

# TRAVEL

ELLE

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## **The Panel** OUR EXPERTS



**SUSAN WARD DAVIES**  
*ELLE travel editor*



**TOM MARCHANT**  
*founder of Black Tomato  
bespoke travel group*



**CHRIS CALDICOTT**  
*travel  
photographer*



**TOM BARBER**  
*co-founder of  
Original Travel*



**JASON HENZELL**  
*Jakes Jamaica owner  
and Breds founder*



**ADRIAN HOUSTON**  
*founder and CEO of  
Design Hotels*



**CHRISTOPHER LUKEZIG**  
*communications  
direction of Airbnb*



**CLAUS SENDLINGER**  
*founder and CEO of  
Design Hotels*



THE  
BEST  
MUST-  
STAYS

## **Chic Shack Awards 2013**

ELLE's idea of the perfect place to stay is small, simple, stylish and utterly unique. Whether it's a £20 hut on the beach or a luxurious private villa, they have the romantic feel of a castaway's island dwelling. And you often need to be in the know to find out about them. We call them chic shacks - and we've scoured the globe so that you can visit our favourites. >

Endémico, Mexico

**SUSAN WARD DAVIES**  
*ELLE travel editor*

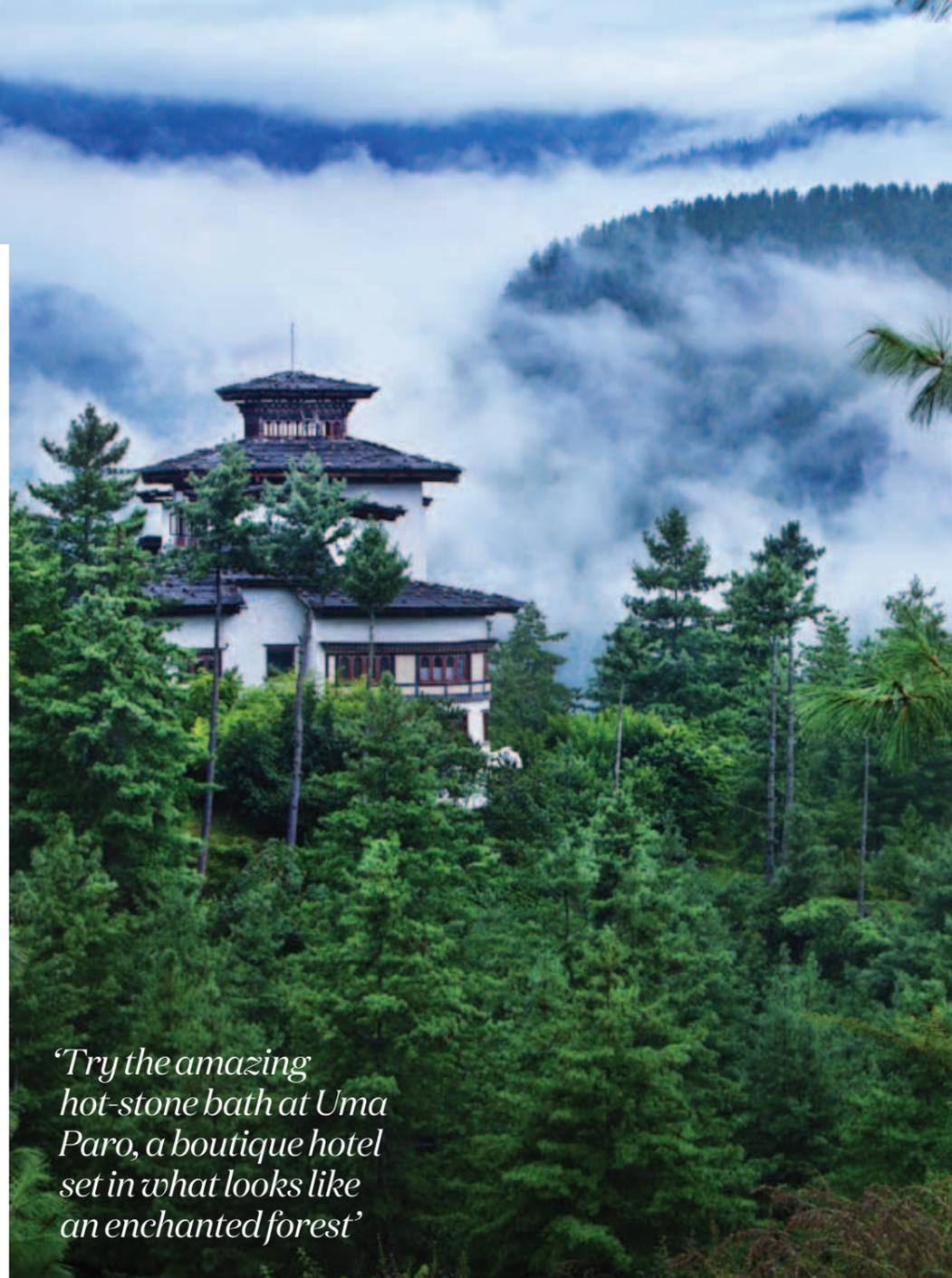
> **Inle Princess Resort, Inle Lake, Burma**

