

FOR the discerning reader. For that queer cut above the molly masses. If sun, sand, pop, pap and shags alone don't quite fulfil - and you've cash to flash to buy quality time away from the usual boy hoi polloi - check out some of these top treks. Experience the riches of the world, plus some far-flung flings.

MALDIVES

THE MALDIVES: those pristine islands strewn across the equator in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Where better on Earth to enjoy an extreme non-scene break - perfect for gay detox or remote romantic retreat? No gay bars or clubs, designer label shopping opportunities or beautiful people; just lush coconut palms swaying over snow-white sands bordering clear lagoons that merge into a pure blue ocean speckled with coral reefs and rainbow fish.

An overnight flight, via the Middle East, lands you in Male by late morning - special deals on business class upgrades are possible. Then a speed-boat or sea plane will whisk you off to your island idyll - until recently, completely uninhabited and still preserved in its natural glory.

Life is simple here: luxury accommodation with superb meals - try the Taj Coral Reef Resort with its very own island - plus a relaxed beachy break with only mild exertions to swim, windsurf, water ski or parasail as you see fit. This is also a paradise for scuba divers so why not take a crash course on snorkelling to experience the hidden world beneath that cobalt sea close up.

Prices from as little as around £950 per person (inc. flights and transfers).

CAPE TOWN

STRANGE forces work at the tip of a mighty continent where two oceans collide - the kind that make you want to strip off beneath new starry skies and get straight down to it, in a second summer as days lengthen.

The Mother City's gay village nestles into two or three roads around the Green Point district, providing rich succour to all queer comers. The scene is essentially white, with a large dollop of European visitors permanently in town to enjoy the very best



Maldives

PREMIUM CLASS

Not mad about Mykonos? Gran Can don't grab ya? QX's touring toff, ADRIAN GILLAN, straddles four continents to sample some of the queer world's poshest packages. Go on - cough up, chill out!

accommodation, food and fun for around £20-30 a day all in, no catch.

You'll certainly want to visit some of the fabulous white sandy beaches like the eponymous Sandy Bay - the Cape's only nudist stretch - about 10 miles away. But you'll also want to explore more widely: The Cape of Good Hope National Park; the Cape Winelands; whale watching; the Townships; and - of course - those safaris: both locally and in the famous Kruger National Park.

You'll be spoilt for choice on the accommodation front too, with most options in the Sea Point district. We could recommend the casually chic and perfectly located four-star Glen Hotel (www.glenhotel.co.za) - Cape Town's first gay hotel and a discreet

and friendly haven for the discerning gay traveller. The Glen is gay owned, managed and staffed, fitted to international standards and has its own fine restaurant.

And, although it may be a twelve hour non-stop flight away, with hardly any time difference you won't feel lagged on landing!

Prices typically from as little as around £900 per person (inc. flights and transfers).

INCA HIGHLIGHTS

PERU is blessed with a rich and ancient past and a colourful and vibrant present. This makes it one of South America's most popular destinations for those keen to experience Spanish Colonial heritage mixed with a far older indigenous Inca civilisation.

Discover the wonders of the Inca world during a week-long wander. Fly to Peruvian capital Lima and then on to the Sacred Valley and Cusco - 11,000 ft above sea level, from where the Incas ruled their mighty



Inca Highlights



Cape Town

400 GAY GUYS

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Alternative
events

ONE HOT FABULOUS WEEK

- Every night entertainment, DJs until dawn
- Foam party, costume party, fireworks and fire eaters
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- Cocktails at sunset and movies at midnight
- Aqua aerobics and a chocolate 'mousse' massage
- Spa treatments, Island cycling, cruising and sailing

ONE LUXURY ISLAND RESORT

- Cool and contemporary, spacious with seaviews
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FRUIT FANTASY ENTERTAINMENT INCLUDES....

ANTHEM

Sunday - Kandi Kane's Welcome Party
Anthem - Yacht cruise with Wayne G

Monday - Pink Foam Party with Hom
swimwear. Dance til dawn.

ORANGE

Tuesday - Bling Bling Bling with
Laquisha Jonz. Orange - PA by
Therese.



Wednesday - 'Beauty and the Beast'
Fancy Dress Ball. Nightingale
entertains - with Phil Oldershaw

Thursday - Fleurettes, Winners of Drag
Idol. Milk and Sugar - Holland's hot
club.

CASH

Friday - Pool Party, Rocky Horror and
fireworks. Cash - with Steve Pitron.

BEYOND

Saturday - Sunset Tea Dance, Diva
Explosion. Beyond.



Alternative
events

► empire which, at its peak, stretched the length of the Andes. Explore the Ollantayambo Inca Fortress, Pisac Market, Inca Observatory and cultivated terraces. Catch the train to Aguas Calientes and follow the Inca Trek into Machu Picchu with its spectacular citadel. Head back to Cusco to visit the Awanakancha Centre, Inca Fortress, 16th Century cathedral and Santo Domingo's convent.

Finally, fly back to bustling Lima for the Huana Pucllana archaeological centre, the Plaza Mayor with the Royal Palace, the City Hall and Cathedral - not to mention the capital's thriving gay scene.

