

Condé Nast Traveller

SPECIAL
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HOLIDAY PRIZES
& SAVINGS
INSIDE

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

FEBRUARY 2010 £3.80

The best beach villas in the world

From intimate hideaways to cheap-and-cheerful family houses

25 reasons
to go to
Beautiful
Bruges

South
India

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of Tamil Nadu

Tanzania

Discover its secret
spice island

Recharge on
a retreat in
Greece

SHORT BREAKS FOR
VALENTINE'S DAY

Romantic trips to suit all budgets





1 SPA RETREAT
JUMBY BAY, ANTIGUA

Accessed only by boat, the secluded, car-free private-island hideaway of Jumby Bay, two miles off the coast of Antigua, offers the quintessential Caribbean experience. Reopened just before Christmas after a major overhaul, Jumby Bay has re-emerged with totally revamped, contemporary-colonial-style rooms, 28 new suites, two new restaurants and Sense, A Rosewood Spa. The spa, set close to the beach, is open to the elements, with five treatment rooms that open onto private terraces. The signature treatments use ingredients taken straight from the garden; one of the highlights is a treatment that involves lying in a soft, handmade hammock while a therapist focuses on pressure points in your head, back, hands and feet to release tension. You can then amble over to your thatched *bohio* (hut) on the beach, or to one of the many hammocks strung up between the palm trees. The resort is good for creative little extras: to help you enjoy the astonishing night sky, staff will pack a Champagne picnic dinner and send you off to star-gaze on Pasture Beach; there are also cookery classes for men, led by head chef Pablo Loza, so while their partners indulge in spa treatments, they can learn how to make everything from ceviche to Caribbean lobster bisque.

HOW TO BOOK Elegant Resorts (01244 897517; www.elegantresorts.co.uk) offers seven nights from £7,660 per person for a couple sharing a Rondavel Room on an all-inclusive basis. Return flights from Gatwick with Virgin Atlantic and transfers by boat and car are also included

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN HUBA/ART-COMMERCE



10
VALENTINE'S
GETAWAYS

Want to go somewhere special this Valentine's Day? Francesca Syz selects the most irresistibly romantic destinations in the world, from a cliff-top retreat in Dorset to a tree house in the tropics



