





TRIPS OF A LIFETIME

When you're ready to go, look to a Virtuoso travel advisor for inspiration and practical advice on navigating travel's landscape now.

For close-to-home getaways or far-flung trips of a lifetime, Virtuoso advisors are your resource for the insight you need to plan a safe, successful, and unforgettable vacation. Their expertise and access to Virtuoso's network of the world's best travel brands, perks, and experiences mean your most memorable trips are yet to come.

Connect with an advisor at virtuoso.com.

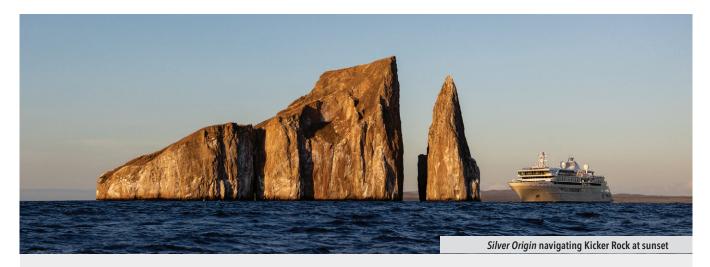
THE WORLD'S TOP TRAVEL AGENCIES AND ADVISORS ARE VIRTUOSO°.





A world of evolutionary enchantment

The Galápagos Islands possess a unique allure. Journey through millennia-old landscapes and leave with a new appreciation for the act of discovery. The 19-island archipelago was the world's first UNESCO World Heritage site and home to an astonishing 9,000 species of flora and fauna. Immerse yourself in exhilarating explorations from the moment you step aboard, from complimentary Zodiac tours, snorkeling and kayaking to nature hikes led by our naturalists, experts, and certified guides. Discover the most fascinating aspects of the region wrapped in the comfort of an all-inclusive travel experience that will dramatically transform your idea of travel.



WESTERN REGION ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS

- Marvel at Kicker Rock, the vertical remnant of a former tuff cone
- Search for flightless cormorants and blue-footed boobies at Isabela's Tagus Cove
- Send a postcard from the Galápagos with a visit to Floreana's Post Office Bay
- Explore the Fausto Llerena Breeding Center for giant tortoises and land iguanas



NORTHERN REGION ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS

- Snorkel with sea turtles in Fernandina
- Meet the iconic Galápagos penguins in Isabela

- Discover the "bird islands" of Genovesa and Española
- Hike across Santa Fé Island to discover an endemic iguana found nowhere else in the world

A hub of discovery

CONNECTING TRAVELERS WITH THE DESTINATION



Silver Origin's hub of discovery, the heart of the ship, Basecamp is where you will prepare for your excursions, relax after returning, or just meet and socialize with your fellow travelers. The elegant lounge has been considered with guests' social interaction in mind and is among Silver Origin's most innovative spaces. Having been specially designed to offer guests a chance to prepare for their next adventure, Basecamp connects to the ship's Zodiac embarkation area—the Marina—and is the perfect meeting point for Zodiac excursions. The flow of incoming and outgoing guests, along with the excitement that is endemic to any Galápagos cruise, truly represents the synergy between destination and ship. Basecamp is also where guests can interact with educational activities and the onboard Expedition Team. These enthusiastic and knowledgeable individuals—more per guest than any ship in the region—are on hand to deepen your knowledge on the rare wildlife, amazing landscapes and captivating history of the Galápagos Islands. This means that your individual understanding of the flora and fauna of the archipelago is far richer and far more informed when experiencing the islands firsthand.



The Silversea difference

BESPOKE, ALL-INCLUSIVE LUXURY FROM THE VERY FIRST MOMENT



SUPERIOR EXPEDITION EXPERIENCE

In the Galápagos Islands, experts make the expedition, and Silversea's top-notch team of biologists, ornithologists, geologists, historians, photographers, and other experts will draw you in with their extensive knowledge and enthusiasm. From enriching your experience during active explorations to providing relaxed one-to-one chat opportunities, informative seminars and daily briefings, our handpicked team of experts—forming the highest ratio of qualified guides-to-guests in the archipelago—will make your adventure a nature lover's dream come true.



INTIMATE SHIPS, ALL-SUITE ACCOMMODATIONS

Our state-of-the-art expedition ships really do break the ice between adventure and luxury. Designed to cruise the planet's most remote regions in civilized comfort, they offer a beguiling sense of open space in their public areas while at the same time fostering an intimate atmosphere. A range of gourmet international and locally inspired dining venues satisfies even the most ambitious of cravings. And spacious all-suite accommodations offer sweeping sea views, many from their own private veranda, and all complemented by exquisite amenities.



PERSONALIZED SERVICE

Our expedition ships accommodate anywhere from 100 to 274 guests depending on the vessel, which allows us to guarantee a level of service well beyond what you may have experienced before. Surrender to the joys of dedicated around-the-clock butler service in your suite, with no request too big or too small. For an even more indulgent experience, allow us to customize your suite with individualized toiletries, stationery, and favorite bar beverages. Our aim is to make this truly feel like your home away from home-only better.

SAVE ON YOUR NEXT GALÁPAGOS ADVENTURE WITH SILVERSEA'S DOOR-TO-DOOR ALL-INCLUSIVE FARES, FEATURING A REFUNDABLE **15% REDUCED** DEPOSIT. BOOK BY NOVEMBER 30, 2023.

YOUR DOOR-TO-DOOR ALL-INCLUSIVE GALÁPAGOS PACKAGE

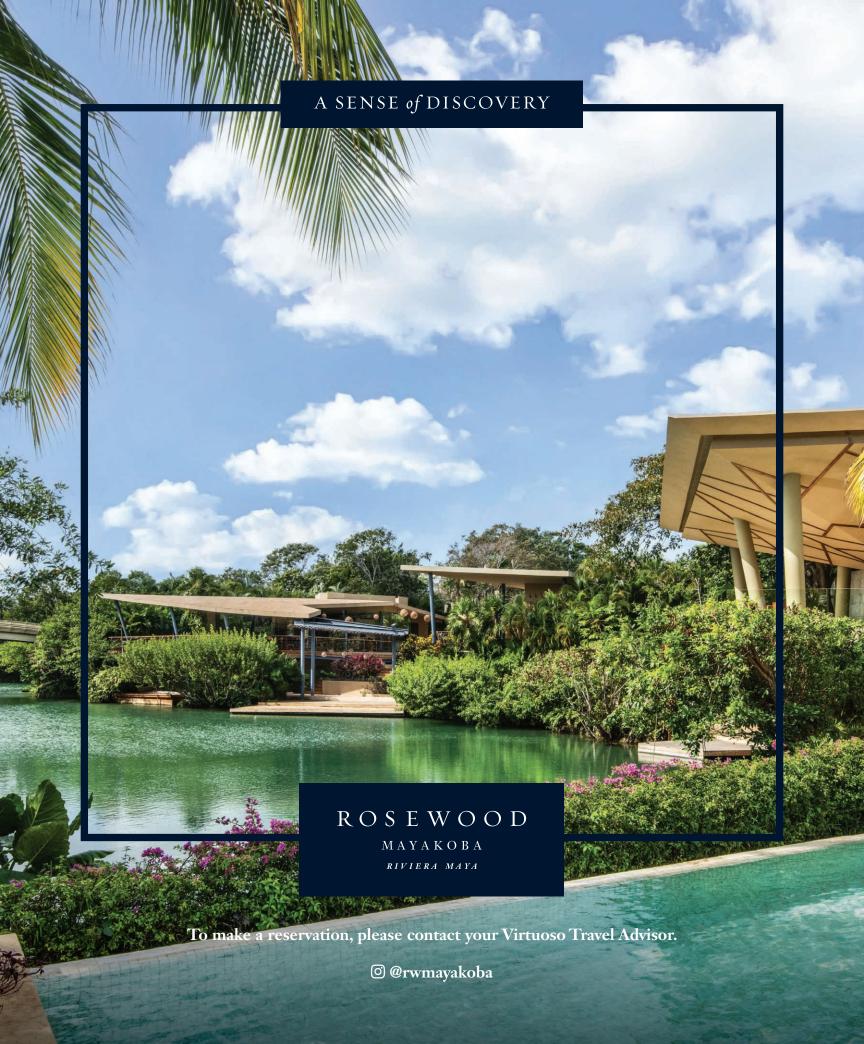


*For guests with flights after 10pm

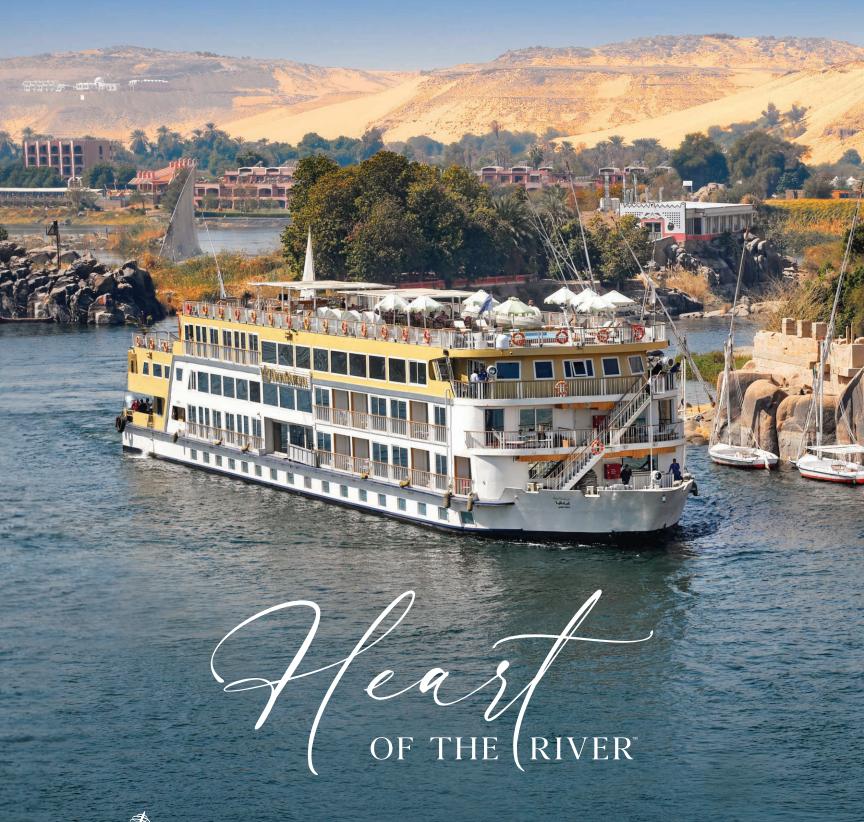


RESERVE YOUR SUITE WITH YOUR VIRTUOSO TRAVEL ADVISOR TODAY TO RECEIVE EXCLUSIVE BENEFITS.









VIRTUOSO

PREFERRED

VOTED BEST RIVER CRUISE LINE NINE TIMES

BY VIRTUOSO ADVISORS

2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2022



PLUS, RECEIVE \$100 ONBOARD CREDIT PER STATEROOM ON SELECT SAILINGS!







Step aboard a world of unparalleled experiences where your journey is our passion. Immerse yourself in the wonders of the life-giving Nile River through a variety of included excursions. Explore the Pyramids of Giza, craft papyrus with your own hands and even enjoy a private tour of Queen Nefertari's tomb, reserved exclusively for AmaWaterways guests on our 11-night Secrets of Egypt & the Nile itinerary.

Contact your Virtuoso travel agency or advisor today.







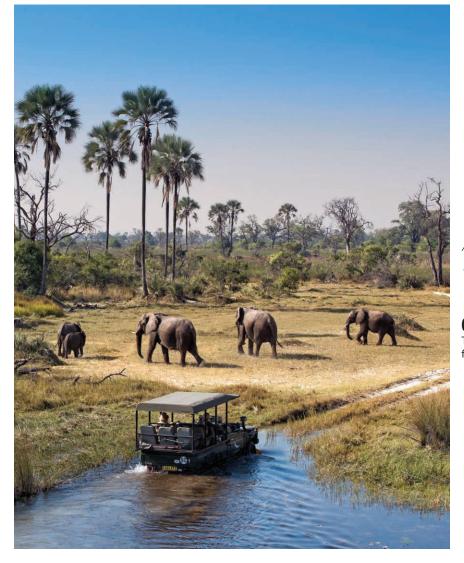






CONTENTS

September October 2023



175
Call of the Wild
There's a safari style for everyone.

132 Road Less Traveled
Set out on a luxe five-lodge circuit through Bhutan.

144 Written in Sandstone
Aboriginal art and tradition in Australia's
Northern Territory.

158 one Night Only

A Champagne-soaked train journey from Paris to the French Alps.

166 Oceans Apart

Madagascar safaris feel a world away from the rest of Africa.

188 Desert Drifter
Cruising South America's wild west coast.

ON THE COVER

Photographed at Six Senses Thimphu, Bhutan. Photography by Korena Bolding.

Styling by "Lhari" Karma Tshering Wangchuk. Hair and makeup by Phuntsho Choden. Vintage sheep's wool blanket modeled by Tandin Lham.

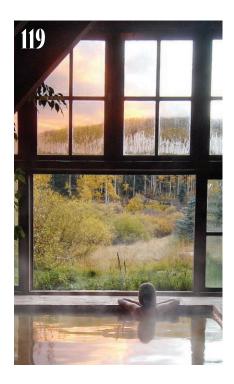


No matter what kind of adventure you're into, everything you love is just a scenic drive away in The Florida Keys & Key West. Enjoy warm, clear water. Legendary sunsets. Unparalleled fishing and diving. An extraordinary array of accommodations. And the world's freshest seafood. There's never been a better time to call your Virtuoso travel advisor.



CONTENTS

September October 2023







- 18 Editor's Note
- **22** Contributors
- 25 Passport
- **48** Cruising
- **56** Hotel News

64 The Virtuoso Life

Outlander actor Sam Heughan's guide to Galloway.

68 City Guide: Las Vegas

Going big in Sin City is more fun than ever.

72 Southern Exposure

How to spend a day in Busan, South Korea's coastal-cool second city.

79 Testing the Waters

A brand-new cruiser takes on Antarctica.

84 Spoiler Alert

A father-daughter cruise on the Galápagos' first superyacht.

111 When in Wanhua

An enlightening day in Taipei's oldest district.

119 Follow the Yellow Tree Road

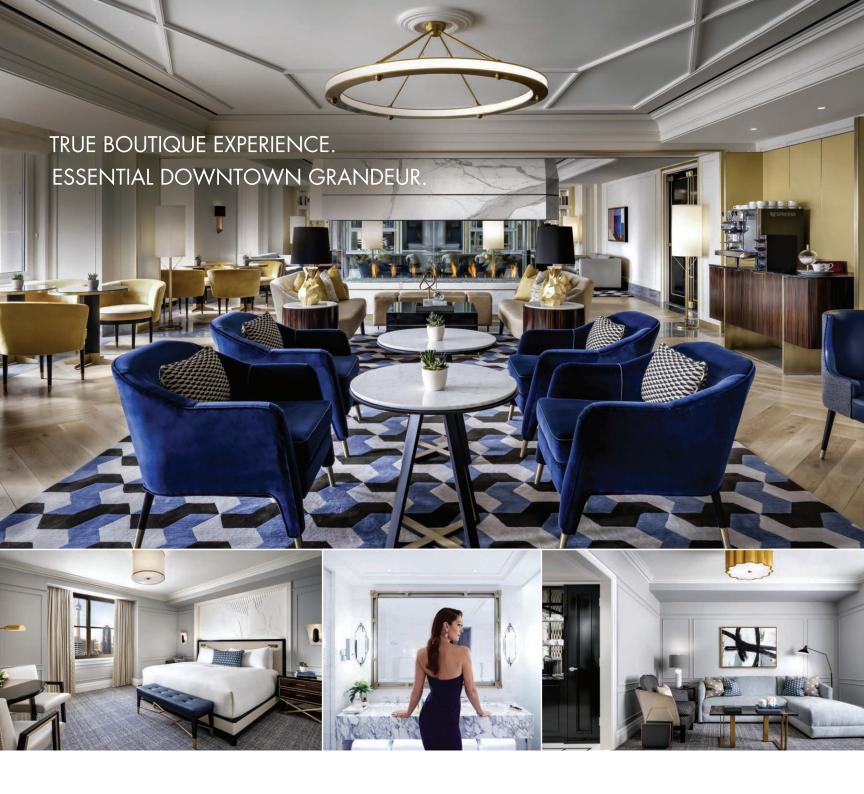
Fall splendor on Colorado's Western Slope.

125 Bolder Than Ever

Reinvention looks good on Buenos Aires.

198 Gallery

Finding inspiration from pigments of the past.



PERSONALIZED LUXURY. EXCLUSIVE RESIDENCE.



Step into a higher level of luxury at Fairmont Royal York.

Experience highly personalized service, reimagined residential-style suites, and a spectacular 18th floor lounge featuring deluxe breakfast, evening canapés, and live entertainment programming.

Our exclusive boutique hotel creates the essential Toronto experience.



Texas to Thimphu

ERE AT VIRTUOSO, we believe in going far – about 16,000 miles, in the case of this issue's cover. That's the there-and-back distance from Texas to Thimphu, Bhutan, which our design director, Melanie Fowler, and art director, Korena Bolding, traversed in pursuit of our cover image. Shot by Korena on location at Six Senses Thimphu lodge, this cover is brought to you by the power of Virtuoso's travel network.

A friend at Six Senses connected us with a wildly talented Bhutanese stylist, who understood our wish to convey both the Himalayan kingdom's traditional side *and* Virtuoso's boldly contemporary mood. Many WhatsApp chats, several international flights, and a vintage Bhutanese wool blanket and traditional yak herder's hat later, our cover dream was a reality. I should add that our team's Virtuoso travel advisor saved the day more than once on this complex journey, rejiggering plans on the fly to accommodate flight cancellations and missed connections.

I share this behind-the-scenes snapshot to illustrate that, through the company we keep here at Virtuoso, pretty much any travel dream is achievable. Your travel advisor always knows someone (or knows someone who knows someone) who can make it so. It's a fitting kickoff for this issue, focused on trips of a lifetime.

In addition to our lodge-hopping journey through Bhutan – a country that's fiercely committed to responsible tourism – stories span destinations from Antarctica (associate editor Emma Franke's first cruise) to Zimbabwe (part of our comprehensive safari primer). There's managing editor Justin Paul's father-daughter Galápagos adventure, a Champagne-fizzed journey on a brand-new Venice Simplon-Orient-Express route, a Las Vegas city guide (which is just a taste of our expanded guide to all things Vegas on Virtuoso.com), and *Outlander* star Sam Heughan's Scotland. We hope this issue inspires your next great adventure – be it 16,000 or 60 miles away.



MARIKA CAIN EDITORIAL DIRECTOR



Double Take

Look again at the "hairstyle" on the cover. Here's what you're actually seeing: an upside-down *tsipee cham* – a traditional Bhutanese Brokpa yak herder's hat. Worn as intended, the hat's points face down to divert rain away from the herder's face.

On set: Our cover shoot in progress.



The fascinating spirit of Alaska

Your clients will be enchanted by the spellbinding beauty of The Last Frontier on a roundtrip voyage from Vancouver. Cunard's renowned White Star Service™ offers luxurious style and comfort as they sail alongside glaciers, hear whale song hang in the air, and absorb the magic of this otherworldly land.

Roundtrip Vancouver
10 nights • Jun 11, 2024
Balcony Fares from \$2,199*

Taxes, Fees and Port Expenses of up to \$230 are additional and subject to change.

Virtuoso Exclusive Benefits include:
Up to \$500 Onboard Credit per stateroom*
Specialty Dining in Steakhouse at The Verandah*
for Balcony staterooms and above



*Contact your Virtuoso Travel Advisor for complete Terms and Conditions.

Combinable with: Cruise Sales | Military Benefits | Limited Time Offers | World Club Member Savings & Benefits

© 2023 Carnival plc. Ships' Registry: Bermuda. The Cunard logo and logotype, Queen Elizabeth, and White Star Service are registered trademarks of Carnival plc, an English company trading as Cunard. All rights reserved in the United States and other countries.

VIRTUOSO

THE MAGAZINE

"What are you ordering from the in-flight drink cart?"

Editorial Director Marika Cain

Editorial

Managing Editor Justin Paul
Senior Editor Amy Cassell
Senior Editor, Special Projects Josie Sexton
Associate Editor Emma Franke
Assistant Editor Victoria Carodine

"I just found out airlines are serving

flavored sparkling waters on board, and my life is changed."

Design

Design Director Melanie Prasetyo Fowler
Art Director Korena Bolding
Graphic Designer Mariela García Ramírez

Contributors

Copy Editors Miriam Bulmer, Diane Sepanski
Researchers Donna Blinn, Jillian Dara, Jessica Mueller
Photo Researcher Mary Risher

Digital Retoucher Walter Kelly
Writers & Photographers

Adam Erace, Luis García, Elaine Glusac, David Hochman, Jeff Koehler, Kimberley Lovato, Kevin J. Miyazaki, Chadner Navarro, Chris Schalkx, Kim Brown Seely, Jen Rose Smith, David Swanson, Clara Tuma

Marketing/Advertising

Partner Marketing Strategist Katy Loucks
Senior Director, Marketing Programs & Distribution Robert Duncan
Senior Manager, Marketing Programs & Distribution Kelly Kirchner
Senior Manager, Consumer Product Marketing Magdalena Jama
Manager, Digital Content Marketing Stephen Cordebas
Brand Lead Paula Franklin

Circulation/Data Services

Lanecha White, Amy Hyde, Gaylynn Magers, Kristen Gwaltney

"On an early flight, my go-to is a Bloody Mary. It's a nice way to enter vacation ~ mode." - D.R.

Marketing Operations

Senior Director Kathy Niwa Terrell

Manager Natalie Sherman

Specialists Katie Harnish, Carol Lewis, Denise Rodriguez

Coordinator Hailee Buchanan

"I love a mimosa, particularly during the last leg of a flight to a tropical

island." - I.A.

Account Sales

Ilianna Aller, Sara Archibald, Amy Bailey, Scott Bryan, Rick Cazzell, Miguelina Cespedes, Xabier Eguren, Trisha Foresman, Susan Gannon, Christine Gilbert, Javier Guillermo, Mallory Hayes, Zoe Kim, Gregg Nielsen, Daniel Pope-Davis, Daniela Trotta

Editorial Advisory Board

Meredith Burbidge, Karen Cantor, Noelle Celeste, Emily Clenney, Dawn Johnson, Jenny Westermann

<u>Virtuoso</u>

Chairman & CEO Matthew D. Upchurch
Chief Operating Officer Brad Bourland
Executive Vice President David Kolner
SVP, Network Products & Events Jennifer Campbell
SVP, Sales & Partnerships Cory Hagopian
SVP, Global Operations Michael Londregan
SVP, Marketing Helen McCabe-Young
SVP, Finance & Business Intelligence Mike McCown
SVP, Digital & Consumer Products Travis McElfresh
SVP, Culture & Human Resources Michelle Rashid
VP, Cruise Melissa Araya
VP, Sustainability Javier Arredondo
VP, Global Public Relations Misty Ewing Belles

VP, Cruise Melissa Araya

VP, Sustainability Javier Arredondo

VP, Global Public Relations Misty Ewing Belles

VP, Global Member Relations Cheryl Bunker

VP, Global Partner Relations Rakesh Dewan

VP, Product Design Paul Ingram

VP, Technology Paul Kearney

VP, Consumer Products Andrew Locke

VP, Member & Partner Development Karyn McCarthy

VP, Finance & Accounting Michael Moten

VP, Operations Steve Wooster

General Counsel Alex Cestero

"Campari and

orange juice,
because I've never
crashed while
drinking one."

Virtuoso is the leading global travel agency network specializing in luxury and experiential travel. This by-invitation-only organization comprises over 1,200 travel agency locations with more than 2,000 travel advisors in over 50 countries throughout North America, Latin America, Latin America, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Africa, and the Middle East. Drawing upon its preferred relationships with more than 2,300 of the world's best hotels and resorts, cruise lines, airlines, tour companies, and premier destinations, the network provides its upscale clientele with exclusive amenities, rare experiences, and privileged access. Normalized annual sales of (U.S.) \$28 to \$32 billion make Virtuoso a powerhouse in the luxury travel industry, For more information, visit www.virtuoso.com. For a subscription, please call your Virtuoso travel advisor. All pricing and travel described herein are subject to change and availability, and restrictions may apply. Prices are per person, double occupancy, in U.S. dollars, and do not include taxes or other fees unless stated otherwise. Publisher assumes no liability for the representations contained herein. Publisher assumes no responsibility for unsolicited art, photography, or manuscripts. Nothing may be reprinted in whole or in part without written consent of the publisher. EDITORIAL: editors@virtuoso.com. ADVERTISING: marketingproduction@virtuoso.com. WIRTUOSO HEADQUARTERS, VIRTUOSO, THE MAGAZINE CIRCULATION, AND POSTMASTERS. VIRTUOSO, The Magazine Circulation, Virtuoso, 777 Main Street, Suite 900, Fort Worth, TX 76102, virtuoso.com. To stop receiving Virtuoso, the Magazine, contact your travel advisor or email help@virtuoso.com. California CST #2069091-50; Washington UBI #601554183. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the state of California. Copyright experience of travel does not constitute approval by the state of California. Copyright experience trademarks of Virtuoso, Ltd. All rights reserved. Within the United States,







A World of World-Class Dining

For more information, contact your Virtuoso travel advisor.



"What's the dream destination you haven't hit yet?"





"I have a long-cherished goal of lighthouse-hopping and lilac-spotting on Prince Edward Island in the spring - Anne of Green Gables-heads get it." **THE REPORT:** "The one thing that can't come across in photos or videos of Antarctica becomes apparent the first time you step downwind of a penguin colony: They're very pungent birds. Every moment of Antarctic penguin-watching was precious, but I'm glad to be reliving those memories from a distance now."



Writer **Aaron Gulley** Santa Fe "Call of the Wild," page 175

"I've been to New Zealand several times before, but I have unfinished business there. My wife and I landed for a slew of assignments the day the country went into Covid lockdown, so we couldn't do anything other than spend the next eight weeks trying to get home. I really want to bike some more of its multiday tracks, kayak and fish its epic streams, and experience the red-stag rut." THE REPORT: "I was amazed

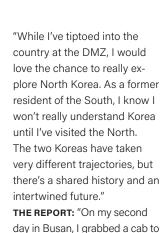
to hear how African safaris are blowing up right now, with several operators saying bookings are up nearly 200 percent for 2024. I'm planning to climb Mount Kenya in the next year, and it made me realize I'd better start planning immediately. Everyone I spoke with said, 'Book early!' " @ aarongulley



Stylist "Lhari" Karma Tshering Wangchuk Thimphu, Bhutan Cover

"Derge, Kham, in Tibet. My dad

was from that region, and it's been my dream to ride horses in Kham's grassland and see the land of his childhood," THE REPORT: "The look for the shoot was put together using vintage Bhutanese clothing, accessories, and footwear collected from friends and family, which I styled to look contemporary. I'm a big believer in sustainability and come from a culture of mending clothes, which is why I didn't make any new pieces for the shoot. A mindful photo shoot is a collaborative gift from our carbon-negative country in the fragile Himalaya." bhutanstreetfashion

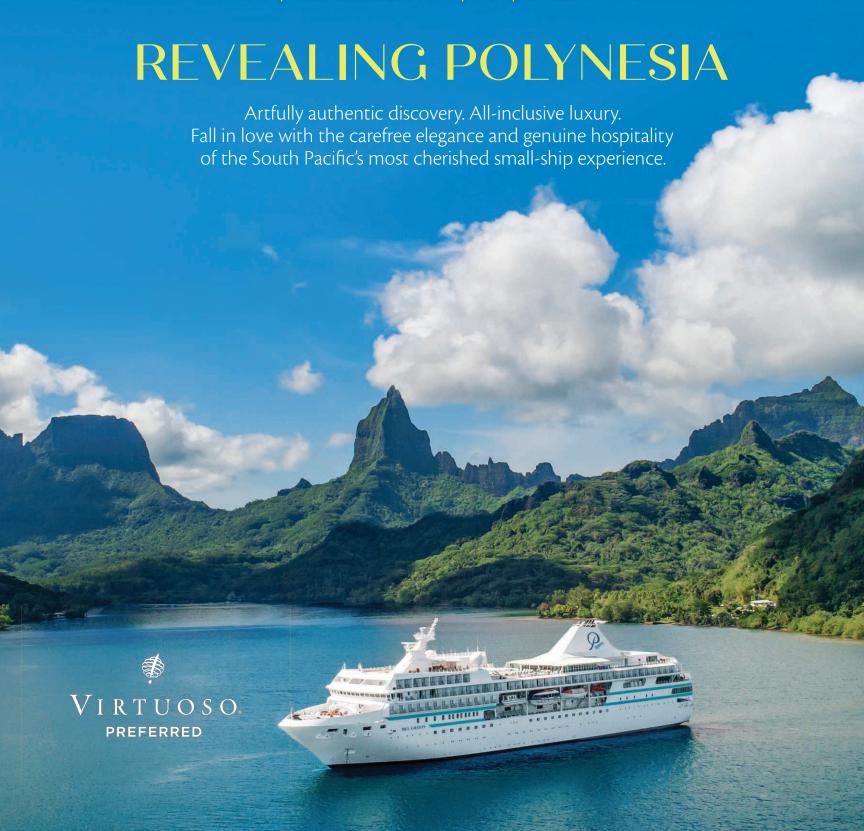


intertwined future." THE REPORT: "On my second day in Busan, I grabbed a cab to Songdo Beach to catch some morning light. Even at 6 AM, the boardwalk was crawling with walkers and runners, and there were a hundred or so people in the water for a distance swimming event. This really captures the Busan experience - it's growing, it's active, and the people who live there absolutely love it."

@ culturechromatic



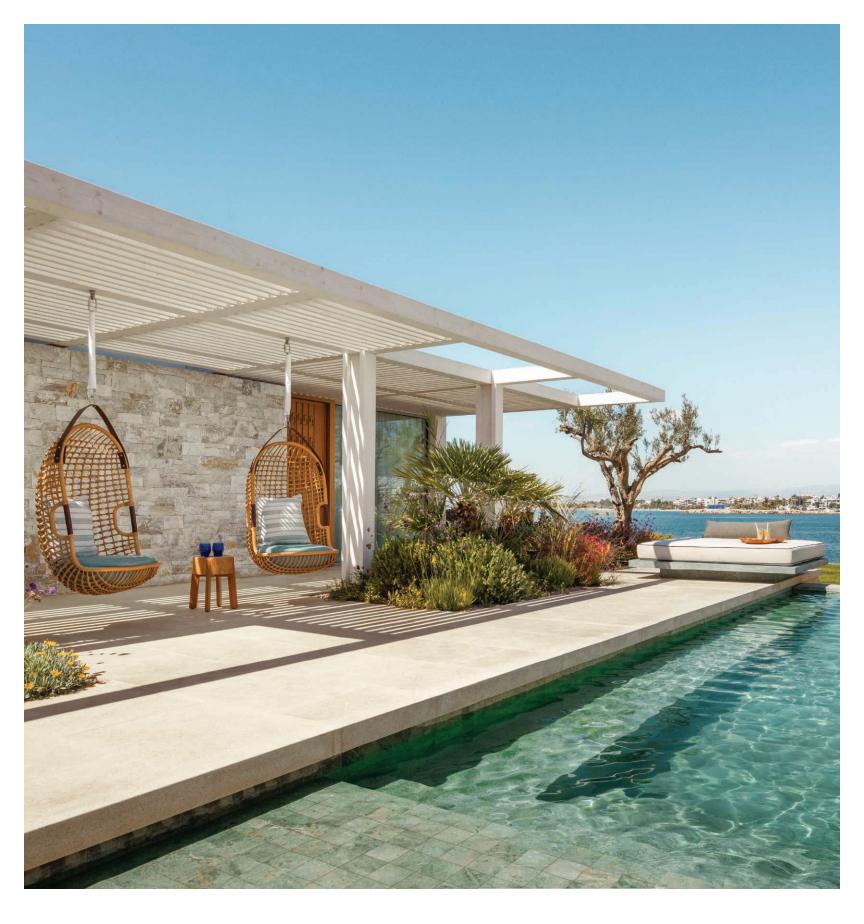
Photographer **Ben Weller** Nagoya, Japan "Southern Exposure," page 72



For reservations, call your Virtuoso Travel Advisor today.

Be sure to ask about Virtuoso Exclusive Benefits!





THE ATHENIAN RIVIERA RETREAT

Discover an untold world of nostalgia and mid-century glamour at One&Only Aesthesis, a coastal hideaway in the heart of Greece.

To make a reservation, please contact your Virtuoso travel advisor.





New Heights

Northern Botswana's Mababe wilderness concession pulses with lion prides, elephant megaherds, and endemic birds (such as the lilac-breasted roller, pictured here), but the most striking thing about its remote setting is what you won't see: other safari-goers. Wilderness' solar-powered Mokete camp opens soon as the only lodge within Mababe's 120,000-plus acres – just nine canvas tents with en suite bathrooms means a maximum of 18 guests at a time can explore Mababe via game drives, sundowners, and stargazing in the bush or beneath each tent's retractable roof. Make plans now, because Mokete's magic is fleeting: Come 2026, Wilderness plans to build a permanent 24-person camp in its place, while staying true to its mission to maintain a minimal footprint. Doubles from \$1,154, including all meals and activities. – Joel Centano



A tour of cakes at Lysée, clockwise from top left: Chocolate, signature mousse, corn mousse, and carrot.

Tasting Menus Are Cool Again

As an alternative to five-hour parades of foams and marathons of tweezer-perfect plates, these restaurants are interpreting the classic tasting menu in new and creative ways.

