

BE UNIQUE:

A round up of extraordinary destinations that exceed all expectations

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From bustling cities to exotic beaches and wild safaris, five-star predictability has reached all corners of the globe. For seasoned travellers the wow factor can sometimes be found missing; truly incredible destinations offering something unique are becoming few and far between. This month, we give you the ultimate guide to worldwide gems that turned their back on predictability.



Bota Bota spa

Montreal

The unique Bota Bota spa began its life as a ferryboat in Quebec during the 1950s. Acquired privately in 2008 the new owners had the bizarre notion of turning the vessel into a spa. The renovated ferryboat now presents sleek, minimalist lines and innovative architecture throughout its five decks and numerous treatment rooms.

Now anchored in Montreal, the floating spa has proven to be a great success, with travellers being drawn to its modern design and quirky maritime history. Luxury treatments on offer, including massage and water therapies, are tailored to individual's needs. botabota.ca/en/



Lebua Sky Bar

Bangkok

Rooftop bars have become something of regularity in London, but for seasoned travellers and serial globetrotters, there is just no competing with the views from Lebua Sky Bar, Bangkok.

As one of the highest open air bars in the world, this firm favourite towers over the vibrant city at 820 feet and offers some truly spectacular views. Thanks to an appearance in the 2011 blockbuster comedy *The Hangover Part II*, Lebua has gained a cult following, attracting visitors from all corners of the globe.

Be sure to try the 'Hangoverini'; created for the cast of *The Hangover* franchise, this cocktail has gone on to become Thailand's signature drink. lebua.com/sky-bar



LEFT View from Bota Bota spa



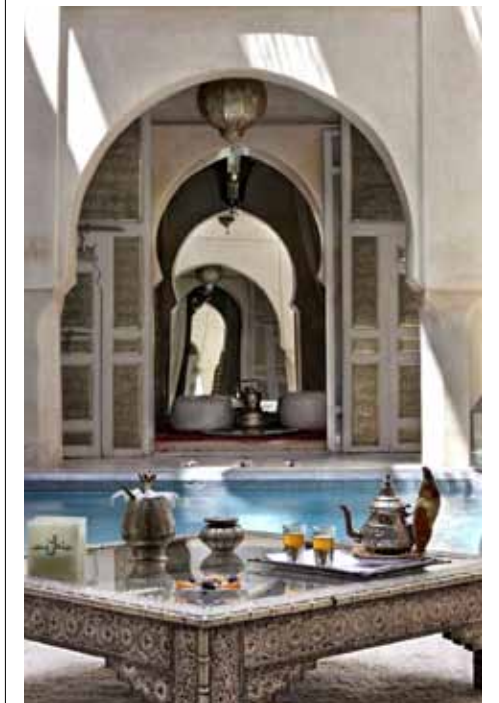
Green T. House

China

“Every man can transform the world from one of monotony and drabness to one of excitement and adventure.” – Irving Wallace, American Novelist

In terms of luxury spa retreats, the Green T. House is unique in its approach to holistic healing, making it a destination of choice for spa goers. Widely considered to be the best bathhouse in China it is practically impossible for guests not to feel utterly relaxed and pampered here. Established in 1997 by classical musician JinR, this unique spa specialises in Chinese culture and green tea, as the name might suggest.

Winning a design award for its sleek interior, Green T. House offers guests traditional Chinese healing therapies within a stunningly contemporary space. Treatments include a green tea bath, qi kong martial arts and music therapy. green-t-house.com



Ana Yela

Marrakech

For anyone looking to add a drop of romantic meaning to their stay in Marrakech, this 300-year-old city palace is designed around a love letter that was discovered in a secret room while it was undergoing renovations. Written by a young girl called Yela, the love letter has inspired the Arabian Nights ambience achieved in each private room.

Amongst the handcrafted Moroccan interiors guests can become a part of Yela's story through the letter which has been inscribed in silver throughout the riad. The exquisite local craftsmanship has made this unique building a piece of art in its own right. *Private rooms from £127 pp per night, anayela.com/*



Fish-Eagle Bar

Botswana

Widely considered to be one of the most romantic bars in the world the Fish-Eagle bar in Botswana has cultivated a loyal following due to its breath-taking views. Located deep within Botswana's Okavango Delta the Fish-Eagle bar benefits from some mesmerising sunsets over the delta.

