

# INSPIRATIONS

2020 - ISSUE 6

DAWN TO DUSK  
TRAVEL MAGIC

THE COOL  
MEDITERRANEAN  
SUMMER

INGREDIENTS FOR  
CULINARY  
CONNECTIONS



BELMOND

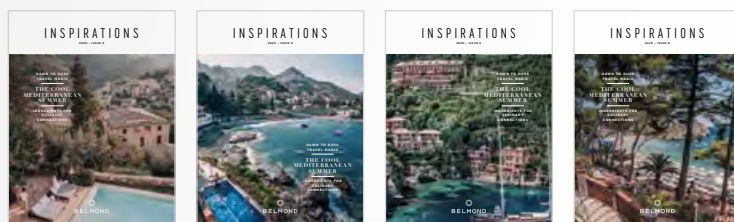


## WELCOME

Welcome to Inspirations, your ticket to our world of incomparable genuine travel. We invite you to journey with us, from the night before to the night after. Along the way you'll sample just some of the many delights we have scattered across the globe.

Party in the Californian hills. Have your fortune told at sunrise in Yangon. Dine deliciously in Cape Town. Chart the wonders of the cosmos in the Scottish Highlands. Wherever you go, with Belmond, you'll be travelling exceptionally.

Our covers were captured by the talented photographer Stuart Cantor. They celebrate the irresistible visuals of the Mediterranean and the timeless appeal of escapism. This year there are four to collect. Which is your favourite?



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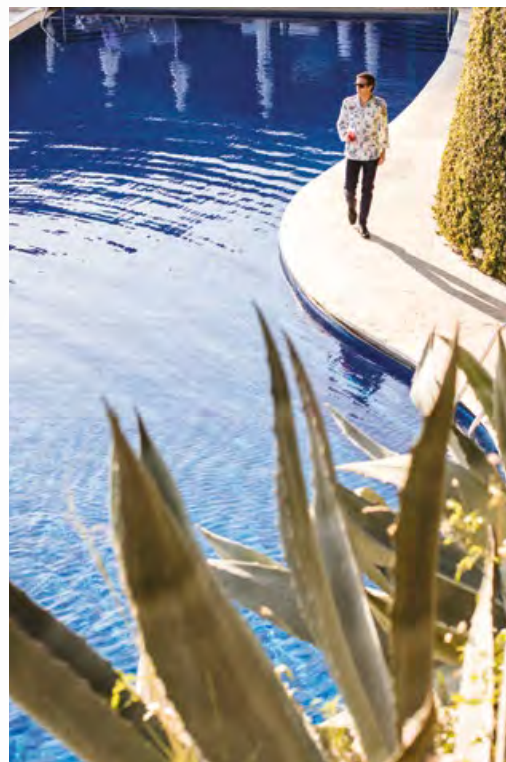
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**THE STARS ABOVE**

Stargazing as you've never known it before.

# The Elevated Allure of PORTOFINO







**A destination that oozes international allure while staying true to its humble roots is a rare find. Portofino, a tiny jewel on the Italian Riviera, achieves the balance with panache.**

While its piazzas echo with the footsteps of legendary stars, from Ava Gardner to Jackie O, and its harbour gleams with sleek yachts, somehow the gentle atmosphere of a Ligurian fishing village remains. One where the catch of the day is eagerly awaited by every charming trattoria, irresistible focaccia aromas seep out of family-run bakeries, and the locals have a cheery "Buongiorno" for passers-by.

So where better to savour the magic of Portofino than at the region's most glamorous hideaway?

Belmond Hotel Splendido began its life in the 16th century as a Benedictine monastery, tucked away in the hills above the bay. Cosseted by cascading wisteria and gazing down to the stunning curve of coastline, the monks knew they had found somewhere truly special. The location radiated an

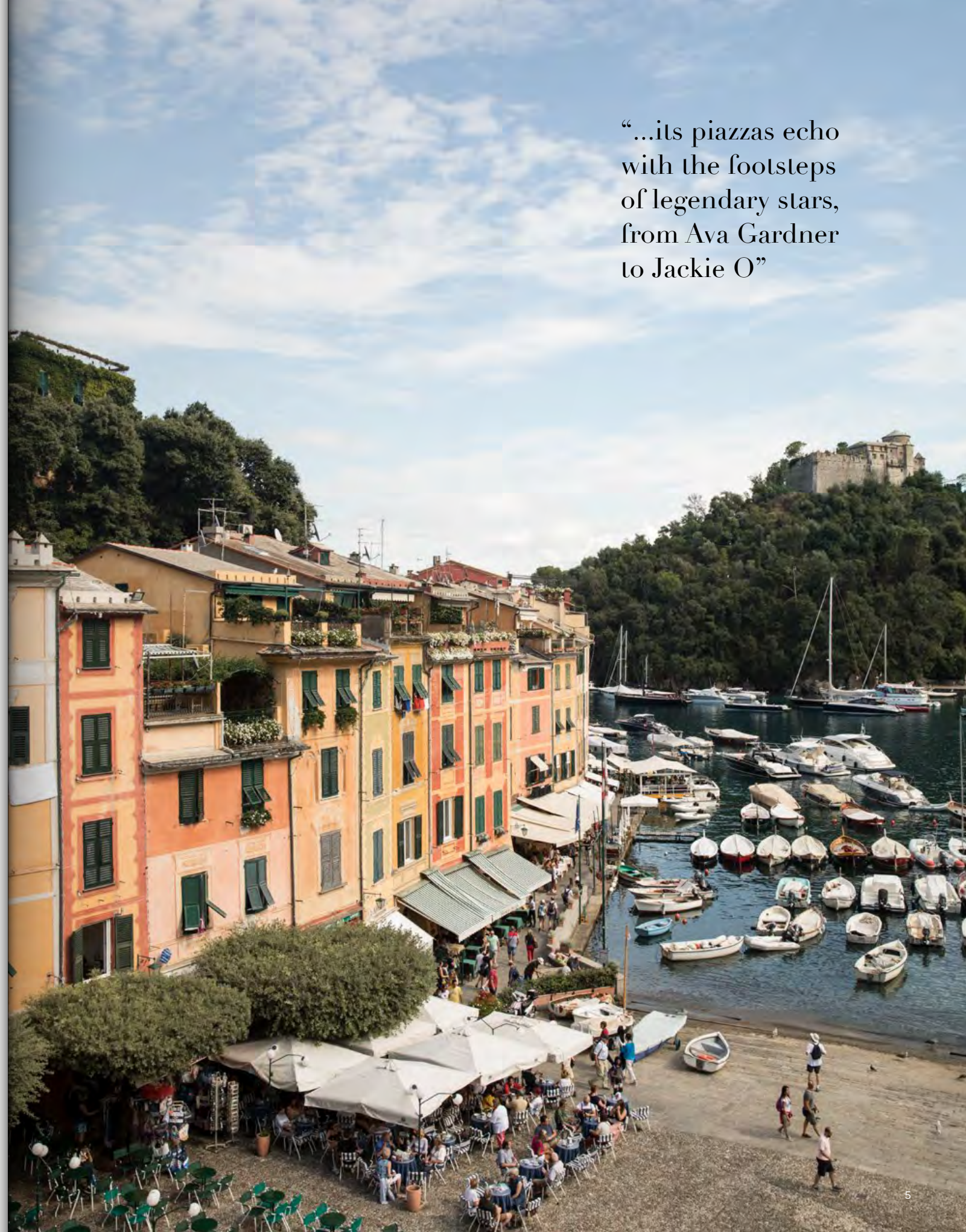
otherworldly quality. It was at once deeply tied to the landscape, while somehow transcending it.

Word spread, and as the years passed aristocrats from around the world were drawn to sample the spot's sparkle for themselves. The magic mingled with a sense of chic indulgence. The Splendido became awash in glamour - luxurious and fashionable, beguiling and enchanting.

Today, that glamour is as irresistible as ever. Spread out in your pastel-perfect suite, crowned with ancient frescoes, a chilled glass of crisp Ligurian wine in hand. Linger over a plate of traditional trofie al pesto at La Terrazza. Find the company of a good book as you savour the sun beside the saltwater pool. Wherever you are, whoever you're with, the views vie for your attention, and the walls whisper a complete history of la dolce vita. In a word? Bellissima.

**Step into Portofino perfection at [belmond.com/hotelsplendido](https://belmond.com/hotelsplendido)**

“...its piazzas echo with the footsteps of legendary stars, from Ava Gardner to Jackie O”





# Your *next* Chapter

From timeless train journeys through the snow-dusted alps to life-changing adventures in Peru's Sacred Valley, there's no doubt that a Belmond escape is better than fiction. But for those who can't resist the allure of the written word, we've collected some of our favourite books to skip to the top of your reading list — each paired with their perfect reading spot.



## 1. WHITE NIGHTS Fyodor Dostoevsky

A light and tender short story in comparison to Dostoevsky's famed epics, *White Nights* is a literary treat dripping in classical romance. It follows the inner dialogue of a young man managing his own restlessness, relationships and vivid imagination against the backdrop of St Petersburg's ethereal summer beauty.

Best read at Belmond Grand Hotel Europe in St Petersburg. This iconic hotel on Nevsky Prospekt is an ideal place to feel the pulse of the city's past. For the most ardent Dostoevsky devotee, opt to stay in the historic suite named for the Russian writer.

## 2. EIGHT FEET IN THE ANDES Dervla Murphy

Set off on an unforgettable journey through Peru's Sacred Valley with the sharp-witted, no-nonsense Dervla Murphy. Accompanied by her 9 year-old daughter and their mule Juana, this rip-roaring true account of a woman's amazing pioneering spirit is sure to inspire your own adventure.

Best read at Belmond Hotel Rio Sagrado in Peru. Surrounded by the towering Andes and set to the soundtrack of the rumbling Urubamba River, this off-the-grid escape lets you breathe in the beauty of the Sacred Valley, as Dervla would have done.

## 3. W.B. YEATS (80TH ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION) W.B. Yeats, edited by Seamus Heaney

In a land famed for its romance and lyricism, it's high praise indeed to be dubbed Ireland's greatest poet. But Yeats' magical weaving of words and imagery is wholly irresistible. This special anniversary edition, curated by Nobel prize-winner Seamus Heaney, inspires readers to be "more resolutely and abundantly alive."

Best read aboard Belmond Grand Hibernian, a luxury train journey through Ireland. Travelling by rail is the perfect way to experience the rugged beauty and boundless grace of the Emerald Isles, and in Yeats' own words, "dance upon the mountains like a flame."

## 4. ITALIAN JOURNEY Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Part diary, part reminiscence, *Italian Journey* tracks Goethe's two-year journey to the land where the lemon trees grow. The holiday became a personal quest, filled with artistic and emotional enrichment. "Although I am still the same," the intellectual decided, "I believe I have changed to the bones."

Best read at Belmond Grand Hotel Timeo in Taormina, Sicily. Goethe arrived in Taormina after almost two months exploring Sicily and was still enraptured by the seaside town. The same sense of wonder can still be captured from the hotel's Literary Terrace, boasting some of the best views of Etna and beyond.

## 5. THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST & OTHER PLAYS Oscar Wilde

Wilde was the cause célèbre of 19th-century London and one of history's most iconic socialites. Through this collection of plays he uses his privileged insider position to critique the city's high society with boundless charm, razor wit and resounding sense of hilarity.

Best read at Belmond Cadogan Hotel in London. The new beating heart and social hub of creative Chelsea, nowhere else weaves together storied past and glittering present with such style.

## 6. RITUALS FOR EVERY DAY Nadia Narain and Katia Narain Phillips

Struggling to find your little moments of calm lately? Sisters Nadia and Katia are on hand to help you regain your mental balance in a way that's both accessible and practical. The series of rituals offer advice for every part of life — from a fresh start in the morning to dealing with goodbyes.

Best read at Belmond Cap Juluca in Anguilla. This dazzling Caribbean resort should be top priority for those looking to escape their everyday stresses. For something truly indulgent, head there in early July when Nadia and Katia will be hosting a comprehensive self care retreat.

## 7. A SHADOW FALLS: IN THE HEART OF JAVA Andrew Beatty

In this captivating travel memoir, Beatty takes us on his journey to the core of Balinese culture while living in a small East Java village for two years. Through a series of beautifully painted vignettes he explores the island's diversity, mysticism, open-heartedness and sensuality, while grappling with the struggles of modernism.

Best read at Belmond Jimbaran Puri in Bali. Hemmed between emerald jungle and sapphire sea, this is the ultimate retreat to step back and slip into the Balinese way of life.

## 8. AURA Carlos Fuentes

A contemporary classic from a famed Mexican writer, *Aura* follows Felipe Montero as he is pulled by destiny into a strange domestic job in Mexico City. What follows is a dream-like narrative that blends present and future; the irresistible draw of fate against the beautiful free-spirited life of the city.

