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SUMMER 2020

Black Book

A GLOBAL GUIDE FOR
THE DISCERNING TRAVELLER

THE TEN

Great Escapes

These hideaways, from luscious private islands to stately *grandes dames*, are the destinations we return to time and again, with just the right combination of beauty, discretion and splendour.

By Claudia Whiteus

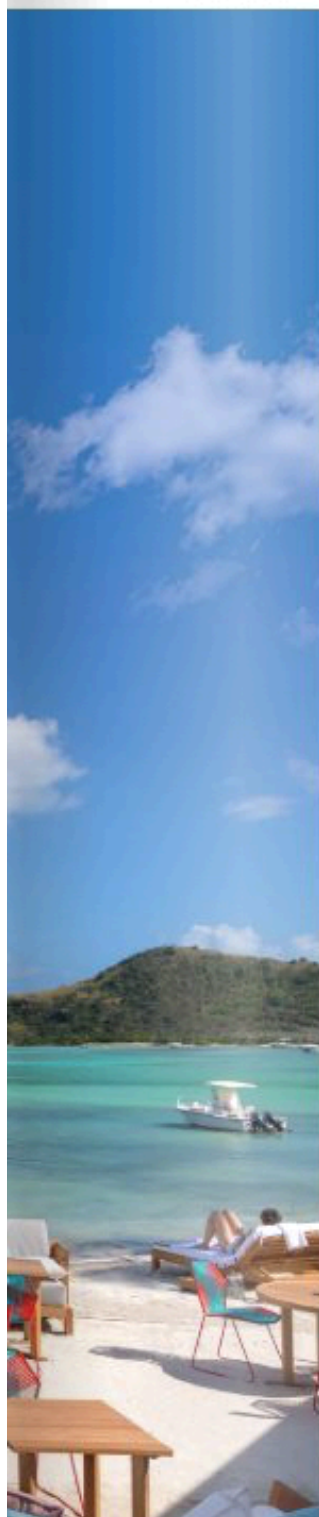
Randheli Cheval Blanc, Maldives THE REFUGE

Set in the northern reaches of the Indian Ocean archipelago, this sophisticated resort is a fusion of contemporary style with natural wonder – but the property's Private Island is something else entirely. The one-hectare islet is a rarefied paradise, centred on an airy four-bedroom villa outfitted with bespoke furnishings in every room. The self-contained features of this captivating isle also include a 25m pool, spa, lush gardens, guest suite and picture-perfect beach, as well as a personal chef and a dedicated staff who can arrange all manner of watersports, including PADI-certified diving, at a moment's notice. Guests have access to the resort's four bars and five restaurants, but the magnetic pull of the private island means few will want to leave. chevalblanc.com

Le Sereno, St Barth's THE SOPHISTICATE

The latest incarnation of this legendary high-glam retreat – opened in the 1970s as the Caribbean's answer to St Tropez in its jet-set heyday – is proof of its buoyant spirit. Gutted by Hurricane Irma in 2017, the property on the island's Grand Cul de Sac has returned more elegant than ever – and, also, more sustainable. Next to all manner of eco-friendly upgrades, including the introduction of solar energy and LED lighting, there's a fresh trio of pool-front bungalows, each with a private landscaped garden, Christian Louboutin-designed furniture and intricate oak ceilings. There's also an all-new beachfront restaurant for delicious lunches and afternoon tipples accompanied by a million-dollar view, and the award-winning spa now overlooks a serenity-infused garden, a delectably peaceful spot for waterfront yoga. serenohotels.com

