



Andrew Harper's Hideaway Report®

A connoisseur's worldwide guide
to peaceful and unspoiled places

Our 26th Year

January 2005
Volume XXVI, Number 8

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Dear Subscriber:

Hideaways of the Year

Each year at this time, we single out some of the world's most captivating hideaway hotels and resorts for special recognition. To be initially considered for our annual awards competition, the properties must be relatively intimate in size and be located in peaceful and scenically pleasing surroundings. Moreover, previous recipients are ineligible to repeat as award winners for a three-year period. Distinctive country house hotels and resorts compatible with these basic qualifications are then judged for their all-round comfort, non-commercial character and passionate commitment to personal service. Also taken into consideration: the recent firsthand guest experiences of *Hideaway Report* readers.

Properties are not evaluated solely by means of a quantified checklist. During incognito inspections, of course, we note the general decor, design, cleanliness and upkeep of lodgings and public lounges; staffs are judged on esprit de corps, attentiveness, friendliness, thoroughness and efficiency; food on ingredients, inspiration and presentation; grounds on overall appearance and maintenance, and so on.

Ultimately, however, we rely on the 'Q factor' — the intangible summary impression that instinctively separates the good from the truly enchanting. Some of our award winners are grander than others, but each exudes an inviting sense of warmth and charm conducive to a relaxing stay.

On behalf of all of us at Harper Associates, we wish you and your family a very joyous Christmas season and the promise of a whole new year of wonderful hideaway discoveries.

Richard Harper
Associate Publisher

Andrew Harper
Editor & Publisher



UNITED STATES

Blantyre Lenox, Massachusetts

Tucked into the Berkshire Hills, this aristocratic and impeccably maintained Tudor-style mansion-estate sits amid 100 park-like acres punctuated by a heated pool, tennis courts and tournament-rated croquet lawns. Rich paneling, heirloom furnishings and interesting objets d'art embellish the splendidly appointed baronial living areas, formal dining room and breakfast conservatory. Some of the 25 choice guest quarters reside in the main house up a grand staircase, others in a restored carriage house and



private cottages dotting the specimen woodlands. Deluxe Double/Single, from \$500, continental breakfast included. Tel. (413) 637- 3556 or Fax (413) 637-4282. Email: welcome@blantyre.com

Home Hill Inn Plainfield, New Hampshire

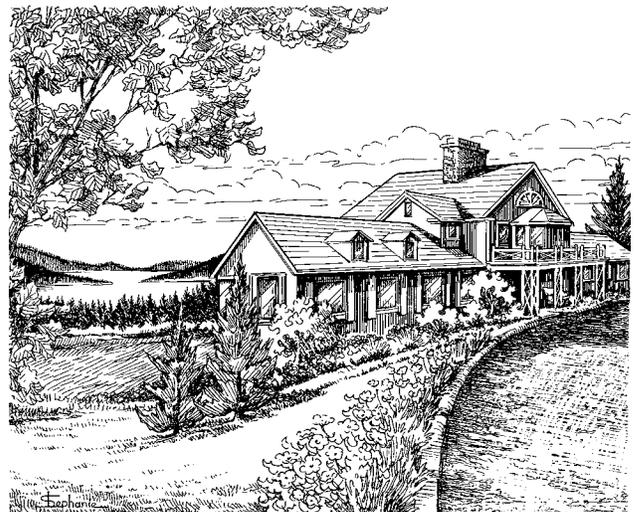
Refined French cuisine and an idyllic setting are the key pleasures afforded by Home Hill, a Provençal-inspired inn located in the Connecticut River Valley, not far from Dartmouth College. Crackling log fires warm the cheery interior, which is decorated with an appealing mix of French country fabrics and early American antiques. The historic Federal manor and a carriage house contain 12 lodgings, the character-filled "Maxfield Parrish Suite," "Churchill" and "Saint-Gaudens" all featuring fireplaces, Oriental rugs and distinctive period appointments. Outdoor lap pool, tennis, small fitness room. Deluxe Double/Single, \$295, continental breakfast included; Suite, \$425. Closed Monday and Tuesday. No smoking in guest rooms. Tel. (603) 675-6165 or Fax (603) 675-5220. Email: homehillinn@relaischateaux.com

