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JOURNEYS HOTELS

Aman Canal
Grande Venice

Four Seasons Hotel Lion
Palace St. Petersburg

J.K. Place
Roma

The Langham,
Chicago

The Ritz-
Carlton, Kyoto

Shangri-La Bosphorus
Hotel, Istanbul

Aman Canal Grande Venice

ESTABLISHING A NEW
HIGH-WATER MARK IN VENICE.

FOR ITS FIRST hotel in Italy, the Singapore-based Amanresorts selected a 16th-century Venetian palazzo owned by Count Giberto Arrivabene Valenti Gonzaga and his wife, Countess Bianca di Savoia Aosta Arrivabene. The palace—located in Venice's San Polo district, just a short gondola ride from the Rialto Bridge—underwent a painstaking 18-month refurbishment that included restoring hundreds of original frescoes, murals, sculptures, and chandeliers to their former splendor. The finished product, which opened



last June as the Aman Canal Grande Venice, marks a magnificent departure for Amanresorts and sets a new standard for Venetian hotels.

Guests arrive at the Aman via boat, disembarking on a private pier that leads to a palatial reception hall where Gothic-style iron lanterns hang from vaulted ceilings. A grand staircase adorned with trompe l'oeil murals takes guests up to the elegant piano nobile, an ornately decorated floor with gilded cornices, marble putti figurines on the walls, and expansive terraces that overlook the canals.

Amanresorts' typically minimalist

aesthetic is not entirely absent from the hotel. In the 24 guest rooms, interiors by Jean-Michel Gathy feature *wenge*-wood furnishings by B&B Italia and floor-to-ceiling windows that complement such lavish adornments as Rubelli silks and Murano chandeliers. Five signature accommodations include the Alcova Tiepolo Suite, with its ceiling painting by the 18th-century baroque artist Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, and the Sansovino Stanza, which includes a fireplace designed by the 16th-century architect Jacopo d'Antonio Sansovino.

The Aman Canal Grande Venice's

gastronomic experiences take place in the piano nobile's Red and Yellow dining rooms—named for the colorful silks lining each room's walls—and offer the choice between Thai and Venetian cuisine. Following a dinner of stir-fried fish with red chile or black squid-ink risotto, guests can retire to the salon, bar, or wood-paneled library for an aperitif. Predinner drinks are best enjoyed at the hotel's *altana*, or rooftop terrace, set high above the canals and crowds of the city. (\$1,588–\$5,040) —DANIEL SCHEFFLER

Aman Canal Grande Venice,
+39.041.2707333, www.amanresorts.com

SET ON THE Bosphorus strait, at the crossroads of Asia and Europe, the **Shangri-La Bosphorus Hotel, Istanbul** (+90.212.275.8888, www.shangri-la.com), blends the best of East and West. The hotel, which the Hong Kong-based Shangri-La Group unveiled last May, occupies a newly built neoclassical-style structure on the European side of the Turkish city. The property displays more than 1,000 pieces of European and Asian art, including





The Ritz-Carlton, Kyoto

a 59-foot-long Chinese silk painting and a Bohemian crystal chandelier. Inside the 186 guest rooms, bespoke furnishings in understated blue and beige tones create a modern ambience; 17 suites, most with private terraces, provide the best views of the Bosphorus. Istanbul's duality is most pronounced at the hotel's Ist Too, which serves sushi, Cantonese fare, and Mediterranean cuisine in various dining areas. The Chi Spa offers relaxing Balinese therapies, an authentic Turkish hammam, and a Roman-bath-style pool. (\$380–\$2,575) —CYNTHIA ROSENFELD

THE TRADITIONAL JAPANESE inn, or *ryokan*, takes a contemporary turn at the new **Ritz-Carlton, Kyoto** (+81.75.746.5555, www.ritzcarlton.com). The 134-room property, which opened in the former imperial capital in February, sets an authentic scene with meditative waterfalls, *washi* paper artwork, bonsai gardens, and other elements of the Meiji architectural style. More international in flavor are the hotel's amenities, among them an Italian restaurant, a French patisserie, and a seven-treatment-room spa. Guests retire to one of the establishment's

134 rooms, which are adorned with calligraphic artworks and blessed with floor-to-ceiling views of the Kamo River and the Higashiyama mountain range. For a true *ryokan* experience, dine on traditional *kaiseki* cuisine at the Ritz-Carlton's Mizuki restaurant. (\$730–\$10,000) —D.S.

J.K. Place Roma (+39.06.982.634, www.jkroma.com) is the third property in the Italian hotelier Ori Kafri's J.K. group, whose chic hideaways in Florence and Capri have garnered a loyal following in recent years.



J.K. Place Roma



Four Seasons Hotel Lion Palace St. Petersburg


Opened in September, Kafri's Roman retreat is set in a 19th-century former architecture school with an enviable location in the city's historic center, just west of the Spanish Steps. The property's 30 rooms and suites, designed by the Florentine architect Michele Bönan, are a luxuriant blend of bespoke furnishings, custom artworks, and carefully selected antiques. A bistro, a library, and a sky-lit lobby share the same modern-meets-vintage scheme. Should such fashionable interiors inspire visitors to embark on a Roman shopping spree, the boutiques of Via dei Condotti are just a short stroll away. (\$975–\$2,800)

—ANDREW SESSA

THE WORLD'S ONLY hotel to occupy a Ludwig Mies van der Rohe–designed building, the new **Langham, Chicago** (312.923.9988, www.langhamhotels.com), is a worthy tribute to the great Bauhaus architect. Debuted in September in an imposing glass tower along the Chicago River, the hotel abounds with appropriate touches, including Mies-inspired furnishings designed by the luminary's grandson, Dirk Lohan of the Chicago-based firm Lohan Anderson. The 316-room property—which occupies the first 13 floors of the 52-story tower—breaks with form at times, as in the plush-carpeted guest rooms and suites and the Eastern-inspired Chuan Spa. The

David Rockwell–designed Travalle restaurant serves as the hotel's most authentic interpretation of Bauhaus, with glass walls, clean lines, and minimalist wood-and-metal furnishings. (\$295–\$6,000) —BECCA HENSLEY

FOLLOWING NEARLY A decade of renovations, the **Four Seasons Hotel Lion Palace St. Petersburg** (+7.812.339.8000, www.fourseasons.com) opened last July as the Russian city's premier address. The five-story hotel—first constructed in the early 19th century as an apartment building for Russian nobility—is located in the heart of St. Petersburg: along the Neva River, adjacent to St. Isaac's Cathedral, and a short walk from the State Hermitage Museum. Of the 157 rooms and 26 suites, the 1,636-square-foot Lobanov Presidential Suite—named for the palace's original owners, Prince and Princess Lobanov-Rostovsky—best preserves the property's imperial provenance, with a sprawling marble bathroom and a garden terrace overlooking the historic Admiralty Tower. The regal guest experience at the hotel is facilitated by a team of guides and concierges who can arrange private tours of the city's famed museums and procure last-minute tickets to the ballet and opera houses. (\$342–\$14,325)

—BAILEY S. BARNARD 



The Langham, Chicago