

Sleep easy in style

Continental Europe's top 20 new hotels all come with sophisticated design and cool little extras

SUSAN D'ARCY

FRANCE

Seven Hotel, Paris: Checking in here is like walking into a superb sci-fi movie. The 28 rooms and seven suites have lots of transparent plastic backlit in psychedelic colours, beds that appear to levitate (psst, they don't really, they're attached to the wall), baths seemingly suspended above the floor (thanks to some nifty trompe l'oeil design techniques), televisions that release a range of perfumes depending on your channel choice and, more prosaically, Nespresso machines. It also has a fabulous location in the Latin quarter, an easy walk to St Germain. More: sevenhotelparis.com.

Les Manoirs de Tourneville, Normandy: This is a classy renovation of five traditional timber manor houses by the owner of St Tropez's celebrity-magnet Hotel Byblos. Set in 7ha between Deauville and Honfleur (the nearest airport is Deauville), it's country casual, with the glamour provided by a state-of-the-art 50-seat cinema and nearby polo fields and horse-racing. Thankfully, this place has cheaper rates than its southern stablemate. More: lesmanoirsdetourneville.com.

Muse, St Tropez: A Bentley shuttles guests to the beach, sun butlers are on hand to assist with regular applications of the SPF 15 at its spectacular sunken pool and the 15 suites are as sexy as their namesakes, which include Catherine Deneuve and Lauren Bacall. If you require even more five-star frump, you're given an iPhone and iPad for the duration of your stay. More: muse-hotels.com.

Hotel Sezz St Tropez, St Tropez: Designer Christophe Pilet goes for a 1950s feel with these 37 cocons, discreetly positioned within a private park minutes from the seaford. All rooms have their own terrace and lead into the garden or to the pool, where the bar specialises in Dom Perignon champagne and the dining rooms presided over by Pierre Gagnaire. Even the air is five-star, scented by candles from trendy Parisian perfumer Francis Kurkdjian. More: hotelsezz-sainttropez.com.

SPAIN

The Girl Residence, Ibiza: This converted farmhouse (or *finca*) has only five indulgent suites, which feature split-level lounges, romantic open fireplaces and egg-shaped black stone bathtubs or pebble-floored rainforest showers for two. The front of the *finca* overlooks the lush hills of the island's north, but a narrow alleyway at the back gives instant access to the lively town of San Juan. It's only a

25-minute drive to Ibiza town's clubs, so you'll probably appreciate that breakfast is served on the terrace until midday and includes a welcome glass of cava. More: thegirl.com.

Hotel Viura, Rioja: Rioja Alavesa is cultivating a reputation for cutting-edge architecture thanks to buildings by the likes of Frank Gehry and Zaha Hadid. The latest addition is Hotel Viura, which bursts out of the tiny, medieval village of Villabuena de Alava with all the force of a champagne cork. The design is meant to represent a bunch of grapes, though its haphazard pyramid of asymmetric cubes that look as if they've been dumped on the hillside could just as easily have been inspired by a tipsy attempt at Lego. The 33 rooms have a clean, contemporary decor, and the restaurant serves Riojan and Basque cuisine with a modern twist. More: hotelviura.com.

Cap Rocat, Mallorca: On a private peninsula surrounded by a marine reserve and with sweeping views over the Bay of Palma, this 19th-century cliff-top fortress is how a smart 24-room hideaway. Interiors draw on its military past, so bullet casings double as door handles and cannons prop up the coffee tables. Rooms are vast and gloriously low-key, and there are hectares of hidden public areas for romantic skirmishes. More: caprocat.com.

PORTUGAL

Areias do Seixo, Santa Rita: Less than an hour from Lisbon, this chic eco-stay is incredibly tranquil, shaded by pines and overlooking sand dunes and the crashing Atlantic. Ten rustic suites use stone and driftwood magnificently and they have strategically placed baths and fireplaces to maximise those views, some of them have private hot tubs on the beach. Hotel excursions include fishing with a cane or harvesting mushrooms for lunch. More: areiasdoseixo.com.

The Yealman, Vila Nova de Gaia: Given that it was built by the Flagdate Partnership, which owns the famous port houses of Taylor, Fonseca and Croft, it's hardly a surprise that the emphasis here is on all things epicurean. There are extensive cellars and regular wine tastings, and one of Portugal's top chefs, Ricardo Costa, is in the kitchen. There's even a Caudalie Vinotherapie spa, where guests can indulge in winemaker's massages and premier cru facials. Teetotalers can console themselves with the knockout views over the Douro River to Porto from the 82 rooms and suites. More: theyealman.com.



Created from a 19th-century cliff-top fortress, Cap Rocat, on the Spanish island of Mallorca, has sweeping views across the Bay of Palma



Whimsical Maison Moschino in Milan

Martinhal Beach Resort, Southwest Algarve: Nigel Chapman and Nicholas Dickinson are among the few hoteliers who have achieved that holy grail: a stylish hotel that's genuinely child-friendly. Martinhal Beach Resort is set within the Costa Vicentina national park in Alentejo, and its ultra-smart seaford cabins have been designed by Conran & Partners. There are plenty of activities, from sand-yachting to horse-riding, that'll keep the kids occupied, so parents can relax. More: martinhal.com.

