



Gallivanter's Guide[®]

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IDYLIC PLACES FOR DEDICATED TRAVELLERS

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The civilised way to live out of a suitcase.

The worst thing about travelling from one place to another is not packing one's suitcase, but unpacking it and repacking it, especially if one is journeying from hotel to hotel.

Here at The Guide, this state of affairs is positively commonplace, which is why our packing technique has to be infallible.

Some travellers simply never unpack, but live day to day out of their suitcase. This is fine if one's wardrobe consists of jeans and tee-shirts; but is hopelessly inadequate if it includes such things as linen suits or silk frocks.

Having tried a myriad of packing techniques, from rolling one's clothes in tight bundles to packing each garment in tissue paper, we now rely totally on the 'dry-cleaning bag' method.

This involves hanging all one's shirts, trousers, skirts, frocks and suits on wire hangers, covered in plastic dry-cleaning bags, and folding them into one's case, with a simple flick of the wrist.

Because the air trapped between the plastic creates a cushion, one's clothes remain uncreased throughout one's trip; and upon arrival at each hotel, it is a simple matter to take out the hangers and deposit them straight into the wardrobe.

Equally, accessories such as shoes, socks and underwear should be 'filed' in see-through mesh laundry bags or plastic freezer-bags, so that one may scoop them up and put them straight into the appropriate drawers.

When it comes to repacking, even with a

case-load of clothes, it should take no more than 5 minutes to throw everything back into one's case and move on to the next hotel.

Happily, the world's better hotels return one's laundry in rather good plastic garment and shirt bags, of which we have a large and varied collection.

My favourite shirt bags; the sturdiest of their kind, hail from The Oriental in Bangkok. My husband possesses a raft of these, many of which are more than eight years old, and in which he keeps his polo shirts and swimwear.

For shoes, one cannot beat Gucci's soft, drawstring bags, which fit perfectly around the edges of one's case, filling up the inevitable 'holes' that occur when packing.

Of course, the current packing trend is for carry-on luggage only; a sort of back-packer philosophy that is a sad retreat from the heady days of Vuitton trunks.

Personally, I like to have enough clothes to cover every eventuality; for who knows when one might require a dinner jacket or a cocktail dress? Who knows if the weather will be unseasonably warm or cold?

With the 'dry-cleaning bag' method, quantity rarely presents a problem, and nowadays, the better airlines are rather more careful to send one's luggage to the required destination.

Editor/Publisher



Our Beach Villa at Hotel Bora Bora offers the most perfect accommodation on the island, with a lagoonful of brightly coloured fish right on one's doorstep.

Bora Bora? Where is it, say most of our friends. Well, it's seven and a half hours south west of LA, just 45 minutes by air from Tahiti, and one of the most unspoilt islands on this earth; the only place, apparently, where the seas are controlled by solar tides.

There is little if any airconditioning on the island, no dry cleaning and only a gesture towards room service, but when the night is a black net ballgown sewn with a million shining sequins; the days are peppered with rainbows, and the waters teem with a kaleidoscope of tropical fish, one's priorities tend to alter.

Hotel Bora Bora

Here the stars of the southern hemisphere are unsullied by ambient light as the lagoon laps at one's feet; the distant roar of the barrier reef growling from the blackness. This is Michener's paradise, where soft smiles, white waxen leis of fragrant blossoms and shells the size of cats pervade.

The gardens burst with flowers and

BORA BORA

Gauguin's
South Pacific
paradise
moves into
the 1990's

fruit; fat green grapefruits dangling above one's head; gourds and Kamana nuts dropping to the white shell-strewn sand;

the warm air perfumed with Monoi oil.

Hotel Bora Bora was built in the 1960's and was the first hotel to create overwater bungalows. In 1988, Adrian Zecha of Amanresorts discovered the hotel by accident and was so charmed by the location that he bought the property.

With high occupancy, a popular 20-year veteran General Manager and a host of repeat guests, most hoteliers would have increased the 83 bungalows to 150. Not Mr Zecha. He reduced the number to 55, doubled the size of each and created the most spacious, stylish and sensitive accommodation on the island.

Of course, when you are thousands of miles from anywhere, refurbishment is slow, and when we were there last month, the first stage was just completed. Phase two will involve increasing the size of the kitchens to allow for full room service, and this will be followed by the construction of a bravura Aman-style lagoon-fed swimming pool and new lobby and restaurants.

