

PREMIER ISSUE

THE DISTINCTIVE LIFE

DISTINCTIVE
COLLECTION

by
**Better
Homes**
and Gardens
REAL ESTATE®

TODAY'S TOP
LUXURY HOME TRENDS

Exciting design directions that are
setting the pace for the future. p.6

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SHERRY CHRIS



On behalf of Better Homes and Gardens® Real Estate, I am pleased to be the first to welcome you to *The Distinctive Life*.

Since 1924, Better Homes & Gardens® has set the standard in stylish living for home connoisseurs across the country. With an unmatched lifestyle heritage, Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate is ideally positioned to deliver on your expectations for the highest levels of service and innovation in the luxury real estate market.

Our luxury offering, Distinctive Collection by Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate®, provides discerning clients the service and market expertise one would expect from a brand whose legacy was built upon a passion for the home.

Offering our wealth of luxury lifestyle knowledge to everyone is the natural next step for Distinctive Collection by Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate. Presented in the pages of this magazine are stories for any individual with an appreciation for upscale living. From high-end interior design to gourmet cuisine to sophisticated leisure, every facet of luxury living is covered in exquisite detail. Additionally, within each edition you will always find the very latest Distinctive Collection homes for sale.

With this inaugural issue, and each issue that follows it, I invite you to discover the very essence of a luxe lifestyle with *The Distinctive Life*.

SHERRY CHRIS
President and CEO
Better Homes & Gardens® Real Estate

DISTINCTIVE
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Presenting the Distinctive Collection by Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate®

LUXURY BLOG

Keep up with the latest trends in Gourmet Cuisine, Interior Design, Life & Leisure and Travel. Visit www.bhgrecollection.com/blog

*today's top
home trends in*
**LUXURY
HOMES**

BY **MAX WILKER**,
Style Director for
Better Homes & Gardens

The luxury home owner is often the earlier adopter for the hottest design trends. With a healthy budget to build or renovate, designers incorporate bold color palettes, the most luxurious of materials and ever-higher degrees of personalization to create homes that are truly unique but livable showcases for the dis-

cerning owner. Luxury homes frequently start tomorrow's top trends for more mainstream houses (think stainless steel appliances and granite counter tops, once the signature look in only the most expensive kitchens). Here are a few of the exciting design directions that are setting the pace for the future:





1. *COLOR TRENDS*

Deep navy is trending heavily right now. It's bold, yet calming when in a matte finish. We see this trend in kitchen cabinetry, on focal walls and in rooms where all four walls and even the ceiling is painted the same dark navy color giving you a space enveloped in a midnight blue sky. This works as a perfect backdrop to lighter wood furniture and bold artwork on the walls. Luxe metallics such as gold and silver pair wonderfully with the navy.

2.

MODERN FARMHOUSE LUXE STYLE

This trending style has hit at all levels of homes. The modern farmhouse luxe style exists at the juncture between old (family antiques, reclaimed wood, handcrafted details) and new (industrial furnishings, contemporary furniture and art). It's a style that can be elegant and upscale, yet comfortable and familiar. This style uses natural wood accents and pairs them in a setting with white and neutral colors, clean lines, and textured fabrics.



3.

STATEMENT LIGHTING

Statement fixtures and pendants continue to be the shining stars of luxury homes. Gone are the days of just one grand fixture in the entryway. Statement lighting in almost every room of the homes, especially kitchens, dining rooms, master bedrooms, and powder rooms. Lighting materials are almost endless in variety, including crystals, capiz shells, silver metal beads, and silk fabrics. Look for lighting trends inspired by midcentury modern styling and crafted from a mix of metals. Pay attention to scale; the fixture's drama is often in how it fills the space, meaning one oversized piece or a grouping of several pendants.

4.

