



— 150 —
HOTELS
YOU NEED
TO VISIT BEFORE
— YOU DIE —

By Debbie Pappyn,
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Classe Touriste.

Lannoo

Introduction

By Debbie Pappyn, *Classe Touriste*

There's something eternally magical about pushing open the door of a new hotel room in expectation of what awaits on the other side – the novelty, the surprise, the views, the fragrance of crisp bed linen, the soft sound of the welcome tune on loop on the TV. After trying out well over a thousand different hotels during a lifetime of travelling around the world, I've always loved this moment and am perhaps even addicted to it. It's all about that feeling of arrival in a temporary home. Maybe it's a canvas yurt in a remote meadow somewhere in Mongolia, or a luxury suite behind a heavy, sound-proofed door in a Park Hyatt in some cosmopolitan, bright-lights city, a door that separates the frantic world out there from the calm, silent retreat inside. Hotels are worlds in miniature, different worlds, worlds endowed with singular rules and pleasures, places where falling asleep and waking are so different from at home. Maybe there's the sound of the ocean out back, like in Room 28 at the Wick Inn on Vancouver Island, or the whisper of reeds at the Inle Princess Resort in Burma, or the hippos laughing away after dusk, just like that night I spent at Duba Plains in Botswana.

Often, it's not about the out-and-out luxuries like the gold taps, the over-the-top service and crazy amenities. Great hotels come in different shapes and sizes. Take the charming Haus Hirt inn in Austria: I would book a stay here in a jiff just to enjoy the wonderful long-drawn-out organic breakfast with a panoramic view over the snow-capped Alps. Or the Four Seasons Park Lane in London where I could stay in bed all day and night. Hotel beds can be absolute bliss, but there's always the danger that you'll never want to leave the room and go out and explore. 'Do not disturb' signs are a hotel lover's best friend. From the glorious beds, gourmet breakfasts, and views to die for, to the miniature shampoo bottles that you take home and use to help you travel back to a place in your imagination whenever you feel nostalgic ... hotels are pure romance. Hotels tell stories. Hotels make stories and create memories. Enjoy these 150 places to stay, and don't forget to switch on the 'DND' on your smartphone!





— 01 — DUBA PLAINS CAMP

BOTSWANA

Okavango Delta
Duba Plains Private Reserve

**360 DEGREES OF
WILDERNESS**

◆ TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

If you want a taste of wild Africa in the most exclusive camp in Botswana, this is your place.



The owners of Duba Plains Camp, Dereck and Beverly Joubert, are National Geographic filmmakers and influential conservationists. They chose this remote corner of the Okavango Delta to create one of the most classic and sophisticated safari camps in Southern Africa. Think *Out of Africa*, Botswana-style a throwback to the 1920s with plenty of chic canvas tenting, oriental rugs, brass fixtures, comfy armchairs, a fine library and vintage maps on the walls. Each of the five guest tents

has a plunge pool and bathroom with a copper roll top bathtub, the wooden canopy beds are enveloped in mosquito netting, and the front window unzips to offer a vista of the wilds of the Okavango Delta. Simply magic.

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Rates start from €1400 / US\$1570 per person per night. all-inclusive, with light aircraft – flights to and from the camp.



— 02 — SAN CAMP

BOTSWANA

Kalahari Desert

Makgadikgadi

LEGENDARY,
CLASSIC TENTED CAMP

◆ TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

This camp is the epitome of romance and style in Africa.



With views over the shimmering salt pans of the Makgadikgadi, San Camp is a cluster of pure-white tents set amid grassland – the ultimate, romantic African hideaway. The spacious, light-filled tents are stocked with museum-worthy antiques and collectables from the old days when the owner's father, Jack Bousfield, was a record-breaking hunter and safari pioneer in Africa.

The communal spaces are equally chic and classic, with fine linen and delicate tableware used during long and relaxing lunches between game drives and explorations of this remote corner of Botswana.

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Rates start from €1,120 / US\$1,260 per person per night, all-inclusive.







— 03 — MIGRANTE GUESTHOUSE

CAPE VERDE

Boa Vista
Sal Rei

COLONIAL
ISLAND VIBE

◆ TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

These islands are still a well-kept secret, with this small hotel as the ultimate must-stay.



Even though Cape Verde is today receiving more mainstream tourist attention, the island of Boa Vista and the little town of Sal Rei remain blissfully relaxed. Migrante Guesthouse has been here for well over two decades and is hidden in a colonial house situated in the old part of town. There are only five modest, yet comfortable rooms, each with its own distinctive personality and with lots of African and colonial charm, from

creaky, wooden floors to four – poster beds. Downstairs there’s an intimate courtyard with high, white walls and tall trees, the perfect spot for enjoying a long breakfast or reading a book before heading to the long and empty sand beaches, just a short stroll away from the hotel.

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Rates start from €80 / US\$90 per night for a double room, with breakfast.

— 04 — OLD CATARACT

EGYPT

Aswan
Banks of the River Nile

LEGENDARY
WRITER'S RETREAT

◆ TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

This is the ultimate colonial grande dame of Northern Africa.



