

## Adventure seekers

### ION HOTEL *Iceland*

**SURROUNDED BY SNOW, LAVA ROCKS AND DORMANT VOLCANOES**, Iceland's newest adventure hotel isn't your usual honeymoon retreat – which is what makes it an awesome option. The 46-room hotel's polished concrete floors and monochrome artwork shout 'industrial chic', while the floor-to-ceiling windows (right) overlooking the *Fortitude*-esque landscape bring you right up close to nature. Here, in Iceland's wildest corner, nature and solitude meet – and it's romantic. Despite temperatures of -7°C during our February visit, the hotel couldn't have felt warmer. Honeymooners are given flowers, chocolates, and their own photobook to take home, but that's where the schmaltz ends. The rest of the time, it's action, adrenaline and highs like you've never imagined. Hiking on sensational glaciers, horse riding through lava fields and swimming in steaming hot rivers is just a taste of what's in store. Back at the hotel, there's a geothermal outdoor pool and a sauna to reinvigorate you. Then, at dinner, chefs Hrafnkell Sigríðarson and Sigurður Laufdal conjure up dishes of native reindeer carpaccio and tender Nordic lamb with burnt onion petals and dried cabbage leaves. Do we hear the tinkling of Michelin stars? It's only a matter of time. And did we mention the views from the bar, which is basically a glass box on stilts? A-mazing!

**WOW FACTOR:** If you're lucky, you'll



see the spectacular Northern Lights (below) dancing across a moonlit sky.

**GO:** A double room costs from £184, B&B; ioniceland.is. Icelandair (icelandair.com) offers transatlantic travellers a stopover in Iceland for up to seven nights at no extra cost. London to New York flights with a Reykjavik stopover start at £399 return.



3 HOURS



### CHEVAL BLANC *Courchevel, France*

**WITH KRUG IN THE MINI-BAR AND A GOODIE BAG OF GUERLAIN IN YOUR BATHROOM**, Cheval Blanc is as close to alpine ski heaven as a hotel can get. The ski-in/ski-out set-up gives easy access to 600km of superb slopes in the Trois Vallées, your boots are warmed for you in advance, and your ski instructors are often former world champions. Most thrilling is the chance to go heli-skiing, where you're picked up by chopper and whisked off to untouched off-piste slopes normally inaccessible to skiers. Although



led by experienced guides, these are definitely not for amateurs, so be warned. Back at the hotel, your bathroom comes with a chromotherapy hammam (colour therapy + hammam = surreal relaxation), delicious cedar-scented candles and hand creams made for high altitudes. Interiors give a 'sense of place', with animal skins, warm woods and cool cuckoo clocks. Bedrooms are spacious with mountain views. And when your limbs need a rest, head to the sensational Guerlain spa. This is the ultimate ski pad, with a gigantic dollop of luxury.

**WOW FACTOR:** Yannick Alléno's two-Michelin-starred restaurant, Le 1947, where the *bouillon* comes with gold leaf and the bread with truffles.

**GO:** Oxford Ski (oxfordski.com) offers seven nights from £9,400 per couple, half board. Includes flights and transfers.



1 HOUR, 45 MINUTES