Best read at Belmond Casa de Sierra Nevada in San Miguel de Allende. A collection of idyllic casas spread throughout the city that inspired Frieda Kahlo and Diego Rivera, there is no finer place to live out your own Mexican fairytale.



*An*  
INVITATION

There is a party happening.  
Where? Somewhere wonderful.  
When? It doesn't matter. It's timeless.  
Whether it's an out door train, in a European  
palace or hidden in Santa Barbara hills, this  
is your invitation to live exceptionally.  
Every moment will be dazzling. We hope  
you can make it. It simply wouldn't be the same without you.  
Yours  
Behrend.





The  
**ROAR**  
*of the new*  
**20'S**





# THE NEW 20'S

- BY ANNABELLE SPRANKLEN -

It was the Charleston-dancing, champagne-fountained Jazz Age of flapper girls, sequins and feathered head-dresses, perfectly summarised by F. Scott Fitzgerald as “an age of excess.” The 1920s was a time of dizzying change for everyone - a post-war prosperity brought about social mobility and a younger, freedom-chasing generation ready to dance their way over the rule book, one boundary-busting move at a time.



Writers Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway and Agatha Christie each painted a picture of this lavish epoch with a dazzling sense of wildness and fun, bursting with period-defining spontaneity that previous war-fighting generations could only dream of. And it turns out, 100 years later, we're heading, full-throttle, into a new age of the Twenties. That's right, Hollywood's favourite era has returned.

The comeback is hardly a surprise considering that our obsession for nostalgia has hit an all-time high. Right now, vintage reigns supreme. Millennials bop around rocking Nineties crop tops. Second-hand buying has never been more popular. We upcycle, go to vintage fairs and have a certain penchant for a classic drinks trolley. Technological advancements mean we don't even have to leave our homes anymore, and traditional dress codes are out the

window. Yet nothing makes us leap for joy more than when a gilded invitation flutters through the letterbox inviting us to a black-tie dinner party. It seems we are all longing for a sprinkle of the gold dust from a bygone era. And who can blame us?

We're in a period of history not dissimilar to the one so vividly illustrated in the Twenties; a time of overwhelming sense of self-awareness and change. Despite a century of progress, we're riding a new wave of stark political and economic uncertainty, where environmental protests and shady politicians splatter newspaper columns. The fun has well

and truly been sucked out - but that's not stopping us.

The pursuit of the glamorous, hedonistic age of the Twenties is our escapism. Now more than ever, we're gearing up to throw on sequin gowns and dinner jackets, ready to sip our champagne from glistening crystal coups and have a proper party, the old-fashioned way. Dance on Belmond's Art Deco trains, in the majestic Scottish Highlands or through Switzerland's breathtaking mountains and glaciers. Lord it up in one of our palatial hotels, river cruises or safaris. Wherever you party, we can guarantee one thing: it's going to be one helluva celebration even Fitzgerald himself would be proud of. Are you ready?







## NOW BOARDING: THE BRIGHT YOUNG THINGS

**Relive the ritzy decadence of the Roaring Twenties aboard the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express. Heralding a fabulous new decade, the legendary train kicks off its 2020 season with The Party, a 48-hour celebration unlike anything you've experienced before.**

Immerse yourself in the hedonism of a bygone era; all glittering flapper dresses, trumpeting jazz and cascading champagne. Expect a journey rich in magic, drama and stunning surprises.

The adventure begins under Venetian skies at Belmond Hotel Cipriani, where a mythical speakeasy has been created for one night only. Sneak into a secret location beneath the resort for a taste of 1920s excess.

The next day, board the iconic train at Santa Lucia Station. The excitement is palpable as you walk towards your gleaming art deco carriage. The platform is already abuzz with activity, from gossiping flapper girls to flirting young couples. And hey, wasn't that Marlene Dietrich sashaying up the platform?

As the train roars across the rails, past snowy Alps and serene lakes, the drama unfolds on board. At lunch, a surprise guest may sit down to tell a joke or two, a handsome man flirts with a guest until his wife catches him. Afternoon tea, served in your cabin, is

a chance to relax and soak up the scenery. If your door's open, an unexpected visitor might drop by with a bit of gossip. Every moment promises a new surprise.

The sound of a lounge crooner wafts through the carriages as evening falls. The cocktails are calling... And how! Put on your glad rags and head to the bar. Our bartender's concoctions are the talk of the train. The thrills continue through the sumptuous dinner.

Party late into the night, whirling to the music, tapping your toes to live jazz. Impromptu performances and electrifying entertainers keep the pizzazz at its peak until the early hours.

There's time for one last finale as the train reaches Basel.

The morning after, awaken in your comfortable cabin. Over a restorative brunch, chat about the sensational soiree as the train makes its way towards the Channel. On the Kent side, the Belmond British Pullman is waiting to take you to London Victoria Station. Relax over afternoon tea before disembarking with your dazzling memories. The new Roaring Twenties have begun.

**This special journey departs on 27 March, but the spirit of indulgence can be experienced all year round. Step aboard. [belmond.com/vsoe](https://belmond.com/vsoe)**



## CELEBRATE ON TOP OF THE WORLD

- AMALFI COAST, ITALY -

A secluded Italian villa, spellbinding views and your own butler to pour the champagne - what could be more magnificent? Close to Belmond's renowned Ravello hotel, Belmond Villa Margherita is a private guesthouse overlooking the Amalfi Coast. Cocooned behind olive trees and bougainvillea, the setting is truly heavenly. Fill the Villa's two suites with your friends and family and host the reunion, anniversary or milestone birthday of your dreams.

trompe-l'oeil ceilings. Outside, in the rose-scented gardens, your private butler is waiting to serve sparkling aperitifs and canapés. Host drinks for up to 20 guests and a bartender will mix up live cocktails. Or stage an intimate banquet for 12 on the rooftop - literally one of the highest points in Ravello. With a sublime backdrop of sea and sky, twinkling lights and sunset, you'll soon discover what certain celebrities already know: Belmond Villa San Margherita is the best secret in town.

Sumptuous interiors blend antique sofas, Fortuny textiles, vintage chandeliers and

Plan a party at [belmond.com/villamargherita](https://belmond.com/villamargherita)



## SILVER SCREEN CELEBRATIONS

- SANTA BARBARA, USA -

Tucked in the hills between the Santa Ynez Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, Belmond El Encanto has been a glittering part of Santa Barbara's social scene since opening its doors in 1918. A-listers from Hollywood's infancy - Charlie Chaplin, Clark Gable, Hedy Lamarr - discovered the hillside hideaway and made it their bolthole. Parties here exude understated glamour, with venues ranging from a grand ballroom to a wisteria-lined arbour. Celebrate your wedding in the flower-filled gardens, host an anniversary gathering on the ocean-facing terrace, or plan a big bash for 200 of your most fabulous friends. After mingling over appley Snow White cocktails and feasting on California coastal cuisine - crab cake, beef tenderloin - it's time to dance the night away overlooking the twinkling lights of Santa Barbara.

Celebrate in style - [belmond.com/elencanto](http://belmond.com/elencanto)







The sun rises in the

# EAST

At Belmond, we believe in making the most of each magical morning – a time when you'd usually be rushing from A to B. Give yourself a break from life's frenetic pace. Be still to witness the beauty of the sun rising, breathing life into the landscape. From a champagne cruise on the Mekong River to a glimmering visit to the Shwedagon Pagoda, discover rich new ways to start the day in Southeast Asia.



**SIEM REAP: SUNRISE OVER ANGKOR WAT**

Set off early from Belmond La Résidence d'Angkor, accompanied by a nature guide, to watch the sun rise over the fabled five towers. Explore the magnificent temple complex, before veering into the jungle to spot birds such as black-capped kingfishers in startling detail.

**LUANG PRABANG: LAO AWAKENING**

Join staff of Belmond La Résidence Phou Vao on a trip into town for the tak bat ritual, where you present offerings to a procession of saffron-clad monks. Further awaken your senses at the vibrant morning market, before boarding a private boat for a sunrise cruise with a champagne breakfast on the Mekong River.

**YANGON: DAWN AT SHWEDAGON**

Shwedagon Pagoda, Myanmar's iconic landmark, is never more spellbinding than at first light. Escorted by a private guide from Belmond Governor's Residence, witness the stillness of the temple at dawn and join locals making offerings to planetary signs.

**BAGAN: MURAL IDYLL**

Aboard the Belmond Road to Mandalay river cruiser, every daybreak is different. Alight in Bagan to visit a small, rural temple, surrounded by farmers cultivating their crops. Continue to majestic Sulamani - the Crowning Jewel pagoda. Step inside to marvel at exquisite murals and frescos created nine centuries ago.

**BALI: HOMAGE TO THE GODS**

Experience the spiritual early-morning routine of the devout Balinese people. Gather in Belmond Jimbaran Puri's fragrant gardens, garbed in traditional island dress, and visit four temples on site. Leave offerings for the gods of the sea, the sun and Vishnu, as well as the temple that guards the hotel.

**KOH SAMUI: LOOK WITHIN, GAZE WITHOUT**

Enhance your wellbeing in spectacular style. Join a sunrise yoga class on Belmond Napasai's panoramic Sky Deck. Absorb uplifting views of the Gulf of Thailand as you breathe in the fresh air and hold your pose. Find your inner calm as the island wakes up beneath you.

**BANGKOK: START OF AN ADVENTURE**

It's never too early for champagne, particularly when you're celebrating one of life's most memorable moments: gliding through the lush landscapes of Thailand aboard the Eastern & Oriental Express. In the Observation Car, raise a toast to both the captivating sunrise and the beginning of a wonderful journey.

Plan your Eastern adventure at [belmond.com/asia](http://belmond.com/asia)



**ANGKOR WAT IN CRYSTAL DETAIL**

**“My name is Mardy Sean, and I am Bird Guide and Tour Leader at the Sam Veasna Center in Siem Reap, Cambodia. I’ve worked there for more than 10 years, and have a lot of tour guide experience previous to that. I love showing people the wonders of this region.**

Angkor Wat is magical, especially at first light, and it's a wonderful experience to share with visitors. For me personally, the sunrise at the temple complex is beyond comparison, with the ancient buildings backlit with the dawn's rays as the sun begins to ascend. This is also a prime time to see the region's many varied, dramatic bird species begin their daily routine. Keep an eye out for the Hainan blue flycatcher, the white-throated rock thrush, the Asian barred owlet and the forest wagtail.

The birdlife of Siem Reap is my passion, but the checklist of details to watch for by no means ends with our feathered friends. The plantlife of the region is also fascinating; especially the giant banyan trees and dramatic strangler fig trees, whose roots spread out, over and into the temples. The butterflies also add a surprising splash of colour.

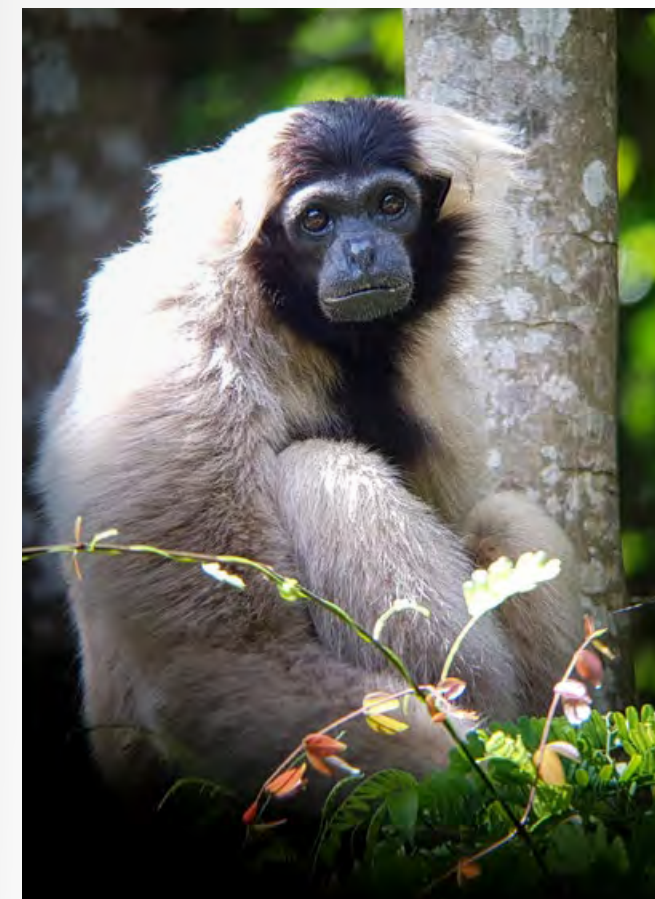
And let's not forget the architecture itself. The overall complex is constructed from more than five million sandstone blocks, using some 300,000 workers and 6,000 elephants. The details

and bas-relief carvings are all truly phenomenal. On our tour you'll learn more about the construction of the temple and how some of the design elements speak of Cambodian culture that still resonates to this day. For example, you'll find images of the sarus crane from over 1000 years ago. The crane still delights visitors to Siem Reap today.

