



A-list hotels

Hoping to spend some time away from it all? We look at four celebrity-owned hotels that each offer superb rest and relaxation – from the best in the business

The past year has been more turbulent than a flight over the Himalayas, but with global restrictions gradually loosening, now is the time to book a restorative break.

The question, of course, is what makes the perfect break? If there is anyone who understands

Above: The Palazzo Margherita courtyard in Bernalda, southern Italy is a centrepiece in the luxury Hideaways hotel group, owned by the Coppola family with detailed palatial rooms

what's important, it is people who have regular exposure to the public eye, which is why resorts by well-known names are the perfect places to start your search.

ITALY

Those looking for elegance and glamour combined with the warmth of a private home will find it difficult to resist the Palazzo Margherita in southern Italy. The palazzo was built in 1892 in Bernalda, a charming small hilltop town that was the birthplace of Agostino Coppola, Francis Ford

Coppola's grandfather. It was this link to his family that led the acclaimed film director to acquire the palazzo in 2005.

Completely restored in collaboration with French designer Jacques Grange and the Coppola family, Palazzo Margherita offers a luxurious yet authentic Italian experience, with vast bedrooms, ornate reception rooms and an inner courtyard opening onto private gardens and a swimming pool. Guests can also make use of a screening room, several bars and places to eat (include within the kitchen), or enjoy cookery classes, massages or hire bikes to explore the picturesque countryside, historic towns and sandy coastline nearby. thefamilycoppolahideaways.com/en/palazzo-margherita

UNITED STATES

There is more history to be found at the Mission Ranch Hotel in

Carmel, California, USA, a small town famed for its rich artistic heritage. The Mission Ranch dates from the 1800s and is set on 22 acres with spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean. In 1986, it was rescued from demolition by actor Clint Eastwood, a long-time Carmel resident and former mayor of the town. Sympathetically restored, it is now a resort with a variety of accommodation options, from the rustic Bunkhouse Cottage to the Meadowview rooms with whirlpool tubs, fireplaces and private patios or balconies. Guests can enjoy American cuisine in a converted barn, then head to the tennis and fitness club within the resort, where there is the option to take lessons with USPTA tennis pro Jeff Gillette – or they can opt for a slower pace and explore the galleries and shops of the town, or simply watch sheep peacefully grazing in the surrounding meadows.

missionranchcarmel.com



AUSTRALIA

For relaxation and a focus on pampering, the multi-awarding winning Gaia Resort & Spa is hard to beat. The wellness retreat was founded in 2005, the shared dream of actress Olivia Newton-John and partners Gregg Cave, Ruth Kalnin and Warwick Evans.

"For me, Gaia provides a spiritual environment to relax and rejuvenate," says Newton-John. "A place of heart to reconnect with the land and yourself." Nestled in the lush, sub-tropical Byron Bay region, the 25-acre

property has a day spa, heated salt-water swimming pool, tennis court, hot-tub spa, sauna, steam room and its own organic garden. Along with exceptional service and organic cuisine, there is a dedicated focus on tailored healing treatments in a safe and warm environment. Guests can plan a retreat that works on a personal level – whether that is active and energetic, tranquil and serene, or a combination, with choices including fitness activities, Tai Chi and art classes. gaiaretreat.com.au

FIJI

If, however, you are the type of person who craves the gentle lapping of waves on a tropical shore, Namale Resort in Fiji offers space to connect with nature, the people you love and, most importantly, yourself.

Namale was founded by Tony Robbins, the renowned life and business strategist, *New York Times* best-selling author, entrepreneur and philanthropist, when he was just 29. Tony had been searching for a location to build a home that would allow him to escape. He came across a coconut farm for sale in Fiji where he built his home, homes for family and friends, and resort-like amenities. When he completed his paradise-within-a-

Above: Poolside at Gaia – the Byron Bay hotel and spa owned by Olivia Newton-John. **Above left:** Stay in a Fijian bure overlooking the ocean at Namale. **Right:** Clint Eastwood is the owner of the Mission Ranch in Carmel, USA

