

DestinAsian



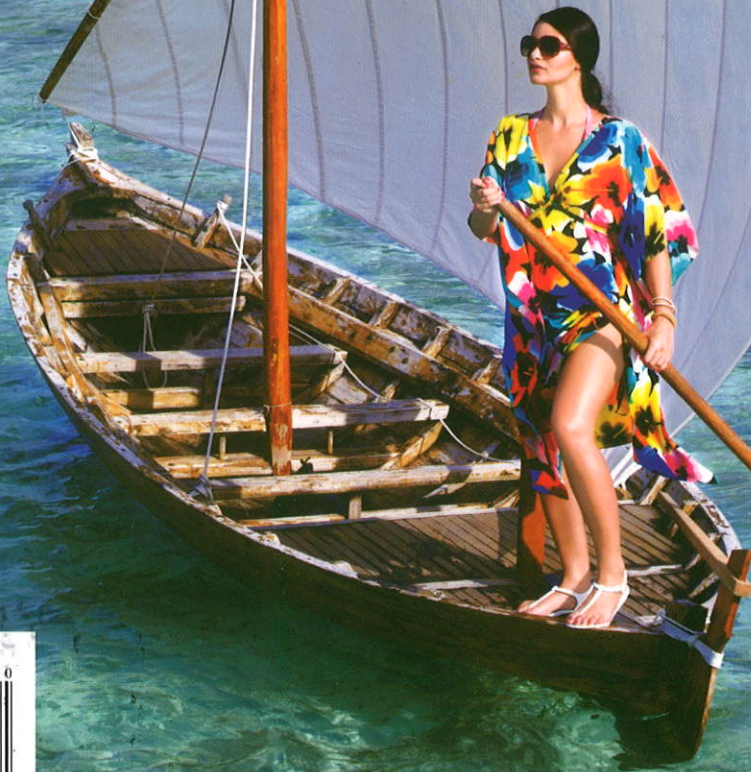
ASIA'S
TRAVEL
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WIN
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STAY AT THE
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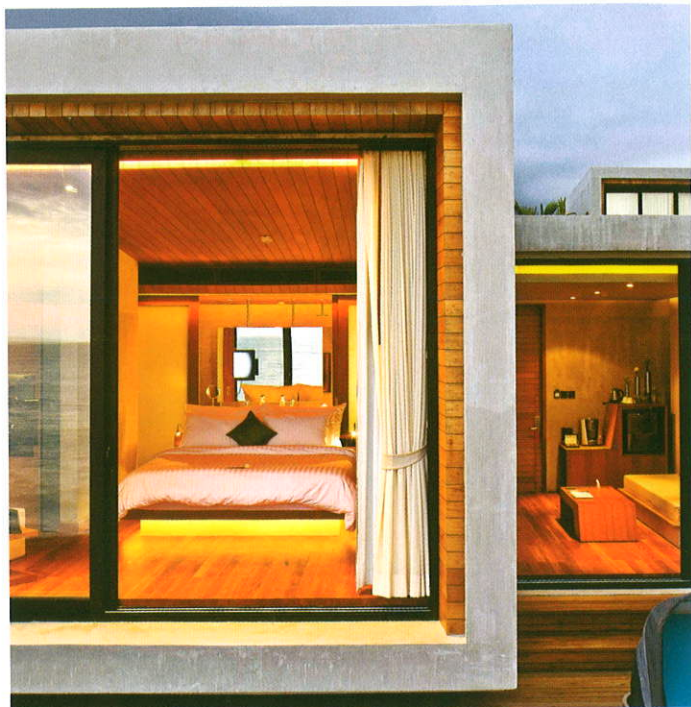
THE 2011 ISLANDS ISSUE

MALDIVES
TONGA
GULANGYU
SULAWESI
SINGAPORE
LUZON
PENANG
SEYCHELLES
BALI



PLUS

A LOOK INSIDE
THE WORLD'S
HIGHEST HOTEL



—INDONESIA

GRAND OLD TIME

Finding mid-range accommodation can be difficult in Bali's trendy Seminyak neighborhood, where most of the luxury resorts and pricey villa complexes sport sleek, of-the-moment designs. In the midst of all this, the new **Colony Hotel** (62-361/736-160; thecolonyhotelbali.com) is something of a throwback—but an elegant, affordable one at that. Though this 20-suite charmer has all the modern amenities of its neighbors—high-speed wireless Internet, flat-screen TVs with a full complement of satellite channels—it offers

a completely different aesthetic. Instead of Zen-like minimalism, the property looks downright Rafflesesque, with whitewashed pilasters and balustrades, floor-to-ceiling French windows, and wrought iron lanterns. Interiors, too, hark back to an earlier era, with dark-wood furnishings, beds swathed in crisp white linen, and balconies overlooking a palm-flanked turquoise pool. Even better, with nightly rates starting at US\$155, you can enjoy a taste of the glamour of days gone by, with plenty of cash left over for a few G&Ts at the poolside bar. —ISABEL ESTERMAN

—THAILAND

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Flanking the golden sands of Khao Lak in southern Thailand, **Casa de la Flora** (66-76/428-999; casadelaflores.com; villas from US\$370) catches the eye with ranks of cube-shaped, glass-and-concrete villas. Though tempered with natural materials like teakwood, the sharp-angled exteriors give a nod to the severe geometries of Brutalist architecture. Inside, though, there's nothing harsh about the 36 sunny villas, lined with honey-toned hardwood and replete with creature comforts like chemical-free plunge pools, private pocket gardens and terraces, rain showers, soaking tubs, and 24-hour butler service. A four-room spa and a dedicated "Dream Butler"—whose sole responsibility is to turn guests' whims into reality—should take off any remaining rough edges. —ISABEL ESTERMAN



—SRILANKA

CEYLON EASE

Situated on a serene estate four and a half hours by car from Colombo, **Maya** (Aranwella; 94-475/679-025; mayatangallessrilanka.com; doubles from US\$170) is as pleasantly removed as it is ravishing. Built around an immaculately restored manor house dating from the turn of the last century, the villa features five suites with eight-meter-high ceilings, locally crafted furniture, polished cement floors, and an eclectic mix of antiques collected from across South and Southeast Asia. Expansive, bird-filled gardens and a large central pool give guests plenty of room to relax. For those wishing to explore the surrounding countryside, Maya's staff can arrange bicycle excursions, temple visits, trips to historic Galle Fort, or a picnic on the golden sands of Tangalle Bay, eight kilometers to the southeast. —CHRIS KIRKPATRICK

