



# Ask Me Anything: The Questions I Didn't Answer on Instagram Yesterday

My Mykonos boutique hotel hit list, who has killer hotel branding, a lesser-touristy Sicily, the place that changed the way I think about hospitality, and who I'd bring to a Coldplay concert (lol).

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Every now and then, I host one of those fun "Ask Me Anything" sessions over on [Hotels Above Par's Instagram](#)—and wow, you all never disappoint with the questions. I always wish I could get to every single one, but with the flood of submissions that comes in, it's just not possible to answer them all there. So I thought, why not bring a few of those questions over here to *Hotel Espresso* for an impromptu send-out. Here are five thoughtful (and slightly hilarious) ones from you—scroll to the bottom for my Mykonos boutique hotel hit list.

## **Question #1: What Hotel Changed the Way You Think About Hotels?**

I love this question. For me, it all started when I worked as a bellboy at Charlie Palmer's old Mystic Hotel in San Francisco (it's now a Palisociety). That job gave me a front-row seat to everything—happy guests, frustrated ones, the chaos and rhythm behind the front desk, and the little details that make great hospitality feel effortless. It showed me how much effort goes into creating a memorable stay behind the scenes. I wasn't just someone checking in anymore—I was part of the operation. I truly loved the experience, and looking back, Mystic Hotel was the place that completely changed the way I see hotels.

## **Question #2: What Are Some Hotels That Are Killing It with Their Branding, Marketing, and Visuals?**

I used to work in hotel PR, so I feel like I've got a decent handle on this one. There are so many great examples out there, but if I had to narrow it down, a couple stand out.

The family-run Pellicano Hotels group. They're behind [Issimo](#), a super cool platform that's all about Italy (which makes sense, since all three of their hotels are based there). What makes Issimo shine is that it's not just editorial content—it's also an online shop packed with products that are either Italian-made or at least *half* Italian. Many of the items are part of exclusive sartorial collaborations, too, such as with Highsnobiety, Frette, and Choosing Keeping. [There's even a special-edition Monopoly game themed around an Italian Road Trip](#). What I love most is how Pellicano has propelled their hospitality brand into a full-fledged lifestyle (many places try to achieve this goal but often fail when you look past the baseless marketing language; that's not the case here, they've successfully done all the right things). It's not just about booking a room

—it's about buying into the *La Dolce Vita* vibe. If you're curious for more, the three properties under their crown are [Hotel Il Pellicano](#) in Porto Ercole, [Mezzatorre Hotel & Thermal Spa](#) on the island of Ischia, as well as [La Posta Vecchia](#) in Ladispoli, which is just about 40 minutes from Rome.

A second boutique hospitality brand that ranks high in this category is the American-rooted [Ash Hotels](#). Their branding on all fronts slays—[Ulysses in Baltimore](#), [The Siren in Detroit](#), and [Hotel Peter & Paul in New Orleans](#) are three of my favorite properties. Ash's online store allows you to purchase pieces from their spaces, including velvet fringe lamps, modernist fruit bowls, silver olive spoons, artisanal ashtrays, and custom bed linens, bringing the hotel vibe home. Beyond design, Ash elevates lesser-touristy American cities like Baltimore and Detroit by restoring historic buildings and turning them into vibrant cultural hubs. Their blend of storytelling and style equates to a thoughtful brand output.

### **Question #3: Sicily That Has Not Been Overdone?**

While Noto isn't exactly a hidden gem, it still feels refreshingly less touristy compared to the buzz and crowds of Taormina (you can thank the *White Lotus*). This baroque beauty offers a slower, more serene experience, where you can wander Corso Vittorio Emanuele past grand, honey-hued churches, sunlit piazzas, and ornate palazzi without the rush. The Cathedral of San Nicolò and the flamboyant balconies of Palazzo Nicolaci di Villadorata showcase the town's rich artistic heritage in a setting that invites lingering. In mid-May, the Infiorata festival carpets the streets in intricate flower mosaics, adding a burst of color and creativity to the calm. And for a truly local treat, Caffé Sicilia serves up legendary granitas and pastries that are worth the trip alone. Stay in a splurge-worthy villa with [The Thinking Traveller](#) or at the peaceful yet inexpensive seven-key boutique hotel, [Dimora Santagatha](#).

### **Question #4: What Are Your Favorite Mykonos Hotels?**

I got asked this question twice, so here are my favorites, arranged in order of lowest to highest starting nightly rate, per Mr. & Mrs. Smith.

#### **Numo Mykonos (From \$279/Night):**

This adults-only retreat features a striking black-and-white minimalist design throughout its 28 rooms and suites, many of which boast private plunge pools or outdoor hot tubs. Situated just steps from Kalafatis Beach, Numo offers a tranquil escape centered around its geometric pool and the Mediterranean flavors of its Theros restaurant.

#### **Domes Noruz Mykonos (From \$349/Night):**

An adults-only, luxury lifestyle resort, Domes Noruz Mykonos positions its 38 suites with private hot tubs, plunge pools, or larger personal pools towards the quieter Agios Stefanos Beach. The property features an all-day pool bar, a fine-dining restaurant, and a wellness hub offering Hammam rituals and signature Soma Spa treatments, all framed by its contemporary, boho-chic aesthetic.

#### **Amyth of Mykonos (From \$373/Night):**

Amyth of Mykonos presents an exclusive adults-only experience within its 17 boho-luxe suites, nearly all equipped with a private hot tub or pool. Perched on a hilltop overlooking Mykonos Town and near Agios Stefanos Beach, this hotel emphasizes

personalized wellness with a spa utilizing Grecian Olive Era products and an outdoor gym.

**Kalesma Mykonos (From \$628/Night):**

Kalesma Mykonos is designed as a contemporary Mykonian village, with 25 suites and two larger villas, each boasting a private terrace with a plunge pool, shaded dining area, and alfresco shower. Located on a hill in Aleomandra, it offers unique double views of both sunrise and sunset, alongside a spa with a Hammam and Dr. Barbara Sturm products, and local Cycladic cuisine at its Pere Ubu restaurant.



Kalesma Mykonos