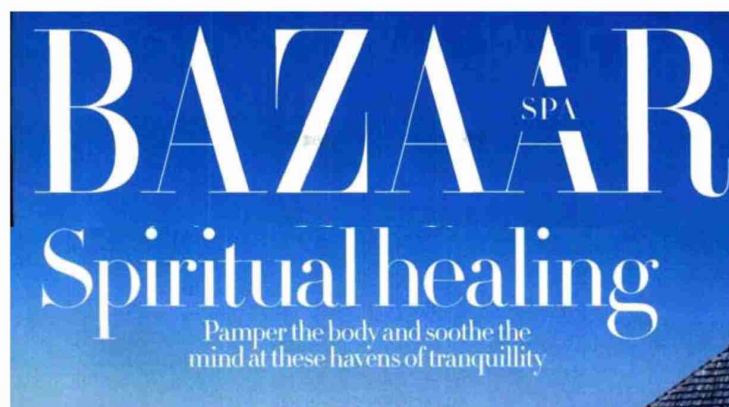


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1 ROSIE HUNTINGTON-WHITELEY *on PARROT CAY Turks and Caicos*

Under the surface, it's just me, the instructor and the fish. We're on a silent odyssey into a serene environment. My breathing slows down to a meditative state. It's surreal and enchanting to see schools of fish floating past and giant lobsters peeking out under the coral. The instructor signals to me to hold my breath for a second and listen, and faintly, in the distance, we can hear whales singing to each other. The fish and reef are vibrant and lush with colour and health.

The Turks and Caicos are among the top 10 diving sites in the world. The first time I ever went scuba diving was here; I was blown away. It felt like the closest thing to being in another world. We swam with sharks and it was astounding to see these giant beasts swim around us and come up close to have a look. I found them graceful and curious, not scary. It was humbling to see them in their true environment. I haven't been since or passed my Padi – the licence you need to scuba dive at greater depths – but that doesn't matter, because all the best fish, creatures and reefs are at 40 feet or less here, so you can still see the reds and magentas that are lost as you dive deeper.

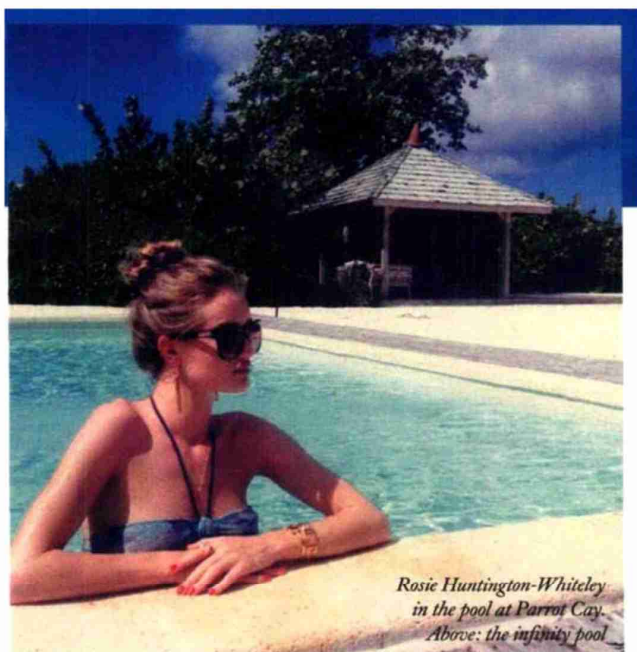
I've been lucky enough with my career to come to the Caribbean many times for work, but am delighted to return this time for a holiday with my mother and a dear friend, Cher, who is flying in from LA. We arrive late at night, the island concealed in darkness. Roby, our butler, meets us at the dock, and all the stress from the journey melts away with the sound of lapping waves and



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PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF ROSIE HUNTINGTON-WHITELEY

crickets chiming in the bushes. Five minutes later we arrive at our villa. We fall into our four-poster beds, full of anticipation for daylight to unveil the island's magnificence.

I wake to the sight of my mum pounding the water, doing laps in our private pool. After breakfast, I get a mani/pedi, my favourite treat. I decide on bright-red fingernails and electric-pink toes and contemplate my goal for these five days: to do yoga every day. Parrot Cay has one of the most impressive spas I have ever seen in a hotel: the Como Shambhala Retreat. You are greeted with a cool ginger tea, and there is an instant Zen vibe with the expansive views over the marshes. I feel a million miles from home and reality. My mum and I meet Andrea, our yoga instructor, at the wooden, Balinese-style pavilion. We are both dazed and stiff from the flight. Andrea gets our bodies in motion and our blood flowing as we stretch out the aches using the vinyasa technique. I leave tall and energised.

