



The Journal



Travel Guide Gives A Sneak Peek Of 2021 Star Award Winner Resorts

San Francisco Feb 2, 2021; As post-quarantine travel rebounds, Forbes Travel Guide offers a sneak peek of its 2021 Star Award winners to provide some getaway inspiration.

These early hotel and spa winners were all inspected prior to the COVID-19 closures.

The full slate of honorees will be revealed in spring 2021.

To find the world's best properties, Forbes Travel Guide's inspectors check into a hotel for a two-night minimum stay, posing as regular guests and paying their own way. The incognito inspectors test up to 900 objective, stringent standards — such as whether you are greeted curbside by a staff member within 30 seconds of arrival, whether the bedroom is exceptionally clean and whether turndown service includes a special or thoughtful element. The ratings calculate 75 percent of a hotel's score based on its service and 25 percent from the quality of its facilities



OscarTek – Gem Series at Blanc Café – Cabos Mexico

See the list of preliminary 2021 winners, along with the properties that earned awards in February 2020, [here](#). And scroll down to learn more about the new crop of Star-Rated hotels and spas so that you can start planning your next escape.

Montage Deer Valley joins the Five-Star ranks. **BETTIE GRACE MINER**

Montage Hotels & Resorts swept the Five-Star hotel category. Newcomers Montage Deer Valley in Park City, Utah, and Montage Palmetto Bluff in Bluffton, South Carolina, joined repeat Five-Star recipients Montage Kapalua Bay in Maui, Montage Laguna Beach and Montage Los Cabos in achieving the top honor. This makes Montage the second all Five-Star hotel company in Forbes Travel Guide history (Peninsula became the first in 2019). The brand will look to continue its winning streak when Montage Healdsburg in Sonoma debuts in the late fall.

26 Workcations To Take Right Now

Given its mountain location with ski-in/ski-out access next to the lifts of Deer Valley Resort, Montage Deer Valley is a skier's haven. But the hotel, which celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, offers far more. Its alpine pool overlooks the mountains of Empire Pass, its cozy craftsman-style rooms have gas fireplaces and the Four-Star spa doles out Tata Harper facials and wellness offerings like outdoor mountain power walking and a Muscle Mania sculpting class.

About 20 miles west of Hilton Head, Montage Palmetto Bluff embodies Lowcountry elegance. The hotel's 20,000 acres include groves of oak trees draped with Spanish moss, a Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course, dining options along the May River, a Four-Star spa that uses local ingredients (like minerals from the aforementioned river) and charming cottages with screened-in porches that almost require you to unwind with a glass of cold sweet tea.

Hotel lobby

Step into Houston's only Five-Star hotel. **THE POST OAK HOTEL AT UPTOWN HOUSTON**

Elsewhere stateside, Houston landed the first Five-Star hotel in the city's history. Clinching the coveted title was The Post Oak Hotel at Uptown Houston, which also boasts the only Five-Star spa in Texas, a two-story Rolls-Royce showroom, a museum-caliber art collection (including pieces from Frank Stella and Alex Katz) and a library of Assouline books.

While the skyscraper only opened in August 2019, Four Seasons Hotel Philadelphia at Comcast Center soared to the top of our Star Awards list with a double Five-Star win. The Four Seasons, which sits in the nation's 10th-tallest building, provides breathtaking views of Philadelphia, though the floral-filled interiors from Jeff Leatham are equally eye-catching. The 60th-floor JG SkyHigh cocktail bar promises the best vistas, but the 57th-floor infinity pool and Five-Star spa deliver sumptuous pampering, too.

Building

Conrad Washington, DC earned Four-Star honors. **CONRAD WASHINGTON, DC**

In D.C., the newly built Conrad Washington, DC picked up a Four-Star award. Opening its doors in March 2019, the hotel highlights works from local artists (like Matthew Langley's double-sided blue-and-white abstract painting), an eatery from Top Chef alums and brothers Bryan and Michael Voltaggio and the 11th-floor hot spot rooftop bar Summit.



