

once-a-pay-by-the-hour establishment, *Spense* lighting, flashes of lipstick-red and pieces of erotic art are a nod to its past, and there are no phones or televisions in the rooms. Not for prudes.

Potential turn-off: Partygoers and trendsetters tend to linger ostentatiously in the lobby.

Our little secret: Lovers of raunchy decor should book room 304 – its black walls are flecked with (occasionally phallic) graffiti. Doubles from £140, room only 100.55. 148. 28.5.180. hotelmexcourtyards.hk

D HOTEL MARI, MARMARIS, TURKEY

In the mood: The stepped pool complex of this Dago Peninsula resort is supermodel-stunning, with atmospheric views of misty headlands. The rooms (white-on-chocolate-on-black modern basements) seal the deal.

Potential turn-off: You'll be dining here 24/7 as there are no local restaurants to speak of.

Our little secret: Book a Deluxe Sea View room on the seventh floor, in Block C – it costs a bit more but in return you'll get

stunning, meditative views of the tranquil
'Silence Beach'

Doubles from 6435.868 (00 90 252 441 2000)
direct.com tel

£100 or less

**HOTEL KARNTNERHOF,
VIENNA**

In the mood: In the cobbled old heart of Vienna, this discreet townhouse has recently emerged from a refurbishment. It now rolls out romantically Art Nouveau-tinged rooms that give off a whiff of nostalgia minus the mellow—all is crisp and clean.

Potential turn-off: The hotel, you'll probably discover during your stay, once functioned as a wartime brothel. Your girlfriend won't like it.

Our little secret: The roof terrace is a city secret, with magical views of Medieval spires. Doubles From £95, 858 (30-43 / 512 1923, janet@rolof.com)

KINSTANA, PELOPONNESE GREECE

In the mood: Natural springs flow through this 500-year-old mansion, filling reflecting pools, while housing its lion cubs and

ambience lush. Rooms have textured
wallpapers made from local lace and
ensuites have twin reinforced showers

Potential turn-off: The beaches on inconvenient 30-minute-drive away

Our little secret: Ask for a private wine-tasting in the hotel's own vineyard. It's magical. Doubles from £150, \$269/200 JD 27,320-66,800, kingstonsahotel.co.uk

THE CHARMING HOUSE, VENICE

In the mood: This quiet retreat, tucked down a back street in the Dorsoduro district, is perfectly located for strolling arm-in-arm to all the city's main sights. Rooms are stylish (think avant-garde furnishings and arty lighting), with just a frisson of Italian playfulness (provocative sculptures and kooky design books).

Potential turn-off There isn't much in the way of a lounge/lobby area to hang out in.

Our little secret: Forge a canal-view ensuite for room G, which overlooks the splendid gardens of the Peggy Guggenheim gallery next door. Doubles from £142, 556 (90.35-04) 2/770262, do724.com.