

A vibrant tropical beach scene featuring several tall palm trees with lush green fronds against a clear blue sky. The foreground shows a sandy beach curving towards the left, meeting the clear, turquoise waters of a lagoon or reef. The overall atmosphere is bright and sunny, evoking a sense of a luxurious vacation destination.

# The HOT List

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From tropical resorts imagined by film stars and mountain palaces conceived by top designers to glamorous Middle Eastern hideaways, the newest luxury hotels are offering things you never even realised you wanted. *ANGELINA VILLA-CLARKE* reports on the hottest new places to stay in 2014

# 1

## Brando Island French Polynesia

If you're looking for an idyllic tropical escape, you'll fall in love with the breathtakingly beautiful island of Tetiaroa in French Polynesia, 30 miles north of Tahiti. After all, Marlon Brando did exactly that when filming *Mutiny on the Bounty* there in the 60s.

In fact, he was so smitten that he ended up buying it. Luckily you won't have to do that. Following the late actor's wishes, the atoll, which measures just 4.5 miles wide, has now been developed to create a carbon neutral luxury resort, due to open later this year. The Brando, as it has been aptly named, will have 35 villas, each built from naturally-sourced materials and each with its own plunge pool. Avarua Polynesian spa and beachfront restaurant, with a menu sourced from the island's own organic garden, will complete the inner vision.

But The Brando is not just a pretty face; it's all about the big picture. It aims to be one of the most eco-friendly holiday destinations in the world with the latest in sustainable technology, as well as boasting its own eco station for scientific research. Surrounded by a pristine coral reef, it goes without saying that protection of the abundant tropical fish is also central to the resort's mission. Guests will be encouraged to explore French Polynesia's culture and history, with guided archaeological tours of Tahitian sites and trips to the surrounding tiny islands, which will be kept as nature reserves.

[thebrando.com](http://thebrando.com)

## 2 L'Apogee, France

New on the skiing scene in Courchevel is the just-opened 'ski-in, ski-out' gem from ultra-luxe hotel brand Oetker Collection. Described as a "ski-palace", L'Apogee has at its heart a focus on dining with its signature restaurant Le Comptoir de L'Apogée. Designed by legendary interior designer Joseph Dirand, it features a wall of windows overlooking the pristine ski slopes beyond, and has a ham-ageing cellar as the centrepiece of the restaurant. Overseen by revered French chef Franck Ferigutti, there is also a fromagerie, with cheeses sourced from artisan producers and matured on site by in-house affineurs. Located at the top of Jardin Alpin, the 55-bedroom hotel has quirky, colourful interiors by India Mahdavi, as well



as a top-floor, four-bedroom penthouse, a private chalet with its own cinema, a Sisley spa and Kids' Club with a real igloo. Prepare to be wowed.

[lapogeecourchevel.com](http://lapogeecourchevel.com)



### 3 Le Grand Bellevue Switzerland

Originally built in 1912 as a cure house and spa, Le Grand Bellevue in the heart of Gstaad Village offers a new concept for this chic destination in its 'casual yet refined' ethos. Owned by visionary couple Daniel and David Koester, the 57-room hotel has stripped back the formalities and grandeur normally found in Gstaad hotels. Instead guests can expect the welcoming feel of a country house hotel. Eclectic furniture, such as side tables made from antique walking sticks, armchairs in soft velvets and herringbone fabrics, and oversized Chesterfield sofas are set against original parquet floors, arched windows and Moroccan-style alcoves.

Lovers of luxury will not be disappointed though – Le Grand Bellevue is home to one of the finest wine cellars in Gstaad, with more than 10,000 bottles. It also has a private cinema, a private members club and the Bellevue Spa, with a Turkish hammam, Himalayan salt inhalation grotto and Bamford treatments. For one of the most charming restaurants to be found, check out its Le Petit Chalet, a traditional rustic chalet nestled in the hotel's grounds that seats just 18 guests with a menu of hearty Swiss dishes. A must.

