

The Anglaise.

A British blog on weddings, fashion, travel, beauty and lifestyle.

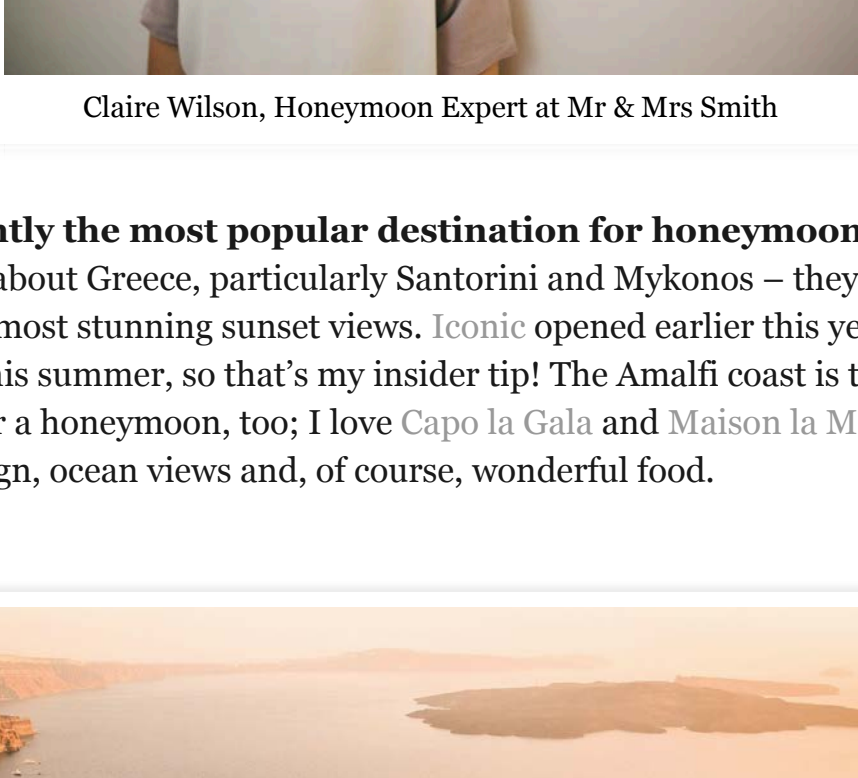
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SATURDAY, 14 JUNE 2014

Honeymoon: Mr & Mrs Smith

We are just starting to think about honeymoon options and really don't know where to begin...

