HOTELS by DESIGN
A guide to the most beautifully designed hotels in the world

HOUSE & GARDEN
At a glance

Pamela Goodman offers a bird’s-eye view of some of the world’s most exciting hotels – both old and new

Europe

England

With the Olympics fast approaching, the London hotel scene is gearing up with several openings racing for the finish. Belgraves (right), brought to SW1 by the US Thompson group, has opened with interiors by Tara Bernerd. Nearby, the Bulgari Hotel & Residences takes silver as its central theme, with interior design by Antonio Citterio. Later in 2012, watch out for the Café Royal Hotel, from the same group as the Conservatorium in Amsterdam (see ‘A new tune’); Kit Kemp’s new offering, the Dorset Square Hotel, and ME London, created by Foster + Partners, which opens on the Strand in June. Out of town, New Forest favourite Chewton Glen launches six tree-house suites in the autumn. The Gurnard’s Head and The Felin Fach Griffin have welcomed sister hotel The Old Coastguard Hotel in Cornwall’s Mousehole; and Bristol has the new Number Thirty Eight in Clifton.

France

The small, discreet and exquisitely elegant Hospes Lancaster (right) off the Champs Elysées in Paris has had a makeover – check out the Marlene Dietrich Suite. On the opposite end of the style scale, the flirty, frivolous and electrifyingly fashion-conscious W Paris Opéra has come to town. In the Alps, the small, pared-down Le Chalet Zannier in Megève comprises a 12-suite hotel, plus a stand-alone chalet for private rental; in Val Thorens, Sibuet Hotels has launched piste-side Alpaga. At the Hotel Metropole in Monte Carlo, the swimming pool area has been redesigned by Karl Lagerfeld for the start of the new season. For a secret island hideaway, Corsica’s Hotel A Pietatella, near Calvi, is a hillside retreat with just 13 rooms.

Spain/Portugal

Think islands – first, Majorca, where Jumeirah unveils a 120-room hotel in a dramatic cliff-top location above Port de Sóller; and second, Gran Canaria, where the Bohemia Suites & Spa (right) is an oceanfront, adults-only retreat. In Portugal, an hour’s drive from Lisbon, is Areias do Seixo, a stylish eco-retreat set amid pine trees and sand dunes.

Italy

Some 4,200 acres of Tuscany forms the Castello di Casole estate, at the centre of which is a restored castle, now a luxurious 41-suite hotel. There are villas and farmhouses for rental too. Giorgio Armani has launched a second Armani Hotel, this time in his home town of Milan, while in Verona, the new Palazzo Victoria – sister hotel to Il Salviatino in Florence – has a museum-like quality to its interiors. Keep watch, too, for the opening of Monastero Santa Rosa on the Amalfi Coast.

Netherlands

Another designer, Marcel Wanders, and another hotel chain, Hyatt, have teamed up for the creation of Andaz Amsterdam, a converted public library on the Prinsengracht, the interior of which promises to be exciting, quirky and fun. More adventurous still is Hotel The Exchange on Amsterdam’s Damrak Street, where students from the city’s Fashion Institute have dressed the rooms like models on a catwalk.

Russia

The big opening this year will be the Four Seasons Lion Palace in St Petersburg. Built in 1820 by the architect who designed nearby St Isaac’s Cathedral, this hotel – a stone’s throw from the Hermitage promises to combine the grandeur of Imperial Russia with modern comforts and facilities.

Turkey

Ian Schrager (see ‘Public service’) and Marriott Hotels caused quite a stir in joining forces for the Istanbul Edition – crisp and modern in style, but with an Ottoman Empire opulence. Amanresorts has arrived on the scene too, at Bodrum, where Amanruya (above) has simple pavilions with private pools and views of the Aegean, arranged to create a village-like ambience.

Croatia/Greece

Modern and edgy in design, Villa Dubrovnik is perched dramatically on a cliff, with stunning views across the water to the Old City and Lokrum Island. Recently renovated, each room has a balcony or terrace overlooking the sea. Hotel Lone, meanwhile, near the beautiful Adriatic town of Rovinj, is cutting-edge, love-it-or-loathe-it cool, somewhere between a giant cruise liner and a multistorey car park. Kinosterna (left) at Monemvasia in the Peloponnese is quite the opposite – a restored thirteenth-century castle set amid vineyards and olive groves. Think remote, romantic and deeply indulgent.

Switzerland

Don’t hold your breath but at the end of the year The Alpina Gstaad will open just a five-minute walk from the centre of the village, with spectacular views of the Bernese Oberland. Aside from its 57 rooms and suites, there’s a 2,000-square-metre spa.