

Where to go...

FOR A WHISPER OF AUTUMN SUN

WANT TO STAY IN EUROPE?

YES

NO

FANCY A BIT OF AN EDGE?

YES

NO



INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL DIEU Marseille

It's a rough diamond, Marseille – a little bit edgy, a tiny bit seedy. But it's cleaning up its act for this year's stint as European Capital of Culture. And, right on cue, in swanks the new Hôtel Dieu, perched between the Panier district and the Old Port, in what was once a *très grand* hospital. They've hurled money at it – £107m, since you ask – and it shows. Pass through the arches of the 18th-century façade into the neat-as-a-pin lobby and you'll know you're off the rough-and-tumble streets and in sure hands. Rooms are bling-free and unshowy – best are those at the front with terraces from where, by night, Marseille looks like a lit-up model of itself. There's a Clarins spa, with all the associated malarkey (pool, fitness centre), but the clincher is the vast first-floor terrace, with its brasserie. It's the size of Surrey, but sunnier.

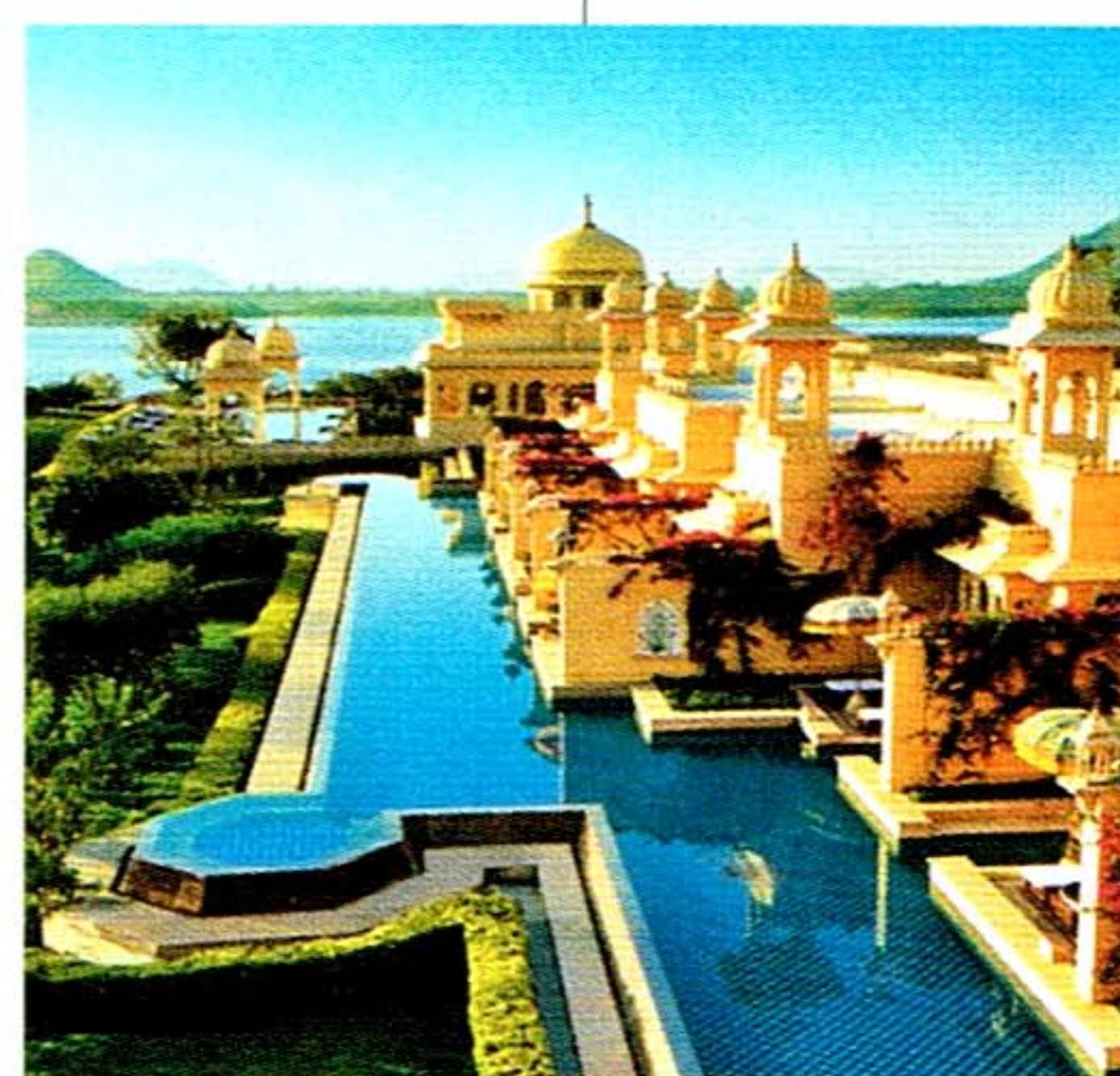
BOOK IT 3 nights for two from £690 (marseille.intercontinental.com); British Airways flights from £124.



