

Sunday 4 June 2017  
telegraph.co.uk

# Discover

TRIED  
TESTED  
RATED  
RECOMMENDED

## Family time On a rural hike in Umbria

Two generations  
bond as they tackle the  
Way of St Francis  
*page 6*



## Telegraph Tours Albania with John Stapleton

Unlock the secrets of this  
enigmatic country with  
the TV presenter  
*page 9*



## Raymond Blanc Oxford à la carte

The chef picks favourite  
haunts in the town he  
calls his second home  
*page 12*

Win a  
dream holiday  
*See page 7*  
The Telegraph • TRAVEL  
**AWARDS**  
2017



# Europe's 50 best boutique hotels

From a calm cliff-top eyrie in Santorini to a cosy farmhouse in Spain, our experts pick perfect properties for a summer escape

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

**B**outique hotels are the catwalk models of the accommodation world: sleek, sexy, dressed to impress and Instagrammable at every turn. Whether in the city or the country, beside the sea or in the mountains, with four bedrooms or 45 (though no more than that), the best of them are cool and stylish, glossy and bespoke, designed to pique the interest, stimulate the senses and make serious hotel junkies of us all.

Hotels were never desirable before boutiques hit the scene. You could be impressed or comforted by them but you never wanted to inhabit them, to take them home. But that's the point: successful boutique hotels have all the qualities of home, only lovelier, and without the work. They are the ultimate in lifestyle living.

It's just shy of 40 years ago that the breed was born. It was London, 1978, and celebrity designer Anouska Hempel unveiled Blakes, at the time something so desirable, bold, seductive, edgy and intimate that the stars of the day flocked to the moody bedrooms whose minibars were quickly emptied of their Champagne, Beluga caviar and personal oxygen canisters. And when, in 1984, Steve Rubell compared Morgan's, the cutting edge, New York hotel that he opened with Ian Schrager, to a boutique, the term stuck.

Brilliant boutique hotels aren't just about looks; they're about how we live now, and so you are as likely to find a yoga or cookery class, a library of books, an all-day grazing menu or a curated cocktail as you are a chaise longue or chandelier that you are desperate to have at home. And don't be put off if you are a dyed-in-the-wool aficionado of large hotels... these hotels on our list have just the right dose of privacy and friendly service. No hotel can be truly lovable without warmth, character and a sense of place though. That's what you'll find in these boutique beauties in Europe, all gems that should be on your hotel wish list this summer and beyond.

Fiona Duncan



Bill & Co Suites & Lounge, Mykonos, above; Little Green Bay, Hvar, right; one of the dishes at Kenso, Mykonos, inset below. Cover image: Perivolos on Santorini

## Islands

### Little Green Bay, Hvar

"Less is more" is the motto at Croatia's hottest new boutique hotel. Built on the site of an old farmhouse and nestled in an isolated pine-scented bay, the stone facades hide slick interiors of polished concrete painted in earthy tones, with big wickerwork lampshades, grainy linen textiles, and considerable attention to detail. This is barefoot-chic at its best.

Rooms: 15; doubles from £312; [telegraph.co.uk/tt-littlegreenbay](http://telegraph.co.uk/tt-littlegreenbay)

### La Granja, Ibiza

This 16th-century farmhouse exudes a private-retreat vibe thanks to earthy hues, concrete floors, minimalist décor, heavy

wood-and-metal furniture, complemented by decorative sprigs of fragrant lavender and L'Occitane products in the bathroom. A traditional Bedouin tent on the property hosts parties, meditations and gatherings of like-minded people.

Rooms: 10; doubles from £290; [telegraph.co.uk/tt-lagranja](http://telegraph.co.uk/tt-lagranja)

### Ammos, Crete

A seaside hotel that is both family-friendly and style-conscious is surprisingly hard to find. This cute little number ticks

all the boxes: cool but unstuffy design, sandy beach, heated pool, babysitters on tap, and home-cooked Cretan food that will keep even the pickiest of eaters happy. Facilities are especially great for younger children. There's yoga lessons and top-notch massages for parents.

