

WORLD ON SALE! 25 SMART WAYS TO STRETCH YOUR TRAVEL DOLLAR IN 2009

Condé Nast Traveler

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

JANUARY 2009

ITALY

SENSATIONAL
NEW SICILY

AUSTRALIA'S
BIG ADVENTURE

JORDAN'S
ANCIENT WONDERS

SPECIAL
44
PAGE
SECTION

GOLD LIST

710 WORLD'S BEST PLACES TO STAY

TOP HOTELS, RESORTS, CRUISE LINES

\$\$\$; 50 rooms; 503-436-2221; stephanie-inn.com

Tu Tu' Tun Lodge, Gold Beach

92.3 97.4 90.8 91.0 87.8 91.9
Every room's private patio or balcony offers views of the Rogue River at this "luxurious but rustic forest retreat." In rooms, guests find details like steam showers and binoculars for watching wildlife, along with a "very comfy bed and cozy fireplace." Staff are "friendly and helpful in a casual way." Meals are communal; four-course dinners include organic vegetables.

\$\$; 18 rooms; pool, water sports; 541-247-6664; tuntutun.com

Hotel deLuxe, Portland

88.0 90.8 86.8 84.2 88.0 87.6
This "classic yet trendy downtown hotel" has gilt ceilings and crystal chandeliers integrated with Art Deco and Art Moderne touches. "Old-movie glam" corridors pay homage to stars like Audrey Hepburn with framed black-and-white still photographs. "Smallish but cozy rooms" have leatherette headboards. At Gracie's, order wild Pacific Northwest salmon linguine.

\$\$; 130 rooms; 503-219-2094; provenancehotels.com

Hotel Georgia, Portland

82.9 83.8 85.2 94.8 89.7 86.7
\$\$; 127 rooms; 503-225-1717; provenancehotels.com

PENNSYLVANIA

Four Seasons, Philadelphia

89.3 92.2 91.8 86.9 88.4 89.8
This gray-granite U-shaped hotel has recessed windows and a brick driveway. Accommodations showcase Federal decor with mahogany furniture, watercolor paintings, and toile-patterned draperies. Sit on a couch and enjoy a pre-supper drink at the Swann Lounge and Café; dinner at Fountain Restaurant means "excellent service, delicious food, high prices."

\$\$\$; 364 rooms; pool, spa; 215-963-1500; fourseasons.com

Rittenhouse Hotel, Philadelphia

90.3 86.9 81.3 94.5 87.9 88.2
With a distinctive saw-toothed facade, this hotel on Rittenhouse Square has a Belgian cobblestone courtyard. "Luxurious rooms" display a gold-and-blue motif and eclectic art. Cassatt Tea Room serves traditional tea in an English-style garden with a gazebo—"it's relaxing yet exclusive and posh."

\$\$\$; 98 rooms; pool, spa; 215-546-9000; rittenhousehotel.com

RHODE ISLAND

Castle Hill Inn & Resort, Newport

83.9 86.3 87.1 91.0 85.1 86.7
\$\$\$; 35 rooms; beach; 401-849-3800; castlehillinn.com

SOUTH CAROLINA

Rhett House Inn, Beaufort

95.2 85.7 71.4 95.2 100 70.0 86.4
\$\$; 17 rooms; 843-524-9030; rhettshouseinn.com

Q Inn at Palmetto Bluff, Bluffton

96.7 92.2 84.4 90.0 94.4 93.0 91.7
This "low-key Southern home-style inn" sits between a tidal estuary and a forest. "Not overly luxurious cottages" are designed with vaulted ceilings, full kitchens, and verandas—perfect for "enjoying some quiet time." River House Restaurant focuses on seafood; "blissful spa treatments" use local ingredients such as cornmeal and mulberry leaves. The Canoe Club, with kayak facilities and four pools, opened in 2008.

