

February 24, 2011

OUR OSCAR PICKS

HOTEL PICKS FOR SOME MEMORABLE CHARACTERS



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'Tis the season to obsess about all things cinematic, and actors above all else. It's a simple enough matter to find out where they spend their down time, as there's an entire industry devoted to photographing them on their way in and out of hotels.

We thought it'd be more interesting to send some of this year's more memorable fictional characters on a little virtual vacation.



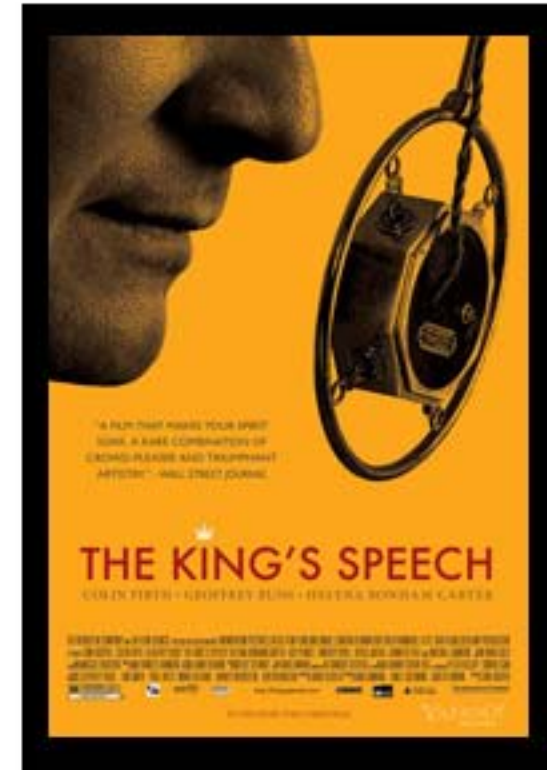
Natalie Portman's obsessive ballerina from *The Black Swan* would probably jump at the chance to stay at Moscow's **Ararat Park Hyatt**, just blocks from the Bolshoi — either that or perhaps Tchaikovsky's old suite at the **Londra Palace** in Venice. Then again, it's February; Moscow is frigid, Venice can be gloomy, and anyway the events of the film make it perfectly clear that Nina isn't exactly acting with her own best interest in mind at the moment.

The last thing she needs is more ballet. A break from competition, and from

European high culture in general, is what's called for. We'd suggest Australia or New Zealand, especially this time of year — but they've actually got black swans there, which could be a bit too much to take. The smart step would be a *grand jeté* to somewhere like the Maldives. You couldn't have a psychodrama at [Anantara Dhigu](#) if you tried.

Bertie and Elizabeth make for quite a power couple in *The King's Speech*. But the royal family has plenty of places to crash when in need of a retreat, and with British intelligence following their every move, a real getaway seems unlikely. Lionel Logue and his wife Myrtle, on the other hand, strike us as the adventuring type. Before settling in London, the Aussie couple road-tripped through Canada and the United States.

We think they'd have a grand time in Marrakech. Sure, there are as many riads as there are spangled souvenir tunics, but [Dar Les Cignognes](#) stands out with its particularly well-conceived design. It's neither unimaginatively minimal, nor needlessly opulent. Lionel may be into the whole shabby-chic thing (wasn't his office to die for?), but surely he'd be willing to drop the shabby for a few days of the good life in Morocco.



Think of *Inception* and chances are you're thinking of an impossibly twisted Parisian cityscape, a Japanese castle, or a fortress on a mountaintop in Canada. The topsy-turvy hotel scenes were shot on a sound stage north of London, and the real Fortress Mountain is closed for business — though it's not far from [Jasper Park Lodge](#), in western Alberta.

Then again, the only place Leonardo DiCaprio's character really wants to go is home. The scenes at Dom Cobb's house were shot at a real house in Pasadena, the Freeman A. Ford House, an Arts and Crafts masterpiece by Greene and Greene. He'd feel right at home at the [Lodge at Torrey Pines](#), in La Jolla, which was designed as a conscious homage to Greene and Greene's iconic Southern California style. And after a few dream-decades in limbo on a Japanese island, you'd have to think a round of golf would go by in a relative blink of the eye.

The Mark Zuckerberg of Aaron Sorkin's *The Social Network* is not

the world's most sympathetic character. The real "Zuck" seems to be a bit more complicated. He doesn't vacation often, but when he does, there's a certain mindfulness that we admire. He visited India for a week and made a stop at the Osho International Meditation Resort — to which his fans responded with 2,800 "likes." He ended 2010 with a trip to China with his girlfriend, but got some flak for mixing [business](#) with pleasure.

For a proper vacation we'd send the young CEO to [Gora Kadan](#), once an imperial family retreat and now a first-class ryokan in the middle of Japan's Hakone national park. It's secluded, but not at all lacking in culture. He may run into an ex-president or other members of the international business elite on the way to the *onsen*, but there's no pressure to hob-nob. A simple head-nod would do.

