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The big hotel openings of 2024

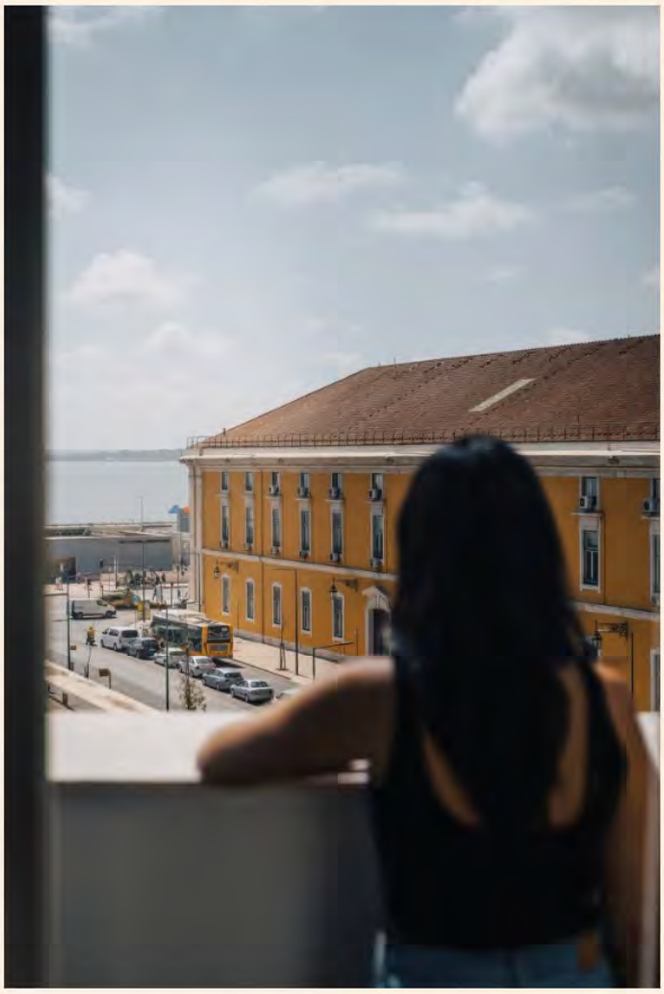
From a Soho House spin-off in Manchester to a floating villa in the Maldives — plus Claridge's (even smarter) new sibling

Claire Wrathall YESTERDAY 14

Colorado

Three blocks west along Main Street from the venerable Hotel Jerome where Hunter S Thompson held court, **Mollie Aspen** is a swish reinvention of what was the three-star Molly Gibson Lodge. A cool $50mn has been spent transforming its 68 rooms, now an essay in white oak and woven textiles in homage to the town's Bauhaus associations. A 10-minute walk from the Shadow Mountain chairlift, the hotel's roof-terrace lounge bar, with plunge pool and views of Aspen Mountain, promises to become a fixture on the après-ski scene. *Just opened, doubles from $749 per night, mollieaspen.com*

Lisbon



In the heart of one of the oldest parts of the Portuguese capital, five minutes' walk from the cathedral, **AlmaLusa Alfama** is a new, inexpensive boutique hotel converted from a building that dates back to the 12th century, with 25 attractively unfussy rooms, some with striking views across the Tagus. Unusually, each comes with the loan of a smartphone loaded with the hotel's app, which contains its guide to this mazelike part of the city, as well as a compass to help you navigate. For the moment, the hotel's café is open only for breakfast, but promises "irresistible Portuguese gastronomy" and a wide menu of *petiscos* (or Portuguese tapas) in time. *Just opened, doubles officially from €189 but currently available from €133, almalusahotels.com*