With such a special experience, capturing the moment is top priority. When asked what to bring, we always recommend that guests pack their preferred camera and binoculars. But at the Sam Veasna Center we also provide something special - Swarovski ATX 95mm spotting telescopes. These are Swarovski's largest spotting scopes, and truly fantastic for bringing you closer to the smaller details of the ancient wonder and the nature surrounding it. The lenses provide a wide field of view to maximise your vision, combined with HD optics and a field flattener to give a real crystal-clear image.

That's the special thing about Angkor Wat. It's an awe-inspiring place; the perfect meeting point between nature and culture. Sharing that special combination with the people who come to visit my country is the greatest highlight of all.”

Inspired? Search **#BelmondFirstLight** on Instagram for more dawnlight adventures.







*a* WORLD

*in* BLOOM

ROMANTIC GREEN  
SPACES, RARE BOTANICAL  
EXPERIENCES AND WILD  
ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS.  
UNTOLD ADVENTURES  
AWAIT, JUST OUTSIDE.





A botanical mastermind and florist to the stars, Simon Lycett talks through his love of the natural world and his work as a Belmond Good Living Experience Maker.



## A WORLD IN BLOOM

- BY SIMON LYCETT -

**I was seven years old when I went to my first flower show. I was with my mum at a local park in Warwick. I walked into the show tent and I was hit by a spark that travelled to my core. In that moment I had found my passion; I knew that I wanted to work with this beautiful raw material. I feel so lucky to still be following that passion today.**

After that, I would sit with our neighbour Norma and watch and listen to her as she created wedding flowers for family and friends. She used to teach at City & Guilds. That's how I learnt the craft. I never received any formal training. I started creating displays for film and television, and after being featured in 1993's Four Weddings and a Funeral my career snowballed. I went from creating bouquets and sprays for real weddings and celebrations to installing grand floral displays for Windsor Castle, Buckingham Palace and European royalty.

This year I joined Belmond as a Good Living Experience Maker, uniting with a group of thought leaders in creating exceptional moments for Belmond guests. For me, it's a chance to share my passion with others, to bring the joy of flowers to people all around the world. I've worked with Belmond to create a range of maps for some of the hotels that will guide you through their unique gardens, finding a deeper connection with the beautiful flora and fauna. I'll be hosting a special floral getaway at Belmond Reid's Palace, in May, for Madeira's sensational annual Flower Festival.

I've also cooked up some delicious tea and infusion recipes. One of my favourites uses rose geranium leaves, simply sweetened with a little honey if that's your taste. I love geranium leaves. I love brushing against them as you're on a walk, and savouring their beautiful scent. That's the feeling I wanted to share with Belmond guests. Something you can recreate and enjoy, even if you're sitting at home listening to a podcast. I think it's important

to be closer to the feel and the fragrance of the foliage.

Whether it's a train journey through the Swiss Alps or a beautiful boutique hideaway in the Sacred Valley, Belmond offers experiences that feel unique and considered and of their place. From the abundant gardens in Cape Town and Oxfordshire to the botanical details and furnishings in Sicily or Lima, they bring the outside in. That's something that's important to me. If you're in Botswana, you should see grasses and baobab fruits, not pretty flowers shipped in from somewhere else.



I think that's the crucial thing. Sustainability. It's so necessary to have natural elements in your daily life, but never at a cost. As florists, our whole world revolves around nature, so it seems wrong that we should ever mistreat the material we work with and cherish. I always advise people to stick to local growers and keep an eye out for what's in season. Avoid flower foam at all costs, which is contributing to microplastic pollution.

When it comes to arranging, keep it simple. There's no need for big ornate vases or additional decoration. You don't need to spend a fortune either. Make a statement with one or two branches then an overdose of clashing colours. Green can definitely be one of the most beautiful shades you can play with. Sometimes nothing could be more organic and beautiful than using your own hand as a vase. Let every stick and stem speak for itself.

Whether you're travelling with Belmond on the adventure of a lifetime or simply exploring your home turf, take the time to notice the plants and commune with the natural world whenever you can. Eat fabulous salads, soak up the views. Smell the flowers. I can't think of any simpler way to feel that little bit better.

Florally yours,  
Simon





## FIND YOUR FLOURISH IN MADEIRA

With its subtropical climate, fertile volcanic soil and levadas, Madeira is blooming and gorgeous all year round. Little wonder it's known as the Floating Garden of the Atlantic.

Each May, floral creativity comes to the fore with the island's celebrated annual flower show. For several weeks, Funchal's main streets are filled with flamboyant parades, folk performances and fragrant markets. Belmond Reid's Palace, set on a private peninsula in Funchal, joins in with its own celebrations. This year, they're hosted by one of the world's most celebrated florists - Simon Lycett.

"Guided by the gardeners of Belmond Reid's Palace we'll draw inspiration from the plant-filled paradise, discovering spectacular foliage and flowers that thrive in Madeira's magical climate," enthuses Simon. "From fragrant herb-and-flower-filled nosegays for bedside tables to gloriously scented botanical bunches for perfuming a bath, it really will be a potpourri of ideas and inspirational designs."

The gardens will certainly provide rich pickings. As legendary as the hotel itself, they were created when founder, William Reid, bought the site in the late 19th century. He transported tons of earth to spread over the craggy land, filling every basin, crack and crevice with fertile soil for planting.

Today the 10 acres offer a symphony of colour throughout the seasons. Hanging vines and honeysuckle merge with glorious displays of geranium, hibiscus and salvia. Magnificent trees from around the world sit alongside statuesque succulents. The stunning emerald flowers of the jade vine mingle with bright bird of paradise blooms. Simply gorgeous at any time of year.

**The Good Living botanical break takes place 8-10 May, 2020. Find out more at [belmond.com/reidspalace](https://belmond.com/reidspalace)**

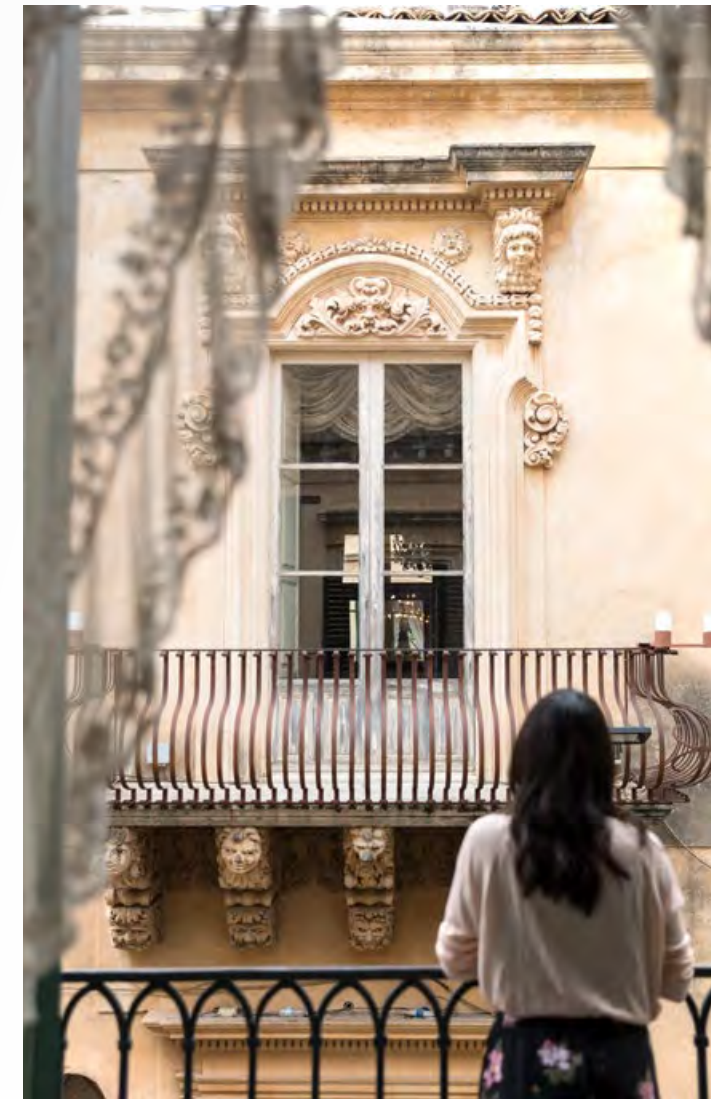


## SECRET WINDOW ON ARTISTIC SICILY

Each May, the Infiorata festival brings an explosion of colours and scents to Sicily's baroque city of Noto. Join an exclusive experience from Belmond Grand Hotel Timeo or Belmond Villa Sant'Andrea for a privileged view of the festival - and discover other surprising treasures.

Start with breakfast at the ancient Palazzo Castelluccio. It was restored to glory in 2011 by an anonymous Frenchman, a fan of Lampedusa's seminal novel, The Leopard. The word sumptuous hardly does justice to this gilded palace. Expect exquisitely restored frescoes and trompe l'oeil, golden candelabras and ornate urns, and even a leopard-print tiled floor. Take a private tour with the owner before the palace opens to the public.

Next, you're off to the Infiorata festival, where the streets are carpeted with tightly packed petals crafted



into luxuriant designs. The Vatican's head florist started the tradition in the 1600s, using flowers to make mosaic-like decorations in the Basilica. You'll be welcomed into a private noble residence, Palazzo Modica, for lunch. There's an exceptional view of the main street, Via Nicolaci, from the balcony. Savour local specialities as Alessandro Modica regales you with tales of his ancestors.

Your final visual feast is at the private atelier of Catania-born artist Sergio Fiorentino, famous for his haunting faces and landscapes in blue. Sergio moved to Noto - "a magical place, outside of reality" - for inspiration. If you're lucky, he'll invite you to take a sneak peek into his whimsical living quarters too.

**Let yourself bloom in Sicily. [belmond.com/villasantandrea](https://belmond.com/villasantandrea)**



## NATURAL HIGHS IN PERU

### ALPACAS AND PRICKLY PEARS

Arrayed across the gentle lower slopes of the Colca Valley, **Belmond Las Casitas** is where the great outdoors comes to life. In the rolling gardens, stone paths wind past cacti and red-hot pokers. Each day, the chefs pick organic produce from the hotel's own vegetable beds, natural greenhouses and prickly pear orchard to create Andean specialities for the restaurant menus. Homegrown herbs, such as mint-like muña, are transformed into healthy tisanes for you to enjoy in the orchard.

Nibbling freely in the grounds are baby alpacas, part of the small onsite farm which also houses horses, pigs and guinea pigs. For a heartwarming treat, join staff in bottle-feeding the fluffy youngsters. A range of activities helps you make the most of the spectacular surroundings. Saddle up for a ride on a Peruvian Paso horse or trek through the canyon to witness its incredible biodiversity. Spot the giant hummingbird, the largest in the world; the hot pink trumpets of the cantuta, Peru's national flower, and rabbit-like viscachas scurrying among the rocks. Perhaps most breathtaking of all, borrow binoculars from the concierge to spot some of our many feathered friends flying across the skies.

Go wild in Peru. [belmond.com/peru](https://belmond.com/peru)

### WHERE HUMMINGBIRDS HOVER

Adjacent to the miraculous Inca citadel of Machu Picchu, **Belmond Sanctuary Lodge** is home to many marvels of its own. At the front of this inviting mountain retreat, explorers come and go. At the back, meanwhile, an oasis of calm invites you to unwind and soak up the sacred spirit of the Andes. Affording stunning views of the mountains, the orchid garden is home to more than 100 different species. Borrow a magnifying glass from the Front Desk so you can admire even the smallest spotted or striped petal in detail.

More than a dozen species of hummingbird dart among the blooms, sipping nectar through their needlelike beaks, as butterflies flutter on the breeze. Early in the morning, meditate or practice yoga in our fern-clad grounds and soak up the views of Huayna Picchu emerging from the mist. Enjoy a massage rooted in Incan techniques, or discover our hidden temple. Here a shaman can guide you through the ancient Pachamama ritual, offering coca leaves, flowers and incense to Mother Earth. Your personal gateway to the Inca world is also a private window on nature's many glories.



### SACRED VALLEY ENERGY

Rushing water, chattering birds and nature's most vibrant hues make **Belmond Hotel Rio Sagrado** rapture for the senses. Set beside the Urubamba River, its verdant gardens beneath azure skies are a joy to explore. Bright geraniums cascade down thick stone walls. Luxuriant lawns are kept neat by the resident alpacas – guests are invited to give the long-lashed pets their morning milk. Everywhere you look, lush vegetation and crimson or orange blooms are offset by rugged mountain backdrops.

