

# OFF DUTY

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## ADVENTURE & TRAVEL

### SITES & SIGHTINGS

# THE WRITE STUFF

'Book a stay' takes on new meaning at these literary hotels

SOME PEOPLE LIKE to escape with books, some like to escape through books. Now you can escape to books, thanks to all the culture-focused hotels that have opened around the world. At these getaways, you can immerse yourself in esoteric libraries, participate in author events and admire décor inspired by favorite authors. Read on.

—Maria Finn



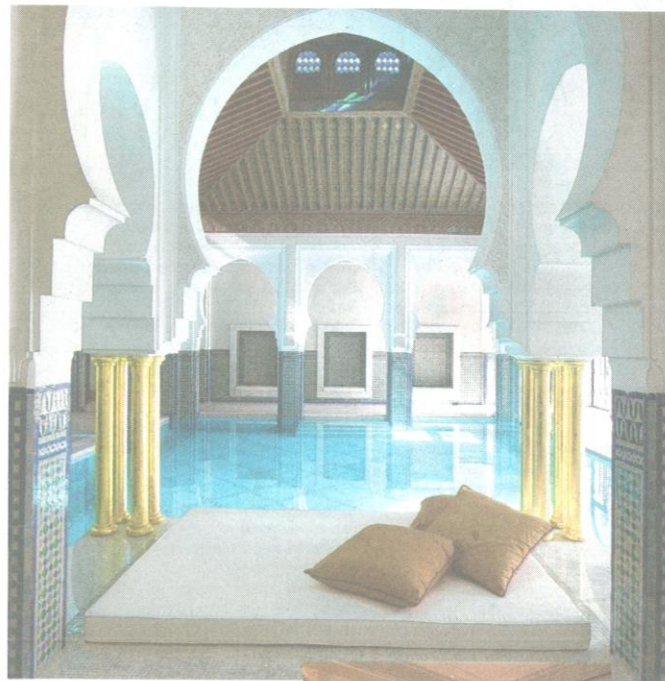
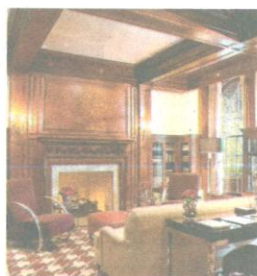
#### A Reading Room in New York

The year-old Chatwal hotel in New York's theater district occupies the original site of the Lambs, a club where Cecil B. DeMille, Fred Astaire and John Wayne gathered. The hotel painstakingly moved the club's library, fireplace and all, turning it into a guest suite named for the building's architect, Stanford White. Each room features a copy of Paula Uruburu's "American Eve," which recounts the tale of White's murder by the husband of his mistress, Gilded Age model Evelyn Nesbit. *From \$795 per night, 130 W. 44th St.; thechatwalny.com*

#### Speaking Volumes in San Francisco

"Book Nerds Welcome" reads the greeting sign at the retro-boutique Hotel Rex near San Francisco's Union Square. Once a bookstore, this 15-year-old hotel hosts literary events throughout the year. Its lobby and Library Bar are lined with bookshelves and punctuated with vintage typewriters, and the recently launched Tour de Rex provides Globe bikes and maps of the city marked with literary spots.

Guests can opt to donate a dollar each night to 826 Valencia, a nonprofit co-founded by Dave Eggers that holds creative-writing classes for children. *From \$169 per night, 562 Sutter St.; thehotelrex.com*



#### A Shelf Life in Marrakech

The recently renovated La Mamounia in Morocco is not all tile mosaics and sumptuous courtyards. In 2010, the hotel launched its own annual literary award to promote Moroccan authors to the Francophone world, with the winner receiving approximately \$25,000. The hotel also boasts a library containing books on all aspects of Morocco and decorated with black-and-white photographs of writers with a link to the region, including Paul Bowles and Tahar Ben Jelloun. An author-in-residence program is in the works. *From about \$720 per night, Avenue Bab Jdid; mamounia.com*



#### A Novel Concept in Paris

Le Pavillon des Lettres, a boutique hotel that opened in Paris late last year, eschews numbers for its 26 rooms (get it?). Instead, guests stay in H (the Victor Hugo room) or S (for William Shakespeare). Text from the corresponding author is painted on the walls above the beds, and each room comes with an iPad loaded with contemporary books and daily newspapers. Prefer paper? The hotel's library is stocked with reads and has a fireplace perfect for lounging by. *From about \$375 per night, 12 rue des Saussaies; pavillondeslettres.com*



#### Sheer Poetry in Miami

Literature isn't the first thing that comes to mind when you think South Beach. But at the Betsy hotel, guests can expect poetry readings, as well as art openings and concerts. The owner's father was poet Hyam Plutzik, a Pulitzer Prize finalist, and bookmarks embedded with flower seeds and inscribed with lines of his poetry are left on pillows at turndown. The Betsy has beach reading covered, too: Every room has a selection of books, and the on-site bookstore sells works by the likes of Malcolm Gladwell and Rick Moody. *From \$325 per night, 1440 Ocean Dr.; thebetsyhotel.com*