

Wake Up Here

For active travellers hungry for more than just a good pillow menu, this issue’s selection of forward-thinking hotels – spanning a working mezcal distillery in Mexico to a family-run Italian apple farm-come-wellness retreat – offer indulgence for mind, body and soul

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ARMANCETTE
SAINT-GERVAIS-LES-BAINS, FRANCE
armancette.com

As far as scenery goes, it’s hard to beat the spectacular Mont Blanc massif. In summer, its dramatic green valleys offer sun-kissed trails, while winter, of course, provides the ultimate snow-cloaked paradise. Right on the fringe of all this sits Armancette, a five-star boutique hotel built on the site of a former bakery and set in a quiet village some 20 minutes from Saint-Gervais-les-Bains in the Haute-Savoie.

Armancette’s timbered exterior blends seamlessly into its alpine surroundings; inside, its 17 bedrooms and suites offer refined comfort in textures of wood, velvet and (faux) fur, complemented by sleek marble bathrooms in which to ease away the day’s exertions. Rest is made easy with black-out shades that whisk up or down at the press of a button, while the bedside espresso machine will help you start the day with a spring in your step.

However, there’s plenty to drag you away from the room. The hotel’s concierge can organise exploits of your choosing: a day spent on an off-road e-bike, perhaps, or a guided hike around the Bionnassay glacier. The snow season brings all manner of activities – skiers will enjoy the convenience of shuttles to and from town, equipment delivery and chairlift access to Evasion



Mont-Blanc. (If you’re planning a group ski getaway, Armancette also hosts three stylish ski-in, ski-out chalets, located a little further up the mountainside.)

Epicurean appetites are well-sated here, too. In the hotel’s La Table d’Armante restaurant, chef Fabien Laprée creates artful degustation menus using thoughtfully selected produce – from chanterelles to cheeses – gathered from the surrounding villages and farms. A few steps across the road, Mont Joly bistro and wine bar offers more casual dining, along with panoramic views from its sprawling terrace. In keeping with its history, Armancette retains the bakery at its heart, housed within its cheerful, light-filled tea room where spectacularly good breads and pastries are rolled out fresh each morning. Be sure to try the highly moreish Dômes de Miage roll, unique to the hotel and named for the ridgeline visible through the French doors.

After all that invigorating activity, wind down with a relaxing sauna or a massage at the in-house spa, or simply gaze at the changing light on the peaks from one of the two outdoor Jacuzzis. Armancette is, like the mountain range it so superbly showcases, a haven for all seasons. ▶▶

APFELHOTEL TORGGLERHOF

SOUTH TYROL, ITALY

apfelhotel.com

Perhaps nowhere else on Earth are apples given such cult status as they are at Apfelhotel Torgglerhof, a farmstead-hotel hybrid situated on the German-Italian border of the South Tyrolean Alps. Nestled between the meadows and mountains of the Passeiertal Valley, just a 15-minute drive from the historic spa town of Merano, this apple farm with rooms pivots around its local native produce, offering a line-up of cookery courses and harvesting days. Activities are backed by a strong farm-to-table ethos, which is also in evidence both at the on-site farm shop and during weekly tours of the orchards and apple press. Recently revamped to include a state-of-the-art wellness space carved into the landscape in the shape of its signature fruit, the hotel now features an award-winning bio sauna where the air is infused with herbs and apples, as well as a day spa offering hydromassage, yoga and an array of fitness classes. Despite its many accolades and impressive facilities, though, the family-run Apfelhotel has managed to maintain a down-to-earth atmosphere. Our favourite part of the experience might just be the fact that, on arrival, each guest is given their very own apple tree to look after for the duration of their stay.

**HOTEL UNION ØYE**

NORANGSFJORDEN, NORWAY

unionoye.no

Atmospheric and imbued with mountain mysticism, this historic Norwegian hideaway has been a refuge for climbers, artists, writers and royals since its original opening in 1891. Set along the soul-stirring banks of the Norangsfjord, in northwestern Norway, the property reopened in June 2022 after a transformative extension and restoration project that has artfully married the past and present, and seen the addition of the Cluster Farm, a rustic settlement housing five standalone guesthouses, three new suites in the hotel proper, plus additional communal spaces, including the Wine Cellar – a tasting offering spanning two rooms, one dedicated to white and the other, red. The crown jewel in boutique experiential travel outfit 62°Nord's portfolio of Norwegian hotels, Hotel Union Øye's wild location makes it a superb springboard into the surrounding Sunmøre region's network of hiking and cycling trails. Explore the fjords by boat, ice-skate on the lake in winter or take a trip into the mountains, then, back at base, settle into the hotel's airy Conservatory for fine sea-to-plate fare that celebrates the area's natural bounty.

