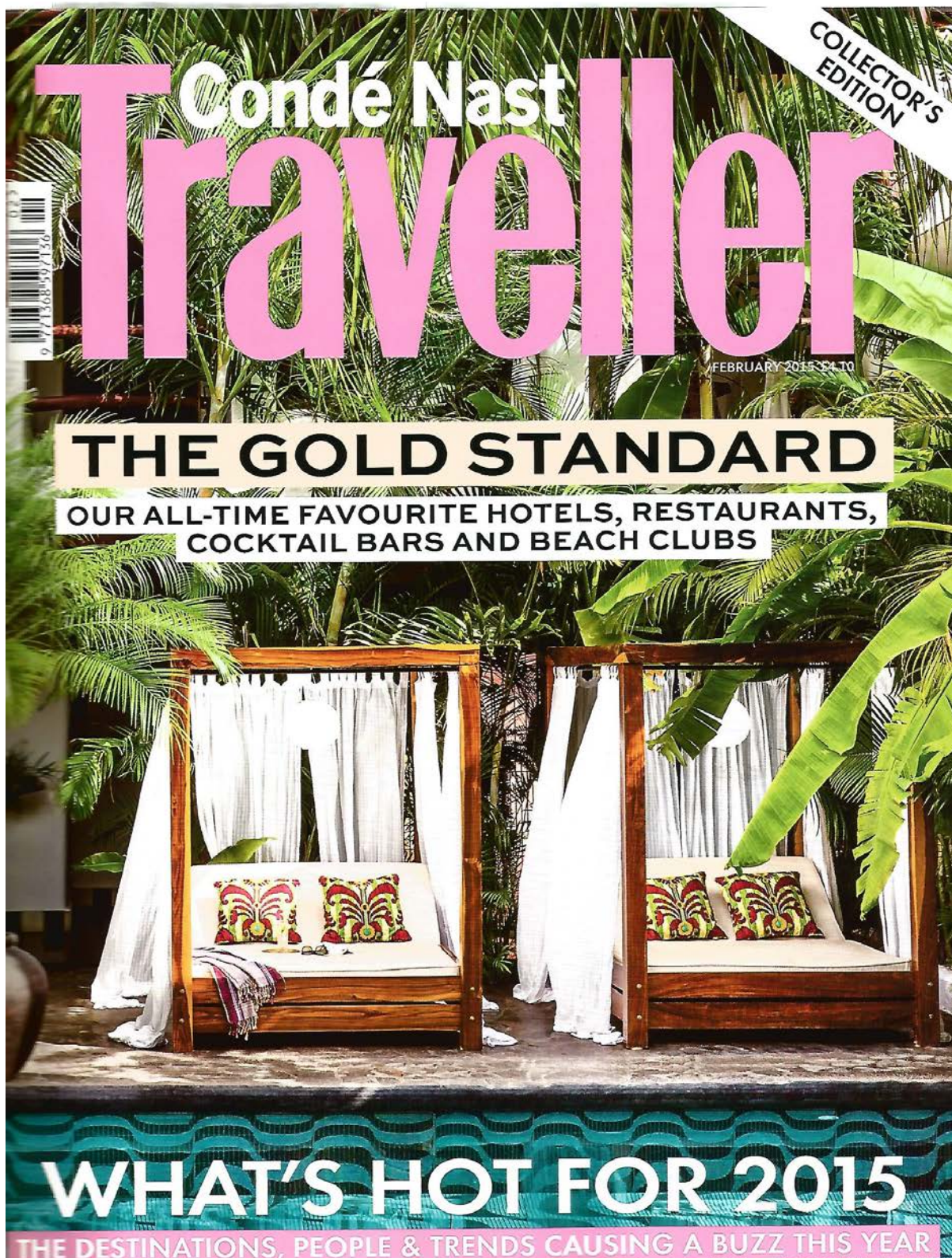




THE
GOLD
STANDARD
2015

COUNTRY HOTELS

LAKSHMAN SAGAR RAJASTHAN

This somewhat stark beauty was once a 19th-century hunting lodge belonging to the Thakur of Raipur and it sits in an undulating desert setting of craggy outcrops, thorn trees and scrubland. There are 12 stone-and-adobe thatched guest cottages dotted around, some reached by a path that winds beneath an ancient banyan tree, others near a lake, where antelope and peacocks trip and sip each evening. There's a swimming pool hollowed out of rock and a spa in a stone water tank. A *shikar mahal* that was the women's quarters has been converted into a seating area, with plenty of shaded, cushioned nooks to escape the midday sun and a roof terrace for sundowners. Rooms are evidence of a zero-kilometre design philosophy: sari-upholstered benches add zip to the mud tones and chandeliers are created from dangling copper pots and wooden spoons. And as darkness falls, guests feast on cardamom-spiced lamb in the open-air pavilion, the night aglow with candlelight and magic. +91 11 2649 4531; www.sewara.com. Doubles from about £140



PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRIS CALDWELL, IAN COBLE, STEFANO SCATA