Prices from as little as around £1600 per person (inc. flights and transfers).

PALM SPRINGS

HEAD east out of Los Angeles, over the San Bernadino mountains and into the Mojave desert and - after a couple of hours - a lush green oasis appears: the Coachella Valley, with Palm Springs at its centre, overlooked by the spectacular San Jacinto range.

Popular as a playground for the rich and famous - Bob Hope and Rock Hudson had holiday homes here in the 1950s - Palm Springs has increasingly become a gay and lesbian destination over the last two decades. With a third of the population estimated to be queer, this town sure is gay-friendly.

A great winter destination - with day-time temperatures still hovering around 30 degrees - Palm Springs enjoys a superb climate with less than 5 inches of rain per year. Indeed, this dry heat - plus extensive air conditioning and poolside mist spray coolers - make even the high summer tempera-



tures comfortable and - of course - that great tan comes extra fast. But it needn't all be basking and bathing. Take the aerial tramway to the top of the mountains; shop till you drop for designer labels; walk or cycle the many local trails; explore the desert museum; or enjoy fine dining at any of the many top eateries hereabouts.

There are over forty all-male compounds and resorts in Palm Springs, many in the popular Warm Sands neighbourhood - about 20 minutes walk from Downtown. Well worth a visit to chill-out after San Francisco or LA.

Prices from as little as around £800 per person (inc. flights and transfers).

► **Manaround is one of the UK's leading and biggest gay travel specialists and tour operators. For details on prices, destinations and even tailor-made packages, tel: 020 8902 7177 and mention QX for their latest offers.**

► **Amro Holidays is a gay owned and operated holiday agent that can tailor and price breaks to suit your specific needs. It promotes a range of premium-end gay packages to destinations world wide, including those above. Tel: 0870 990 7404 and mention QX for latest offers.**



Posh, but not too posh: Fruit Fantasy '05 (Sicily) 18th - 25th Sept... A useful stepping-stone 'twixt your standard Gran Can package and a Palm Springs pamper...

ALTERNATIVE HOLIDAYS' annual homo extravaganza returns to Sicily on 18th - 25th September 2005 - this time to the small island of Favignana, 17 kilometres south west off the port of Trapani. And the overwhelming theme is most definitely: "Fruit". Well, it takes one to know one! 450 queers from all around the world, and from all walks of life, will chill out or go on tours by day and be entertained by renowned performers and DJs by night.

Available in 3, 4 or 7-day packages, Alternative has taken over the spanking new "Valtur Favignana Village" complex whose traditional Sicilian-style stone villas contain cool mod-con rooms. "The Village" is a cashless zone, with all expenses paid via a handy "Quick Pay Card" issued on arrival and settled on departure by cash or credit card. The resort boasts two pools, tennis courts and a fully equipped gym and is fringed on two sides by the clear and shimmering, warm turquoise Mediterranean Sea, plus peaceful, private coves, sandy stretches and craggy shores. Take a lazy boat trip; or venture further afield to discover some of Sicily's ancient treasures.

And then night falls. Time to wake up! Enjoy the sounds of DJ's like Steve Pitron, Paul Heron and Wayne G, Divas like Kandi Kane, entire clubs like Crash, Beyond and Orange, fashion shows, foam parties and the outrageous "Beauty and the Beast" Fancy Dress Ball where you must show up "either gloriously beautiful or outrageously ugly"!

Come morning again, and recharge at The Valtur Spa Club - try their massage treatments based on cocoa or Chianti - or take some tours and excursions. Watch you don't lose your head up highly active volcano Stromboli, though: those constant eruptions are frankly exhausting! For those equally active, get sporty with the OutGames - volleyball, snorkelling and tennis, you name it! There's also a daily gay classic movie, yoga and Latino dance lessons. For an extra fee you can learn to scuba dive in one of the best marine archaeological sites in the world. Shipwrecks galore in crystal clear waters!

With so much on offer to pick and chose from - by day or by night, as your own taste decrees - there's also complete solitude and relaxation to be found in many areas around the resort where you can rest, relax and rejuvenate in your own space and time. And - lest you get homesick - you'll still doubtless bump into dozens of equally discerning queer pals from your own Soho local!

Additional pre-tours are available to tag on before Favignana, to kick start your holiday. Spend two days exploring the Amalfi Coast, Pompeii and Caserta; or spend three days stocking up on local food and fashion, touring a selection of Factory Outlet retailers like Prada & Prada Sport, Armani, Harley Davidson, Byblos, TODS, Diego della Valle and such - gorging at fine restaurants whilst you shop!

Basic prices (exc. optional tours and pre-tours) range from £374 to £997 per person, depending on package length and class of accommodation. For full details tel: 020 8902 7177 and mention QX for latest deals.



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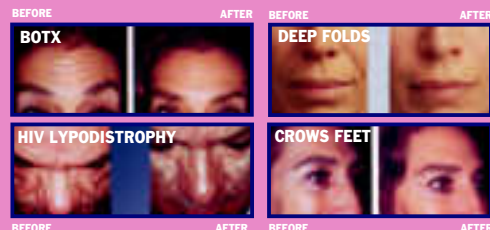
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