URBAN LUXURY

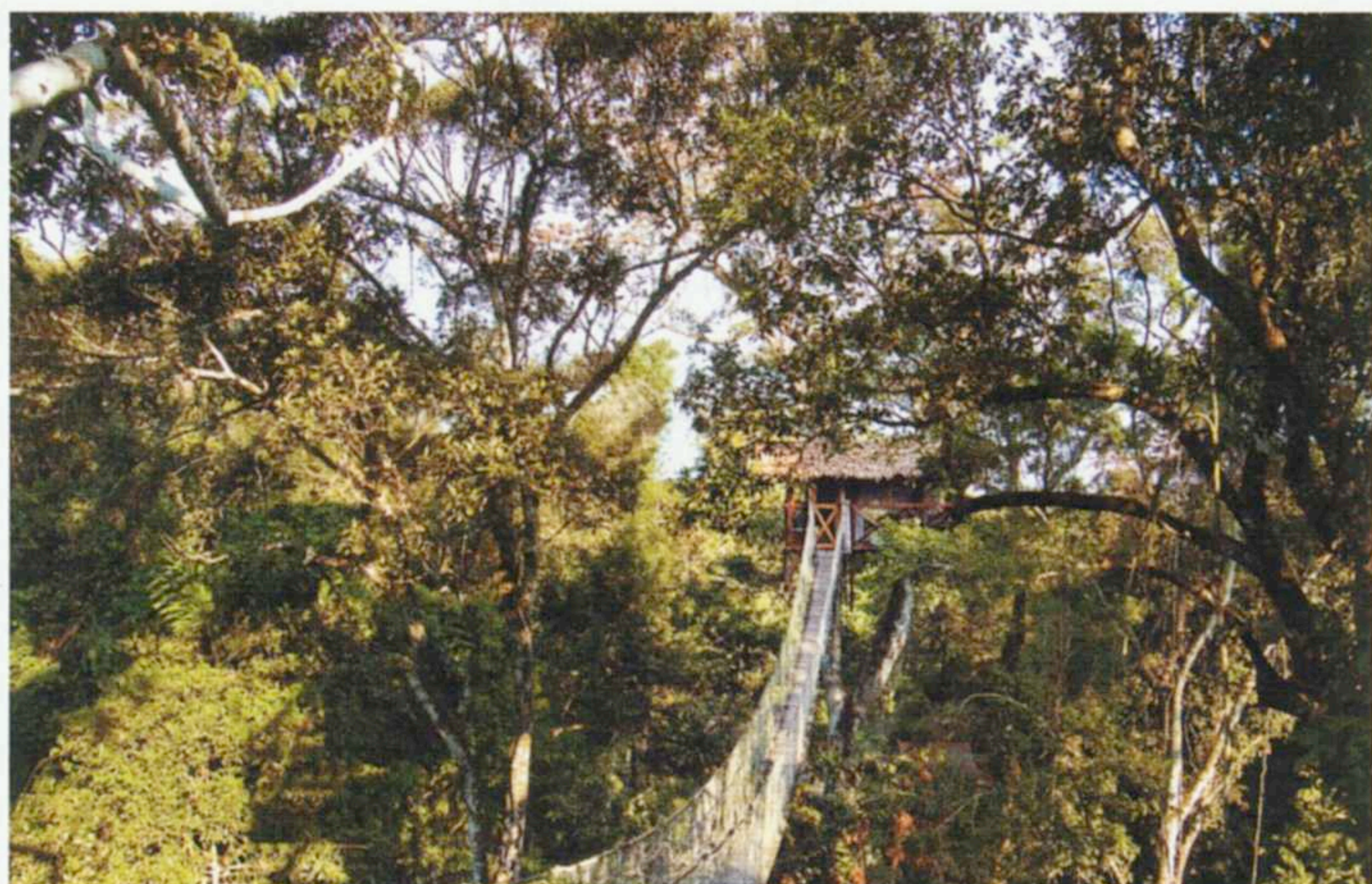
THE CONNAUGHT, LONDON

There are few London hotels more steeped in old-school romance than The Connaught, and it now has a new, utterly indulgent Terrace Penthouse. The 120-square-metre suite, designed in lavish style by Guy Oliver, has a marble fireplace, a library and a bar. Works by British contemporary artists including Simon Averill and Sax Impey hang on the walls. The pièce de résistance is a 70-square-metre

terrace landscaped by Chelsea Flower Show gold medallist Tom Stuart-Smith. The restaurants of Mayfair are on the doorstep, and Hélène Darroze's award-winning cuisine is served downstairs – or in your suite if you don't feel like moving. But you may wish to emerge to try the new five-treatment-room Aman Spa, or to visit the Connaught Bar. The signature cocktail here is the Martini; order one,

and a new, Art Deco-inspired Martini Trolley will come to your table so you can watch while a white-gloved mixologist creates the perfect cocktail. There are 10 Champagnes by the glass, plus small-plate bar food by Darroze (the skewers of squid, chorizo and sun-dried tomato are divine).

HOW TO BOOK 020 7499 7070; www.the-connaught.co.uk. Doubles from £436; Terrace Penthouse from £5,500



ISLAND CHIC

6 CAS GASI, IBIZA

As insiders will tell you, there's a lot more to Ibiza than meets the eye. Go off the beaten track even a fraction and you will discover a world of sleepy hill villages, wild forests, rambling orchards and crumbling farmhouses. Visit in February and a further surprise awaits: almond trees in full bloom, covering great swathes of the interior, with entire valleys exploding into glorious white and pink blossom. All this is complemented by an appealing combination of warm days and chilly nights.

Front-row seats for this extraordinary natural show are available at Cas Gasi, a 12-room property that spills down a hillside smothered in almond, fig and carob trees and which prides itself on being a hotel 'for people who don't like hotels'. Since opening in 1998, Cas Gasi has become popular with high-profile guests who love its secluded location and low-key luxury. Richard Gere and Kate Moss have both been guests, as have the King and Queen of Norway and Jade Jagger, who often stays in winter to avoid having to open up her own house on the island.

Run by a Spanish-German couple as a small, eco-friendly hotel, it has bedrooms in the main building and in converted barns and stables. Cas Gasi is adept at meeting guests' individual needs: if you want romantic meals for two in a secluded location, no problem; should you feel like dining around the big farmhouse table with your hosts, that's fine too. The hotel's central location means that nothing is very far away: getting to the beautiful village of Santa Gertrudis takes five minutes in a car or 40 minutes on foot, and the excellent beach at Salinas is a 15-minute drive away. There is also a small spa offering excellent treatments including the knockout 'Ibiza Relax Massage'. The estate produces all its own organic vegetables, fruit, olive oil and free-range eggs, and the meat and fish comes from local farmers and fishermen.

HOW TO BOOK 00 34 971 197700; www.casgasi.com. Doubles from €219

7 JUNGLE ADVENTURE

INKATERRA RESERVA AMAZONICA, PERU

For those who crave an Amazon adventure with creature comforts, Inkaterra Reserva Amazonica combines exhilarating experiences (wilderness hikes, canoe trips) with great service and accommodation. Book a few nights in a thatched Tambopata Suite, with a spacious bedroom, siesta lounge, private plunge pool and outdoor shower. The adventurous can then tag on a night in the Canopy Tree House, 27 metres above the forest floor. Watch the sun go down with a Pisco Sour cocktail and dine beneath the stars before taking a stroll along the Canopy Walkway. Should you feel like descending during the night, you can retreat to a room at ground level, furnished with beds, deckchairs, hammocks and a shower. Your Canopy Butler is on hand or contactable by walkie-talkie at all times.

HOW TO BOOK Journey Latin America (020 8747 8315; www.journeylatinamerica.co.uk) offers a 10-night trip from £7,666 per couple, with three nights at Inkaterra Reserva Amazonica, including a night in the Canopy Tree House ➤