

# Condé Nast Traveler

MAY 2019 £4.90

## THE HOT LIST 2019

THE WORLD'S BEST  
NEW HOTELS

ARE PSYCHEDELICS THE FUTURE OF TRAVEL?  
GLOW-IN-THE-DARK RESTAURANTS  
MEXICO'S ALTERNATIVE TO TULUM  
TWISTS ON TRADITION IN KYOTO  
CALIFORNIA SURFER STYLE  
THIS SUMMER'S COOLEST BEACH CLUBS  
THE GREAT GAS STATION SWITCH-UP  
EXTREME WILDERNESS LIFE-COACHING  
RETURN OF THE TURKISH RIVIERA



+ CHINA'S NEXT-LEVEL  
GUESTHOUSES

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## MALAYSIA

### THE DATAI LANGKAWI

The word game-changer gets bandied around a lot, but the Datai was truly that when it opened 26 years ago, transforming this under-the-radar Malaysian castaway spot into the go-to South-east-Asian escape. With Kerry Hill's woodsy jungle-luxe architecture, rainforest setting and crescent of feather-soft sand, it was an instant classic. Fast-forward to this year and it is making its mark again after a £45 million overhaul. Architecture and

interiors whizz Didier Lefort has upped the zen factor, sanding back the villas' dark wooden floors, adding hand-poured bathtubs and scattering statement artwork – including a 1,500lb tangle of petrified tree roots – throughout the grounds. Here, dusky leaf monkeys with eye markings like Iris Apfel's glasses swing through sea almond trees next to a new nature centre overseen by walking wildlife encyclopaedia Irshad Mobarak. The grand zig-zag steps that descend from the adults-only pool and veteran staff who know all regular visitors' favourite things remain. But there are plenty more new elements to discover, too: a butterfly garden, forest yoga pavilion with *silat* (a local martial art) sessions and a revamped spa with treatments by pedicure maestro Bastian Gonzalez. Most fun is the bigger-and-better beach club where families feast on satay as the sky turns the colour of raspberry sorbet. A game-changer? Yes. But one that still feels like a wonderfully wild secret. **FLASH POINT** The new Datai Estate Villa, a vast five-bedroom affair in the heart of the jungle, is the spot for multi-generational groups. +60 4 950 0500, [thedatai.com](http://thedatai.com). Doubles from about £530