

Condé Nast Traveller

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10TH ANNIVERSARY HOT LIST SPECIAL

Real

THE HOT LIST 2009

Our choice of the world's best new hotels



in association with Virgin Atlantic: '25 years and still red hot'

CONTENTS

THE AMERICAS & CARIBBEAN



ARGENTINA

- 9 Posada Puerto Bemberg. Iguazú Misiones
- 14 Legado Mítico Salta. Ciudad de Salta
- 14 Nuss Buenos Aires Soho
- BRAZIL**
- 12 Hotel Santa Teresa. Rio de Janeiro
- CANADA**
- 14 Pur Hotel. Quebec City
- CARIBBEAN**
- 16 Geejam. Jamaica
- PERU**
- 16 La Casona Cusco
- 16 Titilaka. Lake Titicaca
- USA**
- 6 Mondrian. Miami Beach
- 8 The Greenwich Hotel. New York
- 9 Montage Beverly Hills. Los Angeles
- 11 Fontainebleau. Miami Beach
- 12 Cavallo Point. San Francisco
- 18 London West Hollywood. Los Angeles
- 18 Mandarin Oriental, Boston
- 18 Thompson LES. New York

AUSTRALASIA, ASIA & PACIFIC OCEAN



AUSTRALIA

- 22 Southern Ocean Lodge. Kangaroo Island
- 24 Sal Salis Ningaloo Reef. Cape Range National Park
- CHINA**
- 23 Aman at Summer Palace. Beijing
- 24 Banyan Tree Sanya. Hainan
- 24 Four Seasons Hotel Macao, Cotai Strip. Macao
- 24 URBN. Shanghai
- 25 Opposite House. Beijing
- 26 W Hong Kong
- INDIA**
- 28 Aman New Delhi
- 28 POD. Chennai
- INDONESIA**
- 20 Hotel Tugu Lombok
- 22 St Regis Bali Resort
- MALAYSIA**
- 28 The Club at the Saujana. Kuala Lumpur
- SOUTH PACIFIC**
- 30 Four Seasons Resort Bora Bora. French Polynesia
- THAILAND**
- 30 Anantara Phuket Resort & Spa
- 30 Six Senses Destination Spa Phuket

AFRICA, INDIAN OCEAN & MIDDLE EAST



BOTSWANA

- 32 Xudum Okavango Delta Lodge & Xaranna Okavango Delta Camp
- 38 Zarafa Camp. Selinda Reserve
- ISRAEL**
- 36 Hotel Montefiore. Tel Aviv
- MALAWI**
- 40 Pumulani. Lake Malawi
- MALDIVES**
- 40 Diva. Didihoonlhu
- MAURITIUS**
- 40 Four Seasons Resort Mauritius at Anahita
- SOUTH AFRICA**
- 35 Molori Lodge. Madikwe Game Reserve
- 40 The Manor. Samara Private Game Reserve
- UAE**
- 38 Atlantis. The Palm. Dubai
- 38 Desert Islands Resort & Spa Abu Dhabi
- UGANDA**
- 36 Clouds Mountain Gorilla Lodge. Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park

UK, EUROPE & RUSSIA



PORTUGAL

- 54 The Vine. Madeira
- RUSSIA**
- 54 Hilton Moscow Leningradskaya
- SPAIN**
- 56 ME. Barcelona
- 56 Murmuri. Barcelona
- SWEDEN**
- 56 Lydmar Hotel. Stockholm
- SWITZERLAND**
- 58 The Dolder Grand. Zurich
- TURKEY**
- 49 W Istanbul
- 58 Witt Suites. Istanbul
- UK**
- 42 Crazy Bear. Beaconsfield
- 46 St Moritz. Cornwall
- 58 Hotel du Vin Poole. Dorset
- 58 Myhotel Brighton. East Sussex
- 60 York & Albany. London

BELGIUM

- 44 Carbon. Genk
- 45 Kempinski Hotel Dukes' Palace Bruges
- DENMARK**
- 50 Nimb. Copenhagen
- FRANCE**
- 47 Mama Shelter. Paris
- 50 Le Couvent des Minimes Hôtel & Spa. Provence
- 50 The Regent Grand Hotel Bordeaux
- GERMANY**
- 52 The George. Hamburg
- GREECE**
- 45 Santorini Grace Hotel
- IRELAND**
- 52 No.1 Pery Square Hotel & Spa. Limerick
- ITALY**
- 48 Four Seasons Hotel Firenze. Florence
- 49 Borgo Santo Pietro. Tuscany
- 54 Castiglion del Bosco. Tuscany
- 54 Torre di Moravola. Umbria
- NETHERLANDS**
- 46 Citizen M Schiphol. Amsterdam

