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# Romantic Escapes

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the seychelles islands



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# Van Cleef & Arpels

## HAUTE PARFUMERIE

Un Air

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Van Cleef & Arpels

Welcome

Introducing the inaugural edition of *Destinations of the World News' Romantic Escapes* — an annual roundup of the most incredible experiences for couples. Whether you prefer kicking back on a secluded island, staying in indulgent spa resorts, embarking on gourmet journeys or venturing off the beaten track, we've got it covered. We hope this 2015 edition inspires and entices.

# Fine Drinking.





Sunraysia Cranberry is currently enjoying minibar residency at the following fine hotels: Waldorf Astoria Dubai Palm Jumeirah, Kempinski Hotel Yinchuan, Raffles Dubai, Langham Place Fifth Avenue New York, One&Only Royal Mirage Dubai, Four Seasons Hotel Shanghai At Pudong, The St. Regis Abu Dhabi...

#### **08** Island hideaways

From the Caribbean to Bora Bora, Bali and beyond, these resorts set the romantic mood

#### **16** Suite dreams

We round up the world's most charming suites, primed for an indulgent getaway

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are just what you need for a little rest and relaxation (and, of course, romance),

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Sandbank dining or a Michelin-starred meal? These dinner dates are unforgettable

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Take the road less travelled with safari breaks, hiking expeditions and more



CRAFT YOUR OWN FAIRYTALE AT THESE TROPICAL HIDEAWAYS, FROM SECLUDED BEACHSIDE LOCALES TO PALATIAL SUITES WITH SUNSET VIEWS

Words: Becca Hensley

Hayman Island sits like an emerald in Australia's Coral Sea



#### **BALINESE BLISS**

Over the course of hundreds of years, Indian and Arab traders have left their legacy in Bali, a mystical island province in distant Indonesia. With emerald-green rice paddies, verdant jungles and ethereal volcanic peaks at the island's heart, Bali is framed by crescents of sugary sand, raucous cobalt-coloured waves and jagged, black lava promontories. Be coddled with the island's infinite charms at the **Bulgari** Resort Bali (+62 361 847 1000; www.bulgarihotels. com), situated atop a cliff on territories that once served as the Balinese royal family's hunting grounds. An idyllic setting for a romantic break, the resort is walled with white coral and manifests classic Balinese exteriors with coconut thatched, sloped rooftops, carved wood and handcut local stone. Inside, each suite channels sleek, urbane Milan — thanks to the property's Italy-based designers. Sit beside your other half and dangle your feet in your private plunge pool as you swoon over the panorama. Both Italian and Indonesian restaurants tempt, and an ESPA provides muscle-melting treatments on site. Staff can also arrange visits to Ubud - of Eat, Pray, Love fame - and the social hotbed of Jimbaran Bay is just 20 minutes to the north.



"Caviar munched in a ga uzy pool-side cabana. A massage bed floating in the Coral Sea. The soun dof crashing waves as your personal symphony."

Celestial skies make a stay at The Brando

> HOLLYWOOD MAGIC IN FRENCH POLYNESIA Marlon Brando called it the "tincture of the South Seas." It was on Tetiaroa, once the summer retreat for Tahitian kings, where the actor sought his bliss, eschewing the throngs of Hollywood for island simplicity. Now, that pared-down opulence, dubbed The Brando (+689 40 866 320; thebrando.com), can belong to you. Share it with your loved one when you dally on this atoll, composed of a dozen sugary sand-covered islands. A homage to carefree elegance, the resort follows an all-inclusive agenda. Meals, spa treatments, mini-bar, bicycles and sea-faring activities are part of the plan. Pandanus, miki miki and coconut trees set a tropical tone, and indoor/outdoor villas sprawl commodiously over their individual stretches of beach. In each villa, a hidden garden holds a plunge pool, while an outdoor tub, flanked by greenery rests behind a graceful screen. Windows the size of barn doors embrace the sunlight as its light graces the scenery. Like Brando, you probably won't want to return home.

esides sand and sea, it's just you two and the lements here on this far-flung bit of beach, a boat ride away from the resort"





The Life Aquatic

The main sunrise pool at Viceroy Anguilla and the striking entrance to Anantara's Banana Island Resort, Doha

#### **CARIBBEAN HIDEAWAYS**

You don't know long you've been on Sandy Island. Just long enough to drink up the contents of the cooler and gobble down the biggest grilled lobster you've ever seen, but not long enough to get sunburnt. Your hotel, Viceroy Anguilla (+1 264 497 7000; www.viceroyhotelsandresorts.com) has given you (and your beau) the gift of the Robinson Crusoe experience. Besides sand and sea, it's just you two and the elements here on this far-flung bit of beach, a the stargazing platform, where the night sky competes boat ride away from the resort. Well, there's a makeshift with the glimmer of Doha's distinctive, futuristic skyline.

