

2019

# Big Sleep Awards

Exceptional service? Menus to die for? Boudoirs fit for Sleeping Beauty? Whatever it is that truly makes a hotel special, we're celebrating it in our annual awards, where we reward the best new tastemakers, trendsetters and game-changers in the business

IMAGE: NIKOLOZ PANIASHVILI



## THE WINNERS

### CITY SLICKER

RAFFLES EUROPEJSKI  
WARSAW

### HANGOUT

STAMBA HOTEL, TBILISI

### LORD OF THE MANOR

HECKFIELD PLACE,  
HAMPSHIRE

### WELLNESS WONDER

THE RETREAT AT BLUE  
LAGOON, ICELAND

### DESIGN DEN

MORPHEUS, MACAU

### BREATH OF FRESH AIR

SHIPWRECK LODGE, NAMIBIA

### CLEAN & GREEN

SHINTA MANI WILD,  
CAMBODIA

### GAME-CHANGER

THE ANNEX, TORONTO

### CASTAWAY

ISLAS SECAS, PANAMA

### GOURMET GETAWAY

BLESS HOTEL, MADRID

### GRAND REDESIGNS

HÔTEL LUTETIA, PARIS

### BOUTIQUE BREAK

THE FIFE ARMS, BRAEMAR

### LOVE SHACK

CAN BORDOY GRAND  
HOUSE & GARDEN,  
PALMA DE MALLORCA

### ON THE MONEY

ALILA BANGSAR,  
KUALA LUMPUR

### SNOW QUEEN

EXPERIMENTAL CHALET,  
VERBIER

### COMEBACK KID

PARAMOUNT HOUSE HOTEL,  
SYDNEY

## THE JUDGING PANEL

**JULIA BUCKLEY**  
Freelance travel writer

**FRANCISCA KELLETT**  
Freelance travel writer

**JOHN O'CEALLAIGH**  
Luxury travel editor, *The  
Telegraph* / [telegraph.co.uk](http://telegraph.co.uk)

**LEE COBAJ**  
Freelance travel writer

**JULIET KINSMAN**  
Freelance travel writer

**DAVID WHITLEY**  
Freelance travel writer

**EMMA GREGG**  
Freelance travel writer

**PÓL Ó CONGHAILE**  
Freelance travel writer

**NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC  
TRAVELLER (UK) TEAM**



Raffles Europejski Warsaw

IMAGES: PIOTR GESICKI, © RAFFLES EUROPEJSKI WARSAW

## City Slicker

We wanted to find the ultimate urban nest. Who's the new girl in town? Or is there a chain that's really turning heads? After a hard day's exploring, here's where we'll want to rest our weary bones



### RAFFLES EUROPEJSKI WARSAW

OUR PANEL SAID: Why has it taken luxury brands so long to wake up to the Polish capital? This grande dame, dating from 1857 when it opened as the Hotel Europejski, has been given some much-needed pizzazz by Raffles, and the result is every bit as sumptuous as you'd expect. The glamorous, sensitive restoration offers the largest rooms and suites in the city, a lavish patisserie, intriguing Polish art, and the Europejski Grill, where a considered array of national favourites are served up in style. But don't skip what must be Warsaw's poshest spa, where the walls twinkle with 1960s mosaics and products come courtesy of Sisley. [raffles.com/warsaw](http://raffles.com/warsaw)

### Runners-up

#### THE MIDDLE HOUSE, SHANGHAI

Set in the heart of downtown just off Nanjing Road, the Middle House is a sensual city retreat. Dotted with an art collection MoMA would envy, rooms come with dark wooden floors, porcelain headboards and smoky tones, and the restaurants and bars are superb. [themiddlehousehotel.com](http://themiddlehousehotel.com)

#### UNITED PLACES, MELBOURNE

This sleek spot on the edge of the Royal Botanic Gardens delivers understated style in spades — contemporary architecture, cool hues and gorgeous tactile touches like concrete walls and obsidian bathtubs. [unitedplaces.com.au](http://unitedplaces.com.au)



