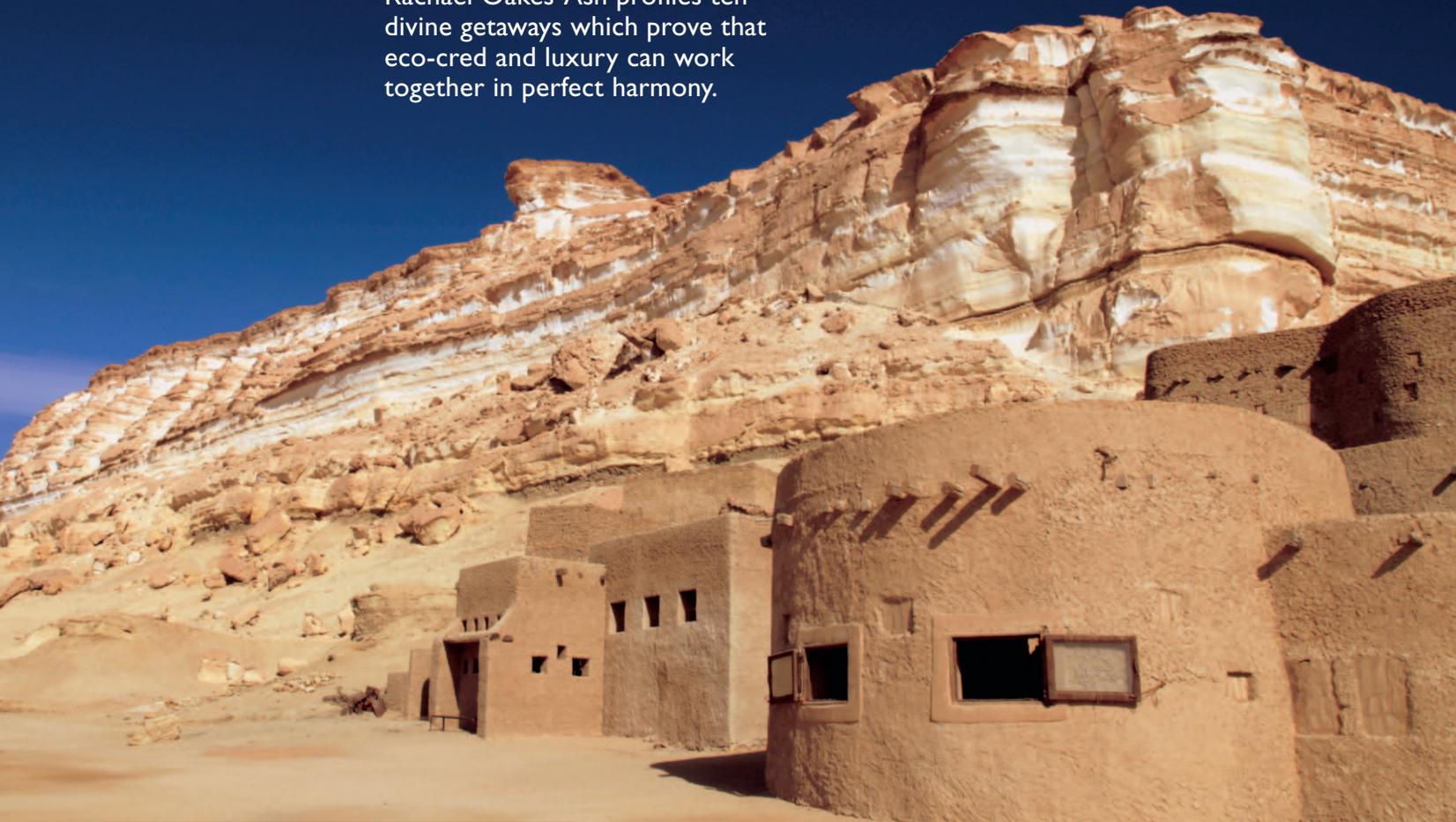




ECO-CHIC ROMANCE

Rachael Oakes-Ash profiles ten divine getaways which prove that eco-cred and luxury can work together in perfect harmony.



Adreere Amellal Desert Eco Lodge, Egypt

The impressive Adreere Amellal Desert Eco Lodge is plucked straight from the pages of an Arabian fairytale. Set in the Siwa Oasis, the lodge's earth buildings blend into the landscape, each made from indigenous rock salt and clay. Every fifty years the town experiences torrential rain that will likely wash the lodge away so get in while you can.

