Courtesy Cotton House Hotel

GOLD LIST

The Best Hotels and Resorts in Europe and the U.K.: The Gold List 2022

Our global editors—based in seven cities across three continents—share their favorite places to go, spaces to stay, and cruises to take.

BY CNT EDITORS

December 9, 2021

There are three great lists annually in *Condé Nast Traveler,* all of which have changed due to the events of the last two years: the Readers' Choice Awards, which you, our beloved audience, select; the Hot List, which compiles the new and notable of the previous year; and this one, which is ultimately about the places and experiences our editors carry in their hearts. This year, when we say *our editors,* we mean *CNT*'s entire global crew, working in locations from California to Beijing; we've also expanded the parameters of the list to include not just the hotels and cruises you've seen in years past, but also the destinations we treasure. The Gold List is made by humans for other humans—something we need more than ever in this day and age. Here, our favorite hotels and resorts in Europe and the U.K.

Read the complete set of Gold List winners here.

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Courtesy Anassa

HOTEL

Anassa →

GOLD LIST 2019, 2022 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2019, 2020, 2021

There is a reason that Anassa has so many "superloyals," as they call them at the front desk—guests who return on the same week, year after year. Life feels supremely comfortable in this series of immaculate white buildings tumbling down the hillside to the coffee-colored beach below. Still owned by the Cypriot Michaelides family, the 23-year-old hillside estate has always been classic, even after a renovation in 2016, when Parisian interior designer Joelle Pleot stuck largely to elegant creams and Hamptons nautical stripes. The spa—including a midnight-blue, glass-roofed thalassotherapy pool that stopped me in my sliders—is sensational. But the reason I really understand all those repeat guests is the seemingly effortless multigenerational appeal. On a recent post-lockdown visit, we were given beach baskets brimming with toys, and left our son to pottery lessons and treasure hunts at the brilliant kids' club as we sauntered off for local rosé at the cavernous, adults-only Basiliko restaurant, with its sunken terrace. Anassa also offers babysitting services and a family photographer, yet none of it feels twee or forced. Instead, this is a place to dangle one's feet over the edge of a sun-warmed pool, or wander through fragrant gardens against a soundtrack of crickets, wood pigeons, and gently lapping sea. It is a place, in other words, to keep coming back to. *Doubles from $540. —Becky Lucas*

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Claire Cocano/Le Bristol Paris

HOTEL

Le Bristol Paris →

$$$ | GOLD LIST 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

Yes, Le Bristol is grand—the polished marble, the Louis XVI armchairs, the *boiserie*-paneled walls—but it has never felt cold or stuffy. I tend to go for Paris Fashion Week, and any sense of *froideur* is eliminated with one stroke of Fa-raon, the fluffy white Burmese cat and unofficial hotel mascot (he's since had a son and heir, called Socrate)—usually draped over the concierge's desk. Le Bristol has had a stylish insouciance ever since it opened on rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré in 1925, and it held on to its gilded soul after a six-year facelift that was unveiled in 2018 by its owners, the Oetker Collection. Suites are about chandeliers, Pierre Frey fabrics, and a very pure devotion to comfort. My favorites overlook the wonderfully serene enclosed garden by Arabella Lennox-Boyd, with its geometric lawns, fountains, and osmanthus topiaries. Eric Fréchon's macaroni with black truffle and duck foie gras at three-Michelin-starred Epicure is a thing of wonder, but I'm as happy at Café Antonia, where the fashion crowd all seem to order the green bean, artichoke, and hazelnut salad. The spa by La Prairie does possibly the best massage in Paris, and I even love the quirky old pool, styled like a '20s cruise ship. It is wholly indicative of Le Bristol, which plays by its own timeless rules and is all the more elegant for it. *Doubles from $1,685. —Martha Ward*

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Courtesy Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc

HOTEL

Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc →

$$$ | 🏆 GOLD LIST 2019, 2022 🎖 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

Life isn't perfect. That's why we have places like Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc, where the world's most glamorous people descend every summer to live on what feels like an impeccably styled film set. The last day of my most recent stay here—the one I had reserved to spend entirely by its swimming pool, cut into rocks overlooking a glittering blue Mediterranean Sea—turned out to be gray and overcast. By this time, I had already experienced the other attractions: the rose garden, the tennis courts, the private cabanas where I enjoyed a massage, the restaurants that manage to feel casually chic in the day and all dressed up at night, and the Manolo Valdés exhibition on its perfectly manicured lawns, where pine trees are being carefully planted to eventually replace the imposing ones standing now. This is a place where nostalgia is kept alive, where corridors are filled with photographs of its most famous guests from the past 150 years, where golden sunshine infuses everyone and everything with an air of romance, so that your time here feels lengthened and expanded, and etched in memory no matter how short your visit actually is. You will leave so well taken care of, so well fed, so intoxicated by the heady, fragrant summer breeze that even a cold final day on the French Riviera will not taint your mood. Instead, it will seem like just a little twist in the plot, enough to make you believe that the rest of your life is pretty perfect after all. *Doubles from $740. —Divia Thani*

