

AUSTRALIAN

# GOURMET TRAVELLER

# 50

**YEARS OF GOURMET TRAVELLER**

*The anniversary issue*

Ginger whisky cake with burnt white chocolate cream



**WHERE NEXT?**

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*travel experiences on our  
birthday wish list*

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ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF ALILA KOH RUSSEY

## Fantasy islands

The idyllic archipelago off Cambodia's south-west coast has an off-the-radar quality – and long may it be so. A handful of islands have a handful of low-key lodges, and then there's **Song Saa Private Island** resort, which set a new benchmark for remote, barefoot luxury based on "triple-bottom line" sustainability principles when it was opened by Australian couple Rory and Melita Hunter in 2011. The archipelago's jungle-meets-beach beauty has lured another pair of high-profile newcomers. **Allia** will open a resort on Koh Russey, aka Bamboo Island, by mid-next year. And by late next year **Six Senses** will open a 40-villa resort with an observatory on Krabey island.



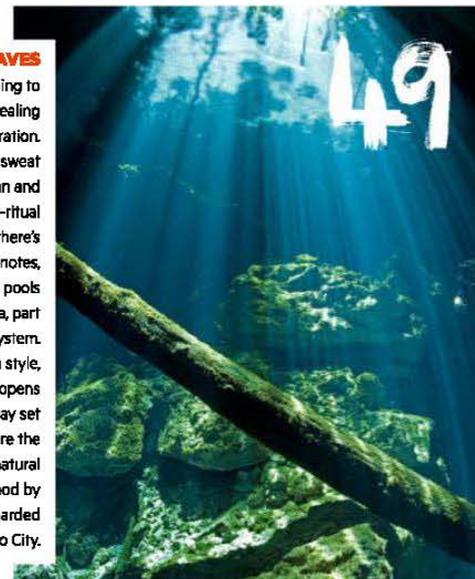
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## WHALE TALE

If fringing reef and wintering whale sharks aren't enough, Exmouth now offers a huge new Ningaloo attraction: swimming with humpback whales. From June to August the WA coast is a thoroughfare for "humpies" steaming north towards their breeding grounds. Eleven licensed boat operators started patrolling the blue highway this year, not so much looking for whales (they're everywhere), but locating those that are suitably relaxed. Once the light is green, it's into the water with a chest full of adrenalin and a semitrailer-sized mammal on approach.

## MEXICAN WAVES

Dedicated spa travellers are warming to a couple of Mexico's traditional healing rituals being revived for a new generation. **Temazcals** are pre-Hispanic domed sweat lodges, often set by the ocean and incorporating an invigorating post-ritual plunge into the waves; and there's renewed interest in the beauty of cenotes, the unique limestone caves and pools that dot the Yucatán Peninsula, part of a vast underground river system. To experience the latter in lavish style, the much-anticipated **Chablé Resort** opens this month, a hacienda-style hideaway set in jungle near the city of Mérida, where the spa's centrepiece is a magnificent natural cenote. Just as exciting will be food by Jorge Vallejo, of the highly regarded Quintonil in Mexico City.



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PHOTOGRAPHY ALAMY (MEXICO) & GETTY (WHALES)

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**NEXT NOMA** *Wherever René Redzepi and the Noma gang pop up next, we'd love to pull up a seat. There's a gap of a couple of months between Noma's closure in February at its current site in Copenhagen and the opening of its new urban-farm kitchen, and the hiatus is ripe for a pop-up. As we went to press the word was Tulum, on Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula.*