



Spirit Away

the inspirational travel magazine



Chilean Heights



Northern Lights



African Sights



Tuscan Delights

Miami - Ponant Yachts - Turkey - Italy - Family Favourites - Trips of a Lifetime - Luxury Gulets

Welcome...

Welcome to the latest issue of our regular travel magazine where we hope to entice you with a varied selection of worldwide holiday ideas and destinations to treat yourself, partner, family or a group of friends to a well-earned break.

The new buzz word in luxury travel is experiential. This reflects a growing trend by discerning travellers for privileged experiences. We hope we have caught the flavour within our "Trips of a Lifetime" feature on page 18, where we have highlighted a number of unforgettable holiday ideas like a private dinner for 2 on the Great Wall of China or a trip to the Ice Hotel in northern Sweden in search of the Northern Lights. All it needs is a bit of inspiration!

As usual we have a healthy selection of European features, and with Summer 2015 looming it is becoming clear that the Mediterranean countries should be very popular options against a weakening Euro. Even so, families would be wise to book their July and August breaks swiftly as increased demand will see all the favourites booking out quickly. We have a few suggestions to get you started.

Contents

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- 3** Travel News
- 4** Grand Tour of Italy
- 6** Gulet Cruising
- 8** A FAN of the Mediterranean
- 10** Happy Families



- 12** Miami
- 14** Joie de Vivre - Ponant
- 16** The World of Aman
- 18** Trips of a Lifetime



For those of you who are looking for a special cruise we are pleased to feature two very special cruise companies. Traditional gulets are an excellent way for couples and small groups to explore the eastern Mediterranean. Alternatively, small capacity luxury cruising with a touch of French panache on one of Ponant's mega-yachts offers a chance to explore exceptional, lesser frequented corners of the world's oceans including Antarctica, Alaska and the southern Pacific.

Whether you are looking for a "trip of a lifetime", a beach getaway, a luxury city break or just news on some of the world's finest hotels and resorts we are sure this issue will inspire you, so sit back, have a read, then give us a call to discuss your travel plans.

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New journeys for 2015 onboard the most elegant train in South East Asia



Belmond is launching two new journeys on the Eastern & Oriental Express in 2015. The five night 'Fables of the Peninsula' from Singapore to Bangkok on 29 September 2015 and the two night 'The Ancient Temples of Lanna' departs on its inaugural journey on 15 October 2015 from Bangkok to Chiang-Mai.

'Fables of the Peninsula', limited to just 60 guests in State and Presidential Cabins, begins with a night at the legendary Raffles Hotel in Singapore, before a 5-night exploration that showcases the very best of peninsular Malaysia visiting Kuala Lumpur, the Cameron Highlands and Huay Yang before disembarking in Bangkok.

A new look for the suites at Elounda Peninsula and free half board this summer



Elounda Peninsula occupies an outstanding and exclusive waterfront location overlooking the Bay of Mirabello in Elounda, Crete. Offering the very highest standards of accommodation, this boutique all-suite hotel within a resort (Porto Elounda Golf & Spa Resort - see page 11) has benefitted from a recent programme of renovation to the suites giving guests an enriched experience for summer 2015 from the extensive selection of suites that all share easy access to the sea.

Furthermore, guests can take advantage of a superb free upgrade to half board when booking a One Bedroom Peninsula Collection Suite with Private Pool.

Extra refinements with the new Club®Level at The Ritz-Carlton, Abama

The Ritz-Carlton, Abama has introduced a new Club®Level offering an exclusive sanctuary, providing the comfort, convenience and privacy of a hotel within a hotel. With its own dedicated team on hand to offer an extra level of service, they take care of all guest needs ensuring an exceptional experience within sumptuous surroundings. The Club®Level has 19 deluxe rooms and 2 suites, all with ocean views, and is located on the 10th floor of the Moorish-inspired Citadel. Guests have access to the Club Lounge which is a peaceful and exclusive retreat for families and couples offering a range of benefits and culinary delights throughout the day thus ensuring a prime setting for the ultimate escape.



The Canny Traveller ...handy tips for a stress-free holiday

Make online copies of important paperwork

Upload copies of your travel documents, including passports, driving licences, visa, insurance policies and itineraries to an online storage/cloud facility. In the event of loss or theft you need simply to access the information via a computer (in your hotel or at an internet cafe) and print off.

Weigh your hold luggage and check hand luggage for restricted items

Avoid surcharges by ensuring hold luggage is within airline's permitted weights.

Before leaving Home

Leave your house keys, alarm details and contact address abroad with a trusted friend or relative. Check all electrical appliances are switched off and unplugged. Lock all windows and doors. In winter, turn the water off at the mains to prevent the pipes from freezing.



Grand Tour of Italy

Cultured cities and classic coastlines with **Belmond**

owing to its fabulous climate, enviable gastronomy, fantastic wines, beautiful scenery, magnificent architecture and rich heritage, Italy has long been a favoured haunt for British travellers even stretching back several centuries when the privileged few embarked on expansive “Grand” tours lasting many months.

These days the luxury grand tourer is more likely to be somewhat “time” poor, so would want to squeeze a lot into a small period of time. For those in search of the superlative Italian experience there can be no doubt that a week or two spent in the company of Belmond staying at their impressive collection of iconic hotels across the Italian mainland and Sicily offers a worthy 21st century reworking of the classic Grand Tour.

