

# VANITY FAIR

HOLLYWOOD 2017

*On Travel*

*"I haven't been everywhere,  
but it's on my list."  
— SUSAN SONTAG*

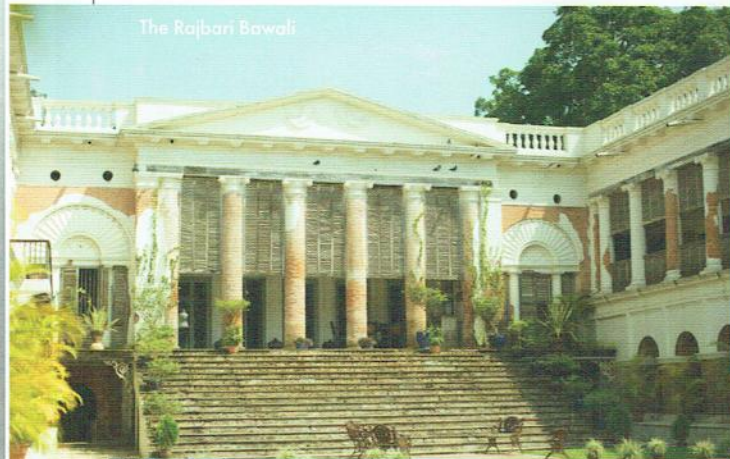
## SOUTH AMERICA

*(On Travel talks Latin)*

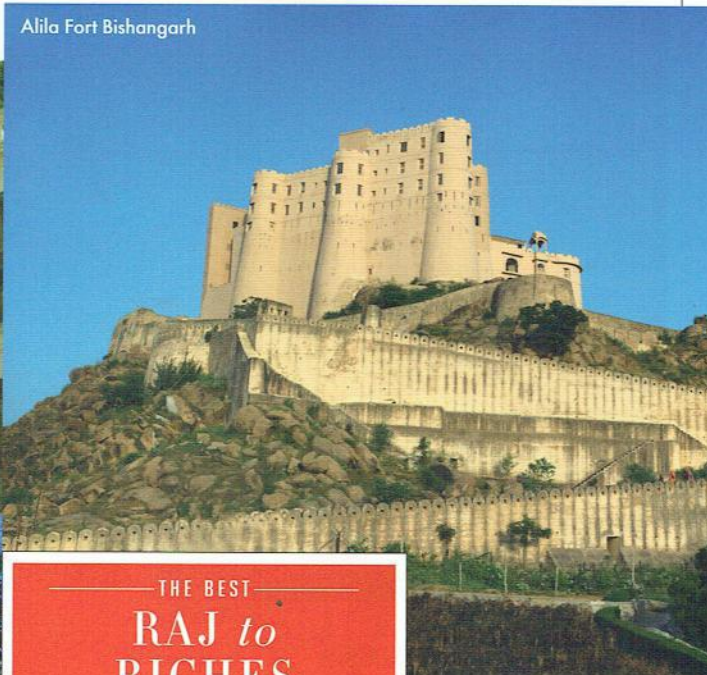
COLOMBIA, BRAZIL, BOLIVIA,  
ECUADOR *and* ARGENTINA