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Alexopoulos Nikos

HOTEL

The Vasilicos →

$$$ | 🏆 GOLD LIST 2022

Almost every building overlooking Santorini's sunken caldera has been converted into a luxury hotel. I've stayed at dozens of them, but surprisingly few live up to those famous views. The Vasilicos is a cut above the crowded competition for several reasons. All seven suites are spacious and secluded, their terraces cascading down the hillside with wide-open views of the infinite blue. Even when the island seems to be sinking under the weight of its popularity, serenity reigns at this former summerhouse. Designed for sun-drenched gatherings with family and friends, it was built in the 1980s by Vassilis Valambous, a Greek art collector and bon viveur, from a cluster of collapsed *yposkafa*—the island's unique cave houses. The atmosphere still has the warmth, intimacy, and personality of a home. From the capsule library (curated by legendary local shop Atlantis Books) to the custom-made beach towels, every thoughtful detail bears the personal touch of the elegantly understated owner, Daphne Valambous. Her brother Yannis has transformed the vineyards he inherited from their father into Vassaltis, one of the most exciting wineries on Santorini. If I'm traveling solo, I like to pop a bottle of its sparkling *pet nat* to toast the sunset, an almost otherworldly experience that is never the same twice (the wines can also be paired with a personalized tasting menu at the sublime two-table restaurant). Open since 2015, The Vasilicos is already a timeless classic. Like most loyal guests, I'd almost prefer to keep this very private hideaway hush-hush. *Doubles from $420. —Rachel Howard*

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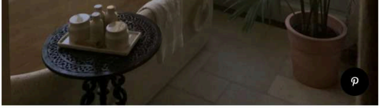

Photo by Yolanda Edwards

HOTEL

Relais Borgo Santo Pietro →

$$$ | 🏆 GOLD LIST 2018, 2022 🎖 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2021

Last autumn—desperate for a sanctuary from living in locked-down Brooklyn with a newborn—I found an Edenic combination of escapism and reconnection here. Unlike at some resorts, visitors here don't block out the destination once they check in. The 300-acre estate is in Chiusdino, on the more rugged side of Tuscany, and feels like a microcosm of the region itself. The ricotta at dinner comes from the sheep you've spied on long walks through farms and forests; the fields of lavender and marigold provide ingredients for the face oils at the spa. None of this is to say that Borgo Santo Pietro isn't sharp. Everything is done with a very Italian elegance: the manicured gardens and landscaped pool; the staff who appear with a Spritz and silver tray of truffled chips simply because they thought you needed it (and I did); the Trattoria sull'Albero, with its thick oak tree rising in the middle. During the harvest season, guests can pluck and stomp grapes at Borgo's tumble of vineyards. There's a six-foot-deep swimming hole in the middle of a rushing stream. It's on the property but open to use by the 30 or so locals from a nearby village. Closer to the guest villas is a tall canopied wall beside the vegetable gardens, along which pilgrims in the Middle Ages trekked to the nearby Abbey of San Galgano. My stay was an opportunity to explore a pocket of wild southern Tuscany, thrillingly alone and free, without ever needing to backtrack through the great wide entrance gates. *Doubles from $760. —Erin Florio*

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Courtesy Starwood Hotels & Resorts/Photo by Matthias Hamel

HOTEL

The St. Regis Florence →

$$$ | 🏆 GOLD LIST 2018, 2022 🎖 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2019