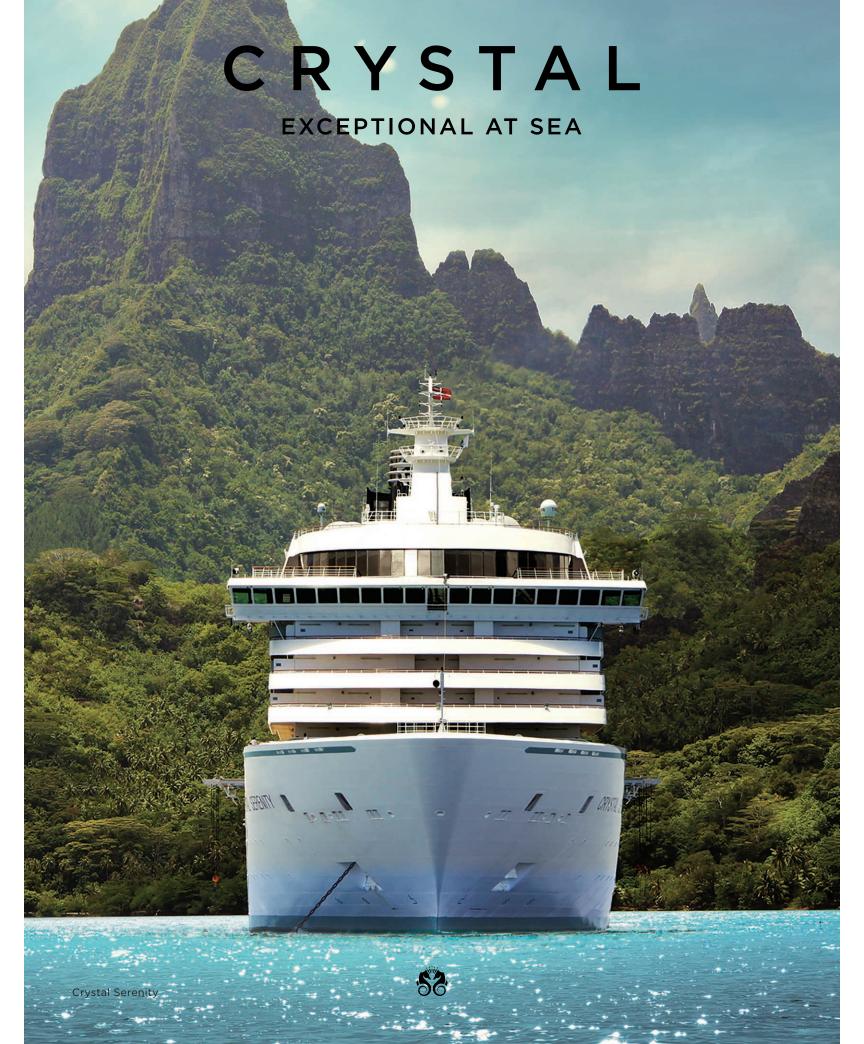
- NYC "pastry gallery" **Lysée** is one of the city's most coveted reservations, with a celebrated philosophy that dessert should be considered a daily luxury rather than a guilty pleasure. The four-course tasting menu features a fine-art-inspired spread of French- and Korean-influenced creations, and the highlight is the cult-favorite corn mousse cake, which sells out nightly.
- Thousands of travelers make the pilgrimage to Caiazzo, Italy (about an hour's drive north of Naples) to visit the critically acclaimed Pepe in Grani – many call it the world's best pizzeria. The pizza tasting menu includes a fried and stuffed dough cone; four to eight seasonal slices, from margherita to fig and cheese; and a sweet fried dessert pizza. »



Passport

- At The Vesper Club, a sleek cocktail lounge inside The Continental Nashville, chef Sean Brock and head bartender Natalie Newberry take guests on a five-course tour of caviars from around the globe. Each spoonful is paired with a petite martini designed to complement the roe. Diners don't receive a copy of the menu until after the tasting, to avoid any fishy preconceptions.
- The tasting menu gets the family-style treatment at Hong Kong's Rosita, courtesy of chefs Ricardo Chaneton and Agustin Balbi (from Venezuela and Argentina, respectively). The hearty six-course meal stirs together Latin American heritage with Japanese and French cooking techniques, resulting in dishes such as seaweed tostadas and Hokkaido scallop and strawberry ceviche.
- Ask for the three-course brunch tasting menu at San Francisco's Hilda and Jesse. The selections, which change regularly (and have recently included celery-root tots, chicken congee, and apple fritters with rye pudding and star anise ice cream), showcase why the playful North Beach space earned its first Michelin Bib Gourmand last year.
- Terroir is a term normally reserved for wine, but it's on full display
 in the plant-based tasting menu at Portland, Oregon's Workshop.
 Cuban American chef Aaron Adams combines childhood favorites
 with Pacific Northwest flair in a vegan feast featuring onion
 stroopwafel-mushroom pâté sandwiches, nopales with celery
 kombucha vinegar, and more. Karla Walsh









EMBARK UPON THE EXCEPTIONAL

Get ready for the adventure of a lifetime with Crystal. Our highly anticipated 2024 World Cruise and Grand Journeys span countries and continents, offering an unseen side to some of the planet's most inspiring destinations.

Embark upon the most exceptional voyage around the world on our 2024 World Cruise. This extraordinary journey aboard the newly renovated *Crystal Serenity* explores 61 destinations, and 28 countries over 125 nights, weaving through iconic destinations, including Polynesia, Bali, Luxor, and the Greek Isles. Traveling from San Diego, the adventure first explores Australia and New Zealand, two stunning countries that have perfected the arts of leisure and pleasure. Next, you'll discover the vibrant colors and ancient traditions of Asia as you discover bustling markets and sacred temples in Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and India. Imbibe in the millennia of history of the Middle East, then traverse the famous Suez Canal to uncover the secrets of the Mediterranean, where culture comes to life amidst ancient ruins and picturesque coastal towns. Finally, enjoy serenity at sea, as you wend your way back to Miami.

Our World Cruise Ambassador, Fernando Barroso de Oliveira, joins us on this exceptional journey. Having spent the last six decades traveling the globe, getting to know the people, places, and cultures that make each destination unique, Fernando is on board to share his incredible knowledge, speak to each guest, and offer tailored, highly personalized guidance.

Celebrate the world in all its breathtaking beauty and immerse in unparalleled knowledge and access powered by our partners at Abercrombie & Kent. From onboard comforts to discovering enriching communities alongside like-minded travelers, this voyage offers a chance to see the unseen side of the world's most coveted destinations.

For those who seek the secret side of a region, but don't have the time, Crystal's Grand Journeys have been designed for discovery. These extended cruise itineraries range from 68-42 nights, sailing to destinations that range from iconic to off-the-beatentrack. Grand Journeys offer voyages that delve deeper into a specific world region, allowing you to fully immerse yourself in their unique charms. From the captivating shores of the South Pacific to the glacial beauty of Alaska, these odysseys offer unparalleled opportunities for discovery and exploration.

Prepare to be inspired, as Crystal's 2024 World Cruise and Grand Journeys unveil the world's most exceptional destinations in our hallmark exceptional manner. Let your dreams set sail and embark on a journey that will forever leave an indelible mark on your soul. This is your invitation to join us on an adventure of a lifetime, where the wonders of the world await.

Book one of our exceptional itineraries by contacting your Virtuoso travel advisor.

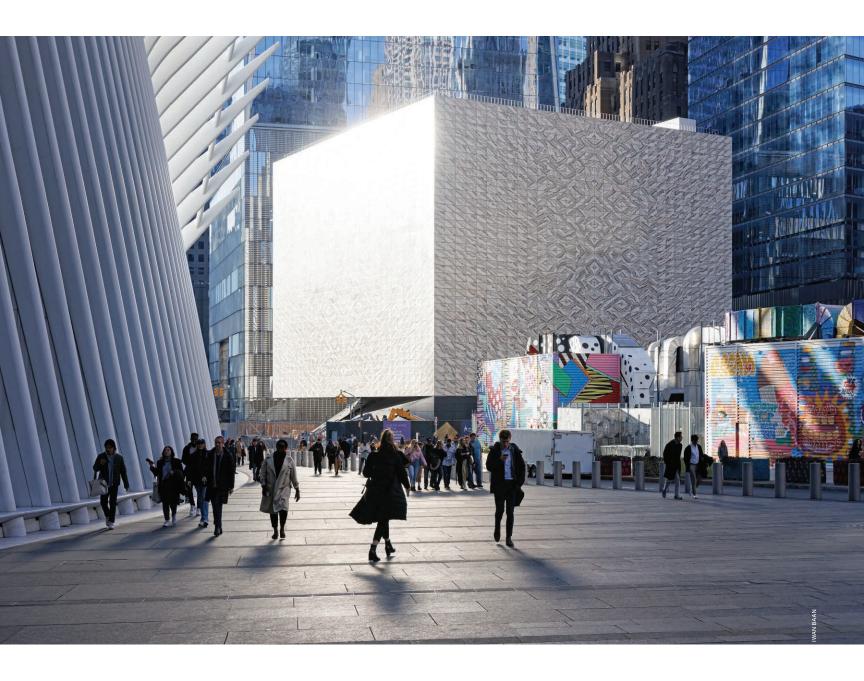


Passport

Downtown, at Last

It's been more than 20 years since NYC mayor Michael Bloomberg hatched plans for an arts and culture hub at the former World Trade Center site – this month, the **Perelman Performing Arts Center** debuts. The cubelike space features a facade covered in thousands of translucent marble slabs that glow from within at night. Inside, three separate theaters can be configured more than 60 ways to seat up to 950 patrons. The center's inaugural season features opera, theater, music, dance, film, and lectures, including the premiere of actor Laurence Fishburne's oneman show and a reimagining of the Broadway stalwart *Cats*. A community-focused program in the lobby will host free performances, and celebrity chef Marcus Samuelsson helms the on-site restaurant, Metropolis Kitchen.

- Devorah Lev-Tov



PUSH YOURSELF

From the Arctic to Antarctica, go beyond your comfort zone. Follow your curiosities, free your spirit and expand your mind with new experiences you've never known; polar kayaking, ice fishing, polar diving and so much more.

THE EDGE.

PONANT 3



THE WORLD'S ONLY LUXURY ICEBREAKER



LE COMMANDANT CHARCOT



Contact your Virtuoso travel advisor for more details and reservations.





Agave Takeover

Everyone knows tequila and mezcal, but Mexico produces many other spirits distilled from its agave and agavelike species. These lesser-known gems, each with distinctive characteristics, flavors, and aromas, are ready for your next margarita. Take sotol: Made from dasylirion, a desert plant similar to agave, it's characterized by its herbal, mineral, and slightly spicy notes, says Miguel Aquino, a mixologist at Riviera Nayarit's 59-room Susurros del Corazón. And teguila connoisseurs are hyping raicilla, which is slightly smoother and sweeter than tequila and mezcal, has its roots in ancient Indigenous traditions, and is sourced from mountain-grown Agave maximiliana or coastal Agave angustifolia. Sip these spirits on their own or add them to anything from a paloma to a negroni.

THE BOTTLES

- Comiteco 9 Guardianes Añejo. \$65. Distilled from fermented agave sap called *aguamiel*, plus a tiny amount of refined brown sugar, *comiteco* is only made in and around Comitán de Domínguez, Chiapas. Its rumlike flavor has accents of grass and mead.
- Gracias a Dios Agave Gin. \$51. This Oaxacan blend uses a base of *angustifolia* agave, juniper, and 31 other botanicals to produce a sweet citrus sipper that ends with notes of dried smoked chilies, pepper, and anise.
- La Reina Raicilla Blanco. \$85. In the rural Sierra Madre village of Atenguillo, distiller Julio Topete Becerra produces small batches of *raicilla* for (discerning) consumers. The brand's Blanco is a pleasant introduction to the spirit, with a mild and smooth flavor profile.
- Quechol Texanum Sotol. \$60. This small-batch sotol is distilled from the *texanum* variety of the dasylirion plant, which is sourced from Mexico's Chihuahuan desert. Expect an herbal, nutty profile. D.L.-T.





Khady Gueye

Elevator Operator, The Pierre, New York City

For 33 years, Khady Gueye has welcomed guests into her "office" at **The Pierre** hotel on NYC's Upper East Side. Her warmth, arsenal of compliments, and signature rhinestone-studded glasses have made her one of the 189-room landmark's most beloved staff members.

Have you always been an elevator operator at The Pierre? I came to NYC via Washington, D.C. from Senegal in 1978 and worked at the New York Palace hotel before being hired as a housekeeping attendant at The Pierre. I used to visit a regular guest's 7-year-old daughter in my free time. After I became too busy to play with her, she wrote a letter to the GM saying she wanted to see more of me, so that's how I became an elevator operator. I've been here ever since – and that little girl, Isabella, invited me to her wedding a few years ago.

Average number of elevator rides per day? I have no clue! I'm a people person, I love to talk, and I love my job. Give me a thousand rides a day, and I'll take it.

How much conversational ground can you cover in a quick ride? If there aren't any other guests, it's easy because we can stop and keep chatting on their floor – or ride all the way up to the 39th floor. One time I waited while a guest showed me two outfits so I could help her decide what to wear for an event.

Any memorable guests? After I met Kirstie Alley in the elevator and called her a beautiful young lady, she told me, "That's it, we're going to be friends." She became a regular at The Pierre. When I had my son, she sent a wagon full of flowers to the hospital. People thought I was a celebrity!

What do you love most about The Pierre? The guests. They make it exciting to come to work. When they see me and say, "What a beautiful lady! I love your look," they become my friends. And I make them all promise they'll come back.

Tell us about that look. I found a pair of shiny gold glasses on vacation 18 years ago. My boss was afraid our GM wouldn't like them, but a guest instantly complimented me. Now I go crazy – I have 14 pairs that I rotate. Sometimes I'm feeling green, sometimes gold.

Doubles from \$995, including breakfast daily and a \$100 dining credit. - Amy Cassell



HUMAN, NATURE, MOMENTS - In The Nordics









The Nordics is a collaboration between the tourism boards of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Faroe Islands, Iceland, Finland, and Greenland as well as The European Travel Commission and The Nordic Council of Ministers, focusing on sustainable travel to the region from North America. In The Nordics travellers can enjoy midnight sun, island hopping, world-beating gastronomy, active adventures, unique accommodation, liveable cities, world-famous architecture, arctic expeditions and much more. The Nordics boasts many hidden gems of high quality. Ask your Virtuoso Advisor today for more info.









LET US GUIDE YOU ON

One of the rarest Mildlife experiences on the planet.









THE EMPEROR PENGUINS OF SNOW HILL

Few humans have laid eyes on the legendary penguin colony in remote Antarctica. It was Quark Expeditions, leading polar specialists since 1991, who conducted the first-ever ground visit to the rookery of 4,000 pairs of emperor penguins in 2004.

We'll take you on a wilderness expedition that no one else can!







Explore Snow Hill with the most experienced expedition team in the industry.



Travel on the technologically-advanced *Ultramarine*—unmatched by any other ship.



Choose from the widest range of off-ship adventures in the Polar Regions.

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL VIRTUOSO TRAVEL AGENCY OR ADVISOR.

Carry-On Companions

THE FRAUD

BY ZADIE SMITH (Penguin Press)

In her dizzying new novel, Smith reimagines the real-life Tichborne case of the 1860s and '70s, which questioned the validity of an Australian butcher claiming to be the rightful heir to a large estate in England. Intertwining the lives of a Scottish housekeeper, a formerly enslaved man from Jamaica who serves as the star witness, and even Charles Dickens himself, Smith showcases our enduring fascination with true crime and the thin, costly line separating fact from fiction.

FAMILY MEAL

BY BRYAN WASHINGTON (*Riverhead Books*) Cam is on an aimless journey of self-destruction after the death of his boyfriend, Kai, whose ghost follows him from their apartment in L.A. to Cam's hometown of Houston, where he reunites with an old friend. Delicately balancing grit and tenderness, Washington reveals the intricacies of grief and the implacable bonds of chosen family.

LAND OF MILK AND HONEY

BY C PAM ZHANG (Riverhead Books)

This lyrical take on dystopia follows an unnamed, 29-year-old American chef stuck abroad in Europe after a mysterious smog causes worldwide food shortages and mass extinctions. With U.S. borders closed and her only hope for return contingent on a debt repayment, she accepts a coveted position at an exclusive mountaintop enclave in

Italy. Sudden abundance and a behindthe-scenes look at the lives of the elite challenge her ethics in this novel that examines pleasure and privilege amid catastrophe.

THE VASTER WILDS

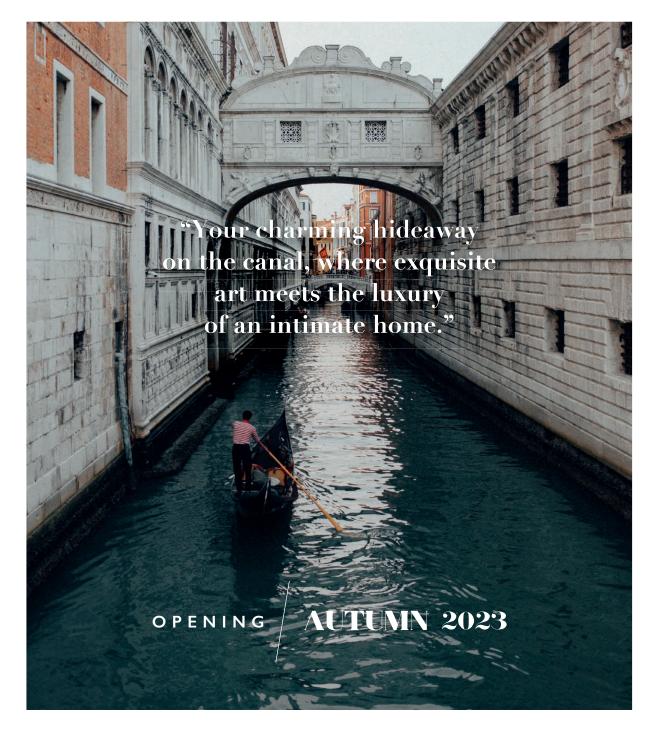
BY LAUREN GROFF (Riverhead Books)
The latest from the Fates and Furies
author is a historical novel set in the

author is a historical novel set in the "starving time" of early 1600s Jamestown, when Zed, a runaway servant, flees into the wilderness after escaping the disease- and famine-ridden fort she's been shipped to. Groff explores America's dark beginnings of colonialism and religious fervor through this harrowing tale of sheer instinct and survival.

- Melissa L. Amstutz



Violino d'Oro









(Deeper) Down Under

Natural Habitat Adventures invites travelers to go beyond the standard koala, wombat, and crocodile sightings on a new carbon-neutral, 21-day Australian safari. During a stop on Kangaroo Island, guests head into the field with Land for Wildlife, which works to rewild landscapes and save endangered species devastated by recent wildfires. Time in Tasmania includes a visit to the Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary to meet protected Tasmanian devils, and a project in the Daintree Rainforest offers insight into nonprofit organization Rainforest Rescue's mission to boost biodiversity. Support for Aboriginal culture - and Aboriginalowned enterprises - is also paramount. An Indigenous-led excursion in the Outback, for instance, sheds light on the area's 60,000-year-old rock art. The small-group trip also checks off the Great Barrier Reef and the Ikara-Flinders Ranges Outback, while hopping private flights and overnighting in eco-friendly properties. Departures: Multiple dates, February 25 through November 27, 2024; from \$26,895. - J.C.



YOUR WORLD is CALLING

Allura

Embrace the continued evolution of Oceania Cruises.

Answer the call of Allura.

OCEANIA CRUISES°

YOUR WORLD. YOUR WAY.®

Contact your Virtuoso Travel Advisor today and ask about select voyages with FREE Pre-Paid Gratuities or Virtuoso Voyages Amenity.

Passport







In 2024, you can explore Alaska your way with the most revolutionary vacation ever, because for the first time Celebrity Edge® will be sailing the rugged coast of the Last Frontier. This ship's outward-facing design takes experiencing the great outdoors to exciting new levels. Marvel at majestic glaciers from the Magic Carpet 12 decks above sea-level and watch for whales from the luxurious comfort of the Rooftop Garden.



All Suites. All Exclusive. All Included.

Enjoy stunning Alaska as a guest of The Retreat* - the ultimate in luxury vacation experiences—only on Celebrity.

The Retreat isn't a place. It isn't an amenity. It isn't a service. It's all of that and more. The Retreat is an unparalleled vacation experience that includes every stunning suite, a private restaurant, an exclusive lounge, and a sundeck* that rivals any high-end resort.





TAKE YOUR TRIP TO THE NEXT LEVEL WHEN YOU PLAN YOUR CELEBRITY CRUISE WITH YOUR VIRTUOSO TRAVEL ADVISOR.

You can expect personalized planning, invaluable firsthand knowledge and when booking a veranda, Concierge or AquaClass® you receive an exclusive specialty dining experience for two, PLUS a \$75 shopping credit when booking The Retreat.

[†]The Retreat Sundeck available on Edge* Series and Revolutionized ships. Currently not available on Celebrity Solstice*, Celebrity Eclipse*, Celebrity Reflection*. Celebrity Infinity*, and Celebrity Constellation*.©2023 Celebrity Cruises Inc. Ships' registry: Malta and Ecuador.





Travel restores the soul. It allows us to reconnect with people and places, and with ourselves.

Everyone deserves to enjoy the power of travel. To take the trip of a lifetime.

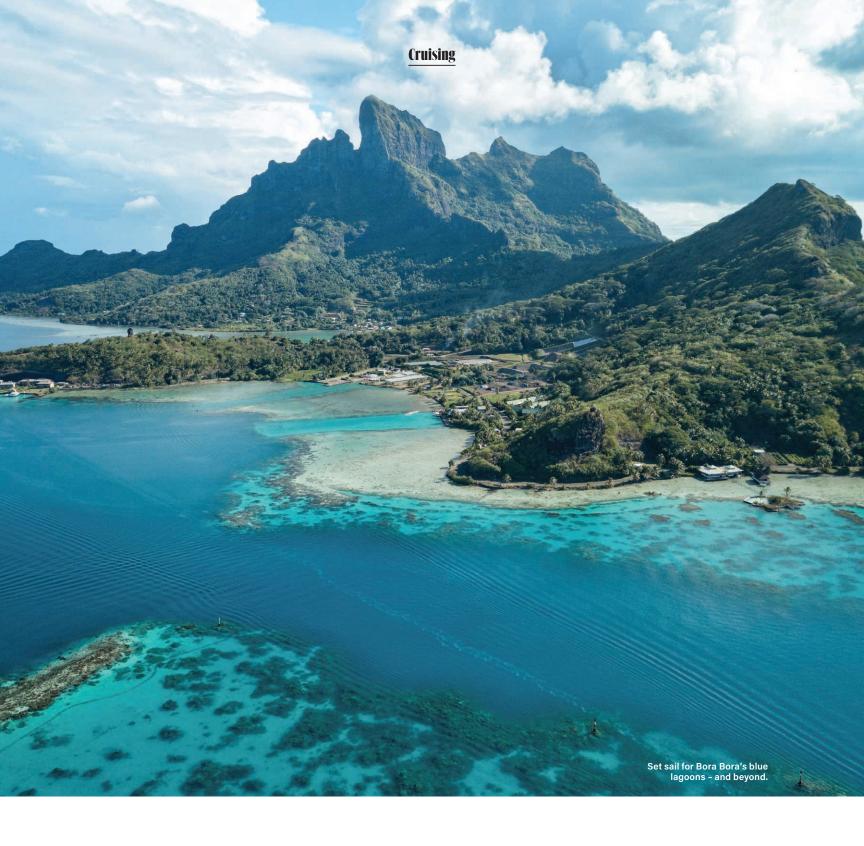
Yet, too often, those with disabilities, specific needs or access requirements are excluded.

At The Red Sea, we believe that tourism should be accessible for all.

From PADI-certified adaptive support divers and adaptive water sports and sailing equipment, to bespoke wellbeing programs for families and caregivers of people with disabilities, our accessibility agenda makes a real difference to the experience of our guests.

At The Red Sea, everyone can enjoy the trip of a lifetime.





Go the Distance

These long voyages notch some serious nautical miles.

AS IN-DEPTH ITINERARIES (and improved onboard Wi-Fi speeds) compel more travelers to spend entire seasons at sea, we turned to Fulton, Maryland-based Virtuoso travel advisor Patty Perry, who specializes in cruises, for expert advice on joining an extended sailing.

WHY ARE TRAVELERS CRUISING LONGER - AND WHO ARE THEY?

I'm seeing a lot more interest in longer sailings, but not necessarily in the 100- to 150-day world cruises. Today, there are a lot of options for what are known in the industry as "grand voyages." Silversea



IT'S THE SHARED MOMENTS WE REMEMBER MOST AND CELEBRATE BEST. Join us in celebrating 20 years of *Life*, *Well Lived*.



Cruising



started with grand voyages around Europe, and they were very successful. On a grand voyage there's more of a theme going on, focused on a specific area or a continent or two, without repeating ports. These tend to appeal to my retired clients, who have time to travel. Most of them don't have pets. Some people can work while traveling and deal with the time changes, but personally, I find it hard after a few weeks.

HOW SHOULD WE PACK FOR A MONTH-PLUS AT SEA?

You should consider where you're going, what the average temperatures will be, and how active you'll be off the ship. Most long cruises have a recommended packing list. A lot depends on whether laundry is included in the fare, or if the ship offers self-serve facilities. You can also ship luggage ahead, which may even be covered by some lines.

WHAT ONE THING SHOULD WE NOT FORGET?

Bring an empty bag for souvenirs. On a long trip, I've even shipped things home.

WHAT'S THE VIBE ON THESE CRUISES?

People on longer cruises tend to be more outgoing. If you're traveling solo, you'll get many opportunities to meet people, because onboard events bring everyone together from the start. For my clients, keeping busy hasn't been a problem – there's plenty to do, even on sea days.

60 Explore the South Pacific on a 94-night round-trip sailing from San Diego aboard Holland America Line's 1,432-passenger Volendam. The journey intersperses languid sea days with choice outposts from Hawaii to Fiji to French Polynesia. At the itinerary's heart: circumnavigations of Australia and New Zealand. An enhanced onboard enrichment program featuring presentations from locals illuminates vivid capitals and quiet islands along the route. Departure: January 3, 2024; from \$16,999.

This year sees the rebirth of **Crystal** (now owned by tour operator Abercrombie &

Kent) and a refurbishment of *Crystal Symphony* that promises larger suites, a reimagined spa, and a new pickleball court, while capacity has been reduced by nearly one-third (to 606 passengers). The refreshed *Symphony* will sail 45 nights from Lisbon to Monte-Carlo, calling on 38 of the Mediterranean's most desirable ports, including overnights in Venice, Istanbul, and Syracuse, Sicily. *Departure: May 20, 2024; from \$25,500.*

Regent Seven Seas Cruises will embark on a 63-night journey from Tokyo to Sydney aboard Seven Seas Explorer, an all-suite, 746-passenger ship with five full-service dining venues, plus a tennis court and putting green. The itinerary features 11 ports throughout Japan – including two nights in Kobe, gateway to Kyoto – along with overnights in Saigon, Bangkok, and Bali before a jaunt down Australia's east coast. Departure: October 18, 2024; from \$47,499. – David Swanson



ADVERTISEMENT TOKYO NAGOYA OSAKA ISE-SHIMA

GETTING THERE

Ise-Shima can be easily accessed from major cities in Japan. When traveling on high-speed rail (bullet train) or express train, it is about 3.5 hours from Tokyo, 2.5 hours from Osaka, and 90 minutes from Nagoya.

Please visit www.japan.travel/en/luxury/ to learn more about what awaits and discover your luxury.

EXPLORE THE HOLIEST SHRINE

Shinto is Japan's indigenous religion, and Ise-Jingu is its most sacred site. With a history dating back more than 2,000 years, the area has long been a pilgrimage destination. It is said that during the Edo period, one fifth of Japan's population made the journey to visit the Ise-Jingu's hallowed grounds.

Ise-Jingu consists of two major shrines located several miles apart. *Naiku* (Inner Shrine), is dedicated to Shinto's most important god, the Sun Goddess Amaterasu. As such, it is considered Japan's most sacred shrine. *Geku* (Outer Shrine), is dedicated to Toyouke, the goddess of food, clothing, and housing, and is also home to the Sengukan Museum. Here you can see replicas of the many treasures considered too sacred to be put on display in the main shrine. In addition, there are over 100 smaller shrines spread across the region.



TASTE LOCAL DELICACIES

Ise-Shima's namesake *ise-ebi*, (spiny lobsters) are considered the finest in Japan, and revered as a luxury indulgence across the country. The local *awabi* (abalone), caught offshore by *ama* (female free divers), are an essential ingredient for Japanese cuisine, and highly sought after by leading chefs. Plus, the nearby city of Matsuzaka is famous for its heavily marbled beef that some say is better than the well-known Kobe variety. All of these delicacies can be enjoyed in fine restaurants across Ise-Shima.





JAPAN WHERE LUXURY COMES TO LIFE

Follow the QR code to learn more about Japan's sacred spaces.





apan National ourism Organization



THE LIFE-CHANGING LIGHTS OF NORTHERN CANADA

Watching the vibrant ribbons of the northern lights unwind across the night sky is a truly transcendent experience—and just one of the many astounding adventures you'll find while traveling in Northern Canada.

When people describe what it's like to witness the phenomenon of the northern lights, grandiose words like "spectacular," "otherworldly" and "magnificent" are almost guaranteed. But when you're standing amidst the silence of the wilderness, under a pitch-black sky, and the first neon ribbon starts to unfurl overhead, words no longer do it justice. This is a spectacle that speaks for itself.

The northern lights (also known as the aurora borealis) appear above the magnetic pole of the northern hemisphere when electrically charged particles from the sun interact with gaseous particles in the Earth's upper

atmosphere. During the fall and winter, Northern Canada offers some of the best, most accessible viewing spots in the world, just short flights away from many major U.S. cities.

And while it's a show that plays out across one big sky, the experiences you can build around trips to the Northwest Territories, the Yukon, and Manitoba, are unique unto themselves. No matter which destination you choose, learning from the region's Indigenous cultures and reconnecting with nature on a truly epic scale will widen your own aperture on the world, in ways that will stay with you forever.

Autora Village, Northwest Territories

♥ SPOTTED:

LEGENDARY ART

Each region of the Dene Nation has an artistic specialty, intimately connected to their history—from beadwork to birchbark baskets to porcupine quillwork. These make for one-of-a-kind keepsakes that let you stay connected to the Dene people's story, long after you've returned home.



Colin Field/NWT

Nahanni National Park, Northwest Territories



The Northwest Territories: Where Nature and Culture Collide

The Northwest Territories offers an unparalleled view of the northern lights during the fall and winter, thanks to its location under the Auroral Oval (an atmospheric band of maximum aurora activity), low humidity, and reliably dark, clear skies. The light shows here, visible for an average of 240 nights a year, are vivid and intense—as are the memories you'll make while exploring life in the north through Entrée Destinations' eight-day Stories of Canada: Northwest Territories tour.

After a day spent touring the captivating capital of Yellowknife, you'll fly to Indigenous-owned, Frontier Lodge, situated on the massive eastern arm of Great Slave Lake, and the gateway to Thaidene Nëné National Park Reserve. Here, you'll learn about the culture and traditions of the local

Dënesuhné people, and take part in guided excursions, including trophy lake trout fishing, canoeing, hiking, and wildlife viewing—all before settling into your private cabin to watch the northern lights start their dance across the night sky.

A seaplane delivers you to your next adventure: four days in Fort Simpson, from where you'll explore the steep cliffs, canyons, and thundering waterfalls of Nahanni National Park, on foot and by air. At night, a traditional land and fire feeding ceremony with a Dene elder offers the chance to truly connect with the Dene way of life. Just as you start to think you've crossed everything off your bucket list, a short flight to Fort Providence offers a rare chance to get up close and personal with bison herds that wander the lake's western shore.



The Yukon: A Winter Adventure to Remember

The Yukon is perhaps most known for the shiny promise it held during the Klondike Gold Rush of the 19th century, and the severe impact the rush had on the region's Indigenous Peoples. Today, the Yukon is the perfect setting for a legendary winter adventure that combines cultural traditions with heart-pumping activities and modern comforts.

The seven-day Stories of Canada: Winter in the Yukon tour, hosted by Entrée Destinations, starts with three action-packed days at the Southern Lakes Resort outside of Whitehorse, on the traditional territory of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation. Here, days are dedicated to snowshoeing, snowmobiling, and taking part in age-old northern traditions like ice fishing and dogsled excursions.

Dawson City is a short flight away, but feels hundreds of years apart. This

former boomtown appears frozen in time, with its frontier-style architecture perfectly preserved from the gold rush days. Spend a day exploring the history of this community, before heading out to nearby Tombstone Territorial Park, on the traditional territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Nation. The sheer majesty of the park's snow-covered landscapes and permafrost landforms will take your breath away. A once-in-a-lifetime flight over the Ogilvie Mountains delivers you back to Dawson City for an off-grid aurora viewing experience hosted by a local guide.

Back in Whitehorse, don't miss a visit to the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre, a gorgeous facility dedicated to celebrating the heritage and modern way of life of the local Kwanlin Dün people. It also features a wide-ranging collection of Indigenous artworks from around the Yukon.

Manitoba: Walking with Wildlife

Churchill, Manitoba, sits along the southwestern shore of Hudson Bay at the edge of the Arctic Circle, and is a hot spot for legendary experiences all year round. The northern lights put on their strongest show in January and February. In July and August, tens of thousands of beluga whales migrate to the bay to birth calves, feed, and molt. It's during the fall, though, when Churchill's most famous residents congregate on the coast and the town lives up to its nickname of "polar bear capital of the world."

The Great Ice Bear Adventure tour, hosted by Canada by Design, is built around providing all kinds of viewing encounters with polar bears and other rarely seen wildlife. After a short plane ride, you'll arrive at Dymond Lake Ecolodge, nestled in a remote spot

between treeline and coastline. The lodge has a fenced perimeter, allowing you to get mere feet from wolves, moose, foxes, pine marten, and yes, even polar bears during your three-day stay. Another bonus: it provides a safe space to lie on the tundra to watch the northern lights. Walking safaris led by local guides offer yet more glimpses of polar bears and other local wildlife in their natural habitat, along with infinite photo opportunities.

Back in Churchill, tour the Itsanitaq Museum before climbing aboard a Tundra Buggy, an arctic explorer vehicle like no other, for one last polar bear encounter. It's a fitting end to a trip that will no doubt push you outside of your comfort zone, and remind you how rewarding the world can be when you approach new and different experiences with openness and respect.

♥ SPOTTED: LEGENDARY MEALS

While in Dawson City, treat yourself to a night of delicious small plates at **BonTon & Company**, a tapas restaurant inspired by local Yukon ingredients and the people's relationship to the land. By day, the restaurant doubles as a coffee shop.

Churchill, Manitoba



♥ SPOTTED:

LEGENDARY VIEWS

For yet another perspective, book a trip with **Arctic Kingdom** and get a unique aerial view of how wildlife explore the vast tundra and coastline of this remote part of the world.



In the Thick

Hoteliers on why their city hotels were made for walking.