Trickling streams overhang with ferns and grasses. Wander at your leisure, or arrange a tour with the head gardener, an expert on indigenous botany. Rich in the energy of its ancient forebears, the Sacred Valley is the place to escape routine and connect with nature. Stretch out at a yoga class by the river or lounge in a hammock listening to the birdsong. When the urge to explore calls, there's rafting, horseriding and ziplining to be done. Return to a tangy pisco sour, barbecued Andean delicacies, or a movie under the stars in quite possibly the world's most beautiful cinema.



## IN AN ENGLISH COUNTRY GARDEN

- OXFORDSHIRE, UK -



**Belmond Le Manoir's ravishing gardens – all 27 acres of them – blend art and productivity to perfection. From the iconic lavender borders to the earthy mushroom valley, this leafy retreat's outdoors is every bit as enticing as inside.**

Chef-Patron Raymond Blanc OBE has been busy developing the 11 gardens and orchards since he opened the Oxfordshire hotel over 35 years ago. He recreated the 16th-century English water gardens, originally dug by monks, and orchestrated the Japanese Tea Garden, inspired by his travels to the Far East. With exuberant, romantic planting, ornamental grasses, ivy-clad archways and rose-entwined stone balustrades he created a quintessentially British country garden. Dotted here and there are sculptures. They include a lifesize bronze of Raymond's adored mother, Maman Blanc, and a bench made from recycled champagne bottles. Feeding the two-Michelin-star kitchens are organic vegetable plots nurturing everything

from artichokes to zucchini, polytunnels sprouting micro-herbs, and orchards bursting with heritage fruits. Guided tours of the grounds are a true highlight of a stay here. You're equally welcome to explore at leisure.

Green-fingered guests inspired by this paradise can cultivate new skills at the Raymond Blanc Gardening School. Head gardener Anne Marie Owens and other experts lead courses on topics ranging from seasonal vegetable growing to fruit-tree pruning. Hands-on, one-day classes take place in the Victorian-style Hartley Botanic Glasshouse, with tuition following the hotel's sustainable, plot-to-plate ethos. Learn what to plant, how to plant, when to plant. Discover which tender greens look and taste great at a dinner party. You can even start your children young by enrolling them for a class led by Raymond's son, Olivier.

**Discover more at [belmond.com/lemanoir](https://belmond.com/lemanoir)**

“...romantic planting, ornamental grasses, ivy-clad archways and rose-entwined stone balustrades...”







ART — ON — THE — MOVE

WHETHER TRAVELLING THROUGH THE EMERALD ASIAN RAINFOREST OR PERU'S RUGGED SACRED VALLEY, OUR TRAINS ARE THE ULTIMATE ROLLING CANVAS.



## TIGER EXPRESS

Two carriages of the Eastern & Oriental Express have been emblazoned with tiger-inspired art by British-Chinese artist Jacky Tsai.

The train's third annual Art in Motion transformation puts the critically endangered cat in the spotlight in aid of the global charity initiative, Save Wild Tigers. Shanghai-born, London-based Jacky, an ambassador for the charity, famously created the late Alexander McQueen's iconic floral skull. His energetic, kaleidoscopic works blend traditional Chinese craft with vibrant pop iconography.

"I wanted to create a visual reminder of the majesty of tigers that, in a similar way to the train, travel through Southeast Asia," he explained. "The design fuses traditional eastern artistic techniques and imagery with western references to create an original style that seeks to establish balance and harmony. Inspired by my Tiger Art on Canvas, it's a powerful reminder of the beauty of these creatures."

The stunning carriages were unveiled on a VIP Tiger Express journey raising funds for Save Wild Tigers. High-profile guests on board included Dior Men's artistic director, Kim Jones, creative director of Shanghai Tang, Victoria Tang-Owen, singer Melanie Blatt and actress Jaime Winstone, with MasterChef winner Ping Coombes creating a delectable menu inspired by the train's route.

Simon Clinton, the charity's Founder, said: "If no action is taken, wild tigers could be extinct in just 10 years. It's essential we collectively all do our best to protect them."

**Step aboard.** [belmond.com/easternorientalexpress](http://belmond.com/easternorientalexpress)

## SPIRIT OF PERU

Jaw-dropping vistas have always been part of the wonder of a journey aboard Belmond Hiram Bingham. The train winds its way through soaring mountains and deep green valleys on day trips between Cusco and Machu Picchu. Now, the Observation Car has itself become a vision of ethereal beauty, its exterior decorated by award-winning Peruvian artist Fito Espinosa.

Representing the first art installation on a train in South America, the playful, celestial artwork illustrates the train's fantastical journey through sub-tropical forest, teeming with Andean flora and fauna, into the spiritual heart of the Inca Empire.

Fito is known for depicting humanity's most tender feelings – love, hope, longing – and the world in which we live. His enchanting work, which includes paintings, illustrations, ceramics and sculpture, has appeared in solo exhibitions throughout Lima, as well as in international group shows.

The carriage adornment heralds a reimagining of the Belmond Hiram Bingham experience. Further innovations include an exciting cocktail menu devised by celebrated Peruvian mixologist Aaron Diaz; and new dishes rich in Sacred Valley ingredients, such as crispy corn tartlet and grilled paiche. The train also launched new stylish staff uniforms endowed with pioneering panache by fashion designer José Miguel Valdiva.

Collaborating with local experts and tastemakers in art, design and gastronomy, the train offers all-new timeless adventures that bring guests closer to contemporary Peruvian culture.

**Step aboard.** [belmond.com/hirambingham](http://belmond.com/hirambingham)



## GREEN WONDERS OF IRELAND

Discover the jewels of the Emerald Isle from an utterly unique perspective. Weave through the diverse landscape on Ireland's only luxury sleeper train, **Belmond Grand Hibernian**.

Join acclaimed Irish chef Clodagh McKenna for a two-night food lovers' adventure. A Taste of Ireland with Clodagh McKenna follows the journey of glorious ingredients from seed to plate. Travellers will have the opportunity to meet an expert forager who will guide you in seeking out delicious wild fruits and vegetables. Back on board, taste Clodagh's personal interpretation of the ingredients in her specially created dishes.

Green-fingered adventurers can delight in a spectacular four-day journey, touring through some of Ireland's most magnificent private homes and country estates. Gardens and Gallops of Unseen Ireland pulls back the curtain to give guests insider knowledge of the beautiful destinations the train passes through. Leading the tour are two enthusiastic gardening gurus. Together you have the opportunity to celebrate the charm of Ireland in a way that truly takes you back to the roots.



## INTO THE SCOTTISH WILDS

**A country famed for its rugged and dramatic landscapes, let loose and discover the wild side of Scotland on the Belmond Royal Scotsman train.** Explore the eclectic gardens of the north on the new journey launching for 2020, Glorious and Grand - A Private Garden Tour. Traversing through the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales and then into South West Scotland, travellers will have the opportunity to visit some of the most beautiful gardens of Great Britain. Guests will explore glorious private homes and gardens, many of which are rarely open to the public. You'll be hosted by British gardening writer Sue Chivers and photographer Patsy Floyd to add some extra expert insight into the wonderful architecture and landscapes.

A jaunt on the Belmond Royal Scotsman invites you to experience timeless luxury in the historic carriages. But the journey also offers a deeper resonance, letting you get closer to the land you travel through. Our new Wild Swimming experiences take that to the next level. Step out of your comfort zone and into the mesmerising lochs of Scotland with an expert wild swimmer as your guide. Savour the thrill of white-water rafting, safe in the knowledge that a hot drink and blanket are waiting for you back on board.



## LET THE SEASON BEGIN

**Arrive at Britain's most prestigious summer events in unrivalled style. As you don your most elegant attire, step onto the 1920s and 30s carriages of Belmond British Pullman and settle in for a day full of timeless glamour. From the moment you take your seat, simply allow all your senses to takeover. Taste divine culinary creations, let the Champagne flow and feel the energy throughout the train as the excitement builds.**

Perhaps enjoy a flutter, or simply soak up the exciting atmosphere at two of the most anticipated horse racing events of the season, Royal Ascot and Glorious Goodwood. Revel in the celebrations that flow through the air and hand-pick the winning horse at the parade ring.

In June 2020, add the Royal Windsor Cup to your social calendar. Admire the beautiful grounds of the Windsor Great Park at one of the world's leading polo tournaments. Watch as the marvellous day unfolds and the sport's greatest players take centre stage. And of course, lend a foot to the tradition by divot stomping at the half-time whistle.

Delight in a perfect blend of world-class opera and timeless travel in an evening spent at Glyndebourne. Enjoy a sublime 3-course lunch on the journey towards the opera house in the heart of the Sussex countryside. After arrival, anticipate the evening ahead as you prepare to take your seat to watch Fidelio, Beethoven's only opera.



# A FEAST FOR THE BODY

France—a land renowned for delicious dining. Postcard villages perfumed by delicious patisseries and fromageries; patchwork vineyards producing world-renowned vintages beside pretty chateaux. It's a bucket-list destination for any self-respecting gastronome. Belmond Afloat in France lets you discover the country's many treasures from the water, travelling on one of seven luxurious barges.

Dining aboard is always a celebration, a time to take pleasure in and savour the glorious flavours prepared by your own personal chef. This year we launch a special Michelin journey, treating travellers to a host of palatable pleasures both on the river and ashore.

Glide through the heart of Champagne on Belmond Hirondelle or Belmond Pivoine, relishing the delectable creations produced by your personal chef. Explore Burgundy on Belmond Amaryllis, Fleur de Lys or Lilas, evenings punctuated with imaginative feasts and artisanal cheese boards. Float gently through Provence on Belmond Napoleon or along the Canal du Midi on Belmond Alouette, dining alfresco as the sun sets.

When you're not indulging on board, hand-pick a personal selection of Michelin Starred restaurants en route. Your expert crew will always be on hand to give you the best recommendations. After all, France is where the Michelin guide began, so you'll never be far from a star-rated establishment. Bon appétit.

**Dine deliciously at**  
[belmond.com/afloatinfrance](https://belmond.com/afloatinfrance)



# A FEAST FOR THE SOUL

**A jewel of the east, Myanmar invites visitors to bask in the unchanged; to truly discover a country barely touched by time, and experience all of its precious kept traditions.**

Captivate your senses on a voyage like no other aboard Belmond Road to Mandalay. Life on this celebrated river cruise is devoted to the art of wellbeing, both on the river and on shore. Indulge in a treatment in the on board spa or an invigorating first light yoga class. On land get closer to Myanmar's rich local life and spirituality, visiting glittering pagodas and hidden villages. The sound of the temple bell and soft scent of incense remind you of the calmness of this place.

Myanmar is a land that encourages you to reconnect with the world around you. Beyond the stunning architecture and breathtaking nature, it's the warm and humbling nature of Myanmar's people which give this country its enchanting personality. They take sincere pride in celebrating their culture and sharing it with curious visitors.

This year sees the launch of a special journey that brings you even closer to the spirit of Myanmar. The eleven-night adventure will take you along the Ayeyarwady River to the ancient city of Bhamo, the northernmost part of Myanmar. Hosting the expedition is the remarkable Raha Moharrak, the youngest Arab woman to summit Mount Everest and one of Belmond's Good Living Experience Makers. Raha will be using her incredible knowledge and innate curiosity to lead daily excursions to some of the country's most fascinating sights.

Gliding along the might Ayeyarwady River opens yourself up to a host of magical experiences, felt within and without. Lifelong memories are guaranteed.

**Find your balance at**  
[belmond.com/roadtomandalay](https://belmond.com/roadtomandalay)







MEDITERRANEAN  
SUMMER

SET OFF ON A VISUAL JOURNEY  
WITH PHOTOGRAPHER STUART  
CANTOR AS HE CAPTURES THE SPIRIT  
OF THE MEDITERRANEAN -  
A PLACE WHERE THE EVERLASTING  
LANDSCAPES ARE MATCHED ONLY  
BY THE INSATIABLE JOY OF LIVING.





**Before finding photography I was in property development.** Working with top architects and interior designers has definitely influenced my style over time. I have always been drawn to the built form, and love looking at how it interacts with the environment, particularly with water and people. I like the timeless appeal of a muted aesthetic, and always love it when people aren't quite sure if my photos were taken yesterday or in the 1960's.

I try to capture a memory you might take away from a place. Staying in an amazing location, at a Belmond hotel, you are always going to have a good time. It is that memory I want people to recall when viewing my work. That's why I like my interior prints to be as big as possible, so you can feel like you're physically there, even if you've never been. You can daydream away and escape to the Med.

