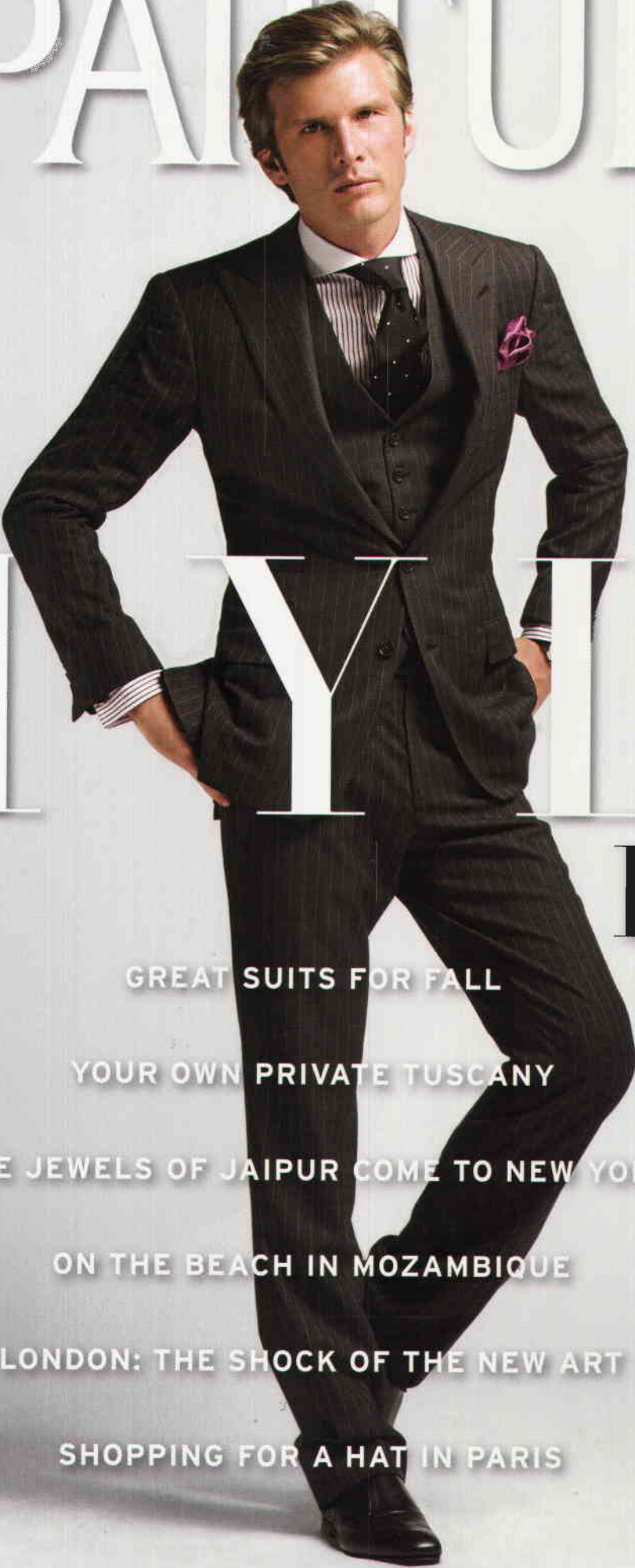


DEPARTURES



SEPTEMBER 2008

THE STYLE ISSUE

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YOUR OWN PRIVATE TUSCANY

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ON THE BEACH IN MOZAMBIQUE

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SHOPPING FOR A HAT IN PARIS

All ten of Vamizi's thatch-roof bungalows front the beach.

The Getaway

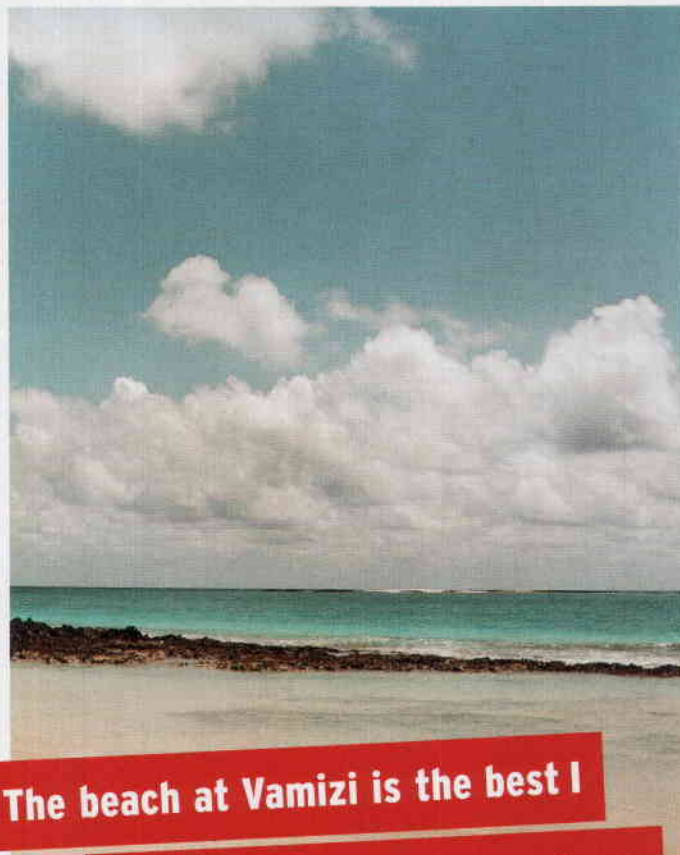
Vamizi, Mozambique

Northern Mozambique's Quirimbas National Park belongs to one of the richest marine environments on earth. Just over a decade ago, however, during the country's 16-year civil strife, it was also part of a war zone. But while there is horror in its history, to be sure, today this 500-mile stretch of about 30 virtually untouched fossilized coral islands presents travelers with a rare opportunity. As Zimbabwean fishing guide Stuart King tells me, "Quirimbas is the next Seychelles. In the next ten years, every single one of these islands will have a resort on it."

