

WORLD ON SALE! 25 SMART WAYS TO STRETCH YOUR TRAVEL DOLLAR IN 2009

Condé Nast Traveler

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

JANUARY 2009

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NEW SICILY

AUSTRALIA'S
BIG ADVENTURE

JORDAN'S
ANCIENT WONDERS

SPECIAL
44
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SECTION

GOLD LIST

710 WORLD'S BEST PLACES TO STAY

TOP HOTELS, RESORTS, CRUISE LINES

and striped awnings, this hotel recalls beach resorts of the 1920s. Rooms strive for a residential feel with an in-room library of books; doors lead to a balcony with lounge chairs. At the newly renovated One Pico, dine on market-fresh food by a large marble fireplace. **\$\$\$**; 198 rooms; pool, spa, beach; 310-458-0030; shuttersonthebeach.com.

Gaige House, Sonoma County

☉84.6 ☉92.6 ☉95.8 ☉96.2 ☉88.5 **91.5**
The former private home is now a bed-and-breakfast on three acres of Zen gardens. Most rooms have their own outside entrance, making them feel "more private than in most B&Bs." Breakfast, the only meal served, uses fresh local ingredients, hence corn polenta rounds with *fromage blanc*: "After that, you can skip lunch." **\$\$\$\$**; 23 rooms; pool, spa; 707-935-0237; thompsonhotels.com.

Hotel Healdsburg, Sonoma County

☉87.5 ☉88.5 ☉89.7 ☉97.9 ☉88.5 **90.5**
This modern take on a country inn is located in an area "much less commercial and crowded than Napa—it's reminiscent of Provence." Warm minimalist decor has Tibetan wool carpets, pecan wood floors, and Indian saris as closet curtains. Charlie Palmer's Dry Creek Kitchen offers an all-Sonoma County wine list. **\$\$\$**; 55 rooms; pool, spa; 800-889-7188; hotelhealdsburg.com.

✓Kenwood Inn and Spa, Sonoma County

☉96.2 ☉100 ☉92.3 ☉96.2 ☉100 ☉88.5 **95.5**
This Mediterranean-influenced villa amid the vineyards secures a perfect design score and is "surrounded by lush vegetation and beautiful fountains." Rooms have private entrances and custom Italian furniture and linens, but no televisions. "We really love the serenity." The inn's intimate Italian restaurant uses produce grown on-site, and dishes are served by perfect-scoring staff "who make your stay special by their warmth." **\$\$\$\$**; 29 rooms; pool, spa; 800-353-6966; kenwoodinn.com.

✓Vintners Inn, Sonoma County

☉88.3 ☉87.0 ☉87.8 ☉88.3 ☉84.4 **87.2**
"My fondest memory was the walking trail through the vineyards" at this European-style property on 92 acres of gardens and vines. Three separate villas with "modern, not overly decorated interiors" sit around a central fountain courtyard. In rooms, some of which have wood-burning fireplaces, French doors open to patios or balconies. John Ash & Co. prepares cuisine like house-made pumpkin and amaretto ravioli. **\$\$**; 44 rooms; 800-421-2584; vintnersinn.com.

COLORADO

* Little Nell, Aspen

☉90.0 ☉87.5 ☉89.4 ☉96.7 ☉90.1 ☉89.3 **90.5**
The town's only ski-in, ski-out resort, steps from the Silver Queen Gondola, has "mountainside rooms with gorgeous views." The muted color scheme contrasts with oak finishes; gas-burning fireplaces warm some of the rooms. Montagna supplies a farmhouse menu "with food from the chef's own farm paired with wine from the head sommelier's vineyard." **\$\$\$\$**; 92 rooms; golf, tennis, pool, spa, skiing; 888-843-6355; thelittlenell.com.

* St. Regis, Aspen

☉88.4 ☉88.5 ☉84.2 ☉96.0 ☉89.7 ☉85.3 **88.7**
The redbrick resort at the base of Mount Aspen has "a relaxed but luxurious atmosphere" that permeates guest rooms equipped with flat-screen TVs and marble bathrooms with double vanities. At Olives Aspen, traditional American recipes display Mediterranean accents, and the menu includes "a great steak." **\$\$\$\$**; 179 rooms; pool, spa, skiing; 970-920-3300; starwood.com.

* Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch, Beaver Creek

☉93.3 ☉92.9 ☉84.9 ☉92.5 ☉94.5 ☉92.4 **91.7**
A resort with ski-in, ski-out access, it is inspired by the grand lodges of Yellowstone and Yosemite. The setting is "rustic rich—homey in a my-mom's-a-millionaire kind of way." Accommodations have picture windows or balconies to take advantage of the views. At Buffalo Bar lounge, "I still remember the buffalo burger!"

