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OCTOBER 2015

INDIA

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ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOMES IN THE WORLD

LIVING IT UP

FASHION DESIGNER **NAEEM KHAN'S MIAMI PENTHOUSE**

**BIG &
BEAUTIFUL
HOMES**

GAURI & NAINIKA'S
NEW DELHI FARMHOUSE

**A BEACH HOUSE
BY VIKRAM GOYAL**

ROOSHAD SHROFF'S
MUMBAI APARTMENT

**THE
CELEBRATION
ISSUE**

**50+ STYLISH
GIFTING IDEAS FOR
THE FESTIVE SEASON**

**PARTY PLANNING
WITH THE EXPERTS**

**FLOWER POWER
WITH ROHIT BAL**

HOTEL

HIGH DESIGN HOTELS

AD plays globetrotter as we travel around the world and India to select the best new design hotels that define the notion of contemporary luxury

WRITER GAURI KELKAR

THE NEW YORK EDITION

ROCKWELL GROUP

Of all the iconic landmarks in the iconic Flatiron district in the world's most iconic city, it was in a clock tower that hotelier Ian Schrager chose to house The New York Edition. Originally designed by Napoleon LeBrun & Sons in 1909, for The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, the 41-storey tower was the tallest building in the world at the time. As The New York Edition, it hits a whole new high. Working with the Rockwell Group, Schrager introduced a modern vocabulary inspired by turn-of-the-century private clubs, Fifth Avenue's Gilded Age mansions and Stanford White's architecture. The oak-panelled foyer that seems straight out of the 1920s has a mammoth 30-foot-long black steel fireplace. A sculptural spiral staircase leads to the second-storey Clocktower restaurant. The real highlight, though, is the 360-degree view of Manhattan. editionhotels.com/new-york



NIKOLAS KOENIG



COURTESY JW MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL

JW MARRIOTT VENICE RESORT AND SPA, MATTEO THUN AND PARTNERS

When Marriott International turned its sights on Venice to build its first resort in Italy, it found the perfect spot—the Isola delle Rose, which fronts a lagoon and is a short gondola ride from the bustling Piazza San Marco. Then, they got Matteo Thun and Partners to articulate their plans to sizeable scale, 40 acres in fact. The firm refurbished the existing buildings to “create a contemporary, unique place in an outstanding location while protecting the historic character of the island”, according to Thun. The result is a sprawling resort that uses locally available materials, including wood, fabrics

from Venetian manufacturer Rubelli and specially designed ‘Laguna’ lamps by Thun, made from handblown glass. Not to forget five different kinds of elegantly appointed accommodation decked out with stunning views—the best kind of local touch you can find. And in Venice, it only seemed right to have paths and canals passing through outdoor areas. As Thun says, “It is all about luxury through subtraction without creating waste.” This Marriott-style urban Venetian legend is that rare breed—a city hotel on a private island. jwvenice.com

LA VILLA, PUDUCHERRY TINA TRIGALA AND YVES LESPRIT

Take some old wood from demolished homes; give a wooden chisel and saw to local contractors; add some candles to serve as exterior lighting; and use a smattering of local handicrafts. *Et voila!* You have a standout boutique hotel located in Puducherry’s French Quarter. La Villa is the work of French architects Tina Trigala and Yves Lesprit, who have embellished its Gallic roots and vintage soul with contemporary touches. So the white walls, teak wood, glass and metal of the new extension seem perfectly at ease with the colonial architecture of the manor and the ground floor’s original walls. The architects used centuries-old bricks, coloured cement flooring and handmade tiles from Tamil Nadu villages to make sure that history wasn’t relegated to the sidelines. Even the enclosure around the pool is made of traditional granite used in village houses. The past shows itself in surprising ways—like the charpoy, which finds new life as a piece of contemporary furniture, or the sections of the original wall peeking through the building facade. lavillapudicherry.com



