

sale) – come together with a shared passion for their garden. Four serenely well-designed bedrooms the colour of jewels face out on to the pool.

- casasusegadgoa.com; four doubles; from £65

6. Casa Colvale, Taliwado, Goa

Off the beaten track, up in north Goa, are two stylish villas with views that soar downriver. On arrival you are ushered to the terrace with a sundowner: lap up the luxuriant scene. The views from the infinity pool are more breathtaking still. Later, meander downhill for a barbecue under the stars. The rooms each have a sit-out space overseeing the river or the islands. There are simple bright linens and rugs on dark stone floors, and walk-in showers. Look forward to long days lazing by two pools, serenaded by wildlife and spoiled by staff. Join in yoga on the terrace or plan a trip to the beaches. Leave by speedboat – James Bond-style. Bliss.

- casacolvale.com; 11 doubles; from £90

7. Chapslee, Elysium Hill, Himachal Pradesh

If you have potted up the mountainside in that splendid little train, filled with expectations of Shimla, you may have been underwhelmed by the town. Its glorious past and its parochial present are at odds. But Chapslee is a treat, undisturbed by mobiles, internet or TV. One of the oldest houses in town (1835), it was the summer residence of the late Raja Charanjit Singh of Kapurthala; the present owner is his grandson. The walls are festooned with swords and sabres, Raj-era paintings and embroideries. Bedrooms are immensely comfortable and the suite is spoilingly sumptuous. The sitting room is in hunting-lodge style; the garden is smothered in nasturtiums. It's more English than England, a flawless snapshot of another age.

- chapslee.com; four doubles, one suite; half-board from £190

8. Shreyas Yoga Retreat, Santoshima Farm, Nr Bangalore, Karnataka

Pull through gates, enter landscaped grounds, and be welcomed with a marigold garland by serene, white-robed staff. As you fill in a questionnaire about your mental and physical health, realisation dawns that this is no regular luxury hotel. Your stay is planned in terms of diet and treatments: Ayurvedic massage and exquisite food, meditation and a rejuvenating spa, pukka astanga and hatha yoga twice a day and, if you like, afternoons spent in the organic vegetable garden. Of course, you can come just to soak up the atmosphere and sunbathe by the pool.

- shreyasretreat.com; three cottage suites, eight tents, one cottage for five; full-board £250. Yoga and sound meditation classes included

9. Privacy at Sanctuary Bay, Muhamma, Kerala

There are two separate bungalows, one housing a single suite, the other two double rooms. Huge sliding screens give onto verandas with bamboo blinds and views across the shimmering lake. This must be one of the most heavenly spots in all Kerala. The thatched air-conditioned suite has a dining room, living room and two bathrooms – a