That afternoon, I head for an Indonesian massage with

a therapist named Siki. It's heavenly. Siki kneads away all the knots in my back and shoulders with traditional Javanese essential oils, rolling pressure and long strokes. I am wrapped in a sense of renewed calm. That night, we dine at the Lotus Bar, one of the two restaurants. Food is always a highlight at Como Resorts, and this menu is contemporary, innovative, fresh and organic. We wait up for Cher to arrive. She comes crashing through the door, bursting with excitement and yelling 'totally tropical'. It quickly becomes our catchphrase.

The next few days are spent relaxing around the pool, walking along the beach – which has the whitest, softest sand I have ever felt between my toes – and dipping in the brilliantly turquoise ocean. The sumptuous sea is crystal-clear; the temperature is perfect, refreshing and cool – totally tropical. The hotel is almost full, yet it still feels secluded and private.

One day, I get up at 6am for yoga, so I can catch the sunrise. Waking at this hour is usually painful: I'm known not to utter a word for hours until I've recovered from the torture of hindered sleep. But I wake to the sound of the waves and I'm looking forward to opening my body and mind. Andrea guides us through every movement with precise direction. She makes yoga easy, but challenging enough that I feel a sense of accomplishment. Her body is streamlined and rock-solid. It's inspiring to observe her poses and perfect lines and see the benefits of yoga in her physicality and compassionate, nurturing demeanour. She even helps me master a headstand.

There's just one thing left I want to do to secure my place of calm: I take a meditation class with Dr N Pradeep. I lie

and listen to his voice and think about what a great time I've had over the past few days. I feel so lucky to have been able to take some time out, reflect and relax. We leave Parrot Cay reluctantly, speeding off in the boat, watching the island get smaller. We are sad to go but energised and strong, ready to face the real world.

Parrot Cay (+1 649 946 7788; www.comohotels.com/parrotcay); five nights in a Terrace Room, from about £1,830 a person full board, including transfers, spa treatments, activities and champagne. British Airways (0844 493 0787; www.ba.com) flies weekly from London Heathrow to Providenciales, Turks & Caicos, from £940 return.

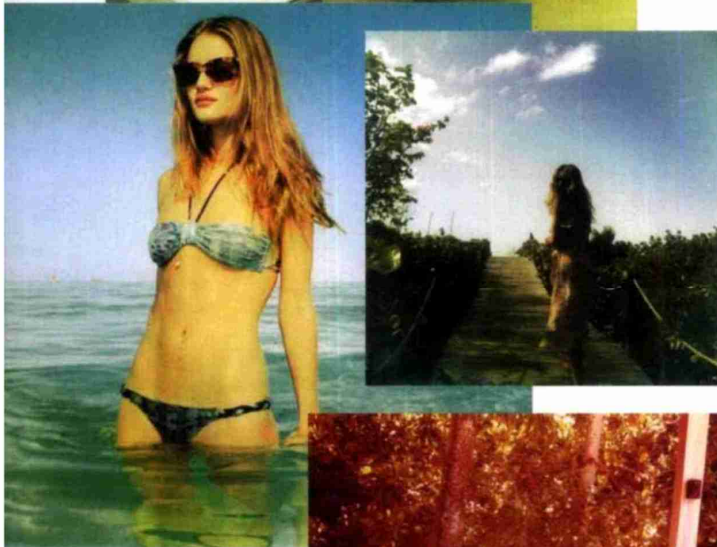
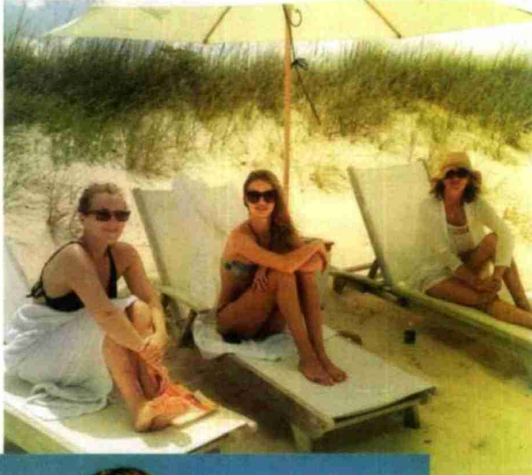
PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF ROSIE HUNTINGTON-WHITELEY, DON McCULLIN