COURTESY MIA STUDIO AUROVILLE



MONDRIAN LONDON

TOM DIXON/DESIGN
RESEARCH STUDIO

Looking to build its first Mondrian hotel outside America, in a city known for its iconic structures and a hard-to-impress crowd, the Morgans Hotel Group got it right twice. First with the location: the famous Sea Containers House building on the Thames, close to London sights. And again, when they brought on multifaceted British designer Tom Dixon, who is nothing if not unpredictable. The design—by Design Research Studio, under Dixon's creative direction—takes the '1920s cruise ship' route to achieve its standout luxury. This is most evident in the handcrafted copper-clad wall, inspired by a ship's hull, running from the exterior through the lobby to the river-facing side. The rooms, influenced by cruise ship cabins, feature metal and brass details and Dixon-designed furniture. But it's the spa where the nautical theme comes into its own. All curved walls, illuminated pathways and underwater-themed visuals, it features a stunning floor-to-ceiling copper installation and a *Renaissance Man* wood sculpture by Dixon, as well as a custom-designed sofa. Then there's the rooftop bar, a botany-inspired seasonal cocktail bar and a 56-seater screening room. The Mondrian may be close to many landmarks, but the question is would you want to venture out?
mondrianlondon.com



ALILA JABAL AKHDAR, OMAN

ATKINS; P49 DEESIGN

At the end of a two-hour drive from Muscat that takes you 2,000 feet above sea level is a treat that will take your breath away—literally and figuratively. The reason? During this temporary disappearance from regular urban life, you'll be at the receiving end of some luxurious treatment at the Alila Jabal Akhdar in Oman. This resort is surrounded by the mountains of the Al Hajar range and looks like one of nature's creations, appropriate, since *jabal akhdar* translates to 'green mountain'. Inspired by local architecture, UK-based firm Atkins used ophiolite (a type of igneous rock) and traditional techniques to create a series of low-slung structures. The earthy tones and minimalist interiors—the work of Thailand's P49 Deesign—make sure the spaces blend in with the rugged topography. With a spa, pool, elegantly appointed rooms and restaurants, the resort leaves no stone unturned to ensure one-of-a-kind comfort. How else would you describe Wi-fi at 2,000 feet?
alilabotels.com/jabalakhdar



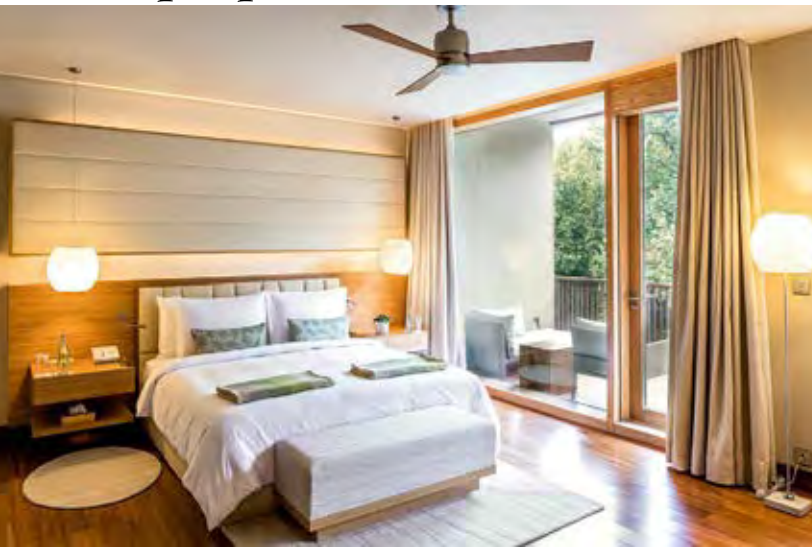
COURTESY ALILA HOTELS AND RESORTS



AMAN TOKYO KERRY HILL ARCHITECTS

You might think that another sky-scraping tower springing up in Otemachi, Tokyo's financial district, is par for the course in a fast-moving metro. You'd be wrong, because Otemachi Tower has something extra that raises it notches above your neighbourhood skyscraper. It has Aman Resorts' first-ever city hotel comfortably ensconced in its upper six storeys. Designed by Kerry Hill Architects as a modern urban space textured with Japanese minimalism, Aman Tokyo is a five-star sanctuary. At its centre is a soaring structure that resembles a Japanese paper lantern—a lobby centrepiece made of *nashi* (a type of paper made in Japan) and stretched over a shoji screen frame. The lobby's rock garden ensures a Zen-like calm. Local influences are evident in the use of camphor wood, *nashi* and stone throughout the hotel. A wellness centre even comes with traditional Japanese hot baths. And that large *furo* (Japanese soaking tub) in the rooms may distract from what's outside the windows. A perch high above bustling Tokyo to observe the city going through its paces, this hotel should leave you with that head-in-the-clouds kind of feeling. amanresorts.com/amantokyo





