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# The Latest Buzz-Worthy Hotel Trend? On-Site Bee Hives!

Think honey-infused cocktails, massages, and more.... sweet.

by **Jill Becker** February 2, 2016 • 9:01 AM ET



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Southwest



## The Daily Dish



Dorinda Medley Dines with Ladies of London's Luke Henderson



Is Sonja Morgan Getting Ready to

Normally, one of the last things you'd want to find when you check in to your hotel is bees. But they're showing up at hotels in record numbers these days, as on-site apiaries have become the latest trend at upscale properties across the globe.

Why? Well, credit the buzzy craze to the growing urban agricultural movement, along with environmental efforts to help save the dwindling bee population.

But it's not just the bees that are benefiting from their swanky new accommodations. Hotel guests are reaping the rewards as well, as the honey they produce is showing up in everything from beers at the bar to lip balms in the gift shop.



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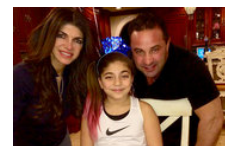
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The Feast



This landmark property in Midtown Manhattan has served as a home away



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from home to luminaries like Dwight Eisenhower and the Dalai Lama since 1893. Today it's the permanent home of 350,000-plus bees, who reside in a six-hive sanctuary 20 stories above Park Avenue. You'll find their sweet nectar in cocktails like the Wax Poetic (consisting of honey syrup, lemon, and Bison Grass Vodka) at the Peacock Alley bar, and in menu items like the sous vide honey fried chicken at the Bull and Bear Prime Steakhouse. It also makes an appearance in spa treatments like the Milk Haute Honey mani/pedi and the Abeille Royal Expert facial, the latter of which utilizes pure royal bee jelly — from the queen bee! — and offers spagoers a pre-treatment honey tasting. Guests staying in the Towers of the Waldorf Astoria (the private hotel within a hotel occupying the top floors of the property) can even partake in an exclusive beekeeping experience. Priced at \$1,800, the outing includes an hour-long exploration of the hives with one of the culinary team members, a three-course lunch of honey-infused dishes, and a pampering honey-based treatment at the Guerlain Spa.

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## **2. Carmel Valley Ranch, Carmel, California**

At this lush 500-acre retreat on the central California coast, interested guests can play beekeeper for a day. The experience, lead by bee ninja John



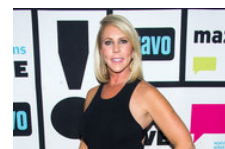
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**The Latest Buzz-Worthy Hotel Trend? On-Site Bee Hives!**

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Russo, is offered several times a week and includes a refreshing lavender and honey lemonade at check-in, a taste of Carmel Valley Ranch honey direct from the hive, and a travel-size lavender beeswax lip balm as a souvenir of your adventure. But the real treat is getting to don a bee suit and follow Russo through the property's extensive lavender fields and into the hives to perform duties like harvesting honey, inspecting the bees' health, and feeding new colonies. Things really get buzzing at Carmel Valley Ranch in September, during National Honey Month, when the resort presents a bumper crop of exciting honey-themed activities and dining experiences.

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### **3. Fairmont Royal York, Toronto, Canada**

This downtown Toronto Fairmont property claims to be the first hotel in the world with a rooftop apiary, an idea said to have come about after then executive chef David Garcelon heard about the hives housed atop the Palais Garnier opera house in Paris. Fairmont Hotels & Resorts has since become one of the leaders of the movement, installing beehives at more than 20 of its properties around the world. The Royal York's 350,000 "employbees" produce as much as 800 pounds of honey each year, which is used in its restaurants as an ingredient in everything from soups to salad



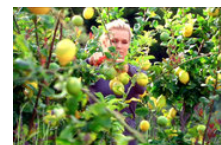
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dressings. An ideal place to sample the bees' handiwork it is at the lavish afternoon tea served at the Library Bar each weekend.

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#### 4. **The Brown Palace Hotel and Spa, Denver, Colorado**



After pollinating the blossoms of nearby linden trees, the approximately 350,000 winged residents of this luxury property in downtown Denver check in to their tenth-floor rooftop accommodations, which have clever names like the Buzzidential Sweet and Mile Hive City. There, they produce the honey, or “liquid gold” as Brown Palace managing director Marcel Pitton calls it, that is sold by the jar in the hotel’s gift shop. The nectar is also utilized in the in-room line of amenities, in several of the treatments at the expansive spa, and even in the barrel-aged Breckenridge bourbon available at the Ship Tavern bar.

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## 5. Hyatt Regency, Atlanta, Georgia

When Atlanta's iconic revolving restaurant Polaris reopened atop the Hyatt Regency in June of 2014 after a ten-year absence, it was committed to using locally sourced ingredients, including tomatoes, peppers, beans, herbs, and other produce from the hotel's rooftop garden, along with honey from its on-site apiary. Home to a colony of 60,000-plus bees, which were rescued from a truck accident, the hives are visible from the restaurant as it makes its 45-minute loop, as is a colorful bee mural commissioned by the Hyatt Regency and painted by a group of design students from nearby Georgia State University.

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