DEPARTURES

FINE HOTELS & RESORTS CELEBRATES 25 YEARS
Places That Still Matter

For all the hype that surrounds debuts, a handful of iconic hotels quietly soldier on, delivering all the romance, design savvy, excellent service, and unexpected delights that can only come with age and experience.

**The Ritz**

*Paris*

To borrow a line from Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa’s *The Leopard*, “Everything has to change so everything may remain the same.” Nearly four years and $400 million later, the saying couldn’t be more true here. What made the Ritz the Ritz is back, from the antiques and tapestries to the old-world flourishes (gilded swan faucets, dimmer keys) and the housekeeping staff. What’s new: Designer Thierry Despont optimized light and space throughout. The famed mosaic pool in the basement is now accompanied by an enhanced fitness space and the world’s first Chanel day spa. Fifteen suites include the landmark Imperial, Windsor, Chopin, and Chanel suites. Even the much-loved Bar Hemingway feels like a better version of its old self, which pretty much says it all. *Rooms from $1,130 per night; ritzparis.com*

**Grand Hôtel Stockholm**

*Sweden*

Nobel Prize winners always stay at this 19th-century waterfront hotel, which sits within easy reach of the Royal Palace, Gamla Stan (Stockholm’s old town), and the Moderna Museet art museum. Take a seat on the century-old veranda for a traditional smorgasbord, or check out one of the three sleek yet playful restaurants run by revered chef Mathias Dahlgren—the 10-seat Matbordet (the Dining Table) is a collaborative “here-and-now” gourmet experience; the Matsalen is modern-gastronomic with two Michelin stars; and the Matbaren (one star) goes for bistrot style. Highlights among the rooms include the duplex Flag Suite, with a turret that grants 360-degree views of Stockholm, and the Princess Lilian suite, which has its own private cinema. *Rooms from $685; thb.se*

**King David Hotel**

*Jerusalem*

Thanks to an elevated perch, the stately six-story King David, the pride of the Dan Hotels Group, claims peerless views over the majestic stone walls, ancient buildings, and holy sites of the Old City, just a 15-minute walk away. Distinctive for its rose quartz exterior and lavish common areas, this 1930 landmark is a perennial favorite for private events and state occasions, but it also offers spacious private gardens with tennis courts, two swimming pools, fitness facilities, a spa, a children’s playground, and noise-free relaxation areas. *Hallelujah. Rooms from $520 per night; danhotels.com*

**St. Regis New York**

*Manhattan*

New York’s original, 20-story skyscraper—a 1904 Beaux-Arts landmark on 5th Avenue and 55th Street—is well-acquainted with celebrity: gilded guestbook aside, its rooms have appeared in films such as *The Godfather, The Devil Wears Prada,* and *Sex and the City,* to name but a few. Following a massive overhaul completed in 2014, visionary John Jacob Astor’s hotel now features a collector’s theme in the three-bedroom President’s Suite, plus designer suites by Dior (12th floor), Tiffany (14th, a bridal favorite), and Bentley (15th); the latter includes access to the in-house fleet. On the ground floor, the storied King Cole Bar & Salon reserves a rare vintage and craft drinks menu exclusively for those who book table number 55. *Rooms from $1,695 per night; stregis.com*

**The Breakers Palm Beach**

*Florida*

The minute Standard Oil cofounder Henry Morrison Flagler opened the original Breakers in 1896, the 140-acre oceanfront estate became the resort of choice for high society, industrialists, political leaders, and golf lovers, who
today migrate here for the 36-hole Ocean Course and the Breakers Rees Jones Course, a half-mile private beach, and world-class diving. Flagler's descendants ensure that the 538-room Italian Renaissance-style property holds its lead thanks to more than $30 million in annual investments. This year's big reveal is the Flagler Club, a 25-room guesthouse—within-the-hotel, designed by Adam D. Tihany, that offers an enhanced VIP experience with private entrances, 19 dedicated staff members, and a level of service that would make Downton Abbey look like a B&B. Rooms from $369 per night; thebreakers.com

