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Guide

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Sunset Tower Hotel

Los Angeles, USA

At last – the world's most hotly anticipated re-re-relaunch. The Sunset Tower Hotel – that distinctive art deco column on Sunset Strip, which used to be the Sunset Towers, was then changed to the Argyle, and now back again – brings the magic of old Hollywood to a contemporary setting. Its LA-noir interior is as seductive as Jean Harlow's suspender belt: muted colours, silk lampshades, loosely tied roses. The only thing missing is diamanté-encrusted telephones. What this place offers beyond all else is a cool, low-key crowd. Dita Von Teese loves a martini at the bar; Jacob Rothschild always books in; Bill Murray practically lives here. The Tower Bar is the new power joint with a refreshing no-trash policy. Paris Hilton and Lindsay Lohan are banned, although Lohan recently had lunch at the chic pool restaurant, and even dressed up in Chanel for the occasion. Ask for Dimitri, the maître d', a real character who will feed you paper-thin pizzas and Bellinis all night. The beauty salon is first-class – here resides Madonna's colourist. This is the place to weather a nervous breakdown. Take a leaf out of Howard Hughes's book, and don't leave for years. **Tel** 001 323 654 7100. **Website** sunsettowerhotel.com. **Rates** Double, from £150. Fly with Virgin Atlantic (tel: 08705 747747).

Copacabana Palace

Rio, Brazil

It's still the best address in town. Built in 1923 for the visiting king of Belgium, this wedding-cake palace was the first luxury hotel in South America and continues to embody the sexy sophistication of oh-so-hot Rio. Anyone who's anyone has stayed (and misbehaved), from Marlene Dietrich and Orson Welles (who threw his TV out of his room into the pool) to Robert De Niro and Naomi Campbell.

New boutique hotels may be hitting the city (La Suite and plans for a Philippe Starck/Fasano place on the beach), but trust us – what you want is the space, style and old-world kick of this legendary grande dame. The pool still reigns supreme as the place to see and be seen and the hotel is a comfort zone of telepathic staff, marble bathrooms, dripping chandeliers, breezy sea views and boiled eggs for breakfast. Even the air-conditioning hums at a hushed level (thank God). A new spa is due to open, and £2 million is about to be invested revamping the old casino. Bond would definitely approve. **Website** copacabanapalace.com.br. **UK reservations** Cazenove + Loyd (tel: 020 7384 2332). **Rates** Double, from £250.



Les Ottomans

Istanbul, Turkey

The ultra-hip shores of the Bosphorus get more glamorous by the moment. The opening of

Les Ottomans by society figure Ahu Aysal marks the beginning of a particularly exciting second wave of hotels. Aysal spent seven years (and a rumoured £30 million) restoring this mansion – more vanity project than business venture. It is dramatic and gorgeous with harem-style colonnades, Ottoman-empire drapes and chandeliers by the ton. One suite resembles a Turkish tent, another has a calligraphy bedhead. There is a marble spa, where local society figures are preserved and pampered. Too intimate to be a hotel, this is more a 'lifestyle mansion', so expect to be vetted. **Tel** 00 90 212 287 1024. **Website** lesottomans.com. **Rates** Suite, from £805, including breakfast. □