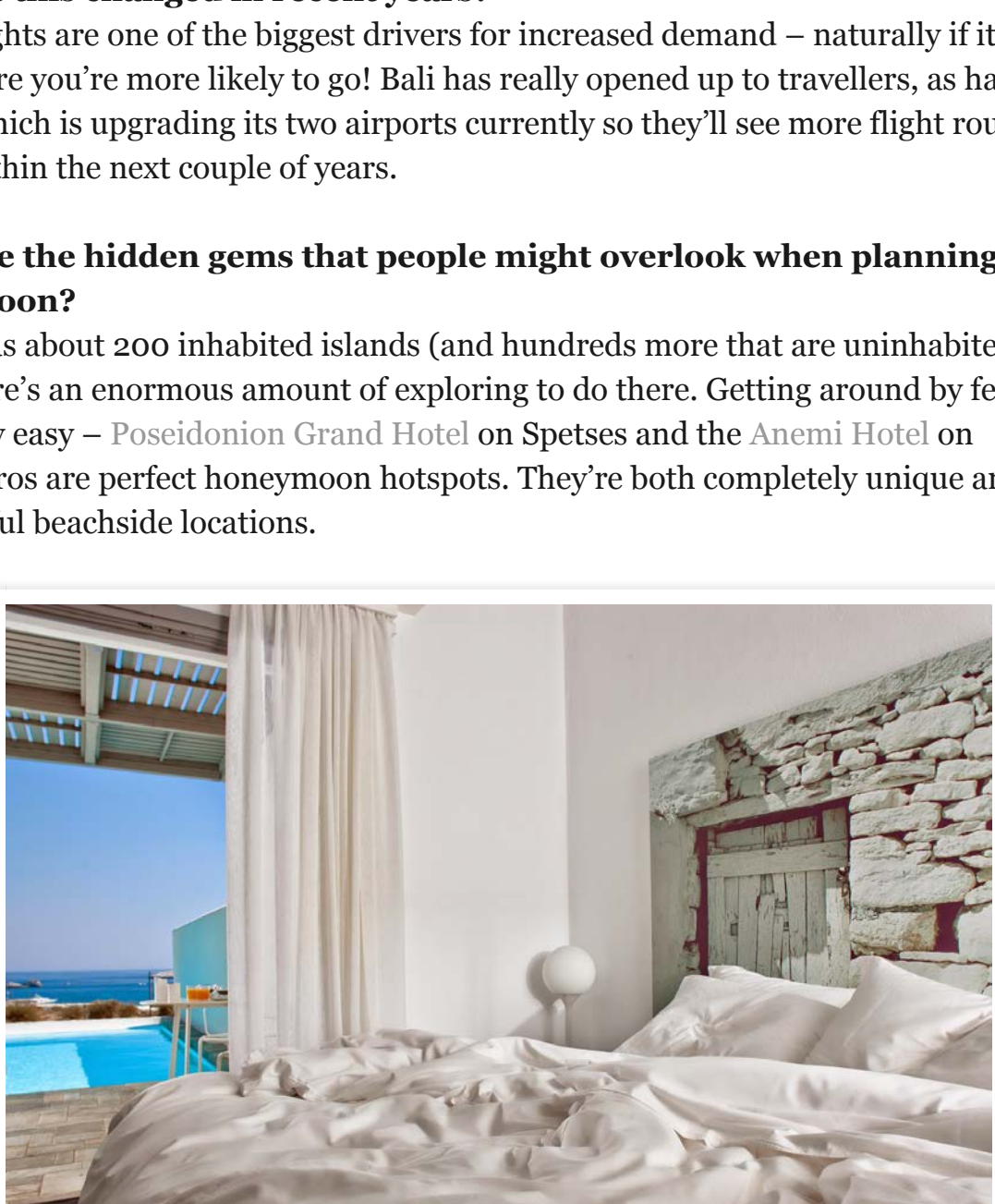
Boutique hotel experts Mr & Mrs Smith know the importance of a romantic retreat so I asked their honeymoon expert Claire Wilson for the latest honeymoon trends and the inside scoop on a stylish stay...



Claire Wilson, Honeymoon Expert at Mr & Mrs Smith

What is currently the most popular destination for honeymoons?

This year it's all about Greece, particularly Santorini and Mykonos – they're beautiful islands with the most stunning sunset views. Iconic opened earlier this year and still has availability for this summer, so that's my insider tip! The Amalfi coast is the ultimate Italian escape for a honeymoon, too; I love Capo la Gala and Maison la Minervetta for their quirky design, ocean views and, of course, wonderful food.