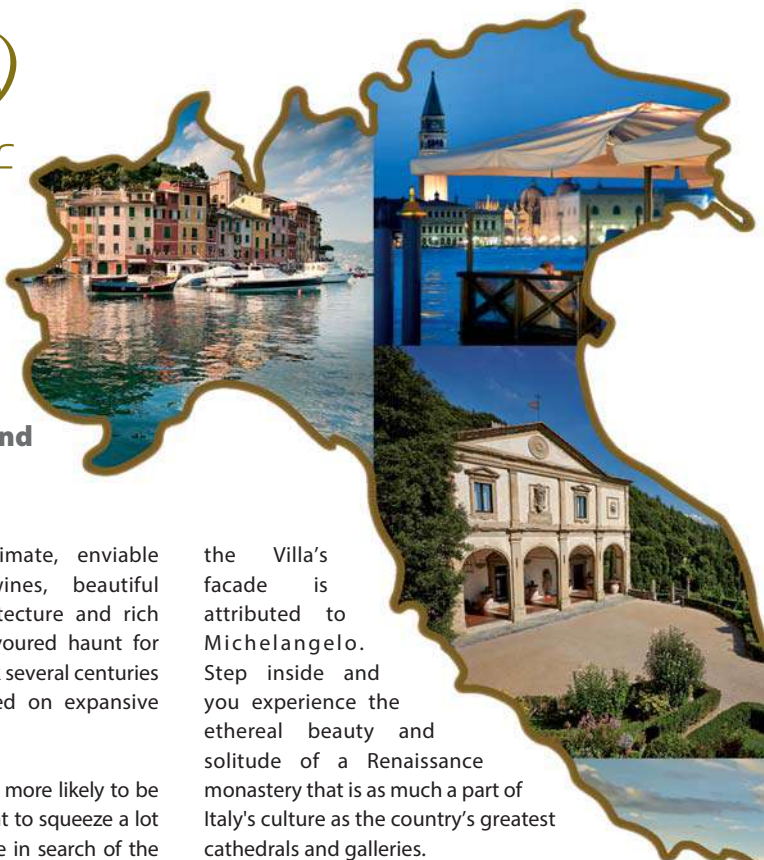
The cities of Venice and Florence are the two Renaissance jewels of Italy. The buzz of the waterways and the spectacle of the classic architecture is a glorious, theatrical experience that touches all the senses. And if Venice is a theatre, **Belmond Hotel Cipriani** is the Royal Box. Four minutes by private launch from San Marco, on the tip of Giudecca Island, this landmark hotel commands unrivalled views of the lagoon and Doge’s Palace.

Florence delivers an equally rich, cultural experience of world-famous galleries and Renaissance architectural masterpieces like the Ponte Vecchio and the Duomo. It is also the gateway to the gastronomically rich hills of Tuscany. **Belmond Villa San Michele** is nestled on a hilltop amid lush trees and terraced gardens, enjoying unparalleled vistas of Florence, stretched out before it in all its classic splendour. Dating from the 15th century,

the Villa’s facade is attributed to Michelangelo. Step inside and you experience the ethereal beauty and solitude of a Renaissance monastery that is as much a part of Italy’s culture as the country’s greatest cathedrals and galleries.

Italy’s coastlines are a natural spectacle and no tour of Italy would be complete without time spent exploring the beautiful bays and hillside villages of Liguria and the Cinque Terre. Set overlooking the picture-perfect harbour of Portofino, with its luxury yachts bobbing at anchor, **Belmond Hotel Splendido** and **Belmond Splendido Mare** are two of Italy’s most glamorous retreats and the ideal stopover between Venice and Florence. Or perhaps the lure of the South beckons. Admire the beauty of the Amalfi Coast and the shimmering Mediterranean far below from an infinity pool that seems to touch the clouds at **Belmond Hotel Caruso**, a former 11th century palace above Ravello.

End your grand tour in Taormina in Sicily, where, in the shadow of mighty Mount Etna, you might choose to split your time between a stay at **Belmond Grand Hotel Timeo** on the high slopes of Taormina Town itself before relocating to edge of the azure waters below at **Belmond Villa Sant’Andrea**.



Belmond Hotel Splendido



Sunset Cruise & Romantic Dinner

Celebrate your romance in an unforgettable way. Hop aboard the hotel's private boat and head to beautiful San Fruttuoso Bay, only accessible by boat or footpath.

A secluded table for two awaits on the beach, where you will enjoy local specialties beneath the starry skies.

Belmond Hotel Cipriani



Bacari Tour

The bacari are lively hubs in which generations of Venetians gather to exchange news and laughs while they enjoy specialist wines.

Discover the best and most unusual of these wine bars aboard a vintage wooden boat.

Belmond Villa San Michele



Love on a Pillow Tour

The 1962 film Love on a Pillow, starring Brigitte Bardot, was filmed in and around Belmond Villa San Michele. Relive scenes from the movie with a unique tour of its filming locations.

Set out in a Fiat 600 to visit Villa Gamberaia's stunning gardens and take in the breathtaking views from San Miniato al Monte.

Belmond Hotel Caruso



Helicopter Tour

There are few more dramatic and luxurious ways to see the stunning Amalfi Coast than from the privacy of your own private helicopter.

The pilot will soar over the cliffs that sheer down into sparkling turquoise seas. Then venture to the Gulfs of Salerno and Naples.

Belmond Villa Sant'Andrea & Belmond Grand Hotel Timeo



Ape Tour in Taormina

Hop aboard an Ape Calessino for a Dolce Vita Tour of Sicily. Visit sites frequented by the Hollywood stars of yesteryear including Casa Cusani and Castelmola.

Sample Sicilian specialties, such as granita and almond wine, before ending at 'Wunderbar', Tennessee Williams' favourite watering hole.



Gulet Cruising

Seriously stimulating holidays with **Westminster Classic Tours**

Imagine the thrill of setting out to sea, coming into harbours for the first time, nearing the loveliest islands with landscapes covered in olive trees and wild thyme. Admire the monuments of civilisations past and present. Join the bustle of lively towns with names that summon up ancient histories and myths and, later, watch their distant lights fade into dusk and into the hush of a night in a tranquil bay. This is a Westminster Classic Tours holiday.

Westminster Classic Tours specialise in small-group tours along the breath-taking coastlines of Turkey, Croatia and the Greek Islands. Cruising in fully-crewed elegant gulets guests retrace the paths of early cartographers to explore the “Wonders of the World” as well as rarely glimpsed classical sites.

