

CHARLESTON

JAPAN

UZBEKISTAN

BEIJING

WIN
A VILLA
ESCAPE IN THE
MALDIVES

Condé Nast Traveller

THE LAST WORD IN TRAVEL

MIDDLE EAST

Where to go in 2018

THE YEAR'S
HOTTEST SPOTS

PUT MARS ON
YOUR BUCKET LIST

WINTER
WONDERLANDS
IN THE
MIDDLE EAST

St Petersburg
with Manolo
Blahnik

Paddle into
the new year
in Mauritius



JANUARY 2018 | AED 25
BHD 2.5 | KWD 2 | OMR 2.5

Switzerland's
Canton de Vaud
is a popular road-
trip destination

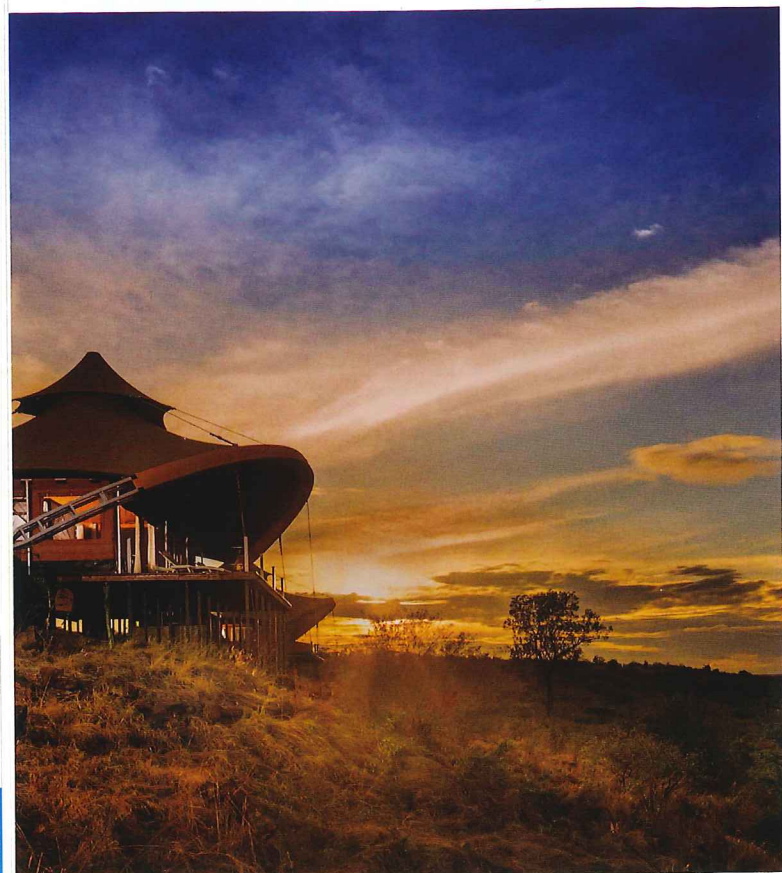
READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2017

Every year, we reach out to our legion of intrepid travellers – all of you – to ask about the best travel experiences you've had. Thousands of you voted online and the results form the basis of our annual awards, where we honour the properties, destinations, airlines and experiences that have received the most recognition. Read on to find out if your favourites made it to the top three

YAS ISLAND
PRESENTS
Condé Nast
Traveller
MIDDLE EAST

READERS' CHOICE
AWARDS 2017

HOTELS INTERNATIONAL



**FAVOURITE HOTEL/
RESORT FOR FAMILIES**
When it comes to providing an ideal oasis for all generations of the family, these three diverse properties tick all the boxes. In the end, the H Resort on Seychelles' most famous beach took top honours.

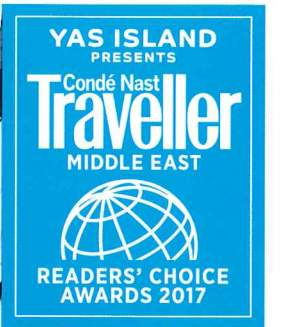
- 1 **The H Resort Beau Vallon Beach, Seychelles**
- 2 Grand Hyatt Hong Kong
- 3 Regnum Carya Golf & Spa Resort, Antalya

FAVOURITE SAFARI CAMP
Richard Branson's 12-tented luxury safari camp in Kenya outperformed its very worthy competitors this year, giving the Virgin Limited Edition property another feather in its cap.

