

10 top colonial hotels in the Asia-Pacific

1

▼ RAFFLES, SINGAPORE

The Lion City has more than its fair share of swanky hotels, but only one can lay claim to being an icon of colonialism: Raffles Hotel. For a considerable outlay, you'll get opulent rooms with four-metre-high ceilings, designer boutiques on your doorstep, and the best Singapore Sling in town (presumably, since they invented it). Plus, local lore has it that the island's last wild tiger was shot here.

Raffles Hotel, Central, Singapore
www.raffles.com
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Raffles Hotel



North Bundaleer

4

▲ NORTH BUNDALEER, AUSTRALIA

With a mere four rooms to spare, what 100-odd-year-old North Bundaleer lacks in size it more than makes up for in elegant carpets, exotic antiques, freestanding baths, and preposterously friendly service. On the edge of the Outback, the hotel commands exceptional views of the surrounding gardens and countryside. The best part: this is Australia; smart casual will do just fine, mate.

North Bundaleer, Clare Valley Wine Region, South Australia
www.northbundaleer.com.au
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5

► GALLE FACE, SRI LANKA

A marvel of fine Victorian architecture dating back to 1864, the "GFH", as the locals call it, is the primo of plush in the heart of Colombo. Over the years, Nehru, Nixon and Hirohito have all experienced the frangipani perfumes and sophisticated creak of teakwood. All the grandeur of colonial Ceylon, the capital's largest saltwater pool, and wi-fi access: what's not to like?

Galle Face Hotel, Colombo, Sri Lanka
www.gallefacehotel.com
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► CORSTORPHINE HOUSE, NEW ZEALAND

Guests have only been inspecting the fine chandeliers of this leafy mansion overlooking Dunedin harbour since 1998; it had been a private residence for nearly 150 years before that. Choose between eight tantalising themed rooms: Indian, Moroccan, Art Deco, Egyptian, Scandinavian, French, Japanese – and Scottish. Well, the chap who built it was Scottish, you see.

Corstorphine House, Dunedin, New Zealand
www.corstorphine.co.nz
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2

▼ THE PENINSULA, HONG KONG

With its fleet of Rolls Royces and exquisite rooms oozing European elegance, the Peninsula is a defining structure on Kowloon's southern tip. Whether you're in the original building from 1928 or the modern adjoining tower (complete with Philippe Starck-designed restaurant), you'll get an in-room plasma TV, fabulous service, and that all-important harbour view.

The Peninsula Hotel, Hong Kong

www.peninsula.com

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The Peninsula

7

EASTERN & ORIENTAL, MALAYSIA

In a prime spot along Penang's George Town oceanfront, the Eastern & Oriental is every inch the grand old dame of imperial charm. There's a nifty 24-hour butler service and a spacious outdoor pool with gorgeous sea views. You'll find a British pub on site too, serving classy ploughman's lunch and steak and kidney pie. Paradise.

Eastern & Oriental Hotel, Penang, Malaysia

www.e-o-hotel.com

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Corstorphine House

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BARON, SYRIA

With 40 charismatic rooms that have serviced the likes of Theodore Roosevelt, Lawrence of Arabia and Julie Christie, the Baron Hotel in magnificent Aleppo is the ideal way to kick back after a strenuous day at the *souk*. It's eccentric and it's ludicrously priced – just US\$60 for a double. The same family who opened its doors in 1909 are still running it today.

The Baron Hotel, Aleppo, Syria

Tel: +963-21-2110-881

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THE MAJESTIC SAIGON, VIETNAM

A Vietnam War-era hangout for spies and foreign correspondents – presumably those with more sophisticated tastes – this French colonial beacon of elegance dates back to the 1920s. A new wing was tacked on a few years ago, adding 50-odd rooms and a luxurious spa. Catherine Deneuve would surely approve.

Hotel Majestic Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

www.majesticsaigon.com

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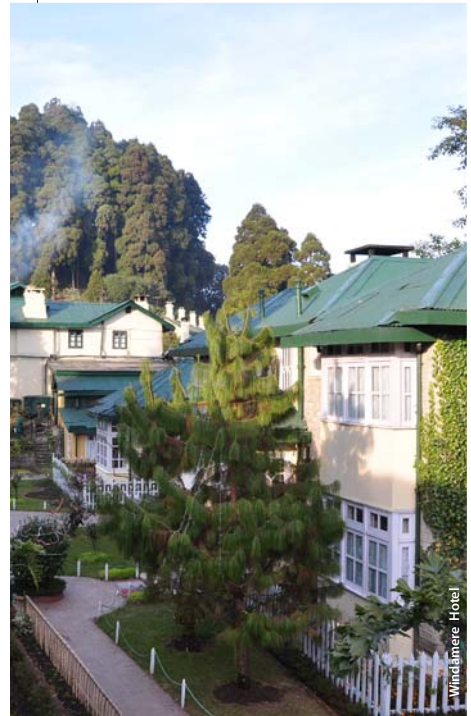
▼ WINDAMERE, INDIA

Perched on a hill overlooking endless Darjeeling tea plantations and with a skyline that includes the planet's third-highest mountain, Kangchenjunga, the Windamere certainly gets top marks for the view. For an authentic, undisturbed stay, request the main house, Ada Villa, which is deliberately devoid of TVs and telephones. Nice and Victorian.

Windamere Hotel, Darjeeling, India

www.windamerehotel.com

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Windamere Hotel

10

MAJAPAHIT, INDONESIA

Drawing the ire of Indonesians when it raised the Dutch flag in a rather late show of colonial power in 1945, Hotel Majapahit was for a brief time at the centre of the struggle for the country's independence. These days, though, locals and foreigners alike bask in its colonnaded splendour, shelling out gleefully for gold and marble bathrooms and antique furnishings.

Hotel Majapahit, Surabaya, Indonesia

www.hotel-majapahit.com

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PRICE GUIDE

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