

 NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

THE UK'S #1 TRAVEL MAGAZINE

TRAVELLER

UK EDITION // OCTOBER 2021 // £4.95

NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.CO.UK/TRAVEL

the new Deep South

ALABAMA • GEORGIA • LOUISIANA • MISSISSIPPI • SOUTH CAROLINA

+

PORTO

FLORENCE

MACAU

WIN!

A LUXURY STAY ON
SCOTLAND'S ISLE OF ISLAY

Seychelles

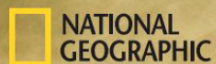
How a new generation is
transforming adventure travel
in the Indian Ocean paradise

Northern Ireland

Going off-grid among the
standing stones & dark skies
of the Sperrin Mountains



ALSO: BATH // BERLIN // LATVIA // SWITZERLAND // TURKEY // VALPARAÍSO // HOTEL AWARDS 2021



TRAVELLER

HOTEL AWARDS

2021

FAR MORE THAN JUST A PLACE TO STAY, HOTELS CAN MAKE OR BREAK A TRAVEL EXPERIENCE. AND AS WE TENTATIVELY BEGIN TO EXPLORE THE WORLD AGAIN, WHERE WE CHOOSE TO CHECK IN MATTERS MORE THAN EVER. OUR AWARDS CHAMPION THE NEW AND IMPROVED PROPERTIES THAT HAVE STOOD OUT FROM THE CROWD OVER THE PAST YEAR — WHETHER IT'S AN EXCITING NEW REFURB, OUTSTANDING ECO CREDENTIALS, SPECTACULAR ARCHITECTURE OR UNFORGETTABLE GASTRONOMIC EXPERIENCES THAT LINGER LONG IN THE MEMORY

IMAGE: FREDERIK WISSINK

THE WINNERS

Grand Redesigns

MANDARIN ORIENTAL
RITZ, MADRID

City Slicker

THE HOXTON, ROME

Good Egg

XIGERA SAFARI LODGE,
BOTSWANA

Lord of the Manor

CASTELLO DI RESCHIO,
ITALY

Love Shack

BÀI SAN HỒ,
VIETNAM

Castaway

KISAWA SANCTUARY,
MOZAMBIQUE

Boutique Break

CAN FERRERETA,
MAJORCA, SPAIN

Leave the World Behind

ANGAMA SAFARI
CAMP, KENYA

On the Money

THE HARRISON CHAMBERS
OF DISTINCTION, BELFAST

Comeback Kid

NOMAD LONDON, LONDON

Design Den

PARADERO TODOS
SANTOS, MEXICO

Gourmet Getaway

TILLINGHAM, EAST SUSSEX

THE JUDGING PANEL

JULIA BUCKLEY

Freelance travel writer

LEE COBAJ

Freelance travel writer

EMMA GREGG

Freelance travel writer

LAUREN JADE HILL

Freelance travel writer

LAURA HOLT

Travel writer and editor

FRANCISCA KELLETT

Travel writer and editor

JULIET KINSMAN

Sustainable travel consultant

TRAVIS LEVIUS

Luxury travel writer

JOHN O'CEALLAIGH

Luxury travel consultant

PÓL Ó CONGHAILE

Freelance travel writer

JONATHAN THOMPSON

Freelance travel writer

& THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

TRAVELLER (UK) TEAM

GRAND REDESIGNS

Sometimes grande dames need a little TLC. These veterans are back and more elegant than ever

★ MANDARIN ORIENTAL RITZ, MADRID

A three-year renovation — the biggest in the building's 110-year history — has finally come to completion. It's been well worth the wait: the landmark property, just moments from the Museo del Prado, has reopened to reveal its belle époque character lifted to new heights. There's a certain Roaring Twenties vibe to the revamp, albeit with a 21st-century spin: expect soaring pillars, glittering chandeliers and no fewer than five restaurants overseen by acclaimed Spanish chef Quique Dacosta. From €750 (£638). mandarinoriental.com



RUNNERS-UP

ECLIPSE AT HALF MOON, JAMAICA

A mere mention of Jamaica's most-lauded hotel conjures images of idyllic shores, and now Half Moon has a sparkling new addition. Unveiled at the end of last year, Eclipse consists of 57 spectacular breezy rooms and suites that re-energise the 1950s icon's accommodation. Pull yourself away from the rooms and you'll find a new infinity pool to bask in, as well as two restaurants and views of the private beach, framed by swaying palms. From \$525 (£379). halfmoon.com

LA MAMOUNIA, MARRAKECH

Among Morocco's most storied hotels, this landmark has attracted royalty, starlets and dignitaries for nearly a century. Now, the five-star has tapped culinary maestros Pierre Hermé and Jean-Georges Vongerichten to completely overhaul its culinary credentials — including two new restaurants, L'Italien and L'Asiatique — in spaces reimagined by design studio Jouin Manku. The result is both slick and grand, from the nearly floor-to-ceiling chandelier in the Salon de Thé or the subterranean Oenothèque. From MAD7,400 (£595). mamounia.com



