

FOOTPRINTS

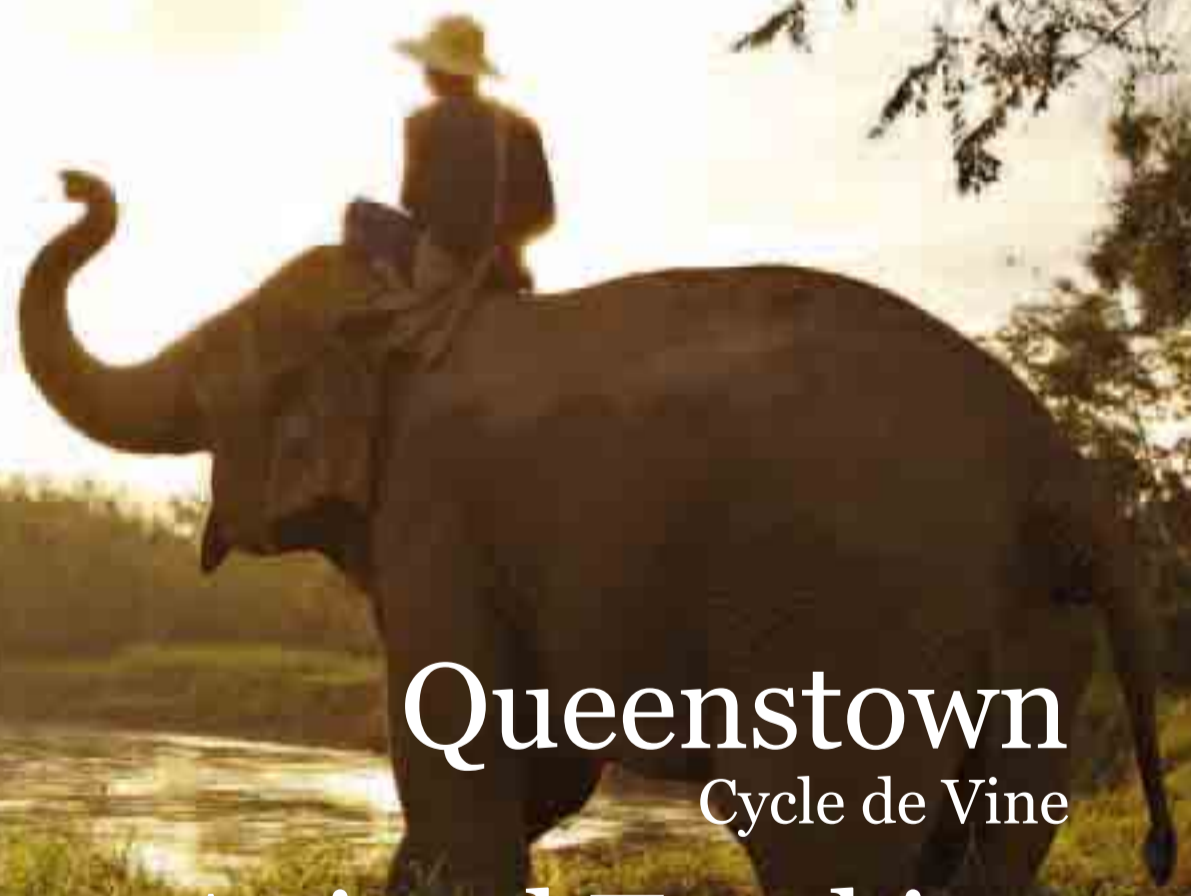


| Minor Hotel Group | ISSUE 3 / 2013

DESTINATION
Thailand's enduring appeal

SPA
Celebrity encounters

Top 5
Exotic teas and coffees



Queenstown
Cycle de Vine

Animal Tracking
An African safari guide

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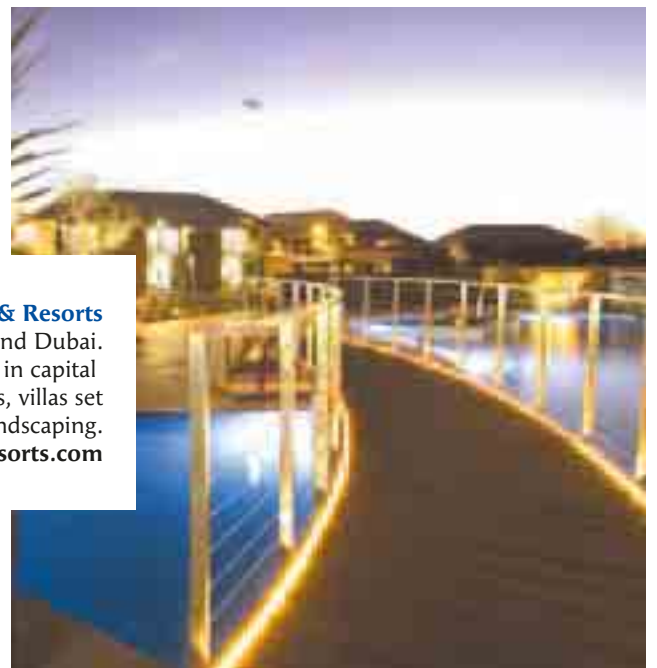
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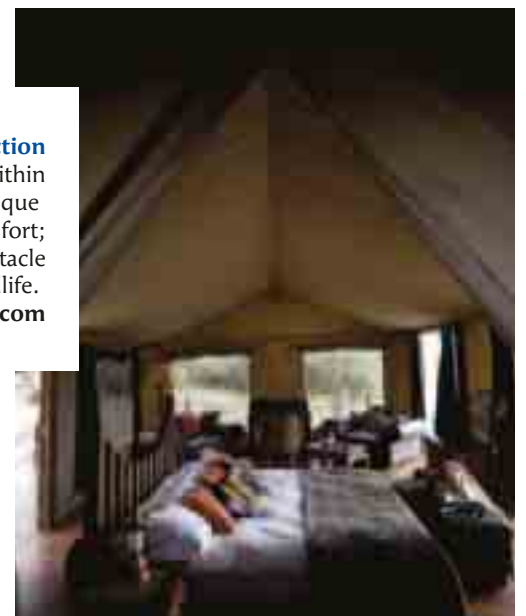


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New perspectives

It's practically a given among travellers that the tourism landscape is one that shifts constantly. The "been there, done that" list of places means people will always be looking for unique excursions in remote areas as well as less discovered regions of countries well known. As a key player in carving out the tourism landscape, we take pride in working with local communities to reveal some of the less known destinations as unique journeys of discovery - places such as our new and upcoming resorts in Yunnan in China, Hoi An and Qui Nhon in Vietnam, Sepang in Malaysia, the southern coast of Sri Lanka or Sir Bani Yas Island in the United Arab Emirates.

