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ROOMS WITH GRAND VIEWS - THE WORLD'S NEWEST HIGH-END HOTELS

HIGH thread count sheets, impeccable service and a hard-to-replicate atmosphere are always top of mind when choosing where to stay. But new hotel openings around the world offer much more - personal and cultural enrichment, real experiences and the opportunity to put something back.

Backed by billions of dollars of government and corporate investment, Parramatta has morphed into Sydney's second CBD. If the massive local Porsche dealership is a good indication, Parra was definitely overdue for its first five-star hotel. SKYE Hotel Suites, with 72 apartment suites, opened in August to "fill the gap" for business travellers, staycationers, and interstate visitors. A self-styled "vertical village", the soaring towers were designed by leading architects Allen Jack + Cottier and Koichi Takada Architects.

The plush property is only 200m from Parramatta Square and accesses high-end shopping and cultural must-dos. Virtual concierge tablets link to all the hotel's services such as the gym, pool, sundeck, spa, sauna and the Husk & Vine Kitchen & Bar, the on-site restaurant which has scored ace reviews from the get-go.

Apart from Stephen Seckold's (ex-Flying Fish) Mediterranean and Middle Eastern-oriented menu, Husk & Vine's wheat and wine concept was inspired by something a lot closer to home. During construction, workers uncovered a colonial era house from the 1840s, a convict hut, wheelwright's workshop and the cellar of the Wheatshaf Hotel, and the dig has been preserved under glass on the restaurant's terrace. The cool-climate boutique wines from Australia and overseas are a far cry from the plonk of yore, and a custom Beech oven is on hand for flatbreads, prime cuts of the best meats and poultry in the country.

Billed as London's most spectacular new hotel, The Ned re-purposed the Midland Bank building in the heart of the city, the pulse of the Brit capital's financial network. The old vault which stood in for Fort Knox in Goldfinger has been transformed into a schmick-as-bar. The name? That's the sobriquet of Sir Edwin Lutyens, the world-famous architect of the heritage landmark. The swimming pool has views of St Paul's cathedral, the vast banking hall has been rejigged with nine restaurants from Italian through Asian and English, and - yes - there's a private members club for guests.

Soaring above Cape Town's Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, The Silo was crafted, as the name suggests, out of a 1920s grain silo that once ranked as the tallest building in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art opened its doors at ground level as the South African equivalent of New York's MoMA in September. The views from the windows of this 28-room luxury enclave are the stuff of Instagram legend - Table Mountain, Lion's Head and Devil's Peak. Or, better yet, drink them in with a cocktail at The Silo Rooftop bar where prior reservations are mandatory.

Hardby Fiji's Great Astrolabe Reef, Aussie property billionaire Lang Walker has dialed up the definition of luxury in the South Pacific with the stunning, multi-million-dollar Kokomo Island Resort. Only 45 minutes from Nadi by chopper or seaplane, the 21 thatched waterfront bures and six palatial "residences" anchor the 56ha private island rimmed with white sand beaches. The restaurant serves sustainably-sourced meals using island-grown fruit and vegetables, and locally caught and raised fish and meats.

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Warsaw was pulverised during World War II and the city's most plush hotel - the Europejski - didn't escape the mass destruction. Rebuilt in the 1960s and reclaimed by its former owners after the fall of Communism in the 1990s, one of Eastern Europe's most luxurious hotels reopens in early 2018. Raffles, the iconic Asian hotel group, has spared no expense in restoring the commanding Neo-Renaissance facade, 106 rooms (the largest in the Polish capital), bar and cigar lounge that was once a magnet for the cream of Warsaw society. Raise a vodka or three to their memory.

LA will be awash with new hotel openings over the next few years. The apex of the flood is the Waldorf Astoria in Beverly Hills, a 12-storey, Art Deco-inspired bolthole on a long-dormant corner of Wilshire and Santa Monica boulevards. The storied brand's first outpost on the West Coast, the Golden Age of Hollywood is the guiding design principle. Michelin-starred uber chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten

presides over the menu in the signature restaurant and there's a La Prairie spa and VIP cabanas, of course.

Located just outside the manic intensity of Shanghai, Amanyangyun threw open its tranquil doors in November and is easily the most ambitious project of the prestigious Aman luxury hotel group. Over the past decade, 10,000 camphor trees and 50 Ming and Qing dynasty homes have been transported and re-assembled as 26 luxury antique villas. Yangyun means "nurturing of the clouds" and the harmonious effect of the ornamental lakes, carefully landscaped gardens and traditional buildings mimic a Chinese water colour painting. There's a choice of six dining venues, including Lazhu, a top-flight Chinese restaurant, of course, the NAMA Japanese, and the Lakeside Cafe. Repair to The Bar to be waited on like an emperor.

When a Berlin hotel says it aims to push buttons and boundaries, attention should be paid. Part of Germany's Gekko Group, Provocateur a 58-room boutique property in Charlottenburg is for the up-all-night-sleep-all-day crowd. The decor is 1920s Paris burlesque with a cutting local edge. Chef Duc Ngo (Moriki Frankfurt and Madame Ngo Berlin) helms the ranges of the Chinese/French restaurant. Sign on for the Provocateur Mode, a multi-sensory in-room experience that goes well with a stiff drink and low lighting.

Saffire Freycinet grabbed global attention as Tasmania's first world-class resort. The same developers - The Federal Group - are behind the MACq 01, the island state's latest high-end hotel. As much a headlong dive into the past as a luxurious getaway, each of the 114 rooms is linked to an historic local character from bushrangers to convicts-turned-plantocrats. The spectacular waterfront location and focus on Tassie's world-beating whiskies, gins and fresh produce make the MACq 01 one of the most exciting new hotel openings in Australia for years.

Be honest. You haven't been to New York 10 times; you've been to Manhattan. The 1 Hotel Brooklyn Bridge is an eco-luxury hideaway that runs on wind power and is the pet passion of billionaire real estate investor Barry Sternlicht. Sustainability is the core concern and over 50 per cent of the building materials were recycled or reclaimed. Sleep soundly on hemp mattresses and wash in marble rain showers. The 1 Rooftop Bar is permanently packed in summer because of its in-your-face panorama of the Manhattan skyline.