PREVIOUS: BELMOND VILLA SANT'ANDREA, TAORMINA MARE, SICILY  
 TOP: BELMOND LA RESIDENCIA, DEIÀ, MALLORCA  
 CENTRE: BELMOND HOTEL SPLENDIDO, PORTOFINO  
 RIGHT: BELMOND GRAND HOTEL TIMEO, TAORMINA, SICILY







**We photographed Mallorca, Portofino then Sicily. We got to Sicily at the end of summer. The whole place was buzzing with locals making the most of the weather. It felt so authentic.**

What makes the Mediterranean special? Architecturally, it's stunning. There are old-world buildings, constantly being restored, and history everywhere you look. You feel like you're in a movie. Then there's the atmosphere. It's so relaxed, and if you live there maybe you become immune to it. Whether it's Mallorca or the Amalfi Coast, there's an attitude of celebrating life. Every day is full of quiet moments of enjoyment. And coming from the Anglo world, which can be so highly strung, it's a breath of fresh air.

**More of Stuart's work can be found online or on Instagram at [@stuartcantorphotography](https://www.instagram.com/stuartcantorphotography)**



TOP: STUART CANTOR

RIGHT: PORTOFINO, ITALY, WITH BELMOND HOTEL SPLENDIDO IN THE DISTANCE



## CORNERS WITH RAHA MOHARRAK

HIDDEN



**The youngest Arab woman to summit Everest, Raha Moharrak finds the hidden adventures in every moment. Follow in her footsteps and discover her philosophy of living curiously.**

I love that I can't really pinpoint when I had my first taste of adventure. That's how far back it was.

I would probably say it was something I did with my family. Perhaps jumping off the pier at my parents' beach house and not having a care in the world. My parents, bless them, always raised me to be adventurous and try new things. I don't think they ever imagined that nurturing that trait would give them so many grey hairs and so many sleepless nights. So I guess I've always been adventurous. I was never afraid to fall, I was never afraid to get bumped and bruised along the way. As long as I was trying something new, I was happy.

Living curiously is my life motto. I suppose I have a few, but that's probably the biggest one. We tend to lose that childish curiosity that bewildered us as children. Losing that feels so sad to me. Sure you're alive, but you're not really living. I strive to keep hold of that childhood spark, and encourage others to do the same. Live with an insatiable curiosity, an appetite to learn, and a desire to explore beyond the bounds of what you already know. I promise you, if you live like that, you will never get bored.

Mountaineering came to me as a strange kind of peer pressure, reacting against the cultural expectations of what I should do when I reached that specific time of my life. I was not ready to settle down. I wanted to do something for me that was boldly mine and outside the play book. Something beyond what they thought a Saudi girl could do. Climbing always has and always will be self-expression for me. An outlet to scream at the top of my lungs that this is who I choose to be.

I've had my failures. We all have. Failing to climb Denali the first time is and forever will be one of the toughest things I've had to overcome. It was awful weather and a huge emotional setback. I had to battle with myself to get off that mountain. It almost broke me. I had to rebuild my courage from zero. It didn't break me entirely, but it nearly did. Sometimes going to the brink of breaking teaches you so much about yourself.

The most surprising thing that I've discovered throughout my travels shouldn't be a surprise at all. We are all so similar. Fundamentally, human beings are the same. We want the same things, have the same passions, the same desires. Kindness can take you a long way. That's the thing I've found fascinating. Walk the earth with an open heart, a kind mind and a gentle soul and you will find people to walk with you.

My advice is: don't follow the trend. There are so many people who travel who follow crazes. Follow who you are, follow your passions. Try to find a passion that goes deeper than the surface. Don't travel for the sake of the picture, or what your friends will think. Travel for the emotion, and the things that the journey will teach you. Always aim to come back different to how you left, with a deeper knowledge of a culture and a richer understanding of something you love. Don't come back angry, tired and jaded. I always tell people, don't follow the patterns, break them. What you find there might surprise you.





## TAP INTO ANCIENT TRADITIONS ON GIUDECCA

- VENICE, ITALY -

Home to the legendary Belmond Hotel Cipriani, Giudecca is a laidback, village-like island moments from St Mark's Square. Though the urge may be to dash off to the bustle of the city or sail to celebrated lagoon islands, there are many lesser-known - yet priceless - treasures on your doorstep.

Where else can you learn the time-honoured art of Venetian rowing with a champion female rower? We can arrange for you to take a lesson with Gloria Rogliani, winner of more than 300 flags and six first places at the Regata Storica. Choose from different types of traditional craft, and discover unique rowing techniques that have evolved over time to suit the lagoon environment and narrow canals.

Rowing techniques aren't the only exclusive aspect of the lagoon. Years ago, 60 families on Giudecca practiced fishing for moeche, soft-shelled green crabs, using nets. Today, there are just two families left - the last moecantes. Head out and meet Andrea Bognolo, a fifth-generation crab fisherman. Learn about

the challenges of his work, which often starts at four in the morning and continues until sunset during the crabbing season. Keen to try them? They're delicious deep-fried.

It takes at least three years to become a squeraroli, a gondola builder. One of the last real boatyards is Squero Crea on Giudecca. Squero means boatyard, crea means champion - the owner, Gianfranco Vianello, is a seven-time Regata Storica winner. Visit him in his ancient family boatyard and gain an insight into the history of gondolas in his studio.

A final Giudecca gem is found behind the majestic façade of Palladio's Redentore Church. A tiny pharmacy, dating from 1577, still contains ancient tools, recipe books and ampoules used by the Capuchin monks to store medicines, which they concocted themselves from ingredients grown in their botanical garden.

Discover more at [belmond.com/hotelcipriani](https://belmond.com/hotelcipriani)



## DISCOVER A PALACE OF ART

- MALLORCA, SPAIN -

Surrounded by woodland on Mallorca's north coast, Sa Bassa Blanca Museum can be found just a short distance away from Alcúdia, the oldest city in the Balearics. The vision of artists Yannick Vu and Ben Jakober, it blends intriguing contemporary artworks with spectacular gardens. From Belmond La Residencia, in Deià, embark on a self-driven or chauffeured excursion to discover an enchantingly different world. Enter to be guided through a series of wonders, from the colourful library to the subterranean Sala Socrates, where a fossilised woolly rhino paces before a curtain of Swarovski crystals.

Step outside to the sculpture park to discover more sculptural surprises. Linger a while before being driven up the steep coast to soak up the spellbinding views and explore the old observatory. Return to the romantic rose garden and savour a tasty picnic, provided by the hotel.

Discover more at [belmond.com/laresidencia](https://belmond.com/laresidencia)



## GETTING LOST IN CUSCO

**Travel photographer Jord Hammond explains the rich joy that can be found while wandering the streets of Peru's ancient Incan capital.**

"I've been lucky enough to visit and photograph some amazing places throughout my career, but there's something special about Cusco. With its ancient arcades, cobble roads and beautiful squares, it's a photographer's dream. And the city was designed to be explored on foot. I travelled there last year as part of The Wonders of Belmond campaign, also visiting Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley.

When looking for a shot, composition is obviously a key factor. But more than that, I want to take a picture that tells a story. And in Cusco, you can't walk anywhere without stumbling onto some piece of history. Did you know, for example, that the city was built in the shape of a puma? The puma was sacred to the Incas; a symbol of life, power and strength. All of the most important and sacred sites are found at the puma's head. You'll see little tributes to the Puma throughout the city - carved into stone walls, emblazoned on door knockers. You can also find the city's colonial past detailed in the many beautiful churches and cathedrals.

It's the kind of place that emplores you to get lost. When you wander along the streets you'll find locals in colourful dress, architectural gems, vibrant markets, and more alpacas than you could fathom. Each and any of these things, with Cusco's ethereal soft light, will make for an impressive photo. But more than that, they'll be a timeless memory."

**For more inspiring travel shots follow [@jordhammond](#) and [#theartofbelmond](#)**





## ESCAPE TO A DESERT ISLAND

- ANGUILLA, CARIBBEAN -

Rarely do locations claiming to be paradise live up to the dream. Prickly Pear Cays, six miles off Anguilla's coast, is the real deal.

Formed of two small, uninhabited islands, easily reached by boat from Belmond Cap Juluca, this is where you can find your inner Robinson Crusoe – though, granted, Daniel Defoe's 18th-century adventurer didn't have access to daiquiri cocktails and succulent grilled lobster. The relaxed, rustic restaurant here is the one concession to human indulgence. The social, gourmet hub of Prickly Pear Cays also offers a range of services. So, if you're not lounging beneath a thatched umbrella on the powder-white beach, you could be renting a paddleboard, kayak or Seabob to explore the warm, turquoise waters of the marine protected area. Or snorkelling among the rocky coral reefs spotting flamboyant parrotfish, angelfish, blue tang and even stingrays.

There are rich rewards on land too. Stride off on a hike or a bird-watching tour. Spot bulbous brown pelicans and red-billed tropicbirds along the rugged shoreline, and even endangered nesting sea turtles. The scrubby vegetation includes the spherical pope's head cactus, seagrape and milky thorn. And yes, prickly pears aplenty.

Discover more at [belmond.com/capjuluca](https://belmond.com/capjuluca)



## TOUR AN ANCIENT TEMPLE BY TORCHLIGHT

- BAGAN, MYANMAR -



Nearly 4,000 ancient temples and pagodas dot the sacred landscape of Old Bagan, stretching as far as the eye can see. Many are magnificent, gleaming in the sunlight and drawing awed crowds. But there is one, located off the beaten tourist trail, that we've singled out for the guests of Belmond Road to Mandalay. Rather than jostling with the throngs, join us for a private, torchlight tour of magical, hidden Pahto thamyā.

Feel like a true explorer as you enter the dark, single-storey brick temple, most likely built towards the end of the 10th century by King Nyaung-U Sawrahan. 'Pahto thamyā' literally means 'sons of the stupa' – a large, bell-shaped stupa is surrounded by baby stupas at the pagoda's corners and along its terrace. The temple is renowned for its frescos, possibly the oldest surviving examples in Bagan. Small stone windows are insufficient to illuminate the beautiful interior, but our torches pick out details while creating a captivating atmosphere, brimming with mystery. It's just one of the enthralling activities included as part of your cruise along the Ayeyarwady River.

Discover more at [belmond.com/roadtomandalay](https://belmond.com/roadtomandalay)





MYSTERIES OF THE OKAVANGO

**My name is Moses Maphane and I've been a guide with Belmond Safaris for over a decade. I'm a 37-year-old Motswana, originally from a village called Shorobe, 40km east of Maun.**



I started an internship with Belmond in March 2008 and began my career at Belmond Khwai River Lodge that August. In 2015, I transferred to Belmond Eagle Island Lodge, where I'm still based today as the senior guide. It has been a wonderful journey with this great company.

The lodge is set in the middle of the Okavango Delta, along the Boro River, one of the region's three main channels. This unique wetland system was the 1000th site to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2014. When it floods, it reaches an area of around 22,000 square kilometres, a wonderland of floodplains, palm groves and papyrus swamps visible from space.

The wetlands attract a glorious wealth of wildlife. As well as a high population of elephant, we have over 500 species of birds, 160 mammals, 35 reptiles, 71 fish and around 1500 plants. Among the mammals are endangered species, such as cheetah, white and black rhino and African wild dog.

A key highlight of Okavango is the spectacular scenery, influenced by the variety of ecosystems. These range from deep, permanent water channels to huge, round termite mounds and long islands formed through the shifting of sediment and the Kalahari sands.

It's amazing how animals adapt to life here. Cats are known to hate water, but in the delta big cats such as lions have learnt to

live and hunt in the shallows, using water to get close to their prey.

The peak season for wildlife viewing is when the water is highest, usually May to August. Around this time, the delta is only accessible by plane or boat. Take a dugout canoe and glide through the clear water, past kingfishers and elephant.

The most magical moment for me is after sunset when tiny frogs emerge from their hiding places and start making territorial and mating calls. When the hippos join in with their deep booms, the combination of sounds from big and small animals is music to my ears.

Botswana's mysteries extend beyond the wildlife. In the stony hills surrounding Savuti, you can admire ancient San Bushmen rock paintings, thought to be more than 1,500 years old. The red ochre outlines depict elephant, giraffe and eland antelope. Nearby, an incredible cluster of giant baobab trees are almost as old as the paintings.

Perhaps the greatest phenomenon of all is the Savute Channel, or "Ghost Channel", which seemingly ebbs and flows at whim. When it springs to life, it attracts great numbers of lion, leopard and wild dog. It runs right in front of Belmond Savute Elephant Lodge, so guests have a ringside view. Even when it has ceased to flow, there are fascinating interactions to witness around the waterholes. It's where creatures such as warthog, hyena and maribou storks gather to drink.

