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The big hotel openings of 2022

From the grand former War Office building in Whitehall to a Rwandan island retreat

© Grain London | Raffles London at the OWO

Claire Wrathall 42 MINUTES AGO

Capri, Italy

The Roman emperors Augustus and Tiberius built villas here but it took until 1822 for a hotelier called Giuseppe Pagano to build a *locanda* on the island of Capri, the so-called "land of sweet idleness" at the south side of the Gulf of Naples. Subsequently renamed **Hotel La Palma**, it hasn't latterly been one of the island's most fashionable addresses, despite its location off the Piazzetta in the heart of the island's main town. But that is set to change when it reopens this summer as part of the Oetker Collection, owners of the fabled Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc on Cap d'Antibes.

The pool deck at the Hotel La Palma

Hotel La Palma is situated in the small main square of Capri's biggest town

With uncharacteristically understated interiors by the fashionable London-based designer Francis Sultana, whose first hotel project this is, it promises more than a little in common with its Riviera stablemate. Its Beach Club on the island's south coast recalls the Eden-Roc's terraces, as do its pool deck, rooftop bar and restaurant, which will be overseen by Gennaro Esposito, whose Torre del Saracino in Naples has two Michelin stars. *Due to open June 18; double rooms from €550; oetkercollection.com*

Como Le Montrachet is in Puligny-Montrachet, renowned for its white burgundy

Four 18th-century stone buildings are being converted into luxury accommodation © Martin Morrell

Burgundy, France

Como Hotels and Resorts is the Singapore-based hotel group behind Parrot Cay in Turks and Caicos, the Shambala Retreat in Bali and the newly transformed Laucala Island in Fiji, but its French CEO Olivier Jolivet has long wanted to create a hotel with wine at the heart of its ethos. During his previous tenure at Aman, there was talk of one in Argentina, another in Provence. This year he will finally get to open one, **Como Le Montrachet**, named after what many consider the greatest of all white burgundies. Four 18th-century stone buildings, among them an existing hotel on the main square of the village of Puligny-Montrachet, are being converted — it's a phased opening — by Italian designer Paola Navone into 31 "sanctuaries" (no mere rooms here). "Exceptional dining options and exquisite wine experiences" are promised, along with what should surely, given Como's form, be an outstanding and thankfully not wine-themed spa. *Due to open in autumn; rates yet to be set; comohotels.com*

When it opens as a hotel in the winter, the former War Office in London's Whitehall will have 120 rooms, 85 residences and several restaurants and bars

London

Six years ago, the Hinduja Group and OHL Developments paid more than £350m for a 250-year lease on the Old War Office in Whitehall, a turreted former government ministry that opened in 1906, having cost a then-staggering £1.2m to build. Next winter it will open as a hotel — **Raffles London at The OWO** — with 120 rooms, 85 residences, a spa and 11 restaurants and bars, its interiors the work of New York-based Thierry Despont. The principal suite will be named after Winston Churchill, who served as secretary of state for war and air here from 1919-21 in an office previously occupied by Lloyd George and later by John Profumo.

Expect much to be made of Ian Fleming too. He is said to have developed his idea for James Bond while employed here as a naval intelligence officer during the second world war. Indeed, no other building has featured in as many 007 films. In *Octopussy*, *A View to a Kill* and *Licence to Kill* it stood in for MI6. It has a cameo in *Spectre*. And the final scene of *Skyfall* was shot on its roof, soon to be the setting of a restaurant with panoramic views. *Late 2022; rates yet to be set; theowo.london*

The villas at Cap Karoso have flat roofs topped with organic gardens

Terraced fields on Sumba

Sumba, Indonesia

In 2017, French couple Fabrice and Evguenia Ivara, a former KPMG auditor and Moët Hennessy brand manger respectively, arrived on Sumba and decided to stay. Back then, most tourists tended to be surfers, drawn by its legendary breaks, and the only really smart hotel was what is now Nihi Sumba. The island, which is twice the size of Bali, an hour's flight away, could do with another, they thought. So having found a beach on which they could build, they set about building Cap Karoso, a 47-room hotel plus 20 villas, their flat roofs disguised by organic gardens so that they seem to merge with the landscape. They've also established a farm that will produce most of the food in its restaurant, and plan to open an agricultural school for the local community as well as ateliers for local and visiting artists. *Due to open in September; doubles from $250; capkaroso.com*

A computer-generated image of Lanserhof Sylt's thatched buildings

One of the suites at the 'medical resort'

