

# J SCOOP



## CHILEAN CHIC

Looking for somewhere original to stay in Santiago? Try the new Lastarria Boutique Hotel, a townhouse of just 14 rooms, originally built in 1927 and set in the eponymous neighbourhood of Lastarria, the Chilean capital's own corner of boho chic, replete with cafes, bars, quirky shops, restaurants, museums and an arthouse cinema. The hotel is simple and elegant, with an outdoor pool, spacious bedrooms and a cool lounge, where breakfast is served, as well as light meals paired with fine Chilean wines. [www.lastarriahotel.com](http://www.lastarriahotel.com)

## DESERT DREAMS

Experience one of the world's great wildernesses, the vast Rub Al Khali, or the Empty Quarter, on a camping safari from Salalah in southern Oman. Accommodation is in smart, African-style tents (complete with chef), from which you can watch the setting sun change the vast, rippling dunes from ochre to red before the stars emerge. Combine this private camp with two nights on the beach near Mirbat, one of the best places to spot dolphins and sea turtles. Tel. +968 9292 0670/[www.hudhudtravels.com](http://www.hudhudtravels.com)



## STAR STRUCK

Gaze at the vast expanse of the night sky from the high-tech observatory at Soneva Fushi by Six Senses, an exquisite 'barefoot' retreat in the Maldives. The resort's resident astronomer will guide guests around lunar craters, the rings of Saturn and the moons of Jupiter once the sun has set, as well as pointing out the constellations, dazzling in the dark night of the Indian Ocean, where there's no light pollution. Book through Carrier; tel. 0161 492 1351/[www.carrier.co.uk](http://www.carrier.co.uk).



Victoria's Yarra Valley, near Melbourne, best known for its wines, has launched a Cider and Ale Trail to promote the artisanal cider makers and boutique breweries in this region. Seven producers offer a chance to sample anything from kiwi fruit cider to 'champagne' cider. Download a map from [www.experienceyarravalley.com.au](http://www.experienceyarravalley.com.au).



## LUXURY CUBA

Explore Cuba on your own terms with a tailor-made tour that takes in the 'real' Cuba, in the company of experts. Specialist tour operator Cuba Real Tours has joined forces with Melia Hotels to create custom-designed holidays for inquisitive travellers. Explore the history of Havana, follow the Che Guevara Trail, hike, bike and discover the vivid underwater world. Or simply relax on the island's gorgeous white sand beaches. [www.cubarealtours.com](http://www.cubarealtours.com)