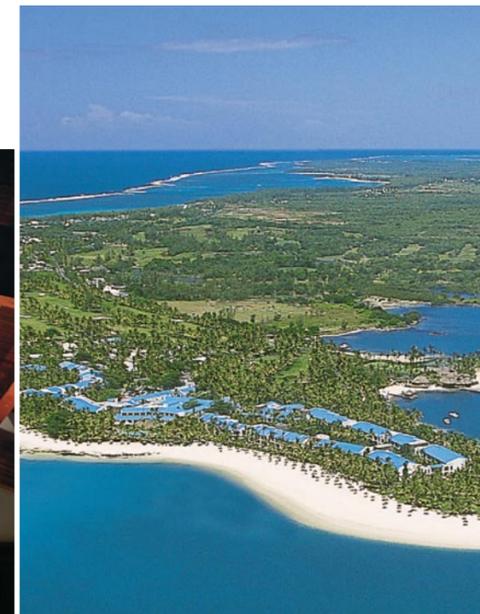
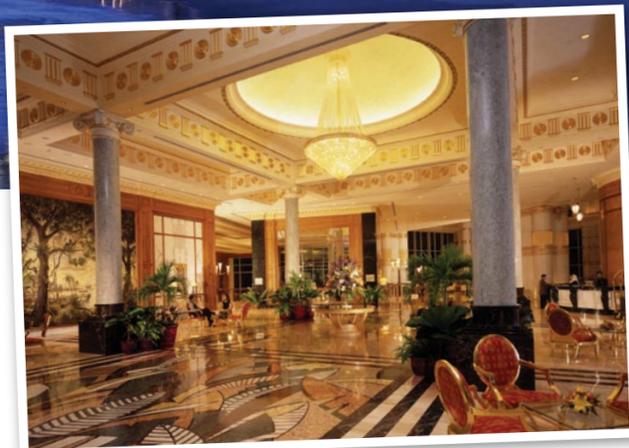


Breaking with tradition

Bespoke, boutique, Brunei to luxury Indochina retreats and private paradise Mauritian, Rebecca Walker reveals the finest undiscovered breaks



hot spot

THE EMPIRE HOTEL & COUNTRY CLUB, BRUNEI

Brunei's warm climate, unspoiled rainforests and beautiful beaches draw international travelers all year round. Known as the "gateway to Borneo", it rests along the shores of the South China Sea and Malaysia and is one of only two Sultanates in the world.

For palatial opulence, the Empire Hotel & Country Club is the place to be - and be seen. Originally built as accommodation for palace guests by the Sultan's brother Prince Jefri, this regal feat of architecture is set in a 180 hectares of tropical gardens, beside a golden sand beach in the Sultanate of Brunei, Darussalam.

Consistently lauded as one of the world's largest and most luxurious resorts, it features a spectacular 12-storey (53.22m) lobby, 359 guestrooms, 61 suites and private villas, nine swimming pools (including one that measures a whopping 11,000 square meters), private cinema, scuba diving and water-sports centre, floodlit tennis courts, fitness centre and 18-hole, floodlit Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course (home of the annual Brunei Open).

An extravagant example of Islamic architecture at its best, the Hotel's layout and design adopts a majestic aesthetic. Spacious and elaborate, its rooms (none less than 60m² in size) are decorated with elegant European style furnishings and feature luxurious touches such as French chandeliers (fitted with Swarovski crystals), silk covered walls, gold-threaded carpets, mosaic marble tiling and lapis lazuli faucets. Murals cover many of the walls and the hotel's main atrium boasts a plethora of sweeping staircases and pillars, accented with gold and inlaid with Tiger Eye stones.

Flanked by one of the oldest rainforests in Borneo and panoramic views of the South China Sea, The Empire takes great pride in its Country Club and championship golf course. With lush scenic fairways, a putting and chipping green and a driving range that has 26 covered bays, the course is well known as one of Asia's leading golf destinations.

ONE & ONLY LE SAINT GERAN, MAURITIUS

Situated in the South West Indian Ocean, Mauritius is renowned for its white sandy beaches, vast coral and stone reefs, stunning forests and waterfalls, beautiful lagoons and warm year-round temperatures. So beautiful is it that Mark Twain once wrote: "You gather the idea that Mauritius was made first, and then heaven; and that heaven was copied after Mauritius."

Lured by miles of white sand beaches, 60 acres of tropical gardens, spacious villas and stunning views of the Indian Ocean, One & Only Le Saint Geran has captured the attention of the world's elite for the past 32 years. Set on the peninsula of Belle Mare on the

north east coast of Mauritius, this chic resort is the epitome of stylish luxury.

Comprising of 148 Junior Suites, 14 Ocean Suites and an exclusive island home Villa (measuring 622 m²), all with secluded terraces and private balconies, the aim of One & Only is to "make every guest feel completely and utterly at home". This ethos is reflected in the resort's elegant, yet comfortable design. Framed by grand bay windows, each suite has spacious bedroom and living areas - perfect for holiday lazing. Striking warm-wood furniture; plush, upholstered sofas; draped curtains and four-poster beds reflect Dutch and French colonial influences while subtle tropical touches add to the resort's exotic charm.

One of only a handful of Givenchy Spas in the world, One & Only's 7,500 sq ft Romanesque-style relaxation haven is legendary. Surrounded by lush gardens, and spilt into two wings, the spa occupies its own secluded building to one side of the main resort. Offering guests a host of state-of-the-art facilities under the one roof, it includes a cutting-edge fitness centre (equipped with personal trainers),

Long relegated to the backpacker set, today it is becoming an increasingly upscale tourist destination, drawing affluent adventure travelers worldwide

pool, sauna and hair salon. Taking a holistic approach to health and beauty, the spa exudes a boutique feel and its eight treatment rooms are home to an impressive range of facial, massage and body treatments.

The three restaurants at One & Only offer guests some of the finest and most innovative cuisine in the world along with an extensive range of fine wines, especially chosen by the resort's sommelier.

VICTORIA PHAN THIET BEACH RESORT & SPA, VIETNAM

One of Southeast Asia's rapidly growing economies, Vietnam is fast becoming one of the world's most popular tourist destinations. Long relegated to the backpacker set, today it is becoming an increasingly upscale tourist destination, drawing affluent adventure travelers worldwide.

Positioned along the palm fringed white sand beaches of Mui Ne, Victoria Phan Thiet Beach Resort & Spa Famous for its lively, fresh flavors and artfully composed meals, Vietnamese food is the true 'light cuisine' of Asia. As well as a plethora of western staples, the dishes served at Phan Thiet Resort boast a mix of authentic Vietnamese dishes and delicious international cuisine. With two restaurants facing the beach, specialties include fresh seafood (caught daily), delicate soups, and stir-fries.

If gastronomy is not your thing, relax at Phan Thiet's Spa 'The Village'. With six treatment pavilions situated right on the beach, it is a sanctuary for the senses. Taking a holistic approach to physical and spiritual wellbeing, The Village blends ancient Asian traditions with modern techniques guaranteed to leave guests refreshed and uplifted. □