## Hangout

If you lived nearby, you'd be here all the time — a place you can't wait to show your friends, where the cocktails are snazzy and the DJ spins the best tunes



### STAMBA HOTEL, TBILISI

OUR PANEL SAID: An old Soviet printing house catapulted into the 21st century, Stamba makes a lasting impression. Its big, brutalist skeleton has been injected with all the creativity that's coursing through the Georgian capital's veins right now — floor-to-ceiling bookshelves dominate the design, minibars come with cocktail kits, and faintly art deco touches meld with all that bold concrete. But it's the effortless cool that makes Stamba stand out: there's an 'amphitheatre' performance space for concerts, a photo museum curating the best local and international photographic talent, the pastel-pretty Pink Bar, an on-site coffee roastery and Café Stamba, where you'll be queuing with the locals for a cheesy khachapuri. [stambahotel.com](http://stambahotel.com)

### Runners-up

#### NOMAD, LOS ANGELES

The old Bank of Italy was one of Downtown's grandest buildings when it opened in 1923, but today it's one of the city's most happening hotels. There's a landmark restaurant, swish cocktail bar and a rooftop pool with views as far as the Pacific. [thenomadhotel.com](http://thenomadhotel.com)

#### THE LINE, AUSTIN

Paying homage to its roots as a jazz club, The Line is an extremely good-looking neighbourhood hangout for anyone with a love of music and good times. Whether for frozen margaritas in the lakeside infinity pool or intimate gigs in the rooftop bar, The Line knows how to draw you in. [thelinehotel.com/austin](http://thelinehotel.com/austin)

LEFT FROM TOP: Aviator Room, Stamba Hotel; Pink Bar, Stamba Hotel

IMAGE: @HELGALAUFEYPHOTOS

## Wellness wonder

Plenty of places offer R&R, but some do it better than others. We want to dissolve our worries in the Jacuzzi, have those knots in our necks massaged away and come back feeling like a new person



### THE RETREAT AT BLUE LAGOON, ICELAND

OUR PANEL SAID: Who knew hot water could be so cool? Last year, Iceland's steaming Blue Lagoon completed a significant expansion, opening The Retreat at Blue Lagoon — a minimalist sanctuary of wellness right on the edge of the country's most famous landmark. The star of the show is, of course, its subterranean spa, built into the jet-black, 800-year-old lava flows, where the Lagoon's salt, silica and algae take a starring role in the treatment offerings. In addition, there's a restaurant that reimagines Iceland's culinary traditions as well as 62 suites encircled by those pearly, mineral-rich waters. [bluelagoon.com](http://bluelagoon.com)

