



## WORLD'S BEST

# SERVICE

**At the heart of a great hotel are the people who work there.**

In this year's World's Best survey, our readers told us which hotels have staffs that consistently go above and beyond. Here, the winners from around the globe in eight regional categories.

**Plus:** concierges at top properties share their insider tips.



**Four Winners**  
 Above: A pavilion at Thailand's Amanpuri—the high scorer for service in Asia. Left: The seawater pool at the Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc, third in Europe, on the French Riviera. Below, from left: The Black and White Conservatory at London's Milestone Hotel, the highest-scoring property overall; a cheese selection at South Carolina's Woodlands Resort & Inn, No. 1 in the U.S.

## Service Secrets

Uncovering the elements of great service.

Excellent service isn't easy to define or measure—it's the sort of thing that falls in the category of "you know it when you see it." And you *have* seen it: the hotels listed on the following pages won votes in this year's World's Best Service reader survey by providing guests with formal, thoughtful, and above all, discreet service. Or was it warm, responsive, intuitive service? Or was it, indeed, whatever the moment required? Good service is a kind of alchemy, a rigorous yet perfectly unscientific art form, and just as difficult to get right.

Any number of luxury hotels provide the requisite high-thread-count sheets, acres of Italian marble, and teams of butlers, but great service is something else. It should be more or less invisible—except when you want it. And then, of course, it should be at your fingertips instantly. A bit of prescience is required—so as to know what guests want before they ask for it—and resourcefulness is also key. At London's

Milestone Hotel, the top hotel overall, when a guest expressed interest in rare antique toy soldiers and tanks, the concierge located a dealer the next day. At another property on the list, One & Only Palmilla, in Los Cabos, a guest's loose button was fixed within minutes, and with thread that matched her jacket perfectly.

The best hotels recognize that no two travelers want the same thing: the couple in the Pool Villa may expect a conspicuous display of the three-to-one staff-guest ratio and preprogrammed iPods, while the mother and daughter in the Ocean View room want to feel like they're utterly alone. To each his own—at these winning properties, you can't go wrong.—MARIA SHOLLENBARGER

### ★TOP HOTELS FOR SERVICE

- 1 **Milestone Hotel**, London 98.61
- 2 **Mandarin Oriental**, Munich 98.00
- 3 **Woodlands Resort & Inn**, Summerville, South Carolina 97.83
- 4 **Amanpuri**, Phuket, Thailand 97.62
- 5 **The Oriental**, Bangkok 97.60
- 6 **Sweetwaters Tented Camp**, Sweetwaters Game Reserve, Kenya 97.50
- 7 **Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc**, Cap d'Antibes, France 97.22
- 8 **Oberoi Udaivilas**, Udaipur, India 97.06
- 9 **Mombo Camp**, Moremi Game Reserve, Botswana 96.88
- 10 **Château Les Crayères**, Reims, France 96.50

