

Condé Nast Traveler

SPECIAL REPORT
THE WAR FOR
THE SOUL
OF ALASKA

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

MAY 2012

HOT LIST

121
BEST
NEW
HOTELS
IN THE
WORLD

(INCLUDING 49 UNDER \$300!)

PLUS...

**20 SIZZLING
RESTAURANTS**

**35 SYBARITIC
SPAS**



AND...

HIPPEST LONDON

(Edgy Pubs, Clubs, Art, Food)

ULTIMATE NEW ZEALAND

(Dream Lodges, Meals, Adventures)

TANTALIZING TANGIER

(Cool Shops, Souks, Scenes)

A TRUE DESERT BLOOM: The brand-new Saguaro hotel in Scottsdale, Arizona.

CONDENASTTRAVELER.COM
YOUR DAILY TRAVEL INTELLIGENCE

\$4.99 US \$5.99 FOR

05



0 757358 5

Hot Hotels

aiming for LEED Platinum—the ultimate in green certification—used mud, bamboo, and reclaimed wood to create this collection of high-tech rondel “huts” and two- to four-bedroom villas. **The experience:**

This is sleepaway camp for adults, with a long roster of activities (kite flying, calligraphy, horseback riding, tea picking), woody paths, heated pools, and a night sky that involves stargazing. Guests—a mix of corporate retreat-goers, bourgeois Chinese, and Shanghai expats, many toting their offspring—get around via solar-powered golf carts.

If only... the locavore fare at the hotel's formal restaurant Kikaboni (“organic,” in Swahili) were more inspired. **The room to book:** One of the three lakeside huts, each with a deck for alfresco dining (86-21-6431-8901; nakedretreats.cn; huts from \$149). ●●●●●●●●

St. Regis Sanya Yalong Bay Resort, Sanya

The space: A 401-room beach resort in South China with five restaurants and views of the landscaped grounds, the pool, and Yalong Bay. **The look:** St. Regis-brand luxury in a beachside setting. **The experience:** Sanya is the Hawaii of southern China, with a mile of luxury beachfront properties, and the St. Regis sets itself apart with its focus on families. Your fellow holiday-makers are almost exclusively wealthy Chinese couples and their Patois-clad broods, with the occasional well-heeled Russian family thrown into the mix. There's a quirkily designed playground with climbing structures and—when you need a break from your offspring—a children's club. For a glimpse into the lives of this beach town's residents, rent a bicycle and take to the main road that connects the row of luxury hotels to greater Sanya. **If only...** more staff members spoke English; be patient and remember that you're in China. **The room to book:** Ground-floor Lagoon rooms share access to a private pool, but if you have kids, this is not the place for you—there's nothing to keep them from falling in (86-898-8835-5555; starwoodhotels.com; doubles from \$400). ●●●●●●●●

Andaz Shanghai, Shanghai

The space: A super-chic 28-story hotel with 207 rooms, across the street from the Xintiandi shopping and eating hub. **The look:** Spare and mod, with a few special touches such as the curved, woody hallways decorated with commissioned art illustrating such Chinese sayings as “a crane standing among the chickens”—that is, a person who stands out from the crowd. **The experience:** Far from the glam-but-boring business hotels in the Pudong business district, the Andaz oozes the stylish new sensibility of China's affluent youth. It also feels homey despite its size, with free snacks at the two islands that serve as friendly check-in desks and free



UP, UP, AND AWAY
In the late 1900s, hot-air balloons were launched from a park where the Saint James in Paris now stands, inspiring the hotel's wallpaper motif. HOTEL.COM



