

**CARIBBEAN'S**  
SECRET ISLANDS

**AMSTERDAM'S**  
NEW BEAUTY

**HONOLULU'S**  
CLASSIC CHIC

# Condé Nast Traveler

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

JANUARY 2013

## GOLD LIST

### WORLD'S BEST PLACES TO STAY

# 510

**TOP HOTELS, RESORTS,  
CRUISE LINES**

(It doesn't get any better than this!)

**SPECIAL REPORT**


**THE END  
OF THE  
RHINO?**



ROMAN HOLIDAY The good life  
on a terrace of the Villa Cupola suite  
at the Westin Excelsior, Rome.



there on business and was impressed with the service and the meeting space." Rising 17 stories, the building received a Berlin Architecture Award for its limestone facade and tapering shape. Works by German artists such as Dietrich Klinge and Katrin Kampmann are displayed in the public areas, and contemporary rooms have white walls and clean-lined wood furniture. Le Faubourg serves classic French brasserie food.

 **Ritz-Carlton, Berlin 88.9**  
 90.5 89.1 86.9 90.6 87.5

**Park Hyatt, Hamburg 89.1**  
 96.4 96.4 84.6 85.7 82.1

**Mandarin Oriental, Munich 91.6**  
 90.7 90.7 90.5 95.3 90.7

## GREECE

**Hotel Grande Bretagne, Athens 90.0**  
 91.2 89.5 81.8 95.9 91.3


 **Blue Palace Resort & Spa (Luxury Collection), Crete 94.0**  
 97.2 91.7 91.7 91.7 97.2 94.3

"The view is breathtaking when you open the curtains" at this "truly inspiring resort" set amid palm and olive trees and jasmine and bougainvillea plants in Elounda, opposite the isle of Spinalonga. The low-rise property blends into the landscape with clay roof tiles, wooden shutters, and traditional pebble mosaics, while the lobby's design evokes the local shipyard. Guest rooms are arranged in groups along a slope overlooking the sea—so "definitely splurge on one with a private infinity pool." Vegetables handpicked by the chef accompany Flame's locally sourced steak. Sample typical Cretan pastries and egg dishes for breakfast at Olea. "The highly qualified staff provide royal service."

**Perivolos Traditional Houses, Santorini 98.1**  
 98.3 100 95.8 100 98.3 95.7


## HUNGARY

 **Corinthia Hotel Budapest, Budapest 91.4**  
 91.8 93.4 89.5 88.5 93.4  
 "Truly grand in all aspects," with "a very courteous staff," this property is in an "excellent and convenient location" that's within walking distance of Andrassy Avenue and the opera house. The French Renaissance style "epitomizes grand old European ambience," with a sweeping staircase and six-story atrium preserved from the original 1886 building, when it was a meeting place for local aristocrats. Rooms decorated with mahogany overlook the atrium or Hársfa Street and are notable for their marble bathrooms. Grab a table at Rickshaw for dishes from Asia, like Szechuan sirloin beef or Goan fish-and-shrimp curry. Equipped with rain showers and a pool that is "pure bliss," the spa is "just terrific."

 **Four Seasons Gresham Palace, Budapest 93.7**  
 96.7 91.7 90.0 96.7 93.3

**Hilton Budapest, Budapest 90.1**  
 94.6 89.6 81.3 92.5 91.7

**InterContinental Budapest, Budapest 89.4**  
 91.5 89.0 78.2 97.6 90.2

 **Le Méridien Budapest, Budapest 89.3**  
 92.9 89.1 81.6 94.6 87.5

## THE GOLD STANDARD

All the properties on this list are the crème de la crème. But some of them are in a class of their own. Here, we celebrate 12 of the best details, touches, sights, and dishes (including chicken and waffles that are worth sacrificing your waistline for; see page 96) which make these hotels truly unforgettable—all nominated by nearly 47,000 of you: our very picky readers.


And the first best is ...

## BEST UP-CLOSE-AND-PERSONAL WILDLIFE MOMENT


For one guest of the Amboseli Serena Safari Lodge, in Kenya, "watching hundreds of monkeys in the morning walking single file to the river to get a drink" was the best part of her vacation (talk about morning commutes).


This urban hotel's "excellent location" puts the Danube River, Parliament, and Buda Castle "within walking distance." After a day of sightseeing, rest in rooms with "luxurious interiors." Many have high ceilings and windows overlooking either Erzsébet Square or the pedestrian street Déak Ferenc. Furnishings are "superbly scaled to complement grandiose vaulted ceilings." The "incredible French restaurant" Le Bourbon has a signature goose liver terrine with dried-fruit chutney. "Staff are friendly and helpful."