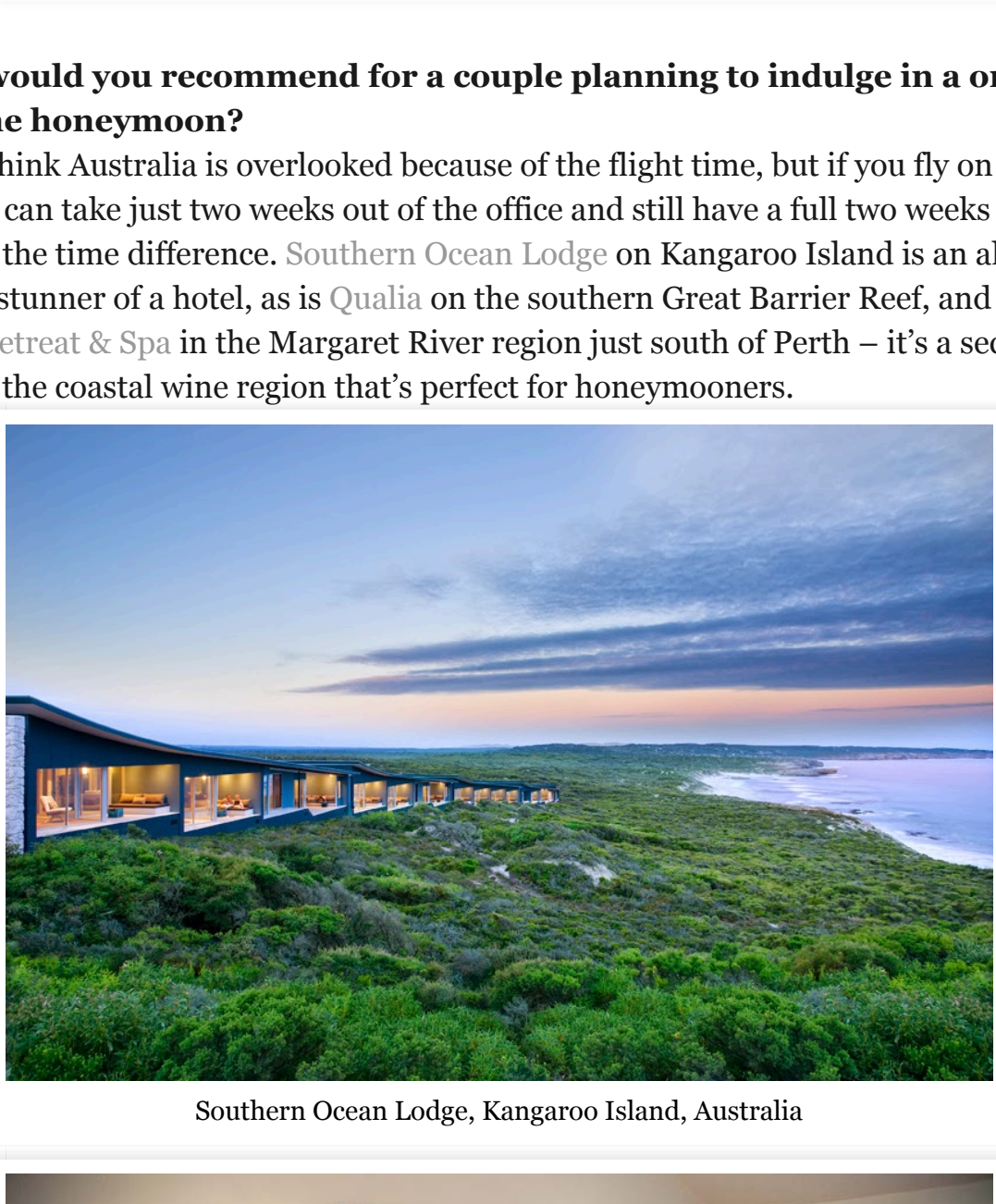
Iconic, Santorini, Greece

How has this changed in recent years?

Direct flights are one of the biggest drivers for increased demand – naturally if it's easier to get there you're more likely to go! Bali has really opened up to travellers, as has Sri Lanka, which is upgrading its two airports currently so they'll see more flight routes added within the next couple of years.

What are the hidden gems that people might overlook when planning a honeymoon?

Greece has about 200 inhabited islands (and hundreds more that are uninhabited) so I think there's an enormous amount of exploring to do there. Getting around by ferry is incredibly easy – Poseidonion Grand Hotel on Spetses and the Anemi Hotel on Folegandros are perfect honeymoon hotspots. They're both completely unique and chic, in beautiful beachside locations.



Anemi Hotel, Folegandros

Where would you recommend for a couple looking for relaxation only? And what is the general price range for this kind of honeymoon?