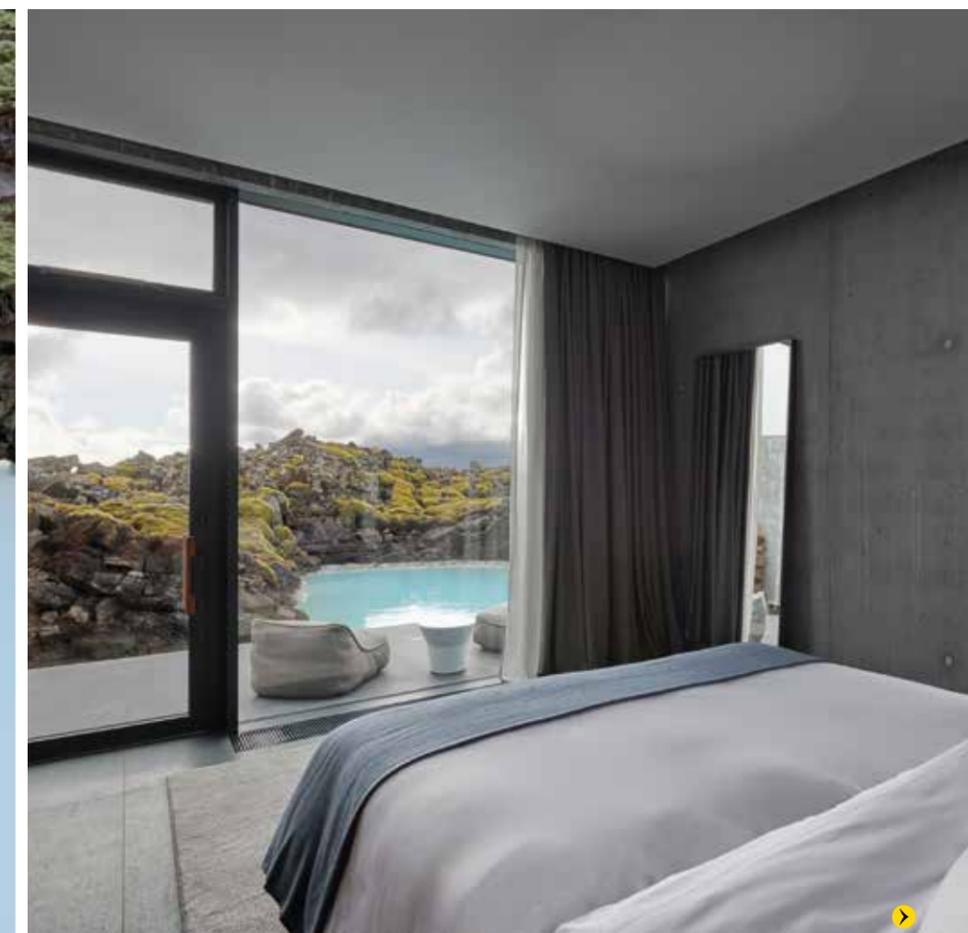
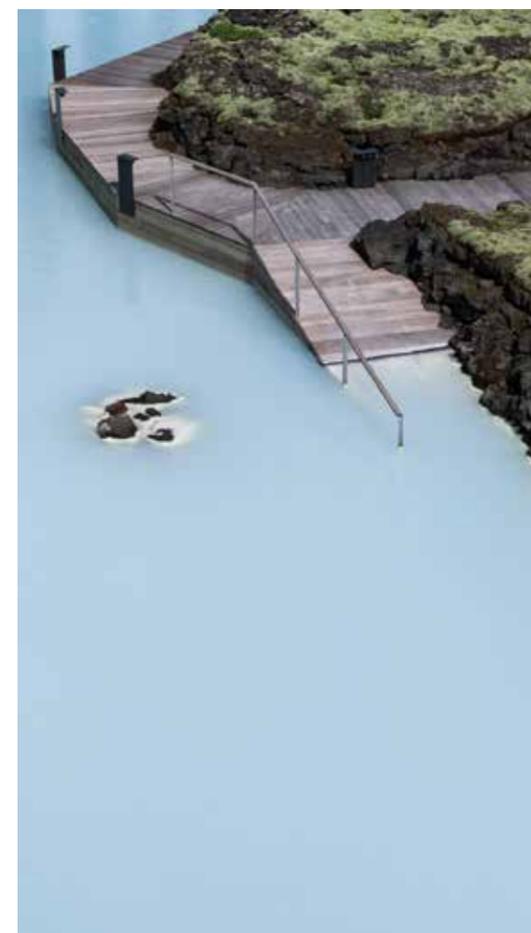
### Runners-up

#### EUPHORIA RETREAT, MYSTRAS, GREECE

This pretty, pine-scented getaway in the Peloponnese does Hellenic-inspired wellness par excellence. Nutrition takes a leading role here, with a lengthy list of first-class facilities, too: a Himalayan salt room and a traditional hammam to name a few. [euphoriaretreat.com](http://euphoriaretreat.com)

