

d activities include a Thai cooking class after market visit (from £180; theslatephuket.com). Best across the Andaman Sea from Phuket, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are India's most remote territory. On Havelock Island, a ferry trip from the capital Port Blair, **Jalakara (7)** is a new hotel in the overgrown grounds of an old banana and betel-nut plantation. Its six rooms and suites and private villa are a modestly luxurious base in a remote out-of-the-way island group, where rains let up in winter (from £140; jalakara.info). Also counting the days before the spring monsoon, Sri Lanka's hill country combines tropical ambience and

heritage architecture. **Fort Bazaar (3)** is a case in point – a former spice and gem merchant's house in the Dutch colonial-era Galle Fort. Soothingly styled rooms surround a galleried inner courtyard (from £140; teardrop-hotels.com/fort-bazaar). A tad closer to home, **COMO Metropolitan (4)** is a 74-room Art Deco hotel in Miami Beach, where 20°C is normal for a winter day. If that's warm enough for a dip, head to the rooftop spa pool or the larger one behind the beachside boardwalk (from £165; comohotels.com/metropolitanmiamibeach). On the Caribbean island of Tobago, **Castara Retreats (2)** has rooms

with names like Ginger Lily and Fiddle Tree, and hill-perched views of an idyllic bay. Its bar menu highlight is a passionfruit mojito (from £420 for three-night minimum stay; castararetreats.com). In Sydney, January is high summer. **The Old Clare Hotel (5)** is a 1939 Functionalist-style building with boardroom timber panelling here, an artfully distressed wall there, and a rooftop pool to do laps in (from £195; theoldclarehotel.com.au). And also basking at this time in the southern hemisphere, **La Grenadine (8)** brings bright Provençal charm to the backstreets of Cape Town thanks to its French owners (from £110; lagrenadine.co.za). ^{LP}