THE RITZ-CARLTON

A DI I D

Sit Back and Enjoy the Glow



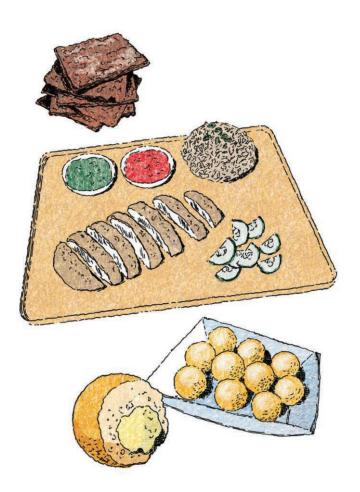


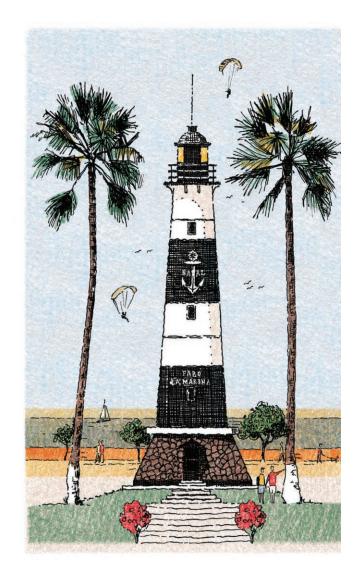
TO MAKE A RESERVATION, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR VIRTUOSO TRAVEL ADVISOR

Hotel News

SINGAPORE

The scents of nearby Maxwell Food Centre hawker stalls - including the Bib Gourmandawarded Tian Tian Hainanese Chicken Rice – beckon travelers ambling the streets of Chinatown around the Autograph Collection's art-filled, 138-room Maxwell Reserve Singapore. Harpreet Bedi, CEO of the hotel's parent group, recommends a visit to the ornate Buddha Tooth Relic Temple and Museum to view the display of the sacred artifact, before picking up bak kwa, a jerky traditionally served during Chinese New Year, from Bee Cheng Hiang's shop, or coconut custard kaya balls from Ya Kun Kaya Toast. Save room for an evening feast of Indian food cooked over an open fire at Maxwell Reserve's decadent Shikar. Doubles from \$320, including breakfast daily and one lunch or dinner for two.





LIMA

For Rosa Deustua, general manager of the 89-room Miraflores Park, a Belmond Hotel, the clifftop, ocean-view Miraflores Malecón provides the best stroll near the property. "Right before sunset, it's the perfect setting to relax and watch the paragliders along the coastline," she says. Deustua also recommends walking roughly 25 minutes (or riding a hotel bike) to the Barranco neighborhood to see the Jade Rivera Museum, which showcases the Peruvian artist's paintings, and shop for contemporary local jewelry and clothing at Dédalo. Dine at family-style tavern Isolina before rolling up to the hotel for a hot-stone massage at Zest Spa or a dip in the rooftop pool. Doubles from \$462, including breakfast daily and a 50-minute massage for two. – Emma Franke



Estate of Mind

Richard Branson has been vacationing on Mallorca for more than 60 years. Now, the Virgin Group founder has rescued the sprawling Son Bunyola Hotel in the island's UNESCO-protected Serra de Tramuntana range. It took more than two decades of coordination with local authorities to restore the sixteenth-century finca, one of Mallorca's most heavily protected sites, with its original olive press, neo-Gothic chapel, and medieval defense tower. Comprising a main residence and a stone-walled annex, the resort has 26 guest rooms, plus three stand-alone villas. Pops of peach and seafoam punctuate beachy-cool interiors, along with dramatic vistas of the rugged north coast and artwork by local talent, including Valldemossa-based painter Jaime Colorao.

Hikes through the 1,300-acre grounds reveal carob, almond, and olive trees and tidy vineyards planted with malvasia grapes. Guests can swim or stand-up paddleboard from the property's secluded, rocky beaches or opt for a mountain-biking adventure through the hills. But the center of the action is the 92-foot pool, with mint-hued sun loungers and a reach-out-and-touch-it view of the Sa Foradada islet. Doubles from \$658, including breakfast daily and a \$100 hotel credit. – Siobhan Reid



Abercrombie & Kent

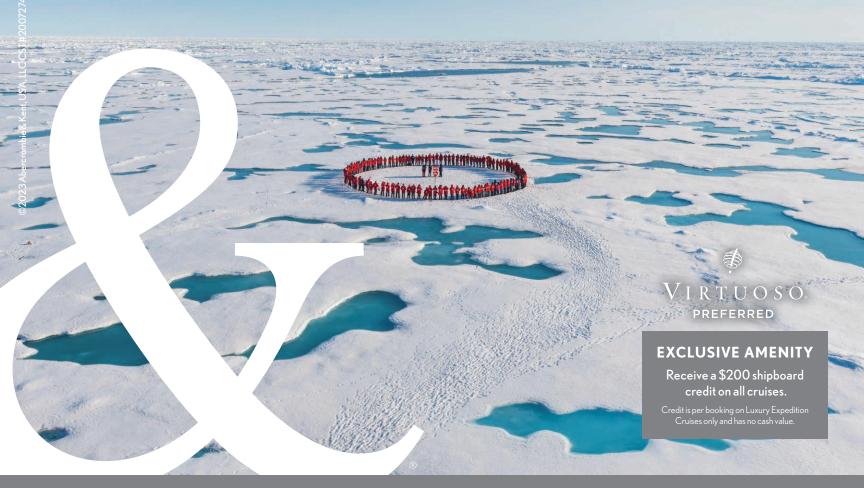
LUXURY EXPEDITION CRUISES SM

Venture to the North Pole and Beyond

Discover a new season of luxury cruising adventure spanning all seven continents in 2024, including our inaugural expedition to a frontier like no other – the North Pole.

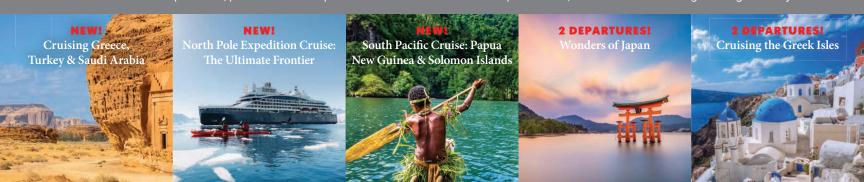
Every A&K voyage is led by our acclaimed Expedition Team on an exclusively chartered – and luxuriously all-inclusive – small ship, each featuring all-balcony accommodations, a fascinating enrichment program and an intimate guest capacity that never exceeds 199.

Ready for the ultimate adventure at sea? Contact your Virtuoso Travel Advisor today.



Explore All 17 Departures, Including Three New Expeditions for 2024

With three all-new expeditions, plus additional departures of our Greek Isles and Japan cruises, this is our most exciting cruising season yet.



Hotel News

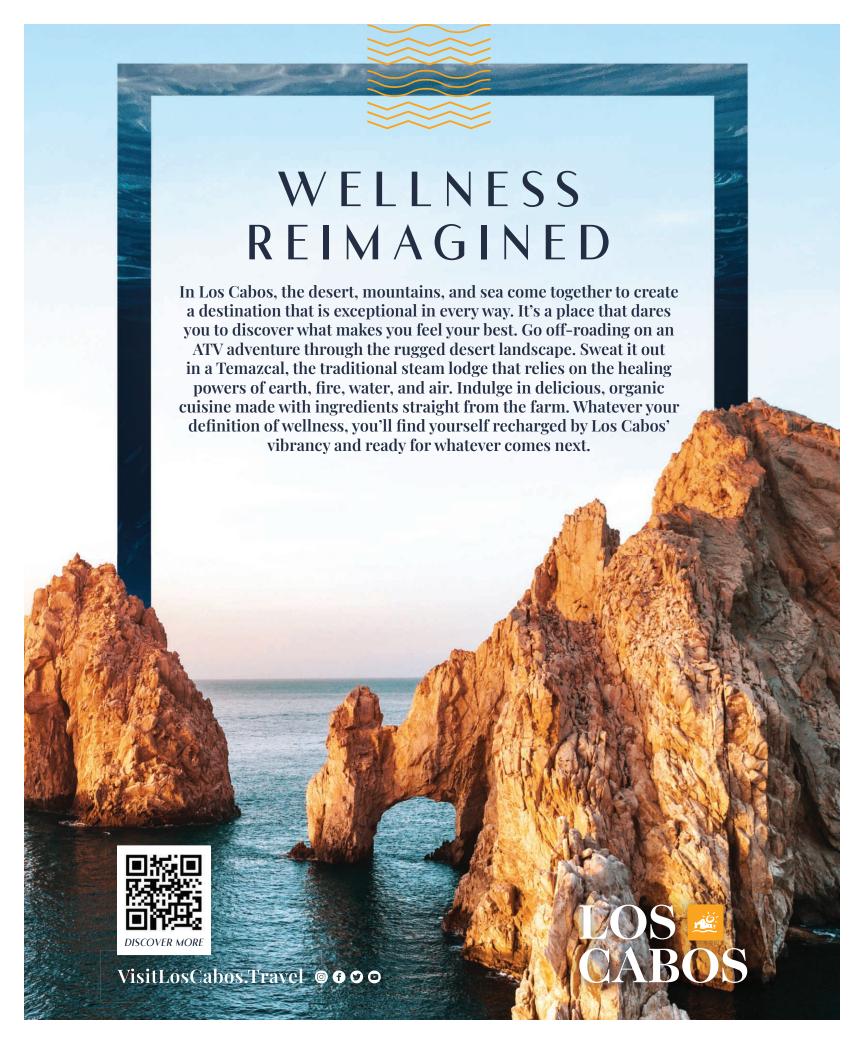




Fifth Dimension

The site of **The Fifth Avenue Hotel**, ten years in the making, holds more than a century of Manhattan history: First a Gilded Age socialite's address, it then became a branch of the Second National Bank. Architects McKim, Mead & White, known for designing the original Penn Station, created the landmark at Fifth Avenue and 28th Street in 1907 in the style of a Renaissance palace. Now its decorative terra-cotta frieze has been painstakingly restored to welcome guests to the 153-room hotel in the former bank – with a 24-story

addition. Commissioned wall tapestries, collections of crystal curiosities, and guest-room furniture such as pagoda-style lamps and custom Chinese-inspired wardrobes conjure the home of a well-traveled bon vivant. Chef Andrew Carmellini oversees hotel dining, including a greenhouse-style café; the mansion's signature restaurant, ringed by mezzanine Juliet balconies; and private dining rooms in the original bank vaults beneath city sidewalks. *Doubles from \$895, including breakfast daily and a \$100 dining credit. – E.G.*



The Virtuoso Life



Great Scot

Sam Heughan on the end of *Outlander* and his home country's hidden gem.

INTERVIEW BY SALLIE LEWIS

ROWING UP IN RURAL SCOTLAND on the grounds of a derelict castle near New Galloway, Sam Heughan's imagination ran free. "Interestingly, it was traveling that made me realize I should be an actor," says the star of the time-traveling, bodice-ripping series *Outlander*. At 18, on a cross-country road trip through the United States, he had a revelation: "I realized I was drawn to theater, and I wasn't



"It was traveling that made me realize I should be an actor."

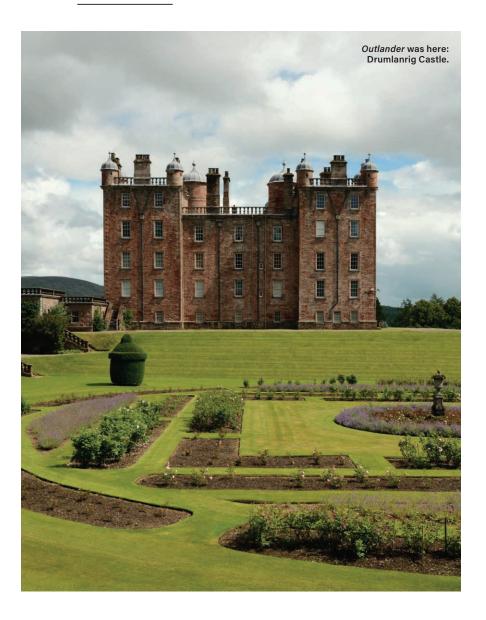
allowing myself to follow that passion." Today, the actor, author, producer, and spirits entrepreneur travels extensively for work and pleasure. He recently explored the wilds of Yellowstone and Zion national parks by camper van and also ventured through the mountains of Oaxaca.

Over the years, the Hawaiian Islands have become one of Heughan's favorite destinations. "They're so different to Scotland, but there's a real connection to the land, and I think Scottish people have that," he says. Regardless of where he's headed, the actor packs last-minute and goes with the flow. "I'm beginning to realize that I need less and less," he says. "The more we relax and enjoy the ride, the more rewarding the journey will be."

This fall, Heughan will tour the U.S. with his latest spirits launch, The Sassenach Wild Scottish Gin, before wrapping up his award-winning show next year. "It's going to be really hard to say goodbye," he says of *Outlander*'s final season. Still, with new film projects, books, and entrepreneurial endeavors in the mix, Heughan says, "I'm at the crossroads of a new journey."

SAM HEUGHAN'S GALLOWAY

The new Sassenach Wild Scottish Gin from my company, Great Glen, is inspired by **Dumfries and Galloway** in southwest Scotland, where I grew up. It's a beautiful, untouched part of the country, with so much to offer, including a dark, intriguing history. The name "New Galloway" is derived from the Gaelic, meaning "strange Gael." The locals spoke a different Gaelic to the rest of Scotland, probably due to the mix of Irish Gaels and Scandinavians that inhabited this remote area in the Middle



Ages. It has ties to Robert the Bruce and to King Arthur legends, amongst others.

As a child I used to pick wild crabapples, which are the base for the citrus in our new gin. I lived in an old, converted stable called the Steadings on the estate of **Kenmure**Castle, which was the seat of the Lords of Galloway. On the grounds, in an ancient, overgrown garden, grew wild rhubarb that my mother would pick and turn into a delicious crumble or jam. We've also used it in our gin, and it brings rich fruit flavors.

Galloway is a creative place, home to many artists and musicians. Robert Burns, Scotland's national poet, lived and died in the area in the eighteenth century. The CatStrand in New Galloway is an arts center that hosts many touring musicians and theater companies. Meanwhile, Drumlanrig Castle is a stunning pink palace with incredible gardens and works of art - I've worked there while filming Outlander. Galloway also has excellent mountain biking and almost 200 miles of coastline, with rocky coves and beaches. Monreith Beach is the most famous and close to Kirkmaiden, one of Scotland's oldest churches. And from Galloway it's only a short hop over the Solway Firth to Ireland. On a good day, you can see England, Ireland, and the Isle of Man from its many beaches. ♥

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST WEEKEND

UTOPIA OF THE SEAS

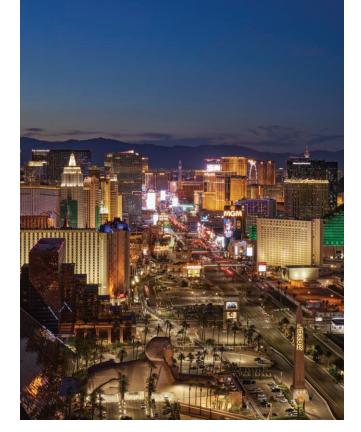
ARRIVES SUMMER 2024

Weekends are about to be transformed for good. We're talking bigger flavors at 40 ways to dine and drink. Bolder play with new adventures and chart-topping showstoppers that blow your mind on stage, ice, water and air. And better chill days than you've ever imagined with 8 pools waiting to make a splash — onboard and onshore at our award-wining private island Perfect Day at CocoCay.

This is *Utopia of the Seas* — arriving in Port Canaveral July 2024.





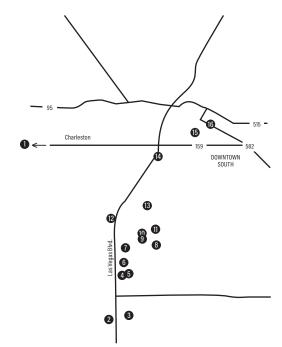




Clockwise from top left: The Strip aglow, the octopus course at Lost Spirits' 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea dinner, and the Smoke Show cocktail at Easy's Cocktail Lounge. Opposite: Rouge Room.

AS VEGAS LIVES LARGE during a four-month stretch that begins with a Formula 1 race this November and ends with Super Bowl LVIII at three-year-old Allegiant Stadium in February 2024. While the city prepares for these events, Downtown continues to evolve as a cultural hub with spots such as the new Beverly Theater, the city's first indie film house, which hosts movies, live music, and literary events nearly every night of the week. Also worth a visit: The new Punk Rock Museum on the outskirts of the Arts District chronicles the genre's rise and gives music lovers the chance to jam on guitars once played by Joan Jett and other legends. Add in the debut of the MSG Sphere, a globeshaped concert hall enrobed with 580,000 square feet of LEDs, and Vegas is poised to shine brighter than ever.

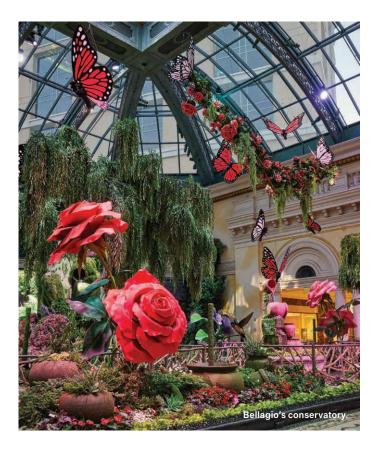
EAT The Rubik's Cube era is alive and well at Retro by Voltaggio, a new restaurant inside Mandalay Bay. Celebrity chef brothers Bryan and Michael Voltaggio's yearlong pop-up pays homage to 1980s culture and cuisine with elevated riffs on classics such as caprese (mozzarella masquerading as a whole tomato, with pesto and pan con tomate),



- Rouge Room
- Allegiant Stadium Retro by Voltaggio
- Easy's Cocktail Lounge
- The Shops at Crystals
- Bellagio
- Diptyque Paris
- MSG Sphere
- 9. Wakuda
- 10. HaSalon
- 11. Wynn and Encore Las Vegas
- 12. Lost Spirits Distillery
- 13. Crockfords Las Vegas
- 14. The Punk Rock Museum
- 15. The Beverly Theater
- 16. Atomic Liquors



City Guide



SpaghettiOs (house-made with arrabbiata butter), and pot roast (Wagyu beef cheeks).

Head to the Area15 arts and entertainment complex for Lost Spirits Distillery's 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, a 16-course, 16seat rum-infused dinner in a surreal setting. Chef Taylor Persh creates whimsical dishes such as a whole octopus tentacle and A5 Kobe beef (billed as "whale"). Arrive early for a predinner cocktail and the distillery's avant-garde circus show, featuring swordswallowers, burlesque dancers, and more.

Hidden behind a bar, Wakuda's six-seat omakase room at The Venetian's Palazzo is well worth discovering. The three-hour meal changes every night - chefs base dishes on each diner's preferences.

In July, Israeli chef Eyal Shani opened his latest HaSalon outpost at The Venetian, serving upscale Mediterranean such as whole turbot roasted in salt and the "Horrible Hammer" - beef carpaccio with herbs and flowers pounded into the paper-thin slices.

SHOP The Daniel Libeskind-designed **Shops** at Crystals offers the Strip's swankiest retail with new stores from Harry Winston, Frederic Malle, and others. At the back of the Louis Vuitton store, James Turrell's installation Akhob - a light-bathed chamber that gradually changes colors - remains one of the hottest (free) tickets in town, booking out roughly two months in advance.

Sweet scents abound at Diptyque Paris' new boutique in the Forum Shops at Caesars Palace. Its colorful ceiling, handpainted by French artist Charlotte Bohn, sets a playful mood while guests browse personal fragrances and home scents.

DRINK The latest entry on Las Vegas' speakeasy circuit: Easy's Cocktail Lounge, a Roaring Twenties-style cocktail lounge with live jazz tucked behind a doughnut shop in Aria's Proper Eats Food Hall.

Rouge Room, a Paris-inspired lounge that opened in March in Summerlin, mixes classic cocktails and martini carts with live

"Don't miss The Lake of Dreams at the Wynn. Watch the show with one of Aft After Dark's great cocktails, or from Lakeside, one of the Strip's best seafood restaurants, totally hidden from the hustle and bustle."

- Stephen Black, Virtuoso travel advisor, Las Vegas

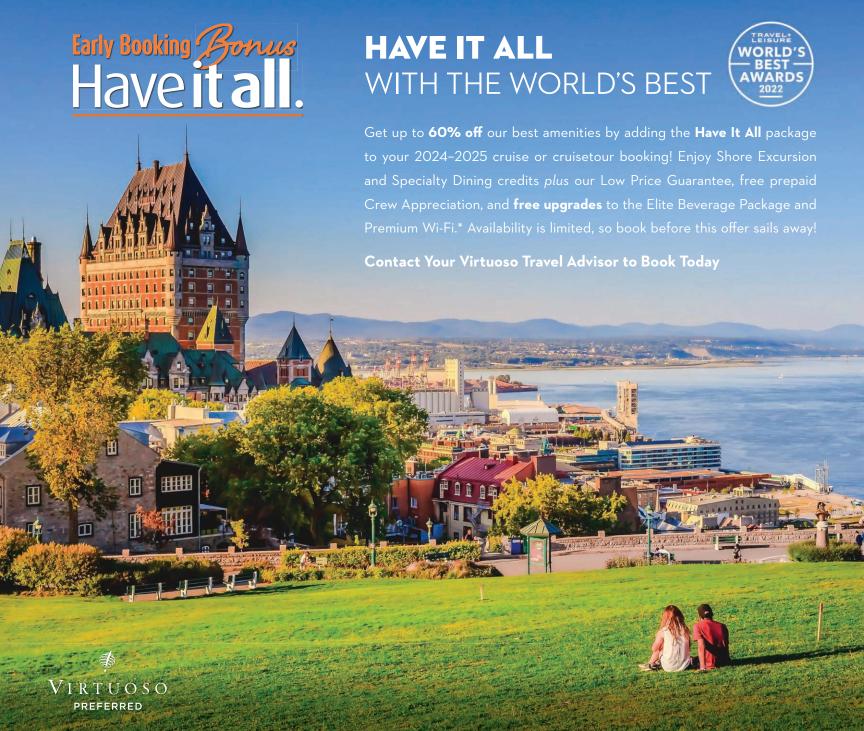
entertainment and an elevated bistro menu serving seafood towers and fresh oysters.

Atomic Liquors on Downtown's East Fremont Street is the city's oldest bar - it owns liquor license no. 00001 - and has been the local for stars ranging from Frank Sinatra and Hunter S. Thompson to Burt Reynolds and Barbra Streisand (who had her own seat). The dive got its name from the Nevada Test Site's nuclear mushroom clouds, which patrons used to watch rise in the sky from lawn chairs on the roof.

STAY Lake Como and the Alps serve as inspiration for the \$110 million renovation of Bellagio's Spa Tower rooms. Also of note: the new private Garden Table in the middle of the 3,933-room resort's conservatory up to six guests can opt for brunch from Sadelle's or dinner from Michael Mina. Doubles from \$239, including breakfast daily and a \$100 dining credit.

Accommodations at the 332-room Crockfords Las Vegas range from 550 square feet to the 7,000-square-foot Palaces, with private pools and gardens. Guests have their pick of more than 50 bars and restaurants in the Resorts World complex. Doubles from \$259, including a \$33 daily breakfast credit and a \$100 dining credit.

Near Resorts World on the Strip's north end, the 4,748-room Wynn and Encore Las Vegas entertains guests with two nightclubs and an expansive beach club, SoulCycle spin classes, and an 18-hole golf course. Doubles from \$233, including a \$60 daily breakfast credit and a \$100 spa credit. 9







*Have It AII Early Booking Bonus Offer ("Early Booking Bonus Offer") fare and its parts are neither transferable nor refundable and have no cash value. Early Booking Bonus Offer fares available only on select departures and exclude Grand Voyages and any cruise lasting 5 days or less. Any advertised fare may be changed or revoked at any time. Fares are subject to full terms and conditions, available on the Holland America Line website. Elite Beverage Package has a daily limit of 15 beverages. Available only for beverages priced at US\$15 or less. Must be 21+ for alcoholic beverages. Management reserves the right to revoke the package and may refuse service for any reason. The package excludes beverages purchased in The Shops, from the mini-bar, through 24-hour room service or on Half Moon Cay. Specialty Dining based on cruise duration and ship type. Dining options are determined by ship and exclude all events in Pinnacle Grill. Shore Excursion offer is based on cruise duration and is per person, not per stateroom. For Alaska cruisetours and 6- to 9-day cruises, eligible guests will receive US\$100 credit per person to apply toward their shore excursion purchase(s). For 10- to 20-day cruises, eligible guests will receive US\$200 credit per person to apply toward their shore excursion purchase(s). For 21+ day cruises (excluding Grand Voyages), eligible guests will receive US\$300 credit per person to apply toward their shore excursion purchase(s). S



72 September October 2023

AKE SEOUL'S cosmopolitan energy, buzzing markets, and epic shopping, throw in some balmy L weather and gorgeous beaches, and you've got Busan. South Korea's second-largest city, which sits on the southeastern edge of the Korean Peninsula, pairs street food with seaside breezes, traditional artisan shops with coastal hiking trails, and small-screen cred with a vibe that's more laid-back than that of its big sister, a two-and-ahalf-hour high-speed train ride north. In the past few years, cruise lines have started adding the city to Southeast Asia- and Japan-focused sailings. There's also the recent Busancentered historical drama Pachinko, returning to Apple TV+ for a second season. It's easy to understand why the city is ready for its moment in the travel spotlight - here's how to see its luster during a day in port.

10 AM

It's a 15-minute taxi ride from Busan's cruise terminal to the Gukje Market, which opened in the 1950s and became known as a place where Korean War refugees tried to make a living by selling smuggled goods. Hundreds of stalls stocking everything from snacks to appliances – as well as an array of traditional Korean souvenirs and artisanmade goods – sprawl across a series of narrow alleys. Search for ceramic tableware, pastel-hued *hanji* lamps made from mulberry-bark paper, and handmade tea sets, complete with satchels



of *yuja-cha* (citron tea) or *omija-cha* (magnolia-berry tea).

NOON

Walk over to the parasol-topped stalls of the 53-year-old Jagalchi Fish Market, South Korea's largest seafood market. Here, Korean women known as *jagalchi*

ajumma commandeer tanks of fresh sunfish, squid, sea squirts, geoduck, and other South Korean specialties. Sample fried shrimp, abalone soup, and seafood bibimbap from vendors, or settle in at one of the market's upstairs restaurants, such as Jacky's Seafood, known for its Korean-style sashimi and



banchan (side dishes). Jacky, a local celebrity, holds court and recommends the day's catches, such as delicate grilled flounder, soy-marinated crab, and fresh abalone.

1 PM

Skip the crowds at Haeundae Beach in

favor of locally beloved Songdo, about a ten-minute taxi ride from downtown. Lounge in the sand or board the Songdo cable car, which whisks passengers over the water and a mile away to Amnam Park. There, trek across suspension bridges and take a midday break in the park's Healing Forest, a name that



"Busan is one of my favorite places – a fantastic destination for natural beauty, cultural experiences, and delicious food. Seafood lovers must try two dishes: *mulhoe*, a spicy, cold raw fish soup, and *hoe-deopbap*, raw fish and vegetables over rice with a spicy vinaigrette sauce."

- Jamie Yoo, Virtuoso travel advisor, New York City

nods to the meditative benefits of taking a stroll through the woods.

3 рм

From the seaside Buddhist Haedong Yonggungsa Temple to the cliffside, three-mile Igidae Coastal Trail, Busan doesn't skimp on panoramic views. Find some of the most impressive at Yongdusan Park, at the top of Yongdusan Mountain, where the 394-foot Diamond Tower holds one of Busan's best observation decks. There's also an aquarium, a café, and a giant statue dedicated to Admiral Yi Sun-shin, a sixteenth-century Korean naval commander.

5 PM

Beef, a symbol of wealth in Korea, dominates the menu at Mullebanga Jeukseokgui, a 45-year-old Korean barbecue restaurant in the Nam-gu neighborhood. Try one of the most famous Korean cuts, toshishal – a heavily marbled and delicate hanging beef tenderloin – served ssam-style (wrapped in lettuce like a Korean taco). Another must-order: the umami bomb of doenjang (soybean paste) ramen, topped with fresh mussels.

Experience is more than what you remember...

It's what you can't forget!

THE

AVENUE

HOTEL



250 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK



OPENING IN AUTUMN OF 2023

CONTACT YOUR VIRTUOSO TRAVEL ADVISOR TO LEARN MORE









In Port

6:30 PM

Before heading back to the ship, walk about 15 minutes southwest to the Nampo-dong district. Beneath the neon-lit arches of its BIFF Square, named for the city's annual Busan International Film Festival, sidewalk plaques bear Korean celebrities' handprints, à la the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Amid the square's many streetfood stalls, the dessert to order is *ssiat hotteok*, a deep-fried pancake filled with almonds, pine nuts, and sunflower, pumpkin, and sesame seeds, topped with brown sugar.

Busan Calling

CRUISE A full day in Busan is one of 17 stops on Regent Seven Seas Cruises' 28-night Singapore-to-Tokyo journey through the Gulf of Thailand and South China Sea. After an overnight in Shanghai, the 746-passenger Seven Seas Explorer sails to the Korean city, where shore excursions include tea ceremonies, temple visits, and walking tours through the Jagalchi Fish Market. Departure: February 7, 2024; from \$26,799.

Ponant's 184-passenger expedition ship *Le Jacques-Cartier* takes cruisers from Japan's southern Amakusa region through the Seto Inland Sea on an intimate, eight-night Kagoshima-to-Kobe voyage. A mid-journey stop in Busan allows time for shopping, afternoon hikes, and visits to the city's Buddhist temples. *Departure: May 4, 2024; from \$9,340.*

Chase cherry blossoms in bloom in Aomori, sample Okinawa's fresh seafood, and beach-hop in Busan on Princess Cruises' round-trip-from-Tokyo sailing aboard the 2,670-passenger Diamond Princess. The 18-night cruise calls on nine ports in Japan, makes two stops in Taiwan, and spends six days at sea, giving travelers time between excursions to soak in the ship's onboard onsen baths. Departure: May 16, 2024; from \$2,808.

Diamond Tower views, a ssiat hotteok dessert in BIFF Square, Busan's coastal sprawl, and toshishal with Korean sides at Mullebanga Jeukseokgui.





Testing the Waters

A BRAND-NEW CRUISER TAKES ON ANTARCTICA. BY EMMA FRANKE



First Person

T TOOK TWO OR three tries to unwrap the chain of kayaks from the iceberg near Damoy Point, where our expedition leaders had stationed them in between outings. In the process, a rope got stuck in our Zodiac's propeller, leading to a short break while the driver hacked away at the orange entanglement with a pocketknife. Perched on inflatable rubber above navy water, threading between neon-blue icebergs while chartreuse kayaks jostled behind (and sometimes in front of) us, my fellow passengers and I cracked jokes and tried to stay out of the crew's way. In the end, we didn't get to kayak - the wind picked up to 25 knots just as we got into the correct formation. That comedic half hour spent going nowhere fast - a Technicolor version of "The Parking Garage" episode of Seinfeld – remains one of my favorite memories of my first cruise. In Antarctica, you take things as they come.

I boarded the 378-passenger Viking Polaris a skeptical but game cruiser. I've always loved planning my own activities when I travel, and here I'd have less control over my day-to-day. Fortunately, I found I enjoyed the freedom to sip Baileys in the outdoor hot tub or swing by the spa's steam room, cold bucket shower, and sauna. On Viking's 12-night round-trip sailing from Ushuaia, weather and daily conditions on the Antarctic Peninsula dictated landing points and activities, giving us smooth waters on the famously rough Drake Passage and taking us through channels along the peninsula's western side. The captain made the call each day about where it was safe to travel, and we clambered into Zodiacs bound for penguin colonies and twentieth-century base camps. A few days into our sailing, when we crossed below the Antarctic Circle and stopped in Crystal Sound, the sun came out and the staff fired up grills on the top deck. Argentinian steak and balmy 30-degree weather warmed our spirits, and frosted mountains glittered around us.

Another day, as part of Viking's research partnership with the National

The waddling antics of a single penguin could – and did – enthrall an entire group of grown adults to the point of giddiness.

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Weather Service, the crew served caviar and aquavit as we yelled out a countdown to the launch of a weather balloon. We then trundled below deck to watch data pour in on the ship's Expedition Central screen as the balloon and its sensors rose roughly 18 miles above us. The data informed forecasts around the world, linking our ship to morning weather reports on radios from Buenos Aires to Banff.

Our geographic isolation (and spotty WiFi) meant that the passengers' focus was unified. Without the diversity of distractions available in, say,

Mediterranean ports, the waddling antics of a single penguin could - and did enthrall an entire group of grown adults to the point of giddiness. Onboard lectures in the wood-paneled auditorium prompted detailed Q&A sessions with Viking's scientists. They discussed ongoing research and shared photos of a rare giant phantom jellyfish - spotted by a guest on a submersible excursion from sister ship Octantis - which the team published in the academic journal Polar Research. The challenge of comprehending the 26 quadrillion tons of ice blanketing the continent outside my window kept me plenty stimulated.

Antarctic Ambitions

60 Viking returns to the White Continent this season with 12-night round-trip sailings from Ushuaia. The 378-passenger Viking Polaris calls on penguin-populated bays on the Antarctic Peninsula's west side. Departures: Multiple dates, November 9, 2023, through February 28, 2024; from \$11,995.

Regent Seven Seas Cruises' 698-passenger Seven Seas Voyager spends three nights in Antarctica on its 24-night passages from Rio de Janeiro to Santiago, which also visit Montevideo and Buenos Aires. *Departures: January 26, 2024, and January 19, 2025; from \$16,213.*

On Atlas Ocean Voyages' nine-night journeys to and from Ushuaia aboard the 186-passenger World Traveller, potential stops include the South Shetlands and Elephant and Deception islands. Departures: Multiple dates, November

16, 2023, through March 13, 2024; from \$8,249.

Time-constrained (or queasy) travelers looking to skip extra days on the Drake Passage can opt to fly two hours each way from Punta Arenas to board Quark Expeditions' 172-passenger World Explorer. Its five-night Antarctic sailings depart round-trip from King George Island. Departures: Multiple dates, December 5, 2023, through February 27, 2024; from \$13,569.



Each time we stepped on land, snowy expanses stretched before us, and the wind whistled past. Our solitude became apparent, as did our dependence on the ship for survival. The fact that lobster tails and chardonnay awaited our pink-cheeked return to the *Polaris* was just a plus. Evenings among my fellow cruisers at my favorite haunt, the leather-bedecked Explorers' Lounge with its panoramic views, were divided between rushing to the window when humpback whales emerged in the distance and rushing

to the dance floor each time the opening notes of "Margaritaville," a crowd favorite, played. Mr. Buffett's dulcet tones proved surprisingly compelling among such enthusiastic company, and I found myself embracing the cruising lifestyle.

One afternoon, we formed a line on board to head out on an excursion to Petermann Island, then heard the water was getting choppy, so we'd be there for a while to wait out the weather. As an hour passed, passengers adjusted one another's life vests, compared bird sightings, and discussed our favorite sections of *Endurance* by Alfred Lansing – all agreed the Shackleton tale was a must-read for Antarctic cruisers. We found it easy to appreciate the fact that we'd come so far, even with our afternoon activity in jeopardy. Finally, word came that the wind had died down, and Zodiacs began slipping from ship to land. Not in control – and still delighted – we begged our drivers to drift nearer to hypnotic blue icebergs on the way.



PARADISE FOUND.



We look forward to welcoming you to Palm Beach's pinkest hotel.

