

The best of the best: World's top hotels named by Traveller

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To understand the value of a good hotel, you only have to cast your mind back to the bad ones. The boxy room with the strange smell. The spectacular vista of a worksite and a brick wall. The service that bordered on hostile.

These memories make you realise that a hotel isn't just a place to sleep: it's an institution that can make or break your holiday.

We all know these bad ones. But we're also familiar with the good hotels, the great hotels, the hotels that get things just right, the places that have thought of everything, the accommodation that turns out to be the highlight of your entire holiday.

So, *Traveller*, with the holiday season rapidly approaching, thought it high time to award these standouts. But, not content with simply awarding hotels individually, we've deconstructed them in order to recognise their most vital parts.

Collectively, the writers who have contributed to our own awards estimate they have spent thousands of nights inside hotel rooms throughout their travels. They've seen every tap fitting in every shower set-up imaginable. They've fumbled around looking for hidden light switches in establishments across the globe. In doing so, they have come to know exactly what makes a hotel exceptional, from the doorman or woman on arrival right through to breakfast the next morning. - **Ben Groundwater**

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THE BEST WELCOME DRINK

THE NOMINATIONS

The Library, Phuket, Thailand You're presented with a lidded goblet and, on lifting the lid, dry ice vapour swirls and entices, a whispering hint of what lies ahead at a place where detail is of the essence.

La Residence, Franschhoek, South Africa The welcome drink here is quite simple: it's a glass of wine, local of course, sourced from one of the surrounding vineyards in this gorgeous part of South Africa. See theroyalportfolio.com

Illa Experience Hotel, Quito, Ecuador Don an apron and stir a mixture of naranjilla juice, cloves, cinnamon and Norteno (a distilled sugarcane-based spirit) in order to make canelazo, a traditional Ecuadorian hot drink. Serve in small copper mugs. See illaexperiencehotel.com

The Clan Hotel, Singapore At this hotel, which salutes Singapore's historic Chinese diaspora guilds, guests are not merely served a restorative welcome tea but an entire, though not too extended, welcome Chinese tea ceremony, served by a schooled inhouse tea master. See theclanhotel.com

Abbaye de la Bussiere, Burgundy, France At this mediaeval former abbey, you're installed on the lawn with a half-bottle of champagne and small jug of cassis. Pop the cork as a pony munches on grass, bees buzz and swans paddle on the pond. See abbayedelabussiere.fr

THE WINNER: The Clan Hotel, Singapore



Get a welcome tea ceremony at The Clan Hotel, Singapore.

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