The tour leaders and lecturers are experts in their field, each with a passion for the sites visited and

each with a desire to share their knowledge. Over evening drinks they give short daily talks on the wonders that await the following day. Afterwards guests enjoy dinner prepared by the on-board cook using local seasonal produce – sometimes just fished out of the sea!

Their graceful gulets can be anchored in secluded bays for swimming in crystal clear waters or moored alongside a jetty for exploring local markets, museums and harbourside cafes. And these moving hotels have something for everyone; adults will enjoy the serenity and relaxation onboard while the kids will revel in the waters of the Mediterranean, kayaking and snorkelling.

Whether you are a lone traveller looking to join a small group or a small group wishing to travel alone, Westminster Tours have a gulet experience just for you.





A FAN of the Mediterranean

“Hideaway” luxury at the magnificent Mandarin Oriental, Bodrum.



Mandarin Oriental, Bodrum, is a breathtaking, fully-serviced resort with great appeal for families seeking a secluded location on one of Europe’s most beautiful coastlines, the Bodrum Peninsula, Turkey’s equivalent of the French Riviera.

Cascading down the hillside and surrounded by ancient olive groves, the 86 sleek, elegant rooms and suites and 23 one- to four-bedroom apartments all share stunning views out over Paradise Bay, two private sandy beaches and the sparkling blue sea beyond. Exuding a wonderful sense of space, the styling is about elegant simplicity, with muted colour schemes, wooden floors, subtle Turkish and Oriental influences and floor to ceiling windows to maximise the vistas.

From water sports to personal cabanas, Mandarin Oriental has every activity covered. Private twin beaches, four outdoor as well as one indoor swimming pools, tranquil treatments in the 30,000-square-foot spa, and an aquatic centre overlooking Paradise Bay beckon to intrepid water lovers and offer everything from scuba diving, wakeboarding, and jet skiing to sailing, fishing, and tours around the coast on a traditional Turkish Gulet.

There is a sumptuous choice of 10 dining venues, bars and lounges including beachfront restaurants offering Italian, Japanese and Turkish options.

Children have their own pool, playgrounds, kids room as well as a special kids menu available in selected restaurants.

Stunning views over Paradise Bay





Mandarin Oriental, Bodrum Top panel from left to right : Oriental Villa (sleeps 9) - Aerial view - Mandarin Junior Suite

Mandarin Oriental to open in Milan...



Above: Mandarin Oriental, Milan

Fusing chic Italian design with timeless Oriental luxury, **Mandarin Oriental, Milan** lies in the heart of the glamorous city. Only steps away from La Scala, this much-anticipated new arrival enjoys an exceptional location in one of the world's most fashionable cities. Occupying four elegant 19th century buildings and with just 104 rooms and suites, a fine-dining restaurant and the most comprehensive spa in the city, it offers a beguiling mix of style and luxury.

Acclaimed chef Antonio Guida takes the helm at the contemporary, fine-dining Italian restaurant interpreting traditional Italian and Milanese recipes with his own unique techniques. The world-class spa enjoys a peaceful and nurturing atmosphere, occupying 900-square metres of exquisitely designed space. *Open from late spring 2015.*

Below: Mandarin Oriental, Marrakech



...and Marrakech

The elegant and contemporary **Mandarin Oriental, Marrakech**, is set among 20 hectares of landscaped gardens filled with the scent of 100,000 roses, with the snow-capped Atlas Mountains providing a stunning backdrop. The hotel offers 54 private walled villas inspired by Berber and Spanish Arabic influences, all with pools and hot tubs, extensive areas for sunbathing and shaded alfresco dining. In addition there are nine suites, seven of them with their own rooftop plunge pool and all with panoramic vistas of the gardens and the surrounding countryside. Guests can experience an eclectic selection of Moroccan and international cuisine at five innovative restaurants and bars, relax in a traditional hammam at the Spa, enjoy a round of golf at one of the premium golf clubs nearby, or simply soak up Marrakech's colourful culture at the historic Medina, which is a 5-minute drive away. *Open from summer 2015.*





Happy families

The Mediterranean's favourite, child-friendly resorts

A successful family holiday delivers a fine balance between bringing the family together and at the same time letting everyone get a chance to do the things they want as well! Normal pressures like juggling work with cooking and school have been left at home and replaced with quality time. The essence of the "luxury" tag is that the family discovers an ideal environment with all the very best comforts and challenges to keep everyone happy and engaged, with time to be shared and moments of independence.

Here are just a few recommendations of wonderful, Mediterranean hotels and resorts offering superb kids' programmes, crèches and babysitting facilities. Children of all ages can have lots of fun socialising with others at the Kids' Clubs; taking part in sports, crafts or more educational activities such as learning about their surrounding environment. Making use of these facilities ensures that parents and guardians get their well earned break and the freedom to enjoy a spa treatment, a round of golf or a romantic dinner for two, safe in the knowledge that the children are being well looked after.



Villa del Parco & Spa, Forte Village **Sardinia**

If you're looking for an outstanding range of accommodation and activities to suit all of the family, in one safe and traffic-free place, you'll find it at Forte Village. Part of the resort is the intimate and relaxed Villa del Parco & Spa, set in its own tropical gardens, the hotel is located close to the Thalassotherapy Centre (a private walkway connects the two) and offers a choice of rooms and bungalows that are interconnecting, making them ideal for larger families.

Child City at Forte Village

Children's City is a slice of paradise right in the heart of Forte Village. The fantastic kid's pool – Laguna – is just one of the attractions specially designed for children in the resort. There's no chance of them ever being bored!

While you relax on the beach or spend an afternoon pampering yourself at the resort's wellness spa, your kids can learn and play at one of the many workshops the resort puts on. At Forte Village there really is something for everyone with the chance for kids to have fun and be creative with activities ranging from modelling clay, playing a musical instrument, painting pictures, cooking a pizza, making mosaics or putting on a puppet show. The kids even put on their own show in Piazza Maria Luigia each week.



