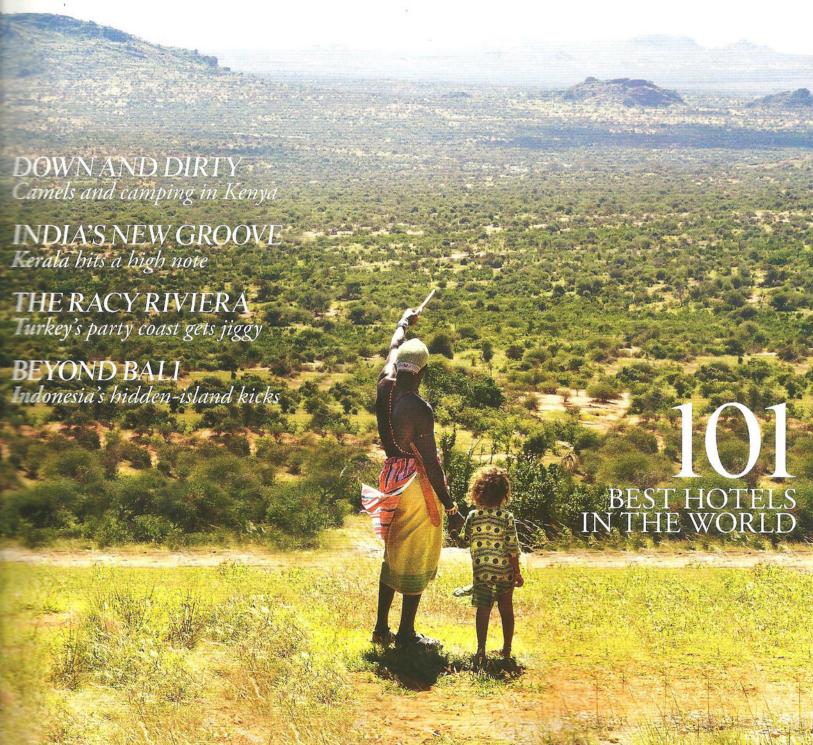


TRAVEL GUIDE 2012

IN ASSOCIATION WITH AFRICA TRAVEL



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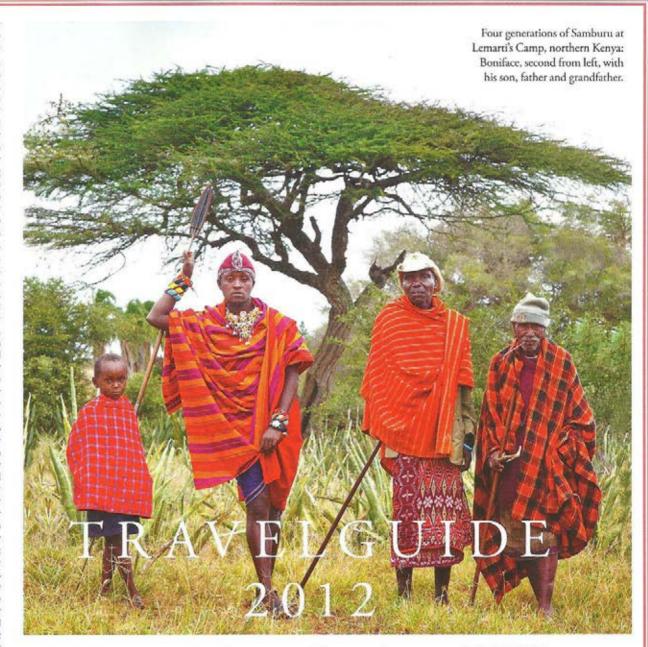
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The hard thing for a hotel that's been around forever is how to pitch its game so that it keeps being interesting. Is having great service enough, year after year, to keep its fickle punters happy? And what happens when a hotel opens that is so left-of-field and unusual, that so blows the doors off convention, that it gives itself absolutely no other option but to deliver from the moment the key opens the lock.

So is this what makes for a classic? When you get a perfect storm of the mix, a beautiful slap in the face that manages to follow through on a wave of winning smiles? We want hotels to be as stunning as they can – go on, we dare them! – but we also want to feel the love.

