

Condé Nast Traveller



DECEMBER 2012 US \$8.95 CAN \$9.95
INTERNATIONAL £4.20

THE WILD BRITISH WINTER

- ★ Best beach walks
- ★ Isles of Scilly
- ★ Loch Lomond

THE NEW SWEDISH SOUL FOOD

EXCLUSIVE

AFRICA'S NEXT BIG THING THE CONGO

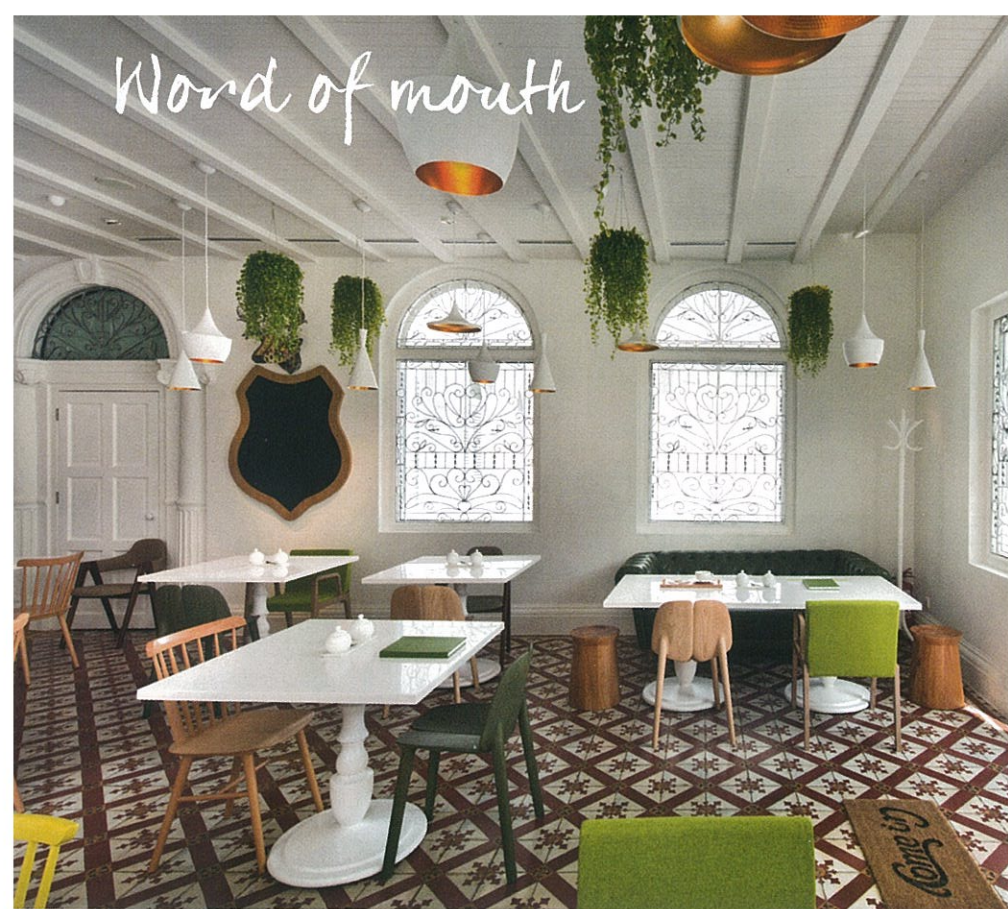
By Giles Foden, author of *The Last King of Scotland*

LA CONFIDENTIAL
Florence Welch on
Chateau Marmont

+
MOROCCO
BEIRUT
ALICANTE
SYDNEY



Word of mouth



BY GEORGE!

A tiny Malaysian hotspot has suddenly gone all contemporary and designer

The island of Penang is having a bit of a moment. Among the colonial mansions, street-food hawkers and Chinese temples of its capital, Georgetown, the modern world is finally beginning to infiltrate. There's even a Beach Blanket Babylon for glitzy, East-meets-West-London nights out, the owner of which has just opened Malaysia's first design hotel. **MACALISTER MANSION** (www.macalistermansion.com; doubles from about £200) is

something of a departure for the city. Although many of the original details have been restored – cornices, Peranakan tiles – this 100-year-old English house has been transformed into a contemporary hotel by Ministry of Design (the architects behind Singapore's New Majestic Hotel) and local artists have been commissioned to create sculptures for the box parterre in the gardens – sweet relief from Georgetown's teeming streets. **LAURA FOWLER**

Above, the living room at Macalister Mansion, Penang

I spy with my beady eye...

One of the world's most diverse wilderness areas is the Masoala peninsula on Madagascar's north-east Vanilla Coast. It has virgin rainforest brimming with lemurs and orchids, crazy rock formations rising out of the sea, and now **Le Petit Relais** (www.relaisdumasoala.com; doubles from about £215, all-inclusive), an eco-lodge you can only get to by boat. Breakfast on freshly baked brioche, stride out on the coastal path to find an empty cove to call your own, and pick some of that vanilla – its sweet, floral scent will stay with you for weeks. **You will definitely see:** a red-ruffed lemur flashing through the forest like a fireball. **You might see:** a panther chameleon, left. **And if you're lucky:** a rare serpent eagle (not so lucky for the other two if it spots them first). **KATE ESHELBY** Book through **Steppes Travel** (www.steppes-travel.co.uk)



Relight my fire

CIGAR SMOKERS ARE BEING WOOED BACK IN FROM THE COLD AS LONDON'S HOTELS WARM TO COMFORTABLE OUTDOOR SMOKING AREAS KNOWN AS 'COSAS'. BUT DON'T CONFUSE THEM WITH STUFFY GENTLEMEN'S CLUBS: TEN MANCHESTER STREET (WWW.TENMANCHESTERSTREETHOTEL.COM) HOSTS LADIES-ONLY CIGAR TUTORIALS ON ITS ALL-SEASON TERRACE (PAIR A GLASS OF CHAMPAGNE WITH A LIGHT HOYO DE MONTERREY SHORT). FOR ALL THE FLAVOUR WITHOUT THE FUG, ORDER A MONTECRISTO DAIQUIRI (WITH CIGAR-INFUSED RUM) AT THE MAY FAIR (WWW.THEMAYFAIRHOTEL.CO.UK). AND IF YOU'VE MONEY TO BURN, THE RANGE OF CIGARS AT THE WELLESLEY (WWW.THEWELLESLEY.CO.UK), ABOUT TO OPEN IN SW1, INCLUDES THE LIMITED-EDITION 2005 COHIBA BEHIKE, £3,000, MADE BY FIDEL CASTRO'S OWN ROLLER. LAURA ARCHER