Casa Palmero Pebble Beach, California

A sublime private haven for golfing enthusiasts, this evocative Mediterranean-style lodging cloister snuggles amid lush grounds along the first fairway of the famed Pebble Beach Golf Links. Two dozen stylish accommodations are highlighted by deluxe units opening onto walled patios with whirlpool spas, the common areas of the picturesque main house encompassing a handsome living room, library, bar-lounge and heated courtyard pool. Breakfast only, but guests have access to all Pebble Beach dining facilities and recreational amenities, including the adjacent health/fitness spa. Estate Studio Double/Single, \$725; Spa Room, \$765. Courtyard Suite, \$1,025. Tel. (800) 654-9300 or (831) 622-6650.

The Lodge at Moosehead Lake Greenville, Maine

This tranquil North Woods wilderness hideaway commands fabulous panoramas of Moosehead Lake, in pristine forested surroundings rife with moose and other wildlife. The 8-room lodge comes adorned with all the trappings of Maine outdoor life, from antlers and paddles to nets and fly rods. "Katahdin Suite" boasts a king sleigh bed, fireplaced living area, spa tub for two, separate shower and scenic patio. Summer fishing and hiking guides are available and kayaking/canoeing can also be arranged; winter sports include downhill/X-C skiing, snowmobiling and dogsledding. Breakfast only, but nearby Greenville offers several



good restaurants. No smoking. Carriage House Suite, \$350-\$475. Tel. (207) 695-4400 or Fax (207) 695-2281. Email: innkeeper@lodgeatmooseheadlake.com

UNITED STATES



The Inn of the Five Graces Santa Fe, New Mexico

Asia meets the American Southwest at this exotic and luxurious bed-and-breakfast incorporating several adobe dwellings along a quiet downtown side street,



a 5-minute walk from Santa Fe's historic main plaza. Most of the 22 lavishly decorated and supremely comfortable suites feature feather beds, woodburning fireplaces, well-equipped baths, separate living rooms, kitchenettes and an abundance of fascinating Asiatic artifacts. A kindly staff provides excellent historical walking tours. Deluxe Suite, from \$380, breakfast included; Premium Suite, from \$395. Smoking in courtyard only. Tel. (505) 992-0957 or Fax (505) 955-0549. Email: info@fivegraces.com

Blackberry Farm Near Walland, Tennessee

There is much to be said for admiring the mist-shrouded Smokies from the rocking chairs lining the sweeping stone verandah of this sophisticated 2,500-acre estate sanctuary bordering Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Done up in a distinctive English country house motif, the 46 guest quarters include 16 cottage suites augmented by fireplaces, stocked pantries, whirlpool tubs and restful porches. Inviting living room-lounges and an award-winning restaurant occupy the rambling main house. Sporting enticements range from an outdoor pool, Aveda spa and fitness center to tennis courts, a riding stable, trout fishing streams and hiking trails. King Estate Double/Single, \$745-\$895, all meals included. Cottage Suite, \$945-\$1,045. Tel. (865) 380-2260 or Fax (865) 681-7753. Email: info@blackberryfarm.com

The Ballastone Inn Savannah, Georgia

An impressive antebellum mansion cossets this romantic and hospitable B&B set right in the heart of Savannah's beautifully preserved historic district. Gleaming wood floors and designer wallcoverings grace the public areas that take in an exceptionally charming bar-lounge and Queen Anne/Victorian parlor looking out on a leafy garden courtyard. The 16 stylish, amenity-filled accommodations are enhanced by striking decorative themes, most featuring king beds, fireplaces, generous sitting areas and well-appointed baths. Superior Double/Single, \$315-\$355, breakfast and late afternoon hors d'oeuvres included. Suite, \$395. Smoking in courtyard only. Tel. (912) 236-1484 or Fax (912) 236-4626. Email: inn@ballastone.com

Twin Farms Barnard, Vermont

For pure casual luxury nothing quite compares to Twin Farms, secluded amid 300 pastoral acres in an unspoiled valley near Woodstock. A wealth of American folk art and custom furniture enlivens the



