

AFAR

The 6 Luxury Hotels I'm Most Excited About in 2020

By Annie Fitzsimmons 12.19.19



Courtesy of LHM Hotels

The Legian, Sire on Lombok will open in April 2020

2020 shows no sign of slowing down when it comes to luxury hotel openings. Here are 6 openings that I am especially excited about, plus a rundown of what other important brands are up to, highlighted at ILTM Cannes this month.

Xigera, Botswana

The Red Carnation Group, an arm of [the Travel Corporation](#) (TTC), counts some of the industry's most beloved hotels (Ashford Castle in Ireland, the Milestone Hotel & Residences in London) among them. It also has a top-to-bottom dedication to sustainability through its TreadRight Foundation, and I'm continually impressed by CEO Brett Tollman's personal mission (one look at his Instagram tells you how involved he is). That's why the opening of [Xigera](#) in Botswana (June 2020), a stunning 12-suite safari experience, is so exciting. With the concept and design spearheaded by Toni Tollman, the project will have the family's touches throughout—and it is extra special since TTC started in Africa. The staff-to-guest ratio will be 105 to 24 guests, with 95 stand-alone suites for staff accommodation, a rarity in Africa.

The Legian, Sire on Lombok

LHM has been a hotel group to watch ever since it opened [the Legian Seminyak](#) in Bali. Now, it will open the Legian, Sire on Lombok (a 1.5-hour ferry ride or a quick flight from Bali) with 45 suites and 15 villas, all with private pools, butlers, and views of the Gili Islands and Mount Rinjani, a volcano that rises over Lombok and offers hiking options for adventurous travelers. I sat next to Hans Meier, a Swiss hotelier and COO of LHM, at a dinner in Cannes, and he told me, "Lombok is a bit like Bali was 30 years ago." And [Embark](#) CEO Jack Ezon says Lombok is an "ideal hideaway for people looking for Bali without the overtourism." Still, travelers will likely want to visit the two luxury resorts and experience both islands.

Rocco Forte's Villa Igiea in Palermo, Sicily

I love anything Sir [Rocco Forte](#) does in the hotel world. The Hotel de Russie in Rome and its garden for alfresco dining will forever be a favorite, and this year's splashy opening of [Hotel de la Ville on the Spanish Steps](#) with beautiful terraces and bars added a new dynamic to the city. Now the Rocco Forte brand will expand to Sicily, a hot spot in the travel world for the past few years, but one that lacked luxury hotel options. Villa Igiea, located in an early 1900s structure built by the "Kennedy family of Sicily," will get the full Rocco Forte brand treatment, with dining, spa, and design. Sir Rocco personally leads his family business, with all three of his children working for the company now. He also announced they are opening a property in Shanghai next year and said that they'd like to expand to 25 hotels over the next five years (currently, they have 14). But for 2020, Sicily is the one to watch.

Villa Copenhagen

Launching in April, Villa Copenhagen (a [Preferred hotel](#)) will see the city's 108-year-old post office transformed into an eco-focused luxury hotel with renewable energy, and an Earth Suite made entirely of sustainable materials (and I'm guessing a lot of plants). What caught my eye is that there will be a traditional Danish bakery on-site, a delicious addition, especially at a time when it is increasingly common to find frozen dough shipped to bakeries daily across Europe. The hotel complements Copenhagen's aim to become the world's [first carbon neutral city by 2025](#)—the city is investing heavily in sustainable infrastructure and clean energy, even as the population grows.

Hotel the Mitsui, Kyoto

Japan is a big destination for luxury travelers in 2020, thanks to the many hotel openings surrounding the Summer Olympics. But [Hotel the Mitsui](#), which claims to be the first locally owned hotel in Kyoto, will be a huge draw to those exploring the country. Built on a site where the powerful Mitsui family lived for more than 250 years, the 161-room hotel will incorporate historical elements like the front gate and gardens, display museum-quality artwork, and offer a thermal spring spa. Interior designer Andre Fu (who helped put Upper House Hong Kong on the map) is spearheading guest room and lobby design. Rumor has it this will be the flagship, with more openings under the brand in the years to come.

