

# CEREAL

In this volume, we explore the theme of **process**. We converse with **Faye and Erica Toogood**, discuss garden design with **Luciano Giubbilei**, and perfumery with **Lyn Harris**. We visit the studios of **Stanley Whitney** and **Elliott Smedley**, and travel to the mountains of **Bhutan** and the hills of **Rwanda**.

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AMONG  
EMERALD LEAVES

*A Stay at One&Only  
Nyungwe House*

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Drums beat. Arms are placed across chests, palms pressed over hearts. “You are most welcome here.” A steaming towel is offered to me as I enter One&Only Nyungwe House. I look around, taking in the traditional geometric designs inscribed onto screens, the fierce masks hanging above fireplaces, the woven bowls mounted on the walls, their rims facing out like gaping flowers. The comfortable lounge opens onto a wide terrace, spread out below an even wider sky. A sea of tea bushes, iridescent in the sunlight, rolls gently towards the lodges and suites. Behind them, the hills of Nyungwe National Park rise, so close I can make out each individual tree. Clouds weave through the canopy, swatches of sunlight drifting across it like reflections on water. At the breakfast table, birds sing and flutter around me as I stare at the forest. I could sit here for a very long time.

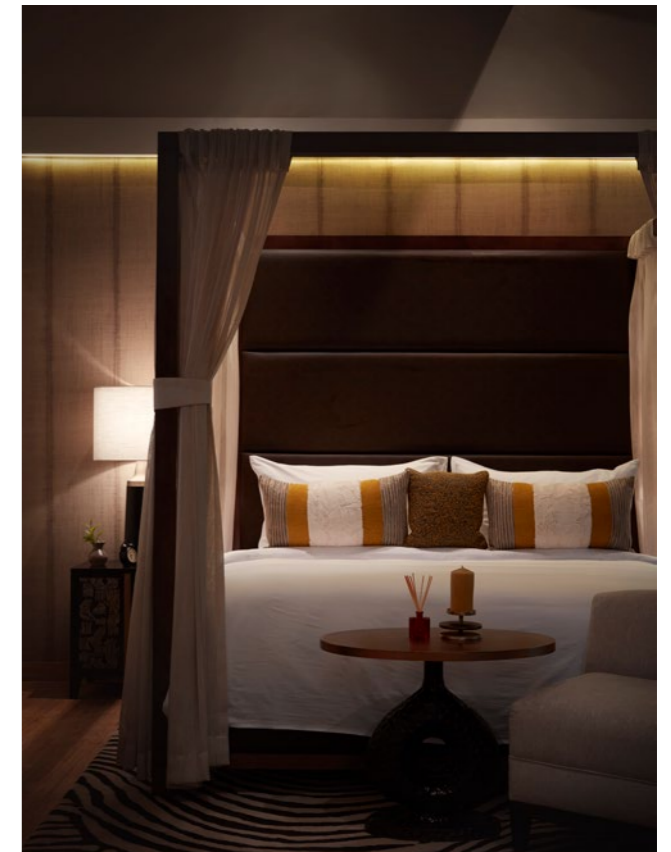
Jacques, the tall, immaculately dressed resort manager, walks with me through the tea bushes. Their leaves are so lustrous, they appear almost unreal. “The team here suffer from ‘green sickness’ sometimes,” Jacques jokes. “They need to take time off in a desert for a week or two.” A gang of white ruffed L’Hoest’s monkeys chatter in a fig tree beside the pool. Its motionless surface extends into the trees beyond. Past the spa and a cluster of dark, wood panelled lodges, I arrive at my room. A four-poster bed faces a wide, glass door, opening onto a balcony that juts out to the forest. Large sliding panels behind the bed reveal an enormous bathtub. I imagine the evening ahead, lying in the tub, watching as the rain strikes the leaves outside.

My luggage has already arrived, in the room. I pull on my walking boots and head back to the main lodge to meet Grace, the resort’s principal guide. She is dressed in khaki with walking stick in hand, ready to lead me on a trek through the rainforest. I fumble hopelessly as I attempt to tie slippery, waterproof gaiters around my boots, designed to keep the biting fire ants at bay. Concentrating on Grace’s patient

instructions, I hear Jacques laughing behind me: “You know it’s your first time in Africa when you don’t know how to put gaiters on.”

Leaving Jacques at the porch, Grace and I head away from the main lodge and along a narrow road, meandering through the surrounding tea farm. Abruptly, Grace plunges into a shadowy gap in the trees, footsteps cracking over leaves and twigs. I follow her onto a narrow path, zigzagging down a steep hill. She leads me over rocks and roots, under trees buried in moss and ferns, all the while pointing out begonia, plums, bitter oil trees, and insects among the foliage. Knotted ebonies and stately mahoganies strain in a centuries-long race for the light. Moss encrusted vines dangle to earth, thick as gymnasts’ ropes. The soil shifts from volcanic grey to deep chocolate and terracotta red. At the bottom of the first hill, we step onto a bridge positioned over a rushing river, cutting through the base of a narrow gorge. Halfway across, I lean on the wooden parapet, listening to the waters murmur beneath me, and gaze at the wall of tree ferns on the opposite bank.

We begin our climb over the hill, following the bend of another slope before descending to rejoin the river, where it flows even faster. The torrent’s roar fills our ears. We move without speech, navigating regions of our thoughts as we clamber ever onwards. We pick our way across slippery rocks at the water’s edge, climbing upstream towards a thundering waterfall. The white plume shoots from a gap in the cliff, crashing on the rocks below. The ferns on either side are buffeted by the constant deluge. A fine mist fills the air, gently cooling my face. It drifts up from the deep bowl of the gorge, to float high above the trees, and out to the open sky beyond. I remember the view from the breakfast table of mists curling across the forested hills. When I look back down, I see Grace smiling at me. How must it be, I wonder, to experience this every day? I smile back. I feel welcome here.





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