

Condé Nast Traveller

SEPTEMBER 2015

*87 lovely
places to
stay worldwide*

**GREAT BRITISH
WEEKENDS**
THE NEXT-GENERATION B&BS

SLOW LIVING
ON GREECE'S MOST
PRIVATE ISLANDS

IS THIS
THE MOST
CHIC CORNER
OF ITALY?

PUGLIA'S BEST BEACH CLUBS,
VILLAS & RESTAURANTS

EAT NEW YORK
AN INSIDER'S HIT LIST

Sunshine state of mind

WHERE TO STAY



SMALL-SCALE BIG HITTER

SANT FRANCESC SINGULAR, PALMA DE MALLORCA

This 19th-century manor house on a square in Palma's Old Town was built to impress, outdoing its more modest neighbours by a mile. Owned by the same clan for over a century, it lay abandoned for a generation until a new proprietor, Andrés Soldevila Ferrer (whose family owns Barcelona's Hotel Majestic), came along with €1.5 million to pump life back into it. Hats off to him. The restoration is brilliant. The central courtyard where steeds were once saddled is now a seating area in which to sip cold Mojitos on hot evenings beneath cloud-scudding skies; the former stables have been converted into an elegant restaurant which serves

Mediterranean sea bass and artichokes sautéed with (get this) hollandaise foam and lemon air. Yes, it's smart and accomplished, but there isn't a whiff of pretentiousness and your companions around the rooftop pool are as likely to be German ladies in pearls as young men with tattoos in neatly pressed shorts. The 42 guestrooms are attired in floppy linens in tasteful oatmeal and hung with original artworks chosen by the owner's interior designer mother. Diminutive Palma really has it all: imposing architecture, shady squares, a revitalised waterfront and a hip tapas scene. Now it has the impeccable little hotel it has always deserved. +34 971 495000; www.hotelsantfrancesc.com. Doubles from about £205 PETER BROWNE

FUN-LOVING SHOWSTOPPER

COTTON HOUSE, BARCELONA

UNDER
£150

There can't be many hotels that house a parlour lined with gleaming walnut cabinets where you can order a set of candy-coloured, hand-stitched shirts, but that's all part of the charm at this new Marriott Autograph property, set in an elegant mansion on the city's Gran Vía. It's a fabulously ostentatious spot, dripping with original Belle Epoque features such as the cotton-flower-shaped chandelier above a sweeping marble staircase that rises to the first-floor reception rooms, where there are 19th-century parquet floors worn glossy with age and carved wooden ceilings inset with cherubic friezes. With all this grandeur it could have ended up feeling a bit formal, but designer Lázaro Rosa-Violán has lavished his customary irreverent touches on the place: a pair of power-blue leather armchairs in the library to match a marble-toned Moroccan rug; chintzy cushions scattered along a bench; floor-to-ceiling windows to draw in sun beams from the hotel's *patio de manzana*. Although this traditional light-giving space has been vamped up with decking and banana palms, the smart apartments that surround it give a real sense of having landed in the bosom of the *beau monde*. Here, a dirty Martini is a perfect sharpener to a light lunch, before a snooze by the pool or under the high-thread-count sheets in your coolly minimalist room. +34 934 505045; www.hotelcottonhouse.com. Doubles from about £145 TS



MODERN CLASSIC IN THE CAPITAL

THE PRINCIPAL MADRID

This significant new arrival might be right on a corner of the Spanish capital's arterial Gran Vía, but with its discreet entrance down a side street, it still feels a bit secret. It's a topsy-turvy place with check-in on the sixth floor in the brilliantly curvaceous, open-plan reception-restaurant-bar Atico. This is a space made for lingering: decorated in rich charcoal, coral and forest green, with velvet curtains, wingback chairs, a marble fireplace and bookcases loaded with leather-bound tomes. Off to one side, there's a small balcony dotted with olive trees beneath which to eat *churros* for breakfast. On the other, there's a pergola-covered terrace for lunch and dinner, where the menu swings from the creative (upside-down red-tuna pizza) to the classic (perfect ham croquettes). It's overseen by innovative chef Ramón Freixa, whose restaurant at The Principal's sister Hotel Unico has two Michelin stars. The 76 bedrooms below this sociable scene have Jackson Pollock-esque artworks clustered above the beds and a palette of moody greys. Gin's the thing at the bar (as it is across the whole city right now): goldfish bowls of the stuff, tinkling with ice and splashed with tonic, preferably drunk at the rooftop Terrazza, with views stretching north over boutique-packed Chueca and south towards the Prado. This is the first really smart hotel to open slap-bang in Madrid's tourist hub in ages, and without a tour group in sight. +34 915 218743; www.theprincipalmadridhotel.com. Doubles from about £165 FIONA KERR

