

## THE BAG

**Popo Parrot** will stand out on the baggage carousel. This children's suitcase joins Archie Allen in Trendykid's 3D Travel Buddies range, which also includes backpacks. From £20 (trendykid.co.uk).



## THE HOTEL

**The Hotel Xenia** opens in London's Cromwell Road on Thursday. The rooms start at £111 and put you within reach of the museums in South Kensington, and Kensington Gardens (hotelxenia.co.uk).

## THE FESTIVAL

**The Isle of Wight Walking Festival** starts today, taking place until 19 May. Highlights include a speed dating ramble and a ghost walk in Shanklin (isleofwightwalkingfestival.co.uk).

## B&amp;B AND BEYOND CAPE VIEW CLIFTON, CAPE TOWN

# Stunning sea views and sleek style as standard

With ocean-facing terraces and a standout location, this chic guesthouse is the perfect Cape escape, says **Sarah Gilbert**



Cape Town's setting is hard to beat, with swathes of golden sand swept by Atlantic breakers and the brooding slab of Table Mountain as a backdrop. The panoramic views from the newly opened, ultra-stylish Cape View Clifton – perched on a cliff overlooking the Twelve Apostles and Clifton's sheltered beaches – are hard to beat, too. It makes the perfect base to explore the Mother City: the bars and restaurants of Camps Bay are around the corner and the V&A Waterfront, with its host of shops and eateries, is a short drive away.

Take a break from sightseeing to lounge on the communal deck, where you can cool off in the small pool. And you don't have to go far to catch the spectacular sunsets – just step out on to your private terrace.

## THE BED

There are four enormous Deluxe Suites and a more modest Junior Suite. While no two are exactly the same, they all have private, ocean-facing terraces. They are decorated in white and neutral tones, with long, sleek sofas and contemporary day beds, designer light fittings, shaggy rugs, flat-screen televisions and large framed prints of African plants. There's also a nod to African crafts in the carefully chosen ornaments, such as buffalo-horn pencil holders and shell-encrusted baskets. Light floods through the

floor-to-ceiling windows. The king-sized bed is clad in crisp white linens, while the sparkling white marble bathrooms have big tubs and powerful rain showers and Africology lotions and potions.

## THE BREAKFAST

Breakfast is served at long communal tables in the bright, white dining room or al fresco on the terrace. Celeste arrives every morning to lay out her just-baked muffins and bread, homemade Bircher muesli and granola. Yoghurt, fresh fruit, cold meats and cheeses are also on offer, as well as a daily special, such as a smoked salmon and dill omelette, or pancakes with all the trimmings.

Soft drinks, a range of tea and Nespresso coffee are available free-of-charge throughout the day, along with a tempting array of snacks, from dried fruit and cookies to South African

**POINT OF VIEW**  
The deck and pool, main; sitting area in one of the Deluxe Suites, top right; Clifton Beach, above right

staples such as rusks and biltong. There's also a well-stocked honesty bar, which includes local wine.

## THE HOSTS

Although still in her twenties, the owner Jess has experience in the property market. Cape View Clifton is her first hospitality project and she was hands-on in its development, sourcing all the furniture, fixtures and fittings. Jess's attention to detail is impressive, down to providing tubes of sunscreen and citronella spray on the terrace for guests to use. She lives next door and frequently pops in, while the manager, Mitch, keeps everything running like clockwork.

## THE WEEKEND

On a clear day, take the cable car up Table Mountain (tablemountain.net) for an unmissable view of the city. If you're feeling energetic, you can hike to the top from Kirstenbosch Botani-

cal Gardens (00 27 21 799 8783; www.sanbi.org/gardens/kirstenbosch).

Explore the Cape Peninsula – including cliff-hugging Chapman's Peak Drive, one of the world's most scenic roads, the Cape of Good Hope, Cape Point, Boulders' penguin colony and quaint Simon's Town – with a knowledgeable guide from Escape to the Cape (00 27 21 462 6104; escape.tothecape.co.za; tours from R700 (£50) per person).

