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# Condé Nast Traveler

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Annual

# HOT LIST

TOP NEW

130 **hotels**

STARTING AT \$80 A NIGHT!

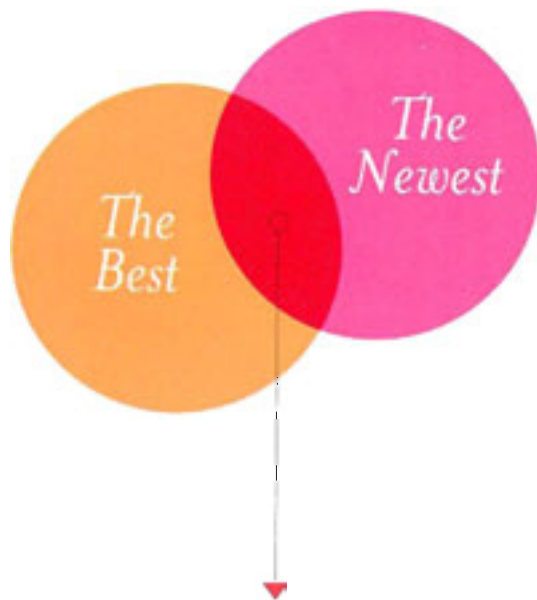
82 **restaurants**

55 **spas**

AND MORE ...

U.S.A. \$4.50  
Foreign/Canada \$5.50





Condé Nast Traveler presents

# THE TENTH ANNUAL HOT LIST

(THE YEAR'S **130** TOP NEW HOTELS)

*Hotels are like husbands—you can kiss a lot of frogs on the way to Prince Charming. Our worldwide network of reporters did just that, combing through thousands of new properties and bedding down in the most promising—incognito, of course. A record 130 won us over on location, look, and service. Spanning 54 countries on six continents, they range in price from \$80 a night at a Nepalese resort set in a forest once reserved for royalty to \$4,510 for a fully staffed four-bedroom villa in the South African bush, and in size from a single stunning duplex in the shadow of Angkor Wat to a 577-room skyscraper in Sydney's business district. Playing matchmaker nonpareil, we've included our hard-won wisdom on when to go and which room to book, and reveal the warts that afflict even the most pedigreed prince. After all, in an era of empty self-promotion and high-tech sleight of hand, trusted straight talk is the hottest commodity.*

Including **32** FOR UNDER \$200 A NIGHT

# THE (2006) HOT LIST

season. **Which room to book:** Top-floor rooms on the north and west sides afford the best views of the downtown skyline and the Gaslamp district (877-230-0300; hotelsolamar.com; doubles, \$319-\$399).

## Tower 23, San Diego, California

Named for a local lifeguard tower on Pacific Beach, it's the polar opposite of the Victorian-era Hotel Del a few miles down the coast. This sleek creation brings a whole new swagger to the beach scene. Keeping with "PB" tradition, bare feet and board shorts are welcome, and guests can even wash off their surfboards in the reflecting pool. But this is no ordinary surf shack. The 44 spacious guest rooms have flat-screen TVs and Xbox entertainment systems, and the Wi-Fi access extends all the way to the high-tide mark. Suites have whirlpool tubs with underwater lighting and automatic aromatherapy release. The beach-level Jordan, a breezy eatery with killer views, has a creative menu (tagliatelle with sea urchin) and a wine cellar stocked with up-and-coming labels from Washington State and Baja California. **When to go:** The sea is warmest in summer, but you're more likely to get hot sunny days in fall. **Which room to book:** Surf Pads and Sweet Suites, for the ultimate ocean views, although every room has a private balcony or a patio and at least a partial ocean view (866-869-3723; tower23hotel.com; doubles, \$199-\$379).

## Hotel Vitale, San Francisco, California

The most striking aspect of Joie de Vivre's first luxury property might be the rooftop deck's million-dollar view of San Francisco Bay. Indeed, the disparate halves of the city converge at this 199-room hotel on the revitalized Embarcadero waterfront. For corporate types, flat-screen TVs and a cozy penthouse-level spa supply the requisite convenience and coddling. For earthy types, lavender-scented hallways are lit by leaf-patterned panels that suggest forest canopies, and complimentary yoga classes are held in the penthouse studio. In a city with dozens of outstanding dining options, the Americano restaurant has itself become a destination. **When to go:** December, when Christmas lights illuminate the shops of nearby Union Square and the palm trees along the Embarcadero waterfront. **Which room to book:** Nos. 516, 616, and 716—circular suites with deep soaking tubs and panoramic bay views (415-278-3700; hotelvitale.com; doubles, \$279-\$299).