155 HAMMON AVENUE PALM BEACH FL 33480

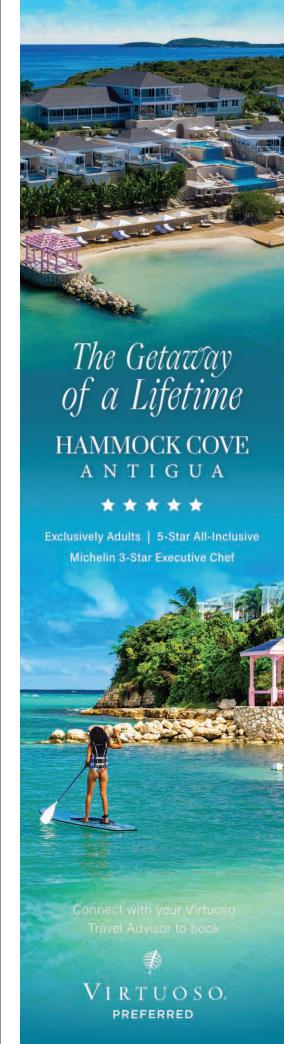
Refer to your Virtuoso travel advisor for booking.

First Person



Polar Packing

- The high-quality outerwear Viking provides means you likely won't need as many base layers as you think for the one- to two-hour-long excursions. Save luggage space for casual clothes to wear around the ship and nicer attire for dinner in the formal restaurants.
- Many packing lists suggest a waterproof backpack for excursions, but because the only camera I brought was my iPhone, a wearable waterproof phone pouch was all I needed.
- Bring shoes with grip and a lightweight vest or jacket to wear around the ship not because the indoor temperature ever falls below perfectly comfortable, but because bird and whale sightings often call you outdoors at unexpected moments. Note that Viking and many other expedition-cruise lines provide binoculars for use on board.
- Don't forget seasickness supplies. Our time on the Drake Passage was calm, and I only resorted to using antinausea wristbands, but having a fully stocked personal pharmacy with Dramamine, ginger chews, and Scopolamine gave me peace of mind. ♥







IFE FIRSTS CARRY a singular blend of anticipation tinged with anxiety. It's a feeling clearly written on my daughter's face as we straddle a Zodiac in choppy seas and peer down into a seemingly bottomless ocean. "Make sure to keep your fingers closed if a sea lion swims up to you," we're told.

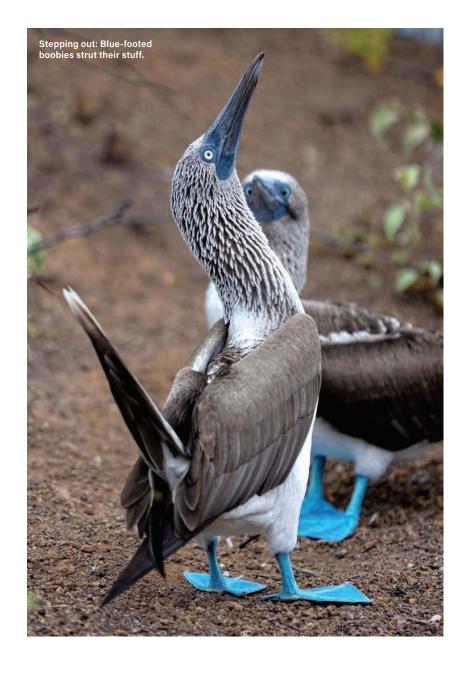
It's a lot for a 12-year-old mind to process. The awkwardness of navigating a rocking skiff in fins. How to hold a snorkel in your mouth and breathe through it for the first time. Deep water, cold currents, and trusting that the wetsuit will make it impossible to sink. And now: returning to the ship with ten digits. It's a lot for *me* to process for her. Yet after weeks of building excitement and a few last-minute assurances, she holds the mask in place with a slightly jittery hand, takes a chest-swelling breath, and plunges in.

Some five minutes later, after we gaze down on parrotfish and a school of yellowtail surgeonfish, a small sea lion blows past in a flash, whips a 180 for a second look, then cruises by so close its whiskers brush Blixa's forearm before returning for more. On the third pass it barrel-rolls and slows a few feet away. A small hand reaches out toward that big-eyed face – how could you not? – and I tug the elbow back. "That was amaaazing," she says, surfacing after it slips off as quickly as it appeared. If only every intro to snorkeling went this way.

Roughly 600 miles off Ecuador's west coast, the Galápagos rise from the Pacific, imposing and unexpected volcanic lumps of basalt - mariner lore held that they appeared and disappeared from the depths on the whims of a local witch. We've come to explore them on a weeklong cruise aboard Aqua Expeditions' newly refurbished 16-passenger Aqua Mare, anchored just around a point from our snorkeling site off Floreana Island. Having already made waves with its stylish cruises on the Peruvian Amazon, the Mekong, and in the Spice Islands and Raja Ampat, the company recently launched Galápagos itineraries packed with active days amid nature and the comforts and staff-to-guest ratio of a superyacht. For my daughter and me, it's a journey worth playing hooky from school.

"Aqua Mare was my first experience in the Galápagos, and the yacht and the astonishing variety of reptiles, fish, birds, and other wildlife surpassed all my expectations," says Virtuoso travel agency CEO Letty Chomer of Mexico City, who traveled there last October. From the walnut-paneled suites complete with rain showers and a surprising amount of storage - including the 861-square-foot Owner's Suite spanning the width of the yacht - to the plush wraparound sofa in the Panoramic lounge and the sundeck's Jacuzzi and daybeds, the ship and its staff made an impression. "This is the Galápagos cruise for discerning adventurers and young luxury travelers with a love of outdoor activities, wildlife, and the ocean," she says.

I admit, in the run-up I had questions about eight days in the islands. Would it get repetitive? Would it be too science-y



Family

for Blixa? What if she was the only kid, given the time of year? (She is.) Would she feel sidelined during excursions or tire of ceviche, poke bowls, grilled lobster, and the chef's perhaps more adult-friendly Peruvian Nikkei cuisine?

Credit Aqua's naturalist, Yvonne Mórtola, for keeping our whole group (spanning six decades) engaged and entertained. After 39 years of guiding everyone from backpackers to Bill Clinton and most of the private yachts through the Galápagos, Aqua's head guide brings the islands to life through lived experience and a deep knowledge and curiosity that stays on the fun side of academia. And the science is cool like how prickly pear cacti, typically squat species elsewhere in the world, here grew trunks to keep their paddles out of reach of giant tortoises, who in turn grew longer necks and front legs to better reach up for a snack: an evolutionary race of the slowest species. Or how the swallow-tailed gulls we come

across couldn't compete as day fishers, so they turned nocturnal and grew enlarged eyes for night vision. (Of course, the tender driver teaching Blixa to take the wheel and zip along the coast, and pasta on request, doesn't hurt.)

DAYS FILL WITH A MIX of kayaking and paddleboarding, hikes, snorkeling, and Zodiac outings. On one of the latter, we pull up to a basalt outcrop with marine iguanas packed claw-totail lazing in the sun, languidly craning their necks to send streams of salt through the air like leather-skinned hayseeds with cheeks full of Beech-Nut. Nearby, flightless cormorants dry their outstretched wings. Then suddenly, penguins - two, and another four, diving and surfacing. Our driver raises his hands to his mouth and lets out a stream of calls. Soon, a raft of two dozen circle our Zodiac almost within arm's reach, cocking their heads side to side like puppies trying to decipher what this penguin master has to say.

Morning walks bring flamingos and baby stingrays flopping in the surf. Kayaking delivers sea turtle after sea turtle, as well as a cavern where we paddle into almost total darkness - and quickly turn back when a bull sea lion bellows somewhere within like a hungry troll. And though I'm not a birder, there's no denying the thrill of a bluefooted-booby feeding frenzy (a fairly rare sight). Dozens climb to a height, pause, then beeline as a group toward the sardine ball below, gracefully tucking their wings back at the last second to plunge into the water at up to 65 mph with no splash and Olympic-diverworthy rips. At night after dinner, the phones come out and Star Walk apps open to scan constellations and map Space Station flyovers.

Perhaps the most refreshing discovery is that yachting the Galápagos is really what you make of it: Do you want

THIS PLACE IS MAGNETIC

Whistler's wild mountains are home to both heart-pounding adventures and elevated experiences. Satisfy your thirst for nature's dramatic beauty and immerse yourself in a vibrant village where celebrating the good life is a way of life.

Interested? Contact your Virtuoso Travel Advisor today.



Family

to nerd out on Latin names of species and subspecies (Yvonne's got you!), or just be able to tell the difference between Nazca and blue-footed boobies, or, hey, what's this bone on the beach from? (She's got you too!) Maybe you want to go for a hike in a landscape unlike any other while surrounded by wildlife found nowhere else, stroll a sandspit and sit a few feet away from inquisitive sea lion pups and their moms, or simply lay back on Aqua Mare's top deck at sunset, watching great frigatebirds ride the bow wave above and wondering, How is it possible that they can glide through the skies for up to two months at a stretch?

On the trip's last snorkel, our group catches up with a school of hundreds of yellowtail mullet and spies reef sharks and rays, but by this point, it's me who has to pick my head up to see where my partner has ventured off to. More than once I scan the surface for a few seconds, without a daughter in sight. She'll dive down to trail a turtle or for a closer look at a parrotfish chomping on coral, surface and clear her snorkel in one blast, and wave excitedly before turning mask back to water – not a finger short.

Natural Selections

STAY Most flights to the islands require a night's layover in Quito. The capital's prime perch: 31-room **Casa Gangotena**, a restored mansion fronting San Francisco Plaza in the heart of the UNESCO-listed Old Town. *Doubles from \$583, including breakfast daily and a \$100 dining credit.*

Set on a nearly 1,500-foot-high extinct volcano on Santa Cruz Island, all-inclusive **Pikaia Lodge** offers four- to eight-day land-based Galápagos adventures with excursions to nearby islands via its 145-foot yacht. *Four-day trips from \$4,650 per person, including all meals, daily guided activities, and two 50-minute massages.*

60 Aqua Expeditions' four-deck *Aqua Mare* sails seven-night itineraries through the Galápagos. Suites range from 170 square feet to the 861-square-foot Owner's Suite. Between excursions, passengers gather in the lounge, in the top deck's Jacuzzi, and around Deck 3's oval dining table. Securing Yvonne Mórtola, one of the archipelago's most experienced guides, was a get for Aqua and its guests. *Weekly departures through 2024; from \$10,000, including all meals and activities. Private charters from \$207,000 for up to 16 passengers, including all meals and activities, an open bar, and five hours of massages per day.*

Explore Quito and the Galápagos on **Avalon Waterways**' eight-day trip to Ecuador. After guided sightseeing in the capital, travelers head to the islands for a four-night cruise aboard the 16-passenger *Treasure of Galápagos* catamaran. *Departures: Multiple dates through November 20, 2024; from \$5,891, including all meals and activities.*

Silversea Cruises' 13-night voyages include 27 calls in the Galápagos. The 100-passenger Silver Origin was built specifically to cruise the islands and sails with a fleet of eight Zodiacs with the option of roughly two to five excursions a day. Departures: Multiple dates through November 30, 2024; from \$16,900, including all meals and activities.

The 48-passenger *La Pinta* serves as home base during **UnCruise Adventures**' Galápagos expeditions. Seven-night itineraries start with a pre-sailing stay in Guayaquil before spending six days cruising the western islands, with daily snorkeling and excursions by skiffs, kayaks, and a glass-bottomed boat. *Departures: Multiple dates, November 9, 2023, through December 19, 2024; from \$9,595, including round-trip airfare from Guayaquil and all meals and activities. 9*





HOME AWAY FROM HOME

One&Only's global collection of villas and suites offer an abundance of space and privacy, with all the benefits of an ultra-luxury resort.

ROM THE EMERALD CLIFFS of one of Mexico's most aweinspiring coastal rain forests to a tropical island paradise in
the Maldives, One&Only Resorts' villas and suites offer the
art of living at its best. In these exceptional spaces, families, friend
groups, and couples can retreat completely, tapping their hosts for
private meals and in-room spa treatments or opting to amble over to
the resort for Michelin-starred dining and immersive cultural experiences. When it comes to living the villa life, the options are abundant.

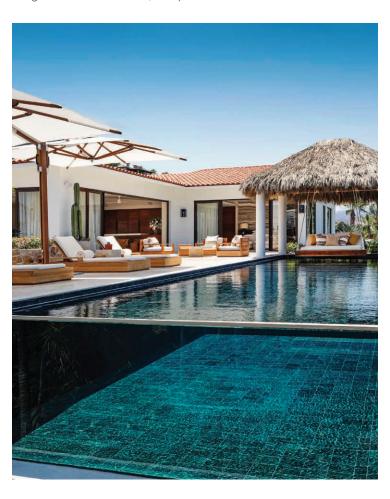
Seaside Glamour

Channeling Old Hollywood style, Mexico's 174-room **One&Only Palmilla** has held court in San José del Cabo since the 1950s, fronting one of the area's few swimmable beaches. A-listers love the resort's Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course, Jean-Georges Vongerichten steak house, and pair of four-bedroom villas. The

14,950-square-foot Villa One, which sits at the resort's highest point, is tucked amid tropical cactus gardens and overlooks the shimmering Sea of Cortés. The 10,500-square-foot, hacienda-style Villa Cortez has hosted the likes of Hollywood's elite, and wows with its handcarved beams, Baja-chic decor, and private palapa. Days at One&Only Palmilla revolve around water: learning to surf from a pro, lounging and watching the waves, or getting inspired by the timeless beauty that first put this storied destination on the map. *Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily and a \$150 resort credit.*

Lush Hideaways

While the 105-room **One&Only Mandarina** occupies a prime mountain-meets-sea stretch of Mexico's Riviera Nayarit, travelers might feel more like they're in Costa Rica or Thailand, cosseted in their own subtropical rain forest. Accommodations include tree





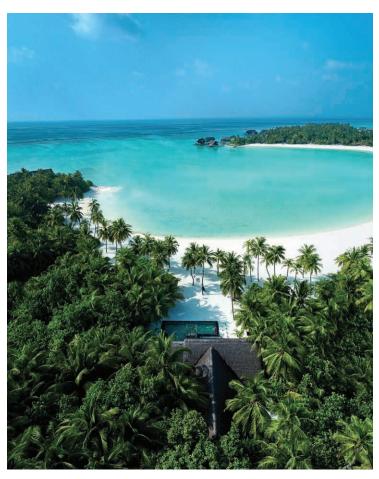
houses and clifftop villas, all of which overlook the Pacific Ocean and have plunge pools, private terraces, spa-style bathrooms, and seamlessly connected indoor-outdoor living spaces. The sprawling and secluded Villa One makes for memorable group getaways: The three-bedroom, ultra-sleek, palm-ensconced beauty is reached via a private road and features a fire pit, game and movie rooms, multiple Jacuzzis, a gym and spa treatment room, a full kitchen with a private chef on call, and an expansive private pool overlooking the Pacific. When it's time to play, guests can zoom through the jungle via zip-line, sign up for a polo lesson (the resort has its own polo and equestrian club) or a mezcal tasting, enjoy dinner at award-winning chef Enrique Olvera's fine-dining Carao, or book a therapeutic session in the temezcal, a ceremonial sweat lodge, with Mandarina's resident Native healer. Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily and a \$100 resort credit.

Island Paradise

Families can hop in a yacht or seaplane and zip straight from the airport in Malé to one of 122 beachfront or overwater villas at the Maldives' **One&Only Reethi Rah**. The thatched-roof villas merge high style and barefoot bliss, setting the scene with oversized oceanview bathtubs, beachfront or patio hammocks, and local textiles and art. While it's all about embracing the island life here, there's so much more to do beyond playing castaway across the resort's 12 beaches: Snorkel through strings of reefs home to colorful marine life, learn traditional Maldivian drumming, or grab a prepacked picnic and hop on a bike for a ride around the atoll. *Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily and a \$100 resort credit.*

From far left: Poolside at One&Only Palmilla's Villa One, One&Only Mandarina's Villa One, and One&Only Reethi Rah.

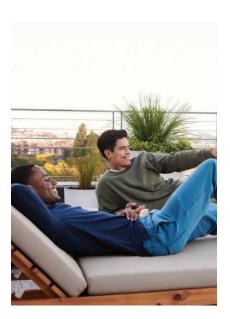




This extraordinary collection of Virtuoso Preferred Hotels & Resorts offers once-in-a-lifetime experiences and exclusive amenities you'll only receive through your Virtuoso travel advisor.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

1 Hotel San Francisco



Unwind at a sustainable sanctuary inspired by Northern California's stunning landscape and central to the Embarcadero.

Participate in holistic wellness experiences designed to nourish mind, body, and spirit. Sip zero-waste cocktails and biodynamic wines. And dine on delicious meals grounded in local, organic ingredients, including those coming straight from the rooftop garden and on-site apiary.

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

PROVIDENCIALES, TURKS AND CAICOS

Amanyara



Bask on the secluded shores of a sprawling nature reserve overlooking white-sand beaches and turquoise waters.

Try transformative wellness immersions and enjoy endless possibilities for discovery, above and below the waves. Sample the Amanyara Mojito, along with vibrant Caribbean and Asian flavors in The Restaurant. Receive a complimentary night when you stay between now and December 16, 2024.

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

FLORENCE, ITALY

Brunelleschi Hotel



Housed within the Byzantine Pagliazza Tower and a medieval church, this property offers elegant suites and unforgettable views.

Enjoy special amenities, including complimentary Champagne, flowers, and a one-way transfer with a suite stay. Savor exquisite cuisine at the two-Michelin-starred Santa Elisabetta, unwind in the stylish cocktail bar, and wander through the on-site private Pagliazza Museum.

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





CHOOSE YOUR CRUISING STYLE

With globe-spanning itineraries and a sophisticated fleet of intimate, all-suite ships, Seabourn knows how to spoil travelers for choice.

Stylish Expeditions

Seabourn's two expedition ships, *Seabourn Venture* and the new *Seabourn Pursuit*, each carry only 264 passengers, giving the line the opportunity to sail where few others can, all while offering elegant base camps for exploring the remote wilds. Take that dream trip to Antarctica on a 12-night round-trip-from-Buenos Aires sailing on the *Pursuit*, which comes with 24 Zodiacs, two seven-passenger submarines, and a 26-person expedition team. Zodiac captains glide up to chinstrap and Adélie penguin colonies, kayakers slalom between icebergs, and hikers trek along snowy mountains for close-ups of **tumbling glaciers**. On board, cruisers can witness vast tabular icebergs and islands of ice that stretch for miles from their suites, at 16 dining venues and lounges, or while inside the ocean-view sauna. *Departure: January 6, 2024*.



Ocean sailing with Seabourn strings together fascinating destinations from resortlike ships with spacious suites, enriching onboard perks, and enough restaurants and lounges to make every night exciting. Unpack once and experience Asia's dazzling variety while charting a 13-night Singapore-to-Hong Kong course on the 600-passenger Seabourn Encore. In Bangkok, excursions include trips to sacred temples and bustling khlongs (canals), while in Cambodia, it's Khmer temple visits and bird-watching tours. Later, in Vietnam, passengers take a longboat to floating Mekong Delta markets, feast on street food in Saigon, and sail through Ha Long Bay's limestone stacks for an enchanting finale. Departure: January 6, 2024.

Continent-Spanning Journeys

Seabourn attracts cruisers chasing the spirit of limitless adventure with a series of world cruises and grand voyages – months-long sailings that can be booked as one epic trip or separate segments. Next year, travelers will map 26 countries from the 450-passenger *Seabourn Sojourn* during an 89-night round-trip-from-Barcelona **circumnavigation of Africa**. See the antiquities of Israel and Egypt, go on safari in Kenya and Namibia, learn about local art in Senegal and the Ivory Coast, and soak up the sun on beaches from Zanzibar to the Seychelles. Overnight stays in Cairo, Casablanca, and Cape Town allow more time to explore. *Departure: November 30, 2024*.







Cruising highlights, from top: Sea kayaking in the Antarctic, the *Seabourn Encore* sailing in Southeast Asia, and a *Seabourn Sojourn* veranda suite.

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

Gansevoort Meatpacking



Soak up expansive skyline vistas when you stay in Manhattan's most desirable suite: the exclusive Poliform Penthouse.

The expansive 1,700-square-foot duplex offers a deep soaking tub, fireplace, full kitchen, and more. Stay two nights in the Poliform Penthouse before December 30, 2023, and receive a bottle of Dom Pérignon Rosé, a 15-course omakase experience at Saishin for two, and VIP rooftop seating.

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

LHASA, TIBET, CHINA

Songtsam Linka Retreat Lhasa



This all-suite retreat offers an authentic Tibetan experience and spectacular views of Potala Palace.

The retreat's architectural design and decor are inspired by the palace and pay tribute to traditional Tibetan artisans, with elegantly decorated wooden floors, Tibetan carpets, and handcrafted copperware. Sample local specialties, such as grilled yak fillet, in the restaurant.

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

COZUMEL, MEXICO

Presidente InterContinental Cozumel Resort & Spa



Enter an oasis of tranquility on the largest private beach on the island, with sugar-white sand and crystal-clear waters.

Explore Cozumel's beautiful coral reefs and marine life at the on-site dive center. Leave kids to be entertained with professional staff while you play tennis, get in a workout, or enjoy a refreshing spa treatment. Experience a culinary adventure among four restaurants.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 resort credit per stay.



GANSEVOORT



WALK THIS WAY

Backroads helps travelers slow down and see the world on foot.

ACKROADS HAS long been known for its popular cycling trips around the globe, and the tour operator brings the same expert planning and seamless logistics to its small-group hiking and walking adventures. From leisurely strolls to altitude-soaring treks, the company's flexible itineraries cater to curious wanderers and intrepid roamers of all abilities. Bonus: Your Virtuoso travel advisor can work with Backroads on turning select 2024 trips (including those highlighted here) into private departures, making for an extramemorable family or friend reunion.



Seaside Strolls

Dive into **Croatia's Dalmatian Coast** on a six-day trip that pairs four- to seven-mile hiking days with island-hopping adventure. From Dubrovnik, the ancient stone city and *Game of Thrones* filming location, travelers cross the Peljesac Peninsula before heading to the island of Korcula, where olive groves lead to a medieval town perfect for enjoying a sunset glass of grappa. After a day of vineyard hikes and dips in Stracincica Bay, sail to Hvar for cliffside walks, fishing-village visits, and home-cooked meals. *Departures: Multiple dates, April 28 through October 1, 2024.*

Italian Jaunts

Historic hiking paths wind through northern Italy's Lake District, which sits in the shadows of the soaring Alps and is decorated with ornate palazzos and quaint towns. Set out for six days round-trip from Milan, first to the lesser-known Lago d'Orta, home of the clifftop Madonna del Sasso sanctuary, before gaining some elevation at Monte Mottarone and heading to Lake Maggiore. Later, a stay in Bellagio on the shores of iconic **Lake**Como includes truffle hunts, hikes to mountain lunches, and a private boat trip to an eighteenth-century villa. *Departures: Multiple dates, April 26*through October 6, 2024.

National Treasures

Swim under waterfalls and stroll past giant sequoia trees while discovering the highlights and hidden secrets of California's **Yosemite National Park**. This easygoing, six-day tour (round-trip from San Francisco) dials down the walking to only two to three hours per day, including a hike along a canyon rim to ogle El Capitan and a naturalist-led meander along the Merced River. The trip finishes on Yosemite's quieter side, snaking through a subalpine meadow full of wildflowers and into a dramatic glacial valley. *Departures: Multiple dates, July 21 through October 15, 2024*.

KAHUKU, HAWAII

Turtle Bay Resort



From the kiss of an ocean breeze to calming waves, let the spirit of aloha in this tropical oasis take you away.

The resort's 1,300 acres offer protected bays for swimming, snorkeling, and surfing, plus miles of nature trails. Try nurturing wellness treatments and dine in multiple restaurants. Receive a complimentary night when you stay at least five nights before December 20, 2023.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 resort credit per stay.

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

Taj 51 Buckingham Gate Suites and Residences



Once the home of lords and ladies of the royal court, this five-star hotel sits near Buckingham Palace and Mayfair.

One-, two-, and three-bedroom suites offer spacious living areas and fully equipped kitchens. Try exhilarating spa experiences and tempt your palate with epicurean delights and seasonal cocktails in five venues. Receive a complimentary third night when you stay by December 15, 2023.

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

KILLARNEY, IRELAND

The Europe Hotel & Resort



Experience the majestic Kerry landscape at this award-winning five-star resort on the Lakes of Killarney.

Indulge in a wellness ritual in the stunning 50,000-square-foot lakeshore spa. Savor fine and relaxed dining of Irish and international fare in three hotel restaurants. Afterward, sink into deep leather chairs in the bar to enjoy an elegant tipple with live music.

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







JOURNEY TO THE WHITE CONTINENT

Explore Antarctica's beauty on the new World Voyager.

UXURY MEETS EXPEDITION TRAVEL with Atlas Ocean Voyages, the two-year-old yachting line that embodies casual elegance. Its intimate yachts – where typical extras such as culturally immersive excursions, drinks, and gratuities are included – offer intrepid journeys in the Arctic and Antarctic, along with culinary-famed Mediterranean destinations ideal for exploring via small ship. This November, the line is set to welcome its third vessel, the 198-passenger *World Voyager*, purpose-built for polar exploration. Here's what cruisers can expect.

Hygge in the South Pole

Sleek cabins with balconies or floor-to-ceiling windows and Scandinavian-influenced interiors (picture lots of pale wood and marble accents) greet passengers on the *World Voyager*. Atlas emphasizes **wellness at sea** with a fitness studio, running track, pool, and SeaSpa by L'Occitane. In the auditorium, guest scientists, mountaineers, historians, and photographers provide regional context. And generous outdoor space guarantees every cruiser a good perch for viewing birds, icebergs, and humpback whales in the company of the yacht's naturalists.

Expedition Extras

World Voyager is propelled by a quiet hydro-jet system, which allows it to get close to wildlife without disturbance. Cruisers receive Atlas Ocean Voyages parkas to keep, ensuring comfort on Zodiac rides that weave between icebergs and lead to **gentoo penguin rookeries** tucked below snowcapped mountains. Possible landings at legendary places such as Deception Island allow travelers to hike beside glaciers and on pebbled beaches. A fleet of kayaks turns passengers into pilots who can paddle calm waters and listen to the sound of ice cracking.

The Drake by Sea and Sky

The World Voyager's 9- to 11-night round-trip-from-Ushuaia sailings include a few at-sea days crossing the Drake Passage, buoyed by enriching lectures, wildlife-watching, and culinary indulgence. For travelers who want to bypass the notorious "lake or shake" crossing, Atlas Ocean Voyages is launching **charter jet service** between Punta Arenas, Argentina, and Antarctica's King George Island. That way, cruisers can choose a one-way charter flight for a single experience of the Drake and a seven-day expedition in Antarctica. Departures: Multiple dates, November 8, 2023, through March 18, 2024.



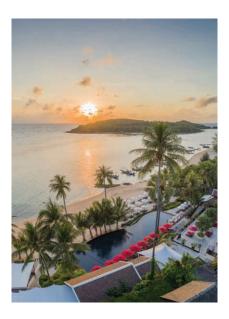




Polar pleasures, from left: The World Voyager's sauna, a rendering of the ship in the Antarctic, and close encounters with gentoo penguins.

KOH SAMUI, THAILAND

Anantara Lawana Koh Samui Resort



Get scuba-certified and enjoy a full-day diving excursion off the coast of Koh Tao, one of the best deep dives in Thailand.

Enjoy this perk, a complimentary treatment in the spa, and other benefits when you stay five nights or more by October 31, 2024. Savor a unique dining experience beneath a 120-year-old jungle canopy in Tree Tops Restaurant and take a dip in the infinity pool.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: 60-minute spa treatment for two guests per stay.

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Raffles The Palm Dubai



Nestled on the iconic Palm Jumeirah, this tranquil escape offers awe-inspiring vistas.

Embrace the opulence of a palace as you step into your exquisite chambers, where legendary butler service awaits to cater to your every desire. Tantalize your tastebuds with seven exceptional dining destinations and revel in renowned beauty treatments in the spa.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 resort credit per stay.

CABO SAN LUCAS, MEXICO

Nobu Hotel Los Cabos



This exclusive hilltop hideaway features mesmerizing views of sapphire waters as far as the eye can see.

Sip exquisite Japanese-inspired cocktails and please your palate with world-famous cuisine at Nobu restaurants. Enjoy sublime garden and golf views with a Residence stay and receive a daily \$100 spa credit per adult, plus a daily \$25 fitness credit per adult. Book by December 21, 2023.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 hotel credit per stay.







NO LAYOVERS HERE

Fly nonstop to Asia and the Middle East in style with Air Canada.

T'S EASY MATH: Less time in transit means more time to explore. Air Canada helps travelers jet off to Asia and the Middle East on its non-stop, long-haul routes from North America. And with Air Canada Signature Class, the journey is simple, from check-in to customs. Concierges whisk passengers through the airport and into the Maple Leaf Lounge for pre-departure cocktails or snacks from Canadian star chef David Hawksworth. In flight, Air Canada Signature Class lie-flat seats allow travelers to sleep well and save energy for exploring. We've rounded up three destinations that we're ready to take off to next on Air Canada's nonstop routes.

Hello, Bangkok

When it returns for its second year of seasonal service in November, Air Canada's Vancouver-to-Bangkok route becomes North America's **only nonstop flight** to Thailand. Stave off jet lag after the 16-hour journey with a boat tour along the Chao Phraya River before digging into the country's legendary cuisine, which blends salty, sour, sweet, and spicy flavors into everything from fiery papaya salads to creamy curries. Admire the gilded stupas at Wat Pho, sip cocktails at the BKK Social Club, and take in dizzying views from the 1,030-foot-tall Mahanakhon Skywalk.

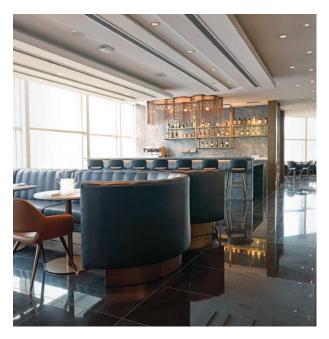
Touch Down in Tokyo

On Air Canada's 13-hour flight from Toronto to Tokyo, travelers take advantage of Air Canada Signature Class' **lie-flat seats** and quilted mattress pads before arriving at either Narita or Haneda, the two international airports located near Japan's capital city. Breeze through customs and head straight for that first sushi hand roll or bowl of ramen, then on day two, stroll through the Meiji Shrine's serene gardens before boutique-hopping in the famous Harajuku district.

Welcome to Dubai

Beginning in October, Air Canada's Dreamliners take off from Vancouver to Dubai four times a week, complementing the line's daily non-stop trips between Toronto and the global **capital of glitz**. Sip something sparkling on board, curated by Air Canada sommelier Véronique Rivest, to celebrate an evening arrival, before checking into your hotel and deciding which memorable meal to savor first. Dubai is home to 11 Michelin-starred restaurants that showcase everything from modern Italian to Malaysian classics and pristine omakase.







From left: An evening at the Wat Arun in Bangkok, Air Canada's Maple Leaf Lounge, and Dubai's Burj Al Arab hotel.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Riggs Washington D.C.



The golden age of banking, reimagined as an elegant escape in the district's

Penn Quarter.

This hotel's historic roots run deep. From bespoke guest rooms designed to evoke the thrill of opening a safety-deposit box to cleverly named cocktails served in a repurposed bank vault, discover an experience imbued with sophisticated whimsy and enduring allure.

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

RIPON, UNITED KINGDOM

Grantley Hall



A hidden gem in the Yorkshire countryside with all the tranquility and fairy-tale charm you'd expect.

Experience seventeenth-century grandeur amidst rolling hills, formal gardens, and storybook-inspired rooms and suites. Indulge in Michelin-starred cuisine, custom spa treatments, and an elite-level gym with everything from personal coaches to cryotherapy chambers.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: Complimentary lunch for two guests per stay.

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

Crockfords Las Vegas, LXR Hotels & Resorts at Resorts World



High-tech rooms, diverse dining, and larger-than-life luxury await on the Las Vegas Strip.

Discover exclusivity and elegance at an integrated resort (the Strip's first in over a decade) designed to excite all the senses. Think innovative accommodations, more than 40 restaurants and bars, and attentive, round-the-clock service to ensure a seamless stay.

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



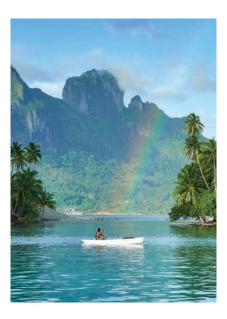




This extraordinary collection of Virtuoso Preferred Hotels & Resorts offers once-in-a-lifetime experiences and exclusive amenities you'll only receive through your Virtuoso travel advisor.

BORA BORA, FRENCH POLYNESIA

Conrad Bora Bora Nui



This captivating resort rises from the turquoise lagoon beneath the rugged peaks of Mount Otemanu.

Sitting on the private islet of Motu Toopua beside an endless stretch of white sand, guests are invited to immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, enjoy blissful treatments at the spa, and taste delectable flavors at the resort's five distinct dining venues.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 resort credit per stay.

PLAYA DEL CARMEN, MEXICO

La Casa de La Playa



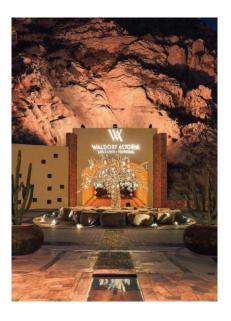
An iconic, ultraluxurious home in paradise, where everything is exclusively your way.

With its locally crafted decor and eco-integrative architectural design, this award-winning hotel provides a serene and culturally immersive setting for exploring the Riviera Maya. Enjoy private beach access and ocean views from your suite's plunge pool or volcanic rock hot tub.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 hotel credit per stay.

CABO SAN LUCAS, MEXICO

Waldorf Astoria Los Cabos Pedregal



Follow the private, torchlit tunnel to this haven of relaxation, revelry, and refined luxury.

Make your holiday even more magical with a room, suite, villa, or casita, plus family-friendly festivities all season long. Enjoy 10 percent off rates, up to an extra \$1,200 resort credit per booking, and round-trip transfers for stays December 19, 2023. through January 5, 2024.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$150 resort credit per stay.







THE NEW RETREAT AT SEA

With its debut ship now sailing and another to come next summer, Explora Journeys is making a splash in the Mediterranean.