shack and two ready-to-please butlers, as well. It's a similar story over at Four Seasons Resort Nevis (+1 869 469 1111; www.fourseasons.com), where the AfterGlow and SeaScape suites boast elevated views all the way to St. Kitts across two balconies. Breezy living spaces, palatial marble bathrooms and uninterrupted views of gently swaying palms and the ocean will make you not want to move an inch — you don't have to, with an extensive in-room dining menu available. That said, the picnic baskets on offer make it all too tempting to take your loved one by the hand and bask in the sun in your own secret paradise.

#### **MIDDLE EASTERN EXOTICA**

Stay in Qatar's first-ever villas to hover over the water at Banana Island Resort Doha by Anantara (+974 4040 5050; doha.anantara.com). Ideal for active couples, the facilities at opulent Banana Island, a 20-minute ferry ride from Doha, beg to be enjoyed. Learn to scuba dive in a practice pool, and then take your newfound talents out into the turquoise depths of the Arabian Sea. Strut your stuff atop a paddleboard or tee off on the nine-hole golf course. A dedicated wellness centre, the first of its kind in the Middle East, boasts a top-level spa with his-and-her hammams, among other delights. But, maybe all you'll really want is watch the sun set on your private deck before dinner on

#### **GEMS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN**

The Maldives' nearly 1,200 coral-ringed islands spread across the impossibly sapphire waters of the Indian Ocean like the strewn beads from a pearl necklace. Two of them form the intimate Jumeirah Dhevanafushi (+960 682 8800; www. jumeirah.com), in the nation's southern reaches. Retreat here by seaplane from Malé to sleep in one of the resort's Sunset Villas on the main, heart-shaped island. Make dusk your personal ritual, tropical drink in hand, when you sit on your private deck with outdoor day beds. Watch as the sun, orange as a tangerine, falls into the violet horizon of the sea. After a morning snorkelling expedition, have the staff drop you at the resort's own Picnic Island, where you'll be the only human beings in residence for the rest of the

afternoon. They'll leave you with umbrellas, water toys and a hamper of gourmet snacks to entertain and curb the hunger pangs during the day.

In the nearby archipelago of the Seychelles, Maia Luxury Resort & Spa (+248 4 390 000; www.maia.com.sc) sits on the turquoise shores of Anse Louis on Mahé island. The Ocean Panoramic Villas are situated higher up the peninsula on a hillcrest that affords couples a little more privacy and 180-degree views of the sea. Indulge in a light but relaxing '20-dancing fingers' massage performed by two therapists in the open-air treatment rooms of the resort's spa, then spend a long afternoon soaking up the sun and salty sea air on the shores of Anse Louis.

Afloat in the Indian Ocean, some 2,000 kilometres east of Africa, Mauritius is a collage of dramatic scenery with a fusion of Asian, African and French cultures. Delve into that at The Oberoi, Mauritius (+91 11 2389 0606; www.oberoihotels.com), which spreads across eight hectares on the isle's north-western coast. It only feels right to check into a low-lying Royal Villa, with its 650 square metres of private space, which boasts a personal pool and a gazebo for secluded dining. Expect to find frangipani blossoms everywhere - in your sunken bathtub, atop your pillows, even in heart-shaped designs on the floor. Spend afternoons swimming in Turtle Bay, or taking advantage of The Oberoi's 'Touching Senses' complimentary programs, which range from cooking classes to guided hikes.



## SHARE THE LOVE WITH DESERT PALM





Desert Palm, a PER AQUUM retreat, guarantees to get make your heart flutter this February, with a range of packages for those daring to be different, whether it's a visionary gourmet dining adventure or a romantic overnight stay in an urban oasis.

#### DINING DELIGHTS

For a memorable experience, Desert Palm is bringing back REVO, the pop-up dining experience from February 11-14. Created by culinary genius, Chef Ray Taylor, REVO brings its playful spin on modern cuisine. The renowned chef will appear at RARE this Valentine's to combine molecular cuisine with traditional techniques in a menu designed to engage you and your partner in a romantic evening to remember. The REVO culinary experience can be booked for AED 595 per person for seven courses including a glass of champagne, or AED 795 per person for 11 courses including a glass of champagne

A Per AQUUM Retree

#### A NIGHT AT DUBAI'S URBAN OASIS

For an extended experience, guests can combine the REVO dinner for two with an overnight stay in a Villa, including an a la carte breakfast in Epicure restaurant.