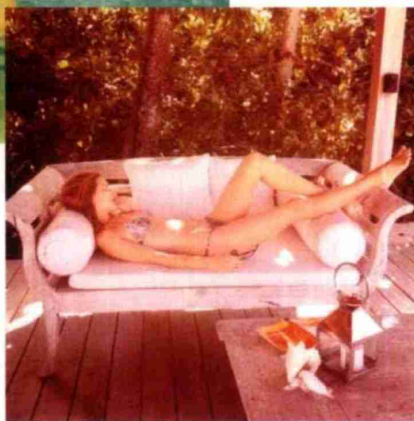
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*Clockwise from top:
Huntington-Whiteley
sunbathing with her
mother Fiona (far right)
and friend, stylist Cher
Coulter. Strolling down
to the beach. Relaxing
on the private terrace.
A beach picnic.
Enjoying the waters
of the Caribbean*



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SPA

2 BANYAN TREE SPA SANCTUARY *Thailand*

Singapore's most sophisticated spa export, Banyan Tree, is synonymous with excellence and a rigorous professionalism. The 14 villas of this dedicated wellness sanctuary allow one to float from a white-linen bed to a treatment couch for soothing massages at any hour. Perched around Bang Tao Bay on Phuket Island, the entire place has been conceived as a 'sanctuary for the senses', with healthy cuisine and muscle-building activities – with the underlying idea that if you surround yourself with the finer things in life, you will feel a whole lot better for it. So there is beauty all around; glass-walled bedroom cubes seemingly float on lotus ponds, and each villa has a private pool and a dedicated spa pavilion for treatments.

Seven nights in a Deluxe Villa, from £1,660 a person B&B, including flights and transfers, with Elegant Resorts (01244 897517; www.elegantresorts.co.uk).



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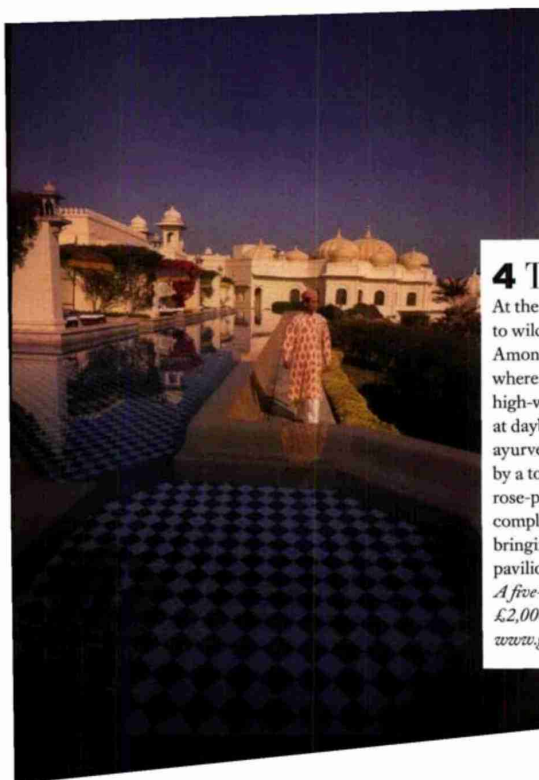
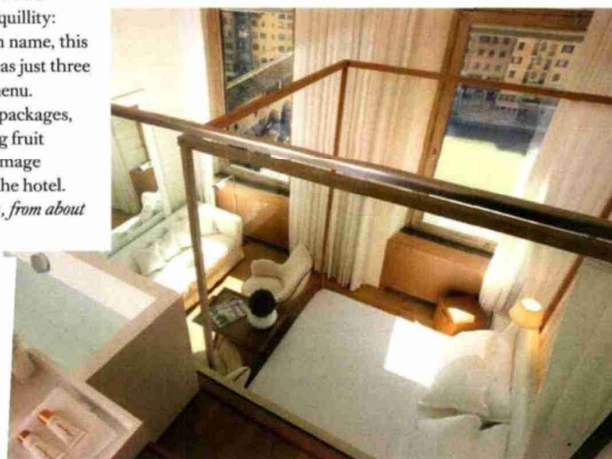