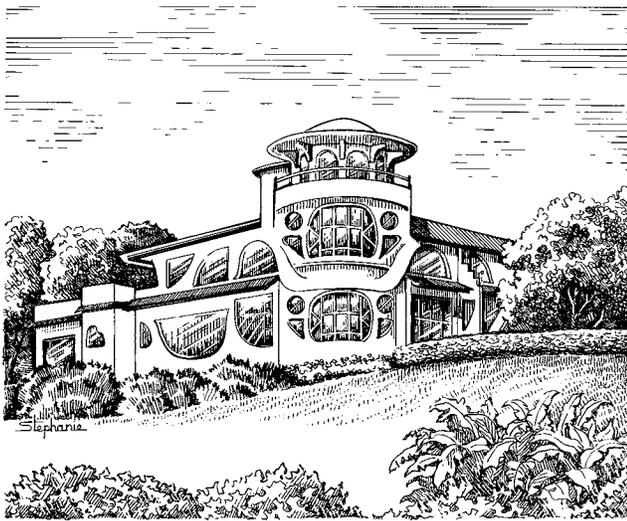
engaging lounges, dining hall, creekside pub and raftered library-den hewn from an old barn. Most of the 15 imaginative and sumptuous lodgings are forest cottages with rock fireplaces and screened porches. Expect a superb spa and fitness center, tennis and lake swimming/fishing/canoeing; ice skating and downhill/X-C skiing during the winter. Cottage, \$1,500, all meals and drinks included. Smoking on porches only. Tel. (802) 234-9999 or Fax (802) 234-9990.



LATIN AMERICA

Finca Rosa Blanca Costa Rica

Nestled in a blissful setting just 15 minutes from San José International Airport, this engaging hideaway crowns a sweeping high-country knoll overlooking a picturesque mountain-backed landscape of rolling green fields, orchards and coffee plantations. A fancifully designed whitewashed hacienda houses seven guest quarters and a striking atrium/dining area trimmed by vivid jungle murals, pre-Columbian



artifacts and lovely weavings. Adding to the joy of a stay are an infinity pool and guided visits to nearby national parks and biological reserves. Deluxe Double/Single, \$220; Suite, \$270. Tel. (50-6) 269-9392 or Fax (50-6) 269-9555. Email: info@fincaRosablanca.com

Hotel Punta Islita Costa Rica

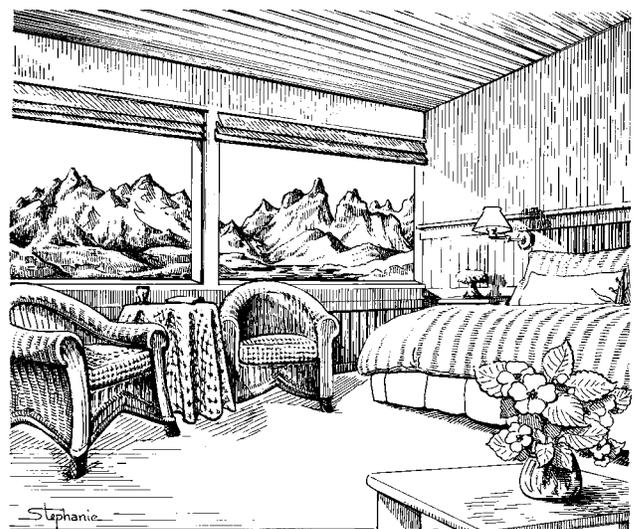
Multi-hued parrots and chattering monkeys reside in the forests surrounding this delightful seaside resort, which terraces down a dramatically scenic amphitheatre along the Nicoya Peninsula (45 minutes by air from San José). Forty Colonial-motif lodgings dot the crest of a sweeping hillside, the preferred casitas sporting hammock-strung verandahs and garden plunge pools. Enjoy open-air dining in a towering thatched pavilion, cupped on one side by a split-level infinity pool looking down on the palm-studded beach skirted by its own freshwater pool. Other enticements include a serene spa, tennis, horseback riding and guided nature walks. Casita for one or two, \$385. Tel. (50-6) 290-4259 or Fax (50-6) 232-2183. Email: info@hotelpuntaislita.com

