

Telegraph magazine  
5 June 2003



## Battle dress

Fashion's military moment

### **MOST WANTED**

On the trail of the real  
Pink Panthers

### **NOT JUST FOR KICKS**

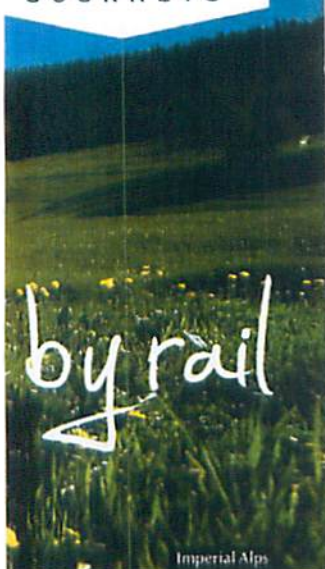
How South Africa's  
women footballers are  
saving lives

### **FOOD & HOME**

Rose Prince's recipes  
for June: a tight  
squeeze in Chelsea



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TRAVEL

Four of the best family-friendly English seaside hotels, by Francesca Syz

email [travelmagazine@telegraph.co.uk](mailto:travelmagazine@telegraph.co.uk)

**BLAKENEY HOTEL NORTH NORFOLK**

This traditional, family-owned hotel sits right on the quay at Blakeney, looking out across to Blakeney Point, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty where seals bask on the sandbanks. Its 60 elegant rooms are classic-contemporary in style and several of those on the ground floor open out on to landscaped gardens. Children can stay in their parents' rooms free of charge over the school holidays, and there are children's lunch menus available plus half portions from the table d'hôte menu. The restaurant, bar and terrace all have panoramic views over the estuary and the hotel's south-facing gardens are scattered with sun loungers. The hotel has digital televisions with children's channels, a good-size indoor swimming-pool, a games room with table tennis, pool and darts and stacks of board games. In the immediate vicinity, children can go crabbing on the quay, mud sliding (messy but fun) and visit a dinosaur park, a Sea Life Centre and a zoo. There is a cosy drawing-room with an open fire where the whole family can sprawl on rainy days. **The details** Doubles, £148-174 (01263-740797; [blakeney-hotel.co.uk](http://blakeney-hotel.co.uk)).



**SOAR MILL COVE HOTEL SALCOMBE, DEVON** Enid Blyton found inspiration for her children's stories at Soar Mill Cove, a glorious little sweep of golden sand along the South West Coastal Path. Owned and run by three generations of the Makepeace family since 1978, the lovely 22-room Soar Mill Cove Hotel has just reopened after a refurbishment. It has always been great for families, with its award-winning West Country restaurant offering a special 'Kids' High Tea' and its two-bedroom suites and family rooms with private patios and sun loungers. It can also supply all the necessary clobber: cots, high chairs, homemade baby food, changing mats and baby monitors. For those with slightly older children there are tennis courts, pitch and putt, a games room, billiards and table tennis. There are also two spring-fed pools (one indoor, one out) and countless other attractions such as mountain biking, coastal treks, caving and multiple Blue Flag beaches (picnics provided). Join a Sunday coastline walk with prizes for identifying flora and fauna en route, a pirate treasure hunt, or enter the weekly sandcastle competition. For the more intrepid, there is body boarding, sea kayaking and BMX courses. **The details** Doubles, £140-240 ([soarmillcove.co.uk](http://soarmillcove.co.uk)).

**THE PLACE AT THE BEACH CAMBER, EAST SUSSEX** Once the 1960s Blue Dolphin Motel, the Place at the Beach, overlooking eight-mile-long Camber Sands near Rye, had several incarnations before its current one. Eventually a dilapidated B&B, it was bought in 2009 by Harry Cragoe (the co-founder of PJ Smoothies) and Tudor Hopkins, formerly of the Leonard Hotel in Marble Arch, who transformed it into a stylish, unpretentious seaside hotel. It has 18 whitewashed, New England-style bedrooms including four studios with their own private entrances, plus two cottages, the Officers House (sleeps nine) and Seakale (six plus cot), a 10-minute drive away. Sea-based activities feature high on the agenda. The hotel offers kite surfing, beach buggying and other watersports and there's a two-day 'Family Activity Escape' package (£595), which includes three nights' accommodation for a family of four and a two-day sailing or windsurfing course for two children (kite surfing is £60 extra). A laidback dining-room serves fresh seafood and slow-reared local meat, and this summer it adds the decked outdoor Café at the Beach. **The details** Doubles, £85-125 (01797-225057; [theplaceatthebeach.co.uk](http://theplaceatthebeach.co.uk)).



**THE SANDBANKS DORSET** Right next to a beautiful, seven-mile long Blue Flag beach of the same name, the Sandbanks is a family hotel through and through, with some rooms accommodating up to five people. What it lacks in sophistication (it feels a bit cruise-ship), it makes up for in facilities to keep everyone happy. It has an indoor swimming-pool, a soft playroom, children's pirate ship and activity shack and a beach on its doorstep patrolled by lifeguards all summer. There is also the Little Rainbows Nursery for three month-to-five-year-olds and the Funsters Cool Kids Club, offering sports, talent shows, fancy dress and face painting and a teenagers' 'Zone' for hanging out in. Surf Shack, a children's restaurant, offers a varied and healthy menu. In 2008 the hotel launched a Watersports Academy offering windsurfing, kite surfing, waterskiing, sailing, kayaking and more, and it runs a children's club during the summer holidays. Other highlights include the outdoor Terrace Bar above the beach and great-value treatments for grown-ups (such as one-hour Dermalogica facials from £40) at the spa. **The details** Doubles, £95-130 (0844-880 6551; [fjhotels.co.uk](http://fjhotels.co.uk)). Next week: South African wilderness lodges