

# Robb Report

33rd ANNUAL

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LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

## Three City Hotels

Hospitality's focus this year has, understandably, been on rugged, rural or decidedly outdoorsy locations. This means the reopening of some of the world's best city-center hotels went largely under the radar, much like this trio of standouts.

### Mandarin Oriental Ritz

MADRID, SPAIN

Mandarin Oriental snapped up this site (100 rooms and 53 suites) when longtime operator Belmond off-loaded the erstwhile Hotel Ritz six years ago. It invested in a three-year renovation by architecture firm Rafael de la-Hoz and design duo Gilles & Boissier to restore the Belle Époque building's somewhat faded glory, while also adding a little contemporary flair.

Gone are the thick carpets and gilt drapes, replaced with pared-down, neutral-toned textiles, exposed oak floors and minimalist four-poster beds. The glass ceiling above the afternoon-tea-serving Palm Court has been reconstructed, and the public areas of the hotel are now festooned with artworks, a nod to the hotel's

location at the apex of Madrid's Golden Triangle of Art, between the Prado and the Thyssen-Bornemisza. *Doubles from around \$785*

### Le Bristol

PARIS, FRANCE

The 190-key hotel, operated by the Oetker Collection, has finally completed its long renovation, the most exhaustive since it opened in 1925. Fittingly, as the world embraces everything affresco, the focus of the final phase was the 13,000-square-foot garden, a rare green sanctuary in the 8th Arrondissement. Landscape designer Lady Arabella Lennox-Boyd sought to bring a sense of countryside to the urban hideaway, with much of the flora native to the Paris region. Roses wreath bespoke trellises, and the gentle tinkle from black slate fountains

fills the space, an almost meditative hum. Stay the night in another of the final additions: the Lumière Suite, with its contemporary but grand design, all polished rosewood tables and brushed-brass reading lights. *Doubles from around \$1,810*

### Rosewood Mansion on Turtle Creek

DALLAS, TEX.

In 2020, Rosewood Hotels & Resorts went back to where it all started by paying tribute to its first hotel—and the city in which the brand was born 40 years ago. Set in a

former private estate built in 1925, this property has long been an anchor in Dallas, and known as much for its ornate décor and setting in a leafy residential neighborhood as for its nationally lauded restaurant. As this grande dame hit middle age, Rosewood undertook a four-year renovation, which concluded last year with the reimagining of the 142 rooms and suites as well as the entry rotunda and lobby. Signature (and fan-favorite) suite elements like French doors and elegant balconies now live alongside specially commissioned works that tie in elements of Texas and the original mansion. Fancy a pair of custom Miron Crosby boots? You can co-design them in a private appointment, one of the hotel's new signature partnerships celebrating other Dallas luxury icons. *Doubles from \$455*



Rosewood Mansion on Turtle Creek

## THE SAXON

JOHANNESBURG

The luxury hotel in leafy Sandhurst is known for its glorious 10-acre gardens, a legacy of its former life as a private residence for insurance tycoon Douw Steyn. So when tourism was halted last year, the hotel's owners expedited a radical renovation of the common areas to better connect with the outdoors: See how the Qunu restaurant now opens onto the terrace there. The walls were covered with a mural, based on a photo by Justin Badenhorst of a wild Syringa tree at sunset at the hotel's sister property, Shambala Private Game Reserve.

The renovation also emphasized another aspect of the Saxon's history. It was here that late president Nelson Mandela lived after his release from prison, and he edited his autobiography on-site. So now the artwork behind reception calls out that connection: pencil drawings of Mandela, depicting the stages of his life, by Dean Simon. Book a stay at the largest suite here, a 4,300-square-foot room, named in his honor. *Doubles from about \$660 per night*



ROSEWOOD MANSION: DON RIDDLE