In this opulent hotel you may well stay in a room that has been occupied by Aga Khan III, the Shah of Iran, Princess Diana or Agatha Christie, as is evident from the hallways decked with photos of royals, artists and other VIPs who've bedded down here. This iconic hotel overlooks Elephantine Island at the crossroads of the Nile river valley and the Nubian Desert. The style is a mix of art deco and

Mamluk glamour with a decor echoing ancient Egyptian motifs with a dash of French chic. When you check into the Old Cataract, you're stepping into an atmosphere reminiscent of an Agatha Christie tale, combined with an *English Patient* aura of a bygone era in North Africa.

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Rates start from €120 / US\$135 per night.

— 05 — ELSA'S KOPJE LODGE

KENYA

Mughwango Hill
Meru National Park

ROMANTIC AND
LEGENDARY
SAFARI CAMP

◆ TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

This is an iconic camp in the Kenyan wilderness without hordes of tourists.



Elsa's Kopje Lodge is not only an illustrious camp, thanks to the lioness in the famous book *Born Free* by Joy Adamson, it is also one of the most romantic safari camps in Africa. The place still overlooks the site of George Adamson's original campsite where now eight open-fronted cottages are freely scattered around the kopje (hill), offering spectacular views of the surrounding plains. Each cottage is uniquely designed

and crafted, integrating the natural features of the rocky hillside, and some have an outdoor bath you can soak in while admiring the stunning views.

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Rates start from €510 / US\$570 per person per night, all-inclusive.



— 06 — KINONDO KWETU

KENYA

Kinondo
Diani Beach

**AFRICAN-CHIC
BEACH RETREAT**

◆ TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

This is probably the best-kept secret along the Kenyan coast.



Book a room here and it will feel like you are staying in the private home of its owners, Ida and Filip Andersson, and their three children, a Swedish family related to the famous Baron Blixen. This intimate hotel, just south of Diani Beach, is a far cry from the big, impersonal resorts along the Kenyan coast. The private beach is calm with almost no outsiders passing by, the ocean is warm and blue, and the hotel has an intimate, cosy home-away-

from-home feel, where like-minded guests come together to relax after a long safari trip. Highlights are dining on locally caught fish next to one of the two swimming pools with the Indian Ocean as a backdrop.

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Rates start from €210 / US\$570 per person per night, all-inclusive.

— 07 — LA MAMOUNIA

MOROCCO

Marrakech
Medina

PALACE RETREAT
IN A SEA OF GREEN



TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

No other hotel can match its *Arabian nights* vibe.



When celebs go on a romantic break to Marrakech, they hide away in the lush gardens of the iconic La Mamounia. There's no a more authentic way to enter a hotel in Morocco than being greeted by the typically dressed bell boys who lead you into a fairytale world of opulent decor with extravagant mosaics, hand-carved woodwork and sumptuous fabrics. The best buffet breakfast in town is served by the large outdoor pool, surrounded by

lush, mature gardens. Rooms are intimate, some with views over the Koutoubia Mosque and the Atlas Mountains, while the villas in the garden are the ultimate hideaway for romantic weekends.

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Rates start from €550 / US\$620 per person per night.

— 08 — SCARABEO CAMP

MOROCCO

Stone Desert
Agafay

CONTEMPORARY
DESERT ENCAMPMENT

◆ TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

This is undoubtedly the most Instagrammable desert camp in the world.



Just a short drive from Marrakech, hidden in the vast Agafay Desert, sits Scarabeo 'Stone Desert' Camp with wide-open views of the Atlas Mountains. Fifteen luxurious and stylish nomad tents are strewn across an endless sea of desert, lit at night by hundreds of flickering lanterns. There's no better way to relax after a couple of days

on the raucous streets of Marrakech than to sit on your porch with a glass of freshly brewed mint tea and inhale the vastness of the Agafay.

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Rates start from €1,120 / US\$1,255 per person per night, all-inclusive.







— 09 — SERRA CAFEMA

NAMIBIA

Himba Land
Kunene River

SPLENDID
ISOLATION

◆ TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

It feels like staying at the edge of the world in a wonderful and comfy safari camp



Here you will hear the sound of the rushing water of the mighty Kunene river but close by, too, is also the driest desert in the world where the semi-nomadic Himba community live. Set under lush trees on the banks of the Kunene River, Serra Cafema is one of the most far flung safari camps in Southern Africa. The eight cabins are set on elevated decks and crafted in wood, canvas and thatch to create a distinctive camp that blends into this remote, natural

environment. The Ozonganda, or ‘main area’ offers mighty views over the river where little boat outings are possible and Angola lies just on the other side of the water.

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Starting rate as of €430 / US\$480 per person, per night, in all-inclusive.

— 10 — WOLWEDANS

NAMIBIA

NamibRand
Namib Desert

**THE SUPERLATIVE
DESERT SANCTUARY
EXPERIENCE**

◆ TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

This is the most iconic camp in Namibia, far from the busy tourist trail.



