

# Holiday with the stars...

There's no guarantee that you'll spot a famous face, but you'll certainly be treated like a VIP at the best celebrity-owned hotels the world has to offer. We take you on a whistle-stop tour

TRAVEL

## Francis Ford Coppola, Turtle Inn, Belize



"Welcome to your own Caribbean paradise" is how the guests are greeted at Hollywood film director Francis Ford Coppola's Turtle Inn on the southern coast of Belize in Central America.

Set in lush tropical gardens overlooking a coral-fringed beach, the accommodation ranges from thatched cabanas to luxury two-bedroom, two-bathroom villas on the beachfront, all with Balinese-inspired décor.

In the open-air dining room you can sample produce fresh from the ocean and from the organic garden of the inn's sister lodge Blancaneaux, cooked to the Coppola family's traditional recipes.

Beach bicycles and sea kayaks are available, as are excursions that include a wildlife-spotting trip to the nearby Monkey River. If you like what you see on the river, you can book into Blancaneaux, a jungle retreat



Come see the paradise: Coppola's hideaway boasts Balinese-inspired décor

surrounded by rainforest, waterfalls and Mayan ruins, whose star guests have included screen siren Cameron Diaz.



Turtle-y tropical: Thatched cabanas set in lush gardens overlook a coral-fringed beach



## Donatella Versace, Palazzo Versace, the Gold Coast, Australia

"Palazzo Versace is the evolution of the Versace lifestyle," explain the hotel's introductory notes. And the signature of Italian fashion house boss Donatella is unmistakable in the deluxe décor and furnishings of this exclusive Australian resort.

If your budget is limitless, you could check into one of the Palazzo's private condominiums, which come with plunge pools offering stunning views and luxury kitchens complete with Versace china. Previous guests have included the Rolling Stones and Shania Twain.

Situated on the ocean front, with its own private marina, the Palazzo also

## Palazzo Versace offers the ultimate in luxury and glamour that is the hallmark of the Italian fashion house

boasts a state-of-the-art spa, Salus Per Aquum, where you can be pampered like a celebrity before tucking into a gourmet dinner in one of three critically acclaimed restaurants.

If you tire of poolside lounging, try a spot of golf and tennis or a deep-sea fishing trip. Or, for the ultimate VIP experience, charter a private jet to fly to the tip of the Great Barrier Reef for a day's snorkelling.

As Gianni's brother Santo says: "Versace has one level – and that is the best."



## Jason Priestley, Terrace Beach Resort, Canada



He may have shot to fame as heartthrob Brandon Walsh, hanging out with the rich kids in the hit television series *Beverly Hills 90210*. But when it came to creating his own personal haven, actor Jason Priestley chose something as far removed from the clubs, boutiques and exclusive high schools of California as he could get.

Terrace Beach Resort, in Canada's British Columbia, is a retreat offering back-to-nature experiences in one of the world's top beauty spots. Perched near a sheltered harbour on Vancouver Island's remote south-western coast, it nestles

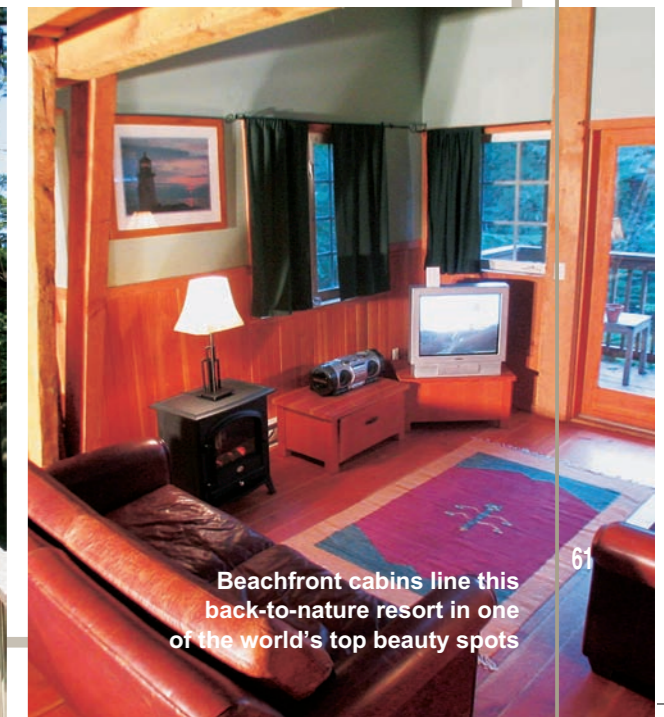
between the two main sections of the Pacific Rim National Park and lures guests from around the world with outdoor attractions such as salmon fishing, kayaking, cycling, and whale and storm watching. The only hint of the Vancouver-born star's California days comes in the shape of surfing classes and in-cabin spa treatments.

The resort features beach-front cabins, lofts, one- and two-bedroom suites and bachelor suites connected by a boardwalk. Guests can even bring along their

four-legged friends because the Canadian resort is dog-friendly.

Visitors are encouraged to pull on their hiking boots or slip into cycling gear and follow the nearby nature trails, where they may be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of the indigenous Golden Eagle.

They may even spot Jason himself. Although the resort is run by his father Lorne, the erstwhile teen pin-up has spent a lot of time in the area in recent months, filming two TV movies in nearby Victoria.



