

travel

INSIDE



Saturday April 28 2007 • "How far we travel matters less than those we meet along the way" Mark Twain



HOW TO BE A GOOD TOURIST

Get in with the locals, says Oliver James **12-13** Trekking: Ethiopia's new hope **4-5**
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IMAGE OF THE WEEK

ROSA MUÑOZ



Dream world: the Spanish photographer Rosa Muñoz places objects in unfamiliar settings and uses lighting to create atmospheric effects. This image was taken in Irati – called “the enchanted forest” – in Navarra, near San Sebastian in Spain’s Basque Country. It will be included in the International Fair for Contemporary Photography and Video Art in San Sebastian from May 3-6 (www.coff.es/en/dfoto07)

HOT HOTELS SPANISH STYLE



THE TOWN HOUSE, MARBELLA

This intimate little pensión is close to Plaza de los Naranjos (orange square) and near the boardwalk, bars and restaurants. There are nine rooms with crisp whitewashed walls and minimalist decor. A roof terrace with comfy oversized sofas looks over the Old Town.

Bonus: Many of the decorations are for sale.

Drawback: No pool, but you can pay to use the one at the nearest five-star hotel, a taxi ride away.

Book it: 00 34 952 901791, www.townhouse.nu. Doubles from £75.



MARBELLA CLUB, MARBELLA

The club was once the grand private residence of Prince Alfonso von Hohenlohe and sits in the middle of the “Golden Mile”, between Marbella and Puerto Banus. There are 121 rooms, including a collection of Andalusian-style villas with their own private gardens and pools.

Bonus: A heated seawater pool offers an alternative to the waves.

Drawback: Romantic plans could be thwarted if your partner discovers the 18-hole golf course.

Book it: 00 34 952 822211, www.marbellaclub.com. Doubles from £222.

BY JO MORRIS

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Now you're really flying

the ancient Ethiopian Highlands, where local villagers lead the way

ROB HOWARD/CORBIS



High road: religious pilgrims take a rest from their journey on a mountain top outside Lalibela

relaxing in comfort for a well-deserved rest after several days in the mountains is half the point. For this, we flew to Addis Ababa and then drove to Bishangari Lodge, one of the first luxury lodges in Ethiopia, which is set in a towering forest 250km south of Addis Ababa on the shores of Lake Langano.

As we walked to our secluded thatched cabin, called a *godjo*, we marvelled at black and white colobus monkeys and silvery cheeked hornbills in the forest that watched us watching them. Each *godjo* has its own veranda, hammock, comfortable bed and fully equipped bathroom. Although not top-end luxury, Bishangari compares well to South or East African safari

lodes. I'll never forget the sight of the hurricane lamps illuminating the dining area as we walked through the forest towards it after a hearty gin and tonic in the bar built in and around a giant fig tree.