On the beautiful Inle Lake in central Burma, this hotel is one of my all-time favourites. The 46 chalets are arranged around a central lily pond - some facing the mountain, some the pond, and the best ones, the lake. All gleaming dark wood, ceiling fans and a pebbled al fresco shower, the best bit is the private terrace where you can flop on loungers to watch the famous leg-rowers manoeuvring through the reeds to deposit passengers at the hotel jetty. Motorboats are banned within about 500 metres, so guest arrivals are heralded just by the gentle dip and splash of oars. *Inle Princess Resort, Magyizin Village, Inle Lake. Doubles from £115, B&B. Enq 00 95 (81) 209055; inleprincessresort.com*

> **Amankora, Thimphu, Bhutan**

Perched above Thimphu, Bhutan's capital, is Amankora, one of the kingdom's five Aman hotels. The group is renowned for its luxury minimalism and this one is true to form. Built like a *dzong* (Bhutan's ubiquitous fort / monastery), it is a white, austere building with a huge stone courtyard edged with benches. Log-burning stoves warm the rooms, giving the feel of a cosy hunting lodge. As night falls, loll on thick cushions as local dancers perform around a fire in the courtyard, like a scene from *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*: all swirling silk robes, and flashing knives. *Amankora, Upper Motithang. Doubles from £896 including*

*'Try the amazing hot-stone bath at Uma Paro, a boutique hotel set in what looks like an enchanted forest'*



Uma by Como, Bhutan



Amankora, Bhutan

*meals, house beverages, transfers and visas. Enq 00 800 2255 2626, amanresorts.com*

> **Uma by Como, Paro, Bhutan**

On a hill just outside the little town of Paro is Uma Paro (left and below left), a stylish boutique hotel, ringed by mountains, in what looks like an enchanted forest. The 20 rooms have amazing valley views, but I think the nine villas dotted around the grounds are the best, with wood-burning stoves, kitchens, and your own spa treatment room. When you're not snuggled up here, you can learn archery (the national sport) or mountain biking (if you don't mind switchbacking down steep hairpin bends). But do make sure you try the amazing hot-stone bath - a luxe version of what the locals do by the riverside: hot rocks are heated, then dropped, sizzling, into a herby bath. After a wallow, flop on to a massage bed to be kneaded with oil, the perfect post-trekking treatment. *Uma Paro, Paro. Doubles from around £180 including breakfast. Enq 00 975 8 271597; comohotels.com/umaparo*

