

# RESORT REPORT

The coolest new hotels, trips and events around the globe.

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## St. Regis style comes to Langkawi

Located off the west coast of Malaysia, the island of Langkawi is known as a jewel in the country's tourism crown thanks to its natural beauty in which verdant, jungle-clad mountains and shimmering turquoise waters feature strongly. It's already home to several well-known five-star resorts, but the opening of a prestigious St. Regis luxury resort in April this year is set to attract even more luxury-seeking travellers from around the globe. With 85 suites and four water villas, each boasting a spectacular view of the Straits of

Malacca, guests can expect the five-star luxury and bespoke services for which every St. Regis property is known, including British-trained personal butlers on hand around-the-clock. Incredible pampering treatments and specialty massages are available in the Spa Salon, while three restaurants and three bars will cater to every culinary and libationary whim. The resort's signature bar also serves up the hotel group's legendary Bloody Mary cocktail, born at the flagship St. Regis New York hotel in the early 1900s. [stregis.com/Langkawi](http://stregis.com/Langkawi)



## Irish eyes are smiling

*"It's my experience that most folk who ride trains could care less where they're going. For them it's the journey itself and the people they meet along the way".*

Author David Baldacci was writing about a train journey in the USA, but could just as well have been writing about the luxury train journeys offered by Belmond, the name behind the iconic Orient-Express. Renowned for its journeys through Europe and Thailand, plus the *Royal Scotsman*, which runs through the wilds of Scotland, Belmond has now launched its first train journeys in Ireland.

The only luxury train in Ireland, *Belmond Grand Hibernian* will offer a selection of journeys from Dublin for only 40 passengers in 20 en suite cabins. Visit Dublin, Belfast and Cork, and you can enjoy daily excursions such as a private tour of the Jameson Distillery, a tour of the Lakes of Killarney by pony and trap, a private tour of the Titanic Experience and a visit to the Old Bushmill's Distillery. This is just a sample of the daily excursions on offer, which have been designed to suit a vast range of interests. The journeys are a unique opportunity to immerse in the fascinating historical, musical and literary history of this bewitching country. [belmond.com](http://belmond.com)



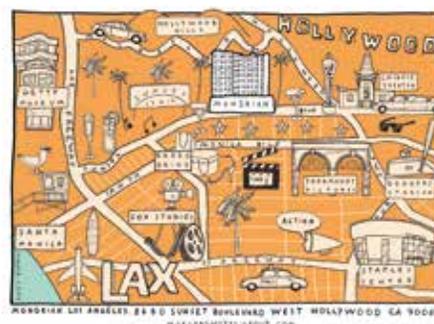
## Through the looking glass

If you're travelling to London soon, you won't want to miss falling down this crazy rabbit hole. The Sanderson Hotel, one of London's finest, is serving up an Alice-inspired take on the very British institution of afternoon tea. The Mad Hatter's Tea Party serves up tea-time favourites on plates adorned with bird cages, carousels and ticking clocks. Sanderson's exclusive teas are poured from teapots that could definitely have been used by Alice at the original Mad Hatter's Tea Party, and menus are hidden inside vintage books. [sandersonlondon.com](http://sandersonlondon.com)

## Classic Hollywood charm

LA's hoteliers and restaurateurs must spend many a sleepless night thinking about how they can tap into the public's eternal obsession with Hollywood. One of West Hollywood's original luxury boutique hotels, the Mondrian on Sunset Boulevard, has recently opened the Ivory Restaurant. The 700msq-space takes full advantage of Mondrian LA's classic setting and sweeping city views – and inspiration from Hollywood's golden age. Delicious Californian cuisine from a menu designed by Chef Brian

Malarkey; a selection of house-infused signature cocktails; a globally inspired, robust wine list; an oft-played grand piano and a relaxed-yet-refined ambience of lounge seating and varied indoor-and-outdoor dining options all combine to create a venue that's a must-visit when in LA. With a glamorous and quintessentially "old Hollywood" vibe, the restaurant – and indeed the hotel – have wide appeal to locals and visitors alike, but as such, early bookings are essential. [ivoryla.com](http://ivoryla.com)



## Thanda-struck

One of the few truly private tropical islands in the world, Thanda Island is situated in the Indian Ocean, within southern Tanzania's Shungi Mbilli Island Marine Reserve, 30 kilometres east of the mainland of Tanzania. There are scheduled 30-minute flights from Dar es Salaam to Mafia Island and then it's a 30-minute boat transfer to Thanda Island.

Book here and you'll call the entire island home, including an expansive five-bedroom villa that sleeps 10. It features an all-white palette and soft, natural hues and fabrics, and looks like it's straight out of the pages of *Vogue*.

