



Gallivanter's Guide[®]

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IDYLIC PLACES FOR DEDICATED TRAVELLERS

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Cutting hotels down to size

The 1990's have cut us all down to size, but although we may be somewhat less exuberant in our spending habits, as travellers we are demanding more.

Now 'more' does not necessarily mean bigger. Indeed, the current hotel trend is for smaller, more intimate hotels, where the front desk greets you by name, the service is personalised and intelligent, and the hotel architecture enhances rather than destroys its environment.

When one is paying upwards of £250 a night in a large hotel, being just another room number on the hotel computer is no longer acceptable.

This attitude often manifests itself in bar staff who repeatedly ask if you are staying at the hotel; chambermaids who eye you suspiciously in hotel corridors, and receptionists who demand identification every time you ask for the room key.

True, many of the hotel chains have recognised this problem and have responded with 'Club Floors', which offer a more personalised service. On the whole, these executive retreats work very well until, that is, you leave their rarefied heights for a meal or a swim, and are plunged back into the maelstrom of anonymity.

In Paris, New York and London, the 'small hotel' revolution is well under way, and the so-called 'boutique' hotels have become all the rage. Here, a handful of privileged guests enjoy real home comforts, exquisite decor and personalised service, coupled with all the business gizmos provided by the larger, chain hotels. The cost is the same, but unlike their big broth-

ers, you really do get what you pay for.

In a 750 room deluxe hotel, it is well nigh impossible for a Manager to know if every bedside light works or if there are enough coat hangers, whereas in a 30 room deluxe hideaway, perfection is a realistic goal.

When it comes to environmental concerns, the small hotel scores once again, either as a sensitively restored historic building, or an ecologically aware retreat, painstakingly crafted in traditional style from local materials.

Of course, small hotels such as this are still in the minority. Hotel chains continue to dump concrete skyscrapers on beaches throughout the world, but there is a reassuring trend away from this attitude, and legions of discerning leisure and business travellers are voting with their feet.

This month's issue is devoted to the new breed of small hotel, from Bali's just-opened Amankila, to the medieval delights of Eze-Village. We also review The Oriental Singapore, a large, deluxe establishment that, despite its size, manages to behave like a personalised retreat.

Today, 'bigger' is no longer automatically 'better', and throughout the world, a new breed of hotelkeeper is quietly changing the face of hotels, designing them not for the faceless concrete conventions of the 1980's, but for discerning travellers such as c

After 13 hours in the air, the last thing one needs, even at super-efficient Changi, is a struggle with cabs and luggage. It was, therefore, with a sigh of relief that we spotted the man from The Oriental, who, greeting us by name, whisked us away to the air-conditioned comfort of a shining maroon Jaguar. Presided over by an immaculately uniformed, white-gloved chauffeur, we settled into the Jaguar's maroon piped, white cotton-covered seats and were handed two ice-cold towels, served from an orchid-decorated silver tray. Is there any other way to arrive?

The Oriental Singapore

As we glided up to the Oriental's elegantly restrained entrance, the doorman greeted us by name, and Cecilia, one of their excellent under managers, showed us immediately to our room, where we checked in with the minimum of fuss.

I do think that arrivals are important. They totally colour one's view of a place, and in this respect, The Oriental far outshines its rival, The Shangri La, which can keep one waiting for ever at reception, and rarely recalls one's existence, let alone one's name.

With 518 rooms, built around an 18-storey atrium, The Oriental is by no means small, yet it manages to achieve the sort of personalised service offered by today's small deluxe properties, where the staff seem to have an almost telepathic understanding of one's needs.

Surrounded by landscaped gardens and enjoying spectacular, airy views of the harbour, The Oriental is sited in a vast, ultra-modern self-contained complex, where one can either shop 'til one drops or just relax in the hotel's sumptuous Don Ashton designed interior.

We surveyed our deluxe Harbour View room with growing pleasure; and sipping the piping hot complimentary china tea, I noticed the personalised note-paper, home made chocolates and orchid-strewn fruit plate that welcomes one's arrival.

After a warm shower in the delightfully elegant white marble bathroom, with rose marble floor, liberally stocked with thick fluffy towels and robes and a pleasing selection of Crabtree and Evelyn Aloe Vera toiletries, we were ready to consider dinner, and booked a table in the Cherry

Singapore flings and

Bali Highs

IN THE LAND OF THE WHITE-GLOVED CHAUFFEUR, SMALL WONDERS ABOUND

Garden Chinese restaurant.