#### BHUTAN SPIRIT SANCTUARY

Set high in the Himalayas with just 22 rooms, this is wellness at the highest level — meditation with monks, yoga and Tibetan massages — and guests can even join therapists on a forage for ingredients to be used in their treatments. [bhutanspiritsanctuary.com](http://bhutanspiritsanctuary.com)







# Lord of the manor

The best rural retreats are beacons of hospitality, featuring classy design, top-notch service and glorious cuisine, all the while honouring their heritage



## HECKFIELD PLACE, HAMPSHIRE

OUR PANEL SAID: This might just be the perfect reimagining of a country house hotel. The revamped, 17th-century Georgian mansion overlooks groomed parkland, and with breezily cool interiors by Ben Thompson (protege of designer Ilse Crawford), a cinema, organic farm and an impressive cultural calendar, it all equals laid-back country style for the 21st century. A huge draw is the hotel's food: superior home cooking under the creative culinary direction of chef Skye Gyngell. Expect produce from the grounds, and heartfelt hospitality at residents-only restaurant, Hearth. [heckfieldplace.com](http://heckfieldplace.com)

## Runners-up

### THE LANGLEY, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Guests will feel like nobility at the Duke of Marlborough's former country pile, now a supremely chic, 41-room Georgian country escape, complete with extensive grounds and a world-class spa. [marriott.co.uk](http://marriott.co.uk)

### CHATEAU LAFAURIE PEYRAGUEY, BORDEAUX

The transformation of this 18th-century wine estate into a luxurious hotel has seen a careful restoration, involving spectacular chandeliers and the creation of a sumptuous restaurant. [lafauriepeyragueylalique.com](http://lafauriepeyragueylalique.com)

# Gourmet getaways

Hotel kitchens sparkle with some of the world's greatest culinary talent. We ate our way through taster menus, Michelin-starred delicacies and seasonal ingredients to bring you the cream of the crop



## BLESS HOTEL, MADRID

OUR PANEL SAID: Martín Berasategui may be Spain's most decorated chef (he's accrued a dazzling 10 Michelin stars to date), but his ventures in the Spanish capital have been scarce until now. At his new restaurant, Etxeko, dishes are inspired by his native Basque Country — gazpacho; grilled octopus on pepper puree; and dry-aged Txuleta beef with bone marrow and piquillo peppers, for instance — all served up amid handsome crimson banquettes and mosaic floors. And if you need to lie down after dinner, Bless will see to that with its spacious, refined boudoirs. [blesscollectionhotels.com](http://blesscollectionhotels.com)

## Runners-up

### DUNEÏLE, NORMANDY

Along with Théo Pourriat, Bertrand Grébaud — from Paris restaurant Septime — transformed a French country house into a show-stopper of a restaurant with rooms that champions rustic, regional produce. [duneile.com](http://duneile.com)

### BLACK BULL, SEDBURGH

Hyper-local yet audaciously worldly: Manchester street food stalwarts Nina Matsunaga and James Ratcliffe bring [blackbullsedburgh.co.uk](http://blackbullsedburgh.co.uk) inn on the Cumbria-Yorkshire border. [theblackbullsedburgh.co.uk](http://theblackbullsedburgh.co.uk)

IMAGE: WWW.ROBERTOCASTANO.COM

FROM LEFT: iVwii | octopus on pepper puree, Etxeko restaurant, Bless Hotel

Paris skyline  
BELOW: Hotel Lutetia



## Love shack

Romantic retreats that have it all — hammocks for two, private plunge pools or honeymoon suites that'd make Casanova blush



### CAN BORDOY GRAND HOUSE & GARDEN, PALMA DE MALLORCA

OUR PANEL SAID: Romance has an address in Palma's beautiful old town. Full of baroque and gothic charm, this majestic addition to the Majorcan capital is the ultimate urban love nest, with regal rooms, gorgeous old-meets-new aesthetics and butler service. A soak in the heated pool is a must, and the walled garden is a secluded suntrap worthy of Romeo-and-Juliet-style serenades. [canbordoy.com](http://canbordoy.com)

