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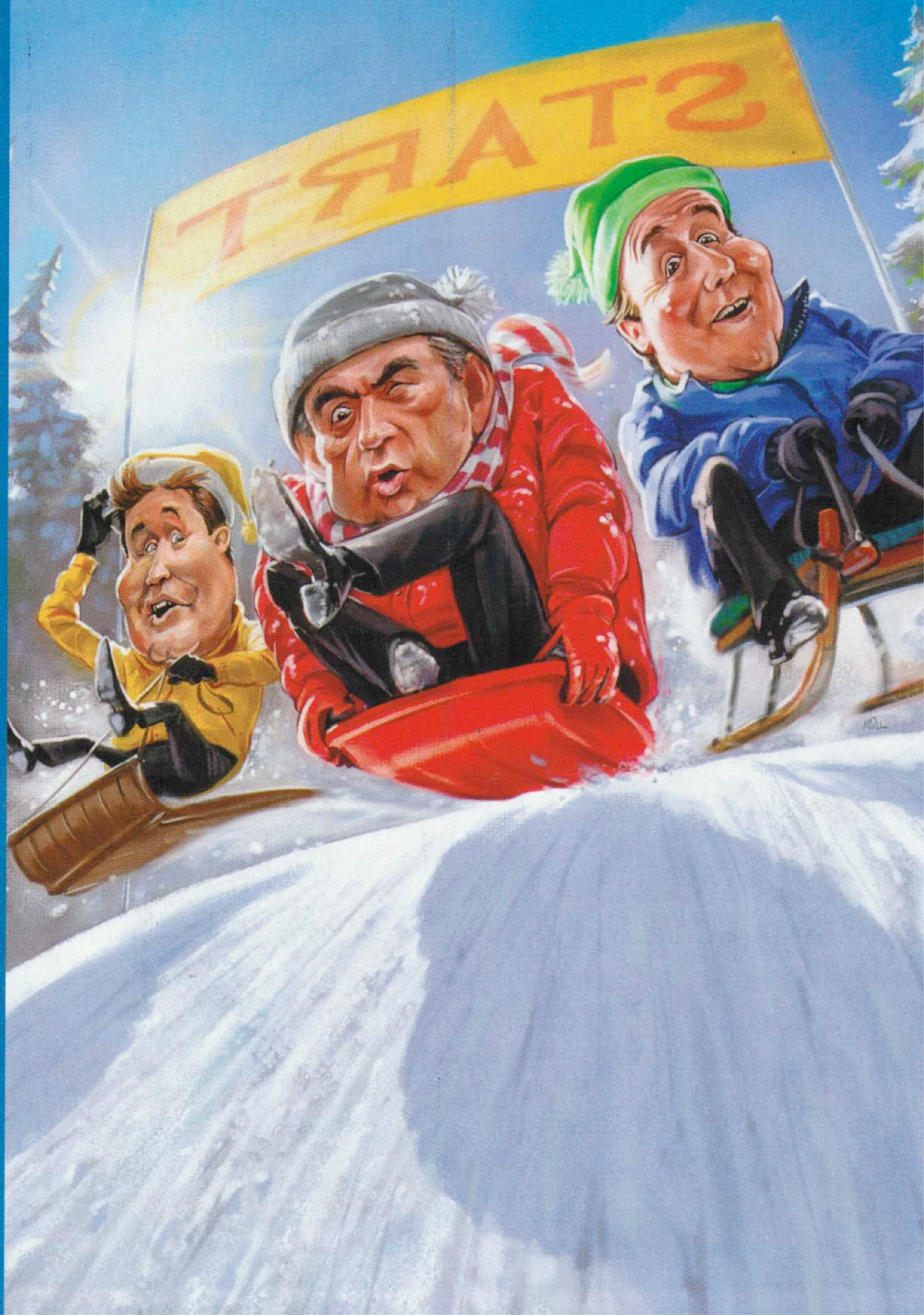
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Six of the world's best hotels

A selection of the most exciting places to stay in 2010

A weekend on the Med

Murtoli, Corsica

Nestling beside a beach on a huge country estate, Murtoli “hits every high note”, says Tatler Travel Guide. It’s not “trendy” (“God forbid!”), but “just the right raggedy side of exquisite”. Guests stay in 12 “beautifully converted farmhouses”, each of which sleeps between two and a dozen people and has its own stone-edged swimming pool. The restaurant is “so good (a prettier version of Club 55) you’ll order fish you don’t even like. Twice.” And the beach, with its white sand and crashing waves, is completely empty. The result is a place that combines all the virtues of “a hotel, a private villa, a b&b and a restaurant with rooms”, at once a perfect romantic escape and “the most fabulous 40th birthday party venue ever”. *Contact: 0033 4 95 71 69 24; www.murtoli.com. Double rooms from £180pn.*



