

STAYS OF THE UNION

It's been a stellar year of boutique hotel openings in the United States. Here, we select eight standouts that showcase classic American dynamism.



**1 HOTEL CENTRAL PARK
NEW YORK**

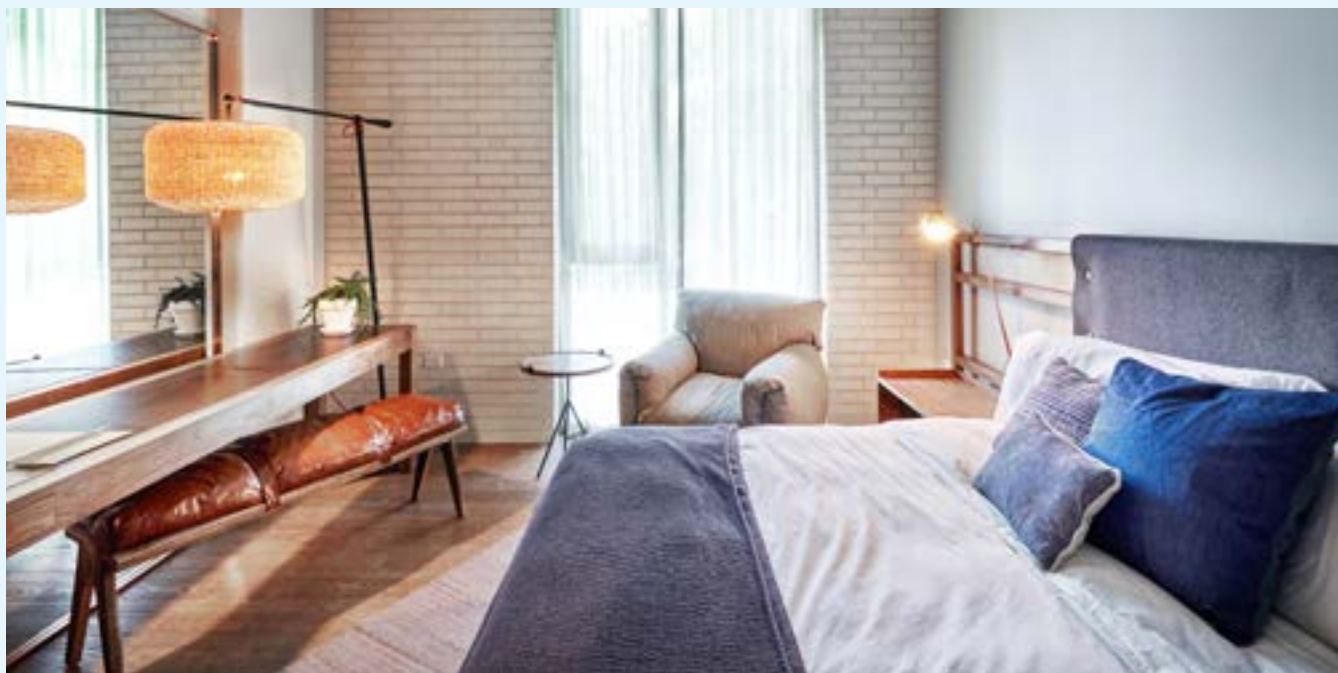
For the second outpost of 1 Hotels, the flourishing dynasty of stylish, sustainable properties that became an instant hit after debuting last year in South Beach, hotelier Barry Sternlicht chose New York—specifically a corner location one block from the city’s green heart, Central Park. Refurbishing an old Manhattan building presents myriad tripwires, so you can imagine Avroko’s reaction when the local studio was told they had to apply an adaptive reuse process to the design that maintains a negative carbon footprint. “That complex tangle of existing structure and new functionality requires a careful study of the floor plans in order to make sure the guest experience and brand vision are upheld throughout the design,” says Adam Farmerie of Avroko. Adds one of his partners, William Harris: “It was actually less of a challenge finding eco-focused materials; rather, delivering on 1 Hotel’s other cornerstone—luxury—while still ensuring the materials were environmentally sound

was tricky.” The solution: a little bit of design jujitsu, turning the rough elements—natural wood headboards made from New York City water towers, existing terracotta blocks—into artful finishes. Yes, there are hippyish nuances such as hemp Keetsa mattresses, terrariums, and five-minute hourglasses in the shower that give guests a gentle reminder about wasting water, but it never feels preachy. In case there’s any doubt about the brand’s fusion of scene and sustainability, just head to Jonathon Waxman’s reincarnated ’80s restaurant Jams, where the Barbuto chef turns out a rustic, farm-focused menu. It anchors the lobby, where a living art piece by Brooklyn’s Sprout Home adorns a wall. Say the words and a provided chauffeur awaits, though not in a Bentley. How about a Tesla? *1hotels.com* —Nate Storey