From AED 3,870 (for Pool Villa), available February 11-14, 2015.

#### ROMANTIC ESCAPE

Those looking for the ultimate romantic experience can take advantage of Desert Palm's special Valentine overnight packages. Stay in a Suite or Villa and enjoy a turndown service that includes champagne and strawberries, breakfast in bed for two and a 60-minute couple's massage in Lime Spa, as well as an in-room bathing ritual. From AED 1,895 (for Palm Suite), available from February 5-14, 2015.



- The Suite -

MARY GOSTELOW TRAVERSES THE GLOBE IN SEARCH OF THE WORLD'S MOST ROMANTIC SUITES





#### ROYAL SUITE

#### FOUR SEASONS HOTEL FIRENZE, ITALY

Florence is revered for its Renaissance art, so it should come as no surprise that one of the most visually stunning suites in the city is the 234-square-metre Royal Suite of Four Seasons Hotel Firenze. The hotel is a conversion of the Palazzo della Gherardesca, dating back to the 15th century. Many of its rooms, lovingly designed by Pierre-Yves Rochon (surely the king of romantic suites) have aweinspiring *trompe l'oeil* works, but this is the masterpiece of masterpieces. The painting on the upper walls continues up to ceiling frescoes, while the space is resplendent with elegant furnishings. The suite looks out onto the beautiful private gardens, which were originally set out by Lorenzo de Medici as a wedding gift for his sister, who was marrying a Gherardesca. The entire hotel oozes romance, from chef Vito Mollica's signature saffron risotto eaten under Murano chandeliers, to the Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella treatments in the spa.

P

+39 055 26 261; www.fourseasons.com

#### LA SUITE SHANGRI-LA SHANGRI-LA, PARIS

From La Suite Shangri-La, on the seventh floor of the 101room Shangri-La Paris, France, you feel as though you can touch the Eiffel Tower. When the weather allows, take a bottle of champagne to your 100-square-metre private terrace and watch the light show as the tower sparkles, top to bottom and back again, on the hour, all evening long. Your inside living area is cosy but, if you're keen to really assure your privacy, you can add a further four bedrooms to take over the entire seventh floor. The hotel is a conversion of the home of Prince Roland Bonaparte, a grandson of Napoleon's brother Lucien Bonaparte, and today's design, by Pierre-Yves Rochon, retains the hotel's palatial feel. Best of all, you don't have to travel far for a romantic meal for two, with two-Michelin-starred dining at L'Abeille on the Lobby Level. +33 1 5367 1998; www.shangri-la.com

#### SUITE 062/063 HÔTEL HERMITAGE, MONTE-CARLO

Hôtel Hermitage is the hidden secret of Monte-Carlo's palace hotels, tucked away as it is in Square Beaumarchais behind its famous sibling, Hôtel de Paris, which is currently undergoing a transformation. All 278 rooms are romantic, but opt for 062/063 — the only suite with a big wooden terrace and double-sized Jacuzzi. Soak in it for hours, champagne in hand, as you take in the views from Monte-Carlo's superyacht-filled harbour up to the Royal Palace. To hand, you have chilled Dom Pérignon and wild strawberries presented on gold-edged Deshoulieres porcelain. Inside your Rochon-designed haven, off-white colouring is enhanced by amorous soft pink-purple velvet. The attentive staff will be at your every beck and call should you want to stay in your suite (with those sea views, we don't blame you).

+377 98 064 000; www.hotelhermitagemontecarlo.com





#### SUITE 76, PALAZZO VENDRAMIN **BELMOND HOTEL CIPRIANI. VENICE**

Belmond Hotel Cipriani, Venice, Italy, is pretty sexy, reached as it is by slipper launch from Piazza San Marco, but it has an even more romantic attached sibling — the 15th-century Palazzo Vendramin. Suite 76 is the knowledgeable favourite - designer Countess Isabelle de Borchgrave has used Italy's finest fabrics, including Fortuny and Rubelli, and stencilled walls. Order a wake-up call with a bottle of Italy's best prosecco or Ca' Del Bosco, and look out across Canale della Giudecca to Doge's Palace and San Marco itself. As a change from yet more crowded sightseeing, spend the day here on Giudecca, perhaps making a pre-arranged visit to the Fortuny showroom, or staying to enjoy the Cipriani's 2.4-hectare garden, with its 200-foot heated seawater pool. Try a Bellini (a cocktail of prosecco and peach nectar), which was invented here, and then have dinner sent up to your suite by the hotel's Cip's restaurant. +39 041 240 801; www.belmond.com

