

The Hotel Book: Great Escapes Asia

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My favourite travel agent cycled through Central Asia and Tibet with a six-month old baby in the days when this was possible. She now goes to remote parts and liaises with local groups so that unspoilt marvels can be seen by day. The exotic taverns and hostelries have long since disappeared. At night, travellers return to a reasonable facsimile of what they have at home — hot and cold running water, a flushing toilet and not too many bugs or reptiles. “Soon everywhere will be like everywhere else,” she warns. At the opposite end of the spectrum, in terms of accommodation, are the unimaginably grand private homes and palaces converted to house tourists that the Taschen team with their usual verve have found for this book. In addition to the exceptional beauty and originality of hotels such as the Dwarika in Kathmandu and the Count de Mauny’s retreat on Taprobane Island, the staff know how to protect guests from some of the horrors of visiting a world-renowned historic site. If you can afford them, go there now.