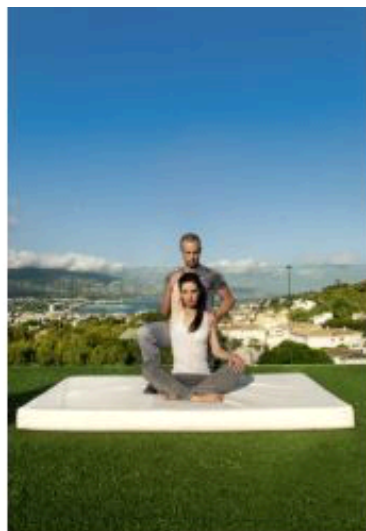




PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: PATRICIA PARINEJAO, CRISTÓBAL PRADO COURAGEO, MARTIN MORRELL

SHA Wellness Clinic, Alicante THE CURE-ALL

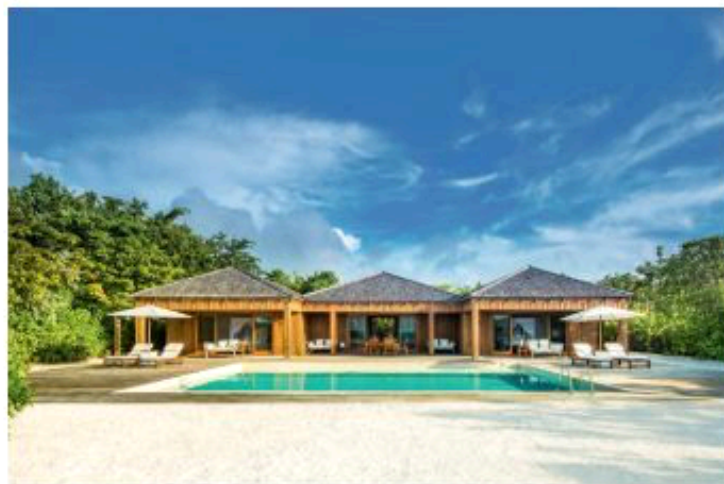
We all know the recipe for health in the 21st century: nutrient-rich superfoods, daily meditation, regular exercise – the list goes on. Still, only a few of us are able to balance all the moving parts successfully, and this is where world-class clinics like Sha come in. With immaculate facilities in an otherwise quiet corner of Spain just north of Alicante, the spiritual and sensorial boot camp has been luring wellness seekers for more than a decade. The so-called Sha Method takes those elusive, abstract tenets of wellbeing and makes them concrete by harnessing the latest, greatest developments in genetics, medicine and anti-ageing science to tailor specific diets, therapies, exercise regimes and habit re-education programmes that offer guests a kick-start to a healthier life. It's not all work and no play, though: there's also top-tier Mediterranean cookery and a blissed-out relaxation pool surrounded by canopied daybeds for endless views of the Sierra Helada mountains. shawellnessclinic.com

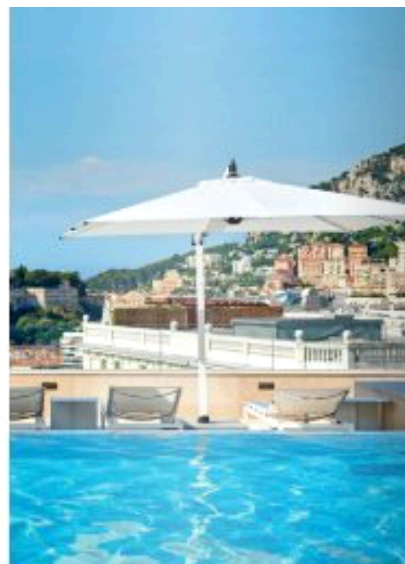


whiter-than-white sand beaches and too-blue-to-be-true waters that might be the Caribbean's very own Garden of Eden – just ask the prominent roster of Hollywood A-listers who've bought their own slice of heaven on the island. It's renowned for its faultless service and sumptuous villas with to-die-for views, and days here are effortless: when you're not taking in an Asian-inspired treatment at the Shambhala spa, you're snorkelling your way through kaleidoscopic underwater wonderlands or kayaking amid rich mangrove forests. And the nights are no less indulgent; reclining on a plush sunbed after a mouthwatering feast of Italian, Japanese or Thai cuisine, you'll toast, superb cocktail in hand, to another day in utopia. comototels.com

