



TREND WATCH

# Micro Hotels

Once upon a time, staying in a small hotel meant a chintzy room in a bungalow and a forgettable breakfast, or a grotty motel at the side of a motorway. But now, unrestrained by the shackles of corporate dos and don'ts, a new wave of media-savvy owners are revamping the concept to create diminutive accommodation in quirky buildings, character-packed private houses and fantastic locations. These are smart places to stay – with three rooms or less – where the intimate scale is enhanced by a delicious dose of atmosphere and chutzpah. We get a first peek inside the world's smallest hotel in Denmark and round up the other mini gems

## The Oyster Inn Waiheke, New Zealand

This little inn on the island of Waiheke, 35 minutes by ferry from Auckland, has caused quite a stir since it opened last year. Fresh from lengthy stints working in the London fashion and events industries, local owners Andrew Glenn and Jonathan Rutherford Best have created more of a lifestyle experience than a hotel. A jaunty yellow 1970s VW van meets guests from the ferry and deposits them, a few minutes later, outside an old building that was once the island's newspaper office. The buzzy bar and seafood restaurant serves up dishes such as snapper on clam-and-corn chowder, with home-made lemonade or NZ microbrews. The vibe is Hamptons-esque, and the fresh, airy design continues in three bedrooms so perfectly kitted out you may feel the need to restyle yourself. Which is fine because there's a small shop downstairs selling hip beachwear and accessories from the likes of Orlebar Brown and Tom Blinns. Doubles from about £145. +64 9 372 2222; [www.theoysterinn.co.nz](http://www.theoysterinn.co.nz) KATE JOYCE

PHOTOGRAPHS: CHRISTIAN HOGUE; MARK SMITH



## Little Ongava Namibia

For anyone who likes the idea of safari more than the early-morning reality, Little Ongava, a three-villa hilltop retreat deep within Namibia's arid Ongava area, is an alluring spot. The parched landscape of the 66,000-acre reserve makes wildlife spotting a breeze, with the lodge's stilted vantage point providing amazing big-picture vistas rather than being at the heart of the action (hi-tech telescopes are on hand for closer encounters). The spacious thatch-roofed, rock-hewn villas are dispersed for privacy and to make the most of their location. Outdoor showers, day beds, private plunge pools and glass-enveloped bathrooms all overlook the plains where lions, giraffes and critically endangered black and white rhinos congregate, and sometimes clash, around the area's principal watering hole. (Guests can also take drives into adjacent Etosha National Park for more action-packed scenes.) A series of wooden-plank bridges link the villas to a rustic-chic, communal living and dining room – a gathering point for bespoke cocktails such as an African White Russian (Amarula instead of Kahlúa), storytelling and healthy gourmet dining. *From about £495 per person per night, including all meals and activities.* +27 11 807 1800; [www.wilderness-safaris.com](http://www.wilderness-safaris.com) PAUL RUBIO

