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GOLD LIST

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EUROPE

Fifteen of these 140 Gold List and 19 Reserve properties—including an inn in Provence, a palace in Venice, and a golfing mecca in Scotland—secure perfect Location scores, so finding a room with a view is a breeze

AUSTRIA

Hotel Goldener Hirsch, Salzburg

☉84.1 Ⓐ92.0 🍷86.4 🍷95.5 🍷86.0 **88.8**

Set among fifteenth-century buildings in the Salzburg Festival District, this “small and homey inn”—formerly run by an Austrian countess—is replete with regional art and antiques. Individually designed rooms have local antiques; accommodations in the Festival Wing were recently remodeled and have bathrooms with handmade Italian tiles. Common areas come with high ceilings and antlers. For local staples like Nürnberger sausages with sauerkraut, visit the “pub-like” Restaurant Herzl.

\$\$\$; 69 rooms; 43-662-80840; starwood.com.

Hotel Sacher, Salzburg

☉82.7 Ⓐ88.5 🍷83.0 🍷92.5

🍷84.3 **86.2**

This late-1800s hotel near the Salzach River affords “impressive views of the Old Town”—not the least from the Roter Salon, which serves regional and international cuisine. Rooms combine original paintings, antiques, and silk wallpaper with modern-day amenities such as air-conditioning and Internet service. “The concierge went the extra mile to get us tickets for a sold-out opera.”

\$\$\$; 116 rooms; 43-662-889770; sacher.com.

Hotel Schloss Fuschl, Salzburg

☉79.2 Ⓐ82.6 🍷83.3 🍷91.7 🍷87.5

🍷83.3 **84.6**

This lakefront castle east of Salzburg finished a refurbishment in July 2006, adding a spa to the annex. Tower suites in Renaissance, Empire, Baroque, or Biedermeier styles have new bathrooms and parquet floors. Restaurant Imperial's creations include Alsatian frog's legs with artichokes, and jellied gazpacho with scallops. The wine cellar stocks Bordeaux selections dating from 1900.

\$\$\$; 110 rooms; golf, pool, spa; 43-6229-22530; starwood.com.

Grand Hotel, Vienna

☉92.5 Ⓐ85.0 🍷71.8 🍷90.0

🍷76.9 **83.3**

Opened in 1870, this Belle Epoque grande dame was the headquarters of the International Atomic Energy Agency for many years in the last century. The rooms retain an “old-world and palatial” feel, with rich fabrics and antiques. Though the three restaurants, serving Japanese, Viennese, and French cuisine, “could be better,” the hotel's location a block from the Vienna State Opera draws plaudits.

\$\$\$; 205 rooms; 43-1-515-80-9902; jwhotels.com.

Hotel Bristol, Vienna

☉81.4 Ⓐ84.3 🍷85.0 🍷93.1 🍷84.8 **85.7**

“You can feel the history in the lobby's drapes and furnishings” the moment you enter this 1892 building. Deluxe rooms with antiques, silk wall tapestries, and marble bathrooms have French windows that open onto the Ringstrasse. An illuminated onyx wall creates a private dining niche at Restaurant Korso, which recently added an outdoor terrace.

\$\$\$; 140 rooms; 43-1-51516-0; starwood.com.

Hotel Imperial, Vienna

☉93.1 Ⓐ89.0 🍷83.3 🍷95.9 🍷92.6 **90.8**

This 1860s neoclassical palace near the Opera House was commandeered by Russian authorities after World War II. “Classic yet understated” rooms have silk wall coverings and crystal chandeliers. Restaurant Imperial displays dark-wood paneling, white linens, and high-backed chairs with golden lattice-work and has a pan-European menu. Café Imperial, a quintessential Viennese coffee shop, puts on a “fine breakfast buffet.”

\$\$\$; 138 rooms; 43-1-50110-0; starwood.com.



I'LL DRINK TO THAT

At the Hotel Amigo, in Brussels, those in search of a little something to wet their whistle gravitate toward the red leather stools at the Amigo Bar.

