

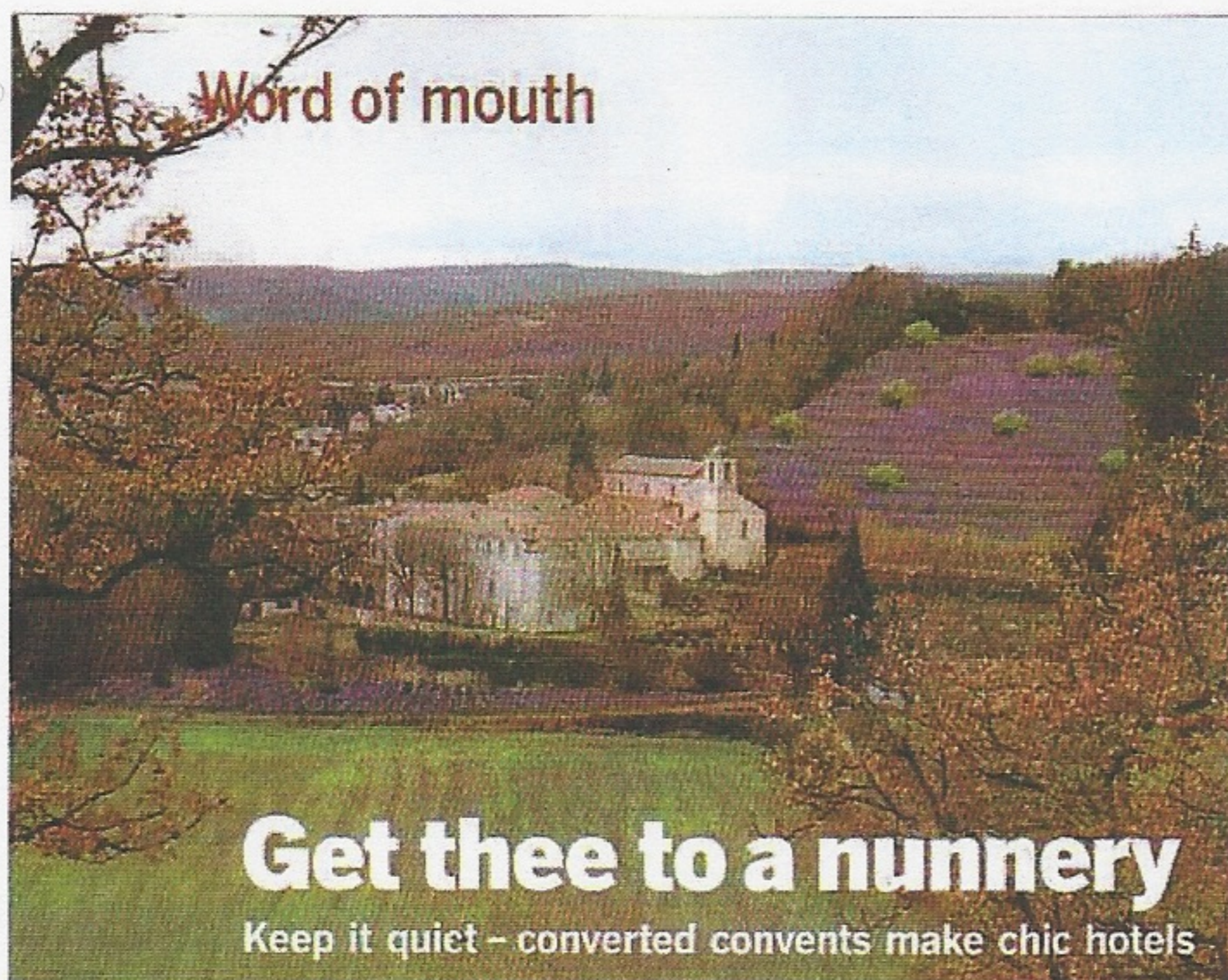
# Condé Nast Traveler

WIN  
A WEEK FOR TWO  
IN THE SEYCHELLES



TRUTH IN TRAVEL®

APRIL 2008 £3.70



Word of mouth

## Get thee to a nunnery

Keep it quiet – converted convents make chic hotels

Left, Le Couvent des Minimes. Below: a bathroom in the convent at Four Seasons Hotel Firenze; a hallway in Le Couvent d'Hérépian

**T**he 17th-century **Le Couvent des Minimes** in Provence, once run by the Order of Minims who lived entirely off the land, has been transformed into a charming 46-room hotel and spa, opening this May. Drawing on its heritage, the hotel kitchen uses local ingredients and the spa incorporates the region's flora in its products. Also dating from the 17th century, the recently opened **Le Couvent d'Hérépian** in Languedoc is an intimate and surprisingly affordable 13-suite boutique hotel. Each suite has a small kitchen, and guests are encouraged to explore the nearby food markets. In Bruges, the **Kempinski Hotel Dukes' Palace** was originally built for royalty in 1429, but had been a convent since 1880. Its listed stained-glass windows and 15th-century paintings have been sensitively incorporated in its latest incarnation as a 93-room hotel. And in Italy, the much-heralded **Four Seasons Hotel Firenze** occupies two listed buildings set in huge gardens: a palazzo, which has just opened, and a restored convent with vaulted ceilings, friezes and frescoes, which will open later in the year as a 37-room, private-hotel-within-a-hotel. **TOBI COHEN**



**Le Couvent des Minimes** ([www.couventdesminimes-hotelspa.com](http://www.couventdesminimes-hotelspa.com)). Doubles from €150

**Le Couvent d'Hérépian** ([www.couventherepian.com](http://www.couventherepian.com)). Suites from €104

**Kempinski Hotel Dukes' Palace** ([www.kempinski-bruges.com](http://www.kempinski-bruges.com)). Doubles from €185

**Four Seasons Hotel Firenze** ([www.fourseasons.com/florence](http://www.fourseasons.com/florence)). Doubles from €550