

ULTRA

intelligence

EDITED BY LISA GRAINGER

Polar attraction A balloon flight for two over Antarctica is Brown + Hudson's next bespoke project



MICHELLE VALBERG

Taking off

3 NEW WAYS TO TRAVEL IN LUXURY

1 EXTREME MADE-TO-MEASURE

When Brown + Hudson talk about “truly bespoke”, they mean it. The London-based travel company, set up in 2009 by Philippe Brown, who had previously worked in advertising, doesn’t have a single package to sell – or even a template. “Everyone’s idea of a perfect holiday is different,” Brown says. “To one person, the word exotic might mean Bethnal Green; to another it might mean diving with turtles in Papua New Guinea.” Hence the “mood board” he creates for each client, followed by a highly personalised trip which might involve meeting a particular hero (Archbishop Desmond Tutu in Cape Town, say, or a Formula 1 driver in Monaco) or spending time with some of the world’s leading experts, from sommeliers to wildlife guides. Brown can arrange tutors for children on long trips, and his latest triumph was hiring a guide who was also a professional photographer to capture a couple’s

safari on film, then present the images to them in a book. The company’s next challenge? Arranging a hot-air balloon flight over the Antarctic for a particular couple who want to soar above the ice, entirely alone (brownandhudson.com).

2 FIVE-STAR SCUBA

In the past, dive hotels have not been synonymous with luxury. However, a spate of recent openings has encouraged Tim Simond, author of the coffee-table book *Dive in Style*, to launch Original Diving. Its holidays feature out-of-water experiences as breathtaking as those beneath the waves. Having just returned from Raja Ampat in West Papua, which he says has “the best diving I’ve ever seen”, Simond – a qualified dive master – highly recommends trips to the area, staying at either the Sorido Bay Resort (papua-diving.com) or the boutique Wakatobi Dive Resort (wakatobi.com) in southern Sulawesi, or playing

the marine-rich seas on a private luxury liveaboard such as Silolona (silolona.com) or Tiger Blue (tigerblue.info). Prices start at £2,500 for seven days, including flights, meals, transfers and all diving activities (originaldiving.com).

3 ART OF AFRICA

Anticipating an influx of design-savvy tourists to Cape Town in 2014, when the city becomes World Design Capital, the One&Only resort has launched art tours led by João Ferreira, a local gallerist. The tours, tailored to guests’ particular interests, might include visits to the city’s main art galleries, private studios (some of which are normally open by invitation only) and hip workshops such as The Foundry, as well as trips to arts-and-crafts areas such as Kalk Bay. Prices range from R3,250 (£260) for a half-day to R4,600 (£370) for a full day, in a chauffeured Mercedes, for up to six guests (oneandonlyresorts.com).