

KENSINGTON &  
CHELSEA

UK, May 2012

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## ALFRESCO ADVENTURES

ANGELINA VILLA-CLARKE urges us all to get back to nature with her pick of the most luxurious ways to enjoy yourself in the world's wonderful wildernesses



### UP IN THE AIR

A luxury hotel may not be the first thing that springs to mind when it comes to getting in touch with the great outdoors but Chewton Glen in the New Forest has something up its sleeve for those who want to experience the best of both worlds. Hidden away in the country house hotel's extensive grounds are six ultra-luxe, eco, cedar treehouses, set to open this June.

Designed to have a minimal visual and physical impact on their pristine surroundings, the treehouses appear from a distance to float over the forest canopy. This magical quality is imbued into your experience from the minute you arrive. The treehouses are approached via a raised boardwalk, giving the feeling that you are leaving solid land behind and walking into thin air. Once inside, you are faced with breathtaking views of the valley cropping away below you, with the verdant forest and picturesque bubbling stream in the distance.

Inside, the hideaways feature floor-to-ceiling windows (they're situated so you can watch the sunset), vaulted ceilings, secret bunk rooms for children, wood burners and ambient lighting. The rustic-luxe design is made complete with natural details – hessian, linen and woad are mixed in with oak, stone, shimmering shell and copper accents. Free-standing spa baths are situated on wraparound decks and therapists, from the hotel's renowned (hi-)spa, can visit to pamper you under the trees. It's true enchantment in the forest.

Chewton Glen, Hampshire, UK  
[www.chewtonglen.com](http://www.chewtonglen.com)



### DESERT DREAMS

Bringing the spirit of the Raj to the notion of 'glamping' is Suján's ultra-luxe camp in India's Great Thar Desert. A stunning oasis set amid dramatic sand-dunes and under clear, blue skies, The Serai aims to recall the glamour of bygone eras and is more akin to a boutique hotel in the sand than a campsite.

All of the 21 creamy, billowing tents sit up from a base of local Jaisalmer stone and have relaxation verandahs, living rooms and bedrooms complete with oversized beds and the ever-critical air conditioning. The Luxury Tentled Suites also have private gardens and sunken pools, while the Royal Suite is the most impressive, with its own private spa, outdoor pool, dining and lounge tents. Inside, you can retreat amid a stylish mix of Indian Dhurries, traditional fabrics and campaign furniture.

The Serai also features an amazing swimming pool based on a traditional Indian step-wall and a spa designed by Raison D'Etre, pitched around a pretty garden. Here, you can choose from a choice of organic treatments, inspired by the local Rajasthani traditions, with products blended from healing Indian herbs and spices, such as saffron, honey and black sesame seeds.

At night, the camp truly comes into its own and is incredibly romantic, with its flickering lanterns and glowing campfires. The communal dining tent offers local delicacies or classic Western dishes – the choice is yours – all made using home-grown produce. After dinner you can retreat to one of the leather club chairs in the library bar to a backbeat of 50s jazz, or have a wander around the boutique, which sells sequined and cotton kurtans made by artisans, local art, leatherwork and beaded items as well as furniture to order.

If that doesn't keep you busy, explore the beautiful pink-sandstone 'fort city' of Jaisalmer, just a 45-minute drive away, or go for a sunset camel ride, complete with a hamper of sundowners. On your return, you'll be given a hot water bottle to stave off the night chill of the desert. It's fabulous, heart-warming stuff. ♦♦

The Serai, Jaisalmer, India  
[www.the-serai.com](http://www.the-serai.com)