[bellevue-gstaad.com](http://bellevue-gstaad.com)



### 4 Andaz Papagayo, Costa Rica

Known as one of the most innovative hotel brands, Andaz (owned by Hyatt and which means 'personal style' in Hindi) is expanding to Latin America with its latest Costa Rican venture. Designed by renowned architect Ronald Zurcher, the Andaz Papagayo doesn't disappoint when it comes to inventiveness. Zurcher, known for blending local cultures, natural elements and landscape in his design, has created a free-flowing environment with open-air social spaces, no desks at check-in and a naturalist design featuring woven textiles, woods and carved local artifacts.

As with many Andaz properties, the Costa Rican venture continues with the no-fuss approach; healthy minibars are complimentary, bath products have been created by artisans and concept restaurants offer cuisine infused with regional ingredients, in this case legendary local coffee and exotic fruits. Nestled in a spectacular location, where the Gulf of Papagayo meets the rainforest, the concept aims to bring to life Costa Rica's Pura Vida (pure life) ethos. Inspiring stuff.

[papagayo.andaz.hyatt.com](http://papagayo.andaz.hyatt.com)

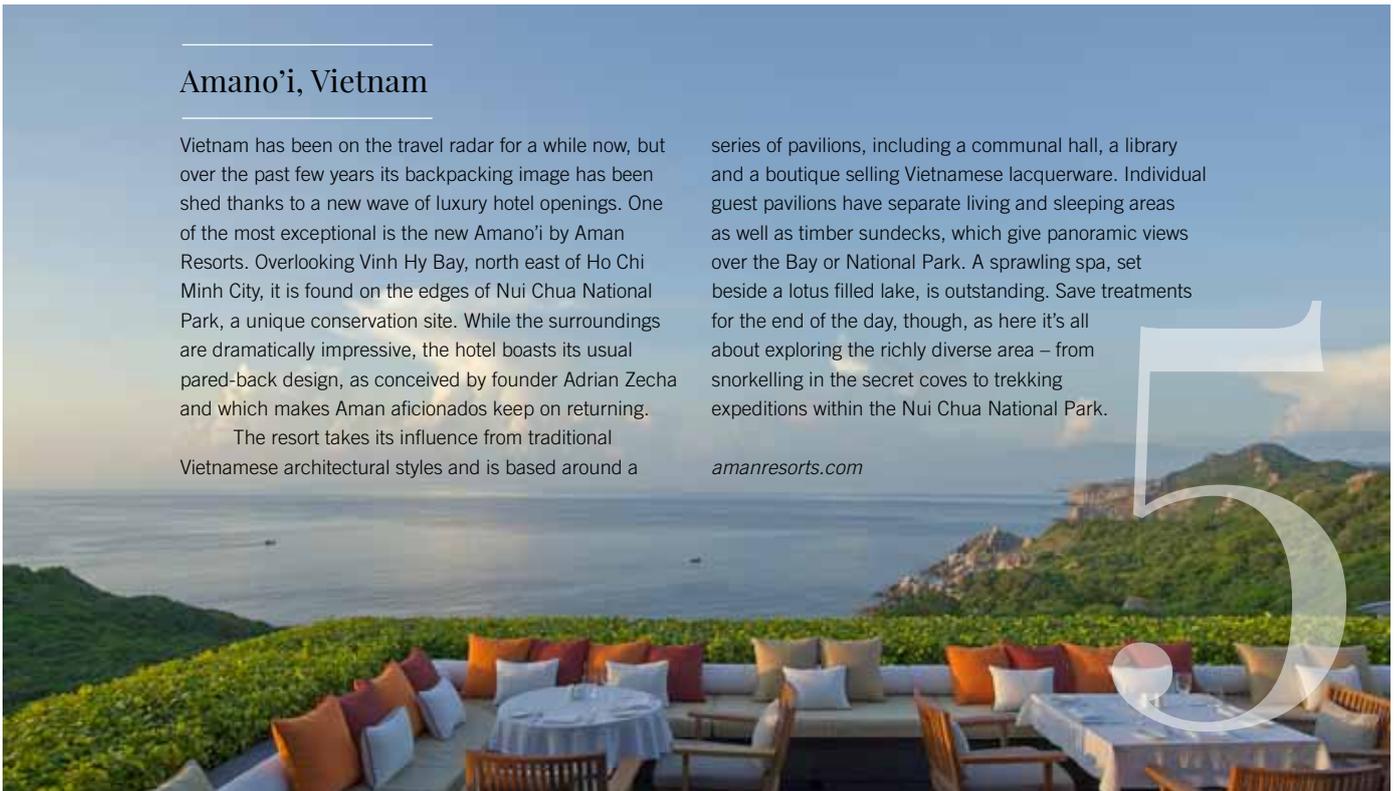
### Amano'i, Vietnam

Vietnam has been on the travel radar for a while now, but over the past few years its backpacking image has been shed thanks to a new wave of luxury hotel openings. One of the most exceptional is the new Amano'i by Aman Resorts. Overlooking Vinh Hy Bay, north east of Ho Chi Minh City, it is found on the edges of Nui Chua National Park, a unique conservation site. While the surroundings are dramatically impressive, the hotel boasts its usual pared-back design, as conceived by founder Adrian Zecha and which makes Aman aficionados keep on returning.

The resort takes its influence from traditional Vietnamese architectural styles and is based around a

series of pavilions, including a communal hall, a library and a boutique selling Vietnamese lacquerware. Individual guest pavilions have separate living and sleeping areas as well as timber sun decks, which give panoramic views over the Bay or National Park. A sprawling spa, set beside a lotus filled lake, is outstanding. Save treatments for the end of the day, though, as here it's all about exploring the richly diverse area – from snorkelling in the secret coves to trekking expeditions within the Nui Chua National Park.

[amanresorts.com](http://amanresorts.com)





## Iniala Beach House, Thailand

Want to get away from it all? The exclusive Iniala Beach House is the place to go. Made up of three separate villas and one penthouse suite, available to hire individually or taken as a whole, this is no usual private house rental. The concept here is ultra-sophisticated luxury. Each villa, for instance, has its own spa (why share when you can have your own?) and jaw-dropping interiors, each by a renowned designer – such as the Campana Brothers of Brazil and A-Cero of Spain, with the whole look overseen by Brit designer Graham Lamb.

