

for lovers of...

Cruise the Mediterranean, see the spookier side in Canberra or retreat to a palatial Indian-inspired getaway in Byron – *Scoop Traveller's* list of top holiday ideas has something for everyone. WORDS LOUISE GOLDBURY

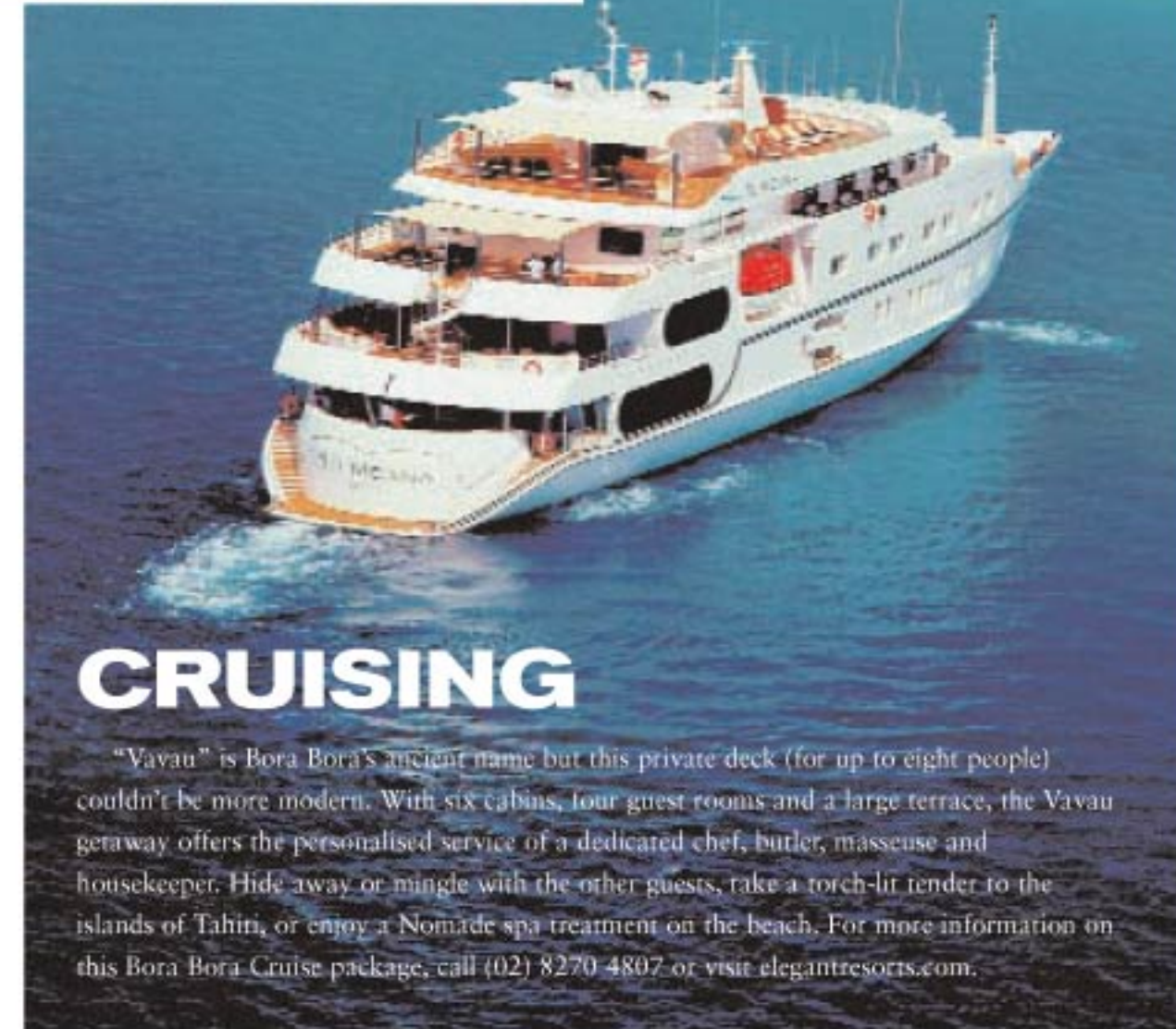
COCKTAILS

The top trends for cocktails this summer include aromatic styles, delicate froths and bases of brown spirits or gin. Bitters such as classic Angostura and Peychaud's will add a deep complexity to cocktails, while rye whisky and dark rums are also in the limelight. Consistencies are different, too, with condensed milk added for thicker, dessert-style drinks. Look out for froth whisked from egg whites to add texture, depth and flavour. This is the word from one of the world's top mixologists, Maxxium UK's Jason Crawley, now based at Mu Shu at Bondi Beach.