König von Ungarn, Vienna

☉82.6 Ⓐ82.6 🍷72.7 🍷87.0 🍷90.9 **83.2**

This seventeenth-century building with an atrium courtyard is in “a perfect location” near St. Stephen's Cathedral. Rooms are individually decorated, and turnaround service includes “a different pastry or candy every night.” Mozart lived in a neighboring building that now houses part of The Restaurant, where the menu includes grilled trout with lemon sauce.

\$\$; 33 rooms; 43-1-515-84-0; kvu.at.

Le Méridien, Vienna

☉90.3 Ⓐ90.0 🍷65.5 🍷96.7 🍷93.3 **87.3**

At this onetime apartment block on the Ringstrasse, modern, parquet-floor rooms in shades of olive, blue,

and pink are minimalist “but don't sacrifice functionality or comfort for style.” The Shambala Bar, with sleek lighting and seating, draws Vienna's night owls; the streetside Café Boulevard serves coffee and pastries. Front-desk staff are “very professional and very prompt.”

\$\$; 294 rooms; pool; 43-1-588-90-900; starwood.com.

BELGIUM

Hotel Die Swaene, Bruges

☉75.9 Ⓐ83.3 🍷86.7 🍷93.1 🍷79.3 **83.7**

This small “high-class joint” set along a canal is “a two-minute walk from the center of town.” “Cozy and elegant rooms” are decorated in rich hues and have canopy beds. Sip a drink while listening to a pianist in the eighteenth-century lounge; the Pergola Kaffee serves bistro fare on a waterfront outdoor terrace.

\$\$; 30 rooms; pool; 32-50-342798; dieswaene.com.

Hotel Amigo, Brussels

☉84.8 Ⓐ82.6 🍷71.4 🍷95.7

🍷87.0 **84.5**

“The best reason to stay is its location” right on Grand Place, within walking distance of the antiques quarter, Le Sablon. This sixteenth-century former prison has rooms in natural hues with red, blue, and green touches, modern furniture, and views of city rooftops; marble bathrooms have framed images of Tintin on the walls. Ristorante Bocconi serves traditional Italian.

\$\$\$; 174 rooms; 32-2-547-4747; roccofortehotels.com.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Four Seasons, Prague

☉90.7 Ⓐ87.6 🍷84.4 🍷94.8

🍷89.5 **89.4**

Combining Renaissance, Baroque, and neo-classic influences, this hotel by the Charles Bridge—it's a fusion of three historic buildings and a new one—“blends seamlessly into the old town.” Interiors feature limestone, marble, and rich woods. Rooms have modern furnishings, large windows with Vltava River views, and bathrooms with soaking tubs. Allegro has views of Prague Castle and serves Italian and Czech dishes.

\$\$\$; 161 rooms; 420-221-427777; fourseasons.com.

ENGLAND

Royal Crescent Hotel, Bath

☉84.1 Ⓐ79.5 🍷79.5 🍷84.4 🍷85.7 **82.6**

\$\$\$; 45 rooms; spa; 44-1225-823333; royalcrescent.co.uk.

Buckland Manor, The Cotswolds

☉100 Ⓐ100 🍷100 🍷100 🍷94.4 **98.9**

The top-scoring property in Europe, this thirteenth-century manor is in the Cotswolds countryside on ten acres of gardens with streams, waterfalls, and “peace everywhere.” Perfect-scoring rooms have a mix of vaulted ceilings, silk curtains, embroidered cushions, and views of gardens or a medieval church. Perfect-scoring service ensures “hospitality at its fin-

Key to Symbols ☉Rooms ⒶService 🍷Food 📍Location 🍷Design 🍷Activities Scores in red = Overall

✓ = Newcomer ♀ = Condé Nast Traveler 2006 Best Golf Resorts \$ = \$199 or less \$\$ = \$200 to \$299 \$\$\$ = \$300 to \$399 \$\$\$\$ = \$400 or more

Reserve hotels and resorts—properties that do not score high enough to appear on the Gold List but are still worth highlighting—appear in light gray.

\$\$\$\$; 102 rooms; 39-055-27351; roccoforthotels.com.