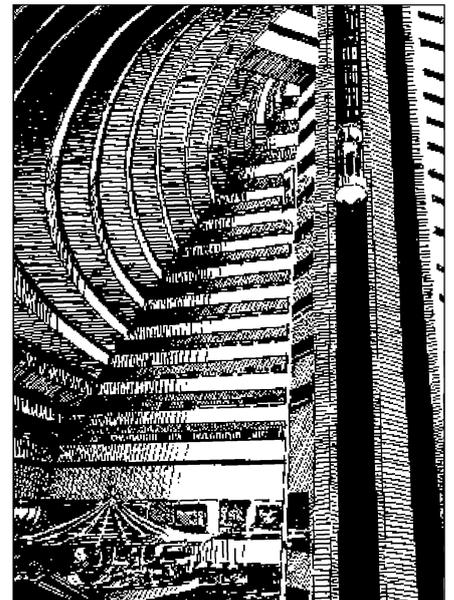
The restful decor of our room, finished in shades of ochre, terracotta, peach and pale green brocade made me long for sleep, and as the jet lag threatened to catch up, I eyed the king size bed with increasing desperation. However, dinner at the Cherry Garden proved to be the perfect remedy to revive my flagging spirits, and armed with silver chopsticks and an imaginative menu featuring Hunan and Sichuan fare, we ordered far too much and finally retired to bed in great good humour.

The next day, we awoke apallingly early and gazed in wonder at the dizzy view from the 13th floor, the harbour littered with Chinese junks and motor boats, set against Singapore's towering sun-lit skyline. As it was so early, we ordered tea, then wandered down to the breakfast buffet which is served around the palm-fringed pool. Amongst the orchids and flowering

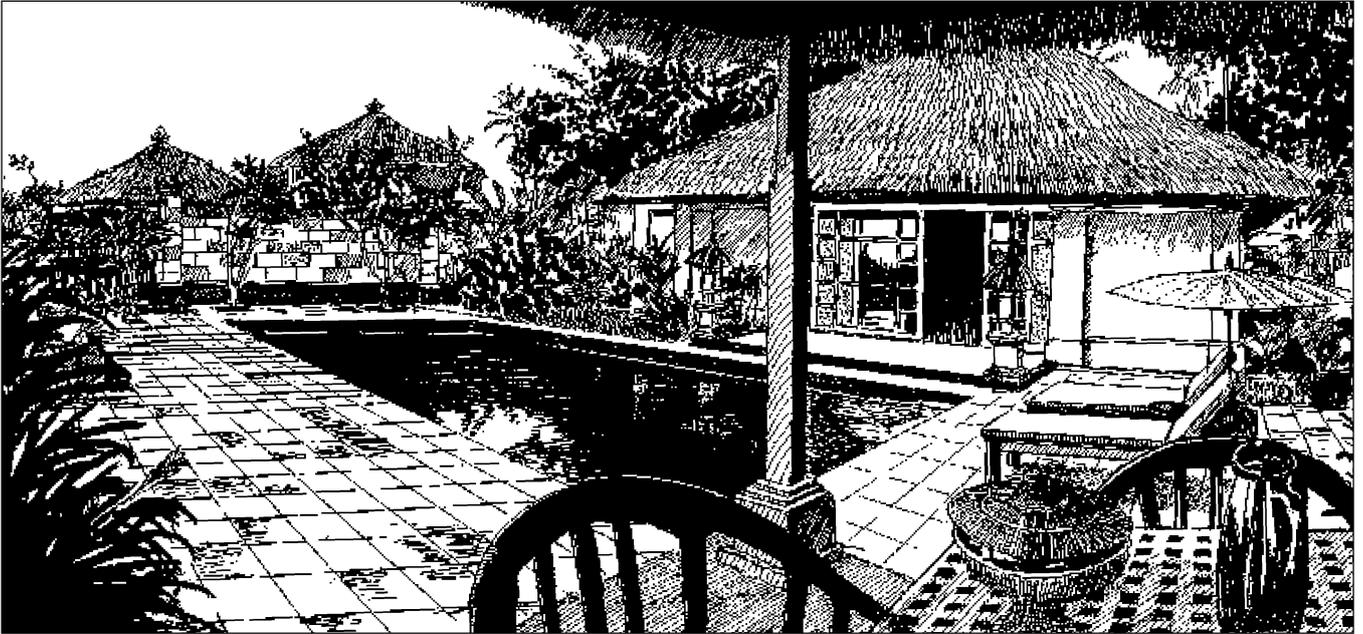
borders, businessmen enjoy an early morning swim, followed by a relaxing breakfast, with a vast array of fresh juices, cereals, pastries and hot or cold courses. Here, it really does feel like a small hotel, very intimate, private and relaxing before a busy day. Indeed, one can understand why 20% of The Oriental's guests come back for more. One, in fact, returned 100 times, and on his 100th visit, was given the Presidential Suite. Such is the hospitality of this extraordinary hotel.

Perhaps the most striking feature of The Oriental, though, is its atrium lobby, which is a masterpiece of lighting. Thoroughly modern, yet oozing quality, it resembles an elite New York art gallery, dotted with priceless spotlight objects. Glass elevators glide like slow-motion rockets up and up into an architect's sky of black, ochre and gold, with splashes of Chinese red; and everything, from the soft black leather chairs of the Atrium Bar to the whispered ministrations of the concierge is designed to soothe and pamper.

