Hotel

SHORTLIST

THE CURATED COLLECTION

FOR HOTEL MANAGERS AND OWNERS · OCTOBER 2026

See your hotel the way buyers will see it.

Tour operators and travel designers use our due diligence to decide where to send their clients. Use it on your own hotel, and on the five across the street, before they decide.

01 What a good rating hides

02 The product

03 Six real dossiers

04 When a busy hotel goes quiet

05 What you get

06 Price per property

The rating is an average. Your holiday is not.

A five-star hotel in Barcelona still scores 4.5 on Google. In July a guest found a cockroach in its spa pool. That review sits among almost three hundred, and nobody has the weeks it takes to go through them all.

We do. In October 2026 we investigated every Google review of every hotel in our collection. The table is what we found hiding under good ratings.

Share of hotels with at least one documented report.

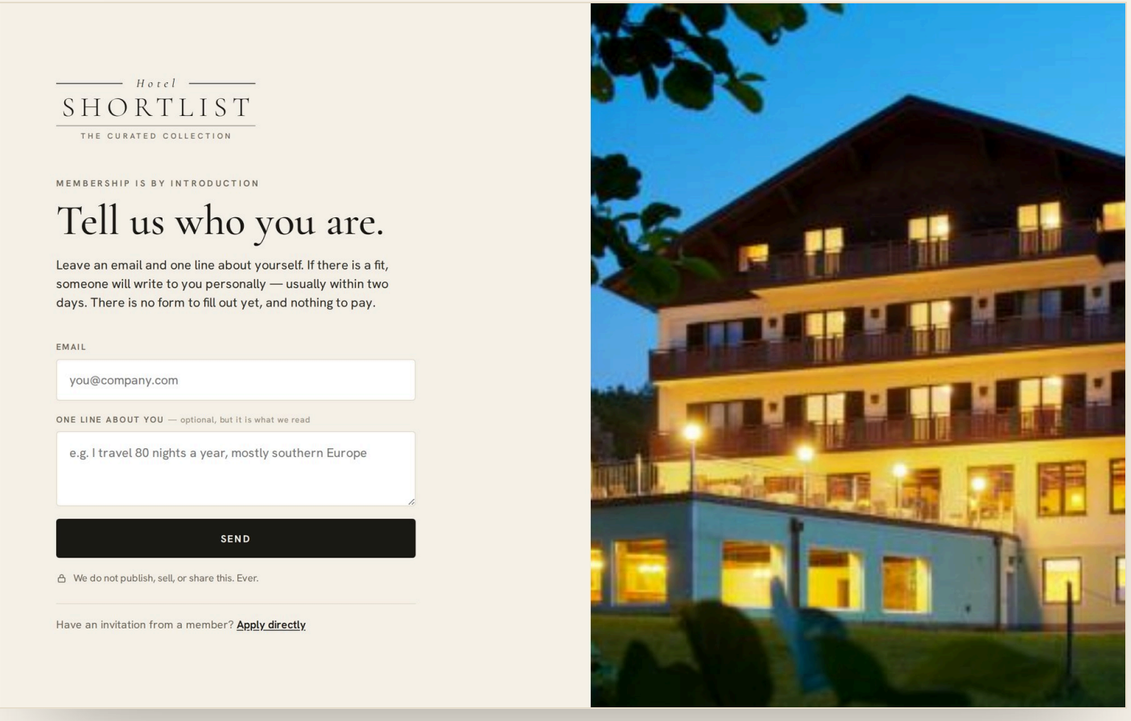
Only the best were investigated: four- and five-star hotels scoring 9.0 or more on Booking.com and 4.5 or more on Google. Several thousand of them.

Hidden fees	72.7%
Aggressive or hostile staff	46.8%
Nightlife or street noise	43.8%
Thin walls	35.1%
Photos that lie	34.3%
Broken air conditioning	34.0%
Safety hazards	30.7%
Billing that looks like fraud	22.3%
Mould	13.4%
Bedbugs	6.3%
Cockroaches	4.5%
Reviews bought or coerced	2.2%
Owners who turn on guests	1.1%

A private members' club for people who are tired of being lied to by a 4.7.

