

AFAR

TRAVELERS WHO CARE

AFAR.COM

SPRING 2024

The **Best**
New
Hotels
in the **World**

p.33



Turn a moment of fate into a lifetime of purpose.



Sandals
SAINT VINCENT
AND THE GRENADINES

NOW OPEN

LEAVE YOUR WORLD BEHIND

AT THE EDGE OF THE LESSER ANTILLES, NESTLED BETWEEN TWO SEAS,
LIES SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES: A LUSH TUCKED-AWAY ISLAND,
RIPE FOR DISCOVERY. IN THE RESPLENDENT RAINFORESTS, A NATURAL
SYMPHONY OF TROPICAL BIRDS, CASCADING WATERFALLS,
AND THE RUSTLING OF NATIVE GREENERY PROVIDE THE PERFECT
SOUNDTRACK FOR EXCITING EXPERIENCES TOGETHER.



SANDALS.COM | 1.800.SANDALS
OR CALL YOUR TRAVEL ADVISOR

Sandals® is a registered trademark. Unique Vacations, Inc. is an affiliate of Unique Travel Corp., the worldwide representative of Sandals Resorts. 8375/0224



CALLING ALL:

CITY-EXPLORERS.

CUISINE-LOVERS.

MEMORY-MAKERS.

Seize Your Stay.

Welcome to Greenville, SC, where waterfalls grace our city center and mountain views complement the skyline. Kid-approved activities and an award-winning international food scene await your discovery. It's time to find your not-so-ordinary vacation. So what are you waiting for? *This Is The Life. This Is Greenville.*

Plan your trip at visitgreenvillesc.com.



DISCOVER
South Carolina

It's Time To Plan Your Not-So-Ordinary Vacation to Greenville, SC



Nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the Upstate region of South Carolina, Greenville offers a combination of natural beauty, unexpected cosmopolitan flair, Southern charm and excellent accessibility.



Request our **FREE**
Destination Guide
to explore more
things to do!

Award-Winning Airport: Arrive with Ease

Our award-winning airport, Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport (GSP), offers 100+ daily nonstop flights to 20+ cities and is located just 15 minutes from Downtown Greenville.



The Best New Hotels in the World

33

Notable for their incredible design, impeccable service, and deep community connection, these 31 new hotels are worth planning a whole trip around.



A team of 750 French artisans worked on the renovation of the Carlton Cannes, a Regent Hotel.

Ambiente Sedona
Arizona, USA

andBeyond Punakha
River Lodge
Bhutan

Angama Amboseli
Kenya

Atlantis The Royal
Dubai, UAE

Bulgari Hotel Roma
Italy

Capella Sydney
Australia

Carlton Cannes,
a Regent Hotel
France

Fairmont Doha
Qatar

Four Seasons
Resort Tamarindo
Mexico

Grand Hotel Son Net
Spain

Highland Base
Kerlingarfjöll
Iceland

JW Marriott Jeju
Resort & Spa
South Korea

Kona Village,
a Rosewood Resort
Hawai'i, USA

Le Grand Mazarin
France

Maroma,
a Belmond Hotel
Mexico

Mondrian
Singapore Duxton
Singapore

One&Only Aesthesis
Greece

Raffles London
at The OWO
England

Riad Rosemary
Morocco

Shinta Mani Mustang,
a Bensley Collection
Nepal

Six Senses Vana
India

Sofitel Legend
Casco Viejo
Panama City
Panama

Southern Ocean
Lodge
Australia

The Fifth Avenue Hotel
New York, USA

The Hotel Maria
Finland

The Inn at Mattei's
Tavern, Auberge
Resorts Collection
California, USA

The Peninsula Istanbul
Türkiye

The Peninsula London
England

Tswalu Kalahari
Reserve, Loapi Tented
Camp
South Africa

ULUM Moab
Utah, USA

Violino d'Oro
Italy



Emerald
Sakara
coming
in hot.



Luxury Yacht Cruises

MEDITERRANEAN | CARIBBEAN | SEYCHELLES

Step aboard Emerald Sakara – our newest luxury yacht – and immerse yourself in boundless elegance, where the expansive design grants uncompromising comfort, while promising ample space for indulgence and relaxation.

Distinguished by its exclusivity, Emerald Sakara accommodates 100 guests with unrivaled sophistication, giving you a broad choice of what many say is the closest you can get to a private yacht experience.

Embrace the allure of exploration as you access secluded ports and tranquil harbors, beckoning you to traverse waters untouched by larger vessels. As one can see, the latest standard for hot has been set.

*Explore the
Extraordinary*

2 for 1 Fares
with Comforts
Included

Call 844.846.5457, visit emeraldcruiises.com
or contact your professional travel advisor.


EMERALD
CRUISES

For complete Terms & Conditions, visit emeraldcruiises.com

Table of Contents

ON THE COVER

The Shinta Mani Mustang, a Bensley Collection, overlooks the Himalayas in northern Nepal.

Photograph by Chris Schalkx

16

CONTRIBUTORS

20

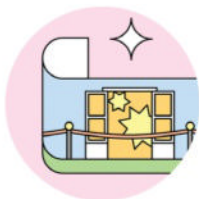
VOICE FROM AFAR

25

UNPACKED

LOST IN TRANSLATION

AI-based language apps are changing the way travelers and locals navigate communication barriers. Latria Graham evaluates the pros and cons.



28

AFAR ANSWERS

HOW CAN I MAKE THE MOST OF A TRAVEL ADVISOR?

A good travel advisor can be the key to a memorable trip, handling logistics, access, and on-the-ground support. Here's how to find and use the best of the best.



112

JUST BACK FROM NEVADA

AFAR Social Media Editor Tiana Attride traversed Nevada's Extraterrestrial Highway.

FEATURES

80

ONE-EURO HOME

A program in Sicily gives buyers from all over the world the chance to purchase a property for an incredibly low price. But how is that experiment changing the island's small towns?

92

INTO THE MYSTIC >

On a three-day hike across Ireland's Dingle Peninsula, poet Tess Taylor reflects on the land's past, present, and future—as well as her own.



100

< GREAT AMERICAN CITIES: PHILADELPHIA

What makes the City of Brotherly Love a fascinating place to visit? Its people. Four tastemakers share what they love about their home—and prove why the national recognition has been a long time coming.

ANTIGUA
AND BARBUDA

RELAX & UNWIND
IN PARADISE



visit [antiguabarbuda.com](https://www.visitantiguabarbuda.com)

Features

Two hours later,
I walk out into
the night air, aloft
on a wave of
bonhomie and
sturdy Sicilian wine.
Oh yes, I think
to myself. *I could
live here.*

ONE-EURO HOME

p.80

A member of **All** - Accor Live Limitless

A large, modern hotel building with a unique, curved, and mirrored facade, situated on a waterfront. The building's design is highly sculptural, with two main towers that curve outwards and then back inwards, creating a central void. The facade is made of reflective glass panels that mirror the sky and the surrounding city. The building is set against a backdrop of a clear sky with soft, wispy clouds. In the foreground, there is a calm body of water that perfectly reflects the building and the sky. The overall scene is serene and majestic, capturing the essence of a luxury hotel in a prime location.

stay ICONIC

Discover **NOW**

VISIT [FAIRMONT.COM](https://www.fairmont.com)

Fairmont
DOHA

PROMOTION

AFAR
RECOMMENDS

Introducing Afar Recommends, a collection of shore excursions selected by Afar

Empowering you to connect with local culture, feed your curiosity, and pursue your passions. Make travel truly life-changing with Afar Recommends.



In partnership with



ATLAS
OCEAN VOYAGES®

REACH FURTHER, GET CLOSER



INTIMATE YACHTING EXPEDITIONS™

Cultural Expeditions by Atlas™ set a new course immersing into rich traditions, including Afar Recommends, a collection of shore excursions selected by Afar as exceptional experiences to connect with local culture. It all happens together with destination and drone photographers, guest chefs bringing cooking cultures to life or cultural experts and storytellers, fewer than 200 fellow explorers and a genuinely caring crew. From lively rhythms of Brazil to enchanting folklore of Iceland, immersions into vibrant cultures abound.

Begin exploring at AtlasOceanVoyages.com



A COLLECTION OF SHORE
EXCURSIONS SELECTED
BY AFAR AS EXCEPTIONAL
EXPERIENCES TO CONNECT
WITH LOCAL CULTURE.

SECOND GUEST SAILS FREE ON ALL-INCLUSIVE YEAR-ROUND EXPEDITIONS.



CARIBBEAN / ICELAND & GREENLAND / NORTHERN EUROPE / SOUTH AMERICA / TRANSOCEANIC

ATLAS ALWAYS INCLUDED:

Expedition Guides + Enriching Experiences, Gratuities, Culinary + Wine Tastings, Unlimited Wines + Spirits, and more.

To book, call your Preferred Travel Advisor or our Voyage Specialists at **844.442.8527**

Special offers and inclusions are capacity controlled and may be changed or withdrawn from any voyage at any time without notice. Additional restrictions may apply. For full terms and conditions, contact your preferred Travel Advisor or Atlas Ocean Voyages. © 2023 Atlas Ocean Voyages. Ships' Registry: Portugal 3075-02.28.24

AFAR

AFAR.COM @AFARMEDIA

FOUNDERS Greg Sullivan & Joe Diaz

What was
your favorite
hotel stay
last year?

EDITORIAL

VP, EDITOR IN CHIEF Julia Cosgrove

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Sarika Bansal @sarika008

CREATIVE DIRECTOR Supriya Kalidas @supriyakalidas

EXECUTIVE EDITOR Billie Cohen @billietravels

SENIOR DEPUTY EDITOR Jennifer Flowers

@jenniferleeflowers

DEPUTY EDITORS

Michelle Baran @michellehallbaran

Tim Chester @timchester

Katherine LaGrave @kjlgrave

SENIOR COMMERCE EDITOR

Lyndsey Matthews @lyndsey_matthews

PHOTO EDITOR Michelle Heimerman @maheimerman

EDITORIAL PRODUCTION MANAGER Kathie Gartrell

SENIOR DESIGNER Elizabeth See @ellsbeths

ASSOCIATE DESTINATIONS EDITOR Chloe Arrojo

ASSOCIATE EDITOR Mae Hamilton @bymaeham

PRODUCTION EDITOR Karen Carmichael @karencarmic

PRODUCTION DESIGNER Myrna Chiu

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR Nicholas DeRenzo @nderenzo

EDITOR AT LARGE Laura Redman @laura_redman

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Lisa Abend @lisaabend, Chris Colin @chriscolin3000,

Latria Graham @mslatriagraham, Emma John @em_john,

Ryan Knighton, Peggy Orenstein @pjorenstein,

Anu Taranath @dr.anutaranath, Anya von Bremzen

@vonbremzen

PHOTO RESEARCHER Rita Harper

COPY EDITOR Elizabeth Bell

PROOFREADERS Pat Tompkins, Kara Williams

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS

Fran Golden @fran_golden_cruise, Sally Kohn @sallykohn,

Barbara Peterson, Paul Rubio, Victoria M. Walker @vikkie

MARKETING & CREATIVE SERVICES

VP, MARKETING Maggie Gould Markey

@maggiekey, maggie@afar.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MARKETING AND

SPECIAL PROJECTS Katie Galeotti @heavenk

BRANDED & SPONSORED CONTENT DIRECTOR

Ami Kealoha @amikealoha

ASSOCIATE DESIGN DIRECTOR Christopher Udemezue

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, MARKETING ACTIVATIONS

Irene Wang @irenew0201

SENIOR INTEGRATED MARKETING MANAGER

Mary Kennedy @marmar353

INTEGRATED MARKETING MANAGER

Isabelle Martin @isabellefmartin

MARKETING ACTIVATIONS MANAGER

Maggie Smith @smithxmaggie

BRAND MARKETING MANAGER

Alice Phillips @alicephillipz

SALES

VP, PUBLISHER Bryan Kinkade @bkinkade001,

bryan@afar.com, 646-873-6136

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BRAND PARTNERSHIPS

Onnalee MacDonald @onnaleeafar,

onnalee@afar.com, 310-779-5648

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BRAND PARTNERSHIPS

Laney Boland @laneybeauxland,

lboland@afar.com, 646-525-4035

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BRAND PARTNERSHIPS

CJ Close @close.cj, cjclose@afar.com, 310-701-8977

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CARIBBEAN

Barry Brown barry@afar.com, 917-226-5398

SALES, SOUTHEAST

Colleen Schoch Morell colleen@afar.com, 561-350-5540

SALES, SOUTHWEST

Lewis Stafford Company lewisstafford@afar.com,

972-960-2889

TRAVEL SALES MANAGER Carly Sebouhian @carlyblake419,

csebouhian@afar.com, 516-633-5647

SALES COORDINATOR Alex Battaglia @alexrbattaglia,

abattaglia@afar.com

AFAR MEDIA LLC

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Greg Sullivan @gregsul

VP, COFOUNDER Joe Diaz @joediazafar

VP, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER Laura Simkins

VP, GROWTH AND PRODUCT Anni Cuccinello

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE Julia Rosenbaum @juliarosenbaum21

HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

Breanna Rhoades @breannarhoades

DIRECTOR OF AD OPERATIONS

Donna Delmas @donnadinnyc

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PODCASTS Aislyn Greene @aislynj

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, GROWTH Julie Huang @julie_yellow

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, SEO, PRODUCT & VIDEO

Jessie Beck @beatnomad

SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR Tiana Attridge @tian.a

PERFORMANCE MARKETING SPECIALIST Courtney St. Pierre

NEWSLETTER PRODUCER Majfred Memetaj

ACCOUNT MANAGER, AD OPERATIONS Vince De Re

ACCOUNTING CLERK Kai Chen

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CONSUMER MARKETING Sally Murphy

ASSOCIATE CONSUMER MARKETING DIRECTOR Tom Pesik

SENIOR PREMEDIA MANAGER Isabelle Rios

PRODUCTION MANAGER Mandy Wynne

ADVISORS Priscilla Alexander, Ellen Asmodeo-Giglio,

Pat Lafferty, Josh Steinitz

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES

afar.com/service

888-403-9001 (toll free)

From outside the United States,

call 515-248-7680

MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 458

San Francisco, CA 94104

"I recently checked into the reimagined Raffles Singapore. The renovated interiors are thoughtful and respectful of the hotel's historic pedigree, the restaurants are fabulous, and the trademark Singapore sling cocktail tastes better than ever." —J.F.

