

The Kremlin's
19-year-old
cheerleader

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sleep slows
the brain

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MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

THE WEEK

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THE BEST OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN MEDIA

Let the Games begin

Can Britain pull it off? *Page 20*



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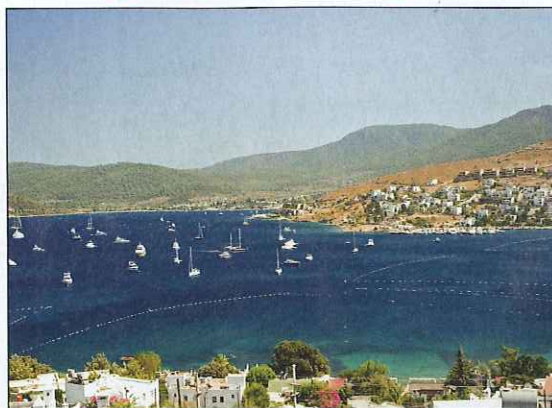
ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS

www.theweek.co.uk

This week's dream: mingling with the jet set in southwest Turkey

With its chic hotels and restaurants, its "bronze-limbed Aphrodites and abundance of yachts", the Bodrum Peninsula "has long been to Istanbul what Saint-Tropez is to Paris". And these days, it attracts "the gilded international set", too, says Lydia Bell in Harper's Bazaar. They don't come for the fleshpots of Bodrum itself – although the port is a good place to moor your superyacht, and the town's 15th century crusader castle is home to a "magical" Museum of Underwater Archaeology, filled with treasures. They come for the more rarefied parts of this "coastal finger" in Turkey's southwest – a place of "immense limestone crags" and "downy olive groves", quiet villages and "jade-hued valleys" rich in ancient remains.

Avoid the "overdeveloped southwest coast", where ranks of modern whitewashed villas march up the hillsides, and head north or east instead. In the fashionable northern enclave of Turkbuku is a boutique hotel, Maçakizi, which has "the ultimate pontoon

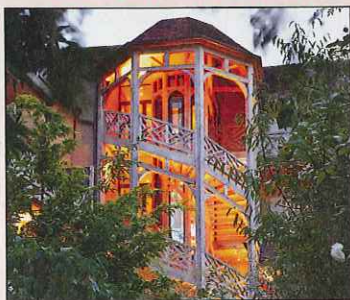


The fashionable town of Turkbuku

beach-club": "immaculate beauties" lounge on platforms floating on the "cerulean waters", or on terraces "carved into the steep hillsides" above. Westwards lies Yalikavak, an "unassuming" town whose harbour is lined with simple fish restaurants. And still further on, Gumusluk is "catnip for writers, artists and bohemians": "a tiny curl of white fishing cottages" built among the remains of the ancient city of Myndos, some of which now lies just a few feet under the clear blue sea – "a treat for snorkellers". From July to September, a classical music festival takes place in its restored Byzantine church.

The peninsula now has two luxury resorts – the Aman, with its "monastic" stone buildings set among "scented beds of thyme and fragrant pines" near Torba; and the Kempinski, on Barbaros Bay, where "the hills spiral breathlessly up from the beach, affording mesmerising sunsets". *Pegasus* (www.flypgs.com) flies directly from London Stansted to Bodrum.

Hotel of the week



Le Relais Bernard Loiseau, Saulieu, Burgundy

The chief attraction here is the food, says Mary Lussiana in Condé Nast Traveller – the three-star Michelin cuisine of Patrick Bertron, formerly sous chef to the late, great Bernard Loiseau. His "exquisitely presented" dishes (such as the "Loiseau classic" of frogs' legs with garlic purée) will transport you to "culinary nirvana". But that's not to knock the hotel, which "exudes luxurious charm". The bedrooms have "splendid" bathrooms; the pool and gardens are "a godsend" in summer; and there's a fine spa. It's well worth the journey through the "bleak" Morvan Natural Park.

Doubles from €189 b&b.
00 33 380 905353;
www.bernard-loiseau.com.

Getting the flavour of...

A wild Tuscan seaside holiday

A former "malarial swamp" drained between the 18th century and the 1950s, the Parco Naturale della Maremma is coastal Tuscany at its "unspoilt" best, says Lee Marshall in The Sunday Telegraph. Its "timeless rural landscape" – a "horizontal sweep of stone pines, low hills, Mediterranean maquis, beach and sea" – is most "pristine" in the stretch between the "salty little port" of Talamone and the Ombrone estuary, where wild horses and long-horned cattle graze. The "standout" beach, Marina di Alberese, is wildly popular in summer; but you need only walk for ten minutes to find "a real Crusoe stretch of sand", backed by the "densely wooded" Monti dell'Uccellina hills. After a day at the seaside, retire for dinner at one of the "picture-perfect" hilltowns only half-an-hour's drive inland. "Perfect for families", *Le Versegge* (00 39 0564 324059, www.leversegge.it) is a former farm with eight apartments, from £570pp per week.

Brontë's Derbyshire retreat

An "idyllic" base for walkers in the rugged hills of the Derbyshire Peak District, the "sturdy stone village" of Hathersage has some fine cultural attractions, too, says Stephen McClarence in The Times. Among them are the medieval parish church, "high on a hill"; the vicarage, where Charlotte Brontë stayed while writing *Jane Eyre* in

1845; and North Lees Hall, a "crenellated 15th century manor house" thought to be the model for Mr Rochester's house, Thornfield Hall. (As in the book, a female owner of the Hall went mad, was locked in a room and died in a fire.) Finally, there's the Round Building, a factory that makes "top-end" cutlery designed by the late David Mellor and his son Corin, with an "airy" café, Design Museum and shop attached. *The George Hotel* (01433-650436, www.george-hotel.net) has doubles from £80 b&b.

The Plain of Jars

Few Iron Age remains are as "mysterious" as the Plain of Jars in Laos, says Elisabeth Eaves in The New York Times. This area of the grassy Xieng Khouang plateau in the country's north is scattered with thousands of megalithic stone jars, some nearly ten feet high. Archaeologists believe the vessels were made to hold cremated remains, roughly 2,000 years ago; but little is known for sure. The only site accessible by a paved road, near the "ancient" town of Muang Khoune, is well worth a visit. Its 300 jars seem to have "individual personalities" – "leaning this way or that" amid a tangle of wild grasses, with "gaping maws in different shapes and sizes". *Ampersand Travel* (020-7289 6100, www.ampersandtravel.com) has a 17-day trip to Laos from £2,795pp, incl. flights.

Last-minute offers from top travel companies

Relaxing in the Cotswolds

Moore Cottage, a quiet house near the centre of Bourton-on-the-Water (sleeps 4) is available for a 3-night stay from 11 August, from £465.50. 01386-701177, www.ruralretreats.co.uk.

A week in Cornwall

Lakeside Cottage Ho is a 3-bed cottage (sleeps 5) in picturesque Looe where a week's stay in August costs from £900. 01503-265330, www.looeandpolperroholidays.co.uk.

Celestial Mountains

A ten-day adventure holiday through Kyrgyzstan – incl. Bishkek and Issyk Kul Lake – costs from £975pp, incl. meals (flights extra). 0845-304 8679, www.adventureworldwide.co.uk. Depart 2 September.

Chill out in Cuba

Enjoy 7 nights for the price of 6 at the 4-star Iberostar Playa Alameda. From £895pp all incl. (2 adults, 2 children sharing), plus flights. 0844-556 6060, www.dialaflight.com. 1 September to 23 October.