

# Condé Nast Traveller

DECEMBER 2018

THE EDITORS' LIST

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sunshine

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# CRUNCH TIME



All pictures: Blackberry Farm

The American spa scene kicked off the idea of hardcore fitness followed by turbo massages in the 1970s. The big players have done well, but they've also stood still. In Europe, meanwhile, the hi-tech medispa has grabbed the headlines and Asia's holistic retreats are increasingly refined. Now the USA is fighting back, with two top properties branching out into adventure-wellness and its coolest gym brand backflipping into hotels.

## BLACKBERRY MOUNTAIN, TENNESSEE

Tennessee's slow pace and the Great Smoky Mountains' pure air are a natural detox, but 5,200-acre Blackberry Farm, in Walland, has built its stellar reputation on foodie rather than cardio excellence. New outpost Blackberry Mountain shifts that balance, with guests climbing trees and scaling rocks. Its two restaurants serve food foraged from the foothills, and you have to hike to lunch at the Firetower, built around the original lookout station. Yoga is practised in silk hammocks, body wraps use Smoky Mountain clay and cottages have outdoor fireplaces. *Opens February 2019; blackberrymountain.com*

## EQUINOX HOTELS, NEW YORK

The gym is the new lobby, according to fitness brand Equinox, the Prada of the exercise world, as it prepares to open its first hotel. The 200-room property in Manhattan's Hudson Yards, the West Side's most up-and-coming neighbourhood, will house the largest Equinox Club yet, with temporary membership rights for high-performance guests keen to keep up with their HIIT classes while away. The company takes design seriously, employing historians and horticulturalists to ensure architectural harmony at its 93 gyms worldwide, and sees bedrooms as a natural extension of post-workout relaxation zones. Equinox makes quality sleep a priority, capitalising on its successful meditation podcasts. *Opens May 2019; equinox.com*

## MIRAVAL AUSTIN, TEXAS

Miraval's flagship Arizona address has been a byword for spiritual self-discovery for years. Now, at its latest offshoot in the Texas Hill Country, the legendary spa teams up with Outward Bound Professional to test guests' mettle with a Tough Mudder-rivalling ropes course, a climbing wall and the 'quantum leap' off a 25-foot pole (don't worry, you're attached). Elsewhere, this newcomer sticks to Miraval's winning script: yoga, mindfulness, therapeutic massage, horse-whispering and classic minimalist rooms. Its location in a wildlife refuge overlooking Lake Travis, 20 miles north-west of Austin, makes high-energy hiking and biking a no-brainer. *Opens December 2018; miravalaustrin.com* JANE WALKER



## WHAT'S TAKING OFF AND WHAT'S RUNNING OUT OF FUEL

### ARRIVALS

#### ARTY MEXICO

Pretty San Miguel de Allende has been named the Americas' Capital of Culture for 2019 by an international panel, making Mexico the country with the most such capitals. To avoid the inevitable crowds, head to less-visited Guanajuato nearby.

#### AIRPORT HOTELS

The new Felix brings retro style to Sydney Airport, with witty neon signs and Sixties-inspired furniture. At JFK, the golden age of air travel will return when a cool, Jetsons-esque TWA Hotel opens in 2019.

#### STAYING AHEAD

Following El Bulli's bowling-out template – shutting up shop when global number one – Ryan Chetiyawardan will be closing Dandelyan, recently voted the world's best bar, at the year's end.

### DEPARTURES

#### EXTRA LEGROOM

New woes for frequent fliers who don't turn left – some airlines are scrapping premium economy, that category between business and no-frills-at-all cattle class. JetBlue has just joined American and Delta with a bare-bones fare.

#### GAP YEARS

Work-savvy millennial school leavers are now squeezing that year-long find-yourself exercise into a month-long 'micro-gap'.

#### MOUNTAIN AIR

Even though less than one per cent of China's population currently skis, the world's largest indoor ski resort will be built in Shanghai before Beijing hosts the 2022 Winter Olympic Games. There will be three slopes, après-ski bars and an ice hotel. But no crisp blue skies. REBECCA HUMPHRIES