

HOTELS

WHERE TO STAY AND WHICH ROOMS TO BOOK

As you would expect, Vienna contains some of the most plush and historic hotels in Europe. It also has a vibrant design-hotel scene. But actually finding a room in a city with so many attractions is not that easy, so don't bank on bagging your first choice when booking a last-minute weekend break, especially during spring, summer and Christmas – though prices do tend to drop in July and August due to the annual city-wide opera vacation. Four hotels – institutions really – stand out: the operatic Hotel Bristol (see p022); Hotel Imperial's stately residence (Kärntner Ring 16, T 501 100); the former rakes' playground of Hotel Sacher Wien (Philharmonikerstraße 4, T 514 560); and finally the Palais Coburg (opposite), which is heavy with Saxe-Coburg history, features a sumptuous décor and offers first-class service.

It's on the boutique front that the modern accommodation story really begins. Terence Conran's first foray into hotel design was Das Triest (Wiedner Hauptstraße 12, T 589 180), and many hotels that came afterwards make more than a passing reference to this trendsetter. Smaller places, such as the sumptuous Altstadt (see p020), the novel Hotel Rathaus Wein & Design (see p028) and the Hollmann Beletage (Köllnerhofgasse 6, T 961 1960), have an idiosyncratic charm, while slick newbie, the Do & Co Hotel (see p031) has raised the benchmark for larger establishments.

For full addresses and room rates, see Resources.

**Palais Coburg**

Some buildings are born great, others are the result of having greatness thrust upon them. Fewer, like the Palais Coburg, are both. Built in 1845 by the Duke Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, the palace was saved from neglect by Peter Pühringer in 2003. Thirty-five of the suites are named after a Saxe-Coburg blue blood, such as the Victoria Imperial Blue (above), which hides its technology amid regal styling.

More contemporary rooms include the open-plan, Japanese-influenced Modern Suite. Elsewhere, guests will find part of the medieval city wall in the Stadtbild room (overleaf), which leads to the largest private wine cellar in Europe, a Michelin-starred restaurant (see p038) and, best of all, a rooftop pool, which is often empty. *Coburgbastei 4, T 518 180. www.palais-coburg.com*