



DestinAsian



IT'S BEEN ANOTHER BIG YEAR FOR HOTEL OPENINGS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION, BUT WHAT MAKES ONE PROPERTY MORE LUXE THAN ANOTHER? BASED ON REPORTS FROM OUR NETWORK OF CONTRIBUTORS, WE'VE ASSEMBLED A LIST OF 96 PLACES THAT EXCEL WHEN IT COMES TO STYLE AND AMBIENCE, BE IT A RAMBLING INDIAN PALACE OR A PRIVATE VILLA IN THE HILLS OF CHIANG MAI. THOUGH WILDLY DIFFERENT IN TERMS OF SIZE, PRICE, AND LOOK, THEY ALL HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON: A SINGULAR SENSE OF PLACE AND STYLE THAT LETS THEM STAND OUT FROM THE REST.



JAPAN EASE

A modern Ikebana arrangement adds an avant-garde touch to a suite at Kyoto's design-driven Hotel Karra.



TOP-END TIBET
In the lobby of the St. Regis Lhasa Resort, the Himalayan city's first luxury hotel.



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CHINA

Four Seasons Hotel, Hangzhou at West Lake, Hangzhou
Hotel Icon, Hong Kong
Hotel Indigo Shanghai on the Bund, Shanghai
Pullman Lijiang Resort & Spa, Lijiang
Renaissance Sanya Resort & Spa, Hainan
Ritz-Carlton Hong Kong, Hong Kong
St. Regis Lhasa Resort, Tibet
Waldorf Astoria Shanghai on the Bund, Shanghai

FRENCH POLYNESIA

Maitai Lapita Village, Huahine

INDIA

Devi Ratn, Jaipur
Leela Palace Kempinski, New Delhi
Rasa Jaipur, Jaipur
Samode Safari Lodge, Bandhavgarh
Saratha Villas, Chettinad
Taj Falaknuma Palace, Hyderabad
The Oberoi, Gurgaon, New Delhi

INDONESIA

W Retreat & Spa Bali-Seminyak, Bali

JAPAN

Capitol Hotel Tokyo, Tokyo
Hotel Kanra, Kyoto
St. Regis Osaka, Osaka

LAOS

Kiridara, Luang Prabang

MALAYSIA

Muntri Mews, Penang

MALDIVES

Anantara Kihavah Villas, Ise'a Atoll
Six Senses Laamu, Laamu Atoll

SINGAPORE

Hotel Fort Canning

TAIWAN

W Taipei, Taipei

THAILAND

Hansar Bangkok, Bangkok
Howie's Homestay, Chiang Mai
St. Regis Bangkok, Bangkok
Thanyamundra Organic Resort, Khao Sok
W Retreat Koh Samui, Koh Samui

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

One&Only The Palm, Dubai

VIETNAM

An Lam Ninh Van Bay Villas, Nha Trang
Fusion Maia, Danang
Hotel de l'Opera, Hanoi
Six Senses Con Dao, Con Dao

2011 LUXE LIST

from Bangkok's urban jungle. The pool area is broadly visible from the hotel's 19th floor rooftop Sky Terrace, which is perfect for weddings and parties of up to 450 guests. The sumptuous French Provencal menu at Eve on the ground floor is ready to accommodate anyone's dietary requirements. Come back for generous breakfasts of fresh tropical fruit, cured meats and homemade baked goods, best enjoyed on the outdoor terrace before Bangkok's midday heat (3 Soi Mahadlekluang 2, Rajadamri Rd.; 66-2/2209-1234; hansarbangkok.com; doubles from US\$275).

Howie's Homestay, Chiang Mai

American Howard Feldman and his Thai wife Jerri so enjoyed hosting VIP diners in their lush, landscaped gardens for guests of the neighboring Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai that they decided to convert one wing of their Bill Bensley-designed, Thai-Burmese dream home—featured in *Architectural Digest*—into a high-end, one-suite homestay. The high-ceilinged teak pavilion features a 500-thread-count bespoke sheets and a comfy, pillow-top bed. Floor-to-ceiling windows open onto a private garden boasting fishponds and fountains plus an outdoor bathroom with a sunken bath. Guests are in good hands off the property as well, with Howard and Jerri more than happy to show them their favorite antique dealers and roadside dives. Other perks of the all-inclusive package feature daily massages, round-the-clock car and driver, laundry, mini-bar and elephant rides (75/1 Moo 1, Ban Mai Mae Ram; 66-81/882-8345; howieshomestay.com; doubles from US\$800).

