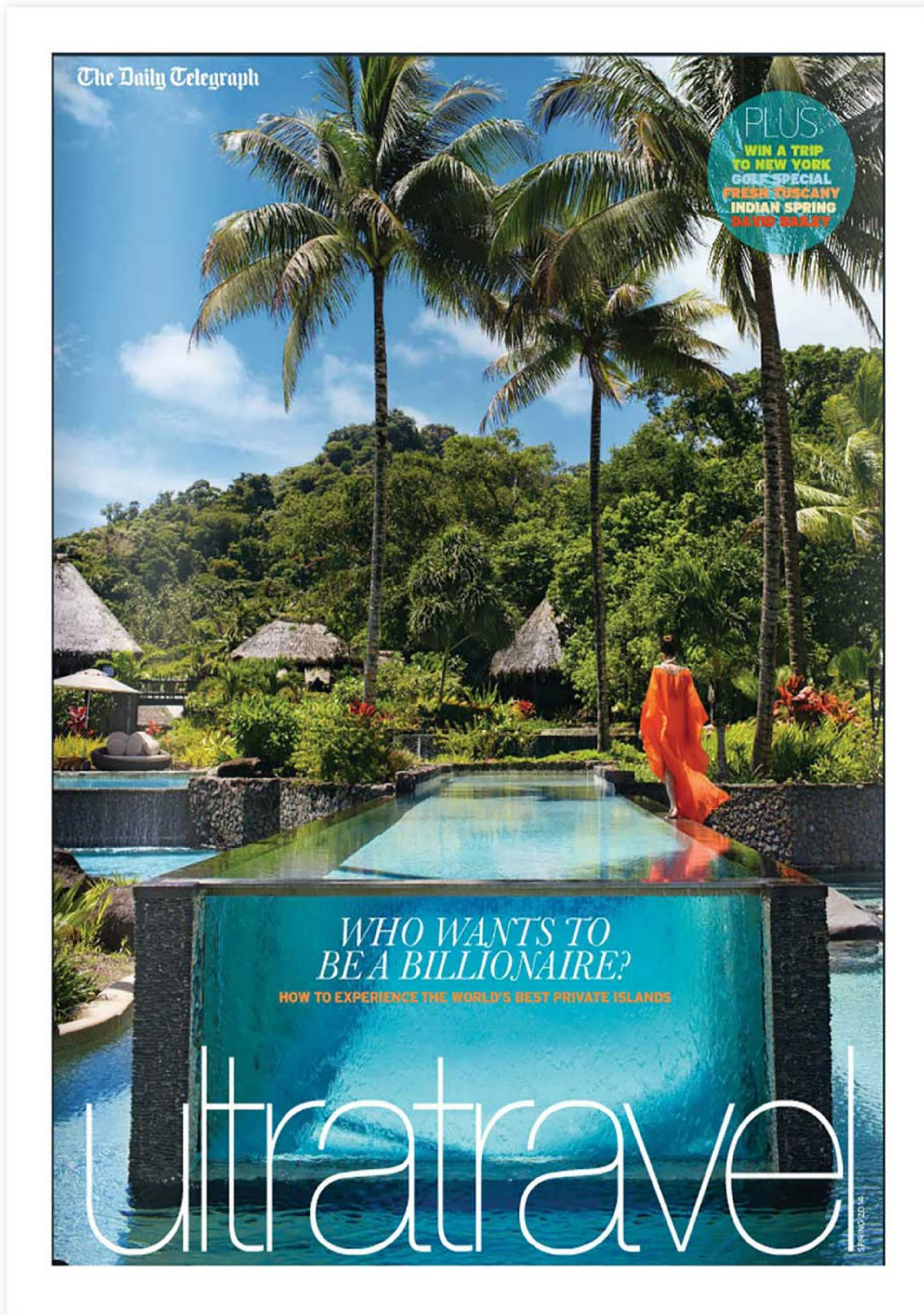


“Although wildlife tourists come to India mainly to see tigers, that might change after the opening of JAWAI - the country’s first luxurious leopard camp...”



BIG CAT SAFARI
Jawai Leopard Camp, Rajasthan

It is dusk, and as the guide scans the trees with his spotlight, a cry goes out. “Look, there’s a leopard! Oh my god, there are two, no three!” Sure enough, about 50ft away, lying on an enormous granite boulder among the trees, tucking its long black and spotted tail and looking straight at us, is a fully grown leopard and behind her two cubs. She is one of about 20 of the glossy, spotted creatures that live on the resort’s 300-acre guide. Ajar Singh says: “They live on grass, sheep – and wild dogs.” He adds, “and what’s most odd is that the leopards like them. They seem to coexist extremely happily; the last time a man was killed was 154 years ago! Last week, a big female leopard was lying on the fence sticks and the crowd took no notice at all.”

Although wildlife tourists come to India mainly to see tigers, that might change after the opening in January of Jawai – the country’s first luxury leopard camp, owned by the Delhi-based hotel Singh. Occupying 30 acres of private land among the Aravalli hills, between Jaipur and Udaipur, it is unlike any other place in India – set up like an African safari camp, but decorated with contemporary style and luxury furnishings. Morning and evening game drives are offered, and walks in the hills. There is a well-stocked bar, a pool, croquet and big flocks of flamingoes, along which visitors can hike, bicycles on which to ride around fields where crops of wheat and mustard seed are grown, goats to herd in the company of heavily muscled horses in search of mushrooms and, soon, horses to ride through a landscape almost devoid of villages but with lots of leopards. Best of all, because this is not a national park, game drives occur at night and drivers can be set up in the middle of nowhere, lit only by handheld lamps and starlight down below.

The accommodation Four of the 16-bed luxury camps are a self-contained, with six bedrooms, bathrooms, complete with linens and towels, and beds made up with fine cotton sheets and wearing two-piece bathers. The food – comprising both traditional Rajasthani and Mediterranean dishes – is fresh and delicious, and served in such sumptuous places as the top of a rocky hill, after a game drive. Doubles from £400 (\$640/austr\$700).

Getting there Jawai is 100km (62mi) from Jaipur. The camp is offering a five-night tour to include Jaipur, ₹2,200 per person. The price includes return flight with Air India, internal flights, private transfers and appropriate gear. Best nights in Mumbai, best nights at each of Jaipur, Jaipur and Goa. Best nights in Jaipur with Jawai, and the best nights in Goa. Best nights in Jaipur with Jawai. Best nights in Jaipur with Jawai. Best nights in Jaipur with Jawai.



What's new, pawsy? Air India's new flight to Jaipur from London, which reduced daily flight times.

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