

Amansara, Cambodia, The name means ‘heavenly place’, and Amansara lives up to the billing. It was once a residence for guests of King Sihanouk, and retains the princely 1960s New Khmer architecture of that era, with modernist proportions that sit handsomely against the wilderness. Sat beneath a canopy of tall trees on the edge of the Angkor Unesco World Heritage space, it is a tranquil, nigh-on spiritual idyll in one of the most striking natural landscapes imaginable.

Belle Mont Sanctuary Resort, St Kitts, Understated and full of charisma, this little spot high in the green hills of St Kitts has a beautiful golf course, shimmering views across the ocean, and a calm, cool ambience. A retreat in every sense.

Palm Heights, Cayman Islands, The first boutique hotel on Grand Cayman, the gorgeously designed Palm Heights banishes the image of corporate golf and tax-haven-hunters with luxurious aplomb. Pleasingly mid-century and characterised by exquisite details, the hotel itself sits on arguably one of the Caribbean's finest stretches of sand. A future classic.



La Mamounia, Marrakech, Morocco

Shutters on the Beach, Santa Monica, United States, A friendly, wood-clad Santa Monica beach house, Shutters on the Beach is beautifully designed and pleasingly laidback, despite its celebrity clientele and impressive reputation. Exquisite sunset views throughout, and a lovely lobster-heavy menu.

Royal Mansour Marrakech, Marrakech, Morocco, The 'Royal' here is not an exaggeration – the hotel (the most prestigious in Marrakech) was conceived by King Mohammed VI, and still welcomes the royal family and their pals. Designed as a 'medina within a medina', it is surrounded

by mature, paradisiacal moorish gardens and divided into 53 private riads, characterised by exquisite Moroccan design.

Inkaterra La Casona, Cusco, Peru, Cusco was the capital of the Incan empire before the invading Spanish took over. The incomers rather liked its grandeur and unique atmosphere, too, and built some of their finest churches and palaces in the city. La Casona is probably the oldest of all these dwellings, and has been restored lovingly and beautifully into a dark-wood-clad, sandy-stoned, earth-hued hotel-mansion of serious renown. There are just eleven suites, but they are each exquisite in their own right. Calm and pampering.

La Mamounia, Marrakech, Morocco, A modern-day icon decked out in dripping Moroccan finery, La Mamounia has long had a fabled reputation and plenty of friends in high places. Impressive, inviting and incredibly photogenic, this former Roaring Twenties hotspot feels timeless and singular, even now.

GoldenEye, Jamaica, Ian Fleming bought the clifftop plot on this site in 1946, before the estate was converted, many decades later, into a hodgepodge of luxury hillside huts and gorgeous, pontooned mini-villas down on the turquoise waters of the bay. Discreet, relaxed and friendly, it is a serious Caribbean hot-spot for those in the know, and the estate is dotted by trees bearing the names of the famous figures who planted them. A uniquely luxurious yet homely delight.

The Barcelona Edition, Barcelona, Spain, It's really easy to love this outpost of Edition – the clean, sleek Ian Schrager aesthetic is all there, of course, with guest rooms awash with a naturalistic palette (walnut panelling and blonde wood feature heavily) and a pared-down configuration; meanwhile, Italian linen and embossed Spanish-leather headboards inject a warm touch that makes you never want to leave the comforts of your pad, creating that much coveted oasis-in-a-city quality. The Roof, the hotel's lovely terrace, offers views of the city; Punch Room makes use of local spirits; and the menu at Veraz revolves around seasonal ingredients sourced from next door's Mercat de Santa Caterina.

The Carlyle, New York, United States, The Carlyle lives up (and surpasses) that most overused of terms: an institution. It was a celebrity hotspot before ‘celebrities’ were a thing – a glorious Beaux Arts behemoth with Art-Deco-inflected rooms and a long, long list of notable admirers. Bemelmans Bar, off the lobby, is a legend in its own right.

Rosewood San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, Beautifully finished in Colonial Mexican finery (dark bevelled woods, leather accents, splashes of orange against vast whitewashed walls), this handsome hotel belies its relatively young age (it was opened in 2011). Sensual and inviting, with an exceptional dining room.

Angama Mara, Maasai Mara National Reserve, Kenya, Sat atop the Great Rift Valley with sweeping views over the endless Maasai Mara plains, this safari experience cleverly combines traditional tented living with modernist touches, contemporary art, and complete luxury. Really, though, it's all about that view.

Ellerman House, Cape Town, South Africa, Cape Town's most exclusive and beloved hotel has a quietly ridiculous, gently cinematic perch on a cliffside outcrop overlooking the sea. With spectacular views, swaddling privacy and long-held glamour, this palatial Edwardian resort is a true gem.



Tongabezi, Livingstone, Zambia

One&Only, Le Saint Géran, Mauritius, A romantic idyll of sugar-white sands and swaying palms, the Mauritius hotel gets its name from the ship Le Saint Géran, whose dramatic nearby sinking was the birth of the story of Paul and Virginie – the local version of Romeo and Juliet. Expect iconic colonial architecture and truly exceptional service.

Tongabezi, Livingstone, Zambia, Adventure meets luxury in this series of river-fronted sort-of-tree-houses down by the unforgettable Victoria Falls. White-water rafting, waterfall helicopter flights and bungee jumping might be the order of the day, but, by night, this ingenious, friendly hotel turns into a bastion of opulence, with incredible food, sunset river cruises, and ridiculous views throughout.

The Lowell, New York, United States, Stylish, knowing and understated, this boutique spot on the Upper East Side is characterised by discretion, wonderful service and a glamorous clientele. Each room is unique, and each regular

has their favourite. But all of them are world class and sumptuously finished.

Soho House Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, Even though it operates on privacy and discretion, there's an abundance of character and heart at this Soho House outpost that's set in an 18th-century building in the city's Gothic Quarter. Each of the 56 pads has been influenced by classic Catalan design: beautiful patterned textiles, warm, rich palettes, a mixture of furnishings that keep things feeling more like a classy abode than a rigid design scheme (we rather like the Large option for its separate living space). The northern Italian fare at Cecconi's offers excellent seafood, pastas and meat – and any excess calories can be burnt off at the buzzy gym, replete with Technogym equipment, or in any one of the two pools.

Eden Rock, St Barths, A society legend ever since French aviator Rémy de Haenen trotted down here with Greta Garbo in the 1950s, this lively spot – sat on its own rocky outcrop amid the sands of the Baie de St Jean – is now one of the best-loved hotels in the Caribbean.

Mashpi Lodge, Ecuador, A striking minimalist delight embedded in the deep-green canopy of the Choco rainforest, Mashpi sits in the vast nature reserve that shares its name. Expect tropical flowers, lush vegetation and a kaleidoscope of exotic wildlife among gently rushing waterfalls and exquisite views.

North Island Seychelles, Seychelles, Among the startling white sands and coconut-laden palms, this paradise island resort is the finest in the Seychelles, with singular culinary creativity, legendary service, and a pleasing, understated immersion in nature.

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