IMAGES: MANDALAYLERA



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Palm Court at Mandarin Oriental Ritz, Madrid; The Lobby Bar at The Hoxton, Rome; cocktail served at The Hoxton, Rome; Deluxe Room at Mandarin Oriental Ritz, Madrid
OPENING SPREAD: Hill Pool Villa at Bai San Ho

CITY SLICKER

Is there a new des res in town? We wanted to reward the hottest new hotels on the block — temples of slick design, stellar service and feel-good vibes that draw in the locals as much as the travellers

★ THE HOXTON, ROME

It's no exaggeration to say the lines between work and home life have been well and truly blurred over the past year, but there are some hotels that have the concept down to an art. With lobbies that feels like the neighbourhood's living room and classy cocktails to end the day, The Hoxton's formula has always been a winner wherever it's put down roots, and it's never felt more successful than now, with the launch of its latest property in the Eternal City. The group's 10th edition — adding to its roster of hotels in cities such as Amsterdam, Paris and New York, not least its trio of London pads — has transformed a modernist building in the Parioli neighbourhood into a 192-bed urban retreat, with a dusty pink facade and a decor inspired by 1970s furniture and classic Italian cinema, with some salvaged Murano glass chandeliers to boot. The all-day Cuginio is a bar-bistro in which you'll be as comfortable for breakfast as you will for aperitivo hour. You don't get that working from your bedroom. From €169 (£144). thehoxton.com

RUNNERS-UP

CAPELLA BANGKOK, BANGKOK

One of the most talked-about openings of the past year, Capella Bangkok has landed a prime spot on the iconic Chao Phraya River. It provides a pocket of tranquility within the city: unwind in the shady Auriga Wellness spa. Capella Culturalists, meanwhile, curate local experiences for visitors. From THB12,900 (£279), B&B. capellahotels.com

THE SOCIAL HOUSE, NAIROBI

This is no ordinary African city boutique hotel, expertly dodging both colonial tropes and the corporate feel of many regional options. Instead, locals pack out four fabulous bars and restaurants, with menus ranging from Scandinavian to Peruvian-Japanese. Bed down in one of 83 rooms with smartphone controls, and contemporary decor. From \$129 (£93). thesocialhouse.ke



CASTAWAY

After the past 18 months, these halcyon hideaways suddenly feel more enticing than ever. From ocean-side villas to secluded stays in paradise, we've found the most outstanding desert island escapes



KISAWA SANCTUARY, MOZAMBIQUE

A 740-acre retreat on the southern tip of Bengueria Island — itself nine miles beyond mainland Mozambique — Kisawa is a hideaway where guests can go days without seeing another soul. Each with its own beach, infinity pool and kitchen, its dozen bungalows are vast but cossetting in their minimalist comfort and come with a dedicated butler to sort out practicalities. On standby, a Mini Moke car allows for spontaneous jaunts to deserted beaches but it's also worth taking to the water — this is the balmy, wildlife-rich Indian Ocean, after all. The WWF National Marine Park adjacent to Kisawa is still firmly off the tourist trail, which means guests might just be the only ones there to admire its manta rays, dugongs and whale sharks. It's blow-the-budget territory, but more than worth the splurge. From €5,000 (£4,244), all-inclusive. Minimum three nights. [kisawasanctuary.com](https://www.kisawasanctuary.com)

RUNNERS-UP

DOMAINE DE MURTOLI, CORSICA, FRANCE

Twenty-five years after revamping a string of shepherds' huts, the owners of this rural retreat have converted the farmhouse into a stylish hotel, tucked between the organic gardens. Guests have full access to the estate, with its wild walks and peaceful Mediterranean sands. From €223 (£190). [murtoli.com](https://www.murtoli.com)

ONE&ONLY MANDARINA, MEXICO

Perched on a cliff above the wave-lapped Riviera Nayarit — the location alone of this eco-minded sanctuary is enough to have you reaching for your passport. Add private dining and a lush spa, and you might consider opting for the castaway life entirely. From \$1,090 (£784), B&B. [oneandonlyresorts.com](https://www.oneandonlyresorts.com)



LEAVE THE WORLD BEHIND

Many of us have fallen back in love with the great outdoors, and we're praising the properties that bring us closer to nature, from tucked-away treehouses to luxurious lodges



ANGAMA SAFARI CAMP, KENYA

Just like its mother camp, Angama Mara, this new, exclusive-use fly-camp — with only four tents — delivers old-school serenity with an ultra-stylish, 21st-century twist. Writing desks, extra-king-size beds and double bucket showers take comforts far beyond the realms of a conventional safari camp, and the list of experiences on offer are the stuff of daydreams. Expect picnics 'in the middle of nowhere', hot air balloon rides and tailor-made, guest-focused safari drives that take in the sun-blessed savannah and Big Five. This is a rare and intimate experience, all stage-managed by a team whose attention to detail is out of this world. From \$1,400 (£1,006) per night, full board, including activities and transfers from the nearest airstrip. Minimum three nights. [angama.com](https://www.angama.com)