Flying above Quirimbas en route to the remote private island resort of Vamizi, I see smudges of creamy sand, a coast threaded with silver, and reefs circled in bright cobalt. There is very little

development: clusters of mud huts and a handful of new resorts, which for the last three years have been popping up with great frequency. Logistically, getting here is a headache—unreliable charters, missed connections, multihop journeys via the provincial capital, Pemba. Yet Quirimbas is positioned to become the next East African hot spot—the new Zanzibar or Lamu. And of the properties I visited there this spring, I'd wager Vamizi is the one to beat.

The island's remoteness means that nobody has paid it much attention—until now, that is. After its initial opening in 2005, the resort was beset with various staffing and food-supply difficulties. But earlier this year the East African safari outfitter Nomad Tanzania took over the island's management and has been fast to make its presence felt. Now new employees and better logistic support have smoothed out many of the inevitable hitches that come with developing African frontiers, and as recently as this past spring, Vamizi saw travelers who otherwise might have opted for a holiday in the Maldives; my fellow guests included hedge fund managers from the UK and America.



The beach at Vamizi is the best I have seen—ever and anywhere.

Vamizi's beach is certainly the best I've seen—ever and anywhere. The resort flanks two and a half miles of blinding white sand packed with pretty shells, and the ocean bristles with flying fish. Just off the beach are eight vast one-bedroom wood-and-thatch-roof bungalows (plus two more with two bedrooms, which are ideal for families). Privacy is key, with each structure

positioned 75 yards from its neighbors; come high tide, beach access to the honeymoon villa actually disappears (don't fret; there's also a forest path). Jungle surrounds each residence, ensuring sightings of wildlife: crabs at your feet, bats swirling around your muslin-wrapped four-poster, and Samango monkeys whooping in the trees. There is no air-conditioning, but the rooms are cooled by sea breezes that move through the villas' open sides and verandas, furnished with soft-as-cloud cushions and Swahili daybeds.

While most visitors will come to Vamizi after a Tanzanian safari, there are others who will be here solely to dive. The resort offers experienced staff, and conditions are excellent, largely because of the upswelling of cold water, which has protected the reefs from coral bleaching. Other activities include fishing, catamaran

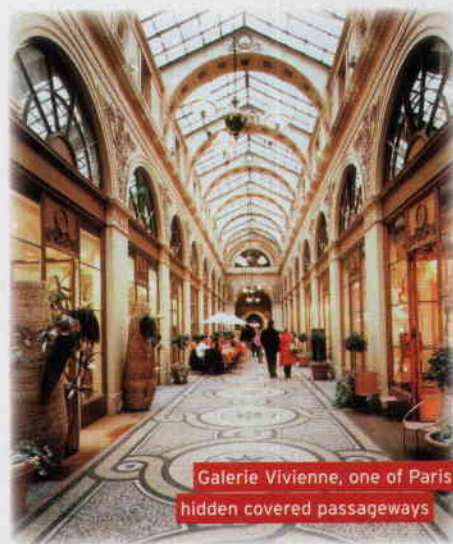
sailing, and picnics on even farther-flung deserted strands. But of course you don't have to travel too far for seclusion: Vamizi's 18-mile circumference means there are acres of virgin crushed-coral beach just outside your bungalow door. *Vamizi Island can be booked directly at vamizi.com or through Journeys by Design (212-568-7639; journeysbydesign.com). Rates, which include meals, start at \$740 a person per night.* —SOPHY ROBERTS

In Paris

The Best-Kept Secret

Anyone who seriously wants to see—and actually *understand*—Paris needs to know **Anne Muraro**. Over the years this spunky 37-year-old Frenchwoman has led clients on private shopping trips to the closed-curtain areas of nearly every atelier in town and advised them on the clandestine worlds of the high-end art and antiques markets. (She specializes in vintage design; antiques from the Renaissance through the 1800s; 19th-century drawings, engravings, and paintings; as well as contemporary art.) She has revealed hidden details during in-depth excursions to Versailles and trekked visitors through Paris's intriguing and little-known early-19th-century covered passageways. The tour guide of choice for a cadre of Middle East royals (not to mention Ultimate Fighting Champion Chuck Liddell), Muraro masterfully and thoroughly ushers her charges through the Louvre, from the original fortress tower built in 1190 by Philip II to the three-year-old viewing quarters of the *Mona Lisa*—and everything in between—and she does it all in just under two hours. No request is too odd or too small for Muraro, who is on a first-name basis with the ace concierges at the George V, The Ritz, and the Palace hotels. *All tours are private and custom-designed, starting at \$140 an hour. To book, call Muraro at 33-6/60-64-65-02 or e-mail her at amuraro@club-internet.fr.*

—PAULA FROELICH



Galerie Vivienne, one of Paris's hidden covered passageways