

Short cuts An Antarctic trek, an English boot camp

Turkey This week saw the launch of Marti in Istanbul, a family-owned five-star hotel, just off Taksim Square, yet with opening rates of €150. It was designed by the Turkish architect Zeynep Fadillioğlu, the first woman to have been commissioned to design a mosque in Turkey: the Sakirin in Üsküdar. With its great aluminium dome, acrylic minbar and fountain by British designer William Pye, it is every bit as worth visiting as the city's great Ottoman places of worship. martiistanbulhotel.com

Italy Incontri in Terra di Siena, one of Italy's more

adventurous summer music festivals, starts this weekend with an eclectic programme featuring, among others, the Russian baritone Vladimir Chernov, the US-based Borromeo String Quartet and a Florentine klezmer band. Concerts take place in churches in Pienza, Montepulciano and at La Foce, the estate where the Anglo-American writer Iris Origo lived. The festival was founded by her grandson, Antonio Lysy, a Grammy award-winning cellist and composer who will perform Francesco Cilluffo's *The Land to Life Again*, a specially commissioned song cycle based on Origo's compelling



Villa Muri Antichi at Monteverdi in Tuscany

second world war diary *War in Val d'Orcia*. You can stay on the estate itself all year round – there are nine traditional farmhouses and 10 apartments available to rent. For more luxurious hotel accommodation, consider Monteverdi, on the edge of the estate at Castiglioncello, which opens on August 1 with seven exquisitely understated rooms from €250 a night, designed by the modish interior designer Ilaria Miani. www.itslafoce.org; monteverdituscany.com

Antarctica Anyone familiar with Frank Hurley's astonishing photographs of

and, to recover, a villa in Mustique

Shackleton's troubled expedition to the South Pole might think twice about joining a recreation of it, but Abercrombie & Kent is launching "an adventurous itinerary" that takes in at least part of the explorer's "historic trek across South Georgia". Departing January 1 2013, it also includes the Falkland Islands, expedition landings to New and Carcass islands as well as parts of Antarctica itself. It's one of A&K's newly expanded range of Antarctic holidays, among them a day trip from Cape Town. Although the irony of spending 11 hours (there and back) in the air to visit the



Abercrombie & Kent's Antarctic experience

fastest-warming place on earth is perhaps worth dwelling on before you book. www.abercrombiekent.co.uk

Mustique, West Indies To prevent the island becoming overcrowded, the Mustique Company has decreed that no further plots on this diminutive Grenadine will ever be sold. So Sienna is not just the latest new villa to join the rental pool (from \$35,400 a week), it will be the last. Nouveau-Palladian in style, it was designed by I&J Bannerman, creators of the wonderful Antler Temple at Houghton Hall in Norfolk, which was once the home of

Robert Walpole, Britain's first prime minister. www.mustique-island.com

England Champney's is launching a seven-night Boot Camp in Leicestershire, August 25 to September 1, exclusively for 18 to 24-year-olds. For once the regime lives up to its name: 7am starts, low-calorie meals and four to six hours of circuit training, cycling, swimming and other sports, all while wearing an armband that monitors food intake, activity levels, steps taken, calories burnt and sleep patterns. www.champneys.com

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