

COUNTRY & TOWN HOUSE

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

MARCH 2019 £3.90

EMILIA WICKSTEAD'S

Postcards from New Zealand,
plus properties to buy
Down Under

AN UNLIKELY ECO WARRIOR

*Tracy Worcester is a
duchess on a mission*

HIP TO BE BRUTON

*How the Somerset
town turned cool*

WILD ABOUT ADVENTURE

PETER OBORNE finds a warm welcome in Syria. **LEVISON WOOD**
explores safe spaces in Afghanistan. **PETER HUGHES** sets sail in eastern
Indonesia. **DEVANSHI MODY** discovers the posh side of Peru

BOTTOMS UP!

Introducing our
new drinks column



MEXICO

MAYAN MANIA

Mary Lussiana finds four heavenly stays on the Mexican Riviera

1 BEST FOR SPA

Belmond Maroma Resort & Spa

Built in 1995, this hotel was a game changer for the destination. It could do with a bit of 21st-century love but it nonetheless maintains real appeal, especially in its impressive Kinan spa. Take the time to experience a traditional Mayan Temazcal ceremony where you and your shaman sit in darkness inside the tiny sweat lodge on the beach. With four cycles of ever increasing heat from the wood piled onto the fire between you, you're encouraged to be reborn through a series of voicing trapped emotions, practicing forgiveness and allowing your inner child out; a remarkably cathartic experience. Relax afterwards in one of the 63 rooms and suites which come with marble floors, indulgently large bathrooms and the sounds of the surrounding jungle.

BOOK IT: A three-night stay starts from £1,795 pp B&B, including flights and transfers. journeylatinamerica.co.uk

2 BEST FOR FAMILIES

Rosewood Mayakoba

Ten years on, this resort is still ticking the boxes for family-friendly holidays with a real sense of the exotic. Huge iguanas laze on the lawns, you reach your room by boat along the canals that cut through the rainforest and if you are there in late summer you should see baby turtles hatch. The food is delicious across the wide choice of restaurants, but don't miss a meal at Punta Bonita where you can taste typical Mexican street food like the Oaxaca cheese quesadillas or indulge in Caribbean lobster tacos with chipotle mayonnaise. The spa is serious with a raft of packages that deal with both emotional and physical issues. The 129 suites vary in views from direct sea views to the Lagoon Suites which are surrounded by the rainforest. All come with plunge pools, some suites are spread over two floors, others have three bedrooms making it ideal for families.

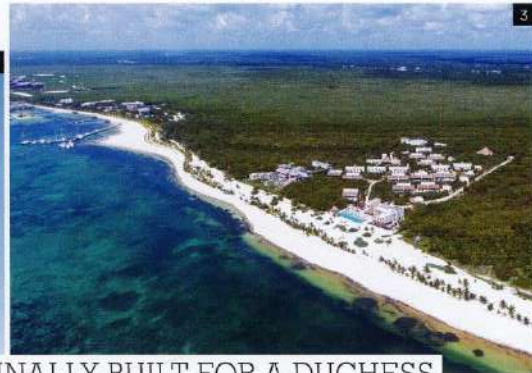
BOOK IT: Doubles from £488, room only. rosewoodhotels.com

3 BEST FOR FOODIES

Chablé Maroma

After the awards and acclamations that Chablé Yucatan Resort & Spa received when it debuted in 2016, there were always going to be great expectations of the second hotel in the home-grown chain (a third is in the pipeline off Mexico's Pacific coast). But Chablé Maroma opened to great applause. It is sexy and sophisticated with food to kill for, service which comes with the widest of smiles and a marked respect for its surrounding nature. Wellness is important here too. Witness the beautiful Palapa thatched spa with treatments that draw on the region's Mayan heritage, but Chablé's 'redefining wellness' tag line is just as much about the contentment derived from the perfection of a smoky Mezcal or a goat's cheese custard with 'piloncillo' (an unrefined artisanal sugar) and lime ice cream courtesy of Consultant Chef Jorge Vallejo, famed for his Quintonil restaurant in Mexico City.

BOOK IT: A three-night stay starts from £2,410 pp B&B, including flights and transfers. journeylatinamerica.co.uk



ORIGINALLY BUILT FOR A DUCHESS, ESENCIA SITS ON THE XPU-HA BEACH WITH THE WORLD'S SECOND LARGEST BARRIER REEF JUST TWO MINUTES INTO THOSE TURQUOISE WATERS



4 BEST FOR ROMANTICS
Hotel Esencia

This is the one for the cognoscenti. A gorgeous, off-the-radar, hideaway that doesn't even have its name on the entrance because those in the know just know. Originally built for an Italian Duchess, it sits on Xpu-Ha beach, considered the most beautiful stretch of this coastline with the world's second largest barrier reef just two minutes out into those diaphanous, turquoise waters. The hotel itself is effortlessly chic; the main house retains its private home feel under new owner American art collector Kevin Wendle, who has sprinkled art and antiques throughout. Last year six beach suites and five jungle suites were added as was Mistura Restaurant, which curves out onto the beach under a domed thatched roof with no-to-be-missed ceviche. Plus, Riccardo Giraudi's internationally-acclaimed Beefbar is about to set up its carnivorous stall at the hotel too. Paradise. **BOOK IT:** A three-night stay starts from £1,754 pp B&B, including flights and transfers. journeylatinamerica.co.uk



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