

CLAPHAM BATTERSEA FULHAM

# time & leisure

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**SUMMER  
SEASON**

MUST-VISIT  
MAY EVENTS

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CHELSEA'S SUPER  
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# RICH PICKINGS

Looking for five-star service and views to die for? Chantal Borciani reveals the best hotels for swoon-worthy settings and poolside pampering



Phuket's Kata Rocks



Dhuni Kolhu in the Maldives

## EASTERN PROMISE

So often a country's moniker is more saccharine than substance but the Land of Smiles certainly lives up to its name. The level of service and hospitality in Thailand is second to none and, with an increasing number of direct flights making the hop to its idyllic shores even easier, Thailand's five-star resorts are a magnet for travellers in search of sun, sea and endless sands. Phuket has reinvented itself in the last decade with luxuriant spa hotels and new private beach retreats now peppering its coastline. For infinity pool paradise, design-driven Kata Rocks located on the quiet southern tip of Kata Beach on Phuket's sunset west coast features 34 iconic 'sky pool villas' that offer its lucky guests 180 degree sea views and vast contemporary living spaces. If the epic private infinity pools don't blow you away, secluded outdoor whirlpool baths on the master suite balconies certainly will. The villas range from one-bedroom to four-bedroom layouts and attract a trendy, well-heeled crowd. The main hotel pool, adjacent cocktail bar and ocean-front restaurant are Instagram gold so when you're not enjoying the nearby markets, rainforest treks, beaches and watersports you can kick back in the lap of luxury. ■ [www.katarocks.com](http://www.katarocks.com)

## BLUE LAGOONS

For long-haul luxury, the ink-drop atolls of the Maldives offer world-famous white sandy beaches, kaleidoscopic marine life and piercing blue seas. Maldivian resorts pride themselves on anticipating your every need and desire and

many boast Michelin-standard restaurants, sublime spas and spectacular vistas. Coco Palm Dhuni Kolhu was one of the first luxe resorts to put the Maldives on the map. Today, it remains at the top of the barefoot luxury game and offers ocean-front villas, beach villas and sunset villas with private slithers of white sand. Wake up and enjoy a shower in your capacious outdoor rainforest bathroom or pad down the few steps to the water's edge where you can spot dolphins, rays and friendly reef-tip sharks. Guests staying in the resort's lagoon villas can enjoy uninterrupted views

of the topaz waters and snorkel straight from their private decks. From dolphin-spotting cruises on the island's fleet of traditional boats to snorkelling safaris, swimming with turtles and private candle-lit dinners under the stars, no request is too much. For guests looking for a once-in-a-lifetime experience, the hotel will whisk you away on a sunset cruise to the neighbouring deserted island of Embudhoo where you can enjoy a private dinner as the sun sets and stay in the romantic one-bedroom thatched suite.

■ [www.cococollection.com](http://www.cococollection.com)



## BEAUTIFUL SOUTH

Time is often the greatest limiting factor when it comes to escaping the rat race so it's worth having a few homegrown boltholes up your sleeve for quick getaways. Hewn from the cliff and overlooking the marigold sand of Mawgan Porth in Cornwall, The Scarlet is an adult-only haven dedicated to grown-up relaxation. Even the swooping ergonomics of this coastal retreat aim to

rebalance and recharge – every bedroom boasts mesmerizing sea views and the cool Cornwall-meets-Copenhagen open-plan interiors mean you can watch the waves while you're brushing your teeth. Favourite spots to soothe frazzled nerves include the clifftop sauna (complete with porthole overlooking the waves), the cosy covered capsule sofas hidden among the wild flowers on the hillside (a glass of fizz can be delivered to you as you recline), the award-winning Ayurvedic spa and exhilarating outdoor pool. The Scarlet's eco policies only add to its beguiling Zen and serenity – wild flowers and grasses divide the garden rooms' outdoor areas, so as not to obstruct the view. Recline in the seaweed relaxation room, enjoy a soporific rock in the hanging cocoon pods and don't miss the best seats in the house – two stunning outdoor hot tubs located right on cliff edge that are available to hire by the hour.

■ [www.scarlethotel.co.uk](http://www.scarlethotel.co.uk)