

# World's 15 most spectacular swimming pools

Amazing pools in amazing locations, including one that's so special you're not even allowed to swim in it

By Anthea Gerrie 18 October, 2011

Swimming is fun. Swimming in a pool that ranks among the most beautiful things you've ever seen ... that's unforgettable.

Whether you want the tropical environs of Bali or a gold-plated pool in the Himalayas, there are swimming pools out there that are destinations in their own right.

## 1. Alila Uluwatu, Bali, Indonesia



If infinity is too scary, head back to the private pool in your villa.

This spectacular cliff-top infinity pool appears to float in space. The scary-looking cage at the end is actually a user-friendly cabana designed for gazing out over the horizon in comfort.

Wonder why the water is empty? Lovely as this 50-meter beauty is, guests are probably using one of the private pools that come with each of the 84 villas.

*Alila Villas Uluwatu, Jl Belimbing Sari, Banjar Tambiyak, Desa Pecatu, Bali, Indonesia; +62 361 848 2166; [www.alilahotels.com/uluwatu](http://www.alilahotels.com/uluwatu)*

## 2. The Library, Koh Samui, Thailand



No, no one's been murdered, that's the way we decorate here.

The Library's pool gets its startling color from a base of mosaic glass tiles in orange, yellow and blood red. The effect is heightened by the red mattresses that line the perimeter, and at night underwater lights transform the swimming pool into a dazzling spectacle on the Chaweng seafront.

*The Library, 14/1 Moo 2, Bo Phut, Koh Samui, Thailand; +66 77 422 7678; [www.designhotels.com/the\\_library](http://www.designhotels.com/the_library)*

*Also on CNNGo: A great big mini-guide to Koh Samui*

## 3. Pelican Hill, California, United States



The lap that never ends.

Named after the Coliseum in Rome, this is the world's largest circular pool with a diameter stretching 41.5 meters. Vaulted arches, corniced columns and an amphitheater of terraced decks sit above the 1 million hand-set glass mosaic tiles which line the bottom, and it's all surrounded by ultra deluxe private cabanas in a resort that aims to recreate classical Italy in Orange County.

*The Resort at Pelican Hill, 22701 Pelican Hill Road South, Newport Coast, California, United States; +1 949 467 6800; <http://www.pelicanhill.com/>*

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## 4. Huvafen Fushi, Maldives



Not to be mistaken for an airport runway.

This enchanting pool, one of the largest in the Maldives, was the first to employ fiber optics. It's illuminated by more than 1,000 of the little lights, and its shoreline deck often becomes a backdrop for glamorous events like international fashion shows. It segues to the only salt-water flotation pool in the Maldives, full of minerals with known therapeutic and healing effects.

*North Mahe Atoll, Maldives; +960 6644 222; <http://www.huvafenfushi.peraquum.com/>*

## 5. Nandana Villa, Grand Bahama, Bahamas



Where sea and pool merge.

Private and serene, the pool at Nandana seems to drop straight into the Atlantic and is the focal point of this Balinese-style property. As it's a private rental villa, the dramatic minimalism of the pool is not sullied by the clutter of dozens of loungers and parasols which line your average hotel pool; there are just half a dozen teak sun beds and three strategically placed palm trees.

*Nandana, Pine Island, Grand Bahama; +212 621 0350; <http://www.nandanavilla.com/>*

## 6. The Standard, Los Angeles, United States



Even better when watching movies of parched desert dwellers.

From a rooftop 12 stories up, this pool offers panoramic views of the City of Angels. The turquoise water contrasts dramatically with the deep red Astroturf of the surrounding sundeck, where there are also bright red water-bed canopies accommodating up to 10 poseurs apiece.

At night the pool becomes an entertainment space, with an open fireplace, dance floor and bar.

*The Standard, 550 S. Flower St., Los Angeles, California, United States; +1 213 892 8080; [www.designhotels.com](http://www.designhotels.com)*

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## 7. Paresa Phuket, Thailand



One of the most picturesque meals you'll ever have.

This infinity pool overlooking the Andaman Sea offers the ultimate in al fresco dining. It's punctuated with tiny private man-made islands in the shadows bookable for a romantic tête-à-tête.

The starlight above is reflected in the pool, and the only soundtrack is the swish of soothing ocean waves.

*Paresa Phuket, 49 Moo 6, Layi-nakalay Road, Kamala Kathu, Phuket, Thailand; +66 76 302 000; [www.paresaresorts.com](http://www.paresaresorts.com)*

## 8. Punta Tragara, Capri, Italy



Even political heavyweights don't mind a splash about.