St. Regis Bangkok, Bangkok

Overlooking the Royal Thai Sports Club—a rare patch of greenery in Bangkok's urban jungle—the 227 elegantly appointed rooms here boast prime views, including a bird's eye view of the Sunday horse races. But the real highlight is the butler service: smartly suited assistants are on hand for everything from unpacking your bags to repairing a broken zip. They can also arrange a lavish private breakfast, which includes caviar with poached eggs, mascarpone French toast, Champagne and a spicy bloody Mary. If you prefer your drinks in the evening, head to the St. Regis Bar, where at 8:45 p.m.

each evening a sword-wielding butler sabers open a bottle of champagne (159 Rajadamri Rd.; 66-2/207-7777; stregis.com; doubles from US\$275).

VIETNAM

Fusion Maia Da Nang, Danang

With a concept that combines healthy living and personal indulgence, every aspect of this resort has been designed to help guests maximize their sensory experience. The spa is Vietnam's largest, and all treatments—based on natural living practices—are included in the room rate. The feng shui-inspired architecture of the resort, modeled on Hue's forbidden purple city, promotes the flow of energy and an airy,



Zen-like ambiance from the elevated welcome area down to the white, sandy stretch of My Khe Beach (formerly known as China Beach). Each of the minimalist 80 pool villas boasts a terrazzo tub and a private plunge pool set within a red-walled leafy green garden. The four two-bedroom spa villas incorporate a 13-square-meter plunge pool, while the two three-bedroom Fusion beach villas are fronted by a 70-square-meter private lap pool overlooking the South China Sea. The hotel's restaurants trade on fresh, tasty pan-Asian fusion cuisine, and there's no need to set your alarm—breakfast is served all day (*Truong Sa St., Khue My, Ngu Hanh Son*; 84-511/396-7999; fusionmaidaanang.com; doubles from US\$330).

Hotel de l'Opera, Hanoi

Set near the scenic shores of Hoan Kiem Lake and a short stroll from the streets of the Old Quarter, this MGallery-branded hotel is Hanoi's most ostentatious contemporary accommodation. The design of the 107 rooms borders on the theatrical: rich purple mottled walls, heavy silk drapes, and rich wooden parquet flooring provide a counterpoint to golden gilded mirrors and flamboyant crushed-pink velvet furnishings. Elegantly sensual, Satine is the hotel's gourmet restaurant, serving Mediterranean-inspired haute cuisine complimented by a well-edited wine list. The drinking rituals at the Fée Verte bar revolve around imported absinth (29 Trang Tien St.; 84-4/6282-5555; mgallery.com; doubles from US\$128).

Six Senses Con Dao, Con Dao

The first luxury resort on one of the 16 emerald jungle-covered islands off of the sleepy southeast coast of Vietnam features 50 sea-facing wooden villas with decks, loungers, and infinity pools. Inside, pillow-top beds confer panoramic views of the surrounding islands and rocky outcrops, and the polished concrete bathtub is roomy enough for two. The spa is a must, especially the three and a half hour Vietnam Journey, which incorporates *hat bang* indigenous almond and yoghurt body polish, honey, milk, and white clay mask, as well as the Oriental stretching massage and traditional herbal hair wash. The hotel's local delicacies include Miss Lan's summer rolls stuffed with fresh shrimp and organic vegetables from the surrounding gardens. Learn how to make your own by taking the local market tour that ends with deep bowls of *pho* noodle soup and Vietnamese coffee, or explore the neighboring islands in Con Dao's protected marine reserve by speedboat, stopping at Bai Cahn Island green and hawkbill turtles sanctuary (*Dai Doc Beach*, 84-61/383-1222; sixsenses.com; villas from US\$685).

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