

FINEST HOTELS



1

5. Surfing the islands

Unlike the chilly waters of the mainland, the Azores offer pleasantly warm water from June to December and virtually no crowds. In Madeira, the best surf is on the west coast of the main island: Jardim do Mar, Ponta Pequena and Fajã da Ovelha.

Local tip: "The best surf spot in the Azores is on São Jorge Island: Fajã de Santo Cristo." *Rodrigo Herédia, surfer and founder of Sul Villas, Azores*

6. Untouched beaches

The north of Portugal offers beautiful sandy beaches, much less visited than those further south. Moledo, surrounded by the Camarido Forest, has conditions that make it ideal for surfers and kite surfers. Or try Afife: a remote strip with long stretches of white sand.

7. The fishermen's trail

The coastline between Ericeira and Nazaré is dotted with pretty fishing villages that offer sea views and plenty of restaurants. Ericeira attracts international surfers; Peniche still has a fishing fleet that sails from the harbour every day. Sunbathe on São Martinho do Porto's sweep of golden sand or visit Nazaré – its winter waves are the stuff of legend.

Local tip: "In the first week of August, don't miss Peniche's Festa do Nossa Senhora da Boa Viagem, which sees the fleet decked with religious icons." *Paulo Mendes, from a Peniche fishing family*

8. Torel 1884, Porto

The 12 rooms in this centrally located 19th-century palace (a former bank) are all generously proportioned. The guest-only library with honesty bar is a welcoming spot to while away an hour, or you can taste wine in the bank's former vault.



2

[1] Heading for the swell [2] Inside The Vintage, Lisbon [3] The pool at Memmo Príncipe Real [4] This hotel in Lisbon offers a warm welcome [5] Porto's Torel 1884 is a former palace [6] Drinks at The Vintage [7] Looking out to sea from White, the Azores [8] Lunch is served at DOP, Porto



3

9. Memmo Príncipe Real, Lisbon

The 41-room Memmo Príncipe Real, which is nestled on a hilltop in the heart of Lisbon, presents beautiful views across the city. Rooms feature Bang & Olufsen televisions, Hermès amenities and, in some cases, a balcony complete with outdoor fireplace for enjoying the night-time air. There's also a restaurant, terrace bar and guest-only pool.

10. The Vintage, Lisbon

As the name suggests, interiors in this centrally located 56-room hotel prominently feature specially sourced vintage furniture in among some more contemporary pieces. One-off vintage bar carts in each room come equipped with complimentary gin, tonic and the necessary drink-making implements. There's also a restaurant and a rooftop bar with outdoor cinema, not to mention the subterranean spa.

11.

Casa Mãe, Lagos

Houses 30 rooms dedicated to Portuguese design. The kitchen garden it overlooks grows everything from strawberries and passionfruit to kale, tomatoes and fragrant herbs.

12.

Companhia das Culturas, Castro Marim

Situated on a country lane a short drive from the sea, the 16 rooms here are a paean to simple modernism. There is a large living room where you can enjoy complimentary afternoon tea and cake, a swimming pool and an egg-shaped hammam with a marble steam room.



13.

Vila Joya, Albufeira

Superlative service, wonderful views and a touch of hedonistic decadence set this hotel apart.

14.

White, Ponta Delgada

With an unbeatable cliff-top location, all 10 suites here face the ocean.

TOP RESTAURANTS

15.

Prado, Lisbon

Based in a former factory that was once overgrown with plants, this Lisbon restaurant serves a farm-to-table menu of local, seasonal produce and natural Portuguese wine in a space filled with greenery. Materials such as marble, glass and brass – along with an abundance of wooden furniture – give the interior a Scandinavia-meets-Portugal vibe.

16.

Noélia e Jerónimo, Cabanas de Tavira

Chef Noelia Jerónimo's restaurant has been a local favourite for more than 20 years. Locally sourced daily specials include oyster risotto made with sparkling wine and lightly battered fish fillets served with açorda, a regional speciality made of bread, garlic and coriander.

17.