Sun palace resort Café

The newly renovated The St. Regis San Francisco attained Five-Star status. The 2005 hotel unveiled redesigned guest rooms in March that draw on the locale: the silver, copper and iron color palette is a nod to the California Gold Rush of 1849, wall coverings feature curves that evoke San Francisco's hills and valleys and glass-covered desks display landscape photographer Ansel Adams' California panoramas.

Pool

Four Seasons Hotel Seattle steals the Five-Star spotlight. **FOUR SEASONS HOTEL SEATTLE**

Also on the West Coast, Four Seasons Hotel Seattle joined the ranks of new Five-Star standouts. Close to Pike Place Market and the Seattle Art Museum, the urban hub is a favorite for its Goldfinch Tavern, coffee concierge, Four-Star spa and the city's only heated, outdoor infinity-edge pool, and it overlooks the Olympic Mountains, the Seattle Great Wheel and Elliot Bay.

Tucked among the Wasatch Range, Waldorf Astoria Park City won a Four-Star award. The luxurious lodge is home to a heated pool (it's even open for a post-ski session when it snows) and Forbes Travel Guide Recommended Powder, a restaurant that specializes in upscale comfort food from mountain regions worldwide. If you prefer a beach getaway, opt for the new Four-Star Grand Wailea, A Waldorf Astoria Resort in Maui. Along with a prime oceanfront location, the hotel offers nine pools and a massive 40,000-square-foot spa, the largest in the state.

Spa

Find a Five-Star sanctuary at Sunstone Spa. **PETER MALINOWSKI**

For those who seek some post-quarantine self-care, a trio of spas joined the Five-Star elite. In Palm Springs, Agua Caliente Resort Casino Spa Rancho Mirage's Sunstone Spa spans 10,500 square feet and spotlights unique treatments like the Desert Rain Massage, which employs botanicals from the local chaparral plant to boost immunity and reduce stress. For Rocky Mountain relaxation, visit The St. Regis Aspen Resort's Remède Spa Aspen, a forward-thinking facility with calming waterfalls, an invigorating cold plunge, an oxygen lounge (which helps with altitude sickness) and CBD treatments. A desert oasis, The Spa at Four Seasons Hotel Las Vegas incorporates the traditional (facials and a healing after-sun wrap) with the untraditional (a melted candle wax massage, cupping and table Thai yoga).

There were other noteworthy accomplishments across North America. Canada saw several key wins. Launched in May 2019, Four Seasons Hotel Montreal lays claim to being the city's only Five-Star winner for both its modern design hotel and its soothing spa with gold-inspired treatments. The Spa at Four Seasons Hotel Toronto also snagged a top award. The largest urban spa among all Four Seasons properties, the Toronto respite recently revamped its Cloud 9 Oasis, a seasonal terrace where you can go post-treatment for some healthy mezze and Yorkville panoramas.

Hotel

Escape to Chileno Bay's Five-Star spa. **CHILENO BAY RESORT & RESIDENCES, AUBERGE RESORTS COLLECTION**

In Mexico, Esperanza, Auberge Resorts Collection reaffirmed Los Cabos as a locale for luxury. The cliffside hotel and its palapa-topped spa garnered Five-Star honors. Sister property Chileno Bay Resort & Residences, Auberge Resorts Collection cemented itself

as a wellness destination with the newly minted Five-Star Auberge Spa Chileno Bay. Auberge Spa infuses local Baja culture into its services and has one of the best gyms in Los Cabos. And Solaz, A Luxury Collection Resort, Los Cabos, a modern, sleek beach retreat, earned Four-Star honors. On the opposite side of the country, Grand Fiesta Americana Coral Beach Cancun gained Four-Star awards for its hotel fronting turquoise waters and powdery sands and the hidden-away Gem Spa.

Living room

Edinburgh gets its first Five-Star hotel. THE BALMORAL, A ROCCO FORTE HOTEL

There were significant wins overseas. The Balmoral, a Rocco Forte Hotel emerged as the first Five-Star property in Edinburgh. The landmark Victorian-era railway hotel draws you in with its Number One restaurant, which serves modern Scottish fare, and its SCOTCH bar, which carries more than 500 single-malt whiskies. Sitting along the Bosphorus, new Five-Star Çırağan Palace Kempinski Istanbul pairs Old World grandeur with modern amenities like a heated outdoor infinity pool overlooking the water.