By ALICE B-B, ALEX CUADROS, STEVE KING,  
PAUL RICHARDSON *and* NICHOLAS SHAKESPEARE

The Rajbari Bawali



Alila Fort Bishangarh

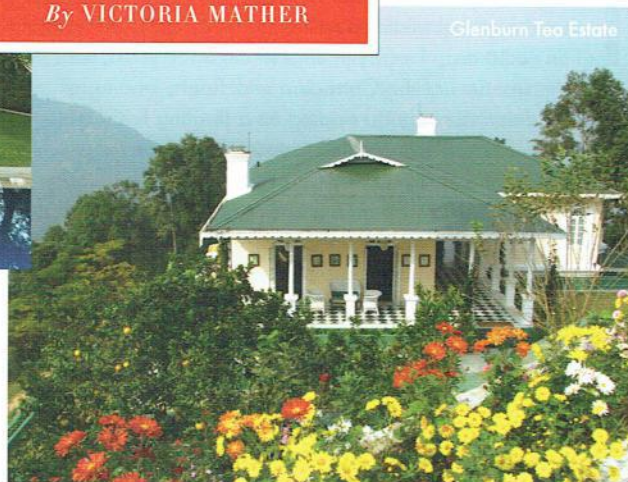


— THE BEST —  
**RAJ to  
 RICHES**  
 By VICTORIA MATHER

Glenburn Tea Estate



Sukhvilas



**H**urrah! Yippee! Calcutta (Kolkata) is the city we forget when exploring India.

The first hits are Delhi, Rajasthan and Mumbai, yet Calcutta is magnificent... And now there is a property in the countryside to rest awhile: the Rajbari Bawali, beautifully restored, a soothing mix of French *château* meets shabby chic—but nothing shabby about it. Immaculate gardens, lake, huge swimming pool, light-filled royal suites, flickering candles by night, a spa, visits to the Bon temples, a return to charming sitting rooms and a palatial courtyard. India's northeast now has a new circuit: expert Mary-Anne Denison-Pender of Mahout recommends a Shakti Sikkim village walk, followed by a stay at the

darling Glenburn Tea Estate, near Darjeeling, staying in the Glenburn penthouse (and the Oberoi Grand is a *Raj grande dame*), then the Rajbari Bawali. [greavesindia.co.uk](http://greavesindia.co.uk)

**And...** Wait for it... Oberoi has also opened a new Vilas property—the first in 15 years—in Chandigarh. Biki Oberoi's Vilas properties—the spectacular Rajvilas in Jaipur, Amarvilas in Agra, Udaivilas in Udaipur and Vanyavilas in Ranthambhore—revolutionized luxury travel in India. Chandigarh is a UNESCO World Heritage Site for the Le Corbusier-designed Capitol Complex, and the resort, Sukhvilas, opened in December, with the spa set to open this April. This pioneers a circuit from the Punjab to the Himalayas. Sukhvilas has 60 villas and tents, many with private

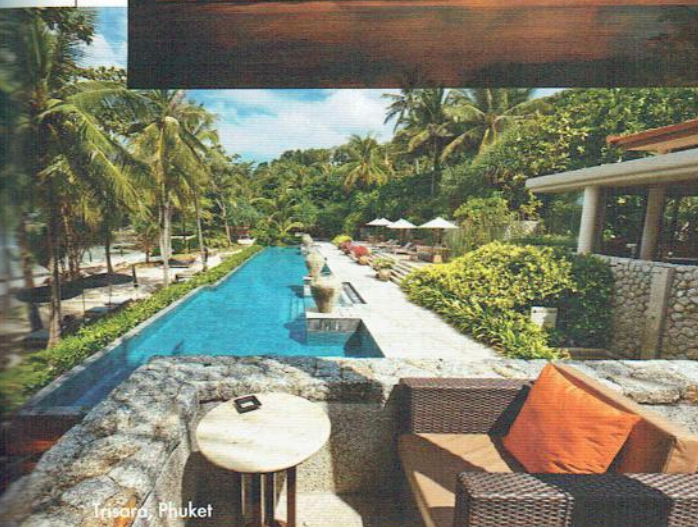
pools and gardens, tinkling fountains and waterways. There's an on-site farm, plus food from local growers: so on-trend. [greavesindia.co.uk](http://greavesindia.co.uk)

**And...** Alila, a forward-thinking hotel group that has done terrific properties in Bali, China and Sri Lanka, has restored Fort Bishangarh, between Delhi and Jaipur. Mughal-British architecture, battlements, spa, 59 suites and a cigar turret. What more do you want? [ampersandtravel.com](http://ampersandtravel.com)

**And...** There's nothing like an Englishman Abroad (reference Richard Hanlon,

who owns Bujera Fort, the hottest ticket in Udaipur; and Mark Hill's Jalakara Hotel on Havelock Island in the Andamans). George Cooper, an interior designer, made Kahanda Kanda, in a working tea plantation near Galle, Sri Lanka, the cool go-to place. Now he has opened KK Beach: four suites that are a tad Corbusier-by-the-sea, just 12km from Galle on the Indian Ocean, brand-new and as white-sparkly as the sand. No shoes, seafood barbecues, open-plan, laid-back. It's kick-back delicious. And he now has a boutique in Galle Fort, so take an empty suitcase. [ampersandtravel.com](http://ampersandtravel.com)