Osaka

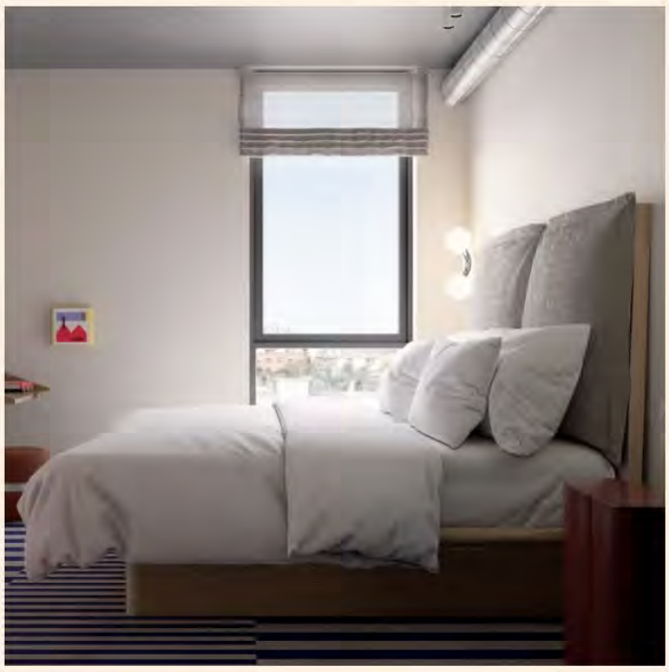
If the biggest hotel opening in Japan this year is likely to be the 175-room **Four Seasons** (expected to open in July in Osaka's new 195-metre One Dojima tower), the most distinctive will be **Cuvée J2 Hôtel Osaka**, operated by Onko Chishin, the boutique brand behind the Tadao Ando-designed Setouchi Retreat in Matsuyama. Billed as "the world's first official champagne hotel", it's been designed by the arch-minimalist Shinichi Ogawa, and its 11 suites each occupy a whole floor of a 14-storey tower. All are named after champagne houses — big brands such as Taittinger, Nicolas Feuillatte, Charles Heidsieck and Bollinger (the penthouse), as well as artisanal houses like Lallier, Telmont and Jean Vesselle, their minibars stocked accordingly. *Opens this weekend, doubles from ¥80,190 (about £430), cuveej2.com*

Buenos Aires

© Casa Lucia

Built in 1928 in the Recoleta neighbourhood, the Edificio Mihanovich was once the tallest building in Latin America. An 80-metre-high landmark, it was topped by a pyramid (inspired by the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus) that overlooked the Rio de la Plata, so that its shipping-magnate owner could keep an eye on his fleet. Latterly a Sofitel but now managed by the five-star Spanish Único brand and rebadged **Casa Lucia**, it reopens this month with 142 elegantly understated rooms designed by Fernanda Schuch, many with balconies, plus two restaurants and a spa, and a palm-court lobby bar that harks back to its Art Deco glory days. *Due to open January 15, doubles from $670, hotelcasalucia.com*

Melbourne



Renderings of interiors at the forthcoming StandardX (images of yet-to-be-completed hotels in this article are computer-generated renderings rather than photographs)

Standard Hotels, the chain originally founded by André Balazs in Hollywood in 1999 (with investors including Leonardo DiCaprio and Cameron Diaz), is set to launch a "brazen, new and surprising" sub-brand. The first **StandardX**, a "rebellious younger sibling" to the eight existing hotels, arrives in Melbourne's Fitzroy neighbourhood with 125 minimalist (and affordable) rooms, two restaurants and an expansive loft-style reception area. The group says "potential targets" for a rollout include Bangkok, Brooklyn and East Austin. *Opens February, doubles from AUD250 (£131); standardx.com*

Maldives

Almost 30 years on from the opening of Soneva Fushi, Sonu Shivdasani and Eva Malmström's first hotel, in the Maldives, **Soneva Secret** promises a whole new level of privacy. For a start, the resort has an entire atoll at its disposal. And Shivdasani promises there are "zero mosquitoes. Even in the beach villas. You can open up the retractable roof above the bed to stargaze at night." (Mosquito nets are provided for the sceptical.) Each of the 14 immense villas — six on the beach, seven on stilts over the sea, two of them accessible only by boat — is staffed by a dedicated "barefoot guardian" (Soneva-speak for butler), assistant and chef. But the resort's USP is its floating Castaway Villa, with 461 sq m of floorspace (though just one bedroom) over two storeys and a curving slide to carry you from its upper deck into the water. It can be towed to one of five anchorages should you desire a subtly different sea view each day. *Opens February, villas from $5,230, soneva.com*

Glasgow

After three years of renovations, the **House of Gods** is due to open in March in Glasgow's Merchant City. The 28-room hotel is a sister to the brand's property in Edinburgh, created in 2019 under the founder's "more is more" philosophy. The Glasgow outpost is housed in a staid-looking red sandstone former warehouse built in 1908, but inside boasts a similar maximalist decor, with hand-painted gold-embellished de Gournay wallpaper, twin baths, private cinema rooms, four-posters in some suites and a rooftop bar set around a marble fountain. *Opens March, doubles from £119; houseofgodshotel.com*