CRUISING

"Yavau" is Bora Bora's ancient name but this private deck (for up to eight people) couldn't be more modern. With six cabins, four guest rooms and a large terrace, the Yavau getaway offers the personalised service of a dedicated chef, butler, masseuse and housekeeper. Hide away or mingle with the other guests, take a torch-lit tender to the islands of Tahiti, or enjoy a Nomade spa treatment on the beach. For more information on this Bora Bora Cruise package, call (02) 8270 4807 or visit elegantresorts.com.



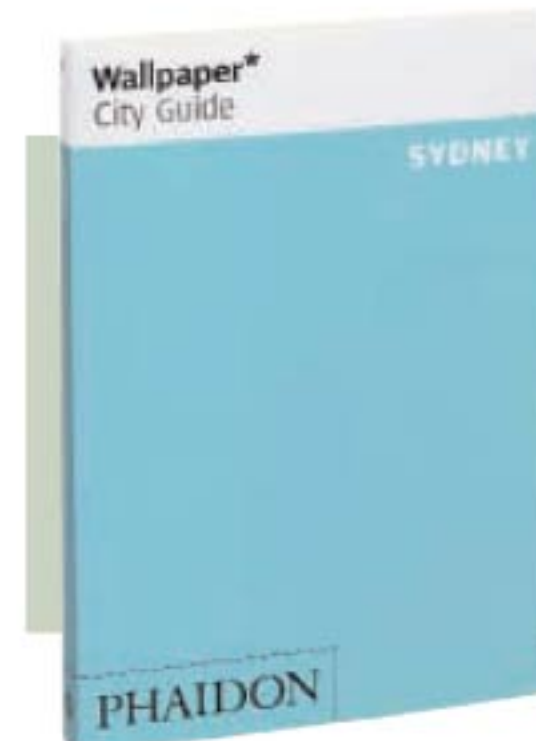
FIRST CLASS

Emirates has opened a \$2.5 million lounge at Melbourne International Airport, the final in its national rollout of facilities in Sydney, Brisbane and Perth. The lounge features marble imported from Italy, leather sofas sourced from Scotland, gold-plated Rolex wall clocks and designer bathrooms and showers. An on-site chef prepares hot and cold dishes and the full bar service includes Veuve Clicquot. The lounge is accessible to Emirates first and business class passengers and Skywards gold members.



CITY STYLE

Style-conscious travellers can now get the inside scoop on the hippest places to stay, shop and be seen. The new *Wallpaper* City Guide* will have 40 titles in 2007 covering landmarks, urban life, architecture and hotels. Each guide features a local identity's recommendations of places to visit in their hometown. Published by Phaidon Press and *Wallpaper** magazine, the pocket-sized guides (\$12.95) squeeze in maps, aerial photography and a notebook. Have a look at phaidon.com/travel.



