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STAY LIST

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Sense of Place



Clayoquot Wilderness Resort, British Columbia, offers elegant outdoor dining.
 Photo by Clayoquot Wilderness Resort

The hotels on our Stay List 2009 don't just reflect their surroundings—they help define them. What they all have in common is a transcendent vision that goes beyond traditional hotel-keeping. This mindset is what gives these hotels their special sense of place. Make no mistake: You'll sense the vibe at once. Maybe it's the regional architecture that speaks to you. Or a guest room resonating with history. Or local food that not only tastes great but tells a story to boot. After your stay, you'll leave with the kind of insight only soulful places can provide.

To find these hotels, *Traveler* tapped into the collected experiences of veteran journalists, inveterate road warriors, and local experts. They based their nominations on key criteria. Is the hotel engaged with the local community? Does it subscribe to sustainable practices that respect the region? Does it truly capture the spirit of its setting? Further research and detailed questionnaires winnowed hundreds of submissions down to this sweet list of 129 hotels.

There's something for everyone here, from wilderness cabins to urban lairs of luxury—all authentic, purposeful places to enhance your travels. Welcome to Stay List 2009. —*Charles Kulander*



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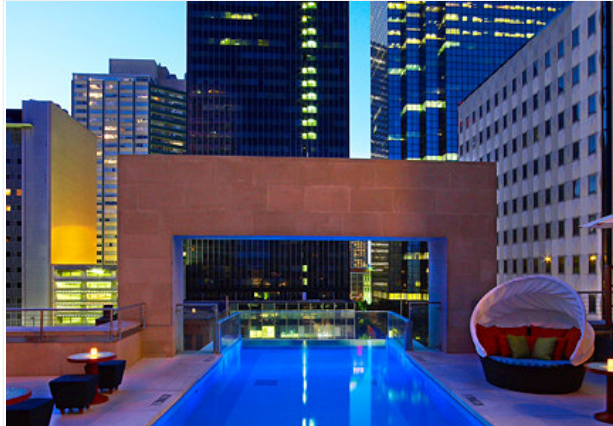
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U.S.A.—Central



The swimming pool at the Joule, Dallas, provides a view from ten stories up.
 Photo courtesy the Joule, a Luxury Collection Hotel

Hotel Sax Chicago, Chicago, Ill.

Draws its vibe from Windy City music scene. Right next to House of Blues, where guests get VIP access. Rooms rock: 42-inch flatscreens, paisley headboards, snakeskin-pattern wingbacks. DJ spins tunes in Louis XIV-style lounge full of red crushed velvet. Close to Loop theater district. 353 rooms; from \$129.

The Talbott Hotel, Chicago, Ill.

A 1927 Gold Coast beauty a block and a half off the Miracle Mile (Michigan Avenue) and near Rush Street dining. Tradition reigns: lots of antique furnishing throughout, snap-to-it room service, larger-than-average rooms (375 square feet) with lithographs. Ahead of the curve with its purchase of wind-energy credits and Green Seal certification. 149 rooms; from \$129.

The Bonaparte Inn, Bonaparte, Iowa

Americana by the Des Moines River. Former glove factory built of local-fired brick and native wood, repurposed as a B&B in keeping with the slow-go villages of Van Buren County (no fast food, not a single stoplight). Antique room furnishings include classic rockers. Breakfast by a warming hearth best followed by a stroll through Bonaparte Riverfront Historic District: pottery works, restored mills. 13 rooms; from \$95.

Circle S Ranch and Country Inn, Lawrence, Kan.

An old plank-sided barn-style place surrounded by rolling hills with grazing bison. Rooms on three floors and a hot tub in the silo. Themed rooms: Cowboy, Celestial, Trail. Hayrides through tallgrass prairie. Run

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