

SMALL
LUXURY
HOTELS
OF THE WORLD

Independently minded

2020 Luxury Travel Trends





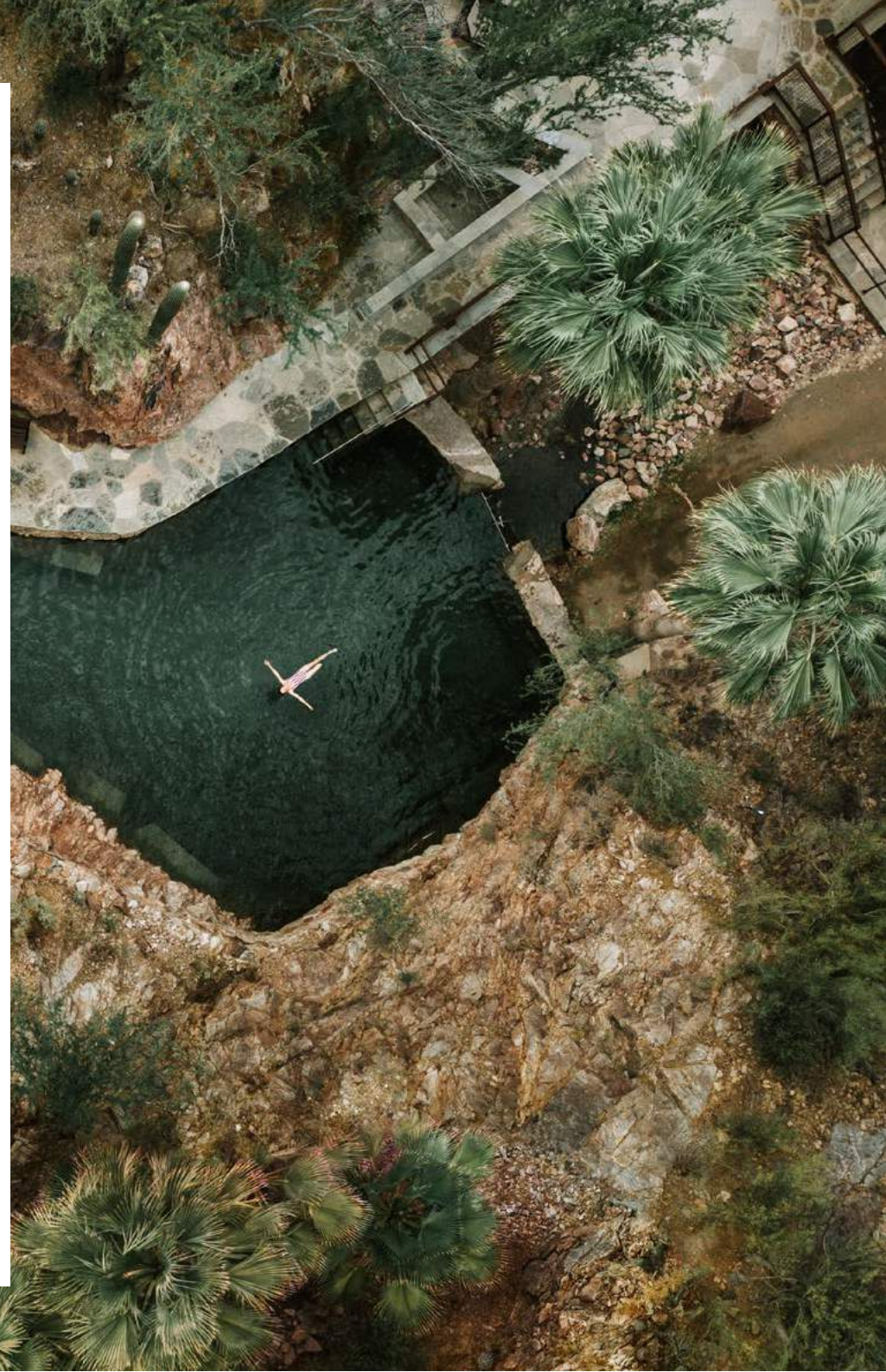
Independently minded

At Small Luxury Hotels of the World (SLH), we're constantly on a mission to find the most individual, intimate and intense hotel and travel experiences around the world for our discerning travellers. As we approach our 30th anniversary in 2020 and celebrate three decades as the pioneer of boutique, we've certainly developed a keen eye for trends and concepts in the luxury hotel space. By curating and championing the very best small independently owned hotels across the globe, we can see that our guests are demonstrating a deeper, yet simple purpose: the search for uncomplicated, authentic and honest luxury.

