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TRAVEL + LEISURE

March 2015

IT LIST 2015

The Best New Hotels in the World

THE IT LIST

There are great new hotels, and then there are game changers. For our 10th annual editors' choice awards, we picked the 43 properties that are transforming their destinations, shining a spotlight here on the 11 most remarkable newcomers.

Read about all the winners at tandl.me/itlist.

2015



The winery at Alexander and Carrie Vik's estate in Millahue, Chile, looks like a concrete-and-glass spaceship touched down amid the lush hills of Chilean wine country, a bit of architectural audacity that is matched by Viña Vik, the retreat they added on the hillside above it last fall. The swirl of titanium that marks its roofline, the room-size Anselm Kiefer in the lounge, the 22 artist-designed rooms (one a trompe l'oeil wonderland, with a riot of azulejo tiles)—the whole place is a feast for the eyes, and thrilling in its originality. A great wine-country hotel doesn't always put you in the middle of the most interesting *terroir*, but this one does: the nearby wineries of the Colchagua Valley are turning out some great vintages, so oenophiles will find plenty to keep them happily occupied. vik.cl. \$\$\$\$\$



DESIGN STAR
 EL BLOK
 VIEQUES,
 PUERTO RICO

The term *design hotel* gets tossed around indiscriminately these days, so it's refreshing when a property truly merits the distinction. Such is the case at El Blok, the Caribbean's most stylish new lodgings, on the quiet Puerto Rican island of Vieques. The materials—colorful cement tiles, rubber-and-concrete lamps from Dutch designer Renate Vos, a 25-foot single piece of almond wood that forms the bar—show off the

gorgeous imperfection of the handmade, while perforated concrete louvers shield guest rooms from the afternoon sun and create Matisse-like shadows on the floors. Downstairs, the curves and ovals of the reception area intuitively lead guests to the bar, which faces the beach across the street and flows into the lively open-air restaurant, headed by Jose Enrique, Puerto Rico's star chef. elblok.com. \$\$\$



ECO-PIONEER
 PIKAI LODGE
 GALÁPAGOS
 ISLANDS,
 ECUADOR

Luxury in the Galápagos Islands took an evolutionary leap with the debut of Pikaia Lodge, the archipelago's first carbon-neutral five-star resort. The setting is spectacular: set along a plateau on Santa Cruz Island, its 14 rooms put the entire lush valley and Pacific coastline on display through floor-to-ceiling windows. But what's most remarkable is that it exists at all. For decades, tourism in the Galápagos has been ruled by boats with rigid itineraries, but Pikaia lets you see the islands by both land and sea (the property owns and operates a private 100-foot yacht), a combination that allows guests to explore with fewer emissions and greater flexibility, whether snorkeling with sea lions or visiting an organic coffee farm. pikaialodge.com. \$\$\$\$\$

FROM TOP: ANNIE SCHLECHTER (8); COURTESY OF PIKAI LODGE



SAFARI SHAKE-UP
SANDIBE
OKAVANGO SAFARI
LODGE
BOTSWANA

The Okavango Delta already offered some of the most over-the-top safari experiences in Africa—yet *andBeyond* has upped the ante with this architecturally stunning camp. Sandibe was rebuilt from the ground up, and reopened last September with 12 cocoon-like suites that hover on stilts above a private floodplain reserve. Each is made with rounded, handwoven cedar, designed after the elaborate nests of the golden weaverbird. Wood-burning fireplaces, private plunge pools, and solar-powered air-conditioning make it easy to forget that you're in the middle of nowhere. Except, of course, when you're being gently woken up by birdsong, or sharing a communal meal by campfire when an elephant saunters by. andbeyond.com. \$\$\$\$

DAVID CROOKES



In Japan's ancient capital, where tradition is prized over novelty, Ritz-Carlton has made a deferential debut with Kyoto's first true luxury hotel. Set along the banks of the serene Kamo River, the low-slung retreat is a kind of modern-day *ryokan*, with Japanese motifs given a contemporary spin: Zen gardens and sleek stone waterfalls fill interior courtyards. Abstract artworks themed after the *Tale of Genji* decorate the 134 guest rooms and public spaces. And the restaurant's superb sushi, teppanyaki, and tempura are served on ceramics made by local artisans. From a river-facing suite, you can watch passing cyclists and schoolchildren hopping stones, or take a short walk to some of the city's most exquisite temples and shrines. ritzcarlton.com. \$\$\$

We never knew we wanted to go to Prince Edward County until the arrival of the Drake Devonshire Inn, the Drake Hotel Toronto's ultra-hip country sister. Now the property is turning a sleepy, vineyard-filled corner of Ontario into a buzzy summertime escape. In a converted 19th-century foundry, the 14-room hideaway draws high-profile creative types and weekenders with live music, art installations, and the rustic charms of gabled ceilings, handmade wool throws, and lakeside bonfires. Oenophiles should get excited, too: some of the best Pinot Noir producers in the country are a short drive away, and the Drake's tasting room stocks the region's best bottles. drakedevonshire.ca. \$\$



SCENE MAKER
MIAMI BEACH
EDITION

In any other hotel lobby, you probably wouldn't be caught dead shooting pool on an all-white billiards table mere steps from the front door. But at the Miami Beach Edition, Ian Schrager and Marriott's latest love child, showing off is compulsory. Open gathering spaces ripple through the white-and-gold Yabu Pushelberg lobby, a potted-palm-shaded lounge opening to a glassy cocktail bar that gives way to a market-style café. Downstairs there's a nightclub, a bowling alley, and a pint-size skating rink. Even the round dining room of Jean-Georges' Matador Room restaurant encourages gawking. If some of the 294 rooms seem simple to the point of afterthought, it's hardly a deterrent for Miami's cool crowd, which is flocking to what is hands down the city's hottest address. editionhotels.com. \$\$\$\$



