

Esquire

A full-page photograph of actor Oscar Isaac. He is standing in front of a dark, textured brick wall. He has a short, well-groomed beard and mustache, and is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. He is wearing a dark grey or black suede jacket with a high collar and large buttons, over a white t-shirt. His hands are partially visible at the bottom of the frame, one near his waist and the other slightly lower.

GET THE HELL OUT OF TOWN

FEATURING

The Best New Hotels
in North America



Drinking with
Your Kids in Rome
BY JESS WALTER

DRESSING LIKE
A GROWN-UP
WHEN YOU FLY

Steakhouses,
Cucumber Water,
and the Thrill
of Airport
Security Lines

New Fiction by T.C. Boyle

SEX AND LOVE
IN THE
SUBURBS
PAGE 44

Oscar
Isaac
IS EVERYWHERE.
YOU DON'T KNOW
OSCAR ISAAC.

A photograph of a desert landscape at sunset. In the foreground, there is a rooftop lounge area with two long, low daybeds with light-colored cushions. The lounge is enclosed by a low, textured concrete wall. A small, warm-toned light is visible in a recessed area of the wall. In the background, there are desert plants, including cacti, and a range of mountains under a sky with a gradient from orange to blue. The title text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

THE BEST NEW HOTELS

i n n o r t h

66

Let's get the hell out of town ✈️

a m e r i c a *

*Architectural wonders. See-and-be-seen
lobby bars. Killer hot tubs.*

*Our favorite
places to check into,
from the high
desert of Joshua Tree
to the private
beaches of St. Barts.*

THE ROOFTOP SUITES AT PARADERO TODOS
SANTOS, IN MEXICO'S BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR.

THIS IS THE LIFE.

How often have you said that in the past two years? A few times, maybe. Possibly not once. Makes sense, because, well, it's been the past two years. But there is an antidote to our collective anxiety and dread: getting the hell out of town.

We said it on a cross-country road trip when we hit the otherworldliness of South Dakota's Badlands. We felt it in Mexico when we ate tacos and drank Champagne on the beach. And we definitely uttered it aloud to whoever was with us in that thermal pool in Telluride overlooking the mountains. Hot tubs are very conducive to optimism.

Travel offers the opportunity to reset. A way to escape and be welcomed. To feel the intoxication of leaving a place *and* the thrill of arriving. To make fast friends at that secret wine bar or to cultivate deeper relationships with family and old pals. You can even find meaning in packing: You confront what truly matters (nope, don't need a second blazer) and, perhaps, how you really want to show up to the world (yes, bring the crazy pants). The following pages are devoted to these undercurrents of joy and discovery that define travel, kicking off with an essential part of the wanderlust experience: a great hotel.

This is more than a cloudlike bed and a TV hidden in the bathroom mirror (but you've got to admit that trick never gets old). The very best provide restoration and inspiration, and each hotel's staff has worked harder than ever to do so. That's why we created our first-ever Best New Hotels list: to celebrate such hospitality and the fact that you deserve a vacation.

There's an old adage that hotels should feel like home. But when home has morphed into an office, a daycare, and a mediocre 24-hour diner, a hotel should feel better than home. There are the classic ways the best properties provide a reset: handing you a cold towel on a humid day, serving you a welcome cocktail after a long flight, tidying up your room after your suitcase explodes. But the ones we've fallen in love with have given us fresh outlooks. They've taught us how to farm or helped us discover a love of archery; they've exposed us to impeccable design that made us think, *I need better bookcases*.

We traveled via plane, helicopter, car, boat, and horse (!) to select this inaugural class of Best New Hotels. (Go to [Esquire.com](https://www.esquire.com) for the full list.) We defined *new* to include places that have opened or gone through significant changes since early 2020. All of them are guaranteed to put you in that "This is the life" mindset long after you've checked out of your suite.

See you at the lobby bar. And maybe the hot tub?

—Kevin Sintumuang

**And the Caribbean.*



MONTAGE HEALDSBURG

HEALDSBURG, CALIFORNIA

in northern California: No Tuscany pretense here, as can be the norm in these parts. The modern glass-wood-and-steel bungalows, featuring cantilevered balconies equipped with fire pits, are situated among mossy oaks, eucalyptus trees, and, of course, grapevines. While Healdsburg has some of the best bars and restaurants in Sonoma, you might find it hard to leave the property, between the zero-edge pool, the archery range, and the restaurant's own lively bar, where locals mingle with guests. There's fun to be had, yet the rejuvenating serenity is inescapable at the end of the day. *Rooms from \$1,200 –K. S.*

When you ascend the road to Montage Healdsburg, you know you are still squarely

CHRISTIAN HORAN/COURTESY MONTAGE HEALDSBURG.
COURTESY PENDRY MANHATTAN WEST.



