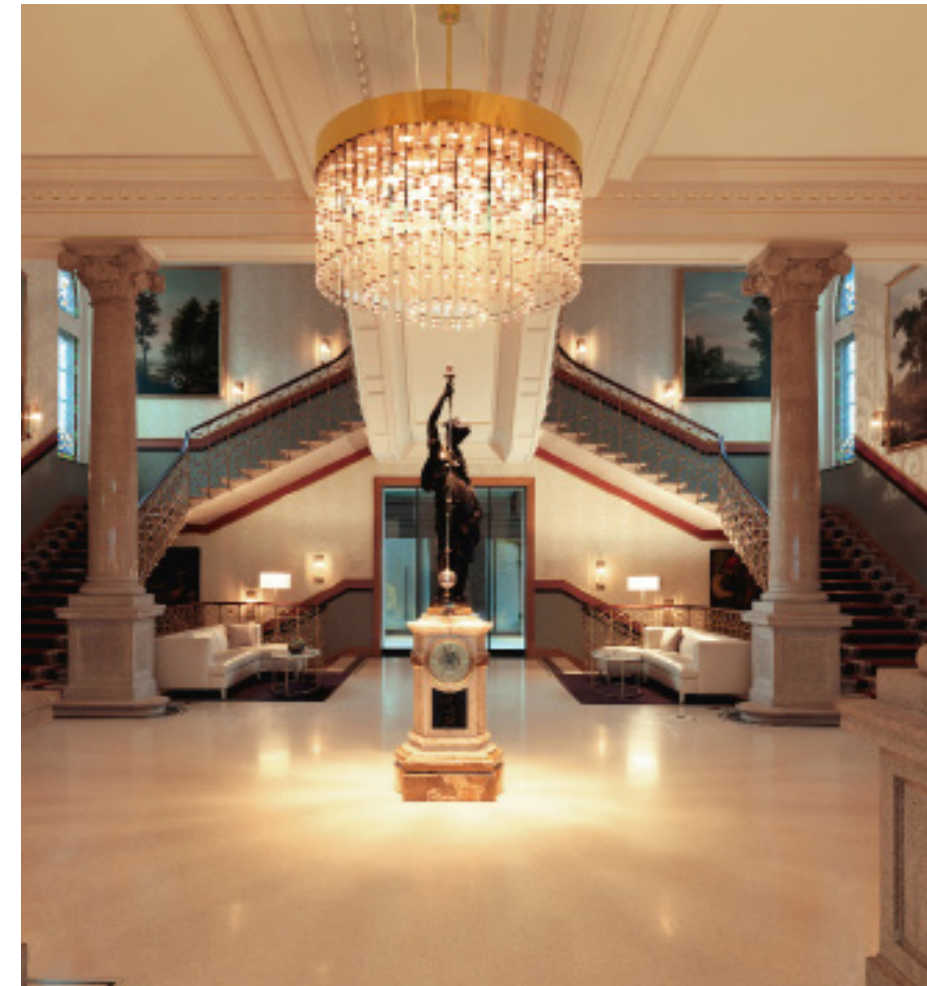


# INDEPENDENT *Lens*

NO CHAINS AND NO BRAND NAMES HERE. THESE INDEPENDENT AND BOUTIQUE PROPERTIES CREATE OASIS WITHIN BUSTLING CITIES FOR BUSINESS AND LEISURE TRAVELERS ALIKE **BY AMBER GIBSON**



*THE  
DOLDER  
GRAND*  
Zürich, Switzerland



This modern castle perched above Zürich is the quintessential city resort: close enough to reach the city center in less than 10 minutes, but also ensconced in nature (next to the Adlisberg forest), and with an adjoining nine-hole golf course and clay tennis courts. The hotel offers regular shuttle service to the city, although the historic Dolderbahn—a just-under-mile-long rack railway opened in 1895—is more scenic and just as convenient.

It's no wonder that everyone from Nelson Mandela to The Rolling Stones have stayed here over the years. The original hotel opened in 1899, but a massive renovation a decade ago brought an opulent 4,000-square-foot spa and two new modern wings, tripling the size of the property to include 175 guest-rooms and suites.

Curved balconies and floor-to-ceiling windows offer unmatched views of Zürich, Lake Zürich, and the Alps, and the junior suite bathtubs have great views, too. Dark hardwood

floors and paneling are a backdrop for simple elegance, as are spacious walk-in closets and bright marble bathrooms.

The impressive art collection includes original works by Andy Warhol, Salvador Dalí, and Joan Miró. A voluptuous Fernando Botero sculpture is sited on the spa terrace, encouraging guests to let loose and relax. New at the spa this autumn are facial treatments by Switzerland's own Dr. Pauline Burgener. Her Haute Couture line is only available in a handful of hotel spas globally, and is dedicated, she explains on her site, "to a personalized service necessary to counter the accelerated aging and the hostile factors of our environment." Membership in the program, which includes quarterly comprehensive skin analysis with a team of dermatologists, personalized skincare products, and 10 facials each year, costs \$20,000 annually. Burgener has also created a custom line of bath amenities that all Dolder Grand guests can enjoy—her first time partnering with a hotel in this capacity.