PRIMROSE VILLAS, CHIKMAGALUR SUMITRA RAMU

“Even before lifting your head from the pillow, the first thing you should see are the mountain views,” says Ravi Ramu, founder of financial advisory firm KPMG India, and, along with wife Sumitra, co-owner of Primrose Villas in Chikmagalur, a few hours’ drive from Bengaluru. When the view becomes the focus, you’d imagine the design would have fallen into place. Not so much, since the resort site was a mountain slope, nearly 5,000 feet high. “The expertise to erect world-class structures in such demanding geographies had to be learnt on the job.” The roof too posed a challenge. “We didn’t want the typical Mangalore tile triangular roof, because the inverted ‘V’ shape cuts the view. We wanted a large sloping roof that would leave the front and sides fully open,” explains Ramu. The final result is a fluid merging of the outside with the interiors, charmingly designed by Sumitra. The Indian and western furniture and their personal eclectic collection of antiques—“acquired over 20 years”—offer an old-world backdrop to enjoy the natural outdoor drama. But above all, the resort is about the view, with its floor-to-ceiling windows, sit-outs, and mostly all-glass walls.

primrosevillas.com



ANSHUMAN SEN



VANA MALSI ESTATE, DEHRADUN ESTEVA I ESTEVA ARQUITECTURA

When high-fashion couturiers like Abraham & Thakore are roped in to create a wellness wardrobe for guests, you know this is a resort that will leave nothing to chance to make your visit special. The Vana Malsi Estate, your gateway to a singular wellness experience, knows all about balancing the aesthetic with the spiritual. After all, like they state on their website: “everything contributes to one’s well-being—architecture, nature, design, music, art, aromas, sense of service and flavours.” You know they’re off to a great start when you consider the location, surrounded by nature near a cluster of reserved sal forests. Spain-based boutique architecture firm Esteva i Esteva Arquitectura articulated a design that offset the location, and the intent, perfectly. Principal architect Antoni Esteva says, “Every moment of the day, [on] the facade of the buildings, the colour is changing.” The minimalist interiors use a neutral palette and materials like bamboo flooring and wood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. The spaces are designed to “let you be alone, because only if you are alone, can you look inside yourself”. Artist Siraj Saxena’s 500 artworks provide the artistic equivalent of spiritual upliftment. Esteva sums it up: “If you understand what is light and what is shadow, you understand Vana.”

vanaretreats.com



GUILLAUME GRASSET

LES BAINS, PARIS VINCENT BASTIE; TRISTAN AUER; RDAI

It's 1885: French literary greats Marcel Proust and Émile Zola relax at a private bathhouse. 1978: Philippe Starck designs a nightclub that, over the next two decades, attracts the likes of Mick Jagger, David Bowie, Johnny Depp, Jack Nicholson and Karl Lagerfeld. 2015: The doors of the legendary Haussmann-style Les Bains open once again, this time as a luxury hotel. Architect Vincent Bastie retained original architect Eugène Ewald's exterior, but flirted with the spaces inside, innovating to maximize natural light and add more volume. The modern interiors lend the space a lightness of touch, thanks to the collaborative efforts of interior designers Tristan Auer and RDAI's Denis Montel. The rooms, all white marble and warm wood, seem like home—till you notice the quirky touches: replica sofas from Andy Warhol's Factory and rock 'n' roll memorabilia. The history too is apparent. Le Réservoir, a private dining area, was a former water tank for the bathhouse; and the brasserie La Salle-à-Manger has the black-and-white chequered dance floor from its nightclub days. Les Bains isn't just another hotel; it's a zeitgeist of the times. lesbains-paris.com