WALLPAPER

Wallpaper has returned as a major fashion statement for the home and is increasing in popularity. From digital prints to textured, 3D wall coverings, this trend is the way to add a bit of “wow factor” to a room. There are so many options available now with oversized prints leading the way. Look for glammed up wall-papers that include metallic inks or Swarovski crystals. These shiny statement makers work well in entryways, dining rooms and powder rooms. For maximum impact, use on every wall or even the ceiling. Wallpaper doesn’t have to be relegated to just the powder room or above a chair rail.





5. *CUSTOM CEILINGS*

Specialty ceilings add unique character to any room of the house. “Builder’s white” is simply no longer the norm. Statement rooms such as the grand foyer, living, or dining rooms, or personal spaces like the master bedroom benefit from this next level of design. There are many options for custom ceilings: vaulted,

exposed beams, coffered, and tray ceilings. Other ceiling trends include cladding a whole ceiling in wood or wallpaper, and bold paint colors.

6.

BLACK WINDOWS & DOOR FRAMES

Goodbye white trim! Black framed windows and doors can add exciting style to spaces. They can set the scene for elegant and traditional homes as well as be dramatic in a luxury modern or industrial-style home. Black window and doors coordinate with just about any other color you put in the room. It's fresh, and modern all at the same time. Plus, when you're inside the home and looking out, black frames tend to disappear to enhance the outside view.



7.

GRAY KITCHENS

Gray kitchen cabinetry is popping up all over the country. The color is not as stark as a black and white palette. It's softer and lends a sophisticated air to a kitchen space. The shade of gray used most often tends to be on the darker side with warmer undertones. Fresh, light-toned cabinets are also beautiful when paired with darker walls or floors to help ground the space. When gray is used in a kitchen, it usually blends two or three shades of gray together with white. Chrome, brushed silver or black hardware can serve as the jewels in the room.

8. *MARBLE BATHS*

This luxurious material is prized for its timeless good looks and stunning variations. Whether it's on shower walls, floors, or countertops, marble continues to be the No. 1 material for bathrooms in luxury homes. It pairs perfectly with chrome fixtures for a classic yet fresh style. Marble bathrooms should be finished with shades of gray or white paint for a dreamy, serene master bathroom.





9. *DRESSING ROOMS*

Dressing rooms are definitely the “room du jour” just as spa bathrooms were 10 years ago. These rooms are designed expressly for the user as they get ready for the day or a big event. His and hers dressing rooms are being filled with amenities such as glamorous chandeliers, flat-panel televisions, refrigerators, cappuccino makers, and luxe furniture. This is the room that homeowners are increasing the budget for when building or renovating.



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10. *OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES*

Outdoor rooms are key to extending living and entertaining spaces. Cover a portion of an outdoor space for “inside” amenities such as flat-panel televisions, integrated sound systems, a fireplace, and a kitchen. Look for lines to be further blurred by using comparable indoor-grade materials and furnishings. Concrete flooring, wood tables and mix-and-

match fabrics are great examples of varying textures and looks. For a seamless transition, match the color palette of the adjacent indoor space. Full walls of windows open to outside entertaining spaces and hide away to let the fresh breeze and guests flow.



ELEVATE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Distinctive Collection by Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate® offers the service and market experience you would expect from a brand whose legacy was built upon a passion for the home. Let us help you find or sell yours – visit bhgrecollection.com.



LUXE SIDE OF LIFE STYLE



how to add **LUXURY** *to your* **HOME**

BY JENNIFER ADAMS
Interior Design Expert

In a perfect world, we would all have a first-class designer on speed dial, ready to add luxury and sophistication to our homes. Of course, in reality, most of us don't have that option. Luckily, there are other ways to achieve the upscale look you love without breaking your wallet.

1.

GIVE EVERY ROOM A FOCAL POINT

Decorating a room to emphasize a focal point is a great way to re-energize the space. While the terminology may sound fancy, a focal point simply refers to a singular spot where upon entering, the eye is immediately drawn. The easiest way to pick a focal point is by high-

lighting an existing architectural detail. Does your family room have a beautiful, old fireplace that's gathering dust? Perfect. Spruce up the structure by giving it a new mantle or brick treatment. Is there a large window that lets in tons of natural light? Consider adding

an interesting bench underneath to highlight its beauty. If you can't find a singular detail to focus on, you can just as easily create one. Show off your artistic skills by painting a piece of art to display in your dining room or invest in a statement mirror for your entryway.

