



The Best Hotels in the World: 2019 Readers' Choice Awards

50 PHOTOS

by CNT EDITORS
October 7, 2019

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Proving once again we have the world's best traveled readers.



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For our 32nd annual **Readers' Choice Awards** survey—yes, more than three decades—a record 600,000 registered voters weighed in on their favorite hotels around the globe. Some hotel stays are utterly forgettable—decent food, standard sheets, and a middle-of-the-road location. But some, you'll remember for the rest of your life. The following list ranks the 50 best hotels in the world according to *Traveler* readers in this year's survey. The impressive number of 2019 results were especially exciting for us: we're ever curious about where you go, what you loved, and who you went with. As you continue to travel, we continue to listen. Here are the hotels you loved most this year.



Courtesy La Réserve Paris Hotel & Spa

HOTEL

15. La Réserve Paris - Hotel and Spa →

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La Réserve Paris is the most beloved address in the **French capital** for fashion editors and the go-to for regular visitors to the city who want to feel like they're staying in a private mansion. It has only 40 rooms in a fine *hôtel particulier* designed by Baron Haussmann for Napoleon III's half-brother the Duc de Morny in 1854. Its position, on a quiet, tree-lined street moments from the **Place de la Concorde**, is propitious. Then you cross the threshold and—ka-boom!—it's an explosion of color and texture in the best way imaginable. There's brocade taffeta, velvet drapes and silk wallpapers in the richest shades of emerald and ruby. No crevice has gone ungilded.



HOTEL

14. Aranwa Sacred Valley Hotel & Wellness →

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Peruvian chain Aranwa's first hotel is a dreamy Andean wonderland spread over a canal- and lake-filled compound beside the Vilcanota River, far from the clusters of resorts in the **Sacred Valley**. One hundred-fifteen spacious rooms are sprinkled about the property in the carefully restored 18th-century hacienda, the resort's centerpiece, and several more modern buildings with minimalist decor. When taking a day off from **Machu Picchu** or valley tours, you'll find loads to do at the Aranwa: Stroll the orchid-filled glass pyramid, browse the art gallery or library, shop for alpaca scarves, soak in the infinity pool, watch a film in the private cinema, or take a treatment in the 25,000-square-foot spa. Personable staff are on hand to give lifts around the property in a fleet of eco-carts, or to entice an alpaca or peacock to pose for a photo op. Locally sourced ingredients are the norm here, and much of the fruit and herbs in the gourmet restaurant Pukawi are grown right in the resort's hummingbird-filled gardens.



Courtesy Aranwa Cusco Boutique Hotel

HOTEL

15. Aranwa Cusco Boutique Hotel →

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Just two blocks from the Plaza de Armas in Cusco, this 16th-century colonial-style mansion has been thoughtfully updated with intelligent oxygen enrichment systems, heated floors, and hot tubs in its 43 suites. Wellbeing and cuisine are among the standouts here, but it's not just about how you feel—it's what you see, too. The hotel houses more than 300 pieces of art, including paintings from the Cuzco school, carvings, and sculptures, so make time to take a lap (or three).



Francisco Nogueira/Courtesy Amerikalinjen

HOTEL

12. Amerikalinjen →

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This Oslo hotel may have only opened its doors this past March, but the building—if you couldn't pick it up from the name—has long had ties to the other side of the Atlantic. Built in 1919 as the offices for the Norwegian America Line, a cruise ship line that ferried folks to the United States, the landmark has since been fully revitalized. Its entry into the 21st century includes 122 elegant guest rooms balanced democratically between old world charm (think, high ceilings and herringbone floors) and punchy, mod accents (velvet headboards, mirrored accent walls), a Finnish sauna, and a gym that has more design flair than any place you've ever worked out before. You'll also find yourself in close proximity to some of Oslo's most popular sights—the National Opera and Ballet, the Akershus Fortress, the Royal Castle, Ekebergparken—but head to Gustav jazz club, the swank in-house music spot, for a night on the town, all without setting foot outside.



Courtesy Alila Hotels and Resorts

HOTEL

11. Alila Fort Bishangarh →

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Alila Fort Bishangarh is India's only warrior fort turned hotel. The restoration and conversion into a hotel was a 10-year process—and the end result could have been very dark and foreboding (it is an imposing fortress with a maze of hallways and eight-foot-thick walls, after all). Yet while the original structure has been restored and many original features and details have remained, the place is airy, light, and contemporary. And the location, in the famed Aravalli Hills near **Jaipur**, is much more accessible than many of Rajasthan's more remote palace hotels, so it's an easy add-on during a Golden Triangle itinerary.