OCEAN EXTREME

Sydney's only commercially operated Special Forces Vessel

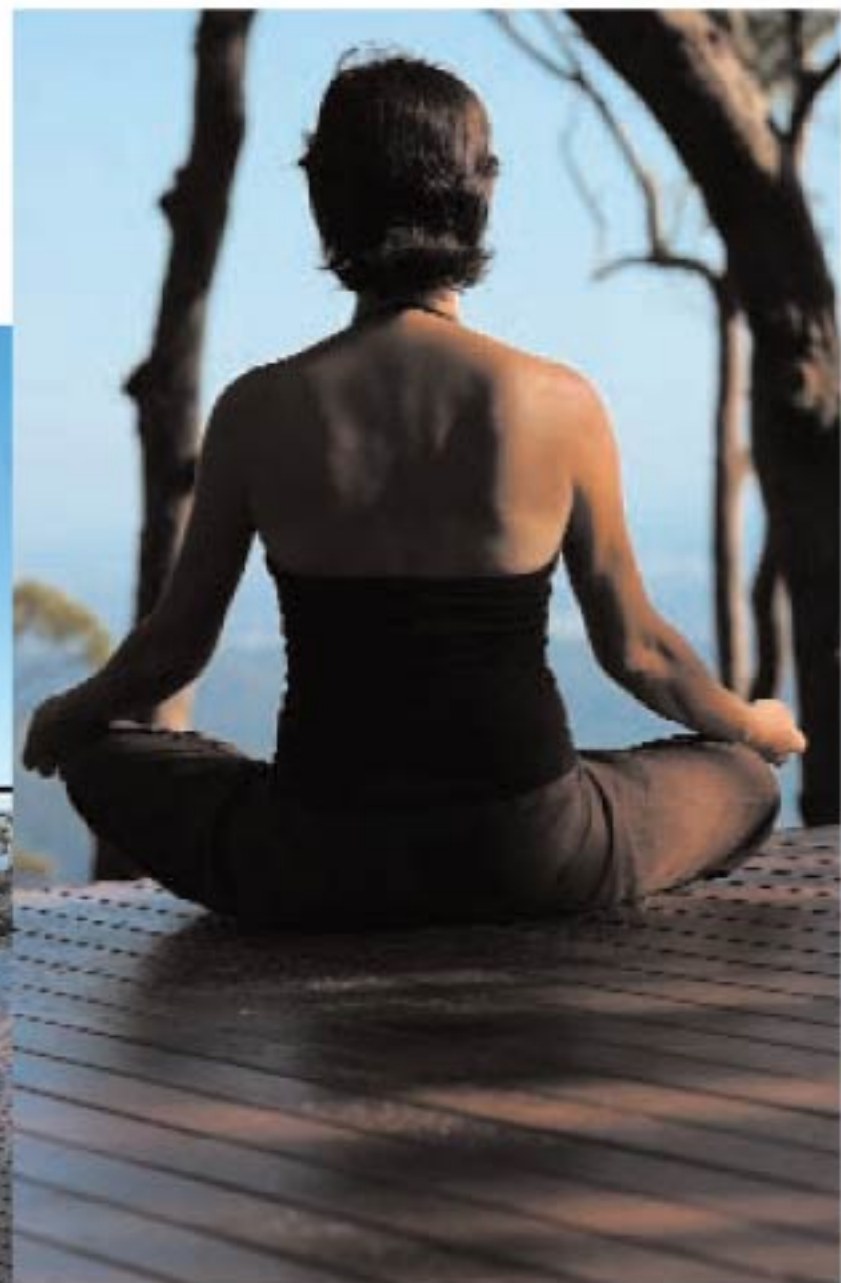
HARBOUR JET
SYDNEY AUSTRALIA

Sydney's Ultimate Jet Boat Adventure

1300 88 73 73

www.harbourjet.com • www.oceanextreme.com.au
Departs from Convention Centre Jetty, Darling Harbour

for lovers of...



MASSAGE

Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat offers getaway packages with a difference. Try painting, jewellery-making, fruit-picking or a clairvoyant reading. One of the more unusual treatments is Sound and Stone, a combination of bodywork, meditation and massage. A massage couch with built-in speakers delivers spatial sound and deep vibrations choreographed to music, while a therapist uses voice and percussion instruments. It's daydreaming at its most dramatic. See gwinganna.com for a full list of organic experiences offered at the retreat on Queensland's Gold Coast, high up in the Tallebudgera Valley.

VIETNAM

A five-star resort in Vietnam is offering special rates in the lead-up to its official opening in April. The almost-complete Evason Villas has a "soft opening special" of \$170 per room per night including breakfast for two adults. Situated in the mountains of Dalat, the 17 restored French colonial villas were constructed in the 1920s and retain their original design and charm. The cool climate (at 1500m above sea level) made Dalat a popular summer retreat for royalty and high society during the French occupation at the turn of the 20th century. Today, the property has striking views of the surrounding town and countryside, with a European-style restaurant, wine bar and day spa. Don't miss the scaled-down version of the Eiffel Tower in Dalat's city centre. Jetstar flies from Sydney to Ho Chi Minh City, with connections to Dalat's domestic airport (50 minutes) via Vietnam Airlines.



140000 traveller



ISLAND LIFE

Chill to the strum of the ukelele, watch hula dancers and meet the friendly locals as Hawaii celebrates its diverse arts and culture. The 2007 Hawaii Arts Season runs from February to May, showcasing the islands' multicultural heritage. Each island will present local and international music, dance, theatre and exhibitions. One of the biggest events is the 10th Annual Hawaii Music Awards (March 20-25), covering traditional and island contemporary, jazz, rock, Latin, blues and country. Last year Elvis Costello performed. To find out this year's line-up, visit hawaiimusicawards.com or hawaitourism.com.au.

HOT SPOTS

Lonely Planet has released the ultimate guide to what's hot in travel this year. The second edition of *Lonely Planet BlueList: The Best in Travel 2007* unveils the world's best journeys, travel trends, quirky experiences and emerging destinations. The Go List predicts 30 of the next hotspots, and the final chapter gives a snapshot of every country in the world. Visit lonelyplanet.com/bluelist.

PALACES

The Palace on Magnolia is a new luxury hotel in Byron Bay. Decorated to look like an Indian palace, the hotel opened in Ewingsdale in December. The elegant rooms have 4m ceilings, crystal chandeliers, velvet curtains, antique furniture and a spa bath or open-air terrazzo bath.

