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The Insider's Guide to Luxury Travel

10

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The Best New BIG-CITY HOTELS



WELCOME TO THE SINGAPORE TATLER 10

The ultimate shortlist of Tatler Traveller's favourite luxury properties and travel experiences, the Tatler 10 represent the best, most exclusive, unrivalled and undisputed in the industry. Every issue, we review the top travel options in key categories, with votes from our sophisticated readers and globetrotting team. Coming up the rest of this year are spa retreats and cruises. Get involved by giving us your picks at tatlertraveller@edipresse.com.sg.

TEXT: NICHOLAS WALTON AND YANNI TAN

Top hotels in the largest cities of the world often set the benchmark for offering that difficult-to-achieve balance of luxurious comfort, cutting-edge mod-cons, top-notch service, sense of intimacy and excellent cuisine. In the following pages, we present the most exceptional new city hotels that will impress the most discerning of jetsetters, whether they are in town for pleasure or business.



THE LEELA PALACE

New Delhi

With all the palatial persona of India's maharajas, The Leela Palace New Delhi is India's single most expensive hotel development to date. Guests are greeted by towering flaming torches at the entrance, where impeccably dressed porters scurry around collecting luggage before whisking you away through a gilded double-height lobby to one of 259 lavishly-appointed rooms. Elegant and spacious yet practical, guest rooms – including three with private plunge pools and one lavish Presidential penthouse – are the largest in the city and overlook the Diplomatic Enclave's leafy compounds. Each room boasts JBL ipod docking stations, flatscreen televisions, Ferrari-fast internet, decadent bathrooms with bathtub TVs, and butler service. Indulge in an authentic Ayurvedic treatment at the hotel's Jeffrey Wilkes-designed ESPA before heading downstairs to some of Delhi's best dining. Jamavar, the hotel's signature Indian restaurant, has already made a name for itself with its authentic northwest frontier cuisine, while Le Cirque serves modern French Italian fare. India's first outlet of New York's contemporary Japanese sensation Megu has also recently opened. www.theleela.com



PARK HYATT SYDNEY

Australia

One of the most ambitious hotel reinventions in Australian history, the iconic Park Hyatt Sydney has reopened after almost a year of extensive renovation. The dramatic facelift by BARstudios saw the hotel gutted to its foundations, with the addition of an extra floor to make room for three stunning new rooftop suites and an over-sized swimming pool with views of the Sydney Opera House. New floor-to-ceiling windows now offer the harbour as the ultimate backdrop, while private balconies allow guests a sensory journey as they overlook Circular Quay. Even the bathrooms, which feature rain showers and decadent tubs, flaunt the city's most captivating views. The hotel, which has been an Aussie institution for more than 20 years, is now dressed with locally sourced material, including gum tree timber; Australian sculptures and art by Tim Johnson, Robert Billington, Bruce Armstrong and G.W. Bot; and the Gosford sandstone that makes up much of the historic Rocks neighborhood. In The Dining Room, the hotel's signature restaurant, expect a contemporary Australian menu that brims with regional flavours and is complemented by leading Australian wines. <http://sydney.park.hyatt.com>



THE SIAM Thailand

Nestled on Bangkok's Chao Praya River, in the historic enclave of Dusit, the city's latest boutique hotel combines the city's past, present and future. Located on a coveted riverside family-owned lot, the 39-room boutique hideaway is the brainchild of Thai celeb Krissada "Noi" Sukosol Clapp and Australian designer Bill Bensley, whose lush landscaped gardens wreath the city's first pool villas. With its antiques and art collection, and four traditional teak homes originally sourced by silk baron Jim Thompson, The Siam is as much a traditional Thai retreat as it is an urban oasis. A total of 28 suites feature Art Deco styling with hints of colonial pomp. The 11 intimate pool villas boast open-air terraces and private pools nestled in tropical gardens. For the ultimate weekend escape, head for Connie's Cottage, a teak home originally brought down the river from the ancient capital of Ayutthaya by antique collector Connie Mangskau. It's not just about hiding out here; The Siam features the city's first in-hotel Muay Thai boxing ring, a private yoga terrace, a riverside infinity pool, a Thai cooking school, as well as an antique gallery, a cinema and a spa with a Turkish-style hammam. <http://thesiamhotel.com>