#### **PENTHOUSE SUITE** KING GEORGE, ATHENS

Your private rooftop pool at the Penthouse Suite of the King George Palace gives the feeling only you and your loved one are gazing upon Greece's most iconic site, the Acropolis. It is all so private — you have the whole of the ninth floor of this 102-room hotel, named for King George II. You might never want to leave your 350-square-metre room, but there are many advantages of staying here. Not only is the hotel right on Syntagma, across from Parliament with its dirndl-skirted guards, but it is run in tandem with its immediate neighbour, the Hotel Grande Bretagne. Therefore, you can use the latter's spa, and take all meals on its lovely rooftop terrace. When you return home, see what designer Alexandros Samaras (brother of former Prime Minster Antonis Samaras) has done to the lobby, including choosing the six-foot David Bowie likeness composed entirely of horizontal colour-filled test tubes. +30 210 322 2210; www.kinggeorgeathens.com











#### THE RESIDENCE INTERCONTINENTAL GENÈVE

Tony Chi has designed the top-floor suites, known as the Residence, of the 18-floor InterContinental Genève, and its all-wall windows offer the city's best views down to Lac Léman and its 459-foot Jet d'Eau, designed in 1886 as a safety valve for the city's hydraulic power. Right next to the United Nations building, the 333-room hotel is regular meeting place for the great and famous, but escape all that razzmatazz to head up to your suite. The elevator doors open to reveal a real silver wall (the hotel owner has a Christofle concession). For real romantics, take only one section of the Residence, say 1814, which still comes with an amazing circular marble tub, and a sauna and spa room. Your space also includes classical and modern sculptures, and a great coffee-table book library. +41 22 919 3939; www.intercontinental-geneva.ch



#### THE PALACE SUITE THE PENINSULA SHANGHAI, CHINA

This hotel's premium 306-square-metre Palace Suite has a 1,098-square-metre wraparound terrace, which is unparalleled when it comes to private viewing of The Bund below, and across the Huangpu River to the newer Pudong area of Shanghai. The suite features an Art Deco look, with rounded corners for walls, heavily lacquered woodwork the world's plushiest carpets and a highly modern touch - electronic nail driers. For extra romance, book a river cruise for two on the hotel's 14.6-metre launch, and order The Peninsula Champagne to go with Thousand Island Lake-based Kaluga Queen Caviar. Other ideas? Swim in the heated indoor pool, choose a couple of outfits in the Chanel boutique and reserve the karaoke room in the basement venue, Salon de Ning. +86 21 2327 2888; www.peninsula.com

#### THE RITZ-CARLTON SUITE RITZ-CARLTON. HONG KONG

The best romantic views of Hong Kong, and further afield, are from the 1,220-square-metre Ritz-Carlton Suite on the 116th floor of one of the world's tallest hotels, in ICC Tower. Designed by Su Seam Teo of LTW Designworks, the suite's focal point is actually looking down at a vista that makes matchbox toys seem enormous (you can just about make out Star Ferries and other shipping, but cars are tiniest pinpricks). Fortunately, the hotel's main activities are also up in the clouds so you can easily get to the 20-metre indoor pool on the 118th floor — it has an LED ceiling which may feature burning fire or soothing woodland scenes. The same floor has the highly popular Ozone lounge, but you go way down, to the 102nd floor, for Cantonese or Michelin-starred Italian. Below ground level you can pick up the direct Airport Express train from Kowloon Station for a romantic day's sightseeing. +852 2263 2263; www.ritzcarlton.com



One&Only Cape Town's Penthouse Suite, now marketed as The One Above by the Royal Portfolio, has arguably the best views in the whole of South Africa. The 1,273-square-metre duplex has two swimming pools and dining for eight (with private chef). Despite the lofty accommodations, this suite is perfect for a couple who appreciates artistic environs. The open spaces boast 360-degree views, taking in Table Mountain, and Victoria and Alfred Harbour. In your light and airy abode, designed by Adam Tihany, you have stunning modern art and sculptures sourced by the contemporary Goodman Gallery. In the main hotel you have a dining choice between Nobu and local celebrity chef Reuben Riffel, as well as access to the ESPA. Insider tip: book in for the Bastien Gonzalez pedicures-for-two. +27 15 793 3977; www.privateresidences.co.za





# Rest and T RELAXATION

SHARE THE LOVE WITH AN INDULGENT SPA TREATMENT À DEUX. WE ROUND UP THE BEST PLACES TO SET THE ZEN MOOD, FROM ISLAND HIDEAWAYS TO URBAN SANCTUARIES





