

# AN EXOTIC EXILE



Rest your head far from the madding crowd, whether in the hill country of southern India, metropolitan Melbourne or on the spectacular coast of Hawaii's Big Island.

## VIVANTA BY TAJ, MADIKERI

The newest Taj property in southern India can't be seen for the trees. It's 1200m above sea level in 73ha of rainforest. The 63 rooms and villas all feature forest views, lorded over by the supersized 836sq m presidential suite. Get your good vibes on with a moment of Zen in the Buddha Garden, meander through the strawberry farm or relish the regional Coorg cuisine served at Nelakki restaurant. From INR15,000 (\$263). **1st Monnageri, Galibeedu Post, Madikeri, Coorg, Karnataka, India.** 00800 4588 1825. [www.vivantabytaj.com](http://www.vivantabytaj.com)

## THE LANGHAM, MELBOURNE

Looking out over the Yarra is Melbourne's grand dame. From "Blissful" beds to bathrooms swimming in marble, all 387 rooms offer Old World style with contemporary touches. Breakfast at Melba is an aria of flipping pancakes, folding omelettes - and could that be a chocolate fountain? Cleanse the conscience with a Tri-bathing ritual at the Chuan Spa, or cycle to the Botanic Gardens on a pink bike and indulge in scones smothered in jam and cream - delivered by the picnic concierge, of course. From \$405. **1 Southgate Avenue, Southbank.** (03) 8696 8888. [melbourne.langhamhotels.com.au](http://melbourne.langhamhotels.com.au)

## MAUNA LANI BAY

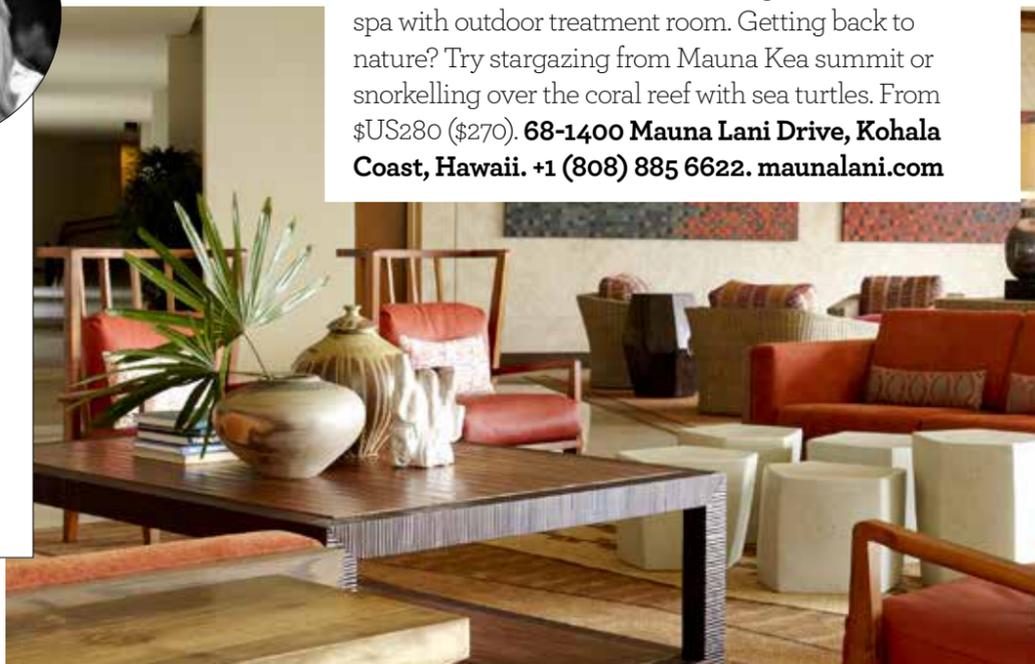
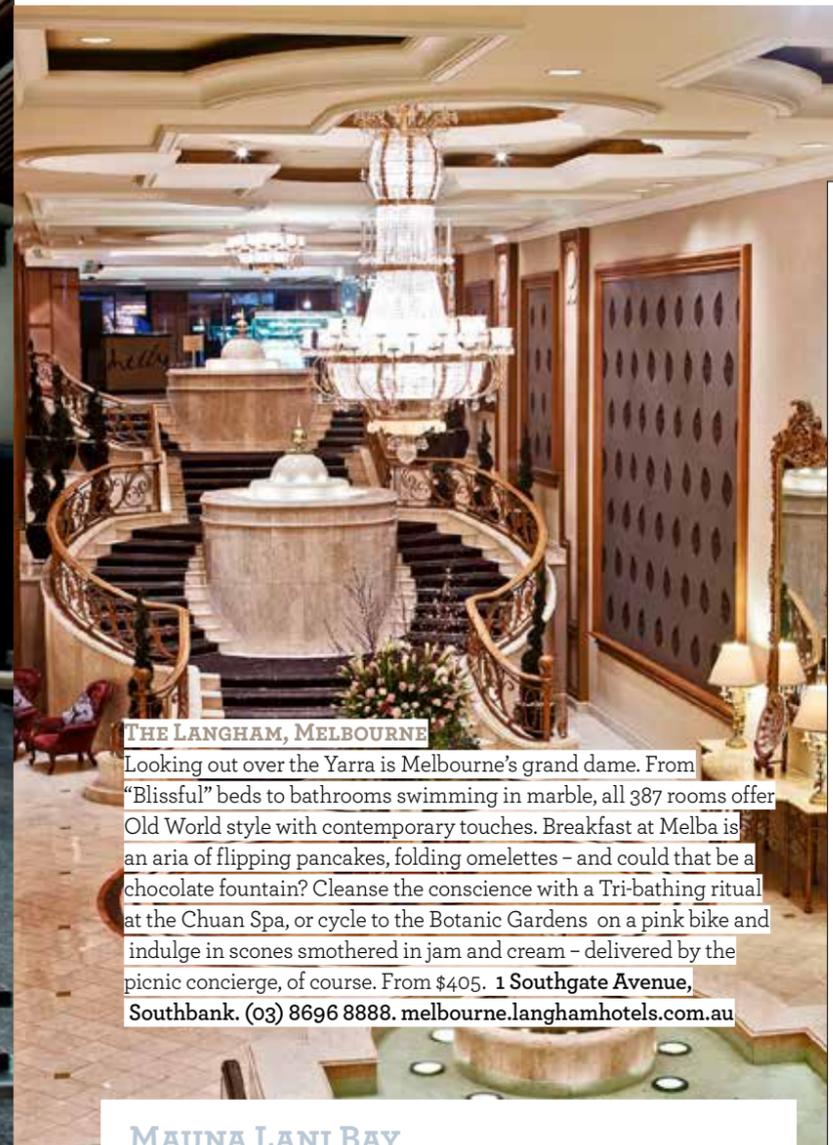
The beachfront Mauna Lani offers a lush contrast to the blackened lava fields of the Big Island, with suites, villas and bungalow options. Sprawling along nearly 5km of shoreline, the resort has two 18-hole golf courses and a spa with outdoor treatment room. Getting back to nature? Try stargazing from Mauna Kea summit or snorkelling over the coral reef with sea turtles. From \$US280 (\$270). **68-1400 Mauna Lani Drive, Kohala Coast, Hawaii.** +1 (808) 885 6622. [maunalani.com](http://maunalani.com)