The Strand, Yangon



Trisara, Phuket

## The Strand, Yangon

A colonial *grande dame* where the inspiring sign outside the bar reads: “There is smoking in this bar because it is traditional.” The ghost of Orson Welles wouldn’t know the old place unless he could have a celestial cigar. Rudyard Kipling and Noel Coward were Strand regulars; they’d still feel at home but would be thrilled to have the Wi-Fi code. Renamed The Sarkies Bar after Aviet and Tigran Sarkies, who founded the hotel in 1901, this is proper club heaven: White’s with women. The Strand was tottering a bit, dear old duck, but she’s been nipped and tucked: rooms are light and airy; local artisans have beavered at the teak panelling,

bedsteads, lacquerware and marble flooring; and in-room tech has been whooshed into place along with vintage textiles and art. Mark Murray-Brown, formerly of Caprice Holdings, is going to roll out the sandwiches at the Strand tea (equivalent to The Ritz tea in Yangon hi-so). If you’ve been the head waiter at Scott’s, you can do anything. [ampersandtravel.com](http://ampersandtravel.com)

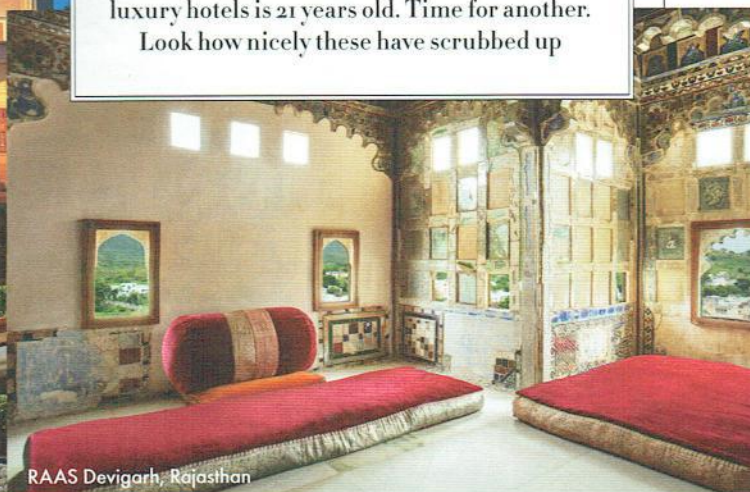
## RAAS Devigarh, Rajasthan

The 18th-century palace of Devigarh has always been special—Elizabeth Hurley once had the whole thing to herself—and pioneered contemporary design in an ancient setting, thus moving away from the dusty-fusty heritage hotel module throbbing with stuffed tigers. How-

## NEW HOTELS FOR OLD

By VICTORIA MATHER

The renaissance of hip, slick, grand designer luxury hotels is 21 years old. Time for another. Look how nicely these have scrubbed up



RAAS Devigarh, Rajasthan

ever, it didn’t get it entirely right. There was a cold feel, at odds with the vibrancy that is Rajasthan. All change: the clever people who gave us the cool and charming RAAS Jodhpur have refurbished Devigarh with love and light. The pool, which had become cracked and scuzzy, is now pristine and heated; the Ila spa is smelling of roses, literally; the bar and restaurant have been totally redone and there is more outdoor dining with food from the palace veg patch. Devigarh was a mould-breaker, and now it has a soul. [greavesindia.co.uk](http://greavesindia.co.uk)

## Trisara, Phuket

The project that became Trisara began in the late 90s, steered by Anthony Lark, who had opened Amanpuri. Trisara opened in 2004, every villa with its own pool, and it has consistently kept ahead of the curve: one of the first resorts to have organic meat, sustainable fish and raw food options. The mature landscaping is gorgeous but the villas were getting tired and dark, the Jim Thompson

silk curtains hanging a foot off the floor. Now all have been rethought, limewashed, brightened with new materials. The spa has been totally rebuilt and PRU (Plant, Raise and Understand), the new restaurant, headlines own-grown farm-to-table eating. They even churn their own butter and make plates from driftwood: politically correct eating at its zenith. Lark is aware of the competition from other Phuket properties such as Point Yamu by Como and the lovely, understated Anantara Layan which, like Trisara, also has residences to rent, though perhaps none like Lark’s five-bedroom one with its private martini bar. Showtime. [carrier.co.uk](http://carrier.co.uk)

