

BLACKBOOK

▶ A GLOBAL GUIDE FOR THE DISCERNING TRAVELLER ◀



CASTAWAY

PERFECTION IN PRIVATE

Tanzania's Thanda Island is an ocean lover's ultimate dreamscape, says Laurie Kahle

PHOTO CHRISTIAN SPERKA

Swedish telecom magnate Dan Olofsson searched for years to find a serene island on which to build an ocean retreat to complement his private South African game reserve Thanda (which means love in Zulu). When he found a tiny deserted isle near Mafia Island, a popular diving destination off the coast of Tanzania, he managed to secure a 40-year lease and a marine reserve was established in the surrounding waters to protect them.

And so Thanda Island was born. The 8ha, comma-shaped atoll lies in the path of seasonal migratory routes for many rare and endangered marine creatures including whale sharks, five species of turtles and three types of dolphin. Even the critically endangered dugong has been known to inhabit these pristine azure waters, and the resort has partnered with NGO Sea Sense on projects that include their protection.

Thanda makes the most of its unspoiled environment with an abundance of water activities that include diving, snorkelling, paddle-boarding, sailing, water skiing and deep-sea fishing. For landlubbers, there is a tennis court, a gym, a kilometre-long ring of pristine beach and a clear-walled swimming pool, all of which spread out before the main house, enveloped by a New England-style wraparound veranda →



Waterside wonder: the island is an aquatic paradise whether relaxing on the veranda or scuba-diving in the deep



where in season, you can see humpback whales breaching.

The house's five king-size suites can accommodate ten adults, and extra beds can be brought in for families with children. The master suite occupies one end of the house with panoramic views. A wall-size aquarium stocked with local species and a white lacquer piano are centrepieces of the great room, and each suite has an outdoor shower and bathtub.

South African interior designer Nicola Baleta was charged with conceiving a design and adds in hits of bright colour with local fabrics and Scandinavian touches. "They wanted everything to match with white, that was the idea," says Antigone Meda, hospitality and guest relations manager. "This is their beach house: it is their home away from home, and that's what they want guests to feel." thandaiisland.com

RETURN TO SPLENDOUR

A landmark renovation is redefining heritage at Charleston's Restoration hotel. By Tom Vanderbilt

SOUTHERN COMFORT



The Restoration, a boutique hotel that re-launched earlier this year in downtown Charleston, South Carolina, owes its existence to a curious fact: that the queue for the 2013 Cartier exhibition at Paris's Grand Palais was too long.

The story goes that Darlene Anderson – wife of Jeffrey Anderson, of the Cincinnati-based development company behind the hotel, Jeffrey R Anderson Real Estate – having been thwarted from seeing Cartier, repaired to the Palais's restaurant. There, she bumped into Cory Ingram, of the branding firm Identity At elier. As it happened, the Andersons were rethinking their small (16-room) hotel, the Restoration on King. They had bought a neighbouring industrial building and imagined joining the spaces to create a more ambitious, 54-room property. From that meeting, Ingram, whose clients have ranged from W Hotels to Mandarin Oriental, became the designer.

Ingram says he wanted the hotel to "abstract culture,

heritage, and history, redefine it in a fresh, modern way for the contemporary elite traveller". Instead of the traditional trappings of antebellum gentility – the sepia-tinted photographs of steamboats, or sweet tea – there's rosemary-infused coffee.

The hotel is now a set of connected buildings that house the Port Mercantile shop (in the old hotel's former lobby, *pictured overleaf*) and the Rise Coffee Bar, accessed via a discreet door from the hotel's library (*above*). The aesthetic is raw yet refined: wood beams and brick, vintage typewriters resting on Amish furniture.

The Restoration occupies a middle ground between the more packaged sense of style embodied by the W and the beguiling eccentricity of a spot like the Yard in Milan. In Charleston, it works as sheer novelty; in other, more saturated markets, it might have to push for a stronger sense of character. But it is on the right track with its →



PHOTOS FROM TOP: CHRISTIAN SPERKA (3), ANDREW CEBULKA (2)