Off-peak rates start at \$360 per night in a luxury suite (\$500 in peak season) and \$400 per night in The Pavilion (\$600 peak season) overlooking the pool. Weekly rates are also available and special rates are on offer until the end of July. Call (02) 6684 8083 for bookings or visit thepalaceonmagnolia.com.



SERIOUS LIP SERVICE

KISS & TELL PACKAGE

\$229

We've thought of everything to create the perfect ambience for your partner and you. Imagine walking into a candle lit New York loft suite and enjoying a bottle of Australian sparkling wine on your arrival. Then relaxing in a tub with bath bombs whilst letting your imagination run wild with a bottle of exotic chocolate kissing paint. Enjoy 50% off all mini-bar, linger over breakfast for two in our Terrace with a late check-out at 12 noon. All of this at an exceptional value of \$229! Visit our website for more details on the inclusions in this package at www.stamford.com.au/ssdb/



SIR STAMFORD
Double Bay

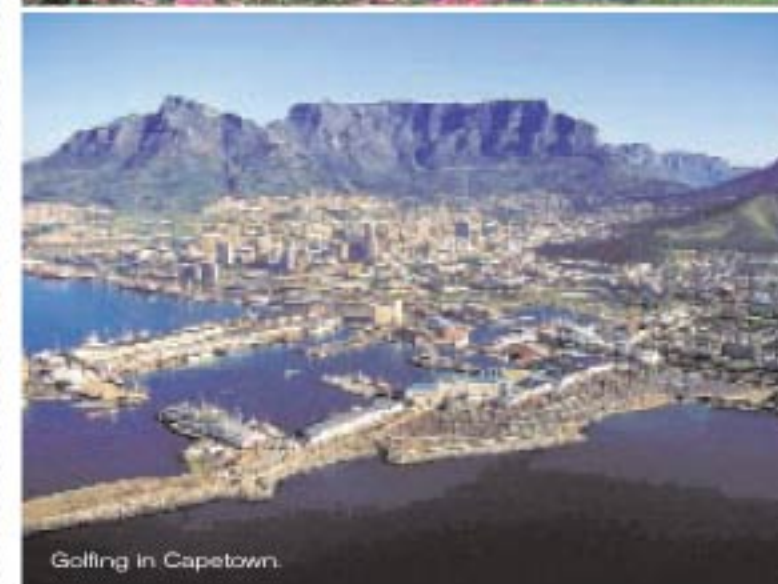
22 Knox Street, Double Bay, NSW 2028,
Phone 02 9302 4100 Fax 02 9302 4140

www.stamford.com.au

for lovers of...

THE MEDITERRANEAN

This is surely the quintessential, ultra-luxury experience. Guests on SeaDream voyages in and out of Rome will this year have an opportunity to drive a Ferrari before or after their sailing adventure. *SeaDream I* and *SeaDream II* megayachts cruise the Mediterranean and the Caribbean with a maximum 110 passengers and 92 staff – no wonder its service wins all the awards. Special activities include the Champagne and Caviar Splash, degustation dinners and nightly cocktail parties. Luxury is alive and well. Read the list of SeaDream's awards at seadreamyachtclub.com. Business class packages are available from Sydney with Gulf Air. Book through CruiseCo on 1800 225 656.



Golfing in Capetown.



SYDNEY

It's official – Sydney is the best city in the world. Well, that's the word according to the prestigious *Conde Nast Traveler* Readers' Choice Awards, which has named Sydney as the world's top city for a record 11th time.

NSW Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation, Sandra Nori, says it is a great credit that the readers of one of America's most popular and influential travel magazines have voted Sydney as their consistent favourite.

"There's no doubt that Sydney is everyone's favourite city – recent Federal government figures show that Sydney's visitor nights increased by 20.9 percent," Sandra says. "Sydney's enviable mix of events, beauty, sophistication and relaxed vibe is what Sydneysiders love about it and it's also what makes it so attractive to visitors."

About 28,000 *Conde Nast Traveler* readers voted on different global cities on a variety of criteria, including ambience, friendliness, sights, restaurants, lodging and shopping. Sydney scored 87.7, followed by Florence (86.8) and San Francisco (85.9).

The Park Hyatt Sydney and Lilianfels Blue Mountains also came second and third in the top 15 hotels in the Asia Pacific.

OPERA

Norfolk Island's old convict site is the setting for this year's Opera in the Ruins. Brisbane's opera and song ensemble Operatif! will perform among the historic ruins from February 18 to 25. Flights operate to Norfolk Island three times a week from Sydney. For general information on Norfolk Island visit norfolkisland.nf or call The Travel Centre on 1800 140 066.

160000p traveller



Ben Makist performing on Norfolk Island.