La Casa Que Canta Zihuatanejo, Mexico

This exclusive and charmingly designed resort haven caps a breathtaking cliff above Zihuatanejo Bay, its panorama enhanced by a palapa-roofed open-air restaurant, stunning freshwater infinity pool and free-form saltwater pool embraced by rocks near the base of the promontory. Two dozen suites occupy visually appealing adobe-like dwellings, each with earthen tile floors, a sea-view lounging verandah and separate living area enlivened by Mexican folk art and authentic handpainted furnishings. A spa and fitness center complete the pretty picture. Grand Suite for one or two, \$475; Master Suite with private pool, \$680-\$725. Tel. (52) 755-555-7000 or Fax (52) 755-554-7900. Email: lacasaquecanta@prodigy.net.mx

explora Patagonia Chile

Overlooking Lake Pehoé and the haunting natural splendors of Torres del Paine National Park, this wilderness outpost hides in the magical Patagonia region of southern Chile. More than 150 unique bird and animal species inhabit the wondrously unspoiled landscape of rugged granite peaks and incredibly hued lagoons afloat with giant icebergs. A comfy contemporary lodge houses 30 guest quarters with lavish slate/marble baths, fitness/massage facilities and a restaurant looking out to the Salto Chico waterfall. Mountain View Double, \$4,120 (4 nights),



all meals and exhilarating daily guided hikes included; Single on request. Tel. (56) 2-206-6060 or Fax (56) 2-228-4655. Email: reservexplora@explora.com

EUROPE



Whatley Manor Near Bath, England

Exuding an enormously pleasing sense of low-key luxury and international panache, this newly reborn boutique manor house lies in the seductive Wiltshire



ruralside at the gateway to the southern Cotswolds (20 miles north of the great Georgian city of Bath). Warmly attentive service, two dozen exquisitely appointed accommodations, a uniquely sophisticated five-star spa, exceptional gourmet dining venues and 26 acres of sensational formal gardens all combine to create a sensual haven for connoisseurs of the good life. Deluxe Double/Single, \$835, full English breakfast, taxes and service charges included. Suite on request. Tel. (44) 1666-822888 or Fax (44) 1666-826120. Email: reservations@whatleymanor.com

Ynyshir Hall Near Aberystwyth, Wales

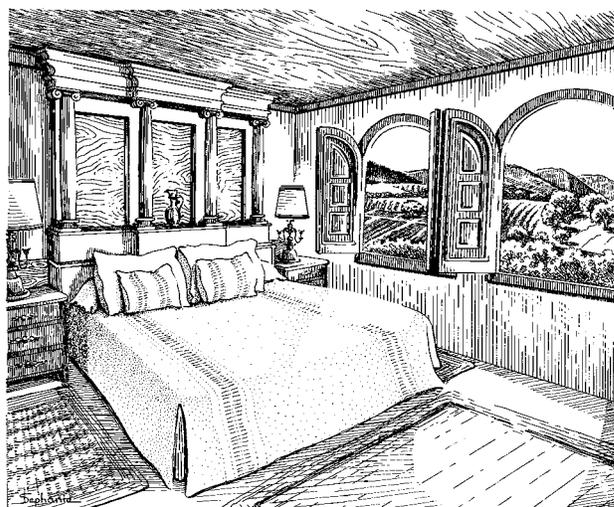
Once a secret vacation refuge for Queen Victoria, this gracious manor captures the peaceful essence of central Wales on the Dovey estuary, adjacent to a vast waterfowl reserve. Giant century-old rhododendrons and azaleas embrace the smartly appointed, art-filled house enhanced by a relaxing deep-seated parlor, convivial bar-lounge warmed by log fires, elegant candlelit dining room and nine distinctive lodgings named after famous painters. This is an ideal spot for touring the comely Artists Valley, as well as the northern moorlands and picturesque beach and coastal paths to the south. Deluxe Double/Single, \$465, full breakfast and taxes included. Suite, \$510-\$610. No smoking. Tel. (44) 1654-781209 or Fax (44) 1654-781366. Email: info@ynyshir-hall.co.uk

