



## Out of this World

In one of his poems Baudelaire argues with his bored soul for whom not even the Parisian life holds any more interest. "Where would you like to go?" demands the poet. "Anywhere, out of this world," the soul moodily replies. A hundred years ago when Baudelaire was writing these lines, there were many places that might have served to soothe and invigorate just such a soul – places where one could peer into the window of a world entirely different from the newly industrialized Europe. Today there are not so many left, and most of those that remain have made themselves so conscientiously touristic that they have lost what charm they used to have. One of the few unspoiled spots is Lamu.



## Secret Gardens and Stately Swahili Retreats

Off the bustling waterfront of Shella Village, dhows sway gently on the incoming tide as merchants and fisherman cross back and forth on the shimmering sand. A few steps away, a small entrance framed by clusters of frangipani and bougainvillea flowers opens to cool shades and green shadows. Entering Kijani House Hotel is like stepping into a secret garden, an enchanted hotel of private spaces and elegant retreats, Aquamarine pools glow gently in the shade of giant kunazi trees, small tables and beach chairs lie under a profusion of palms and flowering flamboyants and yellow oleanders branch out over large terraces that face the ocean. Kijani's rooms and gardens are filled with antiques and hand-made replicas of the furniture, lanterns, ornaments and utensils that graced the stately house of Lamu's past. Copies of old Portuguese lamps sway from white archways. An arrangement of ceramic water pots, used to carry oil and water aboard ship centuries ago, stand under the shade of a royal palm .....



## Slow Travel

Life in Lamu has a distinctly Arab-oriental flavour; the ladies scurry down back streets wearing buibuis (black cloaks which cover them entirely) and yet they are prone to shadding their dark eyes with kohl and have been known to cast amourous glances from the folds of their buibuis towards favoured admirers. In the evenings the aroma of thick Turkishlike coffee permeates the atmosphere; old men sit together philosophizing on the front steps of their houses, and little boys chase one another, darting in and out of quaint shops that line the main street.....