



The fly pond, which dates back to 1918, is one of the many natural wonders featured in El Encanto's gardens.

## On My Radar RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CONTRIBUTING EDITOR CARI GRAY

**Following a \$134 million renovation, El Encanto** (rooms, from \$225, 800 Alvarado Pl., 805-845-9800, [elencanto.com](http://elencanto.com)), a 1910s hotel perched on seven acres just outside Santa Barbara, opens this March. Its 92 California-style bungalows are accompanied by a spa, a fitness center and a restaurant that features locally sourced products—including an exclusive cheese made from the hotel's cow, Ellie.

### CHURCHILL WILD'S SEAL RIVER HERITAGE LODGE

CHURCHILL, CANADA

For the most exclusive and ultimate experience, it's a must to swim with beluga whales at this retreat on the shores of Hudson Bay. Safari packages start at \$8,790 (fly-in access only). 866-848-9453; [churchillwild.com](http://churchillwild.com).

### HOTEL REFUGIA

CHILE, CHILE

A direct doorway to northern Patagonia's hiking trails, roads for biking and rainforests, this island retreat's strong early reviews have piqued my interest. Rooms start at \$530. San José Playa, Centro; 56-05-772-0805; [refugia.cl](http://refugia.cl).

### COPACABANA PALACE

RIO DE JANEIRO

I've long loved the chic poolside breakfast at this recently reopened hotel. Offering views of the building's fabulous Art Deco façade, it's an oasis of luxe calm steps from the sand. This will be the ideal base for the World Cup and Summer Olympics. Rooms start at \$220. Avda. Atlântica 1703, 800-237-1236; [copacabanapalace.com](http://copacabanapalace.com).

### PIKAIA LODGE

EL CASCAJAL, ECUADOR

Opening in October, this resort will offer a new way to explore the Galápagos. Built on a tortoise reserve that sits atop a dormant volcano, it will be an amazing spot for snorkeling, scuba diving and dirt cruising aboard its private yacht, M/Y Pikaia I. Packages start at \$3,330. Santa Cruz Island; 503-628-9952; [pikaialodgegalapagos.com](http://pikaialodgegalapagos.com).

### THE SIAM

BANGKOK

I'm eager to return to this three-acre riverfront property, where designer Bill Bensley has created a space with all the style of a chic movie set. It's the only hotel with a professionally equipped Muay Thai gym (as well as a library, a movie theater and an Opium Spa). Rooms start at \$445. 5/3 Thonin Khoo; 66-2-706-9999; [thesiamhotel.com](http://thesiamhotel.com).

### AMANTAKA

LUANG PRABANG, LAOS

The cool temperatures and outstanding places to stay—like this luxurious, French colonial-style resort—have given this city a reputation as the Hamptons of Southeast Asia. It's a necessary stop on any savvy circuit of the region. Rooms start at \$800. 55/3 Kingkitsareth Rd.; 800-477-8850; [amantaka.com](http://amantaka.com).