

Travel Guide 2003



TATLER Abercrombie & Kent

Best of the rest

Swanky hotels, tropical islands and intrepid adventures are all very well, but it's the personal touch that makes the difference between travel and travail, say **Victoria Mather** and **Daisy Finer**

BED & BREAKFAST

EICHARDT'S, QUEENSTOWN The New Zealand B&B that is a five-bedroom palace. Eichardt's was an old pub on the edge of the lake; now it's a crisp style statement in black and white, with a charming bar (excellent wines by the glass) and suites upstairs: sitting rooms, balconies, dressing rooms, everything you could ever want in a bathroom. The huge beds (serious linen threadcount) are covered with possum throws. 'We only use the best roadkill,' says Victoria Shaw, the sassy young owner who cooks the breakfast herself, squeezing the orange juice, scrambling the eggs. In the evening, one comes home to find the bedroom fire lit, a dangerously tempting decanter of port and a stack of DVDs. Eichardt's is B&B on speed. It's also, surreptitiously, a B&B&D – if you ask nicely, Victoria will cook you a private dinner. This is so friendly, utterly relaxing, and there's masses to do and see in one of the loveliest parts of the South Island.

Website eichardts.co.nz

UK reservations Goodacre & Townsend (tel: 020 7702 1166)
Rates Suite, from £390

HOTEL LE GRIMALDI, NICE The breakfast jam comes from Fauchon, the Parisian deli; the china is Limoges; and the silver cutlery is real. Joanna Zedde, who is English, and her French husband, Yann, are imaginative hoteliers with flair. They used to run Le Grand Coeur, the best hotel in Méribel, crisply Relais & Châteaux. The standards at Le Grimaldi (not to be confused with Le Grimaldi Mercure, a third-rate establishment) are just as pristine: comfortable rooms, a welcoming bar, fresh flowers. It is modest, but of great quality, with jambon cru at breakfast, pastries made by a Corsican baker and thick, real yoghurt from Normandy. Joanna knows everything and everyone – there's not a restaurant she cannot recommend or reserve.

Tel 00 33 4 93 16 00 24

Website le-grimaldi.com

Rates Double, from £50; suite, from £120

HEMINGWAY HOUSE, CAPE TOWN

A gem in Cape Town's central City Bowl. Formerly a masonic lodge, Hemingway House has just four bedrooms, which can be booked individually, or you can take the whole thing. The restoration was undertaken by Josie Hemingway, who is imaginative, welcoming and

kind. Rooms are at each corner of the house; there's a swimming-pool in the central courtyard, with a sitting area shaded with vines. The open-plan living/reception/dining area has hand-painted floors. Hemingway has used eclectic, Afro-colonial decoration. She can book you restaurant tables but, if you want to order in, the dining room, kitchen, housekeeper and maid are all yours.

Tel 00 27 21 461 1857

Website hemingwayhouse.co.za

Rates Double, from £105

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE, LONDON

Hotels in London are excruciatingly expensive – and all you really want is a smart, centrally located base from which to see friends, shop and go to the theatre. Eating in one's hotel is quite sad, despite the fashionability of Mr Ramsay at Claridge's and the Connaught. The Knightsbridge, in Beaufort Gardens, is the latest venture of Tim and Kit Kemp, who have made such a success of their other hotels, the Covent Garden, the Pelham and the Charlotte Street. It's contemporary-cosy with terrific service.

Website firmdale.com

Tel 020 7584 6300

Rates Double, from £165; suite, from £325

Clockwise from below:
Hôtel Le Grimaldi,
Eichardt's, The Knightsbridge