**CHRIS CALDICOTT**  
*Travel photographer*

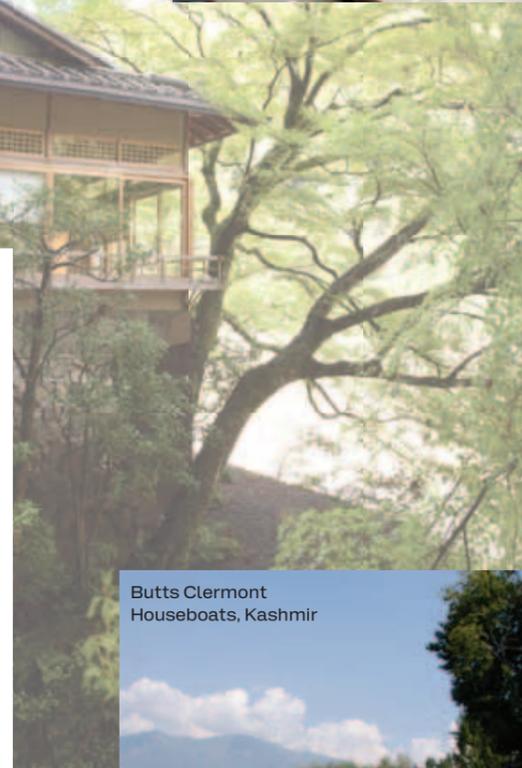
> **Hoshinoya Kyoto, Japan**

The rooms at this sensational *ryokan* (inn) are the epitome of traditional Japanese minimalist style, with tatami mats, sliding rice-paper screens, futon-style beds and luxurious cedarwood hot tubs. Set on a steep cliff among the maple trees, above the Oigawa River, staying in one feels like living in an extremely elegant tree house,

Photographs Chris Caldicott



Uma by Como, Bhutan



Butts Clermont Houseboats, Kashmir



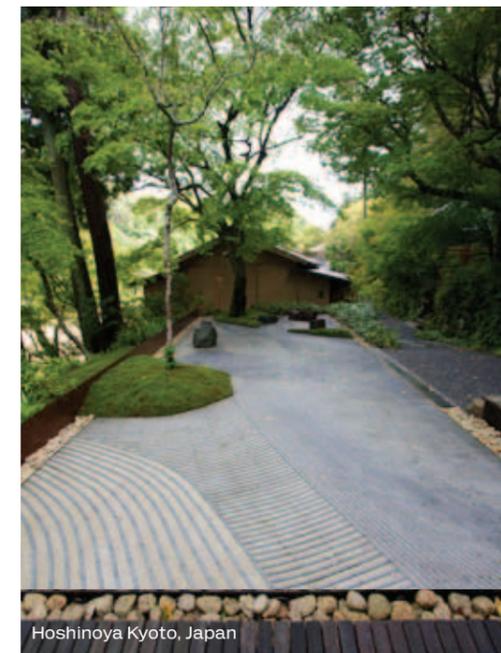
Below: Inle Princess Resort, Burma. Top and right: Hoshinoya Kyoto, Japan



but one that's stocked with modern gadgets like iPod docks and Nespresso machines. Breakfasts are feasts of Japanese delicacies, which I had in my room overlooking the river and bamboo forest beyond. *Arashiyama, Kyoto. Doubles from £400, room only. Enq 00 815 03786 0066; global.hoshinoresort.com*

> **Butts Clermont Houseboats, Kashmir**

George Harrison stayed on the Clermont Houseboats in the 1960s while learning to play the sitar, and not much has changed since. Still decorated in retro-colonial style and packed with atmosphere, wood-panelled rooms feature large beds and en suite (albeit boat-style) bathrooms. For me, staying here is as much about the spectacular location, in a quiet corner of Dal Lake, as it is about elegantly faded nostalgia. Wonderful *kahwa*, Kashmiri tea spiced with saffron and cardamom, is served all day and you can use a *shikara*, the local canoe, to explore. *Naseem Bagh, Dal Lake, Kashmir. Doubles from £70, full board. Enq 00 91 194 242 0325; buttsclermonthouseboat.com*



