

## The cool hotel guide Zanzibar International, East Sussex

East Sussex may be a far cry from the east coast of Africa, but it doesn't feel that way at the Zanzibar International. This chic eight-bedroom hotel has a room with an African theme that includes tribal masks, drums and a zebra-pattern rug. Downstairs there's a colonial-era feel in the smart lounge: a white grand piano, ethnic art, tropical plants and an old wooden floor. Cocktails are served at the bar, which faces the Channel across a pebble beach.

### In a nutshell

Zanzibar is a slick hotel that was opened in Hastings eight years ago by Max O'Rourke, the flamboyant son of a local "showman" (O'Rourke's description), who used to run an amusement arcade on the pier. It is inspired by O'Rourke's travels and now has a bright and breezy restaurant and a cocktail bar. Seats spill into a charming courtyard back garden with a terrace and bamboo plants.



### What are the rooms like?

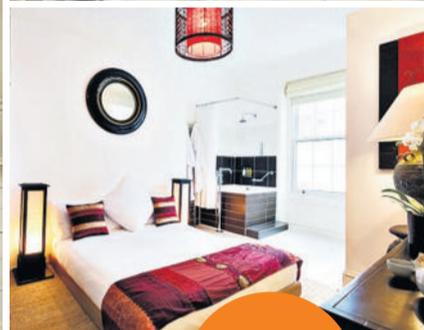
They are spread over four levels of the Victorian waterfront terrace. As well as the Africa room, there's Antarctica, which is extraordinary, and almost entirely white apart from a low-slung ice-blue velvet sofa. Its bathroom comes with a sauna and steam room so guests can "warm up". Other rooms include South America (with a stand-alone bathtub in the bedroom and a chaise longue overlooking the sea), India (monsoon shower and Indian artefacts) and Japan (low-level bed and a feng-shui style).

### Which is the best room?

Four rooms have sea views and are the ones to go for: South America, Africa, Antarctica and Manhattan. The latter is the best, covering the top floor and accessed by spiral staircase. It has a massive lounge, skylights and a kitchen.

### So what's the food like?

There are a handful of starters and seven main courses listed on a simple sheet of A4. Old hits by Kool and the Gang and Prince played over a stereo as a delicious and well-seasoned Sussex



### Need to know

Zanzibar International Hotel (01424 460109, zanzibarhotel.co.uk), 9 Eversfield Place, Hastings, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37; B&B doubles from £100

beef carpaccio with coriander, chilli and ginger starter was swiftly delivered. Other starters include smoked haddock and salmon fishcakes and smoked mackerel pâté. I then tried the curried cod with red lentils and sun-dried tomatoes; a generous portion if slightly bland. Fried sea bass and roasted hake were also on the main-course menu. There's a seafood bias. Two courses cost about £20.

### Who goes there?

This is perfect for arty types and people who want to try somewhere different from Brighton.

### What else is there to do?

Take a stroll along the promenade, see the old-fashioned seaside attractions, go for a fish 'n' chip lunch and try your hand at antique-hunting in the old town. For local attractions, see visit1066country.com.

After a day's sightseeing, have a sundowner at the hotel's cocktail bar: the Zanzibar champagne cocktail with Aperol and an orange twist is recommended (£7).

### The highs, the lows, the verdict

#### Nine and a half out of ten

This is a first-rate, chic hotel run with fun and flair (and with nothing tacky about the themed rooms), but make sure you get a sea view.

#### Tom Chesshyre

Do you agree?

Suggest hotels or get in touch: coolhotels@thetimes.co.uk

## Competition

# Win a holiday for two to Sri Lanka

Vote for your favourite hotels, airlines, travel companies and destinations, and have a chance of winning one of 20 holidays worth a total of £150,000

Sri Lanka has something for everybody — incredible beaches, interesting cultural sites, delicious food, and wildlife from elephants to leopards. The small Indian Ocean island has a huge diversity of landscape, from golden coastlines to mountainous tea plantations, passing through jungle on the way. It also has some beautiful boutique hotels, including Uga Escapes' three properties, which feature spas and wellness centres.

A member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World group, Uga Escapes has hotels in Ulagalla in the old capital of Anuradhapura, Jungle Beach in Trincomalee, often recognised as Sri Lanka's coastal spot, and Uga Bay in Pasikuda, another beautiful beach on the east coast. Vote in *The Times* and *Sunday Times* Travel Awards and you have the chance of winning a stay in these hotels as part of a one-week holiday for

two in Sri Lanka, including flight credits, with Ampersand Travel (ampersandtravel.com).

The trip to Sri Lanka is just one of 20 prizes to be won in *The Times* and *Sunday Times* Travel Awards 2014. We have linked up with the luxury travel consultancy Perowne Charles Communications (PCC) to create prizes worth more than £150,000.

### The other prizes (all for two with flights unless otherwise stated) are:

- Five nights at Fregate Island Private, in the Seychelles (fregate.com)
- Two nights at Le Bristol Paris (lebristolparis.com) with Eurostar tickets
- A week's cruise in the Med with Silversea (silversea.com)
- Four nights at Alila Jabal Akhdar in Oman (alilahotels.com)
- Five nights at the Iniala Beach House, Phuket (iniala.com)
- A two-night ski break at L'Apogée Courchevel (lapogeeecourchevel.com)
- Three nights at the Four Seasons Hotel

### Elephants are among Sri Lanka's fascinating wildlife



## How to enter and vote

- ▶ To vote for your favourite hotels, airlines, travel companies and destinations, just go to [thetimes.co.uk/thetravelawards2014](http://thetimes.co.uk/thetravelawards2014).
- ▶ You need to vote in at least ten categories to be automatically placed in our draw for a chance to win one of 20 remarkable experiences.
- ▶ The final date for entries is September 3 and the results will

be announced in a star-studded ceremony in Barbados in October.

- ▶ Only one entry is allowed per person. The normal Times Newspapers rules apply.
- ▶ Full terms and conditions are available on the website.

Where included in prizes, flights are from a London airport. No correspondence will be entered into.

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Doha, with business-class flights from Qatar Airways (fourseasons.com/doha; qatarairways.com)

- A one-week family ski holiday in Courchevel with Scott Dunn (scottdunn.com)
- Two nights on the Côte d'Azur at the Château Saint-Martin & Spa (chateau-st-martin.com)
- A week at the Bom Bom Island Resort and Omali Lodge, in West Africa, with Rainbow Tours (bombomprincipe.com; omalilodge.com; rainbowntours.co.uk)
- Two nights at Palais Namaskar in Marrakesh (palaisnamaskar.com)
- Five nights in Kenya with The Safari Collection (thesafaricollection.com)
- A week at Fundu Lagoon in Tanzania (fundulagoon.com)
- A two-night spa break at Brenners Park-Hotel & Spa in Baden-Baden (brenners.com)
- Four nights in St Barths at the Eden Rock Hotel, with Scott Dunn (edenrockhotel.com; scottdunn.com)
- Two nights at Monastero Santa Rosa on the Amalfi Coast (monasterosantarosa.com)
- Five nights in India at the new ITC Grand Bharat in Delhi (itcthotels.com)
- A week at a Powder White self-catering flat in Avoriaz (powderwhite.com)
- Five nights at Lower Mill Estate, in the Cotswolds (habitatescapes.com)