However, do not be put off by the fact that parts of the hotel are in the old style,

as everything functions exceptionally well, and the experienced staff are a delight.

Each Suite and Villa, although employing the same unpolished woods, pandanus cathedral ceilings and bare polished wood floors, has an individual style.

The art, personally collected by General Manager Monty Brown from various Pacific islands, adorns each Suite and Villa; from key-note turquoise-hued watercolours of island scenes, to full-size canoe paddles, intricately carved fish-hooks and framed pearl shell garlands.

Sand colours pervade; the key-note turquoise reflecting the exact same blue of the waters, and found edging a white cotton robe, beach towel, napkin or shell-shaped soap. Bathrooms are tiled in matt white ceramic; the free-standing oval bath edged with polished wood; the white step-in showers powerfully invigorating after a hard day's beachcombing; the toiletries fragrant with coconut.

Vast bleached wood decks gaze out over the white sand private beach and ocean; a push-on tap at the foot of the Villa and Suite steps or a shower on the

lower deck of the overwater bungalows.

The Garden Villas, with long-lens views of the circling shore, nestle in fruit trees; some with their own small plunge pools, turquoise bright against sun bleached decks. Even the standard Suites are a delight; with sand-coloured day beds piled with cushions, and elegant lacquered desks softly lit by rattan lamps and concealed spots; pristine white kingsizes adorned with blossoms; some four-postered with filmy white net; romance hiding in every corner.

If one chooses a Villa (all with separate living rooms) or an overwater bungalow, bountiful breakfasts are delivered each morning by smiling turquoise and white clad girls; fresh blossoms in their hair and on one's table, and if romance is paramount, then one may arrange for a candle-lit dinner to be served on the edge of the water, or indeed, wherever one's heart dictates. Otherwise, room service is nonexistent here.

A well-stocked mini-bar and ice bucket cater to one's thirst, as does the coffee machine; and to further keep one's cool, the sea breezes from the glass louvered,

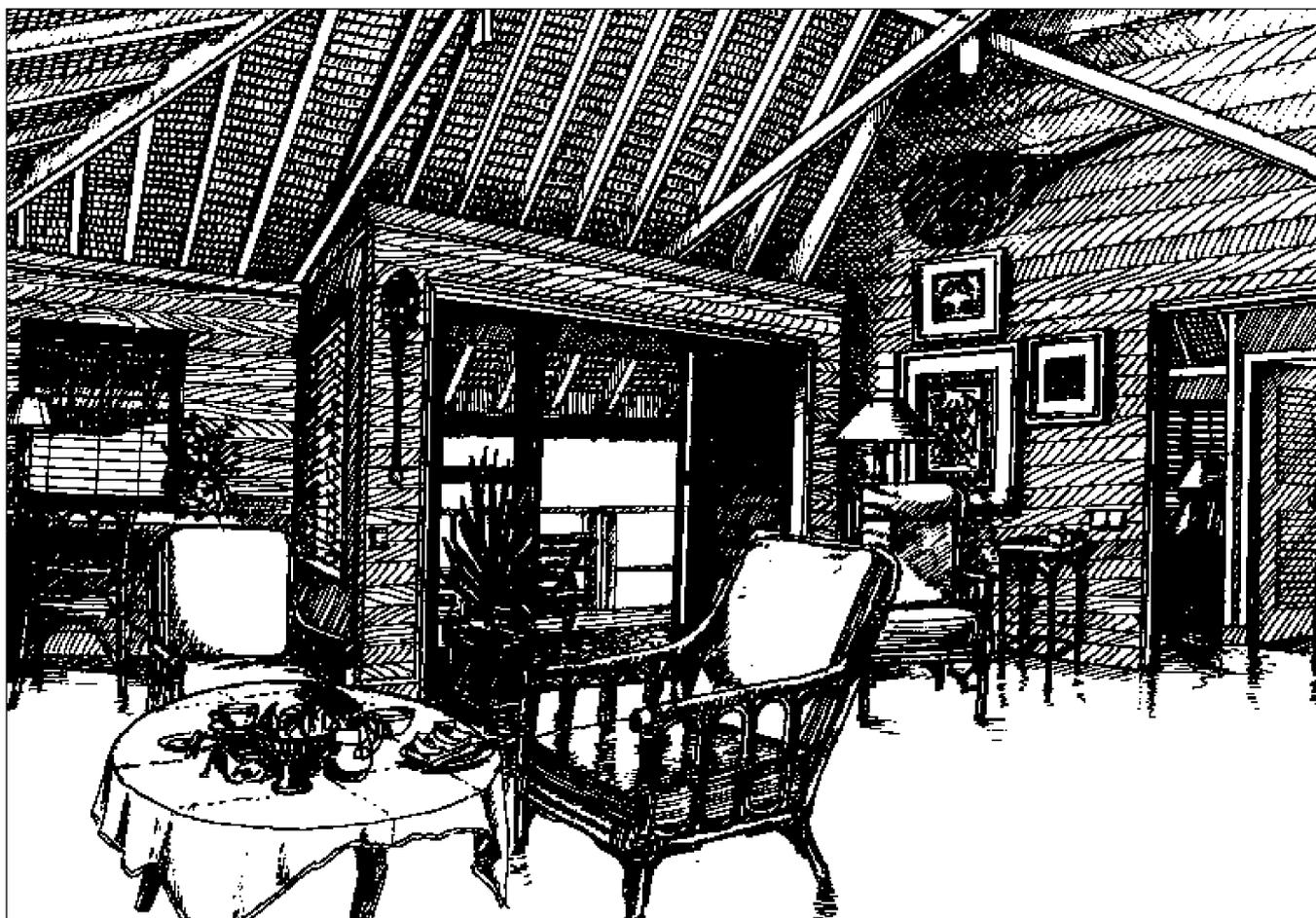
fly-netted windows, the sliding French doors and the powerful ceiling fans help facilitate romance.