Hoshinoya Kyoto, Japan



Artists Studio, Trujillo Villas, Trujillo

Above: Stylish minimalism in Spain. Right: a homely US hideaway



Soniat House, New Orleans

> **Artists Studio, Trujillo Villas, Trujillo**

A small door in a 16th-century stone wall, squeezed between ancient towers in the medieval, walled hill-town of Trujillo, leads into a light-flooded converted artist's studio. I loved the high ceiling, which allows for a mezzanine bedroom with en suite shower up a glass and steel staircase, overlooking an expansive floor-space with a sofa bed, dining table and kitchen. Sliding doors open on to a private terrace and garden with fabulous views over a sweeping plain. *Trujillo Villas, Trujillo, Spain. From £110 per night or £405 per week. Enq trujillovillasespana.com*

> **The Boat House, Isle of Wight**

There is not an inch of wasted space in this tiny but creatively furnished converted boathouse. All white-painted wood and classic English seaside décor, I think it has everything you need for a beach shack holiday. There's a large double bed perched on a mezzanine above an open-plan kitchen/dining/living room with a TV, sofa bed and bathroom. The private decked terrace is right on the quiet sandy beach of Monks Bay and the Isle of Wight coastal path. *The Boat House, Monks Bay, Bonchurch, Isle of Wight. From £45 per night or £295 per week. Enq homeaway.co.uk/p12613*



Seaweed Villa, Treasure Beach

Butts Clermont Houseboats, Kashmir



**JASON HENZELL**

*Owner of Jakes, Jamaica, the original chic shack, and founder of Breds, the Treasure Beach foundation*

> **Soniat House, New Orleans**

This atmospheric, 30-room, Creole-style townhouse is pure old-school New Orleans. In the heart of the French Quarter, it's romantic, cosy and quaint: I felt as if I'd stepped back in time. Don't miss breakfast in bed for melt-in-your-mouth warm buttery biscuits topped with homemade berry jam. Heaven on the bayou! *1133 Chartres Street, New Orleans, 70116. Doubles from around £215, room only. Enq 001 (504) 522 0570; soniathouse.com*

> **Seaweed Villa, Treasure Beach**

This is our newest baby, a six-bedroom villa overlooking the sea and all done out in blues and greens, with lots of mosaics and shell work. Just a few metres along from our original hotel, Jakes, comprising 18 boho-styled casitas, it has an outdoor grill and



Above left and below: no chic shack is complete without a very special view

Seaweed Villa, Treasure Beach



San Lorenzo Mountain Lodge

Jacuzzi. Perched on a bluff above a beautiful cove in Old Wharf, with incredible views, Seaweed takes luxury to a new level. *Jakes Hotel, Villas & Spa, Calabash Bay, Treasure Beach, St Elizabeth, Jamaica. From £280 for two bedrooms, £470 for four bedrooms and £750 for whole property, including staff. Enq 001 877 526 2428; jakeshotel.com*

