

# HARRODS

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**DESIGN  
ICONS**



Harrods



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# *THE WORLD'S TOP Design HOTELS*

WITH THE HELP OF TOP ARTISTS AND  
ARCHITECTS, NEWLY BUILT AND  
REVAMPED HOTELS NOW BOAST FIVE-  
STAR DESIGN. HERE ARE 10 OF THE BEST

by Andy Friedlander



*“The pool area features low-slung double day beds and strategically placed plants to provide privacy to guests touching up their tans in the year-round sunshine”*

## RIVERSIDE ROMANCE

AQUAPURA DOURO VALLEY, PORTUGAL

Aquapura, formerly a 19th-century manor house, looks across the extensive hillside vines and stacked-stone walls of still-active Port wine vineyards. While the original terracotta main building remains, with its blue shutters and white cornerstones, the resort has been brought bang up-to-date by two Portuguese architects who have combined Asian fabrics and colours with angular steel and glass balconies.

The pool area features low-slung double day beds and strategically placed plants to provide privacy to guests touching up their tans in the year-round sunshine. The design of the comfortable spa area also draws on the scenery by echoing the stacked stone perimeter walls, with high sandstone all around the spacious wet areas.

Blending seamlessly with its verdant surroundings, the panoramic suite is decked out with white, beige and black soft furnishings and has floor-to-ceiling windows that look straight down the ever-flowing Douro river.



# SKY-HIGH LUXURY

BURJ AL ARAB, DUBAI

Towering above the Dubai coastline, Burj Al Arab's billowing-sail-shaped superstructure is the world's tallest hotel building – taller than the Eiffel Tower and only 60m shorter than the Empire State Building. Built nine years ago on a man-made island in the Persian Gulf, Burj Al Arab has already become Dubai's most iconic building. Inside the hotel, the lobby's atrium – also the world's tallest, at 180m – is covered on one side by a huge, woven glass-fibre screen that reflects the desert sun during the day and is lit up by giant fire-features at night. On arrival, well-heeled guests are also treated to the sight of a 42m-high fountain that jets water upwards into the cathedral-like glass structure. The 202 duplex suites are spread over 27 double-height floors – with a round helipad jutting out on the 28th. Dripping with rich Arabic textiles and 24kt gold leaf, all of the suites feature Hermès amenities, floor-to-ceiling windows with sea views, round-the-clock butler service, and six in-room telephones. You cannot leave without a sunset cocktail in the vertiginous Skyview Bar, from which you'll have a choice seat to watch the rest of Dubai's new buildings clamour up to reach you.



83H  
TRAVEL



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## INSPIRING URBAN INTERIORS

HAYMARKET HOTEL, LONDON, UK

Attracting young, professional urbanites to the neon and concrete heart of London's bustling theatre district is the latest contemporary townhouse hotel in Tim and Kit Kemp's Firmdale group, the funky and grand Haymarket. Kit's slightly eccentric, colourful interior style mixes modern furniture, contemporary sculpture and theatrical costume illustrations. This splash of imagination somehow works, even behind the formal straight lines and white stone Regency exterior typical of 19th-century English architect John Nash, who also worked on Buckingham Palace and Trafalgar Square. Afternoon tea in the hotel's library may be a quiet retreat for guests to escape Piccadilly Circus, but design-wise, like the 50 bedrooms and suites, it declares war on minimalism. It is decked out with swirling patterned armchairs, thick Persian rugs, gold-framed portraits, heaving bookshelves, and side tables heavy with marble busts. The hotel's centrepiece, the Shooting Gallery, was used in the 1800s for shooting practice by country squires visiting town. Now a vast private dining room with intricate, hand-painted wallpaper, beautifully restored coving and a period glass skylight, it sits just upstairs from the cavernous underground swimming area, with its 18m pool flanked by a pewter bar.

