

cntraveler.com

Condé Nast Traveler

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

JANUARY 2005

GOLD LIST
2005
WORLD'S BEST
700 PLACES TO STAY
TOP HOTELS, RESORTS, CRUISE LINES
UNITED STATES, ASIA, EUROPE, AUSTRALIA,
THE AMERICAS, AFRICA, THE PACIFIC



U.S.A. \$4.95
Foreign/Canada \$5.95

Built on the ruins of a fifteenth-century monastery, this cliffside hotel has an ancient wing with former monk cells—"small, but with so much character"—and a neoclassical wing with larger quarters. All are serviced by "very nice staff." The cloisters remain a place of contemplation, and the gardens survey Mount Etna. Antico Refettorio serves Sicilian fare; the new Principe Cerami has a Mediterranean menu.

\$\$\$\$; 105 rooms; pool; 39-0942-613111; [th.it](#); [5].

Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria, Sorrento

81.8 84.1 83.7 95.5 90.9

87.2

With "a serene setting" among citrus and olive groves off the town square, this hotel has been in the hands of the same family since it opened in 1834. Travertine floors and Asian rugs supply "an elegant and formal feel." Some find the silk and gilding in the rooms dated, but others love the "grand ambience." Cocktails are served on a colonnaded patio overlooking the harbor, with Naples and Mount Vesuvius in the distance.

\$\$\$\$; 96 rooms; pool; 39-081-807-1044; [www.excelsiorvittoria.com](#).

Hotel Cipriani, Venice

81.0 88.1 87.8 95.2 88.1

88.0

The setting on Giudecca Island, across the lagoon from the main part of the city, is "a high point," as is the "astounding pool." "Excellent cocktails are to be expected," since the hotel's founder invented the Bellini. The best rooms are in the fifteenth-century Palazzo Vendramin. The dining terrace "juts out over the water like the prow of a ship."

\$\$\$\$; 103 rooms; tennis, pool, spa; 39-041-520-7744; [hotelpipriani.com](#); [5].

Luna Hotel Baglioni, Venice

93.2 93.2 83.7 95.5 92.2

Having sheltered the Knights Templars in 1118, this hotel just off the Piazza San Marco is replete with "Old World style": antique furniture, Murano crystal chandeliers, and eighteenth-century Tiepolo frescoes. Guest rooms, some with balconies overlooking the Grand Canal, have fabric-covered walls, "luxurious drapes," and noteworthy beds: "I couldn't wait to get back to the hotel to lie down!" "Gracious, charming staff" at Canova serve traditional Veneto and international cuisine.

\$\$\$\$; 109 rooms; 39-041-528-9840; [www.baglionihotels.com](#).

Westin Europa & Regina, Venice

81.3 80.0 71.2 95.1 85.2 82.8

"Splurge on a room facing the Grand Canal" at this neoclassical hotel just steps from the Piazza San Marco. Guest rooms, which are in five eighteenth- and nineteenth-century houses restored with generous helpings of marble and Murano glass, vary from "scuffed and in need of work" to "grand Venetian style." La Cucina serves classic—"but pricey"—regional dishes.

\$\$\$\$; 185 rooms; 39-041-240-0001; [westin.com/europaregina](#).

Hotel Bauer & Bauer II Palazzo, Venice

80.8 74.0 74.6 91.8 71.2 78.5

\$\$\$\$; 191 rooms; 39-041-510-7022; [www.bauerverezia.com](#); [5].

Hotel Danieli, Venice

71.9 71.4 71.5 94.3 84.2 78.7

\$\$\$\$; 233 rooms; 39-041-522-6480; [luxurycollection.com/danieli](#).

Hotel Gritti Palace, Venice

72.5 76.5 75.9 88.8 79.7 78.7

\$\$\$\$; 91 rooms; 39-041-794611; [starwood.com/griitipalace](#).

Londra Palace, Venice

78.9 83.8 78.4 94.7 71.1 81.4



FLORAL FANCY

Bougainvillea clings to the vaulted ceiling of La Sponda Restaurant in Positano's Le Sirenuse. During the summer months, meals are served alfresco.

\$\$\$\$; 53 rooms; 39-041-520-0533; [www.hotellondra.com](#).

Westin Excelsior, Venice Lido

91.8 83.7 77.1 87.8 75.0 83.1

This 1908 Moorish-style hotel with a pool and a private beach, popular during the Film Festival, is "a refuge from the busy streets across the lagoon." In guest rooms, arabesque arches frame doorways and windows, which have views of Venice, the Adriatic, or a courtyard garden. In summer, watch the moon rise while savoring seafood on the beach at La Terrazza, the "most romantic setting in the most romantic city."

\$\$\$\$; 197 rooms; golf, tennis, pool, beach; 39-041-526-0201; [westin.com/excelsiorvenicelido](#).

