PLACES & PRODUCTS & PEOPLE

OUR FINDS

THE BEST LIST

HOTELS

OUR EDITORS SHARE THEIR FAVORITE PLACES TO STAY AROUND THE COUNTRY. (MARTHA WEIGHS IN, TOO.)
HOTELS

If curiosity is what moves us at Martha Stewart Living, it stands to reason that our editors love to travel. It is wanderlust that propels us into new territory and feeds "our finds," where we uncover everything from the best artisanal broom-maker to the most delicious egg sandwich. So for this issue, we present a short list of the hotels we've fallen in love with during our trips around the country, in the categories we know best, including design, food, gardening, and craftsmanship. These properties not only embrace the tenets of Living in memorable ways—we've highlighted those special details that particularly stood out to our editors—but they also capture the unique spirit of their locales.

MARTHA'S HOTEL CHECKLIST

What matters to Martha once she checks in? The basics done very well (though a rooftop pool doesn't hurt).

A PLEASANT greeting.
A careful BELLMAN.
A clean ROOM. And I don't need a suite—I'm there from 11 p.m. to 6 A.M.
A comfortable BED with white sheets and complimentary bottled WATER provided at bedside.
Rooms with VIEWS and WINDOWS that open.
A ROOFTOP POOL.
Efficient ROOM SERVICE. Don't repeat my order to me.
A bath with a HAND-HELD SHOWER (how else would they clean the shower?). Also, if its curtain is closed, I ask a bellman to open it for me—otherwise I'm imagining the scene in Psycho.

BEST NIGHT'S SLEEP

WALDORF ASTORIA, CHICAGO

This hotel is designed to make you forget you're in the middle of the city. Rooms are modern yet incredibly comfortable, are perfectly soundproofed, and have Rivolta Carrignani Italian bedding that begs you to sleep in and then order room service. From $395 per night, waldorfastoria3.hilton.com.

BEST RENOVATION

SUNSET TOWER, LOS ANGELES

Interior designer Paul Fortune masterfully channeled this hotel's Art Deco roots and long Hollywood history without creating a time capsule. Rooms are decorated in a warm, unexpected palette of lavender and brown, with brass Deco-inspired fixtures. For its people-watching and old-school menu, the Tower bar and restaurant is worth the trip itself. From $325 per night, sunsettowerhotel.com.

BEST AMENITIES

HOTEL SAINT CECILIA

AUSTIN, TEXAS

Turntables in every room and a library of vintage vinyl in the lobby. Minibars stocked with European candy and Russian caviar. A cafe of locally sourced rainwater at turndown. Every detail at this chic hotel by designer Liz Lambert is carefully considered and a little quirky. From $298 per night, hotel SAINTCECILIA.COM.

BEST PALETTE

THE WHEATLEIGH

LENOX, MASSACHUSETTS

There is nothing standard-issue about this 19-room country house hotel in the Berkshires. Decorated by Calvin Tsao, it combines the character of a private estate with the amenities of a luxury hotel. Furnishings seem hand-picked, and the muted paint and fabric colors are elegant and inspired. From $715 per night, wheatleigh.com.

BEST VIEWS

POST RANCH INN, BIG SUR, CALIFORNIA

Accommodations blend into the forest landscape ( sod roofs complete the camouflage) and are situated to maximize the mountain and ocean vistas. Every room has a stone soaking tub surrounded by glass walls that open. From $875 per night, postranchinn.com.

BEST ANTIQUING HOME BASE

THE PRAIRIE BY RACHEL ASHWELL, ROUND TOP, TEXAS

Designer Rachel Ashwell of Shabby Chic fame fell in love with Round Top, the site of a quadrennial antiques market, she opened a hotel there. The two cottages and two houses are decorated in her trademark style—vintage furnishings, chandeliers, and lots of chintz. From $200 per night, theranchbyrachelashwell.com.

Each of the 12 rooms in the new property is decorated in an interesting mix of French and Swedish antiques. From $395 per night, washingtonschoolhouse.com.