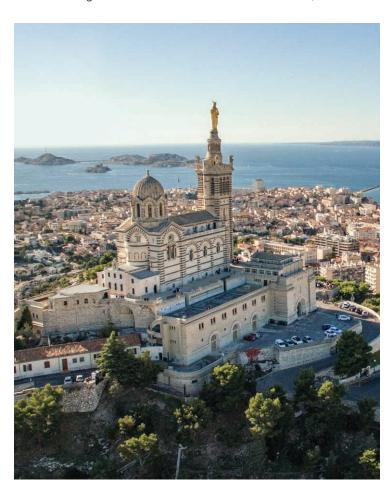
ICTURE A BOUTIQUE HOTEL with sexy, residential-style rooms and intimate, buzzy restaurants. Add the amenities of a resort: a cabana-ringed pool beneath a retractable roof, a contemporary art gallery, and a glitzy casino. Now float it out to sea. That's what travelers will find on the 922-passenger *Explora I*, the first ship from Explora Journeys, which recently made its maiden voyage. The next-gen, all-inclusive cruise line is reinventing luxury for travelers seeking a stylish base, culinary excellence, and sustainability cred, including reduced emissions, a ban on single-use plastics, and the capability to switch to green power with battery storage.

While Explora Journeys may be new, the line has strong maritime roots: It springs from the Aponte family, owners of the MSC Group, who have been sailing since 1675. A twin ship, *Explora II*, is slated to debut next August in the Mediterranean. On both vessels, the line

invites guests to discover the ocean state of mind, with plenty of onboard enrichment and an array of immersive shore excursions, from playing pétanque in Saint-Tropez to cooking in a local's kitchen. Here, three of the line's most anticipated Mediterranean itineraries.

The Best of Both Coasts

On a seven-night Barcelona-to-Rome sailing, travelers bask in the pleasures of the **French and Italian rivieras** aboard *Explora I*. In Marseille, take a cooking class or hop in a private car for a tour of area wineries. Back on board, the ship's nine restaurants and 12 bars and lounges promise even more indulgence after a satisfying day in the countryside. Up next in Saint-Tropez, passengers can hunt for vintage Hermès and Dior on a shopping spree, visit the source of polyphonic Renaissance music at a twelfth-century abbey, or get a new perspective on the South of France via catamaran. Other port





highlights include Cannes, with the option to pop over to Monaco for a tour of the Prince's Palace, and Sardinia, where off-road drives and horseback rides await. *Departure: June 14, 2024.*

Under the Andalusian Sun

Explora I skirts around the Iberian Peninsula on a six-night Barcelona-to-Lisbon swing, sampling Spain's culture-packed Andalusia and Portugal's dramatic Algarve along the way. During an overnight in Málaga, travelers visit **century-old olive groves** before being welcomed into a family's home for a meal; in Seville, flamenco dancers and tocaores (guitarists) showcase their passion during a private performance. The Algarve's cliff-lined coast comes into view of passengers' private terraces before they disembark in Portimão for hikes to pocket beaches and lessons in cooking cataplana, a beloved seafood and pork stew. Departure: August 10, 2024.

Iberian Deep Dive

One of the first journeys for *Explora II* is a seven-night Barcelona-to-Málaga voyage that includes immersive **overnight port calls** in Cádiz and Lisbon. In Cádiz, travelers sign up for coastal hikes and visits to sherry bodegas; extra time in Portugal's capital includes a private audience with a *fadista* (fado singer), who interprets the expressive music that UNESCO has declared a cultural treasure. Day two in Lisbon includes a course in throwing a proper Portuguese party with *petiscos*, savory snacks best accompanied by local wine. Leave time for perusing the ship's boutiques, which include outposts from Cartier, Panerai, and Piaget; plus picks from other luxe brands such as Caran d'Ache, Memo Paris, and more. *Departure: September 23, 2024*.

From far left: A moment in Marseille, *Explora I's* Conservatory, and a leisurely stroll in Lisbon.





CANCUN, MEXICO

Waldorf Astoria Cancun



Signature spa treatments and suites with private plunge pools add to the allure.

Indulge in massages rooted in Mayan traditions, dishes crafted with hyperseasonal ingredients, and sweeping ocean vistas. Reserve a suite for three nights or longer by September 30, 2023, and receive 30 percent off, an extra \$300 credit, and more for stays through December 20, 2023.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 resort credit per stay.

TULUM, MEXICO

Conrad Tulum Riviera Maya



At this coastal sanctuary, Mayan heritage and exclusive amenities take center stage.

Savor time-honored recipes, ancient healing rituals, and a VIP Suite Experience with 30 percent off a three-night stay, an extra \$300 hotel credit, and new Ceiba Club perks from private check-in to complimentary canapés. Book by September 30, 2023, and travel by December 20, 2023.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$100 resort credit per stay.

SAN JOSE DEL CABO, MEXICO

One&Only Palmilla



Unforgettable stories unfold at this sun-soaked escape on the quieter side of Cabo.

Reconnect, relax, and recharge with private beach cabanas, world-renowned cuisine, and dramatic Sea of Cortés views. Soak in more of the year-round sunshine with four nights for the price of three, or seven nights for the price of five, when you travel by December 18. 2023.

VIRTUOSO AMENITY: \$150 resort credit per stay.



CONRAD°
TULUM RIVIERA MAYA



MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Don't believe these myths about African safaris.

SAFARI IS A captivating, memorable, and meaningful experience. One thing it's not: predictable. While days may be filled with game drives and spectacular wildlife sightings, there's so much more to see than what's darting across the horizon. Outfitters such as African Travel, Inc., the longest-established U.S. luxury safari operator, work with travelers to create custom itineraries that fit individual preferences, styles, and budgets. As you consider your first (or next) safari, here's what to learn and unlearn - before you go.



Great Timing

When it comes to the classic

safari, most travelers think of the **Great Migration**, the dry period between June and October when more than a million wildebeests, gazelles, and zebras cross Tanzania into Kenya. But that's not the only opportunity to witness wildlife en masse. Travelers can also see the Great Migration when animals return to the Serengeti between November and May – spy it on African Travel's 12-day Kenya and Tanzania safari. Elsewhere, November through March sees the second-largest migration of mammals in Botswana's Makgadikgadi Pans National Park, which is a highlight on an 11-day South Africa and Botswana safari.

Inclusive Adventures

Traveling to Africa, where homosexuality is banned in many countries, may give some LGBTQ+ travelers pause, but in places such as South Africa, Botswana, and Mozambique, gender identity and preferences are protected by law, and same-sex marriage is legal. African Travel's experts work with Virtuoso advisors on custom safaris that ensure welcoming and **safe experiences** for all travelers, regardless of age, sexual orientation, or race. Families and couples can choose from several Pride Safaris, including a popular ten-day jaunt across South Africa, which combines a mix of culture, wildlife, and food, from Cape Town to the Shamwari Private Game Reserve.

Beyond Game Drives

It's not all sundowners and bush camps: Great safaris can also pack in enriching experiences beyond the plains. Spending time in **Africa's vibrant cities** is often part of African Travel's safari itineraries or can be customized as a pre- or post-safari add-on. Travelers meet with Cape Town's Ardmore artisans on an 11-day South African safari, take a private tour of the Luxor temple during a pre-safari stay in Cairo and on the Nile, or visit the moving Kigali Genocide Memorial in Kigali before heading into Rwanda's national parks.

GRAND BAIE, MAURITIUS

LUX* Grand Baie

MUNICH, GERMANY

BEYOND by Geisel

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

Hotel Café Royal, London



Curated cuisine, a threestory wellness center, and the island's most coveted rooftop.

With its savory-sweet dishes, blissinducing massages, and tropical cocktails served poolside above Grand Baie's legendary lagoon (or from your spot in the infinity pool), this palm-fringed paradise on the northern shores of Mauritius brings indulgence to a whole new level.

VIRTUOSO AMENITIES: Complimentary dinner and a complimentary breakfast in the pool at Bisou for two guests per stay.



Get away to this modern, residenceinspired boutique hotel in the heart of Munich.

Designed to feel like a luxurious home away from home, this property treats you to scratch-made meals in the open kitchen, indulgent amenities from a private chauffeur to a personal chef, and floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking Marienplatz's Gothic cathedrals and golden statues.

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



Glamour, vitality, and charm converge at one of London's most celebrated addresses.

Discover the essence of Mayfair, Soho, and Saint James at this renowned 150-year-old hotel with Michelinstarred dining, royalty-worthy spatreatments, and a guest list that has included names ranging from Oscar Wilde and Winston Churchill to Princess Diana and David Bowie.

VIRTUOSO AMENITIES: \$100 food and beverage credit per stay and a \$100 spa credit per stay.



BEYOND

HOTEL CAFÉ ROYAL

THE PALMS, GRACE BAY + THE SHORE CLUB, LONG BAY TURKS & CAICOS ISLANDS

Where whimsy rules and magic awaits around every corner.









SETTLE IN, THEN SET SAIL

Four new ways to span the globe.







WORLD VOYAGE IS THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME. As travelers desire longer, more immersive itineraries, Viking can deliver them to the most breathaking corners of the world, with multiple globe-trotting options departing over the next two years. Read on for the highlights – and start planning with your Virtuoso travel advisor before these voyages sell out.

A Voyage of Discovery

Unpack on the 930-passenger *Viking Sky* for a 137-night Fort Lauderdale-to-London voyage that visits 28 countries across **six continents**. From French Polynesian reefs to the temples of Luxor, travelers call on the world's most captivating natural and cultural wonders. Go winetasting in New Zealand, pop into Singapore's Gardens by the Bay, and learn to cook like a local on a chef-led excursion in Lisbon. Downtime during at-sea days gives guests a chance to practice putts on the sports deck or indulge in the spa. *Departure: December 19, 2024*.

Circle the Globe

Take the sailing above, add 28 ports, and you'll get the experience of a lifetime: a 179-night Fort Lauderdale-to-New York City passage. After the first set of world voyage passengers disembark in London, the *Viking Sky* sails north to the Arctic, visiting Iceland and Greenland. One of the best elements of any Viking sailing – **enrichment lectures** from resident historians, archaeologists, and cultural experts – remains a staple of the line's world voyages, so travelers arrive in dozens of ports with a wealth of intel. *Departure: December 19, 2024.*

Escape Winter at Sea

The shortest of Viking's world voyages, its 120-night Los Angeles-to-London journey on the *Viking Sky*, still packs in calls on 23 countries. Travelers follow the sun from Hawaii to Tahiti and Australia before tracing historic **spice-trading routes** in Indonesia and Sri Lanka and exploring celebrated antiquities in Israel, Egypt, and Greece. While the voyage goes broad, overnight stays in Sydney, Singapore, Mumbai, Istanbul, and more introduce depth and culture, including a Viking-exclusive dinner at a Balinese temple. *Departure: January 5, 2025*.

Take the Long Way Home

This 162-night Los Angeles-to-New York City sailing extends the L.A.-to-London itinerary above, adding an extra six weeks and 28 ports of call, including the **Scottish Highlands**, Norway's Inside Passage, and Halifax, Nova Scotia. As with all of Viking's world voyages, travelers on this journey receive extra perks, including business-class airfare, a premium beverage package, complimentary visa service, and extra shipboard and shore-excursion credits. *Departure: January 5, 2025*.

World voyage highlights, above from left: Istanbul's Blue Mosque at sunset, the Viking Sky in Norway, and the ship's Wintergarden.



"We are proud to be named the best. And we are already searching for better."

Torstein Hagen, Chairman

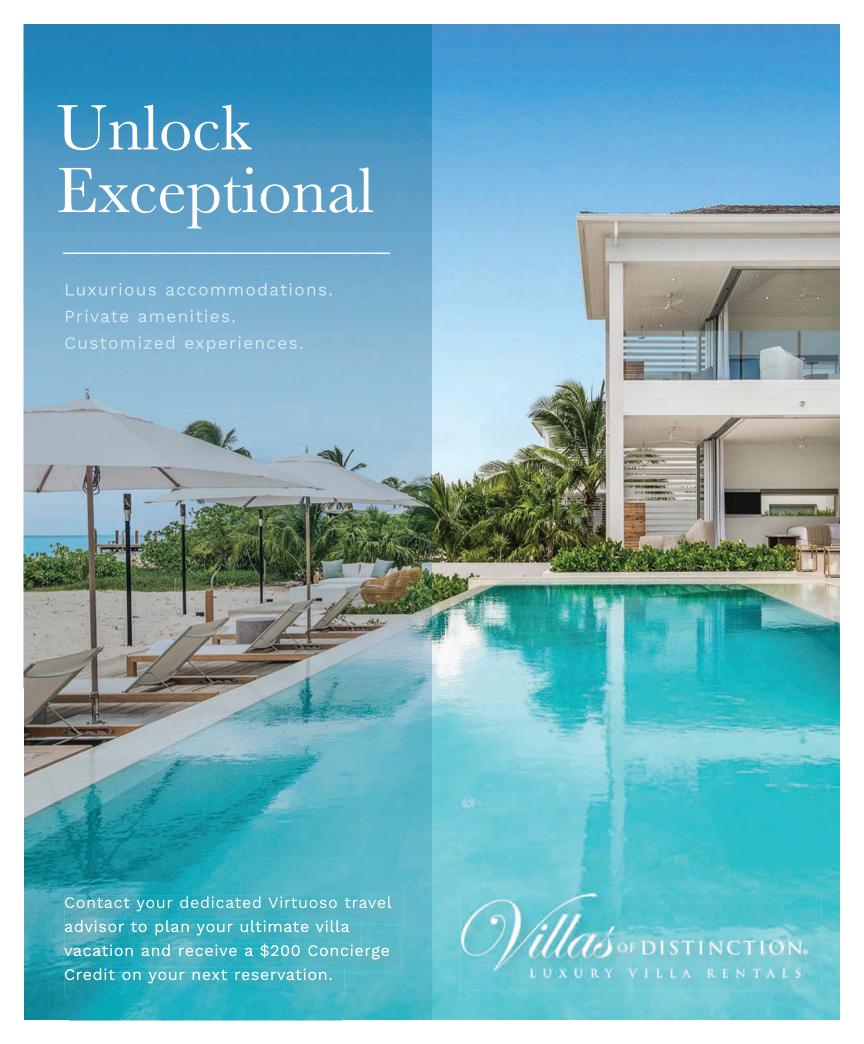
Onwards.



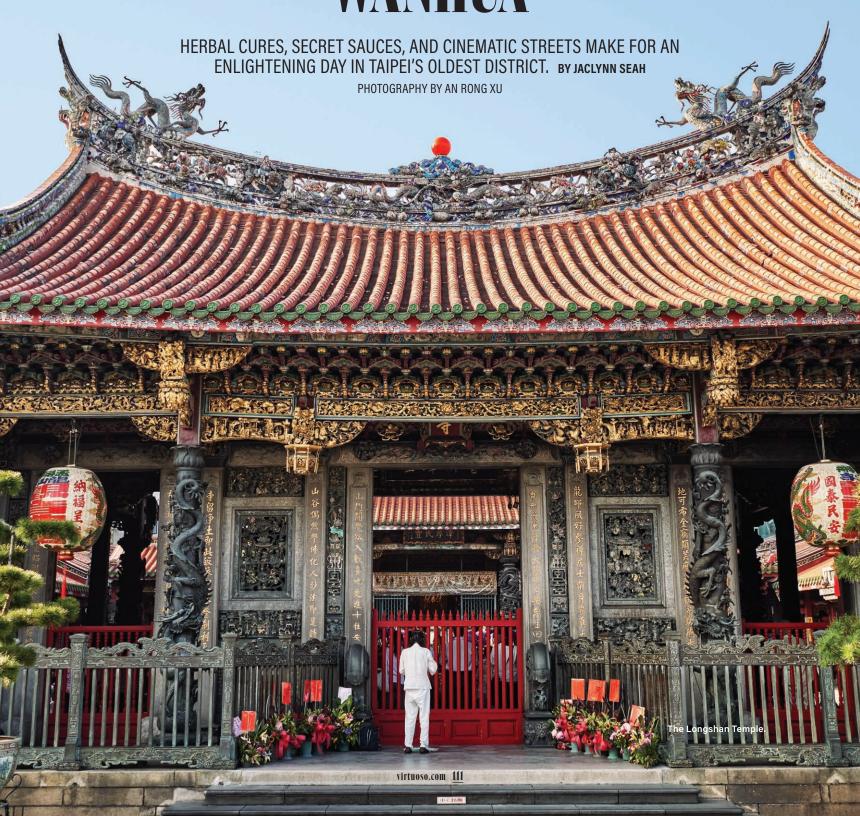
Contact your Virtuoso Travel Advisor today to learn more.

Ship category: Mid-size ship 300–799 cabins and small ship 150–299 cabins. ©2023. *Travel + Leisure** is a registered trademark of *Travel + Leisure* Holdco, LLC, a subsidiary of Wyndham Destinations, Inc. *Travel + Leisure** World's Best Awards is used under license. *Travel + Leisure** is published by TI Inc. Affluent Media Group, a Dotdash Meredith company, which is not affiliated with Wyndham Destinations, Inc. or its subsidiaries.

All rights reserved; used under license. CST# 2052644-40



WHEN IN WANHUA



Culture



A Bopiliao stroll and pork-cheek soup at Chang Hung Noodles.

elers' lists lately, drawing visitors in with its Michelin-starred dining, high design, and under-the-radar appeal. The Taiwanese capital city is a case study in urban juxtaposition: Night markets and refined dining rooms, packed tea shops and cool cocktail bars, centuries-old temples and soaring sky-scrapers. And while it may be tempting to follow the neon lights straight to the 101-story Taipei 101 tower or Immense's ultra-sleek atelier, in this town, it's worth starting from the beginning.

The city sprawls outward from Wanhua, its first district, established in the early 1700s thanks to its strategic trading position at the juncture of the Tamsui, Xindian, and Dahan rivers.

The modernization found throughout the rest of Taipei barely exists in wellpreserved Wanhua. If there's anywhere to get a taste of "Old Taipei," this is it.

My first stop – and usually the first for others in Wanhua too – is the Longshan Temple, a shrine built by immigrants

from China's Fujian Province in 1738 and dedicated to Guanyin, the Buddhist goddess of compassion. It's one of Taiwan's oldest and most famous temples, known for its striking bronze dragon pillars and the matchmaking powers of one of its many resident



JOURNEY INTO THE HEART OF LUXURY.

Onboard Rocky Mountaineer you'll enjoy the company of new friends, classic regional cuisine and breathtaking scenery, paired with award-winning service.

Rocky Mountaineer offers four distinctive rail routes through Western Canada and the American Southwest. The world-renowned luxury train travels by daylight through unimaginable landscapes best seen by rail.



TO BOOK AND RECEIVE A SPECIAL OFFER, CONTACT YOUR VIRTUOSO TRAVEL ADVISOR.





deities, Yue Lao, the god of marriage and love. Worshippers come to Longshan to pray for everything from romance to good fortune to health. Past devotees often used to head next door to Herb Alley, a covered market with vendors hawking traditional concoctions for all sorts of ailments. While many Herb Alley shops shuttered over the years, one family found a way to reinvent themselves. Locals come to the Wang family's shop, LaoJiAn Healing Herbar, for bespoke herbal teas designed to combat millennial maladies, such as burnout and hangovers.

Inside the modern space, I sit down at a wooden bar with a science-lab-like wall of herbs behind it and fill out a short questionnaire about my personal habits, such as how much sleep I get and how stressed I feel. After a quick consultation, Brian Wang, the shop's third-generation owner, determines the combination of herbs I need to combat my insomnia – chameleon plant, Asiatic pennywort, dandelion, honeysuckle, and a dash of mint – and carefully brews my tea, serving it in a ceramic cup as large as a soup bowl.

I've had Chinese herbal cures before, and they're often bitter, but this is easily drinkable – the shop's mixtures are milder to please today's palate. On my way out, I pick up a bottle of chilled herbal milk tea (a pleasant alternative to the saccharine bubble tea confections found across Taiwan) and receive my tea formula and ingredients list so I can brew my own prescription at home.

DESPITE ITS NAME, many of the Huaxi Street Night Market's stalls open at 4 pm, in time for a late-afternoon lunch. Launched in 1951 as Taiwan's first night market for travelers, Huaxi operated as a red-light district until the government outlawed prostitution in the 1990s. (There was also a time when Huaxi earned the nickname "Snake Alley" for its questionable snake-meat restaurants, but that's well in the past.)

Today, travelers and locals navigate Huaxi's bustling arcade in search of the



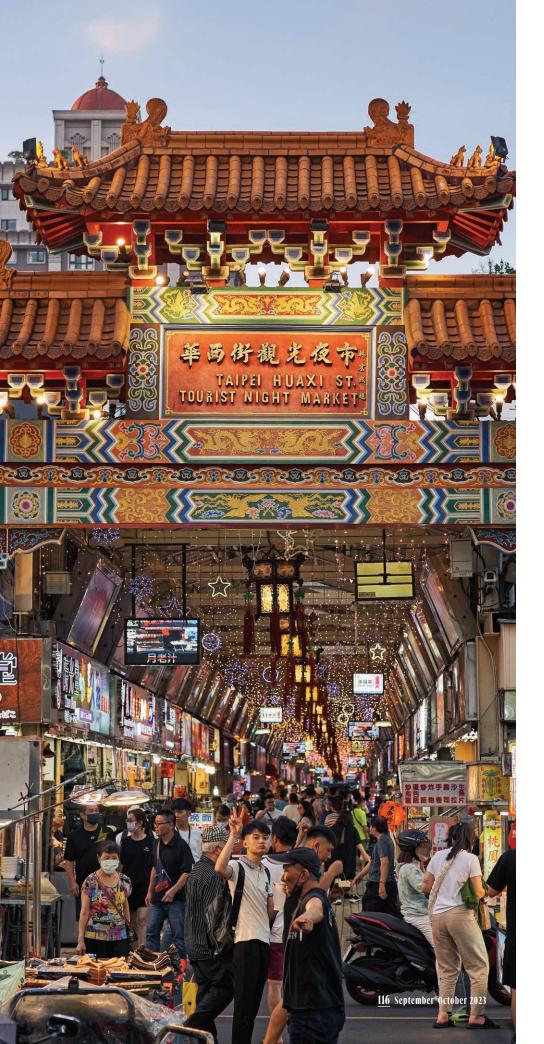
Fresh ocean air, the world's highest tides, sandy beaches, secluded coves, seaside towns, whales and wildlife viewing, rich history, succulent seafood, unspoiled nature, and the warmest of welcomes. **Atlantic Canada** is home to the very best seacoast holidays and **Canada by Design**, in partnership with your Virtuoso travel advisor, can make your next vacation become a reality.



Atlantic Canada, Enchanting Islands – **7 days** • Canadian Maritimes – **11 days** • Newfoundland Discovery – **14 days**Bay of Fundy, Prince Edward Island & the Cabot Trail Road Trip – **7 days** • Wonders of the Maritimes – **10 days**

Plus, more self-driven, privately guided, group, and rail journeys available.





The modernization found throughout the rest of Taipei barely exists in well-preserved Wanhua. If there's anywhere to get a taste of "Old Taipei," this is it.

trio of stalls with Michelin Bib Gourmand status: Chang Hung Noodles, for savory, soupy bowls of pork-cheek noodles; Yuan Fang Guabao, specializing in traditional steamed buns stuffed with fatty pork belly and garnished with ground peanuts and cilantro; and my favorite, Wang's Broth, where minced, braised pork marinated in a secret umami sauce sits atop a bowl of fluffy rice. Huaxi merges into a larger network of night markets on adjacent roads, where hungry travelers can keep wandering in search of bean curd pudding and barbecue seafood skewers.

Rejuvenated by tea and street food, I walk a few minutes east of the Longshan Temple to the Bopiliao Historic Block. It's hard to miss this distinctive stretch of red-brick buildings, which add a pop of color to the district's mostly gray concrete structures. Bopiliao's architecture is some of Taipei's oldest and most eclectic, a mix of Qing Dynasty and Japanese styles spanning the eighteenth century to the early 1900s. It's rare to see these complete blocks of traditional buildings in Taipei; most of the older ones have been demolished to make way for towering

Culture

skyscrapers and apartments housing the city's growing population.

As Wanhua's fortunes waned, Bopiliao was left to decay until 2003, when the city government began restoring the dilapidated buildings and transforming the block into a heritage and cultural center. They did such a good

job that Bopiliao now doubles as a film set. Inside many of its buildings, visitors can browse artifacts and interactive displays to better understand the significance of the area's history.

I end my day a ten-minute drive away at Ximending, a popular shopping district on Wanhua's northern end that's packed with young Taiwanese people popping in and out of trendy boutiques and taking pictures on rainbow crosswalks and in front of colorful murals. The area is known as "the Harajuku of Taipei" – and in a district revered for its history, it feels like a harmonious bridge between old Taipei and new.

A Proper Introduction

STAY In the city's central Songshan district, about a 20-minute drive northwest of Wanhua, visitors find nothing but opulence at the 303-room Mandarin Oriental, Taipei – from the lobby's polished marble floors and massive chandelier to the 1,700-piece art collection and Michelin-starred Chinese at Ya Ge restaurant. Concierges arrange private visits to some of the city's best galleries, secure coveted reservations for the hotel's afternoon tea, and book Taiwanese-inspired treatments at the multilevel spa. Doubles from \$387, including breakfast daily and a \$100 dining or spa credit.

<u>60</u> Artisans of Leisure's private Taiwan tours include a five-day Taipei deep dive, with market tours, cooking classes, temple and

museum visits, and day trips to surrounding national parks. The customizable itinerary means travelers can easily add Wanhua experiences like the ones in this story; plush overnights at the Mandarin Oriental sweeten the stay. *Departures: Any day through July 5, 2025; from \$4,670.*

Spend eight days in Taiwan on a bespoke private tour with **Remote Lands**. Highlights include three days in Taipei for Longshan Temple visits, Ximending sprees, and night-market pursuits; a road trip along the island's rugged east coast to the Taroko Gorge; and a temple-centric jaunt to the port city of Kaohsiung. *Departures: Any day through March 1, 2025; from \$9,800.* •



Immersive itineraries. Group sizes that get you closer. Trips that do a whole lot of good. You in?



Let Japan capture your heart in 2024

Journey where ancient traditions and modernity coexist on the #1 North American Cruise Line in Japan. From Okinawa's tropical islands and Hokkaido's snow-capped mountains to Tokyo's bustling metropolis, fall in love with timeless culture, history and natural wonders. See cherry blossoms, parades and fireworks at legendary festivals. And indulge in sushi, sake and the largest Izumi bath at sea. Join Princess in celebrating 10 years of sailing to this special destination aboard Diamond Princess® or Royal Princess® in 2024 on an unforgettable cruise vacation.

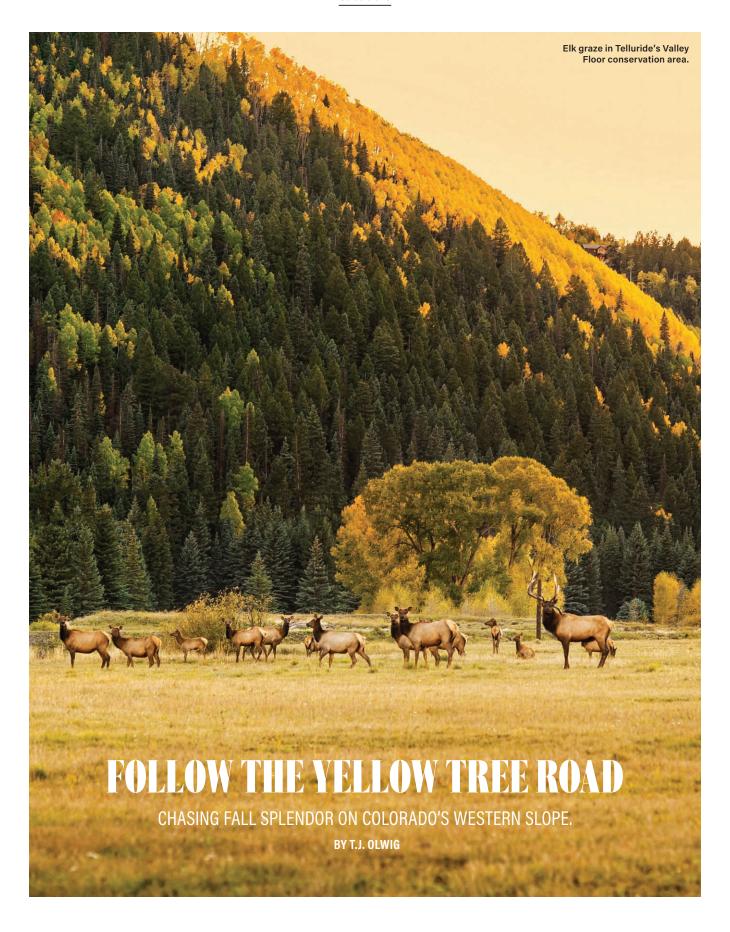


Please contact your Virtuoso Advisor for more details.





Outdoors



Outdoors

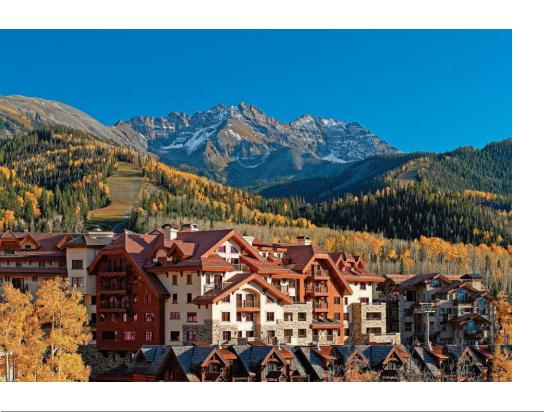


Dunton Hot Springs' Bath House and (opposite) Madeline Hotel & Residences in Telluride's Mountain Village.

IBBONS OF FOG and quickmoving snow blew sideways as my guide, Eliza, and I scaled Elliott Mountain's jagged ridgeline in search of a golden window. It was the first day of October in southwest Colorado's moody San Juan Mountains, and the untimely wintry mix had thrown a wrench in my long-held dream of witnessing peak fall foliage from the summit of one of the area's famed fourteeners. Mother Nature's wrinkle instead rerouted us to a lower perch – still some 12,000 feet skyward – where, winded and wide-eyed, we were greeted by a blur of clouds and mist. And then, just before our descent, the shrouded white wall cracked ever so slightly, unveiling an electric aspen vista aglow on the forest floor.

This wasn't my first trip to the San Juans, but it proved to be my most auspicious. I fell in love with this quiet and hard-to-reach nook of Colorado - just over seven hours by car from Denver and roughly the same from Salt Lake City - on a cross-country road trip with my dog, Gus, more than a decade ago. Over the years, we've hiked beneath summer rainbows on its craggy, high-altitude trails; cold-plunged in the crisp waters of the San Miguel River; and rode Telluride's fabled gondola like a carnival come and gone, up and down and back again. A week too early. A day too late. I'd always just missed seeing the majestic range crowned in full-on fall glory.

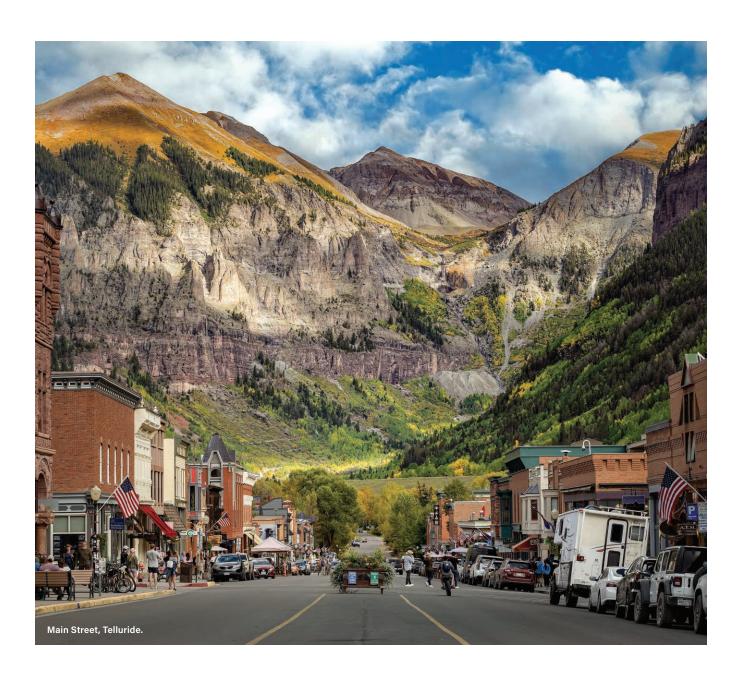
Quaking aspens and their autumnal hues have long lured leaf peepers to Colorado. "You came at the perfect time," Eliza told me as we gazed at one whirl of yellow after another on our drive down the mountain to Dunton Hot Springs, where a swanky cabin awaited me in a resurrected ghost town. "Did you know they're one of



the biggest organisms on earth?" As a matter of fact, I did. What I soon discovered, however, was that groups of these whimsical members of the willow family are called a "stand," and below the soil, their entwined roots grow together as if holding hands. And here I thought they had me at yellow.

Heightening the season's allure was my hideaway at Dunton, a secluded resort tucked in a storybook alpine valley (elevation: 8,850 feet) about an hour southwest of Telluride. More than a century ago, the property - like many a mountain alcove - bloomed as a settlement for west-moving miners in pursuit of silver and gold. When Christoph Henkel purchased it in 1994 and renovated in the years after, the retreat's four manganese-rich thermal pools swapped body-worn prospectors for Gucci-wearing adventurers and the occasional A-lister. (While browsing its cozy library, a stand-alone structure built out of an old granary, I spied





an Oscar winner's signature in the guest book.)

Wrapping Dunton's 14 historic cabins, which gleam with Old West furnishings and artwork handpicked by Christoph's spouse, art dealer Katrin Bellinger, is an amphitheater of confers and red rock. My two-bedroom log abode hung on the edge of the Dolores River. Bundled up over a hot cup of coffee on the back deck, I'd listen to its trickling soundtrack at sunrise

while, in real time, the distant aspen tree line transformed before my eyes. Afternoons, I'd rotate between the Fall Creek Trail, beautified by a 40-foot waterfall on Dunton's back end, and the nineteenth-century Bath House's alfresco hot spring, stamped with four-teener views of snow-dusted El Diente.

But my mission had to roll on, so after a couple of days I hopped in the car and headed 32 miles away to Telluride, my favorite place on earth. The celebrated ski town shines on Colorado's Western Slope come wintertime, but arrive in early fall – after festival and monsoon season and a few months shy of steady, knee-deep powder – and, in comparison to the ever-busy Vails, Aspens, and Park Cities of the world, the crowds are more than mild. Even Bridal Veil Falls, Colorado's tallest waterfall at 365 feet, gushes at a summertime clip.

Few byways, if any at all, rival the scenery of the San Juan Skyway, and

on a sun-splashed October day, it leaves travelers searching for superlatives. Strawberry brushstrokes and tints of apricot would crash the treetop palette party in just a few days' time. Overlooks were crowded, brimming with long-lensed photographers aiming at Wilson Peak and its gold-laced foreground. Farther ahead, a herd of elk grazed riverside in a blonde valley as road-trippers pulled off and pointed out their windows.