Westin Excelsior, Florence

●92.9 ●90.6 ●83.7 ●91.8 ●90.1 **89.9**

"I'll never forget the rooms and spectacular location on the river" of this 1927 property, which was created by merging two neighboring hotels. Art, hand-crafted furnishings, and stained glass combined with "marble, marble everywhere" and neoclassic frescoes give rooms in the Empire, Florentine, or Tuscan style "a sense of old-world luxury." Peruse the Italian menu at Il Cestello.

\$\$\$\$; 171 rooms; 39-055-27151; starwood.com.

Helvetia & Bristol Hotel, Florence

●75.0 ●92.9 ●66.7 ●96.4 ●78.6 **82.0**

\$\$\$\$; 67 rooms; 39-055-26651; royaldemeure.com.

Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni, Lake Como

●88.5 ●93.4 ●91.5 ●98.3 ●95.1 ●89.8 **92.8**

You'll "feel like the lake is there just for you." At this nineteenth-century waterfront villa to which two wings have been added, the parklike grounds are "so tranquil and relaxing." Room decor takes in Empire wardrobes, stucco ceilings, and trompe l'oeil paintings. Staff "charm the pants off you." At the poolside Mistral, try Mediterranean dishes, such as sugar-baked turbot with leek sauce, that are "excellent, even if a little pricey compared with the fare at local restaurants."

\$\$\$\$; 81 rooms; pool, spa; 39-031-950215; villaserbelloni.com.

Villa d'Este, Lake Como

●90.1 ●93.7 ●92.8 ●98.2 ●98.2 ●83.5 **92.8**

From the "mesmerizing view" of the lake to the "magnificent grounds—birds are chirping and you can smell honeysuckle in the air"—this sixteenth-century former prince's home is "so magical." Rooms display antique furniture, velvet and silk brocades, and oil paintings; some have balconies. The Veranda restaurant serves Italian cuisine, and after dinner, "there's nothing more romantic than sitting by the lake under the stars."

\$\$\$\$; 154 rooms; tennis, pool, water sports; 39-031-3481; villadeste.it.

Four Seasons, Milan

●93.3 ●88.9 ●91.1 ●93.3 ●91.1 **91.6**

Fifteenth-century design hallmarks such as the Renaissance stonework and the lobby frescoes date from the time when this building—minutes from the fashion district—was a convent. Rooms differ in decor: Some have new parquet floors, others loomed carpets, and many have Murano lamps. Il Teatro's Mediterranean cuisine guarantees "one of the most satisfying meals around."

\$\$\$\$; 118 rooms; 39-02-77088; fourseasons.com.

Hotel Principe di Savoia, Milan

●88.9 ●93.2 ●93.2 ●72.7 ●84.4 **86.5**

"There's nothing understated" about this 1927 neoclassic landmark near La Scala. Rooms in marble, gold, and damask define "highbrow luxury"; 48 new deluxe rooms overlooking the Piazza della Repubblica were unveiled in 2006. Let the "lovely tea sommelier" create the perfect afternoon brew under the glass-domed ceiling of the Giardino d'Inverno.

\$\$\$\$; 401 rooms; spa; 39-02-62301; hotelprincipedisavoia.com.

Le Méridien Gallia, Milan

●87.0 ●82.6 ●69.6 ●91.3 ●78.3 **81.7**

\$\$\$\$; 237 rooms; 39-02-6785716; starwood.com.

Hotel Splendido & Splendido Mare, Portofino

●82.9 ●85.4 ●87.8 ●85.4 ●80.5 **84.4**

A "stunning view" of the Tigullian Gulf draws visitors to this two-building Mediterranean property—one part on a hillside in a former monastery, the other on the lively harbor. Of rooms in pastel shades, the best are "the ones with a balcony and a full sea view." The restaurant, which serves traditional Ligurian cuisine and fresh seafood, "does a good job competing with the local places." Splash around in a heated pool filled with seawater.

\$\$\$\$; 81 rooms; tennis, pool, spa; 39-0185-267801; orient-express.com.