The Ritz-Carlton, Abama **Tenerife**

Situated in the tranquil enclave of Guía de Isora, this top luxury resort in Tenerife exemplifies the delicate harmony that can exist between man and nature. From its highest point upon the smooth slopes of The Teide, to its exclusive stretch of sandy beach, the beauty of nature abounds at The Ritz-Carlton, Abama.

Ritz Kids - open 10am until midnight

As Jean-Michel Cousteau says, "All kids start out as scientists, constantly asking 'Why? What's that? How does it work?'" Ritz Kids experiences at The Ritz-Carlton, Abama tap into that innate curiosity by introducing their young guests to both the natural wonders and the rich cultural traditions of this family resort in the Canary Islands. Immersive and adventurous, their resort experiences provide your child with enthralling activities to reward their interest in the beauty and workings of the world we live in. With a diverse collection of activities based on the four pillars of the programme – water, land, environmental responsibility and culture – kids, ages 4-12 inclusive, are swept away by everything from coral reefs and forests, to recycling and sustainability, storytelling, art and even food.



Danai Beach Resort & Villas **Greece**

Situated on the middle peninsula of Halkidiki, in a beautiful area full of lush vegetation and views of the brilliant azure waters of the Aegean Sea, this boutique, family-owned and managed luxury resort boasts one of the best private sandy beaches in all of Greece. Danai Beach Resort & Villas, a member of The Leading Hotels of the World, features 60 elegantly designed and furnished suites and villas, offering superb family accommodation, three restaurants serving mouth-watering cuisine, a seaside cocktail bar, indoor and outdoor pools, tennis courts, a gym and a sybaritic wellness spa.

Worldwide Kids Company

Danai Beach Resort has commenced a new collaboration with Worldwide Kids Company. The goal is to ensure that your family holiday here gives you all incredible experiences and memories to take home. The professional childcare service provides inspiring and enticing activities for children of all ages from 4 months old up to 12 years old. Worldwide Kids Company ensures that children have a safe and engaging childcare environment working to the very highest standards.

Porto Elounda Golf & Spa Resort **Crete**

A paradise for families with children of all ages, Porto Elounda offers a vast array of activities to entertain children while parents enjoy a relaxing holiday in the sun. Facilities include an Arsenal Football academy, a dance school, a water park and the dedicated Kids Ark. Porto Elounda offers a large number of inter-connecting rooms, guaranteed upon booking.

The Kids Ark, Arsenal Soccer School Camp, Dancing Lessons & Barbie Club

Porto Elounda has been lovingly designed with families in mind. The Kids Ark and crèche is arranged as an animal-themed park, with indoor and outdoor play areas, and 2 supervised shallow pools. There's circus acting, mask making, cookie baking and treasure hunts, as well as unique activities like mini Olympic games and growing tomatoes in the garden. There is a twice weekly evening event for the kids too. Even 4 month old babies are taken care of, freeing up some valuable time for parents. Exciting activities for children also include the Arsenal Soccer School Camp, twisting waterslides, expert dancing lessons and new for summer 2015, Barbie Club - no girl should be without some life guidance from Barbie!



Upbeat hip or family fun in North America's premier coastal resort city

Miami is one of those rare destinations where the cutting edge of urban chic co-exists with the beauty and splendour of a tropical paradise.

Superb year-round weather, top-ranked beaches and the sparkling waters of Biscayne Bay are the backdrop for a cosmopolitan metropolis, pulsing with the rhythms of its diverse population including the famous Cuban community of Little Havana. Boasting a vibrant arts and cultural landscape, renowned nightlife and world-class dining, North America's premier coastal resort city draws an eclectic mix of visitors from high octane revellers to frolicking families seeking fun in the Florida sun.

Miami's famous beaches stretch north and southwards from the quintessential hub of Miami Beach itself and the famous Art Deco enclave of South Beach. Each Atlantic oceanfront district has its particular attractions and of course ...superlative accommodations.

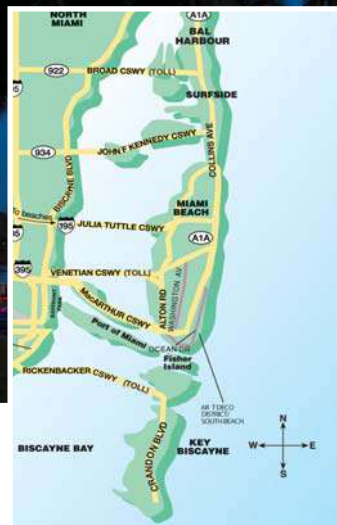


The Miami Beach EDITION

Next Generation Urban Resort

Located in Mid-Beach - the historic "heart of Miami Beach" between South Beach and North Beach—on a 3.5-acre private enclave stretching from Collins Avenue to the ocean shoreline, The Miami Beach EDITION is not merely a boutique hotel. Here you'll find an elegantly designed, intricately interlinked complex of structures, spaces and settings that together offer a new kind of luxury resort environment. Every aspect of the traditional beach hotel has been re-imagined for the needs and desires of a new generation, and every thought given to enhancing a guest's stay, whether for a holiday or work.





The Ritz-Carlton, Miami Collection

The Ritz-Carlton, Bal Harbour

This 18-storey glass signature designed tower overlooks the beautiful Atlantic Ocean and Intracoastal waterway and sits on five sumptuous acres of landscaped gardens and 750-feet of white sandy beach in the ultra-exclusive neighbourhood of Bal Harbour.

A centrepiece of the resort is the 10,000 square-foot waterfront spa; a sanctuary promoting renewal and revitalization that offers ten private treatment suites complete with ocean views, a serene waterfront terrace and a reflecting room for pre-treatment and post-treatment relaxation in addition to a state of the art fitness centre.



ABOUT BAL HARBOUR:

A favoured hideaway of the rich and famous, Bal Harbour epitomises luxury living. Upscale hotels offer oceanfront views, world-class beaches and resort spas all in a quiet, relaxing and high-end environment. A shopper's paradise, Bal Harbour shops and mall rival the world's most ultra-luxury shopping centres.

