

# TRAVEL+ LEISURE

## THE HOTELS ISSUE

Insider's Rome  
Stay, Eat, Shop, Stroll

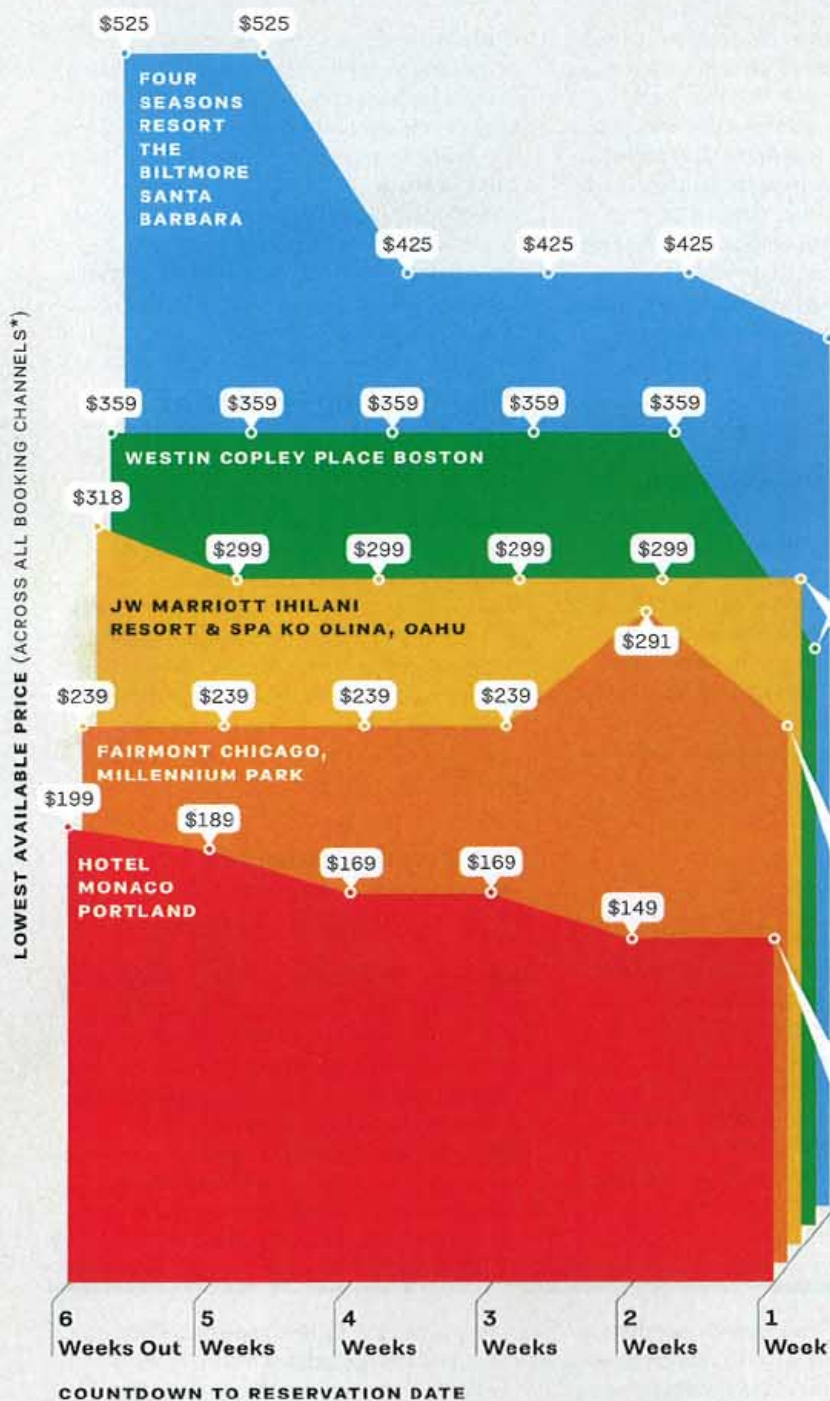
IT  
LIST

T+L Picks Our  
Favorite New Hotels

# Hotel Handbook

## GETTING THE BEST ROOM RATE

What you pay for your hotel depends on when—and how—you book. We tested seven methods (from online travel agents and aggregators to the hotels' own reservation channels) on five different U.S. hotels over a six-week period. The lessons learned? Always shop around, and waiting is (usually) worth it.



### The Takeaway

#### FINAL PRICE \$395

True to its word, Four Seasons matched rates on third-party websites—and even beat them. Three weeks out, the hotel yielded a rate \$70 lower than anywhere else.

#### FINAL PRICE \$260

After five weeks of near-consistent rates everywhere, all third-party sites dropped by \$100—a full \$70 less than what the hotels' toll-free reservation numbers offered.

#### FINAL PRICE \$299

Six weeks out, Expedia and Kayak offered \$80 less than all other channels. But we're glad we waited. A week later, prices dropped to \$299 across the board.

