

Travel

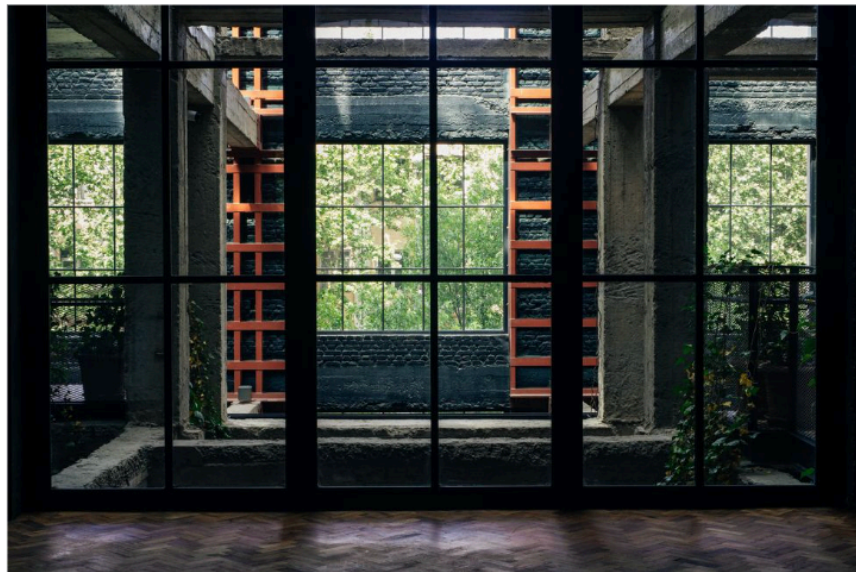
THE 10 BEST DESIGN HOTELS OF THE LAST TWO DECADES

These innovative stays shook up the hospitality landscape like no others – consider this our tribute to the trailblazers



By CAT OLLEY 11 JAN 2023

What makes a great design hotel? It's not any particular style, of course – this diverse bunch can attest to that. Or scope – one has only a single bedroom. All, however, have a keen sense of place and a vision that sets them apart from the pack. Here is our round up of the most innovative hotels to open since the millenium, from riads to agriturismos, members clubs and exclusive hideouts deep in the desert or high in the mountains...



Stamba Hotel

STAMBA HOTEL

Tbilisi, Georgia

Few hotels could make the list for their lobby alone, but then few make the statement of Stamba's. The cavernous atrium, with its imposing Brutalist skeleton, is where the imaginative conversion of a former 1930s publishing house in Georgian capital Tbilisi really shines. A glass-bottomed swimming pool installed on the roof lets dappled light stream into the space, which is flanked by internal balconies that look out over mature greenery below. Where brickwork isn't left exposed, walls are painted in moss green and denim blue.



Jerome GALLAND

LE COUCOU

Méribel, France

Patrick Pariente and his two daughters, Kimberley Cohen and Leslie Kouhana, are the heart of luxury hotel chain Maison Pariente. With an enviable eye for detail and design, the family has become known for collaborating with some of the very best interior designers in the world, from Charles Zana to Pierre Yovanovitch. It is the latter who was called upon to add his trademark warmth and personality to the brand's ski-in wood chalet Le Coucou.

Forget traditionally twee ski resorts – this is an alpine retreat for the aesthetically-minded holidaymaker. Rooms are colourful and considered (all with views across the Three Valleys), while facilities include a brand-new restaurant for 2023: Le Fumoir, which will serve elevated takes on alpine classics like raclette and tartiflette. It's ideal for an apres-ski pick-me-up. Plus, when it comes to easing tired limbs after a day on the slopes, the spa at Le Coucou has a new selection of treatments by Tata Harper that are just the ticket. *From around £408 per night; maisonpariente.com*