Botswana

2024 promises to be a bumper year for new and refurbished safari lodges. Two in particular stand out, both on the edge of the Moremi Game Reserve on the eastern side of the Okavango Delta, an area particularly noted for its lion sightings, thanks to the prevalence of buffalo. Likely to open first, **Atazaró-Okavango Camp** is the creation of the Ibizan *agriturismo* brand (in association with safari specialist African Bush Camps). There'll be just 12 suites, eight standalone, all with plunge pools and "star beds" for those who like to sleep outdoors. It will be followed by **Wilderness Mokete**, a temporary camp with nine suites all with retractable roofs — the better for birdwatching by day and stargazing at night — that will stand for two years. *March: Atazaró-Okavango, from $700 per person per night, atzaro-okovango.com; Wilderness Mokete from $1,150 per person per night, wildernessdestinations.com*

London

Next door to The Berkeley, and designed by the late Richard Rogers' practice RSHP, **The Emory** is the sixth hotel from the Maybourne group (which also includes Claridge's). It's an all-suite property in which half-a-dozen sought-after designers (among them André Fu, Rémi Tessier and Patricia Urquiola) have each been assigned a floor or two to put their stamp on. There'll be a subterranean spa across four floors of the hotel's huge basement, a 22-metre pool and its restaurant will be the first outpost of Jean-Georges Vongerichten's ABC Kitchen outside New York. One word of advice to prospective guests reading on the hotel website that it is "situated on a secluded laneway overlooking Hyde Park". While one side of the building might face the diminutive Old Barrack Yard, the other faces the five usually traffic-filled lanes of Knightsbridge. *Opens April 4, suites from £2,040 (including airport transfers), maybourne.com*

Cyprus

Best known for resort hotels such as Anassa in Polis and Almyra in Paphos, Thanos Hotels' latest project is **Amyth of Nicosia**, which has been converted from an early-20th-century villa (latterly a girls' school) just inside the monumental Venetian walls of the Cypriot capital's Old City into a 10-room boutique hotel. Opposite the 18th-century Kornesios Hadjigeorgakis Mansion, now the Ethnographic Museum of Cyprus, 250 metres from the Byzantine Museum and a 15-minute walk from the fascinating AG Leventis Gallery, it's also very close to Eleftheria Square, lately transformed by Zaha Hadid Architects from a dry moat into a public park quite unlike any other, and an excellent base from which to explore this underrated, if still divided, European capital. *Opens April, doubles from €300, thanoshotels.com*

Cyclades

© Gundari

Directly south of Hóra, the thriving main village on the island of Folegandros, in an 80-acre nature reserve edged by towering cliffs, **Gundari** has 27 suites and villas, partially dug into the hillside, the better to keep cool, and all with their own Aegean-facing infinity pools. Its restaurant will be overseen by Lefteris Lazarou, the first Greek chef to win a Michelin star, and supplied by the hotel's organic farm. The island is 40 minutes by private launch from volcanic Santorini, where another new hotel, the 37-suite **Santo Mine Oia** (from £591, *santocollection.gr*), is expected in April. While on Tinos, one of the northernmost islands in the group and still comparatively undeveloped, 77-room **Odera** (*oderatinos.com*) opens in May above a secluded pale sand beach. *Gundari opens in May, doubles from €600, gundari.com*

Rome

Just south of the Piazza del Popolo at 246 Via di Ripetta, the austere facade of the 16th-century Palazzo Capponi Campanari belies the futuristic interiors of the 74-room **Romeo Roma**, one of the last projects designed by the late Zaha Hadid and completed by the practice that bears her name. Expect swooping curves and improbable angles, even if five of the suites retain original frescoes and coffered ceilings. Alain Ducasse is overseeing its restaurant. Sisley Paris will operate the spa. And there'll be indoor and outdoor pools and a rooftop bar. *Opens this spring, rates yet to be set, theromeocollection.com*

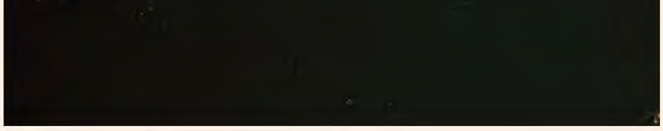
Shanghai

Co-founded in 1972 by Adrian Zecha, the creator of Aman Resorts, Regent Hotels are enjoying a resurgence as the brand's owner, IHG (which also owns Six Senses and InterContinental), positions Regent as its most luxurious marque. First came the reopening in November of the transformed Regent Hong Kong, overlooking the harbour from Kowloon's Avenue of Stars. Next up is the **Regent Shanghai on the Bund**, a new 15-storey tower on the site of what was the Shanghai International Seamen's Club and Seagull Hotel, where the Huangpu river meets Suzhou Creek. Instead of mere rooms, there'll be "personal havens" with a minimum area of 40 sq m, making them some of the largest in the city. *Opens this spring, rates not yet set, ihg.com*

