

SUMMER 2009: GREATEST DEALS EVER

# Condé Nast Traveler

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TRUTH IN TRAVEL

MAY 2009

EUROPE  
ON SALE  
CRUISING  
CLASSIC CITIES

## HOT LIST WORLD'S TOP NEW 140 hotels\*

50 Restaurants

50 Spas

35 Nightclubs

\*including 43 under \$250

INSIDER'S GUIDE

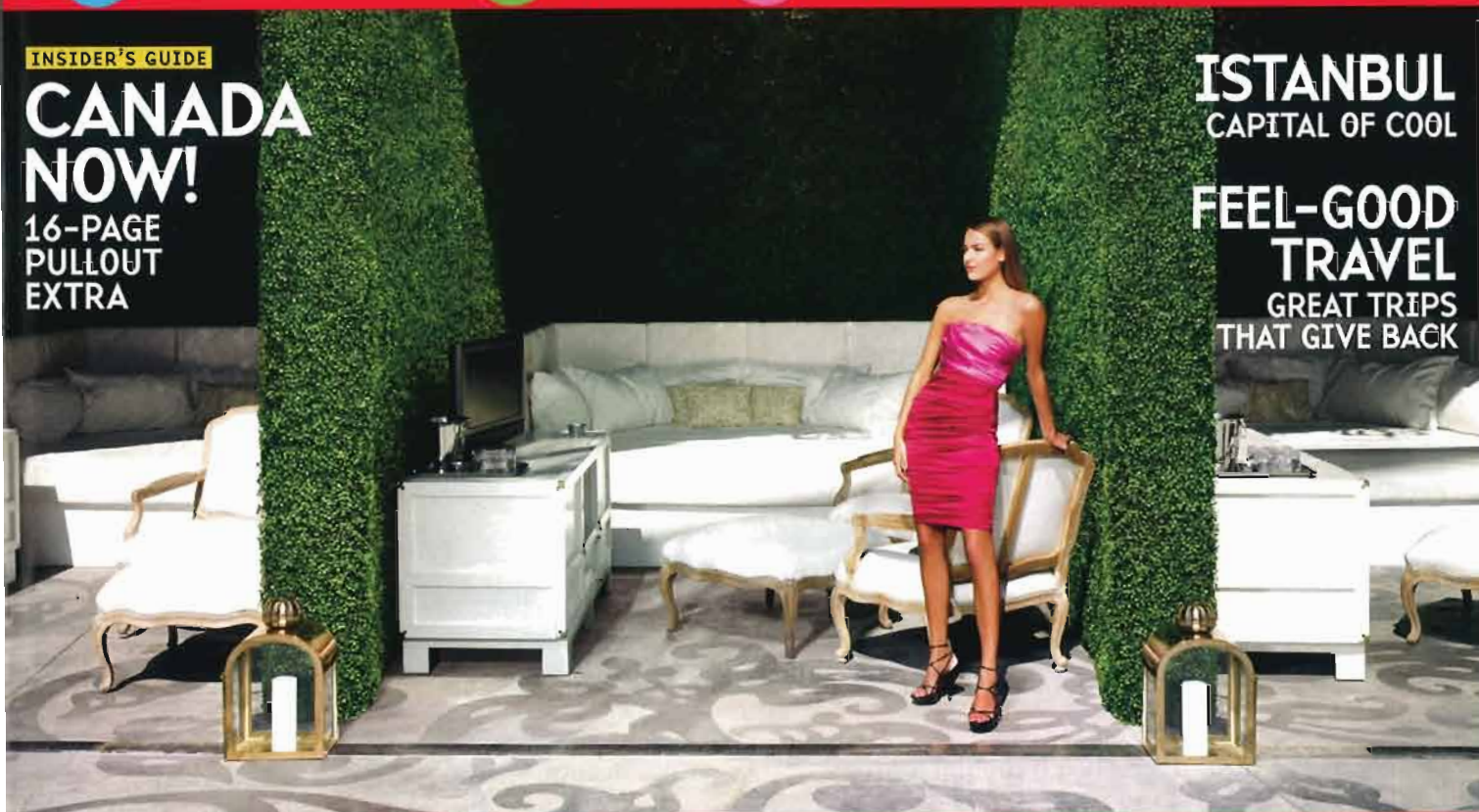
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Condé Nast Traveler presents


