

TRAVEL + LEISURE

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THE IT LIST

SNEAK PEEK 10 MORE HOTELS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

Here is an exclusive look at the coolest new (and soon-to-open) properties around the globe, from New York to Dubai

UNITED STATES

Gramercy Park Hotel NEW YORK CITY

PEDIGREE It's where Humphrey Bogart once tied the knot, where Babe Ruth held court at the bar, where Joe and Rose Kennedy stayed with a young John F. in tow. Could the Gramercy Park Hotel possibly have more panache? Apparently, yes. Long a favorite haunt of writers, artists, and rock stars, this shabbily genteel institution is getting a multimillion-dollar makeover under its new proprietor, Ian Schrager. The boutique-hotel impresario has enlisted artist Julian Schnabel to create its interior. **WHAT TO EXPECT** Schrager is also developing an adjacent property into apartments designed by minimalist architect John Pawson. But with Schnabel's touch, the hotel is bound to have a more eclectic vibe. "It's a completely new aesthetic for me—more original, individual, and bohemian," Schrager says. **ROOM STATS** Forty-six suites and 139 rooms. **T+L TIP** Michelin-starred chef Alan Yau, of London's Hakasan and Yauatcha, is set to open a ground-level *boite* with leafy views of the park across the street. **DON'T MISS** A stroll in Gramercy Park, the only private park in Manhattan—hotel guests are given the much-coveted key. **THE FACTS** 2 Lexington Ave.; 212/920-3300; www.gramercyparkhotel.com; doubles from \$450. *Opens July 2006.*

The London NEW YORK CITY

PEDIGREE LXR Luxury Resorts is transforming Midtown's Rihga Royal into a cross-branding nirvana, with a little help from its A-list friends. A master of

urban glamour, designer David Collins will introduce the same sleek sensibility (glossy satin, leather, sexy mood lighting) that turned the Berkeley Hotel's Blue Bar into a red-hot scene for the coolest Britons in London. Bad-boy chef Gordon Ramsay gets a chance to play nice in a dining room patterned after his original Chelsea restaurant, where he first gained attention for an aggressively contemporary menu. **WHAT TO EXPECT** Quintessentially, the elite global concierge, will handle guests' every whim (private jets, box seats, after-hours shopping) without blinking. And the Golden Door will bring its 24-karat fitness routines to a workout studio with two private outdoor decks. **ROOM STATS** Some 500 rooms, including 10 suites and 40 studios. **COOL FACTOR** Waterworks will make a splash with its custom line of bath fixtures, apothecary products, towels, and robes. **T+L TIP** Check out Ramsay's informal bar menu, which we hope will include favorites such as pressed foie gras with smoked eel or roasted scallops alongside peppered golden-raisin purée. **THE FACTS** 151 W. 54th St.; 866/656-1777 or 212/307-5000; www.thelondonnyc.com; doubles from \$499. *Opens September 2006.*

EUROPE

Château du Champ de Bataille LE NEUBOURG, FRANCE

PEDIGREE Designer Jacques Garcia, whose work can be seen in some of the world's most glamorous palace hotels (from Costes in Paris to La Mamounia in Marrakesh, La Réserve in Geneva, and the Métropole in Monaco), is putting the finishing touches on his own château, Champ de Bataille. Garcia acquired the castle in 1992 with the intention of eventually welcoming guests there. Located on the way between Paris and Deauville (a 90-minute drive from each), the 17th-century castle was designed by Le Vau, the architect of Versailles, and is an ideal place to act out your Sun King fantasies. **WHAT TO EXPECT** "One of the former stables is now both the lobby and restaurant, so guests will have the impression of arriving at the most extravagant and whimsical fête," Garcia notes. **COOL FACTOR** The place was already an attraction, thanks to its 100-acre private