\$\$\$; 50 cottages; golf, tennis, pool, spa, water sports; 843-706-6500; aubergeresorts.com

Charleston Place, Charleston

89.8 92.5 89.0 97.3 92.2 92.2
Reminiscent of a grand seventeenth-century residence, this eight-story hotel has an Italian marble lobby with a Georgian open-arm staircase. "Old South-style rooms" have period fabrics, stenciled wood-floor foyers, and bathrooms with brass fixtures. In the afternoon, some guests don hats and gloves for the English-style tea at the Thoroughbred Club. Try the 24-karat-gold facial at the European-style spa.

\$\$\$; 441 rooms; pool, spa; 843-722-4900; orient-express.com

French Quarter Inn, Charleston

90.9 90.9 81.7 89.2 87.5 88.2
The six-year-old inn one block from St. Philip's Steeple is "a good base for exploring the town." At check-in, guests receive champagne, and each evening look forward to "milk and cookies—a very nice touch." Eighteenth-century-style rooms with high ceilings are decorated in golds and creams. Restaurant Tristan has blue and silver upholstery, local glass art, and food that includes white tuna with Parmesan vanilla broth.

\$\$; 50 rooms; 843-722-1900; fqcharleston.com

John Rutledge House Inn, Charleston

91.7 89.4 84.8 89.4 87.0 88.5
This "quiet and relaxing" Georgian-style landmark has ironwork and Greek Revival porticos around the front door. Rooms have high ceilings, Tempurpedic beds, and Italian carved fireplaces. "Very attentive staff" serve breakfast; there is no restaurant, but guests get priority seating at Circa 1886, at sister property Wentworth Mansion (see below).

\$\$\$; 19 rooms; 843-723-7999; charminginns.com

Market Pavilion Hotel, Charleston

82.4 88.2 88.2 97.1 91.2 89.4
This hotel one block from Charleston Harbor opened in 2002 but evokes the past with its 1880s design. Rooms are decorated with dark mahogany furniture, "lavish fabrics, decorative crown moldings on the ceiling," and oil paintings. Grill 225 serves "wonderful prime beef," and guests "are acknowledged by name throughout the evening."

\$\$\$; 70 rooms; pool; 843-723-0500; marketpavilion.com

Wentworth Mansion, Charleston

91.1 94.6 83.6 92.6 91.3
The former home of a cotton merchant has interiors with chandeliers and Tiffany glass panels. "Charming rooms" have gaslit fireplaces, king-size sleigh beds, and double walk-in showers. Watch the sunset from the rooftop cupola. Circa 1886 serves modern Southern cuisine in a restored carriage house. "Staff have that warm Southern hospitality you always hear about."

\$\$\$; 21 rooms; spa; 843-853-1886; charminginns.com

Charleston Marriott Town Center, Charleston

97.1 91.2 84.4 82.9 77.1 86.5
\$; 352 rooms; pool; 304-345-6500; marriott.com

Planters Inn, Charleston

81.1 86.5 86.3 94.7 83.8 86.5
\$\$\$; 64 rooms; 843-722-2345; plantersinn.com

Inn at Harbour Town, Hilton Head

90.9 83.3 82.8 90.9 84.6 86.5
\$\$; golf, tennis, pool, beach; 60 rooms; 843-363-8100; seapines.com

Boardwalk Inn at Wild Dunes Resort, Isle of Palms

92.3 86.8 80.8 94.3 90.6 90.6 89.2
Bracketed between the Atlantic and the Intracoastal Waterway, this hotel is part of a 1,600-acre private resort. "Very generously sized rooms" have flat-screen TVs and French doors that open onto balconies. Sea Island Grill serves "fabulous hamburgers"; Lettered Olive offers contemporary dishes. The island "is great for walking and riding bikes without fear of traffic."

\$\$\$; 93 rooms; golf, tennis, pool, spa, water sports, beach; 888-219-1368; wilddunes.com

Sanctuary at Kiawah Island Golf Resort, Kiawah Island

92.7 90.9 90.8 92.7 94.5 94.4 92.7
At this "gracious Southern resort," rooms have shuttered bathroom windows and oceanview balconies; "the wood floors make you want to dance to the ocean's purr." Jasmine Porch cooks up Lowcountry favorites: "My wife had the obligatory shrimp and grits and still raves about it." Five golf courses and three pools keep guests occupied. "What an escape! Everyone should check their Black Berry at the front door."

