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THE HOT LIST 2020

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BOOK
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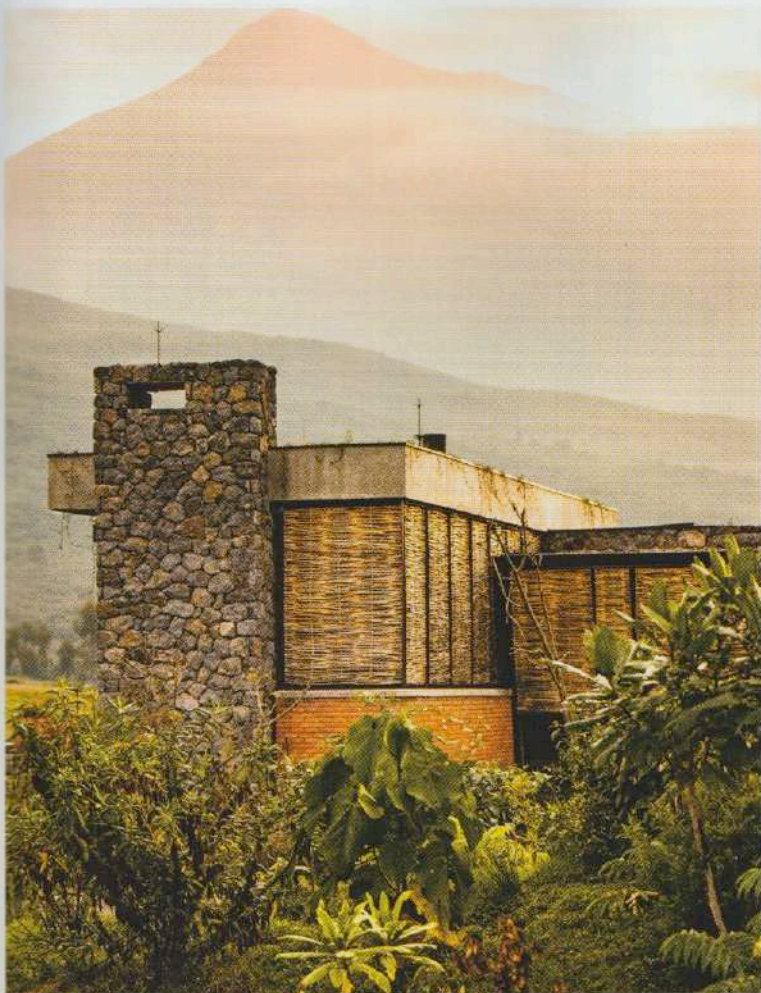
EDITED BY FIONA KERR,
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PARILIO ON PAROS, GREECE

RWANDA

SINGITA KWITONDA LODGE

Setting new standards in sustainable design, Singita's highly anticipated outpost on the edge of Volcanoes National Park treads nimbly on the earth but is firmly grounded in local culture, championing local workmanship and traditional materials including volcanic rock and bamboo. Each of the eight suites is a retreat from the elements; beyond the windows the outlines of the peaks smudge and sharpen as they disappear and reappear above the cloud forests. Food is hearty and nurturing – ingredients are plucked from the kitchen garden or the agricultural plots that surround it. As you'd expect from safari operators at the top of their game, everything has been carefully considered, from the on-site tree nursery providing saplings for the park to expand the natural habitat of the mountain gorillas to a gear room with all the right kit for trekking whatever the weather. Because it's impossible to get closer to the natural habitat of the gorillas than from here, giving Singita the edge over the rest of the recently opened competition. Rwanda's great comeback from its dark past to optimistic ecotourism success has been taken to the next level. **FLASH POINT** Since Dian Fossey first put the gorillas' plight in the spotlight, travellers have been making the pilgrimage here. Now a state-of-the-art campus continuing her research is in the works nearby, supported by Ellen DeGeneres's philanthropic foundation. singita.com. Suites from about £1,360 per person, full board



ITALY

MEZZATORRE, ISCHIA

If there was an Italian (re)opening to define last summer, this was it. And should we even be surprised? After all, hotelier Marie-Louise Sciò, of Il Pellicano fame, has a knack for drawing the beautiful people with her chic brand of *il dolce far niente* (the sweetness of doing nothing). But Ischia – Capri's lesser-known, less flashy, somewhat ugly-round-the-edges neighbour – was not the obvious choice for her family's third hotel. Taking over the historic Mezzatorre on the island's wild north-western tip, Sciò had just four months to give the sea-urchin-coloured building, set in a turreted former 16th-century watchtower and pirate's lookout, a transformative tune-up before opening. Blue ikat and abstract coral prints add a kick to bedrooms which are shrouded in solid quietude. In the basement, a deep-green-tiled thermal spa bubbles with pools of mineral water, and treatments use local nutrient-rich mud. But at the glorious outdoor saltwater pool and along the horseshoe terraces that wrap the bay, beneath navy striped parasols, is the gentle thrum of a scene. Low-key and languid, this is the Italy of Slim Aarons and *The Talented Mr Ripley* (the film was partly shot around here). It's the Formentera to Capri's Ibiza, the Holbox to Tulum. In the age of authenticity, this feels like the real deal. **FLASH POINT** During golden hour, head to Bar La Torre for sky-matching Negroni sbagliatos. mezzatorre.com. Doubles from about £260

