

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

CONDÉ NAST

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Traveler

THE **HOT** LIST



Editor's Letter

The inspiration behind this month's issue ...



Untitled, 1950,
photograph
by Louise
Dahl-Wolfe.

or floating man-made designs, often co-conspire in this self-(re)imagining. In a banner year for new hotels on our Hot List (page 63), properties like the Park Hyatt Zanzibar, the Faena Miami Beach, La Fiermontina in Lecce, and Amanera in the D.R. represent perfect microcosms of place, and also the best versions of a completely alternate lifestyle that lingers after you've gone.

One sense of the word *home* conjures familiarity and comfort, as in a pair of old sweats. And then there is the fantasy of home, in which some hotels, with their cliff-hanging open-air pavilions and lantern-like indoor-outdoor guest rooms, present an idealized version of habitat. As a social animal, I generally gravitate to public areas, even when a suite has its own generous plunge pool. But at Amanera, we scarcely left our casita—a case study in warm modernism that made us, as architectural junkies, want to sell our beloved nineteenth-century Victorian town house and try to replicate the much smaller (yet somehow more expensive) teak, glass, and concrete structure on our home turf. We even played out how we could fit a family of four into its airy—though by no means large enough for real life—footprint. Back at my desk in New York, I still kind of believe we could live happily in 700 square feet with a half-fridge.

So, “home.” Just as our mission at *Condé Nast Traveler* is to be “at home in the world,” we want to steer you to places which offer that push-pull of foreignness and familiarity: comfortable but also defiantly out of your comfort zone. Our recent getaway was both—brimming with fantasy and otherworldly beauty, but where we felt as casual in our casita as if we lived there. In the right hands, at home and not-at-home can be a pretty powerful combination.

Pilar Guzmán, Editor in Chief

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Home, and Away

“THIS IS YOUR HOME,” said Albert Mertz, the gracious general manager at Amanera in the Dominican Republic. I had plenty of time to think about this prevailing wisdom among hoteliers (to make guests feel “at home”) after finishing my second novel in two days, a mess of fish tacos, and a glass of rosé at lunch while nestled in what is possibly the north coast’s most dramatic cove. It’s a balancing act—that notion of creating a “home”—because obviously a hotel’s job is in some ways to make you forget all about it.

Don’t get me wrong. I love everything about my home, but with it, of course, comes a good deal of practical and psychic weight. Each year when my husband and I embark on our annual four-day getaway—just the two of us—I marvel at how quickly and deeply we slip into an alternate, pre-kid reality of sleeping in, taking morning beach swims, reading, and napping. For us, the sole point of this warm-weather vacation is the absence of cultural enrichment or any sense of duty—a time warp that’s as fleeting as it is weightless.

It is in this anti-gravity, anti-guilt, *should*-free zone that once a year we ask ourselves, “What do we want to do?” No, really, “What do *we* want to do?”

The best kinds of trips suspend not only physical but existential reality, pressing us—when stripped of our all-defining responsibilities—to pose questions like, “Who do we want to be?” or “What do we want our life to look like?” The best properties, whether with their dreamy natural settings

HOT LIST 2016

W H E R



UNITED STATES

1. **1 Hotel South Beach**, Miami Beach, Fla.
2. **Ace Hotel Pittsburgh**, Pa.
3. **Bacarat Hotel & Residences** New York, N.Y.
4. **The Chequit**, Shelter Island, N.Y.
5. **Chicago Athletic Association Hotel**, Ill.
6. **Faena Hotel** Miami Beach, Fla.
7. **Hotel Emma**, San Antonio, Tex.
8. **The Inn at Newport Ranch**, Fort Bragg, Calif.
9. **The Ivy Hotel**, Baltimore, Md.
10. **L'Horizon Resort & Spa**, Palm Springs, Calif.
11. **The Press Hotel**, Portland, Me.
12. **Quirk Hotel**, Richmond, Va.
13. **South Congress Hotel**, Austin, Tex.

426
KEYS

Room count at the 1 Hotel South Beach, the largest on our list—about equal to 25 of the smallest Hot List hotels combined.



NORTH
PACIFIC OCEAN

CENTRAL & SOUTH AMERICA

20. **Four Seasons Hotel Casa Medina Bogotá**, Colombia
21. **Hacienda AltaGracia**, Pérez Zeledón, Costa Rica
22. **Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba**, Sacred Valley, Peru

CARIBBEAN & MEXICO

14. **Amanera** (left), Playa Grande, Dominican Republic
15. **Barbuda Belle**, Antigua & Barbuda
16. **The Cape**, Cabo San Lucas, Mexico
17. **Casa Fayette**, Guadalajara, Mexico
18. **Marriott Port-au-Prince Hotel**, Haiti
19. **Playa Grande Beach Club**, Dominican Republic

SOUTH
PACIFIC O C

HOT

WHY RIGHT NOW IS THE BEST TIME TO BE A HOTEL LOVER

FOR THIS 20TH EDITION OF THE HOT LIST—our picks of the year's top hotel openings—editors and reporters crisscrossed 6 continents and 36 countries to review hundreds of new properties first hand. We came back with 60 outstanding winners that represent not just the vanguard of the hotel world but where travelers are headed next—and why. ¶ It was, all told, a damn good year for hotels and travelers alike. A year when that hackneyed term *design hotel* came to mean something again, and when *eco-friendly* stopped conjuring weak showers and hospital lighting but something truly inspired. ¶ It was a year that saw hotel developers putting beds where travelers actually want to go—be it neighborhoods like London's Notting Hill and Rome's Monti or emerging destinations such as Lecce and Chengdu. A year when smaller

U.S. cities caught our attention (go, Pittsburgh and Baltimore!). When hotel kitchens stepped up to compete with the restaurants down the block (and sometimes poached their chefs). ¶ It was a year that saw major brands acting like indies, while smaller brands like Faena and Soho House copped big-chain swagger. And it was the year France and Italy thoroughly smoked the competition, fielding 6 winners each. Other destinations came out swinging: England with 5; Australia with 3; and Germany, Turkey, Portugal, Mexico, the D.R., and the great nation of Texas, each with 2. ¶ Of course the real winners here were... well, us. Travelers in 2016 have all the more reason to get out there and spend the night in style—60 great reasons, to start with, from Alsace to Zanzibar. Here's where to point your arrow next.

For more photos and full details on all our Hot List winners, visit cntraveler.com/hot-list.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF HUNTER HON

HOT



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BECAUSE...

ONE CARIBBEAN BEACH SOMEHOW LANDED TWO OUTSTANDING RESORTS

The Dominican Republic wants you back. And this time it's ready to earn your love—with two equally stylish (yet totally distinct) retreats sharing a mile-long crescent of sand on the island's north shore. At one end you'll find the nine-bungalow Playa Grande Beach Club (above), with its laid-back communal vibe and bright, playful design by Celerie Kemble. At the other is Amanera (left), the second Aman outpost in the Caribbean and the brand's first golf resort. Expect the group's customary polished minimalism and obsessive attention to detail, plus panoramic beach views from the cliffside pool and bungalows. Suddenly, the D.R. feels very much like the place to be.