BEST PORCH

GRAND HOTEL, MACKINAC ISLAND, MICHIGAN

The 660-foot-long porch, lined with rocking chairs and thousands of flowers and overlooking the Straits of Mackinac, sets the tone for this 1887 hotel. Designed by Carleton Varney (a protégé of Dorothy Draper), its colorful, opulent interiors still live up to the hotel's name. From $254 per night, grandhotel.com.

ELEGANT BY DESIGN

1. One of the antiques-filled rooms at the Washington Schoolhouse, in Park City, Utah. 2. A bathroom in a junior suite at the Wheatleigh, in Lenox, Massachusetts.

Previous page The view from a suite at the Wheatleigh.
THE LONG VIEW
The 660-foot-long porch at the Grand Hotel, on Mackinac Island, Michigan, with a ceiling painted blue (to mimic the sky) and more than 100 rocking chairs.
OUR FINDS the best list

MARTHA’S PICKS

THE MANDARIN ORIENTAL
Martha loves to check into the Mandarin Oriental, whether it’s in Boston or Bangkok, because it consistently delivers in ways that count. “You can eat, sleep, exercise, and have a great massage,” she says. “They have the best beds—with white linen sheets—and the best service.” Forty-five locations worldwide, mandarinoriental.com.

FONTAINEBLEAU, MIAMI
“It’s the most beautiful spa in America,” says Martha of the hotel’s Lapis Spa. Treatments include outstanding facials and ocean-inspired wraps, but what stands out are the amenities you enjoy afterward: mineral pools, massage-jet showers, eucalyptus steam baths. And then “you lie on a marble chaise or bench by the pool,” she says of the room modeled after the hammams of Marrakech. fontainebleau.com.

FOOD & DRINK

BEST ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME MEAL
BLACKBERRY FARM, WALLAND, TENNESSEE
The grandaddy of locavore hotels has grown its own food, and offered farm tours and cooking classes since the 1990s. But mostly you come here to eat really well—our food editors still talk about the poached duck egg on grits, gnocchi with guinea-hen confit, and sandwiches of fried pickled green tomato and house-cured bacon. From $345 per night, blackberryfarm.com.

BEST TASTE OF THE WINE COUNTRY
CARREROS INN, NAPA, CALIFORNIA
If the cottages with private yards and the vineyard-enclosed grounds aren’t enough of a draw, the three restaurants are. Menus feature the best from local wineries and the flavors of the region from high to low—duck breast to doughnuts. From $495 per night, carrerossin.com.

BEST KITCHEN
PARK HYATT, WASHINGTON, D.C.
An open kitchen with a big wood-burning oven is the centerpiece of the modernist-meets-Shaker-style Blue Duck Tavern. The restaurant’s menu reads like an American geography lesson, with every dish whether venison or fries—accompanied by the name of the place and the purveyor it’s from. From $249 per night, parkwashington.hyatt.com.

BEVERAGE BAR
HOTEL HAVANA, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS
This hotel’s clubby, Cuban-inspired bar, Ocho, is one of the locals’ favorite places to be, particularly after sunset, when candles are lit and doors opened up to the river. Signature cocktails such as Martinique Punch (made with Clément Créole Shrubb, Liqueur d’Orange, rum, and brandy) are tropical without being kitschy, and the Pan-Latin wine list is impressive. From $140 per night, havana-sanantonio.com.

BEST DESTINATION RESTAURANT
WILLOWS INN, LUMMI ISLAND, WASHINGTON
Guests often book a night at this 20-room inn on this San Juan Island just to eat dinner, a three-hour, prix-fixe parade of small plates made with seasonal island ingredients. From $125 per night, willows-inn.com.

BEST FRIED CHICKEN
THE INN AT SERENBE, PALMETTO, GEORGIA
The menu at Farmhouse, a restaurant at this idyllic inn located in a farming community 45 minutes from Atlanta, is ever-changing based on what’s fresh. But one thing never changes (thankfully): Marie’s fried chicken on weekends. From $330 per night, serenbeinn.com.

