The MONOCLE Guide to Hotels, Inns and Hideaways

A manual for everyone from holidaymakers to hoteliers. We sidestep the humdrum haunts in favour of stays with substance.
Part Ⅰ:

Monocle 100
Our favourite 100 hotels

For 10-plus years, MONOCLE’s editors and correspondents have interviewed everyone from presidents and prime ministers to architects and entrepreneurs the world over. And, more often than not, hotels – big and small, stately and spare – have formed the backdrop. We’ve amassed a little black book of boltholes to which we’d be more than happy to return and in which we’ve often taken time to escape.

The first thing you’ll notice is that our taste is usually for the independent, the unusual and the characterful – and not always for the new. From seaside stopovers and mountaintop retreats to business-minded behemoths and pensions with a handful of guest rooms, we have – at great length and not without a few editorial squabbles over what merited inclusion and what narrowly missed it – corralled a collection of our favourite hotels. May we offer you a tour?

City
22—77
From Parisian refits and artsy enclaves in New York to capsule hotels in Kyoto, we visit the pieds-à-terre and palaces, long-known and newly noted alike, in the cities we adore.

Beach
78—91
The best places to splash out with the sea in sight, from pretty promontories heaven from the cliffs of the Amalfi Coast to hot and hazy huts in Tulum and a grande dame in Honolulu.

Mountain
92—99
We hike headlong into the clouds, with a few choice stopovers in mind for downtime. Expect a comfy bed or two in the Swiss Alps and an architectural marvel in Italy.

Rural
100—119
A homely ‘beit’ in Beirut and a trapped-in-time (in a good way) relic in Tottori, Japan, by way of Bavaria and the Bosphorus.

Fitness
120—129
A refreshing spot on the shores of Lake Garda, a welcoming berth on Weligama Bay, Sri Lanka, plus a smart spa on the sparse flats of Portugal’s rugged Alentejo region.
The High Line Hotel
New York

The brick façade of The High Line Hotel might fool unsuspecting passers-by: a former seminary, it has a naturally modest appearance. The hotel itself is a slice of old-school New York in the Chelsea neighbourhood that has become increasingly peppered with samey-looking glass-and-steel towers. The front courtyard is dotted with bistro tables and planters and is a great spot to sit and have a cortado from the vintage Citroën truck turned Intelligentsia coffee bar.

In the summer the patio sheds its daytime coffee crowd and becomes a restaurant with a seasonal menu – allowing a full display of the city’s culinary talents. The seminary’s former refectory has also been turned into a great hall, kitted out for an array of artsy events.

The property has become a de facto retreat from the glitzy establishments in the nearby Meatpacking District. The hotel’s 60 rooms are understated yet well-kept and offer a smart mix of accents from classic to mid-century. This place reminds you that a stay in New York doesn’t have to be all pomp; it can be about quirk and charm too.

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In numbers
1896 originally built
60 bedrooms
225 seats in the refectory
2013 The High Line opened