

NOVEMBER 2014
TRUTH IN TRAVEL

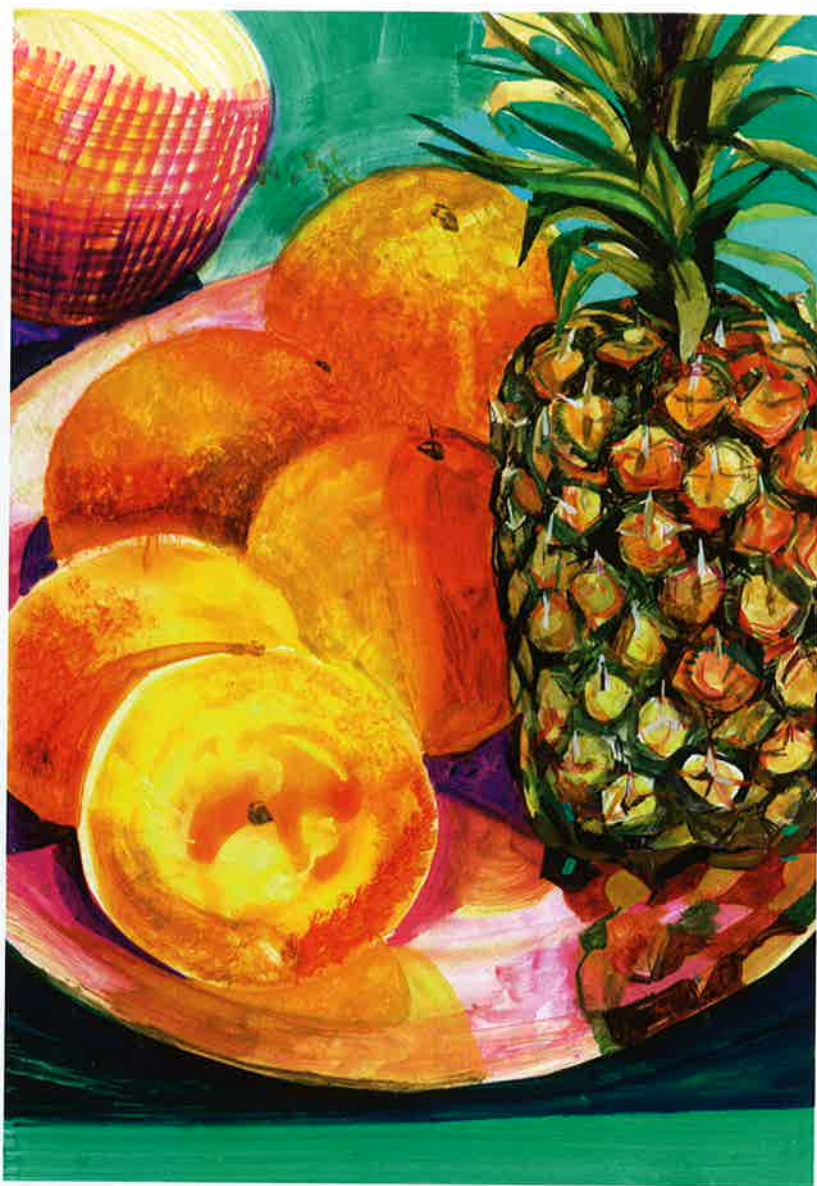
Condé Nast Traveler

**LIVING
THE DREAM
IN THE
MÉDOC**



THE 2014 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

You're a modern-day Magellan—and this is the island you discovered this year.



Palawan

Thirty-odd years ago, you'd have made your friends jealous by telling them about this amazing new island they'd never heard of called Bali. Today, you're bragging about Palawan. The island, in the southwestern Philippines, has turquoise waters, hidden lagoons, gorgeous beaches—and hardly any backpackers or honeymooners. Closer to home, South Carolina's Kiawah has surpassed all-star islands Maui and Kauai. Perhaps it has Charleston to thank: Kiawah's sleepy beaches, maritime forests, and oceanside golf courses are just 21 miles south of your favorite U.S. city.

ONLINE ONLY

The Grass Is Greener

You love your beach with a side of meadow. Particular favorites? Germany's Frisian Islands in the North Sea and Canada's Prince Edward Island.

TOP 20 ISLANDS IN THE WORLD



For this year's complete Readers' Choice Awards list, check out cntraveler.com/rca.