2.

SPLURGE ON FINISHING TOUCHES

Are you ready for a secret that interior designers have known for years? Splurge when it comes to the details. Focus on a few high-end items and buy the best quality you can afford. Replace faucet and drawer-pulls with copper for a modern farmhouse feel. Turn your bathroom into a spa by selecting hotel-quality towels, incense and soaps. Outfit your master bedroom with crisp white sheets and a fluffy down comforter. Buy a cashmere throw and drape it over your couch for luxurious napping. Surprisingly simple things can transform your home and the way you feel within it.



3.

CURATE THE AMBIANCE

When it comes to ambiance, lighting and sound are essential. Use natural lampshades to keep lighting soft and diffused. Consider changing outdated overhead lights with modern, sculptural light fixtures that speak to your decor. If you have overhead lighting in your space, install dimmer switches to allow you to control the brightness. Music can also add a luxe touch. Invest in a quality sound system and consider wiring speakers into the ceiling to keep hardware/wires out of sight.

4.

TURN YOUR BEDROOM INTO A RETREAT

Is there anywhere in the home more fitting for luxury than the bedroom? Down pillows, crisp sheets and a comfortable mattress are staples. If you feel like your bed needs a bit of updating to recapture that luxury feel, but you're working on a budget, opt for some new bedding and a quality mattress topper. What makes a bedroom look like a million dollars are its thoughtful details. Consider adding black-out curtains and mounting your television to the wall for a hotel-quality feel.





5.

ADD PLANTS AND NATURAL ELEMENTS

Adding elements of nature into every room of your home is a surefire way to luxe-up your lifestyle. These accessories instantly change the atmosphere and add that kick your décor needs to feel complete. Orchids are elegant as they continue to bloom in cycles. Use garden pebbles and moss as soil toppers to add even more natural details. A large palm can make

a huge impact when placed in an entryway. If your thumb is far from green and the thought of house plants sends you running, consider adding other natural elements to your home. A vase filled with spindly twigs, or a bowl filled with acorns, river stones or glass, are all wonderful ways to bring a touch of life to your home.



Tips for your CLASSIC CAR RESTORATION

It's part of the American dream. Purchase a classic car that you've always admired. Restore that car to all its original glory. Drive your beautiful car, the engine rumbling your seat, the gears shifting as the light turns green. But that simplified dream state doesn't tell the whole story, and the path to classic car restoration can be a little more complicated. Follow these five tips to ensure you're restoring the right car in the right way.

1. *PLAN YOUR VERSION OF RESTORATION*

Is your goal to restore your classic car to its original glory? This method of restoration focuses on the original ideal of the car and strives to meet that aesthetic. Engine parts, paint and interior colors, the shape and design of the wheels and more are all determined by how the factory handled those decisions.

Or maybe you are looking for a more customized approach to restoration where you want to tweak and change the original design, may-

be to include more horsepower, luxury details like air conditioning, phone docks, and modern speakers. Customizing an old car is different because parts don't have to be as specific and there is room for the upgrades that you want most.

Neither version of classic car restoration is better than another, but having a plan before you even get the car helps to make your later decisions easier.

2. *CHOOSE YOUR CAR CAREFULLY*

Not every old car is easily restored, mechanically or financially, and some of the classics for sale won't be worth as much as the money it will take to restore. Carefully consider why you want to restore an antique on wheels.

Are you doing it for the nostalgia because maybe your father or grandfather drove the same model? Or maybe you're motivated because Steve McQueen looked so cool in his 1968 Mustang GT. Or are you looking for

a different kind of investment to expand your portfolio?

