

Travel Guide

2005



TATLER

Abercrombie & Kent



Treetops, New Zealand

Treetops

Rotorua, New Zealand

Thermal springs, lakes and a lodge in a 2,500-acre estate in a valley with seven spring-fed streams. Treetops took 10 years to create – owner John Sax planted 70,000 trees. Now there are four wetland and lake areas with water buffalo. It's eco-living in a lodge built from natural materials and old trees. As well as four suites there are eight villas, each with a drawing room and log fire. After a day spent trout-fishing, mountain-biking or trekking, dinner is game or fish, with local produce.

Tel 00 64 7 333 2066 Fax 00 64 7 333 2065

Website treetops.co.nz

UK reservations Bridge the World (tel: 0870 814 6318)

Rates Double, from £200

Eolo

Patagonia, Argentina

Here be ice: you're in glacier central, one of nature's great theatrical setpieces. The Upsala glacier, a boat trip from this new lodge, is six miles wide and has a surface area five times that of Greater Buenos Aires. Perito Moreno glacier is 20 storeys high. It is still moving and, from the grandstand of a peninsula on Lake Argentino, one can see huge blocks of ice (as blue as Paul Newman's eyes) crack off and crash into the water. Eolo is a country house, rather Scottish (only with heating and hot water) – appropriate in a landscape that is like an über-Highlands. A challenger to the contemporary Explora in Chilean Patagonia, it has the comfortable feel of the old houses built by the original *estancieros* (ranchers), with log fires, home-made food, vegetables from the garden, a library and an indoor pool. Each of the 17 rooms has a drawing room with staggering views. This is nature with nurture.

Tel 00 54 11 4707 0539 (no fax)

Website eolo.com.ar

UK reservations Steppes Latin America (tel: 01285 885333)

Rates Double, from £355 (full board)

Txai Resort

Bahia, Brazil

A rainforest retreat on untouched Atlantic beaches. The thatched bungalows are integrated into the natural surroundings, where owner-run Txai inspires reforestation projects through community work. Go on eco-trips upriver and return to the spa; eat dinner – fresh crab and Bahian shrimp – in the restaurant overlooking the sea. The suites facing the ocean are all built on stilts and cooled by the breeze. Rustic simplicity and wafting muslin with internet access: this is how the eco-traveller lives now.

Tel and fax 00 55 73 634 6936

Website txairesort.com.br

UK reservations Exsus Travel (tel: 020 7292 5050)

Rates Double, from £255 (full board)

Camp Jabulani

Kapama, South Africa

The happy ending. Three years ago, conservationist Lente Roode heard that 12 trained elephants were about to be shot in Zimbabwe for their ivory and meat. One week and a hefty bribe later, the elephants and their 18 handlers were on her 37,000-acre property in the Kapama Private Nature Reserve. The newcomers were companions for little Jabulani (meaning 'joyful'), an orphan elephant brought up by Lente. Thus South Africa's first elephant-back safari camp was born. To ride elephant among the white rhino and sable antelope is a totally different, wonderfully silent way of game-viewing. On top of Babar the King you rule the world. It gives one a cloak of invisibility when lion-watching – they don't tangle with Jumbo and the human becomes part of the elephantine shape, especially after a massive bush breakfast cooked over wood fires. The camp, with its books and photographs, pictures and artefacts, is like a friend's house. The six suites, reached by swing-bridges, have open fireplaces, plunge-pools and views towards the Drakensberg.

Tel 00 27 12 804 4840 Fax 00 27 12 804 3984

Website campjabulani.com

UK reservations Africa Travel Centre (tel: 0845 450 1622)

Rates Double, from £1,050 (full board, including activities)

