

TROT
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101 BEST HOTELS WINTER



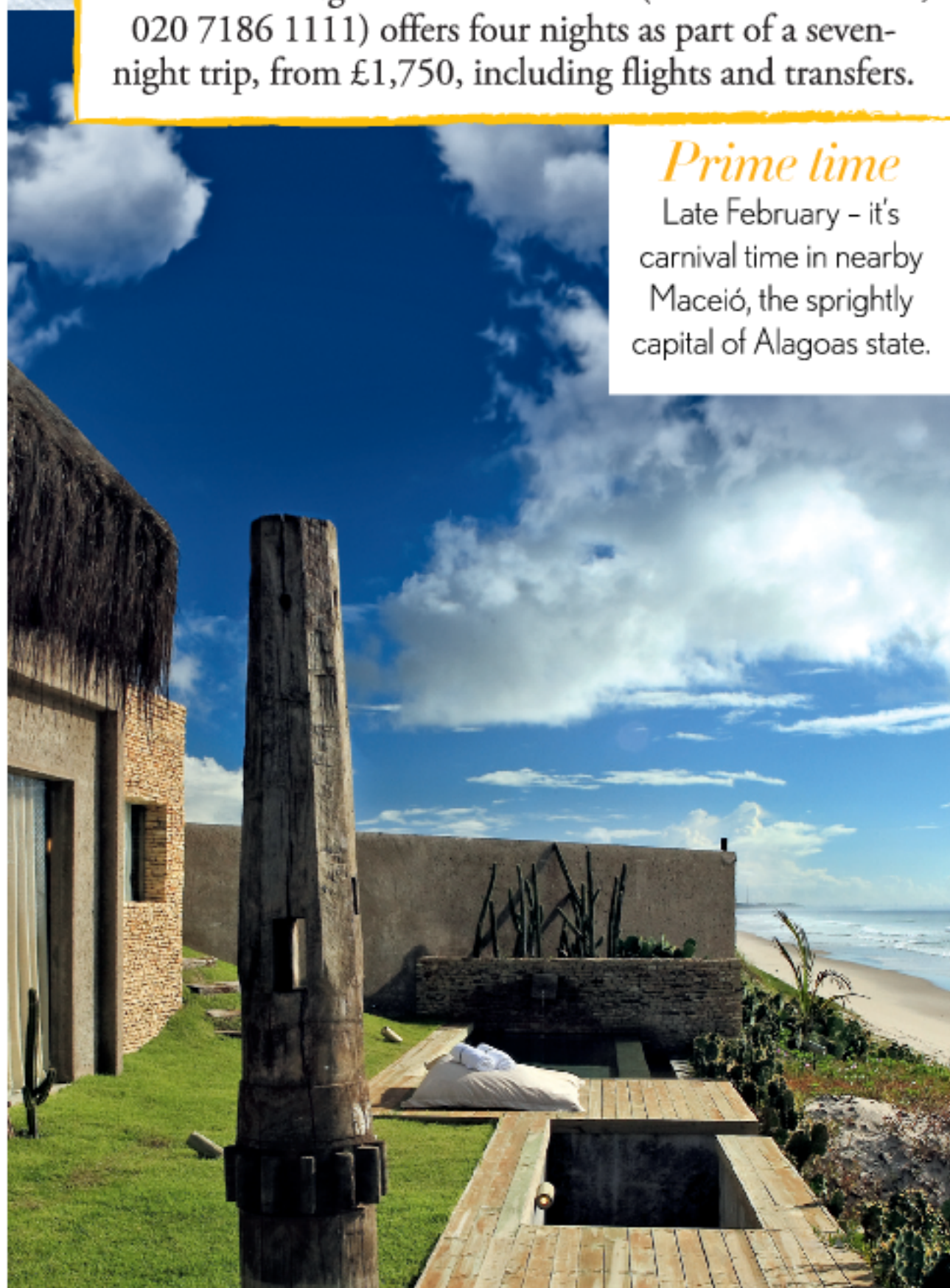
Kenoa

BARRA DE SAO MIGUEL, BRAZIL

It's eminently reachable (just three hours from Rio), but you'd never know. Kenoa feels remote, hidden, a bit wild – known only to a certain breed of Brazilian, with 23 rooms hunkered on a vast stretch of near-deserted beach. This is Alagoas, the country's second-smallest state, and the raw and earthy minimalism of the landscape is reflected all around – adobe, rough-hewn wood, palm roofing, a total absence of primary colours. Overtones of Africa. Very eco-chic – although the hotel doesn't flaunt its green credentials, choosing instead to express them in the best possible taste. There is little to do – you might take a walk among palms and lagoons to Praia do Gunga, one of the best beaches in Brazil. But, really, you should just loll about, guzzle caipirinhas and contemplate the rumble and thump of the Atlantic on sand the colour of soft brown sugar. **BOOK IT** Miraviva (miravivatravel.com; 020 7186 1111) offers four nights as part of a seven-night trip, from £1,750, including flights and transfers.

Prime time

Late February – it's carnival time in nearby Maceió, the sprightly capital of Alagoas state.



Prime time

December to March, for a southern summer when it's (just about) warm enough to swim in the sea and pick mussels off the rocks.

Seascape

BANKS PENINSULA, NEW ZEALAND

Romantic? You bet. This hideaway for two is remote, private, wild – on a 4,000-acre farm on New Zealand's South Island, with a low-slung bed facing the open ocean. Windswept hills all around, a small beach below and dolphins leaping RIGHT THERE. A little performance just for you while you wallow in the plunge pool. The food concept is clever – Paul Jobin, one of the country's great chefs, can cook for you, but better still is the 'we create, you serve' idea. He'll leave you a set of vacuum-sealed meals with instructions, so you can feast on Angus fillet and tomato masala with a fried radish cake, followed by pineapple tarte tatin with tonka-bean ice cream. Whenever you wish. Wash it all down with a Muddy Water pinot noir, then snuggle under the pure-wool throws and stare out at the waves. Raw, ravishing and utterly romantic. **BOOK IT** Momentum Adventure (momentumadventure.com; 01892 784646) offers exclusive use, full board, for £2,015 a night, including transfers.

The Old Clare Hotel

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Seven different styles, but which room to choose? The CUB Suite, that's the one. It's the old boardroom of the iconic Carlton & United Breweries Administration Building, and that means soaring ceiling, oak panelling, original boardroom table and a gents' loo – mercifully redesigned and tucked behind the super-modern bathroom. Set on a lane in an artsy part of inner-city Chippendale, the Old Clare is classic Thirties art deco on the outside, black steel and exposed brick on the inside – retro-industrial chic taken to a new level. Those red-nosed old beer barons may have had the moolah (and the beer), but they wouldn't have had beds big enough for an annual general meeting, with goose-down pillows and mohair throws. They wouldn't have had Italian baths and cool bits of old machinery that have been turned into light fittings. Or native-flower arrangements, or staff gliding about all twinkly-eyed. Or a rooftop pool, the Clare bar and three cracking restaurants to choose from: Sam Miller's Silvereye; Jason Atherton's Kensington St Social; and Automata (don't miss the hapuka, cured-roo emulsion and seaweed). And then there's Martin. He's the concierge. He'll see you right. They didn't have him either. **BOOK IT** The Turquoise Holiday Company (turquoiseholiday.co.uk; 01494 678400) offers four nights as part of a 10-night trip, from £2,550, including flights and transfers.

Prime time

January, for the Sydney Festival: circus, music, theatre, dance, art... all with added sunshine.



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