The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach

With its iconic address among the pastel palette skyline of Miami Beach Art Deco hotels, The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach puts you in the heart of the city's most famed neighbourhood.

The landmark, postmodernist hotel, designed by Morris Lapidus, opened in 1953 as the DiLido. Today, the hotel embraces its glamorous past with a contemporary edge: in restaurants that take you on a culinary journey of Florida's freshest and most inventive fare. With artwork curated from the private gallery of Diana Lowenstein. From stylish guest rooms and suites that reveal soothing seaside views to a luxurious spa where taking time to renew is time well spent, the timelessness is undeniable and utterly unforgettable.



ABOUT SOUTH BEACH:

South Beach has been called the American Riviera and an Art Deco Playground. Yet there's more than fine white sand and colourful, Art Deco architecture. Discover an eclectic mix of world-class boutiques, galleries and stores. Notwithstanding the vibrant nightlife, it's also a culinary hot spot for everything from gourmet to casual beachside cuisine.

The Ritz-Carlton, Key Biscayne

An island oasis, located just minutes from exciting downtown Miami yet world's away from the hustle and bustle of the city.

The Ritz-Carlton Key Biscayne is one of the most iconic hotels located along the five-mile barrier island of Miami, ideal for both family holidays and luxury getaways. Featuring indulgent nightly tequila tastings, complimentary mixology classes and world-class dining, the resort will exceed even the most discriminating expectations. Yet, with **Very Important Kid** check-in service, a host of fun aquatic activities, tennis centre, and **Ritz Kids** programme, this family resort in Miami will undoubtedly appeal to discerning young guests as well.



ABOUT KEY BISCAINE:

The secluded island of Key Biscayne can be reached via the scenic Rickenbacker Causeway crossing beautiful Biscayne Bay. Located south of Downtown Miami and north of Coconut Grove, Key Biscayne touts miles of golden sand beaches and quaint, quiet neighbourhoods.



Joie de Vivre

Small-ship cruising with a generous slice of French style



To many readers, the name Ponant may be unfamiliar, but in the world of luxury, small capacity cruising, France's only cruise company is luring a growing international clientele with innovative itineraries to exceptional destinations, accessing shallow anchorages in sometimes remote locations that the all too familiar giant cruise liners just are not able to gain access.

Furthermore, life onboard a Ponant yacht embraces that unique "Joie de vivre" that symbolises the French enjoyment of gourmet cuisine and fine wines. The French touch is also a subtle blend of relaxed elegance and conviviality, a refined, discreet and welcoming

service on board, the "je ne sais quoi" acclaimed by passengers – whatever their nationality. Certainly, the atmosphere created imbues a sense amongst fellow travellers of being invited onto a private yacht rather than feeling like a bystander in a Las Vegas casino as is sometimes the case on the "big" ships.

Ponant are champions of expedition cruising with 15 years experience of sailing in the Polar regions. Comprising between just 122 and 132 staterooms, each of Ponant's four very modern, luxury mega-yachts, L'Austral, Le Boréal, Le Soléal and Le Lydial (launching April 2015) is designed to navigate in such extreme regions and small enough to land passengers





Images (clockwise from top left)
 1. L'Austral in New Guinea
 2. Antarctica
 3. Karukéra Restaurant, Le Ponant
 4. Champagne is served, Le Boréal
 5. Under sail on Le Ponant
 6. Deluxe suite, Le Soléal

in the most exceptional sites. In Antarctica there is a maximum allowance of 100 passengers to disembark on shore at any one time, and only if the vessel carries less than 500 passengers.

The line's intimate three-masted flagship Le Ponant (32 staterooms) provides a private yacht experience in warmer waters. Under full sail, gliding over the sea with the wind, you will fall under Le Ponant's spell.

Whether you are tempted by warm or cold water cruising, the Caribbean or the Mediterranean, a "Grand" voyage around South America, a chance to visit the cities of the Baltic or a music-themed cruise, you are bound to find a suitable option from the extraordinary variety of cruise itineraries on offer between the 5 yachts. The new destinations for 2015 of Alaska and the South Pacific have been added by Ponant this year as the company extends its global reach.



The world of AMAN

Local, authentic experiences in outstanding locations around the world

Welcome to the world of Aman, an extraordinary collection of 28 small luxury resorts and hotels worldwide. Every Aman resort is unique but each offers a guest experience that is intimate and discreet, while providing the highest level of service.

Certain elements characterise all Aman resorts – a beautiful natural location, outstanding facilities, exceptional service and a small number of rooms to ensure exclusivity and privacy. The décor of each Aman makes use of locally-sourced materials, reflecting the resort's natural surroundings and the traditions of local cultures. This relationship is mirrored in a fascinating choice of activities that will enhance guest's appreciation of each property's locality. For instance:

Visit the Tsukiji Fish Market with a 3 Michelin star Chef when staying at the newly opened **Aman Tokyo** (Japan).

Explore the beautiful islands of Spetses and Hydra as well as the inlets of the Peloponnese coast aboard the private speed boat or day cruiser of **Amanzoe** (Greece).

Share Buddhist tradition at **Amantaka** (Laos) by joining a boat pilgrimage with the novice monks of Luang Prabang carrying a specially blessed wooden statue of Buddha to Vat Pha Pa O temple.

At **Amanjiwo** (Java) experience sunrise over four volcanoes from the nearby 8th century wonder of Borobudur before an inspirational picnic breakfast.

*Bhutan - Cambodia - China - France - Greece - India - Indonesia - Italy - Japan - Laos - Montenegro
Morocco - Philippines - Sri Lanka - Thailand - Turkey - Turks & Caicos Islands - USA - Vietnam*

Look out for special focus features on Aman resorts around the world in future issues...