## St. Regis Hotel, San Francisco, California

Aesthetically speaking, the newest St. Regis is a 180-degree departure from the New York City original. Sleek woods and stitched-leather wallpaper supplant gilded accents, and modernist Asian pieces replace Louis XVI furniture. Unchanged are the trademark service (including personal butlers) and the down-to-the-details indulgences, including Pratesi sheets and doors fashioned from single pieces of Mozambican wood. The 260-room tower (with another 102 condos above) is adjacent to both the new Museum of the African Diaspora and the Museum of Modern Art—fittingly so, since the hotel's art collection is worth \$3.5 million. And while this St. Regis has yet to achieve its counterpart's landmark status, with its instantly popular Ame sushi bar and Remède Spa, it's only a matter of time. **When to go:** October, for perfect weather and a full month of Open Studios by local artists. **Which room to book:** Suite 2017, for its separate living and sleeping areas and spectacular view of the Bay Bridge (415-284-4000; stregis.com; doubles, \$529-\$629).

## The Huntley, Santa Monica, California

The reincarnated Huntley is one of those rare Southern California hotels that provide both eye candy and genuine savoir faire. An arty, sea-inspired lobby has coral motifs and a stingray-hide front desk, and the outdoor seating area with its roaring fireplace is an urbane take on the beachside bonfire. Guest rooms, reminiscent of late 1940s Japanese Deco, are equipped with 42-inch flat-screen TVs, DVD players, safes wide enough to hold a laptop, and wireless Internet access. The view from the penthouse restaurant and lounge—soon to be relaunched with a pan-Asian menu—is a 360-degree panorama of nearly everything that locals hold sacred: the Malibu coast, Venice Beach, and far-off Hollywood. There's no pool, but the Santa Monica strand is a block away—ask for a towel at the concierge desk. **When to go:** Avoid only summer, when morning fog can hang over the coast and the boardwalk gets crowded. **Which room to book:** Anything above the fourteenth floor on the west side is take-your-breath-away territory (310-394-5454; thehuntleyhotel.com; doubles, \$319-\$449).

## Hyatt Grand Aspen, Aspen, Colorado

The Hyatt Grand Aspen is big news in a town notorious for its strict control of development, especially since it's a two-min-

ute walk from the Aspen Mountain gondola. The fortresslike brick facade, with turrets and wrought iron railings bulging from balconies, is a nod to Aspen's Victorian architectural heritage. Interiors are modern mountain comfortable, the kind of place to kick off your boots and relax. The 52 units—ranging from spacious studios to four-bedrooms—have elegant rustic touches such as wide-plank floors, sandstone walls, and stone gas fireplaces. Sink into a squishy leather couch at the Wine Spot, a newly popular après-ski hangout. Its small sandwich menu is the extent of the on-site dining, and although there's no room service, concierges will stock guest rooms' state-of-the-art kitchens. **When to go:** Aspen is great in winter and summer, but fall promises beautiful colors and lower rates. **Which room to book:** The best mountain-view units are also the largest—Nos. 47, 49, and 50, upper-floor two-bedroom units that face Aspen Mountain (727-803-9400; aspen.hyatt.com; doubles, \$450-\$700).

## Keyah Grande, Pagosa Springs, Colorado

This elegant resort and hunting reserve in the San Juan Mountains is on 4,000 acres of natural elk habitat, 60 minutes from Durango. Each of the Spanish-style hacienda's eight rooms, named for different regions of the world, incorporates furniture and art from the owners' travels, and all come with luxe touches such as Frette linens, whirlpool tubs, and balconies. Using organic and artisanal ingredients, the restaurant's husband-and-wife team create innovative sculptural dishes that could pass for fine dining in a major city. Stargazers can take in the view from the outdoor hot tubs and from the breathtaking flying deck suspended over the valley. Most guests spend their time hunting the many elk on the property skeet shooting, or horseback riding. **When to go:** Summer or early fall. **Which room to book:** The spacious America Suite has a panoramic view of the hills (970-731-1160; keyahgrande.com; doubles, \$895-\$995, including mealt).

## Twelve Hotel & Residences, Atlanta, Georgia

The appeal of Twelve, a high-tech hotel/condo hybrid, is the central location in Midtown's new Atlantic Station retail development and the refreshingly modern look of the accommodations. All 101 suites in this 26-story high-rise have around-the-clock concierge access, plush bedding, and a full kitchen with stainless steel appliances and stylish black (Continued on page 305)