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3 THE WHITE IRIS BEAUTY SPA at THE HOTEL CONTINENTALE *Florence*

Near the Ponte Vecchio and all its clamour is a tiny piece of tranquillity: the White Iris Beauty Spa. As white and elegant in style as it is in name, this diminutive gem, the brainchild of spa dynamo Daniela Steiner, has just three treatment rooms and a steam room offering the perfect, edited menu. Choose from five massages, two scrubs and a handful of special packages, which include Steiner's own anti-ageing White Gold facials using fruit enzymes and pearl powder, or the Sublime Feet treatment, in homage to Salvatore Ferragamo, the founder of the company that owns the hotel. *The Hotel Continentale* (+39 055 27262; www.lugarnocollection.com), from about £210 a room a night.



4 THE OBEROI UDAIVILAS, UDAIPUR *India*

At the edges of the Oberoi Udaivilas resort, the manicured gardens give way to wild thickets and grasslands home to spotted deer, peacock and wild boar. Among the mosses and creepers, you'll find the old hunting lodge, Bada Mahal, where princes would hunt tigers and leopards, and pit lion against boar in the high-walled stone pit. The lodge is a peaceful forested platform for yoga sessions at daybreak, when the sun rises over the City Palace on Lake Pichola. The ayurvedic treatments – a turmeric and sandalwood scrub and polish, followed by a tomato wrap to open pores, and a final soak, after a massage, in a milk and rose-petal bath – take place in a marble, candlelit spa pavilion in the main complex amid the scent of jasmine and the sound of fountains. With butlers bringing chilled flannels and face spray, and shade provided by domed *chhatris* pavilions, is this the world's most beautiful lap pool?

A five-night itinerary with three nights at the Oberoi Udaivilas, Udaipur costs from £2,000 a person, including flights and transfers, with Greaves India (020 7487 9111; www.greavesindia.co.uk).



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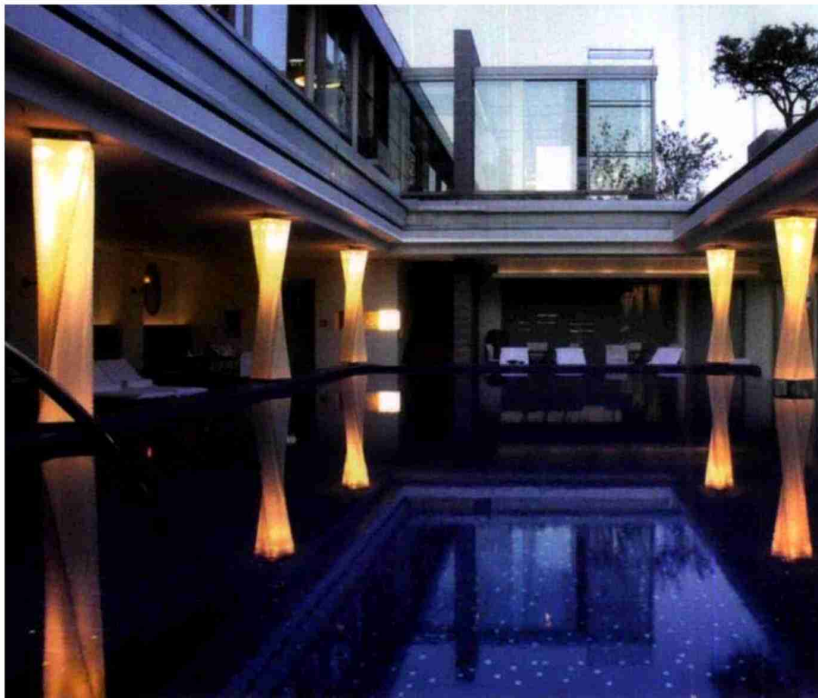
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5 THE BLUE SPA *at* BAYERISCHER HOF *Munich*

Munich's Bayerischer Hof, one of the oldest hotels in the city, has a gem on its roof: the Blue Spa, the only spa designed by architect Andrée Putman. The views from the café, terrace and pool area, complete with fitness studio, are the best in the city. Treatments range from ayurvedic, shiatsu and hot stone to Swedish, but try those devised by Dorissima Organic Alp Spa Rituals, which use indigenous mountain flowers and herbs, such as alpine rose, sallow thorn, gentian and edelweiss. Created by former Versace muse Doris Brugger, and unique to the Blue Spa, they are a fusion of wraps, scrubs and massages using the healing properties of colour and crystals. The Arnica Ritual is based on yellow for vitality and zest, and uses frankincense, lemon and vanilla in the oils and yellow calcite as its crystal.