"Stepping into the Jumeirah Al Qasr in Dubai feels like entering a sheikh's summer residence. The resort sits above the waterways that wind through the Madinat Jumeirah district and is a respite from the hustle and bustle of the city." —B.K.

"My seven-year-old and I stayed at the Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco, which is located just around the corner from Chinatown. Its grand neoclassical facade is stunning." —A.K.

"Hoshinoya Kyoto is only accessible by boat and feels like a hidden retreat even though it's within walking distance of Tenryu-ji, one of the most popular Buddhist temples in the city." —J.B.

**MORE
2023
JAMES BEARD
AWARDS
THAN ANY OTHER CITY?**

Philly, baby!

**And you thought Philly
was just a cheesesteak town.**

VISITPHILLY.COM

**VISIT
PHILADELPHIA®**



LEE TULLOCH

Writer | IG @bymrsamos

The founding editor of *Harper's Bazaar Australia*, Lee Tulloch is the author of five novels, including *Fabulous Nobodies* (William Morrow, 1989). For **The Best New Hotels in the World** (p.33) she visited Southern Ocean Lodge, located on Kangaroo Island. "It is Australia's most extraordinary retreat, set on a wild coast of a biologically diverse island," Tulloch says. She has also written for the *New York Times*, *Vogue*, and *Travel + Luxury*.



GLENN HARVEY

Illustrator | IG @glennharveyart

Originally from Toronto, Glenn Harvey currently lives in Brooklyn, where he creates illustrations on topics ranging from science fiction to technology. For **Lost in Translation** (p.25) Harvey conceptualized how AI-assisted mobile apps are changing the way people travel. "I tried to ground the scene with a universally familiar scenario: travelers looking for directions," he says. Harvey's work has appeared in *Politico*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Atlantic*.



TED NGHIEM

Photographer | IG @tednghiem

After fleeing the Vietnam War, Ted Nghiem's parents settled in the Philadelphia suburbs, and he has always felt a kinship with the City of Brotherly Love. His photography focuses on documenting Philadelphia's foodways, from home cooks to chefs in fine dining restaurants. For **Great American Cities: Philadelphia** (p.100) he sought to capture the complexity of the home he knows—the grittiness as well as its beauty. "I've always known Philly to have a food scene worthy of national and international recognition," Nghiem says. "It was just a matter of getting the right people in the right places to also realize that." Nghiem regularly contributes to *Philadelphia* and *New Jersey Monthly*.



TESS TAYLOR

Writer | IG @tessathon

Journalist, teacher, and playwright Tess Taylor is the author of five poetry collections and the editor of *Leaning Toward Light* (Storey, 2023). She's been drawn to Ireland's literary contributions and green landscapes since she was in college, reading the works of such writers as Eavan Boland, Seamus Heaney, and Brian Friel. In **Into the Mystic** (p.92) Taylor shares the story of hiking across the Emerald Isle's Dingle Peninsula with her husband. The pair navigated ancient Celtic ruins, stony paths, grassy hills, and sandy beaches lining the cold Atlantic, and along the way, developed a deeper connection not only to the peninsula, but to themselves. "We travel to savor our lives, to learn different ways of being in the world, to change and reflect," Taylor says.

Contributors



JOSEPH HERNANDEZ

Writer | IG @joeybear85

As a senior editor at the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Joseph Hernandez covers news, community, food, and arts and culture. In **Great American Cities: Philadelphia** (p.100) he writes about the change-makers who are earning accolades for the city, including two James Beard Award-winning chefs and a designer who translated her community-minded creativity into a boutique hotel and shop. "Philadelphians are intensely proud of their city, and rightfully so," Hernandez says. "They've been doing the work of innovating and growing on their own terms, and the world is just catching up to that vision." Hernandez has written for *Bon Appétit*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, and *Thrillist*.



CHRIS SCHALKX

Writer and Photographer | IG @chrsschlkx

For **The Best New Hotels in the World** (p.33) Chris Schalkx photographed and wrote about South Korea's JW Marriott Jeju Resort & Spa. He also wrote about the Shinta Mani Mustang in Nepal and photographed this issue's cover. Schalkx, who lives in Bangkok, says he tries to capture the liveliness of each property he visits: "[I focus on] ruffled hotel beds, half-eaten meals, and impromptu street shots that truly represent lived moments." His work appears in *Travel + Leisure*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *HTSI*, and *Vogue*.

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a red one-piece swimsuit, is floating on her back in clear blue water. Her eyes are closed, and she has a serene expression. In the background, two large, steep, green mountains (Pitons) rise from the water under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The water's surface is calm, reflecting the woman and the sky.

IMMERSE YOURSELF
IN SHEER LUXURY

If you're looking for the ultimate in high-end style and sheer natural beauty, Saint Lucia is the Caribbean destination that soars above all others. For more information visit stlucia.org


SAINT LUCIA
LET HER INSPIRE YOU

Turkish Riviera: The Land of Light

Kekova, Antalya

Magnificent natural beauty, majestic weather, and rich history! The Turkish Riviera's wondrous skies and idyllic blue sea welcome you all year long. This citrus-scented coastal region offers ancient ruins, pristine beaches, charming cities, and lavish resorts where the art of Mediterranean living is elevated to new heights.

Imagine a 1000-kilometer-long coast, protected by soaring mountains on one side, with a year-round mild Mediterranean climate and 300 days of sunshine. The Turkish Riviera offers an amazing holiday escape for every type of traveler, from families or honeymooners to solo adventurers along sun-kissed shores dotted with picturesque towns and villages. The region promises surprising encounters with well-preserved ancient cities intertwined with turquoise coves and misty mountains, where classical art and democracy

once flourished. The Turkish Riviera will immediately enchant you with the earthly pleasures of coastal living as well —delectable Mediterranean cuisine, a cultural calendar brimming with music festivals, yacht regattas, golf, swimming and cycling tournaments, as well as a diverse array of aquatic and mountain sports that will keep you busy for the duration of your stay. From stunning accommodation options and refined delicacies to extensive historical heritages, the Turkish Riviera promises a life well-lived!

A PAMPERING BREAK ALONG THE MEDITERRANEAN

Built to blend in perfectly with the nature surrounding them, elegant beachside luxury resorts are where summer is enjoyed in high style on the Turkish Riviera. All-inclusive resorts provide a ritzy collection of rooms and villas with stunning sea views, catering to all tastes. Grand swimming pools, aquapark facilities, a la carte and rich buffet restaurants, sports and entertainment facilities, luxurious spas and golf courses comprise a full vacation package for visitors. In addition to a wide selection of luxury resorts, the coastal region stretching from the city of **Fethiye** to **Mersin** also offers several boutique hotels, rental houses and villas tucked away in the historical streets of old city centers and on private terraces carved into mountainsides, overlooking the azure sea from tranquil infinity pools. For those who would like to have a splendid back-to-nature holiday, there is also a wide selection of rural retreats and glamping spots, ranging from off-grid rustic cabins in forests and lakelands to beach

huts that score top marks for their setting.

The soothing effects of the balmy Mediterranean climate make the Turkish Riviera the ideal spot for wellness breaks as well. Supported by the healthy Mediterranean diet based on local olive oil, fresh herbs, fish and produce, you can turn your visit into a truly rejuvenating experience. Many of the hotels in the region offer revitalizing spa complexes, blending the latest holistic treatments like seawater therapy, yoga and meditation with traditional *hamam* (Turkish bath) rituals. It is always a good idea to visit a hamam to unwind after a long day of sightseeing to relax your mind and body. As an ages-old purification ritual extending back to Ancient Rome, the hamam offers a mystical bathing experience not only to get yourself squeaky clean, but also to pause the stress of modern life.

HISTORY IMMERSSED IN STUNNING NATURE

Once you choose your accommodation, you may turn your



Yachting in the Turkish Riviera



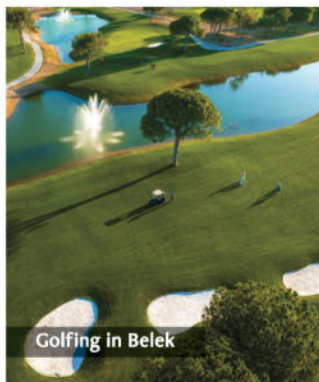
Cycling in Kemer



Ancient Aspendos Theater

attention to activities galore. With shores, forests and mountains each peppered with millennia-old ruins, the Turkish Riviera is the perfect destination for history buffs. Three magnificent ancient regions, Lycia, Pamphylia and Pisidia, merge within the borders of **Antalya** and are easily and delightfully accessible via day trips and sea excursions. The city of **Patara** charms visitors with its two-thousand-year-old theatre and the parliament building, where each city in the Lycian League was represented according to its size, as a precursor of the modern parliamentary system. Nearby, **Olympus** adjacent to the village of Çıralı, recalls the heroic tale of Bellerophon, who rode his winged horse Pegasus to defeat the fire-breathing monster, Chimera. **Side** and **Aspendos**, on the other hand, link antiquity to modernity with their majestic Roman theatres restored to their former glory and hosting summer music festivals and dance performances today.

The Turkish Riviera experience goes beyond such historical surveys and provides amazing adventures in nature as well. First and foremost, it is a great sailing destination. You may opt for a chartered yacht or a *gulet* —a traditional two or three-masted wooden sailing boat— to explore the pristine shoreline of Antalya, encircled by lush green forests. **Beldibi, Kemer, Tekirova, Adrasan, Kekova** and



Golfing in Belek

Kaş are the highlights of any cruise itinerary with their coves, bays and marinas to berth. **The Lycian Way**, meandering between the mountains and the turquoise sea for 500 kilometers from Fethiye to Antalya, is the country's first waymarked long-distance trekking route with awe-inspiring archaeological stops along the way. Known as the “Land of Light”, Lycia offers the modern-day traveler a natural scenery dotted with breathtaking temples dedicated to Apollo, the god of light, and monumental tombs towering from mountaintops or jutting from ancient harbors.

The region is also a paradise for adventurers looking to enjoy caving, camping and biking in and around stunning waterfalls and magical pine and cedar forests of Kemer, Mount Olympus and Tahtalı Mountain. Saklıkent, on the other hand, offers ski enthusiasts with the unique dual experience of an invigorating ski adventure coupled with a dip in the azure waters of the Mediterranean in springtime; and yes, on the same day!

Along the scenic route between Kalkan and Kaş, one can discover immaculate beaches with crystal-clear water, including **Kaputaş Beach, Akçageme Beach** and **Hidayet Cove**. A little bit further, one of the best-kept secrets of the Turkish Riviera awaits at **Kaleköy**, a coastal village guarded by a medieval castle. Accessible only by boat, this cozy settlement has been built upon the ruins of the ancient city of Simena, the sunken parts of which can be explored by kayaking tours around **Kekova Island**, just off the shore. But the ultimate aquatic adventure is underwater! Crown your visit with diving explorations in Kaş to discover the exciting, ancient underwater terrain encompassed by an assortment of the rich, beautiful and colorful underwater fauna and flora that is the Mediterranean.

To the east of Antalya lies **Alanya**, yet another hidden gem along

the Turkish Riviera. This appealing seaside haunt was founded as a fortified city by Seljuks in the 13th century. The citadel is still intact and open to visitors, jutting out from the rocky hilltops to overlook the Mediterranean. The streets winding from the citadel down to the sea have a timeless feel, enveloping traditional houses immersed in their lush terraced gardens. The hexagonal Kızıl Kule (Red Tower) was built to protect a historic shipyard on the waterfront and now houses an ethnographic museum. On the other side of the giant hill, the 2-km-long Kleopatra Beach greets sun worshippers as a golden stretch of sand.

CULTURAL AND GASTRONOMICAL DELIGHTS

For those who appreciate city life, **Antalya** and **Mersin** are urban playgrounds with constant vibrancy. Antalya hosts the Aspendos Opera and Ballet Festival, as well as the Golden Orange Film Festival, the biggest event in the country's movie industry. Mersin International Music Festival is yet another eagerly awaited event on the cultural calendar of the region. From immense shopping malls to tiny side-street craft stores, both cities are ideal locales for shopping lovers.

Antalya's pedestrian-friendly, cobblestone streets, cheerily full of laid-back cafés and bars, are impeccable places to have a Turkish coffee or a cocktail before heading to country-chic traditional diners or stylish fish and meze restaurants lined along the sea. Choose the fresh catch of the day from the display (red mullet, grouper, swordfish or anything in between), and make sure to start the meal with a choice from the notable selection of mezes such as *hibeş* (a spread of tahini, cumin, red pepper flakes and lemon juice) and Mediterranean delicacies like rock samphire and sea beans, followed by hot

appetizers like grilled octopus, or shrimp baked in butter and garlic sauce. The hearty feast should end with pumpkin dessert served with tahini and walnuts. For those wishing to continue the night, Antalya never lacks good local bars or live music venues, where one can dance the night away.

To venture deeper into the culinary universe of the region, you can treat yourself to popular local dishes like *şiş köfte* (meatballs on skewers), cooked to excellence in Antalya and served with a local version of *piyaz* (white bean salad with tahini sauce). Mersin, on the other hand, is famous for a street food named *tantuni* (thinly sliced and stir-fired beef wrapped in fat bread).

The Turkish Riviera's microclimate produces some of the best fresh fruits of Türkiye —particularly citrus trees (especially the trademarked Finike oranges), Antalya avocados, pomegranates, kiwis and Anamur bananas. Elmalı is famous for its *Acikara* grapes, a resurrected endemic variety that has been around since the times of Lycians and produced award-winning regional wines. While in Antalya, you may also consider sampling the vast array of local jams made of watermelon, orange or bergamot skins, before taking the winning choices back home as souvenirs.

As a true holiday paradise with its unique climate, picturesque nature, modern cities and sandy beaches, as well as the remains of countless ancient civilizations, the Turkish Riviera is a must-see for any traveler coming to Türkiye. Take a moment to imagine what your dream holiday can look like, and then let us bring it to life here on the Turkish Riviera!

A Big Year for Hotels

THIS PAST DECEMBER, I attended the International Luxury Travel Market in Cannes, France, the premier annual gathering for travel professionals. And in the 15 years of AFAR's existence, I've never been more excited by what's going on in the world of hotels. Hospitality brands are investing tremendous resources to create (and re-create) amazing spaces.

AFAR cohosted a party at the Carlton Cannes, a Regent Hotel, which was the first luxury hotel on the French Riviera. It reopened in 2023 after a five-year renovation. It was gratifying to see the attention to detail that was put into honoring this grande dame, from stripping layers of paint off enormous marble columns to reinstalling the original chandeliers with the aid of the same skilled craftspeople who previously restored the Palace of Versailles.