Within the established favourite destinations, our hotels and resorts develop experiences beyond the icons and the expected, as people explore 'new' parts of Australia, New Zealand, and Asia, some of which you will read about in this issue. In the case of Thailand, the cultural diversity, warm weather and welcoming people lure visitors to return time and again to encounter the destination's cultural essence, from elephant trails in the northern jungles, boutique cruise trips overnight from Bangkok to Ayutthaya, diving in the Andaman Sea, or simply to explore the ever changing hurly burly of Bangkok.

Most likely you've already started thinking about some upcoming travel plans for 2013 and 2014 - will you go on a romantic escape with your significant other? Take a family trip for some quality bonding time? Head out on that exotic adventure that's been on your bucket list? Or maybe take a solo travel opportunity to do some soul searching? Wherever you choose, at Minor Hotel Group we explore key cultural aspects (history, art, architecture, food, and wine) in each destination, giving that destination relevance, depth, and personality that assists travellers to connect with its local cultural heritage. I hope we will have the pleasure of hosting you again soon to make your stay truly special and unique.

Dillip Rajakarier
CEO Minor Hotel Group

CEO Intro



General Manager Sigrid Stelling has worked in China as well as Thailand. Sri Lanka has been her home since October 2012, looking after the two AVANI resorts on the southern coast.

What surprised you most about Sri Lanka?

The country is still very untouched which was a surprise to me. Beautiful quiet beaches, adventurous terrain, verdant nature in the mountains and friendly people.

Name three things every tourist should experience.

Since arriving in Sri Lanka I have become a fan of Geoffrey Bawa, the famous Sri Lankan architect. Our AVANI resorts are both built by him. My recommendation is a trip to Bawa Garden when staying at the AVANI Bentota. Take a train ride to Galle Fort. If you have time spend some days in Sigiriya, Kandy and Nuwara Eliya and visit the tea plantations. Sri Lanka is full of undiscovered surprises

What aspect of the culture/people do you enjoy the most?

The culture is influenced by many religions and nationalities which can be seen in the architecture and heard in their music. From the lagoon at the AVANI Kalutara you can see a mosque, a catholic church and a Buddhist Dagoba across the river. It is an amazing sight. The people here are very relaxed, like to sing and socialise. I enjoy this diversity

Ceylon tea is renowned the world over – at what time of the day do you prefer your cup, and why?

The tradition here is to have a tea break at 10am and 4pm. Being a coffee drinker I have adopted the habit of "Tea Time". It is a good opportunity for a casual chat.

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Thailand's Enduring Appeal

Footprints celebrates the lasting appeal of Thailand, highlighting just a few of the reasons why tourists keep returning to The Land of Smiles.



The food is sensational

To experience the true taste of Thailand simply take to the streets and markets. In towns and villages throughout the land mobile kitchens fill the air with the tummy rumbling aromas of spicy cuisine. Exciting dishes whipped up in an instant capture the essence of Thai food, known for its complex but harmonious blend of flavours bringing out the salty, sour, sweet and spicy. Travel north to discover spicy and salty dishes enriched with the flavours of herbs and spices that are difficult to find back home. As you journey south to the islands, the cuisine tends to mellow a little with coconut based dishes. And if saying goodbye to Thai food fills you with dread, then why not sign up for a quick cooking course tailored for tourists? Typically you'll be taken to a fresh food market to select the ingredients before being taught the secrets behind one of the world's favourite cuisines. There is no better way to take home the flavours of Thailand and share them with friends.



Anantara Rasananda Koh Phangan Villa Resort & Spa



Anantara Rasananda Koh Phangan Villa Resort & Spa

Island escapes

The islands and beaches of Thailand are second to none. From the window of an airplane they look like green specks of paradise in a sea of glittering turquoise. However, finding paradise deserves a little effort so planning ahead is necessary. Talk to fellow travellers, surf the web, leaf through the travel guides, follow your instincts and you'll eventually get there.

If you're looking to escape the bustle of modern life it's still possible to find your own private utopia on an isolated island where time stands still and locals remember your name. Elsewhere, the tourist industry continues to grow, feeding the needs and wants of travellers from around the world. There really is something for everyone. Adventure sports, full moon parties, fine dining, glamorous nightlife and shopping all feature strongly. Take a pair of sunglasses and plenty of sun cream, and take our advice of going to Koh samui, Phuket and Koh Phangan



Shop till you drop

Shopping in Thailand is an adventure in itself. In Bangkok, ultra modern shopping centres peddle the world's most famous brand names along with work from local artisans, while in the streets below markets bustle with activity. Throughout the country you can shop for textiles in weekend and evening markets, have a suit made to measure or a silk evening dress at a fraction of the price back home. Some of the best bargains in Asia can be found in Thailand, especially if you master the art of bartering with a smile. In some markets (notably Chatuchak weekend market) you can find absolutely anything you want: Handcrafted furniture, oil paintings by Thailand's budding artists, hand carved soap, ornamental furnishings, tuk tuks made out of beer cans, mobile phones, quirky ornaments, silk ties and fashion items to cover head to toe.



