

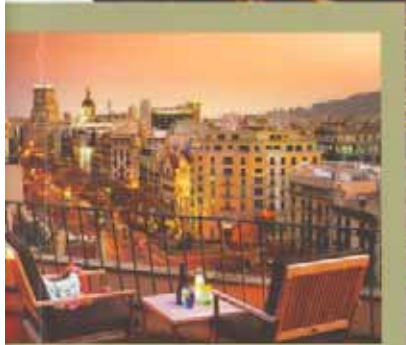
Luxury Travel

INSPIRATION FOR THE EXPERT BUYER

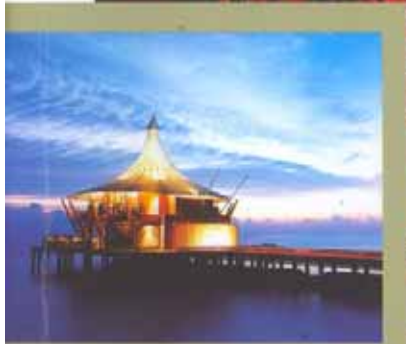
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Mediterranean style
Croatia becomes a player 20



Best of Barcelona
Top 10 luxury tour tips 29

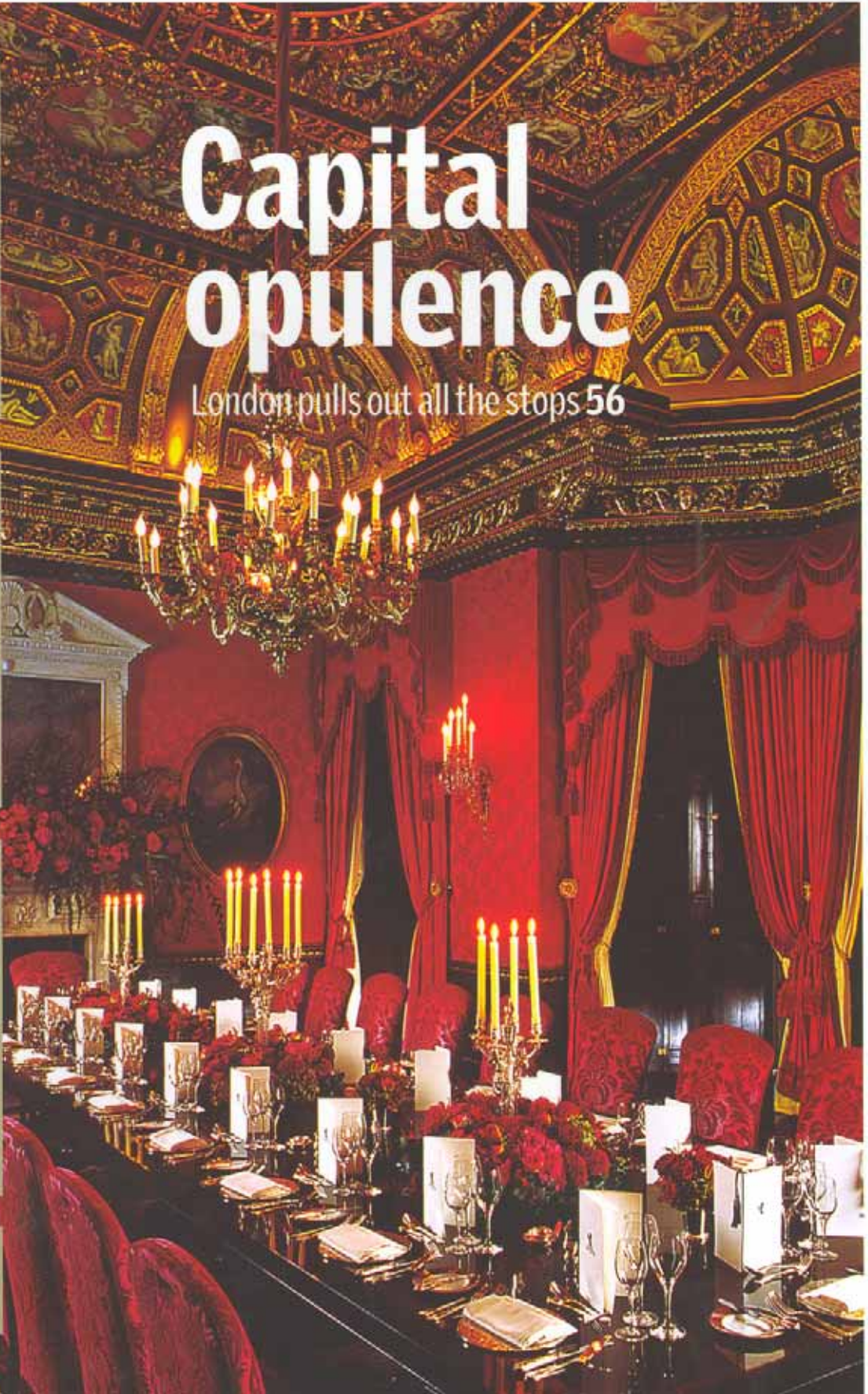


Tranquil escapism
Magic of the Maldives 72

The Virtuoso view
Is it good news for agents? 19

Capital opulence

London pulls out all the stops 56



What's new

The latest information about what's happening in the

NEWS IN BRIEF

Michelin stars for London

Michelin Guide London 2008 has awarded stars to 45 of the city's restaurants, up two on last year. They include La Trompette, Wild Honey, Hibiscus, Rhodes W1 and Quilon. www.visitlondon.com (See p56 for London report)

Trio of luxury hotels for Peru

Cazenove & Loyd is unveiling three luxury hotels in Peru: the floating 12-suite *M/V Aqua* in the northern Amazon; 18-suite Titilaka, Chucito, opens in May on Lake Titicaca; and Casa Andina Private Collection has opened in Arequipa. www.cazloyd.com

Swiss boosts Zurich facilities

Swiss has opened an airside First Class Lounge, airport ticket office and First Class check-in lounge at Zurich Airport. www.swiss.com

Qatar ramps up China flights

Qatar Airways will operate four flights a week non-stop to Guangzhou, China, from 31 March, with 24 Business Class seats. A fifth weekly service will launch in May. www.qatarairways.com

Rainforest tour firm expands

Reef and Rainforest Tours has expanded its Tailor-Made programme with new itineraries across Africa, S America and S East Asia, and the Indian sub-continent. www.reefandrainforest.co.uk

ACE study tour options

ACE Study Tours' 2008 options include Leonard Bernstein in New York, from 13-22 October; Art and Gastronomy of Tuscany, 1-8 September; Bhutan, 19 October-2 November and Pacific Islands, 5-26 August. www.cestudytours.co.uk

Flight services launch

Resorthoppa has launched services in Tunisia and The Azores. www.resorthoppa.com



Kenyan bookings recover

Despite significant cancellations due to the political problems, confidence appears to be returning

The luxury travel trade expressed support for Kenya as a destination after the FCO adjusted its advice (at the time of going to press) against non-essential travel to cover specific regions only.

Hayes & Jarvis stopped selling the destination for a brief period, but resumed following revised advice.

