

**CRUISE POLL:  
90 TOP SHIPS**

Small, Large, Mega

**VANCOUVER'S  
CHINESE FOOD**

Best in the World!

**SPAIN, U.S.A.,  
ECUADOR**

Great Deals Now

**TIPS FROM  
"UP IN THE AIR"**

Maximize Your Miles

# Condé Nast Traveler

EXTRA:  
FLORIDA'S  
NEW HEAT  
24-PAGE  
PULLOUT

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

FEBRUARY 2010

## 10 Blissful Little FRENCH ISLANDS

WHERE TO STAY, EAT, PLAY

**SPECIAL**

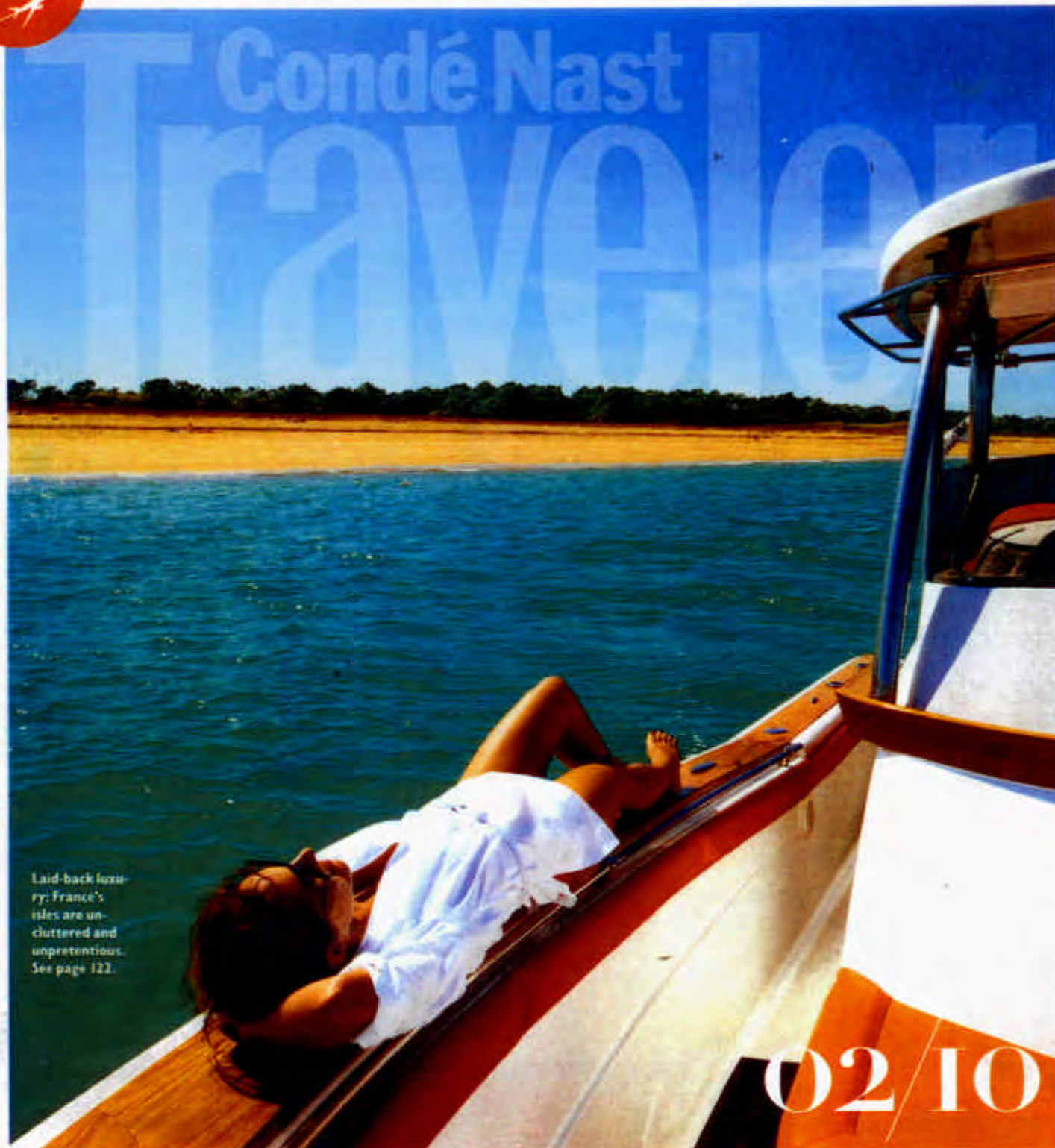
**GLOBAL GUIDE:  
BEST HOTELS  
YOU'VE NEVER  
HEARD OF**

*Comfort, Charm,  
and Value*

**SYDNEY'S BIG  
ADVENTURE**

*(Hold on tight!)*





Laid-back luxury: France's isles are uncluttered and unpretentious. See page 122.

02/10

Photograph by Michel Ugeux; icons by Ralph Launton (Black Label); labels (left) Ralph Launton; menu (\$55); Amber Free Hair from Black Pepper (www.blackpepper.fr)

*China*  
**Magic Melting Mountain**

The glaciers of the Tibetan Plateau, which feed the great rivers of Asia, are melting fast. **Orville Schell** travels to one of China's most beautiful regions and finds majestic scenery, Buddhist traditions, and a people wondering about the future. *page* 96

*Australia*  
**Sydney 360°**

What's the K2 of urban climbs? The Sydney Harbour Bridge. **Murray Sayle** shows you the way to a gobsmacking view of a great city. *page* 106

*Frequent Flyers*  
**Triumph of the Air Warriors**

If you thought *Up in the Air* was fiction, meet the main characters' real-life counterparts: frequent-flier fanatics on a gleeful mission to beat the system. **Greg Lindsay** joins their airborne assault on the \$170 billion world of airline miles. *page* 108

*Photo Portfolio*  
**A Little Night Magic**

Five splendid chambers for grand opera pose in silence for **David Leventi's** admiring eye, while **Manuela Hoelterhoff** recalls how each house comes uniquely to life when the curtain rises and divas face devotees. *page* 116

*France*  
**The Discreet Isles of the Bourgeoisie**

Where do the French go to kick back and relax? **Lee Aitken** follows them to ten islands off the country's Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts and learns the rules of *restez zen*. *page* 122

*Continued on page 8 >*