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FROM FEB 2005

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## 50 Romantic Places

Plus

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### Tugra Restaurant

ISTANBUL

Every element of the Tugra experience is calculated to set your inner clock to Levantine time—after all, the Çiragan Palace Hotel Kempinski, which houses the restaurant, was the last residence of the Ottoman emperors. The cuisine is derived from recipes found in historic Ottoman texts, but new executive chef Aydin Demirgives dishes his own 21st-century flair, creating entrées such as salmon "pastrami" with orange-and-mint couscous. **T+L TIP** Take one of the tables at the edge of the vast columned terrace, which directly overlooks the Bosphorus.

DINNER FOR TWO \$220; 32 ÇIRAGAN CAD., BESIKTAS 90-212/326-4646;  
[www.ciraganpalace.com](http://www.ciraganpalace.com)

### The Cupola at Three on the Bund

SHANGHAI

Those hunting for indulgence in Shanghai should concern themselves with only one reservation: the upper cupola at Three on the Bund. This two-tiered dome atop a landmark 1916 building seats just two and commands 360-degree views of the Bund's Neoclassical architecture and the futuristic, neon-streaked skyline of Pudong. **T+L TIP** Request extra portions of the decadent chocolate cake and chestnut-rum foam from former Jean Georges pastry chef Jason Casey.

DINNER FOR TWO \$400; 3 ZHONG SHAN DONG YI RD. 86-21/6323-3355;  
[www.threeonthebund.com](http://www.threeonthebund.com)

## OVER-THE-TOP SUITES

### The Aviary, Twin Farms

BARNARD, VERMONT

Luxury at this 1930's estate has been taken up a notch with the Aviary suite: the latest addition to the property is a 1,100-square-foot house for two built into the treetops, with floor-to-ceiling windows framing views of the Green Mountains. Should cross-country skiing and tobogganing on the 300-acre property fail to send Cupid's arrows flying, nap hearthside with your partner and a bottle of wine. **T+L TIP** Try a deep-sea body wrap or hydrotherapy soak at the spa.

\$1,850 PER NIGHT; 800/894-6327; [www.twinfarms.com](http://www.twinfarms.com)

### Vera Wang Suite at Halekulani

HONOLULU

Revisit your wedding day in the newly opened Vera Wang Suite, a collaboration between the A-list bridal designer and the Hawaiian landmark hotel that hovers on the edge of Waikiki's famous surf. Wang breaks the Halekulani's all-white tradition with a fruity palette in the lounge and private dining room—which is set with her signature crystal and china. **T+L TIP** Have a traditional Polynesian Nonu massage or a couple's lomilomi in the newly christened SpaHalekulani.

\$4,000 PER NIGHT; 800/367-2343; [www.halekulani.com](http://www.halekulani.com)

### Casa Lisa

LOS CABOS, MEXICO

The Baja Peninsula's Casa Lisa may share a shoreline with the exclusive Esperanza resort, but at this five-bedroom villa, the only person who shares your view of the pale blue sea is your partner. If snorkeling and kayaking

don't inspire you, head to the desert for horseback riding, then celebrate sunset over Land's End with a fresh margarita. **T+L TIP** Watch your host, Ali Ordoñez, catch spiny lobsters in front of the villa and whisk them to your chef, who will serve them by candlelight in a thatched cabana.

\$2,000 PER NIGHT; 888/499-5745; [www.akconciervillas.com](http://www.akconciervillas.com)

### **The Penthouse, Merrion Hotel**

DUBLIN

When a hotel suite has an extra room to accommodate "security personnel," chances are that high-caliber guests are spending the night. Such is the case at Dublin's most exclusive hotel, where celebrities (like Bruce Springsteen) have kept the 3,000-square-foot duplex penthouse booked since its September opening. Ensuring the utmost in discretion, a private elevator opens right into the suite's first floor, where two bedrooms look out on the hotel's faithfully re-created 18th-century gardens. **T+L TIP** Snap your fingers and staff will serve a full-course dinner on your rooftop terrace—beside the cedarwood hot tub.

