The large white shell on the beach, tucked behind a rock, had a long pattern of double tracks leading to it. Something, perhaps a crab, had crawled into it quite recently. It seemed like the only footsteps of any kind on the whole spectacularly tranquil beach, a lush tropical setting of one of the islands in the Myeik Archipelago in southern Myanmar.

As with most of the other 800 uninhabited islands here in the Andaman Sea, the land is full of thick green jungle, with strips of long golden beaches on the edge. There are no roads to these beaches, no promenades, loungers or umbrellas, no man-made structures of any kind, just nature.

We sailed here on a 52-foot catamaran yacht, a small group of travellers lured by the remoteness and isolation, and by the stories of tigers and sea gypsies that might be on the islands. We were spending a week navigating the archipelago, exploring empty beaches, snorkelling, swimming and watching the sun rise and set from quiet anchorages that we were the only ones on.

Lured by splendid isolation, Yvonne Gordon goes back to nature, island-hopping in a remote Burmese archipelago.
Dolphins leap to port as an eagle circled above

Tallinn still smarts from occupation but Wow! what a city...

I t was a typical wintry day in Tallinn. On the street, I heard the faint sound of voices mingling with the crashing of waves on the sea. As I walked along the streets, I saw a group of tourists taking pictures of themselves in front of the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. Suddenly, I realized that this was the same cathedral that had been used as a KGB training center during the Soviet occupation. It was a reminder of the city’s rich history and the challenges it has faced over the years.

As I continued my walk, I noticed a group of dolphins swimming in the bay. It was a beautiful sight, and I couldn’t help but feel grateful for the chance to witness such a wonderful display. The dolphins were so majestic, and it was clear that they were enjoying themselves.

The clear night sky was filled with stars, and the stars were like diamonds in the sky. The majestic starry sky was a reminder of the beauty of the world, and I couldn’t help but feel grateful for the chance to witness such a wonderful display.

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