Meat Me, Lisbon

Meat Me's variety of beef and pork cuts hanging from the ceiling – with more in maturing chambers – rivals a butcher's. There's even a resident "meat sommelier" who can fill you in on provenance, breed, maturing time and more. If you're not carnivorous, try the elegant cocktail bar: Vasco Martins creates drinks using artisanal distillates, liqueurs and bitters, including a homemade absinthe.

18.

Belcanto, Lisbon

Portuguese restaurants are gaining recognition throughout the world – not least those of Lisbon chef Jose Avillez, who has 19 to his name.





TRAVEL ROUND-UP
Global

Take your pick

Do you fancy a 19th-century palace in Porto or a 1920s office building in LA? All bases are covered here.



The Pig at Bridge Place CANTERBURY, UK

"We were trying to deformatise the experience of country-house hotels," says hotelier Robin Hutson of The Pig group, which he founded with his wife Judy in 2011. The Pig at Bridge Place is their sixth and latest opening. Less than an hour from central London and close to the coast, the redbrick property hosted rock legends such as Led Zeppelin back in the day; today it's a rural retreat.

"We grow our produce – and what we can't grow we source within 25 miles," says Robin, adding that they keep their own quails, hens, pigs and sheep. (With that in mind, the venison – paired with a glass of Biddenden gamay noir – is well worth a try.) His brand of hospitality is about "the spirit of generosity, about not having too many rules. It's about anticipating guests' needs and having a relaxed environment, as well as friendly staff. There's not a lot of pomp and ceremony in our hotels."

That's what sets The Pig at the Bridge apart: it feels like coming home. Each room is unique and furnished with vintage and found pieces. Hutson's favourite is the Hop Pickers' Hut, built on stilts along a boardwalk adjacent to the Nailbourne Stream. — MSS thepighotel.com



Q&A

KAREN ROOS

Founder and hotelier, *Babylonstoren, South Africa, and The Newt, UK*

South African hotelier Karen Roos is bringing her hospitality know-how to Somerset, where The Newt will open at the end of August. Just like at Babylonstoren, her hotel in the South African Winelands, the idea is to create a rural escape. — DEP

How does The Newt compare to Babylonstoren?

Both are grounded in large gardens and serve food from farm to table – but there any similarity ends. Babylonstoren is anchored in its history over three centuries as a Cape Dutch wine farm. The Newt celebrates all things Somerset: Georgian limestone buildings, cider and cheddar, but also deer and meadows. All this set within Hadspen House and its Stable Yard, with a spa, indoor and outdoor pools, two restaurants – with a bar – and 23 bedrooms.

What sets your hotel apart from other country houses?

We revel in the local. The hotel is an ode to the county with a focus on sustainability. Everything stems from a deep respect for the land, its animals and its environment, as well as a passion for horticulture and agriculture. Visitors will be able to explore the cultivated gardens, ancient woodland, orchards, cider cellar and farm shops.

There's also something new to explore at Babylonstoren: tell us about the recently opened Fynbos cottages.

With a reference to the sturdy Cape dwellings of the 18th century, the six new cottages are the definition of restrained luxury. They overlook water, mountains and two thirds sky. thenewtinsomerset.com; babylonstoren.com



Torel 1884

PORTO

Torel 1884, which opened in Porto earlier this year, is set in an elegant 19th-century palace that was a bank in a former life. Some clever thinking by its trio of young owners means that its original features – five-metre-high ceilings, a grand staircase and elegant crowning skylight – have been retained and enhanced rather than sacrificed for maximising the number of rooms. "We made a conscious decision to respect the building and give guests plenty of space; we want people to feel they are in a private palace, not a normal hotel," says Torel Boutiques partner Ingrid Koeck.

Located in the heart of the city, the hotel is only a three-minute walk from São Bento Station, five minutes from the riverside and a few steps from the pleasant pedestrian street of Rua das Flores. It has just 12 guest rooms whose historic elements, including granite lintels and wooden floors, are complemented by contemporary details such as handmade curtains, linen cushions, jute rugs and velvet sofas. On the top floor, the guests-only library (which is replete with an honesty bar), makes a bright and welcoming spot to while away an hour or two. — TL torelboutiques.com