GREECE

Poseidon Grace, Spetses: This pine-scented island's landmark hotel, the belle époque Poseidonion, three hours by road and sea from Athens, has just unveiled an impressive five-year restoration, returning original features such as stucco ceilings and marble staircases to their former glory, while the rooms have received a contemporary sheen. The restaurant serves modern Mediterranean dishes, using deliciously fresh produce from its kitchen gardens, while the spa opts for international ingredients including Dead Sea

salts and glacial spring water from Switzerland.

More: poseidoniongrace.com.

The Romanos, Messina: This is the first phase of an ambitious blueprint to turn Greece's greenest region into an up-market, eco-friendly enclave. Clever low-level architecture means despite having 321 rooms it doesn't feel like a mega-resort. There are endless public spaces, surrounded by reflecting pools and olive trees. The guestrooms have a clean, Mediterranean style and views on to a spectacular beach, while an impressive spa and Bernhard Langer golf course should make it a year-round proposition. More: romanoscostanavarino.com.

Kinsterna Hotel, Monemvasia: The Kinsterna is a stylish reworking of a 13th-century mansion built around an ancient spring, set amid orange and olive groves overlooking the sparkling Aegean, and close to medieval Monemvasia's castle. The 27 rooms are fabulously plush, some with working fireplaces. Welcome touches include Hermes toiletries, complimentary minibars and champagne served at breakfast, but this hideaway really comes into its own at night, when the cantilevered platforms around its water source are lit by



Seven Hotel, Paris



Hotel Skeppsholmen, Stockholm



The bar at Palazzina Grassi, Venice



Hotel Sezz St Tropez has been designed by Christophe Pilet to recall the elegance of the 1950s

fire pits. It's truly romantic. More: kinsternahotel.gr.

TURKEY

Argos in Cappadocia, Cappadocia: At this up-market cave hotel in Uchisar, the domed ceilings and archways of its 33 rooms were hewn by hand from soft volcanic rock more than 1000 years ago by monks. The interior retains the aesthetic of luxurious simplicity, with vast beds, antique rugs, exquisite local artefacts and even pools in some suites. Argos is also home to the Bezirhane arts venue, offering regular classical, jazz and Sufi music recitals. More: argosincappadocia.com.

ITALY

Borgo Egnazia, Puglia: This dazzling limestone resort has been built in the style of a traditional fortified village, so its gateway has arrow slits and there are tethering rings for horses in the piazza. In reality, it's a chic, mixed-use complex that includes a 63-room hotel, 28 private villas and 93 village townhouses. The facilities should prevent tears and tantrums from

the adults as much as the children: an impressive kids' club, a beautiful private beach, indoor and outdoor swimming pools (fed from their own wells), tennis courts, posh spa, cookery school and a championship 18-hole golf course. More: borgoegnazia.com.

Maison Moschino, Milan: Part fashion statement, part fairytale, this whimsical property from Moschino, the Italian designer, is definitely not for those in search of a trouser press and tea-making facilities. The intention is to make guests feel as if they are falling down the rabbit hole into an Alice in Wonderland fantasy where they come to expect the unexpected, like a bad boy wolf propped up in the bed of the Little Red Riding Hood room. It's near the fashionable Corso Como district and it's so expensive you may not be able to afford to eat. In other words, perfect for would-be supermodels. More: maisonmoschino.com.

Palazzina Grassi, Venice: For his first Italian hotel, the Palazzina Grassi in Venice, Philippe Starck has been very bit as lyrically theatrical as the sinking city it deserves. The 16th-century mansion on the Grand Canal has no obvious signposting (unless you count the bull's head on the door),

but it's full of Starck's oversized furniture and statement chandeliers. It promises guests "a kaleidoscope of emotions", which is entirely possible considering that there are almost 300 handmade Murano mirrors scattered throughout its 26 rooms - if only a quarter were to catch you at the wrong angle. More: palazzinagrassi.it.

ELSEWHERE

Hotel Skeppsholmen, Stockholm: Skeppsholmen has a fascinating heritage: it's housed in an early 18th-century naval barracks, one of Sweden's most important buildings, and much of it was constructed using ruined castles from the countryside. It retains dozens of original features, including stairs, wooden floors and some brickwork, with a fine location on the waterfront of a tree-covered island within easy reach (about five minutes) of the Old Town. The hotel is an intriguing blend of the minimal and the sophisticated, with thoroughly decent eco-credentials to boot. More: hotelskeppsholmen.com.

Casa Camper, Berlin: Who wouldn't love a hotel that dispenses with the money-pit

minibar and replaces it with a 24-hour cafe serving free snacks and drinks? Guests also get free wi-fi, complimentary newspapers and rooms that are pretty yet practical, with Camper's signature terracotta walls, lots of natural blond woods and a space-saving dado rail with hooks, rather than a wardrobe. And if you don't mind paying a little more for your food, the hotel's tapas restaurant is run by Albert Raurich, former chef de cuisine at El Bulli. The 51-room property is in Mitte, close to cutting-edge art galleries, cool stores and plenty of bars. More: casacamper.com/berlin.

Amman Sveti Stefan, Montenegro: Montenegro is one of the Mediterranean's last unspoiled corners and the 18th-century island village of Sveti Stefan is the jewel in the country's crown. After seemingly endless delays due to a meticulous restoration, Sveti's former fishermen's homes have been converted into 47 hotel rooms, exuding a wonderful sense of place and style, situated beside 2km of pink-sand beach, mother nature's contribution to an extremely glamorous playground. More: amanresorts.com.

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