FAIRMONT PEACE HOTEL China

Easily one of Asia's most iconic institutions, the Peace Hotel has been a beloved landmark on Shanghai's Bund since the 1930s. Re-opened last year after a multi-million-dollar renovation, the Fairmont Peace Hotel revisits the elegance of Shanghai's yesteryears as an Art Deco masterpiece. From the cavernous lobby's vaulted ceilings and marble floors to the lavish Art Deco style of its 270 guest rooms and plush furnishings of the famed Nine Nations Suites, the hotel remains as much a monument to the past even as it reinvents itself as a modern five-star house of slumber. Look out for luxurious touches like 400-threadcount Egyptian linen, Miller Harris bath amenities, king-sized beds, flatscreen televisions and wireless broadband. Downstairs there's a decadent Willow Stream Spa that offers elemental treatments and wellness rituals, and a modern fitness centre with one of the city's coolest indoor pools. The fine dining elegance of the Cathay Room restaurant has been superbly reincarnated and is complimented by live Shanghaiese swing each evening in the Jazz Bar, which is themed on the private clubs of the 1920s and 30s, and home to rising star Theo Croker. www.fairmont.com



THE RITZ-CARLTON Hong Kong

Certainly the most anticipated hotel launch of the year in Hong Kong, the Ritz-Carlton Hong Kong finally opened after significant delays but has made up for its tardiness with sophisticated guest rooms, elegant restaurants and bars, and the best views in town. Located in the top 16 floors of the 488-metre-high International Commerce Centre in Kowloon West, the property boasts the title of the world's highest hotel, meaning its spacious guest rooms, heralded as the largest in this space-starved city, come with views that will make you want to stay in every night. Look out for floor-to-ceiling windows, leading-edge technology, not-to-be-missed soak tubs and chic interiors by Singapore design firm LTW. If you do plan to leave your room, you won't have to go far to find some of the city's top spots; Ozone is the hotel's semi-alfresco cocktail bar on the 118th floor, which serves up innovative signature cocktails and a menu of pan-Asian nibbles. The Tosca restaurant has also quickly become one of the city's favourite Italian restaurants, while the resident ESPA offers vertiginous views and a selection of pampering treatments. www.ritzcarlton.com

BANYAN TREE MACAU Macau

This luxury hospitality brand is reputed for its resorts, but in the rare instance when it actually opens a city hotel, you can expect nothing less than a unique property that still exudes the DNA of its exotic siblings. The scent of Banyan Tree's signature essential oils fills the air the moment you step into the lobby of this Macau hotel, which is part of the integrated Galaxy Macau resort in the Cotai Strip. If this special welcome doesn't already bring on that sense of respite you'd associate with a Banyan Tree, wait until you step into one of its 227 suites.

Each is designed to be a modern Oriental sanctuary with its own relaxation pool. The smallest suite, the Grand Cotai, measures 100 square-metres and packs in a wooden Tibetan-style tub among other luxe features. Four Pool Villas and six Sanctuary Pool Villas by the main pool deck resemble in layout the brand's iconic pool villas, and each flaunts an outdoor pool, living room, kitchen and garden pavilion. The hotel's culinary crown jewel is Belon, a fine-dining aquatic-themed restaurant with 31st floor views, a live oyster bar and a large champagne selection. You can also find sensory pampering at its finest at the 21-suite Banyan Tree Spa. www.banyantree.com



