

A 2014 Bucket List of Luxury Events and Hotels

By Phil Butler

2014 has all the earmarks of being a sparkling year already. The Sochi Olympics coming in February, the FIFA World Cup coming to Brazil, Festa di Santa Francesca Romana in Rome, and an array of sun loving events and festivals worldwide, make for a difficult list of once in a lifetime experiences to choose from this year. This says nothing for the bucket list of fabulous accommodations out there to revel in.

To solve this point of hospitality pain, here's a short list of extraordinary hotels.

Phil Butler is editor of *Everything PR News*, a partner at hospitality PR firm *Pamil Visions*, and an editor/contributor to a number of travel media including *Travel Daily News*, *Epoch Times*, and others.



A lavish icon of neo-classical design, Grand Hotel & Spa Rodina is a unique bit of unexpected Russian luxury.

Sochi Winter Olympics: Grand Hotel & Spa Rodina

From February 6–23, the world arrives at the epic Russian resort on the Black Sea for the Winter Olympics. Those traveling to the compelling Krasnodar Krai region of Russia, where hundreds of thousands of Russians venture forth to sun and surf (and snow ski), most probably are aware of lavish luxury stays like Grand Hotel Rodina.

This majestic boutique hotel offers the most interesting combination of neo-classical design, combined with magnificent subtropical garden flavor, and ultra modern amenities—just describing the place is tasking to the author. Situated on 37 acres amid enormous cedars and delicate maple trees, the sea air mixed with scented rhododendron defies description or analysis. Impressive—that's the best way to think of this Russian landmark of hospitality.

Among the memorable amenities are the magnificent resort locale, the exquisite culinary art of it's Black Magnolia Restaurant, a world famous wine cellar, the chic LILI bar, the spa and pools and fitness center, movie theater, billiard room, and the library. If ever there were a hotel stay worth in excess of \$5,000 per night, the 2,099 square foot deluxe suite here is one of my choices for the ultimate bucket list. Second to that, the Junior Suites go for just over \$1,300, in case your "end all" Russian holiday has a budget.

Imagine your Olympic excursions to the seaside venues, then up the mountains to Krasnaya Polyana and the alpine events, then back down to this lush garden paradise.

ph: +7 (495) 644 - 44 - 99,
www.grandhotelrodina.ru



For those who imagine Emperor Napoleon III in an opulent apartment, the reality of his namesake hotel, the Residenza Napoleone III is no disappointment.

Festa di Primavera Mostra delle Azalee: Residenza Napoleone III

Spring comes early in Rome, and there's no better excuse to visit than the Azalea fest there. At this celebration of the rites of spring, millions of blossoms spring forth, while 3,000 vases of the beautiful flowers line the Spanish Steps. As for a place to stay you'll always remember, Residenza Napoleone III—it's unforgettable.

All set to satisfy your need for romantic Roman holiday experiences, La Residenza Napoleone III is a luxurious showplace you'd expect Cary Grant or even Brad Pitt to come waltzing out of. Situated in the XVI Century Palazzo Ruspoli on Rome's fabulous shopping street Via Condotti, this is the place to live your

aristocratic fantasies (or reality) out. In the historic city center, everything from designer shopping at Valentino, Bulgari, Armani, Ferragamo and more, to the Trevi Fountains, the Coliseum, and the Pantheon are right at hand.

Named for Emperor Napoleon III, who actually once lived here, the residence offers two distinct suites at the top of the grand marble staircase at its center. Either the Napoleon Suite or the Roof Garden Suite are imbued with a true sense of what the emperors of Rome must have experienced—the eternal city just beneath their feet. Rates at this lavish Rome residence range from \$2,600 for the Napoleon Suite with adjoining Blue Room, to \$1,000 per night for the Roof Garden Suite.

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Nestled in the Argentinean Andes, Hotel Aldebaran reminds one of Aspen, only shrouded in mystery.

Patagonia: Aldebaran Hotel

Patagonia, for those who've only heard tell of the region, is the place Magellan named for the people he found here, people he called giants for their tall stature compared to his men. The Tehuelche People were mysterious to early explorers, but no more interesting or mysterious than this remarkable place adjoining the Andes in the Southern hemisphere. The area of Patagonia, about twice the size of Texas, is far more diverse than the casual observer might think. The land of the gaucho, those immense cattle herds you've heard about—this exists too. Far from the rocky outcrop and frozen wasteland some might envision Patagonia's alpine wonderland, innumerable seaside paradises, and forested hills are unbelievable.

Set on a Peninsula at Nahuel Huapi Lake in the Andes, the famous (for Argentineans) vacation land of San Carlos de Bariloche is a stone's throw from the Aldebaran Hotel. Intimate and exclusive to the extreme, imbued with an old world meticulous tone, this lux-

urious and exotic bit of Argentine hospitality really needs no special occasion as an additional draw card. If you need such additional virtues for your "bucket list" getaways, the area has a myriad of sightseeing tours, boat trips in alpine splendor, shopping boutiques, and dozens of driving excursions.

As for the hotel itself, dining overlooking Nahuel Huapi Lake at SIRIUS Restaurant gives the taste of the finest Argentina has to offer gastronomically, just as the Aquarius Spa affords uncompromising relaxation and therapy. Like any five-star experience, there's no amenity overlooked at this 10-room distinctive nature-stay. You can expect to pay from around \$350 per night, which considering your surroundings is a bargain.

+54 0294 444 8678,
www.aldebaranpatagonia.com

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