Como Parrot Cay, Turks & Caicos THE SYBARITE

Almost a pastiche of paradise, Parrot Cay is a 405ha private-island escape with





Hôtel de Paris Monte-Carlo THE LIBERTINE

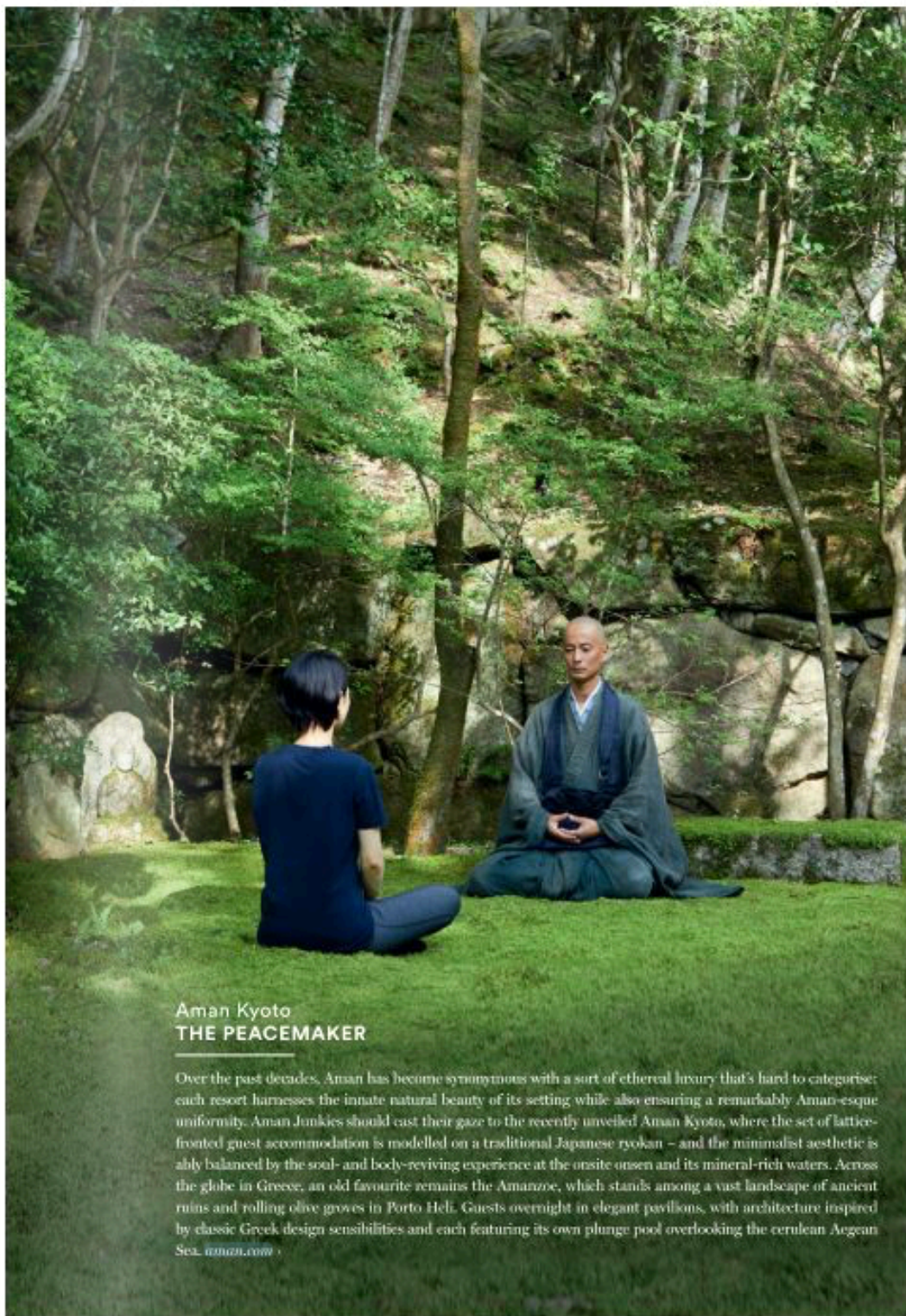
Before it opened its doors in 1864, Monaco's most fêted hotel already had a lot to live up to: its founder, French magnate François Blanc, aiming to compete with the intangible elegance of Paris's *grandes dames*, promised to create a "hotel that would surpass all that had gone before". More than 150 years later, its illustrious history – and promising future – are proof positive that Blanc's vision had been achieved. Last year, after emerging from an almost five-year \$280m nip-tuck, the pleasure palace has never been more enticing; there's a brand-new, 670sq m inner courtyard abloom with orchids and palm trees; each of the 207 guest rooms – contemporary affairs highlighted with baroque details like Murano glass chandeliers and bronze fabrics – now boast terraces; and Alain Ducasse's Ômer, a Pierre-Yves Rochon-designed destination eatery for Med-inflected cuisine, became the celebrity chef's second on the property alongside Le Louis XV. montecarloshm.com



Villa Stéphanie, Baden-Baden THE DETOX

The brainchild of a local court tailor, Brenners Park-Hotel & Spa is fast approaching 150 years of age and boasts a bulging guestbook that reads like a who's who of European history: Otto von Bismarck and Edward VII; Konrad Adenauer and Charles de Gaulle; Helmut Kohl and Boris Yeltsin. Still, for all its historic prowess, the sprawling hotel complex in Germany's reigning wellness capital is still very much on the pulse, especially at its on-site boutique hideaway Villa Stéphanie, a dreamy medi-spa with 15 keys and a cutting-edge wellness concept spanning bespoke preventative healthcare, athletic and weight-loss programmes as well as a 5,000sq m spa landscape with all the trimmings. In a wonderfully whimsical reversal of a quintessential hotel amenity, guests are encouraged to engage in digital detox, too. Thanks to a copper grid in the guest-room walls, you can kill the wifi signal and block any neighbouring "electrosmog" at the flip of a switch. oethercollection.com