Hot Hotels

that there is nothing new about the Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc, but that's why the four-year, \$56 million restoration succeeds. Lead architect Luc Svecchine didn't stray far from the *Tenderloin* the Night original (Fitzgerald's book begins here) while updating all that is unseen: wiring, plumbing, sound-proofing. Rooms retain their Louis XV and XVI dècor with antique furniture, gilded mirrors, and chandeliers. Modern additions include the Eden-Roc Grill, which serves tapas and sushi at the sea-front pavilion, its cantilevered terrace mimicking an ocean liner deck. **The experience:** The price is hefty, but the hotel delivers on every front, and the (formerly snobbish) service is its greatest strength. Consigned to oblivion are the television sets that were once wheeled into rooms on request, and—wonder of wonders—you can even pay your final bill with a credit card. The movie stars are back (De Niro slept here), and families are welcome—nannies keep the youngsters amused. **If only...** the hotel remained open from mid-October to mid-April. **The room to book:** The Eden-Roc Suite for its 820-square-foot terrace with jacuzzis (33-4-93-61-39-61; hotel-du-cap-eden-roc.com/uk/index.php; doubles from \$808). ●●●●●

UNDER \$300 **Les Avenues, Avize**
 ▲ 33-3-26-57-70-06; sclose-lesavenues.com; doubles from \$205. ●

UNDER \$300 **Château Les Carrasses, Capestang**
 ▲ 33-4-67-00-00-67; lescarrasses.com; doubles from \$190. ●●●●

La Belle Juliette, Paris
 ▲ 33-1-42-22-97-40; hotel-belle-juliette-paris.com; doubles from \$340. ●●●●●

UNDER \$300 **La Maison Champs-Élysées, Paris**
 ▲ **The specs:** A 57-room high-design aerie conveniently located in a former *hôtel particulier* almost next door to the Grand and Petit Palais. **The look:** Black, white, and trompe l'oeil. A serene, playful modernism pervades the public spaces—white slip-covered chairs and sofas whose legs seem to float (they are actually supported by central pedestals); a passageway done entirely in silver foil. **The experience:** It is pleasing to come from busy Paris streets into what feels like a calm if ever-so-slightly disorienting negative of its classical decorative elements. The restaurant, La Table du 8, attracts locals as well as guests, and the service staff are invariably charming. If you splurge on one of the 17 "couture" rooms, you will have a seamless high-design, highly curated stay. If you book one of the 40 *chambres boutique*, you will have a relative bargain of a hotel room for central Paris (room 226, for instance, was \$356) but will find yourself relegated to an utterly charmless modernist box with no view (at least one equipped with all the latest tech-

THE PREDICTORS

THE BEST HOTELS AREN'T JUST HOTELS: THEY'RE INCUBATORS FOR THE NEXT GREAT TRENDS IN DINING, INTERIOR DESIGN, ARCHITECTURE, AND WELLNESS. WE ASKED FIVE OF OUR FAVORITE TASTEMAKERS—EACH OF WHOM IS AFFILIATED WITH A HOTEL OR SPA ON THIS YEAR'S LIST—TO PREDICT THE TRENDS WE'LL BE SEEING IN THEIR AREAS OF EXPERTISE IN HOT LIST'S CLASS OF 2013. (HEY, IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO START LOOKING AHEAD, RIGHT?)



INTERIORS

THE EXPERT Rachel Ashwell, interior designer, The Prairie by Rachel Ashwell (see page 125).

SIGNATURE STYLE Rustic romance. Think rose-printed sheets, weathered pastel furniture, and vintage chandeliers.

WHAT'S NEXT IN HOTEL DESIGN

- **Good-bye, cool** Hello, cozy. "The idea of a 'design hotel' is dying. In our increasingly anxious world, people want comfort and functionality. The days when you walk into a hotel and there's furniture you can perch on, as opposed to sit on, is drawing to a close. Look instead for comfort pieces, like a big couch layered with what I call 'nasty,' personality-filled cushions, rugs, and wall hangings."
- **The comeback of the 6&5** "New York City's Metro [Hot List class of '09] ushered in the age of the boutique hotel, and I think the next type of hotel will be even smaller, so you'll be able to get a real sense of the authentic life of a place. As people travel more and more, they'll want a personal connection with a room and the staff."
- **Mood lighting** "Can you imagine how much better a Motel 6 room would look in subtle light? It is innocuous but not to have a dimmer switch in every guest room. They're easy to install and allow you to go from bright functional light to beautiful mellowness. Light is the most vital piece of the puzzle."