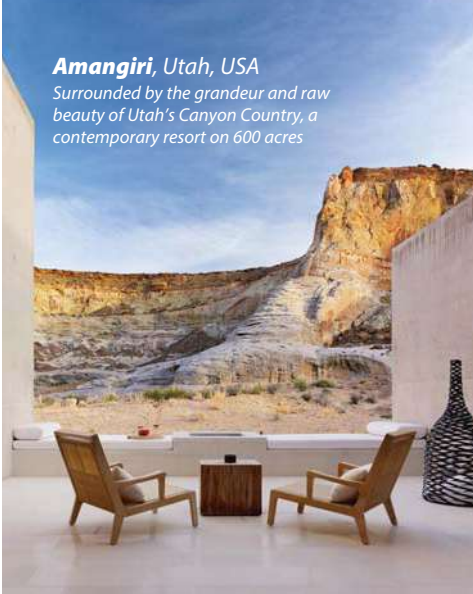


**Amanyara, Providenciales
Turks & Caicos Islands**

*Set on the island of Providenciales
overlooking a marine nature reserve, a
beach resort offering superb diving*

Amangiri, Utah, USA

Surrounded by the grandeur and raw beauty of Utah's Canyon Country, a contemporary resort on 600 acres



Amanbagh, Rajasthan, India

A Mughal-inspired resort on an historic garden estate in Rajasthan's starkly beautiful Aravalli Hills



Amanoi, Vinh Hy, Vietnam

A clifftop, coastal resort backed by a nature reserve on Vietnam's spectacular coastline



Amankora, Kingdom of Bhutan

Five separate lodges spread across the central and western valleys of Bhutan



Aman Grand Canal Venice, Italy

Situated directly on Venice's Grand Canal in a regal 16th-century palazzo with two private gardens

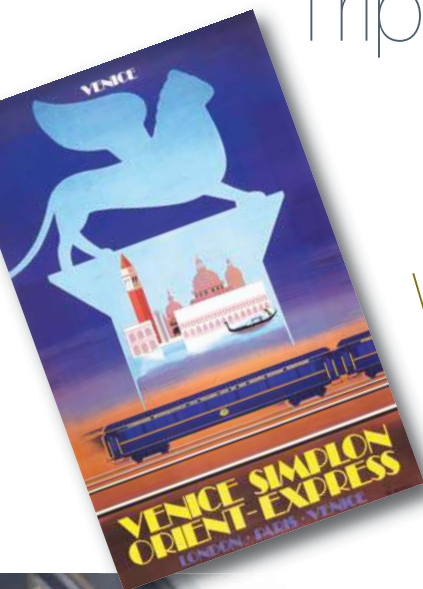
Aman Sveti Stefan, Montenegro

A coastal retreat in Montenegro embracing Villa Miločer and the iconic 15th-century islet of Sveti Stefan



Trips of a *Lifetime*

Unforgettable experiences
to cherish forever



Whether you have only a few days to spare from your busy work schedule or you have the luxury of bags of time on your hands, there is nothing better for the spirit than planning for a truly unforgettable trip. All it takes is a bit of inspiration mixed with splendid execution and you will be enriched with memories, no doubt supported by amazing photographs, to cherish for the rest of your life.

To get the ball rolling, why not draw some inspiration from the following collection of diverse, “once in a lifetime” travel experiences...

The Classic Rail Adventure

Quintessential European journeys on board Venice Simplon-Express

A work of art in itself and a true Art Deco icon, the legendary Venice Simplon-Orient-Express train offers one of the most celebrated and romantic journeys in the world.

Adventure and style are all intimately bound in journeys that crisscross Europe, rolling through sublime scenery to some of the continent’s most alluring cities including Paris, Istanbul, Budapest, Vienna and of course, Venice.

Delightful vintage cabins, gastronomic cuisine and lively onboard entertainment make a journey on this luxury train one of the world’s finest travel experiences. The golden age of travel may have been in the Roaring Twenties, but the art of journeying in style is still alive and well today. That sense of wonder can still be felt on board the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express train, where travel is about relishing the experience.

And if the thirst for further “once in a lifetime” rail journeys develops, then Belmond offers a tantalising selection of equally memorable rail journeys in Peru, South East Asia, Scotland and a brand new train journey in Ireland for 2015.





Heli-hiking in the Rockies

High altitude adventure with Tauck in the Bugaboos in Canada

Join like-minded individuals for the height of adventure in the Canadian Rockies and the Bugaboos! Get set to soar off into an alpine wonderland inaccessible to most.

Gently hopping from peak to peak, helicopters give wing to intrepid walkers who once only imagined the treasures that await at the top of the world. Up in the high country of the majestic Bugaboos, summer unveils a riotous carpet of wildflowers meadows amid gentle ridges resplendent in glorious solitude. Grand wilderness resorts and a cosy lodge open their doors to offer unexpected luxuries and comfort that raise the bar in a mountain holiday experience that was ingeniously conceived by heli-skier Arthur Tauck with Austrian alpinist Hans Gmoser in 1978. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to soar with the eagles in places that entranced past generations of Tauck travellers.

TAUCK 



A Walk on the Wild Side

Getting close to Africa with The BushCamp Company in Zambia



Experience the wild animals up close at one of six bushcamps set in the glorious surroundings of Zambia's unspoilt South Luangwa. These exclusive retreats each accommodate a maximum of just eight guests, ensuring a peaceful stay tailored to your personal needs. Together with the warmest of hospitality, sumptuous meals and first-class guides, the bushcamps are the perfect

gateway for individuals and small groups wishing to explore the spectacular wildlife of the South Luangwa.

In the South Luangwa, the walking safari is king. This is what this remote area is famous for, so it is only fitting that most of the outings will be on foot with the very finest guides. Game drives are also on offer, particularly at night when a whole new cast of characters fills the landscape.



Dinner on the Great Wall... ...and a night in a Palace

Imperial Tours display China in distinctive style

Imperial Tours have won innumerable awards for their excellent tailor-made tours of China for the 5 star, discerning traveller who wants to be cocooned in luxury but experience the best this fascinating country has to offer. What makes them stand out are their Imperial Moments which will see you dining on the Great Wall of China for example, in a watch tower in complete seclusion, immersed in history and living a dream...or gently drifting down an estuary of the Lee River in Guilin on a specially adapted raft surrounded by breath-taking scenery and accompanied by a brilliant guide. No crowds, no stress just the inherent beauty of the environment, seen in total style.