The main tenets of this report include creative sustainability, wellbeing, community, food, escapes and emerging destinations. The idea of paring things back and offering the best of the basics for a true sense of luxury is weaved throughout. Whether it's bio-architecture to preserve the integrity of the land, creating a sense of local community or indigenous spa therapies, travellers are looking to embrace the cultures, nature and people around them in an effort to sustain and nurture our precious planet, while reclaiming their valuable time. We are delighted to share these insights as we prepare for a purposeful and passionate milestone year ahead.

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to be "JF", written in a fluid, cursive style.

Jean-Francois Ferret
CEO, Small Luxury Hotels of the World



An aerial photograph of a tropical beach. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, transitioning to a lighter, sandy hue near the shore. The beach is a wide, light-colored strip of sand. In the foreground, several palm trees are visible, their long shadows cast across the sand. The overall scene is serene and idyllic.

Conscious luxury

The momentum created behind conscious travel in 2019 is unprecedented and proved that behaviour can change quickly for the better. As a global company, SLH will be launching a Sustainability Manifesto in 2020 laying out commitments for SLH as a business as well as guidance for our member hotels. In the meantime, we take inspiration from some of our hotels who have gone above and beyond to pave the way and create a place where guests can truly relax, find tranquility and travel in a mindful way.

Conscious luxury

Bio-architecture

SLH hotels are renowned for their connection to their destination and immersion in the landscape. Examples of bio-architecture can be seen across the collection as hotels seek alternative solutions to building techniques that can cause environmental damage via impact, waste and pollution.

The Racha in Phuket blends in with the existing terrain of the land, incorporating building materials that were selected not to cut through the land or boulders and minimize the number of trees that needed to be cut down. Many of the villas have trees coming through the terraces and for each tree that was lost on property, two have been planted in its place.

The walls at **The Sukhothai Shanghai** are made from clay which is highly effective in air purification, humidity regulation and sound absorption, vital for optimal health and brain function.

New to SLH, **Gangtey Lodge** in Bhutan, one of only two carbon-negative countries in the world, has been designed to have minimal impact on the surrounding landscape. Local, recycled and eco-friendly materials were used in construction and the building designed for maximum energy efficiency.

Striving to be neutral

While many of us are now making the conscious decision to reduce and offset our carbon emissions, for many hotels this has long been a consideration. Envisioned by the Leali family, **Lefay Resorts** in Lake Garda and now the Dolomites, are led by the ethos that 'personal wellness should never overlook environmental wellness' and have been offsetting CO2 emissions since 2013 through the purchase of CERs credits recognised by the UN.



Lefay Resort & SPA Dolomiti

Tabacon Grand Spa Thermal Resort in Costa Rica has been accredited with the highest category Certification for Sustainable Tourism by the Costa Rican Tourist Board. They use 100% organic and biodegradable products, have developed reforestation programmes, implement energy-saving technology and plant a tree programmes, 95% of staff are native and \$3 from each guest stay supports local schools.

Aleenta Resort and Spa Hua Hin in Thailand uses its restaurant to champion carbon-free cooking. Produce is grown in the resort's organic farm which functions as a community co-operative. The remainder of the food comes from local farms, transported by bike or tuk-tuk, powered by recycled cooking oil. Food is cooked in solar ovens and cured in solar smokehouses. Meanwhile, **Arima Hotel** in San Sebastian, Spain, produces 77% of its own energy from aerothermal and geothermal power.

