

Where to stay

A showcase of exceptional hotels, resorts and camps round the world – from timeless glamour in Venice and Andalusia to remote nature-led retreats in Patagonia, Bali and Norway



Villa Palladio in Jaipur, India



Ca' di Dio

Venice | Italy

For her latest hotel project, designer and architect Patricia Urquiola has stamped her contemporary European style on a 13th-century former pilgrims' hostel in Venice. Patricia has brought together the best examples of Italian design, including: furniture from Molteni&C and Cassina; wallcoverings and curtains from Rubelli; Murano glass lights and door handles in cotton-candy shades of blue and pink; and brass bathroom fittings by Cielo. Through its cherrywood revolving doors, the original marble and terrazzo floors have been painstakingly restored in parts and sensitively replaced in others. Walls have been sponge-plastered in a stony beige by the collective of skilled craftspeople who worked on the restoration of nearby Palazzo Ducale and San Marco Basilica. Not far from Giardini Della Biennale, the hotel is ideally placed for touring the various pavilions and venues of the annual art and architecture event. After a day exploring the chaos of canals and campos, its courtyard is the perfect place to have a moment's rest admiring the magnolia and palm trees over an aperitivo. It is also the location of one of Ca' di Dio's two restaurants, Essentia. Dinner is served at the hotel's other restaurant, Vero, where you can enjoy traditional Venetian dishes with a modern twist, looking out over the water as the world goes by. vretreats.com

Villa Palladio

Jaipur | India

Surely the most photographed restaurant in Jaipur over the last decade, Bar Palladio is renowned for its classic Italian dishes and distinctive blue-and-white interiors, which are Dutch designer Marie-Anne Oudejans' vision of a Sixties maharaja palace. Now, the bar's founder Barbara Miolini – who also owns Sicilian-inspired Caffè Palladio in Jaipur and cut her teeth working at the likes of Hotel Cipriani and Suvretta House – has teamed up with Marie-Anne once again for the decoration of Villa Palladio. Set in a former private *haveli* a 20-minute drive outside Rajasthan's capital city, it has been conceived as a home-from-home country retreat. Inside, the palette is equally bold but centred around joyous shades of red and pink. Eight rooms (plus one suite) are furnished with canopied beds, embroidered linens and walls hand-painted with stripes and floral murals; bathrooms feature hand-carved marble *jaali* screens. Homemade pasta and locally grown produce are at the heart of the menu, while *thalis* bring in Indian flavours and a sense of place. With its spa, palm-shaded pool, pavilion bar and gorgeous gardens planted with jasmine, sweet hibiscus and scented roses, this spot is a welcome antidote to the buzz of the Pink City. villa-palladio-jaipur.com



Nirjhara

Bali | Indonesia

Waterfalls carry a spiritual significance for the Balinese, who believe in their healing and meditative powers. It is fitting, then, that one of the island's newest eco-resorts, Nirjhara – meaning waterfall in Sanskrit – has one of its own, fed by a meandering river, which wraps around a rice field above and plunges down to continue its journey. Nirjhara's French founders Dimitri Tran and Adrien Portier have achieved modesty at its most beautiful, stripping away the more materialistic conventions of luxury: there is just one restaurant, Ambu, where menus are faithfully and deliciously Balinese, while yoga sessions are held on a deck by the waterfall. There are 25 rooms in various categories, including riverside pavilions, wood-clad canopy suites and a two-bedroom residence, with eco features such as downsized AC units, solar water heaters and reclaimed and certified wood details. A contemporary art collection and locally crafted pieces, such as ikat throws and ceramics, bring the interiors alive. Outside, honeysuckle leaves fall gracefully from the trees as butterflies dance to the music of birdsong and flowing waters. nirjhara.com



WORDS: EMMA LOVE; ART: GHANBARI; PHOTOGRAPHS: FRANCES WILKS; BIKRANJIT BOSE



La Zambra

Andalusia | Spain

Since the Sixties, when Prince Alfonso von Hohenlohe-Langenburg fell in love with this stretch of the Andalusian coast, Marbella and its surroundings have been the playground of the jet set. Now, in the newly landscaped gardens of the fabled former Byblos Hotel – where Diana, Princess of Wales once sunbathed, The Rolling Stones partied, and Antonio Banderas took fencing lessons – La Zambra has, like a phoenix, taken wing. Located between Marbella and Málaga, just far enough from the coast to ensure exclusivity, La Zambra was conceived by architects Esteva i Esteva as a tribute to contemporary Andalusian cool. Within the structural bones of the Byblos, the focus is on form and the play of light, so shadows trickle through screens and reflections add depth to glass walls set in Andalusian arches. Materials are all natural – stone, wood, linen, textured metal – while courtyards with swaying cypresses and tinkling fountains echo the region's Moorish heritage. The 197 rooms have different footprints that form elegant, balconied retreats. The Penthouse, with its vast terrace and 360° views, is nothing short of spectacular. Under chef Iker González Ayerbe, the three restaurants celebrate the best of local produce and reimagine traditional dishes with creative flair. Sip a manzanilla in the sunshine, visit local villages or relax in the fabulous Mood Spa. La Zambra is an ode to Andalusia; its name is, suitably, that of a vibrant flamenco dance. lazambrahotel.com