(THIS PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM) A room number made of nails. A bed with a natural wood headboard. (OPPOSITE) The lobby lounge.



PHOTOS: COURTESY 1 HOTELS.



(TOP TO BOTTOM) The No Sé café. A guestroom at South Congress Hotel.

SOUTH CONGRESS HOTEL AUSTIN, TEXAS

For sozzled college kids, SoCo is an abbreviation for the sugary liqueur Southern Comfort. In Austin, it's short for South Congress, a hip, evolving neighborhood near the Texan capital city's center. For a district that was once known for its seedy, pay-by-the-hour motels, the new South Congress Hotel is a symbol of how far it's come in an era when the annual SXSW festival turned Austin into a destination for movie moguls and the young pirates of Silicon Valley. At 83 rooms, 12 of which are suites, the hotel is a paradigm of actual Southern comfort. This, according to the hotel's designer, Milo Garcia, was the goal. "We had a very specific trajectory," says Garcia, a principal of the Los Angeles based Studio MAI. "One that aimed to achieve a humble, approachable feeling that is characteristic of Austin." For him, that means an aesthetic that's rugged, elegant, and minimal. An earthiness pervades the interiors, from the walls to the custom furniture and linens, with the liberal deployment of stitched leathers, reclaimed woods, denims, and unfinished metals. The rooftop pool bar is lined with wood-framed loungers and basketball hoop-shaped canopies; the sunset views of the Colorado River are befitting of a Technicolor Western. Despite the buzz around chef Paul Qui's highly anticipated 12-seat omakase restaurant, Otoko, a make-yourself-at-home vibe runs throughout. The meat-forward café, No Sé, is casual; the rooms come with access to free flicks from local Draffhouse Films; and the street-level vintage motorcycle shop is pure Texas. southcongresshotel.com —Charles Curkin

PHOTOS: COURTESY SOUTH CONGRESS HOTEL

HOTEL EMMA AT THE PEARL SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Is it an overstatement to say that design firm Roman and Williams is the singular origin of the interior trends that characterize New York's (hell, America's) hospitality sector right now? That they're behind so many of Manhattan's holiest buzz centers—the Ace Hotel, Lafayette, and the Dutch, to name just a few—suggests it's not. Their aesthetic, a meeting point of Americana and modernism, seems to have become the de-facto approach for any upscale upstart trying to make it in the city's here-today-gone-tomorrow milieu. This month, though, that style departs for the West, when Hotel Emma opens in San Antonio. The space is part of The Pearl, a development that includes high-end apartments, a farmers market, and campus of the Culinary Institute of America, all on the site of a historic brewery. Named after Emma Koehler, whose husband built the bottling plant in 1894—and who, lore has it, kept it open during prohibition—the expansive project has 146 rooms, a restaurant, a rooftop pool, a cocktail bar, and a 19-foot-ceilinged event venue outfitted with repurposed brewing tanks and chandeliers made of 1920s German bottle labelers. Though R&W is up to its usual tricks—leather and dark woods add ambiance to exposed concrete; handmade Spanish porcelain tiles and brass accents punctuate the rooms—there's a deep connection to The Pearl's heritage. The prerequisite reclaimed wood comes from the building itself, and the cement tile floor was rehabbed using remnants of the original. How's that for authenticity? thehotelemma.com —Hally Wolhandler

(TOP TO BOTTOM) A guestroom at Hotel Emma. A bathroom with brass accents.



