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JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2022

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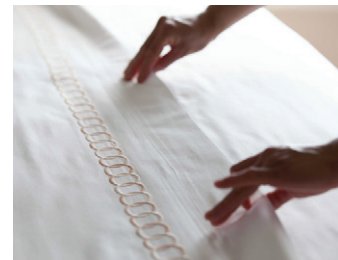
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The village of Santa Maddalena
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PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID MCCONAGHY

i Your Virtuoso travel advisor is your best resource for up-to-date information on health and safety protocols and restrictions, wherever your travels lead.

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(PASTRIES) DAN KULLBERG, (BANGKOK) CHRIS SCHALKX

Montage

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Let's Do This

ANOTHER NEW YEAR, ANOTHER MIXED BAG OF traveler attitudes that range from cautious to throwing caution to the wind. Most of us have at least dipped our toes back into travel – and for that your Virtuoso advisor and the entire tourism industry, especially the hundreds of millions of people whose livelihoods depend on it, are thankful.

We've learned much about behaviors and mindsets – and even our bank accounts – since the beginning of the pandemic, and analysts anticipate a busy year or three ahead for travel bookings, as pent-up demand, delayed plans, and a collective increase in personal wealth add up to a triple travel threat.

Our cover declares 2022 as the year of going far, and it's true – but we're also calling it the year of the travel advisor. Says Virtuoso CEO Matthew D. Upchurch, "Never before have we had such a strong demand for travel, combined with a deeper appreciation for the value of a professional travel advisor." Let's face it – travel is more complex than it used to be, and either way, you can't VIP yourself.

After nearly two years of paused or reduced travel, we're overdue for that big trip. And with many in the workforce enjoying more flexibility, we can stay longer since we're not bound to an office. My mantra is, life is short and the world is wide. So what are we waiting for? Let's go.



JUST BACK FROM: VIENNA
I was thrilled to reconnect with travel industry colleagues on a recent trip to Austria's capital for Virtuoso Symposium (read about the trip on page 16). Above: All dressed up at Vienna's historic Spanish Riding School, transformed for our black-and-white ball, and (left) souvenirs from my stay.

Elaine Srnka
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR &
VICE PRESIDENT, CONTENT
esrnka@virtuoso.com



Travel Goals

The *Virtuoso Life* team's resolutions for the new year:

- Be more spontaneous, and travel somewhere far away that I've never been.
– *Melanie Fowler, design director*
- I'm manifesting Mallorca and a stay at Belmond's La Residencia.
– *Korena Bolding Sinnett, art director*
- Pretty much the same as every year: Visit at least one country and U.S. state I haven't been to before.
– *Justin Paul, senior editor*
- Get a suitcase I actually like! I'm leaning toward Briggs & Riley, based on my colleagues' rave reviews.
– *Marika Cain, managing editor*
- Mine is to not overpack. Also, to focus on supporting local businesses wherever I go.
– *Emma Franke, digital specialist*
- Finally learn another language. This is going to be my year! – *Elaine Srnka*

(ELAINE SRNKA) ROBERT STANZIONE / PHOTOGRAPHIC EXCELLENCE INTERNATIONAL



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“What’s your idea of a great wellness retreat?”



COZY COMFORT
Scottish textile artist Araminta Campbell drew on Highlands flora to create the house pattern found on The Fife Arms' tartan blanket, available in Scottish lambswool or cashmere. From \$340 at shop.thefifearms.com.

“The geothermal pools at Auberge Resorts' Solage are a perfect way to relax and reenergize in Napa Valley.” – S.A.

“Recently I’ve dreamed about revisiting Londolozi in South Africa to connect with animals and the environment. Just thinking about it brings me great comfort and peace.”

“Now that I’m approaching 50, I’d love to do a med-spa makeover at the Waldhotel Bürgenstock above Switzerland’s Lake Lucerne.”

“A warm destination with water lapping at the side of a ship, the smell of ocean air, and maybe a gull or two in the background is exactly what I need to recharge my soul.” – M.H.

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Contributors



**Writer and
Photographer
Chris Schalkx**
Bangkok

"Bangkok's Riverside Renaissance," page 44
THE REPORT: "Poking around Talad Noi reminded me why I love Bangkok so much, even after calling it home for nearly a decade. There's this typical Thai medley of grit and glam, and the creative energy flowing through these streets is infectious."
TRAVEL RESOLUTION: "While assignments take me to some of the most beautiful spots around Asia, I can't remember the last time I took a work-free holiday without interviews and deadlines. This year, I plan to switch off more often and draw on travel to de-stress and reinvigorate my spirit."

@@chrsschlxx



**Photographer
Clara Tuma**
Zürich

"Fragile Beauty," page 94

THE REPORT: "I was really taken by the ancient objects in Murano's glass museum: There are transparent filigree vases and bowls, ornate and extremely delicate, some decorated with intricate gold designs. It's mind-blowing to think that they were used as everyday objects and have survived the past 500 years with just a scratch or two."
TRAVEL RESOLUTION: "I canceled a trip to Croatia's beautiful Istrian Peninsula a couple of years ago due to bad weather. I hope to catch up with that plan in 2022, with a little sailing through the islands off the coast."

@@claratuma
photography



**Digital Content
Specialist
Emma Franke**
Seattle

"Holy Matrimony!," page 56

THE REPORT: "While I was writing this article, my childhood best friend got engaged. Does that make the story a good-luck charm for long-awaited proposals? Follow Virtuoso Travel on social media and share the article to find out."
TRAVEL RESOLUTION: "Offsetting the carbon emissions from my flights using Carbonfund.org."

@@virtuosoldt



**Photographer
Dan Kullberg**
Stockholm

"Sweden's Warm Heart," page 52

THE REPORT: "While shooting this story about the Swedish *fika* tradition, I discovered that the quality of cakes here isn't too different from what you can get in Paris – and the coffee is great too."
TRAVEL RESOLUTION: "Stay safe when traveling and take care of the people I meet by respecting health protocols for face masks and social distancing. Enjoy the chances we have; there's so much to experience and discover – and I say that after more than 25 years of traveling all over the world."

@@dankullberg_
photographer



Tie the knot

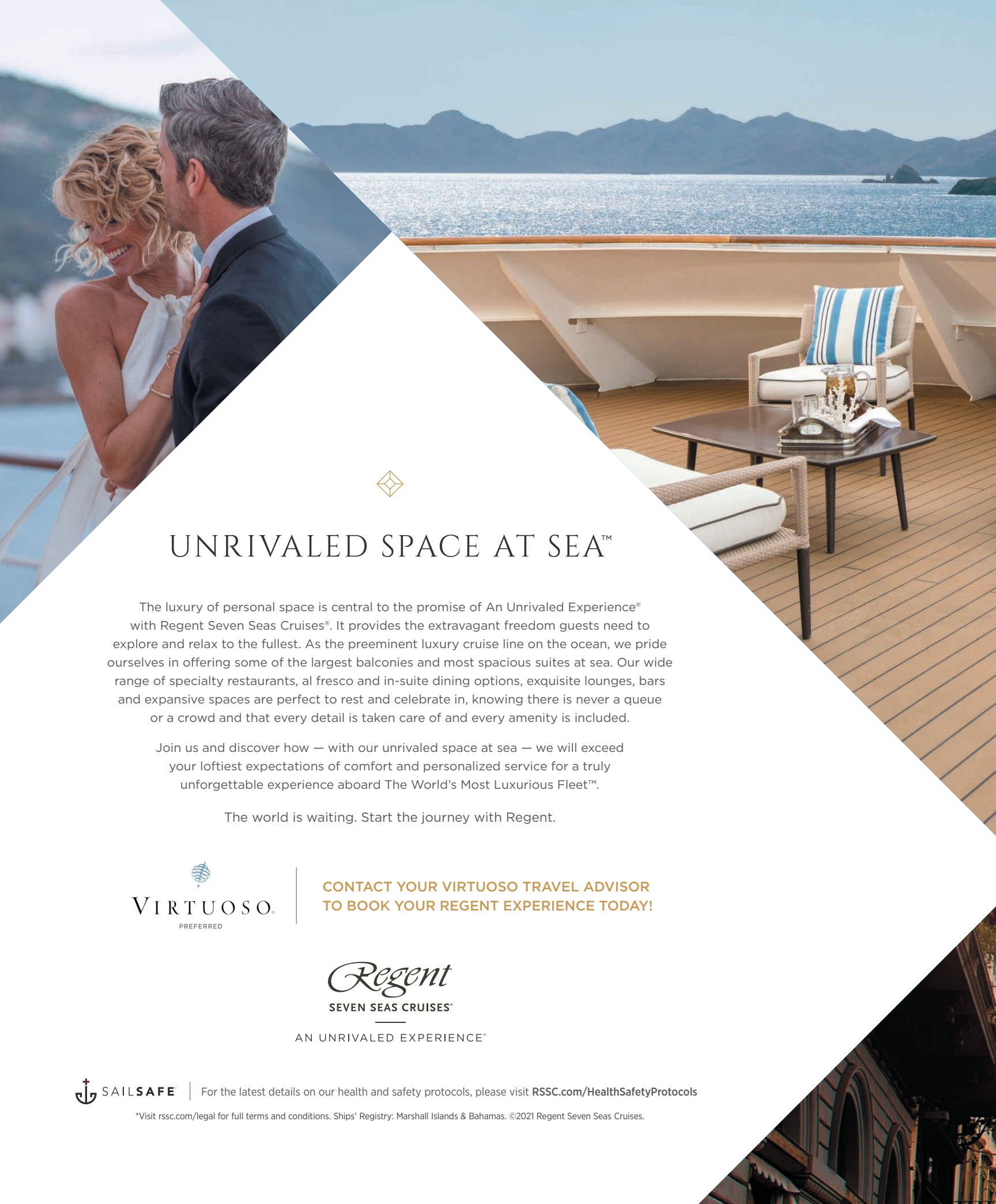
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Clockwise from top: An after-hours museum tour, ballroom waltzers, Virtuoso's Matthew D. Upchurch flanked by agency executives Nancy Strong and Anne Scully, and Saint Stephen's Cathedral.

We Had a Ball

Waltzing through Vienna with insider access and VIP experiences, thanks to Virtuoso connections.

BY ELAINE SRNKA

KKNOWN AS THE CITY OF MUSIC FOR THE ROSTER OF classical composers from Mozart to Beethoven who've lived there through the centuries, Vienna boasts a cultural scene that's at once historic and vibrant. Its glitzy ball season, customarily November through March, showcases the Viennese waltz, one of dance's most time-honored traditions.

After the challenges of the last two years, the mood at a recent Virtuoso gala was cautiously celebratory as our group donned



From top left: A fiacre food tour, dinner at Palais Liechtenstein, private performances by the Vienna Boys Choir and a musical prodigy, and agency owner Michael Holt and Explora Journeys' Chris Austin.

tuxes and ball gowns, cuff links and opera gloves, and joined friends and colleagues to twirl around the dance floor at a formal black-and-white soiree at the opulent Spanish Riding School.

The reason for the gathering: Virtuoso Symposium, an event that brought together more than 300 top executives from travel agencies, hotels, cruise lines, tour companies, tourism boards, and others from 33 countries to network, discuss industry news and what's next in luxury travel, and learn more about this city on the Danube.

The event was originally scheduled to happen in March 2020 in recognition of what would have been the 20th anniversary of the company's rebranding to Virtuoso – which debuted in Vienna.

“This city, which celebrates virtuosos of every discipline, plays a special role in Virtuoso's story,” says Virtuoso CEO Matthew D. Upchurch.

Highlights included an after-hours reception at the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien (Museum of Fine Arts), a performance by the Vienna Boys Choir, and an improvisational piano piece from 16-year-old composer prodigy Alma Deutscher created especially for Virtuoso. After business sessions, networking meetings, and roundtable discussions, attendees set out to explore the city. Virtuoso on-site partner Mondial curated private experiences that included Burgenland winetasting; visits to a 900-year-old monastery or the Benedictine abbey in Wachau Valley; cooking classes and food tours; and behind-the-scenes access to museums, palaces, and royal purveyors that once supplied the imperial court.

“There's a distinction between VIP access and the type of exclusivity that shuts people

out,” says Michael Gigl of the Austrian National Tourist Office. “Fortunately, Virtuoso advisors can offer their clients the same experiences they enjoyed at Symposium.”

Beyond the organized activities, Vienna is an easy city to explore. “Vienna has it all,” says Wendy Davis, a Toronto-based agency executive. “It's a walkable city with art, palaces, cuisine, history, and shopping – plus it's very connected, with good air and train service, and of course river cruising.”

Dallas-based agency executive Jim Strong praises the city's luxury hotel options, which, he says, “offer a caliber of excellent service not often seen elsewhere.” Regardless of where you stay or what you do, sampling the local cuisine is a given. “You can't go wrong with Wiener schnitzel,” says Strong. “Order a Stiegl as the beer of choice with a fresh large pretzel.” That sounds like a toast to travel. *Prost!*

We Couldn't Have Done It Without:

- Austrian National Tourist Office
- Vienna Tourist Board
- Hotel Bristol, A Luxury Collection Hotel
- Hotel Imperial, A Luxury Collection Hotel
- The Ritz-Carlton, Vienna
- Park Hyatt Vienna
- Palais Hansen Kempinski
- Hotel Sacher Wien
- Palais Coburg Residenz
- Mondial Destination Management

Note: At press time, newly heightened travel restrictions were in place, so check with your Virtuoso advisor for current guidelines. **VI**

FLOWER POWERED

April through October, AmaWaterways guests explore Europe's once-a-decade horticultural festival on the river-cruising leader's nine itineraries through Amsterdam.

FLOWER FANS, HOBBY GARDENERS, and lovers of sustainable spaces will converge in Almere, outside Amsterdam, from April 14 to October 9 for the international horticultural extravaganza that is **Floriade**. Held every ten years, the expo showcases flowers, plants, vegetables, and fruit, as well as all manner of green innovations – from the most efficient way to grow tomatoes to cutting-edge solar roof tiles and the latest in vertical gardens. This installment's theme, Growing Green Cities, focuses on solutions for food supplies, green urban development, global health, and energy generation.

Long a sustainable leader in the travel industry, **AmaWaterways** earned Green Award certification in 2020 for the safety, quality, and environmental performance of its European fleet (including one ship that reduces fuel consumption by up to 20 percent), and eco-friendly features such as solar heating systems and on-board water microfiltration. In honor of the nod, all nine of the line's itineraries through Amsterdam during the flower fest feature tours of the show, including the three highlighted below.

MEDIEVAL HEIDELBERG AND MORE

Embarking from Amsterdam, the eight-day **Rhine Castles & Swiss Alps** cruise kicks off with a full day at Floriade, then winds south through Germany's castle-studded wine country, the French region of Alsace, and finally, to Basel, Switzerland. Along the way, visit the preserved medieval city of Heidelberg and its red sandstone castle, enjoy a Kölsch or two in the beer's homeland of Cologne, and bike through Switzerland, France, and Germany – all on one excursion.

BEER AND CHOCOLATE

After a day of touring Floriade or Amsterdam's canals, head south to Utrecht and the fairy-tale Castle de Haar on the



eight-day **Best of Holland & Belgium** sailing. Set out on a bike ride to the historic town of Middelburg, with its twisted alleyways and iconic Gothic town hall, then it's on to the medieval charms of Ghent and Bruges before Brussels and Antwerp, where chocolate and beer tastings top

the list of excursions. Loop north to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Kinderdijk to see its famous windmills, some of which date to the eighteenth century.

CHAGALL'S WINDOWS

Take in Floriade before casting off from



Amsterdam on the **Vineyards of the Rhine & Moselle** eight-day voyage to Luxembourg. Visit Mainz, at the confluence of the Main and Rhine rivers, and see artist Marc Chagall's stained-glass windows at the city's Romanesque cathedral. Tour Cochem's

famed mustard mill – one of the oldest of its kind in Europe – then toast the region's riesling at a winery tour and tasting in Bernkastel.

Virtuoso travelers receive up to a \$300 ship credit on all AmaWaterways cruises.

Clockwise from left: Traditional Dutch windmills near the village of Zaanstad, hiking along the Rhine, spring blooms in the Netherlands, and a horse-shoe bend on the Moselle.

London Calling

A report from a whirlwind weekend to kick-start travel to the UK.

BY IANTHE BUTT



London aglow and (below) Virtuoso CEO Matthew D. Upchurch receiving a salute from the Band of the Coldstream Guards, the oldest regiment in the British Army.



RECENTLY, A GROUP OF U.S. AND Canadian Virtuoso advisors headed to the English capital to celebrate the reopening of tourism. “London and the UK are ready to welcome back U.S. visitors, and we want to show people that testing is straightforward, and how few restrictions are in place,” says Nicola Butler of NoteWorthy, the Virtuoso on-site tour connection that organized the event.

Advisors stayed at hotels in the Virtuoso portfolio and were treated to a host of impressive experiences that would be inaccessible for anyone but a Virtuoso traveler. Thanks to NoteWorthy’s 35 years of creating insider travel experiences and Butler’s unrivaled personal relationships throughout Great Britain, the group enjoyed

highlights such as a private viewing of Princess Diana’s wedding dress at Kensington Palace; meeting the VIHs (Very Important Horses) of the Household Cavalry at the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park; an intimate performance by the stars of the hit West End musical *Six*; and an address from His Royal Highness the Earl of Wessex, underlining the importance of U.S.-UK travel.

“Our advisors are not just influencers, they’re impactors,” says Virtuoso chairman and CEO Matthew D. Upchurch, who also attended. “When they come and experience a destination, they go back and inspire others to travel there by sharing their firsthand experience.” Here are a few of their tips and takeaways from the weekend.

THE 2022 MINDSET “Now’s the time to splurge on a special experience. There’s no better revenge travel moment than getting a play-by-play explanation of the pomp and ceremony behind the Changing of the Guard, from within the barracks.”

— *Henley Vazquez, New York City*

HOTEL HOPPING “London is a city of distinct neighborhoods with iconic hotels in each area: the Corinthia, in the heart of history near Whitehall; The Savoy, overlooking the Thames; or Claridge’s, The Connaught, Brown’s Hotel, and The Langham, for easy access to Mayfair’s fine dining and galleries.

“London is a magical place, and the magic that travel advisors can make happen for our guests through our personal connections stands above the rest.”

– Malaka Hilton, Sarasota, Florida



VIP access and the people who make it happen, from top: Executives from Virtuoso host hotels and NoteWorthy, working the phones in the Churchill War Rooms, Princess Diana's wedding dress at Kensington Palace, and behind the scenes with the Household Cavalry at the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park.



There's Four Seasons at Park Lane, 45 Park Lane, and The Dorchester, just moments from Hyde Park; The Berkeley and Mandarin Oriental for Harrods and Buckingham Palace; the Shangri-La – inside The Shard – close to Borough Market; and Rosewood London ideally placed for Covent Garden.”

– Debbie Bush, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

“Hoteliers in London are not just service focused, they're curators of British history. At the Savoy we had a sneak first look at the Royal Suite, which has been transformed by Gucci and Christie's to celebrate the fashion house's centenary year. Who knew that founder Guccio Gucci was once employed at the Savoy as a luggage porter?”

– Vanessa McGovern, Mooresville, North Carolina



VIP EXPERIENCES “We visited Charing Cross station with a renowned underground historian to tour closed-to-the-public platforms used for MI5 training and movies such as *Skyfall* and *The Bourne Ultimatum* – truly unique.”

– Craig Bush, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

“Bypassing the crowds and having the chance to sit behind the glass in Winston Churchill's chair is unforgettable. On one arm of the chair, you can feel grooves from where he tapped his ring. Whether you're a history buff, an Anglophile, or a fan of VIP treatment, it's a must.”

– Diane Sherer, La Jolla, California



“You can take your kids to visit Shakespeare's Globe, set foot on a replica ship that circumnavigated the earth in 1577, and touch the Roman wall all in one morning. With our insider knowledge, we unlock access to touch, understand, and explore history and the lasting heritage found in London.”