Owen Raggott/Courtesy Rosewood Luang Prabang

HOTEL

10. Rosewood Luang Prabang →

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Despite an uptick in visitors over the past decade, magical, spiritual Luang Prabang, in northern Laos, still has genuine caught-in-time appeal: a place to move easily between traditional gilded temples, saffron-clad monks, and francophone bookstores. For those chasing a Somerset Maugham fantasy, the new Rosewood Luang Prabang is the perfect home base. The hotel is on the outskirts of town, a simple 10-minute drive from the historic district. How easy it is to reach the room, however, depends on whether you go for one of the 17 river- or poolside rooms or villas, or one of the six safari-style tents—the brand's first dip into glamping. The tents, luxe hillside aeries, require light climbing, but the payoff in privacy and sunrises from the balcony is worth it. To reach all of the Bill Bensely-designed rooms (teak and plenty of throwback touches like dial telephones and framed vintage maps), cross a river that snakes through the property. Cleverly, the wooden bridge is also a bar, serving excellent vodka highballs with Laotian snacks.



Courtesy Beau-Rivage Palace

HOTEL

9. Beau-Rivage Palace, Lausanne, Switzerland →

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This is a hotel you might've dreamt of when you were little—though we doubt you were this imaginative. The place truly is a palace, though from the front, it's tough to discern its size: You pull into a private, paved drive, with a fairly modest entrance, and a beautiful, if somewhat smallish lobby, and it's not until you make it out to the back of the hotel that you realize its scale. Set on a hill overlooking the aquamarine (yes, actually aquamarine) waters of Lake Geneva, you'll first notice the immaculately manicured gardens, the thin strips of outdoor pools, and the piqued tent tops under which people are taking their lunch *al fresco*. Hard to believe, but it only gets better from there.



Maurice Naragon

HOTEL

8. Monastero Santa Rosa Hotel & Spa →

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We all dream of a romantic, seaside Italian getaway, and this one in a restored seventeenth-century monastery, just three miles from **Amalfi**, might be it. With just 20 rooms, terraced gardens, cliff-top Mediterranean views, and a pool that seems to float over the sea, you'll find yourself right at that point of enjoying the seclusion without feeling isolated. You can mingle with the other adult guests (children under 16 not allowed) who, like you, no doubt also are looking for a little R&R by Italy's famous Amalfi Coast. Stroll the four levels of terraced gardens, and don't miss the spa, which includes sauna and steam rooms, a hydro pool, and tepidarium. You can enjoy a martini with a side of chess at the library and bar, before dining on local Campanian specialties at Il Refetorio, the on-site restaurant. It's la dolce vita straight out of central casting.



Jaideep Oberoi/Courtesy Rambagh Palace

HOTEL

7. Rambagh Palace (Taj), Jaipur, India →

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Guests may be surprised to hear that this exquisitely restored 1835 palace in **Jaipur**, with all its courtyards and pageantry, wasn't built for a queen—but rather, for the queen's favorite handmaiden. Later on, it was used as a royal guesthouse and hunting lodge, though it's since comfortably taken its place as one of Rajasthan's most luxurious hotels. Enjoy an evening of Champagne, moonlight, and candles in a private dining tent illuminated by flaming torches and pitched on the palace greens, and make sure you get to the Steam bar, which occupies a restored train.



Courtesy Royal Mansour

HOTEL

6. Royal Mansour, Marrakech, Morocco →

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You can bet that just about every detail at this palatial Marrakech hotel, which took more than three years and 1,200 master craftsmen to build, aims to please. Each of the 53 individual three-story riads has a mini courtyard (with a canopy that automatically unfurls if rain is detected); a dazzling living room and bedroom with silk-covered walls; a private rooftop terrace with a fireplace and heated plunge pool, and 24/7 private butler service—of course. If you do decide to leave your room, (though, you very well may not) head to the spa, and try one of the two superb restaurants, La Grande Table Marocaine and La Grande Table Française (both overseen by chef Yannick Alléno from Paris's Le Meurice), as well as the indoor-outdoor La Table, which serves a formally presented breakfast and lunch—by white-gloved staff.