More recently, I had the opportunity to tour the Raffles London, which opened inside the legendary Old War Office. It was from here that Winston Churchill guided the British effort in World War II. With its Grand Staircase leading to the ballroom, as well as nine restaurants and a spectacular glass art installation, this magnificent structure offers both travelers and Londoners a new landmark.

Ambitious projects such as the Carlton Cannes and the Raffles London made our editors' job of selecting this year's Best New Hotels difficult. Accordingly, we more than doubled the size of our list to 31—and there were still worthy contenders left on the cutting room floor.

Yes, there are some expansive properties in our list, but we always have a place in our hearts (and pages) for the small and distinctive. A great example is the 29-suite Shinta Mani Mustang, a Bensley Collection, a collaboration among Nepalese mountaineer Namgyal Sherpa, world-renowned designer Bill Bensley, and Bangkok-based hotelier Jason Friedman. With breathtaking views of the mountains, traditional Thakali architecture, and touches of high design, this property elevates Nepal to the top of my travel list.

So, please turn to page 33 to see which of our picks appeal to your wanderlust. And, for you hospitality aficionados out there, our Best New Hotels list is part of a broader digital series, Hotels We Love. You can subscribe to AFAR's biweekly newsletter, Stay Here Next, in which Senior Deputy Editor Jennifer Flowers and team share the latest in openings, news, and inspiration, at afar.com/newsletters.

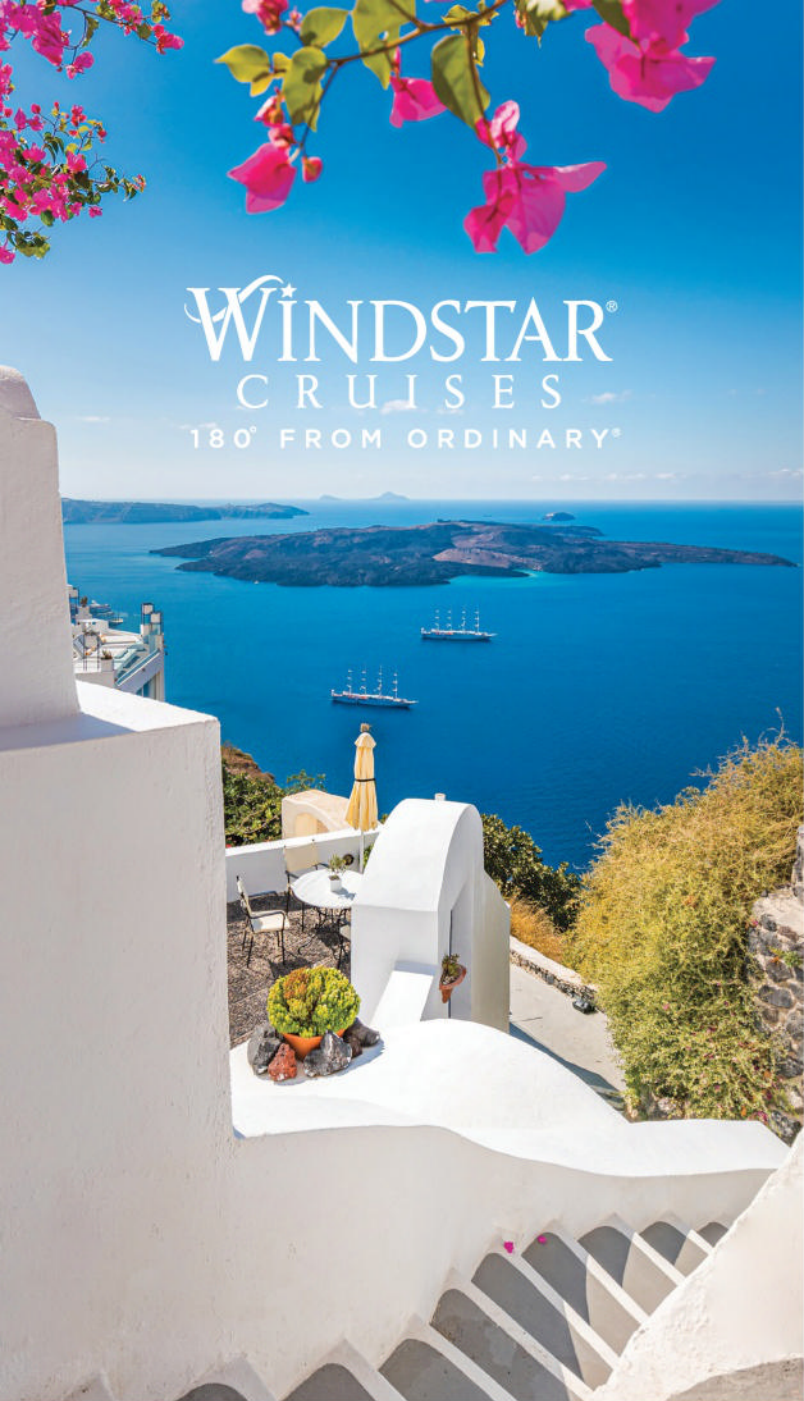
Good travels, and happy lodging!

GREG SULLIVAN

Cofounder and CEO



Winston Churchill's Old War Office has been reborn as the London flagship of the Raffles hotel brand.



WINDSTAR®
CRUISES
180° FROM ORDINARY®



SAIL INTO THE SOUL OF GREECE

ANCIENT MARVELS, TIMELESS CHARM

Book the voyage of a lifetime aboard one of our intimate 148-guest sailing yachts or our newly reimagined 312-guest *Star Legend*. Sail through the Corinth Canal and visit hidden destinations like Patmos and Monemvasia, an ancient fortress-town with winding streets and beautiful vistas. Your voyage may include a complimentary white-glove dinner at the ancient Library of Celsus, available on many of our Greece itineraries.



WINDSTARCRUISES.COM

For the latest offers, contact your Travel Advisor
or Windstar Cruises at 888-749-3906

We love Charleston. We just love our hometown. We are inspired every single day by her beauty, her history, and her charm. We adore the steeples that dot our skyline, the architecture that builds the foundation of elegance that surrounds us, and the sense of place she gives us. We love the Charleston area. Celebrate our beloved community, stylish and unique. We want everyone who visits us to love the Charleston area as much as we do.



SCAN FOR YOUR COMPLIMENTARY TRAVEL GUIDE.

CHARLESTON

South Carolina

A CULTURE OF KINDNESS



The Patrick & Joan Leigh Fermor House

Where Hospitality Meets History

KARDAMYLI - GREECE



ARIA HOTELS

Tel: (+30) 210 2207686 • Email: plf@ariahotels.gr • ariahotels.gr



Lost in Translation

AI-assisted apps make navigating language barriers easier. But at what cost?

I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED languages. I began learning French and German in middle school, and by the time I graduated from high school, I had two years of upper-level French and Italian, three years of upper-level German, and a foundation in opera, which gave me a reverence for the art of translation. In college, I studied French medieval poetry and Norse sagas.

My education was a rarefied experience, but those early forays into communication have shaped the way I think of language and its potential to foster connection. Today, the learning landscape has changed. We have powerful computers in our pockets, and translating at the touch of a button is the norm; apps such as Duolingo can help us with our Greek, Hindi, and Haitian Creole. Sometimes, as with Google Translate, our devices even speak for us, and suddenly, a once-insurmountable language barrier is removed. All this, I think, has its pros and cons.





Instead of instinctually pulling out my phone, I ask myself, *Do I really need an app to try to say what I'm going to say?*

words and phrases, including greetings and terms such as “excuse me,” “thank you,” and “bathroom.” More often than not, I’ve found this low-tech approach endears me to people and is met with grace and goodwill, interpreted as active interest in a place.

I’m still trying to figure out how to navigate our brave new world, and when I do use translation apps, I try to do so sparingly. Instead of instinctually pulling out my phone, I ask myself, *Do I really need an app to try to say what I’m going to say?* Most often, I employ these technologies when my language skills aren’t a match for the level of specificity that I need and I don’t have the option of human-to-human translation. On a recent trip to Japan, I used DeepL’s scan-to-translate feature to “read” about treats available to order by mail, and turned to Google Translate to communicate with a pharmacist so I could get pain relievers for cramps.

In situations like these—phone in hand—I also pay careful attention to my body language. When appropriate, I make eye contact. An app may make it easier to communicate, but that’s just one facet of the exchange.

If all of these efforts fail, I’m prepared to point and smile, to use nonverbal cues. Is this clumsy and with more risk of embarrassment? Perhaps. But we’ve employed this form of connection for thousands of years. Language, after all, gives us a frame we can use to make sense of our experiences, however simple, however crude. And we don’t always need an app for that. **A**

To err is human, but machines are not divine. When we tap our words into an app we lose the colors, rhythms, tones, animation, and thoughts that make communicating across languages so interesting. Often, what’s missing is context: Tech can’t understand linguistic nuances or read the situation, because it can’t see and assess the scene or moment. While these programs can learn grammar rules, they lack the leaps of thought humans are capable of. Without intuitive intelligence, they can’t make sense of new information on the fly.

As a traveler, I worry that sole reliance on this technology renders our conversations on the road transactional and impersonal. With apps, the potential for the quantity of our interactions increases—we are able to ask for more things—but the quality of the connection can diminish. After all, the people we meet on our travels are not just avatars: They have personalities, full lives, and unique perspectives on their home. If we’re lucky, sometimes they’ll share it with us. My hope is that we, as global citizens searching for connection, can see these technologies as an aid, instead of depending on them alone to navigate new linguistic terrain.

Just because translation apps exist doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try to learn a language in preparation for a trip. Before I travel, I brush up on my conversational skills: I’m quick to pick up a grammar workbook, watch videos about pronunciation, or even schedule a language session with a friend. Streaming TV shows or films from the country also helps get my brain in the right mode before I leave home.

Even when I’m competent in a language, I still try to carry a phrase book when I’m in a foreign place. At the very least, I print out a list of essential

Innovative Asheville

Imagination and ideas to stimulate your mind (and more) in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina

by Erin McGrady

Much of what makes Asheville a hub for visionary businesses is the city's forward-thinking culture—including its role in developing climate resilience solutions. For nearly 70 years, the **North Carolina Institute for Climate Studies (NCICS)**, part of the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, has been an Asheville-based research center focused on critical environmental intelligence. Collaborating with more than 400 scientists, NCICS's head of partnerships, Jenny Dissen, helps every business sector in the United States and others worldwide use what she calls "the latest and greatest climate change report."

The city is also home to tech entrepreneurs, including the biomarker app **Spren**, and parking with electric vehicle (EV) charging stations like at the **Hilton Asheville Biltmore Park**. Thanks to local start-up **Brightfield**, you can juice up your EV using solar power.

That blend of innovation and mindfulness has caused Asheville's food culture to blossom as well. **The Market Place**—a pioneer of the farm-to-table movement since 1979—was recently named a James Beard Award semi-finalist.

Another local enterprise, **Matcha Nude**, resulted from an Asheville resident's quest for organic, tasty matcha that's affordable and good for the planet. Sip it at places

throughout the city, such as the dog-friendly **Gravelo Workshop** (where you can rent a bike, too) and **Sugar & Snow Gelato**.

Draw from the creative energy of annual events like **TEDxAsheville** and **Asheville Ideas Fest** (June 17–20, 2024) to spark your imagination. Or simply kick back and let the Appalachian landscape inspire you.

Learn more at afar.com/AlwaysAsheville

Where Great Minds Gather

Coworking spaces for remote workers with big dreams

The Collider is designed to foster the cross-pollination of ideas about climate change.

Focal Point Coworking, **Mojo Coworking**, and the LGBTQ-friendly **WestBase Coworking** are all independently owned.

Grind AVL combines business education with a café and mission focused on supporting Black businesses.

Hatch offers mentorship, community, and more.

Gravelo Workshop



Grind AVL



The Market Place



ASHEVILLE



How Can I Make the Most of a Travel Advisor?

Planning trips these days can feel like a full-time job: flights to book, an itinerary to perfect, the best restaurants and hotel suites to reserve. Luckily, it literally is a full-time job for many knowledgeable people—and they'll do all the planning and booking for you.

There are thousands of travel advisors across the world who specialize in virtually every destination and type of trip. And they're more in demand than ever as people seek authentic, meaningful, and conscientious experiences in a world of overtourism, air travel hassles, and climate concerns.

But what value can travel advisors add in this interconnected age, when you can text almost any person or company around the world in an instant, and endless start-ups are replacing personal interaction with AI-formulated answers? They can add a lot.

More than just logistics

These days, the phrase “travel advisor” most commonly refers to what used to be called a travel agent—a generalist based in the country you live in, who can arrange an itinerary almost anywhere via the local providers they

know around the globe. But it's also worth broadening the way you think about a trip planner to include destination experts—the in-country providers themselves—who create and run trips only in that region and who often work with travelers directly. No matter which kind of travel planner you work with, there are benefits to be had—and they're not limited to booking flights and hotels. They can usher you into a VIP world of exclusive reservations, singular experiences, and special amenities.

“The best ones know the destination incredibly well and have connections to be able to pull strings to make things happen that you might think are impossible,” says travel journalist and industry expert Wendy Perrin of WendyPerrin.com, who maintains a “Wow List” of the best-reviewed planners and matches travelers to the ideal people for their needs.

Her site is full of detailed reviews from travelers who have used the experts on her list. Take Jeannie Mullen, who's on the board of directors of a professional theater company in her

hometown of Highlands, North Carolina. Perrin connected her with Jan Sortland of Norwegian Adventures, a destination expert who arranged for Mullen to meet his actress sister-in-law for coffee, followed by a backstage tour of Oslo's National Theatre. Then he packed in storytelling with a reindeer herder and four nights of northern lights viewing.

Advisors can also unlock such perks as hotel credits for free breakfasts and late checkouts. These benefits “can be valued in hundreds of dollars, depending on the accommodations, without [you] having to play the points and rewards game,” says Josh Bush, the CEO of family-owned travel advisor group Avenue Two Travel. Other advisors may have access to cruise credits and cabin upgrades.

When things go awry

Advisors can come in handy during your travels, too. They'll have an extensive support network on the ground to “prevent the pitfalls



RAFFLES

BIRTHPLACE OF *stories* & LEGENDS

RAFFLES LONDON AT THE OWO

SINGAPORE BALI UDAIPUR SEYCHELLES MALDIVES CAMBODIA JAKARTA MANILA HAINAN MACAU
SHENZHEN ISTANBUL DUBAI MAKKAH DOHA WARSAW PARIS BOSTON LONDON BAHRAIN JAIPUR

AFAR ANSWERS

that can hex a trip," Perrin says.

