



Over the Top

The world's most opulent hotels tempt with stand-out settings, service, cuisine and spas.

BY KELLY MAGYARICS

WHAT'S YOUR PENCHANT? A private infinity pool overlooking a deep-blue sea? Staying in the middle of a thriving city with umpteen on-site restaurants and bars to pique your palate? An Instagram-ready table on the balcony of one of the most romantic cities? Find all this and more at these five ultra-luxe hotels.

THE NAME IN SANSKRIT of Trisara Resort means “garden in the third heaven,” and a stay here will indeed feel like paradise. Located on the northwest coast of Phuket, Thailand's largest island, its 60 two- to seven-bedroom villas are tucked in exotic palms and foliage and face either a secluded cove on the Andaman Sea or a lush garden.

Outside, a private balcony features lounge furniture and an infinity pool; inside, the warm neutral décor blends traditional Thai design with modern simplicity. High ceilings are inlaid with tropical hardwoods, while a pillow menu assures restful sleep, and a lounge area with a sofa and flat-screen television lets you stretch out. The large bathroom features a deep soaking tub, separate shower, built-in seating and a separate changing area, and there's even an outdoor shower. (If you crave privacy, set the Angel of Privacy statue

POSH PARADISE:
Trisara Resort
Ocean View Pool
Junior Suite (top)
and (bottom left
to right) Signature
Ocean View Pool
Suite, dining and
Ocean View Pool
Junior Suite

PHOTOS: © TRISARA
RESORT

outside your separate service door.)

The secluded beach dotted with chairs, umbrellas, palm trees and hammocks lies adjacent to the resort's large infinity pool, and Jara Spa offers the incomparable Royal Trisara Six-Hand Massage. Fresh, aromatic Thai cuisine definitely stands out here, too, from wok-fried red snapper with ginger and long beans at The Deck to "mama recipes" like crab, pork and coconut cream dip at Seafood. For a truly memorable experience, book one of the 14 seats at PRU for a six- or eight-course tasting menu at Phuket's only Michelin-starred restaurant.

WHEN IT OPENED IN 2017, The Silo Hotel in Cape Town, South Africa, located above the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa in the V&A Waterfront, became a stunning addition to one of the world's already most cosmopolitan cities. Housed on the site of a former grain mill, which remains a focal point, the 5-star hotel's most gorgeous design elements are its multifaceted windows bowing outward and warmly lit each evening.

The 28 rooms and suites uniquely designed by Liz Biden in an industrial-chic style overlook either iconic Table Mountain or the harbor. All feature plush textures; local artwork; and vibrant hues such as purple, gold, fuchsia and teal. Luxe amenities include a cabinet housing a gratis bar with drinks and snacks, a decanter filled with Cape brandy, and turn-down service with relaxing linen spray and linen pillowcases.

Breakfast at the Granary Café overlooking the harbor on the hotel's sixth floor starts with a three-tiered tower stacked with warm *koeksisters* (sugar-coated doughnuts), yogurt and granola, fruit, cheese and smoked salmon. At sunset it's the spot for a bottle of local Cinsault and braised springbok shank. At the adjacent Willaston Bar, named for the first ship to export grain from the silo complex, local gins and tonics line the shelves to help you find your perfect combo. During the warmer months, The Silo Rooftop pool and bar beckons with bubbly and oysters, while the five treatment rooms at the spa offer a signature 24 Carat Luminescence Ritual. It all makes for a fabulous sojourn in the Mother City.

IMPECCABLE SERVICE, an unparalleled location in the city's bustling Central Business District and an authentic Asian experience await at the Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong, the iconic brand's flagship property. You'll never hear the word "no," and staff personally and truly commit to making your visit as seamless and memorable as possible.

The 434 rooms and 67 suites offer views of the skyline or Victoria Harbour. The furnishings embrace the hotel's original heritage; rooms flaunt touches like linen bedding, a pillow menu, Bottega Veneta amenities and smart lighting.

