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BLANCANEUX LODGE, BELIZE

The ceiling fans that churn jungle air inside the bar at Blancaneux Lodge once chased heat on the set of *Apocalypse Now*—no surprise, since Blancaneux's owner is Francis Ford Coppola, the movie's director. But Coppola and his wife, Eleanor, have brought more than just film lore to this Belizean jungle retreat secluded in cool mountain forest two-and-a-half hours west of Belize City. Five villas are designed in primitive style, with painted carved animals, Spanish Colonial antiques, and Japanese baths. Stucco and bamboo living rooms open to the Privassion River, where waterfalls thunder into limestone pools lined with tiger ferns. Settle into a villa or one of seven all-wood cabanas, part of the original 1960s lodge, that seem built into the trees. Near Blancaneux there's canoeing and caving (Chechem ha Cave has intact Mayan pottery), and the 166-square-mile Mayan kingdom of Caracol, where enormous crumbling temples and dozens of ancient tombs smolder in the jungle heat. Almost apocalyptic. December through April, doubles cost \$160 for cabanas and \$300 for villas. The Coppola family's villas are available on request (\$300–\$450). There are also two large lodge rooms that share a bath; rates are \$95. Call 800-223-9832. —STACY RITZ

COCONUT BEACH RAINFOREST RESORT, AUSTRALIA

If you think of the Australian color scheme as mostly red and ochre, try a visit to Cape Tribulation, a 2.5-hour drive north of Cairns. Green, gold, and blue predominate as a tidal wave of tropical foliage sweeps down from the hillsides of FNQ (Far North Queensland) and runs smack into a cordon of brilliant sand. Just offshore, the Great Barrier Reef begins. All but hidden in these rainforest-covered hills, the breezy villas of Coconut Beach Rainforest Resort are like eco-playrooms for adults—as close to the biodiversity as you can get short of simply climbing a tree. Each deluxe, polished-wood unit has an

open wall yawning into the greenery, which, when you think about the 100 million-plus years of continuous growth, becomes as compelling to stare at as TV. All night there's the buzz of industrious cicadas and a scrambling of marsupials beyond the screened windows, and who needs coffee when at sunrise you'll be jump-started by a demented chorus of rosellas?

By day, pick your way through the fertile forest, keeping an eye out for the odd ten-yard-long python; then hop a catamaran out to Mackay Cay, one of the richest marine sites on the Barrier Reef. Just below the surface, the blue waters explode into a blur of fluorescent fish, sculpted coral canyons, and rookeries of giant clams whose velvet-lipped mouths close tight

western Honduras might be the steaming cup of locally-grown coffee served each morning with fried plantains and corn tortillas. The Casa's eight rooms are minimal and airy—vaulted ceilings, antique fans, picture windows, cool tile floors (doubles, \$38; 011-504-52-72-74). In proprietor Howard Rosenzweig's library you can bone up on Mayan art before hiking to the ruins of Copán a kilometer away. He also arranges hiking trips through the Montaña del Ángel cloud forest or birding tours to El Jaral Lake, where 5,000 herons nest each evening. —PAUL KVINTA

PEPONI HOTEL, KENYA

Don't come looking for beach-volleyball tournaments or bathtub-sized banana daiquiris at Peponi Hotel on Kenya's Lamu Island. This whitewashed, Moorish-style fortress, perched on an outcropping above an Indian Ocean channel, harks back to the refined glories of the Arabian-Swahili empire that flourished along Africa's east coast nearly 500 years ago. Scattered across two acres of bougainvillea, palm trees, and manicured lawns, Peponi's 24 cottages could have been concocted by a Swahili Martha Stewart: whitewashed ceilings supported by dark mangrove beams, Moorish arch-

TOP TEN FINDS

A rainforest treehouse, a mountain hacienda, an old seaside fort — sometimes the best hideaways are the ones you're least likely to hear about