– Stephanie Fisher, Key Largo, Florida VI

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PLACES
TRENDS
CULTURE
STYLE



Raa Atoll's Bodufushi Island, home to the new Joali Being.

Maldivian Makeover

Name a wellness resolution – better sleep, less stress, lounging on a beach-club deck with a sundowner in hand (no judgment) – and the Maldives' newest eco-luxe resort stands ready to help you accomplish it. Opened last month, the 68-room **Joali Being** invites travelers to tune out on an Indian Ocean islet where Zen-inducing overwater villas come with private pools and meditation tools, and mornings are spent strolling forested sound-healing paths or soaking in the hydrotherapy hall's hammam. Guests can head to the spa for energy-balancing massages, Watsu therapies, and other treatments to their chakras' content, or commit to a custom well-being program focused on one of four subjects: mind, skin, microbiome, or energy. Nature-based amenities include a turtle sanctuary, as well as an herbology center and a food hall with menus dedicated to vegan, vegetarian, and pescatarian cuisine. Intensive well-being retreats range from six days to three weeks, but serenity starts with the floatplane's touchdown. *Villas from \$2,142, including breakfast daily and a \$250 spa credit.*

PASSPORT IS REPORTED BY:
Amy Cassell, Joel Centano, Elaine Glusac, Bethanne Patrick, and Janice Wald Henderson

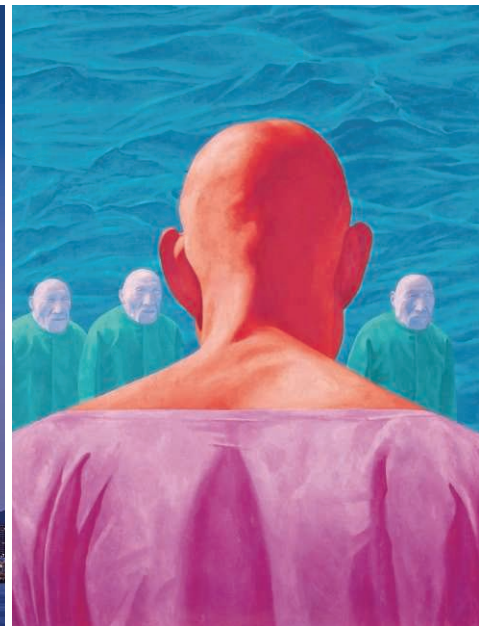
Lit in Rome

See Rome through the eyes of the brilliant and brawling master of chiaroscuro, baroque painter Caravaggio. Guests of the 121-room **Hotel Eden** can take a two-hour walking tour led by an art historian who will gamely tackle questions on topics ranging from Caravaggio's conviction for murder to his dramatic use of light. *Doubles from \$1,275, including breakfast daily and Caravaggio tour.*



HONG KONG SHINES ON

Hong Kong's first museum devoted to contemporary visual culture, **M+** adds an architectural landmark to the West Kowloon Cultural District in a Herzog & de Meuron-designed tower that doubles as a supersize movie screen, broadcasting images across Victoria Harbour. Among the opening exhibits in its 33 galleries: an exploration of Hong Kong's transformation since the 1960s, another tracing the development of contemporary Chinese art, and an installation of tens of thousands of clay figurines that British sculptor Antony Gormley created with roughly 300 Guangdong villagers. Head to the Roof Garden for some of West Kowloon's best harbor and city views, along with an interactive "playscape" by the Isamu Noguchi Foundation.



Clockwise from top: Seventeenth-century Caravaggio paintings in Rome's Church of San Luigi dei Francesi, Fang Lijun's 1995.2, and M+ lights up Hong Kong.

(CARAVAGGIO PAINTINGS) VITO ARCOMANO/ALAMY, (HONG KONG) VIRGILE SIMON BERTRAND, (1995.2) FANG LIJUN, (SWEATER) KORENA BOLDING SINNETT

Climate Cool

Here's to a bright future: **Vincero's** new polarized Villa sunglasses are fully UVA/UVB protective and carbon neutral. The California-based company offsets its emissions and uses recycled materials in much of its packaging and products.

\$95, vincerocollective.com.



First-Class Comfort

For 12 years, **Pact** has crafted cozy, perfect-for-planes joggers and cardigans in organic cotton – which requires a tenth of the water used by conventional cotton. Its versatile new cowl-neck Cozy Sweater Poncho embodies in-flight comfort with a roomy fit and tidy half sleeves.

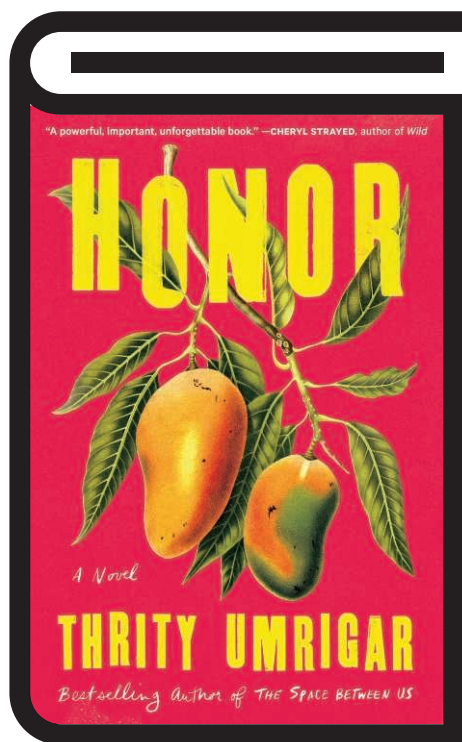
\$95, wearpact.com.

GET CARDED



Covid-19 vaccination cards are becoming as important as passports for international travel – and closer to home, as crucial as tickets to sporting events or reservations to that favorite restaurant around the corner. **VaxCard** allows holders to leave the government-issued original safely at home and carry a wallet-size card printed with an exact image of it, as well as a digital copy in their iPhone's Apple Wallet. While the world has yet to agree on universal credentials and apps, VaxCard is currently accepted for entrance at a wide range of destinations and venues, ranging from Hawaii to the Doge's Palace in Venice and pro sporting events. *\$9.99 for a physical card and \$3.99 for a virtual iPhone version, vaxcard.com.*

Carry-On Companions

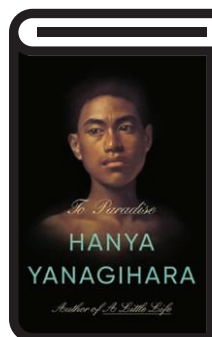


● HONOR

BY THRITY UMRIGAR (*Algonquin Books*)

Smita Agarwal, born in India and brought up in Ohio, thrives as a journalist. She's never returned to her home country, but when a colleague is injured, Smita heads there to cover a murder trial. Meena Mustafa, a young Hindu mother, has accused her brothers of killing her Muslim husband. As Smita investigates, she realizes Meena's trauma encompasses her own conflicted feelings about her ethnic identity and her homeland's somewhat misogynistic culture. As the trial progresses, Smita falls in love with an Indian man and must decide if she's willing to stay in Southeast Asia permanently.

PACK IT FOR: Cruising the Ganges.

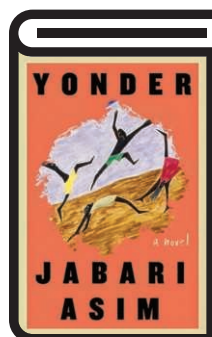


● TO PARADISE

BY HANYA YANAGIHARA (*Doubleday*)

Comprising three (almost) separate stories, *To Paradise* begins in a late nineteenth-century alt-Manhattan, part of the "Free States," where arranged same-sex marriages are as common as hansom cabs. A Washington Square Park mansion once owned by the Bingham family connects the 1890s tale to a twentieth-century AIDS epidemic saga of a young Hawaiian man and his older lover coping with family secrets, and, in 2093, to a woman struggling with her husband's frequent disappearances from a dystopian Hawaii. Yanagihara's latest is dazzling, deep, and mysterious.

PACK IT FOR: A digital detox on Lanai.

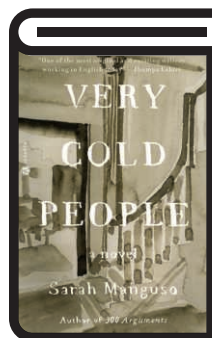


● YONDER

BY JABARI ASIM (*Simon & Schuster*)

At Placid Hall, a plantation set in an unspecified part of the American South, enslaved people refer to themselves as "The Stolen" and to white people as "Thieves." Noted novelist and critic Jabari Asim creates an allegory in which Black characters use friendship, love, and ritual to maintain their humanity under a brutal and unpredictable master – until a night when an unthinkable murder happens. *The Stolen*, encouraged by ideas shared by an itinerant Black preacher, must decide whether to choose unknown freedom or familiar toil.

PACK IT FOR: Lowcountry road trips.



● VERY COLD PEOPLE

BY SARAH MANGUSO (*Hogarth*)

Well known for her nonfiction books, such as *300 Arguments*, Manguso has written a spare debut novel focusing on a young woman's coming-of-age in chilly Waitsfield, Massachusetts, where the town WASPs are almost as aloof as narrator Ruthie's difficult parents (one Italian, one European Jewish). Brief vignettes add up to a portrait of adolescents repeatedly cut down by authority figures, especially the ones who are meant to care for and nurture their dreams of life in the larger world.

PACK IT FOR: A wellness retreat at Miraval Berkshires.



Explora

JOURNEYS

EXPLORA JOURNEYS LAUNCHES ITS CONFIDENT BOLD VISION FOR OCEAN TRAVEL WITH ITS INAUGURAL SAILINGS

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When the Swiss-Italian Aponte family – owners of the MSC Group – decided to fulfil their lifelong dream and create a new luxury cruise line, their vision was to go far beyond building the sleekest and chicest of ships. Seafarers for generations, they want to harness and share their passion and expertise - transforming ocean travel for a new generation of curious, conscious and committed travellers. As such, Explora Journeys is the Aponte's personal crusade to reinvent the industry and encourage a deeper and more enriching sense of discovery and immersion, both on and off the beaten track as bucket list destinations are complemented by paths less travelled. Each of the eight Inaugural Journeys Collection will give guests exclusive access beyond the traditional luxury cruise experience, inviting them to travel deeper and linger a little longer on sailings that span the globe from Europe and the Arctic Circle to the Americas, Hawaii and the Caribbean.

Become part of the Explora Journeys seafaring community by joining its maiden voyage in May 2023. This Mediterranean exploration

begins in Barcelona – the cosmopolitan capital of Catalonia, Joan Miro's birthplace and home to many of Pablo Picasso and Antoni Gaudi's most extraordinary works – setting sail for the Cote d'Azur just as the early-summer sun starts to cool. The first stop in Saint Tropez allows guests to savour the glamour of the French Riviera, or journey further by private charter to enjoy the cultural cachet of old-quarter Cannes or F Scott Fitzgerald's Cap d'Antibes, before sailing onwards to Calvi in Corsica, an island known for its craggy mountain beauty and French-Italian charm. Next wander amidst the endless wonders of Ancient Rome, followed two days later by a change of scene as the ship docks in Fiskardo, a vibrant fishing village with bustling waterfront and Venetian architecture on the northern-most tip of Captain Corelli's Kefalonia, the largest and most mesmerising of the Ionian islands. Two days in Istanbul allows guests to embed themselves in its intoxicating mix of European and Asian influences, before celebrating the journey's end with a climb to the colonnaded hilltop citadel of the Acropolis in Athens. Each sailing is





“EACH SAILING IS SCATTERED WITH A FEW NIGHTS AT SEA, ENSURING GUESTS CAN ENJOY THE FLEET’S ELEGANT AND SPACIOUS SUITES AND RESIDENCES, ITS NINE CULINARY EXPERIENCES AND STUNNING ARRAY OF STYLISH PLACES TO UNWIND.”

scattered with a few nights at sea, ensuring guests can enjoy the fleet’s elegant and spacious suites, penthouses and residences, its nine culinary experiences and stunning array of stylish places to unwind.

The inaugural Norwegian Journey, which sees EXPLORA I setting sail from Southampton in July 2023, moves away from the glittering Mediterranean to traverse some of Norway’s narrowest and most bewitching fjords. Charting a course northwards to the Arctic Circle and the land of the midnight sun, this voyage sails between Norway’s southernmost city of Kristiansand, with its traditional wooden houses and white sandy beaches, and the lively Tromsø, taking in the UNESCO-protected Geiranger Fjord, the luminescent turquoise

icy tongues of the awe-inspiring Svartisen glaciers, a trek – for those willing – to the Artic Globe Monument on Vikingen Island, and multitudinous skerries, snow-capped mountains and enchanting wild waterfalls along the way. This is an aquatic adventure that embraces the Scandinavian idea of “nyde”, meaning the slow and beautiful enjoyment of life – a concept that chimes perfectly with the Apon-te vision for Explora Journeys.

The Explora Journeys team look forward to welcoming guests on EXPLORA I’s maiden voyage from Barcelona to Athens (31 May-11 June 2023), or from Southampton to Tromsø (11-23 July 2023), or any of the other journeys in our collection. For more details, please contact your Virtuoso travel advisor.

On Deck

What to look forward to as cruising makes its comeback.



BOULUD HITS THE SEAS

Daniel Boulud debuts his first cruise-ship restaurant, the 50-seat Le Voyage by Daniel Boulud, on board **Celebrity Cruises'** 3,260-passenger *Celebrity Beyond*. The jewel box-like space stars globally inspired menus, reflecting both Boulud's travels and the regions where *Beyond* sails. *Inaugural departure: April 27; from \$1,909.*

PACIFIC EXPLORER

This spring, **American Queen Voyages** debuts with the launch of the 186-passenger *Ocean Victory*, an expedition vessel that will sail 12- and 13-day itineraries through Alaska's Inside Passage, as well as 15-day voyages between San Diego and San José (Puerto Caldera), Costa Rica, in the spring and fall. The ship's X-Bow design promises a smoother, quieter ride in choppy seas, while sea-level fold-down decks make for easier Zodiac boarding, and a sliding overwater viewing platform provides close marine-life encounters. *Inaugural departure: April 18; from \$5,099.*



Sustainably minded river-cruising line **Avalon Waterways** now offsets every passenger's carbon footprint with donations to Trees4Travel. Cruisers can offset flights and other segments of their trips via a link on Avalon's website.



From left: Previews of *Le Voyage* by Daniel Boulud, *Ocean Victory*, *Explora I*'s indoor pool, and a suite on the *Viking Mississippi*.

MAKING WAVES

Details about the first luxury cruise line to debut in years are still pretty hush-hush, but **Explora Journeys** has teased a few highlights of the first of its four ships, the 900-passenger *Explora I*. Oceanfront suites will start at a spacious 377 square feet, while residences reach up to 3,014 square feet. Cruisers can expect four pools (one with a retractable glass roof), nine restaurants, and an indoor-outdoor spa. *Explora I* will launch in 2023 with eight-day voyages designed around unconventional arrival and departure times for more hours ashore, as well as overnight stays. *Inaugural departure to be announced.*

THE VIKINGS ARE COMING

This summer, **Viking** river cruises stakes a claim to North America's most iconic waterway. The new 386-passenger *Viking Mississippi* embraces the European line's Scandinavian design with state-rooms that include verandas, king beds, complimentary minibars, and bathrooms with heated floors. Aquavit Terrace is the spot for alfresco dining with a grill and carving station, while the River Café features gumbo and other regional favorites. *Inaugural departure: August 27; from \$4,899.*

Rep Your Pied-à-Terre

U.S. fashion brand Frame ignites a sartorial battle of hotel icons in its latest collaborations with New York City's Carlyle hotel and the Ritz Paris.



Effortlessly Aloof

The collection inspired by the 142-room **Ritz Paris** reflects the fashion capital's roots with 22 smart white pieces sporting Ritz navy accents (and vice versa), including the Late Checkout crew, Ritz Varsity jacket, a gym duffel, and a blanket. *Doubles from \$1,315, including early check-in and late checkout, breakfast daily, and private round-trip airport transfers. Frame collection from \$78 to \$1,998, frame-store.com.*

Prep-School Cool

The 189-room **Carlyle** knows city sophisticates value no-fuss comfort too: Its collection skews 1970s Upper East Side with a lemon-yellow crew sweatshirt, forest-green shorts, and a royal-blue hoodie. *Doubles from \$650, including breakfast daily and a \$100 hotel credit. Frame collection from \$98 to \$278, frame-store.com.*



BANK ON IT After a ten-year renovation, the former Second National Bank building, designed by legendary firm McKim, Mead & White on NYC's most prominent thoroughfare, will soon house the 153-room **Fifth Avenue Hotel**, opening this spring in the NoMad neighborhood. Most guest rooms will reside in a 24-story addition; social spaces in the original 1907 landmark include a two-story vaulted lobby, an Italian restaurant, and an art-filled cocktail den. *Doubles from \$600, including breakfast daily and a \$100 dining credit.*



BREATHE EASY

Saint Lucia's 155-room wellness resort, **BodyHoliday**, has launched a program to strengthen the respiratory systems of those recovering from Covid-19. Following a diagnosis, the Covid Convalescence program employs meditation and breathing practices to increase lung capacity. The recommended five-day retreat includes arrival and departure consultations and six treatments, including hypnotherapy and others to rid the body of toxins, depending on the diagnosis. *Doubles from \$800 per night, including breakfast daily, one 50-minute spa treatment, a fitness session, a nutrition consultation, and a \$100 resort credit. Covid Convalescence program, \$800 per person for five days.*

BEACH RETREAT

Gather the gang: The new five-bedroom, eight-bathroom Casa Estancias at Puerto Rico's **St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort** serves as a private resort within the nearly 500-acre resort, with unobstructed views of the water from its two-story, glass-walled living room. The butler-serviced oceanfront estate entertains up to ten guests with its own saltwater lap pool, indoor and outdoor kitchens, a movie room, and a palm-shaded lawn leading to the 139-room St. Regis' private two-mile beach. Beyond the villa, residents have access to its nature-centric spa, tennis club, boathouse, and golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr. *Casa Estancias from \$30,000 per night, including breakfast daily, a private Champagne sabering ceremony, a complimentary golf cart for six, and a \$100 dining credit.*



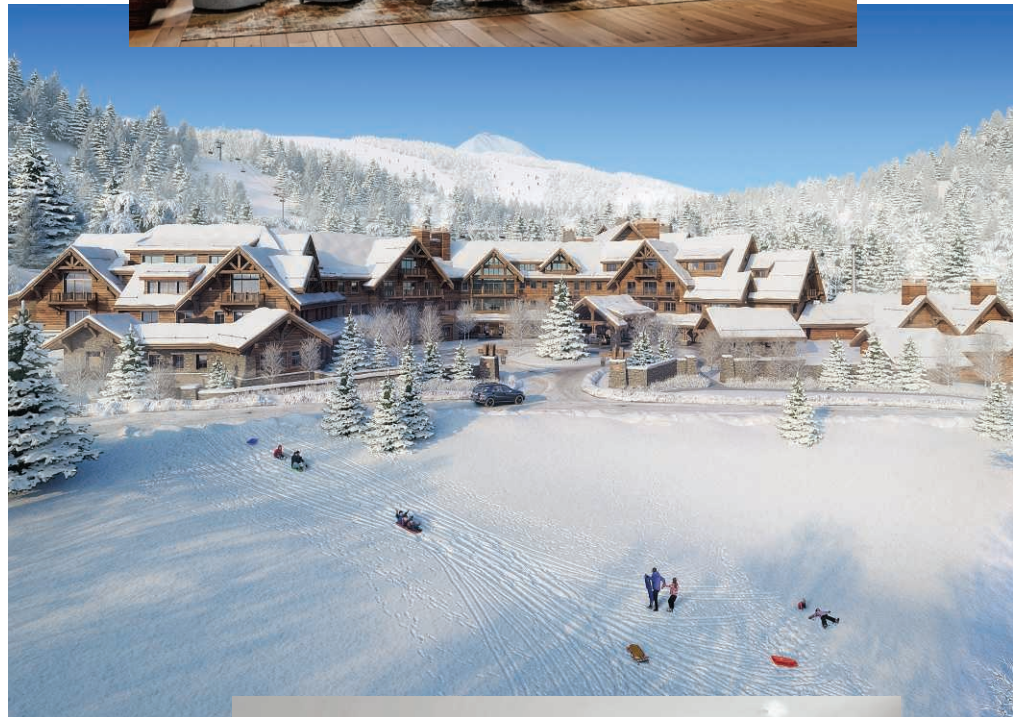
St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort's new Casa Estancias and (above) BodyHoliday's Pavitra Ayurvedic Centre.

