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**THE KIDS
ARE NOT
ALRIGHT**

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IS THE GLOBAL ECONOMY'S
TICKING TIME BOMB. HOW TO DEFUSE IT p58
PLUS: THE FALLACY OF FACEBOOK DEMOCRACY p8

Etc. Travel

Fantasy Island Smackdown

The battle for the world's most outrageously luxe vacation resort

The resort concept dates to the Roman Empire, when private baths were a customary retreat for the well-off seeking some R&R. Today, international resort destinations are all about fabulously lavish extras. According to January's Orbitz Insider Index, which forecasts travel trends, consumers are interested in hotels with amenities that go well beyond the basics. In resort-speak, this means it's no longer enough to have on-call butlers or a private infinity pool in your overwater bungalow. Such comforts are already ubiquitous among island getaways. To truly have an edge, a resort must up the luxury ante: Think flower petals sprinkled throughout your villa at turndown or an extensive menu—of pillows.

A TripAdvisor survey from last March found that 69 percent of travelers claim the beach is their preferred destination. To appeal to the wealthier strata of this demographic in an uncertain economy, the resort business is currently engaged in a veritable arms race over über-amenities. Who can fly in the freshest Kobe beef, carve their bathtubs out of granite slabs, and offer the most au courant yoga classes?

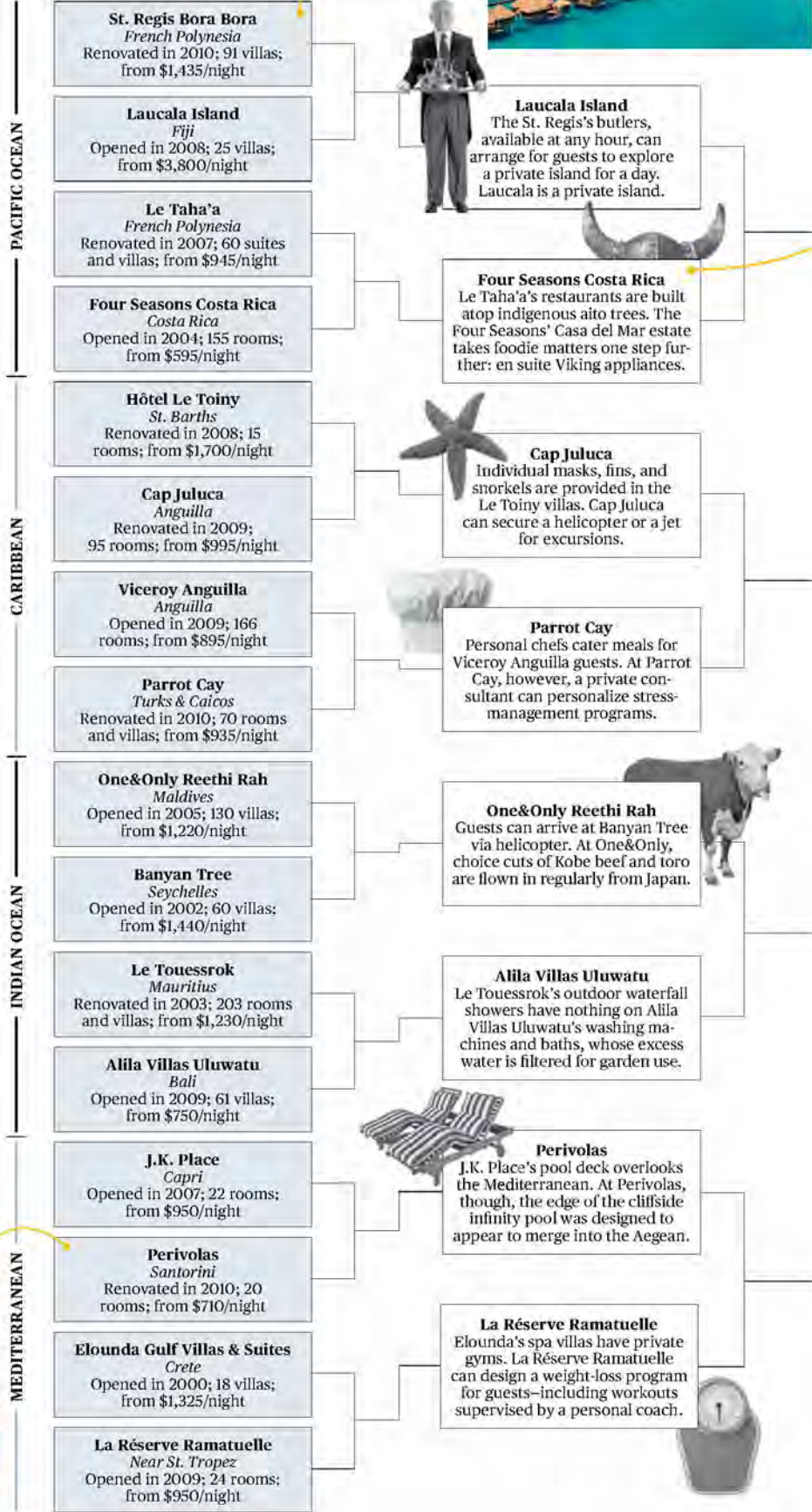
Herewith, a battle of the world's most spectacularly outrageous, exotically perk-laden island escapes, ranging from old-school favorites to ambitious newcomers. Contestants have been divided by region—the Pacific and Indian Oceans and the Caribbean and Mediterranean Seas—and compete on the basis of their most over-the-top offerings. **E**

—Alexis Brunswick



Perivolos's rooms are decorated with island antiques

The St. Regis sprinkles flower petals in villas at turndown



Four Seasons guests can volunteer in the local community



One&Only has a private, island-long jogging path



Yoga mats are free on request at Parrot Cay



Laucala Island
 The Four Seasons' golf course was designed by Arnold Palmer; Laucala's by David McLay Kidd. Tiebreaker: At Laucala, the entire island is accessible by golf cart.

Parrot Cay
 Free cold towels, Fiji water, and sorbet at Cap Juluca's beach don't beat Parrot Cay's complimentary yoga and Pilates classes and fully loaded Kindles.



Laucala Island
 Parrot Cay offers a raw food menu. Laucala raises livestock on its organic farm—and provides guests with juices squeezed from fruit grown on the island.

One&Only Reethi Rah
 At Alila Villas Uluwatu, flat roofs are insulated with local volcanic rock. At One&Only, flat pillows can be replaced by choices from a pillow menu.



One&Only Reethi Rah
 La Réserve Ramatuelle can arrange a yacht rental for tooling around nearby St. Tropez, but the One&Only has its own 55-footer for cruising the Indian Ocean.

La Réserve Ramatuelle
 Perivolos's largest suite has an in-room hydrotherapy massage pool. La Réserve Ramatuelle's indoor pool has a counter-current swimming lane.

La Réserve Ramatuelle's spa uses La Mer products



BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES (10)



Laucala Island
 More than half of One&Only's Reethi Rah island is man-made (15,000 of its coconut trees were imported). But Laucala, which was once a bona fide coconut plantation, is tricked out au naturel: The resort's bathtubs are carved out of granite, and lampshades are made of butterfly cocoons. The island's swimming lagoon is one luxurious man-made exception.

Red Bull billionaire Dietrich Mateschitz owns Laucala



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