THE THIRTEENTH ANNUAL

# HOT

# LIST

## 2009

### THE YEAR'S 140 TOP NEW HOTELS\*



\*including 43  
UNDER  
\$250 A NIGHT

*Consider it a silver lining: Hot hotels continue to open in record numbers despite the recent economic overcast, and many are more affordable than ever. Of the thousands that made their debut in the last year, we checked into the most promising—incognito—measuring up the service, trying out the beds, and sampling the food. The 140 properties that passed our scrutiny make up the largest Hot List yet, proving that the standards for excellence haven't slipped; in fact, they've only risen. Spanning 53 countries (including new-to-the-list destinations Israel, Mongolia, Peru, Slovenia, and Zimbabwe), they range in size from a three-pavilion hideaway an hour north of Sydney to a 2,034-room high-rise on the Vegas Strip, and in room rates from \$89 at an invitingly accoutred Palm Springs hot spot with a pool straight out of a David Hockney print to \$2,050 for a sprawling safari tent in northern Botswana. Such bright choices make the forecast easier to weather.*

## Resort at Pelican Hill, Newport Beach, California

**🔥** Any property with a pool named The Coliseum deserves comparison to an overblown theme hotel. So it's all the more surprising that Pelican Hill relies on old-fashioned grace rather than razzle-dazzle. The resort perches high above Newport Beach and the design relies on exquisite workmanship and earthy materials. Rooms flaunt rustic wood-beamed ceilings and towering limestone fireplaces, while the patios are shaded by mature olive trees. But they're certainly not without their mod cons: plasma-screen TVs, Bose speakers, and coffee machines that even a member of Mensa would struggle to master. The gargantuan Coliseum is a round body of water with an outer edge that seems to plunge into the Pacific. At the northern Italian Andrea Restaurant the osso buco melts in your mouth. **When to go:** The views are more stunning in autumn and winter, when there isn't fog or clouds along the Orange County coast. **Which room to book:** Bungalows on the western edge of the peninsula (on Via Capri and on Via Dome) look across the golf course to the ocean (949-467-6800; pelicanhill.com; doubles, \$695). 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

## Ace Hotel & Swim Club, Palm Springs, California

**🍷** Rather than the usual Rat Pack retro or duffer chic, this hip oasis is a slightly rugged desert escape. The Sahara-circa-1950s decor features walls covered in tent canvas (and matching bedspreads), steamer trunks (which stare extra pillows), striped Berberesque robes, magazine racks stuffed with vintage *National Geographic*, and a clock/MP3 player that appears to be World War II surplus. Bathrooms could be bigger, and the water takes a while to get hot, but that just adds to the illusion of being far, far away. The grounds of this onetime Howard Johnson motor lodge have been transformed into a garden of mature palms and olive trees, with outdoor fireplaces. The King's Highway restaurant, a former Denny's, now serves Middle Eastern cuisine with a California edge. Despite its petite size, the spa offers an awesome array of treatments, while the sprawling pool is framed by royal palms, rocky outcrops, and snowcapped peaks. David Hockney, eat your heart out. **When to go:** Early January's Palm Springs Film Festival is the best time for star gazing (extraterrestrial and otherwise). **Which room to book:** Rooms in the "100" block face the pool and the mountains beyond (760-325-9900; acehotel.com; doubles, \$89-\$259). 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

## Sè San Diego, San Diego, California

**🍷** Though the Sè is very much a visual feast—with a massive bronze front door, a grand staircase framed by faux sand dollars, lamps covered

in gray stingray, an entire wall at the spa covered in tiny green Chinese teacups—it's more than just a pretty face. The staff seem to be genuinely thrilled to help you, and the 164 rooms, in a steel-and-glass building perched atop a Victorian-era structure, are small but well appointed. Yet the thing that really sticks in your mind (and belly) is the complimentary breakfast in bed with chocolate croissants, serrano ham and melon, and granola. All of this from chef Christopher Lee, whose Suite & Tender restaurant is surf and turf with a twist: pork belly and scallops, hamachi fish tacos, carpaccio of Kobe beef. The spa, too, is a pleasant surprise—especially the harem-style lounge, where you can curl up with a good book (or another warm body). **When to go:** The adjacent Gaslamp District rocks year-round. **Which room to book:** Suites in the northwest corner (rooms 909, 809, 709, etc.) have balconies overlooking the rooftop pool and downtown San Diego (619-515-3000; sesandiego.com; doubles, \$379-\$600). 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

## Cavallo Point, Sausalito, California

**🍷** 415-339-4700; cavallpoint.com; doubles, \$270. 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

## Bardessono, Yountville, California

**🍷** Being green has never felt as good as it does at Bardessono, whose main assets are its stumbling distance from more Michelin stars than any Paris pied-à-terre, paired with the atmosphere of an agrarian retreat. After check-in, done via a staffer's hip-slung electronic tablet, it's a short walk to the hotel's four courtyards, where stone walkways curve alongside meandering streams. Each of the 62 rooms comes with a patio and a two-person tub; a few also have outdoor showers. A rooftop lap pool with cabanas overlooks the hotel's own grapevines. The modernist architecture makes use of salvaged cypress wood, weathered steel, and reclaimed tufa stone, while the lobby ceiling is constructed of redwood wine barrel staves. Sustainability is key in the restaurant, as well, where simple preparations rely on locally sourced meat and fish and produce from the hotel's own gardens. The only sign of opulence having lost out to eco-friendliness is in the stiff recycled-material couches, which rustle like packing peanuts when you sit down. **When to go:** May, when the vineyards are outlined in wildflowers. **Which room to book:** Nos. 413 and 414, on the second floor of the quietest courtyard (707-204-6000; bardessono.com; doubles, \$700-\$900). 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