#### FINAL PRICE \$239

Aggregators had the better rates in the early weeks, but in the end (after a brief spike), prices on all channels ended up here.

#### FINAL PRICE \$149

Rates dropped in small increments across all booking outlets, eventually landing at \$50 less than the original price.

\*Booking methods included Expedia, Kayak, Priceline, and Hotels.com, as well as the hotel's own website, toll-free number, and front desk.

## The Wi-Fi Index

T+L crunched the numbers to determine the average daily cost of Wi-Fi at luxury hotels<sup>1</sup> in 10 major U.S. destinations.

Las Vegas **\$23.50<sup>1</sup>**

New York **\$15.71**

San Francisco **\$15.71**

Maui **\$15.60**

Miami **\$14.98**

Scottsdale **\$14.96**

Los Angeles **\$13.71**








Washington, D.C. **\$13.50**

Chicago **\$12.21**

Dallas **\$10.96**

<sup>1</sup>Based on a survey of four top-tier hotels in each city. <sup>2</sup>Mandatory resort fee (Wi-Fi included).

## Spin-off Brands Big-name chains are continuing to embrace the boutique trend. Expect to see more of these design-inspired properties cropping up around the world, especially in the U.S. and Asia.

	EXISTING PROPERTIES	UPCOMING	BACKGROUND	STANDOUT FEATURES
<b>Marriott Edition</b> 	Istanbul	Abu Dhabi; Gurgaon, India; London; Los Angeles; Miami Beach; New York	The mega-chain partnered with Ian Schrager in 2008 to bring boutique cachet to the brand. The rollout was slowed by the recession, but at last has six projects on three continents in the works.	Über-urban settings: Manhattan's <b>Clock Tower</b> building will house the brand's first New York property. The Abu Dhabi Edition will be located in the city's marina.
<b>Sofitel Luxury Hotels</b> <b>Sofitel So</b> 	Bangkok, Mauritius	Mumbai, Singapore	Born in 2010, So revolves around a "modern chic" aesthetic in contrast to the French luxury chain's more traditional properties.	Fashion heavyweights have a hand in So's look: guests at the Mauritius property sun themselves on <b>Kenzo Takada-designed beach towels</b> .
<b>Taj Hotels Resorts &amp; Palaces</b> <b>Vivanta by Taj</b> 	Two dozen across India, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka	Taj is eyeing development in Africa, China, and the Middle East	If Taj symbolizes India's stately colonial past, Vivanta is all about its breakneck, cyber-fused development. The work/play brand is gaining a foothold in boomtowns such as Bangalore and resort destinations in Kerala and Karnataka.	Youthful, playful touches appeal to India's emerging techie class: pet services, <b>limos with video games</b> , and anytime dining with wellness menu items are on offer.
<b>Hyatt Andaz</b> 	New York; L.A.; London; Napa, Calif.; San Diego; Savannah, Ga.; and Shanghai	Amsterdam; Costa Rica; Delhi; Jaipur; Maui; Sanya, China; and Turks and Caicos	The brand distinguishes itself by emphasizing culture and creativity, most notably with the Andaz Salon, an in-house series of food, fashion, and art shows.	Recent Salon events include free tax filing from its "accountant in residence" to guests staying in the second week of April at Andaz Wall Street and a pop-up <b>vintage-clothing shop</b> at the London property.
<b>InterContinental Hotels Group</b> <b>Hotel Indigo</b> 	More than three dozen in the Americas, Asia, and Europe	Fifty-nine hotels worldwide, including in Bangkok; Guadalajara, Mexico; and Madrid	InterContinental created Indigo to give guests a sense of place they wouldn't otherwise get staying at their sister brand, Holiday Inn. Murals inspired by neighborhood scenes grace the lobbies, and restaurant menus include local cuisine.	Seeking to give grab-and-go dining some gourmet cred, InterContinental is testing out a <b>self-serve wine bar</b> and locavore options at its Atlanta property.
<b>Carlson Rezidor Radisson Blu</b> 	Dozens worldwide, from Australia to Zambia	Minneapolis	Carlson Rezidor retired the Radisson SAS name and redubbed its upscale hotels Blu, giving them a more modern look. The first U.S. property opened in Chicago in November.	At the new Chicago property, located in the undulating Aqua Tower, there are two guest-room styles: the dark and sultry Mansion House theme or the airy and bright <b>Naturally Cool décor</b> .
<b>Wyndham Hotel Group</b> <b>Tryp by Wyndham</b> 	More than 90 locations in Europe and the Americas	Bogotá, Colombia; Panama City	Wyndham acquired the brand from Spain-based Meliá Hotels International, adding modern furnishings and social spaces. The first U.S. Tryp opened in New York City in February.	At the new Manhattan location, guests can mingle virtually via Tryp's social network, LobbyFriend, and then meet up in real life at the <b>tapas bar</b> .