Laundry is good and fast, returning in turquoise and white paper parcels, and one can sense the Amanresorts quality slowly taking over here, with hibiscus-strewn fruit bowls replenished daily, and huge bowls of tropical flowers.

Chef, Freddy Fetcher's menu is good, if a little 'international' for my taste, and I would welcome some plats du jour of Polynesian dishes together with a lighter choice of Pacific Rim-style cuisine and a more comprehensive wine list. The Beach Restaurant's menu is dull and repetitive after a couple of days, and one hopes that the new kitchens will put this right.

Two excellent beaches and spectacular snorkelling, together with barrier-reef walks, fish feeding (no fishing allowed!) help occupy one's days, together with the carefully concealed tennis courts.

This is an accomplished, peaceful resort, occasionally marred by traffic noise on Fridays and Saturdays from a small ring road, but otherwise very close to paradise indeed.



The living room of our Beach Villa, Matira #33, which competes against the popular overwater bungalows where you can watch the sun set from your bath.

Bora Bora Lagoon Resort

Like Hotel Bora Bora, this hotel collects one from the airport (which is on a separate island) and transfers one in great style to the resort by motor launch.

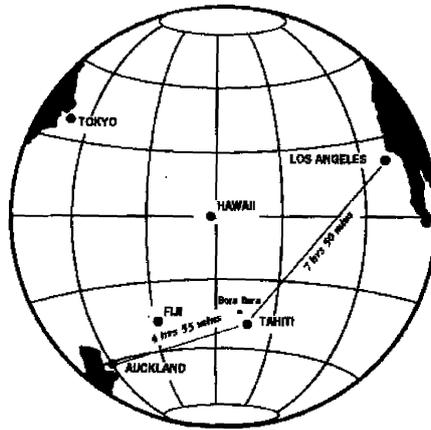
From its own elegant staging post on the mainland, the Lagoon Resort also operates a smaller launch every 15 minutes to this virtually private island of Motu Topua, just 7 minutes away and facing the sacred mountain of Otemanu, which is frequently wreathed with startlingly vivid rainbows or topped with pink sunset clouds.

Barely a year old, and owned by the same Japanese entrepreneur who created The Observatory in Sydney and Lilianfels in the Blue Mountains, the Lagoon Resort is the first real five-star competition the island has seen in 20 years.

A larger property than Hotel Bora Bora, here, the emphasis is on the 50 overwater bungalows, rather than the 30 less successful beach facing, garden-set variety.

