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BRITISH

GENTLEMEN'S QUARTERLY

LOVING THE ALIEN

ZOE Saldana

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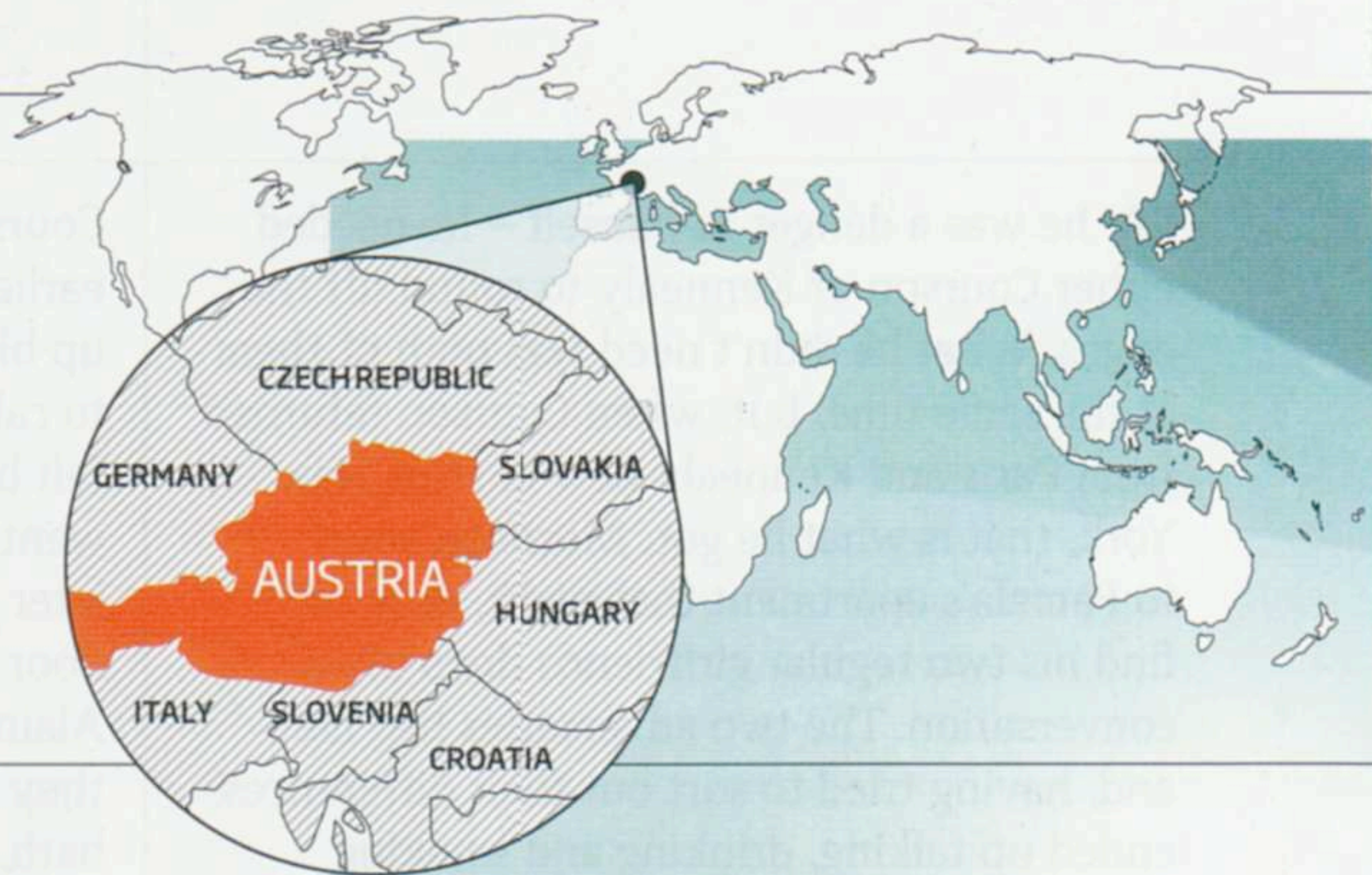


