

The New York Times

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2015

THE EUROPE ISSUE | ROUNDUP

Hotels Where You Won't Feel Like a Stranger

More than just places to rest your head, these properties offer a sense of community.

By ELAINE GLUSAC

Taking up temporary residency on the quiet lanes and public squares of Europe offers the sort of civic intimacy that often eludes mere sightseers. Location and a connection to community distinguish each of the following 10 hotels, all of which offer a strong sense of place, both outside and in.

NEWCOMERS

Brussels

Hotel des Galeries

The new Hotel des Galeries shares the narrow Rue des Bouchers, once butchers' row, with a jumble of restaurants and cafe terraces. Its own Belgian restaurant opens onto the adjacent Galeries Royales Saint-Hubert, a 19th-century glass-roofed shopping arcade designed in homage to the Italian Renaissance. Inside the hotel, 23 rooms overlook the elegant passageway, or surrounding rooftops near the central Grand Place. Red drapes and modern furniture lend subtle drama to the white-walled minimalist rooms. From 130 euros or about \$136 at \$1.05 to the euro; hoteldesgaleries.be.

Budapest

Aria Hotel Budapest

Just around the corner from the grand St. Stephen's Basilica, Aria Hotel Budapest, which opened last month, adopts a musical design. From the owners of the Library Hotel in New York, Aria inhabits a former 19th-century bank with 49 rooms, each designed in the spirit of jazz, contemporary, classical or opera scores, with a music library loaded on in-room iPads. Guests can ogle the domed basilica from the hotel's rooftop High Note Sky Bar, featuring a garden terrace and a Hungarian farm-to-table restaurant. Rooms from €216, including breakfast; ariahotelbudapest.com.



Florence, Italy

Grand Amore Hotel and Spa

Two blocks from the Duomo and steps from the Piazza della Santissima Annunziata, anchored by a Renaissance-era orphanage, the new 11-room Grand Amore Hotel and Spa, above, is the latest boutique property from the Ricci Collection, operators of other small hotels in Florence. Rooms feature tufted headboards, marble-clad bathrooms and vintage black-and-white photos from the Florentine photo company Fratelli Alinari. Management promises soundproof rooms, and a small spa with a steam room and Jacuzzi for post-passeggiata relaxation. Rooms from €207, including breakfast; grandamorehotel.com.

Lisbon

Hotel Valverde

On the grand Avenida da Liberdade, Lisbon's Champs-Élysées, the Hotel Valverde, opened in September, aims to channel a more peaceful era, when the promenade was a public garden. Attractions include a garden where tea and drinks are served, a living-room-like lounge and a small outdoor pool. Its 25 bedrooms, painted in rich colors intended to inspire relaxation, mix vintage paintings and contemporary furniture. Its fittingly boutique restaurant, seating 27, serves Portuguese fare. Rooms from €170, including breakfast; valverdehotel.com.



COURTESY OF ABADIA RETUERTA LEDOMAIN

terra-cotta-tiled houses, the hotel offers views of the sea, and its restaurant features seating on a terrace atop the walls. Open April 1 to Oct. 31; doubles from €395, including breakfast; lesic-dimitri.com.

Sardon de Duero, Spain

Abadia Retuerta LeDomaine

Set amid a 1,730-acre vineyard and farm, Abadia Retuerta LeDomaine on the Duero River near Valladolid, 135 miles north of Madrid, inhabits a 12th-century abbey. Converted into a hotel in 2012, its 22 rooms are considerably less monastic now, some with four-poster beds, garden terraces or wood beams, and all with vineyard views (another eight will open in July). Its restaurant, Refectorio, occupies the abbey's former dining hall and recently earned its first Michelin star. A modern wine-themed spa, built underground to keep from clashing with the historic estate, is set to open in the summer. Rooms from €370, including breakfast; ledomaine.es.