\$\$\$\$; 180 rooms; golf, tennis, pool, spa, skiing; 970-748-6200; ritzcarlton.com.

* Park Hyatt Beaver Creek Resort & Spa, Beaver Creek

☉88.2 ☉84.9 ☉78.9 ☉95.2 ☉90.3 ☉92.5 **88.3**
At this "secluded getaway," the stucco and rough timbers are topped with peaked roofs and copper flashing. "Mountain-chic guest rooms have warm and comfortable furnishings." "Attentive staff" serve drinks around outdoor fire pits during the winter. Bivans is family friendly, but "the meals aren't memorable." **\$\$\$\$**; 190 rooms; pool, spa, skiing; 970-949-1234; hyatt.com.

* Beaver Creek Lodge, Beaver Creek

☉86.3 ☉85.5 ☉76.2 ☉92.2 ☉86.9 ☉83.0 **85.1**
\$\$\$\$; 72 rooms; pool, skiing; 800-825-7280; kesslercollection.com.

* Pines Lodge, Beaver Creek

☉90.2 ☉87.8 ☉71.8 ☉87.8 ☉90.2 ☉82.9 **85.2**
\$\$\$\$; 60 rooms; pool, skiing; 970-754-7200; rockresorts.com.

✓St. Julien Hotel & Spa, Boulder

☉92.0 ☉85.4 ☉72.7 ☉96.6 ☉90.9 **87.6**
This modern hotel steps from Pearl Street Mall "meshes the mountain feel and comfortable vibe of Boulder." The flagstone and Norman brick exterior gives way to a lobby with Venetian plaster ceilings and walnut flooring. At Jill's Restaurant, "the food is okay, nothing more." Simple rooms have beds so comfortable that "you feel like you're sleeping on a cloud of down." **\$\$**; 201 rooms; pool, spa; 877-303-0900; stjulien.com.

✓The Broadmoor, Colorado Springs

☉91.1 ☉92.4 ☉90.7 ☉92.5 ☉92.3 ☉90.9 **91.6**
Rooms in yellows contrast with dark wood furniture at this Italian Renaissance resort. "You're 90 miles from Denver, but it feels like an oasis." Guests can get pedicures on a terrace or watch black swans glide around the property's lake. The Golden Bee is a pub with nineteenth-century panels shipped from England. **\$\$\$\$**; 700 rooms; golf, tennis, pool, spa; 800-634-7711; broadmoor.com.

✓JW Marriott Denver at Cherry Creek, Denver

☉88.7 ☉88.1 ☉78.9 ☉87.7 ☉86.0 **85.9**
\$\$\$; 196 rooms; spa; 303-316-2700; marriott.com.

* Lodge & Spa at Cordillera, Edwards

☉95.0 ☉90.0 ☉87.5 ☉90.0 ☉87.5 ☉80.0 **88.3**
Enjoy the "pure and clean mountain air" at this lodge in a private valley with hiking and biking trails. Wood and earth tones and balconies with mountain views are typical of rooms. Dining options include Grouse on the Green, an Irish pub that serves fish-and-chips. Nearby golf offers "stunning, challenging layouts." **\$\$\$**; 55 rooms; golf, tennis, pool, spa, skiing; 866-650-7625; cordilleralodge.com.

* Sonnenalp Resort, Vail

☉88.5 ☉92.3 ☉86.5 ☉91.3 ☉82.5 ☉84.5 **87.6**
Rooms in this Bavarian-style resort owned and run by a German family have gas-log fireplaces, double tubs, and exposed ceiling beams; "the nicest ones face the river, so you hear the sound of water as you sleep." At Ludwig's, the "breakfast is best enjoyed on the deck that faces southwest and gets the morning sunshine." **\$\$\$\$**; 127 rooms; golf, tennis, pool, spa, skiing; 800-654-8312; sonnenalp.com.

CONNECTICUT

Mayflower Inn & Spa, Washington

☉89.8 ☉89.9 ☉86.9 ☉81.8 ☉83.7 **86.4**
\$\$\$\$; 30 rooms; tennis, pool, spa; 860-868-9466; mayflowerinn.com.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Four Seasons, Washington D.C.

☉89.7 ☉91.8 ☉89.2 ☉85.3 ☉87.4 **88.7**
This brick hotel maintains "the ambience of old-world D.C."; some rooms are being updated by Pierre-Yves Rochon. The location in Georgetown is "a little out of the core of the city." The recently opened Bourbon Steak relies on regional produce.