10 GREAT COMEBACK KIDS The Mark. New York; 9 Jumbay Bay. Antigua; 14 Morgans. New York; 18 Al Bustan Palace Muscat, Oman; 36 La Mamounia. Marrakech; 38 The Langham. London; 45 The Savoy. London; 49 Hotel Danieli. Venice; 50 Grand-Hotel du Cap-Ferrat. France; 54 Principe di Savoia. Milan; 58

10 ONES TO WATCH Las Piedras Villas & Hotel Fasano. Uruguay; 12 Crosby Street. New York; 16 The Standard. New York; 18 The Serai. Rajasthan; 22 The Puli. Shanghai; 24 Shangri-La's Villingili Resort & Spa. Maldives; 35 One&Only Cape Town. South Africa; 40 Aman Sveti Stefan. Montenegro; 46 Dean Street House & Dining Room. London; 54 Verdura Golf & Spa Resort. Sicily; 60

Plus 10 HOT HOTEL PEOPLE James Baillie, André Balazs, Colin Bell, Chris Blackwell, Frank Bowling, Robert de Niro, Angela Hartnett, Sol Kerzner, Karim Rashi, Adrian Zecha

REPORTS FROM: Colin Barracrough, Peter Browne, Karen Burshtein, Fiona Caulfield, Michelle Jana Chan, Tom Chessyre, William Cook, Guy Ditrach, Mike Dolan, Fiona Duncan, Natasha Edwards, Laura Fowler, Jo Fowley, Lanie Goodman, Lisa Grainger, Rachel Howard, Jamie James, Lisa Johnson, David Kaufman, Joan Koh, Seth Linder, Paula Maynard, Lee Marshall, Emily Mathieson, Kate Maxwell, Reggie Nadelson, Andrew Osborn, Ed Peters, Paul Richardson, Cynthia Rosenfeld, Nicholas Shakespeare, Jill Starley-Grainger, Tara Stephens, Chris Sullivan, Nicky Swallow, Francesca Syz, Bonnie Tsui, Christopher Vourlias, Christy Ward, Stephen Whitlock, Carinthia West, Claire Wrathall

GREAT COMEBACK KIDS & ONES TO WATCH Emily Mathieson **HOT HOTEL PEOPLE** Francesca Syz

THE HOT LIST 2009

THE AMERICAS & CARIBBEAN

➤ Inn, and replaced them with floor-to-ceiling panes that flood the grey-and-white bedrooms with light. The starkly understated lobby, a bit like a well-designed airport lounge, is furnished with MDF Italia and Lucite pieces. A white, grey and orange colour scheme runs throughout the hotel, from dark-grey pinstripe carpets to orange room numbers on white doors. In the bedrooms, towels, cushions and flowers provide the orange accents, TVs are wall-hung in lieu of art, and bathrooms have Japanese deep-soak tubs. There are celestial views of the neo-Gothic Saint Roch church, particularly from floors 15 to 18. Pur's young chef, François Privé, prepares fusion dishes such as carpaccio of beer-fed Eumatimi beef. His focus is on ultra-fresh ingredients – no small coup in a city that is snowbound much of the year.

WHEN TO GO Jazz-loving leaf-peepers will do well in September, with the Saint Roch jazz festival and autumn colours.

ROOM TO BOOK Junior suite 1807-1808 has a full-on view of Saint Roch church and also, on a clear day, the Saint Lawrence River and old city. 00 1 418 647 2611; www.hotelpur.com. Doubles from C\$162 (about £100)

GEEJAM Jamaica

Damon Albarn recorded his first Gorillaz tracks here. Björk cut the songs for her latest album. Sharon Stone celebrated her 50th birthday in one of the villas. Banksy has hung out in the grounds, even spray-painting a few works on the walls. Dropping names seems to come naturally at this recording studio and seven-bedroom escapist's dream overlooking one of the most beautiful

stretches of Jamaica's north-east coast. Geejam is part of a hotel group founded by Chris Blackwell, the record producer who brought Bob Marley, U2 and PJ Harvey to the world. The rooms opened late last year in a series of circular villas and two apartments. They are remarkable for their hi-tech facilities (Wi-Fi, iPod stations, Apple TVs with the latest films) and for their secluded terraces with tables and bed-sized sun-loungers, to which waiters deliver cocktails and food from the sushi bar/restaurant. The decor is minimalist with an oriental flavour: in the bar there are low-level red and black sofas that look as if they've come straight from the lobby of a slick Hong Kong hotel – a slightly strange sight in the Caribbean, with jerk chicken stalls just down the road.