Rooms: 33; doubles from £104; [telegraph.co.uk/tt-amos](http://telegraph.co.uk/tt-amos)

### Monaci delle Terre Nere, Sicily

Located on the fertile slopes of Mount Etna, the mood is adventurous eco-chic, with the looming volcano conferring a special energy. Rooms are stylish dens, some with wood-burning stoves, exposed lava-stone walls and weathered ceiling beams, others fresh and bright, with contemporary artworks and Sicilian antiques.

Rooms: 12; doubles from £103; [telegraph.co.uk/tt-terretere](http://telegraph.co.uk/tt-terretere)

### Perivolos, Santorini

The hotel that put Oia on the map and spawned countless imitators. Minimalist suites carved from the cliffs are almost as dazzling as the sea views. The infinity pool is the stuff of honeymooners' dreams – everyone looks like a swimwear model in this setting.

Rooms: 21; doubles from £445; [telegraph.co.uk/tt-perivolos](http://telegraph.co.uk/tt-perivolos)

### Torrabenc, Menorca

Traditional Menorcan drystone walls and olive trees set the tone for a series of white buildings dressed in natural tones and floaty fabrics. Stylishly smooth rather than full-on rustic, and on the smart side of the boho-meter,



Torrabenc is a masterclass in modern Mediterranean good taste. Rooms: 27; doubles from £304; [telegraph.co.uk/tt-torrabenc](http://telegraph.co.uk/tt-torrabenc)

### Bill & Co Suites & Lounge, Mykonos

Luxurious simplicity sets the mood here where pool, lounge and restaurant spaces are centred around a stunning view of the Aegean Sea. The minimalist suites feature a sea-view balcony and several have private pools. The hotel is also home to one of the best restaurants on the island.

Rooms: 32; doubles from £622; [telegraph.co.uk/tt-billandcoo](http://telegraph.co.uk/tt-billandcoo)

### JK Place Capri, Capri

A hotel that embodies Capri as it should be, but rarely is: not a beautiful but fragile



community bursting at the seams with summer day-trippers, but a stylish refuge full of dolce vita class, combining impeccable taste with seaside nonchalance. There's also a lovely heated outdoor pool and small but well-appointed spa. Rooms: 22; doubles from £484; [telegraph.co.uk/tt-ijklacecapri](http://telegraph.co.uk/tt-ijklacecapri)

### Ca's Xorc, Majorca

This imaginatively restored 18th-century olive mill oozes character and rustic-chic charm. Natural stone walls, heavy beams and traditional Majorcan floor tiles all pay homage to its origins, while Moroccan artefacts and plenty of chill-out areas add a touch of the bohemian. The gardens are cradled between rugged mountains and sea. Rooms: 15; doubles from £150; [telegraph.co.uk/tt-casxorc](http://telegraph.co.uk/tt-casxorc)

BROUGHT TO YOU BY CRAGHOPPERS

#### HIGH LIVING

Three key garments for a highland life



#### Kiwi Classic Jacket £80

Tough, waterproof: a perfect everyday walking jacket



#### Elmwood Short-Sleeved Shirt £35

Cool and light, with SolarShield zinc oxide UV protection



#### Kiwi Trousers £40

Practical, rugged: a bestseller for more than 20 years

# Bulwark of the glen

How nature photographer Peter Cairns helps protect wildlife around his Cairngorms home

**T**he Midlands was where I grew up and ran a business from the age of 18. Well, it ran me really. After 17 years I had become disillusioned with it and wanted to have a complete change. So we sat down, looked at a map and thought, "Right – where is the wildest place in the UK?" And this was it.

We took over an old riding centre. It's basically a 140-acre farmholding. When you step outside you see a mix of open moorland, forest and mountains, and the River Feshie rushing by. We pretentiously like to call it a rewilding reserve, so we've got four Highland cattle that replicate natural grazing patterns but apart from that we do nothing. Nature is left to do its own thing. Sometimes it does stuff you like, sometimes it does stuff you don't like. We don't touch it.

