

Condé Nast Traveller

THE WORLD MADE LOCAL

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024

THE GOLD LIST

OUR
EDITORS'
ALL-TIME
FAVOURITE
HOTELS

Plus

SWITZERLAND'S MOST MAGICAL SKI SCENE
GOOD TIMES ON THE SRI LANKAN SURF COAST
GORILLAS AND GREEN SHOOTS IN RWANDA
THE TRAVEL TRENDS DEFINING THE NEW YEAR

THE GOLD LIST 2024

PALACIO PRINCIPE REAL LISBON, PORTUGAL

It's hard to put a finger on exactly why going through the gates to the garden of Palácio Príncipe Real feels quite so much like arriving home. On the face of it, this is an imposingly grand affair: a renovation of an exquisite 1877 pastel-pink home set around a soaring atrium; a garden oasis in Lisbon's smartest quarter, where the Teixeira da Mota family once hosted legendary parties. And yet, from the red Renault 4 in the cobblestone courtyard to the proper English breakfast tea and borderline kitsch runner ducks around the place, there's a cosy, unpretentious whimsy to life here. A lot of that comes from its English owners, Gail and Miles Curley, who rescued the tired building from an ugly office conversion in 2015, embarking on a challenging renovation just as Lisbon was starting to boom. They are charming, self-effacing hosts, clearly in love with their very personal project but wont to reference *Fawlty Towers* while making sure it's nothing of the sort. One of 25, the garden room we stayed in is sublime, with ornate ceiling-height blue tiles and a roll-top copper bath next to the old fireplace. It looks out over a miniature Eden of palms, jacaranda and lemon trees towards the Asian-style pool, lit up come evening as a chatty cocktail hour begins outside the main house. Now and then, Isabel Amaral, an etiquette coach who grew up here with her seven siblings, will drop by – wowed by the restoration, but perhaps not the only one for whom Palácio Príncipe Real feels like a homecoming.

TOBY SKINNER palacioprincipereal.com



THE GREENWICH HOTEL NEW YORK, USA

When I was a teenager, a family friend offered to host me for the weekend. I heard the words “Manhattan apartment” and conjured visions of leather armchairs and silk rugs, parlour palms and walnut desks, and art from far-flung travels. My grand expectations weren't met – for that I had to wait for The Greenwich Hotel. This Tribeca gem opened 15 years ago, but feels like it's been part of the fabric of Manhattan for aeons. Perhaps it's the hotel's lived-in textures: not one of its 88 rooms, suites and penthouses looks like another, and the interiors still give the sense of staying with your coolest uncle. There's a considered quality to the handmade cloud-like Savoir beds, Carrara marble and Moroccan tiles in the bathrooms, and the terracotta floors in the lobby modelled after a 14th-century Italian palazzo. The sense of lived-in cool comes partly from Robert De Niro, one of the hotel's owners, who grew up nearby and clearly gets the neighbourhood. Paintings by his father, the abstract expressionist Robert De Niro Sr, add colourful drama, and photos of both men are dotted around the rooms. At Locanda Verde, the Italian restaurant by prolific Big Apple chef Andrew Carmellini, the service is as it is throughout the hotel: polished yet familiar. An echo, perhaps, of the old Italian-American saying: “When you're here, you're family.”

MATT ORTILE thegreenwichhotel.com



8 SILVER SURFING

To the north of Lisbon, the wave-caressed Costa de Prata (Silver Coast) has generally been considered less upmarket than boho-sleepy Comporta and Melides to the south. That's changing with a new crop of hotels. Two crisply modern, wellness-driven properties have arrived in Ericeira – **Immerso** (pictured) and **Aethos**, the latter with in-house surf retreats – making the town a great first stop on a road trip north, possibly including a stay at the earthier **Areias do Seixo**, near Santa Cruz, on the way towards the monstrous wave at Nazaré. immerso.pt; aethos.com; areiasdoseixo.com



9 FACE TO WATCH

Vimbai Masiyiwa

Along with her mother Tsitsi, Vimbai is the founder of Batoka Africa, whose community-oriented lodge in Zimbabwe, Zambezi Sands, opened in 2023 as the first high-end safari accommodation in Africa owned by Black women. Another, Gorges Lodge, is due soon. **She's excited about...** "Fusing wellness and safari in 2024 with a new running safari retreat that will also include Akagera in Rwanda and Sossusvlei in Namibia. And, more generally, seeing engaged visitors who want a more rounded, dignified and authentic picture of Africa." batokafrica.com



