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TRAVEL

# 16 Enchanting Hotels Housed in Former Churches, Monasteries, and Abbeys

From a 15th-century monastery on a Croatian island to a 17th-century Roman Catholic convent in the heart of San Juan, these are the most spectacular religious sites turned luxury lodgings

By Katie Lockhart and Katherine McLaughlin

October 20, 2022



All across the world, hoteliers are bringing new life to centuries-old properties. Photo: Rainer Klostermeier, Axel Kull. Courtesy of Argos in Cappadocia



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Historically, religious architecture has always been among the most impressive, and these hotels housed in former churches, monasteries, and abbeys harness the best of exquisite design. All over the world hoteliers are turning religious sites into luxury hotels and properties, all with stunning interiors and views to match. And if there's anything more peaceful than roaming the hallowed halls of a former monastery or abbey, it's sleeping in one. These reimagined relics become tranquil oases for travelers looking for a reprieve after a day of roaming cobblestone streets and exploring ancient cities.

Book a massage under original vaulted stone ceilings, admire religious antiquities, or wander through centuries-old medicinal gardens while waves crash in the distance. From a 15th-

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century monastery on a [Croatian island](#) to a 17th-century Roman Catholic convent in the heart of San Juan, here are 16 of the most spectacular luxury hotels housed in former churches, covenants, and monasteries around the world.



Photo: Belmond

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### Villa San Michele, A Belmond Hotel (Florence, Italy)

The glory of the Italian Renaissance can be found in every corner of this former [15th-century Franciscan](#) monastery. The School of Michelangelo designed its stone façade, and Nicodemo Ferrucci's Last Supper fresco has been hanging since 1642. The boutique hotel's 45 rooms and suites have terra-cotta tiles, custom furniture, stone fireplaces, and astounding views of Florence from above. According to the accommodations, Leonardo Da Vinci first attempted to fly in the woodlands surrounding the property.

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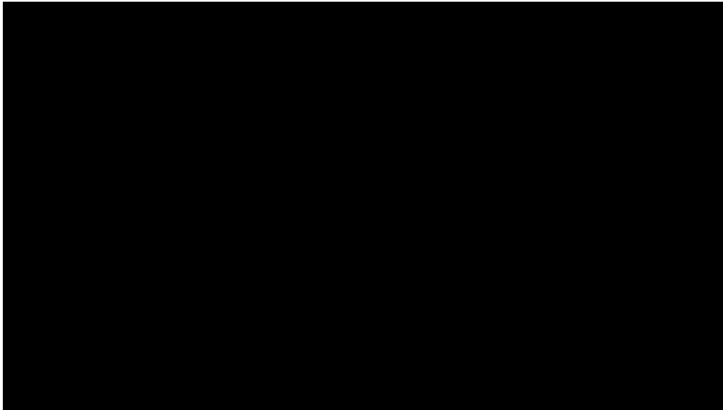






Photo: Courtesy of Hotel Peter & Paul

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## Hotel Peter & Paul (New Orleans, Louisiana)

With a name like [Hotel Peter and Paul](#), it's not necessarily surprising that the New Orleans property takes up residence in a former church. However, you might not know that parts of the hotel are also a former school house, rectory, and convent. The 71 rooms and suites are unique in design and include religious antiques, checkerboard fabrics, and claw-foot tubs. Religious paintings hang in the old schoolhouse, while the rectory contains the Elysian Bar, crafting sinfully delicious cocktails and bites.



Photo: Courtesy of Lopud 1483

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## Lopud 1483 (Lopud Island, Croatia)

Though not a traditional hotel, this 15th-century Franciscan monastery is an exclusive-use property inside an ancient fortress just a short boat ride away from Dubrovnik. Each of the five suites features Renaissance furniture from the owner's family collection. [Lopud 1483](#) has been carefully restored over 20 years using historic plaster techniques to highlight the medieval stonework throughout.



Photo: Scott Dunn

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## Cirqa (Arequipa, Peru)

A southern Peruvian monastery dating back to 1540, this **Relais & Chateaux** hotel is also available for exclusive use with 11 rooms centered around two stone patios with fire pits for cold nights and a plunge pool for hot days. Each room melds its original vaulted ceilings with modern touches like hanging matte pendant lights and handcrafted wood furniture.



Photo: Courtesy of Monastero Santa Rosa

## Monastero Santa Rosa Hotel & Spa (Amalfi Coast, Conca dei Marini, Monastero Santa Rosa Hotel & Spa (Amalfi Coast, Conca dei Marini, Italy)

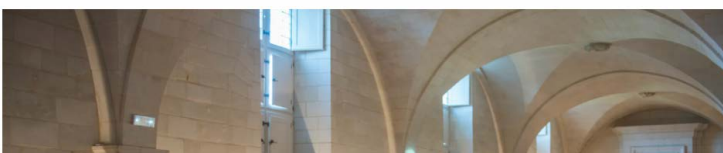
This cliffside **boutique hotel** is delicately perched on the edge of the Amalfi Coast. Its 20 suites are named after the herbs used in medicines made by the nuns who lived in the rooms. The 17th-century Dominican monastery has sweeping views of the Gulf of Salerno from its sprawling infinity pool and its Michelin-starred restaurant, Il Refettorio. The Jane Goff-designed spa features stone-clad treatment rooms with vaulted ceilings, and the grounds have four levels of lush gardens.



Photo: Getty Images

## Hotel El Convento (San Juan)

The oldest member of Official Historic Hotels of America is in the heart of Old San Juan. Starting in 1646, this Carmelite Convent was the first in the Americas and home to nuns for 252 years. Today, it's a charming 58-room **Spanish Colonial hotel**. Its chandelier-clad ballroom with marble flooring across from the San Juan Cathedral makes it perfect for a destination wedding.



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Inside Painter Walton Ford's





Photo: Evelyn Hockstein/The Washington Post/Getty Images

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## The Line DC (Washington, DC)

As you walk into the [Line DC](#), you'll likely notice the Ionic columns at the front of the building, the oversized arch window, or a balcony holding a bar overlooking the lobby. These details, though beautiful in their own right, are traces of the 110-year-old church the hotel is housed in. Located in the Adams Morgan neighborhood, the hotel makes it easy to explore one of the capital's most vibrant areas dotted with brick row houses and full of nightlife, independent shops, and dining options.



Photo: Sozo Hotel/Yann Richard

16/16

## Sozo Hotel (Nantes, France)

Built in 1883, this 19th-century chapel in Nantes, France, is now a four-star [boutique hotel](#) with 24 individually designed rooms. Many of the guest suites make use of the church's original stone walls, with some even incorporating the original vaults and stained glass windows. While most of the interior decor is fairly minimal, pops of color add vibrancy to the historic property.

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[Katherine McLaughlin](#) is the digital features editor at Architectural Digest where she covers architecture and design news, travel, and real estate, among other things. Previously, she wrote trend, lifestyle, and DIY stories for AD as a freelancer as well as contributing to other publications such as *The New York Times*,... [Read more](#)

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