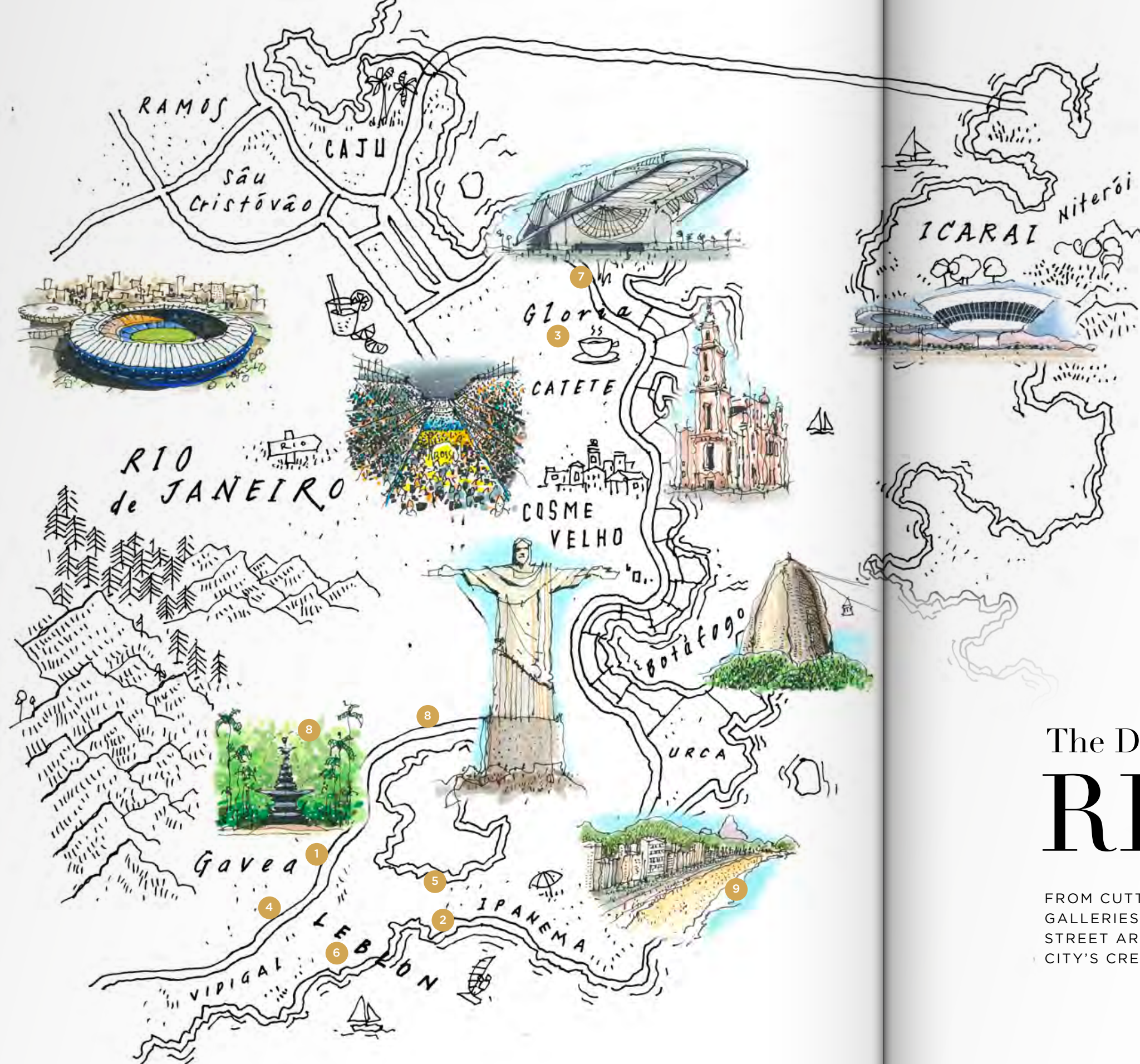
**Chart your own African adventure at [belmond.com/safaris](http://belmond.com/safaris)**



“Perhaps the greatest phenomenon of all is the “Ghost Channel”, which seemingly ebbs and flows at whim.”







## The Draw of RIO

FROM CUTTING-EDGE GALLERIES TO MONUMENTAL STREET ART, DISCOVER THE CITY'S CREATIVE STREAK.

### 1 ANITA SCHWARTZ

This bold, three-storey space is devoted to both distinguished and emerging artists from Brazil and around the world. Ample rooms showcase large-scale installations and video works.

### 2 IPANEMA ART GALLERY

For nearly five decades, this striking gallery has championed the modernist movement. Enjoy works by weighty names such as Cícero Dias, Alfredo Volpi and Lygia Clark.

### 3 A GENTIL CARIOCA

Set in a colonial townhouse near Saara, the largest outdoor market in Latin America, A Gentil's displays capture the melting-pot diversity of its central Rio location.

### 4 GÁVEA GALLERY

Eighteen contemporary photographers are represented by this gallery, whose changing exhibitions portray intriguing and beautiful aspects of Brazilian life.

### 5 LUCIANA CARAVELLO: CONTEMPORARY ART

Caravello seeks out talented artists from a broad array of backgrounds, bringing together cutting-edge and experimental works to reflect the power of diversity in contemporary art.

### 6 LURIXS

Captivating exhibitions by some of Brazil's best-known contemporary artists are staged across this four-floor, custom-built gallery designed by architect Miguel Pinto Guimarães.

### 7 BOULEVARD OLIMPICO

Eduardo Kobra's record-breaking, 190m-long mural, painted as part of the Olympic-fuelled revitalisation of Rio's port area, depicts five glorious indigenous faces from five continents.

### 8 BOTANICAL GARDEN & LAGOA

Rio's thriving street art, legalised in 2009 and today positively nurtured, is concentrated around the Botanical Garden and, just north, the area of Lagoa. Prepare to be dazzled.

### 9 BELMOND COPACABANA PALACE

Book an exclusive art tour from our landmark hotel on Copacabana Beach. Or speak to the Concierge for further tips.



## CHELSEA: THE CREATIVE PLAYGROUND

- BY DELILAH KHOMO -

Chelsea has always attracted a generation of creative visionaries. It has been steeped in fashion history since the rule of King James I. It was he who kick-started Britain's silk industry in this bucolic neighborhood by establishing a mulberry plantation to feed the silkworms—even if his endeavour was not entirely successful.

During the 1700s, Ranelagh Gardens became a fashionable pleasure ground. The area's green spaces inspired the Chelsea porcelain movement with its flowery, rococo-style plates and ornate figurines. Aside from its geographic prettiness, the characters Chelsea attracts have always ensured that it is a bohemian freethinking playground.

There was the artsy intellectual Thomas Carlyle, whose Cheyne Row home played host to many of the great thinkers of the Victorian age, including Ruskin, John Stuart Mill, Tennyson and Dickens. Carlyle described Chelsea's unique magic as "a singular heterogeneous kind of spot, very dirty and confused in some places, quite beautiful in others, abounding in antiquities and traces of great men".

But Chelsea's image as a borough of endless creative possibilities really shone with the seductive style and freewheeling hedonism of the 60s. It was then that Mary Quant accosted women's fashion with her revolutionary mini skirt. Alice Pollock founded Quorum, the destination store and Ossie Clark Mecca. The doors opened for the psychedelic menswear hangout Granny Takes a Trip, which attracted a generation of deep-pocketed trendsetters including a gaggle of Gettys and Rolling Stones.

Later on, the World's End district gave birth to the punk movement, emerging at Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren's infamous boutique Sex on 430 King's Road. Westwood's flagship store still remains today as a landmark to her anarchic spirit.

Chelsea's punk days may have diminished, but it is as postcard-pretty as ever. It's a tangle of 19th-century red brick houses, honey-stoned squares, cottage industry pottery and arts' studios. There's the wildly romantic fairy-lit Albert Bridge, and its leafy green spaces. Chelsea still remains the ultimate 'village within the city', and my own home turf. It is a microcosm of London, a place where the 'anything goes' mentality still rules.

## A NEW LEGACY

The creative spirit lives on at Belmond Cadogan Hotel. An homage to its illustrious past, this year the city's most stylish retreat will host a series of salon events that bring together authors, artists and culture creators to celebrate the very soul of Chelsea.

Follow your muse to [belmond.com/cadoganhotel](https://belmond.com/cadoganhotel)





## THE WINTER ROMANCE OF ST PETERSBURG

- BY STANLEY STEWART -



**In St Petersburg, winter is the natural season. The Tsarist Russian capital is at its most beautiful when the snow starts to swirl. The frozen Neva River becomes a wilderness of ice, and the squares of black trees are softened with white drifts washed with pale winter light. Along the frozen canals and the wide avenues there is a muffled stillness.**

At the Belmond Grand Hotel Europe, the uniformed doorman stamps snow from his feet and swings the doors open for arriving guests. Around the corner, as the afternoons draw in, the windows of the shops along the Nevsky Prospect glow invitingly. Across town in Theatre Square, ballet fans in fur hats and rosy cheeks hurry towards the brightly lit Mariinsky Theatre, where Nijinsky and Nureyev both performed. A few blocks away frost patterns decorate the windows of the Winter Palace, while the great dome of St. Isaac's hovers like a vision in the early dark. The statue of Peter the Great, the city's founder, rears on his horse with a mantle of snow round his shoulders.

Built in the 18th century as Russia's 'Window on the West', St Petersburg quickly became one of the most sophisticated and opulent cities in Europe. Palaces and academies, cathedrals and theatres, line the avenues and canals radiating outward from the golden spire of the Admiralty.

Russian winters have made the city a world of interiors. Step inside the double doors of any of its 500 palaces, and you enter a dream of sweeping staircases, chandeliers and ballrooms

that are measured in acres. Some of the most fascinating are the summer palaces in the surrounding country—Peterhof, Tsarskoye, Pavlovsk, the Catherine Palace – each more lavish than the last. To see them in winter when snow drifts across the parklands is to step into the pages of a Russian novel. Greatest of all, with 1500 rooms and 117 staircases, is the extraordinary Winter Palace, a building that could make Buckingham Palace seem a trifle cramped.

Above all St Petersburg is a city of romance. It was in St Petersburg that Anna Karenina fell in love with Count Vronsky, and Dr Zhivago first met the beautiful Lara. Tchaikovsky studied at the St Petersburg Conservatory and conducted the premiere of his symphonies here. Pushkin, the greatest Russian poet, died here in mid-winter, fighting a duel with a love rival.

All of them knew the Grand Hotel Europe, central to this city since the 1880's. Its interiors are as opulent as any palace. Here they came to meet; to catch one another's eye across the lavish bar. To dine beneath the stained glass windows of the dining hall where Rasputin used to be entertained by his aristocratic lovers, and where a string quartet still plays Tchaikovsky.

So much has changed in St Petersburg, and yet so much remains the same. This is still a city of culture, of intellectuals and artists, and of romantics. And winter is their natural season.

**Explore St Petersburg in style. [belmond.com/grandhoteleurope](http://belmond.com/grandhoteleurope)**



“Russian winters  
have made the city a  
world of interiors.”



# Unlock *the Spirit of St Martin*



**St Martin is a land with two distinct personalities. One of the prettiest islands in the Caribbean, the south, Dutch side brims with buzzing bars, glitzy resorts and late-night casinos. The French-owned north side feels more like a serene fishing village, with picturesque boats, luxury boutiques and some of the most sublime cuisine in the entire region.**

Tying the two sides together? Sensational golden beaches, dazzling azure waves and a call to relaxation that's impossible to resist.

Close to the border on the French side you'll find Belmond La Samanna, taking pride of place on one of the island's best beaches. This timeless retreat is one of the most glamorous in the West Indies, welcoming guests like Diana Ross and Jackie Onassis since the 1970s.

This year it boasts a fresh new design - combining a celebration of the spirit of St Martin with a love letter to the Caribbean Sea, just heartbeats away. Pastel-chic tones of blue, green, pink and peach echo the waves, coral and shells nearby. Culinary delights await at the deliciously reimagined restaurants, while new and exclusive experiences let you experience the island culture like never before.

**Plan your escape today at [belmond.com/lasamanna](https://www.belmond.com/lasamanna)**



## THE ART OF FLAMBOYANT PAINTING

It's easy to see where flamboyants get their name from. The trees, ubiquitous on St Martin, have a way of exhibiting their blush-red blossoms with unabashed flair and a-not-so-subtle touch of... Well, flamboyance.

"Flamboyants spread out and always try to reach back down to the ground, but most of them are trimmed and their branches stay suspended in the air," says Sir Roland Richardson, perhaps the island's most attuned observer of these beautiful trees. A multi-generational Saint Martinois, the acclaimed painter is best known for his plein air impressionist work.

Naturally, flamboyants feature in many of his works. They sit alongside vivid turquoise seascapes, lush green mountains, orange blistered mangoes and pastel-hued skies.

You, too, can lose yourself in Sir Roland's world of colour with an expert art class at Belmond La Samanna. The hues are waiting to be captured.



