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The BED of your dreams

From the very posh to the downright quirky, no matter what your budget or your style, there's a place for you — keep an open mind and your nights need never be ordinary. **Margaret Turton** reports.

Adagio City Aparthotel Paris Tour Eiffel, France

When it comes to the complete apartment experience, Adagio Tour Eiffel is the real thing. It has everything you'll need for a night or a year. There is a fitness area and an indoor pool. The Eiffel Tower and Montparnasse are a short stroll away. The supermarche is close by, so grab some food to cook, pick up a bunch of flowers and a bottle of wine and settle in.

Some apartments have broad sweeping views of the River Seine and the Eiffel Tower through to Musee de l'Armee and Napoleon's Tomb. The Grand Palais takes form in the middle distance and Sacre Coeur sits pertly on the far horizon, while the rooftops of Paris spread out in every direction. This is the Paris of your dreams. And it's affordable.

> www.adagio-city.co.uk, www.franceguide.com.

> Margaret Turton was a guest of Banyan Tours, India Tourism, Wonderful Copenhagen, VisitScotland, Hotel du Vin Scandinavian Tourist Board, Adagio and the French Tourist Bureau.





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Taj Umaid Bhawan Palace, Jodhpur, India

It took 15 years for the maharaja of Jodhpur to realise his dream but, when his royal residence was finally completed in 1943, Umaid Bhawan Palace rivalled the vice-regal palace in Delhi in scale and splendour. A sprawling, Art Deco masterpiece constructed from Jodhpur's golden sandstone, it's the home of the present maharaja, though, like most royal residences in India nowadays, it also operates as a luxury hotel. I

had to try very hard not to be overwhelmed by all its grandeur. Few historic properties have so successfully merged their heritage with exceptional comfort, service and cuisine — a point made clear in January, when The Gallivanter's Guide voted the former royal quarters — now Taj Umaid Bhawan Palace — Hotel of the Year. Today, guests stroll through the vast gardens, visit the vintage car

collection or the private museum with its hunting trophies, clocks and weaponry. They use the pools and the marble-floored squash courts and occupy regal rooms and suites, among them the Maharaja Suite, former abode of Maharaja Umaid Singh, plus the Maharani's Suite — a fantastic concoction in pink, black, chrome and glass.
> www.tajhotels.com,
www.wildlifesafari.com.au.



Nimb, Copenhagen, Denmark

With a Moorish facade, the Copenhagen landmark Nimb has an exotic chic about it, something of the style of an imagined Orient, which adds a level of excitement to its understated glamour.

For more than a century, Nimb has occupied a prime position beside Tivoli Gardens, where it has been a favourite venue for functions and high-toned events. Major refurbishments in 2007 saw Nimb emerge as a boutique hotel, with 13 beautifully detailed suites, each with a fireplace and antique furniture and views on to the gardens where Hans Christian

Andersen sought inspiration for his fairytales. Nothing at Nimb resembles a regular hotel. The rooms are quite luxurious, and yet cosy in the manner of a small private estate. Breakfast and afternoon tea take place in an intimate ballroom with double-vaulted ceilings and handpainted murals that also have a sort of fairytale quality about them. It's not a budget inn, I must confess. But sweet dreams are assured at Nimb, and it made the Conde Naste Traveller Hot List 2009.
> www.nimb.dk,
www.visitcopenhagen.com.



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The Rival. Stockholm. Sweden

Stockholm gained its first boutique hotel when former ABBA member Benny Andersson opened the type of hotel he had always dreamt of staying in himself. The Rival was created with that rare combination of sleek design and technology plus comfort and warmth. Top Swedish designers were commissioned for the furniture and furnishings, including the bold, individual, hand-woven corridor carpeting that

hints at the location and effectively absorbs sound. A pillow menu ensures a perfect sleep. Above each bed, a blown-up still from a classic Swedish movie is surrounded by swanky velvet curtains — references to the building's 1930s origins and the renovated Art Deco cinema downstairs. There is also an original 1940s cocktail bar. A new bistro, cafe and restaurant add restrained, effortless style. Many of

the rooms have a balcony overlooking a courtyard or — better still — the leafy Mariatorget, one of Stockholm's loveliest squares. Watching locals play boules from my balcony had me feeling like a local myself. More than that, it gave a sense of occupying my own small apartment, with all the necessities of life at arm's reach.
> www.rival.se,
www.visitscandinavia.com.au.



Hotel du Vin, Edinburgh, Scotland

Palaces and fairytale venues are one thing. A Dickensian asylum and blood donation centre — well, that's an entirely different proposition. But am I worried? No, I'm not. This once-grim edifice within the Old Town has emerged as one of Edinburgh's sleekest boutique hotels, restyled by Curious Architecture for the Hotel du Vin group, an outfit determined to seek out the quirkiest site in any city and transform it into the coolest spot in town. Bedlam and blood transfusions have been replaced by

luxurious rooms with monsoon showers plus classic bistro dining and a wine tasting area where guests can take a trip to the world's finest vineyards under the guidance of head sommelier Romain Audrerie and his delightful assistant, Lenka Strapkova. There are 500 wines to choose from in this relaxing haven. Life has risen a few degrees since Robert Fergusson, a melancholic poet who inspired Robert Burns, expired here in 1774.
> www.hotelduvin.com,
www.visitscotland.com.