COURTESY OF THE MIAMI BEACH EDITION

📱 *Checking in anywhere fabulous? Join T+L for a Twitter chat about hotels on Tuesday, March 17, at 2 p.m. EST. Follow @travandleisure and #TL_Chat.*



For their latest project in London, Firmdale hoteliers Kit and Tim Kemp have created an entire micro-neighborhood in the middle of Soho—one that still feels so hidden even a London cabdriver might have trouble finding it. Surrounding a tree-lined courtyard are a 91-room hotel, residences, a spa, a movie theater, and boutiques selling hard-to-find international labels. The hotel itself evokes a dapper Londoner's pied-à-terre, with a library anchored by a fireplace and a Joanna Carrington landscape, and an airy restaurant serving seasonal British fare (a chic crowd comes in for afternoon tea, and the place heats up at night). The rooms are a signature Kit Kemp fantasia of pattern, color, and texture, but her most surprising design flourish lies downstairs: an entire bowling alley, circa the 1950s, imported from Texas. hamyardhotel.com. \$\$\$\$

SIMON WATSON



STYLE SETTER
 ● ● ●
WALDORF ASTORIA
 AMSTERDAM

Amsterdam's most sumptuous hotel is a newcomer disguised as a grande dame, tucked into six 17th- and 18th-century patrician houses on posh Herengracht canal. A hand-carved, Louis XIV-style staircase in the lobby sets a regal tone, but the 93 rooms take a more understated approach, with sleek marble fireplaces and subtle touches of the city's famous Delft blue. Nods to tradition aside, these are no old-fashioned accommodations: the Vault Bar draws a fashionable crowd each night for what might be the city's best martini. waldorfastoria.com. \$\$\$

Malliouhana was once *the* place to stay on Anguilla—until its buttoned-up vibe and 1980s décor began to wear thin. So we're thrilled that its new managers, Auberge Resorts, have given it a stem-to-stern overhaul and brought back the sense of glamour that had gone missing. The property is less formal but no less luxurious, from the lobby's shimmering new glass-tiled floors to the 44 bright guest rooms, with their yellow-and-white-striped carpets and orange chaise longues. The breezy seaside restaurant got a makeover, too, with just the type of unfussy menu you'd want at the beach: conch-and-spiny-lobster pizza, locally caught tuna *poke*, and tomato-and-watermelon *panzanella*. aubageresorts.com. \$\$\$\$



COMEBACK QUEEN
 ● ● ●
MALLIOUHANA,
AN AUBERGE RESORT
 ANGUILLA



If there's one tropical island we'd fly 5,000 miles for this year, it's Tetiaroa, the speck of French Polynesia that Marlon Brando bought in the 1960s. The late actor's private refuge, a 20-minute flight from Tahiti, has been breathtakingly reimagined as the Brando, a conservationist's Eden. Each of the 35 ultra-private villas (the smallest is 1,000 square feet) was constructed with sustainable local wood, is cooled by seawater-powered air-conditioning, and faces its own secluded beach. There's a palm-shaded spa and a long list of naturalist-guided activities, but the point of the Brando is to do as Brando did: go into hiding, if only for a week. *thebrando.com*; all-inclusive; three-night minimum. \$\$\$\$\$

IT LIST 2015

For reviews and photos of all 43 winners, visit tandl.me/itlist.

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FAR-FLUNG FANTASIES

Alila Jabal Akhdar Oman
Cape Weligama Sri Lanka
Norden Camp Gansu, China
Vana Malsi Estate
 Uttarakhand, India
Viña Vik Millahue, Chile
Vines Resort & Spa
 Mendoza, Argentina

DESIGN STARS

Adler Mountain Lodge
 Dolomites, Italy
El Blok Vieques, Puerto Rico
Temple Hotel Beijing

ECO-PIONEER

Pikaia Lodge
 Galápagos Islands, Ecuador

SAFARI SHAKE-UPS

Namiri Plains Tanzania
Sandibe Okavango Safari Lodge
 Botswana
Wilderness Safaris Hoanib
Skeleton Coast Camp Namibia

INSTANT CLASSICS

Aman Tokyo
Four Seasons Resort
 Orlando, Florida
The Norman Tel Aviv
Park Hyatt New York
The Peninsula Paris
Raffles Istanbul
Ritz-Carlton Kyoto
Rosewood Beijing
Shangri-La Hotel at the Shard
 London

INDIE DARLINGS

Drake Devonshire Inn
 Prince Edward County, Ontario
Hotel La Semilla
 Playa del Carmen, Mexico
La Villa Pondichery, India

SCENE MAKERS

Miami Beach Edition Florida
Thompson Miami Beach
25hours Hotel Bikini Berlin

NEW URBANISTS

American Trade Hotel & Hall
 Panama City
Ham Yard Hotel London

STYLE SETTERS

Andaz Peninsula Papagayo
Resort Costa Rica
Belle Mont Farm St. Kitts
Hotel Sahrai Fez, Morocco
Sublime Comporta Portugal
Waldorf Astoria Amsterdam

COMEBACK QUEENS

Four Seasons Hotel The Westcliff
 Johannesburg, South Africa
Hôtel Plaza Athénée Paris
Malliouhana, an Auberge Resort
 Anguilla
One&Only Hayman Island Australia
Shelborne Wyndham Grand
 South Beach Miami

A-LIST ESCAPES

The Brando French Polynesia
Maalifushi by Como Maldives
Sanchaya Bintan Island, Indonesia