The resort shows plenty of potential, but, as General Manager Bernard Mercier recognises, in order to succeed it must attract more discerning guests, as at present there is a preponderance of young, very undemanding Japanese honeymooners who arrive every Tuesday on the Tokyo plane and rather dictate the pace.

Technically, the resort provides limited room service; but when one sees the price of a small plate of canapés at around \$55, one realises that this is merely a gesture. Equally, the room rates, given the lack of extras, are exorbitant, and for this money I would expect at



least a bowl of fruit and some flowers in my room.

The location is stunningly beautiful and utterly peaceful, until that is the session singer in the Hiro Lounge Bar strikes up every evening with 'Living Doll' and other such package tour pariahs; the sound of electronic organ wafting across the entire property like a Karioke bar.

'Let's all go down to the Pub Heiva' says a smiling staff member 'and learn how to tie pareos'. Let's not.

Unlike Hotel Bora Bora there is no long beach here, apart from two quite pretty coves, from where the macho Tahitian watersport staff strut their stuff. There is, however, a wonderful swimming pool and jacuzzi, which are much appreciated

additions when one tires of paddling about in the lagoon; and lunch around the pool is both varied, inventive and good in every respect, scoring highly over the competition.

All the bungalows are identical, with dark polished wood floors, traditional pandanus cathedral ceilings and a mixture of eclectic Tahitian Deco Moderne furniture, rattan chairs and a primary-coloured chaise longue bedecked with vibrant cushions that are echoed on the comfortable kingsize.

In the overwater bungalows, a glass-boxed coffee table lights up to give one a view of the water below, and one may slide the top to one side in order to feed the fish, all of whom seem to appreciate a well-soaked baguette.

French sliding doors open onto a small bleached wood deck with loungers, and thence down to a platform with an outdoor shower from where one may swim at any time of the day or night.

Unlike the TV-less Hotel Bora Bora, here a hand-crafted cabinet conceals the dreaded monster; and to help create an illusion of light and space, a carved full-length mirror precedes the bathroom.

The closet has ample hanging space and a separate door conceals a safe, mini-bar and good tea and coffee making equipment. Thoughtful touches include full-length pakamacs, which are welcome in this shower-prone destination.

Fly netting and dark wood louvres replace glass here, which does make it rather dark and stuffy.



Our favourite spot by the pool at the Bora Bora Lagoon Resort after a lazy day on the deck of our view-laden overwater bungalow, #207.

The resort's turtle motif is discreetly echoed in ashtrays and on robes, and the bathroom, with separate loo, contains a good walk-in shower, separate tub and twin vanities set in elegant polished wood.

Apart from the pool, one of the best aspects of this hotel is Executive Chef Ian Macais who has managed to create a delightfully light and varied menu in the outdoor Cafe Fare, including good pasta dishes, Japanese fish dishes and superb Polynesian fare. The fine dining, boat-shaped, view-laden 'Otemanu' restaurant still needs a little work, although I was gratified to see that menus changed daily, which is particularly sensible when one is staying on the island for any length of time. The fly-specked breakfast buffet is the least successful, and I hope that General Manager Bernard Mercier will instigate a little in-room continental breakfast for those of us who prefer to sleep in.

As the new kid on the block, this resort has begun well, and should provide healthy competition for its accomplished rival across the lagoon. Both resorts have their plus and minus points, and ultimately the choice is a subjective one. Personally, I would try both as we did, finding the two experiences pleasantly complementary.

AT A GLANCE

HOTEL BORA BORA, BORA BORA

Address: Point Raititi, BP1, Bora Bora, French Polynesia. **Tel:** (689) 604460. **Fax:** (689) 604466. **Or through:** Prima Hotels: (UK toll-free) 0800-181-535. (USA toll-free) 800-447-7462. Or Rafael Hotels. **Rooms:** 55. **Approx Rates:** *Garden Jnr Suite:* \$395. *Beach Jnr Suite:* \$470. *Lagoon Overwater Bungalow:* \$575. *Deep Overwater Bungalow:* \$600. *Villa with Spa:* \$670. *Villa with Pool or on Beach* (some with limited airconditioning): \$700, plus 7% tax. Telephones optional.