10 STATE OF MIND

Upstate New York has been on the up and up for years now, but 2024 will be all about the area's wellness offering going up a gear – especially with the arrival of **The Ranch's** latest outpost. On 200 acres of the Lower Hudson Valley, it will offer Wall Street-friendly three- and four-day versions of the legendary week-long retreats that have made the Malibu original a regular pilgrimage for the likes of Oprah Winfrey and Michelle Obama. theranchmalibu.com

11 NOT GETTING WASTED

More than 30 years old, **The Datai Langkawi** is still the most beloved resort on the butterfly-ridden Malaysian island. But CEO Arnaud Girodon's pet topic is the hotel's zero-waste-to-landfill policy, which includes turning thousands of glass bottles and ceramics into terrazzo floors and The Asher, a game-changing machine that converts plastic and solid waste to non-hazardous ash. Expect to hear of more similarly granular recycling solutions in 2024. thedatai.com



12 BOUNCING BACK

After the devastating bushfires that hit the "Australian Galapagos" off Adelaide in 2019 and early 2020, Kangaroo Island has – more literally than most places – bounced back, after its famous flora and fauna, and the 5,000-strong community, proved more resilient than initially feared. The island is now open to visitors again, after a two-year hiatus, and is thriving, with five new off-grid **Cabn** cabins on 400 acres of pristine private land, and the reopening of the rebuilt **Southern Ocean Lodge**, all glass and sea views slung along a wild clifftop. cabn.life; southernoceanlodge.com.au



THE RITZ PARIS FRANCE

César Ritz opened this limestone bastion of French hospitality in 1898 and, in the course of running it, he and his wife, Marie-Louise, who would take over the business, flipped the industry on its head. It was the first hotel in Paris with telephones, the first to offer private baths, and the first to install electricity throughout the property. It was also one of the first places in town where women could come without chaperones and meet friends for five o'clock tea. From the start, The Ritz Paris has been a Grand Siècle-style hotel with a modern soul and, much as in 1898, change is afoot. It's said that when he was too ill to dine out, Marcel Proust had chicken and potatoes sent over from The Ritz Paris – now those hallowed kitchens are home to their first female head chef, Eugénie Béziat. Chef Béziat was born in Gabon to French parents and spent her childhood in Africa, so the flagship restaurant, Espadon, features dishes such as chicken yassa, a Senegalese speciality, and barbecued lobster with cassava semolina. Meanwhile, down a warmly lit hall is Bar Hemingway, named for the American novelist who scrimped for a cocktail a week at The Ritz. Last spring, longtime head bartender Colin Field (inventor of the Clean Dirty Martini, served with an ice cube of olive juice) stepped aside, and his protégé Anne-Sophie Prestail, has come in from the wings. JO RODGERS ritzparis.com

FINCA CORTESIN COSTA DEL SOL, SPAIN

The international luxury marques may be piling into Spain at breakneck speed, but none has yet achieved the status of the great Finca Cortesin. With 67 suites, Bali-esque pools, a Mediterranean-facing beach club, vast spa and top-brass golf course, it's a paradigm of perfection on the cusp of Casares, a typical whitewashed town near Marbella. Finca Cortesin is more than the sum of its parts, but each part has been created by someone of significant talent. Javier López Granados is the big-vision CEO-owner who pulls it all together; Rene Zimmer the consummate managing director, who also helms new sister property Grand Hotel Son Net in Mallorca. Architects Roger Torras and Ignacio Sierra conceived this take on a classic Andalusian finca, which gleams sparkling white against the deep-blue Med and vivid flashes of potted geraniums. The sleek public spaces, filled to the rafters with antiques, were originally curated by the late, distinguished Portuguese decorator Duarte Pinto Coelho (after his death, the baton passed to exuberant Madrid-based antiquarian Lorenzo Castillo). Landscaper Gerald Huggan planted the perfumed and palm-studded gardens, replete with jasmine and wisteria. The inviting suites are the work of interior designer sisters Ana and Cristina Calderón, who dressed high-ceilinged rooms with bright pieces, colour feature walls, vibrant bouquets and paintings. To dine with Lutz Bösing, chef at El Jardín de Lutz, is to take a masterclass in classic Spanish cuisine, especially seafood such as a rich mantis shrimp cream soup with lobster and basil. DAVID MORALEJO fincacortesin.com