There's no shortage of elegant hotels in Florence, but something about The St. Regis keeps me coming back year after year. It might be that, for a palazzo of 15th-century frescoes and crystal chandeliers, it is just so cozy, full of stained-glass-lit nooks in which to disappear for hours with a copy of *La Repubblica*. Of course, the Renaissance never feels far away. Filippo Brunelleschi, the brains behind the Duomo, designed the original palazzo in the early 1400s, and it became a hotel in 1866. If the exquisitely detailed cherubs on the ceiling of the Salone delle Feste ballroom could talk, they might tell tales that the wonderful staff here are mostly too tactful to divulge: of Botticelli and Amerigo Vespucci (the explorer who gave America its name), but also of Madonna and Keith Richards. Still, it's not just the great and the good who are treated exquisitely: My clothes have been magically unpacked and ironed while I've been given tickets to skip the queues for the Diocesan Museum or Santa Maria del Fiore's dome. Rooms, all brocades and canopied beds, mostly have views of the River Arno, while the Winter Garden restaurant is at the reverential end of Italian cooking, with dishes served under a great glass ceiling. Still, this is also a hotel that can let its hair down. Last Christmas, during the nightly Champagne ritual that kicks off with a waiter popping a bottle with a saber, I found myself saying "*Cincin*" to a giant teddy bear given pride of place by the fire. This is a hotel where the royal treatment is for everyone. *Doubles from $550. —Sara Magro*

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Courtesy Belmond Hotel Splendido

HOTEL

Belmond Hotel Splendido & Belmond Splendido Mare →

$$$ | 🏆 GOLD LIST 2018, 2020, 2022 🎖 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

I've been traveling to the Gulf of Tigullio since I was a child—so when I learned that the Splendido Mare in Portofino was reopening after a renovation in 2021, I booked a room immediately. This is the more intimate offshoot of Belmond's Splendido, a hillside hideout that started life as a Benedictine monastery before becoming a hotel in 1901, then a magnet for movie stars (Elizabeth Taylor had four honeymoons there). The Splendido Mare, once a fishermen's guesthouse, is its 14-room harborside sister, which first opened in 1998. Its makeover, by in-demand Parisians Charlotte de Tonnac and Hugo Sauzay, is exquisite—local terra-cotta tiles and nautical nods, such as the knots woven into headboards in quietly lavish rooms, with Gio Ponti armchairs and rich Loro Piana fabrics. Everything is done subtly, almost unnoticeably, and there's a deceptive simplicity to the cooking of brothers Enrico and Roberto Cerea. Their restaurant in Bergamo has three Michelin stars, but here they stick mostly to seafood and Ligurian classics, including a sublime pesto *trofie*. This is Portofino, after all, which is above all discreet—a place where the actors and the aperitivo-sipping locals don't much bother one another. I was happiest at the Cereas' breakfast banquet on the terrace, overlooking the emerald bay, watching Italy's most civilized corner come languidly to life. *Doubles from $650. —Sara Magro*

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Courtesy Finca Cortesin

HOTEL

Finca Cortesin →

$$$ | 🏆 GOLD LIST 2020, 2022 🎖 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

Marbella has grown up a little since it was a small town frequented by in-the-know '60s regulars such as Prince Rainier and Jimmy Stewart. As the money rolled in, it became more Costa de Oro than del Sol—and, for a certain clientele, where you stayed was just as important a signifier as the convertible you handed over to the valet or the handbag you took to the pool. Finca Cortesin lies a little aloof from all this, though, between Marbella and the superyachts of Sotogrande, in the foothills of Sierra Bermeja. The labels aren't exactly mainstream, but they're worn understatedly; I think of it as less a place to see and be seen than a place simply to be. It's the epitome of an Andalusian country house, designed by the late Duarte Pinto Coelho, with doors salvaged from a castle and oil paintings and palatial antiques from around Spain, Portugal, and Morocco—though bright pops of color and neon artworks in the bedrooms and pretty fabric-covered walls prevent it from ever getting too serious. And the team here, led by Rene Zimmer, makes you feel very much at home. There's a real sense of intimacy despite its size—technically it is a golf hotel (its greens will host the 2023 Solheim Cup women's tournament), but I'd never describe it that way. Of the restaurants, El Jardín de Lutz is a favorite for its authentic takes on Spanish classics, with the lawns and olive-filled gardens just outside for walks afterward. It's a happy place for me. *Doubles from $700. —David Moralejo*

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Courtesy Ritz-Carlton

HOTEL

The Ritz-Carlton, Abama →

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Some large hotels can seem impersonal and lacking in character. Instead, The Ritz-Carlton, Abama—a monumental vision of faintly surreal, multilayered Moorish pink—feels more like a curious labyrinthine village; a place to get happily lost in, among all those palm trees, curving walkways, and aquamarine pools with sharp, dissonant angles. The sense of a total escape is helped by the fact that the hotel is a world unto itself: With views beyond the white-sand beach to the neighboring island of La Gomera, it is mostly surrounded by its own golf course, beyond which the volcanic Mount Teide looms ominously large. Flying and flopping may be unfashionable, but I can't think of a better place to do just that of a European winter (Tenerife is T-shirt-warm all-year-round). The 10 restaurants include Michelin-starred Basque and Japanese fusion; the kids' club, with art walls and DJ booths, is one of the biggest in Europe; and the spa takes opulent inspiration from Roman baths. But the joy here is just being: hiking along the rugged coast or floating from pool to pool, as the sun casts lines of shadows over pink stucco walls and eventually settles over the peaks of La Gomera. *Doubles from $500. —David Moralejo*