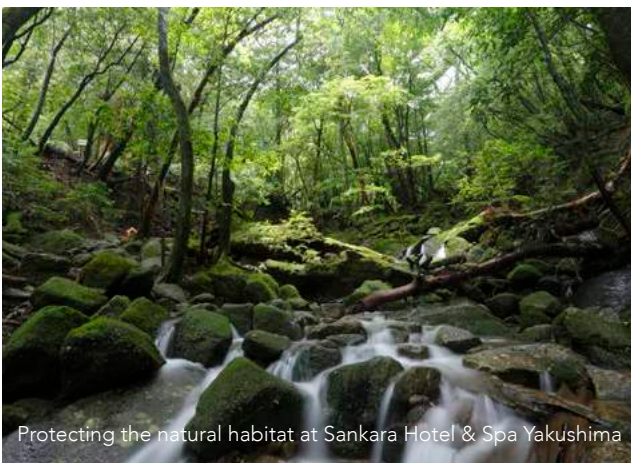


Arima Hotel

Conscious luxury



Homes for Hornbills at Cape Kudu Hotel



Protecting the natural habitat at Sankara Hotel & Spa Yakushima



Underwater reef cam at Harbour Village Beach Club
(streamed by explore.org)

Plastic NOT fantastic

The first step for many, but not as easy as it sounds, committing to becoming plastic free goes far beyond using bamboo or metal straws. [akaryn Hotel Group](#) will become a single-use plastic free hotel group in 2020, offering guests stainless steel water bottles, toiletry products in locally manufactured celadon containers filled with essential oils-based products, bio-degradable bin bags, and shopping bags that can be borrowed from the wardrobes.

[Sankara Hotel & Spa Yakushima](#), Japan, is leading a nationwide 'Team Zero Waste' campaign to reduce plastic waste and educate the masses on eco-practices to learn more about the incredible nature on the island.

Lend a hand to conservation

In an effort to protect the island's native hornbill population, [Cape Kudu Hotel](#) on the island of Koh Yao Noi in Thailand has introduced a 'Homes for Hornbills' initiative to construct and install nest-boxes. By involving the local community and particularly local students, the resort hopes to highlight the importance of conserving their own environment and preserving the future of their forest. Their efforts paid off with the first hornbill checking in to its new home the very next day, on a tree right beside the resort lobby.

[Milaidhoo Island Maldives](#) has implemented a coral regeneration programme where guests can 'adopt' a reef of their own, planting it and watching it grow over the years.

As the only resort in the world advancing coral preservation through Electrified Reef and traditional transplantation techniques, [Harbour Village Beach Club](#), Bonaire, uses an underwater reef cam to monitor and track coral growth while assessing each method's effectiveness. Guests who dive can learn how to hang and maintain corals in the underwater nursery, how to transplant corals from the nursery to the house reef and become PADI certified in coral restoration.

The community of dispersed hotels

As travellers needs change, so have the functions and layout of new luxury properties. Dispersed hotels offer a new way to experience a hotel and a destination by spreading the areas out across buildings in one small town or village, naturally creating a micro-community for guests and locals.

The community of dispersed hotels

Enzo Ango Fuya II in Kyoto is Japan's first ever dispersed hotel. Blending in with the rhythm of the city, each of the 5 buildings, dotted around one street, has its own particular style, features and functionality.

Le Refuge de la Traye in Meribel, France, which opened in December, takes inspiration from classic Savoie design, with eco-luxury chalets creating a 'hotel hamlet' complete with a chapel, shepherd's hut, farm and spa.

San Canzian Village & Hotel in Buje, Croatia, opened in June 2019 and has been created on the ruins of an ancient medieval village. Guests' authentic experience of the Istrian countryside is complemented by Michelin-starred Noel restaurant, of Zagreb fame, showcasing the region's award-winning olive oils, wines and vegetables from the on-site garden.

Scattered across 2 acres, yet tucked against the rocky backdrop of the Aegean cliffs, **Mykonos Riviera Hotel & Spa** has 10 Cycladic buildings in the style of a traditional Greek village, tiered to make the very best of the ocean views.