Il San Pietro di Positano, Positano

●97.1 ●91.2 ●97.1 ●97.1 ●94.1 **95.3**

Rooms at this retreat on the Amalfi Coast, with "huge windows and private terraces topped by straw canopies," look onto terraced gardens or the Mediterranean. An elevator descends through the rocks to the "simply divine" private waterfront where guests swim, play tennis, or take the free boat ride to nearby islands. Try Italian dishes that "make you weep with joy."

\$\$\$\$; 62 rooms; tennis, pool, spa, beach; 39-089-875455; ilsanpietro.it.

Le Sirenuse, Positano

●92.3 ●90.9 ●93.9 ●90.9 ●90.9 **91.8**

"It's like staying with family friends" at this cliff-top Moorish palazzo, from which "the sea view is unmatched." Light-filled rooms have Vietri-tiled floors and antiques mixed with contemporary furnishings; some have oil paintings on the ceiling. The candlelit restaurant serves "exquisite Neapolitan cuisine." "Staff go out of their way to make your stay wonderful."

\$\$\$\$; 63 rooms; pool, spa; 39-089-875066; sirenuse.it.

Palazzo Sasso, Ravello

●91.7 ●97.2 ●100 ●97.2 ●97.1 **96.6**

From its perch 1,000 feet above the Tyrrhenian Sea, this twelfth-century villa has "views that have to be seen to be believed." Rooms are decorated with handmade Vietri tiles, eighteenth-century antiques, and brass accessories. The perfect-scoring Rossellinis serves inventive Italian fare, including pigeon. "The breakfasts are spectacular, with lots of fresh fruits, baked goods, and omelets."

\$\$\$\$; 43 rooms; pool, spa; 39-089-818181; palazzosasso.com.

✓ Boscolo Hotel Palace, Rome

●79.3 ●89.7 ●82.8 ●87.9 ●81.0 **84.1**

"Go back in time" at this 1905 hotel characterized by elaborate frescoes and marble lobby floors. The Via Veneto location puts you steps away from the Villa Borghese, "right in the middle of everything." Empire or Italian rooms are "fine enough," with high ceilings, beechwood furnishings, and marble-top desks. Terazza serves classic Italian food.

\$\$\$\$; 94 rooms; pool, spa; 39-06-478719; boscolohotels.com.

Grand Hotel de la Minerve, Rome

●86.4 ●90.9 ●85.0 ●100 ●95.2 **91.6**

This former home of seventeenth-century Portuguese aristocrats has a perfect-scoring location near the Pantheon. Guests are welcomed in "an ornate and airy lobby" before checking in to rooms done in rich blues and reds, with wood-beamed or decoratively painted ceilings. La Cesta serves local and Mediterranean cuisine on the roof garden in summer: "The skyline view is spectacular."

\$\$\$\$; 135 rooms; 39-06-695201; grandhoteldelaminerve.it.

Hotel de Russie, Rome

●83.1 ●88.1 ●83.1 ●93.2 ●91.5 **87.8**

The location of this 1814 hotel near the Spanish Steps "couldn't be better." "Stark, modern, and simple rooms" have neutral tones, thick drapes, and marble mosaic bathrooms. Dine on grilled salmon with spinach and pine nuts at Le Jardin de Russie. In the evening, count butterflies in the garden while sipping a de Russie Martini, accompanied by caviar and live music.

\$\$\$\$; 123 rooms; spa; 39-06-328881; roccoforthotels.com.

Hotel Hassler, Rome

●87.5 ●89.1 ●82.5 ●100 ●89.1 **89.7**

"The views and especially the sunsets are outstanding" at this nineteenth-century hotel atop the Spanish Steps, ergo the perfect Location score. Rooms with Murano chandeliers, parquet floors, and velvet sofas "feel like a rich relative's home." Recently renovated, the rooftop restaurant has Rome as a backdrop for elegant dining. "Staff treat you like you're a VIP."

\$\$\$\$; 98 rooms; 39-06-699340; hotelhassler.com.