A rural break in the UK

Babington House, Somerset

Babington’s “new-wave country-house hotel look” has inspired countless imitators across the UK – but, 12 years since it opened, Soho House’s rural outpost feels as fresh as ever, says Tatler Travel Guide. The bedrooms, revived by a recent makeover, are “exactly the sort you pray for on a Friday night” (try Playroom, with its “epic” bed); the menu “nails what it is you really want to eat”; and there’s even a polished new spa (Tatler’s International Spa of the Year 2009). Children are welcome and will love the place: the rambling grounds “are like something out of a BBC costume drama”, and the Peter Rabbit walled garden and Little House play zone are great. “Fun, sexy, glamorous, comfortable and stylish, right down to the last pepper pot”, Babington “just has the knack”. *Contact: 01373-812266; www.babingtonhouse.co.uk. Double rooms from £195pn.*



A luxurious safari lodge

Molori Safari Lodge, South Africa

With bedrooms like “private universes” and “brilliant” staff, Molori has set a new standard of luxury among African safari lodges, says Francesca Syz in Harper’s Bazaar. Located in the 75,000-hectare Madikwe Game Reserve, it has five “huge” suites sleeping up to 12 people, a bar and its own award-winning chef, Willie Malherbe, previously in charge of one of Cape Town’s best restaurants. There’s also a grand piano, a spa, a library, and a planetarium (“the perfect place for pre-dinner martinis”), while each suite has its own infinity pool overlooking the savannah. But best of all are the people who work here, “masters of theatre” who “create one incredible memory after another” for their guests. *Contact: 00 27 14778 8000; www.molorilodge.com. Three nights from £3,352pp, inc. flights with BA, with Cazenove+Lloyd (020-7384 2332; www.cazenoveandlloyd.com).*



A new base for visitors to Delhi

Aman New Delhi, India

The Aman chain’s first city hotel is “a relaxing new base for visitors to Delhi”, says Condé Nast Traveller. Its location – in Lutyens’ Delhi – is unbeatable; the design is “slick and modern”; and there’s a “wonderful” spa with eight treatment rooms and two hammam steam baths, together with excellent sports facilities including three tennis courts, three squash courts, a lap pool, a Pilates studio and a gym. The 67 rooms and suites are all spacious and “handsome”, with stone floors, wood-panelled walls and “sleek, pared-down” bathrooms; those on the top floor have black-tiled plunge pools out on their balconies. The main restaurant serves Indian, Thai and French/Japanese cuisine and the sommelier is “excellent”. *Contact: 00 91 11 4363 3333; www.amanresorts.com. Double rooms from £400pn.*



Fine English food in Hardy country

Summer Lodge, Dorset

Summer Lodge is set in the elemental Dorset landscape of Thomas Hardy’s novels – to which its cosy, luxurious interior could scarcely provide a sharper contrast, says Fiona Duncan in The Sunday Telegraph. The décor in its public spaces is really too fussy – all patterned carpets, fabric-draped ceilings, dog paintings and so on; but the bedrooms are genuinely pretty and very comfortable. The hotel also boasts an indoor pool and spa, but its *pièce de résistance* is unquestionably its superb restaurant. Chef Steven Titman is well-known for the “fine-tuned classic English cuisine” he creates using local produce, says Condé Nast Traveller: Dorset lamb, pan-seared sole, pot-roasted guinea fowl and his signature dish: shepherd’s pie. The wine list, by sommelier Eric Zwiebel, is also excellent. *Contact: 01935-482000; www.summerlodgehotel.co.uk. Double rooms from £205pn.*



A mansion by Lake Garda

Villa Feltrinelli, Italy

The Villa Feltrinelli “oozes stately charm”, says Harper’s Bazaar. Built as a summer retreat for the Feltrinelli family in 1892, it is a “magnificent” Italian Art Nouveau mansion nestling beneath a mountain on the shores of Lake Garda. Mussolini spent the last days of his rule among its frescoes, marble staircases and stained-glass windows, all of which were retained when, in 2001, it was “lovingly” converted into a small hotel (there are 21 bedrooms). It’s a great place for “weary souls” to “recharge”, with a pool, a 1920s motor launch for gentle cruises on the lake, a library and – best of all – a Michelin-starred restaurant. Chef Stefano Baiocco serves superb northern Italian cuisine in “luxurious” surroundings. *Contact: 00 39 03 6579 8000; www.villafeltrinelli.com. From about £830 a room per night, b&b.*