Thrilling sports and outdoor pursuits

From elephant trekking through the jungles of the Golden Triangle to a plethora of watersports in the south, Thailand has become a magnet for sporty types from around the world. And what's more, they're all accessible for the tourist at very competitive rates. On many of Thailand's islands and beaches you can hire the gear for windsurfing, kiteboarding, parasailing and jetskiing. Diving enthusiasts are spoilt for choice on both sides of the mainland while even learning to sail and captain a boat has been made accessible for complete beginners. Rock climbers from around the world are drawn to the dramatic limestone cliffs that reach for the skies along Krabi's coastline in the southwest. Heading further north you can hire a guide for hill tribe trekking through the mountainous jungles of the Golden Triangle, become a Mahout (elephant keeper) for a week, go white water rafting, paragliding, hire a bike for motor cross or take off on a long distance cycle tour to discover the real Thailand.



Great value for money

Thailand knows and delivers luxury at a price that no other country can compete with. All budgets are catered to, so if it's a romantic escape, a spa experience, or just a private villa on the beach that you're craving, you're in luck. Often a single beach will host the full spectrum of accommodation. Dining out and nightlife can run the full menu of tasty snacks to Michelin star creations. All forms of transport, including taxis, are very inexpensive, but always insist the meter is switched on and feel free to tip. The dollar goes a long way in Thailand, and with forward planning your dreams can be exceeded to unimaginable realms, and that's why visitors return for more, year after year...after year.



10 Interesting Facts about Thailand

1. Thailand is home to the world's largest gold Buddha (9.8 feet tall), the largest crocodile farm and the longest single-span suspension bridge.
2. The world's smallest mammal, the Craseonycteris thonglongyai (the bumble bat), is found in Thailand.
3. Bangkok was once called the "Venice of the East" because its original buildings stood on stilts above the Chao Phraya River. However, as Bangkok grew larger, most canals were filled and paved.
4. Thailand has had several names over the centuries. For hundreds of years it was known by the names of its dominant cities, such as Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, and Thonburi. Since the 1800s, it has repeatedly switched back and forth between Siam (Sanskrit meaning dark or brown) and Thailand.
5. The brothers who gave the world the term "Siamese twins" were born in 1811 in a village near Bangkok. The twins Eng and Chang were joined at the chest and left Thailand for the US when they were 17 years old. Each brother married, and between them they had 22 children. In 1873, Eng caught pneumonia and died. Chang died a few hours later.
6. The Mekong River, which forms part of Thailand's eastern border, supports more than 1,300 species of fish. It holds some of the world's largest freshwater fish, including a giant catfish which can reach nearly 10 feet long and weigh as much as 660 lbs.
7. In 1999, a group of 282 skydivers set the record for the largest number of skydivers in a free-fall formation above Ubun Ratchathani, Thailand. They held the link for 7.11 seconds.
8. More than 1,500 species of orchids grow wild in Thai forests. Thailand is the world's number one orchid exporter.
9. The Ramakien is the national epic narrative of Thailand and has influenced everyday Thai life for hundreds of years. The story is actually the Thai version of Ramayana, a poem first told in India 3,000 year ago.
10. Traditionally in Thailand, feet are considered lowly because they symbolize an attachment to the ground, which is a cause for human suffering. As such, a person must never sit with their feet pointing to a statue in a temple or at some other person. Feet must always be tucked underneath the body.



Celebrity Encounters

Interested to know what the world's biggest stars do when they visit our spas? Look no further as we reveal their spa secrets.



Lady Gaga

Location: Elemis Spa at the St. Regis Bangkok, Thailand

Treatments: Aroma spa ocean wrap, spa manicure & pedicure

How did she feel: Energised, refreshed and ready to perform a rocking concert in Bangkok!

Gaga's feedback: 'Awesome, I'm ready to put on my Poker Face and Just Dance!'

Spa partner: Gaga showed up with her Personal Assistant where they chatted about her hectic schedule while enjoying her spa therapies



Roger Federer

Location: Anantara Spa at Anantara Kihavah Villas, Maldives

Treatments: Detoxifying green tea body scrub and deep tissue massage

How did he feel: Purified skin and ironed out all his tight muscles from the ATP tour

Roger's feedback: 'I'll be back' (and he was!)

Spa partner: His wife who loved the Exotic Frangipani body wrap



Kate Moss

Location: Anantara Spa at Anantara Dhigu Resort & Spa, Maldives

Treatments: Elemis body sculpting, cellulite & colon therapy

How did she feel: Lighter, slimmer and completely relaxed

Moss' feedback: 'Nothing tastes as good as skinny feels'

Spa partner: A mystery man in a baseball cap and sunglasses that looked a lot like Johnny Depp (but we don't want to start rumours)



Posh & Becks

Location: Anantara Spa at Emirates Palace Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Treatments: Traditional Thai massage for him
Pro-collagen marine facial for her

How did they feel: Becks was rejuvenated after a long flight from LA, Posh was fresh, firm and ready for another busy week

Becks' feedback: 'Best massage ever!'

Posh's feedback: 'I love Elemis!'

Discover more treatments at mspa-international.com



A Taste of Queenstown

The southwest corner of New Zealand's South Island is already renowned as the action capital of the world. Narelle Bouveng discovers that most recently, it is a quieter kind of revolution in Queenstown that is getting all the attention from adventure seeking travellers.



Dirt is the new snow in Queenstown. While the thriving snow season from June to October is still ever popular with adrenaline aficionados sporting skis and boards, it is bikes that are 'du jour' year round.

Queenstown boasts a breathtaking natural alpine landscape; from snow-capped mountains spilling down into deep glacial lakes, raging rivers retiring into whispering fjords and verdant hillsides dotted with award-winning vineyards. And with an offer of gentle to extreme terrain complete with trails to suit all levels of sporting ability, it has recently morphed into pedal paradise.

One of the most popular of all the cycling pursuits is known locally as 'Cycle de Vine'. Central Otago is home to an array of excellent wineries and many can be discovered on two wheels. Taking the scenic back roads and meeting up with the new 8.5km River Trail, cyclists can enjoy not only spectacular scenery and a picturesque ride along the pristine Kawarua River but also the chance to indulge in a tasting or two as you pass through the famous 'Valley of Vines' - Gibbston Valley.

The choice to self guide or take a pre-arranged tour is yours, but either way if you plan your first stop at Gibbston Valley Winery, you can pick up a 'ready to go' picnic basket brimming with fresh local cheeses, assorted condiments and maybe even a bottle of world famous pinot noir. Complimentary wine tasting notes and a map of all the wineries are also included to help plan your own gourmet adventure.