That night, after a pleasant lunch in the elegant Cafe Palm and a relaxing, jazz accompanied drink at the Captain's Bar (which does a very good roast beef luncheon) we headed for Fourchettes, the hotel's premier restaurant. Here, for some inexplicable reason, service was not up to standard, and totally lacked supervision, which meant that we, and several other fellow diners waited nearly one hour for food. However, when my 'Trilogy of Caviar with Green Asparagus' finally arrived, this 'three kinds of caviar' was three kinds of heaven, as was my dessert of Amaretto and



The Oriental's dramatic Atrium lobby.



Amandari's Pavilion 29, with its private pool, dining pavilion and misty rice-paddy views.

Almond Ravioli. Main courses were good but not spectacular, and I worry when the guests know more about the food than the waiters. However, this was the Oriental's only fault, and I am sure it can be easily rectified.

For an optimum stay, do make sure you specify a harbour view, preferably Harbour View Executive or Deluxe, or try one of The Oriental's splendid Theme Suites, which range from the gentleman's club atmosphere of the Commodore Suite to the oriental splendour of the Pai-Shih Suite. But whatever you choose, do book one of their limousines to collect you from the airport, and arrive as you mean to go on.

'Amandari', Ubud, Bali

From Singapore, we flew via Jakarta to Denpasar, where the new, much improved airport testifies to Bali's ever increasing popularity. Many will tell you that Bali is overdeveloped and commercialised, with an excess of concrete and package tours polluting its pristine shores. However, if you look at the map, you will realise that only a tiny part of the southern tip of Bali suffers from this scourge, and if you avoid the mass-market excesses of Kuta and Sanur, you will rediscover Bali's unique paradisaical culture.

No one has fought harder to preserve Bali's traditions and ecological heritage than Adrian Zecha of Amanresorts, who, coming originally from Indonesia, has done more to revolutionise the hotel industry than perhaps anyone else.

Upon leaving Ngurah Airport, a sea of

garish hotel signs faced us, held high by eager drivers, which said much for the profusion of new hotels now jostling for guests on this tourist-boom island. How refreshing, therefore, to see the discreet wooden sign of Amandari, borne aloft by an immaculate young man; and how nice to have one's personal Assistant Manager and driver whisk one away from the mele to the cool interior and white-covered seats of a 4-wheel drive. Ice cold towels were instantly dispensed as readily as smiles, as we set off on the 75 minute drive up into the rice terraced hills outside Ubud, to one of the most romantic hideaways on this earth.

Upon arrival, we were warmly greeted by two tiny costumed girls, who cascaded

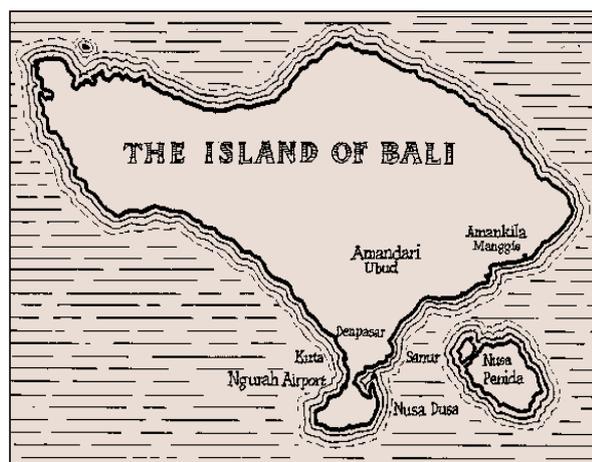
Manager wished us a restful stay, and Trisna, our personal Assistant Manager proceeded to point out the unique enticements of this extraordinary hotel.

In a blur of tropical plants, palms, shimmering lotus pools and pathways, that looked as though they had been there for centuries, we wound our way to pavilion number 29, one of the 29 traditionally thatched, open-walled Balinese suites that make up this mountain village retreat.

Barely taking in the sheer majesty of our surroundings, we followed Trisna through a concealed garden doorway (designed to dispel any evil spirits that may pursue us), across the stepping stones that traversed the lotus pond, and finally to an intricately carved door that led into the cool interior.

A whole world stretched out before us; vast and airy, with sand coloured marble floors, dramatic bamboo cathedral ceiling, canopied king size bed, pale silkscreened sliding screens, and glass and teak panels on every side that roll back to reveal one's private garden and terraces.

Our main garden was resplendant with 30 foot long emerald-tiled saltwater pool, thatched dining pavilion, pale green loungers, and the sort of misty green landscape that one only sees in coffee table books. In the distance, a line of swaying village women floated across the



petals upon our heads in the traditional welcome. We were then led off to our private terraced suite with its own secluded walled garden, lotus pond and emerald green swimming pool.

Chris Teo, Amandari's imperturbable



Nothing can prepare you for the sheer size of Amandari's spectacular pavilions.

rice paddies, balancing dizzy loads of coconuts on their proud heads, and all around us the sounds and rhythms of the rain forest whispered their ancient message.