WE MARVELLED AT THE COLOBUS MONKEYS

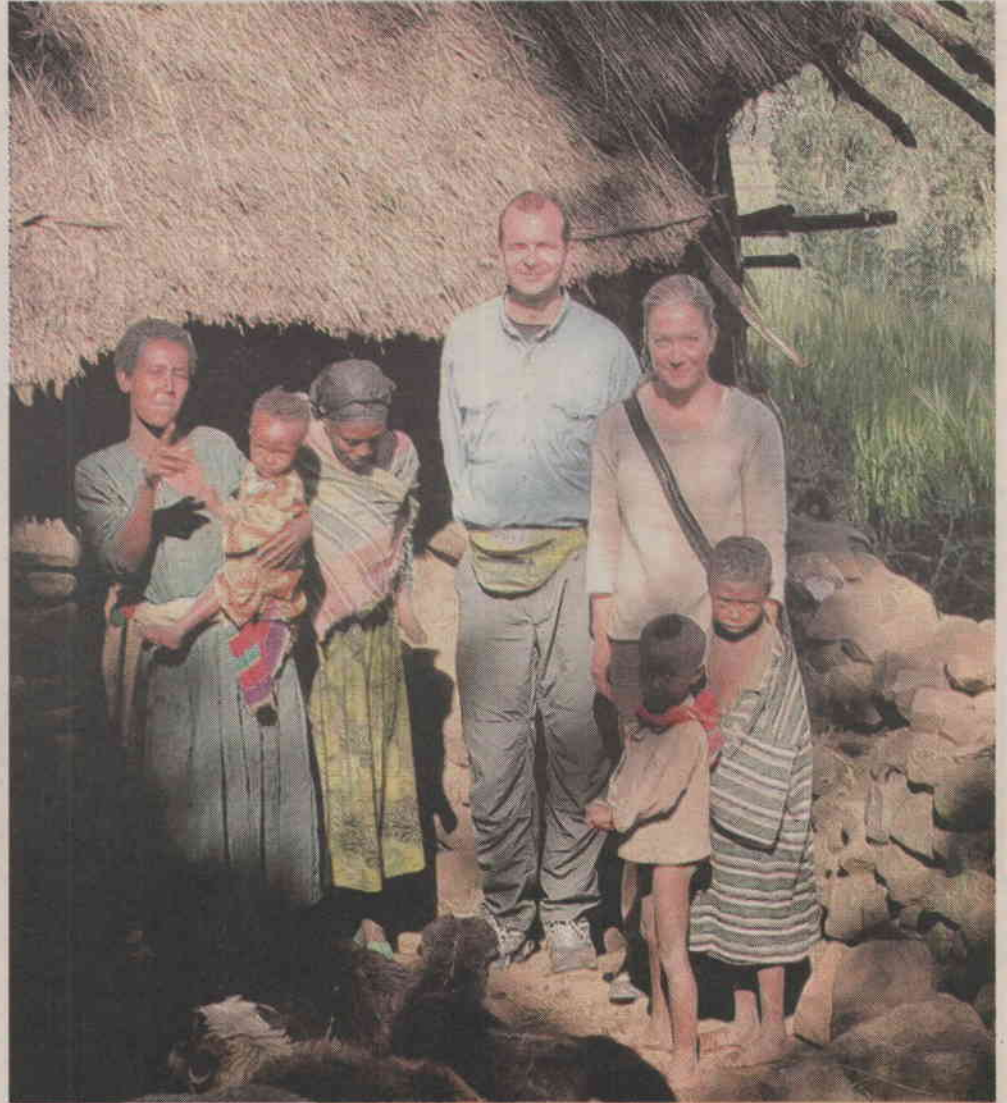
A must for visitors to Bishangari is a walk through the forest with a local bird guide, Hirpo. More than 300 species have been observed here, and Hirpo knows them all. Alternatively you can swim in the lake, watch hippos or go horse riding.

The lodge employs 39 staff, 37 of whom are from nearby

villages. The head waiter, Dekebo, supports four brothers and three sisters from his wages. The chef is from Addis Ababa, and the food at Bishangari matches the best on offer in the capital.

The lodge is planning a micro-finance scheme for local farmers and entrepreneurs to ensure that food can be bought locally rather than at present from Addis — something that guests will increasingly expect.

In the future there is no doubt that Ethiopia could become one of the world's great trekking destinations and TESFA intends to use responsible trekking tourism to create maximum benefit for Ethiopia's charming rural people.



Local welcome: Justin Francis and Heidi Smith meet local villagers during their trek

Need to know

Justin Francis travelled with Journeys by Design (01273 623790, www.journeysbydesign.com), which tailormakes holidays to Ethiopia, East and Southern Africa. A two-week trip, including the Bale Mountains National Park, Bishangari Lodge and a community trek, costs from

£2,200pp. This includes full board and private guiding, but not international flights, which can be arranged. **Further information:** TESFA (www.community-tourism-ethiopia.com); Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and Tourism: www.tourismethiopia.org.



ROMANIA

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