PHOTOS FROM TOP: ANTHONY LANNETTOWNE (2); WOLFGANG STARR/LAIF



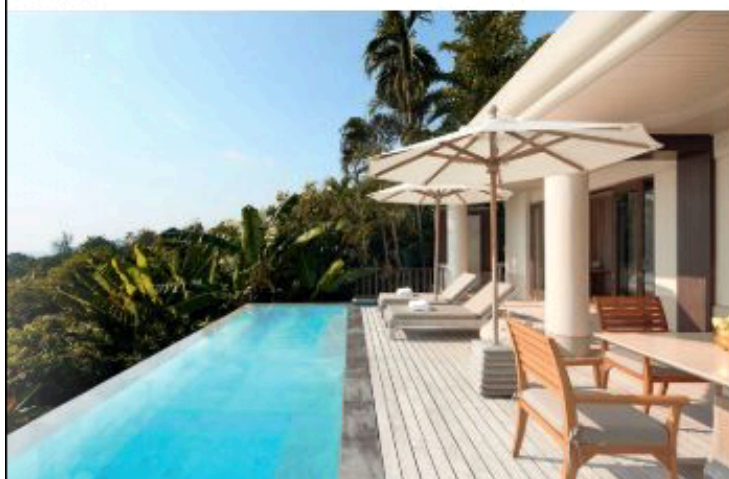
Aman Kyoto THE PEACEMAKER

Over the past decades, Aman has become synonymous with a sort of ethereal luxury that's hard to categorise: each resort harnesses the innate natural beauty of its setting while also ensuring a remarkably Aman-esque uniformity. Aman Junkies should cast their gaze to the recently unveiled Aman Kyoto, where the set of lattice-fronted guest accommodation is modelled on a traditional Japanese ryokan – and the minimalist aesthetic is ably balanced by the soul- and body-reviving experience at the onsite onsen and its mineral-rich waters. Across the globe in Greece, an old favourite remains the Amanzoe, which stands among a vast landscape of ancient ruins and rolling olive groves in Porto Heli. Guests overnight in elegant pavilions, with architecture inspired by classic Greek design sensibilities and each featuring its own plunge pool overlooking the cerulean Aegean Sea. aman.com



Four Seasons Private Island at Voavah, Maldives THE HIDEAWAY

The first two immaculate Four Seasons resorts in the Maldives – one on Landaa, in the Unesco-listed Biosphere Reserve of the Baa Atoll, the other a gem of a hotel of Kuda Huraa, in the North Malé Atoll – were such sun-dappled successes that the Canadian hotelier made an even bigger splash in 2016 with the unveiling of Voavah, an exclusive-use island, not far from its sister property on the wildlife-rife sanctuary of the Baa Atoll. Epitomising the concept of uncomplicated luxury, up to six adults and two children sleep in the beach-chie villa with an open-air living room and a master suite with three walls of windows. Sun-seekers can choose from an array of tailored experiences: whether it's a wind-in-your-hair cruise aboard the 19m Voavah Summer, kite-surfing and jet-skiing or a bespoke barbecue prepared exactly to your liking, every day is worth savouring. fourseasons.com



PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: © FOUR SEASONS, OWEN BAGGETT, CHRISTOPHER KENNEDY



Trisara, Phuket THE ENCHANTRESS

Over the past 16 years, this secluded beach idyll, sited on a lonely cove in the northwestern reaches of the famed Thai island, has amassed an enviable trophy case of hospitality awards, but perhaps the most impressive is its Michelin star, Pru – the only eatery on the island to hold the accolade – sources ingredients from its own 16,000sq m farm in the nearby countryside to create exquisite palate pleasers, like the aged duck cooked over a wood fire and crowned with pickled Thai cherries, or Phuket pineapple accented with native-grown pepper. Indeed, much of life at the resort is deeply entrenched in its cultural and natural setting: guest villas – each with its own infinity pool and mind-bending views across the turquoise Andaman Sea – are built into the hillside amid the flora and fauna, while treatments at the Jara spa are informed by ancient Thai healing rituals.

trisara.com

Rosewood Luang Prabang THE SANCTUARY

This jungle-fringed retreat in Laos's holiest and most enchanting town is a true feast for the senses. Guests here are treated to up-close-and-personal encounters with the jungle, the rolling hillsides and the milky Mekong River, while the man-made edifice – a standout design by architect Bill Bensley – is nearly as stimulating: interiors are modelled after a turn-of-the-century Laotian hill station and feature vibrant colours and subtle local flourishes. There's a daily changing menu of farm-to-table fare serving Western comfort staples and local delicacies, and a magical spa experience is all-but guaranteed at the Sense spa, where locally sourced botanicals feature in a comprehensive menu of body-and-soul-reviving treatments. Beyond the property, countless tailored adventures await, including guided visits to nearby temples and villages as well as instruction on everything from pottery-crafting to weaving.

rosewoodhotels.com •