Situated in the idyllic French countryside, **Domaine des Etangs** may look like a typical chateau but with rooms scattered around the entire estate in separate farmhouse buildings guests can enjoy the beautiful scenery on their own, and come together as they wish.



Le Refuge de la Traye



Mykonos Riviera Hotel & Spa



San Canzian Village & Hotel

A woman is lying on a massage table, wearing a VR headset and large headphones. A therapist's hands are visible, applying a product from a dropper to her face. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting a spa or wellness environment.

Wellbeing from Ahh to Zzz

Self-improvement-obsessed consumers are on the rise, and it's no surprise that road warriors who mix business and leisure travel seek some sort of wellness in every aspect of their lives. From the Marie Kondo craze to the boost in meditation classes in every major city and the increasing popularity of CBD-based products, mindfulness, wellbeing and health are a top priority for all types of travellers.

Wellbeing from Ahh to Zzz

Sweet, sweet sleep

A vital, yet often neglected part of many routines, studies continue to show that simply sleeping well can drastically change overall health and wellbeing. As part of our trends report two years ago, we introduced Sleep by Design therapy at **137 Pillars** Hotels in Bangkok and Chiang Mai and SLH hotels continue to take it a step further.

Mind Therapy at **Rockliffe Hall**, UK, provides the ultimate power nap, where foundational Spa.Wave therapy delivers symptom-reducing and resilience-building through stereo headphones that enable the brain to deeply relax.

Casa Madrona Hotel & Spa in California is the first hotel to introduce a sleep fitness programme leveraging innovative technology and personal biometrics.

Mala Spa at **Keemala** in Phuket offers a Mindful Dreams sleep ritual, aimed at enhancing sleep quality through a heightened sense of relaxation, the ritual begins with a 90-minute spa treatment with essential oils, a meditation sequence, use of rose quartz, a sunset bath and herbal tea before bed.

Lefay Resort & SPA Lago di Garda includes an insomnia check-up treatment that helps to determine the evening concentration of melatonin, an essential neurohormone that regulates the

sleep-wake cycle. Recommended for those who have difficulty falling asleep, insomnia and severe psychophysical stress and anxiety, the test is carried out on a sample of saliva.

Le Grand Bellevue in Gstaad, Switzerland, will host an overnight 'Bamford B Silent Sleep Retreat' this summer in partnership with world-leading Sophrology expert, Dominique Antiglio. The programme combines guided wellness techniques with targeted treatments using methods such as cannabis sativa oils, Japanese shiatsu rocking techniques and pressure point massages to replenish serotonin levels.



Sucimurni spa rituals at Tanjong Jara Resort

Get local with indigenous spa therapy

As everyday life continues to become more technology-driven, there is a strong desire for down-to-earth therapy and spa practices that use traditional foods, plant-based medicines and ancient rituals.

KASA Hotel Riviera Maya lets guests immerse in a traditional Mayan Clay Bath with an interactive healing spa experience designed to energize, hydrate and detoxify the skin.

Guests can indulge in a milk bath and hay bed or “Alpenbad!” at **Le Refuge de la Traye** in Meribel, France - milk baths have long been known for their relaxing and hydrating properties, and the hay beds have been practiced by Tyrolean farmers for generations.

The **Hemingways Nairobi Spa** in Kenya combines both French and custom-designed treatments crafted from locally sourced ingredients. Bespoke treatments include exfoliating rituals using coconut and a selection of traditional African massage techniques.

Villa Franca in Positano offers The Scent of Positano, a ritual that uses famed lemons from the Amalfi coast to promote detoxification.

The Fortress Resort & Spa in Sri Lanka offers traditional South Asian Ayurvedic therapies including Shirodhara, a classical treatment in which selected herbal oil is poured in a continuous stream on the forehead which nourishes the central nervous system.

Tanjong Jara Resort in Malaysia has a spa philosophy called Sucimurni. The unique restorative Malay treatments have been handed down from generation to generation and are believed to have their origins in the convergence of Malay, Arab, Indian and Chinese influences.