Before we had time to close our mouths, a green and white clad boy presented us with a perfectly chilled bottle of Pol Roger and two fluted champagne glasses, accompanied by a platter of beautifully art-directed canapes, demonstrating how Amanresorts perfectly blends Western predilections with local traditions.

When we were finally alone, we began to explore and delight in the thousand little details that make Amandari so special. The pavilions are masterpieces of concealed lighting, so the rooms resemble a precious Bond Street oriental antiques emporium, each object, each antique lit to accentuate its form.

This 'art gallery' approach extends to the bathroom, which leads off the main room through sliding teak doors. The 'room' is in fact a series of different bathing options. The main dressing area has individual mirrored vanity units, each with its own wardrobe, chest of deep drawers and shelves of white and green towels. From here, one moves to another set of sliding doors, flanked by white cotton kimonos and yet more towels. To the right, one discovers a vast walk-in 'rainfall' shower, and beyond the doors, a high walled garden that contains a seductively lit sunken bath, surrounded by tropical plants and furnished with fragrant soaps and toiletries.

The keynote colour at Amandari is

celadon green, which subtly appears on the staff costumes, bamboo umbrellas and hand-made soap dishes, and is reflected in the exquisite screen paintings that the staff roll across the windows at night.

Details include two lacquered woven fans that sit like works of art on a raised lacquered tray; elegant pedestal dish of tropical fruits, continuously refreshed by unseen hands and covered at night by an intricately woven and beaded shade; celadon finger bowls; two complimentary batik sarongs for temple visits; and a huge hand-thrown vase of intensely perfumed jasmine-like white blossoms, that appear in great profusion throughout the hotel.

After bathing in our private pool, then languishing in our outdoor bath, we dressed and decided that we really should

venture out from these exclusive confines, and thus, one hour later we were to be found sitting in the open-sided pavilion bar, mesmerised by the gathering darkness, the sounds of the rain forest mingling with the rushing waters of the Ayung River, hundreds of feet below us. The air was heavy with the perfume of Frangipani; the sky filled with the bright stars of the Southern Hemisphere, competing for brilliance with the Kunang-Kunang (firefly) that pinpointed the blackness with its dazzling laser-like light.

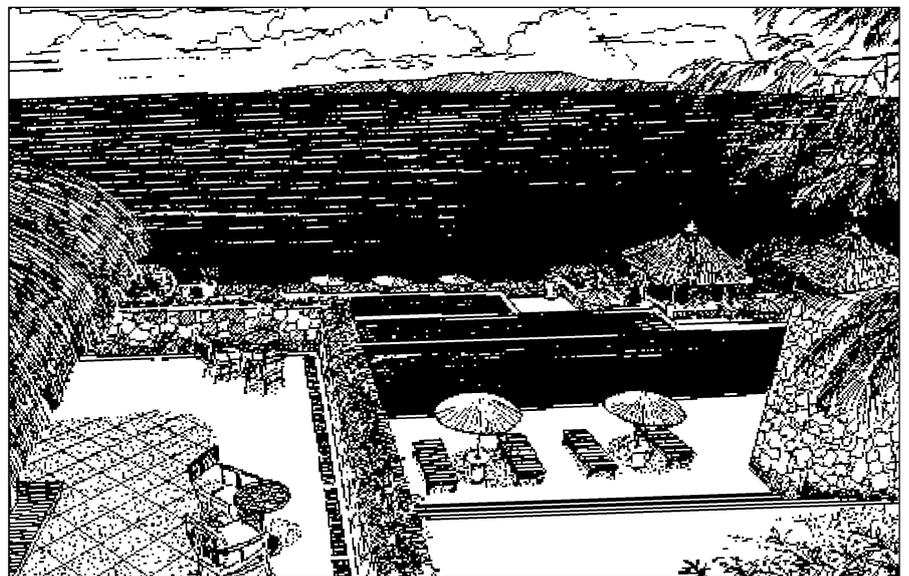
Eventually, hunger led us to the candle-lit raised Dining Pavilion, reached via the museum-lit Gallery and shop, resplendent with local treasures; and as we sat, slow-motion-like at a white orchid-clad table, we gazed upon a view that was sheer illusion.

Floating above the dark, shimmering pool, that clings in an arc to the very edge of the gorge, was a carved, thatched pavilion, where three turquoise clad Gamelan players sat like buddhas in mid-air.

We chose small bowls of fragrant lemongrass flavoured broth, delicate white fillets of fish in a mildly spiced tambal, and a moreish black rice and banana dessert, served with home-made coconut ice cream.

Then, floating home along spot-lit pathways, we turned on the Sony sound system, concealed within a carved cupboard, the sound filling the 20 foot high bamboo ceiling from artfully hidden speakers, and clinking our champagne glasses, we decided that Amandari was, as its name denotes, the 'place of celestial spirits'.

During the following four days, we meandered down beyond the trompe l'oeil



Terraced on 3 levels, Amankila's pool is the exact colour of the sea beyond.

pool whose colour and contour seamlessly join the rainforest back-drop in a feat of extraordinary illusion, and drank in the spectacular hill-top views that plunge down from two idyllic, lounge-equipped vantage points.