With its lush green wetlands, forested islands and parched deserts, Botswana offers visitors a glimpse of the real Africa. The Okavango Delta is an area of untamed beauty in the centre of the Kalahari Desert and at the Fish-Eagle



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bar you can experience it all. Newly deemed a World Heritage Site the Okavango Delta is the perfect setting to gaze at the vast dome of the African night sky.

The area is positively teaming with a variety of animal, plant, fish and birdlife. At the connecting Belmond Eagle Island Lodge guests can take a helicopter safari and get a birds-eye view of the expansive landscape below.

With a staggering variety of animals close by there is nowhere better to sit and take in the mesmerising African landscape, during the ultimate relaxing escape.

belmondsafaris.com/web/safaris/eagle_island_lodge

Pershing Hall

Paris

Combining the luxury of a central Parisian location with the beauty of a tropical rainforest is no small feat for any establishment. Paris' delightful Pershing Hall has elegantly overcome this challenge by creating an imposing vertical garden in its 19th Century courtyard bar and restaurant. This horticultural wonder is the brain child of botanist Patrick Blanc and consumes Pershing Hall's central courtyard at 34 metres high. Teaming with tropical plants from the Himalayas, the Amazon and the Philippines, the vertical garden is illuminated by hundreds of fairy lights. The glamorous amber lighting changes throughout the day, producing the perfect tones for all occasions, but a particularly lovely atmosphere for evening drinks.



Just a stone's throw from the Champs Elysée, you can indulge in Pershing Hall's relaxing horticulture without removing yourself from the culture and decadence of central Paris.

This unusual garden centrepiece provides a little slice of Amazonian beauty right in the heart of Paris. pershinghall.com



Whether in the city, by the sea or in the great outdoors, these unique experiences present new perspectives on classic destinations.



Loeb Boathouse

Manhattan

Manhattan's Loeb Boathouse is a calm retreat in the middle of the city that never sleeps.

With sweeping views of Central Park the cherished Loeb Boathouse is the ultimate urban oasis. Just a short way from the epicentre of energetic Manhattan the boathouse offers tranquillity and nature, without having to leave the city.

The Boathouse's Lakeside restaurant looks out directly onto Central Park Lake and is the perfect spot for a romantic lunch. Gazing at the calm water you'll want to spend far more than a New York minute here and perhaps even join in the 150 year old tradition of renting a paddle boat to take out on the lake. The fine dining and elegant natural views alone will surely make for an unforgettable visit.

thecentralparkboathouse.com

Vamizi Island

Mozambique

With Neptune's Arm thought to be one of the best dive sites in the world Vamizi Island is something a little special.

What better place to sample Mozambique's abundance of aquatic life and coral landscapes.

Vamizi, forming part of the Quirimbas Archipelago in northern Mozambique, offers a wealth of activities, from spa treatments to turtle watching, in addition to the stunning dive sites it's best known for.

[Diving packages from approx. £117 pp, vamizi.com](http://divingpackages.com)



Conrad Maldives Rangali Island Resort

Maldives

The Rangali Island Resort's aquatic rooms are quickly becoming an icon for 21st century luxury travel.

The Ithaa restaurant, located 16 feet below sea level, surrounds diners with sea life and proves highly exclusive, seating just 12 people at a time.

If the Undersea Restaurant doesn't get you quite close enough to the aquatic life, a mini submarine excursion is also available, offering an opportunity to truly appreciate the vibrant coral reef. [Rooms from approx. £406 pp per night, conradhotels3.hilton.com](http://roomsfromapprox.£406pppernight.conradhotels3.hilton.com)

Hotel Kakslauttanen

Finland

The beautiful Aurora Borealis, or Northern Lights, has put Scandinavia on the radar of travellers in the know. Caused by the interaction between the solar wind, the Earth's magnetic field and the upper atmosphere, the Aurora Borealis is one of nature's greatest light displays.

Best seen at night, there is no need to wait out in the cold when there's the option of staying at the Hotel Kakslauttanen in Finland. Accommodation comes in the form of private glass igloos which, offer amazing visibility throughout the northern lights season, which runs from mid-August to April. [Glass igloos from £128 pp per night, kakslauttanen.fi/](http://glassigloosfrom£128pppernight.kakslauttanen.fi/)