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|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Palawan / Philippines / 88.750 | 7 Santorini & Cyclades / Greece / 84.080 | 14 Bermuda / 82.519 |
| 2 Kiawah Island / South Carolina, USA / 86.574 | 8 St. John / USVI / 83.359 | 15 Sea Island / Georgia, USA / 82.514 |
| 3 Maui / Hawaii, USA / 86.471 | 9 Kangaroo Island / Australia / 82.803 | 16 Oahu / Hawaii, USA / 82.457 |
| 4 Kauai / Hawaii, USA / 85.269 | 10 Big Island / Hawaii, USA / 82.761 | 17 Bali / Indonesia / 82.423 |
| 5 Bazaruto Archipelago / Mozambique / 85.119 | 11 Tasmania / Australia / 82.691 | 18 Moorea / French Polynesia / 82.417 |
| 6 Great Barrier Reef & Whitsunday Islands / Australia / 84.467 | 12 Boracay / Philippines / 82.683 | 19 Maldives / 82.319 |
| | 13 Menorca / Spain / 82.643 | 20 Öland / Sweden / 82.143 |

You'll go anywhere for a fantastic beach resort (even if it's 8,000 miles away).

You're traveling to tropical sanctuaries that aren't just beautiful but remote as well: This year, properties on Bali and the Australian islands of Kangaroo and Lord Howe outranked those in the Caribbean and Mexico. Seems there's no better reward for a long journey than a nearly empty stretch of white sand.



TOP 10 BEACH RESORTS

ASIA

- 1 **The Mulia** / Bali / Indonesia / 98.377
- 2 **Four Seasons Resort Langkawi** / Malaysia / 94.156
- 3 **Hyatt Regency Danang Resort and Spa** / Vietnam / 92.500
- 4 **Amankila** / Bali, Indonesia / 92.086
- 5 **Nam Hai** / Hoi An, Vietnam / 90.931
- 6 **Shangri-La's Boracay Resort & Spa** / Philippines / 90.584
- 7 **JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa** / Thailand / 90.179
- 8 **Victoria Hoi An Beach Resort & Spa** / Vietnam / 89.683
- 9 **Rayavadee** / Krabi, Thailand / 88.285
- 10 **Four Seasons Resort Bali at Jimbaran Bay** / Indonesia / 88.036

MEXICO

- 1 **Viceroy Riviera Maya** / Playa del Carmen / 96.480
- 2 **St. Regis Punta Mita** / 94.793
- 3 **Esperanza** / Cabo San Lucas / 92.547
- 4 **Excellence Playa Mujeres** / 92.483
- 5 **Le Blanc Spa Resort** / Cancún / 91.473
- 6 **Banyan Tree Mayakoba** / 91.181
- 7 **Capella Ixtapa** / 90.694
- 8 **One&Only Palmilla** / San José del Cabo / 90.391
- 9 **Hacienda Encantada** / Cabo San Lucas / 89.912
- 10 **Capella Pedregal** / Cabo San Lucas / 89.823

AUSTRALIA & THE SOUTH PACIFIC

- 1 **Southern Ocean Lodge** / Kangaroo Island, Australia / 97.348
- 2 **Qualia** / Great Barrier Reef, Australia / 96.296
- 3 **St. Regis Bora Bora Resort** / French Polynesia / 92.682
- 4 **Four Seasons Bora Bora** / French Polynesia / 92.611
- 5 **Pullman Port Douglas Sea Temple Resort & Spa** / Australia / 92.045
- 6 **Capella Lodge** / Lord Howe Island / Australia / 90.774
- 7 **Bora Bora Pearl Beach Resort & Spa** / French Polynesia / 89.605
- 8 **Le Taha'a Island Resort & Spa** / Raiatea, French Polynesia / 89.286
- 9 **Hilton Moorea Lagoon Resort and Spa** / French Polynesia / 88.492
- 10 **Lizard Island** / Great Barrier Reef, Australia / 88.265

THE CARIBBEAN

- 1 **Jade Mountain** / St. Lucia / 94.834
- 2 **Guana Island** / BVI / 94.494
- 3 **Palm Island** / St. Vincent and the Grenadines / 93.452
- 4 **Curtain Bluff** / Antigua / 92.815
- 5 **Nisbet Plantation Beach Club** / Nevis / 92.588
- 6 **Ladera** / St. Lucia / 92.379
- 7 **Christopher Hotel** / St. Barts / 91.667
- 8 **Hermitage Bay** / Antigua / 91.578
- 9 **Le Sereno** / St. Barts / 91.468
- 10 **Couples Swept Away** / Negrid / Jamaica / 90.835

40% The percentage of U.S. resorts on this year's list that are on (or next to) a beach.



For this year's complete Readers' Choice Awards list, check out cntraveler.com/rca.

Supreme Ski

You've skied the world's best slopes and discovered the resorts with the most sublime off-piste amenities.

YOUR ULTIMATE STAYS: In the U.S., Telluride's family-friendly Fairmont Heritage Place, Franz Klammer Lodge has two- and three-bedroom residences; farther north you recommend Canada's Four Seasons Resort Whistler and its top-rated spa; and some of you ventured to where winter sports first took off, Badrutt's Palace, in the heart of sophisticated St. Moritz, Switzerland.

