

Six of the world's best hotels

A selection of the most exciting places to stay in 2016

Family fun in la France profonde

Domaine des Etangs, Massignac

An 11th century château set in 2,100 acres of woods, fields and lakes, Domaine des Etangs may be “the smartest, most heavenly family holiday camp ever”, says Tatler. Formerly the country retreat of the late French billionaire Didier Primat, and recently revamped by his daughter, it has “exquisite” interiors, with leather and marble Hermès furniture, copper bathtubs and telescopes in the seven bedrooms, and “an actual Roman thermal bath” in the basement. There are equally snazzy cottages available for rent nearby. And there’s no end of things to do. Pack a picnic and go fishing, rowing, riding or mountain biking, or stay on site, where there are the two swimming pools, tennis courts, trampolines and zip wires, and – in the loft – table football for rainy days. *Doubles from £370 (+33 5 45 61 85 00, www.domainedesetangs.com).*



Sri Lankan beach bliss

Cape Weligama

Tropical beach resorts don’t come more “refreshingly relaxed” than this new property on Sri Lanka’s south coast, says Chris Caldicott in Condé Nast Traveller. Designed by Thai architect Lek Bunnag, it has 40 large “contemporary-meets-colonial” villas arranged around a stunning clifftop infinity pool. All are designed for “indoor-outdoor living”, with sliding louvred doors to let in the sea breeze, wide terraces with ocean views, steam showers and 15-metre pools (13 in total, some private, some shared). The two beaches, a short walk away, are “wild rather than manicured”, and the food is “wonderful”, with particularly good cream teas (the owners also run Ceylon Tea Trails). It’s a good base for blue whale-watching boat trips; there are cinnamon plantations nearby; and the fortified town of Galle is 20km away. *Doubles from £460 b&b (+94 11 774 5700; www.capeveligama.com).*



A home from home in the Cotswolds

Foxhill Manor, Worcestershire

It opened as a hotel last year, but the special charm of Foxhill Manor – a beautiful Arts and Crafts mansion overlooking the Cotswolds village of Broadway – is that it still feels like a private house, says Stephen Bleach in The Sunday Times. There’s no reception desk and no check-in – instead, you’re met with a drink by the manager, who mixes “addictive” G&Ts; and, while there are “suggested menus”, chef Jon Ingram will cook “whatever you want” (pinching ingredients when needed from Foxhill’s two sister hotels, Dormy House and The Fish, both set in the same 400-acre estate). The eight bedrooms vary from big to “comically vast”, with “high spec” fittings including free-standing baths. And there’s lots to do, from in-room spa treatments (or try the spa at Dormy House) to cycling, clay shoots and quad biking. *Doubles from £295 b&b (01386-852711, www.foxhillmanor.com).*



A tranquil eyrie in Tokyo's heart

Aman Tokyo

Known for creating rural idylls where “the wealthy go to withdraw from the world”, Aman has broken the mould with its 27th property, says Claire Wrathall in the FT: occupying the top six floors of a 38-storey tower in Tokyo’s central business district, it’s headily urban. Yet the hotel retains the air of “rarefied calm” for which the group is famed. The interior is “uncompromisingly Japanese”, with a “cathedral-like” lobby centred around a Zen garden and lined with translucent wash paper, to give the feeling of being “inside a giant lantern”. Rooms are light-filled, with great views, pale ash furniture and tatami mats. There’s a 30-metre pool, a spa with bathing areas like those in a traditional *ryokan*, and a superb restaurant offering “Asian-inflected reinventions of classic Mediterranean dishes”. *Doubles from £520 (+81 3 5224 3333, www.aman.com).*



Colonial charm by the sea in Brazil

Casa Turquesa, Paraty

A perfectly preserved colonial town set beside a bay on Brazil’s idyllic Costa Verde, Paraty is now one of the country’s most fashionable destinations, home to a celebrated literary festival. And among the charming pousadas (inns) housed in its crumbling 18th century mansions, Casa Turquesa is the most “gorgeously designed”, says Fiona Duncan in Country & Town House magazine. Set beside the cobbled waterfront, with fine views of sea, mountains and the nearby church of Santa Rita, it has just nine “divine” bedrooms, with wooden floors, long arrays of shuttered windows and huge four-poster beds. The charming owner, Tetê Etrusco, is always on hand to arrange boat trips (a must), scuba dives, jungle hikes and more, and there’s a beautiful pool and courtyard garden for lazy afternoons. *Doubles from £220 b&b (+55 24 3371 1037, www.casaturquesa.com.br).*



Airborne adventures in Alaska

Ultima Thule Lodge

Set 100 miles from the nearest road in the heart of the world’s largest protected wilderness – Alaska’s Wrangell-St. Elias National Park – Ultima Thule is “the ultimate fly camp”, says Tatler. Each of its five cabins comes with its own private plane (all Piper Super Clubs) and a pilot who will take you anywhere you want in this awe-inspiring landscape of tundra, glaciers and soaring coastal mountains. You can go “flightseeing”, hiking, bear-watching, fishing, backcountry skiing or picnicking in flower-filled meadows by day, and return at night for “cockle-warming” suppers of locally sourced salmon and game with vegetables from the on-site organic garden. The cabins are furnished with bearskin rugs and Craftsman furniture, and there’s a shared sauna and outdoor hot tub. *Four nights from £5,300pp, with meals and flights (+1 907 854 4500, www.ultimathulelodge.com).*