For those that like to up the pace a little to something more brisk, New Zealand's first gondola assisted 'bike life' could be just the ticket. Load your bike onto the iconic Skyline Gondola, enjoy the panoramic lake and mountain views on the journey up and once you reach the summit, enter the bike park offering 30kms of trails designed for beginners, intermediate and advanced riders. Trails are similarly graded to snow runs, with the choice of green, blue and black, and riders can decide on fast groomed tracks, challenging rock gardens or natural single trails for added ride diversity.

Adrenaline is part of the lifestyle in Queenstown so if you are seeking a higher level of action packed thrills, 'heli-biking' rates as one of New Zealand's most exhilarating experiences. With more than 400kms of trails across five mountain ranges, Queenstown offers the largest number of heli-biking options in the world. Similar to heli-skiing, riders are flown into terrain that may not be accessible by vehicle, and depending on their ability, are encouraged to 'bike it out'. The tour guide tailors your trip to suit your adventure request; however expect a range of dizzying descents, challenging terrain on tracks only the locals know about and the chance to immerse yourself in some of the most spectacular scenery on offer anywhere.

After all that adventure, a supremely comfortable place to stay with views over stunning Lake Wakatipu and the Remarkables Mountain Range is essential. Oaks Hotels & Resorts offer two properties in Queenstown, Oaks Shores and Oaks Club, and both have a selection of spacious, self-contained apartments in one, two and three bedroom configurations. Both are supremely bike friendly with ample storage, secure bike racks and easy lakeside access to a number of the most popular bike trails. Oaks Shores also boasts a 'ride in' reception, believed to be another world first for Queenstown!



Oak Club Resort

If you go:

Stay: Oaks Hotels & Resorts www.oakshotelsresorts.com.au

For more information on all the biking options visit www.destinationqueenstownnz.co.nz



What's on When

There's always a great sporting event or festival coming up within hooting distance of where your travels with us take you. Footprints round up a few highlights for the coming months.

ABU DHABI FESTIVAL 2013

WHEN:
March 3 – March 31

WHERE:
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

WHAT:
A spectacular three-week program of world-class and innovative artistic talent featuring opera supremo Placido Domingo, the world famous Mariinsky Ballet, a new production of Shakespeare's 'Romeo & Juliet' as well as a taste of Brazil and a night of myriad styles from samba to bossa nova; reggae to rock and so much more.

For more information:
www.abudhabifestival.ae

BALI SPIRIT FESTIVAL

WHEN:
March 20 – March 24

WHERE:
Bali, Indonesia

WHAT:
The Bali Spirit Festival is a spiritually charged event that celebrates yoga, dance, music and the synergy of global cultural collaboration through the arts. A vibrant, energetic celebration with a reputation as one of the world's leading lifestyle festivals The Bali Spirit Festival was rated as one of the top five yoga festivals in the world by Hong Kong's leading newspaper South China Morning Post. This year's festival will include over 100 daytime health and wellness workshops, nighttime concerts, healing arts, eco-marketplace vendors, and more.

For more information:
www.balispiritfestival.com

CHRISTCHURCH ARTS FESTIVAL

WHEN:
August 22 – September 22

WHERE:
Christchurch, New Zealand

WHAT:
Building on the success of the 2011 Christchurch Arts Festival only months after the earthquake, the plans for the 2013 Festival are well underway. The city centre will come alive with five weekends of festive fun and a line up of top-notch performers from home and overseas.

For more information:
www.artsfestival.co.nz

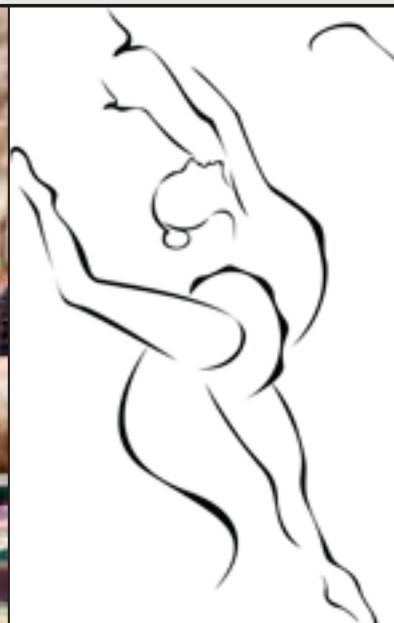
ELEPHANT POLO

WHEN:
August 28 – September 1

WHERE:
Hua Hin, Thailand

WHAT:
The King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament brings together the Kingdom's gentle giants to compete over five days of action packed matches. While mahouts control the elephants competitors ride pillion, swinging their sticks and shooting for glory. Spectators are treated to unforgettable experiences both on and off the pitch, while all proceeds are used to ensure a comfortable lifestyle for the nation's elephants and mahouts.

For more information:
www.anantaraelephantpolo.com



FORMULA PETRONUS MALAYSIA GRAND PRIX

WHEN:
March 22 – March 24

WHERE:
Sepang, Malaysia

WHAT:
The world's greatest Formula1 drivers descend upon Sepang International Circuit of Malaysia for three days of thrilling action: Kicking off with the practice race of Friday, the qualifying race on Saturday and the big race on Sunday. It'll be hot, furious and nail biting exciting.

For more information:
www.malaysia-grand-prix.com

BYRON BAY BLUESFEST

WHEN:
March 28 – April 1

WHERE:
Byron Bay, Australia

WHAT:
One of the country's most acclaimed music festivals held on the easternmost point of Australia's mainland, Byron Bay Bluesfest has a spectacular line up for 2013. Artists include: Paul Simon, Robert Plant, Rufus Wainwright, Madness, Joan Armatrading and The Blind Boys of Alabama... to name a few.

For more information:
www.eventfinder.com.au

THE RHINO CHARGE

WHEN:
June 9 – June 13

WHERE:
Aberdare, Kenya

WHAT:
The Rhino Charge, organized by the Rhino Ark Charitable Trust, is held to raise funds for the conservation of Kenya's Aberdare Ecosystem and is an annual off road motorsport competition that has been held in Kenya since 1989.