Just steps from the East Gate of the Summer Palace grounds lies Aman at Summer Palace – the ideal location from which to discover Beijing. Housed in a series of pavilions, some of which date back over a century and were originally used by guests of the Palace awaiting an audience with the Empress Dowager Cixi, the resort is only 15km from the Forbidden City. A serene retreat, with peaceful internal courtyards embracing traditional Chinese architecture, the property provides easy access to such cultural landmarks as the Great Wall, The Temple of Heaven and the hutongs, as well as Beijing's restaurants, art galleries and other contemporary delights.



Michelin Stars Shine in the Garden of England

at Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons



Not all trips of a lifetime need to take you to foreign shores, but a culinary pilgrimage to Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons in the heart of the Oxfordshire countryside to sample the outstanding cuisine that has earned Raymond Blanc an unbroken 30 years of 2-star Michelin recognition is a must on any gastronome's "wish list".

Situated in the picturesque Oxfordshire village of Great Milton, it is also one of the country's most intimate and original hotels, with 32 individually designed guest rooms and suites. Surrounded by lawns, flower borders and orchards, the luxury hotel enjoys an idyllic, typically English setting. But beyond the eye-catching displays are vegetable and herb gardens that provide the kitchen - and the acclaimed Raymond Blanc Cookery School - with ultra-fresh, organic produce, ensuring the Michelin-star restaurant remains at the cutting edge of culinary excellence.



Exploring the Atolls of the Maldives

Bespoke cruising aboard Soneva in Aqua

Soneva in Aqua is a pioneering luxury cruise concept from the Soneva Group. Soneva in Aqua, which is based at Soneva Fushi in the Maldives, will further elevate the guest experience by offering the option of a boat villa which will combine all the benefits of this iconic resort's services and amenities with the freedom and exclusivity associated with a private boat charter.

The ultra-luxurious and highly refined yacht measures 19.25 metres in length and 6.40 metres wide with a cruising speed of 6 knots. Whilst supported by engine power, the yacht's mainsail will rely on nature to provide the majority of its energy. The boat has a maximum occupancy of four guests to provide the ultimate sense of exclusivity and privacy whilst offering intelligent luxury of the highest international standard.



Fine Wine and Truffle Hunting

Harvesting the treasures of Montalcino at Rosewood Castiglion del Bosco

Indulge in the rich produce of one of the oldest and best-preserved estates in Italy. Rosewood Castiglion del Bosco, in the heart of the Val d'Orcia, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a true "one-of-a-kind" resort, where the bucolic lifestyle of the Tuscan countryside immerses the fortunate visitor. The 800-year-old estate comprising the ruins of a castle, a medieval church, and the Borgo, a village that was once an important farming and social hub. The Borgo now forms the heart of the resort and 23 suites are housed within its buildings. The resort also offers 10 villas which have been created from restored farmhouses. There are two restaurants as well as an acclaimed cookery school, an 18-hole championship golf course and an indulgent spa. The estate is a historic winery and the fifth biggest producer of Brunello di Montalcino, grown on fifty-one hectares of its vineyard. For a truly unique Tuscan treat why not consider a visit to the estate during the mild autumn months for a first-hand insight into the harvesting of the grapes and the chance to hunt for the most prized of fungi, black and white truffles. Join a local truffle experts with their highly-trained sniffer dogs in the search followed by a mouth-watering tasting of fresh truffles.

Ice & Northern Lights

Shimmering displays with Nordic Experience

The Northern Lights are one of nature's great displays: a mysterious, multicoloured show in which the night sky is suddenly lit up with a wondrous glow that twists and swirls like a heavenly lava lamp.

Elusive and ethereal, it is one of the great, timeless thrills of travel and occurs in the Northern Hemisphere throughout the Arctic Circle between October and April.

For a truly unforgettable trip in search of this phenomena, combine the experience with a unique stay at the Icehotel in Jukkasjärvi, Northern Sweden. Icehotel is the world's first and largest hotel built from snow and ice. It's made up from over 1,000 tons of ice and 30,000 tons of 'snice' (icy snow) and the hotel stays open between December and April. Over 100 designers and artists are constantly working on the hotel and it is always evolving and being redesigned as sections melt and new areas are created. Each room is -5 degrees C but you will stay cosy with fur throws and the compulsory Icehotel Survival Course. Opt for a Northern Lights Room for a special view of the sky.



The Ultimate Villa Retreat

Grand entertaining spaces fit for a "once-in-a-lifetime" house party at Panacea Koh Samui, Thailand

On an island famed for luxury resorts, the recently opened Panacea Koh Samui with its 5 spectacularly spacious villa residences is set to become Koh Samui's ultimate destination. This retreat perfectly balances unabashed luxury and intuitive service with an unpretentious private-estate ambience.

Perched on its own hilltop, within delicate tropical landscaping with the island unfurling like a map below, these ultra-sumptuous residences, ranging from 4 to 6 bedrooms, reflect an emphasis on regionally sourced, handmade fixtures and furnishings.

Clearly space won't be a concern whichever villa one selects, but the most lavish of all is the main residence Praana. This six-bedroom villa, with a footprint of 4,000sq metres, is more like its own resort with, among other things, two infinity pools, a staff of 20, 75sq metre gym, cinema, nightclub, games room, kids' club, tennis court and even a Muay Thai boxing ring.



Explora - Reconnecting with the Wilderness

Celebrating the great outdoors within the dramatic landscapes of Chile, Argentina and Bolivia



Explora is a Chilean hotel and touring company that promotes a very different type of luxury travel experience. With Explora, luxury is about the experience, not appearance. Explora thrives on remote locations as they offer us a chance to withdraw and detach from everyday life. The magnitude of the Patagonian mountains or the Atacama Desert seems to reorganize the different aspects of our lives, putting them into perspective, widening our horizons and filling us with fresh, new ideas.