Hotel Shortlist is a private members' club. The hotels in it are not advertised to us, not paid for, not pitched. They are chosen by a forensic due-diligence engine that investigates everything guests have written about a property, and by a founder who then goes and checks.

Friends and family only. If nobody inside knows you, there is no way in. You can ask for an introduction, and every one gets an answer.



hotelshortlist.com/intro — ask for an introduction.

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Three things. We do them in this order.

1

Investigate everything

Every review, every year, in whatever language it was written. We date each complaint, count how often it recurs and check whether the reviews themselves are genuine. One bad review is noise. Fourteen is a fact.

2

Give a verdict

On the shortlist, flagged, or not recommended. With the evidence: the actual reviews, quoted, dated, linked. Solid enough to stand up as evidence, should anyone ever need it.

3

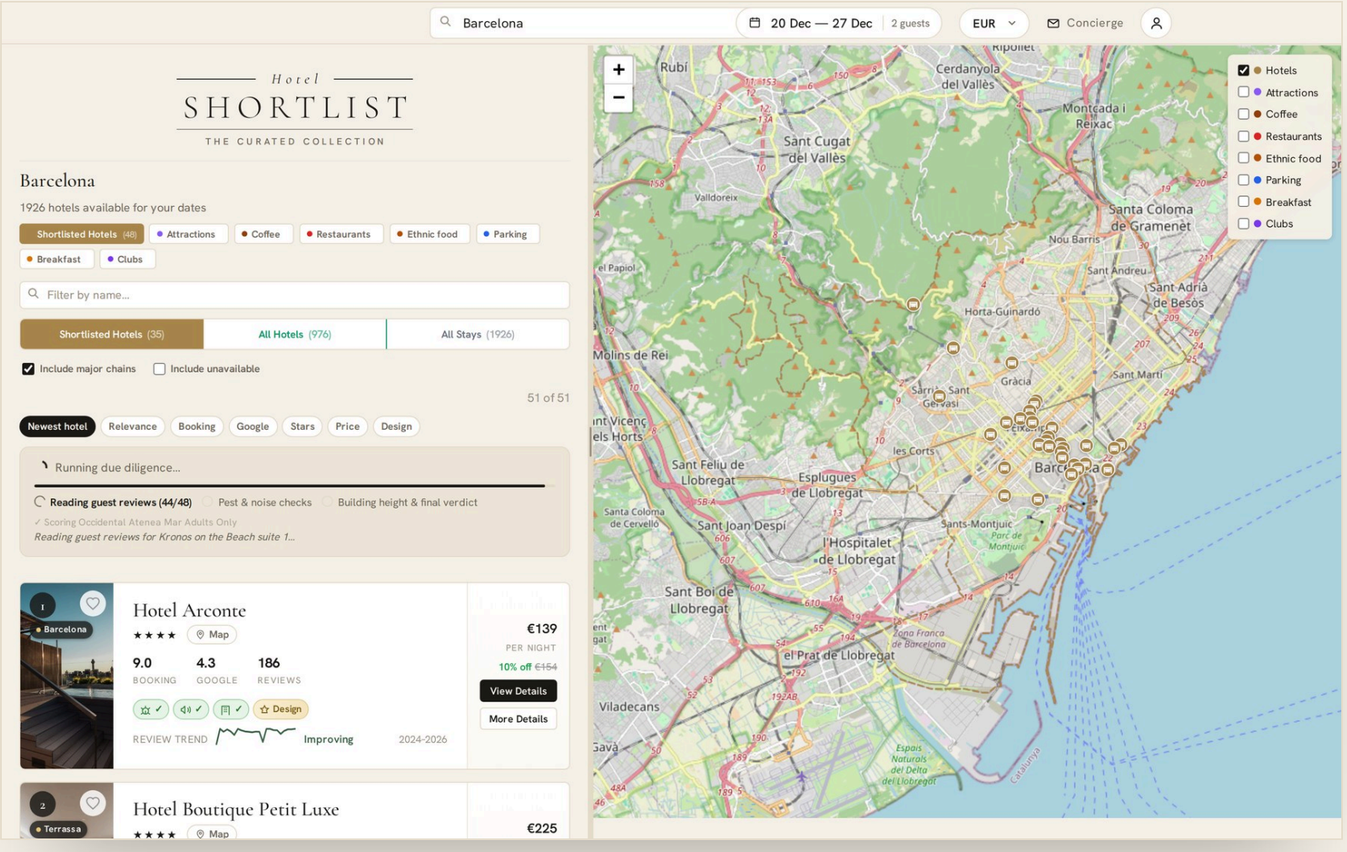
Book it at our rate

Members book through the club at rates usually a few percent under what Booking.com charges for the same bed on the same night.

Search a city. Every hotel already investigated.

Pick a city and dates. The map and the list fill with every hotel that has rooms, and the due diligence runs live in front of you: guest reviews, pest and noise checks, whether it is a tower block or a major chain, a final verdict.

Each card carries a review-trend sparkline. Improving, stable or declining, before you open anything.



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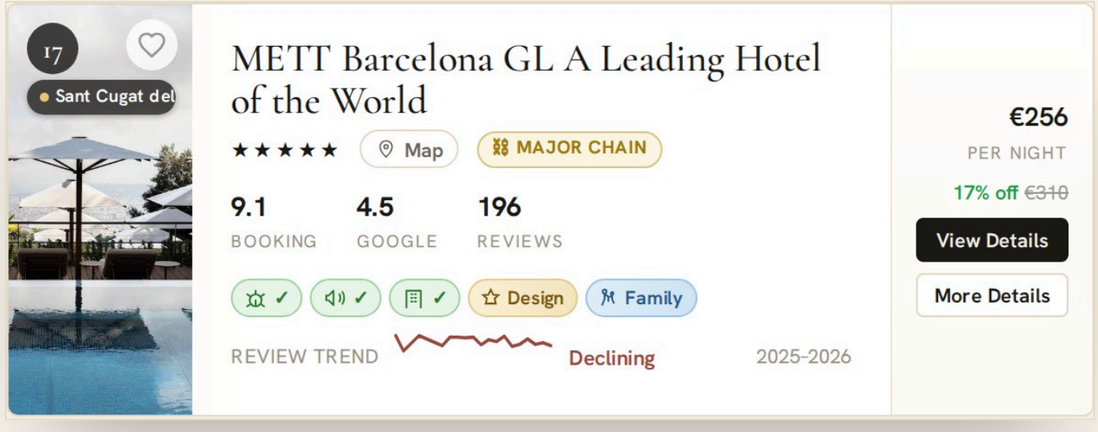
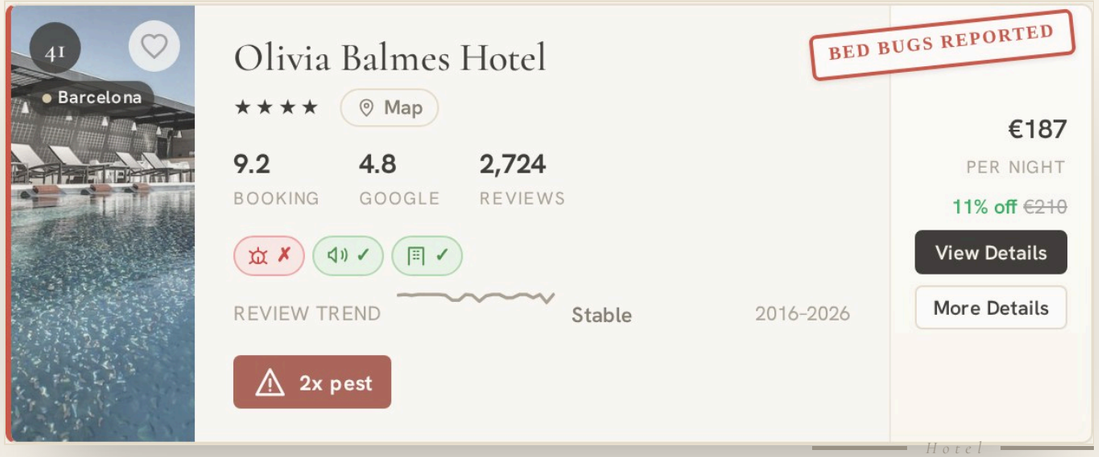
Impossible to get anywhere else: the verdict is stamped on the card.

