

TOP UNUSUAL HOTELS OF THE WORLD - FOR ROMANCE



mention.

There is more to a romantic getaway than a bunch of roses and a run-of-the-mill hotel. With designer hotels increasingly perceived as over priced and all-to-common, couples looking for a bit of romantic sparkle are turning to Unusual hotels to provide a fantasy or a themed overnight stay with real WOW factor. Steve Dobson found a number of properties that stood out enough to merit special

Caesars Pocono Resorts

Some might be a little wary of the 7 foot high champagne glass jacuzzi's on offer at the Caesars Pocono Resorts properties in Pennsylvania, USA, but these rooms are very much in demand. Tucked away on a cove of Lake Wallenpaupack, Pennsylvania's largest man made lake, rooms have mirrored ceilings, heart shaped beds and baths for two. Offering cozy fireplaces, in-room pools and saunas they cater year-round for couples to enjoy a more glitzy, glamorous getaway. In addition to themed rooms, the resorts offer nightly on-site cabaret acts and concerts throughout the year. All-inclusive packages feature: all-you-can-eat breakfast and dinner, breakfast-in-bed, live nightly entertainment, social directed activities, and use of all indoor and outdoor facilities.

Caesars Pocono Resorts
Lakeville
Pennsylvania USA

Photo: (c) Caesars Pocono

Marqués de Riscal

Some couples may show their affection for a partner through an expensive dinner and night out. If wine and gourmet dining is to your romantic tastes, then you might want to consider hotel Marqués de Riscal in Elciego, Nr Bilbao in Spain. With a roofline of shimmering ribbons of pink, gold and silver titanium, this hotel was originally conceived as a 21st century wine chateau in the Rioja Alavesa grape growing region. It has been transformed into Frank O Gehry's only hotel project to date. Managed by Starwood Hotels and Resorts brand, "The Luxury Collection" Hotel Marqués de Riscal may appear a little out of the way, but is well worth the detour to take in the stunning design, fantastic food, wine and spa.

The food is by Michelin starred Francis Paniego, and as well as a stunning wine list there is also a wine themed spa providing wine therapy treatments using products made of grape extracts, created exclusively by Caudalíe Vinothérapie. It has been recognised with many awards for the treatments and venue.

Now you can see, drink and become beautified with Rioja grapes.

Many visitors will have arrived in Elciego from Bilbao (70 miles / 110Km) away, visiting this rejuvenated Basque city and home to the famous Guggenheim museum. Take the 'Ruta del Vino' tour by car to get a flavour of the region with regular tasting spots at smaller Rioja producers along the way.

Check out the special 150th Anniversary of the vineyard in October - with special offers, packages

and a gala dinner and auction on the weekend of the 24th October.

Hotel Marqués de Riscal
Elciego, Spain

Photo: Hotel Marqués de Riscal (c) A.Heras

Crane Hotel

If the thought of a romantic break makes your head spin with happiness, then the hotel to consider is the Crane hotel, in Harlingen, about an hour outside Amsterdam. The machine room of this dockside crane has been converted into a luxury love-nest for two, complete with luxury bathroom. Even though they've fitted a luxury double shower and designer loo, most exciting of all, you can still ascend to the crane drivers cab and spin the crane around and around! A fantastic breakfast is included, delivered magically via the internal lift to your bedroom.

Dromen aan Zee
Harlingen
The Netherlands

Photo: (c) Crane Hotel

The Enchanted Manor

Some romantic retreats are hidden gems and The Enchanted Manor in Niton Undercliff on the Isle of Wight, UK is just such an example. Run by Ric and Maggie Hilton, this magical boutique retreat was the 2008 Winner of the UK's Funkiest guest accommodation award. Offering a secluded hideaway for discerning guests fed up with the run of the mill accommodation, the property is decorated with the work of artist Josephine Wall. Suites have hand carved four poster beds and bathrooms with roll top baths for those that enjoy a relaxing soak.

Located in private gardens and woodlands on the Isle of Wight, winter visits might include a stroll to see the rugged coastline and view the famous St Catherine's lighthouse a few minutes walk away. Some of the best walks on the Island are nearby with stunning scenery, breathtaking countryside and sea views.

For meals, Maggie can provide a gourmet picnic to enjoy in the gardens or Aussie Ric, who knows all about barbeques, can arrange a pack of locally produced meat to cook on the BBQ provided.

The Enchanted Manor
St Catherine's point
Niton, Isle of Wight, UK

Photo: (c) The Enchanted Manor

Residenza del Arte

Italians are famous for their Latin passion. By combining a hotel dedicated to art with the landscape of Tuscany, Residenza del Arte provides a fantastic romance opportunity - even more so if you combine your visit with one of their escorted cookery or painting courses!

Each room is unique, enriched by art and sculpture. Wooden beams, fireplaces, arches, and old stone walls have been carefully restored to their original splendour and mingled with significant works of contemporary art and design in the grounds of the property. Situated in the town of Torrita

di Siena, a 14th century village a few kilometers from Siena, it rises majestically on a hill surrounded by cypresses and age-old olive trees. As soon as you go through the gate, you will appreciate the effort taken to convert this property into an artistic and poetic experience that combines the harmony of nature with bold, contemporary art. The combination makes the Residenza d'Arte a truly unusual and romantic place to stay.

Residenza d'Arte
Torrita Di Siena, Italy

Photo: (c) Residenza del Arte

About Unusual Hotels of the World

For over 5 years, this guide to over 150 of the worlds most Unusual Hotels has showcased properties from around the world in Lighthouses, Caves, Treehouses, Planes, Trains - even Underwater - with a unique WOW rating based on the feedback of around 3,000 daily visitors to their website. They have recently published a top rated Unusual Hotels of the World book, available from www.gounusual.com with 50 favorite properties, available in English, French, Italian and Spanish. For more details of the hotels suggested, comments and rating, check out their website www.unusualhotelsoftheworld.com

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