

Château de Bagnols

Bagnols, France

On completing the refurbishment just over 10 years ago, Lord Hamlyn, as legend has it, turned to his wife and said: 'Whatever the budget was, you blew it.' The chateau is a 13th-century vision rising from the mist: moats and drawbridges; a round pool in a cherry orchard; frescoes on the walls; bathrooms in turrets; and a Michelin-starred restaurant with a fireplace so huge that all the guests could have a cocktail party in it without having to bend their heads. It doesn't feel like a hotel – rather the place you wish you'd grown up. **Tel** 00 33 4 74 71 40 00. **Fax** 00 33 4 74 71 40 49. **Website** bagnols.com. **UK reservations** French Expressions (tel: 020 7433 2640). **Rates** Double, from £370, including breakfast.



The Ritz

London, UK

Reasons we love the Ritz: the cockney doormen; the melba toast; the crazy cherubs; the doubledecker bus in the minibar. The clotted cream in the Palm Court; the Rivoli burger with foie gras. That it's where Nancy Mitford and Evelyn Waugh met; that at lunch you often find yourself sitting next to Margaret Thatcher and her immaculate hair; that the terrace is great for parties. That the suites overlook Green Park; that guests wear real jewels to dinner. That it welcomes children with goodie bags including invitations to ice-cream sundaes. That it's the Ritz with a 'Z', its name in lights. **Tel** 020 7493 8181. **Fax** 020 7493 2687. **Website** theritzlondon.com. **Rates** Double, from £400.



Devi Garh

Delwara, Rajasthan, India

You can't even think of the heartbreakingly beautiful Devi Garh without going all weak at the knees. An ancient palace restored from ruin, it is sophisticated, slick and contemporary. Eat privately on the balcony of your bedroom. Or in a secret turret. Or on the roof while staring at the hills beyond. Magnificent. **Tel** 00 91 2953 289 211. **Fax** 00 91 2953 289 357. **Website** devi resorts.com. **UK reservations** Seasons in Style (tel: 01244 202000). **Rates** Double, from £290.



Hotel Bel-Air

Los Angeles, USA

The Bel-Air is an icon both worldwide and in her hometown, where locals are famous for falling apart at the seams if the pineapple isn't correctly carved into the shape of their chihuahua. She soars prettily above other hotels, fluttering her iridescent wings – grand but cosy, shiny but intimate, buzzy but oh-so-quiet. The Bel-Air has seen everything and everyone's seen the Bel-Air, the grande dame who only drinks tea out of bone china and appreciates the delicacy of sugared violets. Set in 12 acres of beautifully tended gardens, with a swan lake and a jasmine-covered gazebo, she has recently undergone an £11 million renovation. Although the decor might be a bit chintzy for some, and the newly marbled bathrooms a little shiny, old hands will secretly be rather thrilled. **Tel** 001 310 472 1211. **Fax** 001 310 476 5890. **Website** hotelbelair.com. **UK reservations** Elegant Resorts (tel: 01244 897520). **Rates** Double, from £170. □