NEW HOTEL

Powder Play

Make tracks to southern Montana for the ski country's marquee debut this season: **Montage Big Sky**, which opened in December with ski-in/ski-out access to Big Sky Resort's 5,850 acres. Fireplaces, wet bars, and marble soaking tubs distinguish the 139 rooms in the area's first luxury resort – comfortable quarters from which to explore the mountain and Yellowstone National Park's geyser-frosted landscapes 50 miles to the south. Guests return to a family swimming pool, separate lap pool, spa, and bowling alley, as well as six restaurants and bars, including Cortina, serving northern Italian specialties, and Alpenglöw, with a tableside raclette cart. In winter, the on-site Powder Park tempts families with snowbiking and tubing on a 450-foot hill, plus a practice slope for beginner skiers and riders. By spring, anglers can cast for trout on three of North America's most revered fly-fishing rivers – the Madison, Gallatin, and Yellowstone – while hikers have their pick of 30-plus trails, and golfers can tee off on the adjacent Spanish Peaks Mountain Club's Tom Weiskopf-designed 18-hole course. *Doubles from \$1,395, including breakfast daily and a \$100 resort credit.*

From top: Montage Big Sky's lobby, sledding hill, and après-ski bar.



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ON TOUR

Capital Gains

Grenoble is 2022's European Green Capital for good reason, says **Insight Vacations'** sustainability officer, Valérie Furphy. The city, also known as the French Alps' capital, was the first in France to adopt a climate plan some 15 years ago, and, she adds, "It has shown a consistent commitment to creating a green experience for residents and visitors." This begins with an abundance of gardens and parks, including the city's largest, Parc Paul Mistral. Travelers can roam its 52 acres – and spot peregrine falcons that have made the park's Perret Tower their home – on Insight's 16-day guided tour of France. They'll also join a raclette dinner at a bistro belonging to the Association Française des Maîtres Restaurateurs, a national organization emphasizing local and home-made cuisine. On the menu in Provence: wine and olive oil tastings at an organic estate. *Departures: Multiple dates, April 2 through October 1; from \$5,075.*



HOTELS

JOYRIDES IN GERMANY

Guests of Frankfurt's 163-room **Villa Kennedy**, Munich's 160-room **Charles Hotel**, and Berlin's 145-room **Hotel de Rome** can now get behind the wheel of the Rocco Forte properties' new high-performance, hybrid-electric Polestar 1 and all-electric Polestar 2 vehicles. Yes, the cars go from zero to 60 in slightly over four seconds, but slowing down to see the surrounding landscapes promises its own set of thrills, particularly on these scenic spins suggested by The Charles' director of guest services, Claus Banczyk:

- **FROM VILLA KENNEDY:** The Rhine Valley, a magnificent UNESCO World Heritage site, is easily accessible from Frankfurt by car. A worthy stop along the Rhine River is Worms, one of Germany's oldest cities and famous for its eleventh-century cathedral.
- **FROM THE CHARLES HOTEL:** The German Alpine Road winds along mountains and lakes for some 280 miles, from Lindau to Berchtesgaden. Must-sees include the Ettal Abbey near Oberammergau and royal castles near Füssen.
- **FROM HOTEL DE ROME:** Only 45 minutes from Berlin lies the university town of Potsdam, with castles and lakes galore, which Quentin Tarantino chose as the setting for *Inglourious Basterds*.

Green lights (clockwise from left): Grenoble explorations, a Polestar 1 hybrid-electric coupe, the German Alpine Road, and Explora Torres del Paine.

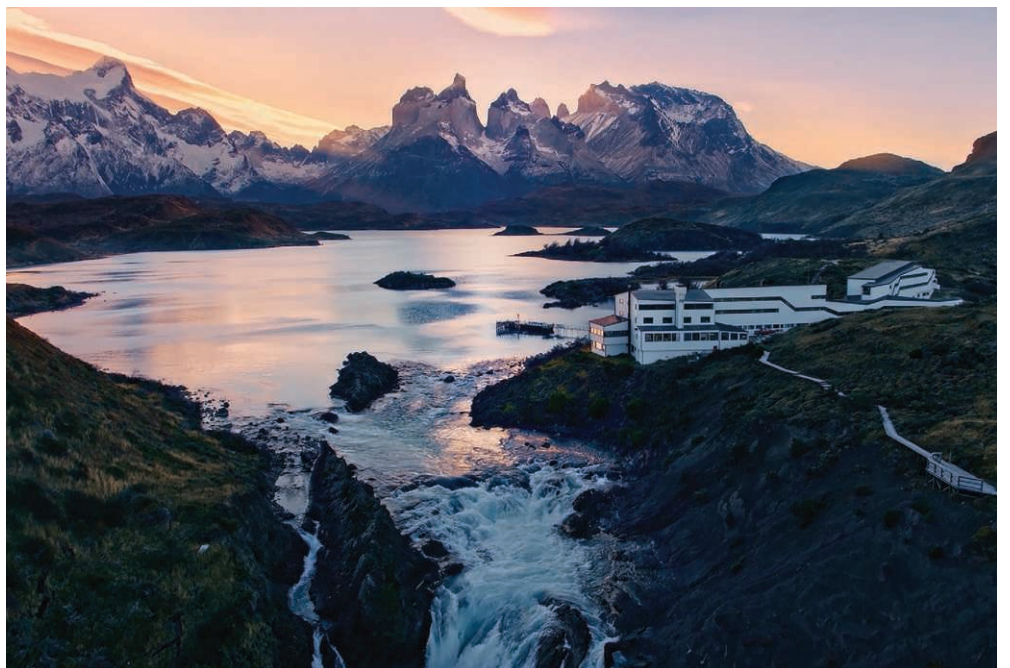
(GRENOBLE) DAMIEN LAMY/GETTY IMAGES



Forever Wild

Created by eco-lodge operator Explora in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, Chile's new Torres del Paine Explora Conservation Reserve will preserve nearly 15,000 acres of Patagonian wilderness in perpetuity. That's huge news not only for the scores of endemic plant and animal species that call the reserve home, but for future visitors too, who can take in its sublime views of the Paine Horns, ride horses across the endless Patagonian steppe, and contribute to conservation programs such as hands-on tree planting. Look for Explora's on-site guesthouse and conservation center to open in 2023, though visits to the reserve can be made sooner on guided treks from the nearby 49-room **Explora Torres del Paine** lodge. *Doubles from \$1,154 per person, including airport transfers, all meals, an open bar, and guided excursions with Explora's guides.*

(GERMANY) LESKAS/GETTY IMAGES



WELLNESS

Natural Connection

A new collaboration between Red Carnation Hotels and Tata Harper Skincare brings the balms of the Green Mountain State to the wilds of southern Africa. Harper’s 100 percent organic, cruelty-free, hyperpotent botanicals – sustainably produced on her Vermont farm – now feature in signature spa treatments at Botswana’s 12-suite **Xigera Safari Lodge**, along with South Africa’s 18-room **Bushmans Kloof Wilderness Reserve & Wellness Retreat** and the seaside, 70-room **Twelve Apostles Hotel & Spa** in Cape Town. Highly recommended: Harper’s 90-minute cocoon ritual, which includes a full-body wrap rich in pomegranate enzymes and honey.



Tata Harper products at Xigera Spa and (right) Nikko, Japan.

CRUISING



Back to Business

The return of large cruise ships to the Bahamas bodes well for the country’s economy, but a sustainable postpandemic recovery largely hinges on the health of its small businesses. Acts of kindness and group efforts help too. “Getting back on your feet is easier when someone has extended a hand to help pull you up,” says Josh Carroll, vice president of destination development for **Royal Caribbean Group**, which operates Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises, and Silversea, and is partnering with the Nassau-based Access Accelerator Small Business Development Centre to give \$500,000 in grants and low-interest loans to Bahamian tourism businesses. The support is the latest salvo in the group’s broader mission to mitigate the pandemic’s financial toll in the regions where it sails, including throughout the Caribbean and Alaska, where recent grants buoyed local tour providers and nonprofits such as the Fairbanks Community Food Bank.

INSIGHTS

ON SECOND THOUGHT

Opting for less-visited locales can help curb overtourism and spread tourism dollars – and lead to fresh discoveries and deeper cultural connections. Here, Virtuoso advisors weigh in on alternate destinations for your next vacation.

● IF YOU LIKE: MAUI
THEN CONSIDER: LANAI

Lanai is great for those who have been to Hawaii but want to experience a more authentic and cultural feel. The island doesn’t have a single stoplight, and traffic and overcrowding aren’t issues. Stop by the Lanai Cat Sanctuary to visit or volunteer. It’s the only rescue organization on the island, which is one of the nation’s most isolated. – *Abby Lagman, Las Vegas*

● IF YOU LIKE: KYOTO
THEN CONSIDER: NIKKO

A two-hour train ride from Tokyo, peaceful Nikko showcases UNESCO-listed temples and shrines, and is surrounded by sacred mountains. Wander the historic streets of Nikko Fudoson and soak in traditional hot springs. Lakes, waterfalls, and lush forests are also easily accessible from this small yet vibrant city. – *Lisa McLachlan, Manly, Australia*



● IF YOU LIKE: BARCELONA
THEN CONSIDER: GIRONA

Roughly 60 miles northeast of Barcelona, Girona also offers excellent Catalan cuisine, contemporary galleries, and a quintessential Spanish vibe, but in a much smaller, more walkable, and less touristed setting. It’s alive with history too: Winding cobblestoned streets lead to medieval walls, Roman ruins, and one of Europe’s best-preserved Jewish quarters. – *Carlo Rappa, London*

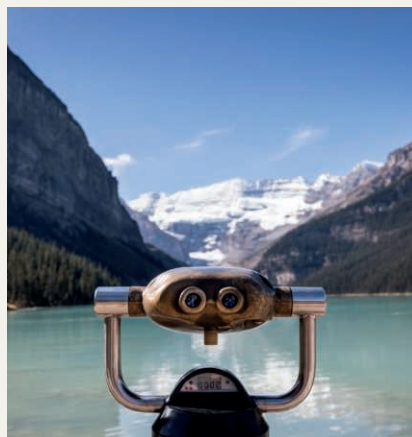


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Florence in full color: The Duomo.



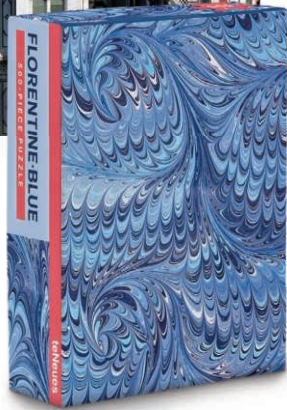
1.
SUMMERILL & BISHOP
Napkin, \$35,
summerillandbishop.com



2.
IL PAPIRO FIRENZE
Notebook, \$70,
artemest.com



3.
TOM DIXON
Swirl stepped bookends,
\$300 for set, tomixon.net



4.
TENEUES
Florentine Blue puzzle,
\$28, shop.getty.edu

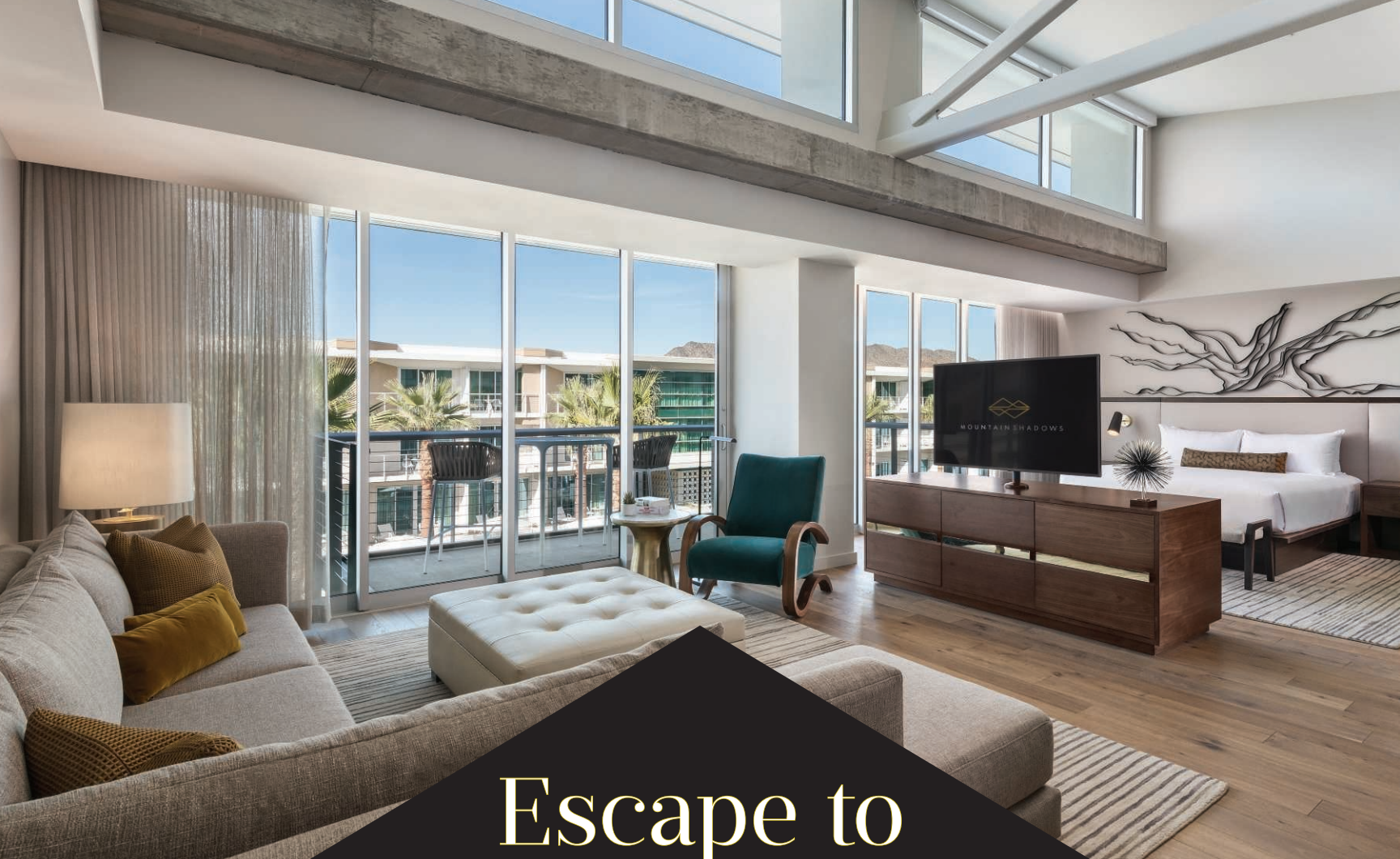


5.
HOUSES & PARTIES
Marbled paper lampshade,
\$76, housesandparties.com

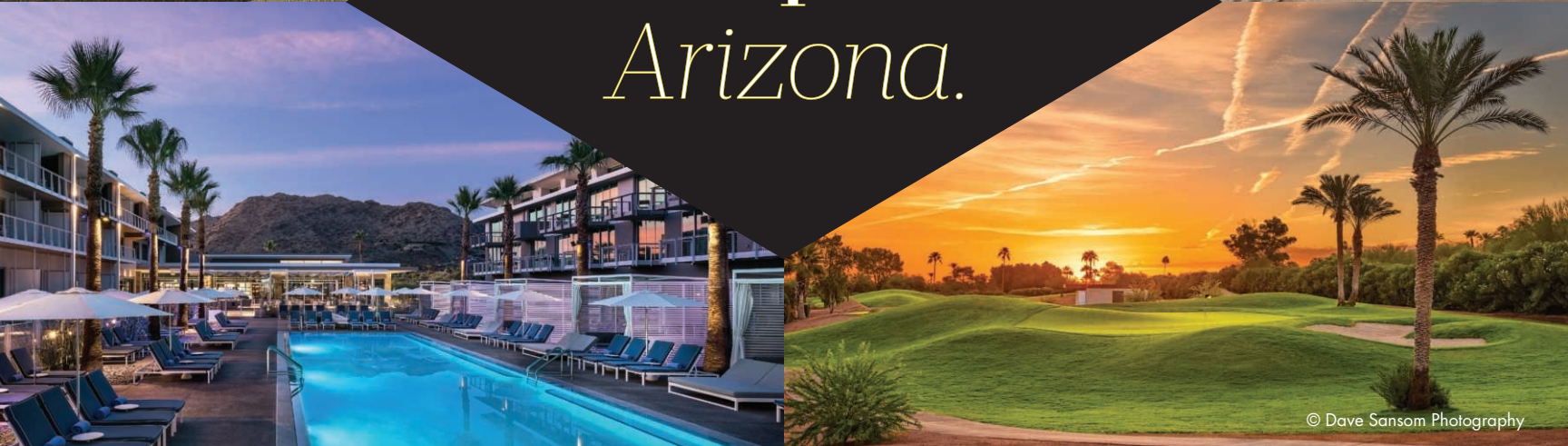
Florentine Marbling

Tuscany's capital is a paper collector's dream. For hundreds of years, artisans there have practiced the craft of *marmorizzazione*, or paper marbling, which involves floating pigment on water and transferring it to paper. The results are distinctive – and irresistible – souvenirs, ranging from hand-bound books to notecards and other stationery. Look for some of the finest examples at long-running shops, including **Il Papiro**, which has several outlets around the city. And when it's time to settle in for the evening – and perhaps pen a letter home or a travel journal missive – check into the 99-room **St. Regis Florence**, set in a fifteenth-century palazzo on the banks of the Arno River. *Doubles from \$925, including breakfast daily, one Champagne-sabering ritual for two, and a \$100 dining credit.*

(IL DUOMO) KORENA BOLDING SINNETT



Escape to *Arizona.*



© Dave Sansom Photography



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From top: Spicy and bright Charmgang, Siwilai Sound Club's Clarified Ruby, and Warehouse 30.

Bangkok's Riverside Renaissance

The scent of jasmine and joss sticks mingles with freshly roasted arabica as one of the city's oldest neighborhoods is reborn.

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS SCHALKX

GO FOR Few corners of the Thai capital encapsulate present-day Bangkok better than its riverside, where snazzy coffee shops bookend century-old mansions and tucked-away temples. In recent years, the pedestrian-friendly alleys snaking between the Chao Phraya River and Charoen Krung Road have received a jolt of energy as street artists have swathed crumbling walls in kaleidoscopic art and dilapidated warehouses have gained new lives as bars and galleries. Despite the pandemic, the riverside's renaissance shows no signs of slowing. Opened at the end of 2020, café, bookstore, and overall creative hub

Central: The Original Store on Charoen Krung Road delivers a high-design homage to one of Thailand's largest retail groups, which started its billion-dollar empire here as a humble corner store in 1950. And this past June saw the opening of **Hong Sieng Kong**, a riverside café and antiques gallery in a 200-year-old Chinese mansion, which will

soon be joined by the design-centric **Citizen Tea Canteen** around the corner.

EAT After leaving his Michelin-starred Nahm in 2018, Australian chef David Thompson has returned to Bangkok with **Aksorn**, a snug dining room on top of Central: The Original Store. Drawing on the literary theme that weaves through the building, the tasting menu changes quarterly and features dishes from Thompson's vintage cookbook collection, including meticulously re-created curries and appetizers from the mid-twentieth century.

