

SHANGRI-LA AT THE SHARD

Step into your room and try, if you can, to lift your jaw up off the floor. This is the most gobsmacking view in London, no question. At 1,000ft, Renzo Piano's Shard is the highest building in Western Europe, and, looking down on the ant-like pedestrians scampering below, it's impossible not to slip into a zen-like calm. The wonders of the capital lie all around but inside is pure Orient: Asian-inspired decor, dim sum served alongside eggs royale at breakfast, and utterly courteous service. Lounge by the pool by day, staring at those views, or perch up against the glass in the bar by night, where it feels a tiny bit like you're in Shanghai. There are a few oddities: Ting restaurant serves Modern European fare when you'd expect Chinese (still delicious, though) and with all that glass around you, there's a strange sensation of being on show. Still, this is the trophy sightseer's ultimate layover.

BOOK IT DOUBLE, FROM £450 (SHANGRI-LA.COM; 020 7234 8088).



THE LANESBOROUGH HAS THROWN OPEN ITS DOORS AFTER A STACK OF REFURBISHMENT WORK. THE PLANS MARK THE LATE DESIGN SUPREMO ALBERTO PINTO'S FINAL PROJECT. THIS REGENCY LANDMARK IS FAMOUS FOR HAVING THE MOST EXPENSIVE SUITES IN LONDON. EXPECT HIGH ROLLERS TO BE FORMING AN ORDERLY QUEUE. (LANESBOROUGH.COM)



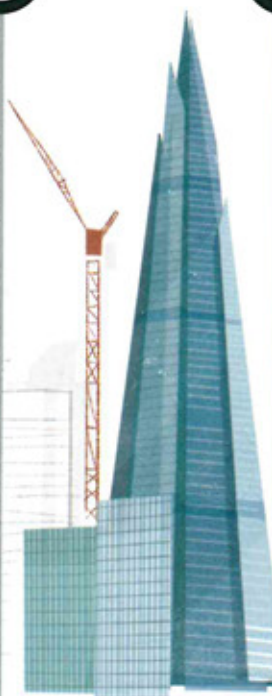
THE MONDRIAN AT SEA CONTAINERS

Did you know that views of St Paul's are protected? The Morgans Hotel Group has taken full advantage, opening the first Mondrian hotel in the UK in Sea Containers House – and gazing at Wren's masterpiece from your room will leave you breathless. Design demon Tom Dixon has bedecked this Seventies landmark with balconies so you can lean out and get closer. There's also a giant glass cube of a rooftop bar called the, ahem, Rumpus Room and the hot-ticket Sea Containers restaurant, where Seamus Mullen creates delights such as charred eggplant with yogurt, dates and sesame. Head down to the spa for a Custom Guru massage or hide away in the screening room. Then it's back to your 'cabin' with its ocean-liner curves and THAT eyeful. **BOOK IT** DOUBLE, FROM £195 (MORGANSHOTELGROUP.COM; 0808 234 9523).



...IN THE CLUB

Prefer something a bit more discreet? Something with all the finery of a big hotel but less of the fuss and bustle? **The Arts Club** (theartsclub.co.uk), a favourite hangout of Gwyneth and Prince Harry, is opening 16 rooms in its Dover Street townhouse in the spring. Guests will be able to lounge around members' areas all they like. The **Artist Residence** (artistresidencelondon.co.uk), meanwhile, has given sleepy Pimlico a pick-me-up. This former pub has 10 rooms filled with original artists' prints and eclectic furniture, with trendy Brighton restaurant 64 Degrees holding court downstairs too. Over in Notting Hill, an area until now devoid of a good local hotel, the **Laslett** (living-rooms.co.uk) will open its doors in the summer. They're knocking through five mammoth stucco houses to create a relaxed 'neighbourhood hangout'. We're officially excited.



FOUR SEASONS HAS SNAPPED UP GRAND OLD TEN TRINITY SQUARE, THE FORMER PORT OF LONDON AUTHORITY HQ. THE TOWER HILL SITE WILL OPEN AS A 98-ROOM HOTEL IN SPRING 2016. (FOURSEASONS.COM)