#### **GRAND-HÔTEL DU CAP-FERRAT. FRANCE**

In the south of France lies this iconic hotel with a spa experience like no other. Masterful interior designer Pierre-Yves Rochon has created a clean and minimalist sanctuary with muted neutrals, light floors and glass brick detailing, which extends to the 65-square-metre Le Grand Salon spa suite, featuring a double bathtub, private steam room and sauna, and private relaxation room. There, you and your partner can enjoy a two-and-a-half hour experience including a Bellefontaine facial treatment and body hydrating wrap. This spa is as much about the posttreatment experience, being surrounded by 1,200 square metres of lush gardens, allowing your mind to wander as you soak up the deep blue hues of the Mediterranean before you. If you've ultimate privacy in mind, you can always retire back to the top-level Penthouse Suite and gaze out at the ocean, refreshing juice in hand, on the impressive 83-square-metre terrace.

Treatment from EUR 540 (\$605) for two people www.arand-hotel-cap-ferrat.com





#### **BELMOND MAROMA RESORT & SPA. RIVIERA MAYA, MEXICO**

The Mayans believed that a close relationship existed between the universe and wellbeing; tradition that extends to the set-up of the resort's on-site Kinan Spa. Treatment rooms point from east to west to represent night and day, while the massage beds face east to symbolise new beginnings. Book yourself and your loved one in for a private Temazcal spa experience, centered around a Mayan purification ceremony performed at dusk. As therapists recite Mayan chants, you are engulfed in an aromatic steam before aloe vera is applied to your skin. Once the sun has set, both of you will plunge into the refreshing ocean to complete your cleansing experience. After dinner on the beach, retire to your Oceanfront One-bedroom Suite and let your minds float away with the ocean breeze. Temazcal spa experience from \$560 per couple

www.belmond.com







Jumeirah Dhevanafushi, Maldives

W Retreat & Spa - Maldives

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n Resort, Maldives 🛛 Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Maldives



One&Only Reethi Rah, Maldives



**DESTINATIONS OF THE WORLD** 



Mosaic walls everywhere you look, stained-glass windows and Arabian opulence abound, Royal Mansour Marrakech encapsulates the essence of Morocco in its palatial complex of 53 riads (traditional houses) surrounded by a five-metre wall. The Royal Mansour Spa is a destination within a destination: on its three floors are two hammams, a salon, private spa suites, a fitness centre and pool, as well as a communal relaxation area. Book one of the Water Spa Suites for a half or full day and enjoy a range of indulgent treatments in complete privacy, including a 75-minute Ceremonial MarocMaroc massage with argan oil and monoi butter, and a traditional hammam experience. The treatments are sure to leave you both feeling like royalty, so its only fitting that your lodgings be the Presidential Riad, a palatial space with exquisitely decorated rooms and a private hammam. Water Spa Suite from MAD 6,000 (\$622) www.royalmansour.com



#### NOTOS THERME SPA, SANTORINI, GREECE

Nothing says a romantic escape quite like the Cyclades, where the island of Santorini sits like a gem in the Aegean. Notos boasts one of the best spas on the island, set straight into the volcanic rock. It used to be the island's old ice factory and is now a sanctuary of bliss, using natural spring waters and volcanic minerals to preen and pamper. The three-hour Grand Spa Exotic experience will lull you and your loved





#### SIX SENSES ZIGHY BAY, OMAN

The rugged beauty of Oman's Musandam Peninsula provides a dramatic backdrop to a break that recharges the batteries and sets the stage for romance. Check into your Spa Pool Villa, an oasis of natural stone and wood that features a private double spa suite. There, you and your partner can enjoy a Zighy Romance Spa Package, a two-and-half hour ritual that begins with an Aphrodite Bath of aromatic oils, followed by a massage and facial. Of course, a little decadence is included by way of sparkling wine and chocolates posttreatment, which you can enjoy on the loungers by your private swimming pool. You can also paraglide, sail off on a sunset cruise, enjoy a private dinner in your villa, or add another 50-minute spa treatment as part of the package. Zighy Romance Spa Package from AED 2,400 (\$653) for two www.sixsenses.com

"The spa used to be Santorini's old ice factory and is now a sanctuary of bliss, using natural spring waters and volcanic minerals to pamper"