With views towards the iconic Faraglioni rocks, this pool is set amid cypress-studded rocks in a luxury hotel on the island, which has played host to the rich and famous for a century.

With a nod to Le Corbusier, this 1920 hotel and its pools have entertained Dwight Eisenhower and Sir Winston Churchill, as well as a flurry of starlets.

*Via Tragara, 57, Capri, Italy; +39 081 837 0844; [www.hoteltragara.com](http://www.hoteltragara.com)*

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## 9. Sanctuary Swala, Tanzania



Whatever you do, try not to look like a gazelle.

Overlooking a water hole in a secluded area of Tarangire National Park, this pool offers views of elephants and rare kudu antelopes against a backdrop of Africa's dramatic baobab trees.

Best enjoyed at night with sundowners, served by the retainers who have turned down the fluffy bed in your luxury tent and come out to light the campfire.

*Sanctuary Swala, Tangarire, Tanzania; +255 (0)27 250 9817; [www.sanctuaryretreats.com](http://www.sanctuaryretreats.com)*

## 10. Alila Ubud, Bali, Indonesia



Is it a pool or a mirror?

This infinity pool set amidst the rice fields of central Bali boasts a spectacular location, floating above the lush Ayung River valley.

The pool spreads out to form an elongated rectangle until it seems to disappear down the terraced jungle hillside.

*Alila Ubud, Desa Melinggih Kelod, Payangan, Gianyar, Bali, Indonesia; +62 361 975 963; [www.designhotels.com/alilaubud](http://www.designhotels.com/alilaubud)*

## 11. The St. Regis, Lhasa, Tibet



There's extravagant, and there's gold-plated extravagant.

Tibet may be associated with monks and spirituality, but its newest resort boasts a gold-plated pool. It's situated in The Iridium Room, designed for spiritual wellbeing in a new hotel built at 3,657 meters on the roof of the world.

Guests who feel too dazzled by the opulence of the materials can nip out to the adjacent meditation garden to recover their chi.

*Hotel St. Regis, Barkhor, Lhasa, Tibet; +86 891 680 8888; [www.stregis.com/lhasa](http://www.stregis.com/lhasa)*

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## 12. Skye, Sao Paulo, Brazil



Unique by name ...

Bizarrely named for the windswept Scottish island, Skye is actually the spectacular crimson rooftop pool of Hotel Unique, a luxury boutique hotel built in the gravity-defying shape of an inverted arc.

With no other high buildings within a one-kilometer radius, it enjoys panoramic views, and its expansive deck is transformed into a cocktail venue by night.

*Hotel Unique, Avenida Brigadeiro Luis Antonio, São Paulo, Brazil; +55 11 3055 4700; [www.hotelunique.com.br](http://www.hotelunique.com.br)*

## 13. The Cambrian, Switzerland



All you need's a mug of mulled wine.

The heated outdoor pool at this design hotel in the Swiss alps gives bathers the sensation of swimming straight into the surrounding snow-capped mountains.

As well as the restorative view, it is equipped with a bubbling massage bed and soothing jets to soothe the muscles of skiers after a hard day on the slopes.

*The Cambrian, Dorfstrasse 7, Adelboden, Switzerland; +41 (0)33 673 8383; [www.thecambrianadelboden.com](http://www.thecambrianadelboden.com)*

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## 14. The Park Hyderabad, India



A royal color for a regal experience.

This startlingly modern hotel in the city of ancient Muslim royalty boasts a pool intended to give a sense of swimming into a 3-D movie, with its infinity edge overlooking Hussian Sagar Lake.

The violet hue matches the furniture in a hotel which uses the regal color all over the place -- appropriately for a royal city.

*The Park Hyderabad, 22 Raj Bhjavan Road, Hyderabad, India; +040 2 345 6789; [www.designhotels.com/park\\_hyderabad](http://www.designhotels.com/park_hyderabad)*

## 15. Hearst Castle, California, United States



The fact that you're not allowed to jump in makes it even more tempting.

The newspaper magnate who inspired "Citizen Kane," William Randolph Hearst, built two spectacular Roman-inspired pools at his fairytale castle in the hills. Charlie Chaplin, Clark Gable and other legendary figures have splashed in the outdoor Neptune Pool, where a special ramp was installed to allow easy access for the pet dachshund of Hearst's lover, Marion Davies.

Today the pool is a highlight of tours around the property -- though swimming is not allowed.

*Hearst Castle, San Simeon, California, United States; +1 800 444 4445; [www.hearstcastle.org](http://www.hearstcastle.org)*