** Ashford Castle**
*County Mayo, Ireland*

Set on 350 acres of parkland in County Mayo in western Ireland, this medieval castle became a country home of the Guinness brewing dynasty in the 19th century. A hotel since 1939, it is now part of a family-run collection of luxury boutique hotels called Red Carnation. Last year, its 62 rooms and suites were opulently refurbished and styled with custom-made fabrics and antiques from Christie's and elsewhere. This summer marks the opening of Hideaway Cottage, a onetime boathouse upgraded to a private suite. Don't miss the traditional Irish dinner amid period décor in the George V dining room (the more intimate Connacht Room leans French). On-site recreation ranges from tennis, golf, fishing, gym, spa and pool to horseback riding, clay shooting, lake cruising, and the country's first school of falconry. Rooms from $272; ashfordcastle.com

** Hotel Maria Cristina,**
*a Luxury Collection Hotel*
*San Sebastian, Spain*

Built on the bank of the Urumea River in the port city of San Sebastian (a Spanish answer to Deauville, with better culture and weather), the 136-room Maria Cristina became an aristocratic holiday destination at the beginning of the last century. Restored to the tune of $25 million for its 100th anniversary in 2012, the Art Nouveau icon retains the elegant trappings of palace life, with soaring ceilings, intricate moldings, acres of marble, and a suite dedicated to one of its most famous guests, Bette Davis. This season, the hotel welcomes three-star Michelin chef Hélène Darroze, whose Basque-centric pop-up restaurant occupies Easo's dining room through the end of October. Rooms from $350; theluxurycollection.com

** Round Hill Hotel and Villas**
*Montego Bay, Jamaica*

This celebrated former sugarcane plantation just west of Montego Bay is a favorite with the Ralph Lauren set. In fact, the 36-room oceanfront Pineapple House and Seaside Terrace restaurant were recently redone by the designer himself. (Mr. Lauren just happens to own one of the 27 private villas.) If that weren't pedigree enough, the retreat has more than its share of star-studded lore: John and Jackie Kennedy spent their honeymoon in villa 10 and returned often for its privacy (although the president-elect rehearsed his inauguration speech poolside in villa 25), and Oscar Hammerstein is said to have written "The Sound of Music" in villa #12, which he owned at the time. Its freshly renovated spa, located in a restored 18th-century plantation house by the beach, uses Elemis products and hosts a selection of private yoga and fitness retreats. Rooms from $479; roundhill.com

** Alvear Palace**
*Buenos Aires, Argentina*

With its Empire and Louis XVI furnishings, the Belle Epoque palace greets visitors to Buenos Aires in grand European style. Nestled on a wide, leafy avenue in the swank Recoleta neighborhood, it offers easy access to the city's best shopping as well as museums and parks and the Teatro Colon opera house. The Royal Suite is its largest and most opulent, with the Executive Presidential Suite coming in a close second. The spa offers specialty treatments such as the detoxifying parafango facial (with volcanic mud and paraffin) or bespoke treatments using Yon-Ka products. Chef Jean-Paul Bondoux officiates at La Bourgogne, aka the best French restaurant in town. Rooms from $505 per night; alvearpalace.com

** The Goring**
*London*

A family affair since 1910, the Goring officially entered the history books five years ago when Katherine Middleton spent her last night as a bride-to-be here (which is likely why it is also the only hotel in the world to hold a Royal Warrant from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II). Tucked behind Buckingham Palace in the chic Belgravia neighborhood, the proud Edwardian hotel features 69 guest rooms and suites individually decorated with furnishings by some of the United Kingdom's top interior designers; the two-bedroom Royal Suite overlooks the hotel's private garden and, like the Belgravia Suites, has a dedicated footman. This spring, the Dining Room at the Goring, which was designed by Viscount Linley and is run by Chef Shay Cooper, won a coveted Michelin star. Rooms from $500; thegoring.com

** Badrutt's Palace Hotel**
*St. Moritz, Switzerland*

At the top of its game for 120 years and counting, the 120 rooms, 37 suites, and seven restaurants at Badrutt's Palace still draw a deeply glamorous crowd. As part of its lavish anniversary celebrations, the hotel has come up with the "CHF120,000 package" ($125,479), which runs through the end of the year and includes transfers by private jet to and from Milan or Zurich, a 120-minute tour of the Alps in a helicopter, a 12-course gourmet