We were also persuaded to leave the pampered splendour of Amandari for a half day's white water rafting expedition along the Ayung River gorge, which despite our wimpish misgivings was an exhilarating experience, with marvellous views of wildlife, waterfalls and local life, counter-balanced by the sheer thrill of the rapids, expertly manoeuvred by our guide.

Amandari will arrange all sorts of outings and experiences to keep you occupied, if that is what you wish. Alternatively, you could just relax with a traditional oil massage based on acupressure and reflexology, ably performed by Ketut, their resident masseur.

Finally, a note about service. During our stay, the staff at Amandari easily outranked some of the world's greatest hotels, which, when you consider where it is, takes some doing! With around four staff to every pavilion, your wishes are invariably anticipated, and, palms together, with fingers to forehead, one is constantly shown the Hindu sign of respect, which soon becomes second nature as one falls into the graceful pace of this enchanting hideaway.

We made a quick comparison visit to the other pricey Ubud hostelry, called Kupa Kupa Barong. Rates here are steep, but our meal was amateurish and service, although friendly, was hardly up to scratch. My husband pointed out that at Kupa Kupa Barong one could see the light bulbs rather than the subject, whereas at Amandari the lighting merely serves to illuminate the experience.

What one cannot fail to notice at Amandari is the extraordinary devotion to local detail, and it comes as no surprise to learn that each stage of building was supervised and blessed by the village elders, whilst every carving and chair was lovingly crafted by local artisans; the exact shade of marble shipped especially from Java, and every piece of bamboo personally inspected by architect and Baliphile, Peter Muller.

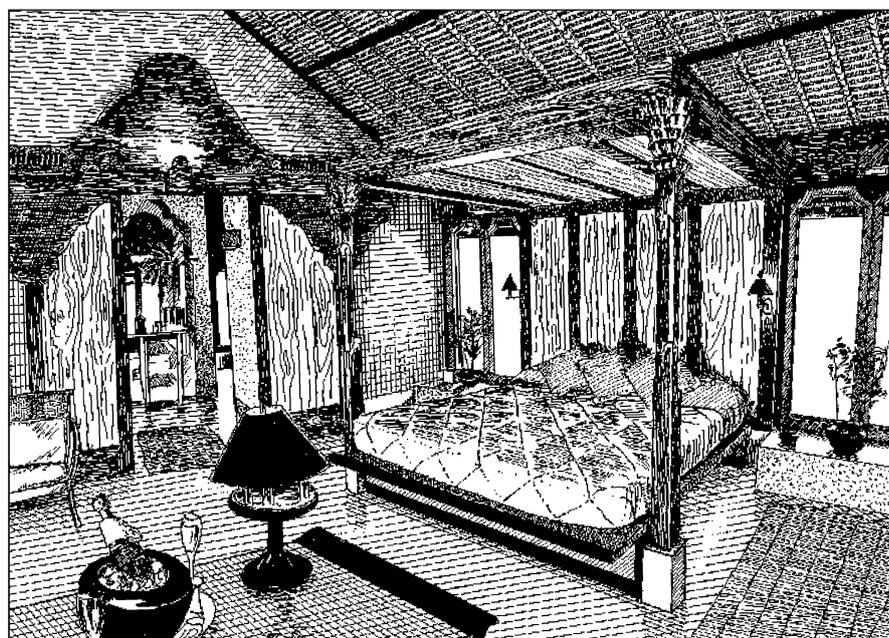
Personally, I would recommend a terrace pavilion with pool, or, of course, the glorious Amandari Suite. The duplex pavilions

do not possess the lovely soaring cathedral ceilings, and to me, the bedroom is a little claustrophobic. However, whichever pavilion you choose, I guarantee that you will not be disappointed. Amandari is very, very special, and try as I did, I could not find a single fault.

'Amankila', Manggis, Bali

On the Sunday morning, we bid farewell to Amandari, and a white liveried driver sped us through lush landscapes on the hour's drive to Amankila, Amanresorts just-opened East coast miracle in the little known Karangasem Regency.

Created by architect Ed Tuttle, who also designed Amanpuri in Phuket, Amankila's inspiration draws on the classical beauty of the nearby Water Palaces of Ujung and



Tirtagangga, where a spring fed pools and lush gardens once served as a Royal folly to enhance the last King of Karangasem's lavish lifestyle.

Today's lavish lifestyles are exceptionally well served at Amankila, which now takes its place as Bali's most luxurious and secluded beach resort.

Although it had only soft-opened a mere five weeks beforehand, it ran as smooth as silk under the relaxed and very able management of Alistair Anderson, late of the much applauded Halkin in London.

Here, the keynote colour is beige, mingling with an abundance of contrasting natural woods, coconut marquetry doors, mother of pearl tables, and lamps that resemble tortoiseshell and Chinese lacquer,

but are actually made from thousands of triangular polished shell mosaics. The main bar is entirely covered by this rich, amber shell, which glows with a mystical inner light.

