



# On the Horizon

Set your sights on the most anticipated hotel openings of 2019. BY KRISTY ALPERT

PEACEFUL PLACE:  
*Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi*  
 PHOTOS: © WALDORF ASTORIA MALDIVES ITHAAFUSHI

**A GREAT HOTEL HAS THE POWER** to positively change the course of an entire trip. Amazing customer service can give a routine work trip the feeling of staying with old friends. Quality bedding can transform a mere place to rest your head into the best sleep you've ever had. And a creative design element or curated artwork can inspire new adventures or even incite new passions during an overnight stay.

Every year, hundreds of new hotels open around the world promising to be the newest, greatest or most innovative, but only the truly great ones will meet the needs and desires of the modern traveler. Mike Diaz, chief operating officer, Driftwood Hospitality Management, has seen his share of new hotel openings since he first took the position back in 1998. Over the years he's witnessed trends come and go, surveying his team of general managers from time to



time to get a feel for the evolving needs of travelers. "Some of the trends our general managers noted [for 2019] included the use of a digital concierge, smart rooms, and properties located in city centers that provide an authentic travel experience," Diaz says. "Today the hospitality industry can help transform the travel experience now that brands can anticipate what it is that gets guests excited."

Great hotels are worthy of getting excited about. From a trendy Norwegian hotel that gives a playful nod to its building's historic maritime history to a sensory-driven design hotel just steps from China's Forbidden City to the world's first fitness-focused hotel, here are nine of the most anticipated hotel openings of 2019.



### CAPRI BY FRASER | China Square Central, Singapore

This teched-out brand made headlines in 2012 when it first came on the scene with its smart-hotel-meets-serviced-apartment hotel concept in Singapore. Now, seven years later, it prepares to make waves again as it opens its newest high-tech Singapore property. The China Square Central location will feature a digitalized core with voice-commanded rooms, chatbot technology and augmented reality features throughout the property. Robotic maid service (available on demand) will streamline mornings among the hotel's 304 guestrooms and 16 floors. The hotel's gym, a must-visit, will boast technology that "gamifies" workouts, with an interactive fitness system that combines innovative flooring with music and lights.

### WALDORF ASTORIA MALDIVES ITHAAFUSHI | Ithaafushi, Maldives

The name for this 5-star resort comes from the Maldivian word for "pearl," and the 138 guest villas promise to be as luxe and exclusive as its name implies. Unlike many single-island resorts in the Maldives, the Waldorf Astoria will span three islands with a range of villas, each offering unsurpassed views over the ocean. The overwater villas feature a sleek, modern design, with limpid walls and glass floors — along with a floating hammock — that incorporate the ocean below into the space within. Reservations are already booking up for the tree house dining experience at Terra, but the resort's beach Champagne bar, Amber, will be the most coveted spot for watching the sun set on the horizon.



### THE PUXUAN HOTEL AND SPA | Beijing, People's Republic of China

Rarely are hotels referred to as masterpieces, but The Puxuan Hotel and Spa's Modernist approach to luxury through its ancestral homages and intuitive designs created a living canvas of contemporary hospitality. A member of the Leading Hotels of the World, the hotel is located just minutes from China's Forbidden City and features 116 technologically sophisticated guestrooms with unique, automated, multiscene lighting and dimming systems; high-pressure rain showers; and personal artwork safes.

MODERN LUXURY:  
*The Puxuan Hotel and Spa Lobby Lounge (above) and guestroom (left)*

PHOTOS: © THE PUXUAN HOTEL AND SPA



### EQUINOX HOTEL | New York City, New York

Set within the tallest residential building in Manhattan's equally-as-anticipated new district, Hudson Yards, the Equinox Hotel claims to be the first fitness-focused hotel in the world. The luxury property is also the first hotel sprung from its high-end gym namesake, which intends to open as many hotels as it has gyms. Features include more than 200 guestrooms, each masterfully designed by high-end hospitality designer Yabu Pushelberg, and a private, 60,000-square-foot Equinox fitness club and spa.

### AMERIKALINJEN | Oslo, Norway

In 1919 Norwegians lined up at the doorstep of this iconic building for the chance to journey across the Atlantic to the New World. Soon travelers will arrive at this former Norwegian American Line building to begin a journey into a new era as they check in to this meticulously designed boutique hotel. Beyond the thoughtfully planned 122 guestrooms, the hotel's speakeasy-style jazz club, the Gustav, is slated to become the hottest option for nightlife in the city.



### ĀNANTI RESORT, RESIDENCES & BEACH CLUB | Reževići, Montenegro

Derived from the Montenegrin word for "joy" and "peace," Ānanti's peaceful surroundings along the Montenegrin coast are enough to warrant such a fitting name. The resort offers sophisticated seclusion and a focus on well-being through healthy cuisine and holistic care. This Leading Hotels of the World property — located in a portion of Montenegro once frequented by Jacques-Yves Cousteau, Sophia Loren and George Bernard Shaw — will be the only 5-star luxury resort in the country, with eight private villas overlooking the Adriatic Sea.



SOPHISTICATED SERENITY:  
Amerikalinjen guestroom (top) and Haven (middle), and Ānanti Resort, Residences & Beach Club (bottom)

PHOTOS: © AMERIKALINJEN, © ĀNANTI RESORT, RESIDENCES & BEACH CLUB

## SIX SENSES SHAHARUT | Shaharut, Israel

Carved into a dramatic cliff deep within the Negev Desert, the Six Senses Shaharut's unique architecture was carefully designed to flow seamlessly into the topography of the desert's natural terrain through the use of local materials and pigments. Like all Six Senses resorts, this 58-suite luxury property focuses on sustainability and authenticity by seeking to minimize light pollution and partnering with local artisans to produce much of the resort's furnishings. Best of all, the resort's family-inclusive activities include camel safaris, wine tours, craft workshops and hikes to some of Israel's most historic and hard-to-reach sites.



## NOBU HOTEL LOS CABOS | Cabo San Lucas, Mexico

When the first Nobu Hotel opened in Las Vegas in 2013, A-listers lined up to be the first to stay at this effortlessly hip hotel. And why wouldn't they? The brand is co-owned by actor Robert DeNiro and celebrity chef Nobu Matsuhisa. The newest addition to the Nobu Hotel brand is also its first property in Mexico. The 200-room beachfront oasis blends minimalist Japanese design with contemporary Cabo elegance and sleek innovative touches (like in-room tablets and wall-mounted smart TVs).



## FOUR SEASONS RESORT AND RESIDENCES NAPA VALLEY | Calistoga, California

Although this gorgeous hotel will feature 5-star amenities like 85 farmhouse-chic guestrooms; a lavish, 6,011-square-foot spa; a gourmet General Store (perfect for couture picnics in the vineyards); and a lively bar and restaurant on site, one feature truly makes this anticipated resort stand out. The Four Seasons Napa Valley will be the only Four Seasons property to sit on 5.6 acres of vineyards and will be the first of the brand's properties to feature a world-class winery on site. Award-winning winemaker Thomas Rivers Brown created his grape-to-glass wine experiences to be inclusive of the resort's guests. Experiences include hands-on winemaking sessions, harvesting participation, tasting sessions and private events paired with the winery's own Cabernet Sauvignon.



**HIP AND CHIC:**  
Nobu Hotel Los Cabos lobby entrance (top) and executive suite (middle), and Four Seasons Resort and Residences Napa Valley guestroom and exterior (bottom)

PHOTOS: © NOBU HOTEL,  
© FOUR SEASONS RESORT  
AND RESIDENCES NAPA  
VALLEY