

Urban myths

Won't you take me to funky towns?



Kensington Place

Cape Town, South Africa

Best boutique city hotel

The coolest bolthole in the Cape. Kensington Place was fun and sassy even before last year's renovation. But owner

Chris Weir is one of those people who's just not happy unless everything he casts his eye over is beyond right. He's also the best-connected guy in town. And now that the city is bristling with seriously world-class restaurants (and bars, and clubs), you'll want him to get you the coolest tables. This place is a real find – not just because the setting is so great, in front of Table Mountain with views over town towards the Atlantic – but because its groovy heart has had a techno injection: the rooms all have laptops, Skype and iPod docking stations. The bar is sexy as hell, and the hand-picked furniture is fabulous. This is the perfect small city hotel. **Website** kensingtonplace.co.za. **UK reservations** Africa Travel Centre (tel: 0845 450 1533).

Rates Double, from £125, including breakfast.

The Observatory Hotel

Sydney, Australia



First things first. The Observatory Hotel doesn't have views of the Sydney

Opera House. It is far too poised, cosy and grown-up for such things. Located in the Rocks district – the oldest part of Sydney, beyond the main harbour – it is a world of graceful comfort and maxed-out chintz. Drink lapsang souchong and the staff will remember for next time. The huge indoor pool is unbeatable and the Japanese-French food is impressive. Some rooms have balconies for afternoon siestas in the western sunshine. Ask the concierge (he knows everything) about Lilianfels, the hotel's sister property up in the Blue Mountains, but as far as Sydney is concerned, nothing beats this place. **Website** observatoryhotel.com.au. **UK reservations** Tim Best Travel (tel: 020 7591 0300). **Rates** Double, from £225.



InterContinental Hong Kong

Hong Kong

With shopping almost better than New York's, and food to rival Paris, Hong Kong is fast becoming a fabulous long-weekend destination. The hotel scene is firing off in all directions – endless Mandarin Orientals, Four Seasons and Peninsulas all battling it out to be top dog. But if you are feeling super-swanky – and are fond of a thumping bassline – then the InterContinental's Presidential Suite is as fly as you can get. The hotel is right on the Kowloon waterfront, so even the recently renovated harbour-view rooms have arguably the best cityscape panoramas in the world. The Presidential Suite, however, is a suite on steroids. To party here – floating about in the rooftop infinity pool overlooking Hong Kong Island and Victoria Harbour, rocking around the huge wraparound terrace, dipping in the inside/outside Jacuzzi and then hitting Lan Kwai Fong in the Rolls-Royce ascribed to your room – is the best plan by far. When you get back, your lovely 24-hour butler can have Bellinis and scrambled eggs waiting for you. **Website** hongkong-ic.intercontinental.com. **UK reservations** Carrier (tel: 0161 491 7630). **Rates** Double, from £190. ▷