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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2023

THE GOLD LIST 2023

OUR FAVOURITE
CLASSIC HOTELS
WORLDWIDE

Plus

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THE GOLD LIST 2023

THE EDITORS' ALL-TIME FAVOURITE HOTELS

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS SCHALIXX

THE DATAI LANGKAWI, MALAYSIA



HOTEL ESENCIA XPU-HA, MEXICO

While Playa del Carmen and Tulum on Mexico's Riviera Maya teeter towards over-development, there's still an unspoiled coastline between the two fast-growing towns. Near the powdery white sands of Xpu-Ha, the secluded jungle hideaway of Hotel Esencia is a reprieve from bustling resorts and hedonistic eco-hotels – yet offers all the trappings needed to never leave its grounds. Originally built as a haven for an Italian duchess, the 50-acre estate was acquired in 2014 by Hollywood producer Kevin Wendle, who has turned the property into the area's chicest beachside retreat. Beloved by tastemakers such as Bella Hadid and Lupita Nyong'o for its privacy, Hotel Esencia centres around a main house, where afternoon tea is served daily in the ocean-facing library, while stone paths lead to four expansive guest villas and 47 suites, each with a private terrace and some with a heated pool and solarium overlooking the Caribbean. The newest and most luxurious lodgings are at the Esencia Mansion, a four-bedroom villa with three swimming pools, a 20-seat screening room, subterranean speakeasy and nearby cenote where guests can paddleboard among the resident manatees. To recharge, there's a café offering Mexican pastries, a juice bar for smoothies and acai bowls, and three restaurants, including a Yucatán eatery serving dishes with Mediterranean flair, from green gazpacho topped with crab to grilled octopus layered with creamy garlic mole. MICHAELA TRIMBLE
Doubles from about £890; hotelesencia.com

PHOTOGRAPHS: TANVEER BADAL; MAITE PHOTO/HYATT; SINGITA