THE FINER THINGS
2. Lapis Spa, in Miami’s Fontainebleau.
3. Dinner in the garden at Blackberry Farm, in Walland, Tennessee.

“My husband and I have marked about every major milestone at Carreros Inn, from our honeymoon to his 40th birthday.”
—JENNIFER AARONSON, FOOD EDITOR
SOAKING IT IN
The 19th-century bathhouse at Dunton Hot Springs, in Dolores, Colorado, one of five mineral springs on the property.
BEST CRAFTSMANSHIP

THE INN AT SHAKER VILLAGE, HARRISBURG, KENTUCKY
For Shakers, quality craftsmanship was nothing short of a religious calling. At this preserved 19th-century village, you can live among reproduction Shaker beds, rocking chairs, and pegboards (and even take some home from the on-site shop). From $100 per night, shakervillageky.org.

ARIZONA BILTMORE, PHOENIX, ARIZONA
This 1929 hotel is full of geometric details influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright, who worked as a consultant with designer Albert Chase McArthur. The amount of gold leafing in the lobby, the Aztec Ballroom, and the Gold Room, was second only to that of the Taj Mahal when it debuted. Originally open to guests by invitation only, the hotel retains its air of exclusivity and grandeur. From $109 per night, arizonabiltmore.com.

ROLLING HUTS, WINTHROP, WASHINGTON
They're the modern equivalent to the log cabin: Six steel-and-plywood structures by Seattle-based architect Tom Kundig. Each offers modular furnishings, sleeps up to four, and has a wall of glass to take in the views of the mountains—which are snowy or strewn with wildflowers, depending on the season. $135 per night, rollinghuts.com.

GARDENS & GROUNDS

BEST OUTDOOR ROOMS
THE PARKER, PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA
The outdoor areas created by landscape architect Judy Kameon as a series of private nooks surrounded by plants (as well as fire pits, pétanque courts, and two lush, relaxing pool areas) rival the modern interiors by Jonathan Adler. From $225 per night, parkerpalmsprings.com.

BEST GARDEN TO TABLE
MARAVISTA COTTAGES, GUALALA, CALIFORNIA
Situated across the road from the ocean, 12 little cottages have well-equipped kitchens—and most of the food you need is right outside your door. There’s a fruit orchard, herb and vegetable gardens, a fish-cleaning station, and hens laying eggs. From $175 per night, maravista.com.

BEST SCENT
LOS POBLANOS HISTORIC INN, ALBUQUERQUE
This intimate 20-room inn is situated amid 25 acres of organic kitchen gardens and lavender fields. You can volunteer to harvest the fragrant crop alongside the farmer, or just buy spa products infused with its essential oil. Lavender honey is made from the inn’s apiary and is served daily at breakfast. From $160 per night, lospoblanos.com.

BEST ITALIAN-INSPIRED GARDENS
GLENMERE MANSION, CHESTER, NEW YORK
More than 100 years ago, a tycoon built this villa in the Hudson Valley, sparing no expense on its garden, which was designed by one of America’s first female landscape architects, Beatrix Farrand. The 150 acres remain true to her vision—an homage to Italy’s traditional gardens—and the hotel was recently restored to its original glory. From $650 per night, glenmere.com.

BEST SUNRISE
TRAVAASA, HANA, MAUI, HAWAII
The sun rises over Maui in paradise-al Hana, and this secluded resort’s grounds—with swaying palm trees and grassy expanses—is one of the best places to take it in. (Alternatively, you could watch the sunset from a hot tub on your cottage lanai.) From $225 per person per night, travaasa.com.

“...the best list..."

“...The Parker’s grounds are designed to be used throughout the day. In the morning, I'd read the paper in one of the sunny gardens, and in the evening I'd have dinner by the fire pit.”