Sylt, Germany

Built and equipped at a cost of €120m, the 55-room **Lanserhof Sylt** consists of a cluster of what look like giant thatched cottages, reminiscent of those in the local villages and overlooking the Wattenmeer, a watery landscape of shifting mudflats that is paradise for birdwatchers. Rather than simply a spa, this will be the third "medical resort" from the Lanserhof group: as well as indoor and outdoor saltwater pools and Technogym equipment, the facilities run to MRI and CT scanners, while a stay here involves a comprehensive range of tests, analyses, scans, ECGs and precisely focused massages, not to mention "medical lectures". But if a week here (the minimum length of a "classic" cure) doesn't sound entirely pleasurable, for those resolved to, as they put it, "get rid of unnecessary ballast" (physical or psychological), Sylt is a beguilingly beautiful setting — an island with a microclimate that ensures the North Sea, which laps (or lashes) its 35km stretch of pale quartz sand, is warmer than you might suppose. *Due to open on May 1; seven-night Cure Classic from €7,120 per person; lanserhof.com*

Accommodation at Sextantio Rwanda is in beehive-like thatched huts

The hotel is intended to support poor Rwandans; guests will be encouraged to make donations rather than pay set rates

Lake Kivu, Rwanda

Sextantio is known for its two wildly atmospheric *alberghi diffusi* in Italy, one in the medieval houses of the tiny Abruzzo hill-village of Santo Stefano, the other in the *sassi* (or cave dwellings) of Matera in Basilicata. Rather than creating conventional luxury experiences, its aim is to open hotels in what it calls "areas of social disadvantage" — the latest project being at the northern tip of Nkombo, an island in Lake Kivu, on the border between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The verdant, hilly island covers 22 sq km and is

Rwanda's, though the population of 20,000 is largely Congolese.

Sextantio Rwanda, The Capanne Project, as it styles itself, will consist of a cluster of beehive-like thatched dwellings inspired by the King of the Tutsis' Hut in the Ethnographic Museum in Butare and built without electric tools. There's a beach from which one can swim, though it won't be warm: the lake has depths of 1,000m and an altitude of 1,460m; the year-round average air temperature is 20C. Exploring the lake in dugout canoes and night fishing are among the activities on offer, along with trips to the Nyungwe Forest National Park (for sightings of a dozen primate species), and the Akagera Savannah in the east of the country (for bigger animals). However, Sextantio's philanthropic founder, Daniele Kihlgren, hopes that guests will also interact with village life on the island, visit its schools and health centre, learn about the farming and fishing that sustains its population and ultimately come to support the NGO he has set up to provide "the neediest in Rwanda" with health insurance. For this is a hotel with no published rates: the price of staying here is a donation. *Due to open March 21,* *sextantiorwanda.com*

This late 19th-century building in Prague is being converted from office block to hotel with 168 studios and suites

The hotel's palette has been inspired by the art nouveau work of local artist Alphonse Mucha

Prague

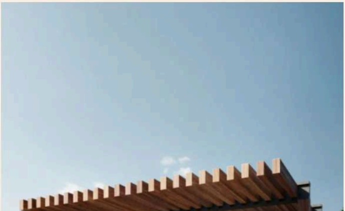
The venerable Viennese grocer Julius Meinl am Graben, a sort of Austrian Fortnum & Mason, is making it first venture into hotel-keeping with **The Julius**, a 10-minute walk from Wenceslas Square (and about twice that from the Charles Bridge). The Italian architect Matteo Thun, well known for the Vigilius Mountain Resort in the South Tyrol and the Waldhotel at the Swiss Burgenstock resort, has transformed a late 19th-century neo-renaissance building, formerly offices, into a hotel of 168 studios and suites, many with kitchens. The subdued palette has been inspired by the art nouveau posters of the artist Alphonse Mucha, a museum of whose work is a couple of blocks away. Julius hotels in Belgrade and Budapest are expected to follow. *Due to open March 1; doubles from €190;* *thejulius.eu*

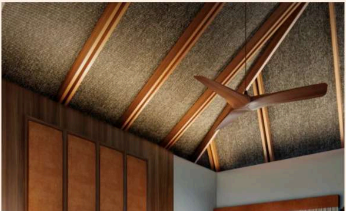
Pawapi Koh Mook resort is situated on a relatively undeveloped Andaman Sea island

Koh Mook, Thailand

Not to be confused with Chile's remote Explora Hotels, Phuket-based Explorar Hotels & Resorts has built its first refreshingly inexpensive hotel **Pawapi Koh Mook** on a comparatively undeveloped island in a part of the Andaman Sea where it's still possible to spot dugongs, the critically endangered elephantine marine mammal.