On my final day in the neighborhood, I joined a group of leaf peepers on a frigid open-air Jeep tour. Numbfaced but wowed, we skirted up a janky dirt road to wild mountain crannies high above Telluride's box canyon, which was dappled in sunlight thousands of feet below. When the vehicle parked, a lone aspen stand wreathing a rock spire, ablaze and luxuriant, transfixed my gaze as if placing me under a spell. I couldn't look away.

San Juans Sojourns

STAY Dunton Hot Springs boomed as a gold miners' homestead in the late nineteenth century. Today, each of the 14 cabins – plus one all-weather tent – at this posh playground delivers upscale coziness for activities such as horseback trail rides, fly-fishing on the Dolores River, and hiking through the San Juan National Forest. After a communal dinner of Wagyu steak and bourbons in the Saloon (where Butch Cassidy hid out after robbing his first bank in 1889 – and carved his name into the still-existing wooden bar), soak in the source spring beneath a star-bright Rocky Mountain sky. Cabins from \$960, including all meals and beverages and a \$100 resort credit.

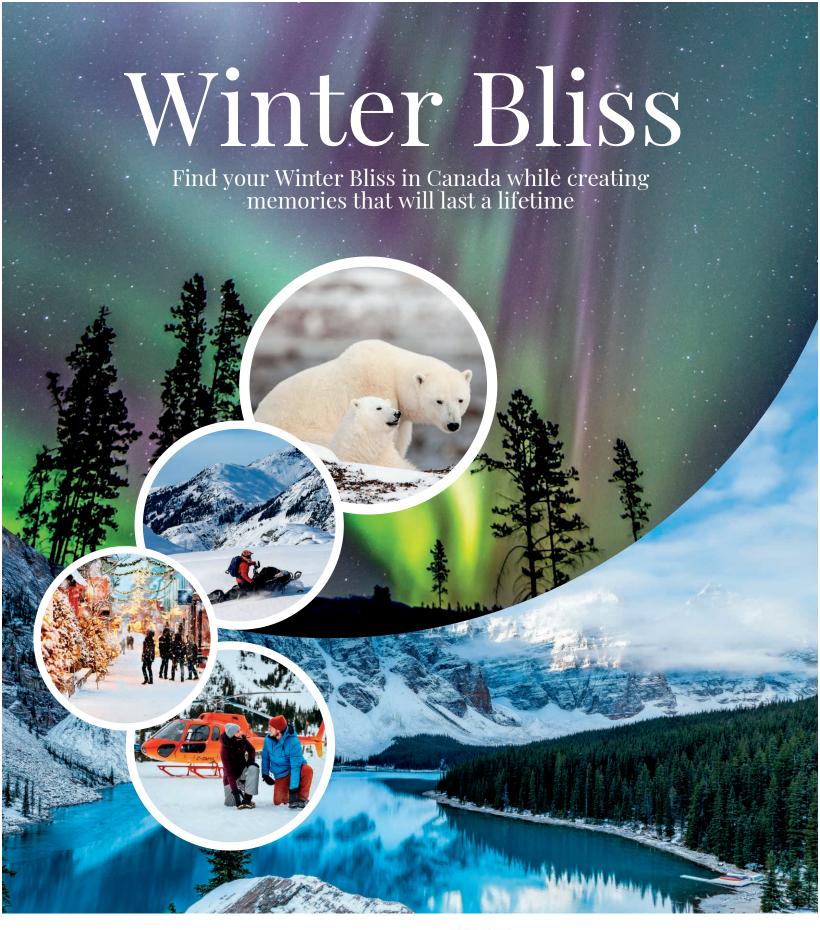
Steps from Telluride's gondola in Mountain Village, the Madeline Hotel & Residences recently finished a full makeover of its 83 rooms and 71 residences, which come outfitted with a backpack, hiking stick, and meditation stool for "stretch down" time (the Auberge Resorts property's play on turndown service), when an amethyst crystal or a card with a yoga pose might appear on your pillow. Fall excursions include mountain biking, via ferrata, and four-wheel-drive Jeep tours. At 4 PM, sip Champagne in the Timber Room while general manager Bryan Woody blows a Swiss-made alpenhorn. Doubles from \$629, including breakfast daily and a \$100 dining credit.

Sleep slopeside in Mountain Village at the Inn at Lost Creek, an intimate 32-suite boutique hotel ringed by San Juan Mountain panoramas. Most of its timber-and-stone lodge-style rooms are equipped with fireplaces, and all come with access to Colorado's largest spa, a five-minute walk away. Doubles from \$449, including breakfast daily and a \$100 dining credit.



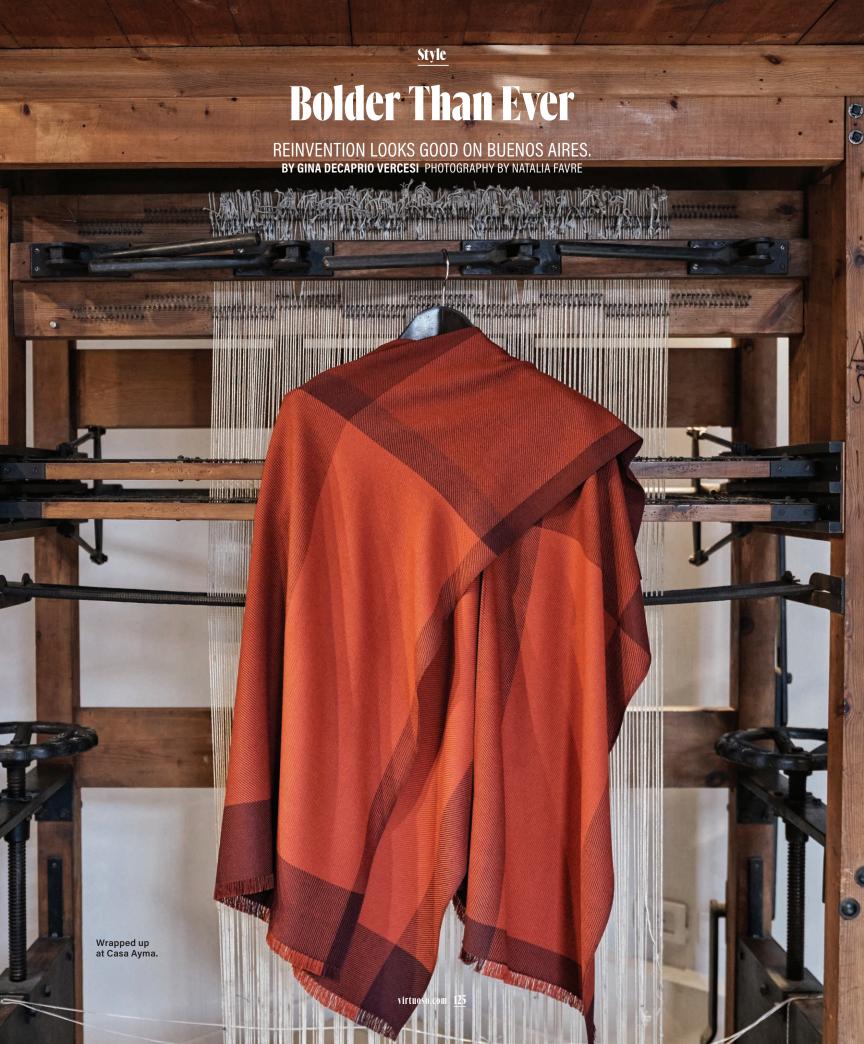


*Offer applies for the second guest only for New Zealand trips departing prior to June 30, 2024, valid for new bookings for two guests booked no later than September 30, 2023. Primary guest is subject to the full advertised trip cost and 50% discount is applied to the pre-tax trip cost for the second guest. Guests must be sharing a room. Solo guests can receive 50% off the pre-tax trip cost of a second New Zealand trip booked. Both trips must be booked at the same time to receive the offer. Not combinable with any other offers. Other restrictions may apply.











UENOS AIRES is deeply stylish: sultry tango clubs and speakeasies, avant-garde theater, and shopping that screams "Buy a second suitcase!" But ever since Argentina reopened its tightly closed pandemic borders nearly two years ago, South America's coolest capital city is even cooler. "Lately, I'm seeing both new and established artists, chefs, and designers revamp their roots and draw on Argentina's heritage to create fresh projects," says Maita Barrenechea, founder of Mailo, a Virtuoso tour connection in Argentina. "It's like a new city altogether."

It's an exciting time to be in Buenos Aires, fresh off Argentina's monumental World Cup victory and brimming with new cultural spaces, creative cocktail bars, and tradition-pushing projects. Here's what not to miss – and how to get the real insider access.

The King of Silver: Marcelo Toledo

Porteños make their way to San Telmo for its high-end antiques shops and famous Sunday flea market, but the historic barrio is also home to Marcelo Toledo, a longtime silversmith and contemporary artist whose recent work beautifully bridges the gap between the country's traditional craft and modern art. Inside his gallery, Toledo showcases some of his early work (baroque and colonial-style goblets, cutlery sets, and maté cups), but it's the unconventional, large-scale installations, inspired by his interest in issues such as climate change, diversity, and gender violence, that command attention. "Even when I was very young, I felt that metal was my way to communicate," Toldeo says.

Across the walls of the airy space, brightly painted mosaics made from hand-cut tiles of alpaca silver (an alloy made from copper, bronze, and white metal) depict the faces of Che Guevara and Eva Perón. In another room, a collection of copper- and brass-wire sculptures inspired by the ancient Paracas people of Peru – Toledo's latest project – hang from the ceiling. They captivate in their three-dimensional glory, but Toledo notes that they can collapse into themselves for safe transport home.

Gaucho Chic: Ayma

Laura Basile and Carlos Carro launched their line, Ayma, with a simple concept: elevate the traditional gaucho's poncho from humble cloak to luxury garment. That magic happens on restored antique European looms at Maison Borel, a nineteenth-century textile mill in the Villa Crespo neighborhood. There, artisans weave guanaco, vicuña, and alpaca fibers sourced from the Andes, as well as superfine merino wool and mohair, into supple ponchos, shawls,

and capes threaded with Argentinian heritage. "There's nothing more avant-garde than the resurrection of high-quality craftsmanship," Carro says. Visit Maison Borel by appointment or browse the women's and men's items, plus blankets and other housewares, at Casa Ayma, the duo's flagship in Palermo Viejo. Also on display is Ayma's newest project, 11 perfumes created using essential oils derived from native Patagonian plants, which Carro spent a decade studying.

Pinkies Up: Liquid Emotions

Afternoon tea is a staple of Buenos Aires culture, whether it's a cup of Earl Grey in Recoleta's La Biela café or a yerba maté gourd passed among friends. Porteños have long frequented master tea blender Inés Berton's Tealosophy shop in Palermo Soho for custom concoctions, and earlier this summer, she expanded her empire with the opening of Liquid Emotions, a jewel-box cocktail bar, in collaboration with bartender Lean Milan. Berton's

Legendary chef Francis Mallmann occasionally invites guests into his home for private dining experiences.

teas – such as the Tea-groni, a classic negroni infused with a black tea blended with almonds and cocoa – are the foundation of every drink. Artistry precedes alcohol in the all-day, glasswalled space: Berton invites visitors to pop by in the late morning for teatonic mocktails made with chamomile, ginger, and verbena.







Urban Legacies: Colón Fábrica and Francis Mallmann

In La Boca, a former working-class port neighborhood turned gritty-hip waterfront, the new 80,000-square-foot Colón Fábrica introduces visitors to the spectacle of theater design. The warehouse showcases the work of designers from Buenos Aires' Teatro Colón, who create every set, prop, and costume for its ballets and operas. Although the pandemic ended tours of Teatro Colón's subterranean workshops, sets from *Turandot*, *Aida*, *Tosca*, and other shows are re-created here, preserving the city's rich theater culture.

An even more exclusive set is just down the street: Legendary Argentinian chef and restaurateur Francis Mallmann occasionally welcomes guests into his impeccably furnished home for private dining experiences, an invite that can only be secured by a select few, including Mai10's Barrenechea. The meal begins with Champagne and empanadas in the living room before a seven-course feast. If he's in town, Mallmann himself may even make a cameo.

Secret Garden: Marti

Chef Germán Martitegui surprised porteños when he shuttered his acclaimed, fine-dining Tegui in 2021. But the chef had a new concept in mind, swapping the parrilla (grill) for the greenhouse and debuting Marti, a plant-based concept tucked into a hidden Recoleta courtyard. Diners reach Marti through Tramando, couture designer Martín Churba's sleek and spartan boutique. An unmarked door at the back leads to a glass-walled, terrariumlike space with a 60-seat bar surrounding an open kitchen, where Martitegui and his team craft artful, vegetarian plates ideal for sharing. The highlight is his luscious spin on Middle Eastern shawarma, which involves a thick stack of oyster mushrooms (grown in an onsite greenhouse) shaved onto fresh lettuce leaves. "There's nothing formal here," Martitegui says. "At Marti, everyone participates in the creativity of what we're doing."

Going to (New) Places

Sun-kissed shores and one-of-a-kind overnights in the South Pacific. Virgin Voyages is giving travelers a way to explore the South Pacific in style, so once you land from that 24-hour flight, you can just kick back on a sundeck, relax with a cocktail, and let Virgin Voyages handle the rest. Our exclusively adult voyages include dining at 20+ eateries, entertainment, group fitness classes, all tips, WiFi, and essential drinks.

Save an extra 5-10% off the voyage fare when booking at least 121 days ahead. Then take off another 10% when you pay in full.*









Best Overall Cruise Line



Best

CRUISERS' CHOICE

Best

Cabins

cruisecrit



Service

cruisecri **** Best Value-

Style



Wake Up in Buenos Aires

60 For VIP access and recommendations only the best-connected *porteño* would have, Virtuoso travel advisors work with **Mai10**, a Virtuoso tour company in Argentina, to create custom Buenos Aires itineraries. Founder Maita Barrenechea can secure one-on-ones with the artists and designers mentioned in this story, plus a coveted invite to lunch at Francis Mallmann's home.

STAY Two buildings – a 1930s belle epoque palace and a modern tower – comprise the 165-room **Palacio Duhau** – **Park Hyatt Buenos Aires** in the Recoleta neighborhood. Besides easy access to some of the city's best dining and shopping, the hotel brings its own cool factor with a contemporary art gallery, a 7,000-plus-bottle Argentinean wine bar, and gorgeous terraced gardens. *Doubles from \$780, including an upgrade (if available) at time of booking, breakfast daily, and a wine-and-cheese tasting for two or a \$100 dining credit.*

From the lobby's Louis XV-style chandeliers to the Hermès toiletries in guests' marble bathrooms, French elegance reigns at Recoleta's 207-room Alvear Palace Hotel. There's Argentinean fare at the Alvear Grill, afternoon tea at L'Orangerie, and views of Buenos Aires' wide avenues from the 11th-floor Roof Bar. Doubles from \$700, including an upgrade (if available) at time of booking, breakfast daily, and a \$100 dining credit.













Each place in Barbados has a story.

EVERY MEAL IS A CELEBRATION AND EACH DAY PROMISES NEW EXPERIENCES, DISCOVERIES AND MEMORIES TO LAST A LIFETIME.

Many expect barbados to be a once-in-a-lifetime type of trip but quickly discover it is the kind of place you want to return to, time and time again. With so much to do it is probably pretty obvious now why travellers keep coming back!











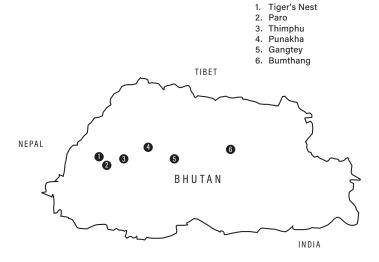
"DON'T MOVE,"

my guide, Sangay Dorji, whispered. We were walking down a gravel path along the folds of a mountain in central Bhutan's Bumthang district when he suddenly halted. On our right, a forest of rhododendrons sloped steeply upward, strings of wind-frayed prayer flags tangled in their branches. On our left, a near-vertical cliff plunged into the leafy canopy of the valley below. But it was the creature ahead that stopped us in our tracks: 2,000 pounds of bulging muscle in a coat of shaggy, mud-stained fur. A yellowish-white streak covered its humped back and face, from which a set of crooked horns pointed skyward. After more than a week of roadtripping through the country, I'd seen my fair share of yaks - but this was the first time I'd encountered one without a car window between us.

Clearly annoyed by our disturbing his lunch break, the yak grunted and threatened to charge. With a rock clenched in his fist, Sangay inched closer, waving his arms and groaning loudly to shoo the beast away. After a standoff that lasted several minutes, the yak dropped its head and trotted off into the bushes. "They're friendly creatures," Sangay said. Then he chuckled. "Just don't piss them off."

The encounter was only one of dozens of moments that sent my heart racing during a 12-day jaunt through Bhutan. Wedged between Tibet and India's northeast, this tiny Himalayan kingdom unlocked a special kind of thrill. Not fear per se, but a giddy surrender to nature's wish. Or, as Sangay would teach me over the course of our trip, a submission to the divine powers, the thunder dragons and ancient spirits that dwell in Bhutan's impenetrable pine forests and sacred mountaintops. I'd come to what's been dubbed one of the world's last Shangri-las to return to more peaceful times – a much-needed rural tonic for a big-city burnout like me.

That spine-tingling feeling started before I even set foot on Bhutanese soil. From the plane's window, I watched snowcapped peaks poking through the clouds like the gates to a



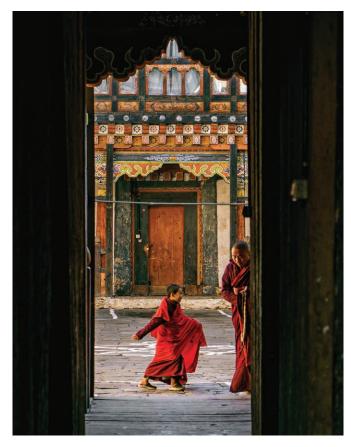
forbidden kingdom. On our approach to Paro, home to the country's sole international airport, the plane maneuvered through valleys flanked by mountains and flew so closely past hillside farms that I could almost count the chilies drying on their tin roofs. It's no wonder, then, that only a dozen or so pilots are licensed to land here.

Paro, a valley town at the Y-shaped confluence of the Paro and Wang rivers, serves as the jumping-off point for most travelers' journeys through the kingdom. Its whitewashed *dzong* fortress and timeworn farmhouses delivered a first taste of a country that was cloaked in mystique, only cautiously

opening its gates to tourists in 1974. Almost five decades and a pandemic later, Bhutan has changed course again: Since September 2022, foreign visitors must pony up a visa fee of \$200 per day on top of lodging costs and (compulsory) guide and driver fees – the country's strategy for preventing overtourism from affecting its deeply traditional way of life and keeping its temples and *dzongs* crowd-free.

The play is working: Unlike at Angkor Wat, say, or the Taj Mahal, at Tiger's Nest, Bhutan's famous monastery that clings to a cliff north of Paro, pilgrims in *ghos* and *kiras* (the tartan-patterned national garb) from all over the country far outnumbered foreign faces. For long stretches of the strenuous uphill trek, we only had long-tailed magpies and the odd langur for company. No one hawked tourist trinkets, and instead of the usual anonymity conferred by mass tourism, a cheery sense of camaraderie lingered in the air.

MY BASE IN THE valley is Six Senses Paro, and upon returning – my heart full and my muscles screaming - I couldn't have been more grateful for the foot massage and hot butter tea that awaited me. Opened in 2019 in the shadow of a crumbling fifteenthcentury hilltop fortress more than 9,000 feet above town, the lodge was one of three the company debuted that year, with two more following, giving it outposts in Thimphu, Punakha, Gangtey, and Bumthang as well. Together, they function as a dispersed hotel of sorts. Most guests book stays at multiple properties – or all, if they have two weeks to spare - which, with Six Senses' private guide and driver, makes for road trips that weave through some of Bhutan's most scenic valleys. With timber-trimmed roofs and walls of stacked stones and rammed earth juxtaposed with floor-to-ceiling windows, heated swimming pools, and spalike bathrooms, the lodges are polished riffs on vernacular architecture and welcome retreats.



A novice monk at Bumthang's Jakar dzong, and the prayer pavilion at Six Senses Thimphu lodge.

The food, too, lifts spirits: Six Senses often sources its organic produce from as close by as the lodges' bountiful orchards and gardens. "We've got more apples than we know what to do with," Six Senses Bhutan's general manager, Andrew Whiffen, told me on a walk around the mountainsides that backdropped the lodge. Lunches and dinners draw on Bhutanese- and Mediterranean-tinged recipes and come paired with elixirs to promote good health. The lodge spas, some as sprawling as the resorts themselves, offer traditional therapies – Bhutanese hot-stone baths, Himalayan herbal body scrubs - to soothe weary minds and muscles after day trips that could include guided farm tours, horseback rides, and temple blessings.

From Paro, it's a winding, hourlong drive to Thimphu, which, as the country's largest city, is metropolitan by Bhutanese standards. To outsiders like me, though, it feels endearingly low-key. There are no traffic lights nor Western chain cafés. And with their ornamental windows and paintings of swirling dragons on exterior walls, its multistoried apartment buildings aren't all that different from the humble farmhouses that dot the rest of the country. It's a window into Bhutan at its buzziest (all relative, of course), with worshippers circling around bonewhite pagodas, vendors selling fruit and football-size cabbages at the central market, and a smattering of museums (for royal textiles and folk heritage) that offer a primer on the country.







Punakha's Chorten Nyingpo monastery and momos traditional dumplings that are a staple of Bhutanese meals.

From my suite at the Thimphu lodge, reached via a bone-rattling road zigzagging its way up a mountaintop on the fringe of town, the city looked like a Lego set laid out between fingerlike valleys covered in conifers. A cross-legged Buddha, one of the world's tallest, gazed down from his perch on a neighboring mountain ridge, bathed in a golden glow as the day drained into darkness.

As we moved east the next day, Thimphu's urban sprawl thinned out behind us. The road writhed through deep valleys and over mountain ledges flanked by towering hemlocks holding up the morning's foggy veil. Ornately decorated semis huffed and puffed their way up with handpainted eyes emblazoned on their bumpers alongside signage that read, almost sardonically, "GOOD LUCK." One wrong move, and you could end up somewhere in the forest far below.

"If you were here ten years ago, you would've hated it," Sangay said. "Back then, the roads were even worse." Passing by the rock-strewn construction sites that pockmarked the landscape along our route, it was clear that Bhutan is still catching up – the country's first paved road, from Thimphu to the Indian border, opened in 1962. Before then, mules and horses were the only way to cross from east to west. Today, the Silk Road-era tracks that connected the dzongs and gewogs (villages) for erstwhile merchants and pilgrims live on as the Trans Bhutan Trail, a cross-country walking route launched last September that takes hikers 36 days to cover from end to end.

When we rolled into compact Punakha, Bhutan's capital until 1955, the sky had cleared, and the temperature had risen to a balmy 70 degrees. Draped around tributaries that form the Sankosh River, the city's relatively low elevation gave the undulating landscape a subtropical tinge. Ferns and broad-leafed plants sprung out of every crevice, and the air was dewy and grassy, with notes of overripe fruit. Six Senses' farmhouse-inspired

lodge stood at the end of a narrow valley of rice paddies – the only outpost in the collection with an outdoor pool.

No wonder, then, that the next morning's cold snap took me by surprise. At the nearby Chorten Nyingpo mountaintop monastery, which dates to the 1700s, a baritone hum poured through the chilly air. Following the sound up a wooden ladder, Sangay and I entered an illlit classroom where several dozen pairs of eyes turned our way. The young novices - some not older than 6 - wore burgundy robes wrapped around fleece jackets in the same hue and sat cross-legged on wooden floors polished by decades of shoeless shuffling. We joined them in their mess hall for a breakfast of potato curry and salty butter tea. With Sangay as my interpreter, I learned about the realities of monastic life - the 5 AM wake-up calls, the simple housing, the long spells away from family - and the boys' admirable commitment to not be seduced by the ever-beating drum of modernization.

THOUGH PUNAKHA was snug, our next destination, Phobjikha Valley in the Gangtey district some three hours east, felt almost unpeopled in comparison. Apart from a one-road hamlet leading to the centuries-old Gangtey Gonpa, a red-banded monastery with rainbows of prayer flags strung from its gilded roofs, the wide valley only contained a sparse sprinkling of farms growing buckwheat and potatoes.

Hiking trails cut through the pine forests flanking its marshy heartland, but with my legs still aching, I opted to cover the day's trek on horseback. A carpet of pine needles crunched beneath my horse's hooves as I crossed streams and dirt roads carved along the hills. Everywhere, beard lichens draped over branches like cobwebs – an indicator of clean air, Sangay explained. When the forest spit us back into the valley, muffled squawks broke



the pastoral silence. In the cloudless sky, a couple of black-necked cranes circled down like paper planes in the breeze. These "heavenly birds," as the Bhutanese call them, return to roost in the Phobjikha Valley every November and are welcomed with a festival where monks and children dressed up in crane costumes dance to folk songs in the Gangtey Gonpa's cobblestoned courtyard.

On the drive to Bumthang, the easternmost and final stop on Six Senses' circuit, Sangay pointed out a pine forest whizzing past the windows. "You couldn't pay me enough to walk through it," he said, before telling me about a malicious spirit that dwells in its trees. Illegal loggers, ignoring

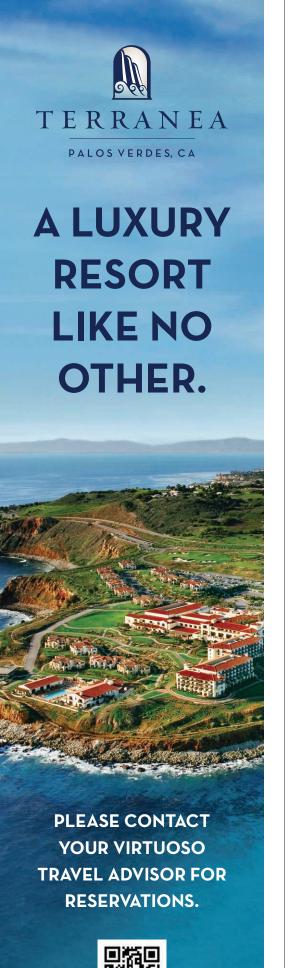
IN THE
CLOUDLESS SKY,
A COUPLE OF
BLACK-NECKED
CRANES CIRCLED
DOWN LIKE PAPER
PLANES IN
THE BREEZE.



the warnings not to enter, have fallen mysteriously ill after returning with their timber. Even though the glass-walled Bumthang lodge is out of the spirit's reach, the tale set the right tone for a spin around Bhutan's religious heartland.

As the reputed place where Buddhism entered the country in the seventh century, the district is dotted with centuries-old chortens (Buddhist shrines) and temples. Their corresponding tales of Tibetan kings, saintly birds, and a country-size supine demoness are as palpable as the syrupy butter-lamp aromas that swirl around their gold-trimmed interiors.

On my last morning, before boarding a propeller plane back to Paro, I slipped out of the lodge for a rare, unguided moment alone. With the sun piercing the trees, I walked along the river that bisected the valley and didn't encounter a soul. Mountains rippled around me in every direction, their sides speckled with farms and chortens that have carried Bhutan's traditional ways and undeniable sense of peaceful happiness through the ages.





HIMALAYAN HIGHS

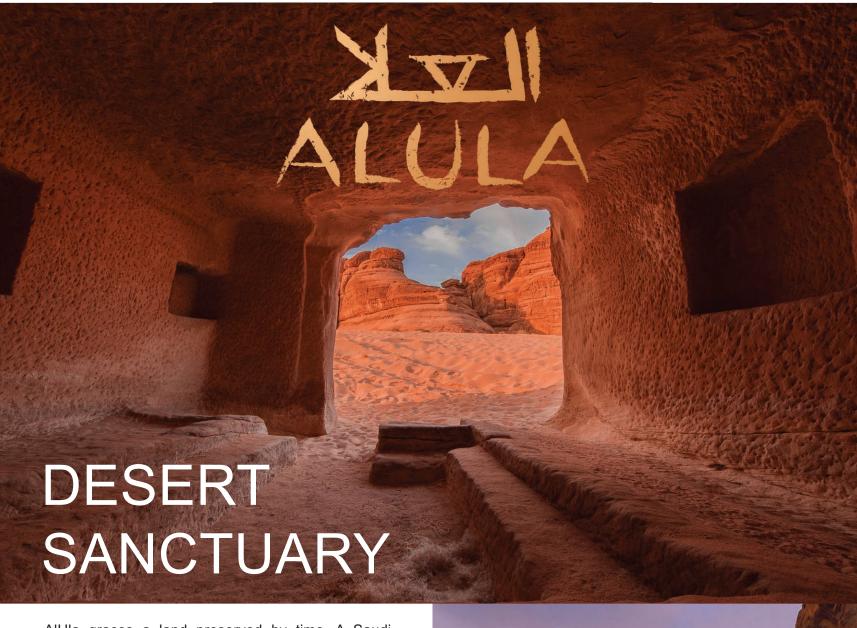
STAY Six Senses Bhutan's five lodges span an intimate eight-suite retreat in Bumthang to a sprawling resort of 25 suites and villas with panoramic views over Thimphu, forming a chain of comfortable crash pads around the country's most visited valleys. Predesigned, privately guided journeys range from a five-day tour of Paro and Thimphu's highlights to a 14-day road trip that covers all five lodges. The company can also arrange bespoke itineraries with guides, transfers, and international and domestic flights. Doubles from \$1,400, including all meals and a 90-minute massage for two. Stays of six nights or more include private transportation and guided activities.

Aman's five 8- to 24-suite lodges form a luxe circuit through Bhutan. Amankora Punakha Lodge (reached via a suspension bridge across the Mo River) is built around a former chief abbot's farmhouse, while the Bumthang outpost has Bhutan's oldest palace, Wangdicholing, in its backyard. Doubles from \$1,840, including all meals and a \$100 resort credit. Stays of seven nights or more include private transportation and guided activities.

Como Uma Bhutan's 29room Paro property and
ten-room Punakha lodge
feature bright and airy suites
with handpainted murals and
sprawling villas with cozy
Bukhari hearths and impressive valley views. Their
zenlike spas offer hot-stone
baths and herbal rubdowns
after whitewater rafting and
treks to Tiger's Nest. Doubles
from \$657, including breakfast and dinner daily and one
lunch during stay.

<u>60</u> Travelers on **andBeyond**'s ten-day private journey go from Punakha's tropics-tinged rice fields to Gangtey's Phobjikha Valley and the Tiger's Nest monastery in Paro, stopping for mountain hikes and monks' blessing ceremonies along the way. September sees the opening of andBeyond Punakha River Lodge on the banks of the Mo River, with six safari-style tents and a river house and family suite with private pools. Departures: Any day through 2023; from \$8,533.

Take in Bhutan's spiritual and natural highlights during Remote Lands' 12-day private tour: Ethnohistorians and yathra textile weavers provide cultural deep dives around the country's five main valleys. Fully bespoke itineraries can be action packed or blissfully relaxing. Departures: Any day through 2023; from \$19,200.



AlUla graces a land preserved by time. A Saudi Arabian jewel of archaeological significance and cultural history, this desert oasis is the gateway to preserved tombs, sandstone formations, and historic dwellings. Both natural and man-made monuments such as Jabal Alahmar in Hegra (pictured right) hold 200,000 years of largely unexplored human history. Hegra, an intriguing UNESCO World Heritage site, is home to ethereal landscapes, ancient legends, and unforgettable history. While experiencing this massive living museum, visitors will also discover over 100 tombs set among unforgettable desert skies.











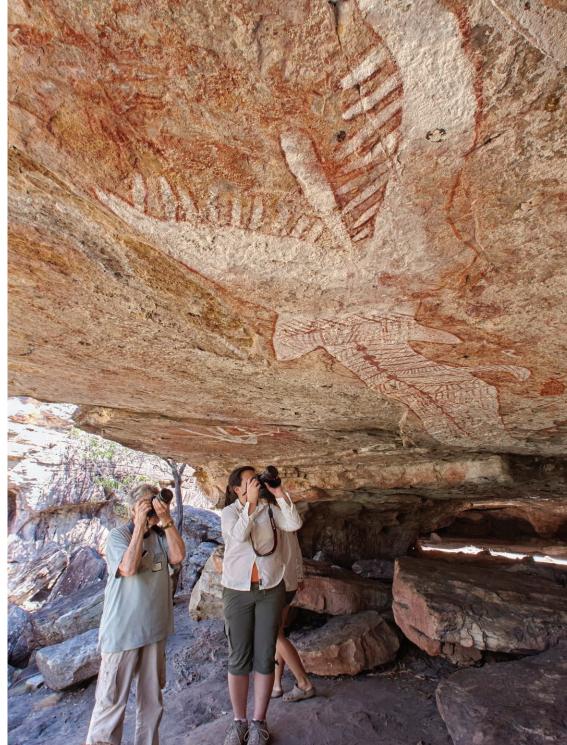


RAINBOW SERPENT BLAZED

above my head. Reclined in the shade of a low cave, I craned to see the ancient rock art rendered in red and white on its cool sandstone ceiling. Twenty feet long from hooked tail to toothy mouth, the painting depicted a snakelike creature with a thrusting

tongue, a world-creating ancestral being of Aboriginal Australian tales. Behind me and beyond the cavern entrance lay the Mount Borradaile region of Arnhem Land, a water-bounded wilderness of escarpments, floodplains, and monsoonal forest at the tropical edge of Australia's Northern Territory.





Mount Borradaile's main billabong and 6,000-year-old Rainbow Serpent rock art.

Containing countless works like this one, it may also be the most astonishing open-air art gallery on earth.

My journey toward the Rainbow Serpent had begun several days before, when I'd boarded a two-seater Cessna eastbound from Darwin – for visitors arriving at the trailing end of monsoon season, swollen, crocodile-filled rivers make overland travel perilous or impossible. The oldest rock paintings in Arnhem Land are believed to date back 30,000 years, tentative sparks of a creative outpouring that archaeologists consider to be humanity's longest continuous

art tradition. The most recent was added just a few decades ago. Charlie Mangulda, the last living speaker of the Aboriginal language Amurdak, laid his red handprint on a stone at Mount Borradaile, a sacred site where he passed his childhood hunting and fishing. For part of the year, he still



Contemporary Luxury

Polished comfort. Modern edge. A new tradition of luxury hospitality.

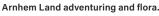
BALTIMORE | CHICAGO | NEW YORK | PARK CITY
SAN DIEGO | WASHINGTON D.C. | WEST HOLLYWOOD

COMING SOON

BARBADOS | NATIRAR | NEWPORT BEACH | TAMPA

For reservations, please contact your Virtuoso Travel Advisor.





lives at nearby Davidson's Arnhemland Safari Lodge, the off-grid resort whose guides have exclusive access to the vast landscape surrounding the mountain. My own trip was organized through Abercrombie & Kent Australia, a Virtuoso on-site connection that works with travel advisors to craft itineraries in the area.