Bayerischer Hof (+49 89 21 200; www.bayerischerhof.de),
from about £285 a room a night.



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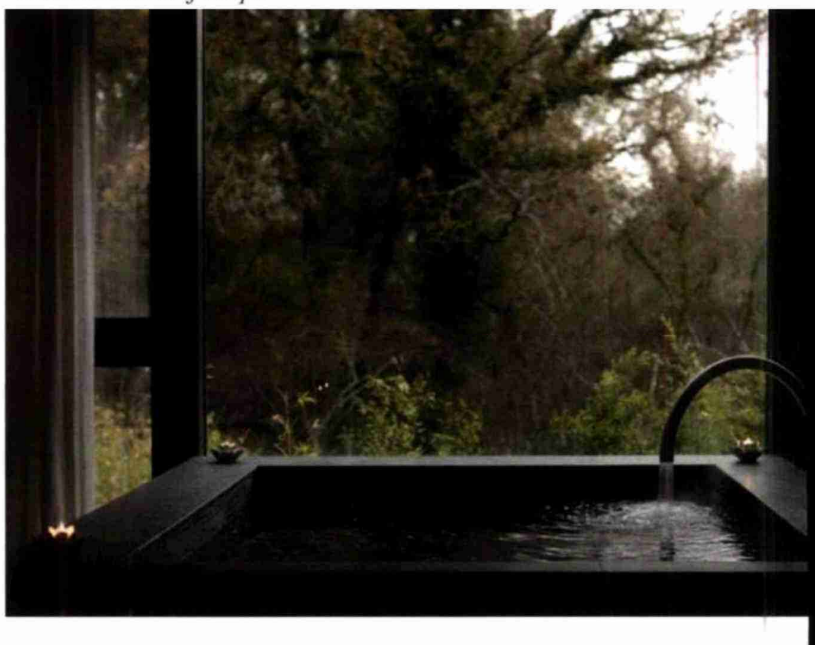


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6 FOREST FIT BOOT CAMP at LIME WOOD *Hampshire*

The gentle but persuasive trainer at the Lime Wood hotel will have you up with the lark doing Pilates or yoga stretches on the top of the Herb House Roof Garden at the start of its three-day Forest Fit Boot Camp. Then he has you pounding the trails of the New Forest, leaping over open-moorland streams, surviving obstacle courses on sand-dunes and performing press-ups on a municipal bench. Later, you can ride, cycle, crawl up and down the ozone lap pool or soak aching muscles in the Mud House and steam room or in the huge sauna. You eat well but healthily in the spa's Raw & Cured bar (haddock and salmon prepared in the hotel's smokehouse) and collapse at the end of the day with room service in front of a roaring fire in your suite. *Forest Fit Boot Camp at Lime Wood (02380 286999; www.limewood.co.uk); three nights, from £1,750 a person full board, including fitness training, bespoke treatments and use of the spa.*



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7 LONGEVITY *Portugal*

There is a new crop of destination spas that renders those pampering resorts of old as stuck in the dark ages. Combining science and soul, Longevity is one such new-generation wellness retreat. Situated in the mountains of the Algarve, a half-hour drive from wild and beautiful Atlantic beaches, it offers a fresh take on the concept of rejuvenation. The focus is on biophysical and cellular health: exercise specialists create bespoke diets on the basis of body and health evaluations using machines tested by Nasa that measure muscle, fat and water content and give metabolic readings. Clients return for the weight-loss and anti-ageing programmes, cosmetic treatments and the incredible food. *Longevity Wellness Resort* (+351 282 240 110; www.longevitywellnessresort.com), from about £200 a suite a night, including breakfast, lunch and a daily voucher towards spa treatments.



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8 NAKED STABLES PRIVATE RESERVE *China*

Hidden in the Moganshan Hills, two hours from Shanghai, lies this magical retreat. A sustainable wellness resort and equestrian centre of 60 acres in its own private valley, it is surrounded by bamboo forest and tea plantations. Guests stay in glass and wood tree-houses or earth huts. The resort has a stable of 20 horses, three outdoor swimming pools, mountain biking and hiking paths, an organic farm and the Naked Leaf Spa and Wellness centre. The latter offers treatment rooms on stilted platforms overlooking the forest, along with hydrotherapy pools, a steam room and sauna, plus a menu of massages, scrubs and facials. Opt for the Chinese tui na massage: not for the faint of heart, but great for aching muscles. The spa uses its own products made from local herbs and plants.