COURTESY SOHO HOUSE



SOHO HOUSE ISTANBUL, JAMES WATERWORTH AND VICKY CHARLES

The Soho House in Istanbul is the biggest one yet. It has 87 rooms, a 49-seat screening room, a gym, a ballroom, two rooftop pools, a Cowshed Spa and restaurants spread across four buildings, including the Glass Building, which has six floors dug into a hillside! But it's the Palazzo Corpi that really catches your eye. It was commissioned in 1873 by a wealthy shipbuilder who decked it up in carrara marble, Piemonte rosewood and paintings by famous artists. James Waterworth—the design director of Soho House's in-house design

team—says, “[We] didn’t want to over-design. We went simple with the fabrics and furniture, and added antique pieces.” The overall design derived its influences from the city, like bespoke cushions made by Istanbul-based brand Yazzma, an Anatolian kilim produced in Isparta, and locally made furniture. A creative space needs a few works of art; the House has 350. If you’re seeking an inspiring holiday, this Turkish masterpiece could well be your muse. sobohouseistanbul.com



SUJÁN RAJMAHAL PALACE, JAIPUR ADIL AHMAD

Consider, for a moment, the stalwarts involved in getting Suján Rajmahal Palace up and running: the royal family of Jaipur, who have perfected the art of princely living over the last 200 years. Then there's the hospitality firm, Suján Luxury, which traces its roots back 130 years and whose founder, Sir Sobha Singh, worked closely with Edward Lutyens to create New Delhi back in the day. And finally, interior designer Adil Ahmad, whose modern take on vintage opulence has made him quite the favourite with royal families. He drew inspiration from the City Palace, the current residence of the royal family, to weave an aesthetic that retains original elements—the marble staircase, intricate chandeliers and mirrored ceilings—and reinterprets regal elegance in his modern sensibility. Traditional royal motifs, crests, old-world artworks and vintage fabrics are evident throughout the interiors, standing out vividly against a pastel backdrop. It's the kind of history you're unlikely to forget.

sujanluxury.com/raj-mahal



COURTESY SUJÁN

VIÑA VIK, CHILE**ALEXANDER AND CARRIE VIK; MARCELO DAGLIO**

When Alexander and Carrie Vik decided to build a resort and wine spa, they gave the job to the people they trusted the most—themselves—with architect Marcelo Daglio's expert help. Judging by Viña Vik's spectacular floating bronzed titanium roof, inspired by the surrounding mountains in Chile's Millahue Valley, they were clearly on to a great idea. Located on a hilltop overlooking a lake by the VIK vineyard, the resort gives an artistic touch to your wine-tasting experience, beginning with an art-filled, open-format living area. In such picturesque surroundings, can there be any other sort?

The dining area has a wine wall, tables designed by the owners, and an Alexander Vik painting, titled *Holism*, on the wall. But it's the 22 suites that impress. Each room is unique, thanks to the different artists with whom the Viks worked—the work by graffiti artist Diego Roa in the Graffiti Suite; the woollen sculptural sofa in La Marcela Suite; or the hammock-style 'Vessel' bathtub in the VIK Suite, suspended right before the window. The design is almost enough to distract you from the spa, or that array of delicious wines. vinavik.com

COURTESY VIK RETREATS

**COTTON HOUSE HOTEL, BARCELONA**
LÁZARO ROSA-VIOLÁN

The Cotton House Hotel in the Eixample district has some aristocratic neighbours: architect Antoni Gaudí's Casa Milà (La Pedrera) and Casa Batlló 10 minutes away, and the Sagrada Família just 20. Fitting right in, this hotel's neoclassical structure is a worthy addition to Marriott International's Autograph Collection. Once the headquarters of the Cotton Producers' Guild, it was refurbished by interior designer Lázaro Rosa-Violán. While its luxuriousness is a given, historic elements too are accounted for. Imposing marble staircase? Can't miss it. Delicate parquet and boiserie? Check. Spiral staircase from 1957 suspended from the upper floor metal frame? Right where it always was. The hotel wears its 'cotton house' past proudly; the Batuar cocktail bar and restaurant was named for a cotton-pressing machine, and L'Atelier, which offers artisanal tailoring services, was the place where the bosses were measured for clothes. Even the colour tones in the rooms are inspired by the cotton flower. Comfortably elegant and completely historic, before you do anything else in Barcelona, be sure to check in here. hotelcottonhouse.com

MERTIXELL ARJALAGUER

