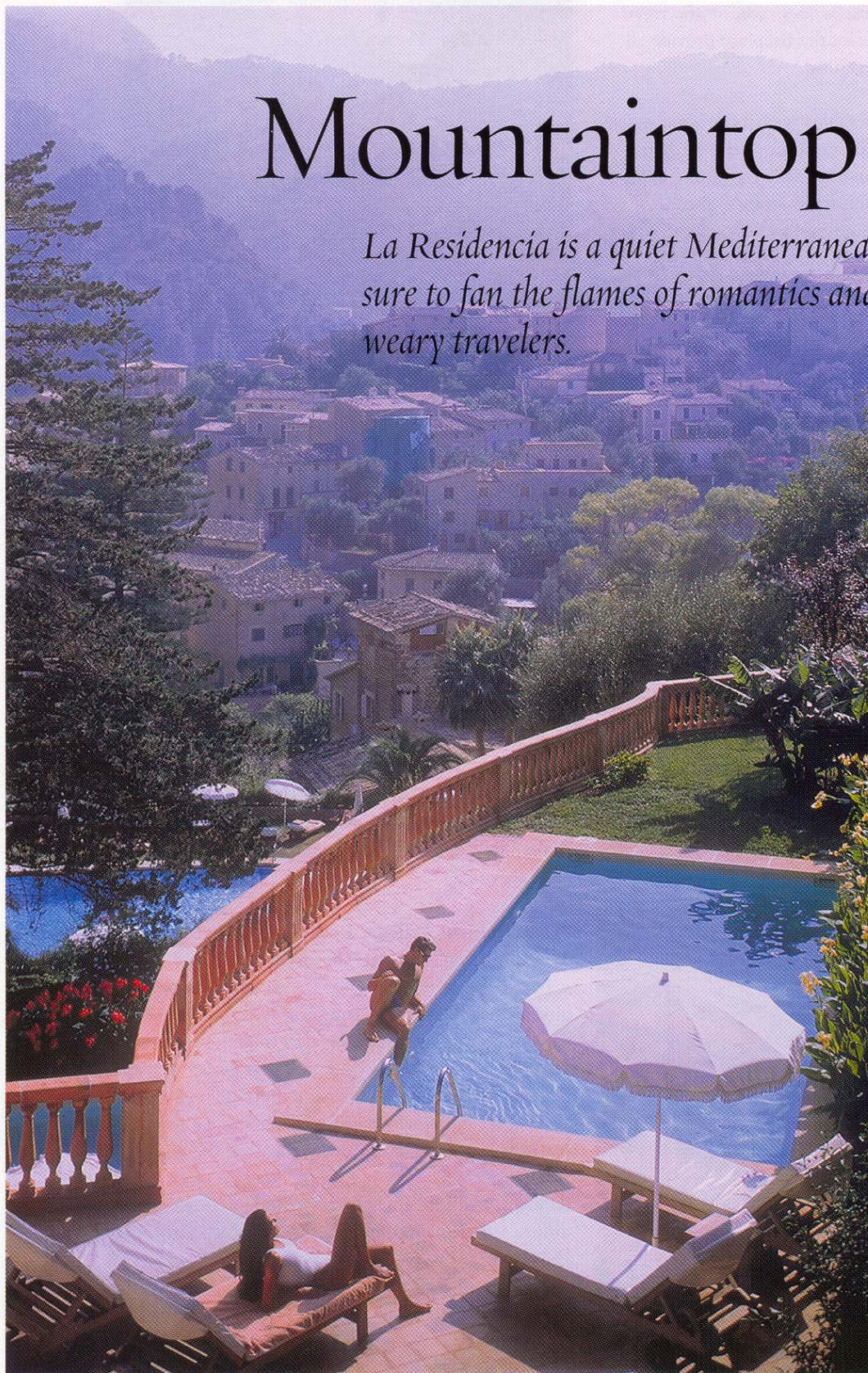


Mountaintop Magic

La Residencia is a quiet Mediterranean island estate that is sure to fan the flames of romantics and soothe the nerves of weary travelers.



Perched high above the sparkling blue Mediterranean Sea on the enchanted island of Mallorca off Spain's rugged northern coast, sits one of Richard Branson's best-kept secrets — until now. La Residencia is a charming 30-acre mountaintop estate dotted by colorful olive and citrus groves that were once cultivated for the well-to-do families who lived there in the 16th century. The tradition of quiet excellence continues as La Residencia hosts romantics and city-weary travelers alike who are looking for a tranquil respite. Little wonder why it's a favorite haunt for celebs.



Most Fab Room: Suite 66 is the ultimate luxury accommodation with its wrap-around terrace, four-poster bed, living room with fireplace and private swimming pool overlooking the enchanting mountainside town of Deiá. This massive one-bedroom suite – which has hosted everyone from Princess Diana and the emperor and empress of Japan to Pierce Brosnan and Sting – occupies the top floor of a 17th-century building that was once a private house.

Cooler Room Feature: The postcard-perfect view of the mountains and the sea from most of the rooms is stunning. Hint: Bring extra film for your camera.

Most Coveted Table/Dish: Chef Guillermo Mendez's house specialty is the lobster ravioli in sorrel sauce followed by rack of lamb in olive crust, which could tempt even the most devout vegetarian. Finish this off with white chocolate mousse with toffee cannelloni. It's worth the calories.

Things To Do: Trek through the steep, winding streets of Deiá and visit quaint shops where local crafts people sell their ceramics and leather goods. Hike to the top of the mountain and visit the cathedral. (This hike is sure to rival your Stairmaster back home.) Or, drive into the town of Valdemossa where you can visit the palatial cathedral and gardens where writer George Sand and composer Frédéric Chopin stayed in 1838.

Favorite Spa Treatment: I opted for a cathodermie facial to soothe my dry cabin-air-weary skin after a night of flying. The 90-minute treatment is a traveler's favorite, and left me glowing and energized.

Most Macho Activity: Hiking three miles down the narrow, winding main road to the beach or hot air ballooning over the island.

Romance Factor: La Residencia's internationally-renown El Olivo restaurant is a culinary sanctuary for world-class gourmands as well as celebs and dignitaries looking for respite from the limelight – and one of the most romantic candlelit dinners on the planet.

Damage: From \$150 to \$750 for rooms and suites depending on season, accommodation and exchange rate.

Reservations: Call Resorts Management, 800-557-4255. 📞