Three of Thompson's former protégés have branched off with **Charmgang**, a neon-lit curry joint in a blink-and-you'll-miss-it alleyway off Charoen Krung Road. The interior, spearheaded by designers Saran Yen Panya and Shelley Kwok, is a quirky mishmash of Thai kitsch, with many of the furnishings for sale. The menu riffs on Thai classics

less known to tourists, with dishes such as *miang kham*-flavored fried chicken and a fiery crab curry.

DRINK In the past few years, the neighborhood has welcomed more coffee shops than you can shake a chopstick at. Café-gallery **Timo & Tintin** is the smartest of the bunch, with a concise drink list – there’s just one coffee blend, one matcha, and an oolong tea blend from Thailand’s north – and unparalleled river views from its rooftop terrace.

There’s no better place for a frosty sundown Singha than the pillow-strewn terrace of **Baan Rim Naam**, a go-slow lounge that reclaimed an eighteenth-century warehouse on the bank of the Chao Phraya. DJs often drop in to spin tunes on weekends.

Bartender-DJs mix both drinks and vinyl at **Siwilai Sound Club**’s second-floor Audiophile Bar, while sultry live jazz and red leather booths set the mood at the lounge downstairs.

SHOP **Warehouse 30** is the riverside’s creative epicenter, home to a clutch of cafés, galleries, and indie boutiques – and a frequent site for design fairs and art walks. Seek out **Horse Unit** for its collection of vintage keepsakes and apparel by home-grown designers.

For an art fix, cross the road to gallery/concept store **ATT 19**, in a 120-year-old former school building. Curator Mook Attakanwong has her finger on the pulse of Bangkok’s contemporary art scene and sells everything from affordable curios to fine antiques and works by some of Thailand’s leading artists.



Its shimmering, gold-encrusted roofs might make it look like a temple, but **Thai Home Industries** is, in fact, one of Bangkok’s best addresses for picking up classic Thai souvenirs. While the artisan-made bamboo fans, pajamas, and silverware are pricier here, they will long outlast the cheaply produced versions sold at most souvenir stores.

STAY Since 1876, the 331-room riverside **Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok** has served as the city’s grandest of dames. Check in for one of Bangkok’s top spas and the three-Michelin-starred French restaurant Le Normandie, and check out the hotel’s new audio tour to learn more about the neighborhood’s fascinating past. *Doubles from \$594, including breakfast daily and one lunch for two.*

Thanks to its location on the Chao Phraya’s northern bank, **The Peninsula Bangkok**’s 370 rooms overlook central Bangkok’s glittering cityscape. This classic hotel channels bygone grace with teak floors, white-gloved waiters, and afternoon tea on silver *étagères* served right along the river. *Doubles from \$361, including breakfast daily and afternoon tea once during stay.* VI



Clockwise from top left: Thai Home Industries’ fans, ATT 19, Che Chin Khor Temple, Central: The Original Store, and Aksorn.



REGAL ARRIVAL

5 things to love about Dubai's Atlantis The Royal.

Dubai's most anticipated resort opens this autumn with 795 rooms, a star-studded chef lineup, and a rooftop sky pool overlooking the Arabian Sea. Here's a first glimpse of its glamour.

1. STATEMENT-MAKING DESIGN

Designed by architecture firm KPF, **Atlantis The Royal** is destined to become a Dubai icon. With a stepped silhouette that features a sky bridge separating the resort from the residential units, the design makes the most of beach and city skyline views from every vantage point – including the rooftop infinity pool. For the interiors, Paris-based Sybille de Margerie employed silver, copper, and gold tones inspired by Dubai's light at various times of day.

2. DESTINATION DINING

From Spanish small plates to high-end Hellenic, The Royal tapped some of the world's most renowned chefs for its **18 restaurants**, including Gastón Acurio,

Heston Blumenthal, and Nobu Matsuhisa. José Andrés brings his signature tapas and paellas to Palm Island with Jaleo. Iranian American chef Ariana Bundy debuts Ariana's Persian Kitchen, with dishes such as Caspian-style filet kebab and rose-scented sea bass. And Estiatorio Milos, from Greek chef and restaurateur Costas Spiliadis, touches down with whole-fish sashimi and tartare.

3. THE ROYAL TREATMENT

With expansive terraces, infinity pools, and exclusive benefits such as around-the-clock butler service and private elevators, **Signature Penthouses** are the jewels in The Royal's crown. Guests in the three-bedroom Royal Mansion, for example, are greeted by 100-year-old olive trees flanking a majestic foyer. The two-level penthouse, which spans the sky bridge connecting the two buildings, is party ready with an outdoor kitchen, 360-degree views, and a room equipped with a 98-inch LED TV.

4. MAKE A SPLASH

Guests seeking that ideal Insta backdrop needn't look further than **Cloud 22**. Anchored by an infinity pool stretching nearly double the length of an Olympic pool and surrounded by luxe private cabanas, the rooftop space is a relaxing spot to soak up the sun and city views. After the sun sets, however, it's all about the club vibe, with cocktails, DJs, and the VVIP cabana.

5. ROUSE YOUR WELL-BEING

Whether your sense of well-being springs from meditating in a halotherapy salt cave, taking a snow sauna, or daily HIIT sessions on the beach, The Royal's 33,000-square-foot, indoor-outdoor **Awaken** spa can make it happen. Find your Zen among 17 therapy and VIP suites; the Hammam Sensorium, inspired by traditional Arabic integrative medicine; a lap pool and fitness classes; and a wellness center with a mindfulness pavilion and meditation gardens.



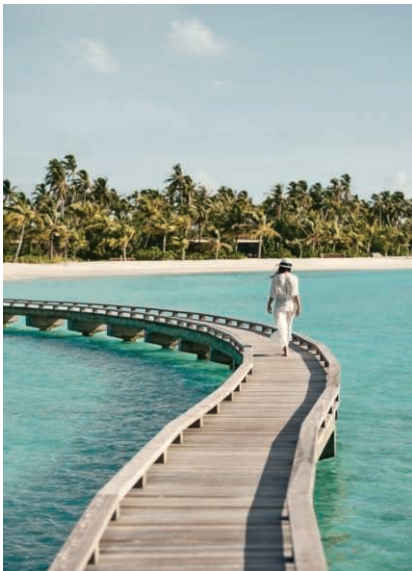
Clockwise from left: Atlantis The Royal, Cloud 22's sky pool and lounge, and the Royal Mansion's *majlis* (living room).

VIRTUOSO BEST OF THE BEST

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MALÉ, MALDIVES

Patina Maldives, Fari Islands



Beach and overwater villas offer a sanctuary for socially and environmentally conscious travelers.

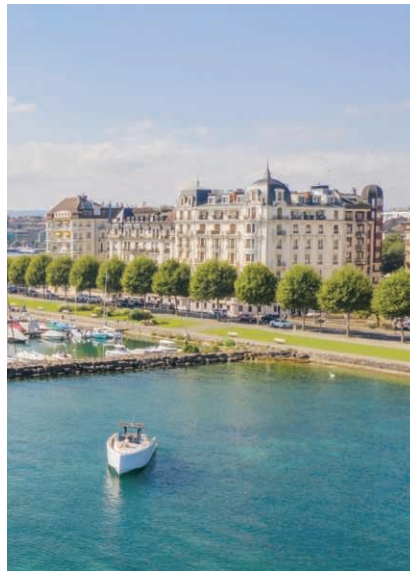
Dine on delicious, sustainable island cuisine provided by nine restaurants and bars, plus three food trucks. Try a flotation treatment in the spa. Nurture appreciation for the ocean with kids' dive lessons and turtle conservation initiatives, help seed coral reefs, and take in gorgeous sunsets from the resort's private yacht.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: One 50-minute massage for two guests, once per stay.


PATINA
MALDIVES • FARI ISLANDS

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

The Woodward, Oetker Collection



Soak up panoramas of Mont Blanc from this Swiss retreat on the shores of Lake Geneva.

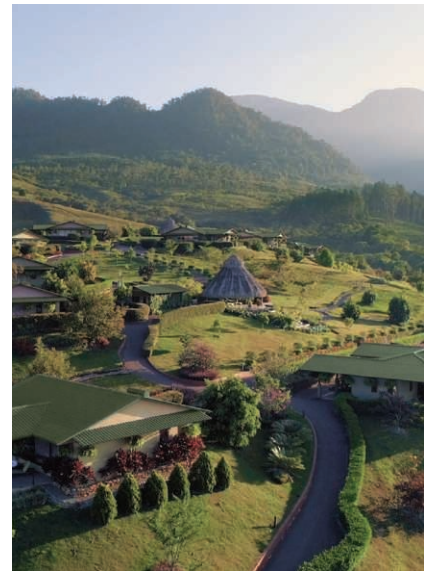
Distinctive suites offer signature furnishings, including marble fireplaces and bookcases. Get in your workout at the state-of-the-art gym and indoor pool, then follow it up with a Guerlain Spa treatment. Savor sumptuous dinners at the famous Atelier Robuchon or Jardinier restaurant with harbor views.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 food and beverage credit per stay.


**the
WOODWARD**
GENEVA

PÉREZ ZELEDÓN, COSTA RICA

Hacienda AltaGracia, Auberge Resorts Collection



This serene 50-casita resort offers a haven for those seeking total well-being and expanded horizons.

Bespoke dining complements daily itineraries of active adventures, wellness experiences, and cultural tours, personally curated to leave you transformed. Book three nights in a casita by March 1 for stays through September 15, 2022, and receive a complimentary fourth night.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 credit per stay to use toward adventures or wellness at THE WELL.


Hacienda AltaGracia
AUBERGE RESORTS COLLECTION
COSTA RICA

VIRTUOSO BEST OF THE BEST

GUSTAVIA, SAINT BART'S

Hotel Barriere Le Carl Gustaf



Surrounded by a tropical garden, this hillside resort offers sweeping views and Caribbean five-star charm.

Sample bespoke spa treatments, practice yoga, or enjoy a relaxing massage. The 21 rooms and suites showcase an immediate sense of escape; each has pool access and stunning panoramas, all just steps from the town center.

VIRTUOSO AMENITIES: \$100 food and beverage credit per stay; round-trip airport transfers; a 50-minute massage for up to two guests per room, once per stay; and more.



THAA ATOLL, MALDIVES

COMO Maalifushi



Escape to the only Maldives resort nestled in the Thaa Atoll archipelago's unspoiled southern reaches.

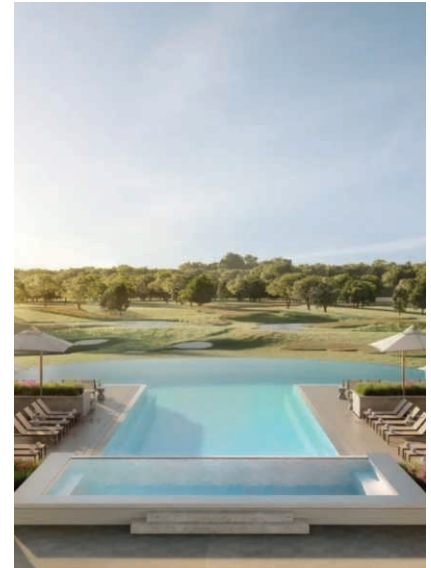
Enjoy yoga and holistic Asian therapies with views of pristine beach, tropical greenery, and a cobalt lagoon. Sample fresh seafood and COMO Shambhala Cuisine with all-day dining at three restaurants. Elegant overwater suites and villas reflect the island's calm setting.

VIRTUOSO AMENITIES: \$100 resort credit per stay, and a 50-minute massage for two guests, once per stay of three nights or longer.



CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA

Keswick Hall



Begin each day greeted by mountain vistas, immersed in the plush comfort of this boutique hotel.

Sip delicious morning lattes at The Counter and enjoy memorable evenings over cocktails in Crawford's. Renowned chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten serves his delicious fare in Marigold. Stay three nights between January 3 and March 31, 2022, and receive a complimentary fourth night.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 hotel credit per stay.



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PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa



Laze the days away beside two palm-fringed pools at this oceanfront retreat on Florida's Gold Coast.

Children will enjoy the reimagined kids' club, while parents get spoiled with pampering spa treatments. Linger over Italian fare or fresh sushi, sample flaky pastries with fair-trade coffee, or enjoy signature selections in the Ice Cream Shop, all while taking in stunning waterside views.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 resort credit per stay.



BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Fairmont Copley Plaza



Ever since its gala opening in 1912, this landmark hotel has symbolized Boston's rich history and elegance.

Located in the city's Back Bay, the hotel is steps away from top area sights and shops. Explore historic memorabilia inside the hotel. Work out in the fitness center and dine at OAK Long Bar + Kitchen. Stay two nights between now and March 31, 2022, and receive a complimentary third night.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 hotel credit per stay.



CAROLINA, PUERTO RICO

Fairmont El San Juan Hotel



Lively Puerto Rican culture meets unparalleled ocean vistas on award-winning Isla Verde Beach.

Escape winter and soak up sunshine, lounging beside any of the four pools. Paddleboard amid turquoise waters, sunbathe in luxury cabanas, and choose from a menu of spa treatments. Enjoy signature dishes and drinks at 13 restaurants, bars, and lounges. Stay three nights by December 15, 2022, and receive a complimentary fourth night.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 resort credit per stay.



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VIRTUOSO BEST OF THE BEST

REYKJAVÍK, ICELAND

The Reykjavik EDITION



This one-of-a-kind hotel offers a personalized, intimate experience in the heart of downtown Reykjavík.

This is the ideal starting point for visiting regional wonders such as the renowned Blue Lagoon and the northern lights. Dine alfresco at Tides amid beautiful panoramas. Visit the spa's Nordic wellness areas, sauna, steam room, and relaxation bar.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 food and beverage credit per stay.

THE
REYKJAVÍK
EDITION

PROVIDENCIALES, TURKS AND CAICOS

The Shore Club Turks and Caicos



Balance well-being, indulgence, relaxation, and adventure at this exclusive Long Bay Beach resort.

Pamper your family with an opulent suite or a villa with butler service. Go snorkeling or kayaking in the bay. Sample fresh cuisine and exotic cocktails at four restaurants and three bars. Swim and lounge in your choice of four pools, play tennis, and treat yourself to spa experiences.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 resort credit per stay.



THE SHORE CLUB
TURKS AND CAICOS

PROVIDENCIALES, TURKS AND CAICOS

The Palms Turks and Caicos



Gaze upon aquamarine waters while sinking your toes into the cloud-white sands of Grace Bay Beach.

Rejuvenate at this all-suite resort with a dip in the sparkling pool and a wellness experience. Enjoy water sports, tennis, and workouts by day, then sip after-dinner cocktails under the stars at night. Try tempting Provo delicacies and fusion dishes in an array of venues.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 resort credit per stay.

THE PALMS
TURKS AND CAICOS

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MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

The Ritz-Carlton, Mexico City



Overlooking the heart of the financial center, this hotel offers inspiring views of Chapultepec Castle and Park.

Go on a culinary journey with fresh, local fare and handcrafted cocktails in the Mediterranean-inspired Samos restaurant and bar. Relax in the indoor pool, and indulge your senses with an Aztec-inspired treatment. Stay three nights in a suite by April 30, 2022, and receive a complimentary fourth night.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 hotel credit per stay.



THE RITZ-CARLTON
MEXICO CITY

SARASOTA, FLORIDA

The Ritz-Carlton, Sarasota



Located on Sarasota Bay, the Ritz-Carlton offers the luxury of resort living in a culturally vibrant downtown.

Sarasota offers a variety of museums, gardens, and galleries to explore. Lounge poolside or beachside at The Beach Club, reserve a tee time at the Tom Fazio-designed golf course, or retreat to the spa for a day of relaxation. Each dining venue offers coastal charm and fresh seafood paired with memorable sunsets.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 resort credit per stay.



THE RITZ-CARLTON
SARASOTA

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Thompson San Antonio - Riverwalk



This contemporary oasis lies nestled at the north end of one of Texas' most charming cities.

Unwind in your spacious guest room or suite. Sample cocktails at the rooftop bar or take a dip in the outdoor pool, all while reveling in dazzling skyline vistas. Work up a sweat in the fitness center, enjoy a spa treatment, and dine at your choice of three restaurants and bars.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 hotel credit per stay.



THOMPSON
SAN ANTONIO - RIVERWALK

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Sweden's Warm Heart

Fika, the beloved coffee-break tradition, brings sweet indulgence to winter's dark days.

BY INGRID K. WILLIAMS PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAN KULLBERG



Classic cake: A marzipan-covered vanilla-and-cream *prinsesstårta* at Stockholm's 1920 Tössebageriet café.

WHEN THE WINTER WIND BLUSTERS AND THE SUN SINKS IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON, Swedes rely on warm scarves, boots, and a cozy afternoon *fika* to combat the cold and increasingly dark days. *Fika* is the tradition of having a coffee and something sweet to eat over idle chitchat with friends, family, or colleagues. It's a pillar of Swedish society, as much as the welfare state or an appetite for pickled herring. And while Swedes will take a *fika* anytime, anywhere – at home, in the office break room, on a weekend hike in the woods – the best place to engage in this sociable ritual is at a café, bakery, or coffee shop offering a selection of baked goods and sweets, such as buttery *kardemummabullar* (cardamom buns) or coconut-coated *chokladbullar* (chocolate-oat balls). An intentional pause, *fika* is a special time to enjoy not only the food and drink, but also the company. And nowhere is it easier to find a place to partake

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Elements of a perfect *fika*, from left: A Johan & Nyström cappuccino; pastries galore at Fosch; and Green Rabbit's cinnamon, cardamom, and saffron buns.



than in Stockholm, where there's a *fika* (*fika* locale) for every taste and sensibility.

CLASSIC CAFÉS

Tradition reigns at the city's classic coffeehouses, called *konditori* for the wide variety of confectionaries on offer. Typical temptations range from iced *mazariner* (almond tartlets) and frosted *Wienerbröd* (Danish pastry) to decadent cakes like the cream-filled *Budapestbakelse* (hazelnut-meringue roll cake). Since 1920, **Tössebageriet** has occupied the same location on a tree-lined boulevard in the tony Östermalm neighborhood. Inside, glass cases display neat rows of miniature tarts and colorful pralines, but the local favorite is *prinsesstårta*, an eye-catching vanilla-

and-cream layer cake draped in bright-green marzipan. The so-called "princess cake" is also a staple at **Vete-Katten**. First opened in 1928, Vete-Katten now has several locations around the city, but the original coffeehouse in central Stockholm remains a traditional go-to with its elegant atmosphere and selection of pastries to rival a Parisian patisserie.

CRAFT COFFEE

These days you won't get a sideways glance for ordering a pot of green tea, a fruit smoothie, hot chocolate, or even kombucha to go with your *kardemummabulle*. But the most typical *fika* pairing is still a cup of coffee. In pursuit of the perfect pour, **Drop Coffee**, a popular coffee shop in the

southern Södermalm neighborhood, roasts its own organic beans from small producers around the world. Co-owner Joanna Alm is a three-time Swedish Coffee Roasting Champion, so this is the place to pair a *kanelbulle* (cinnamon bun) with a single-origin pour-over, creamy cappuccino, or perfectly pulled espresso. A block away, the original location of **Johan & Nyström** is another coffee institution, both a concept store stocked with bags of fragrant beans and a relaxed neighborhood hangout for stroller-pushing parents and freelancers tapping away on their laptops. Serving its own sustainably sourced, slow-roasted varieties, this corner café is a favorite among coffee aficionados and ethically minded Swedes alike.

PASTRY PERFECTION

Fika can take on new meaning in the hands of a classically trained pastry chef. Daniel Lindeberg earned two Michelin stars at the fine-dining restaurant he cofounded with chef Björn Frantzén in 2008, but now spends his days dreaming up creative twists on the Swedish *fika* oeuvre at his suburban bakery. Located in Orminge, about ten miles east of central Stockholm, **Lindeberg Bageri och Konditori** lures loyal followers from the city with seasonal baked goods – summery croissants filled with strawberry jam and black pepper, an autumnal “apple pie” bun with local apples and salted-almond crumble – and artistic pastisseries worthy of a star or two. Back in the city center, pastry chef Damien Foschiatti stands behind the innovative confections at **Fosch Artisan Pâtisserie**, a modern bakery and café with two popular locations. Drawing inspiration from Swedish flavors and French techniques, the *fika* offerings range from cinnamon croissants to elegant sea-buckthorn tartlets with wisps of meringue.

