



sky's the limit
TRAVEL WINTER 2009
BACK BAY BEACH, TOBAGO

BAVARIAN RHAPSODY

In 1914, The New York Times reported that Mary Portman, a freewheeling English aristocrat living in Germany, faced prison in Munich for unpaid debt on a lavish Arts and Crafts house in the Bavarian countryside. (British wartime laws prevented her from paying the \$100,000 bill.) The matter was eventually resolved, but Portman never lived in her dream home, which changed hands several times before the hotelier Jakob Edinger bought it in 2003. He enlisted Ilse Crawford to design the interior; his architect son added a spa, pool and modern wing. The result is Das Kranzbach (daskranzbach.de; from \$215 per person), a chic reimaging of the traditional European country resort. **ARMAND LIMNANDER**

→ Guests are served a light, mostly vegetarian lunch at these communal tables designed by Crawford. "There is no need to have three full meals a day," says Edinger, who uses local produce as much as possible. But no one goes hungry: breakfast includes homemade jam and bread; tea has straight-from-the-oven cakes; and a five-course dinner comes with wine pairings. *Prost!*



↑ Edinger chose Crawford for the interiors of the Mary Portman house because as a Briton she instinctively understood the Arts and Crafts movement. She updated period furnishings with contemporary twists: Chesterfield sofas are upholstered in bright yellow; armoires come in deep purple; lamps are oversize; carpets are tartan. Many decorative touches are one of a kind. Crawford commissioned wallpaper from Timorous Beasties and scoured vintage markets for quirky knickknacks to place strategically throughout the hotel.



↓ Nestled between the Alpspitze and Zugspitze mountains in the Wetterstein Alpine range, and surrounded by protected land, Das Kranzbach is about two hours' drive from Munich. The road from Klais, the nearest village, is private, with no neighbors in sight. Nature is the main attraction, so biking, hiking, cross-country skiing and "Nordic walking" are strongly encouraged.



← Accommodations range from studioline suites in the Mary Portman house (pictured) to more conventional rooms in the modern wing by the pool. You won't be bothered by any conference groups or families with small children; the hotel doesn't allow them. "We cannot be good at everything," says Edinger, for whom relaxation is priority No. 1. "Being able to commune with nature and have a good night's sleep is a real luxury these days."

← Be forewarned: Germans frown at anything but nudity when relaxing in the six breathtakingly hot saunas and steam baths in the hotel's spa. (Don't be scared if an attendant vigorously snaps a towel in front of you — it's meant to circulate the scalding air.) Thankfully, gym clothes are the norm for the Pilates, yoga and qi-gong classes in the exercise room overlooking the pine forest. And the heated pool is open year-round.