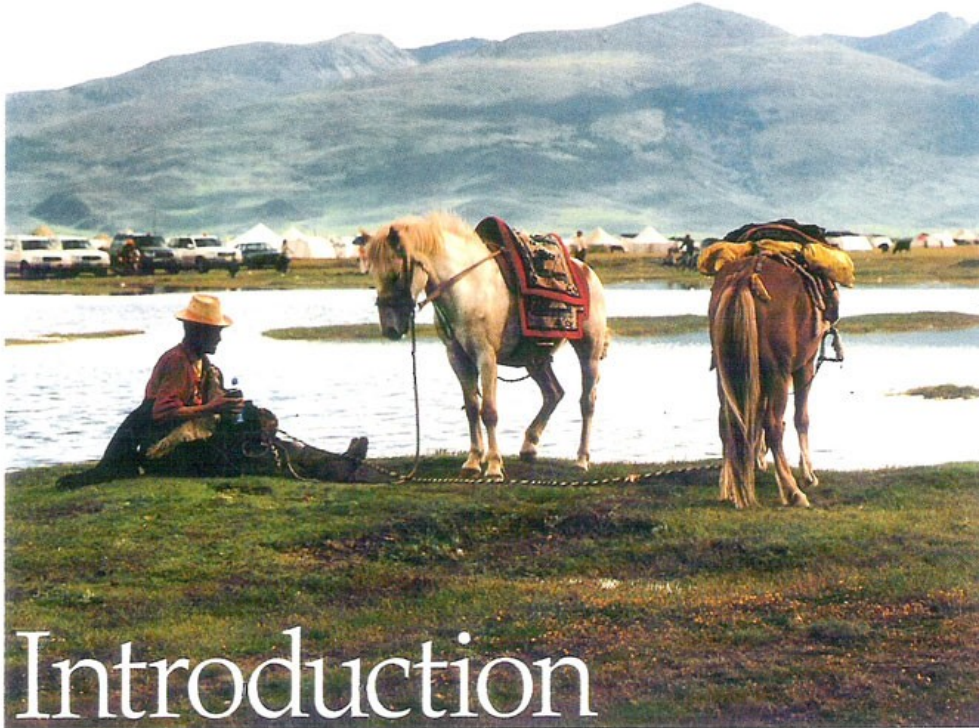


The Litang Horse
Festival, East Tibet



Introduction

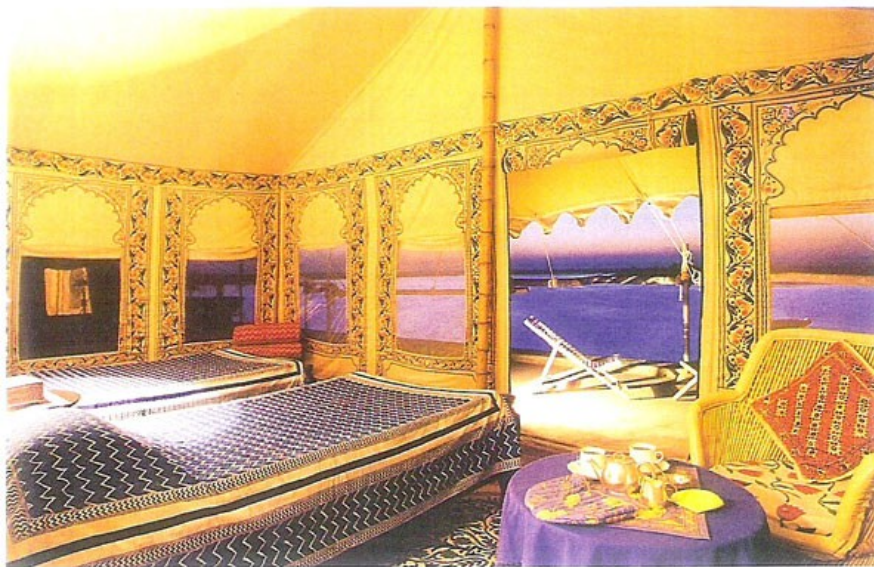


This is a whole new guide – a new look, a new editor, a new attitude. And a fabulous new sponsor, Africa Travel Centre. We've pushed the boundaries to bring you all the cutting-edge news, from outrageous festivals to fabulous hotel openings in emerging destinations. It's about thrills and adventure, but also about kicking off your shoes in a sensational beach wilderness. You'll find the most essential insider stuff: exclusive rooms within privately owned palaces, the hottest winter parties and the chicest villas and chalets to rent. Exciting travel is often about discovering something wonderful ahead of the crowd. This year's guide will fast-track you there. **Melinda Stevens, travel editor**

The internet has made booking hotels direct a great option. However, the advantage of using a travel specialist is that you have redress in a crisis. When a UK reservations number is shown in 101 Best Hotels, the room rate is that charged by specialists, who have been chosen by Melinda Stevens, travel editor of *Tatler*, for value and knowledge of a particular property

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Tatler's 101 best hotels



Chhatra Sagar

Rajasthan, India

The setting is spectacular – 11 tents pitched on a dam with a view of the lake below and the rich green farmland beyond – and the food is the best in Rajasthan. Chhatra Sagar is run by two brothers, one of whom will show you around the local farms, silver shops and village temples; the other will suggest you amble up the hill to watch the spectacular sunset but neglect to mention (bliss!) that a fully stocked bar will greet you at the top. Watch the pelicans, cranes and antelopes gather at the lake in the middle of an otherwise hectic trip (you're two hours from Jodhpur) and exhale. Incredibly peaceful and incredibly special, it is the most rural experience you can get in Rajasthan. And genuinely so. **Tel** 00 91 2939 230 118. **Website** chhatrasagar.com. **UK reservations** Cazenove + Loyd (tel: 020 7384 2332). **Rates** Double, from £145, full board.

Gran Hotel Son Net

Puigpunyent, Majorca

Son Net faces south, so even in March you can sit on the terrace and be bathed in sunshine. It's a short hop from Palma, surrounded by pine forests and hills of wild gladioli, daisies and poppies. The land was once, supposedly, owned by a pirate; the house built on it, dating back to the 17th century, is stunning, with open fires and brilliant bathrooms. It feels like a family home. After long walks, swan about around the pool and snooze in the shade of one of the handy tents. **Tel** 00 34 971 147 000. **Fax** 00 34 971 147 001. **Website** sonnet.es. **UK reservations** Scott Dunn (tel: 020 8682 5040). **Rates** Double, from £165, including breakfast.



Riad Farnatchi

Marrakesh, Morocco

A luxurious, utterly cocooning bolthole, Riad Farnatchi is a five-suite baby-hotel that's far less pretentious – and has far better service – than other upstarts we could mention. It's smart, pretty and all about comfort, with the added bonus of 24-hour room service, a revolution in the riad. Order Moët and ice-cream with caramel sauce at 3am and no one bats an eyelid. Personal attention is high on the agenda. Manager Lynn Perez has been known to 'entice' policemen into letting guests ride camels into the Djemaa el Fna (normally forbidden) before dismounting to sip cocktails. Then everyone returns home for frenetic dancing till dawn. When the hangover kicks in, Lynn will give the yoga teacher a bell. Or you can retreat to the hammam for a jasmine massage. Zoned out in complimentary djellabas and slippers, guests look like they belong to an exotic cult. **Tel** 00 212 4438 4910. **Fax** 00 212 4438 4913. **Website** riadfarnatchi.com. **UK reservations** Ultimate Travel (tel: 020 7386 4646). **Rates** Double, from £190, including breakfast. ▷

