

DEPARTURES

Step Inside Some of the World's Most Uniquely Designed Hotels

By [Maya Kachroo-Levine](#) on December 05, 2019

These design hotels push boundaries, challenge gravity, and one even suspends a UFO-like cabin in mid-air.



© Courtesy Treehotel

Departures is published by Meredith Corp. and owned by American Express. While American Express Card Member benefits are highlighted in this publication, including through the links indicated below, the content of this

article was independently written by the editorial staff at Meredith. Other Departures content paid for by American Express is explicitly marked as such.

Innovative design can breathe life into a centuries-old building or redefine a skyline with a [brand-new building](#) in an up-and-coming town. The [best design hotels in the world](#) aren't limited to exclusively modern, luxury properties or historic hotels with castle-like features. Instead, the emerging crop of high-end design hotels attempts to mirror the external energy of the destination. That's why keen design in a [remote country town in Scotland](#) is different from a cutting-edge building in Shanghai. For the architecturally minded, here are the most uniquely designed hotels in the world:



Courtesy Treehotel

Treehotel, Northern Sweden

Set amidst the forests of Northern Sweden, each of the Treehotel accommodations have been designed by leading architects. The Mirrorcube is perhaps the most design-forward of the chic lodges, done by Bolle Tham and Martin Videgård in 2010. The design is such that the mid-air-suspended lodge looks nearly invisible, reflecting the surrounding forest. Among the other accommodations, The Cabin looks very glamping-meets-shipping container and is posted up on a hill overlooking the Lule River valley. Finally, the [UFO cabin](#), designed by Bertil Harström, is made of “high-strength composite material” and is “suspended on wires and beams connected to the trees” such that guests can feel it move.



Mark Williams/Courtesy The Royal Portfolio

The Silo Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa

Along Cape Town's touristy-but-posh Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, [The Royal Portfolio's The Silo Hotel](#) was built in the elevator tower and storage silos of a South African grain factory. It was open and functional from 1924, when the grain silo was the tallest building in sub-Saharan Africa, to 2001. The Silo Hotel opened in 2017 claiming the six floors above the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA). The exteriors of the building are a Heatherwick Studio creation—they can claim credit for the seemingly multi-dimensional glass windows introducing a mod-factor to the industrial elevator tower. The interiors of the 28 luxury bedrooms were designed by owner of The Royal Portfolio Liz Biden, whose pops of color integrate powerfully into the factory building aesthetic.



Amit Geron/Courtesy The Jaffa, a Luxury Collection hotel, Tel Aviv

The Jaffa, A Luxury Collection, Tel Aviv, Israel[

The new [five-star property in Tel Aviv](#) had a tall design order to fulfill: integrate seamlessly into the historic Old City of Jaffa while bringing a luxe-modernity to the hotel. The hotel occupies a former 19th century hospital, now offering 120 rooms and suites and 34 private residences. It's impossible to choose one design pièce de résistance; the courtyard is one of the most talked about new design fixtures in Israel, the lobby features bold, high-end art and architectural accents, and the pool is tree-lined Mediterranean chic. It's no surprise that this was orchestrated under The Jaffa founder Aby Rosen, a keen art collector whose collection is valued at \$700 million.



Evan Dion/Courteys Las Alcobas Mexico City

Las Alcobas Mexico City, Mexico

Designed by the lauded Yabu Pushelberg, [Las Alcobas Mexico City](#)—an [American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts](#) property—is located in the heart of the ritzy Polanco neighborhood, home to prime shopping, galleries, restaurants, and entertainment aplenty. The property's extensive renovation—a celebration of their 10-year anniversary—wraps up in early December. Yabu Pushelberg was once again brought in to enhance the public spaces and 35 rooms within the opulent seven-story structure. As Las Alcobas design naturally evolves, it retains its initial architectural ethos, from the eye-catching spiral staircase, which serves as the lobby's artistic centerpiece, to the wrap-around terrace suites with perfect views of Mexico City.



Pascal Bony/Courtesy Rosewood Hotels and Resorts

Rosewood Hong Kong

[Rosewood Hong Kong](#), another [American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts](#) property, doesn't occupy all 65 stories of the "vertical estate" tower. But it takes up 43 floors of the skyline-defining building that was seven years in the making. The architecture was done by American-based [Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates](#) and capitalized on the vertical nature of Hong Kong to create an awe-inspiring tower overlooking Victoria Harbour. The interiors were done by [Tony Chi](#), also New York-based talent, though Taiwan born and bringing his experience from working on the Rosewood London interiors to the project. The bulk of the [Rosewood Hong Kong](#)'s 322 rooms and 91 suites, which opened to the public in March 2019, have views of the Hong Kong skyline.



Courtesy Inkaterra

Inkaterra La Casona, Cusco, Peru

[Inkaterra La Casona](#) is a 16th century manor house that has been restored in keeping with the original architectural details. Beyond returning the architecture to its former glory, including frescoes from when Spanish Conquistador Simon Bolivar resided here, Inkaterra has added original artwork to further enhance the atmosphere. Inkaterra La Casona is [Cusco](#)'s first boutique hotel and is set on the former "training grounds for an elite army of Incas." The property has 11 suites, many of which overlook the patio.



Jeff Green/Nemacolin Woodlands Resort

Falling Rock at Nemacolin Woodlands Resort, Pennsylvania

[Falling Rock](#) was designed by [Frank Lloyd Wright](#)'s protégé, David Merritt. Merritt, an architectural designer, was inspired by Wright's technique of using natural materials, muted interior pieces, and geometric patterns. Wright was famously a proponent of "bringing the outdoors in," which is perhaps why light pours into the open Falling Rock lobby. Further adding to the clout of Falling Rock's design, the resort has a curated art collection valued at more than \$45 million, featuring works by George Hetzel, among other celebrated artists.

Link to article: <https://www.departures.com/travel/hotels/best-design-hotels-around-world#intro>