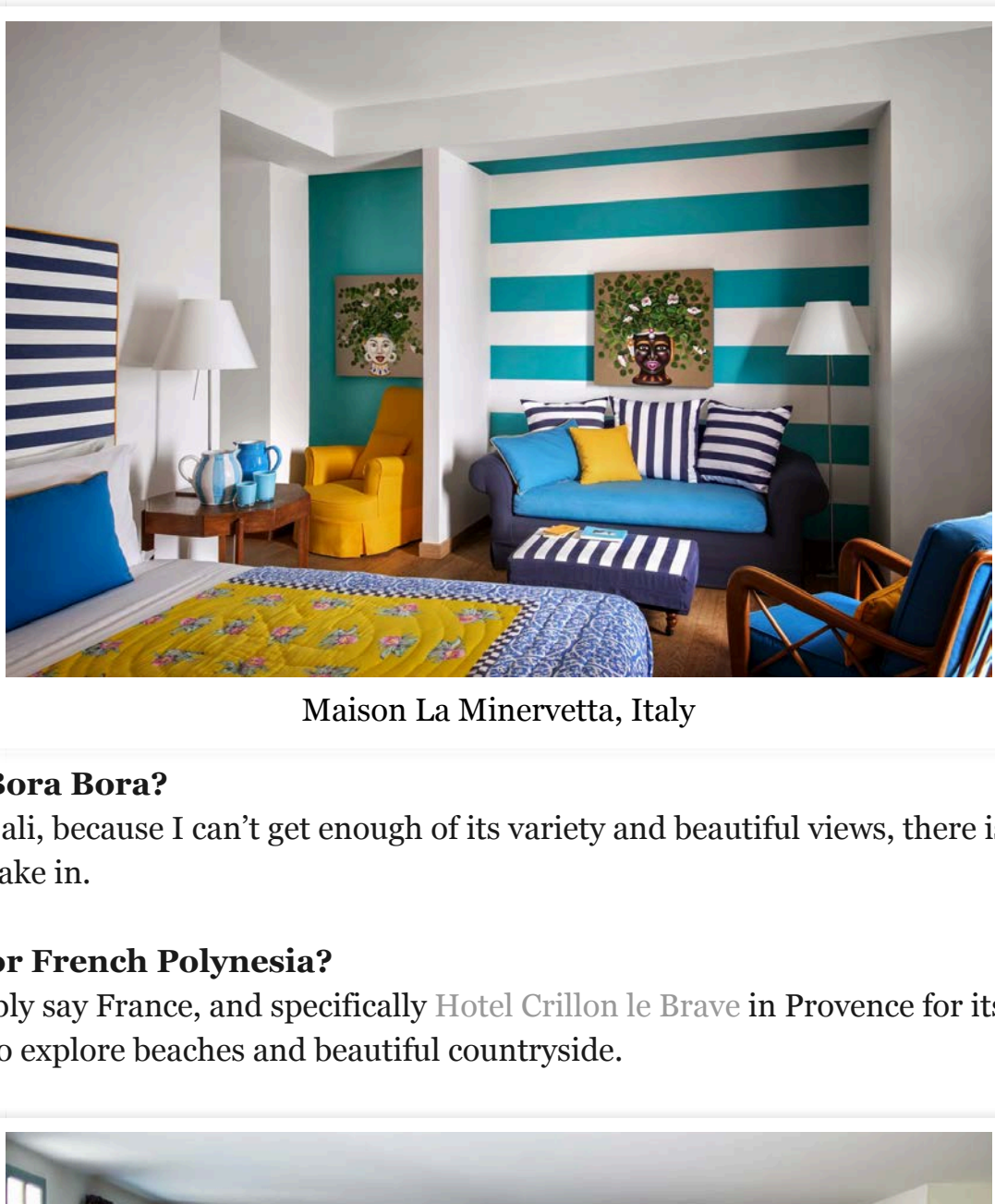
If you want an indulgent beach holiday after an inevitably hectic wedding, Fusion Maya in Vietnam would be my top choice: it has all-inclusive spa treatments and a beautiful beachfront location. In terms of price, it's hard to say because it completely depends on where you go and how long for. You could be looking at anything from £800 for a week in a hidden boutique retreat like Cortijo del Marqués in the Andalusian olive groves, right up to £9,000 for a blowout, multi-stop trip to New York and St Lucia.