## THE LITTLE ISLAND THAT COULD

**Snorkeling U-boats. Intrepid pilots. A self-proclaimed king. Few islands have ever conjured up so many tall tales, fabricated or not. Even fewer islands of such significance have been so small that ten of them could fit comfortably inside Central Park.**

And yet, just a few miles off the coast of St Martin, sits the island of Tintamarre. Its name derives from the Middle French, meaning an uproar or great confused noise. It is completely uninhabited; eighty-plus acres of windswept rocky coastline, white sand beaches and flat terrain. It is commonly called Flat Island by native Anguillians.

In fact, today, the island's biggest draw remains its abundant marine wildlife, best explored in the early morning hours. Hawksbill sea turtles, schools of dolphins, fire corals and sea urchins are plentiful. From January to March humpback whales mate in the warm surrounding waters. As early as October 1764, Auguste Descoudrelles, Governor of French St Martin wrote of the wildlife, "The coastline of this island is the most abundant in fish in the surrounding area."

In the midst of such natural beauty, the island's exciting history can sometimes be overlooked. During the 18th century it was a site of great contention between the French and the British. The location of St Martin, and by extension Tintamarre, in the strategic and highly contested waters of the Lesser Antilles would prove to be the catalyst of a succession of land grabs.

At the turn of the twentieth century, refusing to bow down

to increased taxes by the Dutch authorities the last heir to a Caribbean dynasty, D.C. Van Romondt, boarded up his home and settled on Tintamarre. He took several dozen workers from Anguilla, cultivating the island and even producing his own currency. He rose to fame in 1913 when a French daily paper dubbed him "The King of Tintamarre" and reported on his bachelordom. Legend has it that following the article, numerous letters were sent to Van Romondt by European suitors, each hoping to become the Queen of Tintamarre. None were successful.

The final chapter in this tiny island begins and ends with the short lived history of a local airline, the Antillean Airline Company or CAA. Founded in 1946 by a former French merchant marine, CAA operated a small fleet of repurposed commercial airplanes out of Tintamarre, flying to Dominica, St Lucia, Martinique and Anguilla. The airstrip provided new routes, and with them, smuggling opportunities. In 1951, de Haenen was convicted for the illegal possession of 30,000 crates of whisky. By 1950, after three ill-fated take-offs, the airstrip was shuttered, never to be used again.

Today, among the low-lying shrub and small, grass pastures, the airstrip has vanished along with most signs of the island's storied past. What remains is local lore. Tintamarre, the flat island of the Lesser Antilles, embodies the swirling mysteries of the Caribbean. The legends and the swashbuckling stories passed down from generation to generation.





# Food of PROVENANCE

THIS IS THE FIRST STEP ON YOUR GASTRONOMIC JOURNEY.  
SCINTILLATING DISHES, STEEPED STORIES AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS,  
EACH GIVING A DEEPER TASTE OF OUR DESTINATIONS.





## FINDING YOUR SOUL (FOOD) IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH

- CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA -

**There are countless reasons why Charleston regularly tops travellers' polls. With its charming cobbled streets and antebellum houses, fascinating heritage and vibrant stores, it's no wonder South Carolina's oldest city is a discerning visitor's favourite. But, for many, the most compelling reason to visit is the food - something Executive Chef Michelle Weaver knows all about.**

"Southern food is a celebration of life," explains the Alabama-born chef, who's been at the helm of the storied Charleston Grill, at Belmond Charleston Place, since 2009. Chef Weaver learnt the principles of Southern cuisine from a preternaturally early age, climbing into her highchair to watch her mother work. Among numerous nuggets of wisdom, she learned that you can cook anything in a well-seasoned, cast-iron skillet, should never throw away bacon grease, and vegetables always taste better from your own garden.

"I always say: 'Use what's in season. Make sure it's fresh. Don't over-complicate it. Sprinkle it with love and call everyone to the table!'" explains the engaging chef, who is so warm and inviting her staff even call her "mama". Her philosophy has certainly worked at Charleston Grill, one of downtown's most coveted dining hotspots, where she has elevated Southern cuisine to bold new heights. Her menu is comprised of four quadrants: Shared, Roots & Stems, Waves & Marsh and Field & Pasture. Diners are welcome to stick with a single direction or meander from one taste experience

to the other. In each dish she brings together the bounty of the Lowcountry - crab, shrimp and oysters from the rich estuaries, rice from the marshlands, leafy vegetables, such as collard greens, from the lush farms - and blends them with tastes and techniques from around the globe.

Charleston's food scene is famed throughout the US. Tantalising local dishes include Frogmore Stew, a blend of fresh shrimp, sausage and corn; Hoppin' John, also known as Carolina peas and rice, and creamy she-crab soup, a sherry-infused broth dating from the 1920s.

A great way to discover the city's gastronomy is at the annual Charleston Wine + Food festival, staged each March. Witness verdant Marion Square and other downtown venues come alive with brunches, workshops, tastings and exclusive menus.

And as if you needed more reason to visit: 2020 marks 350 years since English colonists established a settlement on the Ashley River and named it after their king, Charles II. The city will be celebrating the anniversary of its founding in typically effusive style from April onwards. For the occasion, Belmond Charleston Place has created a magnificent excursion, including a boat ride and lunch at historic Middleton Place.

**Taste your way to Charleston at [belmond.com/charlestonplace](http://belmond.com/charlestonplace)**





## CAPE TOWN'S DELICIOUS DIVERSITY

- BY ANNA TRAPIDO -

**Coming to Cape Town? Come hungry. And curious. From street snacks to multicourse tasting menus, the city's epicurean offering is simultaneously simple and sophisticated, ancient yet avant-garde.**

Belmond Mount Nelson Hotel is perfectly positioned to showcase the delicious diversity of Cape Town's cuisine. Having watched over the city for 120 years, this pretty pink hideaway is built into the cultural and historical landscape. And what a landscape it is.

The Cape Floral Kingdom's plant and animal biodiversity nourished the first nomadic hunter-gatherers for many millennia. Wild food enthusiasts can join native plant expert Roushanna Gray on a Cape Peninsula foraging expedition, ending in an al fresco feast paired with botanical cocktails.

Hunting for foraged flavours without the hassle of hiking? Amble no further than the hotel's poolside Oasis eatery for sustainable seafood ceviche garnished with local dune spinach. Or secure a booking at Cape Town's most internationally awarded restaurant – The Test Kitchen – where the delectably deconstructed numnum berry trifle is to die for.

The city's indigenous origins, overlaid with subsequent Asian and European settlement, have marinated into two Cape fusion genres. Biesmiellah, an alcohol-free spot in the beautiful Bo-kaap district, serves hearty, homestyle Cape Malay cuisine. Tamarind and clove rich denningvleis lamb stew is chef Momeena Osman's signature dish. For Cape Malay with wine, head for hipster hotspot Upper Bloem in Greenpoint. Chef Andre Hill has reconfigured traditional tastes into modern masterpieces such as triple-cooked potatoes, Muizenberg wild 'figs' (actually indigenous *Carpobrotus edulis*), curry sauce, burnt chard and bhaji powder.

Sweet tooth? At Jan Innovation Studio, Jan Hendrik van der Westhuizen (chef-patron of Michelin-starred Restaurant Jan in Nice, France) explores and experiments with his Cape-Dutch and Huguenot ancestry in dishes such as burnt butter honey buchu (*Agathosma betulina*) madeleines. It's open on selected evenings, or by prior appointment.

Huguenot heritage is also evident in the city's wonderful wine. At La Colombe restaurant, set high above the Constantia Valley on the Silvermist estate, sommelier Joseph Dhafana and chef Scot Kirton explore the ways in which the region's food and wine have evolved together. Expect the likes of spicy Blaauwklippen Zinfandel paired with "three ages of boerenkaas" dessert. This dish uses aged local cheese and cheese mousse, accompanied by pickled onions, candied walnuts and cumin ice cream. For encyclopedic oenology look no further than the multi-award-winning wine list at Belmond Mount Nelson Hotel's historic Lord Nelson Restaurant.

When you've over-indulged, locals swear by the healing properties of a Gatsby sandwich from Mariam's Kitchen, perched on the foreshore. This fat and carb-laden combo is so named because it is said to resemble the flat cap Robert Redford wore in the 1974 film version of *The Great Gatsby*. It's filled with curried steak, fried eggs, salt-slaked chips, cheese and other junk food joys.

Keen to sample Nelson Mandela's favourite foods? Belmond Mount Nelson Hotel has created a bespoke Mandela menu in collaboration with the great man's personal chef, Xoliswa Ndoyiya.

**Make a delicious dash to Cape Town.**  
[belmond.com/mountnelsonhotel](http://belmond.com/mountnelsonhotel)







THE  
TASTING  
MENU

THE CANDLES ARE LIT, THE CUTLERY IS POLISHED, AND THE CHAMPAGNE IS ON ICE. UNCOVER A CHOICE OF CURATED TASTING MENUS, SHOWCASING JUST SOME OF THE DELICIOUS DISHES FROM BELMOND'S MOST GASTRONOMIC GETAWAYS.



Flavours  
of the  
Americas



**Top:** Esquites – a traditional Mexican amuse-bouche of braised corn with delicately spiced and piquant mayonnaise. Served at **Restaurante del Parque** at **Belmond Casa de Sierra Nevada** in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.

**Middle:** Chupe de camarones – a traditional and hearty Incan dish of shrimp, spicy broth, chunky vegetables and poached egg. Served at **Curiña** at **Belmond Las Casitas** in Colca Canyon, Peru.



**Bottom:** The famous Enchanted Floated Island – rich vanilla custard, delicate twice-baked meringue and a caramel cage. Served in **The Dining Room and Terrace** at **Belmond El Encanto** in Santa Barbara, USA.



# European Sensations



**Middle:** Le Rouget – delicate red mullet with fennel, saffron and bouillabaisse consommé. Served at the two-Michelin-starred restaurant at **Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat’Saisons** in Oxfordshire, England.

**Bottom:** Ricotta and apple sphere on an orange coulis, using apples harvested from Mount Etna in Sicily. Served at the Michelin-starred **Otto Geleng Restaurant** at **Belmond Grand Hotel Timeo** in Taormina.



**Top:** Zuccotto with Buontalenti orange cream and alchermes jelly. This deliciously sweet cream-filled sponge is a Florentine staple, made to resemble the city’s iconic Duomo. Served at **La Loggia Restaurant** at **Belmond Villa San Michele** in Florence.

# A Taste of Adventure



**Top:** Slow-cooked octopus salad with roast carrot purée and Balinese pomelo, served at **Nelayan Restaurant** at **Belmond Jimbaran Puri** in Bali.

**Middle:** Freshwater Irish lobster salad, served on the **Belmond Grand Hibernian** train travelling through Ireland.



**Bottom:** La Résidence signature sorbets – featuring local passion fruit, kaffir lime, young banana and Kampot pepper dark chocolate. Served at **Ember** at **Belmond La Résidence d’Angkor** in Siem Reap, Cambodia.





Tequila may be the country's liquid gold, but Mexico is rich with wine and vine treasures – and their roots run deeper than you might expect.

## MEXICAN VINTAGE

For a country that doesn't quite seem to find a place in either Old World or New World wine region rankings, it often comes as a surprise to learn that Mexico is the oldest producer of wines in the Americas. It is also seen as the progenitor of the winemaking industries across the continent. And yet today it produces only a modest 20 million litres of wine per annum - a small glassful in comparison to the US's three billion.

Many may assume that Mexico is too close to the tropics for grape growing. It is, however, a country with many arid and high-altitude stretches. Cool and dry days with even cooler evenings are just the kind of conditions that grapes love, even if irrigation is almost always necessary. When the Spanish conquered the Aztecs in the 16th century they capitalised on the territory's vine-growing opportunities. They beat nearby Chile and Argentina by decades. In the beginning, the industry thrived. Spanish king Charles I even ordered thousands of vines to be shipped to 'New Spain'.

The tides turned in the late 17th century. French vineyards began to undercut European demand for Spanish wines. King Charles II wanted to protect his domestic industry, abolished all wine production in Spain's foreign territories. This could've

## A Snapshot of the Regions:



### CHIHUAHUA

Chihuahua's long history of fruit growing has recently transformed into vine cultivation due to the lower volume of water needed. Wine production is still young here, but as the few producers have focused on luxury, high-quality labels, it already enjoys a prestigious reputation.

### BAJA CALIFORNIA

Mexico's largest wine producing region, Baja California excels in robust, full-bodied, ripe wines with an intense colour. The use of groundwater irrigation and the region's closeness to the ocean often give these wines a rich minerality.

### ZACATECAS

This dry, challenging region saw a decline in production during the 1990s, but now has a promising future. A small number of producers are working on delicious red wines using Syrah, Malbec and Cabernet Sauvignon.

### COAHUILA

Boasting the richest wine-making history in the country, Coahuila is also home to the oldest, continually-producing vineyard in Mexico. A mixture of whites, reds and dessert wines are produced here, particularly in Valle de Parras.

