

DEPARTURES

——— Hotels ———

15 Independently Owned Boutique Hotels in the US That Set the Standard for Luxury



One more way to shop small, all year-round.

By Maya Kachroo-Levine on January 25, 2021

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What is a [boutique hotel](#)? In the [hospitality industry](#), a boutique hotel is really a catch-all term for a small hotel. But defining a small hotel can often refer to small-scale ownership, which is why we set out to find the most luxurious independently owned hotels in America. With [shopping small](#) and supporting independent businesses top of mind this year, we don't want to lose sight of the fact that [independently owned hotels](#) are, in fact, [small businesses](#), too. So, here, 15 of the [chicest](#), most artistic boutique hotels in the U.S.—all of which are a labor of love for their [small business owners](#).

Dive Palm Springs, California



Sultry French Riviera meets bright, airy Palm Springs décor at this motel turned luxury inn. Off the main Palm Springs drag, [Dive Palm Springs](#) has a heated pool, 11 gorgeous rooms, a secret, velvet-covered bar, and a kitchen serving terrific made-to-order French *crêpes*. Co-owner Dale Fox approached co-owner Abdi Manavi about a Palm Springs venture, and while Manavi was keen on opening a property in the south of France, they struck a compromise: Cap-Ferrat vibes in Palm Springs.

Castle Hot Springs, Arizona



Mike Watts owns [Castle Hot Springs](#), an [American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts](#) property well on its way to becoming the next Amangiri. Home to three pristine, fresh-water hot springs, a via ferrata course so even novice climbers can scale mountains, and freestanding suites with al fresco soaking tubs, this property is pure luxury. The food and beverage program isn't that of your everyday boutique hotel—this all-inclusive serves five-course meals every night with ingredients sourced from the on-site organic farm and has a terrific farm-fresh cocktail program.

Inns of Aurora, New York



Owned by Pleasant T. Rowland, the founder of American Girl, [Inns of Aurora](#) is really five lavishly decorated houses that come together to make one boutique hotel. Set on Cayuga Lake in the middle of the Finger Lakes wine region, guests can stay at their newest house, Zabriskie, which is home to a *magique* double sitting room clad in blue furnishings. Inns of Aurora has been known for their remarkable Ayurvedic wellness practices, programmed by their in-house director of serenity, and is set to debut their long-awaited Aurora Spa this year.

Washington School House Hotel, Utah



An intimate and utterly charming 12-room retreat in Park City, [Washington School House Hotel](#) has stood since 1889 and is now independently owned by Marcy Holthus. The bones of the property are exquisite—oak floors and marble soaking tubs—as are the chic modern touches, like the outdoor pool and spa and [après-ski lounge](#).

CIVANA Wellness Resort & Spa, Arizona



CIVANA offers an opulent wellness experience and a carefree environment—which is particularly fitting seeing as it’s located in Carefree, Arizona. Co-owners Adam Ross and Marc Skalla both had exceptional experiences at resorts like Miraval and Canyon Ranch and set out to create their own wellness resort. The property, which has an exquisite culinary program focusing on local produce, top-notch fitness and wellness programming, and a next-level spa equipped with a hydrotherapy experience and flanked by mountain vistas, is the result. CIVANA, which feels like a start-up in that every member of the staff is putting in 110% to make guests happy, has a resident astrologer and a host of other impressive new-age wellness opportunities.

The William Vale, New York



A chic boutique hotel in Williamsburg, Brooklyn owned by Zelig Weiss, [The William Vale](#) is home to a rooftop bar, hotel rooms overlooking the water and Manhattan, and distinctive local art. The “homegrown” enterprise feels like a hip Brooklyn hotel through and through, from the creatives hanging in the lobby and dining at [Leuca](#) to the vibrant modern art adorning the common spaces and guest rooms.

Resort at Paws Up, Montana



Owned by the Lipson family since the '90s, [Resort at Paws Up](#) is independently owned yet not what you'd consider a traditional boutique hotel. The Montana property, which sits on 37,000 acres and 10 miles of Blackfoot River, specializes in ultra-luxe wilderness vacations. Resort at Paws Up has over-the-top cabins and glamping-style accommodations, and will expand to "tree houses" this year, too.

Troutbeck, New York



Owned by Anthony Champalimaud, [Troutbeck](#) is a [Hudson Valley](#) boutique enclave with farm-to-table dining from a widely acclaimed chef, wellness programming at The Barns, a brand new facility as of 2020, and guestrooms with mod furnishings. From sunrise yoga to acupuncture to sprawling, lush grounds, Troutbeck is everything you'd imagine for an independent luxury hotel.

Malibu Beach Inn, California



[Malibu Beach Inn](#), a 47-room boutique hotel on Malibu's Carbon Beach, is an exclusive retreat home to Carbon Beach Club restaurant and a privately owned shoreline. Guests looking for that "lifestyles of the rich and famous" Malibu experience can book a spa suite with an ocean view and spend their days taking the sun on the so-called "Billionaire's Beach" and sipping cocktails al fresco.

Camp Wandawega, Wisconsin



Privately owned by a couple based in Chicago, Tereasa Surratt and David Hernandez, the owners personal connection to this glamping-style resort runs deep: Hernandez actually went to camp here as a kid. Now a hip, rustic-chic escape (think: rich chestnut furnishings and custom outdoors, Yeti-esque paraphernalia), at [Camp Wandawega](#) you'll find docks leading out to the sparkling lake and every wilderness activity imaginable here. It's a glamping-meets-boutique-hotel retreat, in the middle of southern Wisconsin on a "lake you've never heard of."

The Betsy Hotel, Florida



[The Betsy Hotel South Beach](#) is a testament to the epic art scene in Miami. There's plenty of South Beach glam at this boutique hotel—owned by Jonathan Plutzik and Lesley Goldwasser Plutzik—like the rooftop pool looking over the glistening water. Nonetheless, there's indie accents, too, like the 130 walnut-lined guest rooms decorated with art poached from the owners' private collection.

The Jefferson, Washington D.C.



The Jefferson Hotel, an [American Express Fine Hotel & Resorts](#) property, is owned by the Millstein family and has a longstanding legacy, with design that dates back to the 1700s. The boutique hotel that today inhabits the *beaux arts* building has a phenomenal cocktail bar, The Quill, and opulent suites with views of the capital's most noteworthy monuments.

The Chanler at Cliff Walk, Rhode Island



[The Chanler at Cliff Walk](#) is one of the most iconic hotels in Newport, Rhode Island. It's also independently owned by Lani Shufelt. The Chanler is known for their fine dining at [Cara](#), majestic coastal views, and ocean and garden villa accommodations. Come for the historical charm of staying among the Newport mansions, stay for the modern elegance and the serenity that washes over you when you wake up to a view of the ocean.

The Ivy Hotel, Maryland



[The Ivy Hotel](#), owned by Sylvia and Eddie Brown, is a Baltimore mansion turned boutique hotel that exudes a romantic, city-chic energy. With only 18 rooms and suites, a beautiful garden, and a new American bistro, Magdalena, this creative hotel will make you feel right at home. You'll love the suites' décor and gas fireplaces almost as much as you'll love having your coffee on the tea light-lined patio in the morning.

The Bristol Hotel, Virginia



[The Bristol Hotel](#) really feels like a boutique hotel in Brooklyn—but it’s in Bristol, Virginia. The hotel, owned by Marcus McCall, has a rooftop bar, great eats at Vivian’s Table, and 65 “classic contemporary” rooms. The pet-friendly hotel boasts views of the Appalachian Mountains and sits on Birthplace of Country Music Way.

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