PASSED · DESIGN AND FAMILY TAGS EARNED FROM WHAT GUESTS WROTE



FAILED · STRONG HEADLINE SCORES, STAMPED AND MOVED DOWN THE LIST



Hotel SHORTLIST
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A hotel is on the shortlist only if it clears every rule.

Four or five stars, and guest scores that clear our own bar. The exact thresholds stay with us.

No documented pest report. One cockroach, one bedbug, and the card is stamped.

Noise measured, not guessed. We count the share of guests who could not sleep. Past our limit, the hotel fails.

Tower block or major chain? We tell you before you book. Some members want one. Most do not.

Statistical relevance. A score only counts when enough guests stand behind it. A perfect 10 from a handful of reviews is not evidence.

9.2	4.5	277	★★★★★	~2019
BOOKING SCORE	GOOGLE RATING	TOTAL REVIEWS	STAR RATING	BUILT / RENOVATED
4%				
NOISE MENTIONS				

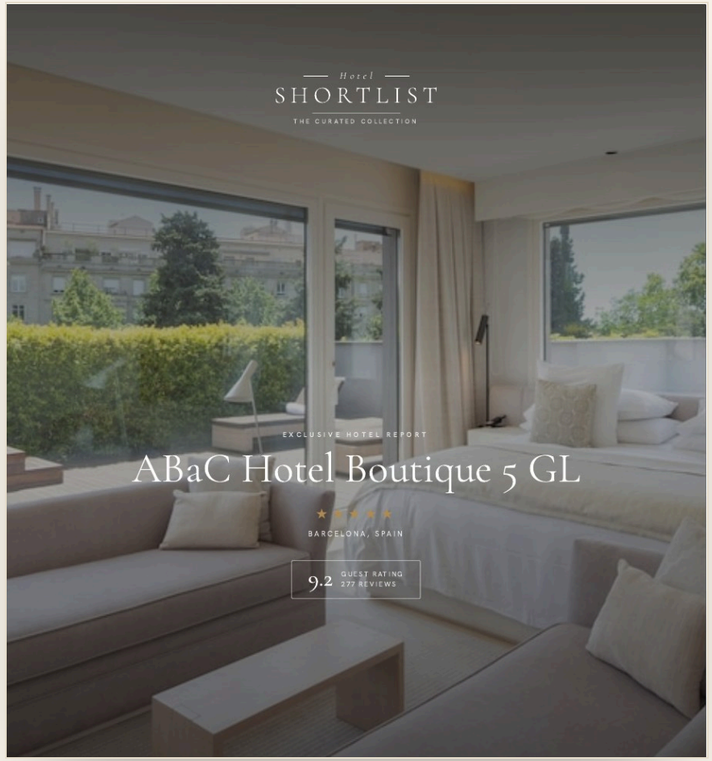
Parking assessment: *Problematic — Multiple guests report difficulty finding spaces, expensive rates (€40/day mentioned), unclear entry instructions, and limited availability with surrounding areas also full.*

Gym & fitness: *Basic — Dedicated fitness area described as small with basic equipment available; Located adjacent to spa facilities requiring advance booking; One guest mentioned 'fitness' and gym but noted lack of detailed equipment variety*

Open any hotel: build or renovation year, noise share, a parking verdict and a gym verdict, each written from what guests actually said.

Open a hotel. Get the dossier.

Each hotel costs fifty cents of research credit and returns a written report: the verdict, the scores, what guests love, what to watch for, every pest, theft or safety report quoted verbatim with its date, and a month-by-month rating chart.



INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT

Due-diligence report

HotelShortlist puts every hotel through independent due diligence: we analyse thousands of guest reviews, pest and noise reports, pricing and location before a hotel enters the curated collection. This assessment is based on 277 real guest reviews.