ZOE SALDANA PHOTOGRAPHED FOR
BRITISH GO BY MARK SELIGER

PLUS! FIT FOR THE BEACH: LOOK LIKE AN OLYMPIAN IN 30 MINUTES

TRAVEL

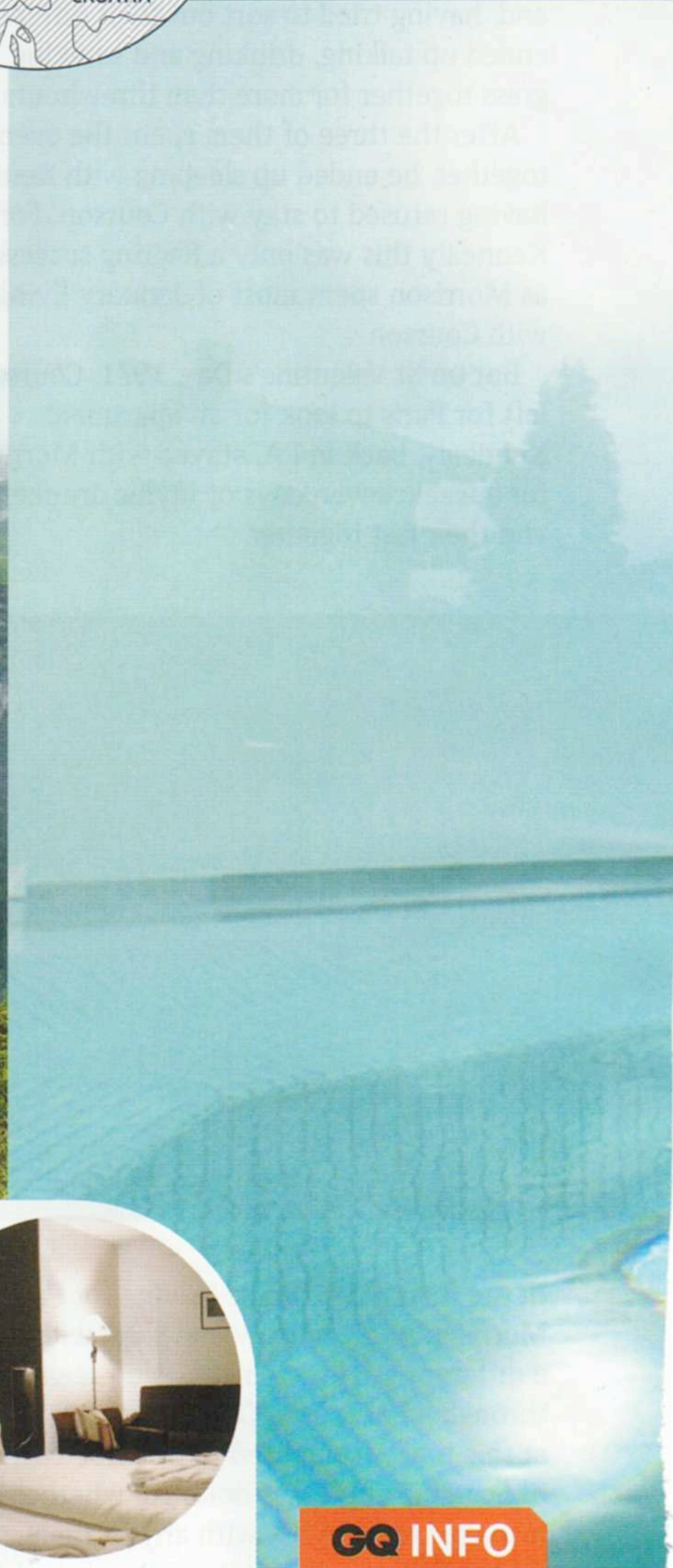
THE BEST PLACES ON EARTH AND HOW TO GET THERE IN STYLE



THE PICK OF THE PEAKS

There's nothing like breathing in crisp, mountain air – so why wait until the snow has settled to make the most of it? The spoils of the **Austrian Alps** are there to be enjoyed all year round, discovers Olympic gold medallist **Victoria Pendleton**

The lady's not for walking: Pendleton takes her foot off the pedal to admire the bike trail's view in Oberlech, Austria



▲ MOUNTAIN TRAIL

I would recommend everyone ride in actual mountains at least once in their life. So many mountain bikes exist only to experience tarmac and gravel, never getting close to the terrain they were designed for. Biking in Oberlech couldn't be easier – there are trails that start 50 metres from the hotel. The views are amazing – which helps when you're panting for breath uphill. And, of course, not many things compare to hurtling down a mountain descent.



GQ INFO

Base point: at 1,700 metres above sea level, Hotel Goldener Berg is the ideal starting place for Alpine exploration



◀ A ROOM WITH A VIEW

The tiny resort of Oberlech lies at an altitude of around 1,700 metres. Here, the four-star Hotel Goldener Berg features traditional chalet styling and the most beautiful, panoramic view I have ever seen: mountain ranges fill a horizon covered in lush meadows and scattered with pine. And, even in August, a couple of the higher peaks are still dusted with snow. Stunning. I stayed in a duplex chalet apartment in the new annex of the hotel. The décor was eclectic – a mix of traditional materials with a modern finish – but had a funky but homely feel.

GETTING THERE
Room rates at Hotel Goldener Berg in the summer start at £108 including breakfast, and from £194 for half board. Packages available include climbing days. Visit goldenerberg.at or call 0043 558 322 050 for more details. EasyJet flies to Innsbruck on Wednesdays and Saturdays in August. easyjet.com

Relaxation station: icy mountain views can be enjoyed from the warmth of the hotel's spa, a draw for speed-loving Olympians, says Victoria Pendleton (below)



On the up: a climbing day brings Pendleton face to rock face with the Austrian Alps



◀ SCALE THE HEIGHTS

If you're looking for something a little more adventurous, the hotel arranges half and full climbing days for all abilities with a local guide, Luiz. We climbed in pairs 200 metres up a rock face before abseiling back down. It took about an hour to reach the top of our route, and, as I waited for Luiz to prepare the abseil, I rested, relying on a karabiner attached to an almost sheer rock face. It may sound daunting, but while I was hanging there, 150 metres above the ground, it was utterly silent, apart from the sound of nature. It was idyllic.

▲ TAKE TIME OUT

The main wall of Hotel Goldener Berg's spa is floor-to-ceiling glass, offering breathtaking views of the mountains. Meanwhile, the mezzanine-level design creates a more intimate relaxation area and the incorporation of wood and stone finishes blend seamlessly with the external environment. When surrounded by this scenery, you could almost get complacent about its beauty – the complete silence and surrounding nature makes you feel relaxed and centred. It felt very indulgent to slow the pace of life right down and enjoy the moments of serenity. 