RUNNERS-UP

THE TREEHOUSES AT LANRICK, PERTSHIRE

Sylvan simplicity is the name of the game at this off-grid site, rooted around five stylish, cabin-style treehouses. Branch off to Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park, five minutes' away, or soak in the outdoor tub. There are picnic and barbecue spots around the grounds, and log burners for chilly evenings. From £200. [lanricktreehouses.co.uk](https://www.lanricktreehouses.co.uk)

CAMP SARIKA BY AMANGIRI, UTAH

This rugged offshoot of ultra-luxe icon Amangiri carves its own niche with 10 one- and two-bedroom canvas-roofed pavilions with plunge pools, industrial-chic furnishings and otherworldly desert landscape views. The pavilions' finest feature, though, is the outdoor space in night-time hours, where guests can toast s'mores on a firepit beneath the stars. From \$2,100 (£1,509), B&B. [aman.com](https://www.aman.com)

BOUTIQUE BREAK

Behold the shining jewels of the hotel world: stand-out properties that shimmer with exquisite style, excellent service and just a handful of sumptuous rooms



CAN FERRERETA, MAJORCA, SPAIN

Farm paths that once funnelled livestock now feel the trot of shoes on stone in the south Majorcan village of Santanyí, thanks to a restoration by local architect Gerard Bastidas. This once-derelict farmstead is now unrecognisable as Can Ferrereta, transformed into a boutique sanctuary that makes an unforgettable first impression. Knobbly, butterscotch-coloured walls and olive-gnarled grounds muster alongside a cool, canvas-like interior, showcasing works by Catalan artists, including Joan Miró. Restaurant Ocre, meanwhile, occupies an erstwhile wine cellar, serving market-bought vegetables alongside smoked Majorcan cheese. Over at the old shepherd's hut, a pool house beckons, while a barn-style spa uses products rooted in the island's geography, including citrus fruits from Sóller and salts from Es Trenc. Mark our words: this is one you'll want to talk about until the cows come home. From €315 (£269), B&B. [hotelcanferrereta.com](https://www.hotelcanferrereta.com)

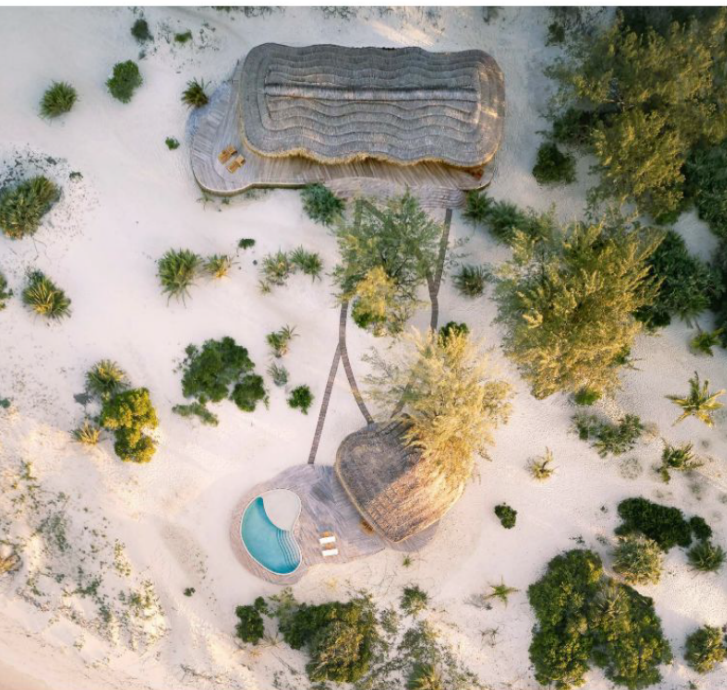
RUNNERS-UP

VILLA DAGMAR, STOCKHOLM

A slick addition to the opulent Östermalmstorg neighbourhood, the Swedish capital's new leading lady is set within a 19th-century art nouveau building and comes with its own flower shop and concept store, Gazebo. The garden bar's the place to be, with a glass ceiling inspired by the British Museum's Reading Room. From SEK2,550 (£213). [hotelvilladagmar.com](https://www.hotelvilladagmar.com)

ARTHAUS BEIRUT, BEIRUT

With Ottoman-inspired rooms and a garden peppered with Roman relics, there was much anticipation for Nabil and Zoe Debs' new hotel. But the explosion in the Lebanese capital's port last summer brought the Gemmayze district to its knees. Arthaus has already partially reopened, with its 25 rooms complemented by a concierge service. From \$320 (£230). [arthaus.international](https://www.arthaus.international)



FROM LEFT: Aerial view of Kisawa bungalow, at Kisawa Sanctuary, Mozambique; bathroom at Kisawa Sanctuary, Mozambique; bedroom at Can Ferrereta, Majorca

IMAGES: ELSA YOUNG/KISAWA