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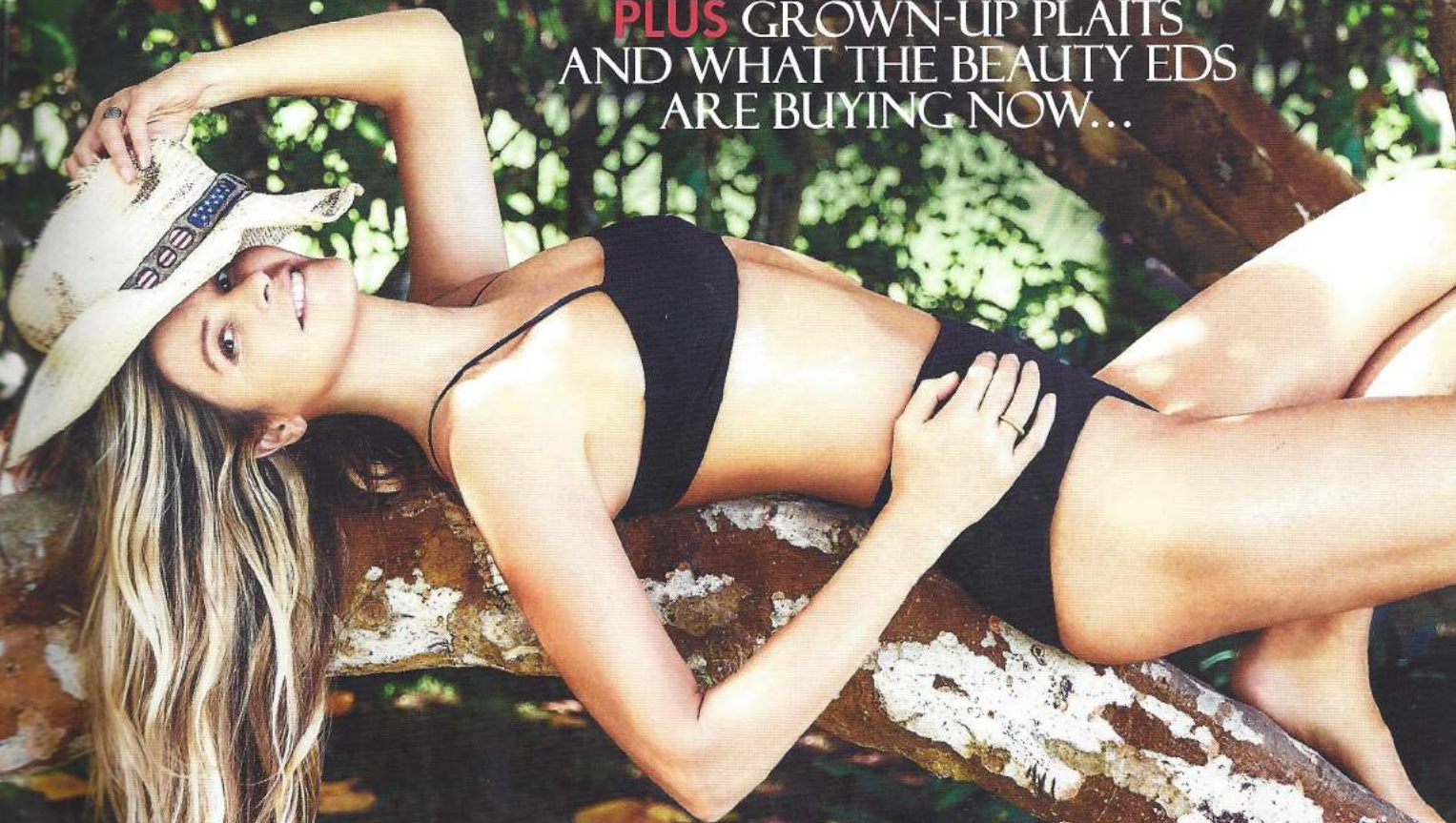
AUGUST 2020 £5.20

ELLE MACPHERSON
on business, her boys and
finding balance

246 Style buys

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FAZENDA NOVA COUNTRY HOUSE, PORTUGAL

There's something gloriously undiscovered about Fazenda Nova Country House – from the flight into Faro, rather than the more bustling Lisbon, to the 25-minute drive along country roads. Winding past orange and lemon groves, these take you to a beautiful, secluded country house, a former family home now converted into an elegant, laid-back hideaway.

The house and its variety of annexes have been carved up into 15 suites, each of them eclectically styled, marrying earthy clay hues and chunky Balinese wooden beds with brushed concrete bathrooms and splashy, bright local art. Lots of the suites have little gardens with fire pits; one has its own first-floor terrace with views across the hills, and the Master Suite is simply glorious, with a private entrance, its own secluded garden, a plunge pool and an outdoor rain shower.

Despite offering tranquillity and space, Fazenda Nova is also wonderfully convivial. It's owned and run by Hallie and Tim, a British couple who relocated to this romantic spot with their family and have lovingly transformed the property, bit by bit. Their incredibly good taste is evident everywhere, from the vinyl library to a selection of stylish Portuguese trinkets available to buy from a large glass armoire in the house. You'll see the couple at Fazenda Nova, with Hallie recommending local yoga classes or where to buy the best straw baskets, and Tim trying to tempt you with a caipirao, his take on a caipirinha that uses Portuguese Licor Beirão muddled with lime and mint.

Food here is a sociable affair – breakfast is continental with an array of pastries and Portuguese custard tarts, fruit platters, muesli, meats, cheese and boiled eggs piled high on the bar. The small but perfectly formed dinner menu can be found on the blackboard in the restaurant. During our stay, it includes fresh fish, salads from the kitchen garden, homemade soups and, naturally, the Fazenda Nova olive oil, which is bottled on-site and is possibly the most sublime thing you will ever dip a hunk of bread into. The little town of Tavira, a 15-minute drive away, is beautiful and home to pretty bars, coffee shops and beaches (some of which are gloriously deserted and only accessible by boat). But when Fazenda Nova is so tranquil, you might find it hard enough to drag yourself away from the pool.

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TRIP NOTES

Rooms start from €270
per night, fazendanova.eu