



Hoteliers as hosts

BY MELISSA BIGGS BRADLEY

MEET THE LATEST breed of hotelier: owners who don't just welcome you to their resort but also share a bit of their personal lifestyle. They fell in love with destinations and built themselves highly individual properties that they then opened to paying guests. Thanks to their vision—and deep pockets—these hosts have created escapes with serious soul and personality. They provide not only immersion in a culture but also every comfort and activity one could desire.

Howie's HomeStay in Chiang Mai, Thailand (above), is the dream house of American expat Howard Feldman, an importer-exporter, and his Thai wife, Jerri. Set on five acres, the guest property has six rooms filled with Asian art and artifacts, and the Feldmans share their local connections, and often their table, with visitors. In the 1990s, hedge fund titan Julian Robertson bought a home in New Zealand, then added a golf course and guest cabins to create Kauri Cliffs; he now has three Kiwi lodges, all run by his son. Financier Jim Manley dreamed of owning a ranch, and when he finally

found the ideal spot in Montana, he outfitted it with 21st-century amenities. He and his family spend their vacations there with guests who come for the fly fishing, riding, hiking and year-round spoiling. The founder of Red Bull, Dietrich Mateschitz, bought Malcolm Forbes's private island in Fiji, up-

graded the plantation house and added beachfront villas. He even shares his world-class boat fleet with guests. Closer to home, well-known interior designer Celerie Kemble and her husband, Boykin Curry, turned their favorite beachfront spot in the Dominican Republic into the Playa Grande Beach Club. Guests stay in three-bedroom cottages decorated by Kemble in a breezy, tropical style, and everyone gathers for meals in the dining room and sometimes for after-dinner games. ☉

MELISSA BIGGS BRADLEY is founder of the travel site *indagare.com*.

