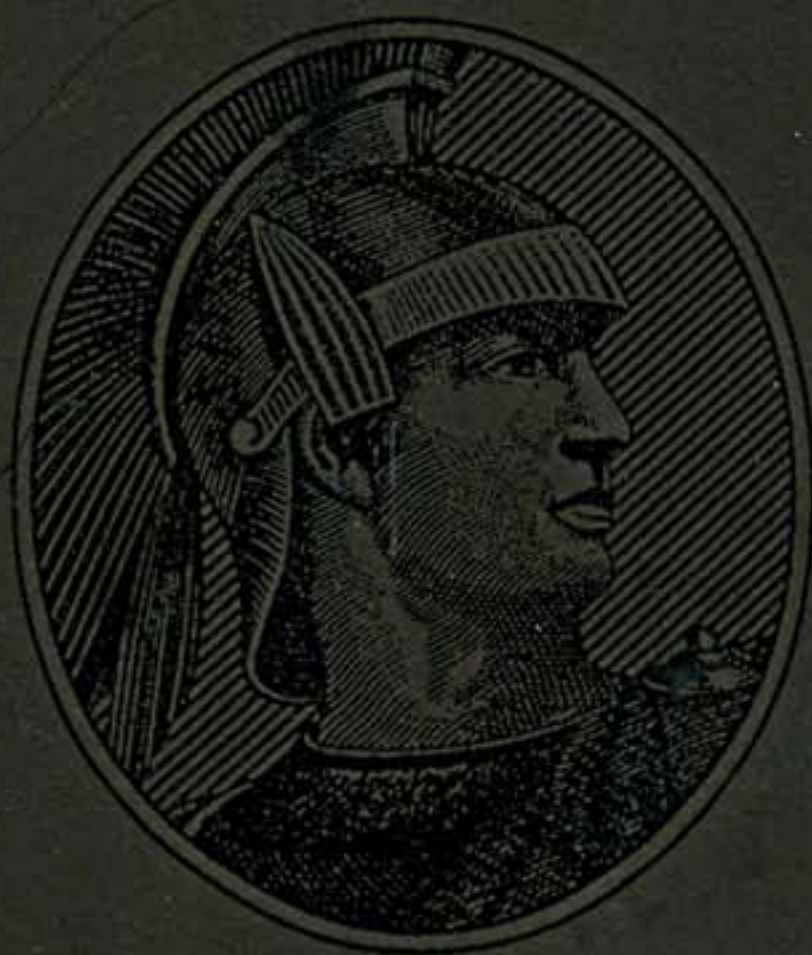


1 / 2008

# CENTURION

MAGAZINE



## Italian Secrets:

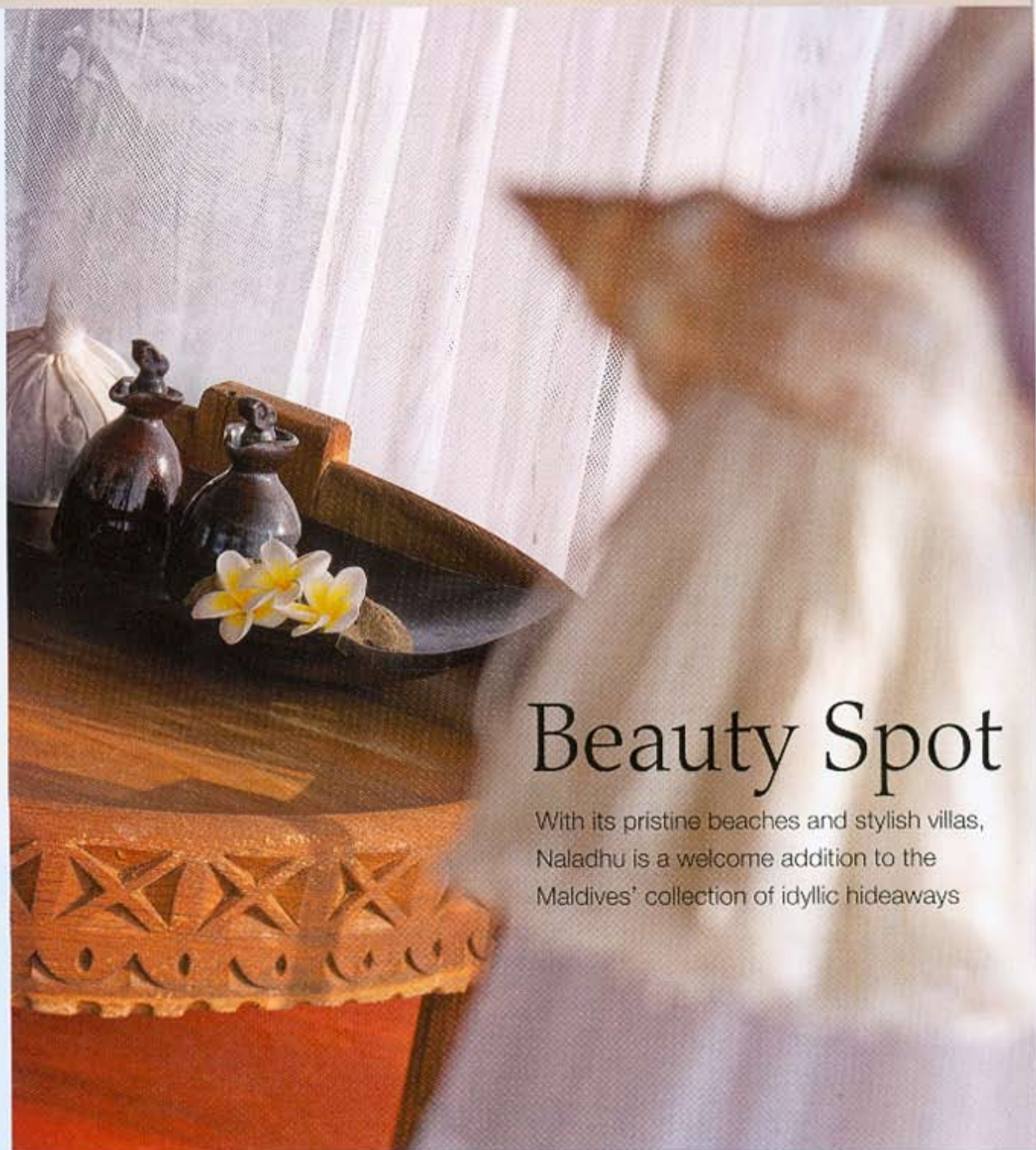
Jewellery, Violins And Where Italy Ends

Men's Accessories • Viennese Cuisine • Art of Siem Reap

The Centurion Menu: Alain Ducasse And Pierre Gagnaire Unite

# BLACK BOOK

MALDIVES ZURICH STOPOVER BRANSON'S NEW LODGE SAN FRANCISCO



## Beauty Spot

With its pristine beaches and stylish villas, Naladhu is a welcome addition to the Maldives' collection of idyllic hideaways

MALDIVIAN FOR 'BEAUTIFUL ISLAND', Naladhu is the latest of the archipelago's luxurious hideaways. And it's certainly an apt description. In fact the 19 beach- and oceanfront villas here are impressive even frequent Maldives island hoppers accustomed to sky-high luxury

levels among these low lying atolls. The first M Collection resort from Bangkok's Minor Group, owners of five-star accommodation across Asia, Naladhu is located on the island of Veligandu Huraa, a mere 30 minutes from the international airport by the resort's stylish pink speedboat. ►



**ROOMS WITH A VIEW** Naladhu's elegant whitewash villas are open and airy, allowing guests to enjoy the picturesque surroundings

Designer Julian Coombs takes his whitewash inspiration from the faraway Bahamas, filling high ceiling interiors with classy cane furnishings, outdoor swings roomy enough for two and indoor divans for rainy days, then covers every plush surface in mood-lifting tropical textiles. Private infinity pools extend far beyond a mere plunge, while high-tech toys range from the iPod and Bose home theatre system with LCD satellite television to the requisite WiFi for those who need to stay connected to the realities of distant shores.

On waterfront massage beds, Thai therapists knead jetlag into submission while gently crashing waves provide the musical accompaniment. Steam and outdoor showers shaded by verdant palm fronds round out the villa's seductive enticements. Dedicated, well-spoken butlers known as VGCs, for "very good chap", are on call around the clock so not a moment gets wasted with mundane details like unpacking, running the outdoor bathtub or waiting for a table.

