



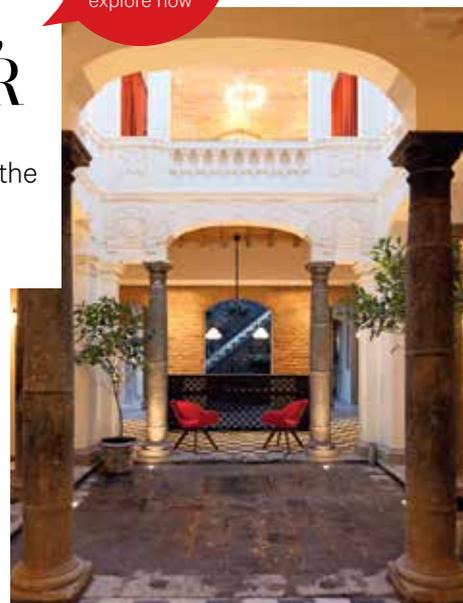
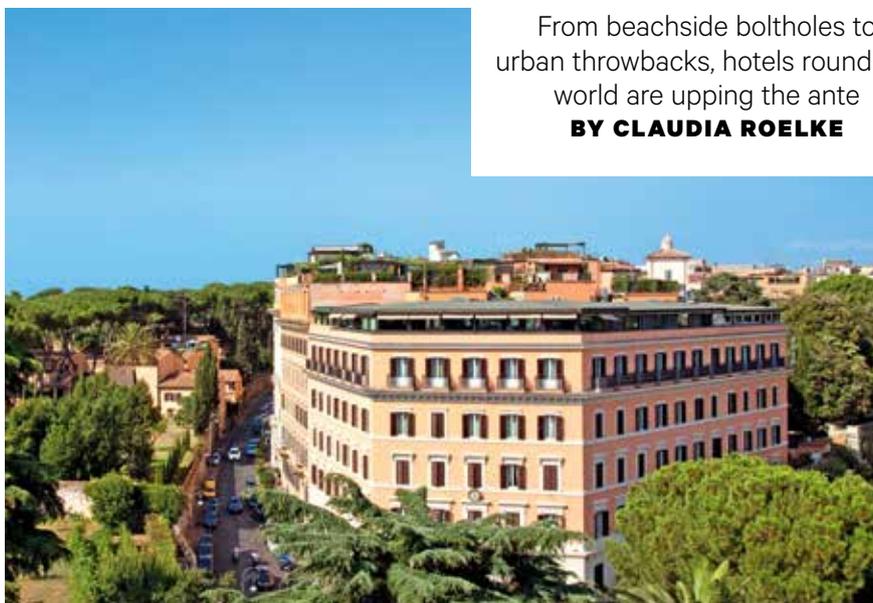
THE AGENDA
Global hot spots to explore now

FIRST LOOK

NEW YEAR, NEW CHEER

From beachside boltholes to urban throwbacks, hotels round the world are upping the ante

BY CLAUDIA ROELKE



Clockwise from top left: room with a view at *The Silo* in Cape Town; the spectacular setting of *Wild Coast Tented Lodge* in Sri Lanka; the columned courtyard at *Quito's Carlota* hotel; the palatial *Hotel Eden* in Rome

The year's bounty of new and new-look hostleries won't disappoint even the most demanding of travellers. Perhaps the season's most hotly awaited unveiling, Rome's venerated **Hotel Eden** (www.dorchestercollection.com), returns from over a year's hiatus with 98 redesigned guestrooms, each classically

opulent homes from home now decked out with Bang & Olufsen TVs and Bluetooth sound systems. A new spa, hidden library bar and top-floor brasserie further sweeten the deal. In London, members-only club and hotel **The Ned** (thened.com), housed in the erstwhile quarters of the Midland Bank, makes a dashing first impression »

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: © THE SILO, © WILD COAST TENTED LODGE, © DESIGNHOTELS.COM, ROBERTO BONARDI

Scaling the dramatic peaks near Iceland's new Deplar Farm boutique hotel



Iceland's Deplar Farm has seen the transformation of a SHEEP FARM INTO AN INDULGENT RETREAT replete with hot tubs, saltwater pool and steam rooms

with 252 1920s-inspired rooms, a rooftop pool and nine international eateries. Equally debonair is the 86-key **Whitby Hotel** (firmdalehotels.com), in NYC, where a destination bar, an on-site orangery and 130-seat cinema form a unique oasis amid Midtown's hustle and bustle. The **Carlota** (carlota.ec), in Quito's historic centre, is yet another inner-city hideaway, featuring 12 boho-chic rooms with exposed brick walls and wood panelling as well as a trendy rooftop lounge specialising in ceviche and gin cocktails. Cape Town's V&A Waterfront gains a swish showstopper in **The Silo** (theroyalportfolio.com), set in a repurposed grain elevator, six floors above soon-to-open Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa. Its 28 colourful rooms, café and rooftop pool enjoy stunning views of the cityscape and Table Mountain. Meanwhile, the **Brown Jerusalem** (brownhotels.com), a 23-key boutique bolthole set in a 19th-century villa a stone's throw away from the Old City, marks the Israel-based Brown Hotel group's fourth property following the recent launch of

Tel Aviv's Poli House. Across the Gulf, Downtown Dubai's commodious **The Address Boulevard** (theaddress.com), enters the emirate's star-studded hospitality scene as a major contender with 196 guest rooms, 533 serviced apartments alongside stellar leisure facilities, including a signature spa. It joins newcomer **Dukes Dubai** (dukesdubai.com), the noted British hotelier's first international outpost, which includes a Martin Cahill-helmed British-inflected brasserie, a tony martini bar and a health club with marina views – just a few highlights in a comprehensively indulgent package that's rounded out by 279 equally well-appointed rooms.

Those looking to flee the city – whether for a little R&R or adventure – can also delight in a handful of new offerings, including the **Wild Coast Tented Lodge** (resplendentceylon.com), where guests overnight in 28 air-conditioned “cocoon” tents (some with their own plunge pools) on a deserted beach in southeastern Sri Lanka. Another Southeast Asian gem, The **Ritz-Carlton Koh Samui** (ritzcarlton.com), makes a graceful

entrance on its namesake island's northern tip with 175 suites and standalone pool villas, authentic Thai cuisine and tranquil Spa Village. It's a similarly idyllic setting at **Satoyama Jujo** (satoyama-jujo.com), in Japan's mountainous Niigata region. Here, a 150-year-old wood structure, and a modern extension, house 12 rustic bedrooms, a farm-to-table restaurant and a hot-spring spa. Up in the wintry wilds of Iceland, meanwhile, Eleven Experience's latest revelation, **Deplar Farm** (elevenexperience.com), has seen the transformation of a sheep farm into an indulgent retreat replete with hot tubs, saltwater pool and steam rooms – the perfect way to unwind after a day spent heli-skiing or fly-fishing in the surrounding mountainscape. It's a more sybaritic experience down under at Willow Creek Vineyard, on the Mornington Peninsula near Melbourne, from which winery's 46-key **Jackalope** hotel (jackalopehotels.com) lures guests with a gourmet eatery, 30m infinity pool and superlative Aussie vintages. It's an intoxicating scene indeed. ♦