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TRAVEL + LEISURE

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TRAVEL The Best
New Hotels
in the World



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DESIGN STAR

EL BLOK
VIEQUES,
PUERTO RICO

The term *design hotel* gets tossed around indiscriminately these days, so it's refreshing when a property truly merits the distinction. Such is the case at El Blok, the Caribbean's most stylish new lodgings, on the quiet Puerto Rican island of Vieques. The materials—colorful cement tiles, rubber-and-concrete lamps from Dutch designer Renate Vos, a 25-foot single piece of almond wood that forms the bar—show off the

gorgeous imperfection of the handmade, while perforated concrete louvers shield guest rooms from the afternoon sun and create Matisse-like shadows on the floors. Downstairs, the curves and ovals of the reception area intuitively lead guests to the bar, which faces the beach across the street and flows into the lively open-air restaurant, headed by Jose Enrique, Puerto Rico's star chef. elblok.com. \$\$