! **Flagged**
Pest reports found in reviews · Elevated noise complaints in reviews

BOOKING.COM	GOOGLE	POSITIVE FEEDBACK
9.2 / 10 Guest rating	4.5 / 5 277 reviews	87% 242 positive of 277

NOISE LEVEL	BUILT / RENOVATED
4% Share of reviews citing noise	~2019

GUEST SENTIMENT

87%

Positive 87% (242) · Neutral 4% (10) · Negative 9% (25)

2 documented pest reports

Evidence from guest reviews, sorted most recent first

Our experience was far from what is expected of a 5-star hotel. In the room we found a small dead cockroach, in addition to cobwebs with dead insects. However, the worst occurred in the spa pool, where we found a huge dead cockroach. It was so large that my husband thought it was a leaf. When I realized what it was, I immediately got out of the water feeling very disgusted and could no longer enjoy the spa. When we informed the staff, I heard the cleaning supervisor call a colleague on the phone to come remove the cockroach, since she herself did not dare to due to its size. Finally, the only solution offered to us was to remove the cockroaches and apologize. There was no other measure, explanation, or gesture of compensation towards us. We expected much more from a 5-star hotel, especially one that houses a restaurant with 3 Michelin stars. Unfortunately, the experience was far below the reputation projected by the establishment. The only thing that was truly at the level of a 5-star hotel was the attention of the receptionists. They were kind, attentive, and very professional at all times. It is a true shame that the level of cleanliness and management of such a serious situation were not at the same level.

ORIGINAL Nuestra experiencia estuvo muy lejos de lo que se espera de un hotel de 5 estrellas. En la habitación encontramos una cucaracha pequeña muerta, además de telarañas con insectos muertos. Sin embargo, lo peor ocurrió en la piscina del spa, donde encontramos una cucaracha enorme muerta. Era tan grande que mi marido pensó que era una hoja. Cuando me di cuenta de lo que era, salí inmediatamente del agua con muchísimo asco y ya no pude volver a disfrutar del spa. Al informar al personal, escuché a la responsable de limpieza llamar por teléfono a un compañero para que fuera a retirar la cucaracha, ya que ella misma no se atrevía debido a su tamaño. Finalmente, la única solución que nos ofrecieron fue retirar las cucarachas y pedir disculpas. No hubo ninguna otra medida, explicación ni ningún gesto de compensación hacia nosotros. Esperábamos mucho más de un hotel de 5 estrellas, especialmente de uno que alberga un restaurante con 3 estrellas Michelin. Lamentablemente, la experiencia estuvo muy por debajo de la reputación que proyecta el establecimiento. Lo único que realmente estuvo a la altura de un hotel de 5 estrellas fue la atención de las recepcionistas. Fueron amables, atentas y muy profesionales en todo momento. Es una verdadera pena que el nivel de limpieza y la gestión de una situación tan grave no estuvieran a la misma altura.

Google review · 1/5 · Jul 26, 2026 · Stenia Couto

It's fine but definitely not a five star hotel! We only stayed one night and last minute but on arrival the key which controls the electricity didn't work. We were taken to our room any way and told they would try and resolve it. We were then left in a dark electricity free room for over an hour... so left the hotel for 3 hours while they resolved it. If it didn't work it would have been nice if they had let us sit somewhere else, offered a drink etc. it just made the start of the experience a bit off. The room it's self was showing a lot of wear. The bathroom door didn't close, the sliding closet doors were broken, there were ants everywhere and blood stains on the seating. We had to ask for hand soap in the bathroom and body wash but was told there is none of the latter. The spa area nice and very relaxing. Overall though this does not come close to comparing with other 5 star hotels I have stayed at

