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TRUTH IN TRAVEL

JANUARY 2012

GOLD LIST

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511

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You take the elevator to the beach
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CHECK OUT OUR DIGITAL EDITION FOR A SLIDE SHOW OF PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE 214 PLATINUM CIRCLE HOTELS, RESORTS, AND CRUISE LINES (SEE BELOW), AS WELL AS FULL REVIEWS OF ALL 2012 GOLD LIST PROPERTIES.

2012 GOLD LIST

THE WORLD'S BEST PLACES TO STAY

511
TOP HOTELS, RESORTS
& CRUISE LINES

HERE IS TRAVEL INTELLIGENCE IN its purest form: drawn from impartial personal experiences, sifted according to exacting standards, far-reaching in ambition, and, finally, tantalizing in what it delivers. The hotels, resorts, and cruise lines that made it onto this, our eighteenth annual Gold List, can't rest on their laurels. The contenders are tested afresh every year, in our Readers' Choice Survey, the collective result of some eight million votes cast by as savvy a group of travelers as you'll find on the planet. Many of those who do meet the gold standard hold their place year after year. But there is always somebody nipping at their heels. This year, for example, almost one-third of the list, a whopping 93 properties, is new. This reflects the acuity of our readers' radar—there are newcomers from the Czech Republic and Costa Rica, Saudi Arabia and South Korea, Tanzania and Turkey, and beyond. At this time of year, when thoughts turn to far horizons, here are more than 500 reasons to make your plans, find the dream.



INTRODUCING
THE
PLATINUM
CIRCLE



What better way to mark 25 years of *Condé Nast Traveler* than by celebrating the superstars of the Gold List? Whenever you see the icon at left, it means that the hotel, resort, or cruise line has made the list every year for the past five years running. † An impressive 214 Gold List properties and cruise lines can now call themselves Platinum Circle members, and the honor is a reminder of what we already know: that consistency, as much as excellence, is its own reward.

nia is "a quiet and serene resort, the perfect weekend getaway." Excursions include kayaking on the Delaware River. Tree restaurant's chef uses ingredients from the resort's herb garden.

Four Seasons, Philadelphia 89.1
 90.8 90.5 89.6 87.4 87.0

NEW Renaissance Hotel, Pittsburgh 91.4
 93.2 89.8 92.7 89.8 91.5

Situated "in the middle of the cultural district," this vintage hotel offers views of the Allegheny River and a design that is "beyond stunning." "Beds are a dream" in rooms with 12-foot ceilings and marble vanities. Braddock's American Brasserie serves up classic French comfort food with a local spin. "Extremely professional staff go above and beyond."

RHODE ISLAND

Chanler at Cliff Walk, Newport 92.0
 92.3 90.8 92.3 93.9 90.8

SOUTH CAROLINA

Inn at Palmetto Bluff, Bluffton 89.3
 95.3 90.0 81.4 86.8 93.1 89.1

Charleston Place, Charleston 91.3
 86.3 90.5 91.9 97.3 90.7

French Quarter Inn, Charleston 92.6
 92.3 92.3 88.0 95.2 94.7

John Rutledge House Inn, Charleston 91.6
 95.5 92.0 87.3 92.0 90.9

Market Pavilion Hotel, Charleston 89.2
 83.9 91.1 87.5 92.9 90.9

Planters Inn, Charleston 89.7
 88.5 90.3 89.9 93.3 86.4

Wentworth Mansion, Charleston 91.3
 93.2 92.6 90.5 88.0 91.9

Sanctuary at Kiawah Island Golf Resort, Kiawah Island 95.9
 98.1 95.8 92.8 96.6 96.2 95.8

TENNESSEE

Blackberry Farm, Walland 92.0
 92.6 91.9 93.7 90.1 91.8

TEXAS

Lake Austin Spa Resort, Austin 92.4
 92.1 93.6 94.3 89.4 92.1 92.9

Rosewood Crescent Hotel, Dallas 94.3
 92.9 95.5 94.5 94.6 93.8

Rosewood Mansion on Turtle Creek, Dallas 93.1
 93.7 96.6 96.6 88.1 90.9

Hotel Sorella, Houston 93.2
 95.6 92.7 93.8 88.8 95.1

Hotel Contessa, San Antonio 89.4
 91.1 87.9 82.7 93.5 91.1

NEW Hotel Valencia Riverwalk, San Antonio 89.6
 89.8 88.0 86.1 94.0 89.9

This mustard-and-paprika apartment building-like property with red-tile roofs is located right on the River Walk. Rooms—with custom-made beds, oversized leather armchairs, and plantation shutters—have views of the city or internal courtyard. Citrus restaurant serves "imaginative contemporary American cuisine."