If you are in it for the money, then choose very carefully. Not every old car will be worth as much as the money it takes to restore it. Research the selling prices for fully restored vehicles and how much money a shop would charge for the work. If these numbers skew dramatically in a restoration shop's favor, then pick a different car.

If your primary motivation is nostalgia, either for your father or the legendary Steve McQueen, and if you have the money to spend on a classic car, then you can be less picky about what you choose. Decide on a model and year based on how you feel when you think about sitting behind the wheel. Let that emotion drive you.





3. *LOOK AT THE ENGINE*

You can judge a car's overall health, in part, by looking at the engine. A car that starts and runs, no matter how old or possibly rusty, can dramatically decrease the time, effort and money that a restoration can take. Even if the

engine doesn't turn over or purr, take the time to make sure all the parts of the motor and below the hood are in place. If your goal is an original restoration, having the original parts of the motor can save you and your mechanic

time and money, and if you don't have the original parts be ready to scour resources like Hemmings until you find what you're looking for.

4.

WATCH OUT FOR RUST

A classic car that shows sign of rust could have bigger problems than just the fading color of paint on the exterior. Rust can indicate that the car was mistreated or never protected from the elements. Look for rust in obvious spaces, like on the door panels or in the wheel wells. While some rust damage can be repaired with elbow grease and a sandblaster, that process takes a mechanic's time. And any rusty steel will have to be shaped to fit and replaced.



5.

FIND A RELIABLE RESTORER

If you are skilled under the hood, then you might want to tackle the restoration work yourself. However, if you aren't an expert mechanic, then you can choose to hire out some or all of your classic car restoration to someone who is talented in the field.

If you do choose to hire a private mechanic, then ask for references and pictures. Make certain that he or she has time and the ability

to complete your project. Even if you are only looking for someone to change the paint color to British racing green, still ask for their credentials. A little research can go a long way when it comes to classic car restoration.

Once you've chosen your classic car and nailed down a plan, then let the project begin. In no time at all, your car will be beautifully restored and so ready for you to slip behind the wheel, turn the key and feel the care rumble to life. You'll turn heads when you finish your classic car restoration.



LIFE & LEISURE



must-have ideas for the

BEST HOME THEATER SYSTEM

Why fight traffic, stand in lines or settle for stale popcorn, when you can indulge in the luxury and convenience of an in-home movie theater. With a well-thought-out design, unique touches and the latest technology, you can create an ideal theater space in the comfort of your own home. Soon you'll be watching the latest releases on your very own big screen from comfortable seats with plenty of room to spread out. Read on to see some of the best home theater system ideas before you start planning your ultimate movie-watching space.



WELL DESIGNED

Consider the room where the theater is planned to go before you start designing your in-home theater. Specifics like the room's overall shape, windows, location within the home and more all need to be carefully thought out to achieve the best sound and picture quality.

Rectangular rooms provide the best sound experience, while square rooms can create reverberation. The ideal dimensions for a home theater is 20 feet long and 13 feet wide

with a high ceiling. But if you're converting an existing room, the room size can't always be dictated. Theater rooms should be large enough for several people to sit comfortably. Windows should be easily covered for the dark theater experience.

Consider a room far away from the rest of the house's busy centers. The kitchen and living rooms are typically spaces with the most activity. Sounds of making dinner or discussing the day's events can easily disrupt the flow of

any movie. Likewise, the sound from an action flick could distract from the quiet of a home office. A basement or attic room might be the ideal location for your home theater.

LATEST TECHNOLOGY

Home entertainment technology moves fast, and even the best home theater system is no exception. The latest trends mean that you will experience the best sound and picture, which will make your home theater feel just like the real thing.

Consider using multiple screens. This growing trend is popular for sports fans who watch television in home theaters. Often several televisions are mounted on the wall, and a drop-down projector is lowered when it's movie time. Or sometimes TVs are mounted on different walls of the same room, especially when the space doubles as a party room.