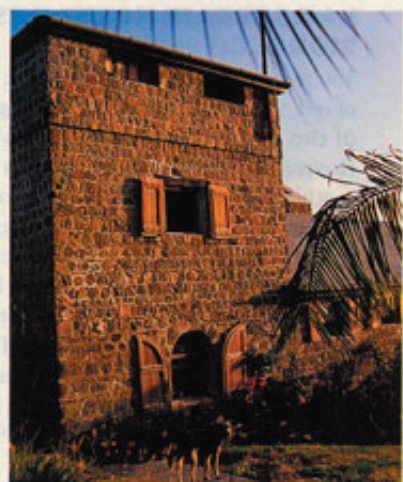
whenever you brush their "tongues." Doubles are US\$222, including buffet breakfast; call 011-61-70-98-0033. —TONY PERROTTET

CASA DE CAFÉ B&B, HONDURAS

As it did for the Mayan kings who once ruled here, the sun plays a critical role for guests at the Casa de Café in Copán, Honduras. Folks sink into hammocks in the Casa's tropical garden and track the sun as it melts into the purple mountains of Guatemala. The only thing superior to the sunsets at this terra-cotta-walled villa in

ways, four-poster teakwood beds, Arabic chests, and coral-pink tile floors. When not basking in your personal sheikdom, you can take a full-moon cruise on an old wooden sailing dhow, windsurf the channel, wander the eight miles of empty beaches, and sample the alleyways of nearby Lamu town, a labyrinth of braying

Todos Santos Inn; ruins of Copán, Honduras; Hacienda Zuleta's main courtyard; La Roserale Hotel; The Old Fort Hotel, Bequia; Blue Lake Ranch, Colorado; Blancaneux Lodge, Belize; Coconut Beach Rainforest Resort Walk; Peponi Hotel, Lamu Island (clockwise from top left); Hotel Mocking Bird Hill, Jamaica (bottom center).



donkeys, sixteenth-century mosques, and shops selling cloves and other spices. Double rooms are \$270 per night with all meals; \$200 with breakfast only. Call 011-254-121-33154. —JOSHUA HAMMER

HACIENDA ZULETA, ECUADOR

Surprising, isn't it, how often you can work the conversation around to the fact that you've slept in a house that belongs to the presidential family? Never mind that this particular president, Ecuador's Galo Plaza Lasso, has been out of office since 1952. His descendants will treat you like a member of the family at Hacienda Zuleta, a historic retreat in the Andean cloud forest about two and a half hours northeast of Quito. The adobe hacienda, built in 1691, is the centerpiece of a 4,000-acre working farm that includes a dairy, cheese factory, organic garden, tree nursery, trout farm, embroidery workshop, and condor-raising project. Most guests saddle up one of 90 horses and ride out through pine and eucalyptus forests and high-altitude grasslands to pre-Inca archaeological sites amid magnificent volcano views. You can also hike, cycle, or take tours to nearby indigenous villages. The nine guest rooms are appointed with Spanish Colonial antique furniture, down comforters, and linens embroidered by local Indian women. And unlike in the U.S., you don't have to make a political donation to sleep at the president's house. Rates are \$150 per person per night, which includes all meals, taxes, and activities at the hacienda; book via e-mail (alponce@uio.satnet.net) or fax (011-593-256-4445). Equitour (800-545-0019) offers a seven-night package for \$1,650 that includes two nights in Quito, five nights at the hacienda, all meals, local transportation and transfers, a tour of Quito, and shopping tours to Indian communities. —BOB PAYNE

LA ROSERAIE HOTEL RESIDENCE CLUB, MOROCCO

You're lying beside a pool, drink in hand, surrounded by hundreds of red, yellow, and pink roses and gazing at the snow-capped peaks of the High Atlas, North Africa's highest mountains. It's La Roseraie, a former French count's hunting lodge tucked into the foothills of Val d'Ouirgane an hour-and-a-half southeast of Marrakech. Rooms are large and breezy, with cool Islamic tile floors and simple wooden furnishings, and there's a wonderful *hammam*, a Moroccan steam bath. An hour's hike brings you to the village of Tezliche, where you can sip Berber tea with the villagers. You can tackle Toubkal, at 13,661 feet Morocco's highest mountain, or ride horseback through hills where only an ancient goatherd and her flock roam like extras in some biblical movie. Rates are about \$57 per person; call 011-212-443-91-28. —EVERETT POTTER

