TATLER

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ROYAL SPECIAL

HRH The Duchess of Kent

1933–2025

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TATLER

TRAVEL GUIDE 2026

THE 101 BEST HOTELS IN THE WORLD

TATLER TRAVEL

THE BOLD, THE BEAUTIFUL, THE BRILLIANT: WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE HAILED AS ONE OF TATLER'S 101 BEST HOTELS IN THE WORLD?

TATLER
THE 101 BEST HOTELS IN THE WORLD

PUT IT ON ICE!

Nothing will put you in a more festive, feel-good mood than Christmas shopping on Avenue Montaigne. For what could possibly outshine a new pear-shaped diamond solitaire? (A new Louis Vuitton trunk? A Harry Winston heirloom?) But first, you'll need a base from which to mount your campaign; and when Paris begins to twinkle, there's no place more enchanting than the Hôtel Plaza Athénée, resplendent with its signature red awnings. The courtyard then transforms into a yule-tide dream – a private ice rink framed by fairy lights, shimmering trees and the glow of chandeliers – and in the dark days around the equinox, the winter chalet returns, offering an urban après-ski fantasy until the end of January. Here, guests sit at one long, candlelit table to dine on raclette, charcuterie and Alpine comfort food before slipping on their skates for a twirl beneath the stars. By day, children glide over this frozen arena; by night, it's the centre of the city's most glittering playground. With Dom Pérignon on ice and carols in the air, Christmas at the Plaza Athénée is Paris at its most magical. Elegant, joyful and entirely unforgettable.

TOUCH OF GLACE
Get your skates on: Christmas is the most magical time to visit the Hôtel Plaza Athénée

PHOTOGRAPHS: LUC BRAQUET; TOM HALL

Hidden JEWELS

Much-loved by those in the know, these coveted boltholes – from a thespian haven on Ibiza to a Regency townhouse in Marylebone – are just too special not to share

SANT FRANCESC

Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Tucked away in the heart of historic Palma, next door to the Basílica de Sant Francesc, is the church's namesake hotel. Talk about pride of place: from its panoramic rooftop pool terrace you can gaze out at the flying buttresses – the saints' statues peering down from above – and beyond to a gargantuan Gothic cathedral. Now celebrating its 10th year, this establishment is a 19th-century neoclassical mansion with preserved original features, such as the daintily frescoed ceilings and paved inner courtyard. But it's a heady mix of old and new, too, with a design-first elegance worked to a palette of mahogany browns, blacks and creams. It has an impressive art collection, which includes pieces by Guillem Nadal and Riera i Aragó. As for sustenance, the Quadrat restaurant – located in former stables – is where you have breakfast; either sipping fresh orange juice indoors, beneath an intimate vaulted ceiling, or in the luscious city garden. With city-centre space unsurprisingly at a premium, a rather chic gym has been masterfully created in the building's former water cistern. And there's a small but perfectly formed spa for divine-smelling Anne Semonin facials. *Doubles from £275 (hotelsantfrancesc.com).*

Watch the sun dip over Palma's cathedral from the singular rooftop at Sant Francesc

Sir Laurence Olivier, Vivien Leigh and Diana Rigg visited Can Talaias, founded in the 1960s by fellow actor Terry Thomas

CAN TALAIAS *Ibiza, Spain*

It's something of a miracle that this agriturismo has remained one of the most special hideaways on Ibiza for so long. The delightfully remote finca was the retreat of British actor Terry Thomas and his wife Belinda, who came across it in 1967 while riding in the forests above the town of San Carlos. The crumbling ruin had one of the best sea views on the island. So they bought and restored it, leaving it to their son Cushan, who turned it into this boutique establishment. It still exerts a magnetic pull as you sit on the shady terrace for summer supper, fuelled by chilled glasses of Mencía, a delicious Spanish red that works oh-so-well with Brazilian chef Rapha's sauteed prawns and artichokes, grilled shoulder of lamb and fabulous passionfruit flan. Every guest here is looking for the same thing: the genuine barefoot-bohemian sense of Ibiza; that's why it's a favourite of Charlotte Tilbury, who had her first wedding here (and a few summers ago took over the whole place). It's elegantly styled but never showy, with wood-burning fireplaces, a drawing room lined with books and 10 airy bedrooms. Cushan and his wife, Laetitia, can usually be found chatting to guests, advising on the best local beaches and hikes. *Doubles from £210, including breakfast (cantalaias.net).*

PHOTOGRAPHS: E CHIARA CADEDDU; CYBRY WESTWOOD; KYM GRIMSHAW PHOTOGRAPH; 15 RAY MAIN 2020

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PHOTOGRAPH: MARK ANTHONY FOX

LAPS OF LUXOR
Surrounded by palm trees, the main pool at Al Moudira in Egypt is large enough for fitness swimmers and has a shallow area for younger guests