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the best **NEW
HOTELS**

| IT LIST 2016 |

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MANY PEOPLE HAVE BUCKET-LIST DESTINATIONS. I DO TOO, BUT EVER SINCE

I was a child and discovered the magic of a great hotel, I've also had bucket-list hotels—properties that promise something so special that I would gladly jump on a plane just to stay at them. These places don't always live up to expectations, but when they do, they attest to the power hotels have to help us experience the world in new ways.

I'll never forget when I finally made it to Twin Farms, in Vermont, one cold and snowy January weekend. I'd wanted to go for ages, in large part because the property's 10 cottages, tucked amid the forest outside Barnard, were done by one of America's great interior designers, the late Jed Johnson, in 1993. (In the years since, another talented designer, Thad Hayes, has overseen the property's evolution.) The setting was wintry-magical, and the cottages did not disappoint in either originality or comfort. But what I'll always cherish is that utterly peaceful

evening my husband and I spent in our cottage—a gorgeous space that evoked a Japanese *ryokan*—curled up in front of a roaring fire, sipping wine and working our way through an intricate jigsaw puzzle.

The best hotels make memories like these, through an alchemy of setting and design and experience. Our annual It List of the previous year's best new hotels begins on page 67—I've been to a number of them already myself, and whatever you happen to like in a hotel, I can guarantee you'll find several here you should add to your own hotel bucket list.



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FROM MY TRAVELS

Just recently I made it to another hotel I've long wanted to see: **North Island**, in the Seychelles, a secluded Wilderness Safaris retreat of 11 villas on a private island. (You might recall hearing it's where Kate and William honeymooned.) The resort is a study in castaway chic—the extravagantly sized villas manage to combine every modern convenience and perfect butler service with the romance of beds draped in mosquito netting, rustic outdoor showers, and walls hung with stringed shells. Conservation efforts on the island mean, among other things, that green and hawksbill turtles nest in great numbers on its beaches—and oh, those beaches: pristine in every way, with talcum sand fronting aquamarine waters that are rich in marine life for superb snorkeling and fishing. *north-island.com*; from \$3,315 per person per night, all-inclusive.

FROM LEFT: BRIAN DOBEN; COURTESY OF NATHAN LUMP