THE OLD FORT HOTEL, BEQUIA

Ottmar Schaedle, the German perfectionist who owns the Old Fort Hotel, first stumbled on Bequia in 1978 during a round-the-world yachting expedition. With his wife and three children, he spent several idyllic Swiss-Family-Robinson years rebuilding an eighteenth-century fortified plantation house; today the place has six guest rooms decorated with Scandinavian-style furnishings, lush gardens, and three pools of varying sizes. The property sits above the cliffs on the island's east coast, with expansive views of some 25 neighboring islands. It's a ten-minute walk down to two little-used coves for swimming, and a two-mile walk to the main harbor. The Old Fort also happens to house Bequia's finest restaurant. As we sampled the wild mushrooms that Ottmar had gathered that morning, lights twinkled in the garden foliage, fire-

light from the dining room's fireplace flickered on stone walls, and Billie Holliday sang about covering the waterfront. When we ordered herb tea, the ever-accommodating Ottmar disappeared into his garden with a flashlight and knife, returning with soursop, sugar apple, and a bayleaf. Doubles cost \$160 December 15–April 15, \$130 in the off-season. Call 809-458-3440. —THURSTON CLARKE

TODOS SANTOS INN, MEXICO

Like the setting of a Gabriel García Márquez novel, the brick and adobe walls of the tiny Todos Santos Inn echo with the possibility something magical could happen here. If not magical, certainly legendary: During the 1910 Mexican revolution, the owner was rumored to have tossed his cashbox full of gold coins into the outhouse to stymie looters. It's never been found, despite years of backyard expeditions by local kids. Located in the tiny town of Todos Santos, 50 minutes north of Cabo San Lucas on Baja California's Pacific coast, the inn is secluded behind heavy wooden doors that open onto a frescoed *saguán* (arched entry) leading to a brick interior patio and garden. French doors off the patio open onto high-ceilinged rooms furnished with Spanish Colonial antiques. The town has great beaches, biking, and hiking, plus fantastic surf at Playa San Pedrito about seven miles up the coast. Doubles cost \$85 to \$120 per night, including continental breakfast. To reserve, call or fax 011-52-114-50040. —ANDREW RICE

HOTEL MOCKING BIRD HILL, JAMAICA

If life in Jamaica's bed of hedonism, Negril, sometimes feels like Las Vegas at the beach, life in the Blue Mountains is like attending a chapter meeting of the Sierra Club. The island's rural southeast corner near Port Antonio is fast becoming Ecoville, Jamaica, and at the center of it all is the Hotel Mocking Bird Hill. From the broad deck of the hotel, a modest villa on a steep hill about 15 minutes from Port Antonio, the mountains recede into a misty distance, blue ridge faintly overlapping blue ridge. Run by two feisty women, Barbara Walker and Shireen Aga, the hotel has ten spartan, airy rooms furnished in bamboo; all have balconies, most have ocean views. During the day you can shuttle down to the beach at Frenchman's Cove, go for a leisurely bamboo-raft ride down the Rio Grande, or let a guide from Valley Hikes take you up into the mountains. From December 15–April, doubles cost \$140–\$160; call 876-993-7267. Unique Destinations in Rhode Island offers special sporting packages; call 401-934-3398. —L.W.

BLUE LAKE RANCH, COLORADO

If you didn't know that you were 11 miles west of Durango, Colorado, you might think you'd landed in the middle of a canvas by Monet. Seemingly the work of some crazed nocturnal seed-scatterer, the grounds of Blue Lake Ranch in late spring and early summer are wall-to-wall with bearded iris. The extensive gardens with views of the 13,000-foot La Plata Mountains surround a yellow clapboard house, converted barn, and assorted cabins and cottages, the remnants of a simple 1910 homestead. Innkeepers David and Shirley Alford have updated the ranch with Victorian antiques in some rooms, Southwest furnishings in others. You can fish for trout from the small lake, visit nearby Mesa Verde National Park, or let the Alford's arrange a special guided hike in the adjacent Ute Mountain Tribal Park. Rates are \$65–\$185 in low season (November 1–April 30), \$85–\$245 in high season. Call 970-385-4537. —L.W.