Diving and snorkelling aside, the island's chief attraction is its Emerald Cave, a huge limestone grotto within which lies a beach that is accessible only by swimming. More readily accessible, the stretch of white sand on which its 23 simply furnished thatched bungalows and villas on stilts are strung out looks even lovelier. *Official opening date is February 1 but already in "soft opening"; from Thai Baht 2,900 to 8,500 (approx £65 to £190); explorarhotels.com*





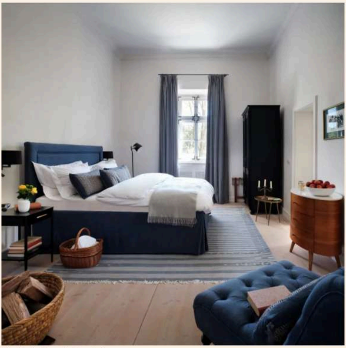
Casa Chablé is the only hotel in the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve

The hotel will have five suites and five bungalows

Quintana Roo, Mexico

At the southern tip of the Riviera Maya, down the rough road from Tulum, lies the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, 530,000ha of protected land embracing a reef, an islet-filled lagoon still visited by manatees, crocodile-filled mangroves, *cenotes* (cavelike sinkholes that the ancient Maya believed were portals to the underworld), jungle and grassland that extends to the border with Belize. Jaguars, jaguarundis and tapirs, though rarely glimpsed, are among the wildlife, and there are even the remains of 27 ancient Mayan cities, notably Muyil, which has a 17-metre-high pyramid. This spring the only hotel in the reserve reopens after a wholesale transformation as **Casa Chablé**. Sited on a speck of an island, it consists of a villa with five suites and five further bungalows on its 200m of beach. Like the other locally owned Chablé hotels, inland near Merida and further up the coast, it takes cooking and wellness very seriously, but the main draw here will be nature. *Due to open in Spring; rates have yet to be set; chablehotels.com*

The Corner Barn is a 300-year-old former farm building


The hotel will have just four bedrooms

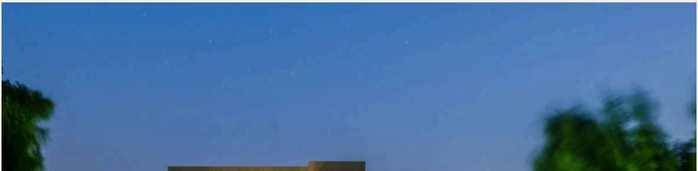
Transylvania, Romania

Over the past decades Gladys Bethlen and her son, Nikolaus, have been acquiring and restoring historic properties on land that once belonged to the family of her late husband, a Romanian count. And in 2019, they began to rent a couple of them out, bases from which visitors might explore one of Europe's last great wildernesses, still populated by bears, wolves and lynxes, on foot, by bike or on horseback. This spring they will open their first guesthouse, the **Corner Barn**, a 300-year-old former farm building converted to accommodate four handsome bedrooms. A restaurant specialising in the local cuisine, which bears not just Hungarian but Turkish and Armenian influences, operates in another restored barn, using locally sourced and foraged produce, not least abundant truffles (when in season). *Due to open in March; doubles from $250;* *bethlenestates.com*

Built on an abandoned farm in Nambiti reserve, The Homestead comprises 12 individual bungalows

Nambiti, South Africa

Accessible by road from Durban, Pretoria and Johannesburg, Nambiti is a 9,000ha private game reserve, home to nearly 50 species of mammal — including the popular big cats — but just 10 small safari lodges. The latest addition is **The Homestead**, located 35km north-east of Ladysmith on the site of an abandoned farm, the ruins of which have been incorporated into its design. It will have just 12 individual bungalows constructed from local and reclaimed ironstone and ethically sourced *kiaat* timber, their roofs planted with grasses from nearby grasslands. Conservation is the watchword here: a solar farm will provide at least 90 per cent of its energy, sufficient to power its fleet of electric off-roaders, the better for game viewing. *Due to open in Spring; rates yet to be set;* *homesteadlodge.com*



Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som is on the Qatari coast, 100km north of Doha

Khasooma, Qatar

Arguably the first tropical destination spa, Chiva-Som opened in Thailand in 1995, becoming something of a benchmark for resorts dedicated to enabling their guests to shed weight, detox and get fitter. But it's taken till now for the company to open an outpost overseas. Calling itself the "full-immersion" spa in the Middle East, **Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som** is located on the coast at Khasooma, 100km north of Doha. Wise to concerns about childhood obesity in the region, it is aimed at families as much as adults, offering programmes intended to "teach children the value of a healthy and sustainable lifestyle" and treatments rooted in traditional Arabic and Islamic medicine inspired by the 11th-century writings of the Persian philosopher-physician Ibn Sina, also known as Avicenna. *Official opening due to take place in February but already in "soft opening"; doubles from QAR4,000 (about £850) per night, minimum two-night stay;* zulal.com