

# Condé Nast Traveller

THE WORLD MADE LOCAL

## THE 2025 GOLD LIST

OUR EDITORS' ALL-TIME FAVOURITE HOTELS

*Plus*

CUBA'S ENDURING BEAUTY  
DARWIN TO BROOME BY SEA  
THE CHARM OF COMO OFF-SEASON  
IN PRAISE OF NORTH WALES



# THE GOLD LIST

OUR EDITORS' ALL-TIME FAVOURITE HOTELS 2025



PHOTOGRAPH: CARMEL BRANTLEY

THE COLONY HOTEL, PALM BEACH, USA



## FALAKNUMA PALACE HYDERABAD, INDIA

During one of my annual holidays in Hyderabad in the 1980s, my well-connected grandfather took us to the long-shuttered Falaknuma Palace. The hilltop eyrie, built in 1893 as a European-style confection with dreamy frescoes, Corinthian columns and Venetian chandeliers, had been a beloved residence of the ruling Nizam before falling into disrepair for decades. As a starry-eyed seven-year-old clambering up marble staircases and peering into locked rooms where clouds of dust and cobwebs danced in streaks of light, I was mesmerised by its faded grandeur.

Since Taj transformed it into one of the country's most opulent resorts, reopening it in 2010, I've made time to return whenever I can – a visit with the elegant Princess Esra, the wife of the last Nizam, in her private apartments; afternoon tea overlooking the city as birdsong mingles with the adhan ringing out from nearby mosques; qawwali concerts at sunset in the gardens. My father turned 75 during our latest trip to Hyderabad last winter so, of course, we celebrated with a stay at Falaknuma. And a new family memory was added: a birthday serenade by the flautist at breakfast under the stained-glass dome of the Gol Bungalow terrace, and a private tour of the palace. India's

Taj hotels are always characterful places to stay, but with the way this one brings Hyderabad's rich history and traditions to life at every corner, Falaknuma will always have my heart. SARAH KHAN [tajhotels.com](http://tajhotels.com)