All meals may be taken on the villa's generous deck but for maximum romance, hop aboard the handcrafted *dhoni*, an upgraded version of a traditional Maldivian sailboat that plies the turquoise waters to little-known deserted sandbanks. Guests who venture beyond their private slice of paradise may go as far as a seaplane ride, or journey inward with private yoga sessions in the open-air pavilion on the ocean front. Be sure to spend at least one evening stargazing from mattresses scattered on the sand at the island's interior Coconut Grove, a laid back outdoor lounge with fruity shisha pipes and fine cigars. Technicolor cocktails flow from the funky bar fashioned from a local fishing boat.

Wellness weeks and culinary vacations headline the upcoming season's schedule, but most guests seem eminently content to simply while away the days within the generous confines of their own seaside domain.

*Cynthia Rosenfeld*



## HOURS TO KILL? Zurich's new first-class lounge

Missed your flight? Don't worry – if you are a first-class passenger in Zurich that isn't. Being stranded here is like being on holiday. SWISS – chosen by frequent flyers because of its personal service – is now winning points for its lounges. In mid-December, the airline opened a 650sq m waiting lounge for its passengers. Colour concepts from the ex-champion Le Corbusier, a true-to-style mix of facilities and contemporary facets give the lounge a 'lifestyle salon' effect. A library with cult magazines and travel guides, individual offices with laptops, conference rooms and two TV lounges. Showers go without saying as do bathrobes and cosmetics. Snuggle up in bed for a while in one of the day rooms or enjoy some international specialities as a pre-flight dinner before being collected by the limousine service. [www.swiss.com](http://www.swiss.com)

*Michèle Musler*