BORA BORA LAGOON RESORT

Address: Motu Toopua, BP 175, Vaitape, Bora Bora, French Polynesia. **Tel:** (689) 604005. **Fax:** (689) 604006. **Or through:** Prima Hotels as above. **Rooms:** 80. **Approx Rates:** *Beach view:* \$470. *Overwater:* \$635. *Deep Overwater:* \$660. *Beach Suite:* \$690 plus 7% tax.



Quietly bued rooms, soft feather pillows, polished armoires and Chinese porcelain.

Checking into our 2-bathroom deluxe double in the Wilshire Wing, #702, was like coming home; and after sampling all of Beverly Hills' finest, I have to say that this superb Grande Dame remains my favourite.

Perfectly situated on Wilshire Boulevard, at the head of Rodeo Drive, and just two blocks from the new 'Barneys New York' store that seems to be magnetising all the beautiful people, this impeccably managed

hotel pampers one from the arrival of one's room maid bearing the traditional strawberries and cream, to the astoundingly good cuisine in the celebrity-filled Café, friendly Lounge and elegant Dining Room.

With some of the best bathrooms in the world, complete with miniature colour Sony TV's, full-size bottles of delicious toiletries and the softest towelling robes imaginable, this is *the* place to learn to live with hedonism.

Service is so good here that nothing is too much trouble. My husband, having bought a pair of trousers, needed the hems taken up on the Sunday before we left for the airport, and the hotel's seamstress did a perfect job in less than one hour!

New General Manager, John Indrieri, a 15-year veteran of Four Seasons Hotels, is set to make the Regent Beverly Wilshire even better, if that is

possible; for when one sees Ronald Reagan lunching in the Café with friends, and Al Pacino tucking into Angel Hair Pasta in the corner, then one suspects that perfection is around every corner.

The best Club Sandwiches ever tempt one on the room service menu, and the Dining Room, now with a first class trio and discreet dancing on Friday and Saturday nights, excels with Chef Leveckis' Californian

fare, such as Home-Cured Salmon Roll with Pickled Ginger and a drizzle of Wasabi Dressing; Miniature Crabcakes enhanced by a Spicy Roasted Pepper Coulis; Pacific Rim Seafood "Paella" and a plethora of temptations on the dessert menu.

If you were scared away by talk of earthquake damage and blocked freeways, don't believe all you read in the press. Everything here is back to normal and having a very nice day indeed.

HOTEL UPDATE

The Regent Beverly Wilshire

AT A GLANCE

REGENT BEVERLY WILSHIRE, BEVERLY HILLS

Address: 9500 Wilshire Boulevard, Beverly Hills CA90212. **Tel:** (310) 275-5200. **Fax:** (310) 274-2851. **Or through:** Four Seasons-Regent: (UK toll-free) 0800-282-245. (USA toll-free) 800 545-4000. **Rooms:** 301. **Approx Rates:** *Doubles:* \$255-\$395. *Suites:* \$400-\$4,000, plus 13.2% tax.

The Gallivanter's Weekend

La Residencia, Mallorca

As if the blinds have been opened to reveal a summer's morning, we step out of the 'plane into soft Cezanne-hued light, marvelling at the warmth after a mere two hour's flight from London's freezing Spring.

The 'people with villas' hurry to the right, their minds abstracted from the airport bustle, as the 'people with packages' are herded to the left, the razzle dazzle of Palma an annual promise glittering from disco eyes.

At one time, Mallorca was a bit of a packaged joke, like the Costa Brava; and indeed, if one were to follow the coach to Palma, the laughter would still be a little too loud for discerning sensibilities.

There is, however, another Mallorca, where Robert Graves once drew inspiration and artists' colonies flourished on this 'isle of dreams'.

Here, fresh green pines and ancient olive and almond trees cover the undulating hills with patchwork precision; an occasional green-shuttered farmhouse testifying to habitation.

Our cab winds its way up into the hills, our eyes catching the occasional glimpse of the island's 186 miles of mostly unspoilt coastline; the sea a white-specked turquoise against the red earth.

Then we see the sign for Deià, even today a revered artist's colony, and almost before we blink, the cab has traversed its length and breadth, turning sharply back on itself to climb the steep driveway to La Residencia.

Talis Waldren has been with this hotel since its inception 10 years ago. Indeed, she has been in Deià almost all her life, as her parents came here from America to paint.