Smart TVs are integrated into your home network and connected to the Internet. This means that viewers can stream movies or events easily, and that apps like Netflix or Hulu are easily accessible. It's also makes your viewing experience interactive by allowing viewers to post to social media while they're watching sporting events or the premier night of their favorite shows.

Hidden, in-wall speakers have been replaced with floor-standing speakers because they produce the best sound. The free-standing model of speaker is also easier to integrate into a home, especially if the theater is being installed in an existing home instead of new construction. Bluetooth technology is able to easily connect speakers to the movie system.





YOUR MOVIE WATCHING OASIS AWAITS

Personalizing your in-home theater makes it feel complete and like a part of your home, plus the furnishings can help provide the best theater experience. Your décor can range from ultra-modern to a classic theater style and everything in-between, but consider the walls, flooring and furniture as you make your design choices.

A dark or neutral color scheme will help create the theater feeling and add to the movie experience on your big screen. DIY Network recommends using flat paint instead of gloss or semi-gloss that can reflect your screen and distract from viewing. Heavy curtains hung over walls or windows can help reduce light and muffle sound; it can also help to decorate walls since framed art with glass might provide glare.

Wall-to-wall carpet with a thick pad in the theater space is also ideal, creating an ambient sound barrier and to help encourage the cozy feeling that you want in a theater.

Consider your seating carefully; part of the appeal of a home theater is the opportunity to enjoy the show in utter comfort. No one is behind you to kick your chair. You can stretch out, recline, snuggle up and make yourself perfectly at home. Genuine leather recliners with cup holders is one popular idea, but don't be restricted by what is typically done. Consider lounge chairs in a variety of fabrics with room to stretch out. Stadium-style seating with oversized couches, or couches with ottomans that can double as a bed are all popular options. Whatever you choose, make sure you have room to put drinks, popcorn or your favorite movie snacks as you watch.

Create the best home theater system in your house with these ideas. All you need is planning and an ideal space to create your own movie-watching oasis, right in the comfort of your own home.



LUXURY TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

you must visit

Unique experiences meet unparalleled beauty in this list of luxury travel destinations from across the globe. With an emphasis on things to do upon arrival, relaxation is only one item on the vacation to-do list. Dining, attractions, adventure and self-care are all important aspects to the top luxury getaways, and Better Homes and Gardens® Real Estate offers a closer look at this year's top travel destinations for luxury seekers.





THE ASILIA HIGHLANDS, TANZANIA

Located on Africa's eastern coast, Tanzania is known for its diverse wildlife and preserves dedicated to native species. Located in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, the Asilia Highlands are remote enough to enjoy privacy and seclusion and wild enough to see amazing biodiversity in unmatched volcanic landscape where Maasai tribes roam the land. The Asilia Highlands offers a glamping experience ideal for luxury travelers who also crave adventure. Canvas-domed suites offer all the ideal home base amenities, like king beds, double showers and panoramic views that look out over the Serengeti. Guests can enjoy an on-site library, a common area emulating the traditional East African campfire experience, and gourmet and organic meals made by on-site chefs.

MALDIVES

If tropical is synonymous with luxury, then the Maldives are the apex of splendor. Located in the Indian Ocean, the collection of islands is known for their blue waters and experiences both above and below the waves like aqua safaris, night snorkeling with whale sharks, windsurfing and more. Como Maalifushi offers spacious overwater suites connected by wooden walkways, and guests can dine on freshly caught seafood and organic vegetables prepared by renown chefs.



PERU

Peru's biodiversity is on display in Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel, a resort that celebrates natural and eco-friendly travel designed to look like an authentic Andean village. Located near the famed Machu Picchu, this resort has been named one of National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World. Inkaterra offers over 300 species of orchids, hundreds of bird species and more than 111 different kinds of butterflies. Guests to Inkaterra stay in their own furnished casitas—or small house—with a thatched roof, terrace, garden views and available full-time butler service. A full-service spa offers a complete menu of services and makes this a sanctuary for guests as well as the wildlife. Plus, the ideal location means that Machu Picchu is easily explored.

