

FOOD

April 2010

and

£3.80 US\$6.95

TRAVEL

Gourmet
travelling in
Turkey
India

Active traveller
sailing, diving, surfing,
photography, cycling

Mamma mia
Greek delights

Peter Gordon's
Fusion food

Smart cookies
from around the world

Kids SPECIAL ISSUE

PLACES TO STAY, FAMILY ACTIVITIES, RECIPES...

CITY BREAKS GRANADA, LE MANS, LODZ
PARIS, BARCELONA, BERLIN, COPENHAGEN, ATHENS, LISBON, ROME...



escapes entertaining drinks weekends restaurants adventure



Newcomers

CHINA HANGZHOU

AMANFAYUN

Amanfayun is surrounded by tea plantations, botanical gardens and temples. The property, built during the Tang dynasty, once housed villagers who worked in the local fields. These ancient dwellings have now been brought back to life with artworks of calligraphy and simple modern appliances. The hotel also features a traditional teahouse, a luxurious spa and restaurant.

Details Double from £200
(00 86 571 8732 9999; amanresorts.com)

SPAIN ANDALUCIA

CASA OLEA

Stay in this traditional Andalucían *cortijo* (farmhouse) and unleash your adventurous side by hiking in the Cordoba mountains or work up an appetite by cycling through nearby villages. Head back to this cosy British-run abode for some home-made dishes such as *pescado frito* (fried fish).

Details Double from €79
(00 34 696 748 209; casaolea.com)

GREECE RHODES

KRESTEN ROYAL VILLAS & SPA

Sitting pretty on the Kalithea hillside, this property is Mediterranean luxury on a budget. With views of the Aegean sea, the Krestan offers superb in-house dining where you can feast on a selection of meze and Greek classics such as moussaka and gyros (roasted meats). Spend a day exploring the old town of Rhodes before unwinding in the nearby Kalithea Springs.

Details Double from €68
(00 30 2241 003 240; thekrestenroyal.gr)

UK SURREY

BROOKLANDS

This hotel takes inspiration from its location on the former motorcar race track built in Weybridge, Surrey in 1907. Rich fabrics and colours light up the rooms and public areas, and the food is also noteworthy. Having worked at Cecconi's and Locanda Locatelli, head chef Nick Bell rustles up modern British dishes with Italian influences.

Details Double from £150
(01932 335700; brooklandshotelsurrey.com)

Where to stay

Judy Bastyra checks in to Havana's only five-star boutique hotel, while Keya Modessa unveils the latest openings



FROM TOP LEFT: AMANRESORTS' LATEST OPENING, AMANFAYUN IN HANGZHOU; THE SARATOGA IN HAVANA, CUBA, WITH UNRIVALLED VIEWS FROM ITS ROOFTOP POOL; INSIDE BROOKLANDS IN SURREY; THE ROOMS AT CASA OLEA IN ANDALUCIA MAKE THE MOST OF THEIR MAGNIFICENT LOCATION



Hotel of the month

CUBA HAVANA

THE SARATOGA HOTEL

Light, airy and stylish, The Saratoga is a pleasant surprise in downtown Havana, which is famous for its crumbling edifices and faded elegance. Equally impressive is the hotel's location – just south of Parque Central and directly opposite the iconic, elegant El Capitolio, which, ironically, is modelled on the Capitol building in Washington DC. When The Saratoga was built in the 1930s it had just three floors and was a watering hole for the politicians at El Capitolio. Now, with two additional floors but retaining the original, elegant neo-classical facade, it attracts discerning travellers with its superior facilities. There are 96 bedrooms and seven spacious suites, as well as a well-equipped gym, a modest spa and wifi in the reception and bar. But one of its most unusual qualities is that it doubles as an art gallery: all of the paintings and artworks in the hotel are for sale. (I hankered after a painting in room 204.) On the roof there is a small but perfectly designed pool, bar and restaurant, where you can relax over a refreshing mojito while taking in one of the best aerial views of the whole of Havana. Chef Mario Berutti has developed an Italian menu featuring home-made pastas for the Anacaona restaurant on the ground floor, which has an impressive wine list. While the Mezzanine Bar has a selection of inventive Cuban 'tapas' such as fritters made from malanga, an indigenous vegetable, and plantain stuffed with 'ropa vieja' (Cuban braised beef). Around the corner is a lively slice of Cuban life – a local peso market selling clothes, religious statues and other paraphernalia, such as dried herbs that are used in the ceremonies of the Afro-Cuban Santería religion. While, every Sunday morning a group of Santería dancers gather near the hotel to display their moves.

Why go? For the only five-star boutique hotel experience there is in Havana.

Details Double from \$380. Paseo del Prado 603, esquina a Dragones, Havana (00 53 7 868 1000; hotel-saratoga.com). □