



COMPILED BY MICHAELA WILLIAMS

STAR QUALITY

Lie low in Honolulu, be cool in Berlin or rise above it all in San Francisco – escaping the limelight has never been more alluring.



KAHALA HOTEL & RESORT

Away from the sensory overload of Waikiki Beach, this elegant stay combines the best of the famous Oahu coastline (minus those noisy tourists) against a backdrop of the golfing greens of the Waialae Country Club. Originally designed as a hideaway for the rich and famous, the Kahala has hosted everyone from Frank Sinatra and Grace Kelly to Queen Elizabeth and Sean Penn. The recently refurbished rooms and suites celebrate their tropical heritage with a flourish of hibiscus motifs and milk-and-honey tones. Don't care for the Waikiki strip? Take a dip with the hotel's own pod of dolphins, chill at the beach bar (recognisable from TV series *Magnum PI*) or hike up the outer slopes of the Diamond Head crater. From \$US495 (\$477).

5000 Kahala Avenue, Honolulu, Hawaii. +1 (808) 367 2525. kahalaresort.com



WHERE I STAY



RACHAEL RUDDICK
**LUXURY LEATHER
GOODS DESIGNER**

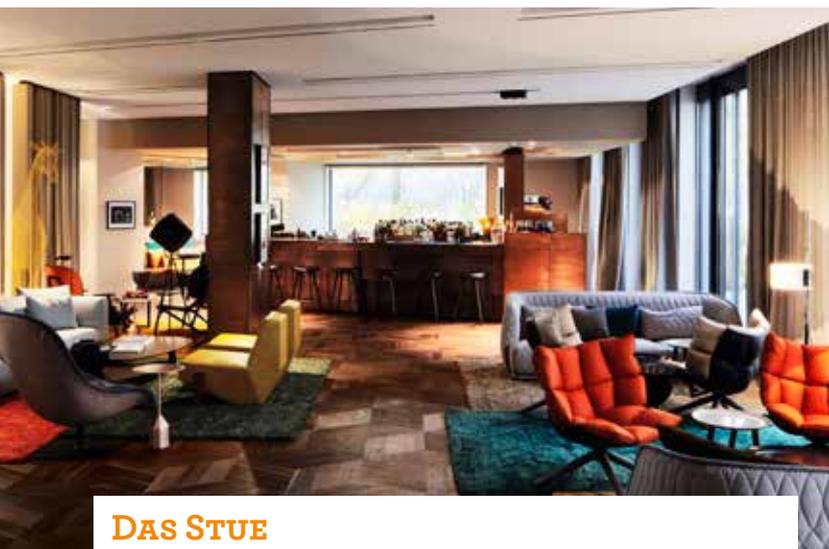
FASANO RIO DE JANEIRO

"I stay at the intimate Fasano boutique hotel, designed by Philippe Starck, which sits on the peninsula between local favourite Ipanema beach and the famous Copacabana. The view from the rooftop pool bar is unforgettable and the pool is huge, taking up nearly all of the roof space except for the bar area with its fabulous cocktails, of course. I love that every room has a decent-sized balcony with views. When you are standing on the roof, it seems to wrap the coastline and capture every important landmark on Ipanema." From \$US820 (\$805). **80 Avenida Vieira Souto, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. +55 (21) 3202 4000. fasano.com.br**



MANDARIN ORIENTAL SAN FRANCISCO

In San Francisco's third-tallest building, the Mandarin Oriental makes the most of its outlook with all 158 rooms, including seven suites, located on levels 38 to 48. Whether gazing out at Alcatraz and beyond to Sausalito or across to Golden Gate Bridge through the binoculars in every room, it's easy to feel on top of the world. The mood is only enhanced by visiting the hotel's Brasserie S&P, which has a 600-strong wine selection and 40 varieties of gin. Follow that with a spot of therapeutic pummelling at the brand new spa and you'll be floating above the clouds. Could it get any better? Yes, if you've reserved the 186sq m Oriental suite, which has its own private terrace – perfect for sunbathing or an intimate dinner for two. From \$US495 (\$477). **222 Sansome Street, San Francisco.** +1 (415) 276 9888. mandarinoriental.com/sanfrancisco



DAS STUE

Modern minimalism takes a hit of the brooding 1930s in this new Berlin boutique. The original hallways are lined with black-and-white fashion photographs, with the stylish theme continuing into the 80 rooms and suites by way of decadent fabrics and inspired lighting. Facing the Berlin Zoo, guests can peer into the animal enclosures at ostriches, ponies and gazelles. From €200 (\$254). **1 Drakestrasse, Berlin, Germany.** +49 (30) 311 7220. das-stue.com



ASK THE CONCIERGE



HUGH McDONALD,
HILTON ADELAIDE

❖ *When friends are in town I take them for a drink at*

The recently opened Collins Bar in Victoria Square. It has an impressive range of spirits as well as a great list of unique cocktails. It's the most sophisticated bar in Adelaide.

❖ *The restaurant I recommend is*

D'Arry's Verandah Restaurant in McLaren Vale. It has a beautiful view over the valley and if you love red wine, they make what I call "old-fashioned" reds. The food is excellent, matched with their wines, of course.

❖ *For designer fashion I steer guests towards*

Burnside Village on Portrush Road in the leafy eastern suburbs. It's an upmarket shopping area of boutique and designer label stores.

❖ *For the perfect gift or memento I'd shop at*

local treasure, Haigh's Chocolates. The factory store on Greenhill Road has a history-rich tour.

❖ *Couples wanting a romantic dinner for two should consider*

Auge, which serves up modern Italian. It has a candle-lit, romantic atmosphere – perfect for sharing with that special person in your life.

❖ *For great art head to the*

Art Gallery of South Australia.

It has one of the largest collections of Australian colonial art in world.

❖ *The best markets can be found* next door to the Hilton, the Central Market. More than 100 years old, it is full of stalls with the best fresh produce.

❖ *For vintage finds* the Antique Market on Grote Street is full of interesting bric-a-brac and unexpected treasures. You can browse there for hours.

❖ *If it's raining* visit the museum, art gallery or National Wine Centre. Take a tram down to the beach, as it can be quite beautiful when the weather gets wild. Or hop on a bus and do a tour of the wineries.

❖ *Adelaide's best-kept secret is* Lucia's in the Central Market, the first spaghetti and pizza bar in Adelaide; it opened in the 1950s. It's small, quaint and slightly retro, with the original orange tables and brown chairs, but has great food, good service and the best coffee in Adelaide.

❖ *If I were a visitor with a free day I would* take a stroll around the city and enjoy the architecture along the North Terrace. My perfect day would include the art gallery, a walk through the botanic gardens and a coffee at Lucia's.



Lucia's, in the Central Market, has the best coffee