

BEST AIRLINE SEATS — WHO HAS THEM, WHERE THEY FLY

Condé Nast Traveler

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

MAY 2011

124
Best New
Hotels in the
World (including
40 under \$300)

The Hot
List 2011

21 Top Restaurants
40 Sensational Spas

PLUS

BEIJING

Insider's Guide
to the World's
Wildest City

CARIBBEAN'S
Sleeping Beauty

THE SEXIEST
PLANE
IN THE SKY



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 Miami, Florida
Soho Beach House,
 Miami Beach, Florida
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 Honolulu, Hawaii
JW Marriott Chicago,
 Chicago, Illinois
Longman & Engle,
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Ranch at Rock Creek,
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Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas,
 Las Vegas, Nevada
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MAXIMUM MINIMALISM
 Rooms are doorknob-free at Dubai's Armani Hotel.
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Pushelberg, left, and Yabu in their Toronto home.

HOT INTERIOR DESIGNERS

George Yabu and Glenn Pushelberg, Yabu Pushelberg

Of the moment interiors with traditional touches are the trademark of the powerhouse designers Yabu Pushelberg. In the 30 years since George Yabu and Glenn Pushelberg met in a Toronto design school, they've created the spots where the beau monde shop (Hiffany's Wall Street), sup (Blue Fin in Manhattan), and sleep (most recently, the Waikiki Edition in Honolulu and Las Alcobas in Mexico City). Pushelberg is the voluble client-whisperer (he describes the Edition's Ian Schrager as "crazy-great and highly intuitive"), while Yabu logs hours with the company's 100-plus designers (his pet peeve: "the diminishing number of craftspeople around the world"). "The idea is to give personality to each property as if you were doing someone's home," Pushelberg says, which at the Waikiki Edition means surfboards in the lobby and ukuleles in the rooms; at Las Alcobas, Mexican handcrafted leather and geometric patterns from a local cathedral. Next up: new Edition outposts in London and Miami and, in 2012, Manhattan's Park Hyatt, "a chic residence that will feel very intimate and New York."

with shiny leaves, and upstairs hallways sport perplexing cabinets of whitewashed flower pots. However, there is still much to appreciate here. Guests are completely cosseted by the highly individual, high-spirited staff. Room furnishings in the main house are classical, with four-poster beds, but are updated with light, subtle fabrics and have hypnotic views of woods and parterres. Rustically furnished suites—situated in a small cluster of cottages, a stable, and an eighteenth-century dower house—are all suitable for families due to their generous size. At the casual, stone-floor restaurant The Barn, expect delicious renderings of wholesome English country fare, while the swank formal dining room presents delectable small plates, ingenious foams, and a crack sommelier. Befitting the setting, there's on-site riding, tennis, golf, and a wonderful spa with its own spa restaurant, but nothing tops the opportunity to indulge in that most cherished of rural English pastimes: long country walks.

WHICH ROOM TO BOOK: One of the top-floor rooms of the main house overlooking the formal parterre

(44-1344-876600; coworthpark.com; doubles, \$348-\$810).



FRANCE

U Palazzu Serenu, Corsica

▲▲ The fashionable nine-room U Palazzu Serenu fills a real need on the island, where most of the lodging choices are large, fussy hotels or modest B&Bs. The hotel's aesthetic is minimalist but not at all chilly thanks to the friendly, well-traveled owner, who has created a cosmopolitan place that still feels like a home (his sizable art collection features Anish Kapoor and Paul de Pignol, among others). Designed by Nathalie Baitesti, a protégée of André Putman and Christian Liaigre, the interiors are fresh and comfortable, with oak parquet floors, large beds with crisp linens, pale stone bathrooms with counter space galore, and large windows with sweeping views to the Gulf of St-Florent. Meanwhile, the setting above Desert des Agriates is the perfect launchpad to St-Florent, rugged Cap Corse, and the sweet interior mountain towns that make Corsica so unique. **WHICH ROOM TO**

BOOK: No. 6 has views in two directions from the large French door-style windows (33-4-95-38-39-39; upalazzuserenu.com; doubles, \$470-\$642). ●●●

Le Strato, Courchevel

▲▲ Judging by the exterior, this could be any cute Savoyard chalet in a blingy Alpine resort town, but inside, the backlit photo panels of skiers suggest serious piste pedigree. Owned by the Boix-Vives family (behind Rossignol skis for half a century) and perched high in Courchevel's ultraluxe 1850 village (named, like all of Courchevel's villages, after its altitude), the ski-in/ski-out hotel takes its name from the sleek Strato fiberglass ski. Guests can rent high-end gear from the swanky Le Ski Room, complete with a cham pagne bar. Twenty-five rooms—all with balconies or terraces—look out on pretty chalets or jagged Alpine peaks and sport textured decor mixing baroque and rustic sensibilities with high-tech gadgetry. There are shimmering drapes, faux-fur throws, Murano chandeliers, wood-grain windows, and armchairs in vivid colors, as

well as naïve art, Christian icons, and Versailles-style porcelaine. Meanwhile, bathroom TVs are embedded within mirrors, toilet seats are heated, and iPod docking stations are wired for surround sound. Chef Jean-André Charial's classic French restaurant is a fine-dining affair, with flawless service and perfect desserts. The 24-hour concierge arranges transportation to and from La Croisette, Courchevel's hub—where Chanel and Hermès boutiques and a constellation of Michelin-starred restaurants prove that the pistes are not the only reason to come. **WHICH ROOM TO BOOK:** The solitary Standard Room (No. 5) offers the best value; top-floor rooms have wood-enee and rustic beams, but the snow-level Nos. 400 and 401 benefit from doorstep skiing (33-4-79-41-51-60; hotelstrato.com; doubles, \$1,224-\$1,658, half-board). ●●●●●

Hôtel Thonnicque, Paris

▲▲ Chef Jean-François Piège (who runs the two-Michelin-star Les Ambassadeurs) and hotelier-restaurantier Thierry Costes have created a charming and exceptionally



ONE TO WATCH In May, the 245-room St. Pancras Renaissance, a restored nineteenth-century grand hotel, opens in London's St. Pancras railway station. Chef Marcus Wareing helms his second London restaurant, the hotel's Gilbert Scott, a "British brasserie" named for the architect who designed the Victorian Gothic building (stpancrasrenaissance.com).