#### Runners-up

##### GARA ROCK, DEVON

Need to escape it all? This discreetly nautical-inspired escape on the dramatic south Devon coast serves up chic, cosy rooms, fresh seafood, a spa and superb sea views to boot. [gararock.com](http://gararock.com)

##### PALAZZO DANIELE, PUGLIA

This 19th-century palace has been turned into an achingly pretty hideaway hotel. A warren of courtyards and cosy nooks, this is real, barefoot romance without the schmaltz and rose petals. [palazzodaniele.com](http://palazzodaniele.com)

## Boutique break

Behold the Fabergé eggs of the hotel world: perfectly proportioned, stylishly designed and, of course, singled out for their top-notch service



### THE FIFE ARMS, BRAEMAR

OUR PANEL SAID: With feted art dealers Hauser & Wirth at the helm, expect the extravagant at this former hunting lodge once visited by Queen Victoria: lavish wallpaper, tasteful touches of Victoriana and a stag suspended from the ceiling. Not that it's style over substance here — the hotel's 46 bedrooms are all uniquely designed, each one inspired by the heritage of the surrounding area and brought to life with a collection of more than 14,000 carefully selected antiques, artworks and furnishings. Mountain views abound, Scottish pub classics are served at the bar, and there's even a bijou spa in which to recover after a hike in the hills. Cue the bagpipes — this Highland bolthole hits all the right notes. [thefifearms.com](http://thefifearms.com)

#### Runners-up

##### PALAZZO BOZZI CORSO, LECCE

With interiors by Laboratoire Design Rabat, this 18th-century baroque palazzo is a dazzling new design hotel in Italy's southern Puglia. The gleaming chrome bar is the place to be for cocktail o'clock, and morning coffee is served in the 10-bedroom property's 'secret' garden. [palazzobozzicorso.com](http://palazzobozzicorso.com)

##### HOTEL AMPARO,

##### SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE

With original touches, pared-back design and splashes of bold, colourful textiles, this chic, five-room addition to the Mexican town's hotel scene is boutique bliss at its understated best. [hotelamparo.com](http://hotelamparo.com)

## Grand redesigns

Some hotels are destinations in their own right, and these institutions — the big-hitters and the grandes dames — have got all dolled up and are now back in business



### HOTEL LUTETIA, PARIS

OUR PANEL SAID: Four years and €200 million (£180 million) after closing for renovation, the Left Bank's leading lady reopened her art nouveau doors last summer. In a city where five-star hotels are par for the course, the Lutetia stands out for heritage alone, having ushered in everyone from Picasso to Pitt, Joyce to Jagger. Its new generation of guests can nod off in one of 184 contemporary-styled rooms and suites, take a dip in the marble pool, or sip a cocktail at the beautiful Bar Joséphine, replete with restored ceiling frescoes. Mark our words — this is a new benchmark for hotels à la parisienne. [hotellutetia.com](http://hotellutetia.com)

#### Runners-up

##### MANDARIN ORIENTAL HYDE PARK, LONDON

Everything from its rooms to its restaurants (one of which is Dinner by Heston Blumenthal) have been redone with plenty of panache in the biggest refurbishment in the hotel's 117-year history. [mandarinoriental.com](http://mandarinoriental.com)

##### THE DATAI LANGKAWI, MALAYSIA

Following a \$60 million (£47.9 million) makeover, the island getaway is back with a bang. New features include extended restaurants, spa pavilions, a nature centre and three additional rainforest pool villas. [thedatai.com](http://thedatai.com)

IMAGES: SIM CANETTY-CLARKE



FROM LEFT: The Fife Arms



## On the money

Coming in at under £150 a night, these rooms deliver serious bang for your buck without scrimping on comfort, style or service