CASA SILENCIO

OAXACA, MEXICO

casasilencio.com

A first-of-its-kind mezcal distillery and hotel set in the mountainous state of Oaxaca – the home of this ancient spirit – Casa Silencio is an isolated refuge for agave enthusiasts seeking a design-forward, wholly immersive experience. Masterminded by Mexican architect Alejandro D'Acosta, the six-suite, eco-minded property was built to blend into its natural surroundings, featuring reclaimed materials such as steel, wood and stone, as well as a rammed-earth technique using compressed clay that gives the boutique its pinkish hue. Instead of a traditional living space, the centre of Casa Silencio is a 16m-long communal dining table, carved from a huge basalt stone slab that slices through the property to create an indoor-outdoor experience. Chef Daniel Robles Sumano's menu riffs on the traditional Tennessee barbecue. Fancy trying your hand at producing mezcal? Get stuck in at the distillery, where guests are invited to join in with the day's activity. Prefer to wait and sample the finished product? Hang out in your individually decorated two-floor suite, where the moody aesthetic features include hand-woven furnishings from local artisans, then pop down to the tasting room to sample rare vintages only available here.





STERREKOPJE
FRANSCHHOEK, SOUTH AFRICA
sterrekopje.com

Created to honour and prioritise rest in all its many forms, this nurturing, therapeutic retreat set on a 50-hectare regenerative farm provides a deeply restorative space in which to unplug and reconnect with nature. Owned and founded by Dutch partners Nicole Boekhoorn and Fleur Huijskens, the intimate, 11-room sanctuary sits on some of the oldest farmland in Franschhoek and is a place where self-healing is actualised through art, nature and indulgence. Explore the farm's vineyards and olive groves by bike, spend time painting and making pottery at the boutique's own atelier, or make your way to the spa for soulful rituals that go more than skin deep. Outside, accompany the chef as he gathers ingredients from the gardens, which are home to medicinal plants and a colour-coded chakra terrace, then join the in-house pastry chef for an artisanal baking lesson. Sterrekopje's groundskeeper is referred to as a "soil guardian" and the farm's produce is treated with deep reverence: there's a zero-waste food philosophy and seasonal lunch and dinner menus are largely plant-based.

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INNESS
NEW YORK, US
inness.co

Amble up to this quiet, 90-hectare country refuge in the Catskill Mountains and you'll be greeted by a 12-room farmhouse inspired by Dutch vernacular architecture, 28 rustic-chic cabins, a nine-hole golf course, tennis courts and pool, as well as an abundance of nature trails to explore at your own pace. The aesthetic here plays on Scandinavian minimalism, with a meditative, muted-grey colour palette, oatmeal bed linen and cosy, Shaker-style furniture. The main drawcard, though, is this destination hotel's top-class food offering, served in a cedarwood restaurant with lime-washed walls and floor-to-ceiling windows that afford widescreen views of the surrounding lush grounds. The menu showcases the best in simple, seasonal Mediterranean cooking, with a focus on Italian and Middle Eastern flavours – as seen in colourful mezze plates and huge balls of burrata served with smoky Calabrian chilli. Most of the produce is sourced from the property's organic farm; don't-miss dishes include fried cauliflower with a spicy vadouvan-infused aioli, saffron rigatoni and locally caught steelhead trout, served with butter beans and salsa verde.



CASA MACA
IBIZA, SPAIN
casamaca.com

Arriving at this 300-year-old whitewashed farmhouse, set amid seemingly endless fruit trees, fragrant pine groves and twisted olive trunks, you'd never believe you were only a 10-minute drive from Ibiza Town and the airport. Embodying the quieter slice of this up-all-night island, the open-year-round Casa Maca is a laid-back, get-away-from-it-all retreat in the Can Palau hills, offering stellar views over Dalt Vila. At the heart of the main house you'll find an ancient olive mill, a nod to the property's former life as an olive farm, while the 10 bedrooms and suites all exude an inviting rural charm – think polished clay floors and beamed ceilings. Airy bathrooms, some of which feature whirlpool tubs, come stocked with indulgent Grown Alchemist goodies. Outside, the terrace and al fresco dining area make for a romantically lit affair, with a huge open-air grill taking centre stage. A contemporary Mediterranean menu puts to good use the vegetables grown on Casa Maca's organic farm, and features freshly caught fish and meat hung, Francis Mallmann-style, over the grill. Live artists and DJs provide a chilled-out soundtrack while you dine. This is Ibiza, after all.