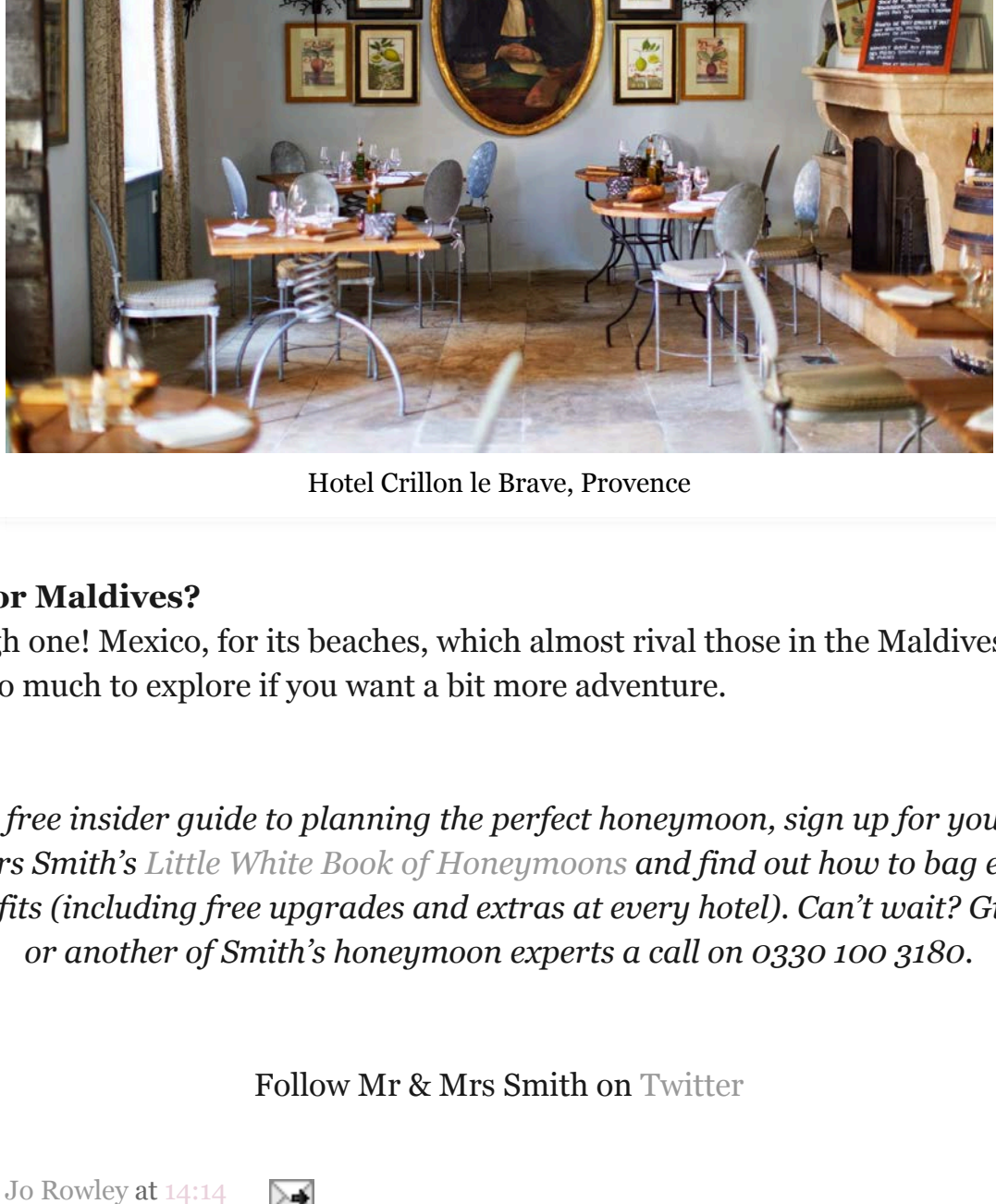
Cortijos del Marqués, Spain

Where would you recommend for a couple planning to indulge in a once-in-a-lifetime honeymoon?