Amina Dearmon, who founded the agency Perspectives Travel, recalls a time some of her clients were leaving the Caribbean country of Dominica. Adverse weather canceled their Friday flight home, and they were told at the airport that the next flight would be on Tuesday. Dearmon used her knowledge and contacts to get them on a flight the following morning and arranged a shuttle back to their villa for an extra night. Fancy doing all that yourself at the end of a holiday?

When AFAR's executive editor, Billie Cohen, landed in Beijing with food poisoning, Mei Zhang of Wild China (a destination expert who'd fashioned a two-week trip for Cohen) was there to help. "Mei was on the phone with my driver as soon as I landed... and was ready to take me to the doctor if I needed it," Cohen says. "It was reassuring to have someone looking out for me, and who spoke the language."

William Kiburz, vice president of Coronet Travel, was able to go a step further when a client had a health emergency while touring Christmas markets in Europe. Kiburz had secured the traveler a comprehensive insurance policy that allowed him to have surgery in a German hospital—and then Kiburz assisted with claims to cover the medical procedure.

Unexpected perks

Enlisting the right professional can also improve your travels in ways you may not have imagined. Come in with an open mind, and they'll broaden it further. Perrin often makes a case for new possibilities—Panama instead of Costa Rica, say, or Sri Lanka (which "so many people just don't even think about").

Bush agrees: "Advisors can redirect clients to an alternative destination by getting to the 'why' and identifying another similarly amazing destination with those attributes and interests. And they can point them to a time of year when it's great to go but minus all the crowds."

Indeed, in popular spots, advisors can help avoid the scourge of overtourism. For cruises on Egypt's Nile River, Jim Berkeley, founder and CEO of Destinations & Adventures International, introduces travelers to small, semi-private *dahabiya* houseboats, which can dock at ports the big ships can't access, allowing guests to visit less crowded sites off the typical main route.

Advisors can also do a lot of the groundwork to ensure trips are sustainable—an increasing request from travelers—by vetting suppliers and partners. Advisors at Avenue Two Travel, a certified B Corp, take time to research the activities and in-country companies, appraise them in person, and have "frank conversations," Bush says. They then present travelers with ways to leave a smaller footprint, give back to the community, and engage in philanthropy. "An advisor takes the worry of sustainability off the client by handling it for them," he adds.

How to find the right advisor

Don't blindly Google your way to a good advisor. First, consider consortia. The Virtuoso group is a network of some 20,000 travel

advisors and more than 1,800 travel companies; each one must be invited to join and must meet certain criteria regarding business model, philosophy, and culture. Signature Travel Network is another; it's been around since 1956. The AFAR Travel Advisory Council, meanwhile, is a small, selective group of 14 experts in experiential travel. Kiburz and Bush are both members. SmartFlyer is a travel agency of in-house advisors and more than 250 independent affiliates—Dearmon's agency, Perspectives Travel, is one of them.

The price of an advisor varies. According to Perrin, the cost is usually applied as a deposit toward the trip or as an additional fee.

But another option is to join a membership-based travel agency such as Indagare. For about \$3,000 per year, members receive unlimited customized itinerary planning, a dedicated "trip designer," and other perks.

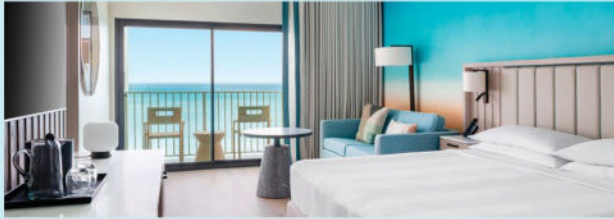
A good advisor is well-connected, well-traveled, and always learning, Bush says. He recommends searching for an advisor based near your home if you're after an in-person interaction; if you're not, Perrin suggests a phone or video call at minimum to kick off the planning. "It's important to find an advisor who you connect with and enjoy working with," Bush says, noting that successful partnerships can last years or even generations. "The goal is to find one who really gets your travel and communication style." **A**



Enlisting the right professional can also improve your travels in ways you may not have imagined.

Tropical Dreams Come True in the Cayman Islands

Find stellar restaurants, distinctive experiences, and utter bliss along world-renowned sandy shores.



Grand Cayman Marriott

Nestled in Seven Mile Beach's heart, Grand Cayman Marriott Resort offers an idyllic escape. Renovated in 2023, this oceanfront property features 301 rooms blending natural tones, reflecting the Caymans' tranquility. Styling is elevated yet relaxed. Put this unique island getaway on your must-visit list.

marriott.com



Cayman Villas

Let Cayman Villas unlock the secrets of the Cayman Islands. By combining exceptional beachfront rentals with in-depth knowledge of the area, Cayman Villas creates one-of-a-kind vacations filled with adventure and discovery. See the Islands through the eyes of locals.

reservations@caymanvillas.com
or caymanvillas.com



A SPECIAL NOTE FROM AFAR

"This trip is important to me because I've never been out of the country before."

—Brandon,
who traveled to Ghana with Learning AFAR

Donate now to change more lives.
Scan below or go to
afar.com/LearningAfarFund




A person wearing a red shirt and black pants is running on a dirt path in a red rock canyon. A white outline of the state of Georgia is overlaid on the image, with a star marking a location on the western side. The text "READY. SET. GA." is written in a white, stylized font across the center of the image.

READY.
SET.
GA.

EXPLORE
GEORGIA.

Look beyond the big cities, coastal beaches, and mountain trails to discover a hidden Georgia. Set off for Providence Canyon State Park and experience the canvas of pink, orange, purple, and red hues of Georgia's Little Grand Canyon. Whether you hike around its perimeter, take on the rugged 7-mile Backcountry Trail, or explore the individual canyons, there's an only-in-Georgia moment waiting to be found.

You're ready for a Georgia getaway. **Start yours at ExploreGeorgia.org.**

Providence Canyon State Park, Lumpkin |  [@capturecalliope](https://www.instagram.com/capturecalliope)



The


Best

New

Hotels

in the

World



A GREAT HOTEL can define an entire trip. So each year, AFAR's team of experts selects the world's best new and renovated arrivals, whether it's an Edwardian landmark in central London, a high-design hideaway in Marrakech, or a canvas-walled luxury camp set against the Utah desert's sweeping rock formations.

The 31 hotels we chose all opened in 2023 and were personally visited by our global network of seasoned editors, writers, and travel advisors. We vetted each of the properties for their noteworthy locations, stand-out design, exemplary service, and remarkable guest experiences. In addition, we paid attention to the work they're doing to tread lightly on the environment and to meaningfully engage with the communities around them.

Above all, the variety of lodgings on our list mirrors the thoughtful, eclectic, and wide-ranging ways travelers are exploring the world now. Read on to find inspiration for your next adventure.

—*Jennifer Flowers*



Shinta Mani Mustang, a Bensley Collection

NEPAL





The Shinta Mani Mustang brings Nepal's luxury circuit to new heights. Sitting at 9,200 feet on a rocky mountain-side in northern Nepal's Jomsom town, the original 2017 hotel structure (by Nepalese architect Prabal Shumsher Thapa) recently received a beautiful makeover by award-winning designer Bill Bensley. Now the 29 suites come furnished with custom-designed cashmere throws and Tibetan antiques; the restaurant serves fine-dining riffs on Himalayan staples such as noodle soup and *momo* (dumplings); and at the glass-walled spa, guests can schedule consultations with a traditional healer. Most notably, the lodge is a base camp for expeditions around Mustang, a Himalayan kingdom that only fully opened to international tourists in 1992. Day trips include drives to ancient mud villages, tours to Buddhist and Hindu sites, and hikes to glacier lakes that end with picnic lunches. *From \$1,800/night for two people. —Chris Schalkx*



There Are So Many Ways to Get Outside and
ENJOY FAMILY TIME IN ARIZONA

In a state with an abundance of options for travelers of all ages, how do you decide what to do?

Start here.

Outdoor Adventure

Feel the thrill of the vast desert wilderness.

Superior Jeep Tour

Go off-road to visit the small town of Superior, experience the Sonoran Desert and its majestic saguaro cacti, and stop at the Silver King Mine and historic Pinal Cemetery.

Kartchner Caverns

These caves under the Sonoran Desert boast 13,000 feet of passages and some of the world's longest stalactites. Take a guided tour, see some local bats, and admire fossils at the Discovery Center. Enjoy an overnight stay in a camping cabin with views of the Whetstone Mountains, right in the park.

Hit the Trails

Explore Arizona's legendary natural beauty.

Lost Dutchman State Park

According to legend, a Dutchman once emerged from the mountains here carrying a stash of gold. Today, this park draws adventurers seeking his mythical mine, as well as premier hiking, camping, and mountain biking.

Boyce Thompson Arboretum

Nearly three miles of paths wind through rare cacti in the Cactus Garden, the Children's Garden's maze, and more in this oasis with 19,000 plants from around the world.

Stay on a Ranch

Choose accommodations with local flavor.

Rancho de los Caballeros

Saddle up for a day of horseback riding at this 13,300-acre sanctuary or hit the links on the historic championship golf course—and revive after with a bourbon scrub or hot stone

massage at the spa. Enjoy spacious casitas and a kids' camp with roping and archery.

Circle Z Ranch

Channel the Old West spirit at this all-inclusive desert escape (conveniently near Kartchner Caverns). Arizona's original dude ranch, the property features seven adobe cottages, horseback riding, meals cooked from scratch, guided stargazing, and more.

Find more inspiration at VisitArizona.com

ARIZONA
THE GRAND CANYON STATE



34.77547° N, 112.05593° W

**Do things they
won't forget.**



Visit a new state of mind.

JOURNEYTOAZ.COM

ARIZONA
THE GRAND CANYON STATE

Raffles London at The OWO

ENGLAND

The much anticipated Raffles London at The OWO (pronounced “oh-whoa”—aka Old War Office) opened in September 2023 after an eight-year overhaul under the guidance of 37 heritage consultants. This Edwardian baroque landmark has seen a lot of history: Winston Churchill presided here; T.E. Lawrence, or Lawrence of Arabia, worked here; and MI5 and MI6 conducted operations from its halls (perhaps the reason the building appears in five James Bond films). The 120 guest rooms and suites are fashioned from former offices and state rooms and detailed with original oak paneling, marble, and a collection of bath products with a fragrance created just for the hotel. And thanks to several bars and restaurants—including three by Argentina-born superstar chef Mauro Colagreco—the OWO promises to turn the sleepy-at-night Whitehall area into a happening dining and drinking hub. *From \$1,264/night. —Anya von Bremzen*



THIS PAGE: COURTESY OF THE RAFFLES LONDON AT THE OWO.
OPPOSITE PAGE: TIMOTHY KAYE; LI-CHI PAN (BOTTOM RIGHT)

Capella Sydney

AUSTRALIA

The Capella Sydney feels like an oasis amid the city's vibrant harbor front, even though it's just steps from the iconic Opera House. Subtle indulgence is the reason to check in: Guests walk into a sun-soaked lobby, which spills into an indoor courtyard with a 23-foot vertical garden of local plants. As you settle into one of the 192 guest rooms (with harbor or city views, beds draped in Frette linens, and in some cases, huge freestanding tubs), impeccably dressed staff will deliver your bags. And if there are younger guests along, they'll bring a hunk of homemade rocky road candy and a freckle lollipop too. *From \$650/night. —Krisanne Fordham*



Fairmont Doha

QATAR

The Fairmont Doha is a bold step forward for a brand that has, at times, felt a little staid. True to its seaside location—in the scimitar-shaped Katara Towers—the hotel's 362 rooms and suites have a yacht-like feel, with big windows, scalloped leather headboards, and backlit onyx bathrooms. Impressive elements abound, from the skyline views on poolside sunbeds to the 4,807 pearl-shaped lights that cascade through the atrium. There's a good sense of fun here too: A towering acrylic cloche in the lobby is filled with cakes, and life-size ice sculptures (think mermaids and Barbie) are hand carved in the Asian restaurant Provok every few days. *From \$270/night. —Nicola Chilton*

ULUM Moab

UTAH, USA

A higher-end 2023 spin-off of the Under Canvas glamping brand, ULUM Moab offers visitors to Arches National Park and Canyonlands National Park an upscale experience through its luxurious design and amenities. Each of the 50 suite-style tents is 400 square feet and includes a king-size bed, a rain shower with Aesop bath products, a seating area with West Elm slingback chairs and coffee tables, a private patio, and a wood-burning stove. The main lodge is beautiful, with a chandelier made of quartzite rocks gathered on-site and floor-to-ceiling windows that frame the other desertscape, famed for its hiking, biking, and canyoneering. Outside, guests can use hot and cold dipping pools, a yoga deck, firepits, and a sprawling patio where local musicians play acoustic sets under the stars most nights. *From \$629/night. —Bailey Berg*