The glen we live in is about nine miles long, and there are probably around 30 people living in it. Secluded is the word. It's a fantastic



Red squirrels are one of the rare species that thrive in the special habitats





**Castel Fragsburg, Dolomites, Italy**  
**36** Located in a historic hunting lodge dating from the 17th century, the property is surrounded by orchards, forests and vines, lending the hotel an intimate and exclusive feel. Interiors feature a harmonious blend of Alpine and Mediterranean, with antique furniture and contemporary fittings. The Michelin-starred food is served on the panoramic terrace in summer.  
 Rooms: 20; doubles from £233; telegraph.co.uk/tt-castelfragsburg

**Towns & cities**

**The Dylan, Amsterdam**  
**37** Period charm meets contemporary styling in a prime location at this lovely

hotel housed in a former almshouse. Michelin-starred chef Dennis Kuipers presides over the hotel's Vinkeles restaurant, with its original cast-iron stoves, and Occo Brasserie, a romantic spot in a secluded garden courtyard. There's also a stylish bar for top-notch cocktails.  
 Rooms: 40; doubles from £245; telegraph.co.uk/tt-thedylan



**St Joseph's, Dubrovnik, Croatia**  
**38** In a beautifully restored 16th-century building in the heart of the bustling Old Town. The décor is predominantly white, with fabrics in earthy shades of cream and beige, and the furnishing is

upmarket, with Baroque references – crystal chandeliers, silver candlesticks and sumptuous armchairs. Breakfast in bed adds to the romance.  
 Rooms: six; doubles from £295; telegraph.co.uk/tt-stjosephs

**Brody House, Budapest, Hungary**  
**39** The imaginatively decorated interiors live up to the hotel's reputation as the "coolest place to stay" in the Hungarian capital. The house dates from the 1850s and self-consciously exudes faded grandeur to dramatic effect. Think exposed walls with old, stripped, wooden doors of varying sizes pinned to them. Wacky, but utterly memorable.  
 Rooms: 11; doubles from £60; telegraph.co.uk/tt-brodyhouse

**Corte di Gabriela, Venice, Italy**  
**40** Venice habitués weary of the omnipresent brocade-and-Murano-glass combo, take note: the Corte di Gabriela successfully foists contemporary décor on to a historic framework, creating a stylish look with startling colours, great textures and some serious pieces of designer furniture. Chic it may be, but it's also intimate and welcoming.  
 Rooms: 11; doubles from £233; telegraph.co.uk/tt-cortidigabriela

**Ad Astra, Florence, Italy**  
**41** The owners have taken the period features (frescoes, vast chandeliers, fine stucco and creaky original parquet floors) and added a quirky yet convincing mix of reclaimed furniture, objets and knick knacks from the Fifties, Sixties and Seventies. The result is classy, comfortable and highly original. The hotel also has a wonderfully large walled garden.  
 Rooms: nine; doubles from £94; telegraph.co.uk/tt-adastra

**Balcon de Cordoba, Cordoba, Spain**  
**42** A dazzling revamp of a 17th-century monastery, with gloriously private



rooms and a sensational rooftop bar, all a stone's throw from the city's majestic Mezquita cathedral. The careful conversion skillfully mixes original open-brick walls, heavy wooden doors and thick pillars with sleek contemporary design.  
 Rooms: 10; doubles from £119; telegraph.co.uk/tt-balcondecordoba

**The Fifteen Keys, Rome, Italy**

**43** You need to ring the bell to gain admittance to The Fifteen Keys – a tall, pale-cream-hued town house, converted into an utterly charming urban refuge with a cool retro feel. Grown-up colour schemes, Fifties-style armchairs and vintage light fittings set the tone of a cool insider address for plugged-in independent travellers.  
 Rooms: 15; doubles from £101; telegraph.co.uk/tt-15keys

**The Serras, Barcelona, Spain**

**44** Sunny, friendly and supremely comfortable, this is one of a new breed of stylish and unstuffy five-stars changing the face of the Barcelona hotel scene. Its decked rooftop bar and pool area, with views across the port, is worth a visit even for non-guests. Standard rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows, balconies, and beds with mattresses by appointment to Queen Elizabeth II, no less.  
 Rooms: 28; doubles from £190; telegraph.co.uk/tt-theserras

