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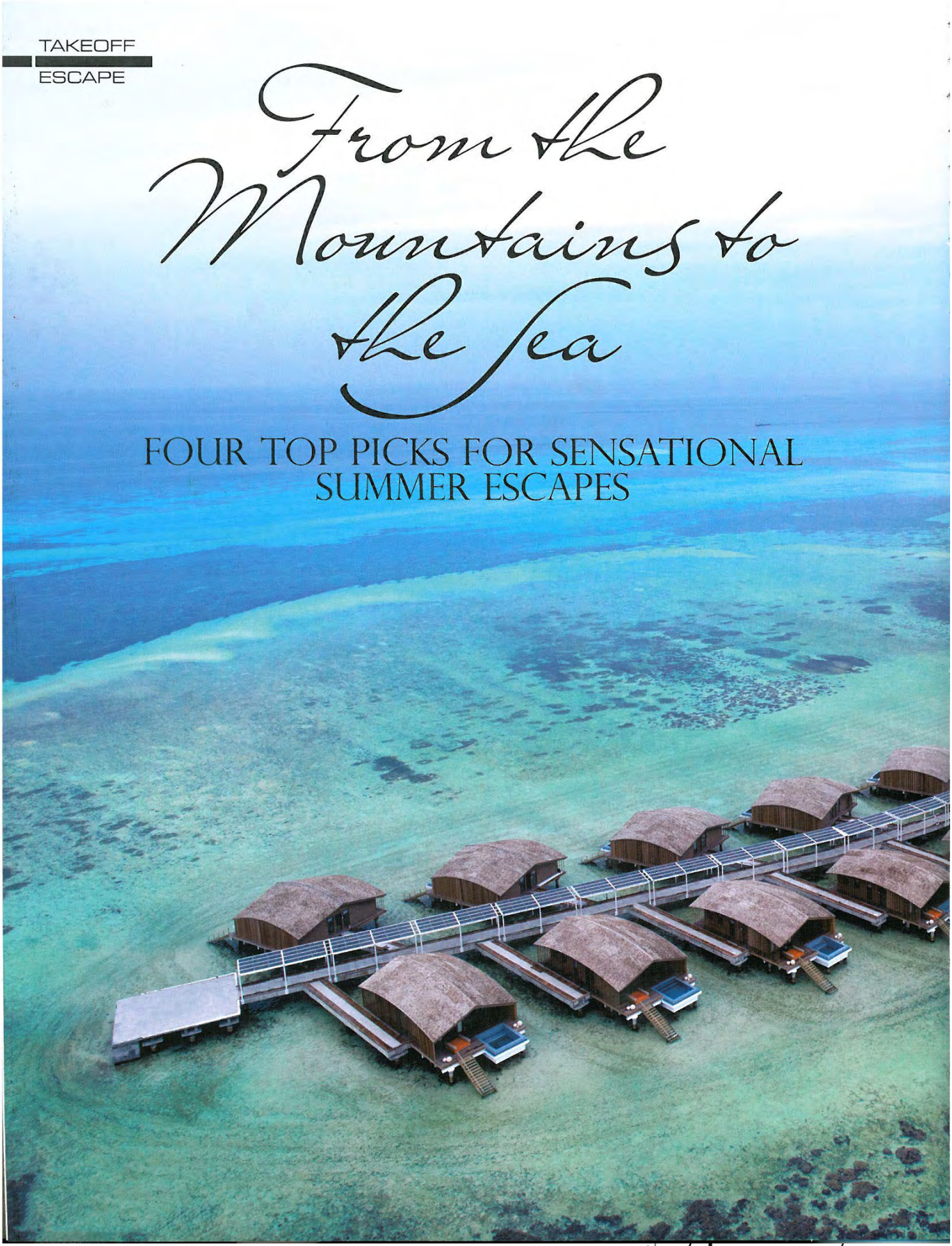
From the Mountains to the Sea