Pale, polished beige floors, glinting with millions of tiny shell shards and mother of pearl, stretch out uninterrupted, save for strategically placed tatami-like mats.

Pools, stocked with rare blue water lilies and fish, surround the main reception pavilion, and everywhere the sheer attention to detail is almost religious in its intensity. Everything has been specially designed and made, mostly by local craftsmen from the neighbouring village of Manggis, and from the beige and prussian batik robes that grace one's pavilion, to the Javanese coconut stationery box, nothing, but nothing is a compromise.

After Amanpuri and Amandari, I thought, foolishly, that Adrian Zecha was incapable of amazing me; but nothing could have prepared me for my first sight of Amankila's

swimming pool, which is built on three descending terraces that look out to the sea beyond, and is the exact same colour. So perfect is the match, that one cannot see the join, and when one swims in its ripple-less lagoon-like waters, the trompe l'oeil effect is breathtaking.

Looking out towards the wide sweep of the Badung Straits, the bay secluded between two jungle clad headlands, one can see the island of Lombok in the distance, and the only building for miles is a tiny village temple, perched high on the

The Gallivanter's Weekend

Chateau de la Chevre d'Or – Eze-Village

When we landed at Nice, a fine white mist shrouded the coastline, and as we nosed the little Avis hire car through the winding streets of Beaulieu towards Monaco, the heavens opened and an unseasonally heavy shower turned a short 12 kilometre journey into a survival course.

Eventually, we turned off the coast road and headed along the Moyenne Corniche into the lush green hills, where, at the dizzy pinnacle of Eze-Village's glorious medieval site, we parked the car and waited for someone to fetch our luggage.

You cannot drive into the old village

itself, so the hotel sends someone down to lead you and your luggage along the impossibly narrow cobbled walkways to the hotel's reception.

Huddled beneath one of the hotel's big black umbrellas, the picturesque streets, with their tiny craft shops and ancient hanging signs looked no less inviting to us, and as we scurried under the sheltering archway of the Chateau de la Chevre d'Or, we were ushered graciously into its tiny reception area. Here, the hotel's lovely signature china, with its pastoral goats, was displayed for sale, and I still regret not buying at least one teapot.

Check-in was swift and efficient, but we were initially puzzled when the bell boy led us outside again. Then we realised that the hotel is actually a series of medieval buildings, with reception, the gourmet restaurant and a few smaller rooms on one side of the narrow street, and the bar, outdoor restaurant, terraces, pools and suites on the other.

We were led down dark, narrow tunnelled steps that quite suddenly opened out into a sweeping vista of trees, foliage and flowers, plunging in dramatic profusion down to a glorious azure bay, thousands of feet below us. Even through the mist, the view was breathtaking, and as we followed our luggage down the meandering pathways, punctuated by flowering terracotta jars and cottage gardens, we finally reached our own abode, its discreet wrought iron gate leading down to a private breakfast terrace that, in better weather, would be hard to leave, such was the perfection of the scene and the excellence of the petit déjeuner.

Our suite was actually a traditional stone cottage, perched precariously on the very edge of the hillside, its large picture windows capturing the beauty of the bay at every glance. With natural stone and

Continued from previous page

headland.

However, Amankila is not just a pretty face. Despite being open for a mere few weeks, service here was extraordinary. One had only to sit down for a moment beneath one of the pool's vast, square canopied lounging beds (complete with tray-tables for one's drink) before a smiling white-clad boy brought armfuls of white towels, ice-cold spring water and tightly rolled cold flannels, presented on a palm-leaf mat. After swimming, fresh towels appeared as if by magic, and an endless supply of complimentary spring water and flannels punctuated the day.

Like Amanpuri in Phuket, Amankila is positioned above a large private beach, surrounded by a coconut grove. A total of 35 free standing pavilions, elevated to take advantage of the staggeringly beautiful views, are linked to the main pavilion by a series of stepped walkways that meander through the lush tropical undergrowth. Again, the architecture draws strongly on

local Balinese traditions, with along-alang thatched roofs and paras stone sitting comfortably alongside more Western materials such as terazzo, timber and mirrored glass.

Everything here is vast and airy. The

Amankila has the ultimate luxury-space

pale, elegant arrival court and lobby leads down to a second terrace, where twin pavilions house the enormous, but intimately inviting bar with its subtly-lit bas-relief wall carvings of local village life, and the exquisite main restaurant, which even has its own equally spacious private dining room. This one may use for a romantic 'diner a deux' or more lavish entertaining,

and is reached via a walkway which traverses an exotic fountained pool.

Amankila's Food and Beverage Manager, Sally Baughen, and Chef, Genevieve Harris are determined to create menus that are as sumptuous and creative as the decor, including such delights as the little-known Chinese-Indonesian 'Nonya' cuisine, delicious home-made breads, fruit preserves, exotic ice-creams and delectably light fish dishes.