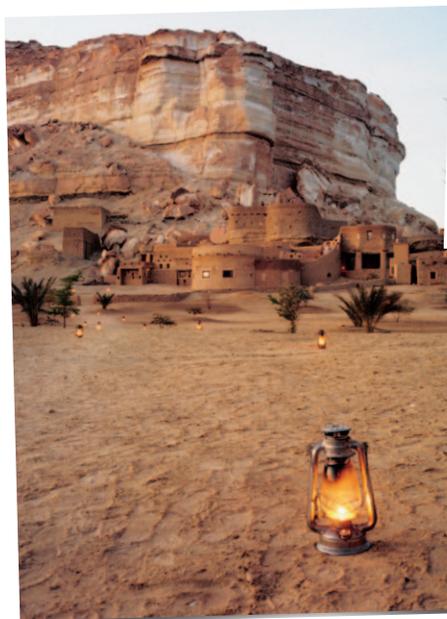
ECO-CRED

The lodge's forty rooms are all hand built from local clay without a nail in sight. Furniture is carved from local trees, an underwater stream feeds the pool and electricity does not exist. Oil lamps and beeswax candles provide lighting and the mud walls keep the property cool. Organic food is grown on the grounds and served under the stars.

ROMANCE FACTOR

Candlelight, premium service, ancient mud style walls and a desert oasis set the romantic tone. Take a jeep safari into the desert, wander the town of Siwa or pay homage at the Temple of Arun. This is Arabia at its exotic best.

Website: www.adreeramellal.net/





Wolgan Valley Resort and Spa, Australia

The much anticipated first Emirates Australian resort, Wolgan Valley, opened in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage area in October 2009. The property has lived up to its 'six star' \$125million hype with forty free standing suites, each with a private terrace and plunge pool and the Sodashi inspired Timeless Spa.

ECO-CRED

It's official, the resort is the first carboNZero™ certified hotel and the first carbon neutral resort in the world. Why? Because the resort has planted 175 indigenous plants in the valley and renewable energy sources provide 35% of the property's electrical supply. Plus food and supplies are sourced within a 160-kilometre radius and both solar power and heat recovery are extensively utilised. Enough said.

ROMANCE FACTOR

The resort lets the landscape do the talking with prehistoric sandstone cliffs, deep valley gorges and expansive bushland that provides a remote and intimate setting for couples inspired by nature. Personal field guides lead couples through nature safaris, private chefs create cuisine for night time dining and personal plunge pools are built especially for two.

Website: www.emirateshotelsresorts.com/wolgan-valley/en/



Six Senses Soneva Fushi, Maldives

If the Maldives archipelago of coral cays were made for couples then Soneva Fushi must be Noah's Ark. The Six Senses flagship property has cocooned loved up pairs in sixty five accommodation suites and villas with direct beach access, private pools and private bathroom gardens since opening in 1995.

ECO-CRED

Soneva Fushi was the first island resort to prove you can combine minimal environmental impact with luxury accommodation without sacrificing service. It worked as the resort has been awarded the President of Maldives Green Resort Award in 2000, 2005 and 2007. Crystals recycle water for drinking purposes, bicycles and battery operated vehicles are used for transportation, food produce is grown in two organic gardens, pools use filtered seawater and ninety percent of employees are from the Maldives. Did we mention an extensive social responsibility program?

ROMANCE FACTOR

Two words - the Maldives. Add the resort's 'no news no shoes' philosophy and you get the relaxed picture.

Website: www.sixsenses.com

Sal Salis at Ningaloo Reef, Australia

Nestled in the sand dunes of Cape Range National Park in Western Australia sits nine wilderness bush luxury tents skipping distance from the blue ocean shores of Ningaloo Reef. Kangaroos graze around the dunes, humpback whales breach on the horizon and butcherbirds sing melodies from the trees. This is Sal Salis.

ECO-CRED

The principle here is minimal impact. Tents are open for nature's air conditioning, all power is solar generated, bathrooms are self composting, soaps are made from native herbs and shampoos are ecologically sound plus the no 'mod cons' approach means no televisions or telephones.



ROMANCE FACTOR

Nature provides something for all the senses at Sal Salis from red sunsets to five hundred species of fish in the marine park of Ningaloo Reef. It is impossible not to be moved by Mother Nature's beauty.

Website: www.salsalis.com.au



Eco Beach Wilderness Retreat, Broome, Australia

Who said you had to sacrifice style to be kind to the environment? Not Eco Beach Wilderness Retreat. This stylish shrine to eco design has it all. Twenty five Eco Villas and 30 safari-style Eco Tents are interlinked by over a kilometre of elevated wooden boardwalks all with views of the multiple blue hues of the Kimberley coastline.

ECO-CRED

Eco villas are solar powered and guests can monitor their own energy consumption with excess generated energy diverted back into the communal grid for the resort. The boardwalks are made from 'Eco Decking', a composite wood decking of recycled polypropylene plastics and wood bi-products, waste water is recycled, cleaning products are biodegradable and televisions don't exist.

