

THE SUNDAY TIMES

travel

BE INFORMED. BE INSPIRED. BE THERE.

DECEMBER 2009 £3.60

£3.50 IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES
www.sundaytimstravel.co.uk

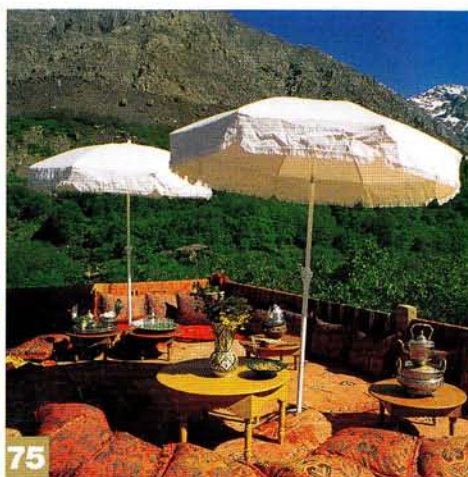


THE WORLD'S 100 BEST HOTELS

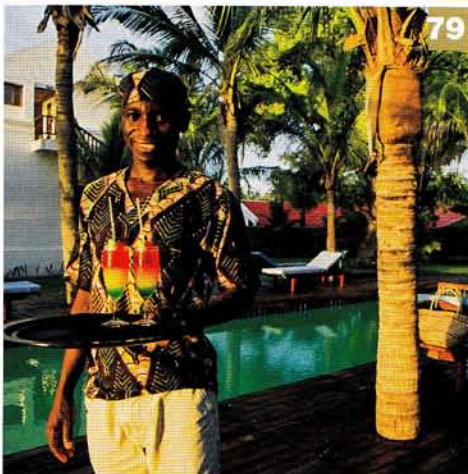
PLUS Paris, Thailand, Edinburgh, Milan, Florida, The Dolomites, Bali, The Caribbean, Malaysia – and the *inside* info on how to get upgraded...



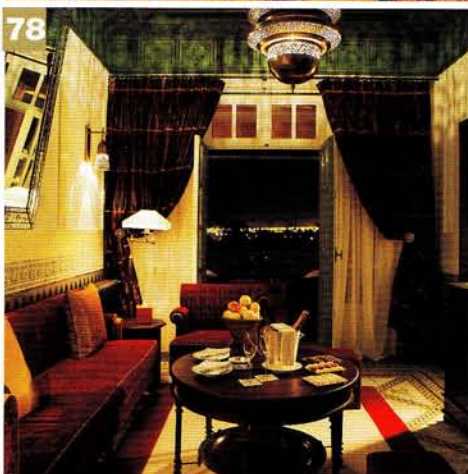
74



75



79



78

Infinity and beyond: clockwise from top left, Bilila Lodge Kempinski, Tanzania; Kasbah du Toubkal in the High Atlas Mountains; La Mamounia, Marrakech; atmospheric Ibo Island Lodge, Mozambique

Africa

72 I want: To feel 'at home' in Cape Town
You need: Jambo Guest House, South Africa
Because: The tropical foliage surrounding Jambo Guest House neatly blocks out any Cape Town hustle, so it's so-near-yet-so-far from the restaurants of Green Point (a three-minute walk) and the V&A Waterfront (just a bit further). The hotel feels like the sunny home of flamboyant friends. Bag the Garden Suite for a four-poster and *trompe l'oeil* ceiling paintings.
And how: Doubles from £112, B&B (00 27 2143 94219, www.jambo.co.za).

➔ **73 I want:** To propose on an exotic island
You need: The Majlis, Lamu Archipelago, Kenya
Because: With pure-white sands and *dhow* sails picked out against a blue Indian Ocean horizon, it would be tough to find a more utopian spot on the East African coast. On exclusive Manda Island (accessible only by boat from Lamu town), Majlis has 25 airy suites dressed in flowing white cottons, and a private stretch of sand made for dropping down on one knee.
And how: Doubles from £180, room only (00 254 2088 2028, www.themajlisresorts.com).

