

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

Travel + Leisure Readers' 15 Favorite Resorts in the South of 2023

North Carolina was voted into six of the top 15 spots in our annual "World's Best Awards" survey for 2023.

By Elizabeth Rhodes

Charming lodges tucked away in the Appalachian Mountains; countryside inns brimming with character; and beachfront hotels set on private slices of Atlantic coastline: These are the best resorts in the South. It's no surprise that a region famous for its hospitality is home to some of the best resorts in the U.S., and this year's list highlights some small-town destinations with a whole lot to offer.

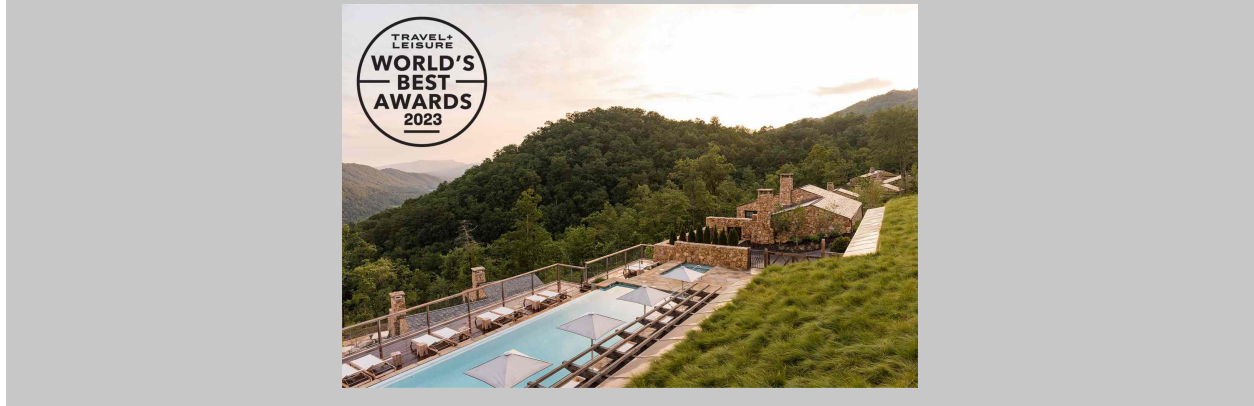
How Voting Works

Every year for our World's Best Awards survey, T+L asks readers to weigh in on travel experiences around the globe — to share their opinions on the top hotels, resorts, cities, islands, cruise ships, spas, airlines, and more. Nearly 165,000 T+L readers completed the 2023 survey, an increase of nearly 25 percent over pre-pandemic voting levels. A total of more than 685,000 votes were cast across over 8,500 unique properties (hotels, cities, cruise lines, etc.).

Hotels were classified as either resort hotel, city hotel, or safari lodge based on their location and amenities, and they were specifically rated on the criteria below:

- Rooms/facilities
- Location
- Service
- Food
- Value

For each characteristic, respondents could choose a rating of excellent, above average, average, below average, or poor. The final scores are averages of these responses.



COURTESY OF BLACKBERRY MOUNTAIN

What Readers Loved

The Great Smoky Mountains town of Walland, Tennessee made a big impression on readers, as it's home to Blackberry Farm and Blackberry Mountain, two properties frequently ranked among the best in the country by T+L readers. The Golden Isles of Georgia, made up of four barrier islands on the Atlantic Ocean, are home to two more of this year's honorees, The Cloister and Lodge at Sea Island.

The Reserve at Hot Springs in historic Hot Springs, Arkansas — a town known for its geothermal springs and 19th- and 20th-century bathhouses — made the list at No. 10. But no Southern state appears more often in this year's list than North Carolina. Five of the top 15 best resorts in the South are located in the western part of the state, while another is just west of Raleigh. The small town of Highlands has fewer than 2,000 full-time residents but is home to three ranked resorts: No. 2 Skyline Lodge, No. 6 Old Edwards Inn & Spa, and No. 8 Half-Mile Farm.

T+L readers voted these the best resorts in the South, starting with The Swag in Waynesville, North Carolina.

15. Keswick Hall: Keswick, Virginia

Dating back to 1912, Keswick Hall offers an upscale stay amid the rolling hills just east of Charlottesville, Virginia. Tennis, golf, a spa, and an infinity pool overlooking the manicured property, along with a Jean-Georges Vongerichten restaurant, are hotel highlights.

Reader Score: 91.12