gardens (the largest in France), Garcia's personal collection of 17th- and 18th-century objects and furniture (including chairs that belonged to Madame du Barry, Louis XV's mistress), and a program of open-air summer operas. **ROOM STATS** Each of the 18 luxurious guest rooms (the first of which will be completed this fall) has been named and decorated in the same exuberant spirit as the other hotels Garcia has done around the world, often using specially commissioned fabrics. **T+L TIP** Book the Japanese room, furnished with Viardot antiques and custom-printed, hand-embroidered silk curtains by Etro. **DON'T MISS** Reserve now for this summer's alfresco performances of Mozart's *Magic Flute* and *L'Ilusion Comique*, by the great 17th-century French playwright Pierre Corneille. **THE FACTS** 33-2/32-34-84-34; www.duchampdebataille.com; prices unavailable at press time. *Opens September 2006.*

Boccadileone Suites

ROME

PEDIGREE Boccadileone Suites (the temporary name at press time) is the first property that the Ferragamos' Lungarno Hotels has established outside of the family's native Florence, where the fashion clan already owns the design hotels Continentale and Gallery Hotel Art, as well as the classic-but-cool Hotel Lungarno and Lungarno Suites. With a heritage like this, great style seems guaranteed. **WHAT TO EXPECT** The location, a 19th-century palazzo above the Ferragamo men's store on Rome's Via Condotti, can't be beat—nor, from what we hear, can the attentive service (one staff member per room) or the ultra-hip interiors by Michele Bonan, the architect behind the Florentine hotels. **COOL FACTOR** The hotel's interior and Ferragamo's brand are explicitly linked with details such as sofas in tailored gray suiting fabrics, silk-lined curtains splashed with the Ferragamo buckle logo, and black-and-white photographs illustrating the shoemaking family's history. **ROOM STATS** Nine studios, four suites, and one split-level penthouse suite with rooftop views and a vast marble bathroom. **T+L TIP** In warmer weather, take breakfast (locally »

sourced bakery products, fruit, jams, honey, and yogurt) on the sixth-floor outdoor terrace-lounge—one of the highest points on Via Condotti—with breathtaking views of Rome, from the Pincio hilltop to the Spanish Steps. **THE FACTS** 23 Via Bocca di Leone; 39-055/2726-4000; www.lungarnohotels.com; doubles from \$485, including breakfast.

Do & Co Hotel

VIENNA

PEDIGREE One of Vienna's postmodern landmarks, Haas Haus, is now home to the new Do & Co Hotel. The 45-room aerie occupies the top four floors of local architect Hans Hollein's stone-and-glass masterpiece, facing the ornate Gothic towers of St. Stephen's Cathedral. **WHAT TO EXPECT** The design firm FG Stijl, which recently won kudos for Amsterdam's College Hotel, has created a lavish Turkish-inflected interior, with silver filigree nightstands, kilim bedcovers, and a hammam-style spa. Why the detour to Asia Minor? Europeans love insider allusions, and Vienna was besieged by the Turks in 1529. Plus, Do & Co just happens to be owned by Istanbul native Attila Dogudan, a restaurant mogul known for his toffee-colored dining establishment in Stephansplatz. General manager Albrecht Clary says guests can expect the hotel's room service menu to have "everything from schnitzel to sushi." **ROOM STATS** Forty-one rooms and two suites with steam baths. All rooms have espresso machines, Bang & Olufsen multimedia centers, and Demel chocolates at turndown. **T+L TIP** The Bernie Suite's balcony—above Stephansplatz—offers the best view in the house. **DON'T MISS** A glass of crisp Riesling Trocken Gaisberg in the clubby Onyx Bar. **THE FACTS** 12 Stephansplatz; 800/337-4685 or 43-1/24188; www.designhotels.com; doubles from \$425, including breakfast.

ASIA

Banyan Tree

LIJIANG, CHINA

PEDIGREE The arboreal logo should look familiar. This property, just launched in the ancient capital of the Naxi kingdom

on the Yunnan plateau, is number seven for the hugely successful Banyan Tree group, a Singapore-based chain famous for its Asian-influenced style and environmentally conscious ethos.