#### TAJ EXOTICA RESORT & SPA. MALDIVES

With romance on the mind, head for Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, set on the country's largest lagoon, which makes you feel as though you're miles away from bustling Malé rather than a 15-minute speedboat ride from the capital island. Yes, it may seem all too hard to tear yourselves away from the tranquility of The Rehendi Presidential Suite with its breezy living spaces, suspended deck and 18-metre freshwater pool, but the overwater couple's suites of the Jiva Grande Spa makes it well worth venturing out. With nothing but beautiful ocean ahead, you and your loved one can be pampered with a Soma — Nectar of the Gods indulgence. In the two-hour treatment, you'll both the spoilt with a candlelit aromatherapy massage, followed by a rose petal bath complete with champagne. Post-treatment, retreat back to your suite to watch the sun set and enjoy an in-villa meal in complete privacy. Soma experience \$400 for two www.tajhotels.com

#### LE CRANS HOTEL & SPA, SWITZERLAND

Nothing kick-starts one's ability to recharge quite like the crisp air and fresh landscape of the Swiss Alps. The best views are from the outdoor heated pool of Le Crans' Cinq Mondes Spa, which boasts an uninterrupted vista of the Valais and makes you feel as if you're swimming in the sky. A

"The outdoor heated pool boasts an uninerrupted vista of the Valais and makes you feel as if you're swimming in the sky"





For more than 25 years, the Valmont Group has been helping women and men master the visible signs of ageing. Heir to traditional Swiss medicine, the company draws from the unspoiled natural resources of Switzerland and the latest cellular cosmetic research findings to formulate utmost anti-ageing skin care products featuring visible and long-lasting efficacy.

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FROM A MICHELIN-STARRED MEAL IN THE CITY OF LOVE TO A GOURMET EXPERIENCE ON A SANDBANK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE INDIAN OCEAN, THESE DINNER DATES ARE TRULY UNFORGETTABLE

#### EATING WELL IN MONTE-CARLO

Long-time favourite of the jet set, Monte-Carlo Beach Club is the place to see and be seen. It's Michelin-starred seafood restaurant, Elsa - named for American writer and organiser of high-society events in Monte-Carlo, Elsa Maxwell — is the place to go to for great food with stunning Riviera views. Executive chef, Paolo Sari, leads a team to put together what is a 100 percent organic menu. Book a table on the all-white-and-beige terrace and enjoy dishes such as wild sea bass with Riviera green citrus, warm 'Panzanella' sautéed vegetables and tomato essence, or honey-coated racks of roasted lamb served with celeriac and liquorice puree, and crispy potatoes. À la carte from EUR 115 (\$130) per person

www.montecarlosbm.com



"Beachside dining is a breathtaking experience, but a meal on a private sandbank in the middle of the ocean sets the bar even higher'



#### TAKING LOVE TO NEW HEIGHTS

Paris is one of the most romantic cities in the world by day or night, but after dark, the City of Lights is truly special. Surely the most romantic place to see it is from the Eiffel Tower, specifically, Alain Ducasse's restaurant Le Jules Verne on the second floor (which is actually 125 metres up). There, couples can feast on five or six course 'Experience' menus, featuring remoulade-style lobster with celeriac, black truffle and wild apple salad, and medallions of venison cooked in cocotte with winter vegetables and fruit, as the magical city glitters below.

Experience menu from EUR 185 (\$207) per person www.lejulesverne-paris.com



**NIGHT AT THE OPERA** 

Love takes centre stage in this gourmet and cultural experience, designed for guests of the Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace in Budapest. The Hungarian State Opera House is revered for its Neoclassical style and its outstanding acoustics - not that you will need your singing voice, athough you will be taking the stage in this private opera experience. Arriving by limousine from the hotel, you'll be escorted to the middle of the grand stage where a five-star meal awaits, prepared by the hotel's executive chef, Leonardo di Clemente. As you feast on gourmet dishes including sea bass with black olives and veal fillet Rossini style, an orchestra and team of singers and dancers provide the entertainment.

#### **DINING ON THE INDIAN OCEAN**

Gentle sea breezes, clear night skies and the sound and smell of the ocean around you. Beachside dining in the Maldives is a breathtaking experience, but a meal on a private sandbank in the middle of the ocean sets the bar even higher. At Cocoa Island by Como, in the coral atolls of South Malé, the team will arrange a night-time dining experience on the resort's eastern sandbank, where a personal butler will serve your five-course meal under the moonlight, complete with half a bottle of champagne. With the clear, starry sky above and sounds of the ocean gently lapping against the sand, it might be all too tempting to stay, were it not for the changing tides.