The Other Side of Italy

You've already visited Florence, Rome, and Venice—now you're exploring the rest of the country.

YOUR ULTIMATE STAYS: Nothing beats a room with a view, and Italy has a wealth of them: Palazzo Avino in Ravello overlooks the winding roads of the Amalfi Coast; Sicily's monastery-turned-hotel San Domenico Palace has postcard-perfect views of active Mount Etna; and the Belmond Hotel Splendido & Splendido Mare is perched just above Portofino's mega-yacht-dotted harbor.

Ireland's Countryside

Your ideal way to see the isle is meandering through three western counties: Clare, Galway, and Mayo.

YOUR ULTIMATE STAYS: These historic properties let you time travel in style and comfort: Ashford Castle, circa 1228, has archery and clay pigeon shooting; sixteenth-century Dromoland, once an ancient Gaelic stronghold, is renowned for its parkland golf course; relative newcomer Ballynahinch, from the early 1800s, is a prime fly-fishing spot for salmon and trout.

Machu Picchu

Though the Incas were vanquished more than 400 years ago, the lure

of exploring the ruins of their former empire has never been more popular—and you voted 15 Peruvian hotels and resorts onto this year's list to prove it.

YOUR ULTIMATE STAYS: Belmond Hotel Monasterio, a Spanish-built monastery from the late sixteenth century; riverside Belmond Hotel Rio Sagrado, in the Sacred Valley, for visits to Ollantaytambo; and Inkatererra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel for its location—perfectly positioned for trips to the country's fabled 13,800-foot-high ancient citadel.

Wild Cruises

This year, you took to the water for once-in-a-lifetime journeys.

YOUR ULTIMATE STAYS: To explore the Galápagos, you went with Lindblad-National Geographic; to sail Burma's Irrawaddy south to Rangoon, you boarded Viking River Cruises' recently refurbished *Viking Mandalay*; and for crossing the Drake Passage from South America to Antarctica, you loved Grand Circle Cruise Line.

Napa Valley & Sonoma

You rave about Northern California's small-town charm, luxury hotels, and outstanding restaurants and vineyards.

YOUR ULTIMATE STAYS: Thirteen of the region's hotels and resorts received high scores this year, but your undisputed champions are (and have long been) the elegant Napa Valley hideaway Auberge du Soleil and Sonoma's historic MacArthur Place.

The Great Outdoors

There are 58 national parks in the U.S.; Wyoming's Grand Teton was a clear favorite.

YOUR ULTIMATE STAYS: Five nearby properties made the list this year: the Four Seasons Resort Jackson Hole

for its innovative Wild West Academy and Kids Ranch; the eco-friendly Hotel Terra and its organic Chill Spa; ski-in/ski-out, family-centric Teton Mountain Lodge; ultra-sleek, somewhat secluded Amangani, above the Snake River Valley; and the luxurious cabins at Jenny Lake Lodge, surrounded by miles of hiking trails.

Southeast Asia

Cambodia and Thailand are big destinations for travelers seeking ancient history in exotic nature.

YOUR ULTIMATE STAYS: Ten minutes from Angkor Wat, the world's largest religious monument, the Sofitel Angkor Phokeethra Golf and Spa Resort in Siem Reap, Cambodia, was your top pick; and up-close-and-personal elephant bonding comes with tree-house accommodations at Thailand's Four Seasons Tented Camp Golden Triangle in Chiang Rai.

Undiscovered Australia

The Great Barrier Reef is a huge draw (as is Sydney), but now it's all about out-of-the-way islands where you're surrounded by crystal-clear water (and not much else).

YOUR ULTIMATE STAYS: The high-design Southern Ocean Lodge, tucked into the pristine landscape of Kangaroo Island, near Adelaide; Tasmania's futuristic Saffire Freycinet, with beach views; and the wonderfully quiet Capella Lodge on Lorde Howe Island, midway to New Zealand.



METHODOLOGY The Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Survey, begun in 1988, is available through a secure Web site at cntraveler.com/vote. This year's tabulations of the responses were done by Equation Research. Organization: The questionnaire contains lists of candidates in various categories (Cities, Hotels, etc.). Candidates must receive a required minimum number of responses to be eligible for a Readers' Choice Award. Evaluation: Individual candidates are judged on a set of criteria relevant to their category, based on a standard five-point scale: excellent, very good, good, fair, and poor. The mean average of these ratings determines the final score published—a departure from 26 years of calculating only the percentage of excellent and very good ratings. For example, in South Africa, Londolozi's score of 98.958 represents the mean average of ratings it received from all respondents for all criteria relevant to resorts: Rooms, Service, Location, Food/Dining, Design, Activities/Facilities, and Value (new in 2014).