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HOT THE LIST 2008

Welcome to the definitive guide to the hottest new hotels in the world. From a shortlist of thousands we have selected the 65 best new places to stay, in the most comprehensive Hot List ever. Our experts from all over the globe have used their discernment and insider knowledge to bring us the most stylish, most innovative, most luxurious hotels, whose settings range from desert islands to capital cities, starting with our own

INTERCONTINENTAL SAN FRANCISCO

The 32-floor InterContinental San Francisco is the largest hotel to open in the city in nearly two decades. Unlike the ornate, 1920s-era InterContinental Mark Hopkins — the brand's first San Francisco property — this sleek, 550-bedroom glass tower is a brand-new build, with a gleaming, marble-floored lobby and public spaces flooded with natural light. Floor-to-ceiling windows in each bedroom and suite give an immediate sense of place, with spectacular views of the downtown skyline and the Bay Bridge. Interiors feature a northern Californian palette of 'seafoam green' and mahogany, accented with deep, rust-red sofas, curving metal lamps and large orchids. Bathrooms are stocked with natural botanical products by Floris. The sixth-floor spa has 10 treatment rooms, a lap pool and a fitness centre overlooking a bamboo-lined, heated outdoor terrace (where there are daily yoga classes). In the evenings, a busy downtown crowd fills the lobby's Bar 888 for cocktails. The restaurant, Luce, is a partnership between famous winemaking families in Napa (Mondavi) and Tuscany (Frescobaldi). In keeping with this pedigree, chef Dominique Crenn cooks inventive Californian dishes with a Tuscan influence: beautiful Dungeness crab ravioli with sliced beetroot and watermelon radish, topped with trout caviar; black-ink *trofiette carbonara* with calamari, pancetta and poached egg. The hotel is in the shopping- and entertainment-focused SoMa (South of Market) neighbourhood, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the new Westfield mall are a couple of blocks away. If you need a lift anywhere within a two-mile radius of the hotel, there is a complimentary car service.

WHEN TO GO Late spring or autumn to avoid the holiday crowds and summer fog.

ROOM TO BOOK One-bedroom corner suites on the 29th and 30th floors have two walls of floor-to-ceiling windows.

888 Howard Street, San Francisco (00 1 888 811 42731; www.intercontinentalsanfrancisco.com). Doubles from \$295; one-bedroom corner suites from \$1,197