

Robb Report

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BEST OF THE BEST

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LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

Robb Report

Best of the Best

With the world slowly but surely edging toward normal over the past year, *Robb Report* editors were back to crisscrossing the globe as part of our annual quest to identify the sine qua non of the luxury industry. Whether fueled by an electric battery or exquisite grapes, crafted in a Swiss atelier or an Italian shipyard, or dreamed up by a lone chef or artist, these honorands are nothing short of superlative. Here, the most remarkable products, destinations and experiences in 16 categories.



TRAVEL

By Mark Ellwood, Sandra Ramani, Mary Holland, Jen Murphy,
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THE BIG IDEA

The Great Escape

RIP, VIP bucket lists. Since luxury travel began to resurge as the pandemic subsided, it's been *carpe* passport, leaving the industry to balance a burst dam's worth of pent-up demand with a host of ongoing obstacles.

One upshot has been travelers' willingness to spend more for the right experience. "When the world was put on time-out, the wealthiest had time to dream big," says travel specialist Keith Waldon of Departure Lounge, noting that most of his clients' budgets have

doubled year over year. "Whatever they were doing before, people want to do at a higher level." Cari Gray of Gray & Co. has observed a similar tendency. "Now it's not just about a driver but a driver on standby," she says, "and not just a yacht for the day but for the week."

No wonder hotels can no longer rely on oversized penthouses or impeccable service as a clincher, notes Scott Dunn Private head Jules Maury. "It's about what you can get out of a destination," she says. See the new yacht operated by Borgo Santo Pietro that Maury has booked for clients; it takes them on coastal Tuscan jaunts with a chef trained at the hotel's Michelin-star restaurant. The recently opened Villa Petriolo nearby is a 395-acre farm with miles of hiking trails and a falconer in residence, while Sweden's Treehotel just added a 365-square-foot, Bjarke

Ingels–designed Biosphere guest room covered in 340 birdhouses; input from local ornithologists should maximize nesting. Safari camps are heavy into the tree-house (or other private, nature-embedded accommodation) trend, too. And a company called 700,000 Heures is a sort of movable feast of hotels: Every six months it uproots for another exotic locale—rural Cambodia, perhaps, or Brazil—and sets up shop in an idiosyncratic structure, be it a palace or a houseboat.

Legacy travel brands are also opting to expand beyond brick-and-mortar. Waldon reports huge demand from clients for this year's launch of the endlessly delayed Ritz-Carlton Yacht, currently penciled in for August; Aman, too, will debut a 50-suite, 600-foot vessel in 2025, codenamed Project Sama. Orient Express, sidelined as a brand for several years, will soon return to prominence under a new owner, Accor. It will add more trains—with private bathrooms, a first—as well as namesake hotels, connecting as a luxury network.

Travel is now even crossing the final frontier. Blue Origin and co. will soon be joined by Spaceship Neptune, an eight-seat capsule complete with a bar that glides 100,000 feet into the sky to the edge of space, a six-hour journey that costs \$125,000 per person. Waldon has already put in offers for two \$1 million buyouts, and the operator, Space Perspective, reports that all voyages in 2024, the launch year, are sold out.

Space is in demand in all senses of the word. Waldon reports that clients are bulk-booking trips to everywhere from Italy to Montana—sometimes four or five separate trips and destinations via a single inquiry—through 2025, to ensure there's room for them. "It's so far ahead it's often hard to get rates, but we're just putting holds on," he says, noting that there's a new mantra among his wealthiest clients: "Life is precious, nothing is guaranteed, and everything is elevated."

ILLUSTRATION BY SHOUT

Always Italy

A perennial hospitality hot spot, Italy has seen an exceptional year of new arrivals, all aiming to add extra sweetness to a trip offering a taste of la dolce vita. Each of these five hotels is exceptional in its own right, but here's a tip sheet to help pick the one most suited to you.

	QUICK HIT	WHICH ROOM?	DRINK THIS	ORDER THIS	DO THIS
<p>HOTEL DE LEN Cortina D'Ampezzo, Dolomites — Rooms from \$270</p>	<p>Minimalist, contemporary boutique hotel, an alternative in a chic village known for mega-chalets.</p> 	<p>Balconied rooms with primo mountain and village vistas, plus extra space for outdoor yoga.</p>	<p>Carum Carvi, an imaginative spin on the classic negroni, delicately infused with local cumin.</p> 	 <p>▲ The extra-thick, toothsome spaghetti known as <i>bigoli</i>, lovingly sauced in duck ragu.</p>	<p>A three-hour evening takeover of the top-floor spa, reserved for a single couple, followed by a private dinner.</p> 
<p>CASA DI LANGA Cerreto Langhe, Piedmont — Rooms from \$500</p>	<p>Sustainability-minded, pastoral-luxe vibe on 100 rolling acres in the Alta Langa wine region, not far from Barolo and Barbaresco.</p> 	<p>One of two Monviso suites, which have canopy beds, large terraces and views of the valley, mountains and a historic castle.</p>	<p>▲ Americano, made with bitters and vermouth from the surrounding Piemonte region.</p>	<p>Flavors from the Garden, a five-course, vegetarian tasting menu; some of the produce is grown right on-site.</p> 	<p>▲ Scouring the estate for truffles with expert hunters and their oh-so-cute and highly trained Lagotto Romagnolo dogs.</p>
<p>PALAZZO FIUGGI Fiuggi, Lazio — Rooms from \$757</p>	<p>▲ A modern medi-spa in a century-old art nouveau palace 50 miles from Rome.</p>	<p>The Imperial Suite, with Murano chandeliers, notable for its 1,000-square-foot terrace ideal for treatments.</p>	<p>A signature tea of chamomile, lavender and passionflower blended in a nearby monastery. (Palazzo Fiuggi is alcohol-free.)</p>	<p>Summer Garden of seasonal vegetables and red quinoa, made marvelous thanks to the genius of Michelin three-star chef Heinz Beck.</p> 	<p>Rigorous outdoor-focused fitness journeys created in a new partnership with Ranch Malibu.</p> 
<p>BORGO SANTANDREA Conca Dei Marini, Amalfi Coast — Rooms from \$1,028</p>	<p>A Gio Ponti-inspired reboot of a midcentury-modern hotel clinging to 200-plus feet of waterside cliffs and with its own private beach.</p> 	<p>One of two suites with private pools, Room 407 has a particularly decadent bathroom, to boot.</p>	<p>Barman Ivan Stankovics's effervescent Verbena Negroni, with citrus and herbal notes.</p> 	<p>▲ When in Rome, carbonara—and when on the Amalfi Coast, <i>linguine alle vongole</i>.</p> 	<p>After a dip in the 65-foot-long waterfront pool, explore the coast from a traditional wooden <i>gozzo</i> sailboat.</p> 
<p>VILLA IGIEA Palermo, Sicily — Rooms from \$675</p>	<p>Anglo-Italian hotelier Rocco Forte runs the Sicilian capital's only true luxury stay in a once-private seaside aristocratic home.</p>	<p>The 1,550-square-foot Donna Franca Suite, with its luxuriously vast terrace looking over the Gulf of Palermo.</p>	<p>▲ The <i>Madame Loren</i>, a mix of gin, strawberry, orange and tomato liqueur named for former villa guest Sophia Loren.</p>	<p>A humble <i>macco di fave</i> (fava-bean puree, a Southern Italian comfort-food staple) fancied up with red prawns freshly harvested off Sicily's west coast.</p>	<p>Take a private architecture-focused tour of Palermo to see the legacies of the influential Florio family, who owned the villa from 1899 to World War I.</p>