The result? A sexy, surreal, futuristic place more suited to New York or Berlin than the shores of the sun-kissed, tropical Natai Beach, but it is exactly that juxtaposition that works. Factor in the darkened, cocooning dining room that is Aziamendi, overseen by Bilbao's Michelin starred chef Eneko Atxa no less, and the Warhol Gym, which sees original Warhols of Muhammad Ali on its walls and a boxing ring, and you won't fail to be impressed.

[iniala.com](http://iniala.com)

## 7 Domaine de la Baume, France

If quintessential French style is your thing, look no further. The gorgeous Domaine de la Baume near the medieval village of Tourtour is so idyllic that it should have been immortalised by a French Impressionist painter. Instead, it was the former home of expressionist artist Bernard Buffet, who lived here from 1986 to 1999. His place of refuge has now been tidied up for 21st century escapes and is hidden away in 99 acres of grounds with cascading waterfalls, an orangery, a vegetable garden with beehives, and an olive grove where house oil is produced.

Owned by French hotel group Maisons & Hotels Sibuet (known for its fashionable hotel Bastide de Marie in Lubéron), this ochre-coloured 18th century bastide, complete with sky-blue shutters, houses an archetypal Provençal chic within, comprising sage green walls, exposed beams, antique furniture and Toile de Jouy fabrics. As well as the exceptional cuisine and wine on offer, the highlight here is undoubtedly the romantic setting, so wander through the formal rose gardens past the chapel and seek out the hotel's Pure Altitude spa, housed in a former tiny dovecote. Wonderfully rustic, you'll drift off to the scent of lavender on the breeze.

[domaine-delabaume.com](http://domaine-delabaume.com)



## 8 Sujan Jawai Leopard Camp, India

For a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, head to Sujan's opening in the heart of Rajasthan's wilderness, between the former kingdoms of Jodhpur and Udaipur. Known for its pioneering approach to sustainable luxury, Sujan's Jawai Leopard Camp is made up of eight luxe tented suites and is the only property to lie within this unexplored region. The spacious tents have a timeless style – with metal work made by artisans, original wildlife photography and canvas and leather accents. Private bathrooms, air conditioning and private viewing decks add to the appeal, as do the dining tents, library, lounges and spa therapies using indigenous herbs and oils.

But, ultimately, the thrill here lies in the surroundings. The area hosts a diverse ecosystem and guests can explore the local terrain in jeeps with trained trackers and guides with the bonus being a high chance of seeing a leopard in the wild.