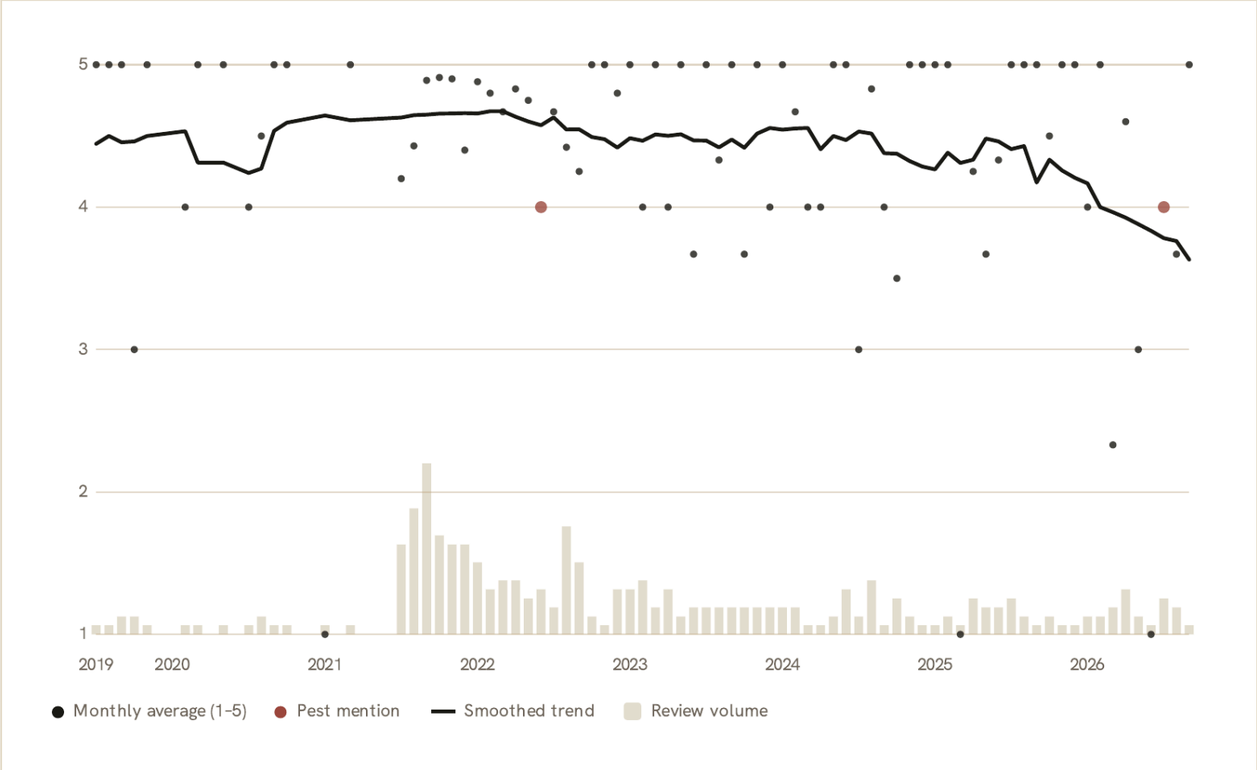
Google review · 3/5 · Jun 13, 2022 · Laura Scott

WHAT THE CHART SHOWS

Google says 4.5. This year says 3.8.

An all-time average hides the direction of travel. ABaC's reviews averaged 4.6 in 2021 and 2022. In 2026 they average 3.8, and a guest found a cockroach in the spa pool in July.

Every dossier carries this chart. The drop shows up here while the headline score still says 4.5.



