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TRAVEL + LEISURE

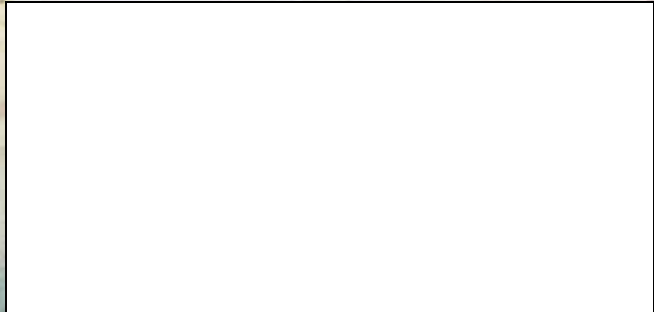
20 Dream Escapes

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20 Dream Escapes

What's your idea of romance?
Exploring the sexy streets of Manhattan?
Staying in a secluded overwater bungalow in Bora-Bora?
Sampling local seafood on Italy's Sorrento Coast?
We've spanned the globe for unique and transporting
experiences that will put you in the mood.



A view of Manhattan and the Brooklyn Bridge. Opposite: The Oak Bar at the Plaza Hotel, in New York City. Dress by Lanvin; shoes, Dolce & Gabbana. See Buyer's Guide, page 122.

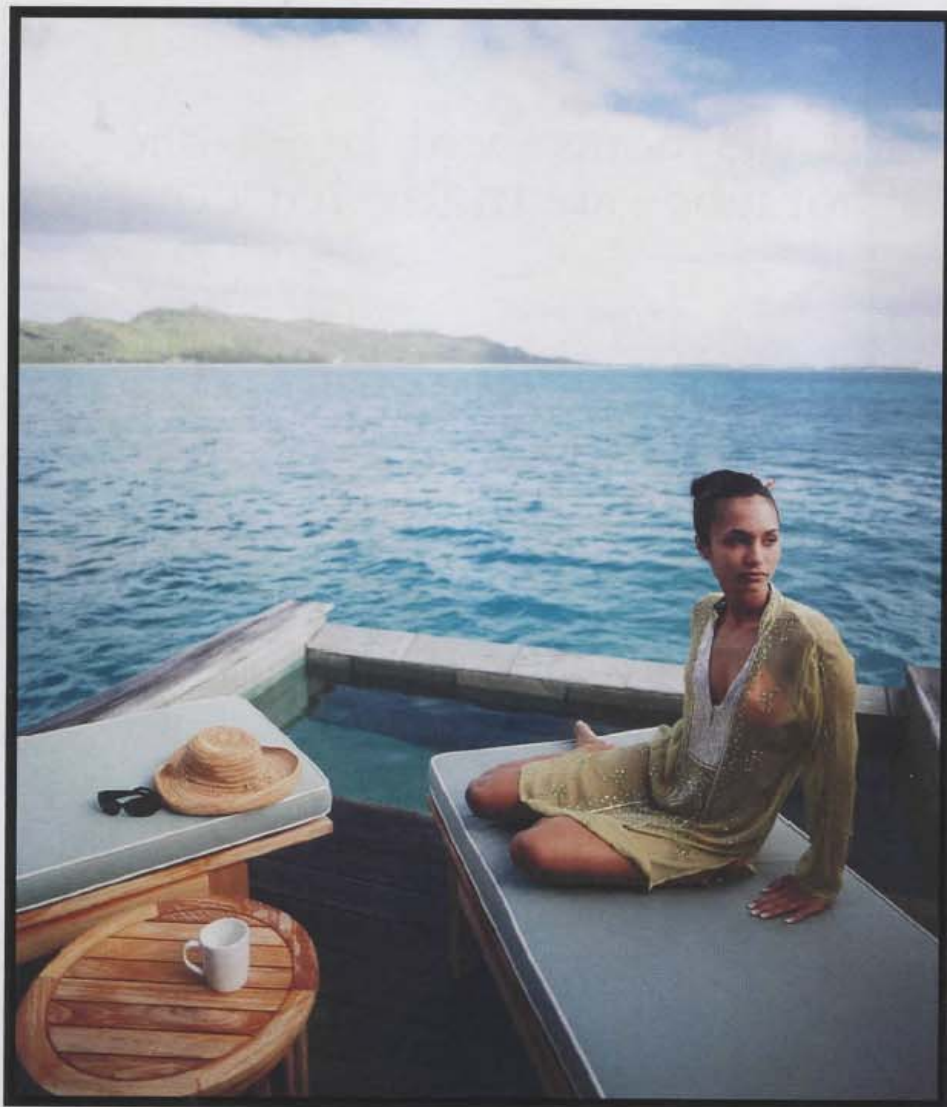
URBAN RETREATS

NEW YORK CITY From uptown's bustling avenues to the quiet, cobblestoned streets of downtown, New York is a study in contrasts. The greatest challenge is deciding where to stay. With its fireplace suites, **Lafayette House** (38 E. Fourth St.; 212/505-8100; doubles from \$395) feels like your own pied-à-terre. Uptown, **On the Ave** (2178 Broadway; 800/509-7598; ontheave-nyc.com; doubles from \$199) has a modern flair, including Italian black-marble bathrooms. Pay a visit to the restored **Plaza Hotel** (Fifth Ave. at Central Park S.; 212/758-7777), where you can browse for art books at **Assouline** or try on vintage-inspired baubles at **Kenneth**