## Singita Lebombo

When Lebombo opened in 2001 up on the Mozambique border, it was a wow. However, Luke Bailes, the innovator behind Singita, is not one for laurel-resting. It’s kill or be killed in the safari business. Both his original properties, Singita

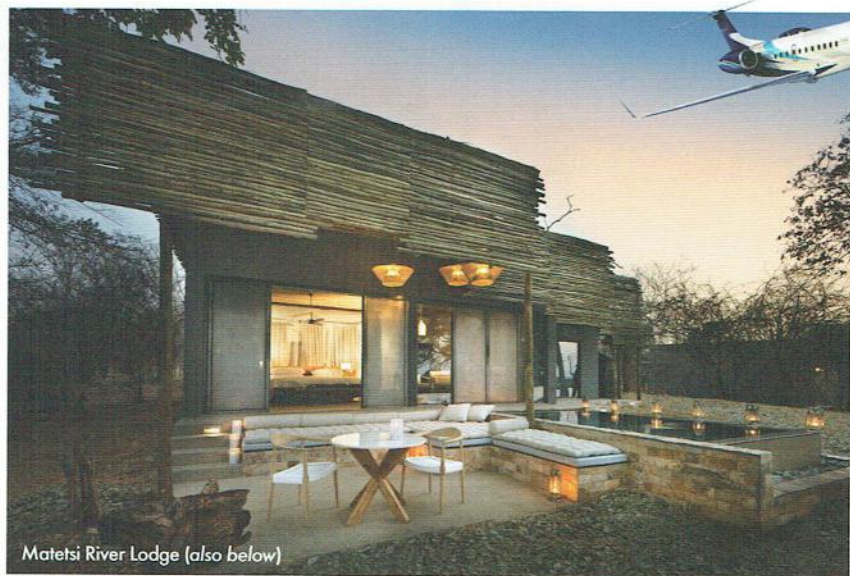
# THE BRAND TOUR

You can't see an entire continent from a single hotel room. But a single hotel brand? Maybe. Choose a local specialist, says AOIFE O'RIORDAIN, and your itinerary practically writes itself

## — Africa —

Responsible tourism that empowers local communities and sustains local wildlife was one of the founding principles of &Beyond. Under the gimlet-eyed expertise of its dashing CEO, Joss Kent, it has also been reimagining the safari experience across its 35 lodges in Africa for a style-savvy, earth-conscious crowd. Vast distances have always been a factor in Africa, but this is not such an issue on its new private-jet safaris, launched to celebrate the company's 25th anniversary.

But this is no box-ticking, whistle-stop tour. On its 19-day trip, just 12 guests get a very privileged view of wild Africa in all its majesty, and not just from above. In the company of two of &Beyond's most experienced guides, Daryl Dell and Grant Telfer, this traverses a swathe of East and Southern Africa, taking in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa, all the while meeting some of the continent's most pivotal conservationists. Guests check in to classic camps such as its Ngorongoro Crater Lodge in Tanzania and Zimbabwe's newly rebuilt Matetsi River Lodge near Victoria Falls, a study in updated safari chic. [andbeyond.com](http://andbeyond.com)



Matetsi River Lodge (also below)



in Uttarakhand, Ladakh and the easterly province of Sikkim.

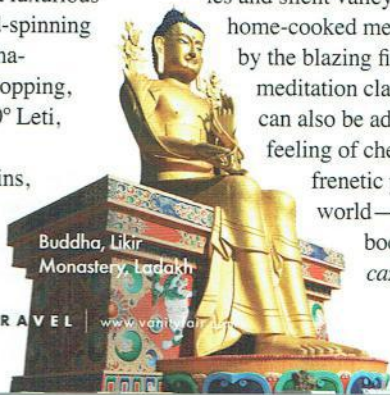
As well as the more obvious comforts such as a guide and a private chef, the luxury on offer here is that profound sense of disconnect everyone now seems to crave. The latest Ladakhi addition, Shakti River House, overlooks the banks of the Indus river valley. Rescued from ruin, it has been transformed into a four-bedroom villa, decorated in a tasteful and utterly comfortable take on the local Ladakhi style. By day, guests hit the trails with their guide, immersing themselves in a landscape of hidden monasteries and silent valleys, returning for home-cooked meals and nights spent by the blazing fire. Daily yoga and meditation classes with local monks can also be added to elevate that feeling of checking out from the frenetic pace of the modern world—a journey for the body and soul. [cazloyd.com](http://cazloyd.com)