One knows instinctively that Talis would only ever be party to an hotel that captured and complemented the magic of Deià; and this is indeed the case, for La Residencia merges seamlessly into the soft landscape as though a painter had blurred the edges of a brushstroke.

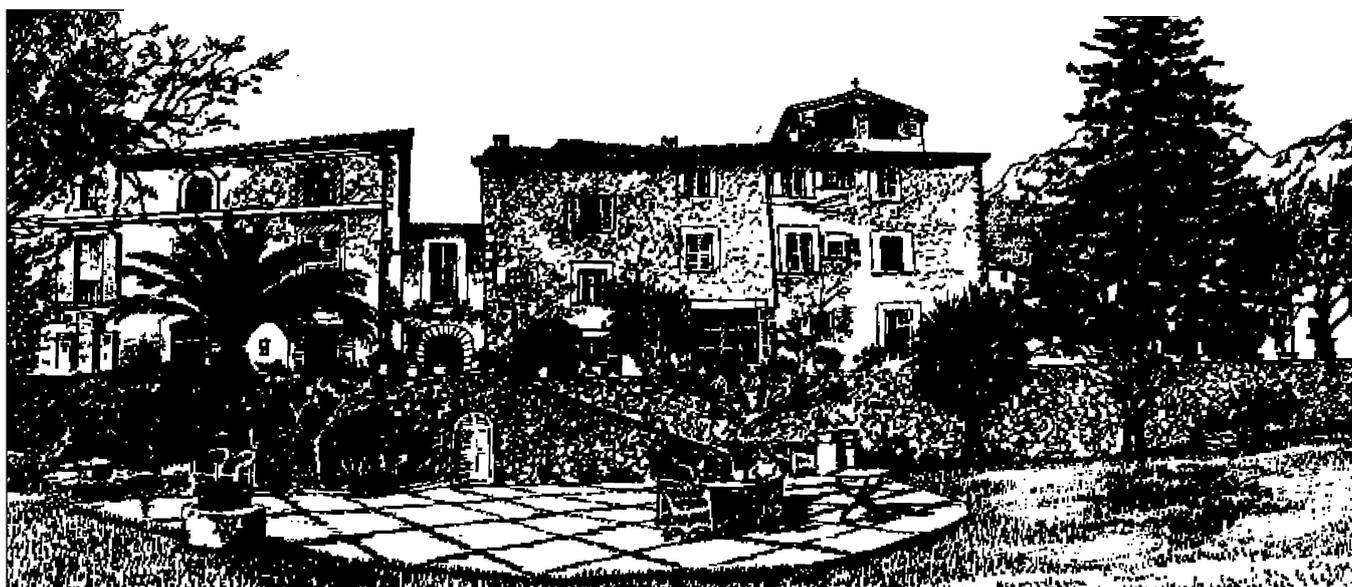
Cypress trees stand out in sharp relief against a darkening sky; the mountains like green chenille, towering protectively over the village.

Eucalyptus, Linden and Citrus trees shade the winding stone steps and pathways, as nature seems to hold her breath, and guests whisper with the cicadas, revelling in the perfume of Jasmine and the luxury of silence.

A couple catch the last rays of the sun around a perfect edge-of-terrace spring-water fed pool, the view mesmeric; and others gather for drinks on the terrace, the bright terracotta-held blossoms of early summer merging into a chiaroscuro twilight.

Three stone-clad manor houses, wrapped in ivy, meander through thirty acres of lush green grounds, the bleating of a goat punctuating the still warm air; and in this peaceful, understated nirvana, the quietly efficient staff lead us through cloistered white rooms, carefully clad with cool, modern canvasses.

Dark oak doors and terracotta floors warm the decor; the handsomely carved local furnishings setting tradition side



La Residencia merges seamlessly into the soft landscape as though a painter had blurred the edges of a brushstroke.

by side with minimalist bravura flower arrangements and original paintings.

Our junior suite, #21, shuttered against the dying light, is divided by a simple white archway, the intricately carved kingsize like a sculptured centrepiece, with four-postered obelisks rising from each corner.

A dark, carved desk with a dozen tiny drawers demands to be explored; and below, a carved sofa and gargantuan wardrobe do nothing to lessen the sense of light and space.

A soft yellow glow from each carefully placed lamp folds one into the romance of this place, and after a perfect pot of Earl Grey, we shower in the tiny olive-tiled bathroom and dress for dinner.

