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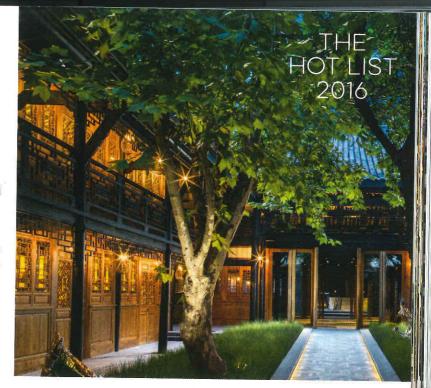
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IE DESTINATIONS, FLAVOURS & TRAVEL TRENDS EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

CHINA THE TEMPLE HOUSE, CHENGDU

-western city has two main claims to fame: its panda reserves and scorching Sichuan food. But it was another of Chengdu's fortes, y, that London-based architects Make seized on for their weaving g theme at The Temple House, the latest from Swire Hotels (The louse in Beijing, Hong Kong's The Upper House). The multi-layered knit together old-world opulence with modernity: the dramatic s actually an ornate, 100-year-old courtyard building; the basketion desk has been fashioned from entwined brass filaments, while ild tower has intriguingly perforated brick walls. A staircase swoops e pool, with its magnificent Art Deco-style skylight, and the Tivola where Italian dishes - from polenta to pappardelle - are served in d jade-green interior. Resurface at ground level and myriad minimatch different moods, such as the outdoor Jing bar for retro-chic ncluding Sichuan Mule (vodka spiked with ginger and peppercorn omewhere serene, head for the teahouse set in an ancient, renovated FLASH POINT This is a compellingly original collision of trad and orary Chinese culture, reflected in its popularity with a hip, local 6 28 6636 9999; templehousehotel.com. Doubles from about £215





AUSTRIA GRAND FERDINAND, VIENNA

Vienna can do grand pretty well. Just look at the armfuls of silver at Princess Sisi's Hofburg Palace, the cherubs at the Belvedere, the sheer balls of the place. But lately it's been learning how to do grand more discreetly, with less stodge. So while this hotel has an impeccable imperial address on the 19th-century Ringstrasse, not far from the Albertina, it occupies a democratic, clean-lined Fifties building that was once a secret-service HQ. There are tinkly Lobmeyr chandeliers and black marble, and white-jacketed waiters who will glide over to pour a flute of Veuve, but also a flurry of Moroccan tiles, modernist glass bricks, a fairy-white rooftop restaurant with a plunge pool outside, a standalone goulash bar. There's even a dorm with Orient-Express-style bunks for €30 per night, though you might prefer to board one of the seventh-floor suites instead, with their long terraces,

freestanding tubs and man-sized floor lights. Those looking for a little *Gemütlichkeit*, that untranslatable expression of contentment, need look no further. **FLASH POINT** The ground-floor brasserie, with its Habsburg menu, has all the atmosphere of a classic Viennese coffeehouse but without the gawpers. +43 1 91 880 400; grandferdinand.com. Doubles from about £140



FRANCE LE PIGALLE, PARIS

shly scrubbed façade and plant-lined balconies, this neoclassical ks more like a private home than a hotel. The 9th arrondissement een an edgy neighbourhood popular with rock bands and their , and the 40-bedroom Le Pigalle is proud of this track record, ng all things bawdy and bohemian. The lobby is a vintage-style ith headphones hooked on the walls for guests to sample tracks nsole in the corner. There's even a Wurlitzer jukebox outside the os. This is the kind of place you'll see a pink-haired singer named g interviewed and instrument-toting musicians with dreadlocks igalle-brewed ale at the bar. Chef Camille Furmony, a 'flavour no less, sources the freshest ingredients, from thyme-sprinkled country-style pâté. Victor Kiswell, the in-house music guru, has the vinyl selection for your in-room turntable (expect Gainsbourg, eld and Nineties hip-hop). The small sunlit rooms are decidedly re-mixed Poire Williams in the mini-bars. There's even a weekly ng performance, just to add to the fun. **FLASH POINT** This is a South Pigalle) locale that succeeds in being a creative showcase y spirit. +33 1 48 78 37 14; lepigalle paris. Doubles from about £110