## Westin Riverfront Resort & Spa, Avon, Colorado

**UNDER \$250** 🍷 970-790-6000; westin.com; doubles, \$129-\$499. 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

## Capella Telluride, Telluride, Colorado

**UNDER \$250** 🍷 970-369-0880; capellatelluride.com; doubles, \$195-\$380. 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

## The Regent, Bal Harbour, Florida

**🍷** 305-455-5400; regenthotels.com; doubles, \$325-\$375. 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

## Viceroy, Miami, Florida

**🍷** 866-781-9923; viceroymiami.com; doubles, \$270-\$300. 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

## Fontainebleau, Miami Beach, Florida

**🔥🔥** With its iconic Miami Modern architecture and guests like Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley, the Fontainebleau created a buzz when it opened in 1954. Now, a three-year renovation has put the 1,500-room beachside behemoth back on the map, with an over-the-top "what recession?" atmosphere and new adjacent towers housing rooms, 11 restaurants, and a \$50 million spa. As a one-stop entertainment complex, the resort lives up to its billing—although the service will have to improve to keep up with the number of guests. All the large rooms, which fill four towers, come with 20-inch iMacs (from which you can make restaurant and spa reservations) and very comfortable beds. On-site distractions include the lobby nightclub, Liv; a series of high-end shops; and a gargantuan complex of pools that includes the see-and-be-seen original. Architecture buffs will enjoy the historic Morris Lapidus details—like the bowtie-motif marble floor and the famous staircase to nowhere, which allowed women to make a grand entrance. **When to go:** After the New Year holiday, when Miami remains balmy. **Which room to book:** In the original Versailles tower, which is close to the resort's restaurants and spa, ask for an Atlantic Ocean view (305-538-2000; fontainebleau.com; doubles, \$309-\$439). 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

## Mansion on Peachtree, Atlanta, Georgia

**UNDER \$250** 🍷 404-995-7500; mansiononpeachtree.com; doubles, \$199-\$349. 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

## Avia, Savannah, Georgia

**UNDER \$250** 🍷 866-644-2842; aviahotels.com; doubles, \$209-\$279. 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

## Royal Hawaiian Hotel, Honolulu, Hawaii

**🍷** This 529-room landmark spent the past couple of decades chugging along on the fumes of nostalgia. When the iconic property opened in 1927, it became a retreat for film stars, presidents, and the early jet-set. Now, after a much-needed \$50 million restoration, the so-called Pink Palace has reclaimed its past glory. Although not every problem can be resolved—it's still incongruously wedged between a sprawling Sheraton resort and the depressing Royal Hawaiian shopping pavilion—the facade has been refinished, and the impeccable interiors are an inspired blend of textiles, artwork, and woodwork that pay tribute to the hotel's heritage while remaining fresh and

### KEY TO SYMBOLS

🍷 = Bar/lounge 🍷 = Beach 🍷 = Free Wi-Fi 🍷 = Gym 🍷 = Pool 🍷 = Spa 🍷 = Hot Spas 2009 🍷 = 24-hour room service 🔥 = Hot 🔥 = Hotter 🔥 = Hottest

For the full reviews of hotels designated **🍷** go to [cntraveler.com/hotlist](http://cntraveler.com/hotlist)



Photograph by Jim Franco

## United States

### Fontainebleau Miami Beach

Room 1124, Fontainebleau  
Miami Beach; 305-538-2000;  
fontainebleau.com. There are  
1,504 rooms; doubles range  
from \$309 to \$439. Room 1124  
is \$439.

NOT CONTENT TO MERELY BE PART OF THE BACKGROUND, THIS ICON and its knockout curves almost overshadow the view. And with good reason. After its opening in 1954, the Fontainebleau became a paragon of Miami Beach style, and its architect, Morris Lapidus, an instant legend—despite purists' dismissal of the half-moon structure as "Bronx Baroque." Frank Sinatra and his Rat Pack arrived to pal around by the pool, Elvis Presley drew legions of fainting fans, and films like *Goldfinger* put the hotel on the silver screen. Today, after a billion-dollar overhaul, the Fontainebleau is poised to become Miami's must-stop once more. In addition to the fabled sand and surf, there are 11 restaurants, 10 pools—and the glamour of hotel nights past to keep you entertained (for more, see "Hot List").

—Ondine Cohane