

101 BEST HOTELS  
RIPPING YARNS



**BOOK IT** AUDLEY (AUDLEYTRAVEL.COM; 01993 838000) OFFERS FIVE NIGHTS FROM £1,955, INCLUDING FLIGHTS AND CAR HIRE.

**THE VANDERBILT GRACE**  
NEWPORT, USA

'Make your stay unique,' says the email that arrives right after you book at the Vanderbilt Grace, inviting you to 'personalise your stay'. Soap on a rope for the shower, maybe? Peanut butter and banana frozen yogurt on ice? Yes – but those are just for your pooch. So before you even draw up at this carefully restored, 1909 (dog-friendly) Newport mansion, and Marina Aslanidou, the lovely manager, has greeted you on the steps and thrust a glass of Billecart-Salmon champagne into your hand, you know you're in for a rollicking good time. The 33 rooms (including the vast first-floor suites) are the last word in understated New England chic, the terrace garden is a bloomin' joy and the food in the posh-option restaurant Muse – try butter-poached lobster with paprika – is sublime. And then there's Newport itself waiting outside. From the supersized gin palaces and America's Cup competition yachts in the harbour, to the shops on Thames Street selling nothing you need but everything you want, to the Gilded Age mansions that line the waterfront – this is the smartest town in the American North-East by miles. And the Grace is its best address. ▷

The bag that has it all. This leather travel trolley, £4,530, by Gucci not only looks glamorously old-school, it has wheels and a tug-me-along pull-out handle too. Your ride has been well and truly pimped. net-a-porter.com



**LOEWS REGENCY**  
NEW YORK, USA

Midtown is back. And nowhere more so than at the Loews Regency, 51 years young after a facelift in which the windows alone cost a cool five million bucks. The new Loews is oh-so Park Avenue: acres of soft white marble in the lobby, and Larry King in the redesigned Regency Bar & Grill – lobster salad followed by Dover sole is his default lunch. This is where the term 'power breakfast' was coined 40 years ago, and it's still the place to chow down while brokering a mega-deal. Actually, it's all still quite men-in-suits orientated – the male spa alone takes up an entire floor. But ladies are hardly forgotten: the wardrobes in even the most modest of the 379 gorgeous rooms (all large by New York standards) are as big as aircraft hangars. No more unruly hair either: the Julien Farel professional-grade hairdryer in the bathroom could power a small country, and if breakfast isn't your thing, skip it for the salon's 'power hour' – a blowdry, manicure and pedicure, all finished in 60 minutes flat.



**BOOK IT** DOUBLE, FROM £335 (LOEWSHOTELS.COM; 001 212 759 4100).