

RESORT ROUNDUP



Mandarin Oriental, New York.

Mandarin Oriental, New York

Sleek, sophisticated and ultra-pampering are just a few of the adjectives used to describe this urban oasis perched high above the city that never sleeps. Guest rooms offer spectacular vistas of New York's surrounding skyscrapers, the Hudson River and Central Park (the hotel is at the southwest corner). The best places for taking in the views are from the enormous soaking tubs in the tower's 248 rooms. At day's end, order a bottle of bubbly, draw a bath and luxuriate in the suds, as you watch the Big Apple take on the rose-gold hue of the sunset followed by the emerging twinkle of the city. For the ultimate indulgence, splurge on the four-hour couple's VIP spa experience, which features a two-hour-and-50-minute signature couple's massage, alone time in a private lounge with hot tub and steam room, plus dinner (room rates start at \$750 a night; mandarinoriental.com).

ROOMS WITH A VIEW

At these posh hotels, there's always time to sit back and simply enjoy the scenery. by Jenna Mahoney



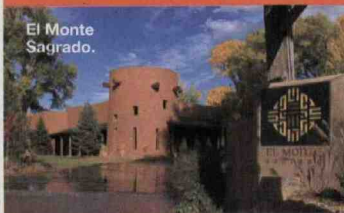
Cape Grace.

CAPE GRACE, SOUTH AFRICA

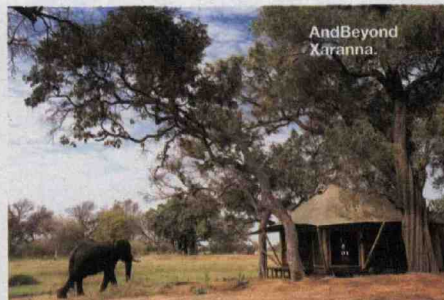
Whether you're toasting to your new union on your suite's balcony, having brunch—starring enormous South African oysters—at the patio at Signal Restaurant or enjoying a whiskey on the terrace of the hip Bascule Bar, you'll be floored by the views from this grande dame in Cape Town. Often lauded as the best hotel on the continent of Africa, the **Cape Grace** offers awesome—and comfortable—places to see two of Cape Town's most famous sites—the waterfront and the aptly named Table Mountain. Take the hotel's complimentary chauffeured BMW to the base of the flat-topped mountain for sweeping vistas of the city (room rates start at \$700 a night and include breakfast and transfers; capegrace.com).

EL MONTE SAGRADO LIVING RESORT AND SPA, NEW MEXICO

Taos, New Mexico's scenery is a stunning blend of red-rock outcroppings, towering mountains, scrub-brush-dotted foothills and a dramatic river gorge. While outdoor activities from alpine skiing and snowshoeing in the winter to hiking and llama trekking in the warmer months showcase Taos's incredible scenery, a stay at the 84-room **El Monte Sagrado Living Resort and Spa** offers a quiet alternative to taking in the natural surroundings. Most rooms offer balconies with views of the property's eco-friendly grounds, picturesque gardens and waterfall streams against the backdrop of the area mountains. And the hotel's centerpiece, the Sacred Circle, an outdoor relaxation space—and wedding site—is set under the shade of old-growth willow and cottonwood trees (room rates start at \$179 a night; elmontesagrado.com).



El Monte Sagrado.



AndBeyond Xaranna.

AndBeyond Xaranna, Botswana

This nine-villa, tented camp on the banks of Botswana's Okavango Delta is so peacefully remote, it's only accessible by boat. It's also blissfully unplugged (there is electricity, but internet access is limited to the main pavilion area). Days at **AndBeyond Xaranna** are spent lazing around on your villa's enormous wooden deck with private plunge pool looking onto Africa's vast landscape. Expect to spot loads of indigenous birds in flight and hippos lumbering around the tall grasses. In the distance, you may spy elephants, antelope, zebras and giraffe. The deep bathtub-for-two and outdoor shower in each villa provide similar views. Safaris via jeep, power boat or *mekoro* (traditional canoe) give you a closer vantage (room rates start at \$910, per person, per night, all inclusive; andbeyond.com).

PHOTOGRAPHY: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL GROUP; ANDBEYOND; THE KESSLER COLLECTION; COURTESY OF CAPE GRACE.