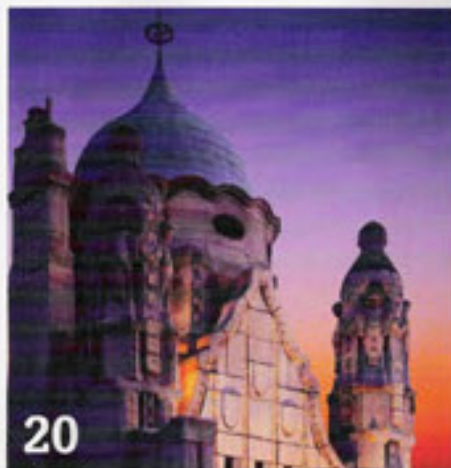


I see my job as a travel editor as an extension of a lifelong passion and hobby. For as long as I can remember, throughout an itinerant childhood and into adulthood, I have thrown anything that serves as a memento of a place into a scrapbook or giant box file: a shell or a pinch of sand from a favourite beach, a postcard from a busy city, menus and brochures from redemptive hotels, tickets to a favourite museum. Compiling a travel memento is not so different. We are constantly asked to divulge our favourite destinations and secret hideaways so, this year, we decided to stick our necks out and commit our choices to paper. We also extracted information from colleagues and well-travelled contributors about their recent trips: that small hotel off the beaten track, the name of that brilliant fixer in Mumbai, the contact details for that accommodating moto driver in Cambodia. We've opened up our address books for you because, of course, there is no substitute for the authority of word-of-mouth recommendations from trusted friends.

Our list of the world's top 100 hotels embraces everything from a small stately in the depths of the English countryside to a slick beach resort in the Indian Ocean, from shack chic in the jungle to oriental languor in the Sahara. But the top 10 have an extra-special something, that touch of fantasy that means they will always stand the test of time.

Catherine Fairweather, travel editor

BETWEEN THE WATER AND SKY
Likoma Island on Lake Nyasa, Malawi (page 45)



20



31



Cover

Silk dress, wedge heels, both from a selection, Asda at Joseph (020 7590 6200). Styled by Nick Cox. Hair by Ed Moolands at Jed Root. Make-up by Tracey Gray at Celliste, using Dior: Diorskin Pure Light Sheer Skin Light Make-up SPF15 in Ivory; Blush Soft Powder Blush in Naive Rose; Diorshow Mascara in Chestnut. Model: Britt Thorsey at Planet M. Photographed at Al Mourina, Luxor, Egypt (www.mourina.com)
Photograph by Diego Uchitel

- 4 **The best hotels on earth** The top 10
- 8 **United Kingdom** National treasures
- 14 **Europe** Continental shortcuts
- 16 **French Riviera** Midi adventures
- 18 **Amalfi coast** Sì, sì, by the seaside
- 20 **Urban escapes** Get hot in the city
- 31 **Party venues** Friends who stay

- together play together
- 41 **A bite of the action** Tuck into trips that offer a taste of new experiences
- 44 **Unique hideaways** One-off global destinations without equal
- 56 **Beach retreats** Coastal congeniality
- 68 **Stop press** The very latest travel news

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