I always think Australia is overlooked because of the flight time, but if you fly on a Friday night you can take just two weeks out of the office and still have a full two weeks exploring thanks to the time difference. Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island is an all-inclusive stunner of a hotel, as is Qualia on the southern Great Barrier Reef, and I love the Empire Retreat & Spa in the Margaret River region just south of Perth – it's a secret retreat in the coastal wine region that's perfect for honeymooners.



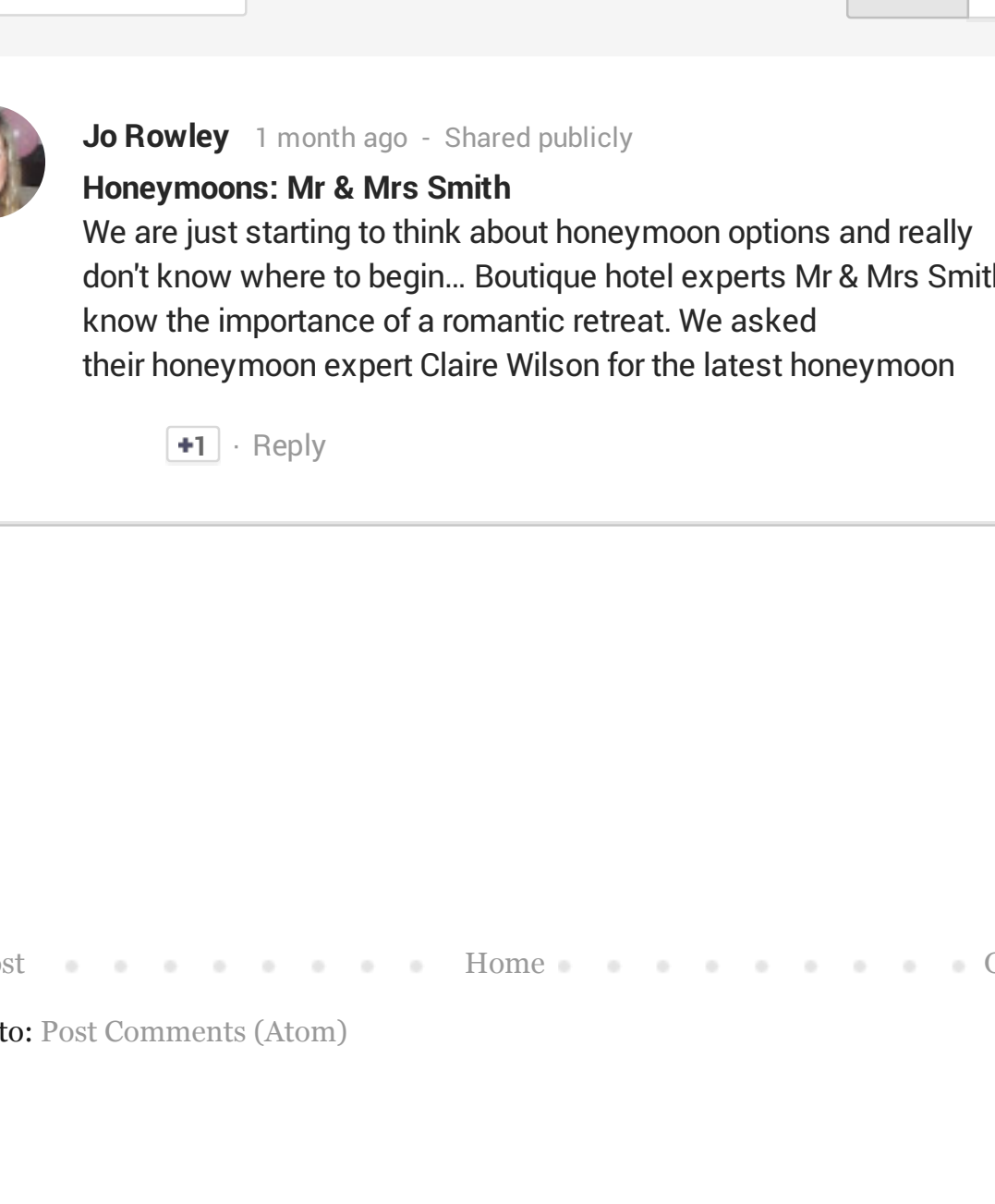
Southern Ocean Lodge, Kangaroo Island, Australia



