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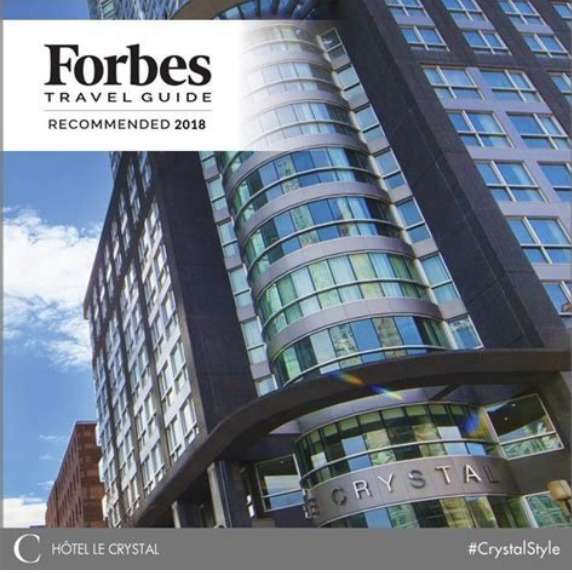


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New stars will shine on February 15.



When Forbes Travel Guide’s expert inspectors visit a property, they anonymously test it based on hundreds of exacting standards, with an emphasis on exceptional service. Only the best of the best achieve the coveted Five Star, our highest rating.



In anticipation of our 2023 Star Award winners announcement on February 15, we give you a peek into what it takes to earn a Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star award. Guests seek authentic experiences. Credit: Five Foot Road Authentic guest experience Wowing a guest or elevating the guest experience is not a new concept in luxury — FTG has been

measuring it for decades — but it sits at the forefront of travel-making decisions as guests’ expectations of what they want out of their trip evolve. There is never a need to overthink the guest experience — often the most memorable moments can be simple and unplanned gestures. A staff of individuals with a passion for service will ensure natural and authentic experiences. Guests value their time more than ever before, and knowing their time was well spent and feeling organically cared for in a way that was not scripted or overplanned is the most important evolution. FTG has recently introduced a new evaluation touchpoint to measure this authenticity. Spas are only one facet of wellness. Credit: Spa at Four Seasons Hotel Philadelphia at Comcast Center Evolution of well-being Well-being goes beyond the spa and reaches into the daily touchpoints of the guest’s stay, including noise reduction, sleep quality, access to high-quality water, light, scent, better use of outdoor space and moving away from traditional communal fitness facilities to more in-room fitness experiences. There are more solutions than ever before to help guests leave a property feeling better than when they arrived. Sustainability is an important part of the guest experience. Credit: One&Only Reethi Rah Sustainability and luxury It’s not about how many sustainability measures a hotel adopts, but about the property doing what it can really well in a genuine manner and without disrupting or removing the sense of luxury. The ability for a guest to maintain sustainability commitments when traveling is a new evolving luxury and one to watch. Equal to the guest experience, the choice to participate in sustainability efforts is not a “perhaps” but a non-negotiable for today’s guests. This factor helps them determine where to stay and dine. Travel professionals will turn to tools such as FTG’s soon-to-launch Responsible Tourism program, which will award a VERIFIED™ badge to hotels that meet expert criteria for protecting the environment and supporting the well-being of employees, guests and the community — creating a global standard for the world’s finest hotels and a trusted third-party verification for guests and travel advisors. Hotels should be prepared for high guest expectations. Credit: Caruso, A Belmond Hotel, Amalfi Coast Guest expectations We are in the midst of a major travel resurgence, and while it’s been going on for some time in the United States and Europe, China is just starting to experience this, and the hospitality industry is booming. Hotels should be prepared for staffing against high demand for quality that sees no slowdown in the foreseeable future — guests’ expectations are on the rise. This aligns with FTG’s own data, which recently saw an increase in the achievement scores for properties earning a Five-Star rating. Hotels are doing away with pandemic-related flexibilities, which further correlates with guest expectations of automatic daily housekeeping service (not every three days or only on request), automatic evening service and the ability to have a room service meal fully set up in your room and then cleared away. The definition of luxury is changing. Credit: Delaire Graff Lodge Relaxed luxury While there is always a place for the finest, most traditional service, the evolution of luxury is continually broadening. Today, service should suit the guest’s interpretation of luxury. While this may be traditional and formal, it may also be approachable and free of pomp. For example, FTG removed the specific requirement for an amuse-bouche in our independent restaurant inspections. The requirement still says to deliver the guest something meaningful but in the style of the venue and appropriate to the cuisine. Visit ForbesTravelGuide.com on February 15 to see the list of 2023 Forbes Travel Guide Star Award recipients. Every villa at Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi comes with an infinity pool. Credit: Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi Travel has made its big comeback. All of those delayed openings and canceled vacations, conferences and celebratory getaways have given hotels and resorts plenty of time to upgrade their services, rejuvenate their facilities and re-envision a better experience for guests. As travelers return to their favorite properties—or seek out new ones—Forbes Travel Guide has announced its 2022 Star Awards for the world’s most outstanding hotels, restaurants and spas. For the 64th annual list, FTG ventured into new destinations, such as the Canary Islands, Greece, Ibiza and Malta. The winners include 323 Five-Star hotels, 558 Four-Star properties and 401 Recommended hotels. There are also 74 Five-Star restaurants this year, 112 Four-Star eateries and 67 Recommended restaurants, as well as 102 Five-Star and 193 Four-Star spas worldwide. To find the best of the best, Forbes Travel Guide’s incognito inspectors stay at each hotel for three days and two nights, posing as ordinary guests. They test up to 900 objective, rigorous standards, from modern-day luxuries—such as whether a room is set up to enhance sleep or whether the food-and-beverage choices are health-conscious—to more traditional amenities, such as the quality of the décor and the courtesy of the staff. Seventy-five percent of a hotel’s rating relies on service, while the remaining 25 percent is determined by the quality of its facilities. See the full list of 2022 Star Awards winners here, and learn more about the newest additions to the collection below. Zurich’s hilltop Dolder Grand is a design lover’s dream, with buildings by Norman Foster. Credit: The Dolder Grand Nine destinations earned the top honor for the first time this year. Madrid made a strong debut with two new Five-Star properties: Four Seasons Hotel Madrid, where you can unwind in the four-story spa and feast in celebrity chef Dani García’s Andalusian brasserie Dani, and BLESS Hotel Madrid, whose recently renovated contemporary interiors take cues from the neighborhood’s 19th-century aristocratic homes. The BLESS brand also claimed its first Five-Star award for its Ibiza property, with destination dining at decorated chef Martín Berasategui’s Etxeko. Iniala Harbour House occupies four 17th-century house in UNESCO-protected Valletta, Malta. Credit: Iniala Harbour House Joining the Five-Star ranks in Europe are Berlin’s Hotel de Rome, a Rocco Forte Hotel, an Italian Renaissance-style landmark set among Bebelplatz’s grand buildings; the Netherlands’ Waldorf Astoria Amsterdam, a string of six connected 17th- and 18th-century palaces along the Herengracht Canal; Malta’s Iniala Harbour House, a boutique gem with 23 eclectic, stylish rooms; Greece’s Katikies Mykonos, a white-washed refuge with sparkling water views; and Zurich’s Dolder Grand, which lives up to its name with panoramic vistas of the city, lake and Alps from its historic hilltop perch. Halekulani Okinawa extends nearly a mile down the coast, and every guest gets a water view. Credit: Halekulani Okinawa A white 15-story tower that sits on the highest of Amman’s seven hills, Four Seasons Hotel Amman earned Jordan’s inaugural award in the Middle East. In Asia, the beachfront Halekulani Okinawa, featuring a showstopping pool lined with nearly 1.5 million mosaic tiles shaped like a Cattleya orchid, garnered the Japanese island’s premier prize. In the United States, Auberge Resorts Collection had a Five-Star trifecta with The Lodge at Blue Sky, a 3,500-acre adventure getaway near Park City, Utah; Madeline Hotel and Residences, a sophisticated Telluride mountain escape that was renovated in 2021; and White Barn Inn, a New England classic that’s home to a beloved Five-Star restaurant in Kennebunkport, Maine. Originally a 19th-century summer home, the five-acre Chanler is the only hotel on Newport’s Cliff Walk. Credit: The Chanler at Cliff Walk Massachusetts scored wins with Encore Boston Harbor, the largest U.S. gaming resort outside of Las Vegas to earn the prestigious rating; Four Seasons Hotel One Dalton Street, Boston, a modern Back Bay skyscraper; and Chatham Inn, a charming 18-room Cape Cod hideaway. Other East Coast winners include The Towers at Lotte New York Palace, an exclusive hotel within a hotel in Midtown Manhattan, and The Chanler at Cliff Walk, a Gilded Age waterfront mansion in Newport, Rhode Island. Once a hideaway for an Italian duchess, Hotel Esencia is a retreat fit for stars. Credit: Hotel Esencia On the shores of Montecito, California, Rosewood Miramar Beach is a glamorous addition to FTG’s annual Star Awards, laying claim