Singita Lebombo

Kruger National Park, South Africa

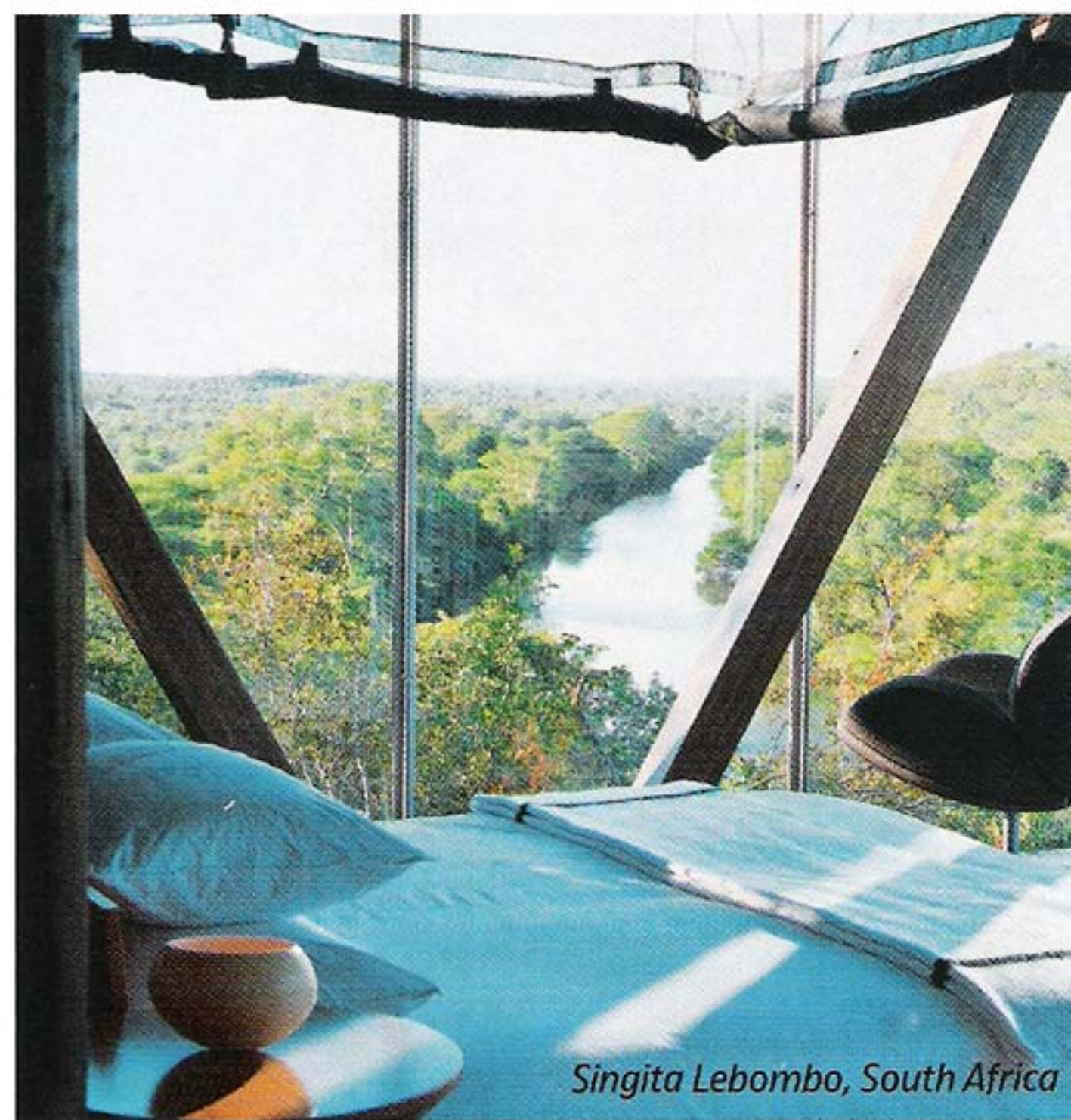
In a remote part of the Kruger National Park, up by the Mozambique border, Lebombo has reinvented the safari. *Tatler's* Hotel of the Year 2004 is designer-eco. Glass rooms hang over the river, built on steel stilts that touch the earth lightly. Shaded by loose rafters, like timber throws, the lodge seems an organic part of the environment, with star-beds on the balconies and hippos yawning below. One of the silky Singita lodges (wonderful food, wine and design), Lebombo gives the traveller choice, not the traditional safari structure. Here you go on game drives, eat or visit the spa when you like. There's wild adventure yet you can sit at your desk and watch giraffes drinking on the river opposite. Queen Noor of Jordan considers it an incredibly spiritual place.

Tel 00 27 21 683 3424 Fax 00 27 21 683 3502

Website singita.co.za

UK reservations Abercrombie & Kent (tel: 0845 070 0611)

Rates Double, from £1,270 (full board, including activities)



Singita Lebombo, South Africa