## — India —



Shakti 360° Leti

Shakti has quietly pioneered its idiosyncratic spin on local but luxurious journeys among the head-spinning heights of the Indian Himalaya. There's the show-stopping, purpose-built, Shakti 360° Leti, dangling on a plateau 8,000ft up in the mountains, and a string of meticulously renovated local village houses



Buddha, Likir Monastery, Ladakh

## — Italy —

Plot a modern-day Italian grand tour to Florence, Rome and Capri. JK Place always features on our lust list of Italian idylls—an impressive feat in a country with an abundance of beautiful places to bed down. All three locations show off the flair of Florentine architect Michele Bönan, with beautifully judged interiors that blur the lines between house and hotel.

Start at the JK Place Florence, a 20-room palazzo on the edge of the 13th-century Piazza Santa Maria Novella. “Discreetly deluxe” probably best sums up the next stop, the 30-room JK Place Roma, which, despite its relative newness, already feels like a modern classic, tucked down a quiet street close to the buzz of the Spanish Steps. Then, follow the trail south to the night-on impossible-to-book JK Place Capri. Perching above the marina and gazing out over the dreamy blue of the Tyrrhenian

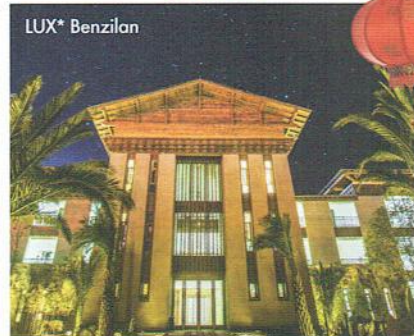


JK Place Roma

ANDBEYOND.COM (JET); MATETSI RIVER LODGE SUITE; LODGE LOUNGE); SHAKTI HIMALAYA (LIKIRI MONASTERY); COTTAGE EXTERIOR; ISTOCK.COM/MOREISO (PRAYER FLAG); SIX SENSES HOTELS RESORTS SPAS (SIX SENSES BHUTANI); ISTOCK.COM/TOMODAJI (BUDDHA); ISTOCK.COM/SORACK (MASHI); TARDOP HOTELS (FORT BAZAAR); ISTOCK.COM/XIABRADOR (WOLU).

Sea towards the Italian coast, it exudes a refined yet carefree beachy vibe. In all three, service is fantastically slick, yet friendly. Rumours abound that hotelier Ori Kafri has his sights set on Paris for his next trick. Watch this space. [bellinitravel.com](http://bellinitravel.com)

## — China —



LUX\* Benzilan

One of the world's most ancient trade routes, the Tea Horse Road is a network of millennia-old paths threading from Yunnan in southwest China to the lung-squeezing altitudes of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Caravans of horses laden with cakes of statin-rich Pu'erh black tea filed along the paths through the deep velvety mountains, valleys and villages of this remote region. Two years ago, LUX\* Resorts opened the 30-room Tea Horse Road Lijiang in the ancient confines of the

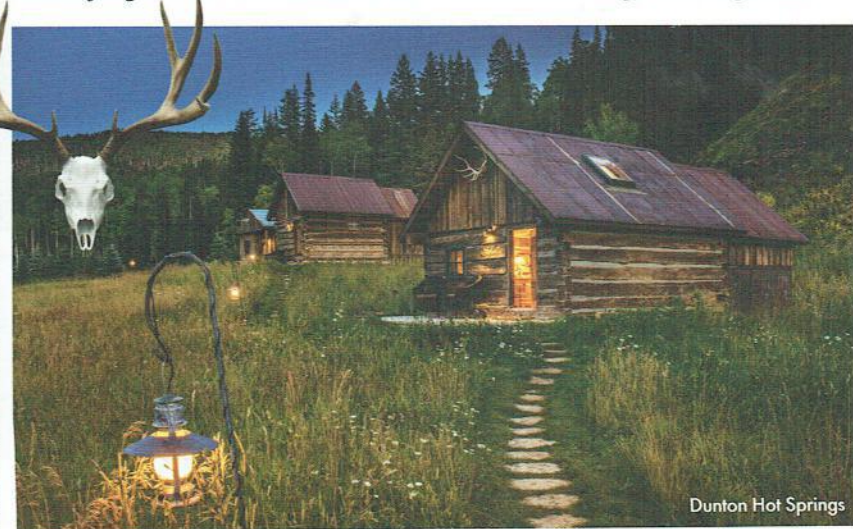
Shangri-La will be close to the final staging post for the caravans before entering the precipitous peaks leading to the Tibetan Plateau, while the northerly, LUX\* Meili Mountain is planted at the foot of the sacred peak with views of the Baima Snow Mountains between the gorges of the upper Mekong and Nujiang Rivers.

