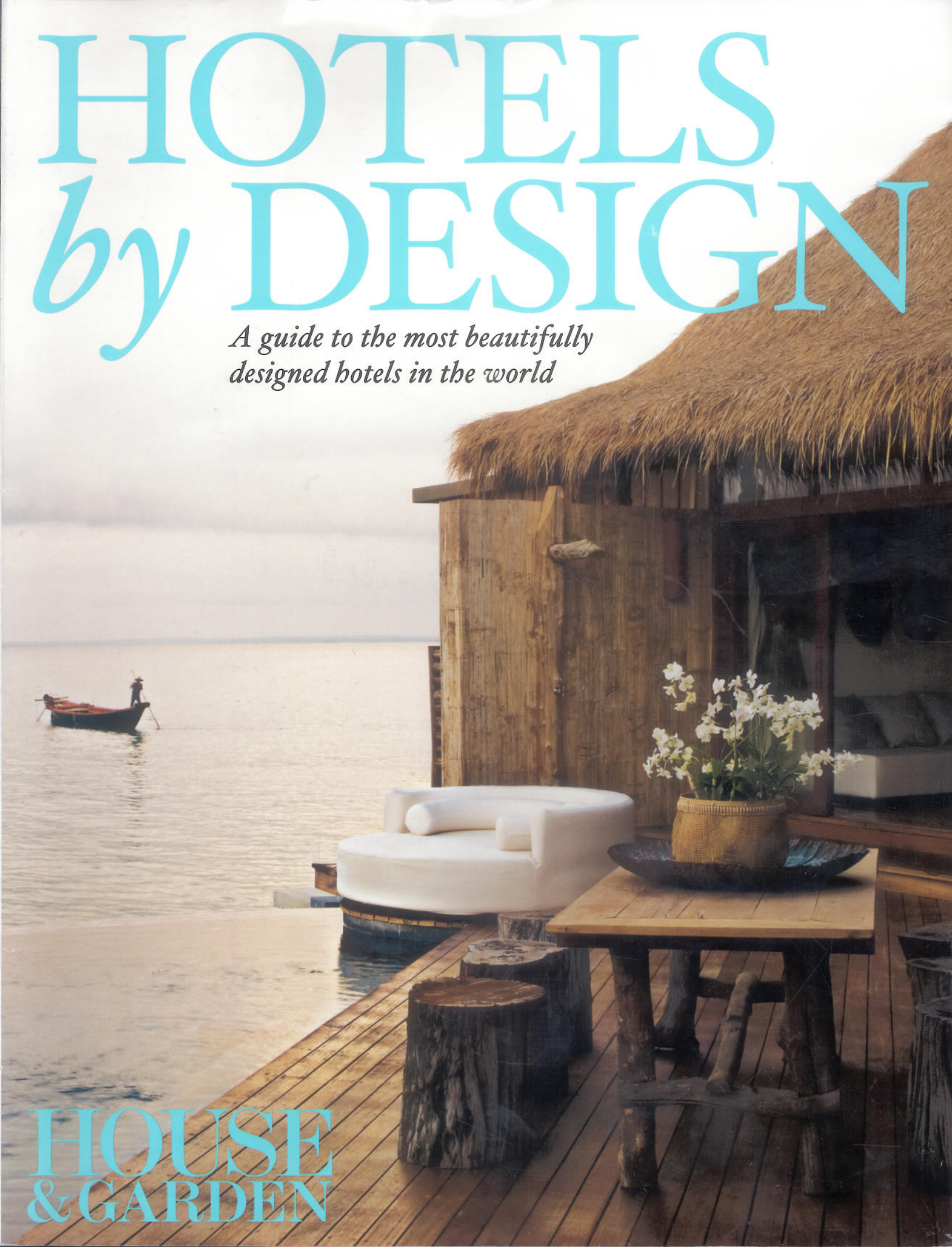


HOTELS *by* DESIGN

*A guide to the most beautifully
designed hotels in the world*

HOUSE
& GARDEN



THE AMERICAS

US West

The Ranch at Rock Creek, set in nearly 7,000 acres of quintessential Montana wilderness, is part cattle station, part hotel - think cowboy style with a seriously luxurious twist. You can ski in the winter and ride and fish in the summer, and cosy up in the evenings in the leather- and cowhide-decked interiors. Alternatively, head to Idaho and Natural Retreats' new outfit at Snake River, **South Fork Lodge**, whose raison d'être is trout fishing. For a hotel all the colours of the rainbow, check out **Saguaro Palm Springs**, while near Santa Fe in New Mexico, **Encantado** is a little bit spa, a little bit ranch, and rather more indulgent resort luxury. Going urban, the **Hotel Bel-Air** (above) in Los Angeles is fresh as a daisy after a top-to-toe redesign, while sister-hotel **The Beverly Hills** celebrates its centenary this year.



