



## ARNAUD ZANNIER

Since 2011, French hotelier Arnaud Zannier has assembled a portfolio of boutique hotels lauded for being low in pretension and high in cultural authenticity, from Le Chalet Zannier in the French Alps to Angelina Jolie's favourite, the village-style Phum Baitang in Cambodia.

**What's on your agenda for 2019?** We're working on two openings, in Namibia and Vietnam. Sonop, in the Namib desert, is a tented lodge of 12 rooms with a 19th-century British colonial atmosphere, and Băi San Hô (meaning bay of corals) is 71 suites and villas, as well as 50 residences at a uniquely preserved site in Quy Nhon, central Vietnam. We are also considering two camps in Namibia; one in the Sossusvlei region, the other in Caprivi near the Okavango Delta, and probably one in Mexico.

**How do you carve out a distinctive personality in a luxury hotel market that's arguably already overcrowded?** We developed a brand for aesthetes in search of authenticity. Our properties are designed to combine authenticity, simplicity and genuine luxury, with discreet tailored service. The architecture integrates local culture and expertise in design and, of course, our restaurants and bars serve local food revisited. But the key factor of success, I believe, remains the elegant settings of our properties. The beauty of the location is essential for a magical experience.

**How do you select your sites?** I give a lot of importance to the feeling one gets in a place – I based most of our establishments on the emotion that I felt when visiting.

**Where is high-end travel heading?** I believe the future leads to small places with a soul. Guests want more simplicity, and I believe standardisation of service is no longer the rule.

**What's one thing you would change to improve the travel experience?** Avoid the use of smartphones. It's much more moving to see the beauty of a landscape through your own eyes rather than the lens of a phone.  
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