When it's time for dinner, choose between the terrace at Saltz restaurant for light starters and grilled proteins or an extravagant six- or 10-course tasting menu at The Restaurant, one that includes crayfish from Galicia, swordfish from Italy, sea urchin and Oscietra-caviar, chanterelles served with fried, pickled egg yolk, bean salad and cassis, and other delights. Chef Heiko Nieder has two Michelin stars for his inventive flavor combinations. A collection of one-bite snacks arrives to begin each dining experience, so you know you're in for a treat.

Rates start at \$705 for a double room. **Kurhausstrasse 65, 8032 Zürich, Switzerland, [thedoldergrand.com](http://thedoldergrand.com)**



## ***NOBIS HOTEL*** Copenhagen, Denmark

This stylish 77-room boutique opened just last year in a historic landmark building that was formerly the Royal Danish Academy of Music. It's the Nobis Hospitality Group's first hotel outside Stockholm, and has a distinctive Scandinavian touch, with interiors designed by Swedish firm Wingårdh. The vibe is clean, contemporary, and efficient, with sharp lines softened by elegant neoclassic detailing in the walls and ceilings. Guest rooms have beautiful chevron-patterned wooden parquet flooring and grey Bardiglio marble bathrooms, which make even the smaller superior rooms feel luxurious. High ceilings made for great



acoustics back in the building's music school days, and the grand marble staircase remains intact, but much of building has been adapted to suit modern travelers. The Nobis Suite used to be a small concert hall and audition room for students, but is now an elegant and relaxed sitting room flooded with natural light.

Restaurant Niels is another highlight, a fantastic example of the Nordic cuisine that has made Copenhagen an international dining destination. Its breakfast buffet includes sea buckthorn marmalade and housemade chocolate spread to accompany freshly-baked breads and pastries. Sit outside in the courtyard for a glass of wine before dinner.

Although there's no spa, the sauna and hamam (a variation on the Turkish bath) are open until midnight (the fitness center is open 24/7) and you'll often have the relaxation area all to yourself. Plus, the location is excellent, just steps from Tivoli Gardens, the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek art museum, and Copenhagen Central Station. Biking is the best way to get around the city, and the hotel has a fleet of 17 bright red bikes to rent. The concierge will help you plan the best route with recommended stops for smørrebrød, fiskefrikadeller (fish cakes) and kanelnurrer (cinnamon rolls) from Meyers Bageri along the way.

Rates start at \$470 for superior rooms, excluding breakfast. **Niels Brocks Gade 1, 1574 København V, nobishotel.dk**

PHOTO THIS PAGE AND FACING PAGE, BOTTOM BY REN KRISTENSEN

# PORTRAIT ROMA

**Rome, Italy**

With just 14 suites, this discreet hotel is just a couple of blocks from the Piazza di Spagna and Spanish Steps—a true hidden gem in Rome’s most touristic shopping district. Its understated entrance is easily overlooked, next to the Salvatore Ferragamo store and across the street from Hermès. Portrait Roma is owned by the Ferragamo family, which has an equally beautiful property of the same style in Florence: Portrait Firenze.

Hit the buzzer outside for entry, and a well-dressed doorman escorts you upstairs and whisks away your luggage. Check-in is in a living room, and you’re offered a glass of champagne, whiskey, coffee or just about anything your heart desires while lounging on a plush sofa. Guestrooms feel more like an apartment than a hotel, spacious and modern in design. You’re asked for your pillow, sheet, food, and drink preferences prior to arrival, so the minibar and bed are personalized to perfection, all part of a concept the hotel describes as “bespoke tourism.” Black-and-white photos of celebrities donning Ferragamo from the 1950s and ’60s decorate the walls, along with copies of wooden shoe lasts from the same era. Walk the stairs to glimpse more fashion photography and other scenes of *la dolce vita*; it’s a veritable style history museum.

The concierge can plan anything for you, from a Ferrari tour to personal shopping... even a private party with friends on the rooftop terrace with views of Roman landmarks in all directions. Breakfast is served on the terrace, too, a lavish feast of local bread, pastries, cheese, fruit, and more. Invite friends over for a drink at sunset and marvel at the serenity you’ve found in the heart of the Eternal City. After dinner and a night on the town, retire to your home away from home when, as if on cue, a nightcap or cup of tea arrives to help you fall asleep.