Here, there are no radios or televisions (unless one demands them); no mini-bars or fridges; just peaceful perfection and wonderful room service, which is exactly as it should be.

Despite the magic, however, we do not expect magical cuisine, for it is our experience that Spain is generally less well equipped to compete in this area.

How wrong we are, and how thankful!

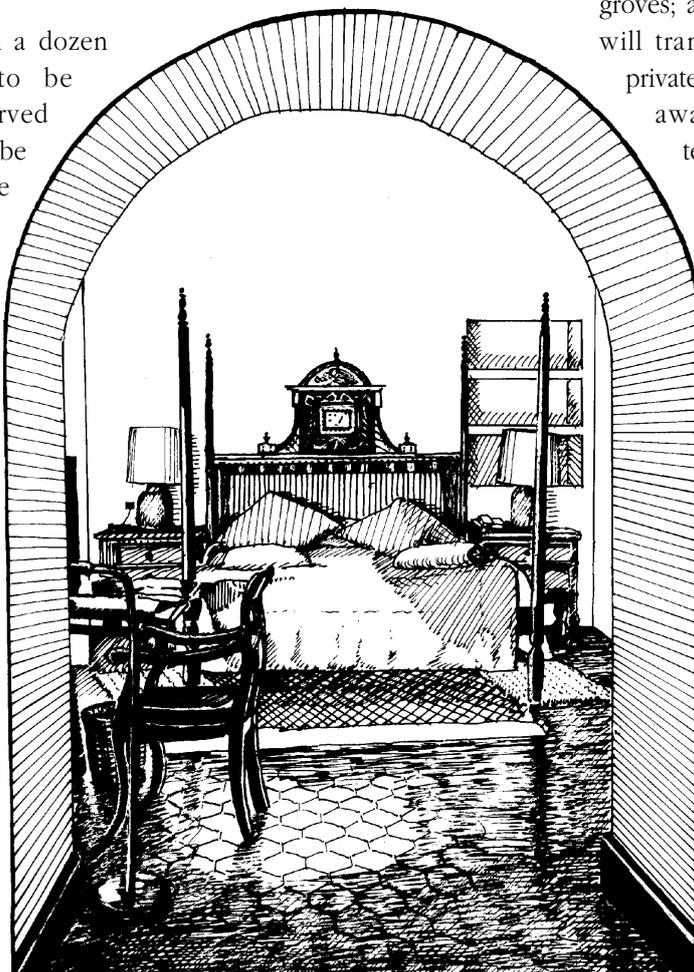
Walking from lounge to lounge; bar to bar, where tiny coteries of guests sit in antique-furnished salons savouring vintage sherries and fine sparkling wines, we find ourselves in a verdant courtyard, where the finest restaurant in Spain (and indeed, one of the finest in Europe) beckons from candle-lit windows.

El Olivio originally housed the 17th century estate's olive press, and still does; although today its vast stone form is surrounded by starched white-clad tables, wicker chairs and hundreds of beeswax candles, glimmering from iron and silver candelabra.

Gloriously romantic, one may choose the main salon, or hide away on the

dark balustraded gallery, surveying the scene below; but wherever one sits, Joseph Saureschell's cuisine is guaranteed to astound; and El Olivio's aspiration for a second Michelin star is rightly optimistic.

After an imaginative series of amuse



gueules, Salmon Tartar with Iranian Caviar melts one into submission.

Carpaccio of Foie gras with Asparagus and Truffles, or Lobster with fresh Figs and Dill create a sensuous overture; and then, the taste buds explode with Duck Consommé with Beetroot or Curry Soup with Oysters; Sweetbreads with Mushrooms and Shallots; Turbot with fresh herbs and Artichokes; Sea Bass in Sorrel Sauce; Guinea Fowl in Cider Vinegar Sauce; Rabbit with Lentils; Deer Medallion with Truffles à la crème. Is a dessert possible?

Yes, it is; and Plums Feuillette with a Purée of Fruits vies for attention with the sharpness of Grapefruit Sorbet, laced with Campari.

Perfect coffee, a distinguished wine list, attentive, courteous service and an unparalleled ambiance make this our favourite restaurant to date this year.