MANDARIN ORIENTAL PARIS

France

One of the most exciting openings in the French capital in the past decade, the luxurious Mandarin Oriental Paris is nestled in the heart of fashionable Rue Saint-Honoré. Place Vendôme is just minutes away, as are the Tuileries gardens and Musée d'Orsay. A boutique hotel in a city of chic addresses, the Mandarin Oriental boasts just 138 beautifully-appointed guest rooms, including 39 two- and three-bedroom suites. If you're looking for an unforgettable experience, book the decadent Cabochons Suite, one of the hotel's signature duplex suites that boast fantastic views of the Eiffel Tower, private outdoor dining terraces and steam showers. Alternatively the regal Royale Mandarin Suite comes with a 360-degree city panorama. Typical of a Parisian property, food is at the forefront, especially with celebrity chef Thierry Marx at the culinary helm. His Sur Mesure restaurant serves up inventive fine dining, while the Garden, the hotel's courtyard venue, flaunts a "Street Marx" menu of French dishes infused with Asian touches. Be sure to leave time for a treatment in one of the Spa at Mandarin Oriental's three couple's spa suites, complete with steam showers and vitality pools. www.mandarinoriental.com



BULGARI LONDON

UK

The rejuvenated face of London is best epitomised by the new Bulgari London hotel, which arguably tops anything the city has seen in recent years. Set in the heart of Knightsbridge a two-minute stroll to Harrods, the property is the first luxury hotel to be built in the city – from ground up – in 40 years. Contemporary and glamorous, its interiors blend fine wood and marble with silver, as a nod to the brand's silversmith origins. The 85 rooms and suites are big on space and absolutely sumptuous, with huge bathrooms and tubs, minibars that resemble travel trunks, beds you'd melt into, generous amenities (including scented tea lights and sea sponges), and the latest in technology. The boutique hotel may not look large, but it goes six storeys underground to bring you a full five-star experience: the Bulgari Spa is excellent and even offers surgical podiatry for pedicures; the heated 25-metre swimming pool is a sight to behold; the Il Ristorante serves to-die-for Italian cuisine; and the 47-seat cinema is one of the world's best with the most advanced cinema-quality HD sound and vision, such as 4K resolution in 2D and the latest Dolby 3D. Service, in our opinion, is also flawless. www.bulgarihotels.com



THE NOMAD HOTEL NEW YORK

USA

One of New York's most eclectic neighbourhoods, NoMad (North of Madison Square Park) was once home to some of the city's top hotels. In recent years, chic properties like The NoMad Hotel are helping to reinvigorate the local scene. Centrally located with Gramercy Park to the south and Chelsea to the west, and SoHo, Greenwich Village and the Meatpacking District close by, the property is the perfect base for exploring the Big Apple. It is housed in a restored turn-of-the-century Beaux-Arts building that now benefits from lavish interiors by French designer Jacques Garcia, who delivers a fresh take on classic European hotel design with velvet and damask patterned paravents, reclaimed maple floors and unique Heriz rugs. Expect great city views, clawfoot tubs, mahogany French writing desks and Côté Bastide bath amenities in its 168 rooms. The NoMad Suite is a 1,100sqft pied-a-terre with a king-sized bed, oversized bathroom and curated art. Also, look out for the cuisine of chef Daniel Humm and local restaurateur Will Guidara, who deliver the same European finesse found at their three Michelin-starred Eleven Madison Park restaurant. www.thenomadhotel.com



KERATON AT THE PLAZA

Indonesia

When it comes to the best of hospitality in Jakarta, images of classic opulence often come to mind. That is why Keraton at The Plaza, one of the newest members of The Luxury Collection brand, is such a breath of fresh air. Despite being adjacent and connected to the bustling Plaza Indonesia, the 140-room property is an oasis of calm and privacy, where eclectic Indonesian design elements spice up clean, minimalist interiors. It cleverly offers the kind of uber-cool luxe Armani Hotel fans are more in tune with – sorely lacking in the city and the complete opposite of the ambience at the popular mega-hotels there. Built from ground up, the hotel building is swathed in cool grey and accessible via a discreet entrance. Appearances aside, the service here is, without a doubt, beyond outstanding. Bengawan, the hotel's only restaurant, proffers scrumptious breakfast and lunch buffet spreads and exquisite Indonesian fine-dining cuisine. Rooms and suites are large and equipped with state-of-the-art technology and full amenities (Nespresso coffee machine, bags of sea salt and loofah sponges: check). We expect it to become the haunt of the super high-end traveller in no time. www.luxurycollection.com/keraton