- 1 **Mahali Mzuri, Kenya**
- 2 Fairmont Mara Safari Club, Kenya
- 3 Singita Game Reserve, Sabi Sand, South Africa

**FAVOURITE HOTEL/
RESORT FOR A SPA BREAK**
Set in Delhi's Aerocity, away from the hectic bustle of the capital city's busy streets, Roseate House's Aheli Spa is a sanctuary that relaxes, refreshes and rejuvenates, winning the hotel its honours.

- 1 **Roseate House, New Delhi**
- 2 Grand Hyatt Hong Kong
- 3 Anantara Kihavah Maldives Villas



FAVOURITE ROMANTIC HOTEL/RESORT

There are many romantic destinations in the world but none quite as classic as Paris. It's no wonder, then, that this year's winner is an elegant boutique-sized property nestled in the City of Love.

- 1 **Le Royal Monceau, Raffles Paris**
- 2 The St. Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort
- 3 Dusit Thani Maldives

From top: Mahali Mzuri in Kenya; H Resort Beau Vallon Beach, Seychelles.
Opposite: Inside Le Royal Monceau, Raffles Paris



HIGH-TECH BLACKOUT

Swiss watch manufacturer Richard Mille pioneers exquisite timepieces by fusing high-tech materials – and the new ladies' timepiece combining diamond and black ceramic is no exception. Polished to a velvet touch, the heart of the case is carved with a rose-gold dial, and blends black onyx and diamonds. Behind these striking materials, an in-house Calibre CRMA2 movement is crafted in grade-five titanium for durability and feather-like qualities. Set to be unveiled this month at the Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie in Geneva, this RM 07-01 timekeeper combines beauty and technicity to captivate lady connoisseurs.

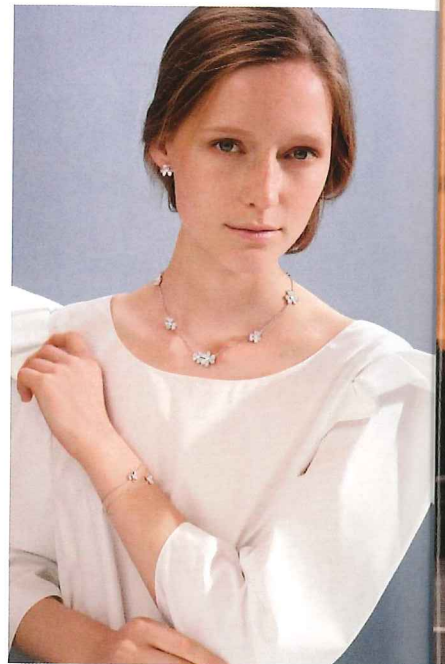
richardmille.com



JEWELLED FAIRY TALE

Enhancing a sparkling season is Van Cleef & Arpels with Diamond Breeze, an event running through mid-January showcasing nature-themed pieces shining exclusively with diamonds. Among them are new Lotus creations, featuring intricate motifs and symbolising purity and self-fulfilment. The sparkling flowers in the Frivole collection showcase heart-shaped petals around one to three central stones. Twinkling like a crisp night sky, each of the delicate pendants, earrings and signature between-the-finger rings are made with handpicked diamonds of uncompromised excellence.

vancleefarpels.com



Most wanted

A look at what caught our eye this month, from a sleek black timepiece to a Maldivian wellness escape

LAGOON LIVING

Just a 30-minute seaplane flight from Malé international airport, Anantara Kihavah Maldives Villas laps Hanifaru Bay, one of the world's best places to spot manta rays. Sitting within a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, it's a paradise abundant in natural riches and unforgettable experiences. Décor inspired by a fusion of Indian and Moroccan styles, with a touch of colonial, is found throughout the 79 spacious pool villas topped by thatched-palm roofs. Tempting though it may be, you'd be remiss to stay villa-bound all day – dine below the ocean's surface at Sea and depart on snorkelling excursions in an otherworldly marine environment. Anantara is also known for its well-being philosophy, and healthy-living initiative Balance Wellness by Anantara tailor-makes programmes to help guests achieve the results they desire, from body-tuning to de-stressing. At the spa, indulgent therapies use natural ingredients in private treatment suites. With a three-tiered health approach paired with coastal bliss, the wellness horizon is as wide as the Indian Ocean views from your villa.

kihavah-maldives.anantara.com



Where to go in 2018

Stuck on inspiration for where to visit this year? These 16 destinations have captured our attention, with epic celebrations, new openings and clever refurbishments that make them especially attractive right now

1

NAMIBIA

Experience otherworldly deserts, prehistoric rock engravings and herds of elephants in this south-west African country, with five new luxury camps opening soon.