US East

In Chicago, Ian Schrager has unveiled his latest hotel venture - **Public** (see 'Public service') - while in New York, Grupo Habita has launched its first property outside Mexico, **HôtelAmericano** (see 'Outside art'). The style here, behind the steely façade, is pared-down simplicity, Japanese-style, with platform beds and wood-lined sleeping pods. Down south, New Orleans is at last back on the scene all these years after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. The **Hyatt Regency**, an integral part of downtown life, has reopened its doors after a squillion-dollar refurbishment. In Miami, the mighty **St Regis Bal Harbour Resort** (above) - 243 rooms with glass-enclosed balconies and ocean views - has just opened, mere minutes from South Beach. Up north, in Newport, Rhode Island, the **Vanderbilt Grace** is a historic mansion with a modern, elegant interior. Check out the roof deck with its views over the historic city and harbour.



Caribbean

Step back in time to the Fifties at **Hotel La Banane** on St Barths, where simple white bungalows have been lavished with an impressive collection of furniture from the likes of Le Corbusier, Serge Mouille and Jean Royère. There's a beautiful tropical garden, too. In St Lucia, the destination spa **The Body Holiday** has recently undergone a \$30 million renovation and is back with a spring in its step. Likewise, **Petit St Vincent** (left) in the Grenadines has reopened under new ownership. Its 22 bungalows have been revamped and there's a new beach bar and restaurant, and hillside spa. The island can also be rented as a whole. Family-owned, all-inclusive **Curtain Bluff** in Antigua has an abiding reputation for impeccable service and a client list straight out of Hollywood. The hotel has completed the final phase of refurbishment. In Jamaica, **Strawberry Hill**, with its 12 Georgian-style cottages, has also had a dose of TLC. For rustic, back-to-nature Caribbean, go to **Secret Bay** in Dominica.



Mexico

Grupo Habita - better known for its urban hotels in Mexico and more recently in New York - is due to launch **Eco Hotel Endémico Resguardo Silvestre** (above) in the rugged terrain of Valle de Guadalupe, Mexico's emerging wine region just south of the US border. Each of the 20 free-standing, ultra-modern bungalows comes with its own terrace and clay chimenea. San Miguel de Allende, Mexico's picture-perfect colonial outpost, has a rich, historical past, but **Hotel Matilda** is all about the cutting-edge design of the present. It's young and quirky and full of contemporary Mexican art.

Ecuador/Peru

At last, for the well-heeled traveller, there's a chance to go jungle-crazy in Ecuador with the opening of **Mashpi Lodge** (below). There are 22 modern rooms, some in the trees, in a 2,600-acre reserve of full-on flora and fauna, plus a two-kilometre 'aerial tram' - a bit like a cable car - which trundles guests through the tree canopy. For a Peruvian jungle experience, the Inkaterra group has opened **Hacienda Concepción**, a carbon-zero jungle-lodge on the banks of the Madre de Dios River, where guests can choose between the eight rooms of the lodge or seven individual thatched cabanas.



Chile/Argentina

Patagonia's Torres del Paine National Park has welcomed two new lodges, both with fewer than 60 rooms. **Singular Patagonia** (above), on Last Hope Sound, is industrial on the outside - it was formerly a meat-packing plant - but lavish and comfortable on the inside. **Tierra Patagonia Hotel & Spa** (see 'Outside art') has spectacular views of Lake Sarmiento and the soaring granite spires of the Paine Massif. Meanwhile, Explora's **Hotel Saïto Chico**, also in the Torres del Paine National Park, has had a facelift, including the opening of a new wine bar which stocks the best Chilean wines. In Argentina, **La Bamba de Areco**, one of the oldest colonial-style estancias, not far from Buenos Aires, has been transformed into an 11-room hotel. This is serious riding and polo country.

For hotel details, see 'Web facts' □