Hotel Santa Catarina Amalfi, Italy

Ensnconced on a lush and scenic headland along the enchanting Amalfi Coast, this charming property affords magnificent panoramas of the sea and an animated yacht harbor from its blossomy terraces and superb indoor/outdoor restaurant. Sixty balcony accommodations occupy the main building and several marvelous oceanview villa annexes cupped by a cliffside lemon grove. Perched on a rocky ledge far below, the hotel's saltwater pool is reached via an ingenious glass-lined elevator. Deluxe Double/Single, \$440-\$800, depending on time of year, buffet breakfast and taxes included. Junior Suite, \$525-\$965; Full Suite on request. Tel. (39) 089-871012 or Fax (39) 089-871351. Email: info@hotelsantacaterina.it

Hotel La Bobadilla Near Loja, Spain

This luxurious and creatively conceived resort is cloistered in the verdant foothills of Andalusia, midway between Málaga and Granada. Resembling a diminutive Moorish village, La Bobadilla comes



replete with a maze of vaulted passageways, marble colonnades and flowering courtyards with splashing fountains. Most of the 60 artfully appointed guest residences feature rich timbered ceilings, regional artifacts and spacious living areas. A festive bar and two fine restaurants also grace the compound, plus a large palm-skirted pool, tennis courts, a riding stable and sizable health club with an indoor pool. Deluxe Double/Single with salon, \$495, buffet breakfast included. Suite, \$690. Tel. (34) 958-321861 or Fax (34) 958-321810. Email: info@la-bobadilla.com



AFRICA



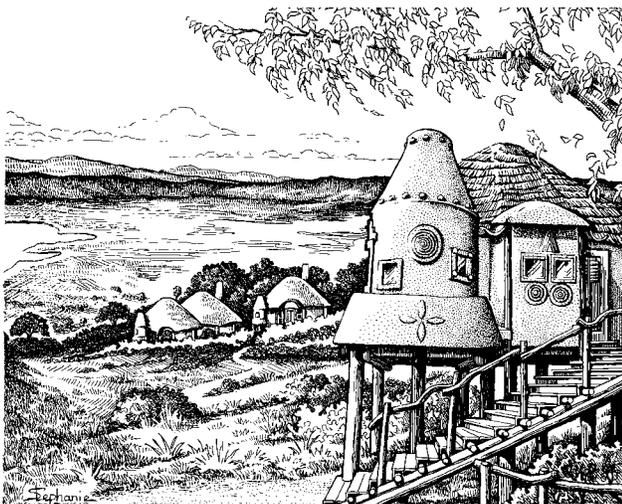
ASIA

Birkenhead House Hermanus, South Africa

Commanding a sweeping scenic point overlooking the Indian Ocean and two beguiling beaches, this cosmopolitan country house hotel lies 90 minutes SE of Cape Town in a resort famed for its August-October whale sightings. Well-chosen antiques and decorative artifacts accent inviting glass-walled living/dining areas and 11 lodgings, Room #1 affording especially notable ocean vistas. Amenities include a small seaside infinity pool, two-tiered courtyard pool, a fitness gym, in-room massages and glorious nearby cliff walks. Deluxe Seaview Double, \$990, all meals and house wines/beverages included; Single on request. Tel. (27) 28-314-8000 or Fax (27) 28-314-1208. Email: info@birkenheadhouse.com

