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Dreamy Suites: 10 Best Hotels of 2016



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Travel

I know the difference between expensive travel and the truly luxurious

It is, admittedly, a little self-indulgent to look back at the end of each year and pick my favorites among the dozens of luxury hotels that I've had the pleasure of staying at and writing about. I know that.

But after another year that saw me spending more than half my nights away from home, my deep affinity for hotels is perhaps inevitable. And the ones that impressed me in 2016 knocked my socks off. Ranging from a postmodern Miami fantasia to an elegant maharaja's palace to a re-creation of an Italian medieval village to a surf resort where no one wears shoes, they share a sense of singularity—they're the kind of places that couldn't exist anyplace else. (“Nowhere else” is in fact a tagline for one of them.)

Below are ten standouts—some brand new, some new to me—listed in no particular order. (Disclosure: I was hosted as a journalist by several.)

[Suján Rajmahal Palace, Jaipur, India](#)

An 18th-century pleasure garden for a favorite queen, the British Residency during the Raj and the private home of His Highness Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II, the pink palace is among the most sumptuous and regal hotels in India. Instead of giving guests the sense that they're exploring a museum, the Rajmahal Palace transports them to a fantasy life of being nobility themselves. Society designer Adil Ahmad (a friend of the royal family, who still own the hotel) oversaw a recent, meticulous refurbishment of all 14 rooms and public spaces. I certainly felt like queen for a day when I was shown my room, the Maharani Apartment, easily the largest and most gloriously colorful hotel bedroom I've stayed in.