

EXTRA VALUE! 46 DEALS JUST FOR YOU

# TRAVEL + LEISURE

SPECIAL

JUNE 2009

## HOTELS ISSUE

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*See page 24 for the T+L sweepstakes*

OUR 2009

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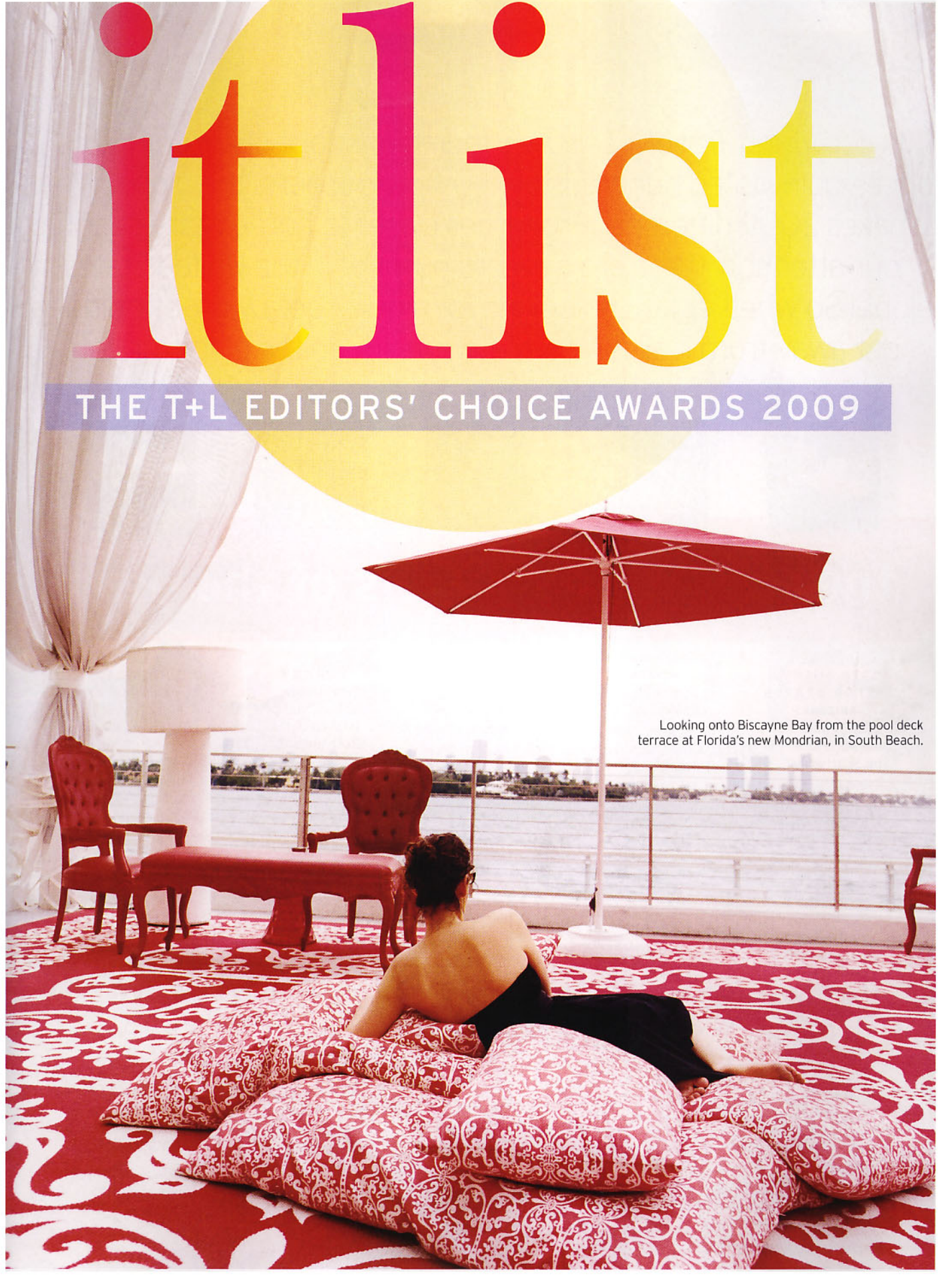
THE 45 BEST NEW HOTELS OF THE YEAR

THE HOTEL HANDBOOK  
GET A BETTER ROOM RATE  
AVOID HIDDEN FEES  
TIPPING ADVICE  
AND MORE

# it list

THE T+L EDITORS' CHOICE AWARDS 2009

Looking onto Biscayne Bay from the pool deck terrace at Florida's new Mondrian, in South Beach.