PENDRY MANHATTAN WEST

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Beyond the modern extension of Penn Station, you'll come across an undulating tower seemingly conjured out of nowhere in an area that was, just a few years ago, a kind of no-man's-land. For the trek across Ninth Avenue, the Pendry epitomizes Cali-luxe: plush, earth-toned rooms where curved windows create nooks to dwell in and admire the new urban vista. Downstairs, it's time for a mini bar crawl. Bar Pendry is a gold-leaf-adorned jewel box for a more clandestine drink, and Chez Zou is like a belle époque garden complete with deft cocktails and a secret cheeseburger. *Rooms from \$725 –K. S.*



1 HOTEL TORONTO

TORONTO, ONTARIO

To understand the mission of the 1 Hotel, you just need to look around. A local woodworking studio has transformed fallen Toronto trees into one-of-a-kind pieces throughout the hotel, engraved with their source location. There is a garden that supplies herbs and crops to the property's restaurants, and even the coffee-machine instructions are printed on napkins. But it's not all greenery and reflection—there is a stylish rooftop lounge and pool overlooking the city. The rooms are spacious, comfortable, and calming even when the popular lobby bar downstairs is at full tilt. *Doubles from \$360 –LAUREN KRANC*





HOTEL SAINT VINCENT

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

Yes, there's the French Quarter. But to experience a more laid-back, less touristy, as-slow-as-a-Sazerac New Orleans among old oak trees, genuine dive

bars, and new indie shops, head to the Lower Garden District and make Saint Vincent your home base. The stately brick building, a former nineteenth-century orphanage, has been reimaged as a destination with the type of venues—Austin transplant Elizabeth Street Café, the compact yet splashy Italian Riviera-esque bar and restaurant duo San Lorenzo and Paradise Lounge—that are see-and-be-seen destinations in and of themselves. But really, get a room. Each is an inspired blend of psychedelic and art-deco decor—you don't see that every day—plus guests get access to the nook-heavy Chapel Bar. *Rooms from \$329—K. S.*



ROSEWOOD LE GUANAHANI

ST. BARTS

If you ever find yourself with a terminal diagnosis and a 401(k) you need to spend down in a hurry, go to St. Barts and stay at the Rosewood. Ever since Hurricane Irma wiped out much of the island's infrastructure in 2017, the famously over-the-top hotels have been on a frantic rebuilding mission, often with environmentally unfriendly results that the locals don't love. But it's impossible not to hand it to the Rosewood's gorgeous renovation for its nods to traditional island architecture, a spa that features a quartz (!) massage table, and two private beaches. The Beach House restaurant serves up inventive Mediterranean dishes (don't miss the sardines on toast) that will come as a welcome change from the sea of indistinguishable mahi-mahi preparations on offer everywhere else on the island. The pool is infinity, the "kids club" is luxe, and seemingly everything is made of teak. *Doubles from \$2,035—KELLY STOUT*

Why Is There Cucumber Water in the Lobby?

BY NEGIN FARSAID

You know exactly what I'm talking about. You walk into a hotel lobby and take in the impressively high ceilings. You make some judgments about the decor, the mood. And then you spot the carafe of cucumber water. It's not water with lemon wedges in it; that would be obvious. Lemon water is something your grandmother drank, and while you recognize its refreshing advantage, it's a little hacky. Overdone. No, no, this is *cucumber* water.

The moment you see it is the moment everything changes. The bumpy flight, the taxi ride—none of that exists. The thrill of hotel luxury and aspirational living overcomes you.

In nonhotel life, you can't remember ever drinking cucumber water. Who among us has sliced cucumbers and placed them in water? Literally nobody. And yet: Your posture is a little straighter, your gait a little lighter as you approach the cucumber water like a scion of some now-defunct monarchy. Dissociated from regular life, with its shitty tap water, you act like—no, you *feel* like—a cucumber-water-drinking person.

If we were to re-envision society, Jay-Z would declare that after the show is the after-party, and after the after-party is the hotel lobby, because that's where you get the CW and therefore *sophistication*. Opulence and flavonoids in equal measure! A full-scale transformation into a utopian, hydrated self!

It's weird: When you get back home, never once will you say to yourself, "I think I'll put cucumbers in water and see if it makes me feel luxurious."



AURORA ANGUILLA

RENDEZVOUS BAY, ANGUILLA

"Smell that? Barbecue and the sea—to me, that is the smell of Anguilla," one of the super-kind staffers told me as we passed the wood-fired grill. The Aurora Anguilla takes food seriously; it has the island's only hydroponic garden for its multiple restaurants, staffed by former members of the Eleven Madison Park team. But golf nuts come for the Greg Norman-designed eighteen-hole course. (A nine-hole course will be completed soon.) The newly renovated beach suites give off a luxe Santorini-meets-the-Caribbean vibe, and the massive villas come with private pools steps from the beach, with enough room that you might even want to invite the in-laws, too. *Rooms from \$1,000—K. S.*