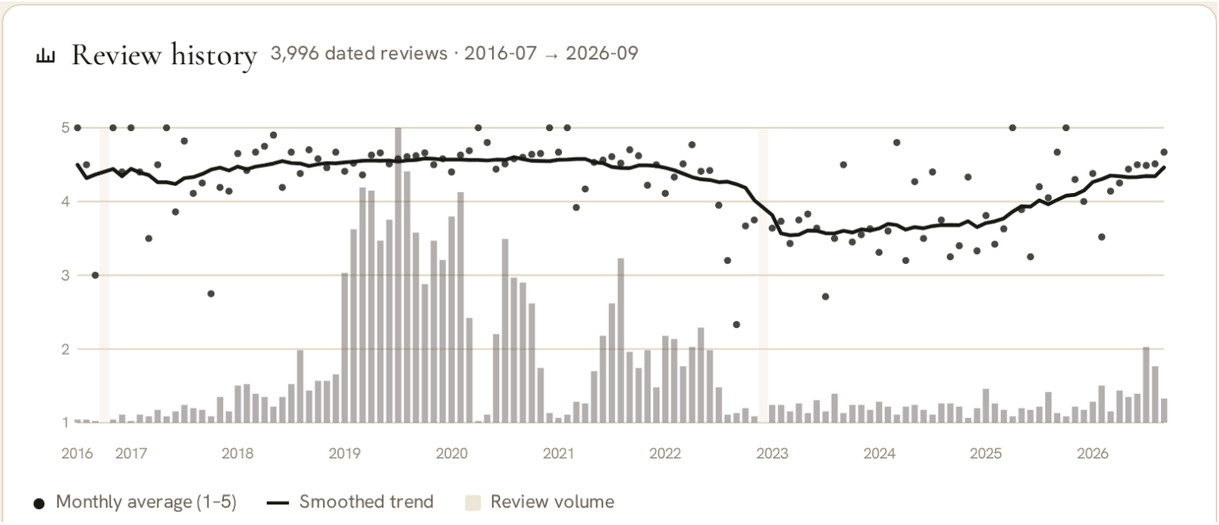
ABaC Hotel, Barcelona, from the real dossier. Dots are monthly averages, red dots months with a pest report, the line the smoothed trend, bars the review volume.

WHEN A BUSY HOTEL GOES QUIET

A hundred reviews a month. Then, almost none.

This hotel collected over a hundred reviews a month in 2019. In late 2022, long after the pandemic dip, they nearly stop, and when they come back the rating sits almost a point lower.

Often a gap like this is innocent. When it is not, we can usually recover what went missing, and in the rare case it ever matters, it holds up as evidence. Mostly, it just means you know.



From a real dossier: 3,996 dated reviews. Dots are monthly averages, the line the smoothed trend, bars the review volume.

WHAT WE SAVE YOU FROM · SIX REAL DOSSIERS

Six Senses Residences, Courchevel 1850

GOOGLE 4.6 · 131 REVIEWS

Jewellery worth 107,449 euros taken from a ground-floor residence through a window left on ventilation. Insurer offered 15,000. No cooling in a 1,200-euro-a-night residence.

ABaC Hotel, Barcelona

GOOGLE 4.5 · 278 REVIEWS

A cockroach in the spa pool that a guest first took for a leaf. Mushrooms growing from rotted parquet in a 300-euro room. Michelin-starred restaurant downstairs.

Mandarin Oriental, Milan

GOOGLE 4.7 · 2,114 REVIEWS

A Patek Philippe stolen from the room. Mosquitoes. Seven euros for a jug of hot water. Glass in a guest's foot. Moved out of the room at midnight for plumbing.

La Fantaisie, Paris

GOOGLE 4.5 · 518 REVIEWS

Concrete falling into the garden restaurant for three years. Homophobic slurs from the rooftop bar staff. Theft from the luggage room. Mice in the pastry case.

Savoy Dolomites, Val Gardena

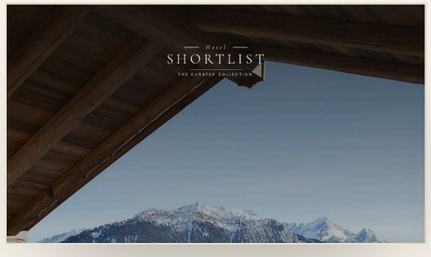
GOOGLE 4.6 · 172 REVIEWS

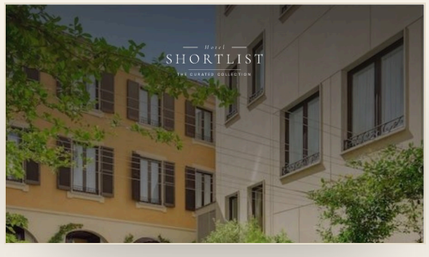
The owner screams at guests. Unused nights billed anyway. Returning guests after ten years "must correct our previous review by 180 degrees."