NEW ZEALAND

Ultimate, traditional luxury is the goal of Blanket Bay. Located 40 minutes from Queenstown, New Zealand, this alpine resort is ideally situated on Lake Wakatipu and near skiing, fishing and the frontier town of Glenorchy. The resort offers sprawling grounds surrounded by mountains and water views. Guests are welcome in the Great Room offering a 30-foot high bridge beam ceiling and picture windows, and a full-service spa with pools fed by mountain streams. Spacious guest suites feature balconies and steam showers, making sure you can relax after a day of heli-skiing, horseback riding, golfing or discovering area wines at local vineyards.





SHANGHAI

The ultra-modern skyline that makes up Shanghai is breathtaking and unlike any other cityscape in the world. History, cuisine and culture connect here to create a luxury experience for visitors. The Peninsula Hotel offers a bird's eye view to all the city offers and the river that runs through it. Travel and Leisure called it “a calm respite from city life” when

it named the hotel the best in Shanghai. With two world-class restaurants boasting extensive wine lists and a variety of dishes, the hotel features a retro décor and oversized rooms, making it a luxurious urban oasis.



MONTENGRO

One of Europe's most exquisite coastlines, Montenegro could be something directly out of a movie. Sail up the coast or swim through the secluded bays, or take in the culture, history and architecture of the region, dating back to the fifth century B.C. Crafted from the original village that gives the resort its name, Aman Sveti Stefan is situated on its own island, connected by a narrow land bridge over the bay. Suites offer amazing Adriatic Ocean views, private terraces, minimalist décor and a 1,600-square-meter spa for the ultimate relaxing experience.

The idea of luxury travel has expanded to encompass once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Tropical beach vacations, African safaris, spa escapes and more are all considered luxury destinations and available for the discerning traveler.

BEYOND *the* MENU

dinner party ideas and themes

Beautiful atmosphere, good food and great company make for a perfect evening. But how do you make your dinner party a true success? Thinking through the details will help, and this goes beyond planning a delicious menu. When you consider a theme, invites, décor and table touches and more, you set the stage for a perfect evening with your favorite people. Follow these dinner party ideas and themes to craft your ideal event.

Start by deciding on an overall feeling or loose theme for your evening. Avoid a literal interpretation like you might find at a child's birthday party. Rather, consider the mood

you'd like to set for the evening and let that be the foundation that you use to influence your dinner party decisions. "Themes tell people what to wear, help you plan what to cook and how to decorate your space, and provide an instant ice breaker," says Rachel Ray, so don't skip this step.

Are you striving for sophisticated? If so, then unite your evening with silver accents and a refined menu served over a crisp white table cloth. Would you rather something more relaxed? If so, maybe a backyard barbeque atmosphere is more ideal. Long after your guests leave, they can carry your dinner party's atmosphere with them, and your dinner party idea or theme is key.

Invitations will be the first time your guest hears about your dinner party, so set the tone right away. By using a paper invitation, rather than an e-mail or telephone call, you make your event official and important. Set a firm date and time so your guests are clear about when you expect them, and include your phone number so they can RSVP or send their regrets. Remember your theme when designing your invitation. Think about colors or imagery that you could rely on to give your guests an idea of what to expect for the evening. In this case, first impressions count.



Your dinner party ideas and theme can carry over into the décor for the evening. You don't necessarily need streamers, but consider your table linens and place settings and how they can enhance your ambiance. Compliment a backyard party with sparkle lights or lanterns strung above the table. Or pull out your fine China for a formal and elegant affair. There is always space to add color through napkins and table runners. Consider low flower arrangements or other table decorations that make it easy to guests to visit with each other, and simple is always best. Or, follow Martha Stewart's advice "for that 'thrown together' look, create a consistent color palette but then vary the textures, shapes and finishes of all the pieces within that palette."

Dinner parties run best if they're loosely scheduled. Think about what time you want to serve dinner, and plan around then. Make sure to build in time for cocktails and socializing. But also realize that this is just a loose time frame and not a rigid schedule to follow. Things will come up, and you do best to expect the unexpected.