Jay Lane, in the newly expanded shopping area. At the spruced-up **Oak Bar**, the wood paneling still glows warmly and the Central Park views are as stirring as always. Three blocks south, check out the skyline from the Peninsula New York's new rooftop bar, **Salon de Ning** (700 Fifth Ave.; 212/247-2200). The vibe: 1930's Shanghai, with daybeds and mandarin-orange-flavored cocktails. For dinner, **Café Cluny** (284 W. 12th St.; 212/255-6900; dinner for two \$90) is a portal to a Gallic village, where waitresses wear Audrey Tautou pigtails. End the evening at **Smith & Mills** (71 N. Moore St.; no phone), a tiny TriBeCa boîte in a former carriage house. The cozy banquettes can accommodate only a dozen-odd patrons. Bright lights, big city? From this vantage point, New York feels like a small town.

ISTANBUL Open-air restaurants, crowded bazaars, and a swoon-inducing location on the Bosphorus—this is a city made for wandering. You'll find Istanbul at its most alluring in the quaint neighborhoods on the European side of the strait. For lunch, try the sea-bass sandwiches at **Mangerie** (69 Cevdetpasa Cad.; 90-212/263-5199; lunch for two \$55), a rooftop spot in the Bebek district. In the waterside Arnavutköy area, Dilara Erbay dishes up grilled fish at **Abacadabra** (50/1 Arnavutköy Cad.; 90-212/358-6087; dinner for two \$75), housed in a wooden mansion. The nearby **Rumeli Hisari** fortress has panoramic views of the strait, making for a picturesque detour. After dark, there's **Anjelique** (5 Salhane Sk.; 90-212/327-2844), a sultry waterside club set against the glowing Baroque Ortaköy Mosque. Take your pick of the new hotels: the **Four Seasons Hotel Istanbul at the Bosphorus** (28 Çiragan Cad.; 90-212/381-4000; doubles from \$550), in a 19th-century palace; **W Istanbul** (22 Suleyman Seba Cad.; 90-212/381-2121; doubles from \$350), an edgy blend of contemporary design and Ottoman influences; or the **Park Hyatt Maçka Palas** (35 Bronz Sk.; 90-212/368-1234; doubles from \$550), where several spa suites come with mini-hammams.





30 More Romantic Places

For bonus destinations, plus more of our favorite hotels, go to travelandleisure.com.

SAVANNAH If only every city planner had the foresight of Savannah's 18th-century founder, James Oglethorpe. His legacy—21 garden-filled public squares ringed by antebellum town houses—is a model of Southern grace. At the **Ballastone Inn** (14 E. Oglethorpe Ave.; 800/822-4553; ballastone.com; doubles from \$235), an Italianate mansion three blocks from the waterfront, rooms have canopied poster beds and mahogany armoires. Or base yourself at the newly opened **Avia** (14 Barnard St.; 866/644-2842; aviahotels.com; doubles from \$189), on landmark Ellis Square. Browse for jewelry and handbags by up-and-coming artists at **ShopSCAD** (340 Bull St.; 912/525-5180; shopscadonline.com), the Savannah College of Art and Design's boutique, and don't miss the **Jepson Center for the Arts** (207 W. York St.; 912/790-8800; telfair.org), a contemporary-art space by Israeli archi-

tect Moshe Safdie. There are dozens of laid-back restaurants in town, but one of the best remains **Desposito's** (187 Old Tybee Rd.; 912/897-9963; dinner for two \$40), where tablecloths are made from newspapers and the steamed oysters and Low Country basket—shrimp, potatoes, corn—are ideal for two.

BORA-BORA For the quintessential far-flung escape, there's nothing like this South Pacific idyll, where barrier reefs meet cobalt lagoons, and volcanic peaks rise above the tropical rain forest and powder-soft beaches. On an isolated islet, the recently opened **Four Seasons Resort Bora Bora** (Motu Tehotu; 800/332-3442 or 689/603-130; fourseasons.com; bungalows from \$964) has 121 thatched-roof bungalows set on piers over the shallows, many with individual plunge pools and views of the lagoon and Mount Otemanu. The

resort is all about bliss: a half-day sail to hidden snorkeling sites; a trip to a pearl farm; an afternoon lounging on the deck of a catamaran. For a more affordable stay, try the 80-room **Novotel Bora Bora Beach Resort** (800/515-5679; accorhotels.com; doubles from \$147), a Polynesian-style retreat set above Matira Point. Nearby, you'll find the five-table restaurant **Villa Mahana** (689/675-063; dinner for two \$140), where Corsican-born chef Damian Rinaldi Dovia reinvents native ingredients (Tahitian vanilla oil, curry, coconut milk) with classic Mediterranean techniques.

BALI This is a land of impossible beauty: wide beaches, elaborate Hindu temples, and terraced rice paddies unfolding in a checkerboard against the mountains. The resorts here are tailor-made for escaping into the landscape; among them is the five-month-old **St. Regis Bali Resort** (Kawasan Pariwisata, Nusa Dua; 877/787-3447; stregis.com; doubles from \$450), where polished villas open onto private pools, a blue-tinged lagoon, and Nusa Dua's white-sand beach. The **Anantara Seminyak** (Jl. Dhyana Pura, (Continued on page 112)