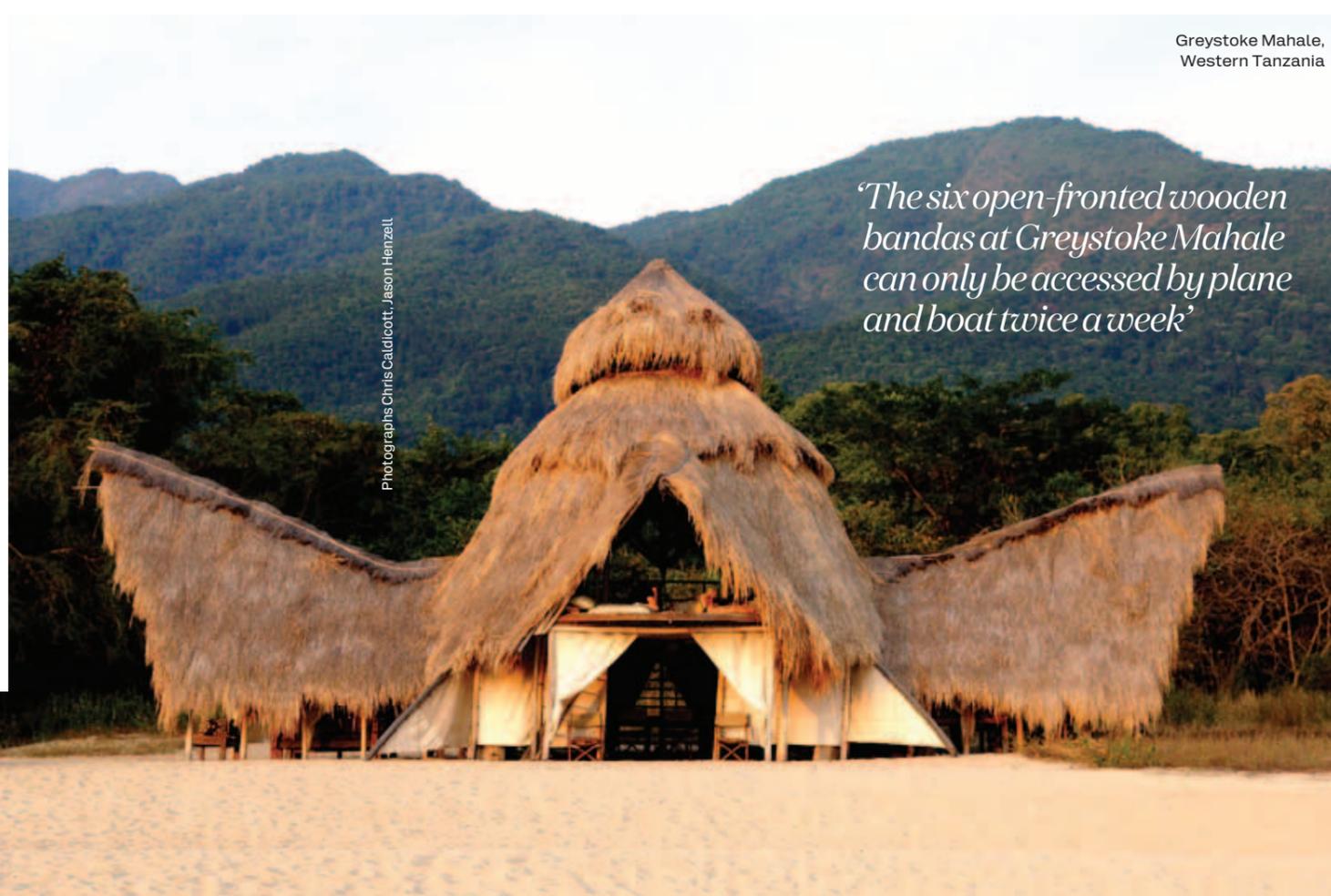
**ADRIAN HOUSTON**

*Travel photographer*

> **Follonico, Tuscany, Italy**

An old farmhouse hidden away in the beautiful rolling hills of Tuscany, Follonico has just six rooms styled with vintage dresses on the walls and lovely old furnishings. I love the fact that the family who own it live in the same house, giving it a very homely atmosphere. *Follonico, Località Casale 2, 53049 Montefollonico, Tuscany, Italy. Doubles from around £114, B&B. Enq 00 39 057 766 97 73; follonico.com*

Greystoke Mahale, Western Tanzania



*'The six open-fronted wooden bandas at Greystoke Mahale can only be accessed by plane and boat twice a week'*

Photographs Chris Caldicott, Jason Henzell



Coqui Coqui

**TOM BARBER**

*Co-founder, Original Travel*

> **Greystoke Mahale, Western Tanzania**

This small camp is tucked away in Western Tanzania, on the shores of Tanganyika, the world's second-deepest lake. Made up of six open-fronted wooden bandas, it can only be accessed by plane and boat twice a week. Simple but luxurious, the service, food and guiding are all five star, as are the spectacular views. We trekked and tracked groups of habituated chimpanzees and explored the forest to see all the birds and butterflies. *Greystoke Mahale, Kangwena Beach, Lake Tanganyika, Mahale Mountains National Park, western Tanzania. Prices from £695. Enq info@nomad-tanzania.com; nomad-tanzania.com*