WHAT TO EXPECT The 55 single-story villas, which start at 1,148 square feet, each have a private gate and garden and face the peaks of the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. In a nod to the indigenous culture, buildings use signature pink stones, gray bricks, and red-clay roof tiles curved in the Naxi style; works by local artists accent the interiors. **COOL FACTOR** Culture buffs explore the nearby Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site; relaxation-seekers retreat to the spa for a classic Royal Banyan treatment; and the adventurous head north to Shangri-la, taking in Tiger Leaping Gorge—the world's deepest, sandwiched between the Jade Dragon Snow and Haba Snow mountains—on the way. **ROOM STATS** Forty garden and deluxe garden villas; 13 pool and deluxe pool villas; one two-bedroom pool villa; and one two-bedroom, two-bath Presidential villa with a private driveway and outdoor pavilion. **T+L TIP** Drink like the locals in the Tea Lounge, where a small but well-edited selection of homegrown mountain brews is served, including the fruity Bi Luo Chun and Chen Nian Pu-erh (known for its health benefits). **THE FACTS** Yuerong Rd., Shuhe, Gucheng; 866/822-6926 or 86-888/533-1100; www.banyantree.com; doubles from \$500.

W Maldives— Fesdhu Retreat & Spa

MALDIVES

PEDIGREE The progenitors of the affordable-chic urban hotel experience—defined by vast swaths of sleek stone surfaces, mood lighting, and techno-dub sound tracks in the lobbies, plus genially insouciant service from a youthful staff—would hardly leave all their hip credentials behind just because they're setting up shop on a pristine deserted island in the middle of the Indian Ocean. **WHAT TO EXPECT** Away-from-it-all privacy, but with modern conveniences a "whatever, whenever" phone call away. The resort's 28 beachfront villas and 50 over-water retreats filter traditional island elements (thatching, bamboo

through W's signature contemporary aesthetic. Guests can pick their own fruit for breakfast—orange and grapefruit trees have been planted in abundance all over the property—and have it prepared and delivered to their rooms (likewise with fish: hook your own catch of the day for dinner, and the chef will bone, fillet, and cook it to order). The Away Spa, with its four guest room-sized treatment rooms for facials, wraps, and massages, will offer yoga and guided meditation. **COOL FACTOR** For the Maldives, off the charts: where else within one hundred miles can you find a subterranean bar with live DJ's every night—or a manicurist who makes beach calls, ready to spiff up your ragged nails while you sip a cocktail under your *palapa*? **ROOM STATS** Seventy-eight Retreats: 28 Marvelous Beach, 46 Marvelous Aqua, three Wow (suite-style), and one Extreme (villa-style). **T+L TIP** Book an inflatable "island," a raft that accommodates up to six and comes stocked with a cooler full of your libations of choice. **THE FACTS** North Ari Atoll, Fesdhu Island; 877/946-8357 or 011-960/332-9489; www.whotels.com; doubles from \$1,300. *Opens July 2006.*

JIA

SHANGHAI

PEDIGREE Two years on the heels of her widely popular, Philippe Starck-designed JIA Hong Kong, 27-year-old Singaporean phenomenon Yenn Wong, ambassador of the boutique-hotel concept in China, is opening a second property in Shanghai. Wong's 54-room venture promises to fill a much-needed gap in the city's hotel market with the same irresistible blend of clean design, intimacy, and sex appeal. **WHAT TO EXPECT** Buro/Hecker Phelan and Guthrie, the A-list Australian architecture and design partners, have transformed a 1924 building in Jingan, near People's Square, into an ultramodern temple filled with colorful printed fabrics, wallpaper, and furniture by the likes of Pier Giacomo and Patricia Urquiola. **COOL FACTOR** Space has not been sacrificed to style—even standard rooms clock in at almost 500 square feet—or comfort to convenience, for that matter. And with high-end stores occupying the first two »

