


TATLER

A woman in a white, flowing dress and a white headscarf stands next to a wooden ladder leaning against a textured, light-brown mud wall. The scene is brightly lit, casting shadows on the wall.

Featuring
the 101 best
hotels in
the world

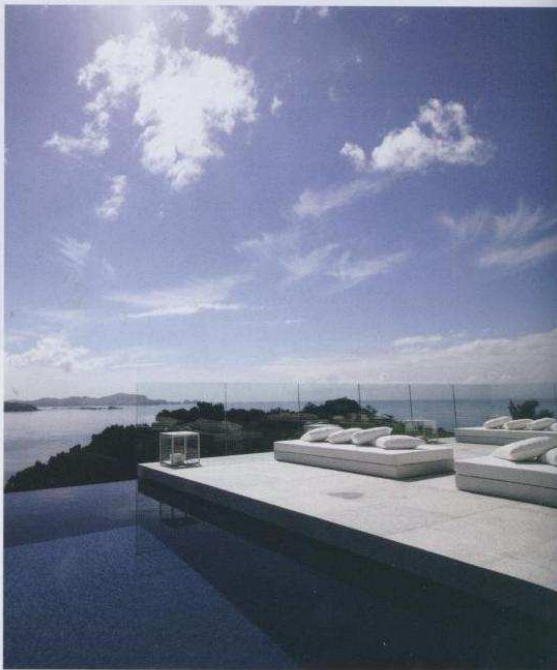
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2009
Travel
Guide

Eagles Nest

Bay of Islands, New Zealand

When the Royal Shakespeare Company stayed here, they spontaneously broke into song; a celebrated architect cried; a travel agent was worried that his clients from Dubai might never leave. This is a back-to-nature fantasy with rock 'n' roll on its mind. Out of the five villas, four certainly have clout, but the serious swinger is the awesome Rahimoana: sunlit bedrooms, views over subtropical woodland to the ocean, a wine cellar with several thousand bottles, a private chef (the local seafood is divine), a personal trainer and home cinema. This honey is razor-sharp, with added gizmos to get you giddy (the infrared sauna only heats through a couple of centimetres, so it doesn't cook your organs). In the nearby town of Russell, you'll find good restaurants, private beaches and a headland that looks out over the swanky Bay of Islands. **Website** eaglesnest.co.nz. **UK reservations** Bridge & Wickers (tel: 020 7483 6555). **Rates** Villa, from £16,325, full board.



Villa Feltrinelli

Lake Garda, Italy

A benchmark hotel – next to it most other places look like fish flapping on the dodgy deck of hoteldom. Even the gravel has a superior crunch. And the grass is so gorgeous you want to roll around on the lawns like an excited puppy. This is a 19th-century villa where Mussolini was held under house arrest during the war. It was bought by the legendary Bob Burns, inventor of the luxury hotel as we know it – the plan was for it to be his own house, but then the budget went silly-crazy. Thank the Lord. This place has class, it has style in spades. It's a small hotel that looks and behaves like a powerhouse. The food, with every permutation of tomato and mozzarella, is now Michelin-starred. The octagonal tower room with its windows shaped like clementine pieces is romantic beyond words. Lie out in the mornings and watch the mist lift on Lake Garda. Scoot about in the hotel's new Riva. It's all irresistible. **Website** villafeltrinelli.com. **UK reservations** Harlequin Holidays (tel: 0845 450 6433). **Rates** Double, from £795.