Explora El Chaltén

Patagonia | Argentina

In Los Glaciares National Park, Explora El Chaltén has a spectacular setting near the southern tip of Argentina, encircled by wild rivers and parkland dominated by the soaring granite spire of Mount Fitz Roy. Known as Fitz, this has an almost mythical status among mountaineers thanks to its challenges and, along with neighbouring peaks including Cerro Torre, attracts climbers and hikers to the area. In a valley, astride the world's third-largest ice field, Explora El Chaltén epitomises the brand's ethos with its combination of restful rooms, pampering treatments and abundant adventures. The 20-room lodge feels more home than hotel. It was constructed in central Argentina and then transported as a series of modular units by truck. Minimising the impact on the surrounding forest, it is part of Explora's commitment to good social and environmental practices as a certified B Corp. The food is divinely local, with exquisite Argentine beef serving as the basis for many of the creations by chef Pablo Rivero of Buenos Aires restaurant Don Julio. But the true sense of luxury comes from what lies outside the door, with more than a dozen hikes starting from the lodge. One route snakes through a dense forest and up to a lake fed by a giant glacier. Along the way, we are serenaded by a host of native birds, including the Magellanic woodpecker. explora.com



WORDS: TERESA LEVONIAN COLE; JONATHAN FRANKLIN

Sextantio Le Grotte della Civita

Matera | Italy

The 18 starkly beautiful cave-rooms of Le Grotte are burrowed in the heart of the Sassi di Matera – a Unesco-protected labyrinth of Stone Age caverns, medieval rock churches and tufa houses in the southern Italian region of Basilicata. They overlook a dramatic ravine to a wild and karstic, almost Biblical landscape – the location for the Passion films of Pier Paolo Pasolini and Mel Gibson and, more recently, the James Bond movie *No Time to Die*. The response of owner Daniele Kihlgren and architect David Chipperfield to the *genius loci* is uncompromisingly authentic, preserving the elemental essence of these ancient dwellings. A monastic air pervades the rock-hewn rooms furnished with weathered wooden tables and beds draped with antique linens. In the bathrooms, old stone troughs and mangers serve as basins and wooden farm ladders as towel racks; minimalist Philippe Starck bathtubs add a splash of modernity. Against this timeless backdrop, guests can relax with in-cave massages, yoga, Pilates or cooking classes. For a romantic tryst, consider a private dinner in the hotel's 13th-century church: glimmering with hundreds of candles and lanterns, it might be a setting from *The Arabian Nights*. sextantio.it





Holmen Lofoten

Lofoten | Norway

Nature determines everything that happens at Holmen Lofoten. Set on the outermost edge of Norway's remote Lofoten archipelago, in the tiny village of Sorvagen, this family-run hotel and restaurant invites guests to slow their pace and embrace the great outdoors – whether that means wild swimming in the summer or snowshoeing in winter. Created over 20 years ago by local Ingunn Rasmussen, it is a collection of renovated fisherman's cabins with bunk beds, minimalist Scandinavian-style, wood-clad rooms and a pair of suites, each with a kitchenette and living space, and its own sauna. Days can be spent on exhilarating mountain hikes that end with hot lingonberry punch, foraging for mushrooms and seaweed, or fishing for the Arctic cod that migrate to these waters in spring. Not only do the seasons affect the daily rhythm of activities, they also dictate what British chef Valentine Warner whips up for supper and the programme for the hotel's Kitchen on the Edge of the World events. Long-weekend culinary adventures including guest chefs (among those booked for 2023 are Nuno Mendes and Fuchsia Dunlop) and craft workshops distil the essence of the place down to its raw elements: fantastic food that is caught, picked, and gathered from the surrounding natural larder and the chance to feel deeply connected to the land. holmenlofoten.no

Wilderness Safaris DumaTau

Linyanti | Botswana

On the banks of the Linyanti River in Botswana's northernmost region, DumaTau has just emerged from a complete rebuild that places it firmly among Wilderness Safaris' collection of Premier Camps. Now with eight tented suites, each with its own plunge pool, alongside the addition of the smaller, more intimate four-suite Little DumaTau. The two new camps sit on the same site as the previous one and take full advantage of its views over the wildlife-strewn Osprey Lagoon. Designed by Cape Town-based studio Artichoke, interiors feature a strong sense of place, with details such as hand-painted maps on the tiles of the bar, a curiosity library with objects and information about the region's animals, and a copper waterlily installation in the spa and wellness area. Here, too, is the main pool and a bijou gym-with-a-view, which is the perfect spot to watch the herds of elephants that often meander past along the river. By day, float along the river on the camp's barge amid snorting hippos, or head out into the bush for the chance to spot African wild dogs or leopards lazing in trees. And at night, after a delicious meal, settle down with a glass of wine around the campfire on the floating jetty as you immerse yourself in the visceral sounds of nature at its best. wilderness-safaris.com



WORDS: LAUREN HO; EMMA LOVE; PHOTOGRAPHS: CHRISTIAN BANFIELD; TEAGAN CUNIFFE