ARTISANAL ACES

Heritage grains and organic dairy products, local produce and ethically sourced coffee – today these terms are baked into a growing number of artisanal bakeries throughout the city. For many Stockholmers, these spots are the Platonic ideal of a *fika*, the cozy spot around the corner where the *bullar* are fresh out of the oven all day long. After years of *bulle*-eating around the city, I firmly believe that there’s no better bun in town than a still-warm *kardemummabulle* at **Bageri Petrus**, a homey bakery with a handful of tables near Mariatorget, a central square in my neighborhood, Södermalm. Quality over quantity is the reigning mantra here, where locals regularly queue for seasonal specialties before they sell out, such as raisin-studded *lussekatter* (saffron buns) at Christmas and, on Fat Tuesday, the cult-favorite *semla*, a calorific cardamom bun stuffed with marzipan and whipped cream. Across town, celebrated chef Mathias Dahlgren opened **Green Rabbit**, a bakery dedicated to rye bread, where one very difficult decision – whether to choose the cardamom *bulle* or the cinnamon? – is the only hurdle to a superlative Swedish *fika*.



A Taste of Stockholm

GO Join Virtuoso on-site connection **Luxury Beyond**’s four-hour, food-focused walking tour, which includes stops at Vete-Katten for *fika*, and at the historic Östermalms Saluhall, an indoor food market that recently reopened after a four-year restoration of the original 1888 star-shaped building. *Departures: Any Monday through Saturday; from \$2,750 for four people, including car, driver, and guide.*

STAY **Ett Hem** means “a home,” and guests at the 12-room boutique property are encouraged to take this to heart, whether slicing cake in the kitchen for *fika* in the

sunroom or curling up by the living room fireplace. Known for its inspiring interiors designed by Ilse Crawford, the property showcases a well-considered mix of modern and midcentury furnishings, as well as statement pieces such as a deep marble tub in the spacious suite. *Doubles from \$454, including breakfast daily and a \$100 dining credit.*

The 273-room **Grand Hôtel Stockholm** overlooks the harbor and the Royal Palace, with wonderful views best enjoyed from one of the top-floor suites with plush, elegant decor designed by the Swedish interior architect Martin Brudnizki.

Take a break from cinnamon buns to enjoy the elegant afternoon tea served in the Cadier Bar. *Doubles from \$439, including breakfast daily and a \$100 hotel credit.*

Guests at the 46-room **Lydmär Hotel** can join locals for *fika* on the waterfront patio, where live bands often perform in the late afternoon and early evening. Retire to one of the individually designed rooms with warm terra-cotta-colored velvet, parquet wood floors, contemporary design, and arresting photography on the walls. *Doubles from \$359, including breakfast daily and a \$100 dining credit. VI.*

Holy Matrimony!

Host a legendary wedding at unforgettable venues around the world.

BY EMMA FRANKE

THESE DAYS, EVEN SMALL MOMENTS MERIT celebration: a pandemic puppy's second birthday, seeing a movie *in a theater*, throwing a dinner party for friends – indoors! So when it comes to the big things, like weddings, we're all for elaborate festivities. Unsurprisingly, we're especially partial to destination weddings – multiday affairs with close friends and family in ultraromantic locations. In addition to scratching our collective travel itch, they're a chance to convene a group of loved ones for more than just a few hours and celebrate a purely joyous occasion. As global travel restrictions begin to lift, packing our bags for a big occasion is a reality once again.

Destination weddings come with perks – such

as bonus pre-ceremony vacations. “Visiting the property during the planning stage can ease some tension and give the couple a better sense of what to expect on their wedding day,” says Birmingham, Alabama-based Virtuoso travel advisor Margie Hand. “It helps to truly visualize the scene.” Many hotels also offer anniversary specials for couples who get married on property, so there's an annual vacation built in for life – not a bad deal. And couples who work with Virtuoso travel advisors get access to a wealth of insider expertise and on-the-ground connections for seamless planning. With input from Virtuoso advisors who specialize in weddings and honeymoons, we've compiled 11 venues, each with an unparalleled sense of place.



Mittens and matrimony at The Little Nell in Aspen.



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GETTING THERE

Ginzan Onsen is easily accessible by a scenic bullet train and car ride from Tokyo. Take the Yamagata Shinkansen (bullet train) line for 3 hours to JR Oishida Station. Ginzan Onsen is 30 minutes by car from the station.

GINZAN ONSEN: UNWIND, RELAX, AND STEP BACK IN TIME

With its heavy snow and old-world atmosphere, Ginzan Onsen reminds visitors of an earlier time. Founded on a former silver mine site in rural Yamagata, Ginzan Onsen's resorts cater to discerning guests with a taste for old-world atmosphere. Here you can step back in time and unwind amidst the heavenly scenery and soothing hot spring baths. Wooden ryokan (traditional Japanese inns) line the river to create picturesque scenes more evocative of a Taisho period (1912-26) novel than a modern resort. It's a long way from big city life and well worth the trip.



RYOKAN: JAPAN'S TRADITIONAL LUXURY ACCOMMODATIONS

Japan offers travelers world-class luxury accommodations, both in cities and in rural areas. Most ubiquitous are the traditional Japanese inns known as ryokan. Ryokan are far more than just somewhere to sleep. With tatami flooring, futon bedding, and local, seasonal kaiseki cuisine served in your room, ryokan offer visitors the chance to experience traditional Japanese luxury at its finest. Many ryokan feature open-air hot springs set in picturesque natural beauty. And most luxury ryokan offer hot spring baths to enjoy from the privacy of your room. Visit and revive yourself amidst the nature-inspired comfort and refined attention to detail luxury-seeking travelers love about Japan's ryokan.

KAISEKI: JAPAN'S EXQUISITE HAUTE CUISINE

The kaiseki meal is a traditional multi-course Japanese dinner. Often compared to Western haute cuisine, kaiseki is genuinely top-notch cuisine that marries seasonal ingredients with masterful cooking. A culinary medley in the guise of a seemingly simple set menu, when you have ended your two-hour kaiseki feast and marveled at its remarkable beauty and delicious flavors, you will realize why this tradition, born in the aristocratic circles of 14th century Kyoto, still mesmerizes today. Be sure to enjoy kaiseki cuisine, paired with local sake, when staying at a ryokan in Japan.

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Setting the scene, from left: **The Ranch at Rock Creek, Ballyfin, and Waldorf Astoria Los Cabos Pedregal.**

SHOUT IT FROM A MOUNTAINTOP

While arches and floral arrangements make lovely wedding backdrops, some couples gravitate to settings with a bit more metaphorical weight. Ninety-two minimalist guest rooms at **The Little Nell** let Mother Nature bring the visual drama. Ride a gondola to the top of Aspen Mountain, where vows echo across the Rockies, then toast the union with a pour from the hotel's collection of more than 20,000 wines.

For a palatial affair with fairy-tale vibes, head to **Fairmont Banff Springs**. The 757-room castle has hosted many marquee names (Fred Astaire once waltzed around its blue-and-gold Cascade Ballroom), but sweeping views of the Bow Valley from its outdoor terrace, with space for 220 guests, give ceremonies at this Canadian grande dame the royal treatment.

RETREAT TO THE COUNTRYSIDE

"Frontier adventures at Montana's **The Ranch at Rock Creek** make weddings so much fun for guests," says New York City Virtuoso advisor Harlan deBell. "Think fly-

fishing, sapphire mining, hiking, and scavenger hunts – experiences that give guests fond memories of the wedding for years to come." The ranch's 6,600 acres leave room for activities, while its cozy cabins and log homes house up to 75 people. Roll up to the ceremony in a vintage Wells Fargo stagecoach, and throw a wedding dinner in the Buckle Barn, surrounded by cowhide chairs, birch accents, and glowing candles.

Just an hour southwest of Dublin, **Ballyfin** accommodates 39 guests in a grand manor house set on 614 acres dotted with grottoes, follies, and Ireland's largest artificial lake. "A wedding at Ballyfin has history, romance, and tradition with a chic modern edge," deBell says. Set an Infant of Prague figurine outside on the eve of the wedding to summon good weather, according to tradition, then walk down the aisle accompanied by a harpist playing Irish ballads. Round out the authentic country-house weekend by shooting clay pigeons, practicing archery, and dressing in elaborate period costumes from the estate's collection.

WRITE IT IN THE SAND

Add crashing waves and tropical birdsong to the wedding soundtrack, courtesy of Saint Lucia's rain forest. Villas scattered around oceanfront **Sugar Beach, a Viceroy Resort** have up to four bedrooms – space for large families and wedding parties to stay together. "Saint Lucia offers so much to do," Hand says. "We can plan group outings such as hiking Gros Piton, private sunset sails, zip-lining, snorkeling, or diving." The 125-room property also partners with a wedding stylist to create wardrobe vision boards for pre-event inspiration.

Granite cliffs frame the 119-room **Waldorf Astoria Los Cabos Pedregal** in Baja California Sur, where the desert meets the sea. Say "I do" on the terrace (the infinity pool creates the illusion of a floating ceremony) and feast on a five-course meal made with seasonal ingredients – paired (of course) with Clase Azul tequila.

"Australia's tropical islands make idyllic settings for relaxed and romantic weddings," says Bettina Kramer of Southern Crossings, an Australian Virtuoso on-site

tour connection. After a white-sand ceremony at **Lizard Island** on the Great Barrier Reef, couples can snorkel with schools of tropical fish through a giant-clam garden. The resort – a private island in a national park – accommodates up to 86 guests.

THROW A CITY CEREMONY

La Mamounia's star-studded history permeates its Berber-crafted halls. Retreat from the bustling streets of Marrakech to marry in ancient olive- and lemon-tree-filled gardens or under a traditional Moorish archway. Prep for the big day with traditional hammam spa treatments at the 209-room resort. Our pick for most romantic accommodation: the Riads – private residences with swimming pools and terraces nestled in the gardens.

A wedding venue makes a statement about a couple's personality, and **Maison de la Luz** says, "We have great taste – and we want to party." Buy out the 67-room New Orleans hotel; fill it with friends, family, and a jazz quartet; and dance the night away in the rich, red Bar Marilou. Bold prints, marble busts, and colorful velvet furnishings pop from every corner. No stuffy seated dinner here: Food stations and passed appetizers keep the festivities moving.

SET SAIL

On a cruise, the ceremony may last only an hour, but the festivities continue for days. For couples with warm hearts and a chill attitude, nuptials during a **Silversea** Antarctic sailing make for a wedding album like no other. From the 296-passenger *Silver Cloud*, board a Zodiac for an excursion on Elephant Island, where penguins make adorable (if inattentive) wedding guests. "December is the Antarctic summer, so you can wear a wedding dress without a parka," deBell says. He suggests searching for whales, kayaking past glaciers, and learning how to take the perfect photo of an iceberg before a Champagne toast with mittened hands.

Those who spent lockdown bingeing classic movies will appreciate the vintage romance of a transatlantic crossing on **Cunard's** 2,620-passenger *Queen Mary 2*. On seven-night trips from New York to London (or the reverse), a White Star bellman escorts the couple to an elegant ceremony space with panoramic ocean views and officiation by the ship's captain. Cap off the wedding with Champagne and dancing while the vessel glides across the ocean. Disembark on the other side of the Atlantic to begin the honeymoon. VI



Joyful color at Maison de la Luz.

STEPHEN KENT

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Northern Exposures

Chasing – and capturing – the aurora borealis.
BY INGRID K. WILLIAMS



Prime night-sky viewing
in Finnish Lapland.



Cozy quarters north of the Arctic Circle in Norway.

THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS I WISH I'd known before trekking to northern Sweden in pursuit of the aurora borealis. Seeing the northern lights was a dream trip I'd spent months planning, poring over images of surreal, neon-green waves splashed across the night sky. Little did I realize that, in person, the lights are almost never as vivid as those overexposed images, but also that what can't be captured in a static snapshot – the lights' mesmerizing movement – would be even more impressive.

Bundled in an oversize down parka on the edge of a frozen lake outside the Swedish town of Kiruna, some 90 miles north of the Arctic Circle, my teeth chattering and my toes nearly frozen, I stood transfixed when the aurora finally emerged from the cloud cover shortly after midnight. Pale-green wisps twirled across the black sky like dancers on a stage, serpentine ribbons swirling before disappearing within seconds, while brighter curtains of light

flowed down from above. Watching this astronomical phenomenon – the result of electrically charged particles from the sun slamming into Earth's upper atmosphere and magnetic field – was an otherworldly experience, a bucket list item ticked, and an ephemeral glimpse beyond the boundary of our planet. It was also a reminder that even my warmest snow boots are no match for the Arctic cold.

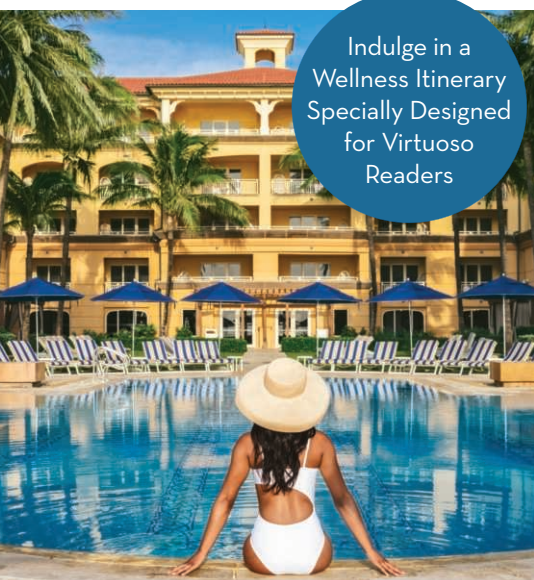
There's a chance the lights will be visible on any dark, clear night between late August and April, but the best time of year to see them is when it's darkest: from October to March. Today, travelers in pursuit of the northern lights have myriad options, from glass-roofed cabins that allow sky-gazing from bed to cruise ships and private tours kitted out with the proper gear to keep aurora seekers warm all night long. Because the more time spent watching the Arctic night sky, the better the chances of seeing the enchanting yet elusive aurora.

**Pale-green wisps
twirled across the
sky like dancers
on a stage.**



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SAILING NORTH

In recent years, cruising to cold-weather destinations during the darkest months has gained popularity among those hoping for a glimpse of the northern lights. Instead of lounging by a pool and enjoying tropical cocktails on deck, these passengers partake in winter activities by day and gaze skyward by night. One clear advantage of being on a ship is the opportunity to watch for the aurora far from land and light pollution. On a 13-day sailing aboard **Viking's** 930-passenger *Viking Venus* that starts in London and ends in Bergen, Norway, ship announcements alert passengers when the lights are visible, though it pays to be quick as the transient display can appear and disappear unexpectedly. *Departures: Multiple dates through March 13; from \$4,999.*

SLEEP BENEATH THE SPECTACLE

Imagine skipping the bulky boots, layers of long underwear, and woolen mittens, hats, and scarves, and instead crawling into a cozy bed to look for the northern lights dressed only in pajamas. Across the Arctic Circle, travelers can now sleep in a variety of small huts and cabins with large picture windows or transparent roofs offering unobstructed sky views. On a seven-day private tour with **The Luxury Travel Designer**, travelers stay in modern igloos – complete with goose-down duvets, wood-burning fireplaces, and high-tech telescopes – overlooking a glacier in northern Norway. Of course, there's never a guarantee that the lights will appear on any particular night, especially not when

Photographing the Aurora

With low lighting and frigid temperatures, taking a good, clear photo of the aurora is tricky. Many northern lights tours are run by guides who are also skilled photographers, but anyone can come home with great pictures by following these basic tips:

- **Upgrade your phone.** If the aurora is very bright, it's possible to get a decent photo on an iPhone (try using the Night mode setting), but for truly spectacular shots, pack a DSLR camera with adjustable settings.
- **Check your settings.** Practice manually adjusting the camera in advance. The general rule is low aperture, high ISO, and long shutter speed, but exact settings will depend on the light conditions.
- **Find balance.** To avoid blurriness with longer exposure times, it's imperative to keep the camera steady. Pack a tripod or find a dry, secure spot to balance the camera.
- **Pack a spare.** Batteries drain quickly in the Arctic cold, so bring an extra and keep it someplace warm, such as in an interior coat pocket.

ELIZABETH M. RUGGIERO/GETTY IMAGES

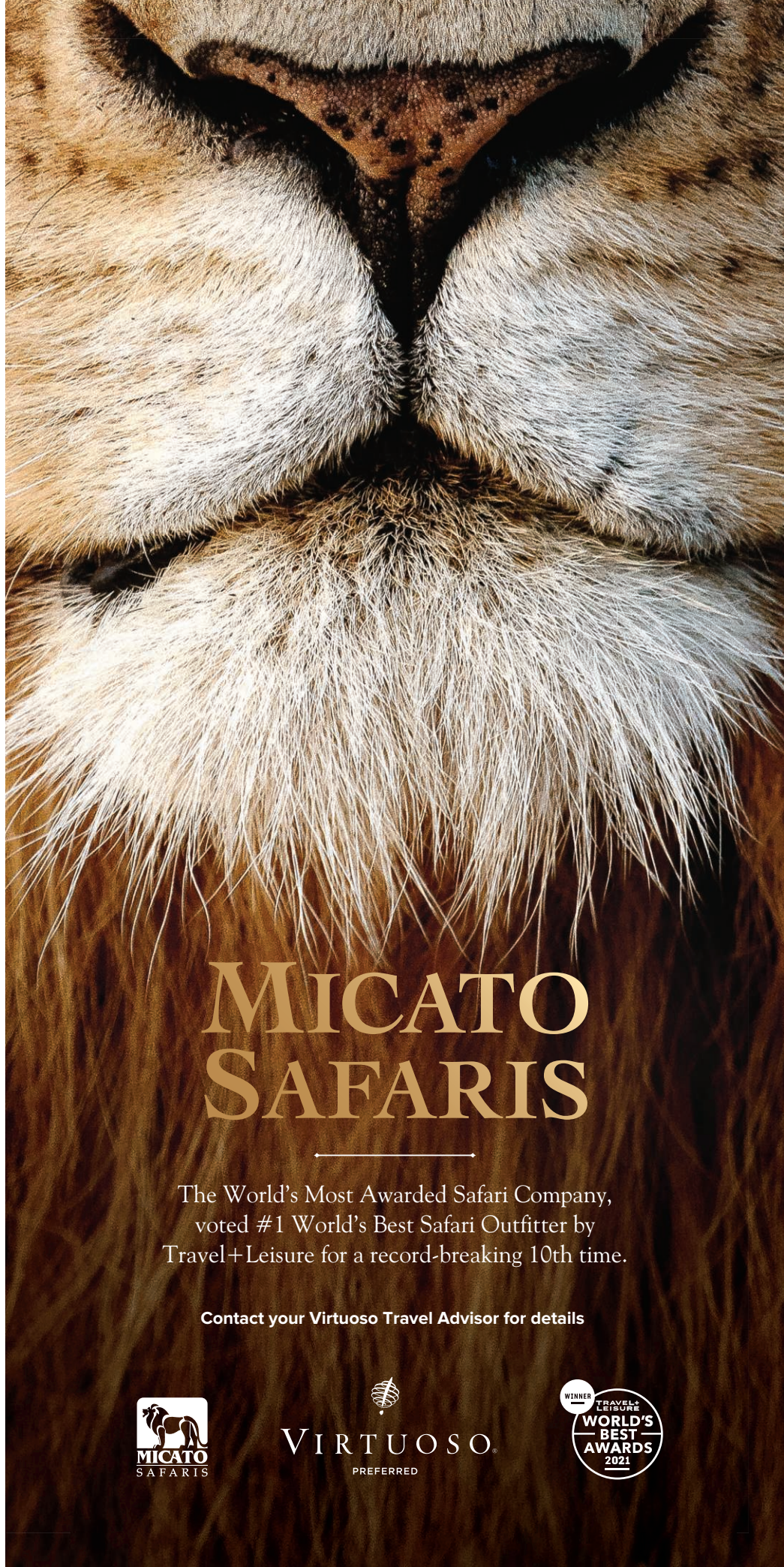
it's cloudy. But snuggled in bed beneath the night sky, the only hindrance to seeing them if they do appear might be your ability to keep your eyes open. *Departures: Multiple dates through March 2023; from \$19,200 for two people.*