Just a few hours' drive from touristy and crowded Sossusvlei and hidden amid 220000 hectares of the Namib Desert sits Wolwedans, a pioneer in sustainable and low - carbon - footprint safari tourism. The privately owned and protected NamibRand is a swathe of unspoiled, red dune desert where Wolwedans offers a collection of singular wilderness camps and experiences. Come here for the emptiness and vastness of the Namib

Desert, its dark skies and intense sunsets, without seeing other travellers. Dunes Lodge is the main camp while Boulders Camp has recently been revamped with a lavish swimming pool looking out over the massive, granite rocks and red landscape.

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Rates start from €410 / US\$460 per person per night, all-inclusive.

— 11 — FREGATE ISLAND PRIVATE

SEYCHELLES

Fregate

OCEAN TEMPLE

Four degrees south of the equator

◆ TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

Of all the exclusive private islands in the Seychelles this one has the most breathtaking natural beauty.



This little speck of granite is one of 115 islands in the Seychelles archipelago, blessed with seven spectacular and secluded beaches where endangered hawksbill turtles climb ashore to nest, and guests can hide away from the world. The 16 villas are built into the slopes of the island and are linked to the harbour and

restaurant by forest trails. Each villa has a private infinity pool, a rainforest shower, unlimited privacy and views over the Indian Ocean.

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Rates start from €3,200 / US\$3,590 a night in a villa, all-inclusive, including buggy and activities.

— 12 — HILTON SEYCHELLES NORTHOLME RESORT & SPA

SEYCHELLES

Glacis
Mahé Island

CREOLEAN
WRITER'S DEN

◆ TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

This is the real Seychelles where you can meet the locals on white beaches and still stay in style.



The grande dame of the Seychelles is the Northolme Resort & Spa, where James Bond author Ian Fleming wrote a few of his bestsellers and enjoyed the local Mahé vibe while bathing in luxury and comfort. Northolme is adults-only (+13-years-old), so it is blissfully quiet and surrounded by rocks and huge granite boulders seen from the 56 treehouse-style villas that

all look out over the Indian Ocean. Some villas have large infinity pools, and all are decorated in a warm, Creolen style with lots of dark wood and bright-coloured accents.

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Rates start from €350 / US\$390 a night with breakfast.

— 13 — BABYLONSTOREN

SOUTH AFRICA

Winelands
Groot Drakenstein Valley

CAPE TOWN
FARM CHIC HOTEL

◆ TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

Because you experience the essence of the oldest Cape Dutch farm in the Winelands.



Babylonstoren feels like a never-ending oasis in the middle of a spectacular valley with the Simonsberg, Du Toitskloof and Franschhoek mountains as a majestic backdrop. This 200-hectare (500-acre) farm dates back to 1692 and features an impressive fruit, herb and vegetable garden next to a cool rural hotel and spa. Some of the old farm buildings have been transformed into sophisticated hotel

rooms and suites. Housed in the homestead's original cowshed, Babel is the laid-back, yet chic bistro serving simple dishes with local ingredients, in a setting that is a wonderful blend of Cape Dutch architecture and contemporary decor.

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Rates start from €420 / US\$470 per night in B&B with extra amenities in the room.







— 14 — LEKKERWATER BEACH LODGE

SOUTH AFRICA

Western Cape
De Hoop Nature Reserve

BEACHFRONT
HIDEAWAY

◆ TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE
You will have the Indian Ocean all to yourself.



Lekkerwater means ‘good water’ in Afrikaans and this is exactly what you will get when you drive three-and-a-half hours from Cape Town to this very remote corner of De Hoop Nature Reserve. There seems to be hardly another living soul in this protected stretch of marine reserve, where Fynbos vegetation dominates the spectacular views. There are only seven rooms along a 6-kilometre (4-mile)

stretch of private beach where whales and dolphins can be spotted during the winter season. Lekkerwater is South Africa’s ultimate, secret beach getaway, where you won’t have to share the ocean with anyone else.

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Rates start from €180 / US\$200 per person,
all-inclusive.



— 15 — PHINDA VLEI LODGE

SOUTH AFRICA

Phinda Private Game
Reserve

KwaZulu-Natal

A STYLISH HOME
IN THE BUSH

◆ TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

This cool safari-chic style is the new trend in the African bush.



Phinda Private Game Reserve is located in the lush Zululand district, sandwiched between Mkuze Game Reserve and iSimangaliso Wetland Park with over 14,000 hectares (246,000 acres) of prime conservation land with seven different ecosystems and the Big Five roaming around freely. The newly renovated Phinda Vlei Lodge feels like a chic homestead, albeit in the middle of the bush. The lush decor with lots of dark

wood, eye-catching wallpaper with swaying palm trees, velvety green sofas and colonial-style furniture all give the camp a very intimate vintage look. After a long game drive there's a private plunge pool next to each of the six thatched suites and you can relax in a huge bathtub or a majestic four-poster bed.

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Rates start from €640 / US\$720 per person per night, all-inclusive.