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floors and the city's boutique district just five minutes away, JIA will be a shopper's paradise. **ROOM STATS** Fifty-two rooms, plus two 1,000-plus-square-foot penthouse suites, both specially designed for high-profile guests (with bodyguards in tow). **COOL FACTOR** Wong's ambitious expansion of the JIA brand (next stop: Krabi, Thailand) is bound to attract droves of natty globe-trotters who are sure to make this Shanghai's newest hot spot. **THE FACTS** 931-33 Nanjing Rd., Jingan; www.jiahongkong.com; doubles from \$225. *Opens October 2006.*

The Fortress

SRI LANKA

PEDIGREE Sri Lanka's post-tsunami renaissance has been propelled by the recent openings of two Aman properties. The Fortress, in Galle, 70 miles from the capital of Colombo, is sure to add to the already building buzz. The sprawling resort pays homage to the UNESCO-preserved Galle fort and promises to bring modern sophistication to the misty 2,000-year-old merchants' port town. **WHAT TO EXPECT** Singapore's C&C Design (which recently won an award for the design of Huvafen Fushi, the Fortress's sister resort in the Maldives) chose a soothing aesthetic: simple lines, Burmese teak-paneling, a Dutch vaulted entrance, and expansive garden colonnades that draw the eyes toward panoramic vistas of stilt fishermen casting their lines into the Indian Ocean. **ROOM STATS** The 49 guest rooms are divided into five types, including two Fortress Residences, each of which features a frangipani-shaded infinity pool, plasma TV's, and two bedrooms with super king-size rotating beds dressed in Frettelinens. **DON'T MISS** Wine3, a wine bar housed in a 750-square-foot glass cave, offers degustations from the 2,000-bottle cellar. **T+L TIP** Visit the T room, meet with the hotel's tea sommelier, and try Sri Lankan handpicked white-tip tea, reputed to protect skin from sun damage. **THE FACTS** Galle; 800/525-4800 or 94-91/438-0909; www.thefortress.lk; doubles from \$370, including breakfast and dinner. *Opens September 2006.*

THE MIDDLE EAST

Kempinski Hotel Mall of the Emirates

DUBAI

PEDIGREE The venerable hoteliers at Kempinski do outsize luxury like nobody's business: the Çiragan Palace in Istanbul would make any Ottoman prince feel immediately at home, and Berlin's Adlon sets the bar for surfeits of marble, velvet, and crystal. So, of course, the company hastened to put down stakes among the shining towers of Dubai, the Middle East's capital of excess. **WHAT TO EXPECT** Over-the-top entertainment and appealing extravagance. The hotel is well situated within the mall (the biggest outside of North America); Ski Dubai, the third-largest indoor ski resort in the world, is right next door. You'll find the requisite sumptuously appointed rooms (all with flat-screen TV's, multimedia players, and ultra-plush robes), a lengthy menu of spa treatments, and an ayurvedic wellness center. And then there are the 15 ski chalets, to house the guests who come to schuss down those pistes. **COOL FACTOR** Considerable, especially with the dining options; these range from Aspen Café, which overlooks Ski Dubai and serves "Arabian high tea" (diminutive onion-labneh sandwiches; saffron-black currant scones), to a juice and vitamin "bar" next to the fitness center, to the 935-seat Sezzam, where guests select one of three venues—Flame, Steam, or Bake—and their order is prepared accordingly. **ROOM STATS** The 393 rooms, spread over a formidable 520,000 square feet, include everything from deluxes to a sprawling 1,000-square-foot Presidential suite. **T+L TIP** Don't want to ski? The 200-acre Montgomerie golf club is just a 10-minute drive away. **THE FACTS** Sheikh Zayed Rd., Al Barsha; 800/426-3135 or 971-4/341-0000; www.kempinski-dubai.com; doubles from \$520. +

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