Ngorongoro Crater Lodge Ngorongoro Crater, Tanzania

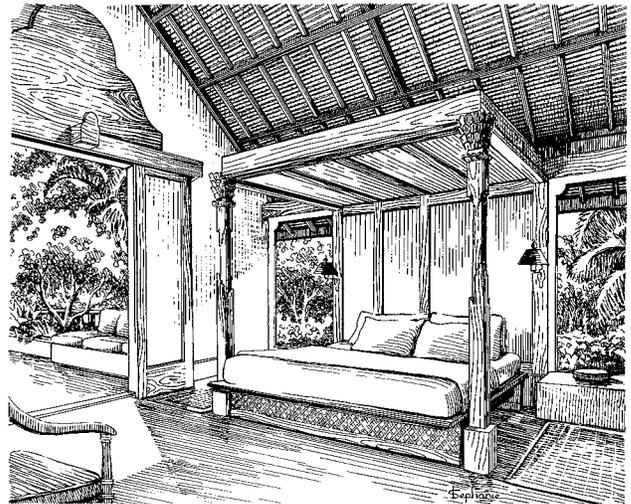
One of the great natural wonders of the world, the mystical Ngorongoro Crater can be enjoyed in grand style at this imaginatively designed safari “village” perched on the panoramic 7,000-foot rim of the crater. Inspired by Maasai tribal structures, the enclave shelters 30 thatched-roof bungalows in three intimate camps, each suite offset by a handcarved king bed, Persian carpets, cozy fireplaced alcove and huge bath with a deep soaking tub and open shower. No less extravagant are the vaulted, graciously staffed public lounges and dining room enriched by African objets d’art. Double, \$1,190, all meals, drinks, game drives



included, Feb 1-Mar 31 and Jun 1-Aug 31; Single and off-season rates on request. Tel. (27) 11-809-4300 or Fax (27) 11-809-4400. Email: usa@cacafrica.com

Amankila Bali, Indonesia

Descending a tropical hillside to an oceanfront bluff, this exotic luxury sanctuary resides in a less-visited corner of Bali. Its temple-like lobby tiers down to a fabulous 135-foot tri-level infinity pool melding into the vast seascape, the terrain below revealing a palm-studded beach fringed by yet another gorgeous pool. Lounging gazebos, an open-air bar and dining



pavilion also anchor the cliff, the central building connecting up with 36 exceptional villa suites via a network of stairs and elevated walkways. Fascinating guided excursions are provided to area market towns, craft villages and cultural sites. Ocean Suite, \$800; Pool Suite, \$1,000. Tel. (62) 363-41333 or Fax (62) 363-41555. Email: amankila@amanresorts.com

Four Seasons Sayan Bali, Indonesia

This visually dramatic highland refuge deftly blends into an alluring hillside of terraced rice paddies and lush woodlands sloping down to the banks of the Ayung River, near the intriguing artists’ village of Ubud. Access to the enclave is by way of a treetop-level footbridge that spans a ravine to a huge rooftop lotus pond concealing the main building. Steps lead down to a spellbinding open-air lobby, the principal dining venue and a splendid fitness center/spa overlooking the picturesque valley. Prized lodgings are the “Riverfront Villas” with private plunge pools. Other pleasures include a split-level riverside pool, guided nature walks and visits to local artisan studios. Sayan Suite for one or two, \$450. Riverfront Villa, \$675. Tel. (62) 361-977577 or Fax (62) 361-977588.

