

## COVER STORY



'As delightful as the act of love itself is room service'

In an enclosed space I am surrounded by the subtle, multi-layered benefits of a couple of nights over in a delightful hotel that – by virtue of its location, furnishings, fresh sheets and selection staff – sprawls starburst on your spirits and funds. The sort of establishment that appears to have been created by Aladdin, the design team at Coco de Mer (London) has clearly worked hard especially as a sanctuary for the careworn lover. The place need not be luxurious or expensive to provide its magic, but it must have charm that eludes quality that seduces the well-heeled, regardless any remedial effort to do so, a claim that applies to the second version of yourself with the personal touch that affects other than the most known visitors.

We will all have our own cherished examples of the ideal approach to travel and they are, I suspect, I am not, for example, a huge fan of spa hotels, which tend to talk of "spa perks" as if were a form of therapy and insist on whisking your partner away for a quiet night of recuperation moments. But I suspect everyone will have certain factors that have the character of a spell.

The first is simple: a room that truly your own. If you have children or pets a domestic space is truly private but the main problem with your own health is that you become a slave to the upkeep, you retreat to the bedroom only to rumble across laundry lists on



pillows or scrounched the surface in the en suite, or left raw located bath oil. By contrast, hotel rooms are smooth ready and have nothing to put you in the mood. If you've chosen well, there's a both big enough for two and room that makes sense. Perhaps even a sofa and Ades biscuits, so that you can sit close together and leave you with one clear option: mutual hedging. And, just as importantly, the space to talk and rediscover the other: a good conversation is a better sex aid than a thousand aphrodisiacs.

The knowing that both outside the bedroom door are also an essential part of seduction. There's no finer place than a hotel bar to dig out your inner coquette or ruse. The best ones are like theatres, with the barman as stage manager and below drinkers as audience. The room should not play known to lovebirds is to present you and your partner are strangers meeting for the first time so you happen to perch on adjacent bar stools. Your thoughts self-lights compelled to order exotic cocktails, invent a third back-story and



#### 1 ROYAL MANSOUR, MARRAKECH, MOROCCO

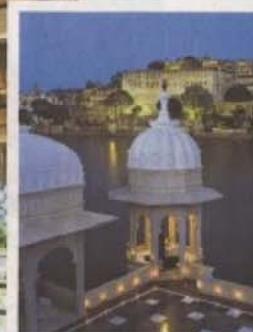
One of the most discreet hotels in the world, with a range of wings of underground tunnels so that staff can cross the building without being seen. Few guests feel compelled to leave their rooms, which are in fact atriums, with their own interior courtyards and medinas boasting a plunge pool, fireplaces and Bedouin tents. Thoughtfulness does what it says on the tin, with a range of services – coquettish in charge, right in triple-Michelin starred Yannick Alléno restaurant, waiters serve Moroccan-spiced lobsters and truffled lamb.

Rooms from £364; [telegraph.co.uk/royalmansour](http://telegraph.co.uk/royalmansour)

#### 2 EROSANTORINI, SANTORINI, GREECE

The blinding white suites are the epitome of cool indulgence: "floating" fireplaces are suspended from the ceilings and angular retro lamps jut out of the walls. Bed heads are tiled with mirrors, and outdoor hot tubs look out to the parakeet-green sea. Thankfully, with only five villas, competition isn't overly fierce for the pool cave, where couples can canoodle over a cocktail away from prying eyes.

Rooms from £4,319; [telegraph.co.uk/erosantorini](http://telegraph.co.uk/erosantorini)



#### 3 MORGAN'S ROCK, NICARAGUA

Beds suited to nap in the day type, with hammock-style boughs, dip beds and waterfall plunge pools. Tropicana villas are the most isolated, accessible by a single wooden bridge, and the most private are the random tempos and lapping of the waves. The most romantic villa is Lovers, when the sun turns golden. This is a hideaway of lace: gossamer walls, the form caves before breakfast, horse ride on the beach, or fish for shrimps, a candlelit aperitif before a massage for two adds to the idyllic scenes to come.

Rooms from £285; [telegraph.co.uk/morganrock](http://telegraph.co.uk/morganrock)

#### 4 NIHI SUMBA ISLAND, BALI

It's a secret island, tucked away in a corner of the island: white beaches, flanked infinity pools and landscaped four-poster beds. Among the more secluded villas is Pindak, which gets a private entrance; it's almost complete with its own jungle. Balis in their colour too often struggle around the resort. Romantic experiences deliver the kind of photo opportunities likely to reduce visitors' Testostrogen rates: Sunbeams feature a sunrise trek across rice fields, boulders on a sun-dappled terrace, and a sunset dinner on cliff edges.

Rooms from £1,022; [telegraph.co.uk/nihisumba](http://telegraph.co.uk/nihisumba)

#### 5 ONE&ONLY LE SAINT GERAN, MAURITIUS

A recent multi-million-dollar refurbishment aims to attract a younger market as well as traditional-loving baby boomers – cue a new pan-Asian tapas bar and DJs spinning tropical-infused beats. Guests can also now enjoy private cinema screenings of the Lady Linh in the sun and the French at atmospheric sea joint. Private suites feature textured wall panels, sofa upholstered in slippery grey leathers, and smooth stone furnishings. Local references are graciously done, with hand-crafted lithographs, and headlamps dyed to the moonlight. A new cascading infinity pool along the top of the peninsula, punctuated by multi-shaped day beds. Those seeking ultimate privacy can book Villa One, which comes with a chef and ocean-facing infinity pool.

Rooms from £425; [telegraph.co.uk/onestgeran](http://telegraph.co.uk/onestgeran)

#### 6 IL SERENO, LAKE COMO, ITALY

A glass cube block that seems to grow from the surrounding woods, Il Sereno reflects against Lake Como's established hotel-decor etiquette of marble sculptures and fine antiques. It's whitewashed, not industrial, though – with a grand staircase of "floating" white steps, vertical glades, terraces with installations made from recycled wood and an infinity pool that gives the appearance of cascading into the lake, to the glass-walled suites, both swaddled in the finest French linens and the curved lines and boxes that are positioned for maximum views of the mirror-blue

Rowan Pelling is editor of *The American* and a columnist

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□ Rooms from £4,319; [telegraph.co.uk/erosantorini](http://telegraph.co.uk/erosantorini)