



Where to stay in 2020: the most anticipated hotel openings

Four Seasons, Madrid

The Spanish capital has lacked a properly grand hotel for two years now, ever since Mandarin Oriental closed the Ritz to embark on a €99m refurbishment by the French designers Gilles & Boissier. It is due to be unveiled this summer but the first quarter of this year should see the launch of a new rival: Four Seasons' reinvention of seven historic buildings, among them the Banco Hispano Americano and the Palacio de la Equitativa, into a 161-room, 39-suite hotel, adjoining the elegant Galería Canalejas shopping arcade. Aside from the architectural heritage, what makes it a really alluring prospect is the fact that Dani Garcia is overseeing its rooftop restaurant (designed by Martin Brudnizki) and terrace. If it's as good as Bibo, Garcia's self-styled "bistro for the bold" in Marbella, let alone his Michelin-starred restaurant next door, it will be worth the trip in itself. fourseasons.com

Cheval Blanc, Paris

LVMH's €750m transformation of the venerable 19th-century Parisian



Villa Copenhagen



Four Seasons Madrid

department store La Samaritaine is due for completion in April. It will contain both expansive retail space — with an emphasis on LVMH brands — and, less predictably, 96 social housing units and a nursery as well as offices, set behind a striking new undulating glass facade designed by the futuristic Japanese architects SANAA on the Rue de Rivoli. The original store's Art Deco extension meanwhile, has been reconfigured as a supremely refined Cheval Blanc hotel overlooking the Seine, with 72 rooms (from €1,150) and suites (the penthouse has its own swimming pool), 26 of them the work of Peter Marino, who has also designed its Christian Dior spa. Chef Arnaud Donckele of La Vague d'Or at the hotel's sister property in Saint-Tropez, which has three Michelin stars, will take charge of its restaurant. chevalblanc.com

Villa Copenhagen, Copenhagen

The trend for repurposing municipal landmarks as hotels continues in Denmark where the imposing Central Post and Telegraph Office, built in 1912, is

due to open as Villa Copenhagen on April 1. In contrast with the marble-and-parquet splendour of the public areas, its 390 rooms (from DKr1,940, about £220) will be decorated in a coolly Nordic style. And in addition to the usual facilities, there will be a winter garden with a glass roof, as well as a roof garden, where they'll grow vegetables and herbs for use in the informal brasserie, plus a 25-metre pool, heated, in accordance with the hotel's aspirations to be environmentally friendly, with excess heat from the building. villacopenhagen.com

Airelles Château de Versailles, Le Grand Contrôle, Versailles

Built in 1681 for the Duc de Saint-Aignan, first gentleman of Louis XIV's bedchamber, and later used as the exchequer (hence its name), L'Hôtel du Grand Contrôle is a *petit palais* overlooking the Orangery parterre in the gardens of the Château de Versailles. Meticulously restored and furnished with Aubusson carpets and Pierre Frey fabrics in an appropriately antique style, based on an inventory of the building taken in 1788 (the last before the revolution) the chunkily named "Airelles Château de Versailles, Le Grand Contrôle" opens this spring as a 14-room hotel (from €1,300 a night) with an Alain Ducasse restaurant. Among the perks of staying there will be out-of-hours access to the palace, the Petit Trianon and their gardens, as well as the chance to take a boat on to its mille-long canal. airelles.com

Castello di Reschio, Umbria

Benedikt Bolza, an Austrian-born architect, and his Florentine wife Nencia



The spa, Aman New York

Corsini have spent the past 25 years restoring the farmhouses on his family's 1,500-hectare estate, Castello di Reschio, close to Umbria's Tuscan border. The estate is home to long-established vineyards (Cesanese, Ciliegolo, Sangiovese and Merlot), 5,000 olive trees, more than a million bees and an organic farm, as well as meadows, woods and a lake you can swim in. As each house was completed, they would sell it (10 are available to rent). In time they added an equestrian centre and, last summer, a 70-cover restaurant. And this June sees the opening of their first hotel, a conversion of the estate's 11th-century castle,



Airelles Château de Versailles, Le Grand Contrôle

with 36 rooms, a second restaurant and a spa. reschio.com

Xigera Safari Lodge, Botswana

The news that South Africa's Tollman family, owners of Red Carnation Hotels, have lavished \$35m on their next venture, a safari camp with just 12 bedrooms, seems surprising — until you consider the details. Xigera Safari Lodge, due to open in June in Botswana's Okavango Delta, will be powered by the delta's biggest solar farm, so its diesel-free, disposable-plastic-free environmental credentials are impressive. (Hot water comes from geysers.) And by hiring 105 permanent staff, it's certainly created employment. But much of the investment must surely have gone on art and design: works and furniture by more than 30 African artists (those by the young South African Chris Soal, still only 25, are a revelation). Sourced or commissioned by Trevyn McGowan of Cape Town gallery Southern Guild, the collection promises to be almost as fascinating as the wildlife on the floodplain it faces. xigera.com

Aman, New York

Six years on from its first urban property in Tokyo, Aman Resorts opens in

New York towards the end of the year, in the 26-storey Crown Building at 730 Fifth Avenue (and 57th), the 1921 tower with a distinctive oxidised-copper pyramid roof and almost 40kg of gold leaf on its facade. Designed by long-time Aman collaborator Jean-Michel Gathy of Deniston Architects (the vision behind Aman properties in Indonesia, Rajasthan, Turks and Caicos islands, Beijing, Montenegro, Venice and Vietnam), the 85-room hotel will share the building with three floors of shops, a triple-height spa, two restaurants (Japanese and Mediterranean), a 10th-floor garden terrace, private members' club, basement jazz club and 22 residences, among them a five-storey penthouse with a reported price tag of \$180m. amanresorts.com

Royal Gorongosa, Mozambique

Until the outbreak of Mozambique's civil war in 1977, the 4,000 sq km Gorongosa National Park was the jet set's safari destination of choice. Now the park National Geographic has called "Africa's lost Eden" — home to lion, leopard, giraffe, zebra, elephant, waterbuck, sable and much more — is being put back on the luxury travel map by the opening, later this year, of the Royal Gorongosa. Each of its eight tents, practically marquees, will cover at least 86sq metres excluding their decks and private plunge pools, and if it lives up to the standards of its sister properties, including Royal Malewane in the Greater Kruger National Park, La Residence in Franschhoek and the Silo in Cape Town, its guests shouldn't want for much. theroyalportfolio.com

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