[sujanluxury.com](http://sujanluxury.com)

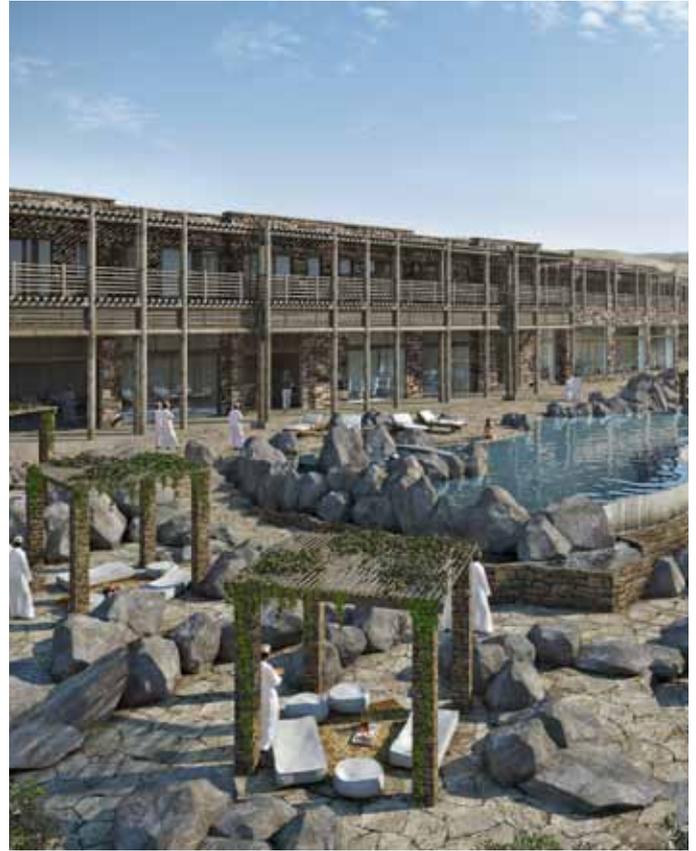


## 9 Alila Jabal Akhdar, Oman

Known for its avant-garde design concept, Alila Hotel's first property in the Middle East will not disappoint. Due to open in spring, Alila Jabal Akhdar is located in the untapped mountainous region of Jabal Akhdar, a two-hour drive from Muscat in Oman. Reflecting its dramatic locale, emphasis has been placed on natural materials – stone, wood and iron – and locally-sourced materials have been used throughout, while the emblem of the rose is a frequent motif in the rooms, employed to reflect the fragrant pink variety that blankets the mountain in spring.

Set 2,000 metres above sea level, the resort overlooks a dramatic gorge with rooms peering over the Hajar Mountains. A glamorous escape for the stylish adventurer, it combines a contemporary minimalist style with warm, ethnic details, such as woven rugs, hanging baskets and tactile pottery. Tempting as it will be to stay put, the new Alila Experiences will undoubtedly mean you'll be expanding your horizons. From picnics in remote wadis, under the shadow of date palms, to a starry night dinner on the edge of the mountainside, a stay here is what memories are made of.

[alilahotels.com](http://alilahotels.com)



## 10 Lohnea, Swiss Alps

When spas boast about their personalised service, it normally means a core range of treatments that can be tweaked to suit a restricted range of needs but this is not so at Lohnea, a new Alpine clinic nestled away in the Swiss Alps in Villars-sur-Ollon, an hour and a half from Geneva. Its raison d'être, devised by renowned medical practitioner Dr Michael Golay, is to take personalised service to another level with an emphasis on diet and exercise to promote long-term wellbeing. Serving only nine guests at a time, who all stay in traditional-style mountain chalets, its emphasis is on absolute attention for each guest.

After a rigorous four-hour health analysis, you'll be given a full overhaul by a team of chiropractors, massage therapists, nutritionists and personal trainers who will remain at your beck and call. A week's stay with a four-month follow-up is the recommendation, so this is for serious spa junkies only. Yoga, massages, an infrared sauna and pristine mountain air complete the allure and you can even expect a drop of red wine or two – for health reasons only, you understand. This the ultimate destination spa.

[lohnea.com](http://lohnea.com)

# 10