### SAN LUIS POTOSI

An often-overlooked treasure trove, San Luis Potosi is home to several small-scale producers creating excellent wines. Of particular note are the Sauvignon Blancs, which blend a high-acidity profile with exciting tropical fruit notes.

been the death of Mexican wines, had there not been an allowance made for Catholic missions. They were given the right to continue winemaking on a small scale for purely sacramental purposes. The War of Reform removed the Spanish restrictions and a number of political movements in the late 19th and early 20th centuries began to resuscitate the industry, originating from these missions.

High-end wine production began in the 1970s, with massive strides in quality being made year-on-year. The vast majority of fine wines are still crafted in northern Baja California, spreading slightly to other nearby territories around La Laguna. The climate here is startlingly similar to California's Napa Valley. There are also regions in Central Mexico, such as Aguascalientes, Zacatecas and Queretaro, that have a growing reputation for fine sparkling wines. The country's evolution is attracting attention from buyers and growers in Europe and the US. Foreign investment is on the rise. Wine blends remain very popular here, but they can differ wildly from European tradition.

For those seeking an immersion into Mexican wines, there's no better spot than Belmond Maroma Resort & Spa on the

pristine Riviera Maya. Not only does this soulful resort boast the country's third largest wine collection, it also has one of their most passionate sommeliers. Aaron Alvarez has pursued his love for oenology through Australia, New Zealand and Italy, finally settling back in his home country. Now the resort's champion for local labels, he has introduced a trio of wines made exclusively for Belmond Maroma. One of them was awarded the Gold Label in the Mexico Selection by Concours Mondial de Bruxelles 2019.

In a tasting class, held in the resort's evocative wine room, Aaron will guide you through Mexico's wine history, regions and producers. He's also on hand to help you find the perfect pairing for every dish. His one piece of advice? "Leave the saving mindset at the door. A good wine is a pampering luxury. When you've worked for something in life, make sure to savour it."

That's something we can raise a glass to.

Discover Mexico in style at [belmond.com/mexico](http://belmond.com/mexico)





*The*  
S T A R S  
*Above*  
- BY STEVE OWENS -

Gazing up on a clear, dark night takes your breath away. Countless stars stud the deep dark, the Milky Way arcs from one horizon to another, blazing shooting stars streak overhead, and your eyes widen with wonder.

Dark skies are a part of our natural and cultural heritage. For as long as we have had eyes to see and brains to wonder, we have looked up and asked questions of the universe. Dark skies connect us to nature in a primal way. You can feel the connection.

But dark skies are becoming increasingly hard to find. Luckily there are still places you can escape to, and witness the cosmos the way our ancestors saw it. Belmond can be your guide. Whether huddled under a tartan blanket enjoying a warming Scotch whisky, circled round a campfire in Botswana or gazing up from an ancient Tuscan amphitheatre, Belmond's stargazing experiences are once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. To witness the night sky, unspoiled and glorious.



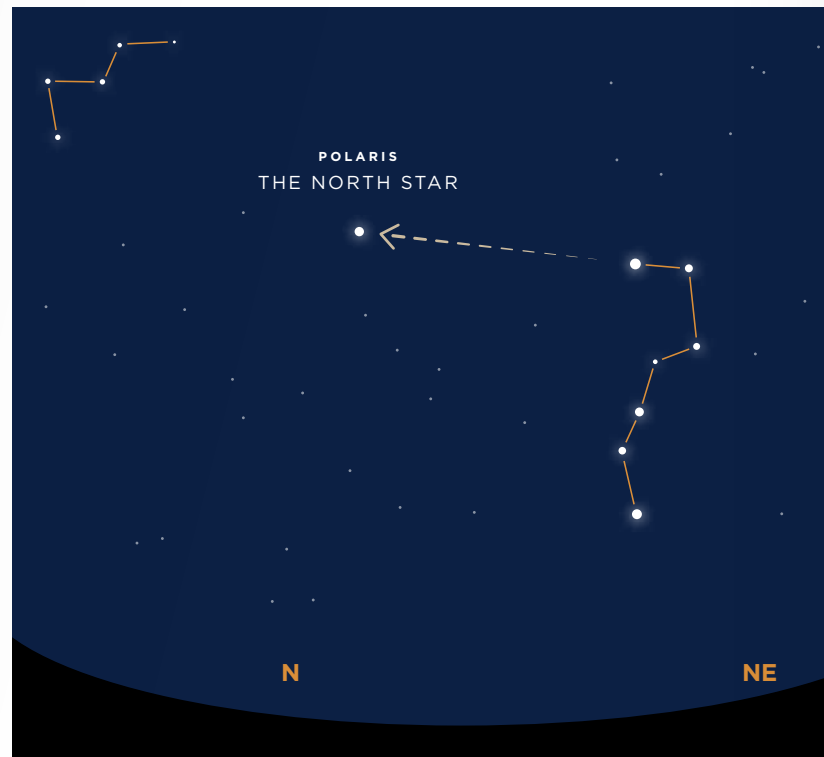
## SCOTLAND

Scotland is home to some of Europe's darkest skies. Given its northerly latitude, you can also see one of the most spectacular sights nature has to offer: the northern lights.

Our star, the Sun, is a vast and seething ball of gas. Every so often its roiling surface erupts with a solar flare. When these flares are aimed towards Earth, our protective magnetic field funnels the energy to the poles. When it hits our atmosphere, it causes the gases there to glow in an array of beautiful colours.

The spectacular displays of the northern lights – also known as the aurora borealis – are almost never seen in more southerly latitudes, but in the north of Scotland they are common. In Gaelic, the northern lights are known as Na Fir-Chlis, or 'the lively ones'. In the Orkney Isles they are called 'the Merry Dancers'. These names perfectly capture the movement of the aurora; they shimmer like huge curtains of green and red flame in the sky.

### FINDING THE NORTH STAR



## HIGHLAND SKIES

Golden days and glittering evenings are guaranteed aboard the indulgent Belmond Royal Scotsman train. The sunlit hours are rich with decadent lunches, distillery tours and visits to Scotland's magnificent stately homes, while grand dinners and traditional Highland tales await come nightfall. Furthermore, during spring and autumn there are rare opportunities for exclusive starlit adventures. The Scottish Highlands boast some of the darkest skies in Europe, perfect for stargazing. Disembark and join expert guide Steve Owens on a stellar expedition through the planetary wonders of the Cairngorms.

Find out more at [belmond.com/royalscotsman](https://belmond.com/royalscotsman)





## BOTSWANA

There are few places on Earth darker than rural Botswana. Its situation in the Southern Hemisphere means that there are sights visible under Botswanan skies that stargazers in the Northern Hemisphere can only dream of.

The Milky Way is a beautiful sight, wherever you see it. Our home galaxy in the cosmos, it's a vast spiral disk of stars - 200 billion stars, in fact, of which our Sun is one. Because our solar system is situated in the disk of our galaxy, when we look out into space we don't see its spiral shape; rather it appears as a band of light across the sky.

While stargazing in Botswana, at the right time of year, you can look towards the spectacular centre of the Milky Way - the most dazzling part of the night sky.

THE TWO BRIGHTEST STARS



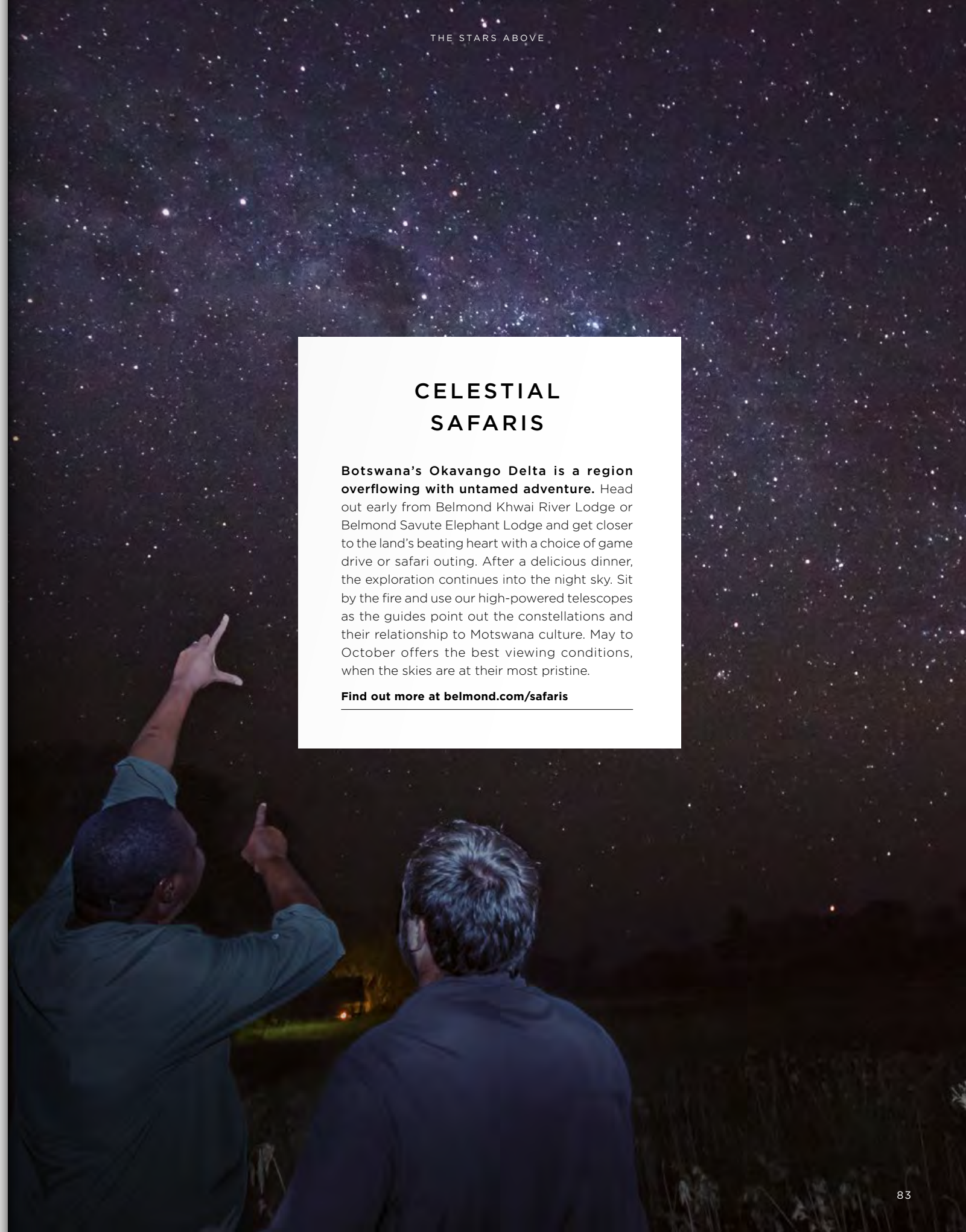
The galactic centre is not only wider and brighter than any other section of the Milky Way, but it is studded with a treasure trove of clusters and nebulae. The largest and clearest of these are the Magellanic Clouds, two dwarf galaxies that orbit the Milky Way.

The most brilliant stars in the night sky - Sirius and Canopus - are also visible from Botswana. The indigenous Tswana people call Canopus Naka, the Horned Star. It blazes brightly in the modern constellation of Carina, and to the Tswana it heralds the start of winter.

## CELESTIAL SAFARIS

Botswana's Okavango Delta is a region overflowing with untamed adventure. Head out early from Belmond Khwai River Lodge or Belmond Savute Elephant Lodge and get closer to the land's beating heart with a choice of game drive or safari outing. After a delicious dinner, the exploration continues into the night sky. Sit by the fire and use our high-powered telescopes as the guides point out the constellations and their relationship to Motswana culture. May to October offers the best viewing conditions, when the skies are at their most pristine.

Find out more at [belmond.com/safaris](https://belmond.com/safaris)





## TUSCAN DIAMONDS

**The skies above Belmond Castello di Casole in Tuscany have been designated some of the best for stargazing in Italy, having received a gold award from Astronomitaly.**

A timeless castle and estate surrounded by rolling hills, the hotel's location has barely any light pollution and boasts a stunning 360° panoramic view of the Milky Way. Head to the amphitheatre near the pool and anticipate one of nature's most spectacular shows. Naked-eye viewing sessions illuminate many of the night's treasures, pointed out by our expert guide as you sit back in comfort with an aperitif in hand. For a more detailed look we also offer state-of-the-art telescopes, so you can pick out the constellations in diamond detail.

**Escape to Tuscany today at**  
**[belmond.com/castellodicasole](https://belmond.com/castellodicasole)**



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# BELMOND

*Welcome to Belmond. Where a good morning begins with a massage by the Caribbean waves. Where a simple stroll in Peru becomes an adventure in the Lost City. Where 'good evening' in Mallorca means a midnight feast in an olive grove. This is your time.*