—Stephen Orr, gardening editor

DREAMSCAPES
1. In Chester, New York, part of Glenmere Mansion’s 100-year-old garden. 2. The Frank Lloyd Wright–influenced exterior of the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix. 3. An outdoor fire pit at the Parker Palm Springs, in California.
CABIN CLASS
Rolling Huts, a series of modern cabins in the North Cascades of Washington State.
ACTIVITIES

BEST PLACE TO TAKE THE WATERS
DUNTON HOT SPRINGS, DOLORES, COLORADO
This Colorado Rockies hotel is a collection of former mining-town buildings restored and decorated to the rustic nines. Soak in one of the hot springs after a day of river rafting or horseback riding. From $850 per night (includes meals), duntonhotsprings.com.

BEST YEAR-ROUND FUN
OMNI MOUNT WASHINGTON, BRETTON WOODS, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Sleigh rides, skiing, and a spectacular (and all-ages) New Year's Eve celebration in the winter give way to rock climbing, biking, and golfing in spring and summer. It's easy to see why families come to this elegant 110-year-old resort year after year—and never leave the premises. From $229 per night, omnihotels.com.

BEST PLACE TO LAND A TROUT
SMITH FORK RANCH, CRAWFORD, COLORADO
Smith Fork may be on the bucket list of every serious fly fisherman—for its pristine three-mile stretch of river and its mountain stream—but the upscale ranch also caters to newbies, with five training instructors. Spend the rest of your days on horseback, at the archery range, or in the swimming pond. From $2,095 (for a 4-night stay; all inclusive), smithforkranch.com.

BEST CITY AND COUNTRY VACATION
CAVALLO POINT LODGE, SAUSALITO, CALIFORNIA
Set in a national park at the foot of the Golden Gate Bridge, this hotel (formerly a military base) allows for both an urban and rural experience. Hike the area's most picturesque trails, or take yoga or cooking classes. If you're with the kids, visit the epic Discovery Museum across the road. Or, of course, you can drive over the bridge to San Francisco for everything it offers. From $339 per night, cavallopoint.com.

BEST FARM STAY
SHELBOURNE FARMS, SHELBOURNE, VERMONT
At this working farm on Lake Champlain, adults can take cheese-making classes while kids milk a cow, collect eggs, or walk a calf. Tennis, croquet, and the inn itself—a 19th-century mansion once inhabited by William Seward Webb and Lila Vanderbilt Webb—provide a buttoned-up counterpoint to the farm life. From $165 per night, shelbournefarms.org.

ATTENTION, HOTELIERS

Martha has a few suggestions for creating a better hotel stay.

ON FLOWERS: "I love them in the lobby but not in the rooms—it's a waste."

ON BATHROOMS: "Unscented bath products, please. I end up bringing my own soap."

ON MOOD: "I want nothing playing when I enter the room—no music or TV."

ON EXTRAS: "I don't need a welcome letter from management, or a chocolate on my pillow (I've just brushed my teeth!)."

BEST FOR PETS

FIFTEEN BEACON, BOSTON
The family hound can lap up some luxury at this Beaux Arts boutique hotel. Dogs get homemade biscuits and peanut butter at check-in, and the concierge can schedule playtime on the roof deck, walks, and dog-sitting. (Pets are not allowed to be left unattended in guest rooms.) From $395 per night. $25 (optional) pet fee is donated to Boston's MSPCA-Angell Animal Medical Center; xvbcon.com.

SANYSIDOR RANCH, MONTECITO, CALIFORNIA
Vivien Leigh and Laurence Olivier got married here. JFK and Jackie honeymooned here. And your family mutt is welcome, too. This resort, just south of Santa Barbara, offers pet room service, 17 miles of pet-friendly hiking trails, and in-room pet massages (even side by side with humans). From $650 per night, $100 per pet surcharge per stay; sanysidoranch.com.

OUT AND ABOUT

"The Mount Washington is the most magical place at New Year's. You see everyone from great-grandparents to little kids dancing in the ballroom."
—POLANDA EDWARDS, EXECUTIVE EDITOR