

## Press Coverage 2019: Casa San Agustín

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*Date: January 2020*

*Publication: Condé Nast Traveller*

*Circulation: 893,790*

*PRV (\$): 23,484*

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# THE GOLD LIST 2020

THE EDITORS' ALL-TIME FAVOURITE HOTELS

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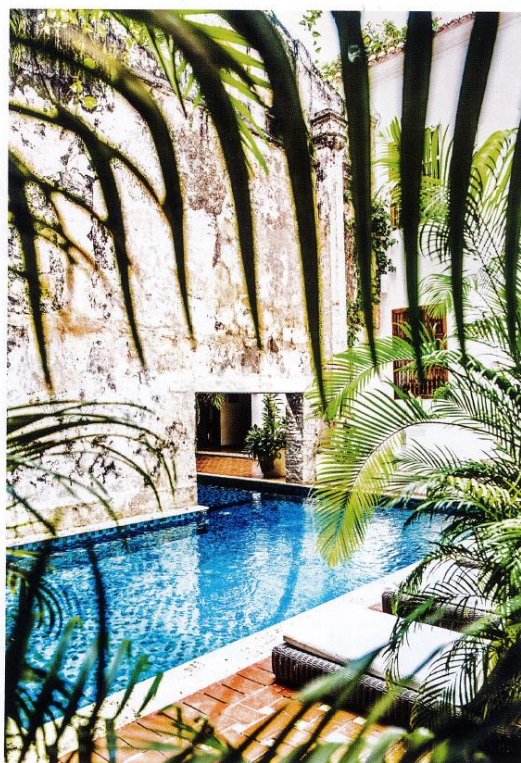
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THE TRIBECA PENTHOUSE AT THE GREENWICH, NEW YORK

January/February 2020 Condé Nast Traveller 111



## Africa: More Classics

After bush comes beach, and **North Island** in the Seychelles is a beach-breaker of hearts, a souped-up shipwrecked fantasy island. Just 11 villas here are set along a sensational lick of white-sand splendour; it set the new standard for what utterly bespoke, barefoot hotel private islands could be when it opened and continues to thrill. ♦ On **Benguerra Island** off the coast of Mozambique, a wonderful renovation of the once rustic lodge by &Beyond, one of African's best safari outfits, might have elevated this hideaway, but it still retains its low-key soul. With around 140 species of birds – from kingfishers to flamingos – and some of the best snorkelling and diving in the world, it is hard to beat as a natural retreat. ♦ Over on Mauritius, **One&Only Le Saint Géran**, above, is one of the most beloved Indian Ocean hotels with a fiercely loyal following since it opened in 1975. Tamper with an old favourite at your peril, but there was a collective sigh of relief when the hotel revealed its £40million renovation a couple of years ago: lighter, brighter, the very model of a smart, slick beach retreat, and still in the island's best spot.



## CASA SAN AGUSTIN CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA

Sometimes a hotel telegraphs such a romantic version of a place that it becomes a stand-in for an entire destination. This dreamy retreat in Cartagena's Old Town has become that synecdoche for the city. With its crumbling 17th-century whitewashed walls covered in climbing vines, soaring wood-beamed ceilings, original frescoes and a terracotta-tiled courtyard shaded by a profusion of palms, it feels like a scene plucked from the pages of Marquez – equal parts sultry and monastic, Caribbean and colonial. Guests may half expect a horse and carriage (or a spectre of one) to roll on through, just as it would have done when this place was a trio of colonial villas on a quiet cobbled alley. The showpiece is the L-shaped pool, which flows under a hole cut into the wall of an aqueduct from the time of the conquistadors. Supper should be lobster tail and ceviche at the hotel's Alma restaurant.

Of the few diners with a room upstairs, the luckiest will be those in 102, the only one with a private plunge pool. [hotelcasasanagustin.com](http://hotelcasasanagustin.com). Doubles from about £410

## AMANEMU KII PENINSULA, JAPAN

It doesn't hit you over the head with design symmetry or rarefied landscapes like other Amans. At first glance, it might even cross the line from pared down to boring. But a trained eye will appreciate the steep-roofed cedar villas, created by Kerry Hill, whose humble construction pays homage to Ise Jingū Shinto shrine – the mother lode of architectural understatement. Two-and-a-half hours east of Kyoto, the property stretches across a salt-kissed hill; the bob of pearl rafts floating on glassy Ago Bay below remind you of Japan's constant tango with the ocean. The rooms are packed with details such as *washi*-paper lamps, basalt *ofuro* (bath tubs) and rattan butterfly chairs, best experienced after too much sake while shuffling about in a *yukata* robe.

Eventually, the hotel buggy should be called for a lift to the sprawling *onsen* pavilion or the restaurant for salt-crusted *ise ebi* – a speciality here in lobster country, often sourced by *ama* fisherwomen who dive for the crustaceans in the freezing bay without oxygen tanks. Just another sign that this part of Japan is quite the opposite of boring, in fact it's a considered sensation. [aman.com](http://aman.com). Doubles from about £995





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