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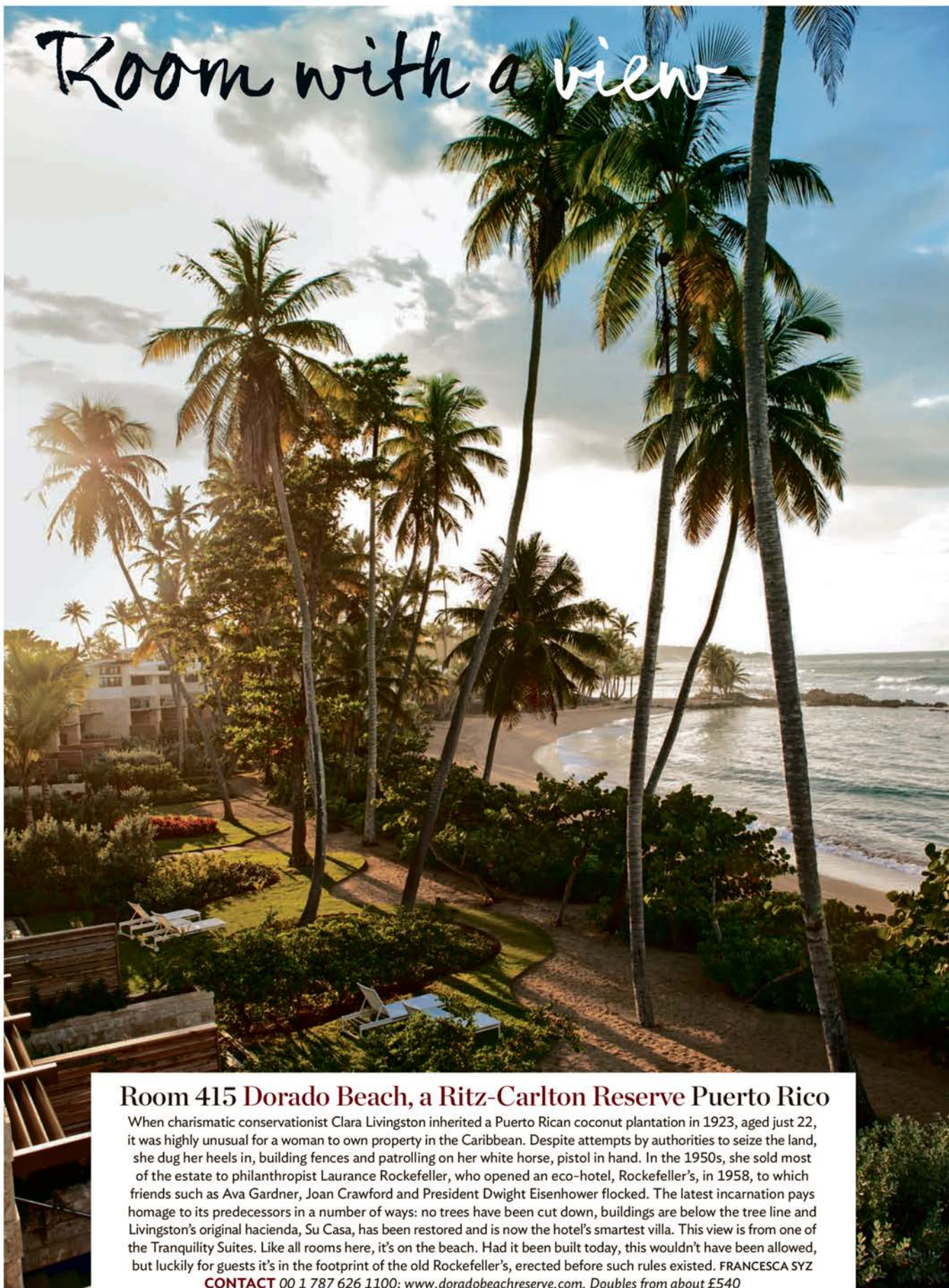
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FIRST REVIEW
OF VENICE'S
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Room with a view



Room 415 Dorado Beach, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve Puerto Rico

When charismatic conservationist Clara Livingston inherited a Puerto Rican coconut plantation in 1923, aged just 22, it was highly unusual for a woman to own property in the Caribbean. Despite attempts by authorities to seize the land, she dug her heels in, building fences and patrolling on her white horse, pistol in hand. In the 1950s, she sold most of the estate to philanthropist Laurance Rockefeller, who opened an eco-hotel, Rockefeller's, in 1958, to which friends such as Ava Gardner, Joan Crawford and President Dwight Eisenhower flocked. The latest incarnation pays homage to its predecessors in a number of ways: no trees have been cut down, buildings are below the tree line and Livingston's original hacienda, Su Casa, has been restored and is now the hotel's smartest villa. This view is from one of the Tranquility Suites. Like all rooms here, it's on the beach. Had it been built today, this wouldn't have been allowed, but luckily for guests it's in the footprint of the old Rockefeller's, erected before such rules existed. FRANCESCA SYZ

CONTACT 00 1 787 626 1100; www.doradobeachreserve.com. Doubles from about £540



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