On Saturday mornings, Woodstock is the place to be. It is quietly gentrifying and you can shop-til-you-drop there for quirky crafts, homeware, art, clothes and jewellery at creative spaces such as The Old Biscuit Mill (375 Albert Road; theoldbiscuitmill.co.za). The Woodstock Foundry (160 Albert Road), and The Woodstock Exchange (00 27 21 486 5999; woodstockexchange.co.za).

Get there before 10am to beat the crush at the hugely popular Neigh-

bourgoods gourmet food market (neighbourgoodsmarket.co.za).

## THE PIT-STOP

Join the queues at much-loved Kalky's (00 27 21 788 1726; fish and chips from R45/£3.20) fish shack in Kalk Bay for hake – or try local favourites, kingklip and snoek – and chips.

For something more upmarket, head to The Pot Luck Club (00 27 21 447 0804; thepotluckclub.co.za; larger dishes around R70/£5) for its Asian-influenced, tapas-style menu. Star chef Luke Dale Roberts' latest venture was an extension to his award-winning Test Kitchen (00 27 21 447 2337; thetestkitchen.co.za) until February, when it opened in its own premises in The Old Biscuit Mill.

## THE ESSENTIALS

Cape View Clifton, 232 Kloof Road, Clifton (00 27 21 438 8748; capeviewclifton.co.za). Doubles start at R2,700 (£194), including breakfast.

## GREAT GETAWAYS

## BURGUNDY BOUND

Take in one of France's most enchanting regions on an eight-day boating holiday this summer. The trip, with uTracks, starts and ends in Dijon, with Saturday departures until 5 October for £790 per person (excluding 6 and 13 July). The barge cruises along the Burgundy Canal to the village of Longecourt-en-Plaine and makes a stop at the town of Auxonne on the Saône, before heading to the wine capital of Beaune and the vineyards of Tournus. Most meals, cycling and excursions included, but not transport to Dijon (utracks.com).

## CANVAS NIGHTS

Pitchup.com, a booking site for camping holidays, has a range of deals in the UK for this month. One example: four nights in an "Inside Out Camping Yurt" at Seatoller Farm in Borrowdale, just outside Keswick in Cumbria, is £228 for arrivals on Mondays and Fridays between 6 and 20 May. The yurt sleeps five, with luxuries such as a wood-burning stove, gas cooker, barbecue and picnic table (pitchup.com/offers).

## TURKISH DELIGHT

May is an excellent month to visit Turkey's Mediterranean Coast, before prices and temperatures start soaring. Thomson has a range of self-catering weeks at Marmaris and Icmeler for under £300, including transfers, from Luton on 20 May; flights from other UK airports are available at similar prices (thomson.co.uk).

## IBERIAN ESCAPE

Prestige Holidays has a week at the five-star Tivoli Victoria hotel at Vilamoura in Portugal's Algarve for £635 from 20 May. The deal includes easyJet flights from Gatwick to Faro, transfers, and B&B accommodation at the resort near the golf courses and marina (prestige holidays.co.uk).

## SOMETHING TO DECLARE



**GO OFFLINE**  
A holiday should be a chance to escape from 'being contactable by the whole world'

## Can we still escape the noise of the world?

### Alastair Sawday



I once sat in the garden of one of our most idyllic Herefordshire B&Bs, drinking tea and listening to my hostess waxing lyrical about the tranquillity of this quietest of areas: the Welsh Marches. Then we ducked as two fighter jets screamed overhead, preparing for the invasion of Iraq. It was more surprising than it was alarming, but it did remind me that total peace is elusive in these isles. "Noise" takes many forms other than the scream of fighter jets.

I had a letter recently from one of our devoted readers making a radical suggestion, or perhaps a heart-felt plea. She was pressing us to create a collection of special places free from all Wi-Fi interference – or electromagnetic "noise".

If only, she wrote, she and her husband could go away for a weekend without the fear of the inevitable insomnia and headaches should there be Wi-Fi close by. Several of her friends had the same problem, she claimed, and they all spend a lot of time double-checking for Wi-Fi before going on holiday (not easy when the neighbour's Wi-Fi can sneak in unannounced).

