

TALLER®

TRAVEL GUIDE 2012

IN ASSOCIATION WITH AFRICA TRAVEL

DOWN AND DIRTY
*Camels and camping in Kenya*INDIA'S NEW GROOVE
*Kerala hits a high note*THE RACY RIVIERA
*Turkey's party coast gets jiggy*BEYOND BALI
*Indonesia's hidden-island kicks*101
BEST HOTELS
IN THE WORLD

101 BEST HOTELS | TENTED LOVE

SHER BAGH

RANTHAMBORE NATIONAL PARK, INDIA

Can you believe Russell Brand and Katy Perry chose a Twenties Raj-style tented camp in Rajasthan for their wedding celebrations? They brought a whole party posse, including Rihanna, sang karaoke and blasted music well into the jungle night, and were eventually, as are all great parties, shut down by the police. The first genuine little camp in Ranthambore, Sher Bagh was opened amid the wildly romantic ravines, forests and lakes 12 years ago; for a while it rather sat about, but now it's pulled up its safari socks and is back being the best in the zone. Suck up the crackling fires, the great stone showers, the fresh roses, the saffron turbans, the absurdly good massages and the campaign-style furniture made by the people behind Purdys. The

GM is more English than a squashed-fly biscuit, with his big moustache and full-on regalia. And you really don't mind asking whether someone will get you an extra tigertini or a bowl of the deeply delicious yoghurt with pomegranate, because everyone seems to be having the most lovely time. Don't miss taking the owner Jaisal's train – a private bogie, fire-engine red – from Delhi or Agra: in the mornings, India's full glory emerges through the mist. And what of the tigers? First, they're so much bigger than you think they'll be! Secondly, goosebumps, people, goosebumps! **Website** sherbagh.com **Book it** *The Ultimate Travel Company (020 7386 4646) offers four nights as part of a six-day trip from £2,595, including flights and transfers.*



BLUE MOUNTAINS PRIVATE SAFARIS

NSW, AUSTRALIA

If a jolly swagman stumbled across this bush camp deep in the Blue Mountains, he'd swallow his pipe. Hidden among eucalyptus trees in which flit tiny flycatchers, such as the fantastically named Jacky Winter, this is somewhere you're going to get your hair messed up and you won't give a fig. Coffee and noisy kookaburras will lure you from your blankets to gather at the campfire where blue woodsmoke curls around your face. There are showers under watering-can-like roses filled with piping-hot water and platypus-searching on the banks of the wild Wollondilly River. A satisfying, dusty-boot, star-spangled place where you'll have your best night's sleep in years. **Website** bluemountainsprivatesafaris.com **Book it** *Turquoise Holidays (01494 678400) offers one night as part of a 10-day trip from £3,250, including flights and transfers.*



SINGITA EXPLORE

SERENGETI, TANZANIA

This might be the most relaxed of the fabulous Singita Grumeti's Tanzanian properties, but basic it is not. A cool Calvin Klein of a camp, it was inspired by old-style safari Land Rovers, hence the rugged mix of khaki shades and shiny-hard accessories (storm lamps, tin mugs, chrome everywhere). Its real upper cut, though, is that it can be packed and moved. So, you want to see the migration? They'll stick the tents up right in the middle of a dust cloud of mooing, snorting creatures. Fancy spending a couple of days chilling by a river? There's a sandy spot already marked out. You have the whole rig to yourself, with a chef, guide and staff to deliver ice-cold G&Ts as you revel in the Milky Way or hand you steaming mugs of tea while you watch lions scoff a hunt. There are 340,000 acres of private wildlife reserve here, with only 80 guests allowed, so the sense of space is incredible. So too – amazingly, given it's in the middle of nowhere – is the food: knockout cold gazpacho served in long-stemmed glasses, exotic salads, even steamed lemon pudding with crème anglais. Camping so delicious that even hardcore urbanites might consider it. **Website** singita.com **Book it** *Africa Travel (020 7843 3580) offers three nights from £2,915, full board, including flights and transfers.*