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SPECIAL REPORT
THE WAR FOR
THE SOUL
OF ALASKA

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

MAY 2012

HOT LIST

121
BEST
NEW
HOTELS
IN THE
WORLD

(INCLUDING 49 UNDER \$300!)

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RESTAURANTS**

**35 SYBARITIC
SPAS**



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A TRUE DESERT BLOOM: The brand-new Saguaro hotel in Scottsdale, Arizona.

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YOUR DAILY TRAVEL INTELLIGENCE

16th Annual

Hot List 2012

The Year's 121 Top New Hotels

UNITED STATES

UNDER \$300 **The Saguaro,** Scottsdale, Arizona

🔥 The specs: Updated 1960s motel with 194 rooms on the edge of Old Town and adjacent to the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts. **The look:** Color blocking gone wild. The genius of this redesign is in its interpretation of the Scottsdale building code, which says exteriors must have a natural desert look, a stipulation that has yielded a city of sand tones. This time, however, town planners okayed the colors of desert wildflowers—a dozen eye-popping hues dominated by oranges, pinks, yellows, and purples. The same contrasting blocks of color are carried over inside; handcrafted wood and leather furniture continue the Southwest theme. **The experience:** This first effort outside of California for the Joie de Vivre hotel group delivers urban cool in a Southwest setting for half what you'd pay at one of Scottsdale's mega-resorts. Iron Chef Jose Garces created Distrito's menu of small plates, such as octopus sevice and pulled-pork tacos, inspired by the street stalls of Mexico City. The spa features a prickly-pear sugar scrub and other desert-sourced treatments. **If only...** rooms were larger and less vulnerable to traffic noise.

The room to book: The relatively quiet inside pool-view rooms in buildings 1 and 3 (877-808-2440; jdvhoteles.com; doubles from \$129).



THE PREDICTORS



ARCHITECTURE

THE EXPERTS Peter Stamberg and Paul Aferiat, architects and interior designers, The Saguaro (see page 122).

SIGNATURE STYLE Brighter is better. With their punchy paint jobs and clever designs, the duo have transformed museums, showrooms, and Park Avenue princesses' pads.

WHAT'S NEXT IN HOTEL ARCHITECTURE

- **Color explosions** "Post-recession, there was an unrelenting tendency toward all things neutral: whites, beiges. But now that we're a little removed from it, it's time for optimism—and color. The standard hotel room has always been neutral, with color added through two pieces of art. Look for those proportions to change over the next year. Think bright rooms with black-and-white art instead."
- **Big bathrooms** "Your hotel room should be sybaritic. Nothing conveys that better than a freestanding tub, walk-in shower, and double sinks—even if the actual room is diminutive by comparison."
- **Lobbies for lounging** "Once, you almost felt like you needed permission to go into a hotel lobby. But the new crop of hotels are becoming so inclusive that they seem to almost welcome loiterers. Look for more long tables, accessible power strips, and indoor-outdoor aesthetics that encourage people to walk right in."

Live the Cover

THE BACKSTORY Our annual tally of the world's very best new hotels and resorts (see "Hot List," in this issue) led us to hundreds of points around the globe—including **The Saguaro** in Scottsdale, Arizona. The hotel sits on the edge of the historic Old Town, with its Wild West-themed main drag, and overlooks the Civic Center Mall—a 21-acre urban park. All 194 rooms in the renovated retro-cool 1960s motel feature balconies with views of the desert cityscape or the property's two swimming pools (480-308-1100; doubles from \$170).

HOW TO GET THERE With nonstop flights to Phoenix's Sky Harbor International Airport from every major city in the country, a weekend getaway to The Saguaro is a relatively easy endeavor. From the airport, it's ten miles to Scottsdale (about a 20-minute drive). For the best weather, visit in the winter, when the temperatures average about 70 degrees.

THE 360 Four miles northwest of the hotel (ten minutes by car), you'll find Camelback Mountain—one of the city's greatest outdoor playgrounds, where hikers ascend 1,280 feet through red sandstone cliffs and are rewarded with spectacular views of the valley below. Post-climb, take a breather at the **Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art**. A ten-minute walk south of The Saguaro, it's Arizona's only museum dedicated to twentieth-century art and design (480-874-4666).



FYI

Desert Rose She wears a dress and shoes by Narciso Rodriguez (see "Where to Buy It," page 200). Hair and makeup by Juanita Lyon for Celestine L.A. Styled by Ali Pew. Photograph by Williams & Hirakawa.