Outsiders must obtain a permit to enter Arnhem Land, an Aboriginal reserve. The designation hints at a fraught legacy still unfolding: Indigenous Australians have faced centuries of dispossession and violence and remain marginalized in many ways, particularly in the Northern Territory. Some Aboriginal communities are profoundly insular, even in places

that welcome tourism, which may have been why my requests for interviews with Indigenous people across the region were ultimately unsuccessful.

Yet a growing number of travelers are seeking a deeper understanding of Aboriginal cultures, whose 60,000-plus-year history places theirs among the world's oldest civilizations. The groundswell comes as Indigenous communities across Australia are fighting to expand their political representation and find a wider berth to celebrate their traditions. At times, visitors may join in. In northern Queensland you might throw hunting spears with the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people. Welcomed by Gooniyandi guides at Mimbi Caves, travelers can



share meals of billy tea and damper bread and learn creation stories. Such tales incorporate ecology and faith, natural history and ancient law. To outsiders they proffer a personal link to a human legacy of nearly unmatched depth, and to wisdom interwoven with landscape. Though I'd come to Mount Borradaile in search of art, I found a place where creativity, storytelling, and heritage seemed to mark each billabong and outcropping.

"All the land is full of signs," Silas Roberts, an elder of the Arnhem Land's Allawa clan, once said of his region's sacred geography. The Rainbow Serpent I spotted in the cave, for instance, is said to have shaped gorges and mountains with its body as it traveled this country during a time known as the Dreaming. Dwelling in waterholes, the serpent evokes twinned creation and destruction. "What these great creatures did and what they left we see as very important. And we see this just as much as before," Roberts said.

In the stone country surrounding Mount Borradaile, many painted images mirror the region's living wilderness. Some things have changed little across thousands of years. One day, after I pored over a tiny rock wallaby daubed in yolky hues on a sheltered cliff, the real-world version startled me by hopping past the place where I stood. Paintings of magpie geese, birds I'd seen flapping and preening, brought another jolt of recognition. But other sites in the region show more enigmatic images: that Rainbow Serpent, rock-dwelling Mimi spirits, and human figures whose outsize headdresses suggest ceremonial practices.

"Sometimes we just have to guess at what they mean," said my guide, Lachlan Cain, a non-Aboriginal Australian who's spent years exploring the bush surrounding Davidson's. Amid the tumult of history, countless sites and stories have been lost to memory. Others are held close, though not for outsiders like me. Charlie Mangulda, whose ceremonial expertise is locally renowned, has shared just some of his knowledge of art sites and stories with guides and the visitors they bring by flat-bottomed boat across the floodplain to Mount Borradaile. In many Australian Aboriginal cultures, such information is reserved only for initiates. If this land is full of signs, it's also full of secrets.

A FIRST INKLING of the area's shrouded nature had come a week earlier and some 1,200 miles to the south, at the opposite end of the Northern Territory. There, at the remote Longitude 131° luxury camp, 16 tents adorn red desert at the foot of Uluru, the world's largest monolith



Contemporary Luxury

Polished comfort. Modern edge. A new tradition of luxury hospitality.

BALTIMORE CHICAGO	NEW YORK PARK CITY
SAN DIEGO WASHINGT	ON D.C. WEST HOLLYWOOD
COMING SOON	
DADDADOC NATIDAD	NEWPORT REACH TAMBA

For reservations, please contact your Virtuoso Travel Advisor.



Red Centre: Longitude 131°.

and Australia's most recognizable landmark. Its tents are a dazzle of dove-white canvas: winged silhouettes, stark against big sky. Beyond their cool interiors grow desert oak, witchetty bush, and heath myrtle, all plants that have long sustained the Anangu people who are this area's Traditional Owners, a term acknowledging long-standing cultural ties to place.

Tents at Longitude 131° have a privileged view of the monolith's northern flank. Today, its summit is bare. Just five years ago, a closer look at this side of Uluru would have revealed a line of hikers trekking to the top. Following a 20-year educational campaign urging visitors not to climb the rock (a site with powerful links to ancestral beings), the 2017 announcement that the climbing route would close led to a flurry of lastminute hikes until the Anangu closed the trail – but not the park itself – on October 26, 2019. As I traveled in the Northern Territory, I heard from

INTO THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

STAY Views of Uluru's north side from 16 tented pavilions mean travelers at Baillie Lodges' Longitude 131° can watch the rock from first light to spectacular sunset. Included experiences range from guided storytelling walks around Uluru and nearby Kata Tjuta and visits to artist Bruce Munro's Field of Light installation to outdoor dining at Table 131°. Doubles from \$2,820, including all meals and beverages and a \$100 spa credit.

60 Blending ancient culture with adventure, Virtuoso on-site tour connection Abercrombie & Kent Australia's private 11-day, rock-art-focused Australia tour from Darwin shuttles travelers to Arnhem Land's Mount Borradaile region by private plane. Spanning the best of the Northern Territory and Western Australia's tropical north, the tour also includes UNESCO-listed Kakadu National Park and bird-watching on the Mary River. Departures: Any day through 2023; from \$14,564, including airport transfers, accommodations, meals, and sightseeing. Some featured destinations closed November through March.

Coral Expeditions' 11-night cruise from Cairns to Darwin (or the reverse) spotlights Cape York and Arnhem Land's remote, beach-fringed seacoast, with stops at the Aboriginal communities of Elcho Island and the Tiwi Islands. Travelers on the 72-passenger Coral Discoverer explore these destinations by Zodiac, glass-bottomed boat, and kayak. Departures: March 31 and October 9, 2024; from \$8,748.

A visit to Arnhem Land's Kakadu National Park leads off private, 12-day tours by **The Tailor**, which also highlight Aboriginal rock art and mud-crab hunting techniques, and modern painting styles. Outings in the Kimberley showcase the region's wide-open spaces and cattle station heritage. *Departures: Any day through March 2024; from \$22,817, including accommodations, some tours, and a private charter flight. Some featured destinations closed October through March.*



WIND YACHTS STAR PLUS YACHTS

Uncover the treasures of the Middle East.

Set sail and discover a blend of old and new you'll see nowhere else.

Alluring and mysterious, this destination calls to the curious.

Windstar Knows the Way.

Find your way to Windstar Cruises by calling your professional Virtuoso Travel Advisor for Exclusive Amenities.



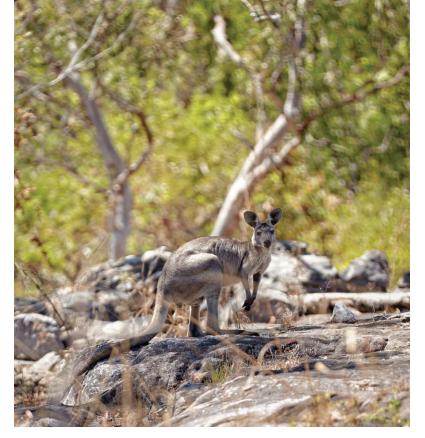


visitors and locals who saw the closure as a sign of progress, a tentative move toward equilibrium echoed by the 2022 founding of three new Australian marine parks that the government will manage in cooperation with local Indigenous peoples.

Where it faces the camp, Uluru honeycombs and whorls, the topography marking places so culturally sensitive that the Anangu ask visitors not to photograph them until afternoon's oblique light conceals details in shadow. "The tourist comes here with the camera taking pictures all over. What has he got? Another photo to take home, keep part of Uluru. He should get another lens – see straight inside," reads a statement in the Uluru visitor center from Tony Tjamiwa, a Traditional Owner of Uluru and Kata Tjuta and a Pitjantjatjara healer. Tjamiwa's words signal a deeper way to view this place, guided by the perspectives and prohibitions of people who have made their home here for at least 30,000 years. Only in 1985 did the Australian government cede the national park to the Anangu. Today, travelers arrive as guests. Hospitality freely offered promises richer rewards: Come ready to listen, and you'll leave with stories.

"The Anangu decide what you're ready to know," explained Sam Inkersell, senior tour guide at Longitude 131°. Here, too, stories are associated with the creation time, part of a complex philosophy the Anangu call Tjukurpa. Inkersell explained that, as a guide and non-Anangu, he's been tasked by the Traditional Owners with sharing their Tjukurpa stories properly. To prepare for the work, he spent time with community members and completed a specialized course at the Northern Territory's sole university. As we approached Uluru's sacred sites, the stories he learned poured out.

Once, long ago, the Mala people had gathered for a ceremony when an evil spirit came to attack them. Only the elderly kingfisher woman, Luunpa, sensed approaching danger. Luunpa warned the



A wallaroo in Arnhem Land.

Mala people about the peril they faced, but they didn't listen, or not quickly enough. The evil spirit attacked. A fight ensued, and the surviving Mala people were forced to flee. The Anangu see traces of the historic event etched into the red rock.

Ignore wise old women at your peril: a sound enough moral. But the tales that the Anangu permit guides to share skim past the greater information that stories might contain. In Aboriginal Australia, as in many Indigenous traditions, storytelling has served as a tool to pass expertise between countless generations without the aid of written language. Many tales contain detailed information about navigation, food harvesting, caring for the land, and performing ceremonies. Some are for men, others reserved for women.

Travelers just get the starter pack. Still, by the time I left for Arnhem Land, I'd gathered a few stories of my own to bring home – of the kingfisher woman, the python Kuniya, and the venomous snake Liru. Their tales looped through my mind as I trekked toward Mount Borradaile's art sites

and floated past thickets of blooming water lilies. Each day's journey led to paintings whose humanity transfixed me. Child-size handprints splayed stark and red against an overhanging rock shelf. Women danced, legs at wild angles, across a dry cave roof. One day as I napped through the afternoon heat in my screened-in cabin at Davidson's, I caught the purring squawk of a blue-winged kookaburra – a kind of kingfisher – as it called out a warning of its own from a nearby tree.

On the day of the Rainbow Serpent, I lay in that shady cave, considering the long-ago artists who had painted the ceiling. Open-jawed, the creature seemed to voice a perpetual roar. Some of the stories known to the painters had surely gone quiet with time. Others had persisted, passed only between trusted insiders. Aboveground portions of Uluru, I recalled, account for just a small fraction of its actual size. Staring up at the Rainbow Serpent, my thoughts returned also to the monolith, its true shape hidden by red sand, its stone descending into dark earth. \P



Hear the joyful sounds of your trip of a lifetime.

The roar of a lion echoing across the savanna. The tremble of the ground as a herd of curious elephants approaches. The hush of sunrise as another day of adventure dawns. With safaris on foot or on wheels in our 19 national parks, you'll see the wild come to life with your eyes and ears wide open. At the end of each dreamlike day, you'll slumber in the comfort of luxury lodges. Return home from your journey through our Rainbow Nation with a heart full of stories of the times you truly felt free.

Ready to plan your trip of a lifetime? Contact your preferred Virtuoso Travel Advisor.







There is perhaps no better way to visit Switzerland than by rail. Not only for the beauty and comfort – you can admire natural wonders from up close as you travel up the highest mountains in first, second, or premium class – rail travel is also the most sustainable way to get around.

For the ultimate experience, the Grand Train Tour of Switzerland is a phenomenal 800-mile route combining all panoramic lines, including the legendary Glacier Express, which travels at a glacial pace. You can access these lines and more with the Swiss Travel Pass, your all-inclusive ticket for exploring Switzerland.

But where should you go? We know unlimited access to a country as beautiful as Switzerland can be overwhelming. To help you, we suggest an itinerary from Geneva to Zurich, with five stops along the way.

The **Swiss Travel Pass** gives you nearly unlimited access to the Swiss Travel System – public transportation, scenic trains, cable cars, and boats – and over 500 museums for trips between 3 and 15 days. Got kids? Ask for the Swiss Family Travel Pass, which allows accompanied children under 16 to travel for free.

Begin your journey in **Geneva**, the vibrant hub of francophone Switzerland. From its iconic Jet d'Eau to over 200 international organizations, including the United Nations, the "City of Dialogue" offers the perfect blend of culture and natural beauty. Spend the day traipsing the cobblestone streets of the Old Town, lined with charming boutiques and chocolatiers; assembling your own Swiss watch alongside a master watchmaker at Initium; traveling back in time to the origin of our universe (and the internet) with a visit to CERN, where the World Wide Web was born; indulging in the brand-new "Choco Pass," savoring Geneva's finest chocolates at your own pace; and exploring the newly reopened International Reformation Museum, after 21 months of refurbishment – a testament to Geneva's Calvinist history. No matter your interests or taste, Geneva welcomes you with open arms and endless possibilities.

Next, head east along Lake Geneva to **Lausanne**, the Olympic Capital of Switzerland. Celebrating 30 years in 2023, the Olympic Museum is a must-see, particularly ahead of the 2024 Paris Olympics. Afterwards, explore Lausanne's historic city, teeming with charming bistros and craft shops. The medieval town evolved around the Cité hill, sculpted by the Flon and Louve rivers. Meandering through its cobbled pedestrian streets, you'll encounter remarkable landmarks such as the Cathedral of Lausanne, Saint-Maire Castle, and the Old Academy, each bearing witness to the city's rich history. Don't be surprised if you're left breathless – not just from the steep climb, but from the stunning views along the way, which only become more exquisite the higher you go.

Continuing on, keep a look-out for the vertical, terraced vineyards between Lausanne to Montreux, home to the UNESCO-rated **Lavaux** wine region, which dates back to the eleventh century and produces some of Switzerland's best wines.







Next stop: **Interlaken**. Famous for being the Adventure Capital of Europe with your pick of adrenaline-fueled fun, it also has a tranquil and upscale side. Gourmands and connoisseurs will appreciate the five-star **Victoria-Jungfrau Grand Hotel & Spa**, particularly its restaurant Radius by Stefan Beer, which sources all produce from within a 31-mile radius. Alternatively, Bellevue Palace, the official guest house of the Swiss government and a member of the Michel Reybier Hospitality Collection, is just a short train-ride away in Bern. Situated in the heart of Switzerland between Lake Thun and Lake Brienz, Interlaken also offers a number of unique and relaxing waterbased experiences, from lake cruises to the wood-fired HotTug, a unique floating hot tub that glides along Lake Brienz.

Interlaken is also the perfect base for exploring the **Jungfrau Region** of the Alps. Hop on the classic red **Jungfrau Railways** line, operating since 1912, to the Jungfraujoch – Top of Europe, which at 11,333 feet is Europe's highest railroad station. While it might be summer, don't forget to bring a warm jacket, and savor the crisp Alpine air. Here, snow and ice are guaranteed year-round. These conditions help maintain Europe's longest glacier, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

What could possibly top that? Get back on the train, and take it south to **Zermatt**, the beautiful and car-free resort town built around the Matterhorn, a mecca for mountaineers since the 1800s, which is home to Europe's highest ski area (not to mention its highest restaurant) and cable car station at 12,739 feet. Zermatt is also a paradise for hiking, with 250-miles of trails across 38, 13,000-foot-plus peaks in the surrounding areas. But more than just a climbing village, Zermatt boasts several top-notch restaurants, including four Michelin-starred restaurants and 19 selected by Gault Millau. The village also has luxurious lodging options, all of which are well-deserved after long days outside in the mountains, be it hiking, skiing, or climbing.



From here travel east to **Ticino** in the Italian-speaking region of Switzerland, by way of Zermatt to **Saint Moritz** (it's just a scenic ride away) aboard the wonderfully luxurious **Glacier Express**. As you cross the Swiss Alps, sit back and enjoy a refined regional five-course menu with wine pairings, accompanied by your own personal concierge and a guaranteed panoramic window seat, giving you frontrow access to all 291 bridges and 91 tunnels between Zermatt and Saint Moritz when you choose the new Excellence Class – home to the most sought-after seats in Switzerland. Don't forget to reserve this extraordinary journey in advance.

Once in Ticino, where Swiss quality meets Italian living, stroll along the lake promenade of Ascona, the pearl of Lake Maggiore, dotted with Mediterranean-style cafes; take a panoramic hike to Mount Bre, the sunniest mountain in Switzerland overlooking **Lugano**, the beautiful lake town lined with palm and olive trees, where you can enjoy an aperitivo under one of the Old Town's porticos; swim in the emerald green waters of Valle Verzasca, surrounded by unspoiled nature and stone-house villages; visit UNESCO-listed Bellinzona, whose castles

are the most enchanting examples of fortified medieval architecture in the Alps; and top it all off by tucking into a traditional meal inside a grotto to experience the most quintessential Ticinese gastronomic experience there is.

Finally, after a journey north through the famous Gotthard Tunnel, the world's longest and deepest rail tunnel, you'll arrive in **Zürich**. Known for its cosmopolitan lifestyle and stunning natural landscapes thanks to its picturesque place on Lake Zürich, this Germanspeaking city is an ideal place for a wealth of leisure activities, some more surprising than others. On a guided city tour you can make your own cheese, cycle through public art pieces on an electric bike, learn to surf in Zürich-West (a trendy neighborhood known for its art and design), or discover local products on the new "Made in Zürich" tour. On your own, uncover 2,000 years of history in the Old Town and the high density of world-class institutions at your fingertips, like Kunsthaus Zürich, Switzerland's largest art museum, which opened a new wing in 2021 designed by David Chipperfield. You'll surely be inspired to come back.

Contact your Virtuoso Travel Advisor to book your ultimate Grand Train Tour of Switzerland!











Party prep in bar car 3674 and (opposite) onboard revelry, a Choo Choo martini, and morning-after viennoiseries.

I'VE ALWAYS LOVED TRAIN TRAVEL

speeding from Tokyo to Kyoto on the Shinkansen, drinking rosé on the Eurostar between London and Paris – so last winter I jumped at the chance to preview the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express' new Paris-to-French Alps route, which launches this December. The legendary train, with 17 restored navy-and-gold carriages, many from its 1920s and '30s heyday, celebrates slow travel in the most glamourous way possible.

At Paris' Gare de l'Est, a cadre of stewards dressed in perfectly tailored, all-black uniforms took my bags, while another escorted me to my cabin. The plan was to pull out of the station and idle outside Paris for dinner, drinks, and dancing, before departing for the French Alps overnight. As I settled in, Champagne in a monogrammed crystal flute appeared in my hand – a sign of things to come.

Time on the VSOE revolves around bar car 3674, where a three-piece Italian band performed next to the grand piano, which doubled as a tabletop for a giant display of Petrossian caviar on ice. The dress code called for black tie, a fitting complement to the car's rich blue-and-gold interior, and passengers turned the space into a sea of sequins, beads, and feathers, clinking martini glasses and singing along to 1950s classics.

Chef Jean Imbert served a multicourse feast inspired by his favorite French Christmas dinner in the stunning L'Oriental dining car, before it was back to 3674 for more dancing and endless glasses of Perrier-Jouët. It quickly became clear that nobody boards the VSOE to sleep – Victor, the barman, told me they don't close up until the last guest leaves – but I managed to sneak away to my cabin, which had been transformed into a cozy bedroom, where a patterned kimono and monogrammed slippers awaited me.

The next morning I woke up in a snow globe, as the VSOE rolled through the mountains. My steward deftly transformed my cabin back into a sitting room and delivered a spread of coffee, *viennoiseries*, and Bordier butter that I'm still dreaming about. I watched through my window as we pulled into Moûtiers. I can't think of a better wintertime arrival in the Alps.

Back home, weeks later, my phone dinged with texts from friends and family who'd received their surprise from my trip – letters I'd written on gold-foil-stamped stationery on board, postmarked from Italy with a special VSOE stamp. It's those little details that made my journey. Sometimes, like a surprise snail-mail delivery, the best moments in travel arrive when you're least expecting them.











FY

Lay out your pajamas in your cabin before you go to dinner. Stewards stow your luggage on a high shelf when they transform your room from banquette to bed, and it can be a bit tricky to reach – especially after a few Choo Choo martinis.

All Aboard

GO Belmond's new Paristo-French Alps overnight route launches on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express in December, whisking travelers from the City of Light to Albertville, Moûtiers, or Bourg-Saint-Maurice, where they can transfer to the region's famed ski resorts. The oneway trip includes cocktails, dinner, breakfast, brunch, and accommodations in cozy cabins or one of eight opulent new suites. Departures: December 15 and 21; from \$4,799 per person.

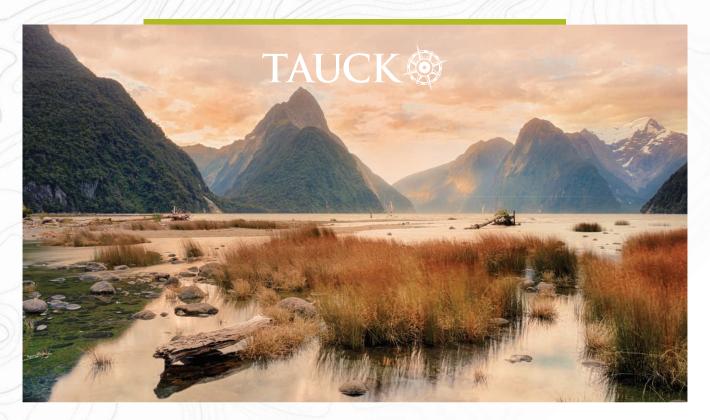
Reservations open this year for journeys on **Orient Express'** La Dolce Vita, which debuts six new Italian itineraries at the end of 2024 – a three-day Sicily jaunt, for example, travels from Palermo to Agrigento, Taormina, and Mount Etna. While much of the trip is geared toward outdoor exploration, overnights are spent on board, and passengers can plan for an evening in the modernist-inspired dining car. Departure dates to be announced; from \$4,624 per person.

Passengers on Belmond's three-hour trip from Cuzco to Machu Picchu (and the reverse) aboard the Hiram Bingham admire Andes views and enjoy entertainment and a meal on board before visiting the Inca citadel on a guided tour. Although the trip doesn't include an overnight stay on the train, travelers can

extend their journey by checking into Belmond's 31-room Sanctuary Lodge near the ruins. *Departures: Multiple dates through 2024; from \$560 per person each way.*

Rocky Mountaineer's two-day Denver-to-Moab

two-day Denver-to-Moab journey, one of many options from the company in Colorado and Utah, crosses the Continental Divide. There's time for taking in the landscapes by rail, plus sightseeing in the Rockies; a midtrip hotel stay in Glenwood Springs, Colorado; and stops near Canyonlands and Arches national parks. Departures: Multiple dates, September 10, 2023, through October 21, 2024; from \$1,456 per person. •



UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEYS, EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES

Discover the wonders of Australia & New Zealand with Tauck

Making the most of your explorations in Australia and New Zealand, Tauck includes guided sightseeing with local experts, exclusive insider visits to iconic sights, private tastings and talks that celebrate cultural traditions and private charter flights, offering you seamless travel in the lands down under.

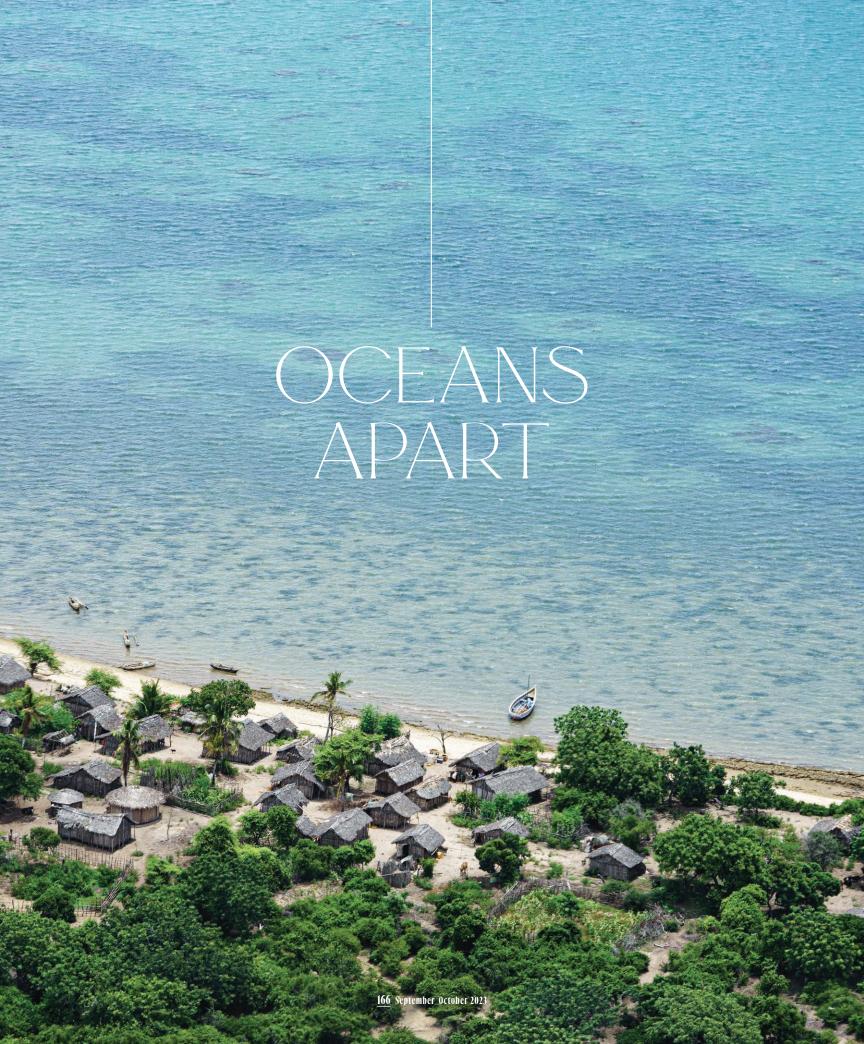
Grand Australia & New Zealand

Give us 20 days and we'll upend your expectations in the lands down under. Sunset champagne at Ayers Rock, underwater adventures at the Great Barrier Reef, tea at a New Zealand sheep farm, private cruises in Sydney Harbour and Milford Sound, dinner with the "warbirds," wine tastings with vintners, all included, along with charter flights and multi-night stays in places where you'll long to linger with Tauck.

2024 Departures: 20 days - Melbourne to Auckland



Travel beyond ordinary™





S I ZOOM OVER NORTHERN MADAGASCAR in the shotgun seet of a small turquoise-striped heli-

in the shotgun seat of a small, turquoise-striped helicopter, the first thing I notice is what *isn't* there. With the handful of beach resorts and sugarcane plantations around Nosy Be disappearing in the hazy distance behind me, the northern boondocks of this Texas-size African nation—the world's fourth-largest isle—unfurl into an expanse of grassy savannas and rice paddies, occasionally interrupted by mountains that, from above, seem covered in green felt. During the hour it takes to cross the mainland from Nosy Be—"Big Island" in Malagasy—in the west to my destination, the Levens Archipelago off the country's eastern shore, I spot more oxcarts than cars, and not a single town of significant size. Now and then, the area's sole paved road snakes into view, meandering past chocolate-brown rivers and hamlets of thatch-roofed huts.

In the weeks leading up to my arrival, I dove into Madagas-car-themed literature. I learned about the dozens of lemur and chameleon species that live there and nowhere else on earth. I read about exceptionally local plant species – 89 percent of the island's flora grows only in Madagascar, some just in certain pockets of the country – and birds so endemic they can only be found in a single forest.

What also surprised me is the natural absence of species that roam in abundance just across the Mozambique Channel: no monkeys, big cats, cobras, or even squirrels. And even though the African mainland is just 250 miles away, Madagascar's Indigenous people trace their roots to Indonesia – some 4,800 miles east. The island is so convoluted, it's boggled the minds of biologists, entomologists, anthropologists, and archaeologists the world over.

What puzzles *me* now, though, is the landscape below. Where did these scientists discover 615 new wildlife species in the last two decades, when all I can see is sparsely vegetated farmland and mountains scarred with dry gullies? Over the helicopter's fuzzy intercom, my pilot explains that while Madagascar is one of the world's richest biodiversity hot spots, many of its residents are desperately poor. Illegal logging, cattle grazing, and agricultural slash-and-burn practices have decreased forest cover by at least 40 percent in the last 50 years, pushing wildlife to the relative safety of national parks and nature reserves.

My destination, the Miavana resort on Nosy Ankao, is one of the ritziest in this part of the Indian Ocean, and I'd come to find out how a resort of this caliber leaves an impact on a

Miavana's lounge and experience manager Jonhson Ratsimanadino.



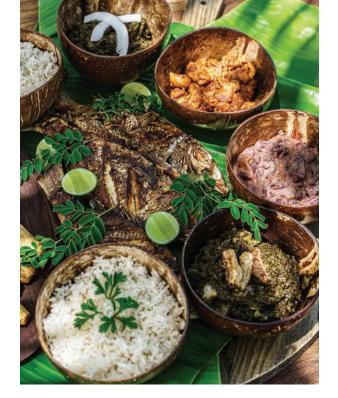




country that is, in many ways, the polar opposite. This is, after all, not your typical Malagasy retreat, where lemur safaris and jungle treks are a jeep-drive away. Instead, Miavana's fleet of boats and helicopters provide access to corners of Madagascar few other visitors get to see, such as the emerald forests of the Daraina Reserve, where local rangers help guests track critically endangered golden-crowned sifakas, a type of lemur found only in this patch of jungle. Guests lift off for picnics on remote northern highland mountaintops inaccessible by road or to an unmapped stand of 40 increasingly rare baobab trees, which Miavana's chief helicopter pilot recently discovered during a flight over a remote part of the mainland.

Surrounded by water the color of Listerine Cool Mint, the resort sits in a hard-to-reach spot – hence, Miavana shuttles its guests via four-seat helicopters. On approach, it's the kind of place where you'd expect to find pared-back cabins on the beach, with thatched roofs, hammocks, and a small menu of local fish fresh off the grill. Instead, I enter my villa to discover a sleek sunken tub in the breezy bathroom and a Palm Springs-worthy patio with a private pool. Champagne sundowners are the order of the day.





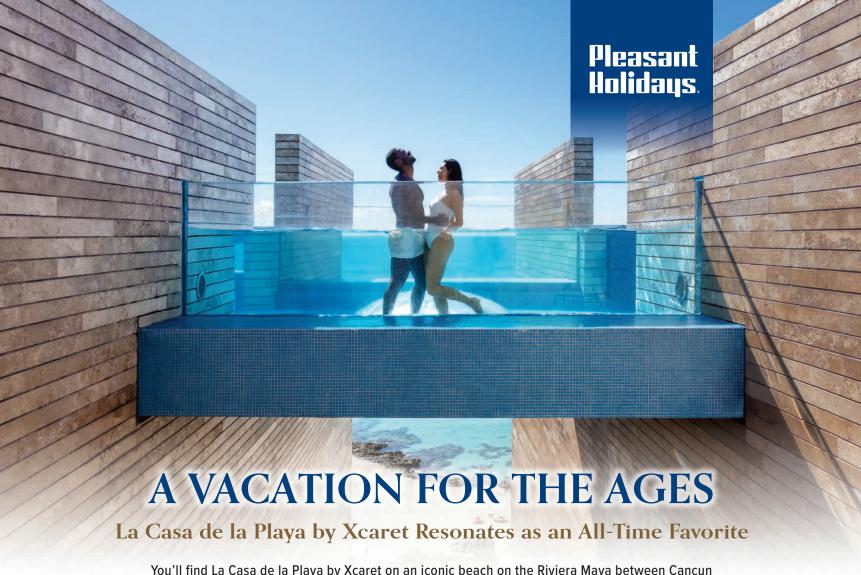
OPENED IN 2017 by French-Mauritian investor Thierry Dalais (who also had a stake in the Seychelles' North Island resort), Miavana has defied more than a few odds. Before Dalais' involvement, the island housed a deteriorating seaweed farm and a small village of transient fisherfolk. Most of the island was covered in invasive casuarina trees (ankao means "casuarina tree" in Malagasy), which Dalais replaced with more than 100,000 palms and shrubs native to the region. Despite plenty of room, the resort comprises just 14 midcentury-modern villas (spacious enough for a serious game of hide-and-seek) by a talcum-powder beach, a thatch-roofed diving center, and a communal pool and restaurant clad in local limestone.

Curled up with a book on a candy-striped beanbag in my own tropical garden, I'm grateful for that decision. The resort's small scale (and, to be fair, its nightly price tag) affords a level of privacy and service that few others can match. Every time I pop out for a bike ride to look for chameleons or a Malagasy-rum-spiked mojito at the bar, my butler swoops in to remake the bed or refill the kitchen's glass jars with local chocolate and granola bites. Guests can order Thai massages and fresh coconuts at will – as well as ad-hoc deliveries of wood-fired pizzas, Malagasy curries, or cheese and charcuterie boards to their glass-walled living rooms.

One morning, I join Miavana's experience manager, Jonhson Ratsimanadino, to explore a mangrove forest on the mainland. Seated in a canoe handcarved from a single canarium tree, we

A lunch of fried fish, akoho-braised chicken, and accompaniments, and the resort pool.

170 September October 2023



You'll find La Casa de la Playa by Xcaret on an iconic beach on the Riviera Maya between Cancun and Tulum in Mexico. A timeless, beautiful blend of natural surroundings and top-of-the-line hospitality, La Casa de la Playa offers 63 suites, each with its own unique personality.



La Casa de la Playa by Xcaret

Exclusively Your Way, Adults Only (Ages 16+)
RIVIERA MAYA

Virtuoso Amenities:

Complimentary room upgrade, welcome amenity, welcome letter from Travel Advisor and early/late check-in/out.¹

Exclusively Your Way resorts include all meals, drinks², 24/7 experiences inside the house, round-trip transportation to the airport, tailor-made experiences at Grupo Xcaret Parks and more!



Ask about complete vacation packages including convenient flights, exciting activities, travel protection coverage with cancel-for-any-reason options and more.

CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL ADVISOR TODAY

Virtuoso Amenities: Subject to availability. Some restrictions apply.

²Age restrictions may apply.

For complete Terms and Conditions, please visit pleasantholidays.com/Terms-and-Conditions-of-Sale. Not responsible for errors or omissions. Pleasant Holidays acts only as an agent for cruise & tour providers listed. CST# 1007939-10. Pleasant Holidays is registered with the State of Florida as a Seller Of Travel ST#37983. Copyright©2023 Pleasant Holidays, LLC. All Rights Reserved.



Hidden in plain sight: Madagascar is home to half the world's chameleon species - more than 50 of which live nowhere else.

glide through glassy waterways flanked by the tangled roots of mangroves. Shoals of tiny fish jump above the waterline, their bodies shimmering in the sun like silver dollars. The clicking sound of mud whelks fills the humid air as herons and Malagasy kingfishers hop between branches. Ratsimanadino rattles off their names with ease and tells me about the time he witnessed the discovery of a new subspecies of dwarf lemur while guiding a group of scientists around Madagascar's west coast. At a nearby village, the ramshackle houses built from sun-weathered palm fronds stand in jarring juxtaposition to the oasis just across the channel.

Back at the resort, I learn that this screaming divide between the haves and have-nots isn't being brushed over. As part of the nonprofit Time + Tide Foundation, which is focused on developing more sustainable safaris in Zambia, Miavana commits to safeguarding its natural environment and uplifting the residential communities near its lodges.