Le M de Megève in the French Alps offers a hot sand therapy based on the thousand-year old Psammotherapy technique, which relieves pain and brings deep relaxation.

Taking advantage of its location on Vulcano (off the north coast of Sicily), **Therasia Resort Sea and Spa** offers various treatments using Vulcano mud, bioactive volcanic minerals and ancient rituals involving the spring thermal waters.



Indulge in a milk bath at Le Refuge de la Traye



The scent of Positano at Villa Franca



Volcanic mud treatments in Vulcano

Upskilling escapes

Experiential travel may have granted travellers more likes on their Instagram posts, and transformational travel inspired them to disconnect, but learning new skills will be the motivating force behind betterment trips of the new decade.

Upskilling escapes

Terej Hotel in Monogolia is a luxury country retreat surrounded by forests, lakes and mountains in Gorkhi-Terej National Park – here guests can meet with Mongolian nomads and learn about their lives and traditions including building gers (sturdy round tents) and tending to horses, sheep and camels.

Paseo 206 Boutique Hotel in Havana, Cuba, offers private boxing lessons with world champions including 1980 Moscow Olympic Champion Armando Martinez.

With a prime position on Cabarita Beach, guests at **Halcyon House** can now enjoy private surf lessons with Australian world surfing champion Joel Parkinson, winner of eleven elite surfing world title events and World Champion in 2012.

Guests at **Nobu Hotel Ibiza Bay** can book a one-to-one diving expedition with National Geographic presenter, marine biologist and underwater photographer Manu San Felix to learn about protecting the island's precious Neptune grass.

A nod to the Praiano's roots as an ancient fishing village, **Casa Angelina** is now offering authentic squid fishing excursions with a local expert fisherman. Taking place at night, guests can now sail on a Gozzo Sorrentino—a typical wooden boat from the region—from the Marina di Praia to participate in some of the world's best squid fishing three miles off the coast.

Olympic skier Andrew Weibrecht is available as an exclusive ski guide to hotel guests down the slopes of Whiteface Mountain at **Mirror Lake Inn Resort & Spa** in Lake Placid, New York. The 1980 Olympic site is where Andrew honed his craft.

Recently opened in November 2019, **The 121 Hotel** in Nashville's desirable West End can curate private songwriter sessions for guests to listen to legendary songwriters talk about hit songs they penned for country singers including Blake Shelton, Jason Aldean, George Strait and Garth Brooks.



Ski with Andrew Weibrecht at Mirror Lake Inn Resort & Spa



Meet Mongolian nomads at Terej Hotel



Private boxing lessons at Paseo 206 Boutique Hotel



The root back to real food

Keto, Whole 30 and other food programmes might be the diets dujour, but the more we learn about food, nutrition and the planet, the more it's understood that natural is best. Taking food back to its roots pays homage to local herbs, vegetables and even charcoal debuting as the star in menus across continents.

Taking food back to basics

All charcoal is not created equal

Charcoal has been popping up as a new ingredient in everything from skincare to beauty products, and we're now seeing it incorporated into food and drink. White Charcoal (Binchotan) is one of the purest forms of carbon available – it is known to absorb impurities and can turn tap water into pure mineral water, removes odours from the air and works as a balancing agent while releasing vital minerals such as potassium, magnesium and calcium. The production is also 100% ecofriendly as it locks the carbon in.

The **Prince Akatoki London** and **Mykonos Riviera Hotel & Spa** both utilize Chikutan Sticks made from sustainably derived white charcoal for cocktails at their bars to purify and elevate the taste.

Hotel de la Ville in Monza, Italy, includes Binchotan in a variety of fusion dishes in the Derby Grill restaurant. The chef uses Binchotan to give a black colour to certain elements of a dish, particularly to enhance a smoked flavour, and also for the active charcoal components which aid digestion.



Arima Hotel

Unexpected herbivores

Whether opting for a meat-free diet for environmental, social or health reasons it's still unusual for hotel restaurants to opt to go veggie. Now travellers can find specialist restaurants at hotels, even in destinations where being vegetarian might previously have proved a challenge.