> **San Lorenzo Mountain Lodge**

Originally a 16th-century hunting retreat, with dramatic views across three valleys, this is the slickest place to stay in the Dolomites. There are just four (immaculate) bedrooms with four living rooms, and the place is taken on an exclusive basis so it's ideal for going away in gangs. *San Lorenzo mountain lodge, 39030 San Lorenzo di Sebato, Dolomiti, Italy. Sleeps 10, prices from £275pp per night when full, including half board, afternoon tea and daily private transfers to the ski slopes. Enq 00 39 0474 40 40 42; sanlorenzomountainlodge.com*

> **Wolwedans, Namibia**

Wolwedans Private Camp is one of my favourite places for desert solitude with plenty of creature comforts. It is set in the middle of a grassy plain and offers sweeping views of the NamibRand Nature Reserve. It sleeps just four, you have to book on an exclusive basis, but it makes the ideal desert hideaway. I love zoning out in a hammock or walking >



*'Azura Benguerra is one of the most incredible islands I've seen. Deserted beaches seem to stretch forever'*

in the surrounding desert. Game drives and hot-air ballooning will keep you entertained and you can self-cater or hire a chef. At night you can see stars right down to the horizon.

*Wohwedans, NamibRand Nature Reserve, Namibia. Doubles from £198, half board. Enq wohwedans.com*

*For all of the above, Original Travel can arrange bespoke trips. Enq (020 7978 7333); originaltravel.co.uk*

#### **TOM MARCHANT**

*Founder of luxury holiday operator Black Tomato Group*

##### > **Geejam, Jamaica**

Former record producer Jon Baker's hotel is an institution. Catering to a cool rock-star crowd (Gwen Stefani and Rihanna), and smack in the middle of the lush rainforest, I find the peace and isolation here is the opposite of Jamaica's generally overdeveloped tourism environment. With just three cabins, one suite, a three-bedroomed villa and a wi-fi-enabled private beach on Mack Bay, Geejam provides pure seclusion. Furnishings and artwork are courtesy of the likes of Banksy and Philippe Starck. *San San, Port Antonio, Portland, Jamaica. Doubles from £245, B&B. Enq 00 1876 993 7000; 00 1876 618 8000; geejamhotel.com*

##### > **Azura Benguerra, Mozambique**

It's rare to find an undiscovered paradise, but the island resort of Azura Benguerra is just that. The newest beach destination in the remote Bazaruto archipelago, it is one of the most incredible islands I've seen, with deserted beaches that seem to stretch forever and brilliant turquoise waters. The 16 villas have thatched roofs and hand-carved furnishings. The owners have worked with the community to create an eco-retreat dedicated to conserving the island's beauty. *Benguerra Island, Mozambique. £295pp per night, fully inclusive. Enq 00 27 (0) 767 050599; azura-retreats.com*

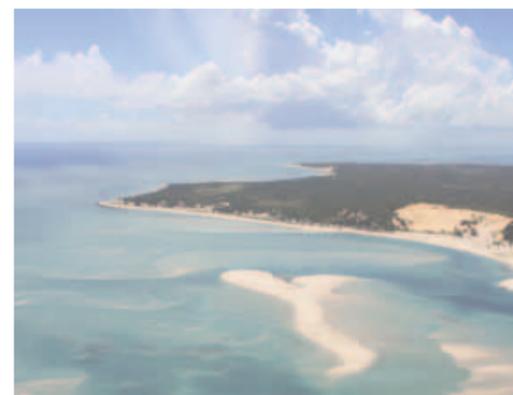
##### > **CasaSandra, Mexico**

Although just a few hours from Cancun, the island of Holbox feels like a lost world. With even the streets covered in powder-soft sand, the policy here is to leave your shoes on the boat when you arrive. Home to only a small islander community (and some pink flamingos), there wasn't much here until this hippy-chic boutique hotel opened. I love that you can walk through waist-high clear sea for miles. *Calle Igualdad s/n, Isla Holbox, Quintana Roo, 77730, Mexico. Doubles from £219, room only. Enq 00 52 984 875 2171; casasandra.com*