WHEN TO GO Mid-December to mid-April for the best weather; any other time to escape the crowds.

ROOM TO BOOK The Ska room, for its private hot tub on a deck with dramatic sea views. 01895 450731; www.islandoutpost.com. Doubles from US\$425

LA CASONA CUSCO Peru

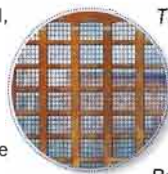
Cusco has never been short of beds for backpackers, but now there's somewhere small and perfectly formed to stay as well. La Casona Cusco is local luxury travel group Inkaterra's newest addition to its Peruvian portfolio and claims to be the country's first carbon-neutral hotel. This restored manor house in the city's historical heart has 11 suites with stone fireplaces, faded frescos and colonial tapestries, all set around an elegant courtyard. The 16th-century surroundings are offset by hi-tech comforts such

10 ONES TO WATCH

Our choice of this year's most hotly anticipated hotel openings

2. CROSBY STREET NEW YORK

www.crosbystreethotel.com



This is the first hotel outside London from the Firmedale Group (Charlotte Street Hotel, The Soho Hotel). Set to open this summer in SoHo, it promises to marry eclectic British style with New York touches such as warehouse windows

as heated floors, iPod speakers and Wi-Fi. Next door is the exquisite Pre-Columbian Art Museum, a good place to start any Incan adventure. Cusco may be the most beautiful colonial city in the Americas, and wins outright for the finest Andean shopping. After a trip to Machu Picchu, guests are welcomed back to the hotel with a magical infusion of coca, honey and *muña* (Andean mint) to ward off altitude sickness. Hearty Peruvian dishes are served beside an open fire, and a petite urban spa restores even the weariest Inca Trailers.

WHEN TO GO May–September is when it is clear and sunny; but April is a good gamble, at the end of the rainy season and before the crowds arrive.

ROOM TO BOOK Plaza suites 5 and 6 are biggest. 00 51 1 610 0400; www.inkaterra.com. Doubles from US\$792

TITILAKA Peru

This astonishing new hotel stands on the south-western shores of Lake Titicaca, cutting a crisp silhouette of sharp corners, with stark colours and daunting brick walls. But slip inside and ➤

10 HOT HOTEL PEOPLE

What's so hot about your hotel?

3. FRANK BOWLING Hotel Ambassador, Montage Beverly Hills



'Building the Montage from scratch meant that we could include absolutely everything we wanted, so the quality is extraordinary; from the 44 types of marble to the dynamic staff recruited by our managing director, Mr Ali Kasicki'



The Ska room at Geejam

THE HOT LIST 2009

THE AMERICAS & CARIBBEAN

➤ everything bursts into life, with the bright stripes of hand-woven textiles, shabby-chic colonial antiques and roaring fires. All 18 rooms have big-sky views of the lake and snowy peaks beyond. Kayaking, mountain-biking and swimming are on offer, but best of all is a visit to timeless Taquile island, where residents still rely on farming and weaving. After a brisk day out, the hotel is extremely welcoming (there are even gulps of oxygen for anyone needing a boost). Meals are home-grown: quinoa chowder, alpaca brochettes and native-potato croquettes stuffed with Andean cheese. An indoor pool and spa will open later this year, providing indigenous treatments using Titicaca sand, aloe and coca. If you perceive echoes in Titilaka of the nature-travel company Inkaterra (see La Casona Cusco, page 16), you'd be spot-on: this is the first project from that company's spin-off, The Andean Experience Co. Two more hotels are planned under that brand, including one in Lima.

WHEN TO GO June–August is dry and sunny but you'll need strong UV shades to counter the daytime dazzle, and thick jumpers by night.

ROOM TO BOOK Corner suites 301 and 302 have the best views; rooms on the third floor have high, pitched ceilings made of lake reeds. 00 51 1 700 5100 or 0808 234 2368 in the UK; www.titilaka.com. Doubles from US\$1,104, full-board including transfers and excursions