The Ritz-Carlton Paradise Valley

OK, I'm slightly biased as my family has lived in Scottsdale for 25 years and seen the entire Valley of the Sun expand. The location of the [Ritz-Carlton, Paradise Valley](#) could not be better. It will be set on 20 acres overlooking iconic Camelback Mountain, a popular summit for hikers (although I recommend climbing Tom Thumb in north Scottsdale for a less-trafficked hiking experience). It's also a five-minute drive from Scottsdale's Fashion Square mall and Old Town Scottsdale, a hub of great restaurants, southwestern style, and a Thursday night art walk through local galleries. The Ritz promises a "desert-inspired" spa, and in a town of beautiful spas, it will be one to watch.

Plus, a few more luxury hotel openings to note

It's impossible to mention every one of the hundreds of recently opened and opening-soon luxury hotels, but here are some more that stood out to me at [ILTM Cannes](#).

Airelles

In France, the growing [Airelles](#) brand will open the much-awaited Airelles Le Grand Controle at Versailles, a 15-key hotel facing L'Orangerie with an Alain Ducasse restaurant. It also opened [Airelles Val d'Isère, Mademoiselle](#), this month, a game-changer in the area for in-the-know ski (or ski town) enthusiasts.

Marriott Luxury Brands

Marriott said it will open more than 30 luxury properties next year, under brands such as the Ritz-Carlton, St. Regis, the Luxury Collection, JW Marriott, and Edition. Highlights for me: Reykjavik will get another needed luxury hotel when Edition opens in 2020. And sweet Savannah will welcome a new JW Marriott, making it more attractive for conferences. Of course, [North Island](#) in the Seychelles (where Prince William and Kate Middleton honeymooned) became a Luxury Collection property this year, a huge draw.

One&Only

[One&Only Desaru Coast](#), opening in March, marks the brand's first property in Asia, and it will be home to a destination spa. One&Only Mandarin will open in Mexico, adding a sexy new option on Riviera Nayarit, a 30-minute drive from laid-back Sayulita.

Anantara

[Anantara](#) has 41 properties now—the newest are Anantara Villa Padierna in Marbella, Anantara Tozeur Resort in Tunisia, and Anantara Iko Mauritius Resort & Villas. (Most resorts are in the northwest, and this one is in the southeast.) Watch out for the Marker Hotel in Dublin to become an Anantara next year.

Rosewood

This year, [Rosewood Miramar Beach](#) in Montecito debuted on a storied stretch of California sand. Next year, Rosewood Little Dix Bay will be a huge return after a four-year closure, and Rosewood Washington, D.C., will open six townhouse suites in Georgetown (very "Sense of Place," its tagline).

Hyatt Luxury Brands

[Hyatt](#) will add 20 hotels globally to its luxury portfolio, which includes Park Hyatt, Grand Hyatt, Miraval, Unbound, and Alila properties. Park Hyatt Mexico City and Park Hyatt Auckland will open in 2020 (in time for the 2021 America's Cup). The two most exciting Unbound openings are Great Scotland Yard, the former Metropolitan Police Headquarters in London (opened on December 9) and Hôtel du Palais Biarritz next June, a former residence of Napoleon and not far from the border of northern Spain, a lesser-traveled area for Americans that will gain more buzz.

Proper Hotels

[Proper Hotels](#) (represented by [J.MAK](#)) is growing from its San Francisco and Santa Monica locations to open one in Austin and one in downtown Los Angeles. The Austin property will be the “hottest place to see and be seen in Austin,” says Ezon, with a fifth-floor rooftop pool deck.

Oetker Collection

It’s not a reopening, but a refresh—[Oetker Collection](#), a small group of showstopper hotels, will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the famed [Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc](#) with a fresh look and feel upon reopening. Chef Eric Frechon, Michelin-starred chef from sister hotel Le Bristol in Paris, will join executive chef Arnaud Poette, who has been at the hotel for 27 years, to help consult on the culinary program.