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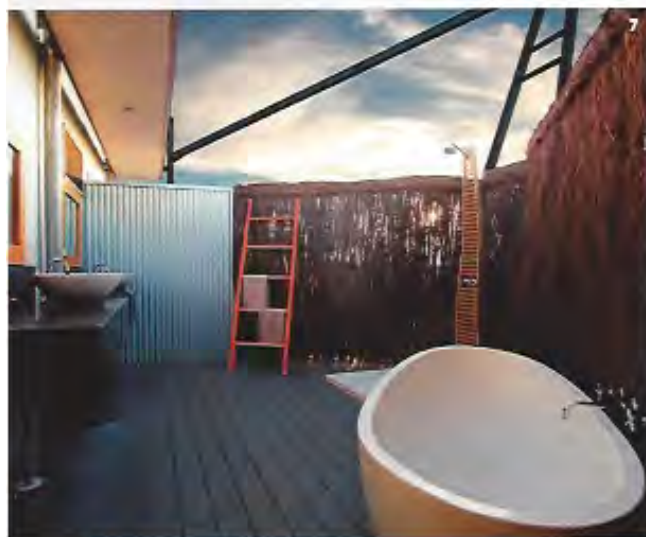
SUMMER ESCAPE

## TEN DESIGN HOTELS

*Lightfoot Travel's MATT VLEMMIKS shares his inside tips on the world's most exceptional hotels, whether you're on the search for authenticity, culture or simple, unbridled luxury*



Clockwise from top: Get cozy at the Hacienda De San Rafael in Seville, Spain. Open-air bathing at the Berkeley River Lodge in Kimberley Coast, Australia. Aerial view of the Berkeley River Lodge in Kimberley Coast. The Gorge River in Kimberley Coast



## 7 BERKELEY RIVER LODGE, KIMBERLEY COAST, AUSTRALIA

This relatively new, delightfully remote luxury lodge on the wild Kimberley Coast of Western Australia is perfect for those with a hankering for the massive landscapes, unique wildlife and earthy colours of the Australian outback. The lodge's relative inaccessibility is one of its delights, with the closest town of Wyndham located 150km away, and the nearest major airport in far-flung Darwin, so arrival is only possible by air or sea. Your most likely approach is from Kununurra by seaplane, with a couple of scheduled flights per week and charters

possible at other times, while the truly indulgent might also look at chartering a helicopter. For those that can make it, summer (the Australian winter) is the perfect time to visit, with cooler temperatures providing ideal conditions for classic outdoor pursuits such as fishing, hiking, river cruises, 4WD safaris and wilderness picnics. For more prosaic downtime, the star gazing is exceptional, flatback turtles often visit the nearby beaches to lay eggs, sundowner drinks are a rare treat, and there is even a moonlight cinema, which guests can enjoy while floating in the swimming pool. The 20 luxury villas are huge, cool and spacious, with floor-to-ceiling glass offering stunning, panoramic views from the lodge's elevated location. With an outstanding restaurant and well-stocked cellar, Berkeley River Lodge has become an attractive proposition for jetsetters and staycationers alike.

## 8 HACIENDA DE SAN RAFAEL, SEVILLE, SPAIN

A rich history of Moorish influences, historical sights and classic Spanish cuisine make Andalucía arguably Spain's most attractive region, with Seville its signature city. This vibrant southern metropolis plays host to flamenco performances, centuries-old tapas bars, a thriving nightlife, and fascinating sights such as the Alcazar Palace and the Cathedral. In definitively Spanish countryside on the way to Jerez, the Hacienda de San Rafael provides a glorious respite from the action. A charming 18th century home, family-operated on what was once a thriving olive estate, the Hacienda is a boutique property that often feels more like an inviting private residence than a hotel. The rooms and casitas are airy and high-ceilinged, stylishly





**Clockwise from left:**  
Sleep seaside at the Iniala in Phangnga Province, Thailand. One of the three luxury villas located on Iniala, Sand Spit beach on the private paradise in Ibo Island Lodge in Quirimbas Archipelago, Mozambique.



decorated, with stone walls, high beams and enchanting artwork. Surrounded by beautifully manicured gardens, with swimming pools, massage treatments and yoga on offer, the aim is to leave all guests feeling refreshed and rejuvenated. With its sister property, the Corral del Rey, based in the heart of Seville's historical Barrio Alfalfa, combining the two guarantees a magical introduction to the charms of Andalusia.

## 9 IBO ISLAND LODGE, QUIRIMBAS ARCHIPELAGO, MOZAMBIQUE

An enticing hidden gem in the remote Quirimbas Archipelago of Northern Mozambique, Ibo Island Lodge offers the perfect combination of languid relaxation and fascinating historical context. Ibo Island was on the Arabian slave trade route and later a Portuguese colonial outpost after a series of tussles for control with the Omani Arabs. These eclectic influences are evidenced by the evocative, crumbling forts and villas that have been abandoned to nature on the island, many of the structures now becoming intertwined with trees, branches and bushes in a style reminiscent of some of the Angkor temples in Cambodia. The accommodation itself comprises three beautifully converted colonial mansions, with peaceful gardens,

inviting swimming pools, atmospheric rooms and delicious sea views from the evening terrace. Guests can be dropped at a deserted Indian Ocean sandbank to snorkel and relax, or enjoy dhow cruises, fishing and diving. For those looking for a longer visit, the lodge even runs its own mobile dhow safari, with rustic tented camps erected on various deserted islands as part of an itinerary covering several nights. July and August are picture perfect in Mozambique – warm, dry and sunny – and this area can easily be combined with an African safari.

## 10 INIALA, PHANG-NGA PROVINCE, THAILAND

Just north of Phuket, the new Iniala villa complex is brash, opulent and utterly hedonistic. With world renowned architects and designers brought in to bring a distinct feel to each room within the three villas and single luxury penthouse, each represents a new discovery for guests looking for a new 'mise-en-scène' for different nights of their stay. With rooms

variously styled as libraries, boudoirs, Russian doll-like structures, private spas and modern art installations, it's likely that not all will be to your taste, but there is undoubtedly something here for everyone. The whole complex can be booked out, or each villa separately, and with exceptional facilities that include a children's villa, various swimming pools, private butler service, diverse spa treatment options and an outstanding restaurant with a 3-Michelin starred head chef supported by decorated culinary specialists (from seafood to pastry and desserts), Iniala has arguably become Thailand's most overtly luxurious villa concept.

To find out more about the resorts, contact [mar@ightfoottravel.com](mailto:mar@ightfoottravel.com)