Beachfront cabins line this back-to-nature resort in one of the world's top beauty spots



A-list celebrities fight to secure a stay in the stunning two-storey penthouse

### Bono and The Edge, The Clarence, Dublin



If you're heading off to the Irish capital and are hoping to hang out with the in-crowd, then make yourself a reservation at The Clarence, the boutique hotel owned by rock stars Bono and The Edge, the singer and guitarist respectively from the legendary band U2.

Part of the city's cultural scene since 1852, The Clarence was purchased by the two in 1992 and, after a major overhaul, reopened to rave reviews in 1996. Since then John Travolta, Jack Nicholson and Kate Moss have all passed through its doors.

Situated on Wellington Quay, on the edge of the lively Temple Bar area, the hotel has 44 king-sized double rooms and four suites, plus one spectacular two-storey penthouse, complete with baby grand piano and outdoor hot tub. Each room is unique and decorated in one of five signature colours: royal blue, crimson, gold, chocolate or amethyst, with Shaker-style furniture and specially commissioned beds.

The Clarence also houses a spa, whose therapists, it promises, will "make you feel like the Gods and Goddesses that you are". Then there's the Tea Room, the hotel's award-winning restaurant. Here the building's original dining

room has been transformed into one of the city's hottest eateries.

The Octagon bar has been a favourite place for Dubliners to meet for more than a century – and is where Robbie Williams and a group of friends once saw in the New Year. For somewhere quieter to start or end the evening, try the hotel's guests-only bar, The Study.



The Clarence stands on the rim of the trendy Temple Bar area



Pastel-coloured cottages punctuate the enchanting 20-acre Bahamian retreat



Perched atop a dramatic outcrop, Rock Lodge offers some of the most sensational views in the whole continent



Acquired by Virgin boss Sir Richard Branson in 1999, the Ulusaba Game Reserve offers its visitors the opportunity to "discover the soul of Africa".

Situated on the border of South Africa's Kruger National Park, the reserve will allow you to get close to Africa's wild animals. It also pampers guests – who have recently included Will Smith – with gourmet food and even a

### Richard Branson, Ulusaba Game Reserve, South Africa

relaxing massage or facial at one of two hotels: Safari Lodge or Rock Lodge. Each has air conditioning and its own deck from which you can watch the sun set over some of the continent's most spectacular scenery.

Within the grounds you'll find an infinity pool built around a natural waterfall and a spa centre, while tennis courts and a gym are also available for fitness fans.

A typical day starts before dawn with tea and refreshments on the main terrace before hopping into a four-wheel drive for a morning safari, where sightings of the "big

five" – elephant, buffalo, lion, rhino and leopard – are almost guaranteed. Then it's back to the lodge for breakfast and free time for sunbathing, swimming or a beauty treatment.

Lunch is often served on the sundecks, while afternoon tea is on the patio. The evening game drive starts at about 4pm, with sundowner drinks followed by a brief night drive. Dinner time brings more fine cuisine, plus a blazing fire and tribal singers and dancers.

For the ultimate in romance, the staff at Ulusaba can even organise your wedding.



Traditional colours and weavings on the walls create an authentic Out Of Africa experience

### Chris Blackwell, Pink Sands Hotel, Bahamas



"Good hotels are places where you dream of staying. Great hotels are places where you'd want to live," says Island Records boss

Chris Blackwell, who currently reigns as the king of cool in the music and hotel businesses. With a string of hip Caribbean retreats to his name, his Island Outpost portfolio of small, exclusive retreats includes the enchanting Pink Sands on tiny Harbour Island in the Bahamas.

This 20-acre beachside estate is the creation of Barbara Hulanicki, who founded designer brand Biba, and has been restored by Blackwell to comprise 25 pastel-coloured cottages. Guests can opt for a one- or two-bedroom cabana in lush tropical gardens,



Indulge your senses in the Bimini Cottage with its private spa bath that overlooks the Atlantic

or they can choose an ocean-view suite with a private path leading to the pink sand beach, which Blackwell calls "one of the most beautiful on the planet".

A-list clients – the likes of Tim Robbins and Susan Sarandon have stayed here – will probably choose

the deluxe, two-bedroom Bimini Cottage, which has a private spa bath overlooking the Atlantic.

The atmosphere is welcoming, rather than elitist, however. "Warm is always cool," reasons Blackwell, who likes to involve the local community in each of

his hotel projects. Fittingly, the cuisine has a funky Caribbean twist, and activities range from fishing and scuba diving to romantic picnics. Guests can also use the three tennis courts, freshwater pool, exercise studio and library.

### Fact File

Turtle Inn, Belize  
[www.turtleinn.com](http://www.turtleinn.com)

Palazzo Versace, Australia  
[www.palazzoversace.com](http://www.palazzoversace.com)

Ulusaba Game Reserve, South Africa  
[www.ulusaba.com](http://www.ulusaba.com)

The Clarence, Dublin  
[www.theclarence.ie](http://www.theclarence.ie)

Pink Sands Hotel, Bahamas  
[www.islandoutpost.com](http://www.islandoutpost.com)

Terrace Beach Resort, Canada  
[www.terracebeachresort.ca](http://www.terracebeachresort.ca)