PHOTOS: COURTESY HOTEL EMMA



**L'HORIZON HOTEL AND SPA
PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA**

Designer Steve Hermann, known for his work with top-tier celebrity homes, brought a once star-studded Palm Springs outpost back onto the A-List when he opened L'Horizon last spring. The hotel sits in the bones of a 1952 William F. Cody property, spanning four-acres, and is a former hideaway for the Hollywood and Washington elite (Marilyn Monroe and the Reagans stayed there). Inside the original shell of seven midcentury bungalows, the 25 rooms were given a \$5 million dollar facelift after falling into neglect. Hermann broke the typical mold of uniformly dressed hotel rooms and decorated each as an independent space. Though the suites retain their own distinct flair—a slump-stone wall here, Percival Lafer chair there—a cohesive thread runs throughout each one with

elements like geometrically-patterned curtains, vintage furniture, and crisp Frette bed linens. Each low-lying structure showcases views of the San Jacinto Mountains and floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors that open to private patios equipped with Planika fire pits, manicured cacti gardens, and marble vanities in the bathrooms (complimentary foot and back massages are a call away). Other touches, like original artwork, copper-crowned fireplaces, and an infinity-edge pool accentuate the rustic setting in the California desert. The newest addition: The Sopa restaurant by chef Giacomo Pettinari, who cut his teeth at Spain's world famous El Bulli, opened in September with a live-edge walnut communal table and Lindsey Adelman-designed chandeliers. lhorizonpalmsprings.com—Courtney Kenefick

A copper fireplace inside a bungalow. (OPPOSITE FROM TOP) A wood-ceiling room with a private pool. The exterior of a bungalow.



PHOTOS: JIM BARTSCH

**QUIRK HOTEL
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA**



Richmond's arts district was an eyesore of crumbling infrastructure and panhandling vagabonds when Ted and Katie Ukrop opened their Broad Street concept shop and art exhibition space, Quirk Gallery, in 2005. Ten years later, the neighborhood has become ground zero for the city's creative movement, with recording studios, Southern-style gastropubs, indie-label fashion boutiques, and now, the new Quirk Hotel. "The gallery has always operated with that principle in mind: To bring attention back to Broad Street and re-establish this area as a major destination," Katie says. Inside the facade of the erstwhile 1916 J.B. Mosby & Co. department store, the 74 rooms enunciate the building's past as well as local talent with original pine floors and bed frames crafted from repurposed 100-year-old wood joists, offset by bright paintings and pink resin ice buckets. In the lobby, soaring segmental arches and a groin vault ceiling house artworks like Chris Milk's life-size tin men cyclists and a massive installation by Susie Ganch called "Pile," an assemblage of upcycled coffee cup lids, lipstick imprints and all, from nearby cafes. On a recent Sunday afternoon in the

lobby, the Ukrop's decade-long mission to bring some magic to Broad Street was on full display. The developer of an app called Coffitivity shuffled from the attached gallery space, to the barista counter that serves cult roaster Blanchard's, to his laptop resting on a plush midcentury sofa. Brunch-goers tucked into toasted avocado hash at chef David Dunlap's restaurant, Maple & Pine. Even Harry Potter (yes, Daniel Radcliffe) whisked himself into an elevator. "The local art scene gets richer every year with more imaginative and creative people moving to town who are making huge contributions to Richmond's culture," Katie says. "We've established some really strong connections with amazing artists and will continue to exhibit their work at the gallery; hopefully, the hotel will give them a broader audience." Case in point: the studio around the corner, where the hotel's first artist-in-residence, paperist Leigh Suggs, is completing a six-month residency. Before she's done, one of her pieces will join the property's permanent collection. destinationhotels.com —N.S.



(TOP TO BOTTOM) A guestroom at the Quirk Hotel. A desk.

