



Why some hotels trump the destination

Most of us choose where to go and then start planning where to stay.

But some hotels are so seductive that they don't just unlock a destination – they inspire the entire trip. Here are the hotels to look out for this year, from properties enveloped by nature to design masterpieces crafted by avant-garde architects

By **Joshua Zukas**



Because...

They can be works of art

Some of the world's most daring hotel and resort architects are working in Asia

Shinta Mani Wild

Architect Bill Bensley launched Shinta Mani Wild (above) deep within the Cambodian wilderness. With a cluster of raised wooden structures that peer over the jungle, it's no surprise that it's now a member of National Geographic's Unique Lodges of the World. bensleycollection.com

Four Seasons Hotel Kuala Lumpur

Located just next to KL's Petronas Twin Towers, the hotel's Yun House restaurant was crafted by Ed Ng and Terence Ngan to express the outside impact on the city's history over the centuries, from the mercantile Cantonese to British colonials. fourseasons.com/kualalumpur/dining/restaurants/yun-house/



Amanyangyun

Built out of Ming and Qing dynasty village houses and set up in a forest just an hour outside Shanghai, Amanyangyun was named Hotel of the Year at the prestigious AHEAD Awards in 2019 for its skilful blend of chic minimalism and luxurious detail. aman.com/resorts/amanyangyun

Because...

Some hotels are truly liberating

Sometimes, all you need is to fall off the map, and **The Lindis** in New Zealand's South Island is probably as off-grid as it gets. With a rolling roof inspired by the contours of the landscape, plush but earthy interiors and a range of experiences from fly-fishing to horse riding, it's all too easy to forget about the rest of the world. thelindis.com



Because...

It gives you a chance to downsize

Less is definitely more in Tokyo's tiny **Trunk Hotel**, which has just 15 designer rooms in the city's fashion-focused Shibuya ward. In contrast to the neighbourhood's decidedly futuristic and neon aesthetic, Trunk Hotel exhibits more natural tones, with upcycled timber and potted plants that bulge from the crisp lines of the exteriors. trunk-hotel.com



Because...

The right hotel can frame a whole city

Some hotels can make a destination, whereas others have a way of embodying it. **Rosewood Bangkok** was modelled on the traditional Thai *wai*, the national greeting emblematic of Thai hospitality, adding yet another eclectic high-rise to the city's hodgepodge skyline. The 158 rooms epitomise contemporary urban luxury with floor-to-ceiling inclined windows that parade generous city views. rosewoodhotels.com/en/bangkok

Because...

They let you go wild



Port Lympne (above) outside London works with the Aspinall Foundation, a conservation charity dedicated to protecting endangered animals and returning them to protected wilderness areas. In the meantime, the animals – lowland gorillas, black rhinos, lemurs and other primates – roam around the expansive grounds which are dotted with lodges and cottages. In

2019, they opened the Lion Lodge, where the reserve's lion pride comes right up to the broad glass windows. This year, they'll launch the Giraffe Hall, a centuries-old stately home turned 10-room luxury hotel with giraffes tall enough to peer into the first-floor bedrooms.

In northern Thailand, the **Anantara Golden Triangle Elephant Camp & Resort** recently constructed giant glass bubbles where guests can come face-to-trunk with the resort's elephants.

Nestled just outside Yala National Park in southern Sri Lanka, the **Wild Coast Tented Lodge** (left) has large luxury tent-like structures landscaped in the shape of a leopard's paw in honour of the park's most celebrated residents.

aspinallfoundation.org/port-lympne; anantara.com; resplendentceylon.com