Price upon request





#### SEVEN-STAR FEAST AT BURJ AL ARAB

Fifteen years after its opening, Dubai's self-proclaimed 'seven-star' hotel remains one of the city's most luxe experiences. It's Al Mahara (The Oyster Shell) restaurant is breathtaking, not least for the floor-to-ceiling aquarium that dominates the dining space. Sink into your high-backed chairs, champagne in hand, and take your pick from a seafood-heavy à la carte menu — just be sure to start with the Oscietra Gold 'Grand Cru' caviar with homemade blinis, melba toast and crème fraîche. Opt for the 'Taste of Al Mahara' seven-course menu with wine pairings, which starts with Loch Fyne salmon served two ways (marinated in beetroot and served with white sturgeon caviar, and poached with fresh herbs), and ends with Arabica coffee chantilly with Ghanaian chocolate crémeux and hazelnut biscuit. From AED 1,170 (\$318) per person; www.jumeirah.com







#### AN ITALIAN AFFAIR

Solo Per Due is, as the name suggests, a restaurant that serves one couple at a time. Tucked away in the village of Vacone in central Italy (about an hour's drive from Rome), this restaurant is in the grounds of an old Roman villa, resplendent with mosaic floors and a traditional portico (porch). Book for lunch and, if the weather is fine, you can enjoy your meal al fresco with views across the valley - but a candlelit dinner oozes romance. The menu changes daily according to what fresh food is available, but you can arrange with the team beforehand if you have particular preferences. Summon the waiter at any time during your meal with the silver bell on your table, and be sure to immortalise your love story in ink in the restaurant's Libro dei Pensieri (Book of Thoughts) before you leave. From EUR 250 (\$280) per person

www.soloperdue.com

GRAND SAVOY

All-day dining restaurant, offers the best local and international cuisine using only the freshest of ingredients.

**OPEN DAILY: 07H00 - 22H30** 

# GECKO BAR

An amazing beach bar features refreshing tropical smoothies, blended specialty drinks, infused rums and Savoy's homemade Sangrias and live entertainment where you can listen to beats from some of the best musicians on the island.

#### GET READY FOR THE EXTRA ORDINARY EXPERIENCE AT A PERFECT HOLIDAY DESTINATION?

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#### **OPEN DAILY: 10H00 - 01H00**



Resort's signature seafood restaurant, next to the largest swimming pool in Seychelles, specialized in seafood with South East Asian and Italian touches.

#### **OPEN DAILY: 19H00 - 23H00**



## ~ Thirst for ~ ADVENTURE

TAKE THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED WITH THESE ALTERNATIVE HOLIDAYS, FROM LUXURY SAFARIS TO TRIPS WITH A PHILANTHROPIC HEART





#### **INTO THE WILD**

The sight of dramatic mountains and untamed wilderness is enough to set adventurous hearts aflutter. If exploring remote valleys while discovering authentic culture is your thing, make tracks for Bhutan, where you and your loved one can hike through valleys, discover ancient temples and soak up incredible views of the Himalayas. Black Tomato's 10-night itinerary begins in the serene Paro Valley for some cultural delights in Thimpu, Bhutan's capital city, before heading towards the Punakha Valley for a trek up to the mystical Chimi Lhakhang Monastery. You'll enjoy a night at the luxurious **Amankora** resort before hiking to a dizzying 11,000 feet to take in the spectacular mountain views. As for the highlight? It's surely the three-day trek through the stunning Bumthang Valley, where you'll have porters, an expert local guide and a chef to make your experience comfortable (+44 20 7426 9888; www.blacktomato.com).

If the wilds of the African savannah get your hearts racing, look no further than Scott Dunn's (+973 1619 8244; www.

scottdunn.com) 'Ultimate Zambia Safari' package. It takes in two of Zambia's top game-viewing areas, staying at the Chinzombo Norman Carr Safari Camp, with oversized tents that look out directly over the wilderness. A trip to the majestic Victoria Falls rounds off the 14-night trip, with accommodation on Sindabezi private island.

Of course, there's the option to just sit back and drink in the beauty of nature (and your loved one). In Northern Australia's wild Kimberley landscape, El Questro Homestead (+61 3 9426 7550; www.elquestro.com.au) makes it well worth the long flight south, particularly when kicking back in one of the three Cliff Side Retreats. Each features feather-topped beds and freestanding tubs on the verandahs, which look out over the Chamberlain Gorge escarpment. They're also set apart from the homestead for complete privacy.

