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10 Great

Places to check into some cool digs

Travel in 2004 may prove challenging, but rewards exist, such as finding a unique accommodation with individual style. "A hotel or resort that has a pure sense of place and is representative of the area in which it is located is ideal," says photographer and writer Herbert Ypma, author of the new *Hip Hotels: USA* (Thames & Hudson, \$29.95). "My definition of hip hotels are *Highly Individual Places to stay* — they are not always of-the-moment places," but they offer exceptional experiences. Ypma shares hip and happening lodgings with USA TODAY's Shawn Sell.



Rooms on stilts:
Treehouses at Post Ranch Inn are 9 feet above ground.

By Batista-Moon Studio, The Lippin Group

Canoe Bay

Chetek, Wis.

"Frank Lloyd Wright's influence is in residence at Canoe Bay, which offers 280 extraordinary acres of virgin forests and pure waters. All accommodations feature the designer's signature styling, which blends nature and architecture to create a luxurious wilderness getaway. The adults-only policy makes this a romantic retreat." 715-924-4594; canoebay.com.

Cibolo Creek Ranch

Shafter, Texas

"This is exactly how you would imagine a ranch in Texas, from the dinnertime bell to the adobe fireplaces and big old frontier beds to the nighttime coffee around an open fire. The vast, untouched landscape is ... 30,000 acres of perfection, a three-dimensional expression of our most romantic Texas fantasies." 432-229-3737; cibolocreekranch.com.

The Townhouse Hotel

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Miami Beach

A fun South Beach hotel with a fantastic location on Collins Avenue just off the beach, "the Townhouse has an upbeat vibe that makes it a cool place to chill out cheaply. Designed with creativity and simple elements, the effect is fun, modern and eclectic. Check out the outdoor living room lined with red waterbeds for reclining, exercise machines in the corridor and a downstairs lounge." 305-534-3800; www.townhousehotel.com.

Hotel San José

Austin

"Austin is the Amsterdam of Texas, bursting with creative people and great bars and restaurants. Originally a motel, the San José is not expensive, but it has a design integrity that incorporates timber furniture with modern minimalism. Catering to an urban and urbane crowd, there is plenty of outdoor space and the little touches, such as breakfast delivered in compartmentalized wooden trays add to the low-key cool." 512-444-7322; sanjosehotel.com.

The Viceroy

Los Angeles

"The Viceroy has a prime location in Santa Monica, only a block away from the sea and is a favorite for stylized 'modern colonial' design, which is full of glamour, innovation and green — the color scheme that works its way through the hotel." 310-260-7500; viceroyasantamonica.com.

Ace Hotel

Seattle

The former boarding house represents the urban café culture that Seattle is known for. With "the coolest communal bathrooms around," minimalism reigns, but "rooms and public spaces are white, fun and inexpensively decorated." 206-448-4721; theacehotel.com.

The Shaker Inn

Enfield, N.H.

"In addition to being affordable and showcasing the natural beauty of the New Hampshire landscape, this inn introduces guests to the simple, spare and beautiful experience of Shaker living. Little has been done to change the original stone building since the Shakers were in residence, so visitors can stay in a truly authentic environment." 603-632-4900; theshakerinn.com.

Korakia Pensione

Palm Springs, Calif.

"With the heat, palm trees and laid-back lifestyle, guests immediately notice the influences from Morocco, Greece and Mexico here at this villa, originally built by a Scottish architect in memory of his beloved Tangier. Korakia is a seductive retreat from reality; a place where you don't feel like you are anywhere but in a desert." 760-864-6411; korakia.com.

Intercontinental Mark Hopkins

San Francisco

"Sophisticated San Francisco is one of the most European places in the USA. The refined Mark Hopkins, an American institution that combines Spanish renaissance styles with the feel of a French chateau, embodies elegance with its grand Nob Hill setting, its colorful history and its famous visitors." 415-392-3434; markhopkins.net.

Post Ranch Inn at Big Sur

Big Sur, Calif.

"The quintessential California coastal experience is located on a little stretch of still-unspoiled land. Post Ranch Inn is easily the most spectacularly situated hotel in the USA, perched on a ridge that drops several thousand feet down to the Pacific. Still, many guests come just for Chef Craig Von Foerster's New California cuisine." 831-667-2200; postranchinn.com.

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