Ovolo Central in Hong Kong is home to VEDA, Hong Kong's first vegetarian hotel restaurant spearheaded by celebrated vegetarian chef Hetty McKinnon.

While San Sebastian in Spain might conjure up the idea of plates of ham and fish, **Arima Hotel** in San Sebastian offers a veggie-forward menu at Misura that allows guests to customize their vegetable dishes with different variations.

Keemala, also in Thailand, celebrates the 9-day Phuket Vegetarian Festival in October each year. The idea of the event is to honour the nine emperor gods by abstaining from meats and other stimulants. The locals believe that through this, they



Elite Spring Villas

can gain better health and peace of mind.

Alibi at **Ovolo Woolloomooloo** in Sydney offers food design by world-renowned plant-based chef Matthew Kenney. Matthew's food philosophy is simple; clean eating need never compromise on taste.

Going herbal

Pretty on a plate and pleasing to the palate, herbs contain unique antioxidants, essential oils and vitamins which help fight against germs and toxins, and boost immunity levels. SLH hotels are showing creativity and innovation in some of the ways that they are using herbs to enhance the guest experience.

Strictly for grown-ups, **Le M de Megeve's Bar du M** has launched a Génépi tasting menu for guests to taste different versions of the traditional herbal liqueur including black, "hors d'âge", and organic variations. Conceived by a professional herbalist, the hotel has also launched a new herbal tea menu adapted to the intensity of different spa treatments.

Elite Spring Villas, in China's tea capitol Anxi, offers tea-infused hot springs – guests can choose the tea they wish to bathe in to help lower blood pressure and reduce stress among others.

Praia Art Resort in Calabria, Italy, has introduced pencils for guests to use in their rooms – once the pencil has been used it can be planted and will grow into a parsley plant.

DasPosthotel in Austria has created an herbal kitchen where owner Christina Binder-Egger utilizes her degree in herbal medicine to prepare Alpine concoctions that are incorporated throughout the hotel's recipes and spa treatments.



Trending Destinations

Global tourism hit record highs with 1.4 billion tourist arrivals in 2018 (up 6% from 2017) according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization. The exploration of lesser-known destinations looks set to take another leap forward in the year ahead. SLH is primed for 2020 with new hotels in locations where luxury tourism is emerging.

Trending destinations for 2020

Bhutan

Well-known for the famed Bhutanese Gross National Happiness Model, active travellers are lured to the country's incredible hiking and biking, while cultural enthusiasts appreciate its traditions unhindered by outside influences – protected in part by the government's restriction on the numbers of visitors to the country each year. [Gangtey Lodge](#) in Phobjikha Valley is an all-suite outpost surrounded by mountains and forests offering guests a glimpse of pure happiness with spectacular views of an unspoiled landscape while [Bhutan Spirit Sanctuary](#) (joining SLH in 2020) advocates real cultural immersion.

Nepal

After enduring catastrophic earthquakes just 5 years ago, the country is gearing up to celebrate 'Visit Nepal' in 2020. While those hoping to climb Mount Everest might soon find the number of permits issued each year restricted, there is renewed interest in the Himalayas from younger fans following the release earlier this autumn of the Dreamworks movie *Abominable*. [The Lost Horizon Resort & Spa Begnas](#), opening in December 2020, will offer a completely new location for luxury travellers to discover. Surrounded by protected forests and inspired by the mountain village of Mustang, famous for its views of the Annapurna mountain range and Begnas Lake, the resort will offer three-storey villas and suites making the most of its incredible surroundings.

Azerbaijan

The combination of European, Asian and Middle Eastern influences makes The Land of Fire a fascinating place to explore. The country gears up to receive five million annual tourists by 2020 and has gained global popularity for its spa, skiing and health tourism. Dotting the countryside are a plethora of mineral springs and mud baths that have attracted

visitors for centuries. Baku is now on the map thanks to its Grand Prix, and sports history dominates at [Dinamo Hotel Baku](#). Housed in the 1930s Dinamo Sport Society building where national athletes were trained, the building showcases architectural Constructivism with sports-inspired patterns on the exterior. Custom-made furniture and decorative arts are also sourced from the world of sport. The novelty of the building emphasizes the best qualities of the city and the local culture, utilizing elements such as traditional rug patterns on stone mosaic floors to offer guests an inviting home away from home.



