

TATLER®

Spa Guide 2020

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
Healing  Holidays AND ESPA

Holistic hideouts

Seek out sustainable retreats. There's nothing more restorative than a life-affirming spell of eco-immersion

BAWAH RESERVE

Anambas Archipelago, Indonesia

One can't fail to fall in love with Bawah. The colours are intoxicating; the shipwrecked setting wildly romantic. It took nine years for the sea snail-shaped island to come to life – not because of the locals' belief in 'island time' (a leisurely pace, easy to adopt), but because of their insistence on sustainability. Freestanding bungalows, perched above the lagoon or woven into trees, are built from harvested bamboo; taps in the dreamy, muslin-tented bathrooms spout fresh drinking water. Vegetables picked from the permaculture garden are reimagined into dishes at the tree-top restaurant; while underwater, fields of multi-coloured coral are being replanted. Daily massages, soothing facials and skin-brightening scrubs in the breezy spa keep bodies feeling as carefree as minds, but it's the wellness journeys that bring a seismic shift. Lisa, the Wellness Director, assesses guests, establishing postural and behavioural patterns, then crafting a spa itinerary to address them. Walks on the beach bring a meditative calm; Zentangle art classes unlock creativity; hiking at first light awakens senses. Intentions come into focus, blockages shift, and a childlike curiosity for life re-emerges. Changes follow guests on departure; changes that last because they are powerful, but also sustainable. *Turquoise Holidays* (turquoiseholidays.co.uk) offers a seven-night trip from £4,160, with five nights at Bawah, full board, and two nights at Six Senses Duxton in Singapore, including breakfast, plus flights and transfers.



Bawah Reserve



Overwater bungalows



Bathroom in an overwater bungalow

BABYLONSTOREN

Paarl, South Africa

Bountiful Babylonstoren is a place with purpose: a land of wheat and wine; half working farm, half glorious Cape Dutch lodgings (the new Fynbos Cottages – whitewashed walls, swathes of glass and mid-century furniture in earthy tones – are so homely you'll want to move in). Explore the 720 hectares by bicycle, passing clouds of dill and forests of kale, Chenin and Chardonnay grapes hanging heavily on the vines, and olive trees rustling in the groves – then take refuge in the spa. Wooden walkways wind between trees, leading to myriad pools, a hammam for two and pretty treatment rooms hung with botanical prints; while therapies are intuitive and thoughtfully orchestrated. A massage, using firm elbows and rolling lengths of bamboo, flows seamlessly into a brightening QMS facial. Meanwhile, sun-ripened figs and prickly pears reappear at farm-to-fork restaurant Babel; medicinal mint and lemongrass are plucked from the healing garden for poultices and teas; lavender is blended with clay into face masks in the apothecary... Don't forget the shop (a bottle of their young, rather robust red is a way to take the magic home). *Elegant Resorts (elegantresorts.co.uk) offers seven nights from £2,995, including breakfast, flights and transfers.*



Outdoor rock pool, Stanglwirt

STANGLWIRT

Tyrol, Austria

At super-sumptuous Stanglwirt, it's all about the pools. There are hot pools, cold pools, whirlpools and saltwater pools, even a seawater tank filled with coral for quiet contemplation (though best is the all-natural stone grotto that rushes and gushes yet somehow slows time). Miraculously, it's entirely fed by local spring water collected in a vast underground reservoir – and glimpses of further eco

pursuits are to be found everywhere. Sleep comes easily thanks to horsehair beds in rooms, constructed from only the happiest of local timber, and the whole place is powered by clean energy. Additional purification comes in the form of alkaline baths, algae wraps and snowy alpine hikes with trained psychotherapist Ave Annama. It goes without saying that Gwyneth is a fan. *Double, from £83, including breakfast (stanglwirt.com).*



Spa reception, Kudadoo

KUDADOO

Lhaviyani Atoll, Maldives

Arriving at this newcomer to the Maldivian private island scene is an experience in itself: a 40-minute seaplane flight from Malé, gliding over a kaleidoscopic blue sea. And it only gets better: guests checking into one of 15 overwater residences (with private deck and pool) can expect attentive butler service that caters to every whim – a sushi platter upon arrival or an impromptu jet-ski ride in search of pilot whales. (Those seeking next-level luxury can rent the entire island for unprecedented privacy.) More impressive still is Kudadoo's focus on sustainability: the island is powered by solar energy while plastic is banned (cue bamboo straws in your celery juice; and deliciously scented products in bathrooms, housed in refillable glass bottles). And the good vibes continue in the spa. Sound healing in a Himalayan salt chamber helps clear the sinuses; the ringing of Tibetan singing bowls alleviates insomnia and lifts depression, they say. If that doesn't do the trick, a top-to-toe massage in the ocean-view treatment room most certainly will. *Double, from £2,900, all-inclusive (kudadoo.com).*



Spice Garden restaurant at Babylonstoren