## WHERE I STAY

BONNIE LYTHGOE  
DANCER, PRODUCER,  
THEATRE DIRECTOR

### MANDARIN ORIENTAL, BANGKOK

"The most majestic, yet comforting hotel in Thailand is the Mandarin Oriental, where the staff treat you with respect and friendliness. I've been there four times now and would go back tomorrow if I could. The choice of rooms is fabulous and if you want total seclusion, a private villa on the grounds is pure luxury. There are nine restaurants in the complex along with local shops, local dancing (perfect for me) and the best-ever spa - the treatments are to die for. Trust me, you won't want to leave." From THB12,750 (\$399). **48 Oriental Avenue, Bangkok, Thailand.** +66 (2) 659 9000. [mandarinoriental.com/bangkok](http://mandarinoriental.com/bangkok)



## ASK THE CONCIERGE

CHRISTIAN THWAITES  
THE GEORGE,  
CHRISTCHURCH



### ❖ When friends are in town I take them for a drink at...

Pomeroy's. It's an Old English-style pub with craft beers.

### ❖ The restaurant that best shows off Christchurch is...

Pescatore - with its panoramic views over Hagley Park, it is one of NZ's best contemporary dining experiences.

### ❖ For designer fashion I steer guests towards...

the Re:START Mall in Cashel Street. It's quirky and unique as the shops are made out of shipping containers and include names such as Ballantynes and Trelise Cooper.

### ❖ For the perfect gift or memento I'd shop at...

Toi Toi and Simply New Zealand, also located in the Re:START Mall. Toi Toi has a great selection of quirky gifts for the hard-to-buy-for and Simply New Zealand has a large range of merino wool products, pottery, beauty products and jewellery.

### ❖ Couples wanting a romantic evening should consider...

a candlelit dinner at the [recently reopened] Curator's House by the Avon River overlooking the beautiful Botanic Gardens. The heritage stone building dates from 1920.

### ❖ For great art head to...

Christchurch Art Gallery's "Outer Space" projects, scattered around the city while the main gallery is being rebuilt post-earthquake.

### ❖ The best markets can be found...

every Saturday from 9am until midday at Riccarton Bush. Look out for delicious macarons from J'aime Les Macarons, freshly baked bread from Le Panier, or purchase some local wine, beer or honey.

### ❖ For vintage finds go to...

Foragers on St Asaph Street. It's full of antiques, collectables and characterful furniture.

### ❖ If it's raining head to...

the Canterbury Museum to "see a moa [extinct giant bird] in a minute", or spend hours exploring New Zealand's rich cultural and natural heritage.

### ❖ Christchurch's best-kept secret is...

She Chocolat in Governors Bay. The view over Lyttleton Harbour is the perfect spot to enjoy a hot chocolate.

### ❖ If I were a visitor with a free day I would...

take a drive to the French settlement of Akaroa, then hop aboard a harbour cruise to look for rare Hector's dolphins and other wildlife varieties.

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