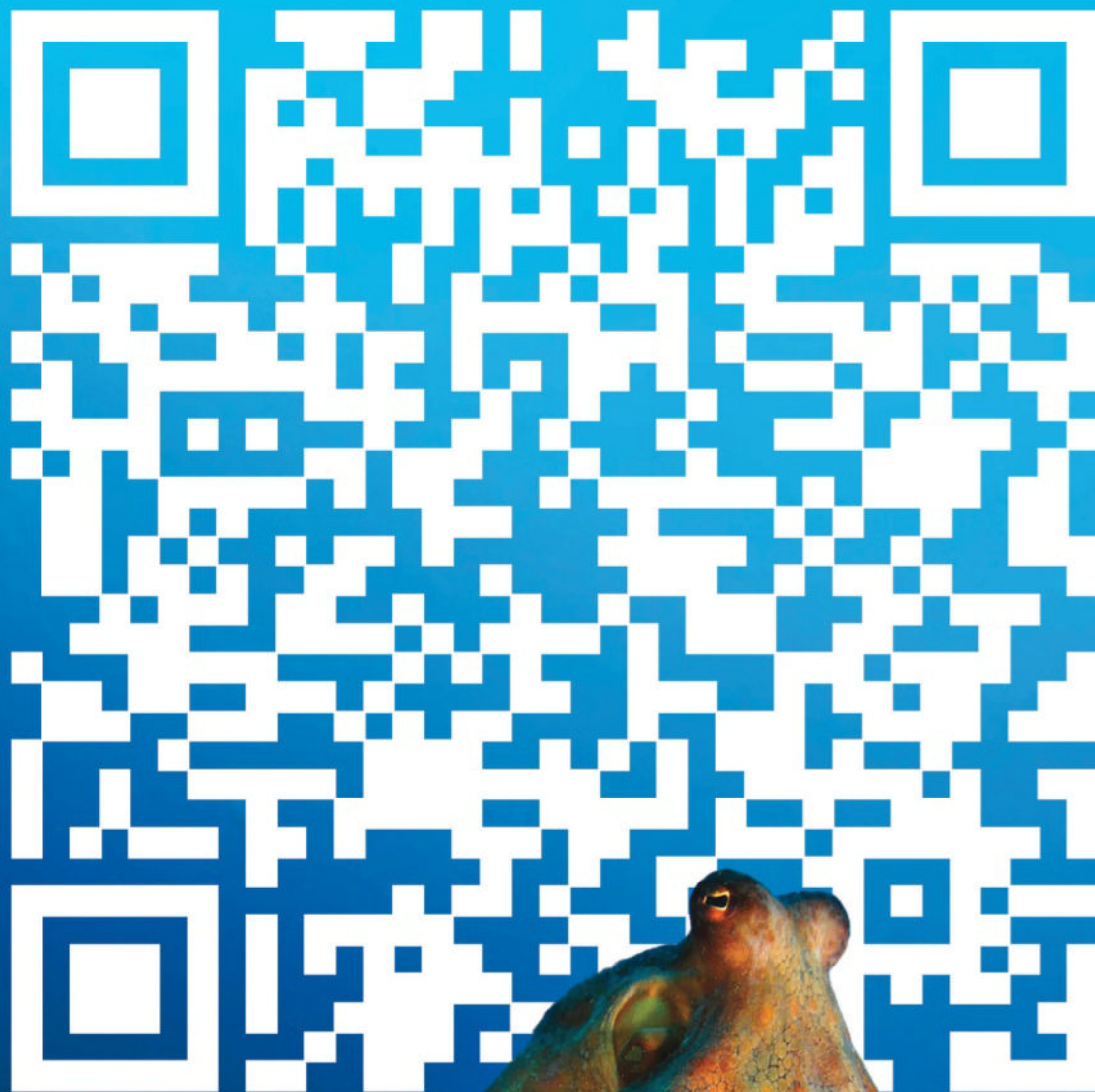


Sofitel Legend Casco Viejo Panama City

PANAMA

An anchor of Panama City's UNESCO-designated historic center, the Sofitel's French colonial-style manse started as a social club in 1917, hosting the likes of Queen Elizabeth II, Albert Einstein, and Helen Keller. Today, the rebuilt property's 159 rooms and suites are still fit for VIPs, decorated with four-poster beds and wrought-iron balconies overlooking the city and the ocean, with thoughtful nods to sustainability throughout. (There's no single-use plastic anywhere, for example.) The hotel also showcases Panamanian culture: The embroidery on staff uniforms is by celebrated fashion designer Federico Visuetti, lanterns on display in the lobby speak to the city's maritime roots, and a nearby farm is responsible for the house coffee. *From \$345/night. —Billie Cohen*

THIS QR CODE SAVES OCEANS



Become a Wavemaker Today

OCEANA

Protecting the
World's Oceans

© Oceana/Carlos Minguell



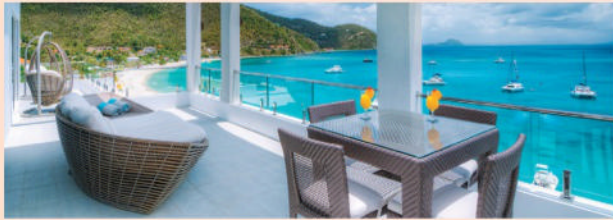
Highland Base Kerlingarfjöll

ICELAND

Iceland's remote central highlands have long been off the radar of most visitors, but Highland Base Kerlingarfjöll, the first all-season destination in the area from the team behind the Retreat at Blue Lagoon, is a game changer. A three-hour drive (at least) northeast from Reykjavík, half on gravel roads, it's for adventurous travelers who want to ski the region's backcountry or hike to natural hot springs, but prefer creature comforts such as rain showers and spiked hot chocolate. The 26 rooms, two suites, and six private lodges are decorated in a Nordic style with blond wood, textured linen sheets, and reading nooks set inside large picture windows. An on-site bathing area with a trio of geothermal outdoor pools and a sauna will open this year. *From \$430/night. —Lyndsey Matthews*

Discover Unmatched Beauty in the British Virgin Islands

Your Caribbean escape awaits in this archipelago.



Quito's Gazebo and Luxury Inn

Immerse yourself in reggae and relaxation at Tortola's most distinctive beach hotel, restaurant, and bar. Inspired by local musician Quito Rymer, the property's 21 suites overlooking the ocean are named after his songs.

QuitosBVI.com



The Moorings

Cruise one of the world's greatest sailing destinations with the British Virgin Islands' leading yacht charter. With five decades of expertise, The Moorings delivers unparalleled service, stunning scenery, exquisite cuisine, and white-sand beaches.

Moorings.com



PROMOTION

Travel reimagined

Take your travels from dream to reality. When you work with an advisor, you can count on expertise and a one-on-one relationship every step of the way. It's about trust. From custom trip planning to providing 24/7 white-glove service, advisors make it easy to travel with confidence—so you can get back to relishing the wonders of traveling deeper.

www.afar.com/tac

The Fifth Avenue Hotel

NEW YORK, USA



In an early-20th-century bank in New York City's NoMad neighborhood, the Fifth Avenue Hotel brings a maximalist approach to the liminal stretch between downtown and midtown Manhattan. Diverging from the stately limestone facade, designer Martin Brudnizki's whimsical interiors channel the ornate aesthetic for which the Gilded Age was known. The 153 rooms and suites—which span the top four floors of the original building (aka “the Mansion”) and a new 24-story tower—have a Wes Anderson vibe with botanical wallpaper, mother-of-pearl inlaid mini bars, tiger-stripe rugs, and chandeliers dripping with colorful baubles. Café Carmellini is earning buzz thanks to beloved New York City chef Andrew Carmellini, but don't miss the Portrait Bar, a wood-paneled boîte where the cocktail menu takes cues from the staff's travels: Try the Cartagena-inspired Barrio Getsemani (a crisp gin martini with passion fruit notes) or the St. James (an English milk punch with gin steeped in Earl Grey tea, cucumber, and blackberries). *From \$895/night. —Lyndsey Matthews*

THIS PAGE: WILLIAM ABRANOWICZ. OPPOSITE PAGE: MARINA DENISOVA

Riad Rosemary

MOROCCO

The Riad Rosemary strays far from the mosaic-and-carved-plaster aesthetic usually seen at Marrakech riad hotels. The result of a two-year renovation by Ayoub Boualam and Laurence Leenaert (the couple behind Marrakech-based design company LRNCE), this cozy five-room house centers on a calming courtyard where a towering jacaranda tree reaches up to a rooftop terrace, perfect for lazy breakfasts or afternoons lounging on a daybed with a good book. Each individually designed room combines Leenaert's swirling motifs (rendered in ceramic, textiles, and plaster) with flea market finds, vintage furniture, and handlaid terrazzo floors. The result feels part art deco, part mid-century modern, and fully Marrakech, like staying in the home of fun-loving friends who have exceptional taste. *From \$250/night. —Nicola Chilton*



Grand Hotel Son Net

SPAIN

Grand Hotel Son Net is set in the foothills of the Tramuntana mountains on the Mediterranean island of Mallorca, just a 20-minute drive from the center of its capital city, Palma. To stay in this freshly refurbished 31-room mansion is to time travel—through a baroque world of gold-flecked tapestries, stone archways, and portraits of royalty whose gazes contain lifetimes of intrigue, sex, and splendor. “Rooms” are more like a series of tasseled chambers, accented with such details as carved wooden ceilings, antique fireplaces, or elegant four-poster beds. The hotel’s outstanding cuisine spotlights dishes such as salt-grilled beetroot tartare and Mallorcan lobster stew. The property also has a private vineyard of malvasia grapes, from which Son Net bottles its own wine. *From \$653/night. —Sophie Mancini*



THIS PAGE: COURTESY OF GRAND HOTEL SON NET.
OPPOSITE PAGE: COURTESY OF KONA VILLAGE, A ROSEWOOD RESORT



Kona Village, a Rosewood Resort

HAWAII, USA

Kona Village opened on the island of Hawai'i in 1965 and gained fame for its surroundings: the blue waters of Kahuwai Bay, volcanic landscapes, swaying palms, and ancient petroglyph fields. Sadly, a tsunami destroyed the resort in 2011, but now Rosewood Hotels & Resorts has unveiled its long-awaited comeback, upping the ante on luxury while reinforcing cultural, environmental, and historical connections. The decor, from award-winning designer Nicole Hollis in collaboration with Kona Village's cultural committee (composed of direct lineal descendants of the land and other Hawai'i Island *kūpuna*, or honored elders), includes artworks commissioned by more than 30 native and resident Hawaiian artists, salvaged items from the original property, and handmade beds shaped like boats to reflect the area's fishing village past. Many of the 150 thatched-roof *hales*, or houses, feature large tubs, outdoor showers, and lanais, while the standalone Asaya Spa offers holistic treatments with views of lava flows. To top it off, the resort is solar-powered. *From \$1,800/night. —Dobrina Zhekova*



Mondrian Singapore Duxton

SINGAPORE

This smart newcomer taps into a side of the Lion City few hotels have explored. Instead of leaning into the city-state's colonial heritage or status as a fast-paced business hub, Mondrian Singapore Duxton celebrates its creative undercurrent. Staffed by former Olympians, DJs, and part-time drag queens, it's a social hub for clued-in locals, whom you'll find tapping away at laptops at Christina's (the hotel's café and cocktail bar) or schmoozing at one of several other bars and restaurants, such as Bottega di Carna, a meat-focused Italian affair by mustachioed celebrity butcher Dario Cecchini. Out-of-towners stay in the 302 rooms, some furnished with augmented reality-enhanced paintings and tall arched windows inspired by Singapore's traditional shophouses. *From \$320/night. —Chris Schalkx*

Maroma, a Belmond Hotel

MEXICO

A half-hour drive south of Cancún airport, crowded resorts with beachside parties are the norm. But one hotel stands out here, thanks to its location on a secluded stretch of sand: the Maroma, a Belmond Hotel, Riviera Maya. Belmond has overhauled the resort, now with 72 rooms and villas, while paying homage to the environment. There's a sea turtle sanctuary, a nursery dedicated to rescuing endemic plants, a conservation program for endangered bird species, and even a sustainable ocean golf experience. (The balls turn into fish food.) Guests get taken care of too: Accommodations come with sun hats, sandals, and cotton caftans for the beach—plus carafes of tequila and plates of fresh fruit. Staff are ready to arrange a yoga class or a cenote-inspired spa treatment. Just as soothing is an evening with margaritas and ceviche à la minute at the oceanfront Freddy's Bar. *From \$1,095/night. —Corina Quinn*



AN UNDENIABLE *American Masterpiece*



Art comes in many forms. Whether it's our picturesque mountain setting or our legacy of longest running Five-Star, Five-Diamond service, The Broadmoor is sure to take your breath away. Offering an array of award-winning restaurants, a Five-Star spa, championship golf courses, and adventurous activities like zip-lining, The Broadmoor is an experiential destination like no other.

Find your inspiration today at broadmoor.com.



THE BROADMOOR • *Sea Island* COMPANY



866.264.7009

BROADMOOR.COM

andBeyond Punakha River Lodge

BHUTAN

Travel outfitter and lodging company andBeyond has taken its conservation mission to the Himalayas with the Punakha River Lodge, on the banks of the Mo Chhu River in Bhutan's green Punakha Valley. Guests can choose from six safari-style tents hung on traditional Bhutanese timber structures, the two-bedroom family suite, or the private River House with its large windows framing views of the forest. Outdoor excursions double as introductions to the area's culture and bounty, such as a hike to an 18th-century Buddhist monastery for a private blessing, followed by a mountainside breakfast of buckwheat pancakes with local fruits. Ease post-trek muscles with a soak in the spa's wooden hot-stone bath filled with aromatic herbs. *From \$890/night. —Jane Broughton*



The Inn at Mattei's Tavern, Auberge Resorts Collection

CALIFORNIA, USA

A new generation of chefs and vintners has brought fresh energy to southern California's Santa Ynez Valley wine country recently, but aside from a few roadside inns and B&Bs, there hasn't been much in the way of luxury lodging—until Mattei's arrived. Set in a 19th-century stagecoach stop and tavern in Los Olivos surrounded by oak-studded hills, cattle ranches, and vineyards, its 67 guest rooms and four historic cottages are meticulously designed. The architecture, interiors, and culinary offerings are attuned to the location, from the poolside platter of seasonal produce to the antique horseshoes on the walls. What's more, this is a rare wine country resort that welcomes kids: The Tavern has a "pequeños" menu, and child-friendly experiences include a visit to a llama farm. *From \$648/night. —Julia Cosgrove*

LEFT: RACHEL WEILL. RIGHT: COURTESY OF THE INN AT MATTEI'S TAVERN, AUBERGE RESORTS COLLECTION



IF IT CAN
SHAPE THE
WEST

IMAGINE WHAT IT WILL
MAKE OF YOU

Elyse Guarino

MODERN EXPLORER

Rivers have always transformed so much more than the canyons through which they run. They change all those courageous enough to set out and see where they lead. Discover how Wyoming's Modern Explorers navigate whatever's around the bend at WYModernExplorers.com.