### ALILA BANGSAR, KUALA LUMPUR

OUR PANEL SAID: Set atop a domino of black glass in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur's hippest neighbourhood, the Alila Bangsar has everything you could want from an inner-city sanctum: 360-degree city views, a rooftop pool, top-quality restaurants and minimalist rooms that look like they've been pulled straight from the pages of a design magazine. A stay here won't break the bank, either — rates are remarkably affordable for a hotel of this standard and location, with studios starting from as little as £65, B&B. [alilahotels.com](http://alilahotels.com)

### Runners-up

**THE COW HOLLOW HOTEL, MANCHESTER**  
What might just be the city's coolest opening this year is also a steal. A room in the warehouse turned urban nest — with creature comforts aplenty — is yours for just £85 a night. [cowhollow.co.uk](http://cowhollow.co.uk)

### CITIZENM, COPENHAGEN

Bright, brilliant and a little bit brash, this young hotel chain's bold design is always a winner. But the key to this Scandi success? Beds for £110 in the notoriously steep Danish capital. [citizenm.com](http://citizenm.com)



Verbier, Switzerland  
LEFT: Alila Bangsar

## Snow queen

After a day hitting the slopes or hiking across glaciers, we want to return to a true winter palace with roaring fires, mountain views and an apres-ski experience that's second to none



### EXPERIMENTAL CHALET, VERBIER

OUR PANEL SAID: Laid-back and clubby, this sparkling opening in the Swiss Alps is about as urban-cool as ski hotels gets — an off-shoot of a boutique brand that began life in Paris as a speakeasy bar. Emblematic of the new-era luxe hotels that are blossoming across Europe's smarter ski resorts, this new take on mountain luxury is decked out in bright tiles and muted velvets — banish all thoughts of traditional tasselled curtains and silver-service dining. Its buzzy brasserie is fronted by Gregory Marchand, a Jamie Oliver protege, and an airy cocktail bar graces the first floor. [experimentalchalet.com](http://experimentalchalet.com)

### Runners-up

#### SHELDON CHALET, ALASKA

Set high on a glacial outcrop, Alaska's poshest ski pad comes with wrap-around windows that make the most of its remote setting in Denali National Park. [sheldonchalet.com](http://sheldonchalet.com)

#### CALDERA HOUSE, JACKSON HOLE, WYOMING

This wintry hideaway nestled beneath the mountains of Jackson Hole is one of several smart new openings within the elite US resort. Expect an ultra-modern, eight-suite lodge with a plush, Wild West aesthetic. [calderahouse.com](http://calderahouse.com)



Paramount House Hotel  
RIGHT: Exterior of Paramount House Hotel

# Comeback kid

We've seen everything from prisons to palaces undergo transformations into high-flying hotels — and these are the ones that got it just right



## PARAMOUNT HOUSE HOTEL, SYDNEY

OUR PANEL SAID: Right in the middle of the hip Surry Hills neighbourhood is a blockbuster of a renovation, housed in the former headquarters of Paramount Picture Studios. The 1940s-era brick building has been jazzed up with a copper-coloured herringbone-patterned facade and is appropriately cool for this part of town, with bare walls, high-end furniture and exposed brass plumbing. There's also a rooftop recreation centre, a killer Aussie-style breakfast and screenings at the Golden Age cinema next door. [paramounthousehotel.com](http://paramounthousehotel.com)

## Runners-up

### COMO CASTELLO DEL NERO, TUSCANY

Guests can live like a king in this 12th-century castle converted into a country escape with 50 rooms, pristine gardens, two restaurants and fittingly regal decor in the rolling hills of Chianti. [comohotels.com](http://comohotels.com)

### THE JAFFA, TEL AVIV

In its newest incarnation as an elegant hotel, the former hospital and monastery in the ancient port of Jaffa has kept many of its original features, such as high vaulted ceilings and stained glass — this time shot through with a dash of contemporary style. [thejaffahotel.com](http://thejaffahotel.com) □

