rans, a piano bar, and a cigar lounge. **The look:** Unobtrusively neutral with accents in cardinal red and paisley nods to tradition (silk embroidery, mother-of-pearl inlay). The diverse artwork is commissioned through a program supporting contemporary Indian artists. At night, the reflecting pool is lit by torches that seem to float upon the water. **The experience:** Located in the wealthy commercial district of Gurgaon, which is home to both the international and domestic airports, the hotel is an excellent choice for business travelers. Butler service and spa treatments are round the clock, and the 24-hour fitness center has a 55-meter outdoor heated pool. Amaranta serves fresh crab and lobster from Indian waters. **If only...** the service were more consistent. **The room to book:** A fourth-floor Premier room for maximum privacy and an expansive view, or a Premier suite with a candlelit private pool (61-134-245-1234; oberholzhotels.com; doubles from $640).

**Leela Palace, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi**

**The species:** An opulent new 260-room high-rise in New Delhi’s diplomatic district. **The look:** Over-the-top française méhara jà luxe—double-height reception rooms hung with massive chandeliers and filled with gilded furniture, the couches plumped with elaborately brocaded pillows, tables laden with vast urns of flowers, and piccolo variations of the same theme through the foyers and guest rooms. **The experience:** The Leela esotets you with a practiced hand from the moment you step into the limo sent to meet you at the airport—chilled towels, ice water, a bejeweled sitar sound track... of course. Rooms are appointed just so for cocooning comfort, afternoom tea is accompanied by a string trio, and dining options range broadly. Choose among ca-

**INDONESIA**

**W Retreat & Spa, Seminyak, Bali**

**The species:** A five-story, 237-unit hotel built around a lagoon pool on one of the best stretches of the Seminyak shoreline; 76 rooms in the main wing face the sea. The prime location is within walking distance of many of the island’s best new restaurants on booming Jalan Petitenget. **The look:** Futuristic—more South Beach than Balinese village—with an emphasis on natural woods and gray volcanic stone. The spa is an architectural tour de force, with rounded corners, recessed blue lighting, and the aura of an elegant spaceship. **The experience:** The opera begins with a magical voyage: The wide, breezy lobby has a wall of handblown glass and takes in a panoramic view of the sea and Bali’s rugged southern peninsula. Rooms come with Bose surround-sound home cinema, 350-sheet-count W signature bedding, and walk-in showers that are big enough for two. Personal trainers are available at the well-equipped gym, and free yoga classes are led daily in the adjoining garden. The haute-Asian cuisine, though pricey, rivals Bali’s best. North Americans and young

**ARCHITECTURE**

**The experts:** Peter Stamborg and Paul Allerst, architects and interior designers. Thé Saguaro (see page 122).

**Signature style:** Brighter is better. With their punchy paint jobs and clever designs, the duo have transformed museums, showrooms, and Park Avenue princesses’ pads.

**WHAT’S NEXT IN HOTEL ARCHITECTURE**

- **Color explosions** Post-October there was an unrelenting tendency toward all things neutral: whites, beiges. But now that we’re a little removed from it, it’s time for optimism—and color. The standard hotel room has always been neutral, with color added through two pieces of art. Look for those proportions to change over the next year: Think bright rooms with black-and-white art instead.

- **Big bathrooms** “Your hotel room should be a bathroom.” No conveyer belts to be fast-tracked through the bathroom stocked with Irish sea-weed-derived Voya amenities and a hidden mini-fridge filled with gra- sitic sandwiches (elderflower soda, anyone?). Fred Commander’s fancied country dishes, like phyllo-wrapped local pheasant with chive and elderberries, are paired with wines from a well-stocked cellar. If only... the spa were better. It’s just some treatment rooms, and the services are only okay.

**The room to book:** The Lady Caroline’s Coiste Room, where the lady of the manor once slept. It’s done in beige and powder blue, with a rococo ceiling and a sunlit staircase through high easterly windows (353-577-5858; ballyf.inn.com; doubles, $1,240).

**IRELAND**

**Ballyfin, County Laois**

**The species:** A 15-room country retreat on a Georgian estate in Laois (pronounced leesh), an hour and a half from Dublin. **The look:** Eighteenth-century elegance; oil paintings of the former lords and ladies of the house, tufted banquettes, glistening chandeliers, elaborate cornices and friezes, and a secret door that leads to a glass conservatory decorated in greeno-Roman stat-

ekts. **The experience:** Situated on 600-emerald-green acres, Ballyfin embodies every Irish cliché, from a lake surrounded by mystical thickets to a mossy stone tower for climbing. Each guest is met by a crew of country butlers lined up on the manor steps, then whisked into a grand, golden dining room, where lunch (Irish salmon baked in a pas-

dy crust, soup made with tomatoes from the garden out back) is served by a snappily dressed gargo.

The afternoon might be filled with a long walk (parasol optional), or boatfailing, fishing, or horseback rid-

in the grounds. And then there’s cocktail hour, when fur-
clad ladies take their first sips of prose-

c in a library stocked with antique and modern tomes. The large rooms are period, but not obviously so: Their sitting areas might be adorned in 1700s-era lamps, plates, and paintings, with a floral valance above the bed, but there’s that bathroom stocked with Irish sea-weed-derived Voya amenities and a hidden mini-fridge filled with gra-
tic sandwiches (elderflower soda, anyone?). Fred Commander’s fancied country dishes, like phyllo-wrapped local pheasant with chive and elderberries, are paired with wines from a well-stocked cellar. If only... the spa were better. It’s just some treatment rooms, and the services are only okay.

**The room to book:** The Lady Caroline’s Coiste Room, where the lady of the manor once slept. It’s done in beige and powder blue, with a rococo ceiling and a sunlit staircase through high easterly windows (353-577-5858; ballyf.inn.com; doubles, $1,240).

**ISRAEL**

**Beresheet Hotel, Negev Desert**

**The species:** A 111-room new build on the rim of the Ramon

**Photography by Shawn Baldwin**
HOT LIST

121 BEST NEW HOTELS IN THE WORLD
(INCLUDING 49 UNDER $300)

PLUS...

20 SIZZLING RESTAURANTS
35 SYBARITIC SPAS

AND...

HIPPEST LONDON
(Edgy Pubs, Clubs, Art, Food)

ULTIMATE NEW ZEALAND
(Dream Lodges, Meals, Adventures)

TANTALIZING TANGIER
(Cool Shops, Souks, Scenes)