**THE DURHAM
NORTH CAROLINA**



For the uninitiated, Durham may recall images of airport layovers, Duke University hoops, tobacco smoke, and Kevin Costner wooing Susan Sarandon. These days, the central North Carolina city has been crawling toward relevance, specifically downtown. Real-estate developers have descended from high and low, leaving in their wake a bevy of trendy bars, offices, loft apartments, and art spaces. Banked in the middle of it all, on East Chapel Hill Street, is the 53-room Durham Hotel, which occupies the former Mutual Community Savings Bank, a building that dates back to 1969. The hotel's viscera is a bright explosion of midcentury modern designs—deep reds, yellows, and caramel tones throughout—by Los Angeles interiors outfit Commune, though a local style prevails. The rooms are appointed with custom Raleigh Denim blankets. James Beard Award winner Andrea Reusing of Chapel Hill's acclaimed Lantern helms the restaurant. Staff uniforms are made with materials produced at a Greensboro mill. But the lobby, with its black-and-white scalene triangle tiles, is the hotel's purely hypnotic piece de resistance. Its design, according to the developers, is reflective of both the historic integrity of the building and its period. In addition to that, the National Design Award-winning team looked to the Black Mountain College in nearby Asheville for inspiration. Sometimes all it takes to elevate a small town's status is a stylish hotel. thedurham.com —C.C.



PHOTOS: COURTESY QUIRK HOTEL.

PHOTOS: COURTESY THE DURHAM.

(TOP TO BOTTOM) The Durham's exterior. The lobby and reception desk.

(TOP TO BOTTOM) The Rivertown Lodge's lobby. The library. (OPPOSITE, TOP TO BOTTOM) A guestroom. The front desk.



**RIVERTOWN LODGE
HUDSON VALLEY, NEW YORK**

Situated in a former 1920s movie house, the just-opened Rivertown Lodge reflects the sleepy-no-more state of its hometown. Located in Hudson, about 120 miles north of Manhattan, the cozy hotel celebrates the region's aesthetic—the valley is renowned for its antique shops—but that doesn't mean it's solely folksy. Like its surrounding streets, which include an in-the-works museum by artist Marina Abramovic, an annex office for e-commerce site Etsy (which is headquartered in Brooklyn), and several storefront galleries, the 27-room lodge speaks to the town's city-dwelling, culturally-in-the-know visitors. Designed by Brooklyn-based firm Workstead, which also did the Wythe Hotel in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and co-founded by Ray Pirkle, whose résumé includes stints working for Grandlife Hotels and Ian Schrager, the property would seem just as much at home in the city (save for the stovepipe fireplace). Interior elements include tables created by Sawkille, a furniture company in nearby Rhinebeck; custom-made beds and lighting by Workstead; and vintage side chairs. Mixologists Natasha David and Jeremy Oertel are behind the cocktail list and Jean Adamson of Brooklyn restaurant Vinegar Hill House does the seasonal menus. Almost like a “living room” for the town—at least that's how Pirkle sees it—the two-story space features a kitchen and espresso bar in the lobby, as well as a communal dinner table for the urban refugees. rivertownlodge.com —Spencer Bailey



PHOTOS: EMMA TUCCILLO.

THE BORO HOTEL
LONG ISLAND CITY, NEW YORK

Hotels are neighborhood barometers, whether marking the moment that an area's gentrification is inexorable or reflecting the most current demographic through its clientele. Take Long Island City in Queens, where the new Boro Hotel—across the street from a Sheraton, in close proximity to a Ramada Inn and Best Western, and a few blocks from the 7 train to Times Square—suggests that the borough has started attracting a new crop of travelers who won't be spending their vacation in the vicinity of the Naked Cowboy. The first foray into hospitality for a group of five siblings, Boro takes advantage of the area's industrial roots and Manhattan views, and infuses it with Scandinavian cool while adding enough color to keep it from being too serious. As principal designer Matthew Grzywinski of local firm Grzywinski + Pons says, the goal was to achieve a sweet spot of "happy and minimal." Where playful accent lighting from brands like Plumen and Muuto and floral tile patterns soften concrete flooring, not to mention views of surrounding warehouses, it does. The Boro notably eschews overt hotel markers: there's no formal reception desk, just a table where friendly employees sit inconspicuously at laptops, ready to check you in (once you figure that out, they're quite helpful). Absent are in-room minibars, although the staff is happy to bring one up à la carte. A bar is planned for the rooftop deck, and the restaurant, a French-American bistro, opens in early 2016. Spend a morning scoping out the lively scene at the complimentary breakfast bar—proof that Long Island City really can draw a cool international crowd. *borohotel.com* —H.W.



(TOP TO BOTTOM) A guestroom desk.
 A bed. (OPPOSITE) The reception area.



PHOTOS: FLOTO + WARNER.