

The good, the bad and the Ryanair cabin crew

A safari lodge in Kent, the opening of the world's sexiest railway station, a pod hotel and a paradise island for backpackers ... our writers recall the highs and lows of 2007

- Sally Shalam, Simon Mills, Dixie Wills, Nick Maes, Tanya Gold, Leo Hickman, Benji Lanyado, Gemma Bowes, Isabel Choat, Ian Belcher, Rory Maclean, Will Hodgkinson, Mark O'Flaherty
- [The Guardian](#),
- Saturday December 29 2007
- Article history



Gabon is go ... the 'new' destination for 2007

Best dinner party boast

To ensure fellow diners spluttered their canapes across the table in jealousy and disbelief, you should have casually mentioned your recent holiday in Gabon. The travel industry loves labelling "new" destinations and so Gabon became the "Costa Rica of Africa" in recognition of the large percentage of the land designated a national park and the extraordinary variety of wildlife. But the similarities end there. With few tourists, you're more likely to come across one of the 35,000 western lowland gorillas than another foreign visitor. Cox & Kings and Explore both introduced Gabon this year. It's surely only a matter of time before other tour operators cotton on to its potential.

Must-do city break

With the critical acclaim that accompanied the 10th international Biennial, 2007 was the year Istanbul finally shrugged off its clichéd, antique "east meets west" tagline. The exhibits at the Istanbul Modern gallery showed that this is a thoroughly modern

city indeed. Beyond the arty stuff, cool hotels, restaurants and bars flourished. The district of Beyoglu is riddled with trendy spots ... the all-glass exterior of the 360 Istanbul restaurant sits on the top floor of a 19th-century apartment building, while Indigo, on the bottom floor, is one of the rowdiest electro clubs of any city.

Thought we'd hate, but loved

A capsule hotel with no windows designed by the man who brought conveyor-belt sushi to Britain did not look good on paper. But the new Yotel (yotel.com) at Gatwick airport turned out to be an inspired concept, and it was love at first sight for Travel's hotel reviewer. A British firm of architects, the Manser Practice, had put the fun into functionality. A luxurious bed that converted into a sofa, a techno-wall for DVD, music and menu selection (no sushi!), plus a pod bathroom so slick we wanted to take it home.

Shameless publicity stunt

Long gone is the stewardesses' glitzy 1950s heyday, when Frank Sinatra sang Fly Me to the Moon and they got to marry a millionaire and live in a five-bedroom house in Guildford. Just how far removed we are from that more refined era of travel was illustrated by Michael O'Leary this month with the launch of his most tasteless piece of propaganda yet - a calendar with near-naked stewardesses posing in airline-themed scenarios. Nicola (Miss April, from London) is nude, apart from a thong and life jacket, which we hope Ryanair won't recirculate because she is sucking on the toggle. Miss January, from Dusseldorf - all split ends and pneumatic breasts - is draped over the cockpit. And poor Miss October, from Dublin, has drawn the shortest of these short straws - in a scene culled from a thousand porno shoots, she is actually soaping down the plane.