NIGHTTIME SAFARI

Many seasoned guides refer to aurora tours as a hunt or safari, the pursuit of not only the northern lights, but also the clear skies necessary to observe them. Finding the optimal location – a valley far from artificial lights, a hill where the sky is predicted to be clear, or perhaps high atop cliffs if the fog begins to roll in – requires knowledge of the aurora and local microclimates *and* their meteorological conditions. To maximize the chance of seeing the lights, guides continually consult the forecast on hunts, because even the most spectacular light show can't be seen through thick clouds. A nighttime aurora chase begins in Fairbanks, Alaska (one of the best places to view the lights in North America), on **Collette's** seven-day foray into the state's snowy interior. On an 11-day group tour through the Canadian Rockies with **Intrepid Travel**, days spent snowshoeing and ice-fishing culminate beneath the dark skies of the Peace River, where, with a little luck, the dancing aurora may make an appearance. *Alaska departures: Multiple dates through March 2022; from \$2,699. Canada departures: Multiple dates through December 2023; from \$5,010.*

AURORA ADVENTURES

Staying up late into the night staring expectantly at the sky is not for the restless. But some tours add a dose of adrenaline to the typical aurora hunt with faster-paced itineraries ranging from brisk horseback-riding excursions through the woods and hair-raising dogsled races across frozen lakes and rivers to over-the-top hot-air balloon rides above the clouds. With one eye on the sky, travelers can search for the lights while snowmobiling through snowy forests on **50 Degrees North's** eight-day escorted group tour in Finland and Norway. Even if the night's experience doesn't include an aurora appearance, travelers will still go to bed with new memories – and a new chance to search for the northern lights the next day. *Departure: March 12, 2023; from \$7,940. VI*



MICATO SAFARIS

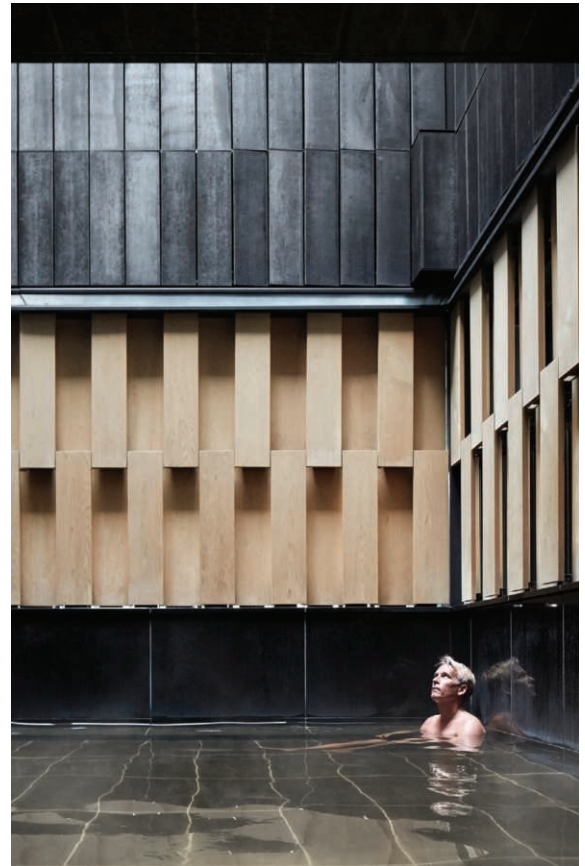
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From left: Equinox Hotel New York and Hoshinoya Tokyo's onsen.



Pulse of the City

More vital than ever, urban wellness resorts emerge from the pandemic as sanctuaries for self-care.

BY ELAINE GLUSAC

EVEN BEFORE THE PANDEMIC, URBAN WELLNESS RESORTS – RESTORATIVE sanctuaries with comprehensive fitness, health, and spa services amid the big-city thrum – were proliferating globally. But as with so many other trends in the making, Covid-19 may have sped up their adoption as the return to travel dovetails with a concentration on personal health.

“Travelers are focusing on self-care and investing in wellness in new ways,” says Pablo Henderson of Equinox Hotel New York, which opened in summer 2019. Its Zen-channeling rooms promote sleep; the menu offers healthy items, from chia-seed breakfast bowls to Ōra King salmon dinners; and fitness options include spinning to pop anthems and yoga on Hudson Yards’ 100th-floor observation deck.

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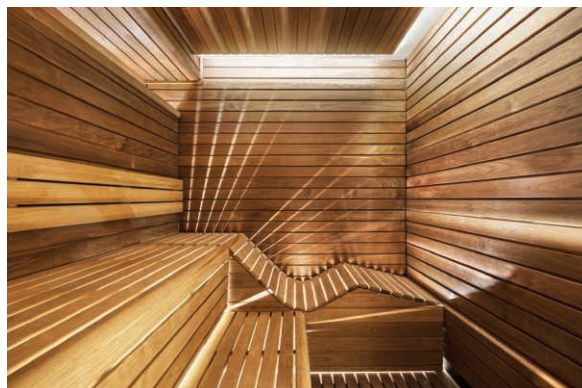
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Movement, nutrition, and regeneration, he adds, are “more relevant than ever as travelers seek greater balance, place increased emphasis on sleep, and look to boost their immunities through improved diet and exercise.” Far from candlelit spaces for massages and facials – though Equinox offers those too – these lively fitness-first hubs provide wide-ranging services, from nutritional consultations and sleep coaching to the latest in Gyrokinesis workouts (picture Pilates with spiraling movements) and energizing IV drips.

“The pandemic asked people to rethink what wellness is and how to get it,” says Tammy Pahel, co-general manager and vice president of spa and wellness operations at Carillon Miami Wellness Resort, which introduced touchless services such as halotherapy, a salt chamber that reportedly detoxes and builds the immune system, and vibrational and sound therapy to improve concentration and creativity. Guests’ average stay has increased from three nights in 2019 to five in 2021. “Individuals and families came to places in their lives where they said, ‘I want to live healthy and want to understand what I should be eating, how I can sleep better, and what is restorative,’” she says. “People’s minds are more open to experiences they wouldn’t have considered.”

Check into five of our favorite urban wellness escapes – and check out with a better you.



From top: Dive into the good life at Carillon Miami Wellness Resort’s pool, and The Lanesborough Club & Spa.

THE BODY GURUS

In 2019, Equinox expanded from gym brand to hospitality provider with its first property, **Equinox Hotel New York**, dedicated to wellness. Designed as sleep-promoting respites for the city that never sleeps, its 212 rooms include blackout shades, superior soundproofing, and mattresses made from natural materials and covered in two temperature-regulating duvets. Guests can order in-room vitamin IV drips, administered by an on-call nurse, for energy boosts. Treatments at the 27,000-square-foot spa range from cryotherapy to quantum harmonic sound wave therapy. And the on-site fitness club features indoor and outdoor pools, along with Pilates, metabolic conditioning, and ballet created with American Ballet Theatre, among other classes. Refuel at the 24th floor’s Electric Lemon with everything from breakfast grain bowls to dinner crudos. Rest up, then repeat.

Doubles from \$695, including breakfast daily and a \$100 hotel credit.

MIAMI MAKEOVER

An early adopter of the urban wellness movement when it reopened in 2015, the 150-room **Carillon Miami Wellness Resort** resides in a midcentury-modern landmark on Miami Beach, where guests and condo residents can choose from 65-plus fitness classes per day, ranging from boot camps to Gyrokinesis, boxing, and indoor climbing. Its spa partners with doctors and health specialists to offer consultations, treatments, and seminars in a broad range of expertise, including nutrition, traditional Chinese medicine, sex therapy, cosmetic plastic surgery, and more. Therapies range from stress relief via a salt bath to IV treatments that address mental clarity, chronic pain, and sleep issues. New touchless wellness services include meditation pods, antiaging

cryotherapy, and detoxifying loungers that use sound resonance and electromagnetic forces. *Doubles from \$650, including breakfast daily and a \$100 spa credit.*

THE TREE HUGGER

A woody scent permeates **The Douglas'** sixth-floor reception area, lending a forest-bathing welcome to Vancouver, British Columbia's 188-room, nature-themed boutique hotel overlooking False Creek and BC Place stadium. When the property reopens this spring, guests can stretch their legs or meditate in the sixth-floor park – home to 200 native evergreens and some 15,000 plants. Borrow a hotel bike to cycle the 17-mile Seaside Greenway path, which runs right past the hotel and into Stanley Park; reboot your gym routine with CrossFit-style equipment; or turn to the concierge for top hikes, paddleboarding, or goat yoga on a North Vancouver farm. Head to the 17th-floor Spa by JW for hydrotherapy and an outdoor yoga space, multisensory spa treatments such as 25-minute virtual-reality visits to a rain forest, and

detox treatments that combine wraps with shiatsu and Thai massage. *Doubles from \$285, including breakfast daily, a \$100 dining credit, and a bottle of Douglas fir-infused gin.*

SOAK UP THE CITY

For centuries, Japan's citizens have turned to restorative *onsens* (natural hot spring pools) at rural *ryokans* (inns) for health and peace of mind. In building the modern 84-room **Hoshinoya Tokyo** in 2016, Hoshino Resorts' chief executive, Yoshiharu Hoshino, sought to bring a bit of the relaxing inns' calm to the megacity. The result: a rooftop *onsen* with gender-separated indoor and outdoor pools filled with high-saline water from natural hot springs nearly 5,000 feet belowground. Each floor of the hotel, modeled after an intimate *ryokan*, holds just six guest rooms; residents, robed in modernized kimonos, visit an *ochanoma*, or communal living room, for tea and snacks. Tatami-matted floors and shoji-screened windows set a traditional tone in the rooms, where every morning staff deliver generous Japanese breakfasts featuring healthy

proteins such as tofu and salmon. Afterward, take part in a traditional *kenjutsu* practice, wielding a wooden sword on the high-rise rooftop. *Doubles from \$925, including breakfast daily and a lesson in preparing matcha.*

JOIN THE CLUB

London's stately 93-room **Lanesborough** sequesters a spa and fitness center behind its Greek-revival facade in Knightsbridge. Guests have access to the otherwise members-only Lanesborough Club & Spa, home to hydrotherapy pools, saunas, and steam rooms, and an expansive gym with yoga, TRX HIIT, and "Gluti-licious" classes. Therapists dispense innovative treatments spanning sound healing and amethyst gel wraps to regenerate skin cells. Spa day packages combine face and body treatments with lunch from the club's restaurant, serving "energy ball" bites of coconut and matcha, Asian salads, superfood shakes, toxin-targeting tea, and post-workout wines and Champagne. *Doubles from \$885, including breakfast daily and a \$100 hotel credit. VI*

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Pollinator power:
Honeybees at work.

Something to Buzz About

Bees are essential to the planet's ecosystem – and at some hotels, they provide sweet and sustainable experiences for guests.

BY ADAM ERACE

LONDON ROCKET, A WILD COUSIN OF ARUGULA, IS ONE of the first spring blooms around Miraval Arizona, the wellness refuge in Tucson's high desert. Mexican gold poppy, desert lupine, and other wildflowers follow, erupting like bursts of confetti and inviting the resort's 350,000 (or more) honeybees to join the party. Thirsty for nectar, the bees tumble around in the pollen, transporting reproductive material between the male and female plants. They repeat this dance with the cacti and then the trees – mesquite, acacia, palo verde – which bloom last. This desert ecosystem wouldn't exist without bees: In fact, 80 percent of the world's flowering plants require a pollinator.

The bees pollinate whenever plants are in bloom, carrying nectar back to the 35 hives spread across Miraval's grounds. Once they've

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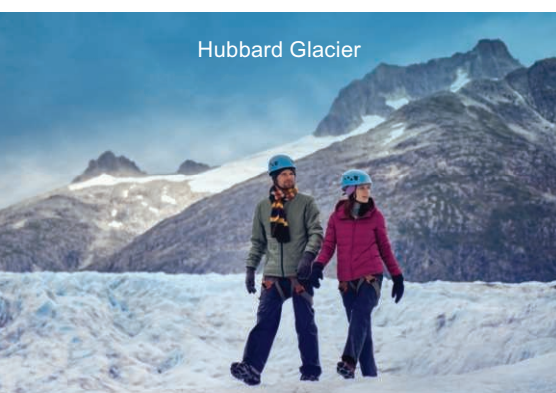
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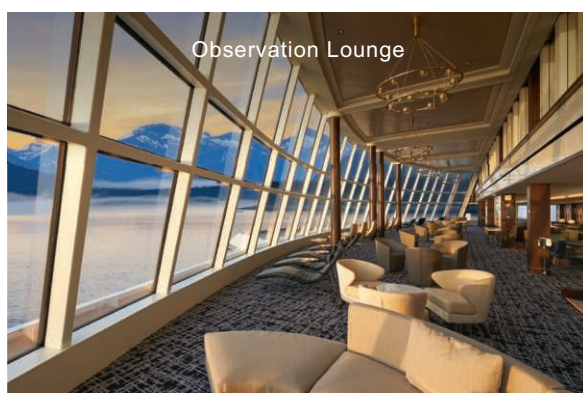
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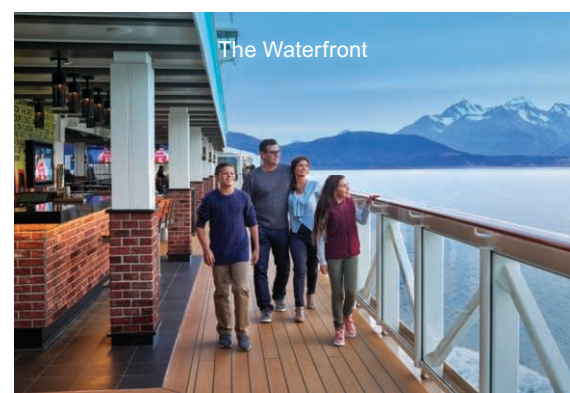
Hubbard Glacier



Observation Lounge



The Waterfront



Conscious Comeback

converted those nectars into an expression of honey unique to each hive, Noel Patterson, Miraval's resident apiarist, harvests the liquid gold that guests will savor in the months to come. "In winemaking, grapes are just a microphone through which a place speaks," Patterson says. "And that's how I look at our honey at Miraval. Honey is significantly sensitive to terroir."

For hotels that pride themselves on being rooted in place, "sensitive to terroir" is the North Star. As guests seek more authentic experiences, properties have forged partnerships with local suppliers and community artisans; some have even found ways to outright produce the goods themselves. Beekeeping is a win-win, creating a meaningful experience for guests and a boost for the environment. Any addition is vital: Beehives have been in decline in the U.S. for nearly a century, dropping from 6 million in the 1940s to about 2.5 million today.

Honey is the physical representation of the hives' value – a single colony of Miraval bees can produce 25 to 60 pounds of honey



Sweet scenes, from left: Mauna Kea Beach Hotel's hives, Manoir Hovey in bloom, and an Ojai Valley Inn honey tasting.



Pollinators are responsible for one in every three bites of food we take.

annually. It's a sweet return on investment for the hotels, which use it in resort-branded beauty products (honey soap at the Shangri-La Toronto), layer it into custom cocktails (the Bees Knees at Hawaii Island's Mauna Kea Beach Hotel), and paint it on foreheads during spa treatments (the Cara Vida facial at Miraval's Life in Balance spa).

At Manoir Hovey, the Québécois jewel just over the Vermont border, two hives generate 90 percent of the honey supply for the hotel's two restaurants, but apiarist and sommelier Jérôme Dubois points out a meaning that reaches beyond the sensible economics of beekeeping: "The important thing is to be connected with the planet," he says. "If we can autonomously produce the product we use, we need to do it."

Programs like Dubois' and Patterson's entertain and educate guests, help on-site farms and gardens thrive, and, perhaps most important, indirectly keep us alive: Pollinators are responsible for one in every three bites of food we take. "Without bees, we'd cease to exist," Patterson says. Hotel hive programs illuminate this truth and offer a recalibration of our relationship with bees – which, historically, hasn't been very balanced. "Unlike the symbiosis between bees and plants, we do very little for bees," says Patterson. "They get their own food and are more than capable of protecting themselves."

In other words, we need bees more than they need us. Says Patterson, "Everything the bees give us is genuinely a gift."



Honey, I'm Checking In

On the island of Hawaii, travelers can tour the gardens and Instagrammable flow-style beehives at the 252-room **Mauna Kea Beach Hotel**. During harvest season (late July to mid-September), this includes an on-the-spot honey pull, and there are always jars available for a take-home taste of the nectar. *Doubles from \$1,100, including breakfast daily and a \$100 hotel credit.*

Set between enchanting woods and Lake Massawippi, Québec's 36-room **Manoir Hovey** draws its food-and-wine focus from the surrounding ecosystem, including a colony of 70,000 bees. Guests can embark on guided hive visits. *Doubles from \$220, including breakfast daily and one three-course lunch for two.*

In true California fashion, the 306-room **Ojai Valley Inn**'s beekeeping experience begins with a sage smudging over the apiary to calm the European honeybees. The finale is a tasting of honey from the ranch and several California producers. *Doubles from \$609, including breakfast daily and a \$100 hotel credit.*

The 146-room **Miraval Arizona** hosts 35 hives spread across its 400 desert acres near Tucson. Guests can don a bee suit for a hands-on experience with keeper Noel Patterson, learn from a distance via lectures and honey tastings, or absorb the power of honey during a spa facial. *Doubles from \$1,279, including breakfast daily and a \$100 resort credit.*

A squad of resident bees pollinates 125 varieties of produce on the farm at Cape Cod's **Chatham Bars Inn**. Guests can get an up-close look at the operation in a Beekeeping 101 experience or enjoy the honey at one of the 217-room property's four restaurants. *Doubles from \$300, including breakfast daily and a \$100 spa credit.*

The 202-room **Shangri-La Hotel, Toronto** doesn't have a beehive, but a B-Wall, a custom-built condominium for the skyscraper property's 50,000 bees. Visitors find their honey in the hotel's lip balm and soap, and in the B-Wall Honey Lager that's available in the lobby bar. *Doubles from \$536, including breakfast daily and a \$100 hotel credit.* VI

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Wailea's most intimate beachfront resort features 321 guestrooms and suites, including 31 luxurious two- to four-bedroom residential villas. Indulge in the new 'Ilikai villas, which come in three-bedroom options with a wide variety of bedding configurations and expansive ocean views. For unparalleled access to Mokapu beach, our ocean-front villas are steps away from the ocean, so you can dive right into your Maui adventure.

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My Travel Essentials

Accessories designer Lizzie Fortunato wears her sun hat on the plane.
 PORTRAIT BY BALL & ALBANESE

FOR THE 37-YEAR-old cofounder and creative director of NYC-based accessories brand Lizzie Fortunato, travel is a family affair: She vacations with her husband and 18-month-old daughter and takes work trips with her twin sister, business partner, and “constant sounding board,” Kathryn.

Inspiration from a visit to Morocco showed up in one recent collection's palette, Italy's coast translated to novelty motifs and rainbow-hued stones in another, and the landscapes of Abiquiú, New Mexico, informed the Spring Summer 2022 collection and served as a lookbook backdrop. Fortunato

describes her travel style as equal parts relaxation and exploration. “For every day that I spend sitting on a beach, I want to spend another scouring a bazaar or hiking up a mountain,” she says. Vietnam, Corsica, Naoshima: Wherever she goes, she carries on, but packs a lightweight duffel to tote her finds home.

I DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT:

- 1.** Paravel's Aviator in the carry-on-plus size. Chic and eco-friendly, it's made in part from recycled water bottles, and the company has a carbon-neutral shipping program.
- 2.** My passport and cell phone go in our crossbody **Ruby bag**, named for my daughter because I needed to have a hands-free way to hold my phone and credit card when I'm pushing her stroller.
- 3.** I wear a sun hat on the plane – they're hard to pack, you'll be happy to have it, and travelers in hats always look chic. I like **Gigi Burris'** large-brimmed ones.
- 4.** **Ilia's Multi-Stick** lip and cheek stain in sienna red is always in my purse.
- 5.** **Issey Miyake's Pleats Please** line doesn't wrinkle and helps you look put together.
- 6.** **SZ Blockprints** makes colorful, fashion-forward sarongs and tunics that I use as cover-ups on the plane or picnic blankets on the beach. We carry them on our website.
- 7.** I pack our **Mood Hoops** and a handful of detachable charms. These gold earrings are a sophisticated staple, and by adding the charms you can get a ton of different looks.
- 8.** **Diegos espadrilles** are beach shoes on hot-weather trips and house shoes on cold-weather trips. I wear them in red.
- 9.** I travel with a roll of **washi tape** and **pens from Muji**. You have no idea how often these come in handy – I've wrapped presents in the airport!
- 10.** **Aesop's face spray** is a great misting hydrator when you're spending hours on the plane. VI.



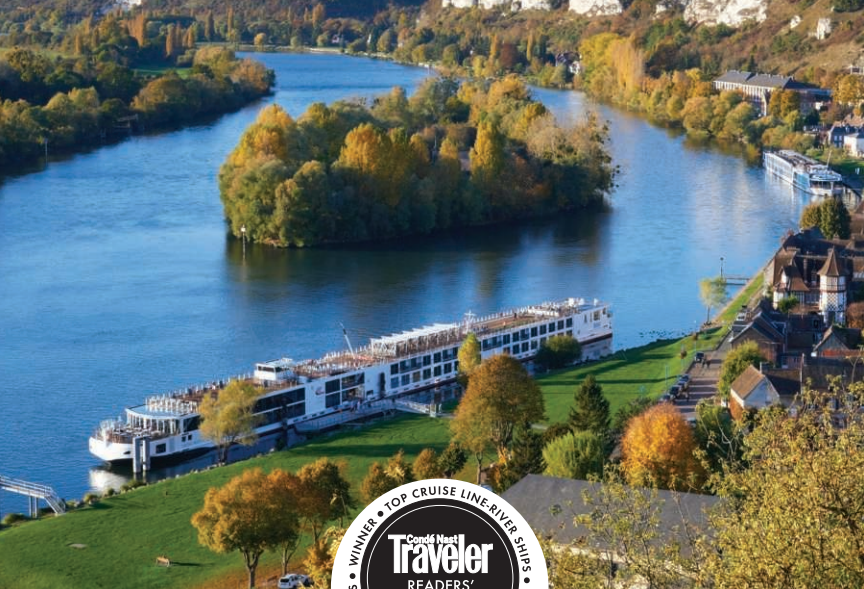


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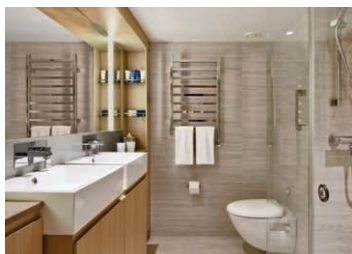
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TRAVEL RESOLUTIONS

7 steps toward a healthier, happier,
and more rewarding year ahead.

BY ELAINE GLUSAC

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JENNIFER TAPIAS DERCH

New year, new you: It's an annual mantra. But 2022 feels different, maybe because the world is reopening and inviting reinvention. Whether you want to lose your "Covid 19," reconnect with family, or advance new skills learned during the pandemic, resolve to travel this year. Never has keeping a resolution – including the following seven – felt so compelling.



1. SHAPE UP

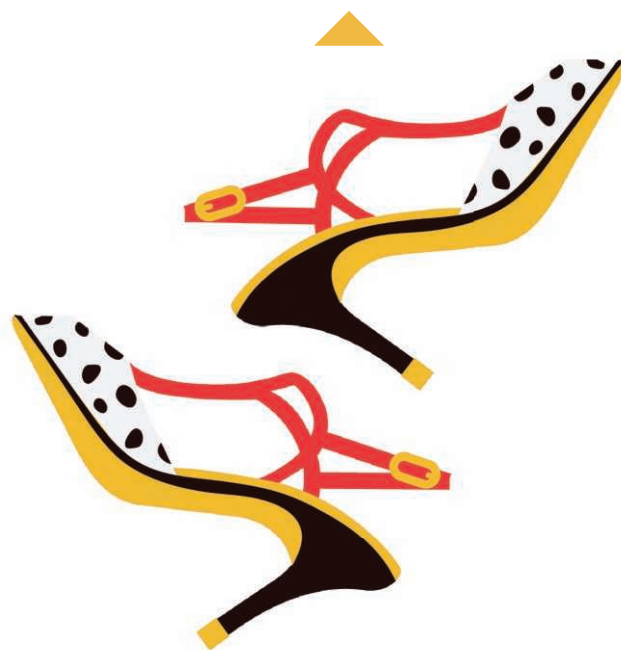
Not everyone gained weight during the pandemic, but a recent study found that nearly 40 percent of Americans packed on the pounds. Experts say shedding them requires a holistic approach – healthy eating, exercise, sleep, and stress management, among other lifestyle changes. Kick-start your progress at the 104-room **SHA Wellness Clinic** in coastal Alicante, Spain. Eight-day custom programs focus on physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, beginning with a medical exam and followed by underwater massages, personal training sessions, and cryotherapy (plus free time for beachcombing and lounging at the pool).

“At SHA, you don’t have to suffer for results or to find quality of life,” says Atlanta-based Virtuoso travel agency owner Kristen Korey Pike, who has spent time there, as well as organized wellness retreats for numerous clients. “Guests achieve results while enjoying the highest hospitality standards, from facilities to service to incredible food.” One of her favorite activities: the resort’s private cooking classes for a healthier diet.

2. BREAK OUT THE HIGH HEELS

Cast the joggers and Zoom shirt aside and step out where style matters: Buenos Aires. The city’s late-night culture of dining and dancing – *milongas*, or tango clubs, typically don’t get going until midnight – demands you dress the part, according to Garden Grove, California-based advisor Michele Benigno, who used to live in B.A. Step one: Comme Il Faut, an unassuming second-floor boutique that specializes in strappy tango shoes, followed by the intimate Rojo Tango show at the 88-room **Faena Hotel Buenos Aires**. Red meat rules the *parrilla* at El Desnivel in the city’s San Telmo neighborhood, a prime stop before a night at Salón Canning’s popular Milonga Parakultural in Palermo.

For travelers with no tango experience, Benigno arranges a private lesson with an instructor, who will later escort them to a *práctica*, or practice session, before the main dance. “He’ll explain the very structured code of behavior so they can understand what’s going on,” she adds.



3. RAISE YOUR SOURDOUGH SKILLS

The home bread-baking trend spiked so fast during the pandemic that it created a yeast shortage. Whether it's a hobby or a calling, why not level up? "There's such a range of experiences people can have learning to cook in a destination," says Encinitas, California-based Joan Qualls, a Virtuoso advisor who specializes in culinary travel. (Examples of past trips she's arranged for clients run from baguette making in Paris with a master baker to farm-to-table cooking at an Irish country house.) In Copenhagen, she recommends cooking classes at the 92-room **Hotel d'Angleterre** that span savory *smørrebrød* (open-faced sandwiches) and classic Danish pastries. Another favorite: The Cookery School at northern England's 207-room **The Grand, York**, which hosts everything from chocolate soufflé intensives to "bakes" focused on teatime fruit scones, mince pies, or sweet and savory tarts.



4. CHECK OUT FOR A MONTH

Work-from-anywhere policies enticed travelers to try out new lifestyles, and the urge has only grown stronger. "Coming out of Covid, there's a lot of desire for immersive experiences," says Virtuoso agency owner Keith Waldon of Austin, who has booked his own great escape at a two-bedroom (one for visiting friends) apartment in Florence, Italy, this spring. "You can have an appetizer taste of a place with a cruise's port call or spend three to four days and get to know a destination, but if you really want to live like a local, go for a month – or two or three."

Extended-stay options range from **Cuvée's** sprawling eight-bedroom estate on 35 acres in Aspen to a three-story, two-bedroom contemporary London home in Notting Hill with **Onefinestay**. In addition to matching the home to the traveler, Waldon lines up personal chefs, museum tours with art experts, and activities such as a day with a local genealogist to dive into ancestry and help would-be expats get the most out of their home-away-from-home.

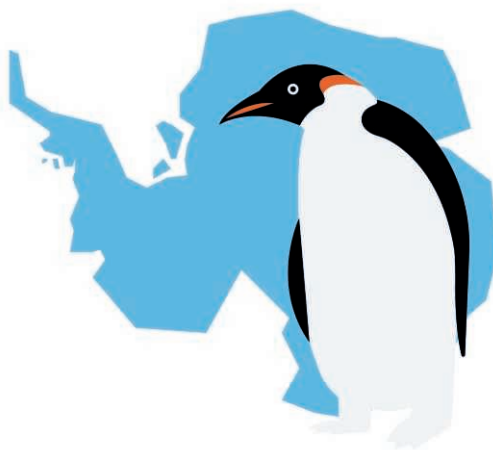


5. MAKE UP FOR MISSED VACATIONS

Postponed trips and untapped vacation budgets have many travelers thinking big with itineraries that go farther and deeper, such as **Abercrombie & Kent's** private jet tours. "You hit a lot of places in a short amount of time," says Chicago-based Virtuoso advisor Caroline Wolfe, who also notes big trips' pandemic-era appeal. "Being in a bubble with the same travelers, air crew, and guides creates safety, because your exposure isn't the same as traveling commercially." These trips – both around the world and regionally focused – have proved so popular that the company has doubled departures on its wildlife safaris and cultural-treasures trips in 2022 and added two new journeys in New Zealand and Mexico.

6. GATHER THE FAMILY (WITHOUT HOLIDAY BAGGAGE)

After the in-law and extended-cousin invasion of what's been one of the busiest holiday travel seasons in years, cast off for a tropical oasis reunion without ritual. "Villas provide great opportunities to explore a destination together organically and without stress," says Virtuoso agency co-owner Angela Pierson, who specializes in family and celebration travel and was on the tail end of an around-the-world trip with her 8- and 10-year-old daughters when the pandemic hit. She recommends **Villas of Distinction** for the likes of an oceanfront four-bedroom vacation home with a private pool on Saint Bart's or a nine-bedroom manse on Saint John. A beach stay, with swimming and sunning steps away, takes some of the pressure off day-trip activities everyone will enjoy. "Especially if you have kids, trying to rally and get out at a specific time is exhausting," she says.



7. CHECK OFF YOUR SEVENTH CONTINENT

With a lineup of new ships and options to fly over (rather than cruise) the infamously wild Drake Passage, it's easier and more comfortable than ever to explore Antarctica. Last July, **Lindblad Expeditions** launched the 126-passenger *National Geographic Endurance* with infinity Jacuzzis and an X-Bow design

that rides smoother on rough seas. **Ponant** recently launched the 245-passenger *Commandant Charcot*, a hybrid-electric ship with a restaurant from Michelin-starred chef Alain Ducasse. And this year, **Seabourn** will debut the 264-passenger *Venture* with two six-passenger submarines for excursions. "Antarctica is uniquely silent," says Virtuoso advisor and frequent cruiser Sharon Johnson of Martha's Vineyard. "You can hear the ice crack. During days at sea, you'll learn so much from the naturalists, but you can have a martini in your hand too – just don't tell the penguins." VI



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SOMEDAY



Into the mist: One&Only Nyungwe House, Rwanda.

FIRST, OUR MOST BELOVED PLACES INVITED A RETURN TO TRAVEL. Visiting familiar haunts from Iceland to Italy last year, we thrilled to rejoining the world a little at a time. We found sights, sounds, and colors more vivid than ever – reminders that travel’s allure is truly timeless – and now we’re ready to dream big again.

Welcome to the joyful renaissance of epic journeys. This is the year of going far, and of celebrating our life-long love for crossing borders. “We all have these places that, when we first heard about them, we swore we



IS NOW

**DRAMATIC
DESTINATIONS
FOR 2022**

BY JEN ROSE SMITH

would see them for ourselves someday,” says Waterbury, Connecticut-based Virtuoso travel agency owner Scott Largay. Whether they’re etching perfect lines into Hokkaido powder or trekking Rwanda’s lush forests in search of endangered gorillas, travelers are heading to the very edge of the map. “‘Someday’ is now,” Largay says. For 2022, we’ve found places to spark that sense of long-awaited discovery, with effervescent spirit adding urgency to *now*.

UNCOVER SECRET **SLOVENIA**

Europe's undiscovered wine country is crowned by a soaring alpine playground. Visiting now earns "I was there when" bragging rights.



"Slovenia is absolutely beautiful," says Denver-based Virtuoso advisor Leah Smith. Intimate geography puts the cobblestoned squares of capital Ljubljana's UNESCO-listed core within day-tripping distance of seaside villages and three major wine regions that, with limited U.S. exports, still fly under the radar. Knock on tasting-room doors to meet vintners face-to-face – it's like hopping a time machine to explore Tuscany before the rest of the world was in on the secret. An hour away from the capital, find day hikes along sections of the new 168-mile Juliana Trail, which hugs the edge of Triglav National Park, with its hanging valleys and high peaks. "As a hiking destination, it's hard to beat," Smith says.

GO Honeycombed inside a thirteenth-century island edifice, **Otocec Castle Hotel's** 16 rooms and suites offer medieval chic with views of the Krka River. The 182-room **Kempinski Palace Portoroz** is belle époque glitter and formal gardens steps from the Adriatic. Private tours by **Artisans of Leisure** depart Ljubljana for a week of food-and-wine sampling from the Julian Alps to the Adriatic.

Clockwise from opposite left: Vineyards in Jerusalem, Slovenia; a Hokkaido powder hound; and Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono's slopeside scenery and understated lobby.



OVERWINTER IN HOKKAIDO

Zen mountain resorts are bringing luxury – at last! – to Japan’s winter island.

Japanese snow belongs on every skier’s life list, thanks to storms that bury Hokkaido mountains in featherweight powder. Visitors to the area made do without off-slope luxuries for years, but that changed when the 100-room **Park Hyatt Niseko Hanazono** opened in 2020 at Japan’s top ski destination. Slopeside wellness retreat Aman Niseko will expand the options even further in 2025. And, says Largay, “After a few days of hitting the slopes, you can eat your way through one of the world’s top culinary destinations.” Après-ski means traditional *onsen* hot springs, sake service, and steaming bowls of ramen. Get a taste of nightlife in the island’s capital, Sapporo, whose namesake beers flow during a week-long festival in February that fills the city with exquisite snow sculptures.

GO Snow days meet traditional Hokkaido cuisine and culture during **Remote Lands’** nine-day tours.



BLOOM IN **COSTA RICA**

Nature-powered wellness hands travelers the ultimate tropical reset button.



Sprawling over 180 acres of jade-canopied mountains, the Auberge Collection's new 50-casita **Hacienda AltaGracia** embodies soulful retreat in southern Costa Rica, where the resort opened in November 2021. The country's *pura vida* spirit suffuses the area, from a coffee plantation to riding trails and The Well, a 20,000-square-foot holistic health facility. Charter flights link AltaGracia with capital San José, where onward travel puts the country's astonishing biodiversity within reach. After waking to a dawn bird chorus in Arenal Volcano National Park, visitors might then make the drive around Lake Arenal and to the south, for instance, to hike upward into the Monteverde cloud forest, then head to the coast to settle in for a sunset or two on a Guanacaste surf beach.

GO Inside Arenal Volcano National Park, 50 villas at **Nayara Gardens** open to personal gardens with views of the active volcano; adjoining property **Nayara Springs** has 35 adults-only villas featuring private thermal plunge pools. The jungle-shaded spa and villas at 56-room **Hotel Punta Islita** are set amid Guanacaste forest, and a shuttle whisks guests to nearby sandy beaches.

CHANNEL **COLOMBIAN** COOL

This charismatic South American country gets the attention it deserves.

“From the mountains to the sea, Colombia is just breathtaking,” says New Smyrna Beach, Florida-based travel advisor Misty Jones, naming Bogotá’s street art, desert off-roading, and coffee country as her favorite experiences. Dirt roads through the latter, called the Zona Cafetera, can turn espresso tastings into all-day affairs, but Colombia’s not limited to rugged adventuring. Within Cartagena’s city walls – built to fend off persistent pirates – colonial style at hotels **Casa San Agustín** and **Sofitel Legend Santa Clara Cartagena** brings a touch of romance. “Cartagena is on the ocean, so you can do evening cruises,” Jones says. “It’s absolutely gorgeous.”

Clockwise from left: Costa Rica's Hacienda AltaGracia; a Cartagena street scene; Mada'in Salih, also known as al-Hijr or Hegra, an archaeological site in Al 'Ula, Saudi Arabia; and Sofitel Legend Santa Clara Cartagena.

(CARTAGENA) DC COLOMBIA/GETTY IMAGES.
(AL 'ULA) MATTHEW STARLING/GETTY IMAGES

BLAZE A PATH IN **SAUDI ARABIA**

A kingdom newly opened to tourism can tantalize and challenge visitors in equal measures.

GO A customizable ten-day trip from **Big Five Tours & Expeditions** takes in Colombia's most vibrant cities, slowing down for Zona Cafetera explorations and relaxation on palm-shaded Barú Island.

Saudi Arabia evokes desert for days, but those swaybacked dunes silhouette modernist sculptures, jewel-toned reefs, and an archaeological treasure chest. "Because the area is only now opening up for the world to see, the sites are virtually untouched," says Garden Grove, California-based advisor Jay Johnson of the Nabatean ruins surrounding cultural hub Al 'Ula. Ottoman architecture meets pristine coral formations at Red Sea port Jeddah, while Riyadh is an oasis-turned-capital-city spiked with glimmering towers.

Despite recent changes, the country remains profoundly conservative. "Setting politics aside, I wanted to experience for myself a region of the world that almost no Westerners have seen in order to offer clients who might be interested in the destination an honest report about what it's like to travel there," Johnson says. Outside major cities, most Saudi women wear veils, he says, though foreigners aren't expected to, except at religious sites. Western travelers remain a novelty, for now: "Locals were warm, welcoming, and ecstatic to see us."



GO A 13-day sailing with **Silversea** in 2023 stops in three different Saudi ports: Jeddah, Jazan, and the protected marine sanctuary of the Farasan Islands. An eight-day exploration of Saudi Arabia by **Abercrombie & Kent** includes Riyadh, Jeddah, Al 'Ula, and the petroglyphs of Hail.



TACKLE **TASMANIAN** TRAILS

Isolated but accessible, Tasmania combines pristine wilderness with serious gourmet and cultural cred.

New mountain-bike trails at St Helens and the Bay of Fires – with yet another network under construction in Queenstown – cement Tasmania’s status as an up-and-coming adventure hub. And while Australia has been off-limits to international travelers, there’s hope that the country will reopen during 2022’s first quarter. “Tasmania is blessed by nature,” says Virtuoso travel advisor and lifelong resident Robyn Sinfield. “We have sea cliffs, rugged coastline, and stunning beaches.” From a lookout on Bruny Island Neck, visitors can track the world’s tiniest “fairy” penguins, while hikers watch for elusive Tasmanian devils in Cradle Mountain’s wilderness. Seaside capital Hobart is the cultural heart, with art at the waterside bunker-museum Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) and stylish bars for sampling the island’s celebrated sparkling wines and farm-to-table foods. Best of all, it’s just a one-hour hop by plane from Melbourne.



GO Set above Hobart’s lively harbor, the art-filled, 11-room **Islington Hotel** opens to gardens with views of Mount Wellington. Three days in Tasmania are the centerpiece of a 14-day sailing with **Windstar Cruises** linking hip Melbourne and New Zealand’s fjords.