Manchester

The old Granada Studios building will re-emerge this year as home to a Soho House members' club (complete with outdoor rooftop pool, Manchester drizzle be damned) and a 128-room hotel, **Mollie's**, due to open by summer. It will be the third in the Mollie's chain, a motel, bar and diner concept created by Soho House founder Nick Jones to offer budget-luxe accommodation. After roadside properties just outside Bristol and Oxford, this will be the brand's most ambitious launch, occupying five floors of the landmark 1950s building and aiming to create "a vibrant and inclusive social hub" in the heart of the city. There will be a "modern take" on the classic American diner on the ground floor, plus a cocktail bar and live music space in the basement. *Doubles from £120; mollies.com*

Nice



It's more than 60 years since the last nun left the early 17th-century Convent of the Visitation Sainte-Claire in the city's historic centre, close enough to the Mediterranean for there to be sea views. This summer it becomes the 88-room **Hôtel du Couvent**, the latest creation of Valéry Grégo, the maverick hotelier behind Le Pigalle in Paris and Les Roches Rouges in Saint-Raphaël. Its cloisters and courtyards should, however, remain a sanctuary of calm, with a hectare of fragrant gardens (some of which will supply its restaurant) and apricot orchards, citrus and olive groves, designed by Tom Stuart-Smith, a new complex of "Roman" baths and a resident herbalist. *Opens this summer, rates yet to be set, hotelducouvent.com*

South Carolina

Johns is the largest of the marshy Charleston Sea Islands and home to **The Dunlin**, a 2,000-acre waterfront estate containing 72 river-facing rooms in white clapboard houses with hip roofs and airy verandas, 20 miles of trails and a working farm, yet only 45 minutes by road from Charleston International Airport. Proposed activities include fishing, paddleboarding, biking, boating and birding: the resort takes its name from a local wading bird that migrates from the Arctic each autumn. You should also see roseate spoonbills with their dazzling pink plumage, great blue herons and ospreys, among many. It's operated by Auberge Resorts, so there'll be a full-service spa, riverside pool cabanas and all the usual luxuries, but ultimately it promises to be a place to kick back in nature. *Opens June, rates tbc, aubergeresorts.com*

Germany

Best known as the founder of the influential sales and marketing consortium Design Hotels, Claus Sendlinger has created a new brand called Slowness, through which he plans, he says, to "build and nourish locally rooted places that offer a deeper, more conscious form of hospitality". About 100km north of Berlin, **Arnesse**, near the village of Uckermark, will be its first hotel, an imposing 15-bedroom manor house designed in the early 1840s by August Stüler, a student of the great Prussian architect and designer Karl Friedrich Schinkel, to evoke "a version of Arcadia" — with expansive gardens and bucolic grounds, a lake on which to idle in a boat or swim, a "historical gymnasium" and a plant-filled solarium. *Opens this summer, rooms from €280, arnesse.com*

Madrid

Built at the behest of King Alfonso XIII in 1912, **The Palace** used to be the grandest hotel in the Spanish capital, and one of the first in the world in which every bedroom had an en-suite bathroom. It has a magnificent stained-glass dome above its restaurant (a space used as an operating theatre during the Spanish civil war, when the hotel became a field hospital) and a peerless location, opposite the Thyssen-Bornemisza museum and minutes from the Prado and Reina Sofía. But by the turn of the century, it was showing its age and since 2020 it has been eclipsed by the opening of the Four Seasons, the Ritz Mandarin Oriental and Rosewood Villa Magna. Now, its operator, Marriott, is overseeing a major refurbishment, with the renovation of all 470 rooms and suites due to be completed by April, to be followed by work on a new bar, restaurant, meeting rooms and lobby (though it remains open throughout). When finished, by the end of the year, it will be relaunched as part of the group's Luxury Collection. *Rates not yet set, marriott.com*

Warwickshire

The Pig, the wildly popular chain of southern English hotels, is launching its ninth property at the end of the year, and its most northerly to date. **The Pig on the Farm** is five miles outside Stratford-upon-Avon, with 35 rooms spread between a 16th-century manor house and its surrounding farm buildings, set among 53 acres of pasture and arable land. A restaurant will occupy what was the main barn and spa treatments will take place in three shepherd huts. *Opens December; doubles from £250; thepighotel.com*

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