1. The first lodge to be built on the coast in Skeleton Coast National Park, the aptly named **Shipwreck Lodge** (00264-61-22 8104, skeletoncoastlodge.com) – designed to look like its namesake – is scheduled to open this summer. Guests checking in will be able to relax on private decks, or take sundowner drives into the dunes and set off on excursions to the Hoarusib River to see desert-adapted lions and burrowing hyenas.
2. A joint venture between the local community and the Giraffe Conservation Foundation, **Hoanib Valley Camp** (0027-21-001 1574, naturalselection.travel) in Kaokoland opens in May. Elephants and giraffes inhabit the wild, remote destination, and the camp steps lightly with just six luxury tents that blend into the environment with locally carved furnishings and an eco-conscious philosophy.
3. Namibia Exclusive (namibia-exclusive.com) is opening three new lodges this year, with **Omatendeka Lodge** scheduled to be the first. In the Kunene region, it's a desert Eden with springs that attract abundant wildlife, from leopards to elephants. **Xaudum Lodge** will be the first lodge to be situated within Khaudum National Park, near the Botswana border. Its rugged wilderness is ideal for the traveller seeking a true off-the-beaten-path experience. Rounding out the trio, **Sheya Shuushona Lodge** overlooks a salt pan on the northern boundary of Etosha National Park and boasts a 100,000-hectare private concession where the grassland teems with wildlife. →

See desert-adapted wildlife
on safari in Namibia

2

PORTUGAL

Lisbon has been the destination on everyone's lips lately, and for good reason. Lining its winding, historic streets are fascinating museums, beautiful façades decorated in the tiles Portugal is known for, and an ever more enticing food scene with cosy grape bars and modern gastronomy led by chef José Avillez of two-Michelin-starred Belcanto (*tasting menus from AED 540; 00351-213-42 0607, belcanto.pt*). It's a one-stop shop for culture lovers and tempting though it may be to stay put, it's well worth it to venture beyond the capital. Not far from the city, colourful Sintra immerses visitors in a romantic atmosphere amid its castles and palaces, and further north up the coast lies Porto along the Douro River. The latter is a destination for oenophiles thanks to the surrounding Douro Valley grape region and the in-progress World of Wine, a "collection of experiences", set to open in 2020 beneath the chic Yeatman hotel. Then there's the Algarve, on the southern coast, which has seen a spate of new hotel openings recently, including Anantara Vilamoura (*doubles from AED 605; 00351-289-31 7000, vilamoura.anantara.com*) last year. This sun-drenched part of the country also boasts golden beaches and excellent golf courses, rounding out a leisurely getaway.



Many Caribbean islands are holiday-ready, left untouched by recent hurricanes. **Opposite:** There's no lack of culture, history or leisure in Portugal



3

CARIBBEAN

Last year's hurricane season was devastating, but plenty of islands were untouched and are open for business as usual. Plus, many destinations that were hit are on the mend – and they need visitors and their cash in order to finish rebuilding.

Go now The storms had little or no effect on Barbados, Jamaica, St Lucia, St Kitts and St Vincent, and the Grenadines (Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao, which almost never see tropical storms, were also unaffected). The Florida Keys are up and running and Art Basel Miami Beach kicked off as scheduled last month. You could also visit Havana or anywhere in the Dominican Republic, where recovery was fairly quick. Or take a cruise: Many lines, after assisting in relief efforts, changed their itineraries to avoid harder-hit ports of call. **Go, but know this** The British Virgin Islands suffered serious damage. Many hotels are still being rebuilt, but you can go by charter yacht: The Moorings (*five-night cruises from AED 6,610; 001-888-952 8420, moorings.com*) officially opened their BVI base last month. Many islands in Turks and Caicos were pummelled, but Providenciales, where most of the major resorts are, is already back. **Go this spring** The US Virgin Islands suffered major destruction. Caneel Bay Resort is closed this winter, but many other hotels are trying to reopen for early 2018. St Barts is ready for visitors, says Stiles Bennet of WIMCO Villas, and nearby Anguilla is on a similar timeline. In St Martin, hotel and villa operators say it'll take months to recover. Puerto Rico, as everyone knows, was ravaged by Hurricane Maria, but San Juan's airport and cruise terminal are operating, beaches and roads near the city are clear, and hotels like the Condado Vanderbilt (*doubles from AED 1,155; 001-787-721 5500, condadovanderbilt.com*) and El Convento (*doubles from AED 550; 001-787-723 9020, elconvento.com*) are open and desperately need guests. →