✓ Rome Cavalieri Hilton, Rome

●86.2 ●91.4 ●91.2 ●72.4 ●89.7 **86.2**

Located in a park on Rome's highest hill, this newcomer popular with Saudi royalty is "a bit inconvenient if you like to be in the thick of things"—the city center is four miles away. In rooms, contemporary furnishings and amenities mingle with classical standbys of marble and crystal; some have large balconies with Vatican views. "Exceptional staff go above and beyond." La Pergola offers "wonderfully appetizing" French-Italian dishes. \$\$\$\$; 370 rooms; tennis, pool, spa; 39-06-35091; hilton.com.

St. Regis Grand, Rome

●88.6 ●88.6 ●89.7 ●78.6 ●88.2 **86.7**

First opened by Cesar Ritz in 1894, this hotel near Trevi Fountain offers "old-world elegance and opulence": Rooms have marble baths, tapestries, and frescoes. The new e-butler service equips butlers with handheld devices to which guests send requests, such as procuring theater tickets or making spa appointments. Try the suckling pig with pumpkin at Vivendo.

\$\$\$\$; 161 rooms; spa; 39-06-47091; starwood.com.

Westin Excelsior, Rome

●88.7 ●85.2 ●80.6 ●90.0 ●84.5 **85.8**

Located on the Via Veneto, near the boutiques, this 101-year-old grande dame is especially convenient "if you're happy to walk a lot." Rooms are styled differently; some have velvet curtains, gilded furniture, and ceiling frescoes. Recently remodeled, Doney Restaurant serves Mediterranean cuisine in a setting of stone walls and wood furnishings.

\$\$\$\$; 319 rooms; pool; 39-06-47081; starwood.com.

San Domenico Palace, Taormina, Sicily

●90.3 ●87.1 ●87.1 ●93.5 ●90.3 **89.7**

This hotel built around a fifteenth-century monastery retains original details such as white corridors, images of saints, and a choir stall. Accommodations in two wings vary from former monk cells to "bright rooms with Mediterranean vistas." The pool offers "amazing views of Mount Etna." The seasonal Principe Cerami serves local dishes on an outdoor sea-view terrace.

\$\$\$\$; 105 rooms; pool; 39-0942-613111; thi.it.

Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria, Sorrento

●88.6 ●91.2 ●94.3 ●97.1 ●94.3 **93.1**

"When you arrive by boat, you take a private elevator directly from the dock up to the hotel," which consists of three connected Victorian buildings above the Gulf of Naples. Decor includes Louis XVI art, Belle Epoque statues, and eighteenth-century Neapolitan paintings. Rooms have pastel colors and walls with geometric and floral stenciling. Sip a Sorrento Mon Amour cocktail, which includes Cointreau and basil, at Vittoria Bar's terrace overlooking the water. The hotel added a solarium in July 2006.

\$\$\$\$; 98 rooms; pool; 39-081-877-7111; excelsiorvittoria.com.

Hotel Bauer and Bauer Il Palazzo, Venice

●87.7 ●81.5 ●83.1 ●98.5 ●89.2 **88.0**

A favorite of artists and royalty, this nineteenth-century hotel and its sister palazzo are steps from St. Mark's Square. Rooms have Murano chandeliers and vintage furnishings; palazzo rooms overlook the Grand Canal, offering "views that encompass much of what people want to see in Venice." The terrace at the Italian restaurant De Pisis is right over the canal.

\$\$\$\$; 133 rooms; spa; 39-041-520-7022; bauerhotels.com.

Hotel Cipriani, Venice

●85.4 ●91.7 ●93.5 ●95.8 ●93.6 **92.0**

Staff "welcome you by name" at this complex on Giudecca Island, a five-minute ferry ride from St. Mark's Square. The property comprises two buildings with "gorgeous, uniquely decorated rooms" that have trompe l'oeil wall coverings. An Olympic-size pool is the centerpiece of the resort's gardens. Fortuny serves Italian fare beneath domed ceilings or on the outdoor terrace.

\$\$\$\$; 104 rooms; tennis, pool, spa; 39-041-520-7744; orient-express.com.

Hotel Gritti Palace, Venice

●89.9 ●85.4 ●83.1 ●95.5 ●89.9 **88.8**

This sixteenth-century Venetian Gothic palace near the