74 I want: A 24-carat safari with a great spa
You need: Bilila Lodge Kempinski, Serengeti National Park, Tanzania
Because: Short of disguising yourself as a date palm, this is the nearest you'll get to the big beasts roaming the Serengeti plains. In the heart

of Tanzania's natural park, this luxury lodge lies on the path of the great migration, so every day is a pick'n'mix of fabulous fauna: giraffes, baboons, African buffalo. As the sun sets over the savanna, indulge your human desires at the spa, an outpost of plush Thai brand Anantara.
And how: Doubles from £160, B&B (00 255 778 888888, www.kempinski-bililalodge.com).

75 I want: A Moroccan mountain palace
You need: Kasbah du Toubkal
Because: This converted kasbah is so film-set fabulous that Scorsese used it as a Tibetan monastery in his film *Kundun*. You'll find it 64km south of Marrakech, surrounded by a crown of High Atlas summits, including the highest mountain in North Africa, Mt Toubkal (4,167m). There are trails into the hills, and guides to take you up Toubkal, but with food this good and a hammam so inviting, you'll be hard-pushed to even get your walking boots on.
And how: Doubles from £150, B&B (00 33 5 4905 0135, www.kasbahdutoubkal.com).

76 I want: A wild-but-luxurious desert camp
You need: Wolwedans Dune Lodge, Namibia
Because: Marooned on a sea of dunes at the edge of the Namib Desert, more than 100km from the nearest town, this is as close to the middle of nowhere as you can get without a camel. It's a sumptuous base for desert safaris and day trips to Sossusvlei, with nine tents on wooden platforms built right into a 250m dune.
And how: Tents from £336pp, full board, including activities (00 264 6123 0616, www.wolwedans-namibia.com).

77 I want: A romantic one-off hideaway, deep in the bush
You need: Chalkley Treehouse, South Africa
Because: Built atop a ghostly 500-year-old leadwood tree and open to the stars, Chalkley Treehouse is dangerously romantic. It's not far from base camp Ivory Lodge, at Lion Sands game reserve near Kruger Park, but once a ranger has dropped you off, it's just you, the moon, your dinner, and the lions and leopards wandering beneath.
And how: Doubles at Ivory Lodge cost £1,470, full board, with activities. The Chalkley Treehouse experience costs an additional £170 per night (00 27 11 484 9911, www.lionsands.com).

78 I want: A top-end classic hotel in Marrakech that's not a riad
You need: La Mamounia
Because: The rose-walled Moroccan city was once synonymous with this *grande dame* – host to Churchill, Chaplin, De Gaulle and Deneuve. It ran out of steam in later decades, but it's back after a three-year, £112 million refurb and it's a stunner: loungey Baroque furnishings; lashings of marble; gourmet French, Italian and Moroccan restaurants; and a pool scene to rival the Indian Ocean.
And how: Doubles from £490, room only (00 212 524 388600, www.mamounia.com).

79 I want: To step back in time
You need: Ibo Island Lodge, Mozambique
Because: A ghostly 200-year-old outcrop in the Quirimbas Archipelago, Ibo Island has sporadic electricity, only three cars, and relies on giggling kids to shoo goats from the grass airstrip. Once a centre for the slave trade, it was abandoned overnight by the Portuguese – its crumbling Colonial mansions now held together by ivy. Three elegant waterfront villas have been restored to create nine rooms, with high ceilings, whitewashed walls and mahogany furniture.
And how: Doubles from £160, full board (00 27 21 702 0285, www.iboisland.com).

80 I want: An Indian Ocean island with a sense of culture and history
You need: Z Hotel, Zanzibar
Because: Until now, Zanzibar's hotels have been either basic backpacker or expensive five-star. Finally, there's an affordable, stylish alternative: on the northern tip of Nungwi Beach, the Z has 35 rooms with Conran wallpapers, Philippe Starck furniture and coconut-wood four-posters. Come 5pm, its pool bar is the best spot on the island to watch the sun sink.
And how: Doubles from £125, B&B (00 255 732 940303, www.thezhotel.com).

81 I want: The full *Out of Africa* experience
You need: Cottars 1920s Safari Camp, Kenya
Because: His grandpa was one of the original great white hunters, and Calvin Cottar has raided the family attic to furnish this glam safari camp in authentic Colonial style. Giant canvas tents have gramophones and hurricane lamps, while expert guides are on hand to take you into the Masai Mara for riveting wildlife encounters. After fine-dining by candlelight, a spear-wielding warrior will escort you to your four-poster.
And how: Doubles from £590, full board (00 1 888 870 0903, www.cottars.com).