And while you're expecting the unexpected, don't hesitate to ask for help, if you need it. When the unexpected does come up, feel free to ask your guests to help you chop or open the wine. It's a social event, and everyone is there to visit, so helping you in the kitchen can be another opportunity to socialize and share your personal news. It's not a party failure if

you ask for help, and according to Rachel Ray "The goal is to wake up the next day with good memories and plans for your next bash, not party PTSD." You could even invite a close friend over an hour early to help you set the table or mix a custom cocktail. This will give you time to relax and be prepared for when your party does start.

Planning the ideal dinner party doesn't have to be difficult or complicated, but thinking of ideas and themes will help to craft a memorable night that you feel good about.

LUXURY FOOD TRENDS

Of course we live because of food, but many of us live for food. We'll go out of our way to enjoy an absolutely decadent culinary experience, to the extreme according to some. Food trends like traveling to another part of the world for an exclusive meal and setting are always on our radar. Paying exorbitant amounts of money for over-the-top,

almost unimaginable food delights us beyond compare.

The luxury of being able to enjoy food in almost any way lends to the creation of some pretty memorable moments. If you're looking for your next gastronomic pleasure and adventure, here are some food trends to jump on.





GOLD- ADORNED FOOD

What do bagels, tacos, sushi, donuts and pizza have in common besides being food that people love? They're currently created in gold-encrusted versions that look brilliant and are available only for those willing to pay hundreds to tens of thousands of dollars for a serving.

The glowing garnish is popping up in cocktails, gelatos and burgers. It's almost a crazy concept really, but one that's all too tempting if extravagance and a magnificent meal continuously call to you. Edible gold is 23 to 24 carats, so it's not your average jewelry gold you'll be consuming. It's an indigestible ingredient though, and it offers absolutely zero vitamins or minerals. While deemed relatively safe, there haven't been any comprehensive studies on eating gold. So, experts advise that one only consume it on rare special occasions.

PRIVATE CHEF HELICOPTER TOURS

Take a helicopter ride over spectacular scenery and don't worry about where you'll dine when you land. You'll have escorts with you who will bring you to pristine places in Hawaii, to pick fresh produce so you can enjoy it prepared artfully when you arrive back home. That is, if you've booked a private chef helicopter tour like the one Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea offers.

Aerial sightseeing, foraging for herbs and vegetables and dining on your bounty at a Hawaiian ranch await as part of the hotel's Unforgettable Experiences, A Taste of Island Life custom excursion. Your trip begins with a helicopter ride to Hana to see Maui's lush mountains and Haleakala. Local guides show you where to pick the best ingredients in Hana Ranch's gardens, and then you'll get to visit Pailoa Beach before heading back to enjoy what you've gathered as part of a sensational multi-course spread.



ULTRA-REMOTE DINING

Food trends that take you to the most remote places in the world to eat amidst sheer and pure beauty are trends that can't be ignored. Like dining in the magma chamber of an Icelandic volcano, for instance. You can feast inside the Thrihnukagigur Volcano located on Iceland's Southern Peninsula.

The volcano might be dormant, but it's still a thrill to trek into the cavernous chamber that local guides say is as large as 3 full-size basketball courts and vast enough to hold the Statue of Liberty lying on her side. It's all yours for a gastro journey designed completely by you to suit your tastes and expectations for the experience.





DINNERS IN THE SKY

Elevated about 160 feet into the air, hanging over the Mexican ruins at Teotihuacán or the glimmering skyline of downtown Los Angeles, eating becomes a heightened affair. Companies like Dinner in the Sky set up hoisted dinner parties for up to 22 diners, in jaw-dropping locales across 40 cities worldwide.

Look down on the Acropolis as you savor the flavors of a 5-course meal. Try to keep your adrenaline in check or embrace it while realizing moments like this are what all of your hard work has been for.