This unique and exciting event requires bravery and a high level of skill in off road driving and navigation. The organisers confirm that no animals are involved in the event, other than crazy humans.

For more information:
www.rhinocharge.co.ke

TORCH FESTIVAL

WHEN:
August 24 – August 25

WHERE:
Yunnan, China

WHAT:
The torch festival is held as a way of holding off bad spirits and welcoming in a good harvest. For the festival proper, every family lights a torch and holds the torch to illuminate the corners of a room and walk around the fields. Some villagers even have a torch parade so as to drive away all bad luck and to pray for a good harvest. Modern celebrations include festivals featuring wrestling, horse racing, dance shows, a beauty contest and a bonfire party with traditional music.

For more information:
www.chinaculture.org

BAGAMOYO ARTS FESTIVAL

WHEN:
October 14 – October 19

WHERE:
Bagamoyo, Tanzania

WHAT:
A five day festival with traditional performances of music and dance, acrobatics, exhibitions of art and sculpture, local hip hop, reggae bands and much more. Beyond the festival the historic town of Bagamoyo is worth exploring. Located on Tanzania's east coast it was once the capital of German East Africa and the most important trading port in East Africa.

For more information:
www.arusha-serengeti-safari.com/event/Bagamoyo_Arts_Festival

DUBAI INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVAL

WHEN:
October 24 – October 26

WHERE:
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

WHAT:
The 6th Dubai International Dance Festival 2013 is the largest dance event of the year for the region, featuring three days of performances, live entertainment workshops, themed dance parties, dance competitions, international guest DJs and more.

For more information:
www.dubaidancefestival.com

EXOTIC FLAVOURS

They say “When in Rome,...” so tickle the taste buds with these liquid refreshments of exotic origin and adapt yourself to the customs of the places you visit.



Elephant Dung Coffee

Thailand

The working life of a domesticated Thai elephant can take many forms. In the days of ancient Siam they might have been spotted marching into battle with a saber swinging warrior sat atop or clearing a forest for human habitation. Nowadays, they're more commonly spotted assisting tourists on jungle treks or, more recently, preparing some of the smoothest and most expensive coffee known to mankind.

Here's how it works: As the coffee cherries pass through the elephant's gargantuan digestive system the coffee beans are rendered smooth by enzymes that break down the bitter taste of protein. Many of the coffee beans are destroyed in the chewing process. Those that make it through with their shell intact harbour a distinctly smooth and rich flavour that has been variously described as, “smooth and chocolaty”, “slightly floral” and “unlike any coffee I've ever had.”

At present, this novel process of producing coffee is unique to Anantara Golden Triangle and follows on from the much older practice of producing coffee from the civet cat. It takes 30 kilograms of raw coffee to produce one kilogram of elephant dung coffee. Hence, the hefty price tag at \$50 per pot.



Civet Coffee

Indonesia

Commonly referred to as lopi luwak in Bali, civet coffee follows the same journey from source to cup as elephant dung coffee. The main difference being that civet coffee passes through the intestinal tracts of the Asian civet cat.

The origins of lopi luwak can be traced back to 18th century Indonesia during Dutch colonial rule. During this period the Dutch prohibited native farmers and plantation workers from picking coffee fruits for their own use. Still, the native farmers wanted to have a taste of the famed coffee beverage.

Soon, the locals learned that certain species of the Asian palm civet consumed the coffee fruits, yet they left the coffee seeds undigested in their droppings. The natives collected the coffee seed droppings, then cleaned, roasted and ground them to make their own coffee beverage. The fame of aromatic civet coffee spread from locals to Dutch plantation owners and soon became their favorite, yet because of its rarity and unusual process, the civet coffee was expensive even in colonial times. Nowadays, it's simply astronomical.



Arusha Coffee

Tanzania

BC, for the true coffee connoisseur, means 'Before Coffee'. In Tanzania those shadowy days can be traced back to the 16th century, it was only then that the enlightening affects of coffee were introduced from what we now call Ethiopia. Back then, coffee beans were chewed by the natives as a stimulant.

Under German colonisation in the late 19th century coffee took root as a cash crop and after WWII the industry continued to grow. Today, Tanzania is amongst the top 20 producers of coffee in the world with the highest grades being grown on Africa's highest mountain, Mount Kilimanjaro.

The rich and aromatic flavours of Arusha Coffee attest to how far Tanzania has come as a coffee producing nation.

Ceylon Tea

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka was known as Ceylon under British colonialism, and the name has stuck for the tea. First introduced to the country by the British in 1867, to replace a devastated coffee crop, tea farmers quickly began to produce a brew with a unique flavour and colour, and Ceylon tea began to experience high demand. As the demand grew the brew spread like an ocean of steaming tea pots.

Ceylon tea classically brews strong, dark, and flavoursome, with complex hints of orange and spice. The soil, climate and geography of Sri Lanka lends itself to the production of a tea that's as likely to be found at a hole-in-the-wall restaurant in Calcutta than at a Buckingham Palace tea party in London.

Thank god for tea. Tea unites the world and Sri Lanka, as the world's second biggest producer, plays no small role in our love affair with the steamy brew.



Pu'er

Tea China

Pu'er tea (also known as aged or vintage tea) is another of China's great treasures and has only recently been discovered in the West. It is unlike any other tea in the world but Westerners can appreciate its similarities to fine wine, with which it shares many attributes.

Like the great wine regions of the world, Pu'er tea production is highly regulated to ensure the highest quality and authenticity. Only aged tea that comes from Yunnan province can be called Pu'er tea. Some of the trees that produce this tea are said to be over 1,000 years old. The silvery leaves from these old trees and plants are harvested and sent to Pu'er City where they're blended to in a range of unique and time-honoured recipes.

After the production process, the tea is stored in warm and moist cellars which allow a subtle chemical process to further mature and mellow the tea over time. Pu'er tea is drinkable after three months and after five years, starts to develop its unique aged taste.



Every great dish deserves salt!