**Vander Urbani Resort, Ljubljana, Slovenia**

**45** The hotel's trendy cocktail bar and restaurant spill out onto the street at this riverside spot in the shadow of the city's imposing castle. The traditional

**Sant Francesc Hotel Singular, Palma, Spain**

**Sant Francesc Hotel Singular, Palma, Spain**

**47** A five-star beauty in an elegant mansion with stylish rooms, a calm atmosphere and attentive service. The Majorcan city's major sights and the Mediterranean are a short walk away. The rooftop pool and bar make the hotel particularly attractive in summer. The hotel's laid-back Quadrat restaurant is open for lunch and dinner.  
 Rooms: 42; doubles from £152; telegraph.co.uk/tt-francescsingular

facade and minimalist design meets Baroque charm. Pack a cosse for a dip in the cute rooftop pool.  
 Rooms: 20; doubles from £86; telegraph.co.uk/tt-vanderurbani

**Hotel Valverde, Lisbon, Portugal**

**46** Interiors celebrate the best of Portugal with porcelain from Braz Gil Studio and art from Vieira da Silva set against a backdrop of heavy fabrics, geometric rugs and retro furniture. The Sítio restaurant, on the ground floor, has an elegantly relaxed, brasserie feel with views of the hotel's tree-filled interior courtyard.  
 Rooms: 25; doubles from £190; telegraph.co.uk/tt-valverde



Brody House, Budapest, top; Ad Astra, Florence, above; Hotel Particulier, left

five-star beauty in an elegant mansion with stylish rooms, a calm atmosphere and attentive service. The city's major sights and the Mediterranean are a short walk away. The rooftop pool and bar make the hotel particularly attractive in summer. The hotel's laid-back restaurant is open for lunch and dinner.  
 Rooms: 42; doubles from £152; telegraph.co.uk/tt-francescsingular

**Hotel Particulier, Paris, France**  
 This hidden 19th-century mansion, jewelled with a manicled garden in hilltop Montmartre, is the last word in Parisian chic. Suites are spacious and eclectic, and the fashionable cocktail bar and restaurant, with dreamy summer seating, is in the little black book of every Parisian A-lister.  
 Rooms: five; doubles from £334; telegraph.co.uk/tt-particulierparis

**La Casa del Califa, Vejer de la Frontera, Spain**

**49** North African and Andalusian artefacts create a seductive, exotic atmosphere at this lovely hotel that sprawls through 10 adjoining 500-year-old houses. All the rooms are different and decorated in warm tones with antiques and Moroccan touches. The rooftop bar is a lovely spot for cocktails.  
 Rooms: 21; doubles from £81; telegraph.co.uk/tt-casadelcalifa

**Nimb, Copenhagen, Denmark**

**50** Located in the leafy Tivoli Gardens, the exterior of this "Arabian fantasy castle" dating from 1909 features striking Taj Mahal-style turrets and light bulbs that bring the place to life at night. Interiors are reassuringly Danish, with Douglas pinewood floors and Oland granite stonework. Rooms have a wonderfully hygge feel with open fires for cool summer evenings.  
 Rooms: 17; doubles from £325; telegraph.co.uk/tt-nimb

For a guide to the best hotels in Europe and beyond, see: telegraph.co.uk/hotels

**Telegraph TRAVEL** CRUISE OFFER

**AMSTERDAM AND ANTWERP BANK HOLIDAY CRUISE**

**SAVE UP TO 30%\***

**MercuryHolidays** OFFER CODE: MSAF20

**9 DAY FULLY ESCORTED TOUR FROM £1,699\***

**SOUTH AFRICA'S WINELANDS & GARDEN ROUTE**

Selected departures from November 2017 to October 2018

This leisurely journey along South Africa's breathtaking Garden Route combines scenic drives through undulating vine-clad valleys, a chance to meet an ostrich, the world's largest bird and a rewarding hike