MONACO

Hôtel de Paris, Monte Carlo

79.2 80.0 87.3 96.4 87.0 86.0

Panoramas of the city and sea, particularly from Le Côté Jardin restaurant, make this 1864 Belle Époque resort "a standout." Guests praise the 400,000-bottle wine cellar and the tunnel to the casino—"it's right out of a James Bond movie." Damask, toile, and thick carpet or Hungarian oak parquet kit out most rooms, though "a few are run-down and oddly shaped."

\$\$\$\$; 191 rooms; pool, spa, water sports; 377-92-16-30-00; [montecarloresort.com](#); [5].

Hotel Hermitage, Monte Carlo

97.1 90.9 90.9 100 90.9 94.0

This "lovely Belle Époque Old World hotel" overlooking the port and just a few blocks from the principality's shops and casino earns a perfect Location score. Rooms—including 51 added in 2004—marry historical friezes and cornices with contemporary furnishings. Staff handle special requests "promptly and easily, even if you have a lot of them." The Michelin-starred Le Vistamar is decorated to resemble a luxury boat and continues the theme with its "fabulous, very fresh seafood."

\$\$\$\$; 280 rooms; pool, spa; 377-92-16-25-25; [montecarloresort.com](#); [5].

POLAND

Le Royal Meridien Bristol, Warsaw

91.3 78.3 91.3 95.5 90.9 89.4

Overlooking the Presidential Palace (making it a

favorite of political visitors, including Jacques Chirac and Margaret Thatcher) and a stroll from the Old Town and the business district is this "gorgeous, beautifully restored 1899 Art Nouveau hotel." "Well-trained staff" keep the lobby's striped marble floor and decorative ceiling gleaming. Generous-sized rooms have "very comfortable beds." Epicureans rave about Malinowa's "fantastic French dinners" and the Café Bristol's Viennese pastries.

\$\$\$\$; 205 rooms; pool; 48-22-5511-817; [warsaw.lemeridien.com](#); [5].

PORTUGAL

Hotel Quinta do Lago, Algarve

76.9 80.8 80.8 92.3 73.1

80.8

\$\$\$\$; 141 rooms; golf, tennis, pool, spa, water sports, beach; 351-289-350350; [www.hotelquintadolago.com](#); [5].

Four Seasons Hotel the Ritz, Lisbon

84.9 84.9 78.8 71.3 72.4

78.4

\$\$\$\$; 282 rooms; pool, spa; 351-21-383-1783; [fourseasons.com/lisbon](#); [5].

Lapa Palace, Lisbon

87.1 93.1 80.0 58.6

80.0 79.9

\$\$\$\$; 109 rooms; pool; 351-21-394-9494; [lapapalace.com](#); [5].

Tivoli Palácio de Seteais, Sintra

76.9 84.0 76.0 92.0 87.5 83.2

"An Old World palace with modern plumbing," this eighteenth-century structure is in a UNESCO World Heritage town between the mountains and the sea. Staff impress: "The desk clerk even gave me Portuguese lessons." Fruit, flowers, and port in the rooms make guests feel at home among the restored frescoes and period furniture. The restaurant Panoramic serves Portuguese dishes "modified to any taste."

\$\$; 30 rooms; golf, tennis, pool; 351-219-233200; [tivolihotels.com](#).

RUSSIA

Grand Hotel Europe, St. Petersburg

81.8 77.3 77.3 93.2 88.6 83.6

Carefully preserved stained glass skylights, fine moldings, intricately patterned wallpaper, and wood-paneled walls decorate this 1825 landmark with Art Deco interiors. Located down the street from several concert halls, the hotel has "good-sized rooms" with heated tile bathroom floors. L'Europe serves French cuisine; Rossi's, Italian. "Staff are quick and extremely efficient."

\$\$\$\$; 301 rooms; 7-812-329-6000; [www.grandhotелеurope.com](#); [5].

SCOTLAND

Gleneagles Hotel, Auchterarder

89.4 91.5 85.1 87.0 97.8 90.1

This 80-year-old country house hotel is "one of the most fabulous places on earth." Last year, archery and air-rifle shooting were added to the lineup of activities, including horseback riding, off-road driving, fishing, and croquet. "Staff are chipper and very good at what they do." "Luxurious, plush rooms" are "big enough for my whole football team." Dinner at the Michelin-starred Andrew Fairlie at Gleneagles consists of "delightful French food."

\$\$\$\$; 211 rooms; golf, tennis, pool, spa; 866-463-8734; [gleneagles.com](#); [5].

The Balmoral, Edinburgh

75.4 77.3 72.7 95.5 83.3 80.9

\$\$\$\$; 188 rooms; pool, spa; 44-131-556-2414; [thebalmoralhotel.com](#); [5].

Inverloch Castle Hotel, Fort William

86.4 91.3 95.7 82.6 95.7 90.4

"Guests feel like royalty" at this nineteenth-century castle, converted to a hotel in 1969. The rooms are