Sea salt contains the essential trace minerals that the body needs in order to stay healthy, but salt comes in all colours, shapes and sizes; as well as pure white, salt may be pink, grey, black or green.

When it comes to a sprinkling of the good stuff, to trace the history of salt is to trace the history of human kind itself. As far back as 6000 BC evidence points to Neolithic man extracting salt for the preservation of food by boiling spring water laden with salt.

In the Hebrew Bible, thirty-five verses mention salt, one of which being the story of Lot's wife, who was turned into a pillar of salt when she looked back at the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as they were destroyed. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus referred to his followers as the "salt of the earth" while the Islamic Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said that: "Salt is the master of your food. God sent down four blessings from the sky – fire, water, iron and salt".

Fast forward several thousand years and we catch up with Anantara salt guru, Khun Wanchai at Anantara Phuket Villas. Far from turning Anantara's guests into pillars of salt, Wanchai has been busy unraveling the complexities of salt for our gourmands of fine dining. "Each of the salts has an interesting story," Wanchai explains, "and it's different in the way it complements the subtleties of different dishes." So let's cut to the chase and look at five from an array of salts that Anantara Salt Gurus will be using to pair your dishes with the optimum seasoning.



Cyprus Black Lava Salt

This simple Mediterranean flake salt is mixed with activated charcoal. The beautiful colour is not the only benefit that the charcoal adds. It also gives a unique taste and adds a natural detoxifier. It enhances salads, chicken, red meat, fish, sauces and soup and is perfect for encrusting the rims of Margarita glasses.

Salish Smoked Salt

Salish Smoked Salt is an organic Pacific salt that is cool smoked over red alderwood. No artificial colouring or flavours are added. Salish gives food a delicious smoked flavour both on and off the BBQ. It is recommended as a seasoning for salmon, red meat, creamy pasta dishes and baked potatoes.

Peruvian Pink Salt

Extracted from a natural spring 10,000 feet high in the mountains of Peru this salt has been hand harvested for over 2,000 years. The crystals have a high moisture content and a light pink colour. Peruvian Pink Salt has a strong flavour and is a great seasoning salt.



Salt Guru at Anantara Phuket Villas

Black Truffle Salt

A genuine treasure imported from Italy, Black Truffle Salt is a precious blend of ground black truffles harvested from the Abruzzi region of Italy and all natural sea salt. Black truffles have an excellent buttery garlic flavour that is coveted by chefs and connoisseurs around the world. An ideal addition to cooked egg dishes, pasta, mashed potatoes or even sprinkled on buttered popcorn.

Bali - Coconut and Lime Smoked Sea Salt

Coconut and lime soaked sea salt starts with tropical salt harvested from the Bali Sea. The beautiful geometric crystal grinds easily and absorbs lots of flavour. Indigenous coconut and kaffir lime leaves are used to create a smoky salt with a bite of citrus. Ideal with fresh seafood.

Kala Namak - Indian Black Salt

Kala Namak is also known as Indian Black Salt. It has an unforgettable smell, similar to egg yolks and is used extensively in Indian cuisine. This salt has become popular with vegan chefs for adding natural egg flavour to their dishes. Pink with a powdery texture.

These and many other natural salts have gained gourmet status and are recommended for their rich mineral content providing numerous health benefits. So salt with style in 2013, stock up your salt cellar, or contact your Salt Guru when staying with Anantara.

INTERPRETING SHADOWS

THE ANCIENT ART OF ANIMAL TRACKING

Any safari in East Africa is guaranteed to provide a litany of lifelong memories. With the anticipation of seeing the magnificence of Africa's wildlife in a variety of guises and locales, many visitors will arrive with an advance if only basic knowledge of the continent's flora and fauna.

The Elewana Collection of lodges, camps and boutique hotels provide a team of professional and highly experienced guides all of whom are delighted to demonstrate their understanding of the bush and to help visitors share in the delights of the rich, diverse and organic intricacies of the African wild.

One such skill, the art of animal tracking, dates back many thousands of years to the first humans who walked this land, utilising this exceptional expertise to help the continued progression of their species. Today the art is used practically – in terms of animal husbandry and conservation research – but also to encourage us to open all of our senses to the subtle clues that are hidden all around us.

THERE IS SO MUCH THAT ONE CAN LEARN FROM TRACKING.

Like an episode from a Hollywood-style CSI TV series, a footprint in the sand can tell so much about the profile of an animal. We can learn its age, its size, the direction it walked, when it walked there, which other animals it was following, or perhaps what animals were in hot pursuit. Simply from a footprint, a whole screenplay begins to unravel and an imagination-fuelled experience takes hold.

With guided walks being offered by guides at two of Elewana's luxury camps and lodges, guests can begin to unlock their inner 'Sherlock' and tap into the ancient art that lies buried deep within our ancestral DNA.

It is on these guided walks that guests are taught to track animals as an interpretive art – one that sharpens the awareness of nature and deepens the understanding of our own behaviour. The same routines that make for success in tracking can easily translate to the modern world, enhancing the quality of our lives. Trackers speak a language which is based not only on a thorough knowledge of tracks, trails and signs, but also on a rich grounding in the natural history, anatomy, and behavioural characteristics of animals and the ethno-botany of plants.

A basic proficiency of animal tracking does not take long to achieve, and it is with this newfound skill that visitors to the African wilderness can begin to unlock the meaning behind what originally appeared to be a cacophony of markings in the soil.

And by passing down this knowledge, no matter how basic a level, the continuation of this art is guaranteed, preserved and protected for generations to come.