Leading straight off the pristine white-sand beach, each of the fan-cooled and air-conditioned suites feature indoor and outdoor showers. An impressive swimming pool and a huge indoor aquarium to rival its outdoor counterpart are the finishing touches that make this such a unique property.

Eight hectares in size, the island is just 1.1 kilometres in circumference and 350 metres wide. It's surrounded by its own private coral reef, with a one-kilometre exclusive-use zone which can be explored with a snorkel and mask, straight from the beach. There are sailing boats, stand-up paddle boards and single- and double-kayaks, while a powerboat zone outside the marine park allows for water skiing, jet-skiing, wake-boarding and tubing, and big game fishing off Mafia Island can be experienced on a 28-foot reef runner cat. [thanda.island.com](http://thanda.island.com)



## Hail to the Chief

Vientiane in Laos has just joined the "must" list for travellers seeking the latest in luxury digs.

The opening of The President by Akaryn is set to create a health-and-wellness, epicurean and cultural destination unique in Laos.

The sumptuous, boutique property of just 30 rooms – including two Presidential Suites – is centrally located near the House of Parliament, The Presidential Palace and the temple of the Emerald Buddha. Built in neo-classical style with Laotian accents of soaring ceilings, timber floors and tropical shutters, it echoes the architectural grandeur of colonial times in the late 1800s, when the golden age of travel was at its zenith. There's a private members' club, cigar lounge, humidor and whisky cellar, and a revolutionary Ayurah Wellness Centre with bespoke programmes based on the four pillars of wellness: weight optimisation, anti-ageing, mind balance and detoxification. Seven dining areas, an ever-evolving menu and Vientiane's best high tea will satisfy the most discerning palates. [akarynhotelgroup.com](http://akarynhotelgroup.com)



## Spice up your life

A new 13-day culinary tour to India from Wildlife Safari will explore South India's natural beauty, history, culture and the fragrant world of Indian cuisine. Chef Kumar Mahadevan – who is widely credited with introducing authentic Indian cuisine to Australia – will escort this tour of enchanting Tamil Nadu and serene Kerala. Born in Chennai, Kumar achieved prominence with Abhi's restaurant in Haberfield in Sydney and has enjoyed continued success with Aki's, his establishment in Woolloomooloo.

The Thali tour journey starts in Chennai, travels through Tamil Nadu, winds through the Chettinad region with its unique cuisine, on to the emerald backwaters of Kerala, and ends in Fort Cochin. The tour takes in visits to produce markets, cooking demonstrations with highly talented local chefs, memorable meals in private homes of prominent food identities, a traditional lunch on a working organic farm and, of course, lots of cooking and lots of stories with Kumar. An enormous amount of detail has gone into organising this exclusive departure, with many elements not found on any other tour. It promises to deliver an incredible culinary and visual journey. The Thali tour runs from 10 to 22 September 2016 and costs AUD8,695 per person (based on a twin-share basis; single supplement AUD1,500; international flights additional). The tour can be booked on its own or combined with additional arrangements to travel throughout India or Sri Lanka. [wildlifesafari.com.au](http://wildlifesafari.com.au)

## No. 1 fun

Get to know one of the world's best-loved novelists while exploring the spectacular setting of much of his work on an exclusive safari with Belmond: "Journey to the Heart of Botswana with Alexander McCall Smith". This unforgettable six-night journey for fans of *The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency* encompasses Belmond's three luxury lodges in northern Botswana. It begins at Belmond Savute Elephant Lodge in the heart of Chobe National Park, it's perched on the banks of the Savute Channel – known as the elephant capital of the world. Next stop is Belmond Khwai River Lodge. Overlooking vast floodplains in the Moremi Wildlife Reserve, it's known to be a year-round destination for viewing wildlife, predators and plains game. You can also experience a thrilling night drive, follow nocturnal predators on the hunt, watch hippo feeding frenzies and possibly spot magnificent nocturnal birds such as the Giant Eagle Owl. The adventure ends at Belmond Eagle Island Lodge in the magnificent Okavango Delta. It offers Africa's most water-focused safari experience, and featured in McCall Smith's much-loved novel, *The Double Comfort Safari Club*. The journey also includes a thrilling open-sided helicopter ride over the wilderness. Throughout the safari, McCall Smith will share memories of his beloved Botswana and chat with fellow travellers about the inspiration for his books, including two new *No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency* novels, *Precious and Grace* and *The Woman Who Walked in Sunshine*. "Journey to the Heart of Botswana with Alexander McCall Smith" runs from 10-16 November 2016 and costs from AUD7,985 per person, based on two people sharing. [belmond.com/safaris](http://belmond.com/safaris)