EXCLUSIVITY IN ANCIENT VILLAGES

Without all the tourists in ancient cities like Angkor Wat, you probably won't call your visit an adventure. But, the peacefulness and serenity that take over the iconic ruins after the crowds of people have left is something else to desire. Jacada offers the opportunity to access the grounds outside of normal operating hours – for an exquisite and nearly unbelievable dining experience.



Prepare for a private dining tour in a dreamy setting, and receive blessings from a Buddhist monk before you begin your first course. The Khmer-style dinner is a privilege that will cost you roughly \$11,000, but experiencing the landmarks and temples in privacy and exclusivity is well worth it.



BOUTIQUE HOTELS

redefined

The label “boutique hotel” seems to be the most buzzworthy phrase of the luxury travel industry today. And many hotels that are smaller than the grand and extravagant resorts chains are calling themselves boutique. But what does that term really mean? And why would travelers want to plan to stay in a luxury boutique hotel abroad? The answer lies in the intimate size, huge personality, modern atmosphere, quirky accents, ideal location and local favor.

INTIMATE SIZE

If you're planning a stay in a luxury boutique hotel, don't expect unending hallways filled with identical guest room doors. Boutique hotels are quite the opposite and pride themselves on their small size. Typically less than 100 rooms, but still larger than a bed and breakfast, boutique hotels possess an intimacy that's missing from the large hotel chains.

With the extra familiarity comes unmatched service and a staff that can take the time to get to know your name and travel preferences. It's a difference you will notice immediately.

HUGE PERSONALITY

Typically, luxury boutiques aren't owned by major corporations, or if they are, the hotels are independently operated so they can create

the personality that defines boutique hotels. Because of this independence, each hotel can react to its surroundings and develop a unique personality. Defined by the décor, staff and traditions, each boutique is bounding with personality that can't be seen anywhere else. This makes any stay more memorable and extravagant.

MODERN ACCENTS

With its individual approach, boutique hotels offer modern accents and unbeatable luxury amenities. Look for rooftop lounges that provide views, hand-crafted cocktails and unique swimming pools or hot tubs like at the Bermondsey Square Hotel in London, or luxury amenities like screening rooms, pet friendly spaces, bike or cars that guests are free to use for touring restaurants and bars. More than anything, though, luxury boutique hotels boast unmatched style and décor. With sophistication and modern approach, every detail throughout the hotel is stylized to fit in overall impression that the hotel gives. From the first steps into the lobby, the atmosphere of a boutique hotel is unlike any other space in the world.





ECLECTIC DÉCOR

With the unmatched and stylized décor is a sense of whimsy that makes each room of a boutique hotel feel unexpected. Unexpected color palettes, bold statement pieces and one-of-a-kind artwork help to define the spaces. The entire Le Plumes Hotel in Paris is deco-

rated in a yellow, gray and purple color scheme with artwork depicting classical composers and their sheet music. The décor adds intrigue to any luxury getaway and makes guests want to explore the spaces where they are staying as much as they explore their destinations.



IDEAL PLACEMENT

Because of their small size, luxury boutique hotels are able to offer guest rooms in central locations of top world destinations. This style of hotel is right at home in a converted historic home, like Wentworth Mansion in Charleston, South Carolina, as much as in a converted train station, like Velona's Jungle in Florence, Italy. For this reason, boutique hotels offer rooms in city centers across the globe.

LOCAL TIES

With the perfect placement within each city, boutique hotels also represent their home towns perfectly in every detail. An emphasis on place means that local art hangs on the wall and local delicacies are served in restaurants or at bars. Furnishings mimic local style or design. Guests can expect to feel saturated by their destination, in a good way, when they stay in a boutique-style hotel.

Boutique hotels are a unique and popular approach to luxury travel. Through unexpected touches, they help to craft and create an interesting and unforgettable experience, and many travelers are turning toward luxury boutique hotels as an alternative to the typical chain for their vacation accommodations.



THE DISTINCTIVE LIFE

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