LONDON WEST HOLLYWOOD

Los Angeles

UNDER £150 'Everyone says it's the best – big rooms, a pool at the top, good personal service and value for money.' And that's just the cab-driver from Los Angeles airport talking. Any suspicion that his poetic licence should be taken away is banished the moment you venture inside the Art Deco lobby of the London West Hollywood. You can forget the hotel's self-conscious (and largely unnoticeable) 'nod to British style': your initial impression is that you have stepped into Alphonse Mucha's Prague, except the luxury

here is more discreet. As for the atmosphere of the 200 suites, designed by David Collins Studio in a style trumpeted uncertainly as 'bel age', it is reminiscent less of Knightsbridge than of Pompeii, the capacious bath and black-and-white mosaic tiles evoking the sort of washroom where a Roman senator might come for his scrapes, albeit in a Gilchrist & Soames shower cap. But the suites are indeed roomy, the bed positioned in the centre with a walk-around headboard; and whatever the influence, it's all most tasteful. The wall tiles are hand-cut from bleached oak, the cupboards are pea-green, the linen Italian and the coffee-maker a Keurig. Even the view across the flat roofs to the Hollywood Hills does not disappoint. The only indisputably 'London' element is the ground-floor restaurant, opened by Gordon Ramsay and his aptly named chef de cuisine, Andy Cook. The amberjack sushi with black-bean miso, cherry-blossom shrimp and pressed king mackerel is especially good – and the closest you'll get to fish and chips here.

WHEN TO GO Any time: LA has mild, sunny winters and very hot summers.

ROOM TO BOOK Any on the top floor. 00 1 866 282 4560; www.thelondonwesthollywood.com. Doubles from \$199

MANDARIN ORIENTAL, BOSTON

The lobby at Boston's newest hotel may be chic, but it's the buzz in the M Bar & Lounge that draws you deeper into the hotel: from the day it opened last October, the bar has attracted the Back Bay neighbourhood smart set. The 136 bedrooms are pretty grand, too (there are also 12 suites, but why bother when the bedrooms are this big?). Each has a large TV, Wi-Fi, a seating area, a desk and a huge bathroom with a rainforest shower. The decor is a fusion of classic Asian and contemporary American, and much of the artwork throughout the hotel is by internationally recognised local artists. Asana restaurant offers Asian specialties from crispy duck to *nasi goreng*, as well as a world-beating clam chowder; a 'cheese cave' is given pride of place so that guests can sniff and sample the produce before ordering. The spa on the third floor has nine treatment rooms, a steam room, vitality pools and an ice fountain; the adjoining fitness centre has state-of-the-art equipment including an amazing Kinesis wall.

WHEN TO GO Summer, when it makes a terrific stopover en route to Cape Cod.

ROOM TO BOOK Any overlooking Boylston Street so you can watch the world go by. 00 1 617 531 0888; www.mandarinoriental.com/boston. Doubles from \$425

THOMPSON LES New York

Manhattan was experiencing a hotel boom before the global economic downturn, and the Thompson LES (Lower East Side) is one of the most eye-catching new arrivals. Located on Allen

10 HOT HOTEL PEOPLE

What's so hot about your hotel?

4. **ROBERT DE NIRO** Co-owner, The Greenwich Hotel, New York



'Like TriBeCa itself, the Greenwich is an original. I don't like stuffy hotels, so it had to have a warm, welcoming feeling, open fireplaces and a restaurant that could spill out onto the street. Why be in a neighbourhood if you don't intend to connect with it?'

Street, where the East Village meets the Lower East Side, this 18-floor, 141-bedroom hotel towers over the mostly low-rise district. Staffed by a multinational crew in uniforms by cult fashion brand Rogan, the hotel has proved popular with those who appreciate the area's funky, anything-goes energy. Inside, however, a cool, low-lit vibe predominates. Bedrooms are big by New York standards, with floor-to-ceiling windows, exposed-brick walls and black-and-white photographs by Lee Friedlander (illuminated from within to form unusual night lights) above the beds. Hong Kong native Susur Lee cooks modern Chinese cuisine in Shang restaurant. There are plans for an outdoor pool with a mural of Andy Warhol by Gerard Malanga. In January the hotel launched a small spa and a hip rooftop bar, Above Allen.

WHEN TO GO September for Fashion Week, when the poolside bar promises to be the grooviest gathering spot in town.

ROOM TO BOOK One of the Studio Kings: they cost 25 per cent more than standard rooms but are almost double the size.

00 1 212 460 5300; www.thompsonhotels.com. Doubles from \$425

10 GREAT COMEBACK KIDS

Landmark hotels reinvented and reinspired

3. **MORGANS NEW YORK**

www.morganshotel.com



The original New York boutique hotel had a facelift by design doyenne Andrée Putman last year. The most striking feature is an art installation in the lobby, but all the bedrooms have had a subtle makeover

10 ONES TO WATCH

Our choice of this year's most hotly anticipated hotel openings

3. **THE STANDARD NEW YORK**

www.standardhotels.com



The much-hyped new hotel from André Balazs was taking bookings as we went to press, with a disclaimer: 'We'll put up with your banging if you'll put up with ours'. If you prefer not to sleep on a building site, wait till summer to stay at this magnificent building straddling the High Line park