Each of the three superlative hotels, Explora Patagonia, Explora in Atacama and Explora Rapa Nui (Easter Island) are staging points to a myriad of outdoor explorations whilst their innovative programme of “Travesías” extend the process into full-blown journeys of discovery covering the substantial distances needed to appreciate the grandeur of crossing the Andes or traversing the Bolivian Altiplano, reaching the Uyuni salt flat and its immaculate peacefulness. A large team of professional guides are at always at hand to supervise the many and diverse explorations, whether on foot or horseback.

Gorillas in the Mist, ^{Uganda}

Tracking endangered species at Sanctuary Gorilla Forest Camp

Located deep in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest in western Uganda, this intimate lodge offers luxury in the midst of one of Africa's most amazing natural environments. A UNESCO World Heritage site, Bwindi is one of the most biologically diverse areas on earth including 113 species of mammals (including a herd of the rare forest elephant), 200 species of butterfly and over 360 species of birds. In addition, Bwindi is home to seven species of primates of which the most endangered is the elusive mountain gorilla. Only 700 of these magnificent animals remain worldwide and Bwindi is home to just over half of them.

Gorilla Forest Camp has a bar and dining cottage as well as a natural raised platform for open-air dining. At night, a traditional African campfire is lit where the gorilla briefings take place. Cuisine and service has been described as the best in Uganda. Experienced guides will accompany you on your gorilla trekking where a maximum of eight visitors are allowed to each gorilla family group. Tracking can take anything between half an hour and up to nine hours dependent on the family you are visiting. You will also be trekking at altitudes of 5200 feet so a good level of fitness is required.

Designed to blend seamlessly with the environment, eight spacious double tents raised off the ground on wooden platforms benefit from new en suite facilities that look out onto the surrounding vegetation. Each tent has a spacious wooden veranda where you can relax, enjoy a private meal or simply absorb the breath-taking scenery of the surrounding rainforest.



Spirited Moments

Travel memoirs from the team at Spirit Away

Barbados - Hawaii - Mauritius - Marrakech - Dominican Republic



Since our last issue I have been fortunate enough to revisit **Barbados**. It was a great opportunity to update my knowledge on the hotels there as it has been at least 12 years since my last visit. I am happy to report that nothing much changes in the Caribbean which is part of its charm. We visited a few new properties and stayed at **The Fairmont Royal Pavilion** and **The Colony Club** – both excellent. Colony Club has a new restaurant right on the beach which is fabulous. **Coral Reef Club** and **Sandpiper** are both still very popular and there is a new general manager at **Cobblers Cove** where they have now renovated nearly all the rooms. **Sandy Lane** remains a favourite with many clients – the golf and spa being the best on the island. We visited many more hotels so please do not hesitate to contact me for any further information on Barbados – I am totally up to speed!

I have also enjoyed a city break in Aix-en-Provence which has recently been described as one of the best places to live in Europe. The famous Cours Mirabeau, lined with plane trees and townhouses, studded with fountains and bars is known as the most elegant avenue in southern France. There are a plethora of restaurants and cafes to while away the time, elegant 17th and 18th century architecture and colourful markets three times a week. It is also a perfect base for exploring Provence.

Finally I have just returned from Thailand and Burma... but more of that in the Autumn edition – suffice to say both destinations were wonderful but in totally different ways.

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My first trip of last year was a short break to **Marrakech**, where I enjoyed the sights, sounds and history of the fabulous "Red" City. I also strongly recommend a day trip to the Atlas Mountains. There is such a great choice of accommodation in Marrakech with beautiful Riads in the heart of the City's medina and stunning resort hotels in the outskirts.

In the Summer I shared two weeks with family in **Hawaii**, splitting our time between the two islands of Oahu and Maui beginning on vibrant Waikiki Beach at the historic **Westin** hotel. On Oahu there are endless places to visit and during our 6 days we included a scenic drive to the North Shore and the roaring Oahu

Waterfall. We also visited the Polynesian Cultural Centre before experiencing a traditional Luau ceremony. For the second week of our holiday we took a short flight to Maui, the second largest of the Hawaiian Islands. We stayed in the **Hyatt** on the world famous 3-mile long Kaanapali beach on the west of Maui, what a fabulous location!

In October I visited the **Club Med** in the **Dominican Republic**. It is located on a pure white sandy beach and is ideal for those who enjoy a large choice of activities.

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I had the pleasure of visiting **Mauritius** for a week in November last year, courtesy of The Azure Collection. It's a gem of an island offering ideal tropical conditions in the Indian Ocean off the southeast coast of Africa. Beautiful beaches and shallow lagoons girdle a rich interior with striking mountain ranges and luscious gardens.

During my tour of the island I managed to visit 9 amazing resorts beginning in the South of the island at **Outrigger Resort and Spa**. With a beautiful private beach, 3 pools and a great kids club there's something for everyone here.

Foodies will be especially drawn to the sophisticated **St Regis Le Morne** and its 2-

star michelin restaurant, Simply India, whilst die-hard romantics should book a stay at **Lux* Le Morne**, voted the most romantic hotel on the island. The ultimate spa retreat can be found at **Shanti Maurice**.

Moving on to the north east of the island I visited **Constance Le Prince Maurice**. Recently renovated, the hotel offers suites overlooking the lake, on stilts over the lagoon and beach front villas. The **One & Only Le Saint Geran** is an iconic hotel surrounded by tropical gardens and without a doubt the best beach of my trip. Meanwhile **Lux* Belle Mare**, recently renovated by designer Kelly Hoppen, offers a modern resort with all the little extras that make a holiday special. The

colonial architecture of **The Residence Mauritius** is timeless elegant. The resort overlooks a beautiful beach where complimentary water sports are offered. Rooms are generously sized and décor is simple but luxurious with the butler service as standard.

Situated in the east of the island the **Four Seasons Resort Anahita** is made up of more than 100 contemporary 1-4 bed roomed villas spaced along the coast and around the Ernie Els designed golf course.

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