AUSTRALIA



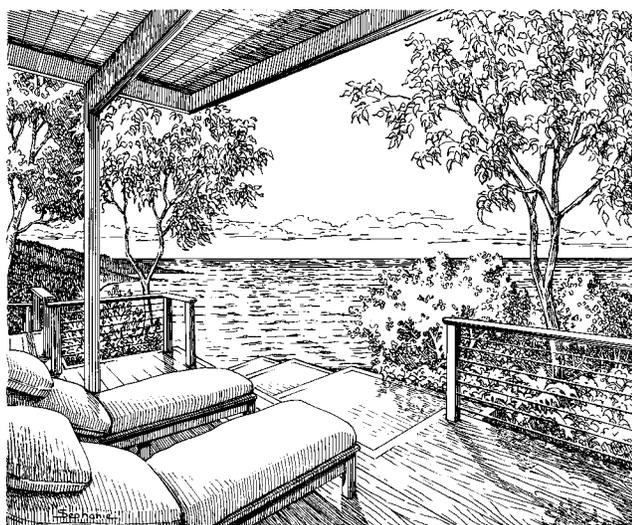
NEW ZEALAND

Longitude 131° Ayers Rock

Secluded in Australia's mystical Red Centre, this premier desert oasis straddles an isolated dune yielding unobstructed views of wondrous Ayers Rock. Historic artifacts and photos of early pioneers trim 15 handsomely appointed tented lodgings, each air-conditioned unit featuring wood floors, an IDD phone and shower-bath outfitted with robes and hairdryers. A library, bar and dining room occupy a central tent fronting an outdoor pool. Memorable guided eco-tours include sunrise/sunset excursions to the luminescent Rock and nearby *Kata Tjuta*, another astounding geologic formation concealing remarkable chasms and gorges. Two-Night Package, \$2,500 for two, all meals, wines/beverages and guided tours included; Single, \$1,740. Tel. (61) 2-8296-8010 or Fax (61) 2-9299-2103. Email: travel@voyages.com.au

Lizard Island Great Barrier Reef

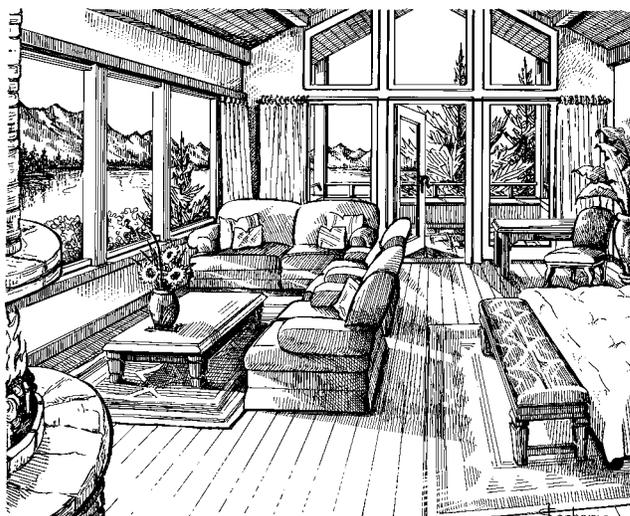
Set on a remote 2,500-acre island skirted by two dozen sandy coves, this recently restyled tropical idyll fronts a crystalline, coral-fringed snorkeling lagoon and expansive white beach. In addition to a scenic bar-lounge and dining pavilion, the resort offers 40 luxury lodgings highlighted by 16 suites with



separate living/dining rooms, plus 9 villas nestled on a panoramic seaside cliff. Amenities include a spa/fitness center, pool, tennis, nature trails, sailing, deepsea fishing and spectacular snorkeling and scuba diving. Double, \$1,140, all meals included; Single, \$760. Suite or Villa, \$1,385. Tel. (61) 2-8296-8010 or Fax (61) 2-9299-2103. Email: travel@voyages.com.au

Blanket Bay Queenstown Area, South Island

This stunning backcountry retreat sits along the serene northern shores of Lake Wakatipu amid a majestic backdrop of towering alpine peaks, 45



minutes outside Queenstown. Lofty beamed ceilings, massive rock fireplaces and vast picture windows frame the heroic stone and timber lodge with its Great Room, paneled bar-lounge, game room/pub, fitness center/spa and several indoor/outdoor dining venues. Twelve guest quarters offer every conceivable amenity. Among the sporting diversions: an outdoor lap pool, bush walks, guided fly-fishing, jet boating and horse-back riding. Lodge Double, \$910, breakfast, cocktail hour, dinner included; Single, \$765. Suite, \$1,400. No indoor smoking. Tel. (64) 3-442-9442 or Fax (64) 3-442-9441. Email: information@blanketbay.com

Eichardt's Private Hotel Queenstown, South Island

Crafted from an evocatively restored historic residence, this luxuriously intimate gem sits along the lakefront near Queenstown's lively shopping district. The graciously staffed property cossets only five lodgings, each a stylish suite with a fireplaced living room and entertainment center, plus a lavish bath. An inviting lounge and popular bar serve as the site for breakfasts and lunches, with dinners enjoyed at many restaurants a short stroll away. Concierge services range from in-suite massages to cruises. Mountain View Suite for two, \$970, full breakfast and cocktail hour included; Single on request. Lake View Suite, \$1,125. Tel. (64) 3-441-0450 or Fax (64) 3-441-0440. Email: enquiries@eichardtshotel.co.nz

