

THE HOT LIST

ITALY

NOLINSKI VENEZIA

Most of Venice's household-name five-star hotels are converted palazzi. In this respect, and others, the Nolinski – 43 rooms and suites on Calle Larga XXII Marzo, the smartest shopping street in town – is different. It occupies a 20th-century building constructed not as a grand private residence but as a stock exchange. Yet there's nothing the least bit stock exchange-y about it. Its five-storey façade, in a version of the Liberty style, is subtly animated by rippling lines and wavy undulations, suitably rich in maritime associations. Interior designers Yann Le Coadic and Alessandro Scotto have pulled off a nifty trick, deploying an adventurous mixture of elements in a way that creates an impression of great restraint and serenity. Mirrors feature prominently, along with a remarkable collection of glassware, assembled specifically for the hotel. Indeed, the art throughout has been curated, hung and displayed with exceptional flair – nowhere more so than in the ravishing little Library Bar on the piano nobile. Venetians have a particular fondness for sunny courtyard spaces; the Nolinski's is a doozy, with a small but extremely fetching adjoining bar and dining room. Upstairs, in a stupendously domed space with gold-trimmed arches, fine-dining restaurant Palais Royal is due to open in spring, overseen by chef Philip Chronopoulos, a protégé of the late Joël Robuchon and much admired for his Hellenic take on classic French cuisine.

STEVE KING *Doubles from about £730; nolinskivenezia.com*

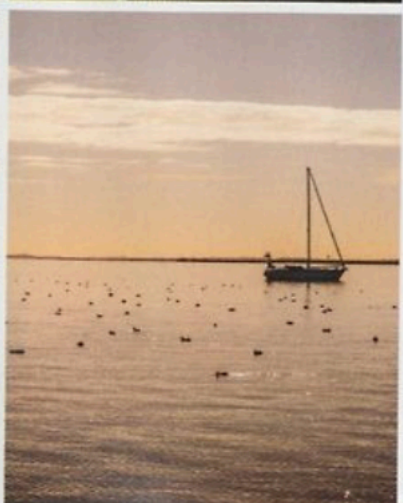


NETHERLANDS

DE DURGERDAM, AMSTERDAM

A former 17th-century clapboard inn in a fishing village just a 20-minute cycle from downtown Amsterdam, De Durgerdam has been restored and relaunched as a friendly hotel, with astonishing food by the team behind Michelin-starred restaurants 212 and De Juwelier. Named after the historic village it calls home, the 14-room creation is a celebration of simple, low-impact design, with a mix of vintage and custom-made furniture (Hypnos beds with beautiful wave-inspired local tulipwood headboards); but also of the golden age of Vermeer, through its moody use of natural light, velvety throws and palette of green, rust and putty. The relaxed open-plan restaurant, De Mark, takes over the whole ground floor and is already a local favourite, with a wood-burning stove, a bar and doors that open on to a terrace overlooking saltwater lake Ijmeer (an inlet of the North Sea until it was dammed in 1932). It's overseen by head chef Koen Marees, known for his imaginative, vegetable-forward menus featuring dishes such as roasted cod with buttermilk and cream of barbecued celeriac, and tomato steak tartare. Downstairs is a candlelit wine snug. Guests can whizz into town in a cab, hire one of the hotel's electric bikes to explore, or just cosy up by the fire. The braver among them scamper down the hotel jetty and leap into the lake.

FRANCESCA SYZ
Doubles from about £260; dedurgerdam.com



CHRIS SCHALAXY; SOPHIA VAN DEN HOEK