Empire Retreat & Spa, Margaret River

Where would you recommend for an adventurous couple planning a longer honeymoon (say two to three weeks) on a tighter budget?

Sri Lanka is a great option and it's good value – it has the ideal mix of culture and beach. I'd recommend starting in Colombo, heading to Kandy and the hill country to explore the tea trails, and then, if you want to have a treat and can splash out at the end of your trip, the Maldives is hard to beat, somewhere like Cocoa Island by COMO.



Cocoa Island by COMO, Maldives

Do people tend to go for one week or longer? What other trends are you noticing?

Most honeymooners head off for more than a week – if it's a trip within Europe then it's generally 10 days. For those heading long-haul, it's generally a fortnight to make the most of it. I always think two weeks feels like you've been away for far longer than just double the one!

In terms of trends, combination stays are becoming more popular, for example twinning Miami week with Mexico's Riviera Maya, or Singapore with Bali, or Sri Lanka with the Maldives.

Your top tip for planning a honeymoon?

It sounds obvious, but book ahead... although bear in mind that flights come out 11 months before travel, so don't try to book any earlier than that! Generally six months ahead of travelling is sensible. Remember to check direct flights and connections, too, if you want to go on a multi-stop trip – planning a logical route will save you time as well as money.

Your personal opinion...

Italy or Indonesia?

I'd personally pick Italy, because the options are endless: Tuscan hills, lakeside luxury, coastal retreats...