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Courtesy Cotton House Hotel

HOTEL

Cotton House Hotel, Autograph Collection →

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Smart hotels in this city often hew to a certain mod-minimal, design-agency template. The Cotton House in Eixample, though, is very different—a riot of neoclassical joy in a 19th-century cotton guild, which makes me smile every time. Interior designer Lázaro Rosa-Violán is well known for his designs across Barcelona, including the Edition—but it's hard to think he's ever had more fun than with the Belle Epoque features here, from its old parquet floors to the wood-paneled ceilings and grand spiraling staircases. The cotton theme runs through the orb-shaped chandeliers, like cotton flowers; the 300-thread Egyptian-cotton sheets in the more minimal rooms; and the fact that guests can order candy-colored, hand-stitched shirts from the very sharp concierge desk, which is known as the Gossypium (the Latin name for the genus of plants that produce cotton). The style is grown-up, but a chintzy wink is never far away. In the bar, which spills out onto a lushly foliaged terrace, the house Gossypium cocktail with Pisco and blue Curaçao gleefully throws out the prevailing vogue for Savoy classics. It is a reminder that hotels can grandly mine the past—but do it without taking themselves too seriously. *Doubles from $280. —David Moralejo*

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Courtesy Heckfield Place

HOTEL

Heckfield Place →

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There's a reassuring seamlessness to Heckfield Place, a renovation of a stout Georgian manor house that is true to its redbrick bones, yet somehow perfectly modern. Even getting here is relatively frictionless from London. The first time I came, I was eight months pregnant and anxious, but we'd barely finished *The Archers* omnibus when we glided into Heckfield's 438 acres of pasture and woodland, with its arboretum and ornamental lake, installed in the 19th century by Viscount Eversley, speaker of the House of Commons. For all that the restoration itself was a trial—Boston-based billionaire Gerald Chan endured more than a decade of painstaking work before its eventual opening in 2018—the end result is proof that Georgian needn't feel stiff or chintzy. Designer Ben Thompson went big on earthy tones and textures, "editing" the grand house (his words) with greenery and leaving forest-green, ochre, or rose-colored walls elegantly unadorned. There's a constant sense of the outside creeping in—sometimes literally, in the case of the biodynamic farm on the estate that supplies two wonderful restaurants overseen by seasonal-eating pioneer Skye Gyngell. Activities include trail running, wild swimming, and rowing on the lake with tuck boxes in tow. A new spa, The Bothy, will open this year with a focus on nature and mindfulness. But I'm just as happy in my light-bathed room, clad in a chenille robe and quietly perusing the pocket library. Like the place itself, life here feels entirely unforced. *Doubles from $470. —Jo Rodgers*

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Courtesy Maybourne Hotel Group

HOTEL

The Connaught →

$$$ | GOLD LIST 2020, 2022 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

Some places just have magic in their bones: the whiff of a vast Cire Trudon candle in the lobby; the gleam of 200-year-old oak banisters; or the hum from a perfectly low-lit bar, where a martini trolley is being wheeled from table to table. The Connaught is a place where the original lifts still creak elegantly, rain patters on the roof, and solid walls make it feel like, whatever troubles befall the world, all will be well within. The setting is just right, too: spotless Mount Street, with its mustard-bright awnings, high heels click-clacking on the pavement, and line of shiny black taxis with yellow lights winking. Removed from the traffic but pin-sharp in the heart of Mayfair's thrills, it is first and foremost a cocooning retreat, enveloping and deeply comfortable. But there's also a buzz in spaces such as the new Red Room, a sly speakeasy hidden beyond a velvet-curtained doorway, and a sense that things are happening in some nook somewhere. For all that it does elevated Michelin dining, there's also a corner to dive into for a late-night hamburger and *frites*. Bathrooms are wall-to-wall marble; some beds, such as the carved four-poster in the Prince's Lodge, are so high off the ground they need steps to climb into. Everything is immaculate, spoiling, and just so damn smart. It is a very London grande dame, and I can't think of a better place to spend a night. *Doubles from $830. —Issy Von Simson*

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