I had no idea that Wi-Fi might interfere with the well-being of people within its reach. Apparently, she told me, up to 2 per cent of humans are susceptible to a range of effects including nausea, insomnia, headaches and a racing heartbeat.

I'm no scientist, but I am

inclined to cynicism. Not about claims such as these, but about any industry which says that its products are harmless.

Nevertheless, a little research revealed a general rejection of such fears. It is not easy to prove that Wi-Fi does absolutely no harm, but almost impossible to prove that it hurts. Perhaps, I pondered, there is some personal susceptibility to heavy electromagnetic "fog" when there are all sorts of devices – especially mobile phones and computers – in the house.

This all raises a matter that is interesting to many of us who travel. How can we escape the noise, the pervasive sense of being contactable by the whole world? Don't we want to get away? OK, so there are times when we need to be in touch, to gaze at the giant flatscreen and hear the comforting tinkle of our mobile. But there are other times when we need peace. I wonder if humanity will not one day suffer from a form of global tinnitus – an eternal and unstoppable buzzing in our ears.

Yet, for those who dig deep to find it, there are numberless quiet corners still. I am moved enough by our reader's plight to consider creating a collection of especially quiet places to stay and to see if we can also guarantee freedom from Wi-Fi. I'd do it not for scientific reasons, but for the very sensible idea that without this brilliant beast there is less interference from the outside world. A little silence, too, might help us all. Trees, flowers and grass grow in silence, Mother Teresa reminded us. Perhaps we do too.

Alastair Sawday is founder of Sawday's, the guide to special places to stay in the UK and Europe. See sawdays.co.uk

## READER OFFERS: TRAVEL

## Great value hotel breaks

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Redworth Hall Hotel, Co Durham

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Imperial Hotel Blackpool	£69.50
Errington Chase Stratford upon Avon	£72.50
The Met hotel Leeds	£74.50
Britannia Heathlands Bournemouth	£76
Bridge Hotel and Spa Wetherby, Yorks	£81.50
Jurys Inn Liverpool	£82
Paragon Hotel and Spa York	£89
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Redworth Hall Hotel County Durham	£94.50
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## COMPETITION WITH BRADT TRAVEL GUIDES

## Win a holiday for two and a travel-writing commission

We have once again joined forces with Bradt Travel Guides to offer readers the chance to win our travel-writing competition, with a top prize this year of a holiday for two to the Croatian region of Istria, plus publication of the winning story in *The Independent on Sunday* and a travel-writing commission from the newspaper.

## The prizes

The first prize is a one-week holiday for two to Istria, courtesy of the Croatian National Tourist Office (croatia.hr) and the Istria Tourist Board (istria.hr), returning before 14 June 2014.

This peninsula in the northern Adriatic rivals Tuscany and Provence. Its hilly interior contains medieval villages, olive groves and vineyards; the coastline offers hidden bays to explore. You'll have time to discover the Venetian town of Rovinj as well as guided tours, and wine and olive oil tastings.

The tourist boards will prepare a bespoke itinerary for you, but you will also have plenty of time to explore the area for yourself.

The winner will also see their entry published in *The Independent on Sunday* and earn a commission from the newspaper to write a piece about their prize visit to Istria.

A special prize will also be awarded to an unpublished writer. This is a place on any travel-writing weekend run by Travellers' Tales (travellers tales.org) in 2013 or 2014. Travellers' Tales is the UK's leading training agency for travel

writing. This prize does not include transport.

Every entry to the competition will be eligible for the first prize; only unpublished stories will be considered for the special prize.

## How to enter

The theme this year is "A Narrow Escape". Entries must be original, previously unpublished, and based on personal experience relating to the theme. Minimum length is 600 words; maximum length is 800 words. The closing date for the competition is midnight on Sunday 2



June. The competition is open to all writers who are resident in the UK.

The judges will include representatives from Bradt Travel Guides, Travellers' Tales and *The Independent on Sunday*. The winners will be announced at an event at Stanfords, the UK's leading travel bookshop.

For full competition rules, go to independent.co.uk/bradtcomp. To enter, go to bradtrguides.com/travelwriting

• Last year's winner, Julia Bohanna, won a trip to the Italian region of Abruzzo. Turn to page 69 to read her story.