

BEST RESORT  
IN  
NORTH, CENTRAL &  
SOUTH AMERICA



Four Seasons Resort Costa Rica.

The Gallivanter's Guide<sup>®</sup>  
Award for Excellence 2005

*Lyn Middlehurst*

Lyn Middlehurst, Editor/Publisher

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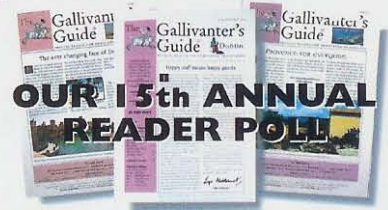
David Maslin, Managing Director



The



# Gallivanter's Guide<sup>®</sup>



IDYLIC PLACES FOR DEDICATED TRAVELLERS

## The 2005 Gallivanter's Awards for Excellence.

**C**an you keep up with all the new hotel and resort openings? We certainly can't. Despite the fact that we travel every month, the seemingly endless crop of up-scale properties continues to overtake us. Interestingly, though, few hoteliers appear to be truly in touch with what the discerning guest now requires. Understanding what is needed in spas, for instance, appears to be beyond even the most elevated of hotel management companies. They are still building too few treatment rooms, and most continue to resemble cell-like boxes. Few comprehend that every spa room should have a wow factor and that a stylish reception area is merely the beginning of the journey.

High-end hotels also fail to realise that the 21st Century is a 'suite world'. New hotels continue to concentrate on building standard twins and doubles, when what they should be doing is building more suites with interconnecting rooms. Invariably, the majority of new properties has to create extra suites post-opening, which is a terrible waste of investors' money. Why not get it right in the first

place?

Meanwhile, many of you who write to me regularly do not, it seems, take time to vote, whereas those of you whom I never hear from, tend to vote religiously every year. I have often suspected that the whole concept of hotel awards was skewed, for in order to gain an accurate picture of what up-scale guests really appreciate, you would have to invade everyone's homes for an hour or so of in-depth research! Equally, focus groups are most unlikely to tell you the truth, but will, invariably, opt for the status quo, or deliberately disagree with every new idea you present.

The thing is, a genuinely new hotel concept requires courage. It takes courage for the owner to invest in something that has not been done before, and it takes courage from the management company, who worries about filling the rooms. It also takes courage from the General Manager, who often arrives on what is just a building site, sans family, sans home and, in some cases, sans bank account. Despite all this, some astoundingly good hotels are opening across the world, and

many of our old favourites are running just to stand still; refurbishing, renovating and, in some cases, innovating.

As the world's most experienced guests, hailing from 42 countries, which span from Europe and the Americas, to Russia, Asia and Australia, you never cease to surprise me, but hopefully we keep up with you better than most, realising that you are quite likely to check out of a resort if the satellite weather forecast predicts rain, and that an inaccessible resort is not inaccessible if you have your own jet.

At the end of the day, you appreciate the little things. Like me, you ceased to be impressed with bottles of vintage Champagne long ago. Nowadays, it is the thoughtfulness of staff that counts; the comfort of your bed, the quality of the restaurant produce. You are not difficult to please, but you do demand the best, and that, I hope, is why you continue to support what we do.

*Lyn Middlehurst*  
Editor/Publisher

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READ BY THE WORLD'S TOP TRAVELLERS IN 42 COUNTRIES, SINCE 1991.

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## BEST CITY HOTEL IN NORTH, CENTRAL & SOUTH AMERICA.

1. Four Seasons Hotel New York	31.5%
2. Mandarin Oriental New York	10.5%
3. The Peninsula Beverly Hills	9.5%
4. Four Seasons Hotel Chicago	8%
=5. The Ritz-Carlton Central Park New York	5%
=5. Four Seasons Hotel San Francisco	5%

**M**andarin are creeping up steadily, now at second place and with 3% more votes than last year. Four Seasons, though, have not only retained top slot, but have also upped their percentage from 29% to 31.5%. The ever popular Pen has also moved up a slot, as has the consistently superlative Four Seasons Chicago; but the big surprise is the complete absence this year of the New York St. Regis, and the inclusion in this category of newcomer, Four Seasons San Francisco, which readers appear to like as much as we did.



Suite #3207, at Four Seasons Hotel New York.

## BEST RESORT IN NORTH, CENTRAL & SOUTH AMERICA.

1. Four Seasons Resort Costa Rica at Peninsula Papagayo	9.5%
2. Montage Resort & Spa, Laguna Beach, California	6.5%
=3. Four Seasons Resort Hualalai, Hawaii	4.5%
=3. The Point Saranac Lake, NY	4.5%

exotic setting, General Manager, Luis Argote's excellent hospitality, the superb service, top notch cuisine, magnificent golf (with pesticide-free grass!) and 37 gorgeous suites, especially those with plunge pools. Other readers are equally enamored of the oh-so-chic Montage Resort on Laguna Beach, whilst the Hawaii regulars are big Hualalai fans, although many are curious to see what Four Seasons can do with Manele Bay on Lana'i. Finally, the get-away-from-it-all, 11-room, Adirondack escape, The Point, returns to these pages after a long absence.



Rave reports for Four Seasons Resort Costa Rica.

**I**n this category, most of the votes emanated from North American readers, who have raved to me in e-mails about Four Seasons Costa Rica; its

## BEST CITY HOTEL IN EUROPE/AFRICA/MIDDLE EAST.

1. Four Seasons Hotel George V, Paris	47.5%
2. Four Seasons Hotel Milan	7.5%
3. Claridge's, London	6.5%

**I**sometimes think that those readers who write to me praising particular hotels are not those readers who vote in these awards, although I must admit that when it comes to Four Seasons George V, just about everybody sings its praises, and deservedly so. I wonder, though, why all

those readers who loved, say, Soho Hotel in London or Bvlgari in Milan did not send in their voting forms. The voters this year went instead for the traditional Grandes Dames in all their glory; a loyal following raising Four Seasons Milan from fourth place last year, to second. The Lanesborough in London disappeared entirely, whilst Claridge's, now owned by Quinlan and operated by their Maybourne Hotel Group, shot up in your estimation, and returned once again to these pages. Sadly, nothing else scored sufficient votes to be counted this year.



Individually designed suites at Four Seasons Hotel George V, Paris.