If one requires more than peaceful perfection, then there is a floodlit tennis court, secreted amongst the olive groves; and for beach-lovers, the hotel will transport you to their unspoilt private cove, about ten minutes drive away, where their discreetly terraced barbecue cafe, with all the amenities, will serve you until the sun goes down (from mid-May until end-October).

Have they not thought of everything?

Interestingly, La Residencia is part of Richard Branson's carefully nurtured Voyager Hotels Group, which, amongst its eclectic mix of half a dozen hotels and conference venues, also offers exclusive escapes to celebrity-starred Necker Island.

Indeed, I gather that Mr Branson perfected his tennis skills under the tuition of La Residencia's resident coach, George Lindsay.

If you are planning a European escape this year, do visit La Residencia. It is one of the most memorable hideaways I have visited in a long time, especially out of season.

AT A GLANCE

Address: Finca son Canais, 07179 Deià, Mallorca, Spain. **Tel:** 34 (971) 64 90 11. **Fax:** 34 (971) 63 93 70. **Or through:** (UK only) Voyager Hotels Tel: (071) 221-5200. **Rooms:** 64. **Approx Rates:** *Doubles:* £94-£125. *Superior Doubles:* £121-£161. *Junior Suites:* £154-£190. *Full Suites:* from £193-£248. Prices, according to season, include continental breakfast and exclude 6% tax. Ask about special Short Breaks and Gala Weekends.

GALLIVANTER'S Gossip



THE SAME ARCHITECT WHO CREATED LA RESIDENCIA in Mallorca is creating an exclusive new retreat on the Greek island of Hydra for Richard Branson's **Voyager Hotels**, opening in about two years time.

FOR THE BEST FISH IN SYDNEY, take the ferry over to Manly Wharf, where you will discover an understated café at the entrance to the ferry itself. Called **Armstrongs**, the service is friendly and the food divine, and a small but well chosen wine list makes for the perfect seafood lunch. Reservations are advised. Tel: 976-3835 or 976-3834.

AS ONE MUST STOP-OVER IN TAHITI, on the way to Bora Bora, a day room is advisable, as one often has to spend five hours or more between flights, invariably in the early hours of the morning. There are no great hotels on Tahiti, but the best option is an overwater Fare bungalow at the 211-room **Tahiti Beachcomber Parkroyal**, just 5 minutes taxi ride from Papeete airport and set in 30 acres of lagoon-wrapped gardens. The Fares have mini bars which are useful as room service stops at 11pm just about everywhere. Overnight rates are approximately \$350, and you can book direct by fax on (689) 865130, or ask your chosen Bora Bora hotel to arrange it for you.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A HOME FROM HOME IN LONDON, but you cannot stomach another chintz-clad, four-poster bedroom, then check into London's stylish new Art Deco apartment hotel, **Fountains**, now just one year old. Designed more as an up-scale apartment block than a full-service five star, Fountains is for those who prefer space and self-sufficiency to 24-hour pampering. With a total of 16, highly imaginative suites, full of eclectic modern furnishings, and complete with their own fully-equipped kitchens, Fountains offers once-a-day maid service and room-service breakfasts; but if you crave a restaurant-cooked meal, then you must order this via an outside company, aptly named 'Room Service'. Centrally located overlooking Hyde Park at 1, Lancaster Terrace, reservations for Fountains can be made on (071) 706-7070. Fax: (071) 706-7006. Suites £120-£314.

HOTEL GROUP 'MUSICAL CHAIRS' ARE ALL THE RAGE THIS YEAR. **Ciga Hotels**, it seems, are fighting off a hostile bid by Sheraton after a long courtship by Forte. More surprisingly, though, Isadore Sharp, chairman and founder of **Four Seasons**, is rumoured to be on the verge of retiring, and as his sons do not want to continue the business, he is looking for a buyer for the Four Seasons-Regent group. Hopefully, five star hotel life as we know it will not sink to the lowest common denominator.

THIS MONTH, THE D-DAY CELEBRATIONS IN NORMANDY will fill every hostelry, from tourist to deluxe. The four-star 15-room château hotel, **La Chenevière** will be accommodating the Presidential entourage, who will no doubt be entranced by chef, Claude Esprabens' unique style of Normandy cuisine. Visit when the hoards have departed. Tel: 31-21-47-96. Fax: 31-21-47-98. Double Junior Suites: from 700FF-1100FF according to season.

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