The learning of one of Africa's oldest profession can be experienced in Tanzania with the Elewana Collection.

www.elewanacollection.com



SPOTTED HYENA

- Light brown coat with small dark spots
- Males and females look extremely similar
- Usually live in large female-led groups of up to 80
- Often steal and scavenge kills from other predators
- Do not climb trees
- Mainly active at night

Spotted Hyena Tracks

- Claw marks visible
- Side toes curved: appear 'banana - shaped'
- Back of pad is angled & does not have a 'W' shape
- Front foot size: 9-11 cm long, 7-10 cm wide
- Rear foot size: 8-10 cm long, 6-7 cm wide

CARNIVORE GUIDE

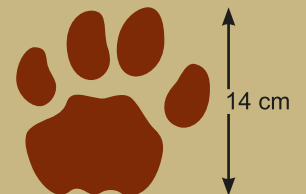
AFRICAN LION

- Light brown coat, sometimes with light brown spots on belly
- Adult males have manes on their necks - juveniles and females do not
- Live in large family groups
- Often seen in groups, which can be all males, all females, or mixed-sex
- Mainly active at night
- Do not often climb trees



Lion Tracks

- Large footprint
- No claw marks visible
- "W" shaped at back of pad
- Similar to Leopard, but larger in size
- Front foot size: 13-15 cm long, 11-13 cm wide
- Rear foot size: 12-14 cm long, 10-12 cm wide



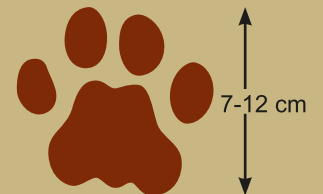
LEOPARD

- Spotted cat – spots are rings of smaller spots, not solid
- Males are slightly bigger than females
- Usually live alone, apart from females with cubs
- Tend to hunt alone at night
- Hunt using sudden ambushes rather than chases
- Good climbers - may take kills up trees, and often rest in trees



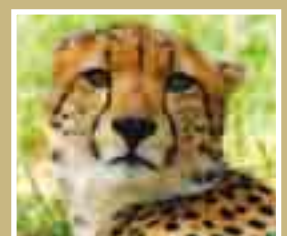
Leopard Tracks

- No claw marks visible
- Rounded toes
- "W" shaped at back of pad
- Similar to Lion, but smaller in size
- Front foot size: 7-12 cm long, 7-10 cm wide
- Rear foot size: 8-10 cm long, 6-18 cm wide



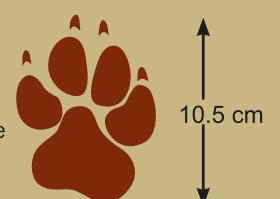
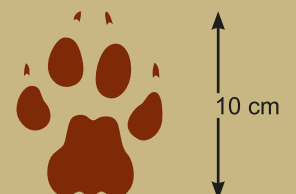
CHEETAH

- Spotted cat – spots are small solid spots, rather than rings of spots
- Sexes are quite similar in size and appearance
- Adult males live in groups or alone, adult females are alone or with cubs
- Usually hunt in the day rather than night
- Hunt using very fast, short chases
- Can climb trees but do not take kills up trees



Cheetah Tracks

- Claw marks usually visible
- Quite pointed toes
- Back of pad is clear 'W' shape
- Front foot size: 8-10 cm long, 7-8 cm wide
- Rear foot size: 8-10 cm long, 6-7 cm wide



Anantara Vacation Club Traveller

The latest in vacation, travel and fashion



Capital Villas

Owning a holiday villa has always been a dream for many discerning vacationers and now Anantara Vacation Club offers a new concept in shared ownership vacation residences with its portfolio of tropical luxury villas and urban retreats.

Nestled on the tranquil Mai Khao coastline in Phuket (Thailand), Anantara debuted its newest flagship vacation club resort to wide spread acclaim, earning top property awards. The resort offers all the service and amenities you've come to expect from Anantara, but with added dimension, scale, and tasteful interior design complete with state-of-the-art technology that affords guests the experience of a private vacation villa—your 'home away from home'.

Experience the difference with a "Discovery Preview Package" at specially discounted rates. Simply email info@anantaraclub.com and learn how the dream of holiday villa ownership has become an affordable reality and a smart investment.

Workout Gear from Gap Fit

Don't let a holiday be the reason to stop your exercise regime. Whether it be the well equipped resort gym or an early morning jog along the undulating paths around the resort, ensure you are dressed to maximize your workout. That way you can enjoy that extra martini by the pool without feeling guilty.



Island Appeal



Year-round sunshine, beautiful beaches and a chilled-out lifestyle; what more could you want? Those considering making Bali a permanent stop-off might want to know more about the new Bali Vacation Pool Villas in Seminyak. Discover one of the island's most sought after destinations, characterised by a charming laid back vibe, great restaurants, gourmet cafés, chic bars and designer shops. More than a favourite haunt for the rich and famous, your stylish Seminyak escape can easily be combined with exploration of the island's rich artistic scenes, spiritual heartland and traditional culture.

Experience the Luxury of Anantara Vacation Club Ownership

A collection of elite villas in exclusive destinations, it's an enticing alternative to a vacation or second home. Anantara Vacation Club offers the opportunity to combine home ownership, vacation freedom and lasting memories whereby you choose the destination and season to fit your lifestyle. Visit www.anantaravacationclub.com to enquire about our exquisite properties.



Tumi Tegra International Carry On

Travel in style with this exquisite carry on bag. Tegra is an advanced travel experience offering ultra-modern style. This must have accessory for travelling on your next holiday offers ultra-modern style that defies definition, the protection of a hardside case, and a surprisingly lightweight, easy-to-manuever design. It sets the standard for strength, durability, mobility and aesthetics. Whether staying or passing through Bangkok, the Tumi International Carry On is available at all major shopping malls or visit www.tumi.com.



Keeping you up to date with our news and developments, we specialise in transforming dreams, wishes and expectations into memories of quality service and unique experiences. Our management team at each of the locations is ready to assist in any way to make your stay with us as memorable as possible. Please contact the local concierge for the latest events and offers.



Surf's Up in Paradise

Guests at Anantara Dhigu, Anantara Veli and Naladhu resorts in the Maldives' South Malé Atoll can experience the thrill of surfing under the guidance of resident surfing guru, Kym Everett.

For Kym surfing is a magical ride, an exciting world of exhilaration and freedom. "You can ask anyone, whether they've been surfing for twenty years or twenty minutes, they will

always be able to remember the sense of accomplishment and sheer exhilaration when they stood up on the board for the first time and rode their first wave in. I can remember mine so vividly and that feeling is indescribable."