Rates start at \$586, including breakfast.  
**Via Bocca di Leone, 23, 00187 Rome, Italy,**  
[lungarnocollection.com/portrait-roma](http://lungarnocollection.com/portrait-roma)



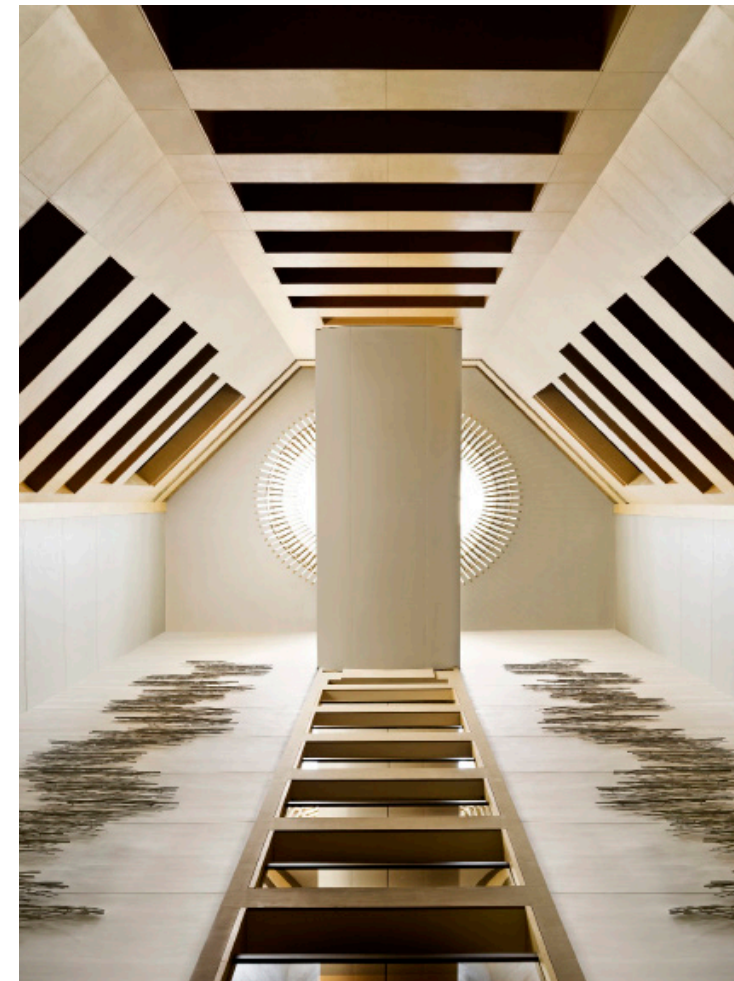
# THE UPPER HOUSE

Hong Kong, China

In a city like Hong Kong, home to iconic hotels like the original Peninsula and Mandarin Oriental, how does a new property stand out? The Upper House chose to eschew the pomp and circumstance of these storied brands in favor of understated elegance and simplicity. Geometric design by local guru André Fu favors smooth symmetry with natural materials including bamboo, wood, and limestone floors and walls. The effect is an austere calm, a sharp contrast from the frenzied, frenetic streets of one of the most densely populated places in the world.

Every detail in the 117 guestrooms is chosen with comfort as the top priority, from sumptuous down bedding and a dual-temperature wine fridge to the freestanding limestone bathtubs in the spa-inspired bathrooms. Don't worry, the tinted windows ensure privacy while allowing you to take in the skyline views. There's no better prelude to a restful night's sleep. Rooms are presented in two monochromatic color schemes: "bamboo," with ash flooring, bamboo timber, and lilac upholstery, or "celadon," with green tea upholstery and limed oak floors.

Wake up to a private yoga class on the terrace followed by hot tea or a cold-pressed juice. Enjoy views of Victoria Harbour from your room, then cross the sky bridge over the bright and airy atrium to reach Cafe Grey on the 49th floor, where Western and Eastern breakfast bento boxes are served straight from the mind of Chef Gray Kunz, whose passions are organic seasonal ingredients (he also taps into culinary experience in European, Asian, and American restaurants). The Sky Lounge is on the same floor, where the hotel hosts invitation-only monthly



fireside chats with thought leaders in fashion, music, art, and travel. If seclusion is of importance, a tucked-away green space on level 6, The Lawn, is a wonderful discovery—a grassy place of respite, within which is served a customized menu of garden bites, "picnic cocktails," beers, and half bottles of wine.

The Upper House is conveniently located next to the Pacific Place MTR station and shopping center, home to Balmain, Goyard, Le Labo, and Van Cleef & Arpels. While the material luxuries are lovely, the way the staff go above and beyond to take care of every guest is even more remarkable, from quickly learning preferences and leaving personalized gifts to sending forgotten glasses back home.

Rates start at \$730 per night for an island view studio. **Pacific Place, 88, Queensway, Admiralty, Hong Kong, [upperhouse.com](http://upperhouse.com)** 