That's
WY



Carlton Cannes, a Regent Hotel

FRANCE

When it arrived on the scene in 1913, the Carlton helped turn Cannes into a well-heeled summer beach destination. More than a century later, following a painstaking restoration by Regent Hotels & Resorts, it endures as a symbol of the Belle Époque French Riviera. Gone are the false ceilings and large concierge counters that used to confine the lobby. Instead, the eye is drawn to soaring marble columns (uncovered under eight layers of paint) and Murano glass chandeliers—and beyond sits a tree-lined garden with an infinity pool. Of the 332 rooms and suites, choose a sea-view option with French windows opening onto a wrought-iron balcony. Here, cream-colored love seats offer the perfect place to study the ever-changing Mediterranean light. *From \$550/night. —Mary Winston Nicklin*

Six Senses Vana

INDIA



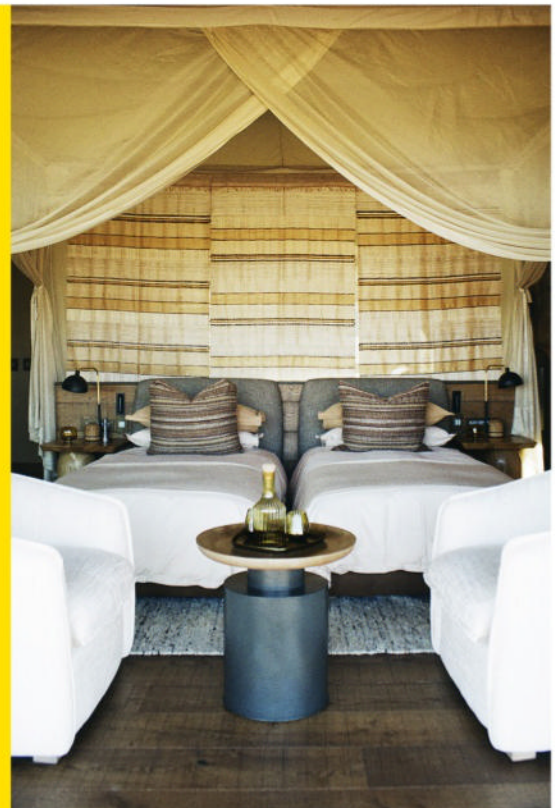
Six Senses Vana fuses ancient Ayurvedic medicine and modern spa rituals to create a wellness retreat in the foothills of the Himalayas, on the outskirts of Dehradun. The 82-room resort features bamboo-clad ceilings, handcrafted art installations, and massive windows overlooking a forest of sal trees, considered sacred in Hindu tradition. An Ayurvedic doctor tailors programs toward individual guest needs by tapping into practices from Tibetan medicine, Chinese acupuncture, and reflexology, combined with 20th-century treatments like compression boots and gold-leaf facials. And you can make it as intense or laid-back as you like. Want to drink wine? It's on the menu. Feel like sleeping in rather than rising for sun salutations? That's your choice. There are, however, some rules that guests need to play by: No cell phones in public spaces, and everyone gets organic cotton kurta pajamas to wear during their stay. *From \$630/night.*

—Laura Begley Bloom

Tswalu Kalahari Reserve, Loapi Tented Camp

SOUTH AFRICA

Tswalu Kalahari, in South Africa's semiarid Kalahari region, is the country's largest privately protected conservation area; at 282,000 acres, it's about the size of all five boroughs of New York City combined. In 2023 it welcomed Loapi Tented Camp, the third accommodation in the entire reserve. The camp ensures a highly personalized experience, making it ideal for families and multigenerational groups looking to shape their own trips. Each of the six "safari homes," as they're referred to, comes with a vehicle, guide, and tracker, as well as a private chef and butler, allowing guests to set the pace of each day. The decor is striking: pavilions of steel and canvas, with accents of wood, leather, and woven grasses. The information boards and maps in each home are a lovely touch; they highlight recent wildlife sightings and the ongoing conservation work at Tswalu. *From \$2,452/night.* —Richard Holmes



Southern Ocean Lodge

AUSTRALIA

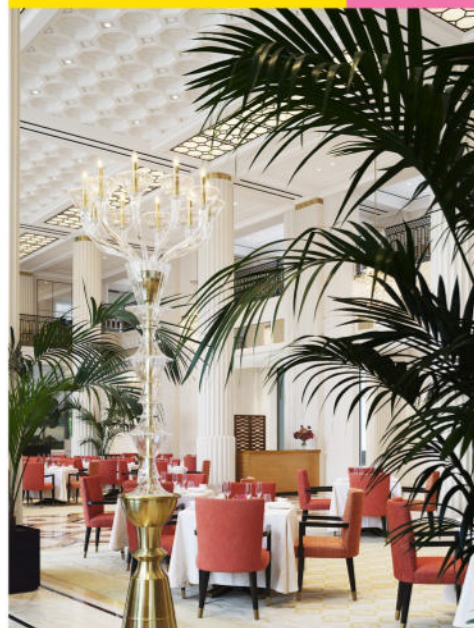
Can you improve on perfection? The rebuilt Southern Ocean Lodge may be proof positive. Anchored on limestone cliffs on the edge of Kangaroo Island (eight miles off the coast of South Australia), the lodge was razed by wildfires in 2020, but has reopened with several considered upgrades. Its 25 suites are oriented to take in uninterrupted views of the thundering surf, some with plunge pools overlooking the coastal bluff. Suites manage to be cozy as well as part of the spectacular wilderness, with terraces and fireplaces to boot. The island's wildlife is thriving once again, and everything that was much loved about the award-winning resort is back—including Sunshine, its kangaroo sculpture mascot. *From \$2,218/night.*
—Lee Tulloch



The Peninsula London

ENGLAND

Designed to suggest an understated version of a Renaissance palazzo, the Peninsula London wraps around a courtyard embellished with jasmine and wisteria vines, along with two 120-year-old Japanese maples. In the 190 rooms and suites—many with views of Wellington Arch or Hyde Park, others with terraces overlooking fancy Belgravia homes—celebrity designer Peter Marino's color scheme harmonizes off-white and palest blue with furniture accents of orange, jet black, and stony brown. Marino also designed the two-story belowground fitness center and spa, with an 82-foot heated pool and wood-paneled treatment rooms. Even in London's thrilling food scene, the Pen's dining and drinking options are in a league of their own. At Brooklands, chef Claude Bosi (of the two-Michelin-star Bibendum) serves Franco-British fare under a 46-foot model of a Concorde airliner. And at Canton Blue, chef Dicky To fuses Chinese techniques with regional ingredients in such dishes as British wagyu beef fried rice. *From \$1,640/night.* —Anya von Bremzen



TOP: GEORGE APOSTOLIDIS. BOTTOM: COURTESY OF PENINSULA HOTELS

SOUTHALL

FARM & INN



SOUTHALLTN.COM

615-282-2000 | FRANKLIN · TN

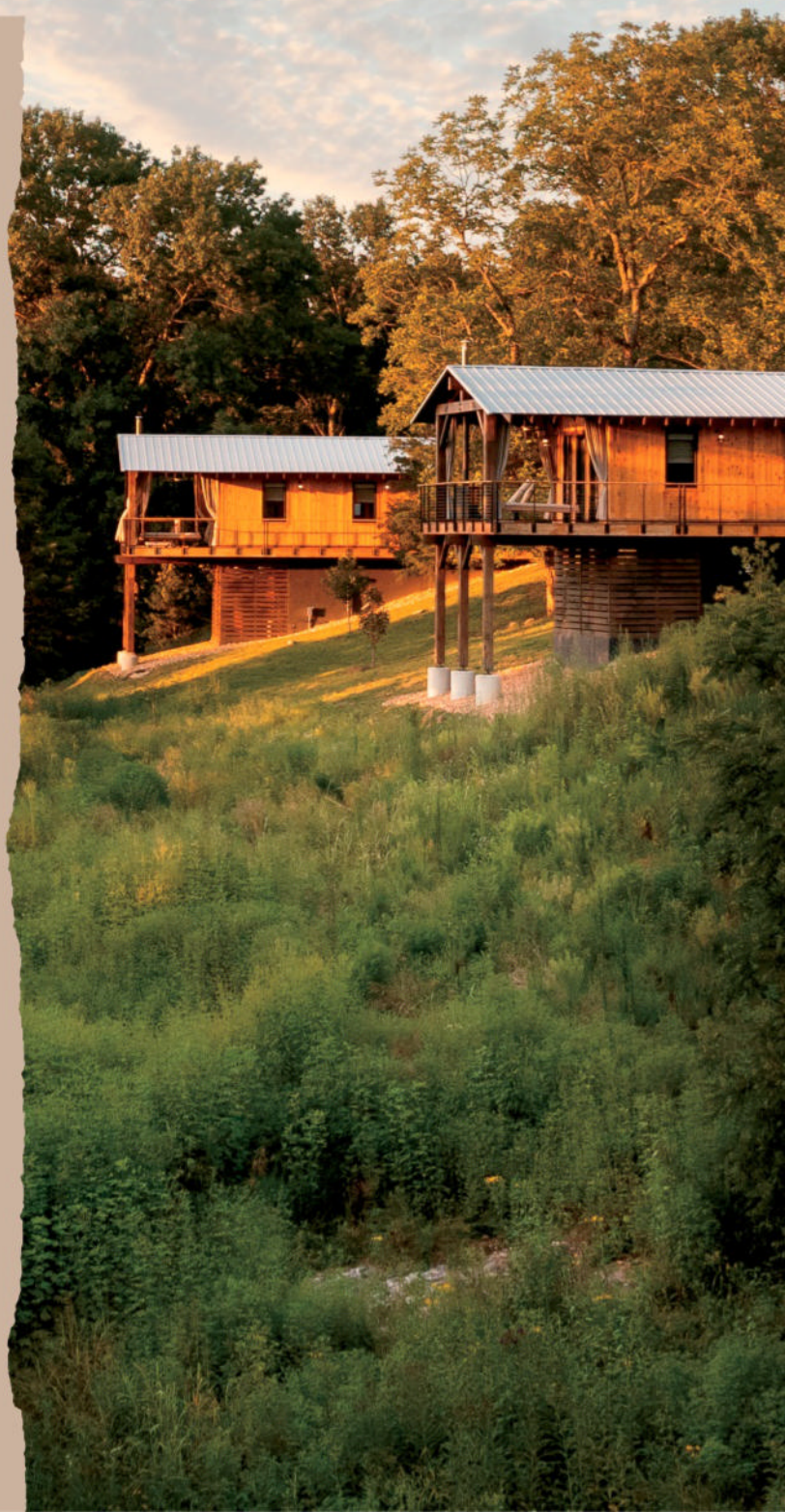


Where the Land Connects Us All

Outside of Nashville in historic Franklin, Tennessee, Southall is a 400+ acre resort with an inn, one-of-a-kind cottages, dining and spa experiences inspired by the land, and a working farm at the heart of it all. A place to gather, connect, and explore, Southall offers a wealth of nature-inspired activities that foster a deep appreciation for the land. From tours of our working farm, orchard, and greenhouses to culinary experiences, such as cooking demonstrations and seasonal tastings, Southall will ignite your curiosity and invite you to pursue new passions.

Adventure awaits with an array of activities, ranging from hiking and biking to a challenging aerial ropes course. Beautiful Lake Mishkin provides a picturesque setting for fishing, kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding, and more. Grounded in wellness, Southall will guide you to find balance with mindful pursuits that nourish the soul. Here, you'll enjoy a celebration of inventive cuisine, wellness experiences, and outdoor adventures that immerse you in nature.

Join us on the journey. Visit www.southalltn.com



Atlantis The Royal

DUBAI, UAE



Allow yourself to give in to the sheer exuberance and vast scale of Dubai's Atlantis The Royal, and you might find yourself falling for it. This is a place with fountains that burst into flames, a see-and-be-seen beach club run by chef Nobu Matsuhisa, and mesmerizing views from the sky-high Cloud 22 infinity pool. Towering over the edge of man-made Palm Jumeirah island, the stacked-block architecture includes 795 light-filled rooms and suites, many with huge terraces and glass-sided plunge pools for a dose of Dubai-level bling. Perhaps the real secret to the resort's success, though, is the service, delivered by a team of 2,000 staffers with the level of genuinely attentive friendliness you'd expect of a hotel one-tenth its size. *From \$580/night. —Nicola Chilton*

Bulgari Hotel Roma

ITALY

Situated in what was a former social security office in Rome's Piazza Augusto Imperatore, this hotel in the Campo Marzio district is one of many 1930s public administrative buildings designed by notable rationalist architects. An ancient statue of Augustus Caesar from the private Torlonia Collection greets visitors at the entrance, accompanied by a rotating exhibition of several other works from the collection—a nod to the marble sculptures that line the Pantheon nearby. The 114 rooms and suites have a contemporary design filled with light tones; the 16,000-square-foot spa is a modern vision of Roman baths; and the enormous rooftop terrace, with its couches and pergolas, is an ideal spot for watching the sun set over the city. *From \$2,050/night. —Erica Firpo*

Come to your Senses

SIP
&
SAVOR
CELEBRATE

JUNE 5-9, 2024

Join us for our
Wine Dinners, Labs,
Experiences and
Burlesque, Bubbly & Brunch



Enjoy Our Signature Events

Get your tickets today
nowfe.com

New Orleans
WINE & FOOD EXPERIENCE

32 YEARS OF EATING AND
DRINKING FOR A GOOD CAUSE



Vinola



Tournament
of Rosés



Grand Tasting



One&Only Aesthesis

GREECE

The One&Only Aesthesis is a 51-acre beachfront retreat just steps from the bars and boutiques of the swanky Athens Riviera neighborhood Glyfada, a half hour south of the city. But once inside the serene resort, all thoughts of urban life melt away. On this site in the 1950s and '60s, shipping magnates and celebrities gathered at the aptly named beach club Asteria (which comes from the Greek word for star). Today, One&Only's reinterpretation of that legendary hangout is a polished yet thoroughly relaxed sanctuary with 127 accommodation options including suites, breezy beach bungalows, two- and three-bedroom residences, and a pair of private seafront villas. At the hip restaurant Ora (from Italian-Greek chef Ettore Botrini, whose eponymous northern Athens restaurant bears a Michelin star), it's easy to conjure images of movie stars dining on langoustine dolmades in the backlit booths. *From \$1,280/night. —Helen Iatrou*



JW Marriott Jeju Resort & Spa

SOUTH KOREA

The island of Jeju, an hour's flight south of Seoul, had long been a getaway spot known mostly to regional travelers in search of sun, sand, and nature. But the opening of the clifftop JW Marriott Jeju Resort & Spa has helped put the destination—with its waterfalls, volcanic crater, and miles of coastal walking trails—in the international spotlight. Bangkok-based designer Bill Bensley infused interiors with eye-popping yellows, a nod to the canola fields that carpet Jeju Island in spring, and dark grays inspired by the basalt stone walls that hem nearby farms. There are plenty of tongue-in-cheek elements, too: Look for the faux taxidermy pigeons by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan perched on the *hanok*-style eaves in the lobby. Wellness lovers will appreciate the sprawling spa and the natural hot spring facility that's expected to open by spring 2024.

