



TRAVELER

Published: April 2009 (condensed version)

Sense of Place

The hotels on our Stay List 2009 don't just reflect their surroundings—they help define them. What they all have in common is a transcendent vision that goes beyond traditional hotel-keeping. This mindset is what gives these hotels their special sense of place. Make no mistake: You'll sense the vibe at once. Maybe it's the regional architecture that speaks to you. Or a guest room resonating with history. Or local food that not only tastes great but tells a story to boot. After your stay, you'll leave with the kind of insight only soulful places can provide.

To find these hotels, *Traveler* tapped into the collected experiences of veteran journalists, inveterate road warriors, and local experts. They based their nominations on key criteria. Is the hotel engaged with the local community? Does it subscribe to sustainable practices that respect the region? Does it truly capture the spirit of its setting? Further research and detailed questionnaires winnowed hundreds of submissions down to this sweet list of 129 hotels.

There's something for everyone here, from wilderness cabins to urban lairs of luxury—all authentic, purposeful places to enhance your travels. Welcome to Stay List 2009. —*Charles Kulander*

[Napili Kai Beach Resort, Maui, Hawaii](#)

Old-school resort with contagious Kahuna spirit. No building higher than a palm tree, private lanais with blue-water panoramas, reefs off crescent sand beach aswirl with polychromatic fish. Daily cultural presentations, including weekly slack-key-guitar concerts. Runs foundation to perpetuate Hawaiiiana among local keiki (kids), who stage weekly programs for guests. 163 rooms; from \$230.

© 2009 National Geographic Society. All rights reserved.