\$\$\$\$; 211 rooms; pool, spa; 202-342-0444; fourseasons.com.

Ritz-Carlton Georgetown, Washington, D.C.

☉92.8 ☉90.4 ☉82.9 ☉87.2 ☉86.8 **88.0**
The 130-foot smokestack on this brick hotel recalls the area's waterfront industry early last century. Its location is "in the middle of Georgetown, a quiet part of town." Rooms have limestone and slate baths. Degrees Bar and Lounge is geared toward "the jet-set crowd." **\$\$\$\$**; 86 rooms; spa; 202-912-4100; ritzcarlton.com.

The Hay-Adams, Washington, D.C.

☉85.3 ☉86.5 ☉82.0 ☉94.1 ☉82.4 **86.1**
\$\$\$\$; 145 rooms; 202-638-6600; hayadams.com.

Willard InterContinental, Washington, D.C.

☉83.6 ☉84.4 ☉82.4 ☉92.9 ☉85.3 **85.7**
\$\$\$\$; 332 rooms; spa; 202-628-9100; interconti.com.

FLORIDA

✓Elizabeth Pointe Lodge, Amelia Island

☉100 ☉95.2 ☉85.7 ☉100 ☉95.2 **95.2**
This Nantucket Shingle-style lodge with Atlantic views and a perfect location score is "the quintessential beach getaway," replete with sweeping rooflines and broad porches. Antiques-filled rooms score perfectly for walls with jewel tones that contrast with mahogany floors. The rocking chairs on the porch are "a great place to sit and enjoy the sight of the ocean." **\$\$**; 25 rooms; beach; 904-277-4851; elizabethpointelodge.com.

✓Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island

☉92.7 ☉91.5 ☉89.0 ☉90.2 ☉92.0 ☉87.9 **90.6**
This 26-acre resort set among oaks and salt marshes offers views of the Atlantic. Rooms are "comfortable without being pretentious," with oversized chairs and a muted palette. Guests stay busy with activities such as a gingerbread house-making class or nature sessions. Eat "fabulous grouper sandwiches" at the pool. **\$\$\$**; 444 rooms; golf, pool, spa, water sports, beach; 904-277-1100; ritzcarlton.com.

✓Ritz-Carlton, Fort Lauderdale

☉91.7 ☉88.9 ☉83.3 ☉94.4 ☉88.9 ☉80.6 **88.0**
The former St. Regis is a white curvilinear building fronting the Beach Boulevard Promenade, with a 29,000-square-foot pool deck overlooking the Atlantic. Guests enter a "gorgeous lobby" before moving on to rooms with 1940s black-and-white photos and limed oak floors. Cero restaurant uses organic ingredients; the bar's ceiling displays a hand-painted mural. **\$\$\$\$**; 192 rooms; pool, spa, water sports, beach; 954-465-2300; ritzcarlton.com.

✓Marquesa Hotel, Key West

☉90.0 ☉93.3 ☉86.7 ☉93.3 ☉93.1 **91.3**
One block from Duval Street, this former Catholic boardinghouse has Greek Revival architecture. Gardenside accommodations are "light, airy, and not overdone," with a pale aqua-blue and yellow color scheme and mahogany furniture. Café Marquesa serves "fine Caribbean-Continental" seafood, lamb, and seasonal vegetables. Staff are "exceptionally hospitable." **\$\$\$**; 27 rooms; pool; 305-292-1919; marquesa.com.

✓Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge, Lake Buena Vista

☉85.3 ☉87.4 ☉83.5 ☉84.9 ☉94.1 ☉92.8 **88.0**
Animals roam at this thatched-roof resort on 33 acres of savanna, giving it "an authentic African lodge feel." The grand lobby has a mud fireplace; rooms come with furniture and art from Zimbabwe. Jiko has interiors inspired by *The Lion King*. The lobby's nightly congo-line parade, where the kids play African instruments, is "not to be missed by the under-ten crowd." **\$\$**; 1,293 rooms; pool; 407-938-3000; disneyworld.com.

Disney's BoardWalk Inn and Villas, Lake Buena Vista

☉82.2 ☉82.4 ☉75.3 ☉94.1 ☉90.6 ☉89.1 **85.6**
\$\$\$\$; 378 rooms; pool, beach; 407-939-5100; disneyworld.com.

✓Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa, Lake Buena Vista

☉80.9 ☉82.3 ☉78.2 ☉93.0 ☉88.9 ☉87.4 **85.1**