(ROCKS) QUITHH TRAN/GETTY IMAGES.
(FOOD) COURTESY ADAM GIBSON/MONA



SUMMER IN THE **DOLOMITES**

Italy's winter wonderland blooms into an alpine dreamscape in warmer months.

Fairy-tale villages girdle serrated peaks in Italy's mountain playground, where alpine escapes, known as *rifugi*, teeter on passes with operatic views. Local cuisine, melding the region's Italian and German heritage, is hearty enough to fuel outings on trails that S-curve through meadows laced with edelweiss and saxifrage. Some active trips overnight at the rustic *rifugi*, where you can rub shoulders with an international crowd of hikers and bikers. More-indulgent surroundings can be found at spas that earned the region its rep for world-class wellness among the summits.

GO **Backroads'** six-day multi-adventure tours stop in Selva, Corvara, and Cortina. The 93-suite **Lefay Resort & Spa Lago di Garda** overlooks cliff-wrapped Lake Garda; with wooden turrets cozied against ever-green slopes, chaletlike **Rosa Alpina** has 52 mountainside rooms and suites.

Set for summer at Rosa Alpina and (opposite) a rock formation on a Tasmanian beach and high-design seafood at MONA in Hobart.

STRIKE OUT FOR **HAIDA GWAI**

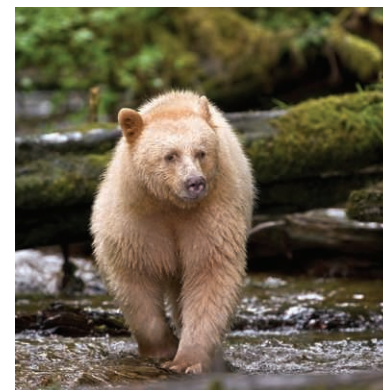
Explore an archipelago of 150 rocky islands cloaked in ancient rain forest and First Nations traditions.



Mirrorlike calm against a backdrop of cedars during an expedition off Haida Gwaii and (right) a white Kermode bear, also known as a “spirit bear,” denizen of the adjoining Great Bear Rainforest.

British Columbia’s jigsaw coast sets biodiversity hot spot Haida Gwaii apart, literally. (There’s a reason it’s known as Canada’s Galápagos.) But this is also a human landscape: Totem poles flank village sites and the shoreline by the Haida Heritage Centre at Kay Llnagaay. “The draw is a stunning blend of the land and sharing of culture with the Haida people in their traditional territory,” says Marc Telio, president of Virtuoso on-site tour connection Entrée Canada & Alaska. Watch for bald eagles, orca whales, and seals patrolling the waters here, or join a local interpreter to learn about Indigenous wood carving and dancing. Venturing beyond Haida Gwaii into the adjoining Great Bear Rainforest – one of the largest temperate coastal rain forests on earth – gives travelers a chance to spot all-white bears, known by First Nations people as sacred spirit bears, living among 1,000-year-old trees.

GO Entrée Canada combines three or four nights in Haida Gwaii at Tlaal, between the forest and beach, with a city exploration of Vancouver. Cruises by Lindblad Expeditions make Haida Gwaii a stopover on itineraries linking Sitka with Seattle or Vancouver.



(HAIDA GWAI) CAVAN IMAGES; (BEAR) GERALD CORSI/GETTY IMAGES

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The Caribbean fills daydreams with an island for every mood. Highball hedonism prevails from the shores of Saint-Martin to Anguilla, while sailors make landfall to take in laid-back, French-accented charm on Saint Bart's and Martinique. Private charters usher travelers to regions where undeveloped archipelagoes still dot the map. Off the coast of Panama, for instance, the San Blas Islands offer castaway bliss where nature thrives – meet Indigenous Guna people on islands with just enough space for a thatched hut and a cool breeze.

GO Yacht company **The Moorings** offers skippered, crewed, or bareboat charters, with departures from Belize and the Bahamas to Grenada. **Blue Parallel's** six-day private tours from Panama City include three nights aboard a catamaran in the San Blas Islands.

A posh port on Saint Bart's, a yachters' paradise in the Caribbean.

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GORILLA TREK IN **RWANDA**

Find endangered mountain gorillas in mist-shrouded tropical rain forest at the edge of the Congo Basin.



Five rain-forest summits mark the spot at Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park, where tracking gorillas brings visitors face-to-face with the slow-moving giants. They're not the only primates adding wonder to Rwandan forests, and more travelers are now exploring beyond Volcanoes. On the cusp of Nyungwe National Park – a spectacularly biodiverse area – the 22-room **One&Only Nyungwe House** opened in 2018 with wooden villas brushed by rain-forest canopy where chimpanzees and monkeys roam. Guests join trackers to follow their troops through the rain-lush landscape, assist in community tourism projects, and visit the resort's private tea plantation to sip the most local of brews.

GO Ticking off three Rwandan national parks – Akagera, Nyungwe, and Volcanoes – **African Travel, Inc.**'s 11-day trip is for nature-chasing completists, with arrival by helicopter at One&Only Nyungwe House. A four-day gorilla trekking experience with **Micato Safaris** goes straight from Kigali to the Virunga volcanoes, devoting two days to encounters with different gorilla families. **VI**

Rwandan highlights: A silverback mountain gorilla and (above) a lenticular cloud caps Mount Muhabura in the Virunga Mountains.

(GORILLA) MARY ANN McDONALD/GETTY IMAGES.
(MOUNTAIN) GUENTERGUNJ/GETTY IMAGES



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A dark grey rectangular box with a yellow chevron pattern on the left side. The text is in white and yellow. It reads: '20% OFF ALL VOYAGES' in large yellow and white font. To the right is a plus sign, followed by 'AN EXTRA 10% OFF IF YOU PAY IN FULL' in white, and '&' in white. Below that is '\$100 BAR TAB* BONUS' in large yellow and white font.

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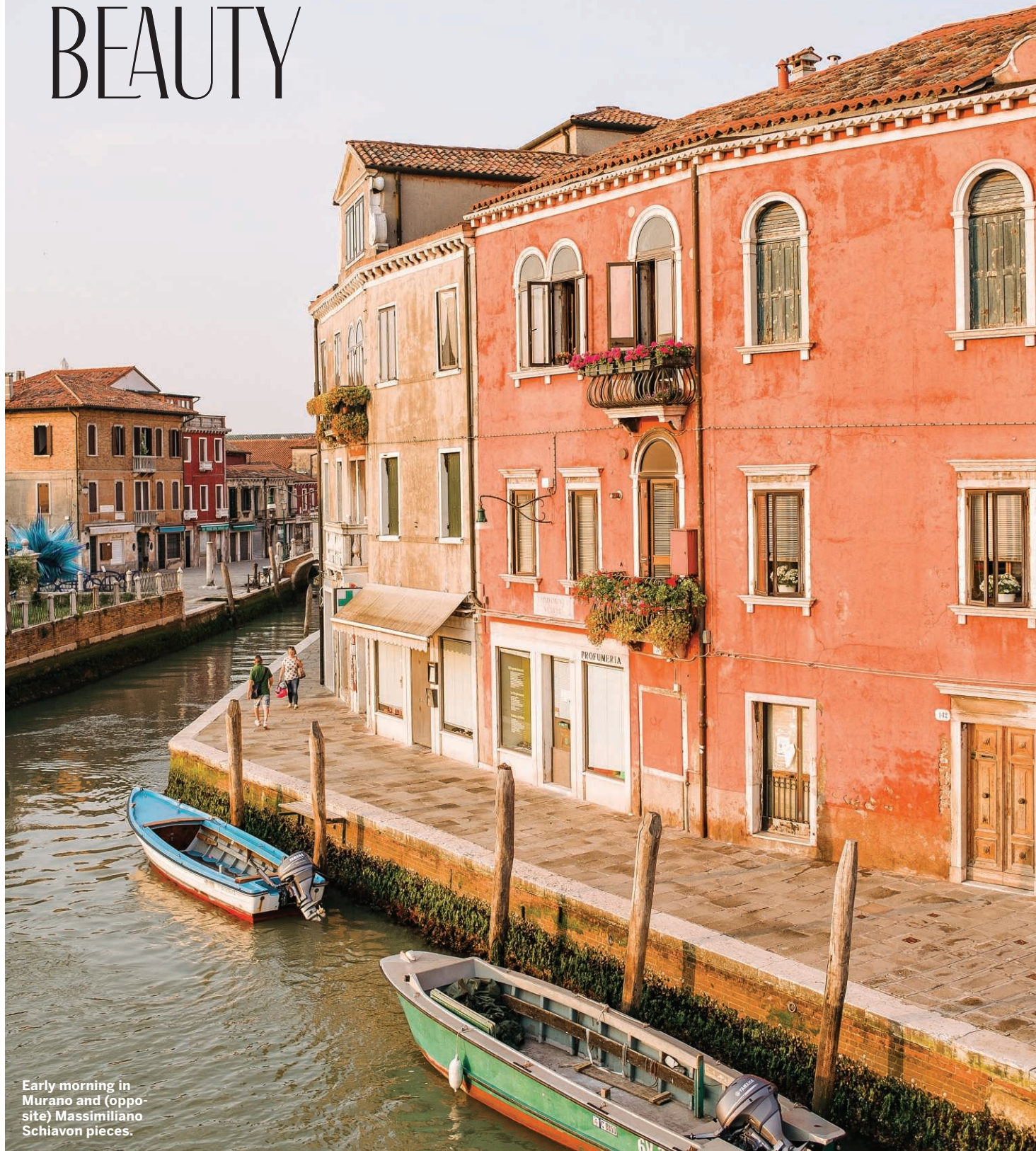
Adam Coulter, Cruise Critic

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FRAGILE BEAUTY



Early morning in Murano and (opposite) Massimiliano Schiavon pieces.



BEHIND THE SCENES WITH MURANO'S GLASSBLOWERS.
STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY CLARA TUMA



From left: At the Museo del Vetro, an airy display and seventeenth-century flasks; and showstopping glassware at NasonMoretti.





IN 1291



authorities moved all of Venice's glassmaking to Murano, a small cluster of islands in the Venetian lagoon, to avoid a fire threat in Venice – and keep trade secrets confined to the area. To this day, the glass objects made in Murano are a protected art form. To visit is to immerse yourself in glassblowing and the beauty of the chandeliers, lampwork and millefiori beads, and artistically shaped vases and bowls that the island's artisans produce.

I love any kind of behind-the-scenes photo op, and at sixth-generation glassmaker Massimiliano Schiavon, I was right there with the glassblowers, as close as I could get, the heat from the oven hitting me ruthlessly. Inside the furnace the temperature is around 1,300 degrees Fahrenheit. The room was so hot, I was afraid my camera would stop working. I felt privileged to be that close. My admiration for these artists grew even more seeing them transform pieces of color – in a few blows, twists, and cuts – into smooth, totally unique handmade objects.

Murano is much quieter than Venice, especially in the mornings and in late afternoons and evenings, when most visitors have taken the return ferry to have their dinners in Venice. I found myself almost alone there during those off-hours, with time to stroll along the quiet canals, stopping to watch the occasional motorboat go by (locals coming home!), people walking their dogs, teenagers playing soccer, and children riding their bikes. On Ponte Longo I even encountered one of the glassmaking artists I had photographed earlier, making his jogging tour through the neighborhood. Those hours were magical – unexpectedly serene. I imagine this was how Venice felt before modern-day tourism, populated just with locals, living and working there.



Murano magic, from left: Glass rods used to make beads and lamp-worked items, a Massimiliano Schiavon masterpiece in progress, and the Massimiliano Schiavon furnace and showroom.



MURANO MUST-DOs

- * Don't miss the Museo del Vetro, Murano's glass museum. Housed in an ancient palazzo, some of its magnificent pieces date as far back as the fifteenth century.
 - * Shop for glass in the showrooms of Venice's most venerable makers – such as Barovier&Toso, Simone Cenedese, and NasonMoretti – along Rio dei Vetrai (Glassmakers' Canal) and nearby.
 - * Have a gelato or a *panino farcito* (stuffed sandwich) and do some boat-watching.
 - * Order *cicchetti* (Italian tapas) and an Aperol spritz for aperitivo or enjoy spaghetti *alle cozze* and calamari *fritti* at one of the canalside restaurants.
 - * Tour the Seguso glass factory (by appointment only).
-



Evening ambience
at Campo San
Donato on Murano.



Venetian Adventures

GO Spend two and a half hours visiting a glass furnace and the Museo del Vetro during a private tour of Murano with **Context Travel**. *Departures: Any day through 2022; from \$392.*

Tour operator **Family Twist** lets kids (safely) try their hands at Murano-style glassmaking at a small Venetian atelier. During the two-hour session, parents and kids get to create their own glass souvenirs. *Departures: Any day through 2022; from \$446.*

STAY The newly renovated 91-room **Baglioni Hotel Luna**, at the edge of Piazza San Marco, blends its

refreshed interior touches with antique Murano chandeliers to stunning effect. The palazzo, which dates to 1118, reportedly once sheltered the Knights Templar. *Doubles from \$498, including breakfast daily and a \$100 dining credit.*

On Giudecca Island, the 96-room **Cipriani**, practically synonymous with Venetian hospitality, drips with Murano glass and history. Casanova once whispered sweet nothings to his love interests in the gardens here (now named for him), a constant parade of luminaries has boated up to the lobby since the hotel opened its doors in 1958, and its blush-colored

facade remains a canal landmark. *Doubles from \$1,004, including breakfast daily and a \$100 dining credit.*

Three palaces, including the gilt- and marble-festooned fifteenth-century Palazzo Dandolo, a masterwork of Gothic architecture, compose the lagoonside **Hotel Danieli**. Its 204 rooms and suites, many with canal or lagoon views, feature Laura Tonatto products (in standard rooms) or Acqua di Parma products (in suites). And in fair weather, the rooftop Bar Terrazza Danieli opens for cocktails and bites. *Doubles from \$677, including breakfast daily and a \$100 dining credit.* **VL**

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Travel Intelligence

LGA'S FRESH LOOK

NYC's LaGuardia Airport, one of the country's oldest, is a few years into an \$8 billion overhaul that's already brightened it up considerably. Up next: Delta's Terminal C, set to partially open this spring. The modern space includes 37 gates, the country's largest Delta Sky Club, and an arts program with the Queens Museum. On the tarmac, new taxiways aim to cut down on the airport's notorious gate delays.

STAR SEARCH

Michelin is bringing its lauded restaurant-ranking system to the Sunshine State, thanks to a partnership with Visit Florida. Inspectors are currently dining at the top outlets in Miami, Orlando, and Tampa, with plans to dish out their

coveted stars in a guide set to publish this year. Florida is the fifth U.S. destination to get its own Michelin Guide, joining California, Chicago, New York City, and Washington, D.C.

THE DOCTOR IS IN

Driven by the demand for private villa escapes, Onefinestay added retreats in 14 locations last year, including Santorini, Ibiza, and Aspen. Now guests staying at any of the company's homes, villas, and chalets have complimentary access to nonurgent medical services – concierges can arrange a telephone consultation with a doctor (in English, Spanish, or Portuguese) within one hour of a request. Outside the U.S., in-person visits are also available, but fees apply.



We're Obsessed With

Salt lovers, unite! **The Red Clay Spicy Drink Salt Duo** jazzes up cocktails (or adds a little flair to your morning eggs) with Southern flavor. For citrus, spice, and a hint of sweet, reach for the Spicy Margarita; for a little heat and smoke, go for the Spicy Bloody Mary. \$18, redclayhotsauce.com



INTERVIEW

Coordinated Adventures

After a travel snafu that wound up costing them hours of rebooking time, California residents Kathleen Wade and her husband, Kelvin, ditched DIY and started working with Brooklyn-based Virtuoso advisor Claire Soares for travel planning. They've never looked back. "Claire has a love for what she does, and it appears beautifully in her work," Kathleen says. Here, Kathleen's travel takeaways.

Traveling is important to me because it's a way to celebrate life, and it allows time for self-care. I travel to allow all of my senses to explore the wonders of creation.

One travel ritual we have is to coordinate our outfits and discuss which clothing is best suited to each occasion and destination.

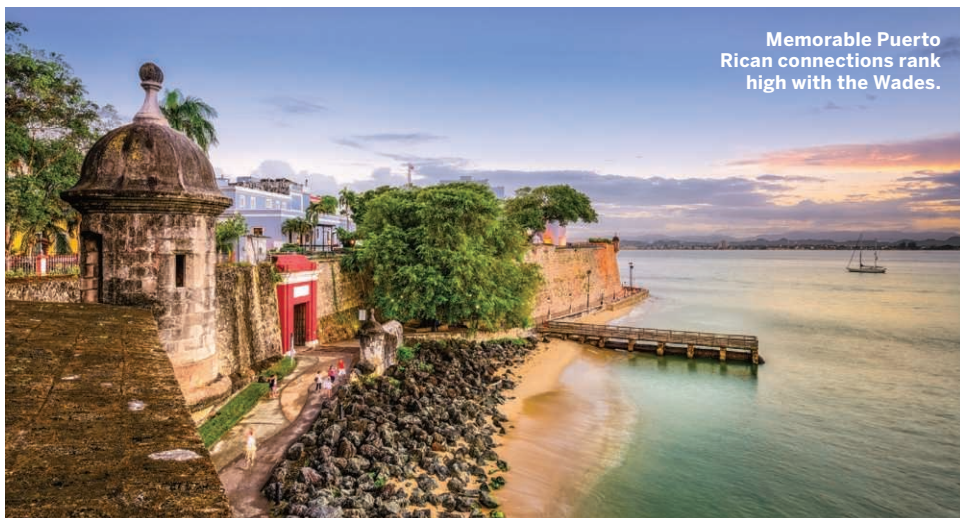
Favorite trips? I loved Puerto Rico for the connection with the people there and the friends we made. And my birthday dinner on the beach in Cancún during a stay at Nizuc Resort & Spa is a memory I treasure. Claire planned the whole thing. It ranked up there with my wedding day.

We loved the architecture, decor, and landscaping at Nizuc. It felt like we were on an enchanted island.

Our minds are at ease just knowing Claire will take care of our needs and wants. When the airline kept changing and delaying our flights, Claire made all the necessary changes to our itinerary; notified our hotel, transportation, and insurance about refunds due; and updated the travel app.

Next up: Portugal later this year. I'd also like to visit Africa to experience the culture of my ancestors.

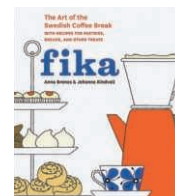
Memorable Puerto Rican connections rank high with the Wades.



(WADES) COURTESY, KATHLEEN WADE. (PUERTO RICO) SEAN PAVONE PHOTO/GETTY IMAGES

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

IF YOU'RE GOING TO ...



SWEDEN

("Sweden's Warm Heart," page 52): Bring the country's beloved *fika* tradition home with help from Anna Brones and Johanna Kindvall's *Fika: The Art of the Swedish Coffee Break*, an illustrated guide filled with recipes for classic Swedish pastries, breads, and more.



COLOMBIA

("Someday Is Now," page 84): Revisit native son Gabriel García Márquez's masterwork of magical realism, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.



MURANO

("Fragile Beauty," page 94): Pick up a copy of Marina Fiorato's 2009 novel, *The Glassblower of Murano*, which links the tale of a seventeenth-century Venetian glassblower with the present-day journey of his descendant.

90

Total number of swimming pools at the soon-to-open **Atlantis The Royal Dubai** resort. (Not included in this number: the tank holding more than 2,000 jellyfish.)

Floral Perspectives

LOOKING AT THE NATURAL WORLD FROM A NEW ANGLE.



Futuristic Flowers
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New Haven, Connecticut-based multimedia artist Kristen Meyer has a background that ranges from floral design to prop styling. “Art can bring even the most distant elements of the earth right to us,” she says. “My work contrasts soft, natural shapes arranged in precise geometric patterns, shining a new light on the seemingly ordinary and mundane. My hope is that it will help viewers explore some of the breadth of our world in new ways.” Prints available at salvagedesign.net. @kmsalvagedesign

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