Hotel room

Gaze at Çırağan Palace Kempinski Istanbul, the city's newest Five-Star gem. ÇIRAĞAN PALACE KEMPINSKI ISTANBUL

The Middle East saw a Five-Star addition with The St. Regis Saadiyat Island Resort, Abu Dhabi, which has Mediterranean-style architecture, tropical grounds and six miles of beach.

Over in Asia, two Bali hotels earned first-time Five-Star accolades. The Mulia - Nusa Dua, Bali is known for having the longest oceanfront infinity pool on the island and some of Bali's top restaurants. The St. Regis Bali Resort lets you revel in privacy among its spacious suites and villas, and its serene Four-Star spa sanctuary specializes in Balinese treatments.

Tokyo added four properties to its Five-Star roster: Takanawa Hanakohro, a ryokan (traditional Japanese inn) with 16 tatami suites and a five-acre Japanese garden with 230 cherry trees; The Capitol Hotel Tokyu, which sits next to the grounds of the Imperial Palace and showcases Japanese art from the likes of woodblock printmaker Shiko Munakata and sumi ink painter Toko Shinoda; The Prince Gallery Tokyo Kioicho, A Luxury Collection Hotel, which affords mesmerizing city views from its 36th-floor lobby and the cushioned window seats in each room; and The Ritz-Carlton, Tokyo, which resides at the top of the 53-story Tokyo Midtown building and gives breathtaking vistas everywhere from its 21,528-square-foot spa to Azure 45, one of the city's best French restaurants

Cabo San Luca – History of the America.

Gratefully Reprinted From Cabo Life Magazine - by C.W.Ferguson

Hernan Cortes sat in his headquarters on the Isthmus of Tecuantepec scheming about what he might conquer next. Bingo! A shipwreck survivor reported an island ten sailing days north that was populated by Amazons and was rich in gold and pearls. That sounded to Hernan like the fabled island of California ruled by the Amazonian Queen, Califia. He fairly drooled at the thought. "Andale, hombres", he told his ship builder, "get on with it".

In 1535, with three galleons and a compliment of over 600 men and women, Hernan sailed into a tranquil bay which he promptly named Santa Cruz. It didn't take him long to figure out that there weren't no gold and there weren't no Amazons, neither. He packed up and sailed south for the last time.

But there were pearls in the waters around Santa Cruz. Sebastian Vizcaino set up a pearl fishing colony there in 1596 knowing full well that he was certain to become a wealthy man. He found a few pearls, but not enough to support his expediton; he also found a whole bunch of unsociable Indians. The only thing Sebastian got out of his misguided tour was an excellent chart of the Mar de Cortes. The only thing California got out of Sebastian's misguided greed was a new name for the pearl-less bay: La Paz.

During that period, Spanish merchant marine interests had established a trade route from Luzon in the Philippines to Acapulco in the south of New Spain. They were transporting ton upon ton of oriental silk and spices; along with Mexican gold and silver with which to buy the treasures. The Spanish monarch loved the silk and spices; English pirates became impassioned over the silver and gold.

The 16th of September is a very special day in Mexico. It's Mexico's Independence Day. It's also the day that Sir Francis Drake entered the "Sea of the South" with a quintet of warships in 1578. What do you suppose he had on his mind? The Spanish had an inkling of what it might be.

Pirate stories abound in Baja. Some true, others...well, maybe not exactly true. True it is that Thomas Cavendish sacked the "invincible" galleon Santa Ana off cape San Lucas in 1587. And true it is that a number of "Dutch Hens" entered the Skull and Crossbones trade against the haughty Spanish. Joris van Spilbergen was the most famous of the group. Racing up and down the Pacific coastline, the Pirates had a field day. And when they were not plying their trade they were hanging out at Cabo San Lucas and San Jose and La Paz just R & R-ing-it - and maybe stashing a little treasure. The Spanish of course, were not happy. The only people taking any spoils out of the new world were the English and the Dutch and they didn't know how to get there until a Portuguese named Magellan showed 'em the route.

