COVER STORY

The Cool Hunters

The little-known travel mavens who help the industry to anoint new destinations



Simon Cooper Chief operating officer, Ritz-Carlton Looks for signs of growing wealth among

locals; 90% of the food and beverage sales at his city hotels come from local customers.

Ross Klein

President, Starwood Luxury **Brands Group**

Scours 1950s- and '60s-era travel magazines for ideas of forgotten travel destinations that might have a retro-chic appeal.



John Stoll Director of land progams, Crystal Cruises Arrives at each potential new destination by

boat, to see it as a cruise passenger would.

Adrian Zecha President and founder, Amanresorts

Picks places he likes to vacation himself, such as Montenegro. where he's been more than a dozen times in the last decade.



Marc Hediger Senior vice president of development, Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts

Keeps on eye on where Chinese travelers-millions of whom now have passports-are going.

Gerard Joachim

sites are approved.

Beach consultant, Club Med The 73-year-old—a 50-year veteran of Club Med-swims and snorkels at the beaches before



Scott Woroch Executive vice president, development worldwide, Four Seasons

Keeps three working lists of future destinations, depending on the chain's interest level.



Below, 10 places the travel industry hopes will become hits in the coming years



What to do: Snorkel around the island of Roatan's protected reef, hike through tropical jungles or spot local "Jesus lizards" that appear to walk on water.

Watch for: Cruise crowds. Carnival is building a terminal here to handle as many as 7,000 passengers a day.



Providence, R.I. A

The Pitch: A cultural center with more than \$500 million in revitalization projects under way

What to do: Explore the growing arts scene by gallery hopping; the city is also known for its varied restaurant scene.

Watch for: Conventioneer crowds. A push for convention travelers is underway.

Newfoundland. Canada

The Pitch: A Canadian island drawing second-home owners

What to do: Ski and snowboard in the winter, or try salmon fishing, kayaking and whale watching in summer and early fall. Watch for: Global warming. Summers there are getting warmer and longer.

Montenegro The Pitch: A newly independent country where Sophia Loren used to

What to do: Lounge on the Adriatic's beaches and tour old towns like Ulcini and Kotor.

Watch for: Rising prices. Unlike other Balkan countries, Montenegro has adopted

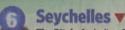


Rwanda

The Pitch: A view of Africa few tourists have discovered

What to do: Trek for mountain gorillas and golden monkeys, and visit genocide memorials in areas like Kigali.

Watch for: Uncomfortable rides. Rough roads can make traveling by car treacherous—especially during the rainy season.



The Pitch: An Indian Ocean alternative to the Maldives

What to do: Study the flora-Vallée de Mai island boasts the rare coco de mer palm. with seeds that weigh up to 30 pounds. Watch for: Long flights, with a layover necessary in London or Dubai.



Saadiyat Island, **Abu Dhabi**

The Pitch: The flash of Dubai, with an eye toward culture

What to do: A dozen new luxury hotels are coming to the area and Guggenheim and Louvre outposts are opening by 2012. Watch for: With so much hype, the island

may lose its coolness soon after opening.



What to do: Ski at Chimbulak Ski resort: the city is also hosting the Asian Winter Games

Watch for: Border areas. The State Department says travel generally is safe, but that groups like al Qaeda "remain active" in neighboring countries like Uzbekistan.

Sanya, Hainan Island, China

The Pitch: The "Hawaii of China." popular with China's leisure class

What to do: Explore a diverse landscape of rain forests, mountains and beaches. Watch for: Complex itineraries. Major U.S. carriers don't go there yet, so finding direct flights takes some work.



Boracay, Philippines

The Pitch: A regional vacation spot reinvented for luxury-seekers.

What to do: Go windsurfing or hunt for native puka shells on white-sand beaches. Watch for: Travel fatigue after a 15-hour flight from Los Angeles, a stopover in Manila and a boat ride from Kalibo Airport.