From \$900/night. —Chris Schalkx

Violino d'Oro

ITALY

Set along a canal near Piazza San Marco in Venice, Violino d'Oro (from the family-owned Florentine luxury brand Collezione EM) celebrates the city's artisan legacy in every fabric, furnishing, and piece of glass. Public spaces feature hand-placed Venetian *seminato* terrazzo flooring and Venini chandeliers, while the 32 guest rooms and suites—spread out across three palazzi—incorporate dark greens and smooth beiges. Details traverse local design history from the curtains, headboards, and pillows fashioned by 130-year-old Venetian textile company Rubelli to contemporary coffee tables and lamps. While enjoying a Doge's Fizz and *cicchetti* (Venetian tapas) at the cozy Il Piccolo bar, be on the lookout for hotel co-owner Sara Maestrelli, who has created a series of adventures outside the hotel, such as archeo-running tours (which combine sightseeing with jogging) and introductions to artists. *From \$865/night. —Erica Firpo*



Four Seasons Resort Tamarindo

MEXICO

When creating the Four Seasons Resort Tamarindo, set within a 3,000-acre protected nature reserve in Jalisco on the Pacific coast, the Mexican owners left 98 percent of the biodiverse jungle landscape alone. Guests can explore it on guided hikes and bike tours, biologist-led night safaris, or boat excursions along six miles of shoreline. The hotel itself is a showcase of Mexican talent, from the brutalist structures using local marble and volcanic rock (by architecture firm LegoRocha) to traditional crafts in the 157 guest rooms, such as framed textiles and handwoven hammocks. Suites come with private infinity pools, while beach and “nature” rooms are closer to the spa, three tiers of pools, a casual taquería, and a restaurant run in collaboration with chef Elena Reygadas of Mexico City’s beloved Rosetta. *From \$1,600/night. —Lyndsey Matthews*



The Hotel Maria

FINLAND

The Hotel Maria is the latest luxury accommodation to open in Helsinki. Spread across four historic buildings built between 1885 and 1930 on chic, residential Mariankatu street, it radiates a regal elegance: The ivory-on-white lobby makes for an impressive welcome, and an understated aesthetic of creams with brass accents creates a relaxed ambience throughout the 117 rooms and suites (most about twice the size compared to other luxury hotels in Helsinki). More than 150 chandeliers are suspended from the complex’s high ceilings, and, in true Finnish style, many of the suites have fireplaces and private saunas. Guests can connect with a wellness concierge and an experience manager before their arrival to customize activities for their stay. *From \$496/night. —Kate Doyle Hooper*

ARIZONA BILTMORE™
A WALDORF ASTORIA® RESORT

Stay in Splendor this season
at the Arizona Biltmore.



YOU CAN LINGER LONGER WITH A \$500 RESORT CREDIT WHEN YOU STAY FOUR NIGHTS
AT OUR LEGENDARY PROPERTY, CELEBRATING 95 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE.

ArizonaBiltmore.com | 602.955.6600 | 2400 E Missouri Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85016

Angama Amboseli

KENYA

The new sister property to Angama Mara brings the safari lodge's people-driven ethos to the 5,700-acre Kimana Sanctuary, Kenya's first community-owned conservancy. Everyone on the staff, more than 70 percent of whom hail from the surrounding area, treats each guest like a family member and a partner in conservation. For instance, they will explain how the sanctuary serves as a vital corridor for wildlife, including some of Africa's last super tusker elephants, who move between the nearby Chyulu Hills and Amboseli national parks. The 10 suites, styled with serene natural tones offset by stark modern blacks, feature outdoor showers, private verandas, and



views of Mount Kilimanjaro. The camp's aesthetic complements the environment: The round infinity pool sits above a lowered trench so that resident elephants can take a drink; elephant dung is used to add texture to exterior walls; and a semicircle chartreuse sofa is inspired by the leaves of the ubiquitous acacia trees. *From \$1,650/person/night.*
—*Sarika Bansal*



5 Openings to Watch in 2024

The Surrey, a Corinthia Hotel / New York, USA

The U.S. debut of Malta-based Corinthia Hotels, slated for summer 2024, will occupy a 1926 residence hotel in New York City that once hosted the likes of JFK and Bette Davis. The 100 rooms and suites will be dressed up with richly textured fabrics in greens, blues, and muted golds. *From \$900/night.*

Mandarin Oriental Mayfair, London / England

Expected in spring 2024, London's second Mandarin Oriental is housed in a modern red brick, metal, and glass building designed by the firm of late British architect Richard Rogers (he was a codesigner of the Centre Pompidou in Paris). The 50 guest rooms take cues from haute couture, with handpainted silk wallpaper and carpets with floral motifs. Chef Akira Back—acclaimed for his Seoul restaurant, Dosa, and other international outposts—will oversee the dining venues. *From \$1,168/night.*

Janu Tokyo / Japan

Cult favorite luxury hotel group Aman now has a sibling brand, Janu, whose flagship opened near the buzzing Roppongi neighborhood. Where Aman tends to be hushed and secluded, Janu leans playful and social. The 122 rooms and suites have a minimalist aesthetic, and the 43,000-square-foot wellness center has a hammam, seven treatment rooms, and two pools. *From \$944/night.*

One&Only One Za'abeel / Dubai, UAE

Dubai gained another superlative when this urban resort opened in January 2024: Its two towers are connected by the world's longest cantilever. The 229 sprawling guest rooms and suites, with panoramic skyline views, were made to feel graceful and uncluttered. Don't miss a meal at one of the 11 restaurants—six of them helmed by chefs with other Michelin-starred establishments. *From \$835/night.*

Soneva Secret / Maldives

Sonu Shivasani, founder of the sustainability-minded Maldives resort Soneva Fushi, is behind the new Soneva Secret brand, which focuses on remote destinations that get travelers—children included—closer to nature while maintaining a near-zero carbon footprint. The 14 overwater and beach villas have an airy indoor-outdoor vibe and retractable roofs for stargazing; the restaurant has an overwater wine cellar with a glass floor. *From \$3,200/night.*

—*Jennifer Flowers*

Ambiente Sedona

ARIZONA, USA

Sedona's red rocks are world famous, but at Ambiente Sedona, they are merely part of the backyard. The adults-only hotel is made up of 40 cube-shaped villas designed to celebrate the natural surroundings. In each "atrium," as the resort calls the villas, floor-to-ceiling windows capture 180-degree views of those rocks and the Coconino National Forest. Private rooftops are outfitted with a firepit and chaises for epic stargazing. (Sedona is a certified Dark Sky Community.) The hotel also has direct access to the region's Adobe Jack Trail, a well-marked path that connects to more difficult hikes. But with the comforts of the cube—down bedding, an oversize soaking tub, complimentary snacks—getting out there might be tougher than it sounds. *From \$999/night. —Katherine LaGrave*

The Peninsula Istanbul

TÜRKIYE

The new Peninsula Istanbul has a distinct East-West sensibility that harmonizes with the way this ancient metropolis literally bridges Europe and Asia. Located on the lively Karaköy waterfront, the hotel restored three heritage buildings that had been closed to the public for decades, and constructed a fourth specifically for the complex. The best local *ustas* (craftspeople) were enlisted to work on its marble, stained glass, and *sedef*, a type of traditional mother-of-pearl inlay. Additionally, designer Zeynep Fadilloğlu incorporated cultural nods throughout the 177 guest rooms, such as the curtains' subtle embroidery, as well as in the underground spa, where light fittings modeled on Islamic honeycomb niches (*muqarnas*) reflect on a swimming pool. Don't miss the views or the food at Gallada, the rooftop restaurant by chef Fatih Tutak, the city's reigning sultan of creative fine dining. *From \$755/night. —Anya von Bremzen*







Le Grand Mazarin

FRANCE

Blink and you might miss Le Grand Mazarin's discreet entrance in the heart of Paris's Le Marais district, but even in the small lobby—with its pleated moiré fabric ceiling, basket-weave parquet wooden floor, and tasseled wall sconces—this hotel makes a bold statement. Swedish designer Martin Brudnizki is behind the look; he took inspiration from 18th-century French literary salons and eastern European houses to design everything from the restaurant and bar to the spa and pool area. The 50 guest rooms and 11 suites, all with nonuniform shapes due to the historic building's architecture, are filled with brightly patterned furnishings. One-of-a-kind details created in partnership with local artists include ornate tapestry bed canopies juxtaposed with funky painted table lamps. *From \$560/night.*

—Devorah Lev-Tov 



Embrace the Welcoming Spirit of Florida

With gorgeous beaches, unique and varied accommodations, and outstanding dining—from mom-and-pop spots to innovative cuisine—the Sunshine State invites you to experience its many charms and modern Southern hospitality.

Another amazing day on the horizon.



Some come for the weather. Some for the food. And some just to experience the rich, colorful history and cool vibe that could only be Key West. Whatever brings you here, every day is filled with so much to look forward to, and amazing experiences to look back on forever.

fla-keys.com/keywest 1.800.527.8539





Fort Jefferson in Dry
Tortugas National Park

Follow Your Bliss in Extraordinary Key West

Thanks to its relaxed vibe and inclusive spirit, this laid-back locale filled with white-sand beaches makes finding contentment easy.

The simple pleasures of **Key West** are perhaps its biggest appeal. It's about what we're all ultimately after—a fulfilling life shaped by the places we explore, the people we meet, and the delicious meals we savor. Near-endless dining options, a “come as you are” attitude, and adventure await on the Florida Keys’ most far-flung island, a dreamy setting for living the good life.

A colorful history, long-standing community, and unique accommodations all contribute to the inclusive atmosphere that defines easygoing Key West. Discover the eclectic art scene, fascinating museums, and

restaurants ranging from fine dining to cozy Cuban coffee shops. You'll quickly learn that Florida's southernmost extreme offers an ideal balance of fun and freedom spilling from gingerbread architecture into streets canopied by trees.

When you're not reveling in pristine beaches and wide-open spaces, visit shipwreck museums, take snorkeling trips, embark on fishing expeditions, and enjoy a **Conch Tour Train**. A life well-lived is effortless in Key West.

Learn more at Fla-Keys.com/Key-West

Top Key West Hotels

Marrero's Guest Mansion

Experience historic charm and modern convenience in Key West. This family-owned boutique hotel, a converted Victorian home, offers 12 unique guest rooms, a lush courtyard and private pool, and complimentary breakfast.

Ocean Key Resort and Spa

Choose between guest rooms and suites—all featuring private balconies, local art, and hand-painted furnishings—at this waterfront resort at the foot of **Duval Street**. After exploring the island's most famous thoroughfare, unwind at the property's private pool or boutique spa.



Welcome

TO MOMENTS YOU'LL
NEVER FORGET



In Greater Fort Lauderdale, carefree beach days are just the beginning. Share the excitement of an Everglades airboat ride, or exploring Flamingo Gardens, Butterfly World and fascinating museums. Your beach playground awaits with unforgettable fun for everyone in your family. And we can't wait to welcome you.



Plan Your Adventure at
[VisitLauderdale.com](https://www.VisitLauderdale.com)



Enjoy Family Time and Luxuriate in Greater Fort Lauderdale's Charm

The fascinating museums, sunny beaches, and animal attractions of southeast Florida ensure lasting memories with loved ones.

Lose yourself in the beauty of a tropical paradise where every desire is met and anticipated with open arms. On a visit to Florida's southeastern coast, beachfront dining, stays at exclusive resorts, and unparalleled hospitality make for a getaway in style. Welcome to **Greater Fort Lauderdale**.

It's a beach playground with 24 miles of golden shores, a setting that combines moments of sublime personal relaxation with the endless joys of bonding with family. And carefree beach days are just the beginning.

Brace yourself for unforgettable adventures. Explore the wonders of **Butterfly World**, the largest butterfly park on Earth, or embark on an exhilarating **Everglades** ecotour with an airboat ride. Check out captivating exhibits at the **Museum of Discovery and Science**, and engage with the lush landscapes of **Flamingo Gardens**, where nature meets education.

Be inspired at
VisitLauderdale.com



Crowd-Pleasing Accommodations

Fort Lauderdale Marriott Pompano Beach Resort & Spa

At this beachfront property, enjoy multiple pools and easy access to water sports and fishing charters in the harbor town of Pompano Beach. Then relax in a spacious room or suite with a private balcony and ocean views.

Pelican Grand Beach Resort

Find contemporary beach-inspired accommodations, onsite paddleboard rentals, activities for kids, and a zero-entry pool at this family-friendly resort near shopping and cultural attractions in Fort Lauderdale.



LET'S GET AWAY, TOGETHER.



Set sail for dolphin sightings and sunset cruises. Wander white-sand beaches and amazing museums. Build epic sandcastles and the perfect seafood pairing. Make every moment a memory in St. Pete/Clearwater. Let's shine—plan your escape at VisitStPeteClearwater.com



**ST.PETE
CLEARWATER
FLORIDA**





Let the Seaside Beauty of St. Pete/Clearwater Wrap You in Its Warm Embrace

Plan a trip to this destination on Florida's Gulf Coast to experience some of the top sandy shores in the United States for yourself.

In **St. Pete/Clearwater**, home to **America's Best Beaches**, paradise awaits. Celebrated for sugary white sands and emerald waters, this stunning region along Florida's Gulf Coast will make you wonder why you'd ever consider another vacation spot.

Take a sunny stroll along the **St. Pete Pier** or explore the new *Dali Alive 360* exhibit at the **Dali Museum**, one of the world's most acclaimed collections devoted to a single modern artist. You can also visit a botanical

garden, hike through a lush nature park, or go on a dolphin-watching cruise as seabirds soar overhead. Plus, the area boasts a wide array of accommodations, ensuring you'll find the hotel, beachfront resort, or charming rental to suit your preferences. No matter your choice, you're guaranteed to leave rejuvenated and without a care in the world.

**Plan your next getaway at
VisitStPeteClearwater.com**



Where to Stay on the Waterfront

JW Marriott Clearwater Beach Resort & Spa

Soak up the sun at this 16-story resort with gulf views. Swim in the rooftop pool, stroll **Clearwater Beach**, and then retreat to one of 198 guest rooms for a restful sleep.

The Vinoy Resort & Golf Club, Autograph Collection

Embrace a local icon with a stay at this historic resort in **downtown St. Pete**. A recent renovation restored the grandeur of this bayfront property's pink, Mediterranean revival-style façade and 354 guest rooms.



Amelia Island Combines Coastal Wonders with Downtown Delights

Discover 13 miles of shoreline, historic charm, and Southern hospitality, all in one easily accessible location.