FOUR TOP PICKS FOR SENSATIONAL SUMMER ESCAPES



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BY KAREN BROST

We always search the world to bring *Jetset* readers the very best luxury travel destinations. So to help you finalize your summer travel plans, we've put together four sensational options that span the globe from Canada to the U.S. to Mexico to the Maldives. Whether your ideal summer getaway involves pristine beaches, private plunge pools, personal butler service, gourmet cuisine or thrilling outdoor adventures of every kind, you'll find a choice here that is sure to have you packing your bags. We invite you to discover a magical coastal retreat on Mexico's Riviera Maya, an island paradise in the Indian Ocean, the ideal vacation home setting in Utah's spectacular Wasatch Mountains and an island lodge surrounded by the rugged beauty of the Canadian landscape. The choice is yours, and you just might want to choose more than one.

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MAHEKAL BEACH RESORT

PLAYA DEL CARMEN, MEXICO

Like a perfectly blended Margarita, Mahekal Beach Resort offers every ingredient you could possibly need for a relaxing beach getaway. Fresh from a $10 million re-imagination, this oceanfront retreat offers an appealing blend of authentic Mexican ambiance, stellar service and endless views of the turquoise waters of the Caribbean from its prime setting on the longest stretch of pristine beach in Playa Del Carmen.

There's a lot to be said for a resort that offers its guests a true sense of place. Accommodations at Mahekal come in the form of bungalows with thatched palapa-style roofs and are surrounded by lush vegetation. Each bungalow has a private terrace equipped with a hard-to-resist hammock, and the interiors, which feature vaulted ceilings and a "moon shower" with river rock flooring, are decorated in soothing neutrals accented with fresh pops of color thanks to the use of vividly colored Mexican textiles. When you book one of Mahekal's Ocean Front bungalows, you'll be just 10 steps from the beach and have your own refreshing plunge pool to take a dip in. That is, when you're not on the beach enjoying an oceanfront massage. Or, you may simply want to stake out a lounge chair at one of the resort's two new pools or bask in the seaside Jacuzzi. Decisions, decisions.

Of course, a resort is nothing without excellent service, and here's some insight into the kind of service you can expect. Mahekal's long-time concierge, the always-smiling Boli, is so beloved by guests who return to the resort year after year, that one of the resort's three new bars has been named in his honor. Here's another fun twist. When you're waiting for your room service order to be delivered, you won't hear the typical cart rumbling down the path to your bungalow. Your meals will be delivered by a staff member riding a vintage bicycle carrying a rattan basket. Mahekal also has a talented pottery artist, so don't be surprised to arrive at your bungalow to find a hand-painted plate bearing your name and room number hanging by your door. In the spirit of helping guests get away from it all, Mahekal keeps TVs out of the bungalows, but don't worry, you'll still be able to stay in touch with the world when you need to, thanks to a new, state-of-the-art Wi-Fi system in place throughout the resort.

For dining, Mahekal offers everything from traditional Mexican and Latin American fare to gourmet dishes that blend the best of the land and sea. Also, unlike many other resorts in the area, Mahekal has the distinct advantage of being located literally just steps away from Playa Del Carmen's popular 5th Avenue district (known locally as La Quinta), a lively pedestrian area filled with sidewalk cafes, shops, boutiques and nightspots.

Playa Del Carmen is set in the heart of Mexico's beautiful Riviera Maya, so there's plenty to do when you're ready to venture outside of the resort. Riviera Maya is home to the second longest barrier reef in the world, so the snorkeling and diving are excellent. The ancient Mayan ruins at Tulum are a "must see," and there are many other outdoor adventures to choose from in this ecological paradise, including the rare experience of swimming in underground caves.

Given its prime location, luxurious oceanfront accommodations, excellent cuisine and welcoming, attentive service, it's easy to see why so many families make it a tradition to return to experience the magic of Mahekal year after year.

MahekalBeachResort.com

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