ROMANCE FACTOR

Arrive in style and sail by catamaran from Broome to the red rock shores of Eco Beach then kayak blue water caves, swim with turtles and take a private dinner on your personal deck. Bliss.

Website: www.ecobeach.com.au



Paradise Bay Eco Escape, Whitsundays, Australia

You know a resort is remote when it's only accessed by boat or helicopter. Paradise Bay Eco Escape in the Whitsunday archipelago features ten waterfront bungalows on a pristine rainforest bay in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park surrounded on all sides by rugged wilderness.

ECO-CRED

The entire retreat relies on solar power, natural gas and collected rainwater. The Paradise Bay 'Water Farm' collects rainwater in thirty six tanks and any waste water is treated and recycled on the resort's garden. Carbon emissions are offset with 1500 hectares of virgin bushland in the Northern Territory and 44.5 hectares of local farmland being reverted to native forest.

ROMANCE FACTOR

Catamarans, high speed ribs and kayaks built for two whisk couples to secluded bays daily for languid time in the sun and sand.

Website: www.paradisebay.com.au



Nihiwatu, Sumba, Indonesia

Nihiwatu attracts an eclectic celebrity crowd so take your dark glasses. The Hermès fashion family book Nihiwatu out for two weeks every year and the visitor's book features signatures from Layne Beachley, Mark Occhilupo and their surfing friends drawn to the resort's famous surfbreak.

ECO-CRED

Nihiwatu's Sumba Foundation focuses on sustainable education of local staff, the building of medical clinics, clean water wells and schools for the island's community and has significantly reduced the number of malaria cases on the island.

All waste at the resort is recycled, the generator works on biodiesel fuel, they utilise a bio mass treatment for waste water, no trees are cut on the 480 hectares and a turtle hatching program keeps the local underwater wildlife breeding.

ROMANCE FACTOR

Blue curaçao waters break onto a two kilometre private beach. Come sunset the local ponies come down to the ocean to bathe. Watch from the deck of your cliff top bungalow or sup cocktails barefoot on the sand bottom bar.

Website: www.nihiwatu.com

Phinda Lodge, South Africa

Six exquisite safari lodges in the heart of South Africa game land makes up Phinda reserve including sixteen forest suites at Forest Lodge, twenty five suites in the mountainside at Mountain Lodge and private pool villas at Rock Lodge. Nothing spells primal romance more than the wilds of South Africa.

ECO-CRED

&Beyond's Africa Foundation works closely with local communities at all of the company's resort lodges with education, medical and sustainable programs. Ten thousand people a month are treated at the Phinda Mduku clinic and their digital eco village trains locals with computer courses and advanced education. At Phinda Game Reserve biofuel from recycled kitchen and workshop oils is used to pilot vehicles and lanterns. Sixteen endangered black rhinos were released into the Phinda wild in 2004 and are thriving today.

ROMANCE FACTOR

Early morning game drives with the big five at dawn, midday lounging by a private pool, sunset drinks in the bushland as elephants graze nearby. Africa gets under the skin and into the soul right where love hits, the heart.

Website: www.andbeyondafrica.com



Gayana Eco Resort, Borneo, Malaysia

Where the lush jungle forest meets the coral reef of Borneo you'll find Gayana Eco Resort. Bed down in one of 44 stylish over-water villas with the sound of lapping waves to accompany your slumber.

ECO-CRED

Marine ecology is at the heart of Gayana and the property has its own on-site Marine Ecology Research Centre. Seven of the eight giant clams of the world are found at Gayana where a Giant Clam Restocking Programme is helping prevent them from extinction. The Centre also features a maternity tank for pregnant bamboo sharks and seahorses. Guests can replant replenished corals into the reef, watch giant clams spawn or caress starfish in the 'touch tank.'

ROMANCE FACTOR

Saving the creatures of the sea is a natural aphrodisiac. Add uber lush villas and romance is a given.

Website: www.gayana-eco-resort.com

Cacao Pearl Luxury Eco Resort

The wild spice Palawan islands of the Philippines sit between the South China and Sulu Seas and serve up thousands of remote beaches and private islands. Cacao Resorts are putting their responsible footprint in these sands with a series of lush resorts that spell intimacy and are available for private purchase.

ECO-CRED

The Cacao Pearl Luxury Eco Resort will be 100% carbon neutral and will be the world's first non-profit luxury resort. All operating profits will be dedicated to environmental protection and social responsibility.

ROMANCE FACTOR

White gloved butler service for every residence to cater to every guest's whim and desire.

Website: www.cacaoresorts.com

