

The Way I See It
Or don't... a young backpacker on travelling blind

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Ant hunting in Oz
Readers' reports on the best and weirdest jobs they've had overseas

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Reign in Spain
Eat with the new kings and queens of Spanish cuisine
theguardian.com/travel/spain



the guardian
Saturday 30.01.16

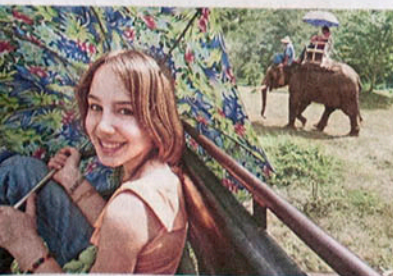
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Life's a holiday

The travellers who never came back

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No class

Would you take the kids out of school to travel?

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How to be a top Airbnb host, and make money at it



8 Brits abroad
Great guesthouses around the world set up by expats

**Walk
Unwind
Discover
Revitalise**



ABTA

Most had never done anything like it before, but these Brits packed their bags and set off to run their own hotels and B&Bs all over the world, with great success

Hospitality's sweet

Covert Cabin Dordogne, France

Off-grid hideaways in the woods don't get much better than these three cabins in the Dordogne. They're the sort that inspire dreams of downsizing and doing important things with your life - like fishing and baking bread. They have just the right mixture of hobby idiosyncrasy and complete practicality. The most difficult decision is whether to swim in the lake or fall asleep on the raft. Diane and Bob Kirkwood bought a ruined house on mad impulse during a trip to France and started working on the property as a holiday project.

"I was a chef working crazy hours in Chelmsford," says Diane. "Bob was self-employed doing joinery. We never meant to live here!"

Bob's skills came in useful when they constructed a small off-grid cabin by a lake, meant to be a quiet retreat

for fishing and swimming. "I wanted a job, though," says Diane. "We decided to let the cabin so I could run it as a business."

Bob built two others and is currently working on two more. "We feel lucky to live in a beautiful part of the world," says Diane, "and although we'll never get rich here, we have space and time to do our own thing - and that is worth much more to us than money."

● Cabins for two from €95 a night, [covertcabin.com](#)

Atmosphere Resorts & Spa Dumaguete, Philippines

In the south of Negros Oriental province, Atmosphere Resorts & Spa is the long-held dream of Brits Matthew Holder, an architect, and his wife, Gabrielle. Originally from Scarborough and Loughborough, the couple met in the Philippines, where Gabrielle taught Matthew to dive. (By a weird coincidence, Matthew's mum had

► **Brits abroad ...**
clockwise from
top left, Casa
Sánchez;
Atmosphere
Resorts & Spa;
Romiti del
Torrente; the
Weldborough

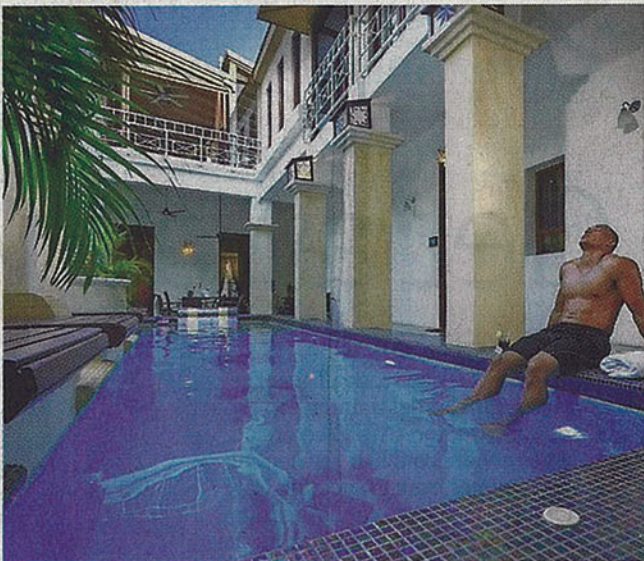
taught Gabrielle at school in the UK, but that's another story.) After working as dive instructors together they plotted to open a boutique dive resort, scraped together a deposit for some land and sold some homes within the resort, to help finance the building. "We lived off cheese and crackers for a year," says Matthew.

The result is a laid-back, luxurious 30-room resort with top-notch diving, spa and restaurant. They now have kids and have become part of the local community, running a daily soup kitchen for 85 underprivileged children.

● Doubles from £170 B&B, [atmosphereresorts.com](#)

The Weldborough Hotel Tasmania, Australia

You could hardly get further from Britain than Tasmania. But that's where Mark Montgomery, who hails from Oxfordshire, and wife, Felicity, from Reading, run The Weldborough



Van der Generator

Generator hostels has a new property, opening in Amsterdam on 16 March in the university's former health sciences and zoological department with space for 566 guests. [generatorhostels.com](#)



Sure as eggs ...

The Bed and Breakfast Academy now has weekend courses on setting up a B&B at the course leader's own establishment in Ludlow, Shropshire, for £250 a weekend (not inc overnight stay).



How you could become the perfect Airbnb host

Want to join the millions who rent their homes on Airbnb? It's the details that count, says Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett

Any seasoned Airbnb guest knows that the quality of your host is paramount. It is far from unusual for a guest to find, on arrival in what may be an unknown city, that the host is out of reach by phone, or the apartment looks nothing like the description.

Airbnb encourages all its members to be good hosts - and good guests - but in the "sharing economy", the onus is on the individual to provide a decent experience. If you're considering hosting, it's worth noting that Airbnb has over 2 million listings in 34,000 cities and 190 countries, so you need to stand out from the crowd. Being a great host - and getting good reviews - is a significant part of that.

To find out what makes a good host, I attended Airbnb Open in Paris last November. The conference welcomed more than 6,000 hosts from all over the world, including from Cuba, one of the site's latest additions. Cubans, with their tradition of *casas particulares*, are somewhat ahead of the curve when it comes to hosting.

Many told me that listing their

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sure they have all the information they need. As soon as they've arrived, I ask if everything's OK. If anything does go wrong - something's out of place, you've run out of toilet paper - they have a chance to let you know before it bothers them."

How your property looks is also, naturally, an important factor. Edma Balestri has three Airbnb properties in Sardinia, and said it was vital to have "a well-organised house". (This automatically counts me out as a prospective host.) "Make sure there's nothing missing that guests might want to use," she advised. "Also, make sure your house conforms with the description - people are usually happy as long as this is the case."

Ian Wilkinson from London's Kensington, meanwhile, emphasised the more personal aspects of hosting: "Being honest and upfront, and being available - or having someone else available if you can't be there - is important. That's in the nature of