The lower terrace houses the Terrace Restaurant, with its moorish mirrored arches that reflect the blue beyond; and to the left, a vast library and sophisticated shopping Gallery beckon from behind teak-carved doors.

Considering the sparsity of guests (a maximum of 70), everything at Amankila is of devastating proportions, and as we sat alone in this great expanse of paradise, the jungle at our backs, the horizon stretching to infinity, we knew the ultimate luxury – space.

While we were there, the separate Beach

panelled walls, polished wooden floors, Louis XIII style antique furnishings, Persian rugs, richly hued chintz curtains and matching kingsize bed, it thoroughly exceeded our expectations.

The main room was not designed to sit in, for through a small french window, yet another terrace beckoned, equipped with sun loungers and idyllic view. The interior served purely as bedroom, dressing room and bathroom, although having said that, it was large, airy, delightfully furnished, well equipped and cosy to the extreme.

The next morning, the sun shone as it is meant to do in Provence, and we explored this little village-within-a-village that calls itself an hotel, discovering new delights at every turn. On the same level as our cottage, we found an exquisitely landscaped pool cut into the rock on the very edge of a flower-filled terrace, and above it, yet another, smaller pool surrounded by little chairs and tables, that served as an outdoor bar.

Having peered behind each door and walked down every winding pathway, finding an intimate bar here, a terraced restaurant there, we spent the rest of the day delighting in our surroundings.

Here, myriad shops, restaurants and

sights are to be found in this immaculately preserved 1,000 year old village, that coils like a walnut whip to the peak, where, extraordinarily, an Arizona-like botanical garden perches, with spectacular views of distant Cap Ferrat.

That evening, we donned our finest and climbed the staircase from reception to the gourmet restaurant, where the silvered centrepiece in the form of a goat competed for attention with the glittering lights of the bay and the delectable cuisine.



Our suite, housed in a traditional stone cottage.

Here, every morcel is created with serious intent, and if one needs to ask the price, then one should not book a table, for the bill is as rich as the food.

Dizzy with etiquette and wine, we retired to the bar for coffee, then wandered through the warm night, discovering a tiny, bouquet-laden church alight with candles and heady with the scent of incense and flowers.

Two nights at the Chateau provide a perfect summer weekend away, and despite the day trippers that throng the narrow streets, peace and tranquility can always be found behind the discreet bastions of la Chevre d'Or.

AT A GLANCE

CHATEAU DE LA CHEVRE D'OR

Address: Rue du Barri, 06360 Eze-Village, Alpes-Maritimes, France.
Tel: 93-41-12-12. **Or through:** Relais & Chateaux. **Rooms:** 15 (3 suites). **Approx Rates:** *Deluxe double/suite* from FF2750.

Club was still under construction, but should be completed by the time you read this. Set within the coconut grove below the resort itself, one reaches it via a series of descending steps that meander through the palms. As we walked down to the beach, past the beginnings of a thatched pavilion where the bar and third restaurant will be housed, and past yet another sea-hued swimming pool, we marvelled yet again at the extraordinary largesse of the amenities here.

Strolling through the palms, we suddenly came upon the most perfect private beach, with sand the exact same colour as the hotel's cool, beige floors. Again, this is no small cove, but a good half-mile stretch of pristine sand, edged by crystal clear, calm waters.

Despite being in its embryonic stages, the beach was, surprisingly, staffed, and carefully furnished with four white-towelled loungers and parasols. As we sat down to appreciate the view, more towels appeared, accompanied by glasses of spring water, cold flannels and offers of fresh fruit and juices! The level of personal service at Amankila is astounding,

and I suspect that when the resort is entirely finished it will surpass even its own impossibly high standards.

Each of the 35 pavilions at Amankila are of the same gargantuan proportions, and are graded according to their views and position. Five have their own private swimming pools, like at Amandari. However, there are so many swimming options here, and so much space that a private pool struck me as superfluous, unless of course one is honeymooning.

The Amankila Suite enjoys the best ocean views, with an enormous private terrace, replete with private pool and water lily ponds. There is also a pair of adjoining pavilions (#12 and #15) which share a pool via a series of elegant arched doorways.

We stayed in #32, a Deluxe Pavilion with spectacular ocean views, even from one's bathtub! The outdoor terrace, accessorised with large potted palms and overhung by a towering thatched roof, was elegantly furnished with a big, beige-upholstered day bed, scattered with bolsters and cushions and equipped with a tray-table for drinks. To the

left of this, a coconut marquetry-covered serving desk with comfortable cushioned chairs bore a dark shell-covered fruit stand and finger bowls, constantly refilled throughout our stay with exotic local fruits.

Through sliding glass doors, that also have secondary sliding mesh screens and pale wood wall panels, one reaches the bedroom, with its soaring tent-shaped bamboo ceiling, king size bed beneath a carved wooden canopy, marquetry writing desk and chairs, custom designed mosaic reading lamps, shell-mosaic table, Sony sound system and cloud-form, back-lit door sconces.