VILLA ORSULA Dubrovnik

Byron was bang on. Dubrovnik was, he declared, 'the pearl of the Adriatic' – and, damn, was he right. Arrive, fling open your balcony doors and LOOK at that view: all that turquoise sea, the medieval city across the bay, that little island (gasp!) directly opposite, where *Game of Thrones* was filmed. Then potter downstairs in your flip-flops (it looks like a grand Venetian palazzo but is charmingly laidback) and collapse on one of the terraces for a stiff drink – very Byron – and a bowl of garlicky mussels. Thierry Caruel, the hotel's chatty chef, will most likely tell you all about cooking for the royal wedding while you eat them. After that, brush your teeth. Then tiptoe down the cutaway steps to the sea. No beach, but a big pool and a refreshingly healthy guest-to-sunbed ratio, especially at this balmy, secret time of year.

BOOK IT Original Travel (originaltravel.co.uk) offers 3 nights for two at Villa Orsula from £1,620.



THE OBEROI UDAIVILAS Udaipur

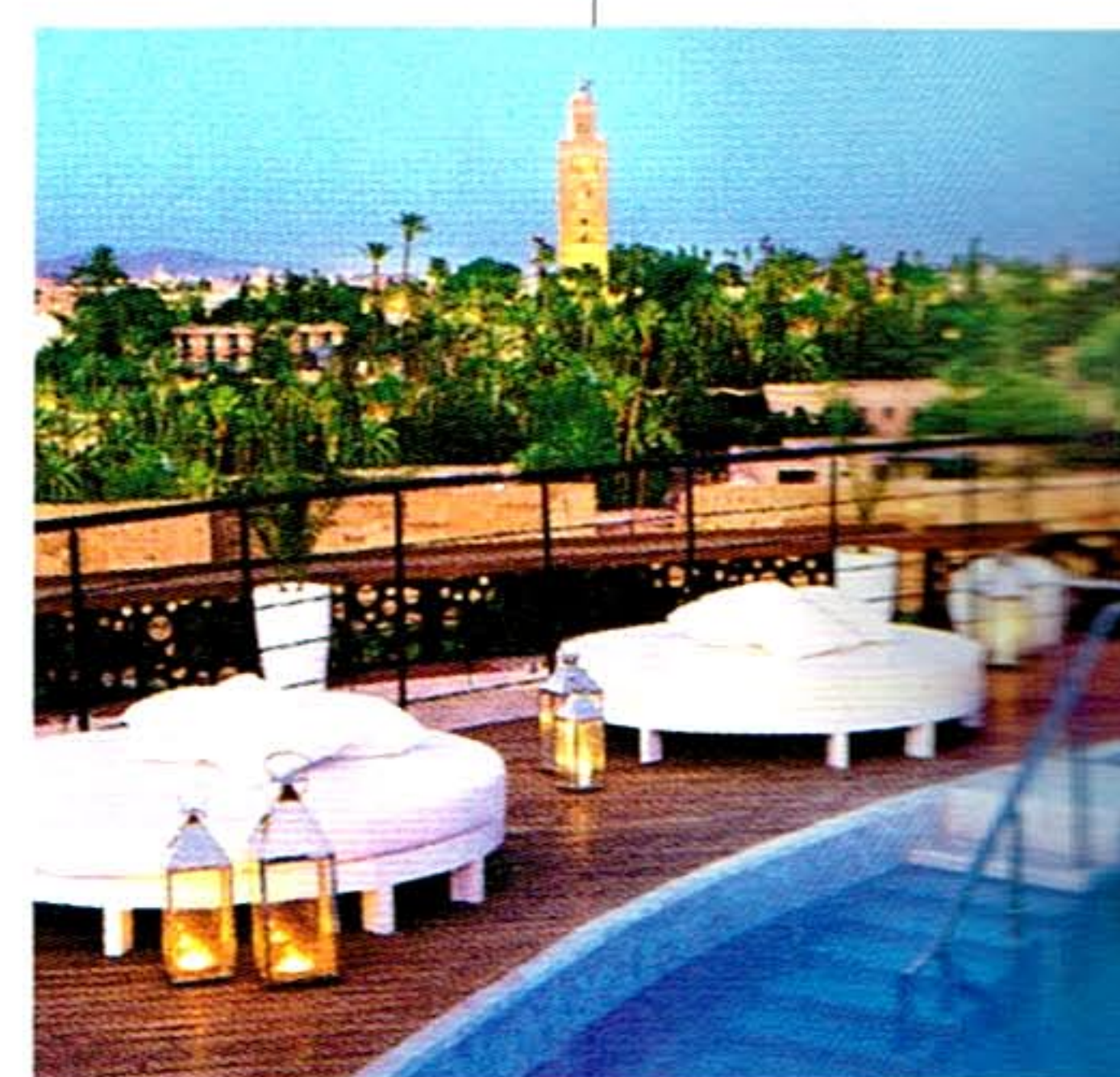
'All I wanted was a sweet distraction for an hour or two...' Name that tune. From *Octopussy*? There you go. The James Bond classic was filmed in Udaipur, and there is no lovelier town in Rajasthan. You'll struggle to get that song out of your head, but who cares when you're resting it in the lakeside bliss of the Oberoi Udaivilas. This ochre-hued palace, right on the shores of Lake Pichola, has acres of glistening, checkered marble, fairytale walkways through stone-carved