"The foundation is the link between the community and the lodge," says Léa Razafimanitsony, head of Time + Tide's social programming in Madagascar. She and her team train teachers to provide education in remote villages around the archipelago and mentor girls and women to empower them in this traditionally patriarchal society. "We're not expecting to see an impact tomorrow," she adds. "But ten years from now, we hope that the boys and girls we help today will take over our jobs."

Parisian marine biologist Julie Pezin, who leads Time + Tide's conservation efforts around Nosy Ankao, tells me about the poaching of turtle and tern eggs and how rampant overfishing has ravaged the reefs just off the island. (When I joined her on a snorkeling trip earlier in the week, we had to sail to a different island to find underwater valleys teeming with kaleidoscopic fish.) Through local educators, she teaches farmers and fisherfolk about alternatives to crop burning and harmful fishing techniques, and works with rangers to keep tabs on nearby tern nesting grounds and endangered lemur populations. "People are just surviving, so it's essential that we explain the importance of sustainable living," she says. "But we're not the boss here. We have ideas, but it's a real collaboration – that's what makes it so rewarding."

That evening, I head out on the back of a bone-rattling ATV driven by Ratsimanadino. Over lukewarm beers and banana fritters at Nosy Ankao's only drinking den – sand-floored, with chickens pecking around – he tells me about the deeprooted traditions and *fady* (taboos) still dictating every aspect of life: no farming or funerals on Tuesdays, be careful where and how you point, don't bring pigs or domestic animals to the island, and a host of others involving the deceased. Miavana might be an anything-is-possible escape with a mission, but mighty Madagascar still has the last word.



MAKE FOR MADAGASCAR

STAY With just 14 airy villas in the remote Levens Archipelago and a family of lemurs as its closest neighbors, **Miavana by Time + Tide** delivers big on the away-from-it-all fantasy. But a team of attentive butlers, a well-stocked wine cellar, and a palm-shaded infinity pool right on the beach mean it's anything but Crusoe-esque. *Doubles from \$3,400 per person, including all meals, most activities, and a \$100 dining credit.*

60 Big Five Tours & Expeditions' 11-day private trip around Madagascar's southern, central, and western reaches explores the wildlife-rich Andasibe-Mantadia National Park – home to the largest living lemur species – as well as the nearly 1,000 types of orchids at nearby Perinet Special Reserve. Guests will also dive into the history of the Sakalava people in Morondava and, in the south, discover forests filled with the ornate ancestral tombs of the Antandroy people. *Departures: Any day through 2023; from \$1,000 per day.*

Blend adventure with toes-in-the-sand relaxation on Intrepid Travel's 14-day Madagascar trip. Among the highlights: a tour of the French-colonial corners of the island's colorful capital, Antananarivo; snorkeling off Ifaty's powder-white beaches; and hopping between lemur-filled reserves, stands of baobabs, and otherworldly rock formations in the country's center. Departures: Multiple dates through December 6, 2024; from \$2,964.

Ker & Downey's private 14-day Madagascar safari showcases the country's deep-rooted Indigenous culture and rarer lemurs (as well as nocturnal life during a nighttime nature walk). Plan for bonfire-side traditional dance performances, picnics beneath baobabs, and a few days of beachside bliss on an island near Nosy Be. Departures: Any day through 2023; from \$13,600.

Discover rice paddies and fruit stands around the royal place complex and the Mandrare Valley's cacophonous open-air markets and baobab groves on African Travel's private nineday tour. Also in the plan: rain-forest treks in Analamazaotra National Park (a bird-watcher's delight) and lemur-spotting in Andasibe-Mantadia National Park. Departures: Any day through 2023; from \$7,995.



Discover the true greatness of Jordan. A land of mystery and wonder. Immerse yourself in the history of ancient civilizations while enjoying unparalleled experiences in the heart of the Middle East. Consult your travel advisor.





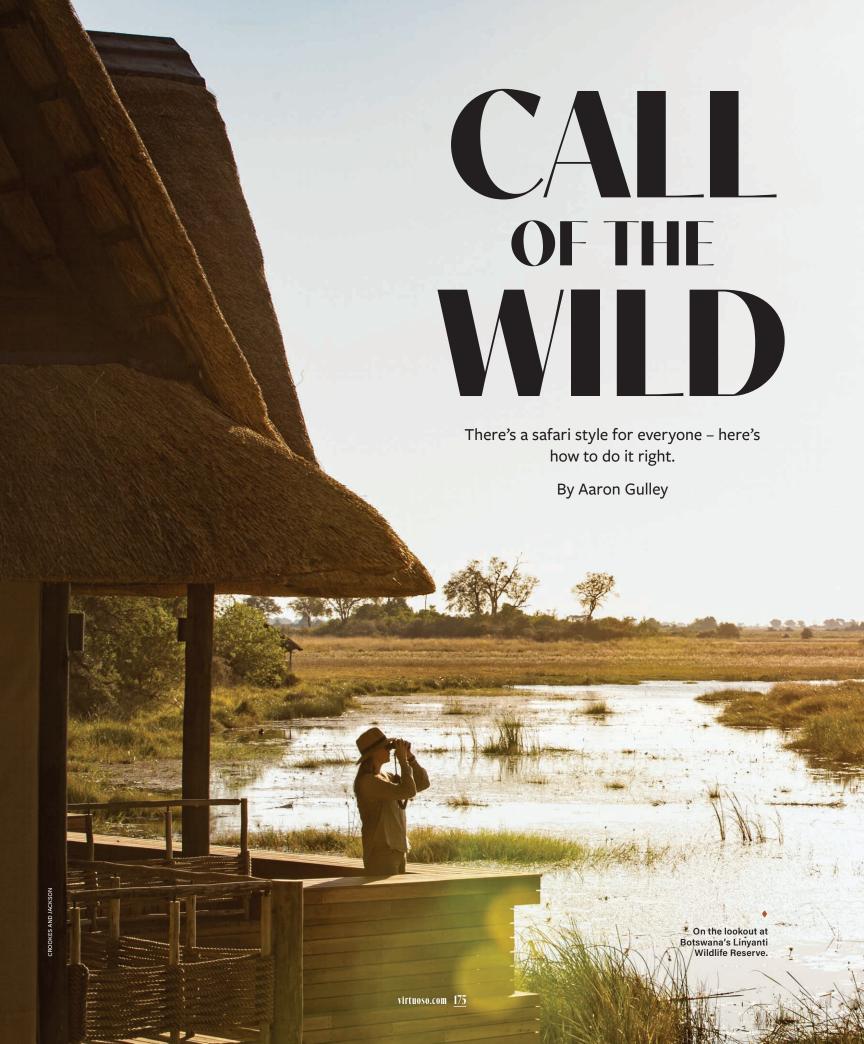
HERITAGE SPLENDOUR ALONG THE BOSPHORUS

From the stunning shores of the Bosphorus, The Peninsula Istanbul offers sumptuous accommodation imbued with Turkish design, exceptional service and the generosity of local culture.

For reservations and details, please contact your Virtuoso Travel Advisor.











FIRST TIME AROUND

Kenya ◆ Tanzania ◆ Zimbabwe

Dennis Pinto, managing director of Micato Safaris, says that first-time safari-goers fit broadly into two categories: "Those who envision big open plains and unending herds to the horizon should try Kenya and Tanzania," he says. "Those after good wildlife viewing plus other activities will probably like South Africa, including time in Cape Town, the Winelands, and other cultural destinations."

THE GREAT MIGRATION Micato Safaris' small-group, 12-day loop through Kenya and Tanzania is succinct but comprehensive, with a chance to peek at thousands of creatures from the Ngorongoro Crater; take in the thunder of zebras, wildebeests, and gazelles by the gazillion migrating across the fabled Serengeti; and spy copious

elephant herds at Tarangire National Park. Best of all, there's the opportunity for a hot-air balloon safari over the Mara, which Charlotte French, a North Carolina-based Virtuoso travel advisor, describes as "one of the top five travel experiences of any lifetime." Departures: Multiple dates, September 6, 2023, through December 25, 2024; from \$15,750.

BIG FIVE, LITTLE KNOWN It doesn't have East Africa's marquee attractions (besides Victoria Falls), but Zimbabwe is a solid bet for first-timers seeking smaller crowds and authentic experiences. "Zim has some of the continent's best guides and fewer tourists than better-known destinations," says Crisney Lane, a Virtuoso travel advisor based in Austin. Abercrombie & Kent's private 12-day circuit guides guests through the highlights, including tracking the "big five" at Hwange, the country's largest national park; elephant sightings by boat on Lake Kariba; and canoe encounters with hippos at Mana Pools National Park. The tour culminates with a helicopter ride over Victoria Falls. Departures: Any day, April through October 2024; from \$13,495.



PLANES, TRAINS, AND RIVERBOATS

Namibia ◆ South Africa ◆ Botswana

The quintessential safari consists of beating the bush with a guide and four-wheel drive. "The classics are great, but nobody will ever be disappointed or bored by returning for something different," says Linda de Sosa, a Houston-based Virtuoso travel advisor. Novel experiences – from the air, the water, or a hypnotically swaying train – can yield a fresh perspective on the land and wildlife.

HORNBILL'S-EYE VIEW The vast expanses of Namibia are best explored by light aircraft. Big Five Tours & Expeditions' 11-day flying safari hits all the high points, starting with Etosha National Park to try and tick off the "big five" - and possibly spot the endemic Monteiro's hornbill. From there, Cessna-hop to the best of the rest. In the Hartmann Valley, meet members of the nomadic Himba people. Pause at Serra Cafema, a lodge whose opulence defies its isolation, before heading to Damaraland to track elephants and black rhinos. And in the NamibRand Nature Reserve, renowned for its vocational training initiatives for young Namibians, guests scale nearly thousand-foot dunes, spot oryx from hot-air-balloon game flights, and sip sundowners from desert-view decks. Departures: Any day through 2024; from \$17,050.

TRAVELING SHOW AmaWaterways'

13-night southern Africa sailing allows for the unparalleled experience of spotting wildlife from your cabin. After three full days exploring Cape Town, guests spend four nights aboard the *Zambezi Queen*, patrolling for herds of elephants and bloats of hippos along Botswana's Chobe River. The trip wraps up with four nights spotting lions, giraffes, and impalas from the berth of a deluxe train that eases through the bush from Vic Falls to Pretoria. *Departures: Multiple dates, November 3*, 2023, through November 7, 2025; from \$14,795.

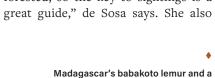
UP-AND-STRUMMING

Rwanda • Madagascar

Rwanda might just be Africa's buzziest destination. "Though it's carved out a reputation as the place to see gorillas," French says, "it actually offers perhaps the broadest safari experience of any country on the continent." From chimpanzees and a profusion of birdlife (don't miss the shoebill at Akagera National Park) to mountain coffee plantations, a trip here is an exploration of a country on the upswing.

OUT OF THE MIST The centerpiece of Artisans of Leisure's private, eightday Rwanda experience is a pair of conservation-focused accommodations. Wilderness Magashi, a string of eight spacious tents overlooking Lake Rwanyakazinga, is a tranquil headquarters for delving into Akagera's rehabilitated wildlife. Its lion population is thriving, thanks to a committed management strategy, and rhinos, which disappeared from the country after its civil war, are back after an international translocation project. Meanwhile, to the west, Wilderness Bisate's six forest villas, nestled on the slopes of a volcanic cone, are the jumping-off point for another success story: Following their near extinction, mountain gorillas in the Virunga massif now number more than 600. Departures: Any day through January 3, 2026; from \$26,640.

ISLAND PRIME As in Rwanda, primates are the main attraction in Madagascar - but here, endemic lemurs are the stars. Guests may encounter more than 25 lemur species on Natural Habitat Adventures' 13-day, fournational-park, small-group navigation of the island. There are also chances to glimpse the tenrec, which can look like a cross between a weasel and a pincushion, or the fossa, a reclusive catlike beast straight out of a Dr. Seuss illustration. "A lot of the land is densely forested, so the key to sightings is a advises tacking on a few days at Miavana by Time + Tide - profiled in our page 166 story - for powdery beaches, helicopter safaris, and one of the country's top restaurants. Departures: Multiple dates, September 7, 2023, through



Wilderness Magashi tent. Opposite: The Zambezi Queen and hot-air balloons in Namibia.



RESERVE-TO-TABLE

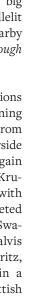
South Africa ◆ Namibia ◆ Botswana

"I've never had a meal at a safari camp that didn't impress. The food is always great, and especially so considering everything it takes to provide five-star dining in such remote places," says Tesa Totengco, a Virtuoso travel advisor based in NYC. "But for variety and volume, nowhere can match South Africa."

HOME BASE If you think of Cape Town and the Winelands as the San Francisco and Napa of Africa, it's easy to see why Ker & Downey's private epicurean adventure doesn't travel more than three hours at a stretch in ten days. At Mount Nelson, a Belmond hotel, there's dinner at The Red Room, where karaage chicken and Karoo lamb wonton soup pay homage to the city's history as a trading post with Asia. Next comes a Cape Dutch estate in the Winelands, where guests work up an appetite by canoeing or cycling on the grounds before a dinner of locally raised Chianina beef and baked water-buffalo yogurt - paired with local vintages, naturally. Then it's off to Sanbona Wildlife Reserve, where "big five" game drives precede candlelit dinners and sundowners from nearby vineyards. Departures: Any day through 2024; from \$10,000.

ROOM FOR MORE Safari destinations are so renowned for excellent dining that it's tough to call out just one. From the seven glass-and-wood riverside suites at Singita Sweni Lodge, gain private access to 33,000 acres of Kruger National Park and a wine cellar with some of the continent's most coveted reserves. The Tug Restaurant in Swakopmund, Namibia, features Walvis Bay oysters, rock lobster from Lüderitz, and other fresh-caught seafood in a dining room fashioned from a Scottish

tugboat built in 1959. And the eighttent **Wilderness DumaTau**, perched on Botswana's Linyanti marshlands – home to Africa's highest density of elephants – offers a fresh, plant-forward culinary experience, starring carrot gravlax (a vegetarian salmon dupe) and pumpkin with millet polenta.





Grilled goodness and stylish surrounds at Singita Sweni Lodge.







HIGH-OCTANE

Tanzania • Zanzibar

Safaris once meant soaking up next-level experiences while seated – in a Land Rover or a game hide, at the dining table – but that's changing. "People want to maintain their activities, even on vacation, whether that's walking or hiking or running," says Micato's Dennis Pinto. Increasingly, operators are crafting active itineraries, from horseback game rides to jogging tours of the reserves with local running guides.

MOVABLE BEAST In July, a mobile, two-camp safari experience, Wilderness Usawa Serengeti, opened on a stretch of secluded sites in Tanzania's Serengeti. Not only are each camp's six en-suite safari tents completely mobile, they're also situated in the Serengeti's designated walking zone, allowing guides to lead on-foot safaris directly from your tent. The camps' flexibility

within the 5,700-square-mile park gives guests the best chance of witnessing the annual migration, when some 2 million animals move in search of food and water. "It's for active travelers looking for that truly immersive experience," says Wilderness' Amanda Wilson. Fear not: Plush beds and G&Ts still round out each day. Tent accommodations from \$1,400 per person per day.

TAKE A HIKE For the intrepid, G Adventures' 19-day Tanzania extravaganza starts with a five-day ascent of Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak at 19,341 feet. Groups hike between 5 and 12 hours daily, moving through five climate zones at a measured pace to allow for altitude acclimatization. After standing on the continent's summit, then hiking down for another half day, a few less strenuous days on Ngorongoro Crater and Serengeti game drives complement mountain-flora sightings with plenty of savanna fauna. The trip ends with some true R&R: snorkeling and beach days on the island of Zanzibar. Departures: Multiple dates, September 2, 2023, through December 21, 2024; from \$6,649.





explore river cruising with Uniworld

All-inclusive, luxury river cruising with Uniworld opens up the world of travel like nothing else. From marquis cities to hidden gem towns, you'll immerse yourself completely in incredible destinations throughout Europe, Egypt, Southeast Asia, India, and Peru. Uniworld's river cruises are unmatched, with excellent service, delicious farm-to-table cuisine, and a fleet of floating boutique hotels, each a unique representation of the destinations it sails.



Complement your trip with a pre- or post-cruise extension to such enticing destinations as the Red Sea, Ha Long Bay, Greece or opt for a Customizable Extension tailored just for you.

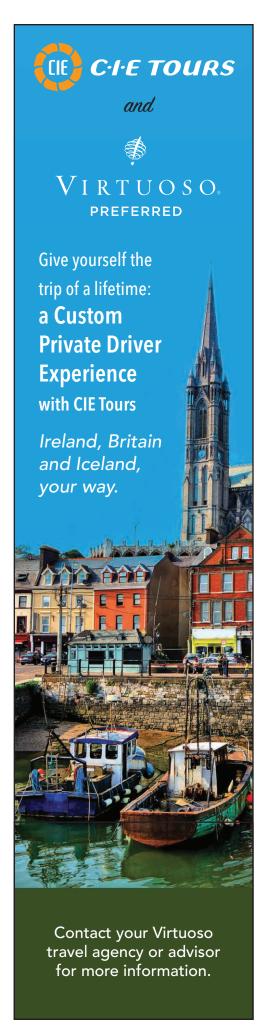


Visit several of the world's most exciting locales on the farthest-reaching trip in river cruising. The 2024 *Rivers of the World* journey spans 10 countries from Peru to Vietnam.



Combining all the best of river cruising, land and train travel, our *Cruise & Rail* itineraries represent the most innovative and exciting new way to see the world.





YOUNG, WILD, AND FREE

Botswana ◆ South Africa ◆ Zimbabwe

"Nature is its own classroom, and a safari is a chance for kids to get off devices and experience something concrete and real," says and Beyond's Nicole Robinson. She adds that, while not all camps allow children, an increasing number of safari operators are catering to families.

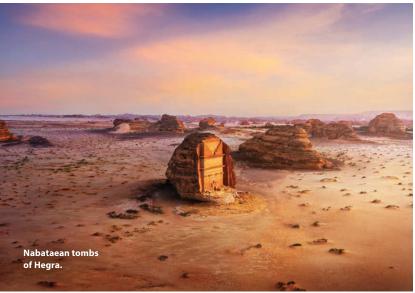
SAFARI SCHOOL On andBeyond's small-group, five-day Botswana Okavango Delta trip, teenagers (ages 14 to 18) go deeper than the standard game drives by shadowing a ranger trainer and learning to track animals, engage in baobab conservation, identify medicinal plants, and survive in the desert. They also spend time with researchers from the Botswana Predator Conservation Trust to assist in tracking and surveying wild dogs. There's catch-and-release fishing for tigerfish, pike, and catfish; a friendly competition to identify the most birds; and evening astronomy lessons under the dark southern skies. Departures: Any day through 2024; from \$6,500.

PLAY TIME For even younger children (ages 4 to 10), African Travel, Inc. offers an 11-day South Africa and Zimbabwe itinerary with kid-friendly highlights, including baking with the chef and pint-size bathrobes at Belmond's Mount Nelson hotel, and big-game-oriented programming during daycare at Kruger's Sabi Sabi Bush Lodge for kids who aren't ready for the Land Rover. "We took our child, Noah, on safari when he was 5, and we've built this experience around the wonderful time we all had," Banda says of the tour. "When we came back to get him after a game drive, he was having such a great time that he told us to go away." Departures: *Any day through 2024; from \$9,899.* **♥**











Experience AlUla

Deep in the desert in Saudi's northwestern region, AlUla offers visitors the chance to play out the fantasy of being an intrepid archaeologist for a day.

Explore Hegra, Saudi's first UNESCO World Heritage Site

At Hegra, you can explore over 110 remarkably well-preserved tombs set in a desert landscape while learning about the ancient people and culture of AlUla. Along with the wondrous tombs where the Nabataean elite were laid to rest, you'll see wells and stone-lined water channels demonstrating the civilization's expert craftsmanship. Roman influence is present in the ruins of defensive walls, gates, and towers that once encircled the city.

Get off your feet - and into the sky!

AlUla is a noteworthy destination because of its layer upon layer of human history and the wealth of natural wonders waiting to be explored. Few sites boast such a rich combination of heritage, culture, and natural beauty. You'll be struck by AlUla's openness, vastness, and magic – from mazes of dramatic rock formations and rolling, sand-swept dunes to a valley cloaked in palm and citrus groves. In addition to exploration on foot or via four-wheel-drive safari, you can discover AlUla from above via hot-air balloon, zip line, helicopter, or even a vintage aircraft.

Discover Jeddah's Exceptional Waterfront

Saudi Arabia's oldest city, Jeddah, welcomes visitors wanting to experience pristine beaches, underwater adventures, and the bounty of the Red Sea.

Dive and Snorkel the Red Sea

The untouched world that lies beneath the surface of Saudi Arabia's Red Sea offers rarely experienced opportunities to explore. Home to more than 1,200 species of fish (20 percent of which are found only in the Red Sea), Saudi boasts a variety of exciting diving and snorkeling opportunities for adventurous travelers.

Kiteboard off the Coast

Soft, sandy beaches and clear, shallow waters combined with consistent year-round winds make Jeddah's coast a hot spot for kiteboarding. Even in the winter, watersports enthusiasts take advantage of the cool, temperate, and sunny days to ride waves propelled by wind speeds from 17 to 25 knots.

Delight in the Day's Catch

Early risers can watch the local fishermen offload their hauls at sunrise and even bid on the freshest catch at Jeddah's bustling Central Fish Market. Later, you can experience the freshly prepared fish in local restaurants hours after being caught.

Stay at Shangri-La Jeddah

Perfectly situated along the shores of the Red Sea on the new Jeddah Waterfront, the 220-room Shangri-La Jeddah sets a new standard for luxury. Guests experience floor-to-ceiling windows, a dedicated kids club and supervised play area, four restaurants and lounges including the legendary Shang Palace, and convenient access to beaches, landmarks, and the Red Sea Mall.

Discovering Saudi Arabia is easier than you think! Ask your Virtuoso travel advisor about convenient online visa applications and direct flights from select cities aboard Saudia Airlines. Once-in-a-lifetime experiences are waiting.

















VERYONE ON OUR EARLY-MORNING

transfer breaks into a cheer when the guide enthusiastically announces that our destination, the Islas Ballestas, is home to sea arches and hundreds of thousands of birds. I hadn't realized I was on a cruise full of bird lovers. I lock eyes with a passenger across the aisle and confess that my greatest fear in this earthly existence is birds – all of them. They flap inexplicably in place while perched. They're prehistoric. They've got talons

and beaks that can do unimaginable things to small creatures. I'm only five feet $\sin x$ – an easy target for a pelican with an enormous gullet.

Will there be pelicans on these islands? I'm spiraling. The guy looks at me in disbelief. "Then what are you doing here?" he asks.



"Adventure and self-improvement," I tell him as I text my mom that she may need to fly to Peru to identify my body after "hundreds of thousands of birds" have had their way with it.

Birder though I'm not, I love traveling in the spirit of new discoveries – as well as returning to the comforts, service, and amenities of a great hotel. Seabourn's 11-night cruise from Lima, Peru, to Santiago, Chile, aboard its much-anticipated new expedition ship promised an alluring mix of both. The new Seabourn Venture, sleekly designed with interior decor that you'd find in modern luxury condos, had already cruised Svalbard and Greenland and island-hopped through the Caribbean before transiting the Panama Canal to meet the Humboldt Current. Rushing up from Antarctica along the Pacific coast of South America, this nutrient-dense, cold-water current travels to the Galápagos, sustaining incredible biodiversity along the way. And that's why I find myself on a bus for Peru's Islas Ballestas, a group of uninhabited outcrops teeming with wildlife not far from the mainland's Paracas National Reserve.

Thankfully, my visions of being pecked by skinny, black-and-white guanay cormorants – the most plentiful species here – are fever dreams. And no such calamity befalls our convoy of eager bird-watchers and the naturalists leading the excursion. Joe, an ornithologist from the UK, explains how the Humboldt Current brings a buffet of sardines and anchovies to the islands' cormorants, Peruvian pelicans, boobies, and Humboldt penguins. The jagged sea stacks and arches are covered with seabirds and, occasionally, South American sealion moms lounging with their pups. When the waves suck back, starfish, hanging onto the rock faces, emerge.

The guano-perfumed air attests to the islands' historical importance. In the nineteenth century, Peru made millions harvesting the manure as a nitrogen-rich fertilizer that it shipped all over the world. Ages before that, the guano played a critical role in Inca agriculture. Though it's no longer exported, every seven years harvesters collect thousands of tons from the rocks for domestic use. The visit is a wildly sensorial adventure: the rocking of the boat, the distinct scent of the islands, the occasional squawking.

In the afternoon I join another excursion, this time to Paracas National Reserve, located on a peninsula a few miles south of Las Ballestas. The dramatic landscape – craggy hills

in shades of red, yellow, and black pressing up against the sea's dark waves – looks otherworldly. Erosion from the Punta Santa María cliffs lends Playa Roja its namesake Martian hue. We stop at the nearby fishing village of Lagunillas to watch boats pull up to the docks to unload the day's catch. Along the waterfront, four-foot-tall pelicans waddle from restaurant to restaurant, like feathered Dickensian characters, begging for food. Shortly afterward I'm back on board, happily relaxing on my private balcony, contemplating a coastline best viewed from the sea.

ID CHOSEN this trip as a luxe introduction to the world of expedition cruising. As Seabourn's first expedition vessel, *Venture* is outfitted with amenities made for intrepid exploration – among them a fleet of kayaks, 24 Zodiacs, and two \$4 million six-seat submarines – and the comforts of 132 suites, all with verandas. There are

The Seabourn Venture in Paracas, Peru, and red-legged cormorants on Isla Choros, Chile.

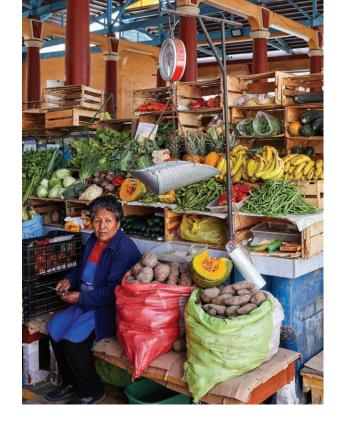


"If you're prone to seasickness, book a cabin midship on a lower deck and ask your suite steward to stock your mini fridge with ginger ale. My best tip, though: Sleep sideways on your bed so you rock head to toe rather than side to side."

> Kimberly Davis, Virtuoso travel advisor, Charlotte, North Carolina







Zodiacs off Isla
Albizuri and
Mollendo, Peru's
central market.
Opposite: Flowers
at Lima's Museo
Larco and Bolivian
dancers performing at the Presencias Tutelares
sculptures near
Arica, Chile.

also plenty of open decks from which to gaze in hopes of wildlife sightings. Many of my fellow passengers can often be found there, binoculars in hand, or in the Expedition Lounge's cozy armchairs, curled up beside picture windows. While they're scanning the horizon during sea days, I dive into my self-improvement mission – and, OK, the luxe quotient as well: restorative yoga classes in the motion studio, sweat sessions in the most beautiful sauna I've ever seen (with a full-wall window looking out to sea), playing trivia with strangers while snacking on caviar and sipping Champagne, and stuffing myself silly with sushi at The Club, an onboard restaurant with a stellar raw bar.

Another appealing aspect of this itinerary is that, unlike the ship's Antarctica sailings, it's not just nature based – Indigenous cultures and history play starring roles too. For example, on day six in Arica, Chile, we visit San Miguel de Azapa Archaeological Museum's 7,000-year-old mummies and stare up at elaborate geoglyphs high on the desert hills. One depicts a caravan of llamas marching through the Azapa Valley. Our guide explains how the etchings may have been used to direct traveling communities. But they're best viewed from above – hence the alternate theory that they were etched into the earth to communicate with ancient aliens.

Afterward, we head into the Atacama Desert to see Chilean artist Juan Díaz Fleming's towering abstract sculptures of sacred symbols and mystical wildlife. This juxtaposition of the desert's starkness and Fleming's whimsical artistry sets the scene for the arrival of a troupe of women dressed in traditional Andean attire, with embroidered dresses and hats festooned with colorful feathers, who perform a dance with animated gestures and rhythmic chants and whoops. Other outings bring the option of winetasting in the Elqui Valley or flightseeing the Nazca Lines, hundreds of pre-Columbian geoglyphs spread across 290 square miles of desert.

Still, chasing after nature and wildlife ranks high on most passengers' lists, and the *Venture* delivers. Our last day features one of the trip's highlights: the Humboldt Penguin National Reserve, about 370 miles north of Santiago. From the port of Coquimbo, we disembark early and, thanks to unusual precipitation during the previous few weeks, are treated to a desert blooming with poetically named wildflowers – tear of the virgin, whisper of the sea – on the drive north to Punta de Choros. We board small boats to explore the reserve, home to 80 percent of all Humboldt penguins.

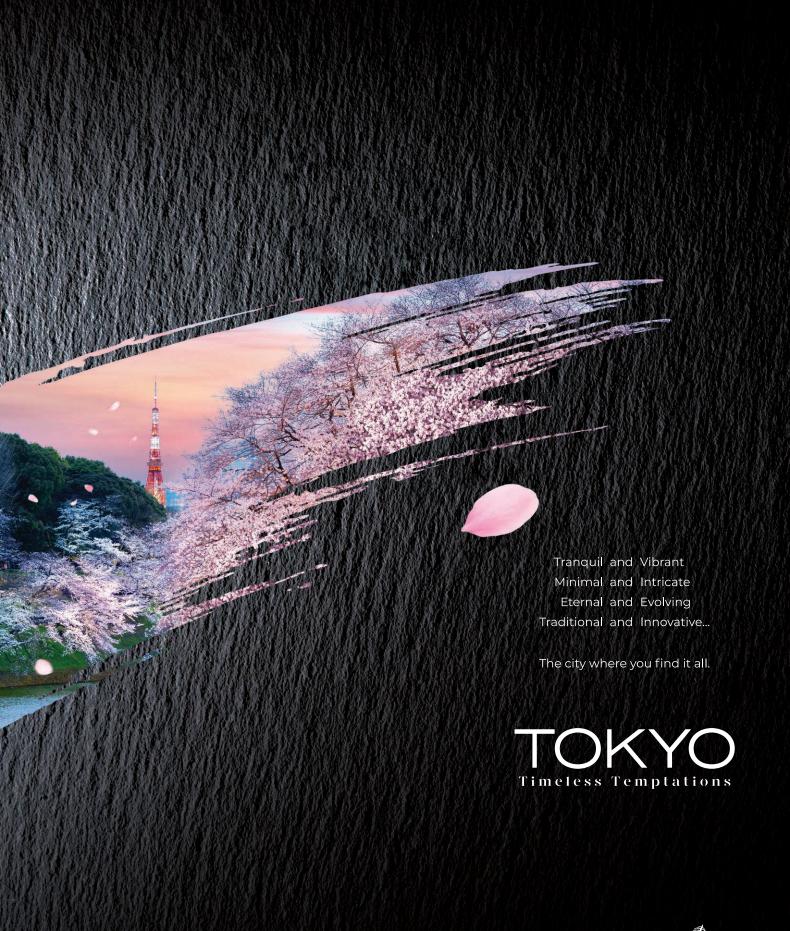
Isla Damas, Chile,

Thousands of the tuxedoed creatures call Isla Choros home, and we arrive to find small families waddling around the island's edge. Some swiftly head for higher ground, their leaders stopping only to let stragglers catch up; one group loitering on the beach gets a shock when a sea lion starts scampering in their direction. Even I'm charmed by how cute the penguins look fleeing their blubbery nemesis.

Decades ago, Isla Choros was home to fishing communities, but today, visitors aren't allowed. Nearby Isla Damas, however, permits landings for short, meandering hikes. Like the rest of the region, Damas is now blanketed with flowers – the most in more than a decade, according to our guide. My favorite is called *pata de guanaco* (guanaco hoof). Its purple-and-yellow blossoms perfume the salty sea breeze with a candied aroma that stays with me all the way up to a viewing platform, where I breathe deep. It's a picturesque, tranquil vista – and mercifully birdless.

Expedition cruisers, I've come to realize, are a varied breed. Some will fly across the world to follow a whiff of guano to rookeries packed with exotic species. Others thrill to kayaking marine reserves' rolling swells or diving into the archaeological past. My pinch-me moment: an unexpected hike on an uninhabited desert islet few have ever heard of, miraculously cloaked with wildflowers, where I feel overwhelmingly at ease.





TokyoTokyo







HUMBOLDT BOUND

Seabourn's 264-passenger Seabourn Venture spends 16 nights sailing from Costa Rica to Santiago, Chile, with calls in Ecuador and Peru. Stops in wildlife-rich destinations, such as islands near Matarani, Peru, might yield penguin and lemur sightings. Departure: October 15, 2023; from \$6.355.

Hurtigruten Expeditions' 13-night cruise from Lima to Valparaíso, Chile, aboard the 530-passenger *Roald Amundsen* combines coastal experiences with adventures on land, such as flying to Juliaca to see the pre-Inca Sillustani tombs and exploring Machu Picchu. *Departure: October 8, 2024; from \$7,322.*

Silversea Cruises' 274-passenger Silver Wind calls in four countries during its 18-night journey along the west coast of Latin America. Passengers spend the first six days exploring Costa Rica, including a stop at Jacques Cousteau-favorite Isla del Coco, before disembarking in colorful Valparaíso. Departure: October 31, 2024; from \$9,750.

Azamara's 702-passenger *Azamara Journey* sails for ten nights from Lima to San Antonio, Chile, with stops at lesser-known South American gems such as Iquique, home to the world's largest urban sand dune, and Antofagasta, Chile's gateway to the Atacama Desert. *Departure: January 23, 2025; from \$2,239.* ♥



True Blue

Finding inspiration from pigments of the past.



La Corriente que nos Une 2021 Terra-cotta and indigo-dyed Tencel thread

Mexican American artist Nicole McLaughlin looked to Maya blue, an ancient pigment the Maya created by mixing clay and dye derived from the añil (or indigo) plant, to inspire her Indigo Series, a collection that represents maternal nourishment, the power of the past, and her own multicultural roots. "Each component comes together to make the other stronger," McLaughlin says. Currently based in Cape Cod, McLaughlin tries to visit her family in Mexico every year. "My favorite place is Cuernavaca, my mom's hometown," she says. "There's a restaurant there, Las Mañanitas, that really embodies the vibrance of Mexico." Original work available at nicoleamclaughlin.com. @ nicole.a.mclaughlin





Personal connections and access to a network of the world's best travel companies give Virtuoso travel advisors the power to deliver your dreams - customized just for you. And the peace of mind that comes with knowing an expert has your back is more essential now than ever before.

Connect with a travel advisor at virtuoso.com.



Your trusted travel resource.

Virtuoso travel advisors customize each trip with extras and perks, and act as your advocates every step of the way.

Connect with an advisor at virtuoso.com.

THE WORLD'S TOP TRAVEL AGENCIES AND ADVISORS ARE VIRTUOSO°.