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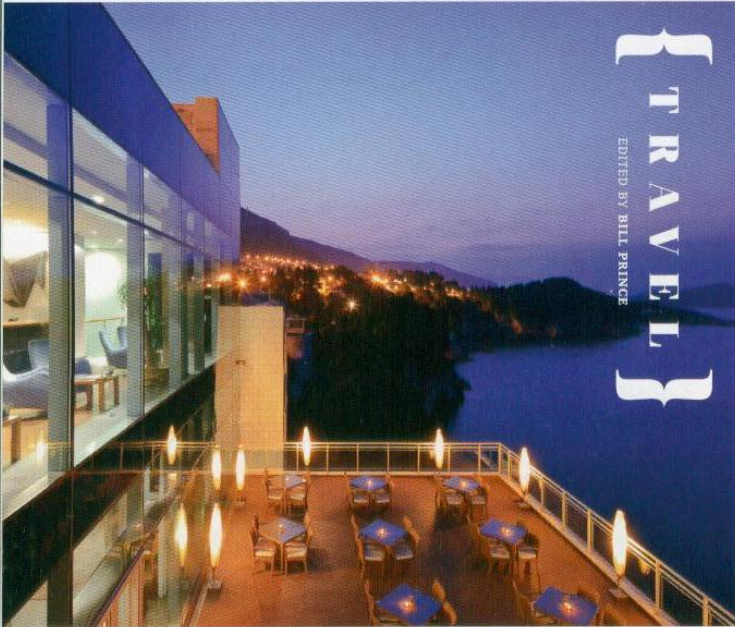
CHRISTINA HENDRICKS PHOTOGRAPHED FOR BRITISH GQ BY MILES ALDRIDGE

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OVER-PROMOTED BLUES **MATTHEW D'ANGONA** ON THE CABINET'S WEAKEST LINK

THE THREE PLACES TO BE SEEN AT THIS AUGUST

A change is as good as a rest, and that's an opinion shared by the owners of these refurbished and reinvigorated resorts. GQ checks in at this month's trio of definitive destinations



Belle epoch: with views of the Adriatic, fine dining and a spa, the Bellevue is the Dubrovnik destination resort



1 CROATIA HOTEL BELLEVUE, DUBROVNIK

Although it's 18 years since the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was blown apart by civil war, phantom bombs still echo out over Dubrovnik as a reminder that, as tourists, we're lucky to be able to enjoy this beautiful city once more. Before heading to Croatia, any wannabe weekender would do well to remind themselves of the conflict; if you're at a loss as to where to start, Slavenka Drakulic's novels are a vivid emotional source.

Of course, this shouldn't put you off visiting, but a short history lesson goes some way to explaining what an open-minded, courteous, life-enhancing place Dubrovnik has evolved into – a picture-perfect tourist Mecca. Unlike some hotels along the coastline, the Bellevue – ten minutes from the city's old fortified Pile Gate – wasn't hit during the bombardment, but this hasn't stopped its owners offering up a glittering whizz-bang 21st-century refurbishment.

Perched atop a 30-metre cliff, each of the Bellevue's 91 rooms has a sea view that makes you weep. Spacious balconies, a private beach, a restaurant with some of the best John Dory GQ has sampled, the warm Adriatic rolling in, superb spa treatments – the Bellevue will have you (and her) horizontal before you know it. JH ROOMS FROM £107 PER NIGHT. HOTEL-BELLEVUE.HR EASYJET FLIES TO DUBROVNIK, FROM £70 RETURN. EASYJET.COM



To hell with the Costa: lavish Andalusian luxury is enough to make Finca Cortesin stand out from the crowd on Spain's most well-travelled coast

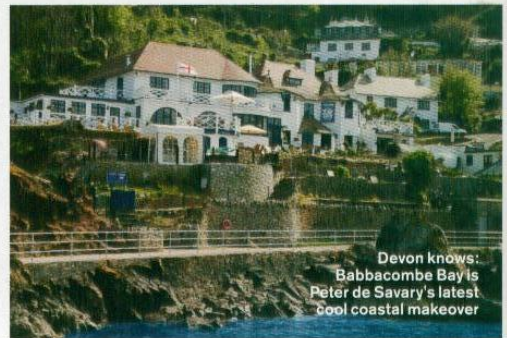
2 SPAIN FINCA CORTESIN, COSTA DEL SOL

No matter if you thought the Costa del Sol had sold its soul to high-rise, low-rent hell: a splendid new name emerges to make you want to head back to the sun.

Finca Cortesin is a vast estate about ten miles from the western end of the coast at Estepona, which has just been unleashed as a super-luxury resort. There's a championship golf course, but the big draw is the immaculate hotel, which manages to be both extremely sophisticated yet admirably laid back.

Spacious, gracious and refined, it feels like Finca Cortesin has been there for generations. Yet in reality the project is very new; many years and millions of euros in the making to create.

Three pools, a world-class spa and a restaurant to talk about long into the night: this is a spot for the seriously sybaritic. The bill at the end might jolt you back to reality, but at the moment, while it's all new and economic times are tight, it remains a bargain. RE SUITES FROM £315 PER NIGHT. FINCACORTESIN.COM



Devon knows: Babbacombe Bay is Peter de Savary's latest cool coastal makeover

3 BRITAIN THE CARY ARMS, DEVON

America's Cup battler and entrepreneur Peter de Savary is a serial shaper-upper when it comes to the hospitality industry. A few years ago, he put Devon's Bovey Castle back on the map – before selling up – having previously done the same for Stapleford Park and Skibo Castle. Today, his portfolio includes properties in the Cotswolds, the West Indies, Rhode Island and south Devon – or to be precise, touristy Torquay's secret decompression chamber, Babbacombe Bay.

Dating from the 1880s, the Cary Arms, perched overlooking the beach at Oddicombe, had been closed for three years before de Savary came along. Now it offers eight rooms, plus self-catering residences, all with sea views. The restaurant serves locally sourced food of the fish, fowl and four-legged variety, while for those who fancy an approach by sea, why not take it up on its complimentary mooring and tender service? BP ROOMS FROM £150 B&B. CARYARMS.CO.UK