**RESORT** OKAVANGO DELTA, BOTSWANA

## Xudum Okavango Delta Lodge

Amid the colonial-throwback camps in Botswana's Okavango Delta, there's an iconoclastic new kid in town from &Beyond, the safari company formerly known as CC Africa. The 62,000-acre reserve, one of the largest in any permanent African delta, is a part-land, part-water experience. Guests from the nine pinewood suites punt for hours along water channels in *mekoro* dugouts, or make incursions into the acacia- and palm-studded plains, hot on the trail of hippos, Cape buffalo, and a profusion of wild cats (hence the lion research institute that's the reserve's only other tenant). *Okavango Delta*; 888/882-3742; *andbeyond.com*; doubles from \$1,375 per person.

**RESORT** PHUKET, THAILAND

## Anantara Phuket Resort & Spa

For its first Phuket property, Anantara eschewed bare-bones minimalism in

favor of a fresh take on classic Thai aesthetics. Hidden within a former coconut plantation are 83 bougainvillea-covered villas, whose wooden walls and sloping roofs make guests feel as if they're meandering through a local village. But there's nothing rustic here: each villa, clad in teak and raw silk, comes with a swimming pool, an outdoor daybed, and a terrazzo bathtub. The expansive spa lured us from our rooms for the kind of massage that makes jet-lagged muscles thankful to be in Thailand. *888 Moo 3, Tambon Mai Khao*; 66-76/336-100; *anantara.com*; villas from \$846.

**RESORT** DUBAI

## Atlantis, The Palm

In a place that already defines excess, Atlantis manages to push the envelope further. Situated on the arch of the Palm Jumeirah artificial island, the Dubai incarnation of the Bahamas resort is ersatz-oceanic in style—with a 4-million-gallon Aquaventure theme park, a mile of powdery man-made beachfront, and a 65,000-creature marine habitat. And then there are the rooms—1,539 in all—with waterfront balconies that look onto the Persian Gulf or the construction-project-in-action that is Dubai. *971-4/426-1000*; *atlantisthepalm.com*; doubles from \$500.

**RESORT** MIAMI BEACH

## Canyon Ranch Miami Beach

Miami's hotel spas trembled at the arrival of Canyon Ranch earlier this year. Here, yogis replace *Baywatch*-style joggers, and a 70,000-square-foot maze of David Rockwell-designed spaces serves as the backdrop to a host of treatments ranging from mud baths to thalassotherapy. An over-the-top, gimmick: "experiential" showers (picture a simulated rainstorm, with the sound and lighting effects to match). Guest rooms offer ocean views and residence-style touches such as granite-clad kitchens—these are condo-hotel rooms, after all—and refrigerators that can be stocked with healthful organic staples upon request. *6801 Collins Ave.*; 800/742-9000; *canyonranch.com*; doubles from \$350.

**RESORT** SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

## Encantado

It was with a sigh of relief that we entered the airy casita at Auberge Resorts' newest spa property just north of busy Santa Fe. It wasn't only the perfect late-afternoon light that did us in (who doesn't love sun streaming onto a plush down bed while a piñon-scented fire crackles in an Indian kiva?), but the fact that a stay here delivered what we didn't even realize we'd hoped for: a luxurious Southwestern desert experience minus even a hint of dream-catcher kitsch. *198 State Rd.* 592; 877/262-4666; *encantadoresort.com*; doubles from \$575.

**RESORT** SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA

## InterContinental Montelucia Resort & Spa

With its graceful plazas and arcaded walkways, this 35-acre retreat so resembles an Andalusian *pueblo blanco* that you'll forget you're in Arizona. To set apart its North American flagship in resort-rich Scottsdale, InterContinental created a



A Dale Chihuly sculpture presides over the lobby at Atlantis, The Palm, in Dubai, right. Opposite, clockwise from top left: Taking in the Atlantic views from a terrace at Canyon Ranch Miami Beach; Auberge Resorts' new Encantado, north of Santa Fe; a private picnic at Six Senses Hideaway Zighy Bay, in Oman; daybeds for two at Anantara Phuket Resort & Spa.