Paris

La Réserve Paris Hotel and Spa

Opened in January on quiet Avenue Gabriel, between the fashionable Faubourg Saint-Honoré and the Champs-Élysées, down the street from the Élysée Palace gardens, the new La Réserve Paris Hotel and Spa conjures turn-of-the-20th-century elegance in a period home once owned by Pierre Cardin. The designer Jacques Garcia oversaw the renovation, which features silk on the walls, velvet drapes and parquet floors in its 40 rooms, partly furnished in antiques. Amenities include an indoor swimming pool, three-treatment-room spa, orange garden and upscale French restaurant. Rooms from €750, including breakfast; lareserve-paris.com.



LA RESERVE PARIS HOTEL AND SPA

Prague

Emblem Hotel

Designed in Art Deco style, with a lobby clad in richly patterned brown marble, the recently opened Emblem Hotel is on a side street near Old Town Square. Most of its 59 rooms, one of which is shown above right, are decorated in soft neutrals. Some offer French doors that open onto the street. Its restaurant turns into a steakhouse at dinner, and a series of basement rooms are a private club for guests with games and tablet computers. A spa occupies the top two floors, where an outdoor terrace with a Jacuzzi offers views to Prague Castle across the river. Rooms from €250, including breakfast; emblemprague.com.

CLASSICS

Korcula, Croatia

Lesic Dimitri Palace

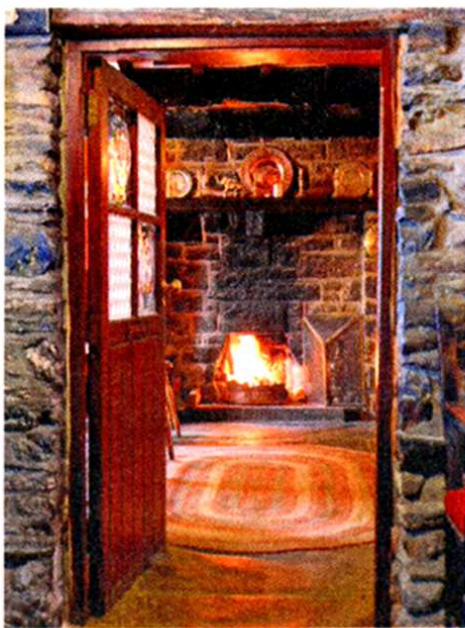
Built in the 18th century as the bishop's palace in the heart of medieval Korcula, on an island in the Adriatic midway between Dubrovnik and Split, the Lesic Dimitri Palace has five apartment-like suites. Ranging from one to three bedrooms, they include kitchens and are each decorated after a different Marco Polo-inspired destination: Venice, India, China, Arabia and Ceylon. On the edge of the walled town of tiny lanes and

Top center, the Aria Hotel in Budapest, around the corner from St. Stephen's Basilica, has a musical theme and a rooftop bar. Top right, Abadia Retuerta LeDomaine in Spain inhabits a 12th-century abbey. Above, a bed at La Réserve Paris Hotel and Spa.

Tregaron, Wales

Y Talbot

On the town square in Tregaron, a convenient base for exploring the Cambrian Mountains or the western coast, the 17th-century Y Talbot inn, above, offers board and bed in a stone-constructed pub with nine rooms. The rooms were recently updated with bright décor, and while each is distinct in layout, several offer walkout access to or balcony views over a rear garden. The pub champions local and sustainable ingredients, and the bar features Welsh cask ales brewed nearby. Doubles from 110 pounds, or about \$159 at \$1.44 to the pound, including breakfast; ytalbot.com.



Vienna

Hollmann Beletage

In a hidden courtyard in Vienna's historic center, just a few blocks from St. Stephen's Cathedral, the Hollmann Beletage houses 25 rooms in a former 19th-century noble's home. Period walls conceal lively contemporary interiors, with splashes of orange, its signature hue, in everything from throw blankets to sheer drapes that cover glass-walled showers. Public areas include a garden terrace, eight-seat cinema and game room. Its contemporary Austrian restaurant, the Hollmann Salon, sits on a Baroque courtyard known as Heiligenkreuzerhof around the corner. Rooms from €159, including breakfast; hollmann-beletage.at.

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