The concealed lighting is dramatically filmic, yet eminently practical, creating a warm amber glow against the pale beiges and natural wood finishes. This time, a hand-made ice bucket greeted us with chilled Charles Heidsieck, and even a champagne-saver was provided for the more moderate drinkers amongst us.

From the bedroom, one moves through another towering arched doorway to a series

Continued on back page

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of exquisite mirrored bathing and dressing rooms, with huge step-in shower, custom-designed carved sunken bath, yet another cushioned day-bed and the most marvellous twin vanity units, all in polished bevelled terazzo and mirrorwork.

Views abound; from the privacy of one's bathtub to the luxury of one's mirrored mini-bar and day-bed. Indeed, such is the splendour of this bathroom that one cannot wait to get up in the morning.

Amankila is, as I predicted in Issue 2 of The Guide, the hotel sensation of the year, and I congratulate Adrian Zecha and his team for yet another visionary masterpiece.

AT A GLANCE

THE ORIENTAL, SINGAPORE

Address: 5 Raffles Avenue, Marina Square, Singapore 0103. **Tel:** (65) 338 0066. **Or through:** Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group. **Rooms:** 518. **Approx Rates:** *Harbour View Deluxe Double:* £142. *Harbour View Executive Double:* £192. *One Bedroom Theme Suites* (including round-trip limousine transfers) £425. Plus 4% tax & 10% service.

BEST TAILOR IN SINGAPORE

Take along your favourite suits and shirts for better-than-original copies to Wai Cheong Tailors, Lower Lobby, Shangri-La Hotel, Singapore (10 minutes by cab from The Oriental). **Tel:** (65) 235 7692.

AMANDARI

Address: Kedewatan, Ubud, Bali, Indonesia. **Tel:** (62) 361 95333. **Or through:** Rafael Hotels. **Rooms:** 27. **Approx Rates:** *Terrace Pavilion:* US\$300. *Terrace Pavilion with Pool:* US\$500. *Amandari Suite:* US\$700. Plus 5.5% tax & 10% service.

AMANKILA

Address: PO Box 133, Klungkung 80701, Bali, Indonesia. **Tel:** Enquire through Amandari. **Or through:** Rafael Hotels (UK toll free) 0800 282684. (L.A.) 213/670 0863. **Rooms:** 35. **Approx Rates:** *Superior Pavilion:* US\$300. *Deluxe Pavilion:* US\$400. *Pool Superior Pavilion:* US\$500. *Amankila Suite:* US\$600. Plus 5.5% tax & 10% service.



In the luxury stakes, The Hong Kong Five-stars spend much of their time trying to outdo one another, but it will be difficult to compete with **Mandarin Oriental's** latest multi-million dollar escapade, in the form of Asia's very first caviar restaurant. A marriage between Petrossian, the finest Parisian caviar house and the hotel's renowned, freshly-refurbished 'Pierrot' restaurant, the 'caviar bar' serves Beluga, Ossetra and my favourite, Sevruga, on imported Christofle palettes with gold ladles and silver 'presentoirs'. Ice cold Petrossian vodka or chilled champagne in the best crystal complete the experience; yet incredibly, prices start at a mere £7!

If you have always wanted to dine with La Contesse Bertrand de Saint-Seine in her moat-encircled **Chateau de Longecourt** near Dijon; or share the refined and luxurious life of Prince Philippe de Broglie at **Chateau de la Bourdaisiere**, then you may now do so. **La Vie de Chateau** represent 140 private chateaux in 9 countries, and you can send for their excellent guide by writing to 'La Vie de Chateau', 9 Rue, Henri Pape, 75013 Paris, France.

The horrendously insensitive concrete jungle of Cancun, on Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, has finally given birth to a small, luxury gem in the form of **Casa Turquesa**, a brand new 32-suite Mexican-style mansion, with hot tubs in the bathrooms and jacuzzis on the balconies! Overlooking the turquoise waters of the Caribbean, Casa Turquesa is close to the major Mayan sites, which means that one may now enjoy the archaeological splendours of the region without bedding down with the package tours. Suites from US\$245 to \$1,500 + 15% service and 15% tax. Bookings through Small Luxury Hotels of the World (UK) 081-877 9500, (USA) 1-800 544 7570.

Scheduled to open in August '92, Amanresorts newest deluxe offering on Bali will be called **Amannusa**. Sited right next door to the island's best golf course, Amannusa is set to take the cream from neighbouring hotel Nusa Dua, the offensively large resort whose only claim to fame is that Ronald Regan once stayed there.

The Gallivanter's Guide is a privately published monthly newsletter with the aim of unearthing idyllic places for the dedicated traveller. The selection of hotels and resorts included in this Guide is made on an entirely independent basis, and all opinions expressed are those of the Editor. Neither the Editor nor Publisher can be held responsible for any problems which may arise through the subscriber or reader's direct experience of any place, hotel or airline as recommended in this Guide. All information, including room rates, is published in good faith, and the Publishers cannot be held responsible for its accuracy. We recommend that you always double check all information with the hotels/authorities concerned.

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