So, the Spanish Crown told the Jesuits to go to California and settle down the Indians. "Make Christians out of 'em" spathe the King. The Crown wasn't especially interested in the future of the Indians but he figured that if they could colonize the peninsula and Alta California it would keep the Dutch, the English, and by that time the Russians at bay.

The Jesuits were delighted. They could go to an inhospitable land, suffer as no missionary had ever before suffered, and save souls. And that they did; but...some people simply don't like change. The Indians were not happy campers. They didn't much like wearing



clothing. They did not like monogamy. And they certainly didn't cotton to the Jesuits. So, in 1734, a bunch of the local boys got together and figured out how to run the Fathers plumb out of the New World. California, as it was called then, took a nap for a couple of hundred years.

In 1844, U.S. President James K. Polk sided with a bunch of ornery Texans who had been plumb tired of paying taxes to "Mexican" generals. The Mexican-American War got so ridiculous that even Mexico couldn't figure out why "green-go" troops were marching on La Paz and San Jose del Cabo. At the bargaining table the Americans conceded they really didn't want any more desert than they'd already stolen, so they left Baja California to the "Mezicans". After all, there weren't no oil, no gold nor silver, no natural resources, and no water. "Keep it Amigos", said the norteamericanos, "keep all a it".

However, the phrase "natural resources" has taken a bit of a twist in the last couple of generations.

Ask the question, "Who was the first Anglo to put The Baja on the road-map to prosperity?" and you're likely to get six different answers.

Shortly after World War II, a group of Southern Californians learned that they could fly to La Paz and then travel by ratty roads to the shores of the Mar de Cortes. "Why?" people asked. Little by little word leaked that the Sea of Cortes was teeming with fish, was protected from prying eyes, and possessed weather "as good as God will allow" in the Baja. There were no roads there. Only long range pleasure yachts and private aircraft need apply. It was exclusive. The names of the shakers and movers were exclusive: Bing Crosby, Phil Harris, Desi Arnaz, and The Duke. About 1948 they pooled their coins and built hotel Las Cruces on the East Cape. The sign read:

"PROPIEDAD PRIVADO"

PRIVATE PROPERTY

Ten years later the equally exclusive hotel La Palmilla was built near San Jose; Hollywood money was rumored at work there too. It didn't take long for W. Matt (Bud) Parr to figure out a road map to his future and build hotel Cabo San Lucas. Parr would eventually buy the Hacienda and double its size. Cabo was definitely on the map.

Ex-U.S. Air Force pilot Luis Coppola put up hotel Finisterra near the very end of the cape and Luis Bulnes quickly countered with hotel Solmar; Cabo was in the thick of the race for the tourist dollars.

Los Cabos would slumber for a few years while adjusting to the sobriquet "Tourist Destination". A peninsular highway, completed in 1974, opened the Peninsula to Middle America. When Los Cabos International Airport was expanded in 1986, Los Cabos' lure



reached deep into the United States and Canada and triggered the imagination of every citizen. Marlin fishing tournaments were drawing international acclaim by this time and non-fishermen and their ladies were discovering the sun, the beaches, and romantic star-bright nights while strolling "las playas del Mar de Cortes".

The past five years have witnessed the trebling of populations in San Jose del Cabo and Cabo San Lucas and has beheld a burgeoning growth in tourism as well. Condominiums Cabo Bello, Marina Sol and Terrasol, and hotels Melia Cabo San Lucas, Melia Cabo Real, Fiesta Inn, Howard Johnson, Calinda, Posada Real, and Plaza las Glorias were operational by 1990. Meanwhile in excess of 3,000 private residences were built for foreign vacationers and retirees.

Currently, four major golf course designers have finalized their fairway and green schematics and all courses are playable. International tournaments are scheduled and a number of airlines frequently service the area. Los Cabos, as a "Destinational Resort Area: with world wide impact, is NOW.

Hernan Cortes, a Conquistador, saw no profitable future in California. The modern day Conquistadors, on the other hand, conquers not with sword and musket, but with world class accommodations and service. Hernan plundered and ran. The modern Conquistadors reinvest. It's evident they've been doing just that in Los Cabos.

As you stroll down the beach and wonder at the magnificent seascape surrounding you, take a moment to remember Hernan; the short, short sighted fellow. . .who let the "big one" get away.

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