\$3,085 PER NIGHT; UPPER MERRION ST.; 353-1/603-0600;

[www.merrionhotel.com](http://www.merrionhotel.com)

### **Royal Penthouse Suite, King George II Hotel**

ATHENS

Play gods while overlooking the Parthenon from the terrace of the King George II Hotel's most opulent guest quarters, recently reopened after a 16-year hiatus. Adding to the extraterrestrial atmosphere of the entire-ninth-floor suite are a Jacuzzi and butler and enough public space to entertain more than 70 friends in full view of the Acropolis. **T+L TIP** Swim in the Parthenon's shadow in the terrace's infinity pool.

\$9,950 PER NIGHT; VASSILEOS GEORGIU A ST., SYNTAGMA SQ.; 30-

210/322-2210; [www.grecotel.gr](http://www.grecotel.gr)

### **Abu Elephant Villa, Abu Camp**

OKAVANGO DELTA, BOTSWANA

This exquisite two-bedroom villa is set in an ancient riverine forest, just across the lagoon from the five-tent Abu camp. A classic mahogany four-poster bed dominates the main room; the purpose of the second room is left to your imagination. Couples can take one of Abu's famed elephant-back safaris, then return to soak in their en suite copper bathtub in the afternoon.

**T+L TIP** Spend the evening on the teak pool deck gazing at fish eagles swooping over the water while your personal chef prepares dinner.

VILLA FROM \$2,200; 267/686-1260; [www.abucamp.com](http://www.abucamp.com)

### **Great Mercury Island**

NEW ZEALAND

Through New Zealand's Seasonz Travel bespoke outfitters, you can rent a cloistered retreat on the privately owned Great Mercury Island—25 minutes by helicopter from Auckland. The two Scandinavian-inspired residences are set into the hillside and have panoramic views of the Pacific. You won't feel isolated, though: massage therapists, personal cooks, and expert guides are at your beck and call, and endless activities await. **T+L TIP** Ask the staff to prepare a basket of picnic goodies and transport you by boat to a secluded beach where you can play Robinson Crusoe.

FROM \$20,000 PER NIGHT; 800/225-4255; [www.seasonz.co.nz](http://www.seasonz.co.nz)

## **SYBARITIC ESCAPES**

### **Hôtel Guanahani & Spa**

ST. BART'S

Long before P. Diddy began chartering yachts here, St. Bart's was courting celebrities who basked in the glow of the flashbulbs. It's surprising, then, to note that the ultrachic island has suffered for so long the lack of a full-service spa. Thanks to the Guanahani, the reign of spaless sun breaks is over. The hotel's 5,000-square-foot open-air space blends into the pastel cottages—and caters to couples in search of corporeal indulgence. **T+L TIP** Take a body scrub in tandem, then surrender to the island's laid-back rhythm in an Indonesian-

style daybed for two, set beneath shady palms.  
DOUBLES FROM \$699; 800/223-6800 OR 590-590/276-660;  
[www.leguanahani.com](http://www.leguanahani.com)

**Aghadoe Heights Hotel & Spa**

COUNTY KERRY, IRELAND

Emphasis is on the casual at the recently expanded Aghadoe Heights Hotel's new spa—don't let its regal 10,000 square feet fool you. From the private balcony or thermal suite, guests can admire the nearby lakes and mountains of Killarney without wearing anything more formal than a robe. After a precious-stone therapy followed by massages in the couples room, the only thing you'll need to do is breathe the country air while exploring the Zen gardens. **T+L TIP** Sample the Kerry lamb at the hotel's acclaimed restaurant, Fredrick's at the Heights.

DOUBLES FROM \$372; 353-64/31766; [www.aghadoeheights.com](http://www.aghadoeheights.com)

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