Some 30 per cent of bookings were cancelled for summer 2008, said Stephen Marshall, product and contracts manager for Hayes & Jarvis, with clients rebooking to a variety of destinations. "Now we are all guns blazing for all departure dates," he said, but added: "I think Kenya will probably take a while to recover."

Gara Gharagozlou, director of Ultimate Safaris & Islands, said clients who had booked and "decided to wait and see" had now chosen to travel.

Kenya came fourth in Kuoni's list of top long-haul destinations 2007 (see p7), while sales for January 2008 moved it down to just seventh place. The tour operator said it was now business as usual, but predicted it could take up to six months to rebuild consumer confidence.

Dominic Grammaticas, finance director of The Governors' Camp Collection, said January occupancies

for its Kenyan properties were down, but bookings for February were expected to be normal.

Cox & Kings reported just two per cent of bookings were affected in January. Africa product manager Louise Stanion said: "I think the quality of the safari experience offered in this established destination

will mean people will be drawn back, despite the political problems. We were making bookings for Kenya during early January for travel in autumn 2008. Perhaps our clients are more adventurous and better informed about the issues. They understand the areas affected are localised."

Cheli & Peacock reported some cancellations for January, with 20 per cent of February bookings falling through. However, summer bookings are intact, and its Samburu Saruni lodge is set to launch in June.

The Kenyan TB believes the long-term effect on travel will be limited. "To ensure the luxury market continues to visit Kenya and that the UK remains the biggest inbound market, the TB has planned agent fam trips, ad campaigns, agent roadshows and tour operator partnerships," said Angie Meddins, sales and marketing director, Kenya Tourist Board UK.

KENYA FACTS & FIGURES

■ Kenya's main luxury tourism areas: coastal areas of Mombasa and the national parks, including the Mara, Samburu and Tsavo.

■ In 2006, the UK made up 18 per cent of the total number of visitors to Kenya.

■ Alternative destinations clients have booked: Tanzania, South Africa, Egypt, Antigua, Indian Ocean, Botswana and Mozambique.

■ Monarch Airlines has suspended its services to Mombasa from Gatwick and Manchester until the end of April. www.monarch.co.uk

■ www.magicalkenya.com