Between April to October the Anantara Surf School by Tropicsurf offers an exciting range of surfing options, including basic training for beginners and boat trips to the largest, hollowest waves for experts. Visit <http://dhigu-maldives.anantara.com/Riding-the-Waves> for more information.

Anantara Videos

Peek through the keyholes of Anantara Hotels & Resorts around the world with our new video collection. Visit Anantara.com, choose your destination, visit the gallery page and watch your dream unfold in a 2-3 minute video. Within seconds it becomes clear that Anantara is so much more than a room; it's always an experience unlike any other ordinary stay.



Central Reservations Office

With the rapid expansion of Anantara Hotels & Resorts we are pleased to announce the opening of a Central Reservations Office in Thailand. With one number you can now book any Anantara hotel or resort. The Central Reservations Office operates from 08:00 to 20:00 (Bangkok Time) seven days a week for reservations in Thai and in English.

Reserve your next indigenous discovery with one of our experienced reservations agents. Call on +66 (0) 2365 9110

Book your travel itinerary on Anantara.com



It's never been easier to book your Anantara journey of discovery. Anantara Hotels & Resorts recently launched its itinerary booking functionality on anantara.com. Whether you are booking a few days in Bangkok followed by a weekend getaway in a private villa in Phuket or booking your Desert hideaway at Qasr al Sarab before you head to Eastern Mangroves Abu Dhabi, it's all easily bookable with our new functionality.

GHA Discovery



GHA Discovery is our Anantara Loyalty programme in partnership with our Global Hotel Alliance partner hotels. Discover a world of possibilities both within our portfolio and also over 300 partner hotels globally. With 14 Hotel chains as members of the Alliance, there's a hotel almost everywhere you need one and you can enjoy similar rewards and benefits at all hotels. Join GHA Discovery today by going to anantara.com/discovery and start seeing the rewards.

Minor Hotel Group

Wherever your suitcase takes you, from luxury to family-friendly or from extended stay and once-in-a-lifetime adventures, you are sure to find the perfect hotel and resort with our family of brands.

anantara.com
anantaravacationclub.com
avanihotels.com
elewanacollection.com
oakshotelsresorts.com
mjets.com
mspa-international.com

Where is your next destination?

Minor Hotel Group is opening new horizons in exciting and developing destinations in 2013. Here is a sneak preview of travel experiences to start planning.



Malaysia

AVANI Sepang Goldcoast Resort

Opening Q2 2013

Stretching over one kilometre of water, contemporary villas face the sheltered waters of the straits of Malacca, perfectly balanced between accessibility and seclusion. Located in the district of Sepang, in the southern part of the state of Selangor, a 45 minute drive from Kuala Lumpur International Airport, the resort is also conveniently located close to the Sepang International Circuit – home to the Malaysian leg of the F1 race.

avanihotels.com



United Arab Emirates

Anantara Sir Bani Yas Island Al Yamm Villas

Opening Q2 2013

On the eastern shore of stunning Sir Bani Yas Island, Anantara Sir Bani Yas Island Al Yamm Villas will look onto the Arabian Sea and bestow luxurious, scenic tranquility. To comprise of beach style villas, some benefiting from a shoreline position and others set back with idyllic views over a long salt water lagoon rich with mangroves, guests will be treated to sights of the elegant flamingos that favour this verdant desert island sanctuary.

anantara.com

United Arab Emirates

Anantara Sir Bani Yas Island Al Sahel Villas

Opening Q3 2013

Overlooking the Arabian Sea and salt-dome hilltops, Anantara Sir Bani Yas Island Al Sahel Villas is poised to be one of the only two developments within Sir Bani Yas Island's Arabian Wildlife Park. To feature 30 luxurious rustic villas surrounded by a lush grass savannah, guests will view Arabia's elusive gazelles and oryx in total comfort and set out on enthralling adventures

anantara.com



United Arab Emirates

Anantara Dubai Palm Jumeirah Resort & Spa

Opening Q3 2013

Located on the crescent of Dubai's iconic Palm Jumeirah, the new luxury resort to open in September comprises 293 guest rooms and suites, with 130 rooms featuring direct access to lagoon pools, 12 beach villas, 18 over water villas and three Royal Beach Villas. Facilities include a private beach, three natural lagoons, water sports, a shoreline infinity pool, an Anantara Spa sanctuary with 12 treatment rooms, a fitness studio and two tennis courts.

anantara.com



Thailand

Anantara Phuket Layan Resort & Spa

Opening Q3 2013

Situated on the northwest coast of Phuket in an intimate and unspoiled corner of the island, Anantara Phuket Layan Resort & Spa nestles Layan Beach at the serene, far end of Bang Tao Bay. Peacefully secluded, Anantara's newest Phuket hideaway offers the best of both worlds. Stroll along a tranquil stretch of white sand to Laguna for lively bars and boutique shopping. The island's bustling southern beaches and city centre are only a 35 minute drive, while the international airport is just a 15 minute drive.

anantara.com



China

Oaks Sanya

Opening Q4 2013

Oaks Sanya will be the first of the Oaks brand to enter China when it opens in late 2013 and will feature 122 two and three bedroom duplex apartments, each with kitchen facilities. Oaks Sanya will also feature a Chinese restaurant, a bar, a kids club and a gym. The apartments overlook both bays of the Serenity Coast peninsula and are located five minutes' walk from the beach.

oakshotelsresorts.com

China

Anantara Emei Resort & Spa

Opening Q4 2013

Just an hour from Chengdu International Airport, the new Anantara Emei Resort & Spa is located in the southwest of China and at the western edge of the Sichuan Basin. It will be the ideal base from which to explore Chengdu's historic places and natural beauty sites such as E-Mei Mountain and Sanxing Dui which attract visitors from home and abroad.

anantara.com



Qatar

Anantara Doha Island Resort & Spa

Opening Q4 2013

Doha's newest exclusive getaway for residents and visitors is on a 13 hectare island off the coast of Doha. Anantara Doha Island Resort & Spa is a 141 key five star resort accessible by a 20 minute speedboat ride from piers in the city's downtown area. There will be four restaurants and bars, including a contemporary Japanese restaurant and a beach club with shisha deck.

Image shown to the right is Doha city.

anantara.com