- **Distinguished Staff & Service Award** — Four Seasons George V in Paris, overseen by an obliging and hospitable house-proud staff, who make you instantly feel at home. In U.S., Tel. (800) 332-3442.
- **Best New Resort Hotel** — The Sanctuary at Kiawah Island, a splendidly appointed and graciously staffed Southern jewel near historic Charleston. A truly spectacular beach, five championship golf courses, a sophisticated spa and more. Tel. (843) 768-6000.
- **Best New City Hotel** — Four Seasons Gresham Palace Budapest, a gorgeously restored art nouveau landmark affording grand city views from the banks of the Danube River. In U.S., Tel. (800) 332-3442.
- **Best New Small Hotel** — Mollies (Auckland, New Zealand), a stylish 15-suite Victorian manor set amid lovely gardens above St. Mary's Bay, five minutes from city center. Email: reservations@mollies.co.nz
- **Best Contemporary Boutique Hotels** — Canada's Hôtel Le St-James set in the charming old section of Montréal (Tel. 514-841-1232), and Spain's Gran Hotel Domine situated across the street from the wondrous Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao (Tel. 34-94-425-3300).
- **Gourmet Sanctuary of the Year** — Based on our annual reader survey, your overwhelming choice was Boyer "Les Crayeres," a sumptuous French epicurean shrine tucked into a Pommery château on the fringe of Reims. Email: crayeres@lescraayeres.com
- **Best Little Scottish Inn** — Glenmorangie House, a cozy and convivial 6-room gem nestled on the shores of Cromarty Firth, not far from Royal Dornoch Golf Club. Don't miss the festive whisky-tasting weekends, replete with Highland dancing! Tel. (44) 1862-871671.
- **Most Overrated Resort Hotel** — Parrot Cay in the Turks & Caicos, which just doesn't understand what the hospitality business is supposed to be all about.
- **Most Consistent Restaurant in the World** — *Botín* (Madrid). In operation since 1725, this gregarious *taberna* still turns out fabulous garlic soup, as well as suckling pig and tender lamb on sizzling platters.
- **Best Down-Home Cookery** — *Jasmine Porch* at The Sanctuary (Kiawah Island, SC). Sautéed jumbo shrimp with cheddar grits, she-crab bisque, smoked duck gumbo with andouille sausage, sweet pepper slaw, barbecued pulled pork with buttermilk mashed potatoes, peach tea-rubbed yellowfin tuna and more.
- **Best Foreign Tour Guide** — Akif Gürerk, a very professional and knowledgeable English-speaking driver-guide, who puts you at ease amid the exotic culture of Turkey. Email: agurerk@hotmail.com

- **Most Unique Hotel Amenity** — Little Dix Bay's arrangement with top publishing houses that allows guests to read advance copies of new fiction and non-fiction works by best-selling authors months before they reach bookstores. In U.S., Tel. (888) 767-3966.
- **Best Outdoor Pool For All Seasons** — Be it sun or snow, the 115-foot open-air heated pool and whirlpool spa at Amangani (Jackson Hole, WY) provides memorable swims and alpine vistas from its panoramic 7,000-foot perch. Tel. (307) 734-7333.
- **Best Place To Watch A Winter Storm** — Canada's Wickaninnish Inn, a sensuous sea lover's sanctuary capping a wave-dashed point along the wildly scenic west coast of Vancouver Island. Tel. (250) 725-3100.
- **Most Quirky Destination** — The timeless and remote 1,300-acre island of Sark in the Channel Islands. It's Europe's only surviving feudal state!

Hideaway Report Hotel Review Procedures

Hotel and resort recommendations made by this newsletter are arrived at on a completely independent basis. We accept no advertising and are therefore totally free of pressure from advertisers. To further maintain our freedom of judgment and objectivity, we pay full rate for all meals, lodgings, transportation and related travel expenses and receive no complimentary fees or other subtle forms of remuneration from the hotels/resorts reviewed within our pages. We also make it a point to travel incognito, booking rooms as typical guests and not under our pseudonyms of Andrew Harper, Richard Harper, Iain Harper, nor *The Hideaway Report* or Harper Associates, Inc.

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