arches, splashes of sari-bright raspberry. Peacocks strut about, fountains tinkle and pools reflect the intricate inlays in the walls. Plop down on a window seat and gaze out to the City Palace, or dip into your very own pool. Then it's a three-hour ayurveda experience at the showstopper spa, followed by a soak in your Victorian roll-top bath, with views of the lake. 'On an all time hiiiiigh...'

BOOK IT Greaves Travel (greavesindia.co.uk) offers 10-day tours of Rajasthan from £3,660 a person.

EAGER TO EXPLORE YOUR INNER BOND GIRL?

YES

NO



DELANO Marrakesh

Yes, it's a Delano, but don't come expecting the latest DJs and Cristal-sprayed models. (You're in Morocco – get a grip.) This outpost of the Miami trendsetter is a little more low-key and subtle, but no less sexy. French designer Jacques Garcia has applied his usual velvet-and-marble style to the rooms, with purple chaises longues and vast artworks by calligrapher Nouredine Daifallah. Some have balconies looking towards the Medina; all are kitted out with iPads and Malin+Goetz goodies. It's pocket-sized but packs plenty of punch: two restaurants, three pools, a nightclub and a delicious 20,000-square-foot underground spa. Trumping the lot is the Sky Lounge: a rooftop pool with a sushi bar and views towards the Atlas Mountains. Non-residents can pay to hang out for the day – quite the cleverest, cheekiest way to catch some rays in style.

BOOK IT Tselana Travel (tselana.com) offers 3 nights at the Delano from £815 a person.