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The Editors' List 2020



WORD OF MOUTH

THE ARTFUL LODGERS

With the travel world regrouping and reshaping, there is room for original takes on what hotels can be. Here are some of 2021's most exciting openings, crafted by an emerging crew of creatives



THE PROJECT The Mighty Fine in Johannesburg

THE CONCEPT Cool hybrid

Cutting his teeth in the bar and nightclub world, Johannesburg-based Tristan du Plessis first hit the hotel scene in 2019 with Gorgeous George in Cape Town, where he added an industrial edge to his modern-African design ethos. His follow-up, Chapter Roma in the Italian capital, was equally dramatic, with the gritty after-dark glamour of velvet against raw brick. Now, back in his hometown, he is working on a fun crossover space, a first for the city. The 62-room Mighty Fine will be a neighbourhood hangout with a podcast-recording studio and a lobby co-working space. Expect the signature du Plessis style with tactile materials such as patterned concrete tiles and herringbone oak floors.

This brings the idea of the hotel as community hub to Africa and gives it roots.



THE PROJECT WunderLocke in Munich

THE CONCEPT Playful escapism

Walking a line between historic and futuristic, Londoners Alex Holloway and Na Li's influences are as culture-hopping as the millennial demographic they're aimed at: for Bermonds Locke in Tower Bridge they channelled the Mojave Desert, while at (sadly short-lived) Omar's Place in Pimlico their references were mid-century Mediterranean.

Next up for the pair, who founded their eponymous studio in 2018, is a rooftop extension for The Hoxton, Shoreditch, and Wunderlocke, drawing inspiration from Munich's The Blue Rider artist collective of the early 1900s. And the duo have progressive ideas of their own, dressing the concrete bones of the former Siemens factory as a jungle. A good-looking lesson in how urban hotels can be eco too.



THE PROJECT Nordelaia in Piedmont

THE CONCEPT Nature-led design

All-female studio These White Walls, helmed by Rose Murray, made its debut in 2018 with Hide, chef Ollie Dabbous' Michelin-starred restaurant in London's Mayfair. The organically constructed, head-turning venue led to a flurry of new commissions, most notably Nordelaia, a boutique hotel set deep in Piedmont wine country. Again, Murray is harnessing three key themes – narrative, artistry and materials (here it's wood, stone and burnished metals) – as well as the landscape, to give each room a distinct character. Among the highlights will be an ornamental garden extending from the terraces and a spa with views of the vineyards that produce the property's own wine. A slow, from-the-earth approach in Italy's slow-food heartland. LAUREN HO