Adrian Gaut

HOTEL

5. Four Seasons Hotel at The Surf Club →

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Over the years, guests here have included Elizabeth Taylor, Wallis Simpson, and the Shah of Iran. Winston Churchill used to rent two cabanas, one to paint in and one “for naps” (and drinks, as during Prohibition spirits were served illegally here). Set in Surfside at the less-developed northern end of **Miami Beach**, this hacienda-style hotel has been brilliantly extended by Richard Meier, whose 12-story glass towers seem to float above the terra cotta tiles of the original 1930s Mediterranean-style pantile roofs, and interiors by Joseph Dirand. The cabanas now house part of the charming spa, where even the brushed-brass key pads on the lockers are a thing of beauty, as well as a handful of Cabana Studio bedrooms, each a pale-but-interesting essay in contrasting textures: canvas, rattan, and travertine. Of course, the restaurants are as much of an attraction: The Surf Club by superchef Thomas Keller opened its doors in summer 2018, and Le Sirenuse Miami comes from the owners of its **namesake hotel in Positano**. Densely planted with exotic palms, the latter evokes a cultivated jungle, a setting that is almost as memorable as Antonio Mermolia’s deft cooking, where the attention to detail extends to dyeing the ice over which they serve oysters the bluish-green of an iceberg. Try the Kumamotos, flown in daily from Washington state and dressed in a zingy citronelle emulsion. “Spectacular” was the word the *Miami Herald* ran in a headline for the Surf Club in November 1959. And so it is, nearly 60 years on.



James Baigrie/Courtesy 1 Hotel West Hollywood

HOTEL

4.1 Hotel West Hollywood →

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It'll take a second for your Uber or Lyft to find the right pull-in for the 1 Hotel: It's on a busy Sunset Boulevard corner and its concrete exterior decorated with sprawling lush plants fades into the background compared to the sparkling billboards scattered in view. It makes sense then that you feel as if you've stepped far from **Los Angeles** when you walk into the lower-level lobby, with exposed wood beams on the ceiling, natural-toned fabrics on the couches and chairs and the lobby bar, and, yes, even more plants. Beyond just looking good, the hotel's natural, leafy decor serves a greater purpose.



HOTEL

3. Taj Lake Palace →

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A real-life jewel in Lake Pichola, this 18th-century palace is a sweep of courtyards, corridors, and pavilions inlaid with stone, gilt molding, and mirrors. It was originally built as a palace for the prince Maharana Jagat Singh and was completed in 1746. Today, guests reach the four-acre man-made island in Udaipur via private boat and are taken to rooms with hand-painted motifs, mosaics, silk bolsters, swings, and stained glass. With 65 rooms and 18 suites, set in the middle of the lake, guests rave about rooms with views of the shore, including City Palace, Aravalli Hills, Machla Magra Hills, and Jag Mandir. Restaurants at the hotel are open only to guests; opt for wood-fired Rajasthani specialties at Neel Kamal. Formal attire is required at the rooftop Bhairo restaurant, but you'll be rewarded with prime cuts of steak. When you're ready to get off the lake and sight-see, ask the concierge to set you up with a tour of the local lakes and attractions in one of the hotel's vintage cars.



Courtesy Baur au Lac

HOTEL

2. Baur au Lac, Zurich, Switzerland →

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Opened in 1844 and operated by the same family ever since, this property has hosted the likes of Joan Miró and Plácido Domingo. Set in a garden near the Bahnhofstrasse shopping drag (**Zurich's** equivalent of Fifth Avenue), the hotel looks right onto Lake Zurich and the Alps—but that's not the only nice view. Inside, rooms tastefully mix Art Deco, Louis XVI, and Regency styles, and are individually decorated in neutral tones with red, purple, and teal accents—though, if you're lucky, you'll get a room with a balcony on the water. Baur's is more casual brasserie, though if you're really keen to splurge, the Michelin-starred Pavillon is worth the indulgence.



Courtesy SLS Hotel, A Luxury Collection Hotel, Beverly Hills

HOTEL

1. SLS Hotel, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Beverly Hills →

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The chic Philippe Starck decor at this **Los Angeles** hotspot rockets guests into the future as soon as they walk in. Fresh off a \$22 million renovation in 2018, the hotel has retained the playground-esque feel that Starck created through a unique blend of dining, drinking, and lounge spaces that are mostly decorated with mid-century modern furnishings, with surrealist touches. With a food program run by the inimitable chef **José Andrés**, who has made the SLS a hotspot for trend-followers and foodies in the know, you're guaranteed to eat well here. The hotel offers complimentary car service within a two-mile radius. Starck designed the Ciel Spa to resemble "a dreamscape" and that it is, with ethereal white decor and treatment rooms featuring huge, free-standing bathtubs.