The three-floor Mandarin Spa encompasses almost 23,000 square feet, nine treatment rooms, a salon, a barber, an indoor swimming pool, a fitness center, an herbal steam room, a Jacuzzi, a sauna and radiant-heated tepidaria. Treatments like the Chinese Meridian Massage incorporate traditional Eastern techniques like cupping and reflexology.

The property includes 10 restaurants and bars, with several of the best on the 25th floor. The chic M Bar shakes up Journey to the West cocktails with Eastern ingredients like pu-erh tea. Pierre

ULTIMATE LUXURY:

The Silo Deluxe Superior Penthouse (top) and The Rooftop pool (middle), and Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong Lobby (bottom)

PHOTOS: © THE SILO, © MANDARIN ORIENTAL





ELITE RETREATS:
Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong restaurant (top left), The Gritti Palace (right), and The Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua (bottom left)

PHOTOS: © MANDARIN ORIENTAL, © GRITTI PALACE, © RITZ CARLTON KAPALUA

Gagnaire’s 2-Michelin-starred namesake Pierre serves modern French dishes, and Man Wah is a 1-Michelin-starred restaurant with Cantonese specialties like wok-fried lobster, dim sum and several iterations of prized bird’s nest soup. The latter space is especially glorious after the sun goes down, when the gold lanterns reflect on the windows and seem to float in a futuristic Hong Kong skyline. The effect is surreal and magical, just like a few days spent here.

IF YOU TRULY WANT TO FEEL like a member of the glitterati in the City of Bridges, book a room at The Gritti Palace, a Luxury Collection Hotel, a 15th-century noble palazzo on Venice’s Grand Canal. Views span from the island of San Giorgio Maggiore past Punta della Dogana to the Basilica di Santa Maria della Salute. Its 61 guestrooms and 21 suites (some with canal views) feature decorative touches like local, hand-blown Murano glass accents, Italian marble, historic fabrics and rare books and curios.

The Gritti SPA offers two double suites with private steam baths decorated in Venetian mosaics and uses Sisley Paris products in treatments like The Phyto-Aromatic Radiance Facial and The Zen Harmony Phyto-Aromatic Body Treatment.

Weather permitting, you’ll want to spend as much time as possible gazing out at the gondolas and vaporetti on one of the world’s most famous waterways. A Vesper martini or the Riva Cocktail with rum, orgeat, orange and grapefruit is a great place to start, sipped along with a plate of cicchetti, the bar snacks that are Venice’s answer to tapas. Once the sun dips, relocate a few steps to a canal-front table at Club del Doge, chef Daniele Turco’s homage to Venetian cuisine, for shrimp with almond cream and shellfish broth, risotto with white truffles, and turbot with Jerusalem artichoke purée and mushrooms.

As you walk back to your room and come across the autographed photos of former famous guests — from movie stars to musicians to world leaders — flanking the walls, don’t feel too badly about smugly counting yourself among the privileged elite.

LOCATED ON 54 ACRES along one of the prettiest stretches in Kapalua on the island of Maui, The Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua underwent a major renovation in 2018, transforming its rooms, lobby, pool and more. All of the luxe hotel’s 463 guestrooms (including 107 residential suites) feature spacious lanais and are decorated in a fresh, modern island style with dark wood flooring, Hawai’ian prints from local artists and other details that drive home an authentic sense of place.

The impressive poolscape stretches 10,000 square feet on three levels, including an adults-only pool, a children’s pool and technology-filled cabanas. The beach sits just a short stroll away (you can also pop onto one of the golf carts constantly ferrying guests to and from the ocean); after a swim, head to a high-topped bar table at the super-casual beachside Burger Shack for live music, creative riffs on burgers and milkshakes. Adjacent to the pool, The Banyan Tree’s bar shines with crafty garden-to-glass cocktails like a coconut foam-topped mai tai and a bourbon sour with muddled pineapple and serrano chili peppers. Next door in the dining room, nosh on crispy five-spiced duck buns, steamed Hawai’ian snapper and hoisin-braised lamb shank.

The spa draws on indigenous plants, flowers and fruits from its organic garden for treatments like the Tropical Awa Nui Journey, a blissful 110 minutes with a full-body exfoliation, body wrap, Lomilomi massage, scalp massage and foot treatment.