## IRELAND

 **Dromoland Castle, County Clare 90.9**  
 91.7 92.9 90.4 89.3 95.2 85.5


 **Ballynahinch Castle Hotel, County Galway 92.3**  
 88.2 97.1 100 91.2 85.3

 **Mount Juliet, County Kilkenny 89.0**  
 89.3 89.3 85.7 92.9 89.3 87.5

 **Adare Manor, County Limerick 91.0**  
 90.2 93.2 86.6 92.2 93.2

 **Ashford Castle, County Mayo 95.1**  
 92.1 96.8 92.1 95.2 98.4 96.3

**Ritz-Carlton Powerscourt, County Wicklow 93.1**  
 100 90.5 87.2 90.5 97.6 92.7

 **The Merrion, Dublin 93.2**  
 94.1 95.6 87.7 95.6 92.6

## ITALY

 **Hotel Santa Caterina, Amalfi 97.0**  
 97.0 93.9 97.0 97.0 100

**Hotel Caesar Augustus, Capri 98.6**  
 100 98.8 97.6 100 98.8 96.4


**Four Seasons Firenze, Florence 94.4**  
 95.1 92.8 95.0 94.0 95.2

**Hotel Lungarno, Florence 89.1**  
 89.3 89.3 80.8 96.4 89.3

**St. Regis, Florence 95.0**  
 95.0 95.0 95.0 95.0 95.0

 **Westin Excelsior, Florence 91.4**  
 89.7 89.7 89.7 95.3 92.5


**Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni, Lake Como 94.7**  
 94.1 94.1 90.9 100 94.1


 **Villa d'Este, Lake Como 93.1**  
 92.5 95.1 92.6 96.3 92.7 88.6

**Park Hyatt, Milan 94.2**  
 96.9 96.9 77.8 100 96.9

**Hotel Splendido & Splendido Mare, Portofino 98.0**  
 96.4 100 100 100 93.3


 **Il San Pietro di Positano, Positano 95.6**  
 97.8 97.8 93.3 91.3 97.8

 **Le Sirenuse, Positano 94.6**  
 92.2 96.2 92.3 98.1 94.2

 **Palazzo Avino (formerly Palazzo Sasso), Ravello 98.5**  
 100 96.3 96.3 100 100

**Aldrovandi Villa Borghese, Rome 93.5**  
 97.5 96.7 91.7 88.4 93.4

**Hotel de Russie, Rome 90.7**  
 95.1 82.9 87.8 92.7 95.1

 **Hotel Hassler, Rome 92.9**  
 91.1 91.1 89.6 100 92.4

 **Hotel Majestic, Rome 89.5**  
 87.1 87.1 86.2 96.8 90.3

Opened in 1889 as the first hotel on the Via Veneto, this neoclassical property is "within walking distance of all the sights," including the Spanish Steps, the Trevi Fountain, and the Villa Borghese. Rooms have hardwood floors and white-lacquered furnishings. Junior suites use soft shades of beige, brown, and purple on the walls. "There's great people watching" from the terrace overlooking the Via Veneto at Filippo La Mantia, where the menu focuses on the tastes of Sicily, with ingredients such as mint, toasted almonds, basil, and oranges strongly represented.

 **Westin Excelsior, Rome 88.8**  
 93.6 87.2 85.4 90.1 87.2

 **Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria, Sorrento 93.8**  
 92.7 96.4 96.2 94.5 89.1

 **Bauer Il Palazzo, Venice 91.0**  
 86.8 97.4 81.1 100 89.5


**Ca' Sagredo Hotel, Venice 88.0**  
 92.6 88.9 76.0 88.9 92.6

**Hotel Cipriani, Venice 91.1**  
 91.1 93.3 86.4 93.3 91.1


 **Londra Palace, Venice 90.4**  
 85.3 91.2 87.1 97.1 91.2

**Luna Hotel Baglioni, Venice 88.0**  
 93.0 83.7 81.6 97.6 83.7

## MONACO

 **Hôtel de Paris, Monte Carlo 92.3**  
 88.5 84.6 92.3 100 96.2

## THE NETHERLANDS

 **Renaissance, Amsterdam 88.3**  
 86.0 93.9 80.5 94.0 86.0

"It's a breeze to explore the city" from this "wonderful hotel" with a brown-brick facade near the central station and on the UNESCO-listed Singel Canal. Comprising 12 refurbished historic homes, the property has "small rooms" done in contemporary style—the decor combines black-and-white images of the city with browns, greens, and blues. Dine on Mediterranean cuisine prepared in a show kitchen at Scossa restaurant. "The ambience is great, and the staff's attentiveness is outstanding," including "a well-versed and helpful concierge."

## PORTUGAL

 **Four Seasons Hotel Ritz Lisbon, Lisbon 94.8**  
 97.8 100 89.1 93.5 93.5


 **Olisippo Lapa Palace, Lisbon 88.0**  
 90.0 100 85.0 75.0 90.0

## SCOTLAND

**The Balmoral, Edinburgh 90.1**  
 86.4 88.1 89.2 98.5 88.1

 **Old Course Hotel, Golf Resort & Spa, St. Andrews 88.4**  
 91.7 84.0 84.0 96.0 84.0 91.3

## SPAIN

 **Hotel 1898, Barcelona 89.9**  
 95.2 85.7 82.5 95.2 90.5

Steps from the Plaza Cataluña, "right on the Ramblas," this property used to be the headquarters of the Philippines Tobacco