

TRAVEL+
LEISURE

The World's Greatest
HOTELS

2013 EDITION

Introduction by Nancy Novogrod

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Part of my role as editor-in-chief of *Travel + Leisure* is serving as a travel confessor—for friends and family, of course, but also for T+L readers, who have plenty to say. Most of your “user” comments about hotels exist on the extreme ends of the spectrum, ranging from wild enthusiasm to crushing disappointment.

This is hardly a surprise when you consider how intimate and dependent your relationship can be to the places that cater to your basic human needs.

Because we know what we like when we venture out into the world and we’ve heard loud and clear what pleases you, it is always a pleasure to step back and consider the astounding range of hotels, resorts, inns, and lodges that are contained within 12 months of issues of our magazine.

With this in mind, we bring you the latest edition of *The World’s Greatest Hotels*: a selection of the year’s best places to stay, curated by T+L’s editors and culled from the thousands of extraordinary destinations we’ve featured. In this eighth annual compendium, you’ll find a wide range of properties, from the classic (a Jamaican resort that once served as Grace Kelly’s winter getaway) to the cutting-edge (a luxe tower piercing the Dubai skyline); and from the cozy (a Wisconsin retreat reminiscent of the sleep-away camps of childhood summers) to the exotic (a plush safari lodge in a far-flung corner of the Serengeti).

Some of the destinations featured within these pages demand a considerable degree of commitment, both in terms of time and money, but they offer high rewards. Such is the case with Mashpi Lodge, a glass-enclosed refuge in the heart of the Ecuadoran rain forest; Song Saa, a private-island preserve off the coast of southern Cambodia; and the Berkeley River Lodge, a remote outpost in western Australia’s untouched

Kimberley region. Others, at a less ambitious distance, are no less satisfying for their relative convenience: take, for example, the Castello di Casole, in the Tuscan hillside just 40 miles outside Florence, and the Saint, a stylish haven housed in a landmark building at the edge of New Orleans’s storied French Quarter.

Despite the upheavals and uncertainties of our times, it is noteworthy how many iconic properties are undergoing significant renovations. Witness the head-to-toe refurbishment of the elegant Le Bristol, in Paris, among the city’s distinguished palace hotels; the glamorous remake of Los Angeles’s legendary hideaway for Hollywood movers and shakers, the Hotel Bel-Air; and the modern reinvention of that doyenne of Asian hospitality, the Mandarin Oriental Bangkok.

Where to begin in choosing your next getaway? To help you in your search, we highlight the winners of T+L’s annual World’s Best Awards as well as the T+L 500, a comprehensive list of the top hotels and resorts as chosen by you, our readers. At the back of this volume, you will find an index and trips directory organizing properties by location and category, from family-friendly to affordable. We hope you’ll turn to these resources for advice—and to this book for inspiration—again and again.

Nancy Novogrod EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



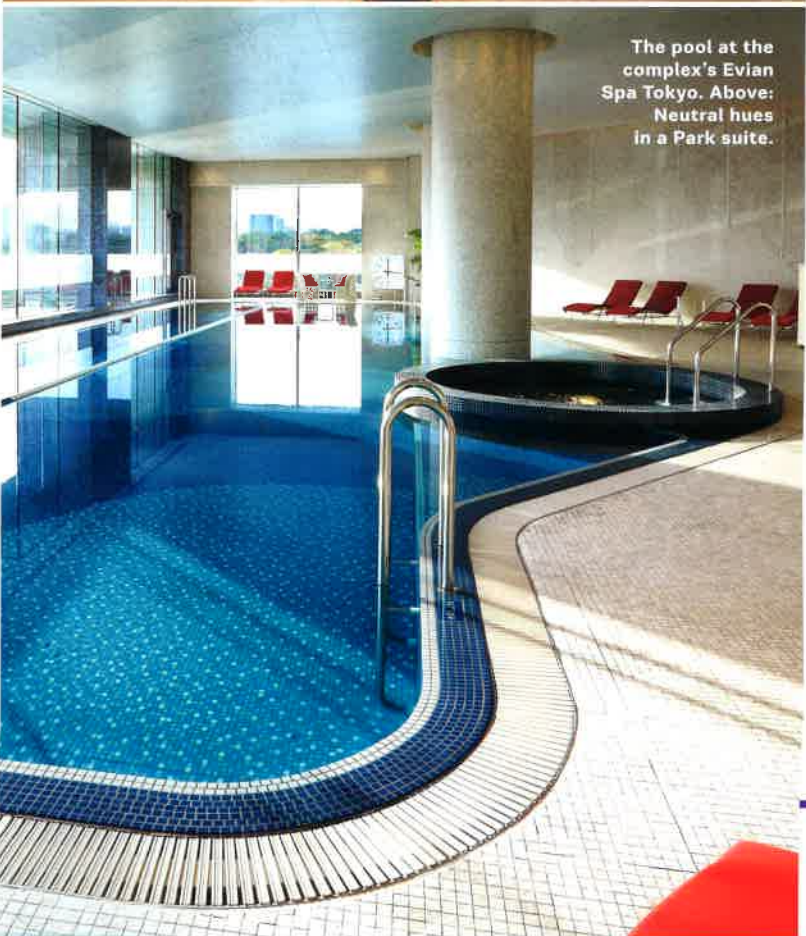
A sunlit seating area in the Palace Lounge.

TOKYO

Palace Hotel

In the shadow of the Imperial Palace, a storied 1961 property is once again channeling its understated opulence. Thanks to the skillful eye of Australian interior designer Terry McGinnity, the revamped Palace Hotel evokes the natural beauty of the royal residence's serene outer gardens in 290 earth-toned guest rooms with leafy motifs, deep green carpets, and floor-to-ceiling windows. Traditional Japanese touches abound throughout, from the kimono-clad servers in the lobby café to the cast-iron teapots in suites. Nearby, a terrace doubles as an alfresco *salon de thé*, where you can choose from 48 blends with the park's fountains as a meditative backdrop. It's all part of a \$1.2 billion development that includes Japan's first Evian spa, a high-end subterranean shopping center, and 10 restaurants from some of the country's most celebrated chefs. Have the emperors ever had it so good?

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The pool at the complex's Evian Spa Tokyo. Above: Neutral hues in a Park suite.