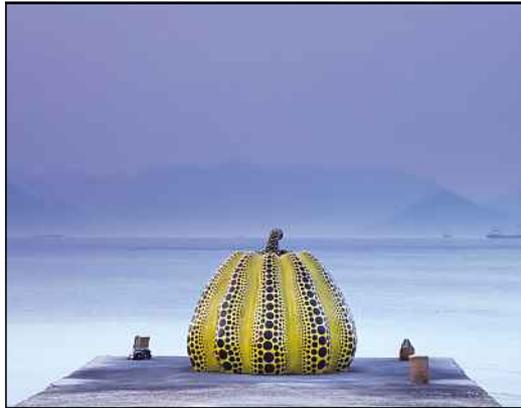


This week's dream: enchanting islands of modern art

Attracting a million art pilgrims a year, the remote islands of Naoshima and Teshima in Japan's Seto Inland Sea have "an almost mythical status globally". Formerly polluted by industrial waste, they were rescued in the 1980s by the philanthropist Soichiro Fukutake, who has since worked to regenerate them through art. The result is a "new Arcadia", says Catherine Fairweather in Porter – two wondrous and uniquely Japanese sanctuaries where sculpture, painting, architecture and the landscape come together in harmony. Fukutake's vision is of "spirituality without religion", and the galleries, hotels and cafés he has created have roots in the "minimalism" of Zen and in the veneration of nature at the heart of Shinto, Japan's pre-Buddhist belief system. Wandering among them is all but guaranteed to "shift perspectives, stir the soul and calm the mind".

Many of the fishermen and chrysanthemum gatherers who once populated Naoshima left years ago; at Honmura port, their



Sculpture, architecture and the landscape in harmony

homes and workshops have been turned into galleries, inns and libraries. But the island's pièce de résistance is the Chichu Art Museum, a sort of concrete bunker built into a grassy mound. Open, in part, to the sky, its galleries, corridors and ramps have a wonderfully fluid quality, and centre on a "stunning" mosaic-tiled space housing five of Monet's giant *Water Lilies* canvases. Nearby, Tadao Ando's Benesse House Museum has hotel rooms, each a "paean to simplicity", and guests are allowed to visit the galleries when the crowds have gone.

On Teshima, visitors can spend their days cycling between art installations on electric bikes, swimming off sandy beaches, exploring "primeval" forests and eating in "sensational" restaurants. Particularly charming is Hotel Lemon, an installation that becomes a tiny hotel by night. *Discover Shikoku* (www.discovershikoku.com) offers custom tours starting from ¥95,000 per day, double occupancy.

Hotel of the week



Los Enamorados, Ibiza

Set beside the sea in the fishing village of Portinatx, this former hostel has recently been revamped and now has an "extraordinary mid-century tropical aesthetic", says Condé Nast Traveller. The nine "jewel-coloured" bedrooms are smallish but chic, with huge beds and pile rugs and raffia wall hangings that create "a throwback-motel vibe". The bar, thatched with faded palm fronds and lined with sheepskin-topped stools, opens out onto a "sprawling" waterside sun deck and restaurant terrace. Here, locals join guests to eat at long tables, from menus that rely heavily on the local catch.

Doubles from about £200.
00 34 971 33 75 49,
www.lozenamoradosibiza.com

Getting the flavour of...

An East African adventure

To get away from other tourists in the vast wildernesses of Tanzania, try a mobile safari, says Horatio Clare in the FT. Driving by day and camping by night makes for a real adventure – but with a guide, cook, crew and a support vehicle carrying "proper beds" and other luxuries, the experience can be made "blissfully" easy. The Selous Game Reserve and Ruaha National Park see very few visitors, but they are enormous – the size of Holland and Wales, respectively. Visit them with a wildlife expert such as Rod Tether, and you will enjoy breathtakingly close encounters with animals including lions and, if you're lucky, leopards. In between, you could stop at the smaller Udzungwa Mountains National Park, to swim beneath "spectacular" waterfalls and track sanje crested mangabeyes – golden primates only discovered in 1979. *Natural High Safaris* (01747-830950, www.naturalhighsafaris.com) has a ten-day trip for a family of four from £13,720, excl. international flights.

Hamburg's palace of music

A giant new concert hall encased in glass, the Elbphilharmonie towers over the River Elbe in Hamburg "like a glacier". It is now the city's "defining landmark" and reason enough to visit in itself, says Trisha Andres in The Daily Telegraph. Designed by the Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron, it ran nearly

three times over budget (to €789m), and its acoustics, the work of Yasuhisa Toyota, are "exceptional". Attend a concert by the resident orchestra in the evening after a day spent exploring the historic Speicherstadt, a "labyrinth" of lofty 19th century warehouses and narrow canals lined with fashion showrooms, artists' studios and tea rooms. Also fantastic are the five art galleries of the Kunstmeile; they include the Kunsthalle, which holds a vast collection of European paintings. See www.elbphilharmonie.de/en.

Staying in a bothy on Exmoor

Accommodation does not come much simpler than the National Trust's new bothies on Exmoor, but these overnight shelters, with sleeping platforms, running water and real toilets, are proving popular with walkers, says Phoebe Smith in The Guardian. One of them, Foreland, is a converted stable beneath the village of Countisbury; the other, Hebdon Orchard, is a former apple store built in 1867, near Martinhoe. Each is available for exclusive use by up to four people for £20 per night. The 21-mile route between them follows the North Devon coast and passes through the spectacular Valley of Rocks, with its "fortress-like protrusions" of fossilised bedrock and fine views of the Bristol Channel. To book, see www.nationaltrust.org.uk or call 0344-335 1296.

Last-minute offers from top travel companies

Norfolk New Year's Eve

Spend 3 nights in a Silver Birch cabin in Thorpe Forest, set in a woodland glade, with 4 sharing on a self-catering basis, from £314pp. 0333-011 0495, www.forestholidays.co.uk. Arrive 29 December.

4 nights in Berlin

Located near Checkpoint Charlie, the Adina Apartment Hotel offers a b&b stay for two from £303pp, incl. Liverpool flights. 020-8974 7200, www.travelrepublic.co.uk. Depart 11 December.

Sicilian winter break

Enjoy panoramic views of the coast when you stay 7 nights at the Hotel Excelsior Palace, from £976pp half board, incl. Manchester flights. 01293-832515, www.citalia.com. Depart 23 November.

A week in Memphis

Surrounded by a rich musical history and heritage, The Guest House at Graceland is a real treat. From £1,293pp room only, incl. flights. 01293-832716, www.hayesandjarvis.co.uk. Depart 15 December.