\$\$\$; 255 rooms; golf, tennis, pool, spa, water sports, beach; 843-768-2121; kiawahresort.com

Myrtle Beach Marriott Resort & Spa at Grande Dunes, Myrtle Beach

89.1 82.6 71.1 93.5 95.7 82.6 85.8
\$\$; 407 rooms; pool, spa; 843-449-8880; marriott.com

Woodlands Resort & Inn, Summerville

95.2 93.4 93.4 78.7 93.3 71.4 89.2
"One of the great secrets of the Lowcountry," this 1906 brick home 22 miles west of Charleston, is a "little out of the way." The dining room, set among magnolias and moss-draped oaks, serves contemporary American. Balconies and high ceilings characterize rooms. Staff "think of the little things," like stocking your car with water before a day of sightseeing.

\$\$\$; 19 rooms; tennis, pool, spa; 843-875-2600; woodlandsinn.com

TENNESSEE

Blackberry Farm, Walland

93.5 91.0 93.6 88.5 89.7 91.3
"Attention to rustic details" is a hallmark of this Smoky Mountain retreat. Guests can choose art- and antiques-filled rooms with feather beds, or opt for a cottage with a fireplace and a porch. "Fantastic farm-fresh food" like Laurel Creek squab is served at The Barn. A creamery, bakery, and charcuterie are on the premises. By day guests fish for rainbow trout or unwind at the spa set in a nineteenth-century farmhouse.

\$\$\$; 59 rooms; tennis, pool, spa; 865-984-8166; blackberryfarm.com

TEXAS

Four Seasons, Austin

89.3 92.2 86.6 89.3 88.6 89.2
Oaks, gardens, and lawns extend to Lady Bird Lake at this downtown hotel. Inside, find "comfortably large rooms" with wood credenzas. At Lobby Lounge, try the Batini cocktail, named for the Mexican bats that migrate here each spring, and light fare is served daily. "Accommodating staff" greet with smiles.

\$\$\$; 291 rooms; pool, spa, water sports; 512-478-4500; fourseasons.com

Lake Austin Spa Resort, Austin

88.9 93.0 87.5 83.9 91.2 92.9 89.6
"There are wildflowers everywhere" at this former rodeo training camp on Lake Austin. Limestone buildings have tin roofs, and cedar posts line walkways, while interiors are "decorated in Hill Country chic." Vegetables from the organic garden are used in meals. "I had acupuncture on my knee. It has not hurt since!"

\$\$\$; 40 rooms; pool, spa, water sports; 512-372-7300; lakeaustin.com

Ritz-Carlton, Dallas

100 91.3 91.3 89.1 88.9 92.1
At this one-year-old Regency-style newcomer, guests find marble tubs and Bulgari bath amenities in perfect-scoring rooms, which also have city views "that you don't get tired of." Fearing's, named for "the incredibly outgoing" chef, serves up barbecued shrimp tacos under rawhide chandeliers. "The spa is a great escape," with Vichy treatments.

\$\$\$; 218 rooms; pool, spa; 214-922-0200; ritzcarrton.com

Rosewood Crescent Hotel, Dallas

91.3 89.0 84.8 88.1 86.6 88.0
This property, designed by Philip Johnson, has an Uptown location in a mixed-use development. The two-story entrance has limestone walls and marble floors and columns, and opens onto a garden terrace. Rooms, "on the small side but well appointed," have French doors that allow natural light in. The Conservatory specializes in local, sustainable cuisine.

\$\$\$; 220 rooms; pool, spa; 214-871-3200; rosewoodhotels.com

Rosewood Mansion on Turtle Creek, Dallas

88.0 92.9 89.9 85.2 88.3 88.9
The food at this former private estate "was so good that we almost skipped Thanksgiving dinner at our aunt's—the foie gras melted in my mouth." Seasonal flowers bloom in manicured grounds, while indoors, cathedral doors and stained glass set the tone. Soon to be refurbished, rooms have views of the Dallas skyline and "super comfy beds with great linens."