to Santa Barbara’s only Five-Star spa. In Hawaii, the lavish ESPACIO The Jewel of Waikiki dedicates each floor to a single suite with an always-on-call butler. Toronto’s Hazelton Hotel became the first independent boutique hotel in Canada to earn a Five-Star rating. In Mexico, newcomers include Hotel Esencia, a tropical-chic retreat in Tulum that was once the home of an Italian duchess, and Banyan Tree Mayakoba, where every room comes with a private pool. Bathed in white Greco-Moorish architecture, the reborn Cap Juluca, A Belmond Hotel, Anguilla was the sole new Five-Star entry in the Caribbean. London’s new Pan Pacific resides in a 43-story skyscraper. Credit: Pan Pacific London Two new additions—Pan Pacific London, a sleek hotel in a 43-story tower, and The Prince Akatoki London, a serene Japanese-influenced getaway—cemented the English capital as the city with the most Five-Star hotels worldwide (to see the full list of 21 top London winners, click here). With 15 solar-powered residences on the private island, Kudadoo is a sustainable vacation. Credit: Kudadoo Maldives Private Island The Maldives and Macau each added new Five-Star hotels. The former unveiled Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Landaa Giraavaru, JOALI Maldives, Kudadoo Maldives Private Island and Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi, while Macau’s honorees include Emerald Tower at MGM COTAI, Grand Suites at Four Seasons Hotel Macao, Cotai Strip; Hotel Okura Macau, and Skylofts at MGM COTAI. Bulgari Hotel Shanghai offers everything from private jewelry showings to Masserati limo service. Credit: Bulgari Hotel Shanghai More top hotels peaked in the Alps (Airelles Courchevel, Les Airelles; Gardena Grödnertal; Park Hotel Vitznau), the Amalfi Coast (Casa Angelina) and Istanbul (Mandarin Oriental Bosphorus, Istanbul). Caesars Palace Bluewaters Dubai and Conrad Abu Dhabi Etihad Towers brought honors to the Middle East; and Bulgari Hotel Shanghai; HOTEL THE MITSUI KYOTO, A Luxury Collection Hotel & Spa; and The Murray, Hong Kong, a Niccolo Hotel were new standouts in Asia. Glimpse Atlantic views while dining at Cara. Credit: Cara Stateside, three restaurants achieved the coveted Five-Star rating for 2022. Dallas’ Carte Blanche turns out luscious pastries in the morning and then five- or 12-course tasting menus in the evening. At Cara, tucked inside Rhode Island’s newly minted Five-Star hotel The Chanler at Cliff Walk, chef Jacob Jasinski crafts nightly changing blind tasting menus with New England ingredients. Savor French-Japanese fare in seasonal tasting menus in Waikiki from chef Jason Yamaguchi at ESPACIO’s hidden gem MUGEN. Macau’s Five Foot Road is a taste of history. Credit: Five Foot Road Hong Kong added to its Five-Star restaurants with L’Envol, a French fine-dining destination; Sushi Saito Hong Kong, whose seafood is chosen every morning by chef Takashi Saito at Tokyo’s Toyosu Market and delivered that day; and Tempura Uchitsu, which specializes in a tempura omakase menu. In Macau, two Chinese restaurants also took the top honors: Five Foot Road, which focuses on flavorful Sichuan cuisine, and Imperial Court, which offers a modern take on Cantonese fare (be sure to peek at the dining room’s dragon column). Finally, La Dame de Pic, Raffles Singapore showcases the culinary prowess of world-renowned French chef Anne-Sophie Pic. Try the five-hour Majestic Hammam Journey at The Bulgari Spa Dubai. Credit: The Bulgari Spa Dubai For those in need of some premium pampering, there are plenty of star-filled possibilities this year, whether it be in the country (Salamander Spa in Middleburg, Virginia), the city (The Spa at Encore Boston Harbor; The Spa by Ivanka Trump at Trump International Hotel Washington, D.C.; or The Wellness Floor at One Dalton in Boston), the mountains (Spa Ojai in Ojai, California, or Edge Spa in Utah) or the Lowcountry (Spa Montage Palmetto Bluff in Bluffton, South Carolina). Around the world, seek out The Bulgari Spa Dubai, a sleekly designed oasis, and The Spa at Mandarin Oriental, Doha, which introduces Qatari ingredients like pearl powder and sand into some services. Not only are they the inaugural Five-Stars in their respective cities, but they are also the first in the Middle East. Other winning spas include Asaya, a Hong Kong wellness center that provides everything from expressive arts therapy to facials; SE Spa at Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit, where a hydrotherapy circuit should precede slipping into one of the Puerto Vallarta sanctuary’s 20 treatment rooms; and Banyan Tree Spa Mayakoba, where Asian-inspired therapies combine with Mexican traditions and a lush jungle setting.