This year, the *Tatler Travel Guide*, again sponsored by the mighty Africa Travel, celebrates the hotels that suck us in with the sheer force of their personality, that have us at hello.

Melinda Stevens Melinda Stevens

COVER Photograph by Hugo Burnand. Lemarti with his daughter, Tacha, looking out over Mpala Game Reserve, next to Lemarti's Camp, northern Kenya

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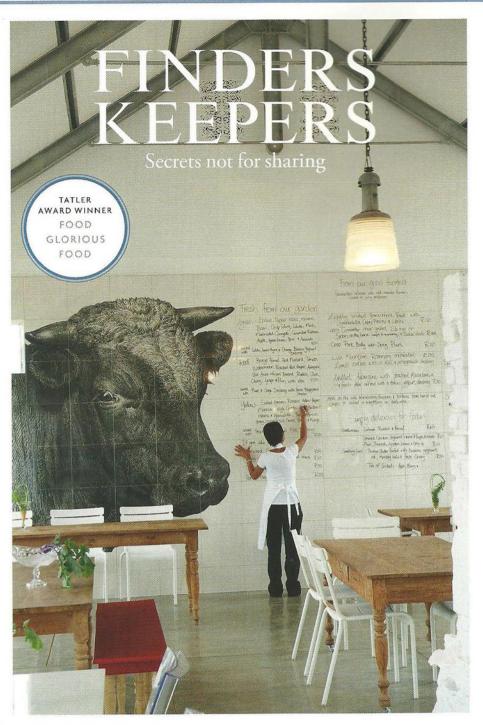
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Embrace the shameless tourist in you

The tour operators have provided Tatler with the most competitive rates in the marketplace at the time of going to press. All package prices are per person, unless otherwise stated.



BABYLONSTOREN

CAPE WINELANDS, SOUTH AFRICA

Nowhere else in the Cape Winelands do the worlds of contemporary and historical South Africa collide with such style. Until a decade ago, this 17th-century estate was run as a fruit farm. Then former magazine editor Karen Roos got her hands on it and it was soon the freshest, chicest guesthouse in the country. Babylonstoren still operates as a farm, but now the whitewashed, thatched workers' cottages are guestrooms, with panoramic views of soaring mountains. The garden's the star, full of pretty parterres, lavender-hedged paths, olive groves housing beehives, walls hanging with multicoloured pumpkins, miles of dreamy roses and a sea of red (beets, cabbage, rhubarb and peppers). There are more than 200 acres of vineyards, orchards and a spring-water reservoir to swim in, a simple, deliciously natural spa and a minimalist former cowshed with a look as inventive as the food within – multicoloured salads, yummy passion-fruit cakes and melon, ginger and lemongrass juices straight from the garden. Groups are occasionally permitted to rent the grand 1777 Cape Dutch farmhouse, featured regularly in interiors magazines. It's a kitchen-garden wonderland, the air thick with butterflies and the whiff of rosemary. Website babylonstoren.com Book it Africa Travel (020 7843 3580) offers five nights from £1,695, including British Airways flights, hire car and breakfast.



CASATURQUESA

PARATY, BRAZIL

You'll want to kidnap the chef, receptionist and bellboy! What a joyous, cosy place. The owner, Tete Etrusco, is a workaholic with delicious taste - 300-threadcount Egyptian linen, statement art and a library stuffed with fashion books. Set apart by a unique brand of non-bling that you wish you could bottle, this lovely spot is a mass of cobbled streets, crumbling churches, beaches and bobbing boats. There are only nine rooms (lots of wood and windows, whizzy bath jets) and food is a big plus, despite the fact they only serve breakfast - but what gorgeous warm linseed and oat bread, freshly baked ginger cake and watermelon juice. They're so on it that the charming waiter Raoul will wait for you to walk in and sit down before blitzing the blender. Website casaturquesa.com.br Book it Dehouche (0871 284 7770) offers five nights from £1,800, including British Airways flights, transfers and breakfast.