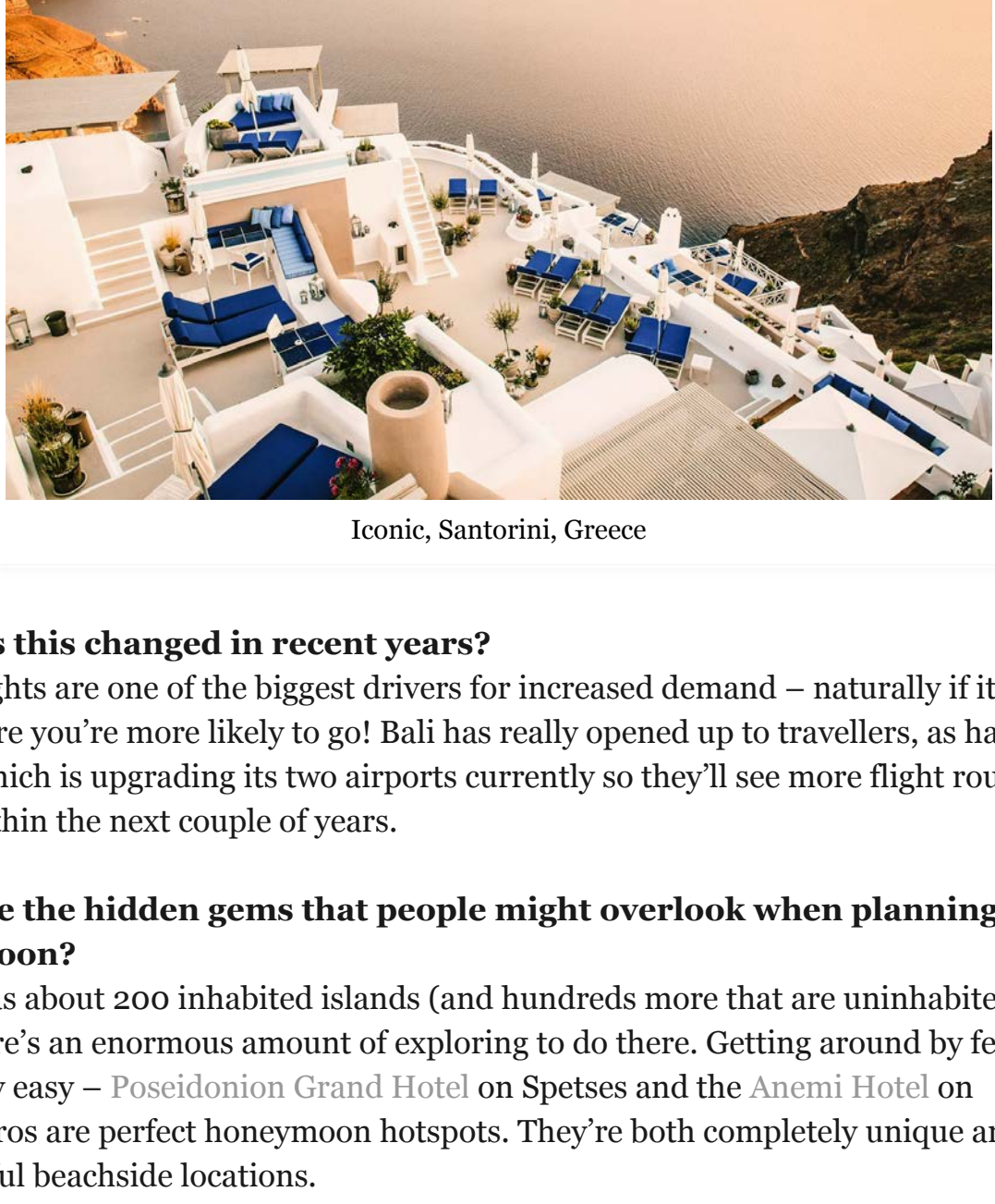
Maison La Minervetta, Italy

Bali or Bora Bora?

For me, Bali, because I can't get enough of its variety and beautiful views, there is just so much to take in.

France or French Polynesia?

I'd probably say France, and specifically Hotel Crillon le Brave in Provence for its perfect location to explore beaches and beautiful countryside.



Hotel Crillon le Brave, Provence

Mexico or Maldives?

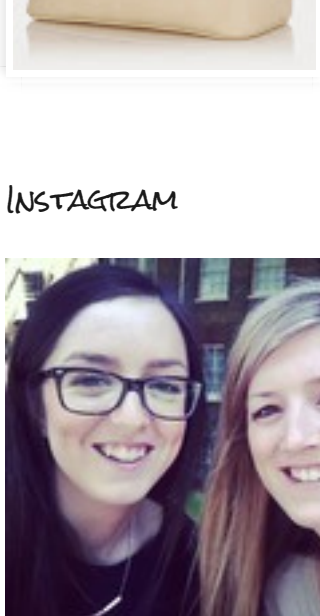
Ooh, tough one! Mexico, for its beaches, which almost rival those in the Maldives... but it also has so much to explore if you want a bit more adventure.

For your free insider guide to planning the perfect honeymoon, sign up for your copy of Mr & Mrs Smith's Little White Book of Honeymoons and find out how to bag exclusive VIP benefits (including free upgrades and extras at every hotel). Can't wait? Give Claire or another of Smith's honeymoon experts a call on 0330 100 3180.

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