Mokara Hotel & Spa, San Antonio 92.0
 91.2 90.0 90.9 95.6 92.1



A private dining room at Eight K, the signature restaurant at Viceroy, in Snowmass, Colorado, is entered through a door set in a glass and birch-tree wall. The resort scores 86.2 for food.

2012 GOLD LIST

GOLD STANDARD

ACTIVITIES MOST LIKELY TO GET YOU OUT OF YOUR ROOM

At Ayana Resort and Spa, on Bali's southern coast, guests can take Balinese cooking classes, or plant trees on the resort's grounds. Makes a body wrap at the spa sound a little ho-hum, don't you think?

Omni La Mansión del Rio, San Antonio 90.1
 89.4 86.7 87.3 96.7 90.5

UTAH

*** Stein Eriksen Lodge, Park City 89.7**
 88.5 89.5 88.6 93.3 87.5 91.1

NEW * Waldorf Astoria, Park City 89.0
 92.0 92.3 86.4 80.8 96.2 85.0

"Beautiful rooms" in natural colors have custom furnishings and views of the Wasatch Mountains. Enjoy a yam-and-pumpkin enzyme peel at the "first-rate" Golden Door Spa. "I would recommend this property to anyone who wants to be pampered while skiing." The restaurant serves seasonal American cuisine.

VERMONT

Twin Farms, Barnard 89.5
 95.7 91.3 77.3 87.0 95.7

NEW Rabbit Hill Inn, Lower Waterford 91.6
 97.8 95.7 93.5 89.1 95.7 77.8

"It may be the most romantic place in Vermont." The white Greek Revival-style B&B, which opened in 1834, has "exquisite service, food, and hospitality." "Individually designed rooms are telephone- and TV-free." At the Snooty Fox Pub, order signature cocktails such as the Vermont Maple Martini.

*** Stowe Mountain Lodge, Stowe 93.0**
 93.7 90.9 89.0 95.5 94.1 95.0

Pitcher Inn, Warren 89.1
 94.6 89.7 86.8 87.2 87.2

VIRGINIA

Keswick Hall, Charlottesville 94.7
 93.7 95.2 96.8 93.7 96.8 91.7

Colonial Houses, Williamsburg 96.8
 96.6 97.7 92.7 98.9 97.7

WASHINGTON

Fairmont Olympic Hotel, Seattle 89.2
 86.2 92.2 84.4 95.3 87.5

Hotel 1000, Seattle 92.7
 94.0 91.9 89.0 94.0 94.7

Inn at the Market, Seattle 90.4
 89.1 89.0 85.2 97.3 90.3

Hotel Murano, Tacoma 92.3
 94.4 94.3 82.6 94.3 95.7

WEST VIRGINIA

The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs 89.5
 89.5 92.7 88.1 83.6 91.3 92.0

WISCONSIN

NEW Iron Horse Hotel, Milwaukee 94.2
 97.5 97.0 94.9 84.8 97.0

Expect "a fun atmosphere" at this hotel in a former bedding company building that was constructed in 1907. The "very cool design" includes sleek, modern rooms with club chairs that have tattoo-inspired upholstery. Smyth's nightly tasting menu of "superior New Wisconsin cuisine" highlights local and seasonal ingredients. "This is the most masculine hotel you can imagine."

WYOMING

*** Amangani, Jackson Hole 93.5**
 97.4 94.9 86.8 92.1 92.3 97.4

*** Four Seasons, Jackson Hole 91.0**
 92.3 89.1 90.1 91.3 90.2 93.3

NEW * Hotel Terra, Teton Village 95.2
 97.6 95.2 92.9 97.6 95.2 92.7

The ski-in/ski-out contemporary Western lodge is "stylish and comfortable." "The eco design is fresh and cool," with vibrant colors, streamlined dark-wood furniture, and gas fireplaces. Have a hearty Italian dinner at Il Villaggio Osteria, with home-made pastas like beef cheek ravioli.