It's a similar story some 12,000 km away at Anantara's Qasr Al Sarab (+971 2 886 2088; gasralsarab.anantara. com) nestled in the rolling sand dunes of Abu Dhabi's Empty Quarter. Its Royal Pavilion Villas with private pools are set one kilometre from the main resort and offer all-inclusive luxuries with meals and two activities a day, including dune bashing, camel trekking and dune hikes. Of course, all the villas can be rented at once for complete and utter privacy.



"Philanthropic holidays are rising in populatiry, with couples choosing adventures that have the objective of improving the lives of others"

#### HOLIDAYS WITH HEART

Philanthropic holidays are rising in popularity, with couples choosing to embark on adventures that have the objective of improving the lives of others, be it by building houses or working with endangered wildlife. One of the must-visits of the Golden Triangle in Thailand's north is Anantara Golden Triangle Elephant Camp & Resort (+66 53 784 084; goldentriangle. anantara.com). The on-site Elephant Camp offers guests the chance to get up close with the country's gentle giants. Set out like a traditional mahout village, the camp cooperates with the Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation to rescue elephants and provide them with a comfortable lifestyle. Resident research assistants from Think Elephants International are on hand to educate you about the projects carried out by the foundation, and you can assist the resident vet to conduct a basic elephant

Song Saa Private Island

#### ADVENTURES FOR TWO



itself provides five-star luxury in the tranquil landscape framed by the breathtaking mountains of Northern Thailand, Myanmar and Laos.

In the Gulf of Thailand, Cambodia's Song Saa Private Island (+855 23 686 0360; songsaa.com) is a sanctuary where relaxation and community mindedness are shared objectives. Community and conservation programs range from working with local fishermen to sustainably protect the waterways, to education programs that teach local children about the surrounding flora and fauna, and they ways they can ensure their sustainability.

South and Central America are popular destinations for 'voluntourism.' In vibrant Buenos Aires, you and your loved one can embark on an 18-day experience, moving from your boutique hotel base each day to work in one of two hogares (homes for underprivileged children), where you will meet local teens and teach them skills such as photography, cooking or perfecting their English. Included is a chance to see the city itself, as well as other Argentinian sites such as Iguacu Falls, the vineyards of Mendoza and Los Glaciares National Park. The experience is arranged by Hands Up Holidays (+44 207 193 1062; www.handsupholidays. com) who also arrange voluntourism experiences in Costa Rica, where you can assist at an animal rescue centre and still have time to get lost in the breathtaking landscape on health check, and give an elephant a shower. The resort hikes, kayak tours and stays in jungle-inspired eco-lodges.

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#### **CRUISE CONTROL**

There is something truly serene about gliding across the world's most picturesque waterways, with soft sea breezes dancing on your skin and glorious sunsets sinking into the horizon. The quiet backwaters of Kerala, India, are prime places to take your loved one on board your very own converted kettuvallum, or houseboat. Spice Routes (+91 86 0600 0430; spiceroutes.in) offer a unique journey that takes you through a labyrinth of canals on board a luxury thatched houseboat, kitted out with all modern amenities. The threemember crew (driver, assistant and cook) are on hand, but you will hardly notice they are there, as you get swept up in the romance of the swaying palms, cruising into the sunset, with the smell of coconut curry wafting in the air, as you journey from Allepey across tranquil waters.

In the heart of the Indian Ocean, the some 1,400 islands of the Maldives dot crystalline waters like emerald jewels. Sure, most of the island resorts offer incredible experiences, but why settle on one? A yacht charter with Sultans of the Seas (+960 332 0330; www.sultansoftheseas.com) will have you cruising the cerulean waters, dropping anchor to snorkel secluded reefs and stopping at uninhabited islands for an afternoon at your will. A dedicated team of staff will ensure your every whim is heeded, and the course of charter dock into the iconic Port Hercule en route, for a romantic can be completely customised by you.



The magical French Riviera is one of the world's most iconic stretches of coastline. Hop on board Edmiston's (www.edmiston.com) Reborn and chart a course for romance across the waters of the Cote d'Azur. The yacht isn't modest by any means — 75.5 metres long with a duplex beach club and private cinema, should you want a break from ocean views. While you have everything you could possibly need on board, it would be remiss of you not to night in Monte-Carlo.



Share memorable moments with a loved one at Ajman Saray, a Luxury Collection Resort with special room rates starting from AED 700\* with a romantic in-room breakfast, 50% off GoCo spa treatments, 25% off water sport activities and 1 hour open bar during sunset at Bab al Bahr Lounge.



## Escape to Ajman's Enchanting Coastal Sanctuary

For reservations or more information, contact 06 714 2222 or reservations.ajman@luxurycollection.com

> Quote "Romantic Escapes" to avail this offer.

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