



Six Senses Samui THAILAND

Set on the northern tip of Koh Samui with views over the Gulf of Thailand, Six Senses is the epitome of luxury and relaxation. Each villa is down a discreet path hidden by overgrown jungle, lending a feel of privacy and isolation. Inside they're seriously romantic with double outdoor rain showers, baths big enough for two and secluded sun decks on the lower level. Expect plenty of teak throughout and dramatically high ceilings. Opt for one with its own private pool as the Thai heat can become overwhelming, although the main infinity pool set high up on the hill is one of the best we've ever had a chance to dip a toe into.

The service is spot on, with your personal GEM (guest experience maker) constantly on call. In the evening, try Dining on the Rocks where tables are set out on bamboo decks jutting out over the water with fabulous ocean views. The tasting menus show off delicate seafood dishes like prawn and seabass ceviche. At the more casual Dining on the Hill, you'll find excellent, authentic Thai cuisine such as green curry with aubergine and chicken satay with lashings of peanut sauce. Retreat to your room feeling relaxed, ready for a deep sleep. *LF. Doubles from £300. 00 667 724 5678, sixsenses.com*



Places
This month, we enjoy panoramic sea views in Wales' beautiful Wye Valley and bed down

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IL BORGO DI PETROIO TUSCANY

Nestling among the Tuscan hills, this 900-year-old farmhouse has sweeping views over deep forests and the eye-wateringly picturesque village of Acone. From the outside it's a vision of rustic charm with a red tile roof, swimming pool surrounded by vineyards and apparently endless shady seating areas in which to while away lazy afternoons. However, a recent renovation has elevated the interiors to something special. Original features such as enormous stone fireplaces and ancient wooden beams sit quirkily beside contemporary art, while bedrooms painted in pretty sorbet colours are a pleasure to wake up in. The property is owned by a pre-eminent local family and there are some fabulous excursions on offer through their contacts, from a Florence market tour and cookery class to a Chianti wine and cheese tasting. It's a winding drive to reach the main road, but the sense of utter tranquility that permeates this 364-hectare farm and estate is well worth the adventure. *IL. From £5,074 per week, sleeps 14. 00 442 076 848 884, tuscanynowandmore.com*



Gourmet bolthole THE WHITEBROOK, WALES

Wales' lush Wye Valley is the ideal spot for a secluded gourmet getaway. The last leg of the drive along increasingly narrow, leafy lanes hints at the pastoral vibe that will characterise your entire weekend.

Start with an easy stroll through the woodland as per the helpful directions provided in your room, where the pretty landscape is varied and the aroma of wild herbs permeates the air. Later, you can expect to see them on your plate, as chef and owner Chris Harrod is a keen forager. Pennywort, bitter cress, wild onion, hogweed and lesser celandine all feature regularly on his Michelin-starred menu.

The seven-course tasting option is the best way to experience everything that the local area has to offer as well as Harrod's considerable skill in the kitchen. A dish of flaked white crab with crispy shards of roast chicken skin and horseradish was an unusual but delicious combination, while tart blackcurrants were perfectly balanced with chamomile and sage for dessert. Expect a convivial atmosphere and an interesting selection of wines featuring local bins and wines from independent growers and biodynamic producers.

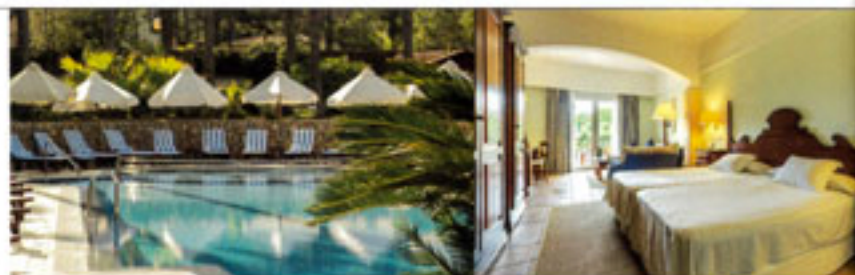
All eight bedrooms have enormous bathrooms and soothing decor, rounded off nicely with a breakfast of thinly sliced smoked salmon over plump poached eggs and another ramble in the valley. *LF. Doubles with breakfast and dinner from £223. 01600 860 254, thewhitebrook.co.uk*

CALA SANT VICENC Mallorca

To call this hotel tranquil doesn't do it justice – it's positively horizontal. Set in Sant Vicenç, one of Mallorca's sleepest towns, the pace of life is molasses-grade slow here, making it a fine choice for a relaxing retreat. The pool is shrouded by tall palms and the noise of the ebb and flow of the water is broken only by the pool attendant as he comes to either take your order (we can wholeheartedly recommend the mojitos), or to deliver the day's complimentary sorbet as the afternoon sun reaches its zenith.

The rooms are simple and fitted out with handmade, honey-coloured pine in traditional Mallorcan style. While they're far from flash, their simplicity is in tune with the atmosphere and have everything you need. One of the 38 rooms has its own huge terrace – be sure to request it on booking.

Service is provided by British general manager, Lynda Walsh Furlong, who's been at the hotel for 30 years. It's she who sets the tempo from



the top down: nothing is too much trouble and tasks are completed with effortless grace. Restaurant Lavanda offers unfussy food from a short menu. Think steak, grilled fish and salads, best served with good-value local wine.

A small sandy cove is about five minutes' walk away, which also plays host to a restaurant serving Mallorcan classics – sardines with aioli, say – that's obscenely well priced. For a break with R and R as its focus, you'll find few better hotels. *MS. Doubles from £163. 00 349 7153 0250, hotelcala.com*



FLEMINGS MAYFAIR

This hotel is a venerable Mayfair institution, having opened in 1851 for the Great Exhibition. The terrace of linked townhouses oozes historic charm, yet bedrooms have a modern feel. Lush midnight blue drapes and faux-bearskin throws contrast with polished deco-revival surfaces and ultra-luxe bathrooms. A breakfast room doubles as Ormer Mayfair Restaurant; chef Shaun Rankin built his early reputation on Jersey's seafood and those in the know flock here for wild lobster, crab, bass and turbot. *MR. Doubles from £215. 020 7499 0000, flemings-mayfair.co.uk*