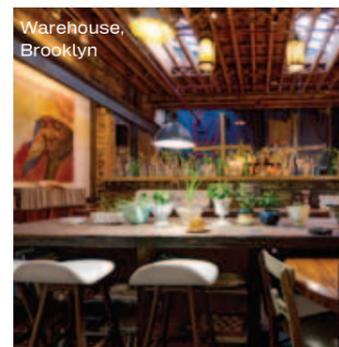
##### > **Krakal Island, Kura Kura Resort, Indonesia**

This tiny desert island in the archipelago of Karimunjawa is owned by the 36-room Kura Kura hotel. I spent a few days in the resort, then sailed over there to enjoy total seclusion, with just the clown fish for company. You sleep in the (luxurious) beach shack, with one bedroom, bathroom and living room. *Karimunjawa Islands, Java, Indonesia. Doubles from £200, room only. Enq 00 62 (0) 24 766 325 10; kurakuraresort.com*

*For all of the above, Black Tomato can arrange bespoke trips. Enq (020) 426 9888; blacktomato.com*



Warehouse, Brooklyn



#### **CHRISTOPHER LUKEZIC**

*Director of Communications Airbnb*

##### > **Converted warehouse, Brooklyn**

If New York was a property, this would be it. As a functioning media art studio, this space is inspirational, exciting and everything you wouldn't expect from home-stay accommodation. It's like stepping into a shabby chic art gallery that you get to sleep in, too. It's tucked away in a rapidly developing part of the city and I love the way it looks like an ordinary warehouse from the outside, but inside it's a bustling creative space. The interior is eclectic with its bohemian furniture and exposed brick wall, the open space gives you a sense of community. Combined with its location, it doesn't get much better. *Brooklyn, New York, £53 per night based on two sharing. Enq [airbnb.co.uk/wishlists/3020967/listings/289130](https://airbnb.co.uk/wishlists/3020967/listings/289130)*

Converted warehouse, Brooklyn, New York



Geejam, Jamaica

CasaSandra, Mexico

> **Surazo, Matanzas, Chile**

I had to put my passion for surfing on hold for a few years while I was a professional runner. Now that those days have passed, Chile is fast becoming a favourite destination for my friends and me. The Surazo hotel, in the coastal village of Matanzas, has two dorms and eight private glass and wood cabins a few feet from the thundering Pacific waves – the perfect modern surf shack. *Surazo, Matanzas, Chile. Doubles from £62, dorm beds from £30. Enq 00 56 9 9277 8706; surazo.cl*

**CLAUS SENDLINGER**

*Founder and CEO of Design Hotels*

> **Endémico, Mexico**

Ranged on a secluded hillside in Mexico's premier wine-growing region, Endémico's eco-friendly cabins are designed to highlight the beauty of the wild landscape. The rustic environment inspired the refreshingly understated design: simple but stylish, with private terraces giving unobstructed valley views. *Endemico, Mexico, Ctra Tecate-Ensenada, km 75, Valle de Guadalupe Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico. Doubles from around £108, room only. Enq 00 52 646 155 27 75; designhotels.com/endemico*

> **Papaya Playa Project, a Design Hotels Project**

Hidden among the palm trees on the edge of a 1km-long stretch of Mexico's Caribbean coast, is what we call our 'jungle-chic beach resort with an urban spirit'. The Papaya Playa Project (a recent ELLE fashion shoot location), is made up of 66 cabañas and casitas, all ecologically built using indigenous materials and Mayan construction techniques. The resort is all about music, art, food, sustainability and spirituality, and the spirit of collaboration (international team, top DJs providing the sounds) means that even guests are encouraged to play their part, with a special beach amphitheatre for readings and performances. *Papaya Playa Project, Km 4.5 Tulum Boca Paila, Tulum, Mexico. Doubles from £40. Enq 0800 7468357; designhotels.com* ●



Endémico, Mexico

*'Endémico's eco-friendly cabins are designed to highlight the beauty of the wild landscape'*



Endémico, Mexico



Papaya Playa Project



Papaya Playa Project

Above and left: a beach paradise with an urban spirit from Design Hotels