nology) and with just one redeeming feature—a very comfortable bed. **Hotly...** there were a gym—the ample downstairs spaces have instead been transformed into conference rooms. **The room to book:** If you can swing it, No. 341 or 142. Both are junior suites designed by Martin Margiela, the first a symphony in white, the second in black. (33-1-40-74-64-65; lamaisonchampselysees.com; doubles from \$295). ●●●●

Mandarin Oriental Paris, Paris

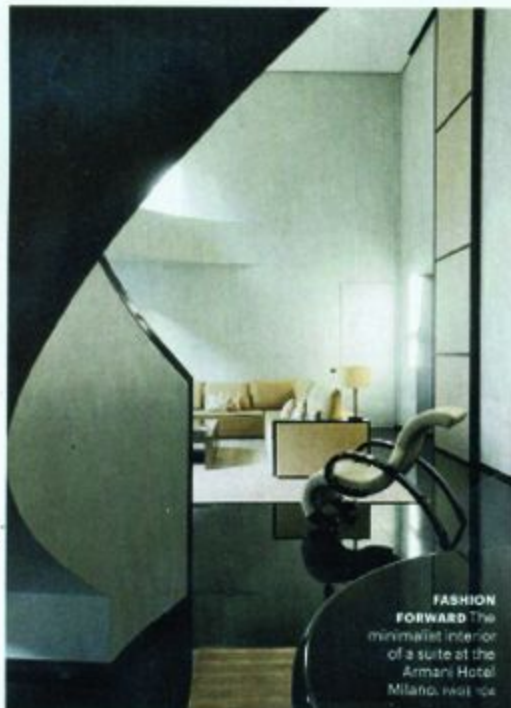
▲ 33-1-20-98-78-88; mandarinoriental.com/paris; doubles from \$1,009. ●●●●●●●●

Saint James Paris, Paris

▲ **The specs:** Forty-eight delightfully renovated rooms and suites in a garden-surrounded neo-classical mansion built in 1892 in the elegant sixteenth arrondissement. The hotel is steps from the Place Victor Hugo and a short walk from the Champs-Élysées and the Bois de Boulogne. **The look:** Rich yet irreverent, Napoleon III whimsicality interpreted by British designer Fanni Sloan. Rooms and suites, many with Juliet balconies (ah, Paris), are all individually and boldly decorated in jewel-like colors and with great attention to both comfort and style. **The experience:** The Saint James advertises itself as the only château-hotel in Paris and, the uniqueness of its setting aside, delivers fully on the promise of high comfort in a home-like—or club-like—setting. The entrance is not from the street but across a private courtyard adorned with a central fountain (yes, a valet will take care of your car). A concierge (or two) awaits you in the small vestibule atop the entrance steps, while the salon immediately behind beckons like the living room of a rich and playful friend. The restaurant and large bar/library beyond overlook a private garden terrace, where you can drink and dine in warm weather, and each invites lingering, over either business or pleasure (the guests in January seemed a mixture of both). And the food? The cabbage stuffed with leg of duck accompanied by sautéed foie gras in a braided grille was unforgettable, as were the grilled scallops with beetroot—haute French with a modern twist. **If only...** you didn't have to check out. **The room to book:** The ones on the second floor in the front have the Juliet balconies and overlook the courtyard and fountain, which is illuminated at night (33-1-44-05-81-81; saint-james-paris.com; doubles from \$440). ●●●●●●

Altipura, Val Thorens

▲ **The specs:** A distinctively modern 88-room, Nordic-style chalet with ski-in/ski-out access to the Trois Vallées. At 7,345 feet, this is the highest resort in the Alps (translation: great snow). **The look:** Sleek and Scandinavian-inspired, with lots of light—colored natural wood and stone, faux fur, and playful touches (such as the giant snowflake cutouts and stylized reindeer



FASHION FORWARD The minimalist interior of a suite at the Armani Hotel Milano. www.ihm.com