Naked Stables Private Reserve (+86 21 6431 8901; www.nakedretreats.cn), from about £150 a room a night B&B.

LUXE FOR LESS

9 FIVELEMENTS *Bali*

Fivelements hugs the sacred Ayung River, enveloped by lush, green forest and paddy fields. Founded on Balinese spiritual traditions, which is all about balance and realigning chakras, the spa nurtures a sense of inner harmony through meditation, yoga, water therapies and deep massage with expert healers. In your sumptuous grass-roofed lodge, you will be lulled to sleep by the sounds of the forest. Suites open onto a riverbank verandah, where you can bathe in outdoor stone baths filled with the essences of lime, ginger and orange. The alfresco restaurant serves delectable vegan and raw food with flair. This is more a spiritual life-saver than a honeymooner spot; for yoga-loving couples and those who long to be early to bed and up with the birds, ready to start the day with a shot of wheatgrass.

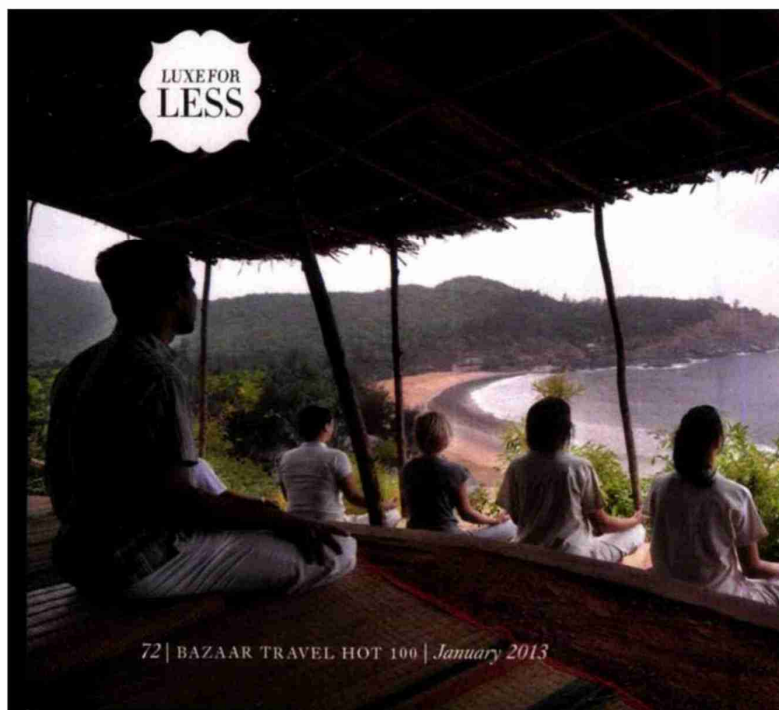
Seven nights at Fivelements, from £1,986 a person, including flights with Emirates, with [Ampersand Travel](http://www.ampersandtravel.com) (020 7289 6100; www.ampersandtravel.com).



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10 SWASWARA *India*

The drive alone, along the lively coastal road south from the international airport in Goa, past Portuguese colonial houses painted in brilliant emeralds, lilacs and pillarbox reds, lifts the spirits, making the world you leave behind seem dull and grey. This destination spa in the southern state of Karnataka doubles as a lovely tropical beach retreat. Doctors assess dietary needs and prescribe ayurvedic treatments, and naturalists take you hiking through the dense forest of acacia, cashew and date-palm, and around the five coves. Villas are open to the elements, with bedrooms air-conditioned and self-contained within glass walls. Pluck lemon balm, sweet basil and mint in your private garden to make tea. Yoga takes place in a stunning *shambhala* overlooking the forest canopy and the sea. Don't miss morning meditation on sunrise rock, when the epic Om Beach is still free of hippies and sadhus.

Five nights in a villa, from £1,699 a person full board, including yoga, ayurveda consultations and treatments, British Airways flights, domestic flights and transfers, with Greaves India (020 7487 9111; www.greavesindia.co.uk).