Scenic splendours such as Tiger Leaping Gorge aside, this is one of the most fascinatingly ethnically diverse regions of China. Lijiang is in the heart of Naxi country, while the cultural landscape quickly changes as you head north, giving way to the Tibetan culture of northern Yunnan.

[luxresorts.com](http://luxresorts.com)

## — Colorado —

Three is the magic number here. Magnate Christoph Henkel and his wife, Katrin Bellingier, first created Dunton Hot Springs, a paradigm of rustic-luxe from an abandoned 1880s mining town in Colorado's majestic San Juan mountains. There are just 12 log cabins and one tent, where you can soak in hot springs under the stars and spend your days hiking or rafting through the Colorado Rockies. It may be only four miles downstream, but the nearby Dunton River Camp, with its eight tents



Dunton Hot Springs

UNESCO World Heritage-listed city, the first in a planned series of up to a dozen lodges tracing the route from the tea hills on the border with Burma to Lhasa in Tibet. Last year, the second 30-room Tibetan-inspired LUX\* Benzilan opened roughly four and a half hours' drive north of Lijiang. Later this year heralds the opening of two more lodges. LUX\*

set on former 19th-century Cresto Ranch, feels a world away. Opened in November, Dunton Town House completes the trio with a dose of small-town style in Telluride. Its five bedrooms are done in a considered Tyrolean style, an homage to some of the original pioneers. Art aficionados are also in for a treat — Bellingier is a gallery owner of international repute and curates all the art in the three properties. [blacktomato.com](http://blacktomato.com)



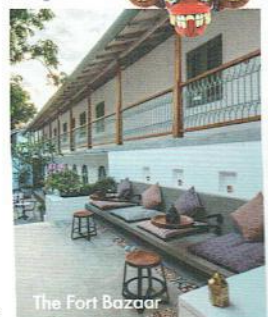
Six Senses Bhutan

## — Bhutan —

Bhutan evokes misty-eyed longing in even the most seasoned traveller, with its silent Buddhist monasteries and fluttering prayer flags. But navigating its vertiginous roads makes travel times lengthy and having one base impractical. The notion of multiple lodges was pioneered by Como and Aman, but soon to open is the hotly anticipated Six Senses Bhutan. It's five resorts in one, with each satellite dotted strategically across the country, creating a route from Paro to Bumthang. Eighty-two suites are carved up between five lodges in scenically significant spots: Paro, Thimphu, Punakha, Gangtey and Bumthang. The must-do is the hike to the dream-like monastery known as the Tiger's Nest. Spirituality, spas and soaring peaks: the ideal trinity. [sixsenses.com](http://sixsenses.com)

## — Sri Lanka —

It's best to go boutique in Sri Lanka. Teardrop Hotels' pair of properties on the island are about to be complemented by three new siblings. Michael Davies, Charlie Austin and Henry Fitch, three cricket-crazy chums from Bryanston School, came together with local lawyer Viraj Premasinghe to open The Wallawwa, a short drive down the coast from Colombo, which quickly became one of the island's hottest spots. Last year's opening of The Fort Bazaar proved Teardrop was no one-hit-wonder. Set in a restored 17th-century former merchant's house within the cobblestoned Galle Fort, the décor is perfectly pitched colonial cool. The coming months herald the next phase of evolution with the opening of three former tea planters' bungalows: Goatfell, Pekoe House and Nine Skies are variously set in folds of the ravishing rumples of the island's tea country surrounding Nuwara Eliya. [ampersandtravel.com](http://ampersandtravel.com)



The Fort Bazaar

COURTESY OF DUNTON LIFE (CABIN); ISTOCK.COM/KATEWHAT (SKULL); LUX\* RESORTS (TEA HORSE ROAD BENZILIAN); ISTOCK.COM/SOPIAWORIED (LANTERN)