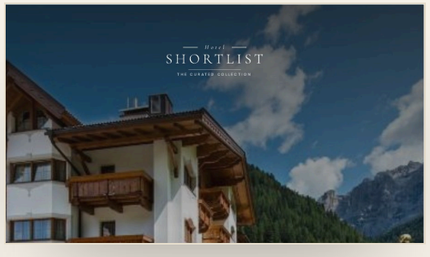
Grand Hotel Rimini

GOOGLE 4.5 · 2,930 REVIEWS

Bedbugs, cockroaches and ants in a 1920s palace. Music until three in the morning. Beach loungers at 85 to 125 euros a day.







Five of the six have a finished Hotel Shortlist dossier, shown above. Every line is a quoted guest review, dated and linked. Pests are named, never pictured.

> *“"Housekeeping robbed me and my siblings; $60, $40, and 90% of my wallet missing."”*
>
> FOUR SEASONS GEORGE V, PARIS · GOOGLE 4.8 · 7,383 REVIEWS

> *“"Monkey scratched our child. Rabies shots. Five-centimetre cockroaches."”*
>
> JW MARRIOTT SANYA · HEADLINE CASE

> *“"Staff threw our luggage out of the window."”*
>
> LE GRAND HÔTEL, COURCHEVEL 1850

> *“"The owner threatened to kill our dog."”*
>
> TOMA PIRTS · OWNERS TURN ON GUESTS AT 1.1% OF HOTELS

> *“"Air conditioning will be fixed next month." For years. Thirty-one complaints.”*
>
> HÔTEL LE MAGNIFIQUE

> *“"A used needle in the spa."”*
>
> RAFFLES THE PALM, DUBAI

Every quote is a guest review we can show you, with the date and the link. Ask.

The same investigation. Every platform, every month.

Members' version

Google

once a year

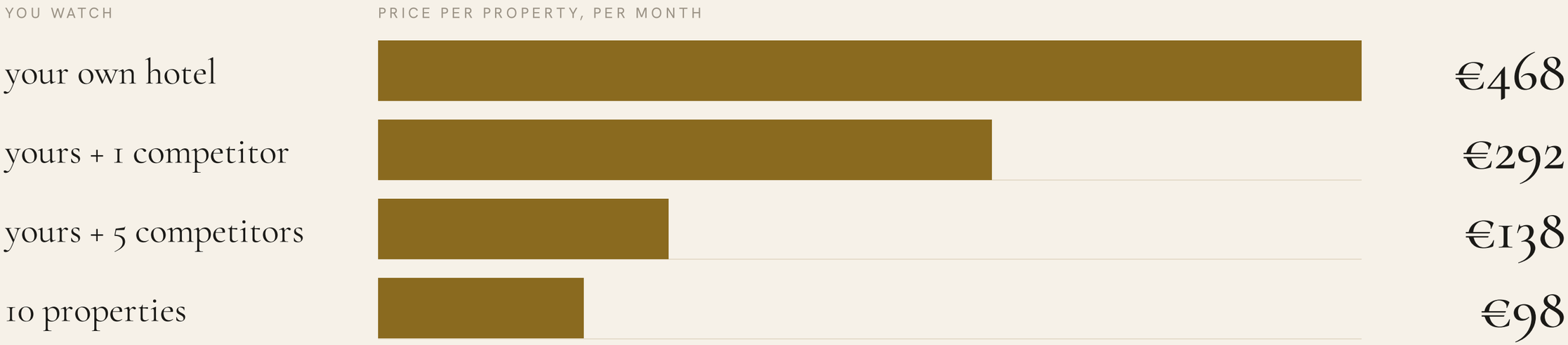
Competitive Set, for hotel managers and owners

Google · Booking.com · Tripadvisor · Expedia · Agoda · Trip.com

every month

A written monthly digest for you and the hotels you compete with: the whole review history and what changed since the last one, across every platform.

Pay per property, per month. The more you watch, the less each one costs.



Per property, per month, in euros. Any number from 1 to 10, on the same smooth scale: no tiers, no jumps. Try your own number at hotelshortlist.com/connect/hotel-managers.

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Start with your own hotel.

Send me its name and I will run the full check for free, inside a week. If it comes back clean, you have it in writing. If it doesn't, you heard it from me, in a private report, with time to fix it before the next season. Either way, it doesn't cost you anything.

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Watch the film: hotelshortlist.com/connect/hotel-managers