Baku, Azerbaijan



Gangtey Lodge, Bhutan

Tel Aviv, Israel

Tel Aviv encompasses the best of city life and beach days, boasting around 300 days of sunshine a year and a dynamic fusion food culture that inspired Ottolenghi. Israel itself has reported strong growth in its visitor number last year, with approximately 405,000 tourist entries in September alone – 44% more than this time the previous year. With new flight routes from American Airlines, Virgin Atlantic and British Airways World Club Suite, the destination is only on the rise, offering an alternative to other established cities in the region. [The Norman Tel Aviv](#) is the only luxury boutique hotel in Tel Aviv and is located in the heart of the White City among the world-famous UNESCO heritage site of historic Bauhaus architecture buildings and Rothschild Boulevard.

Montenegro

Despite the country's small size, Montenegro is full of hidden treasures – and a new destination for SLH in 2020. It is home to the famous (yet not overdeveloped) bay of Kotor, its shoreline dotted with fishing villages and small islands, and the nearby lakes and mountains. [Villa Geba](#) is a luxury hideaway overlooking the breathtaking Kotor Bay. The location's minimalistic and elegant ambiance perfectly integrates its surroundings providing a true luxury hideout.



New hotel openings 2020

SLH continues to bring brand new hotels to the forefront, many in new destinations for the brand. Below are some of the hotels to look out for next year:



Spring

The Celino South Beach, Miami, USA

Check out the peekaboo glass-bottomed pool on the rooftop that is visible from the atrium below. The Celino is also said to be the birth place of the Conga!



April

Torre Del Marques, Monroyo, Spain

Discover the little-known region of Aragon, filled with olive groves, almond trees and terraced vineyards, from this new eco-friendly hotel.



April

Hotel Maalot, Rome, Italy

Located in Rome's city centre, just steps away from the Trevi Fountain, the Spanish Steps and The Pantheon. Guests can expect large shimmering mirrors, soft colours, comfortable sofas and armchairs.



May

Panoptis Escape, Mykonos, Greece

Explore 18 villa suites and the views from the 130m2 infinity pool while every details is looked after by 'The Artisans'.



May

KASA Hotel Riviera Maya, Puerto Aventuras, Mexico

Try cenote diving, biking explorations of the area's Mayan ruins, Mexican cooking classes and diving alongside sea turtles.



July

Les Sources de Cheverny, Loire Valley, France

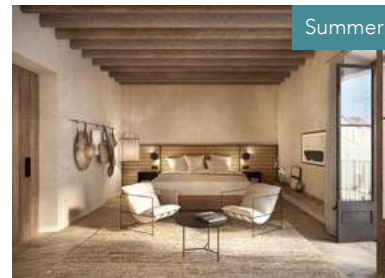
Enjoy vinotherapy in the spa with Caudalie products from its Bordeaux sister hotel, Les Sources de Caudalie.



July

Castello Di Reschio, Umbria, Italy

Explore this 3,700-acre pastoral Estate in the Umbrian hills. Stay in a 1000 year old castle and enjoy a dressage performance at the Teatro Equestre.



Summer

Can Ferrereta, Mallorca, Spain

The latest opening from the team behind Sant Francesc Hotel Singular is a meticulously restored 17th century buildings hosting one of the region's most exciting collections of contemporary art.



August

Living Berna by Stara, Mexico City, Mexico

Check out Mexico City's up-and-coming Colonia Juárez neighbourhood, home to chefs, artists and designers at this state-of-the-art hotel.



December

Lost Horizons Resort & Spa Begnas, Pokhara, Nepal

Named after the James Hilton book Lost Horizons about escaping the constraints of rising modernity, guests will be able to enjoy 7,000sq feet of spa and a pool for all seasons overlooking The Himalayas.

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For further information, please contact pr@slh.com