Imagine a destination with abundant shopping and dining, ample outdoor recreation options, and uncrowded beaches—all much closer than you think. Just 30 minutes from Jacksonville International Airport and nearby Interstate 95, **Amelia Island** beckons with a range of activities and accommodations.

Choose one of the island's bed-and-breakfasts for an intimate retreat with an "Old Florida" vibe. The shady courtyard and lush gardens of **The Addison** (addisononamelia.com) reflect the elegance of a bygone era. An 1885 Italianate villa houses **Fairbanks House** (fairbankshouse.com), which has a private pool.



The Best Things to Do

Hit the Beach

Revel in vast stretches of sandy seaside along the Atlantic Ocean. These pristine shores, caressed by gentle waves and framed by natural dunes, seem entirely untouched.

Experience Downtown

Explore 50 blocks of Victorian-era architecture in downtown Fernandina Beach. Relish boutiques and a local dining scene specializing in fresh seafood, Southern classics, and delicious desserts.

Take a Hike

Embark on adventures beneath statuesque oaks draped in Spanish moss. Wander through history at **Fort Clinch State Park** or follow the winding nature trails of **Egans Creek Greenway** through maritime forests and marshlands.



Also consider **Williams House's** (williamshouse.com) luxury accommodations in an antebellum mansion. All three inns are just steps away from historic **Fernandina Beach** and offer complimentary breakfast, personalized concierge service, and modern amenities in remarkable settings.

At **Hampton Inn & Suites Amelia Island-Historic Harbor Front** (ameliaislandharborfrontsuites.hamptoninn.com), marina sunset views are the norm. Guests can expect free parking, Wi-Fi, and a delicious breakfast buffet at this boutique-style hotel, with more

than 50 nearby restaurants and shops within walking distance and a beach that's minutes away. Or opt for **Omni Amelia Island Resort** (omniameliainland.com), a beachfront retreat with access to championship golf, a spa, and the region's largest pool deck. Each of the 402 modern rooms boasts stunning views. With preserved marshlands for exciting adventures like kayaking and paddleboarding, along with a variety of onsite restaurants, it's an ideal spot for your dream Florida vacation.

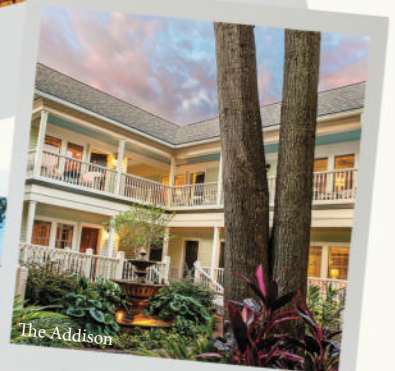
Learn more at
AmeliaIsland.com



Williams House



Hampton Inn & Suites
Amelia Island-Historic Harbor Front



The Addison

The Palm Beaches COLLECTION

Florida's *Most Stylish* Vacation Destination



When you visit The Palm Beaches, you'll trade one-size-fits-all experiences for a vacation that's custom-fit to your desires. Curate the perfect vacation at ThePalmBeaches.com.





Revel in the Enduring Appeal of The Palm Beaches

Explore 39 distinct towns and experience fun in the sun, as well as shopping, golf, and dining.

The **Palm Beaches** have been the go-to warm-weather getaway for discerning guests for more than 125 years. In **America's First Resort Destination**, where a vibrant mix of cultures and coastal towns welcomes all, genuine hospitality is a way of life.

Check out 47 miles of golden coastline, savor critically acclaimed restaurants, take a swing in **Florida's Golf Capital**, and shop Worth Avenue and the Royal Poinciana Plaza. In **Florida's Cultural Capital**, museums and theatres are plentiful, and kids are also in for a treat with fantastic animal encounters and water parks.

Time-travel in historic **Palm Beach** or sample the art and culinary treasures of **Boca Raton**. Discover dozens more destinations, from the unspoiled natural beauty of **Jupiter** to the lively culture of **West Palm Beach**, the eclectic atmosphere of **Delray Beach**, and the golf haven of **Palm Beach Gardens**, home of the PGA.

Pack your bags—the ultimate vacation begins here.

Plan your visit at
ThePalmBeaches.com



Exceptional Hotels

The Breakers Palm Beach

This seaside estate has hosted presidents and foreign dignitaries.

PGA National Resort

Golf year-round at this Palm Beach Gardens resort.

Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa

Unwind at an ideal waterfront spot for families.

The Boca Raton

Discover the top-rated spa at this stylish haven.

Hilton West Palm Beach

Turn to this hotel for downtown excitement.

The Brazilian Court Hotel

Experience 1920s glamour at this intimate Palm Beach property.

Music IN WASHINGTON, DC

The nation's capital is a melodic hub, uniting artists and enthusiasts among a tapestry of sounds and styles.



WASHINGTON
DC
WASHINGTON.ORG

THERE'S ONLY ONE DC



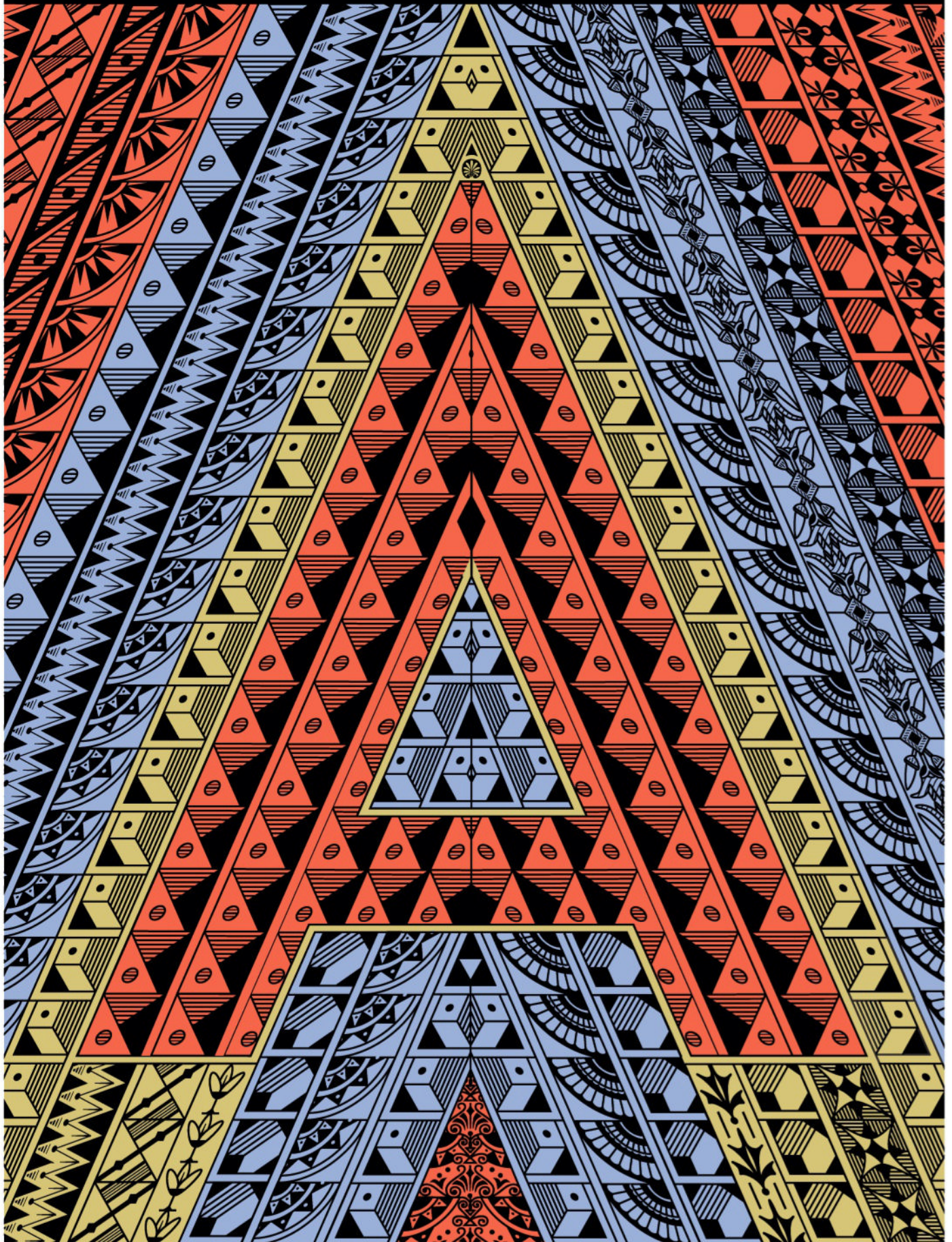
#ONLY1DC



Echostage © Jordan Sabillo



FEATURES





IN SICILY, A GRAND
EXPERIMENT IS
UNDERWAY: REVIVING
CENTURIES-OLD
VILLAGES BY SELLING
OFF VACANT
HOUSES FOR NEXT
TO NOTHING.



WRITER
LISA ABEND HEADS
TO THE LARGEST
ISLAND IN THE
MEDITERRANEAN
TO SEE IF—
AND HOW—LIFE
HAS CHANGED.

Photographs by Julia Nimke



LIKE ANY SMALL TOWN that isn't yours, Sambuca di Sicilia, located about an hour's drive south of the Sicilian capital, Palermo, feels a little intimidating at first. Stroll its perimeter on a late afternoon in winter, when the sun sets the buildings alight, and eyes follow you. Order the town's signature *minni di virgini*—breast-shaped cakes filled with cream, chocolate chips, and squash jam—and a hush silences the chatter in the local bakery. It's not unfriendly, this exaggerated alertness, but it does make you, the visitor, feel a bit self-conscious.

By the time I walk into a small restaurant that first evening seeking dinner, my self-consciousness has reached an uncomfortable peak. The restaurant's only other guests, a middle-aged couple, fall quiet as I make my way to a table. After the waiter and I stumble through my order, impeded by his poor English and my worse Italian, I pull out a book to hide my awkwardness while I wait for the food. But when the first course arrives—a heap of ocher-tinted pasta topped with crimson shrimp and shards of pistachios—I am so clearly delighted by the dish that the waiter then decides we are friends. He introduces himself by name, Giovanni, and when two women with their children enter the restaurant, he seats them next to me and introduces them as well. "*La famiglia*," he says—his own,

and that of the chef, who, stepping out from the kitchen to kiss his wife, also comes over to greet me.

Two hours later, I walk out into the night air, aloft on a wave of bonhomie and sturdy Sicilian wine. *Oh yes*, I think to myself. *I could live here.*

I'm not the only person to arrive at that revelation. In fact, I had come to Sicily to investigate a program that has attracted thousands with the same notion. A program that allows people, although they may not have the financial wherewithal to go full-bore Tuscan-villa-with-frescoed-ceilings-and-private-vineyard, to nevertheless live a different version of the dream. A program that promises them a house for a single euro.

Since the 19th century, large numbers of villagers in the poorer parts of Italy have migrated to more prosperous regions and countries. The migration continues; in some places, populations have shrunk so dramatically that there



are no longer enough patients to keep the local doctor in business, or enough children to fill the school. Young people who moved away to study or work didn't want to return, and when their parents died, the family homes stood empty, sometimes for decades. Around 2010, the village of Salemi in western Sicily was one of the first towns to come up with an idea: What if you could fill them again by offering the properties for sale at a ridiculously low price?

I wasn't in the market for a house, one euro or otherwise. But I wanted to know if the program worked. Though the rumors I'd heard about driving in Sicily gave me pause—highways that suddenly turn into rutted cow paths; drivers whose chosen passing method involves achieving the closest possible proximity to the fender of the car in front of them—I decided to set out in a rental car through villages in various stages of implementing the initiative. Were once-sepulchral towns reinvigorated by newcomers eager

to put down roots? Were the new residents integrating into small-town life, or was an influx of new blood bringing unintended side effects? And did a town that drew enough newcomers lose the qualities that had attracted said newcomers in the first place?

THE MORNING AFTER my dinner in Sambuca di Sicilia, I leave my home base to see my first one-euro house. Before that, I stop in the Valley of the Temples. Located in a national park, the valley preserves the remains of a Greek colony founded in the 6th century B.C.E. on land inhabited by the indigenous Sicani. A couple of millennia later, the original temples to Hercules and Hera survive, but so does evidence of Carthaginian rampage and Roman reconstruction. Those peoples would in time be followed by Vandals from northern

From left: Mussomeli is roughly 60 miles from Palermo; in the small town of Sambuca di Sicilia, Pasticceria Enrico Pendola is one of few bakeries; the population of Sambuca di Sicilia has declined because of a low birth rate, but the town gained media attention after The Sopranos actress Lorraine Bracco bought a home there.

AS WE SLOWLY MAKE
OUR WAY UP CAMMARATA'S
STEEP STREETS,
THE SILENCE GIVES WAY
TO THE SOUND OF
HAMMERS AND SAWS.
"HEAR THAT?" GIRACELLO
ASKS. "IT'S WORKING."

Europe and Muslims from Africa, to say nothing of the French and Spanish. Standing there, looking at the gold-colored columns of once-grand temples set against the sparkling sea and flowering almond trees, time seemed to bend. Outsiders, I realize, have been making their homes here for a long time.

They've also been leaving. When I arrive in Cammarata, a steep jumble of a village whose mountains are dusted with snow, I can feel an absence. In the winter sunshine, it's beautiful, but it's also empty. In the 15 minutes I spend standing in front of a very sleepy-looking town hall, where I've arranged to meet architect Martina Giracello, not one person passes by.

Finally, Giracello arrives, her corkscrew curls bobbing, and explains the silence. "People here wanted to live in larger, more modern apartments," she says. Many moved to neighboring San Giovanni Gemini, about half a mile away, where the gentler topography allows for larger buildings and better conveniences. Now, Giracello tells me, "the one real estate agency in the area doesn't even handle houses in the historic center."

Like other young people from the region, Giracello and her boyfriend, Gianluca, moved away for university and to start their professional careers. But as they approached the end of their 20s, they returned to Cammarata, yearning for a quieter life. They also wanted, however, some kind of cultural scene, and neighbors their own age. "We studied other towns with one-euro programs, saw that for a lot of buyers, once they are there, the house is just a vacation home, and they don't have a relation to the people there," she tells me. "We wanted to do something different. We wanted to create a community."

They banded together with other professionals to form a volunteer association called StreetTo, which convinces the owners of abandoned properties to sell, then helps foreigners find their houses and navigate the inspections, paperwork, and renovations that follow. And, in the hopes of forging community, they also organize exhibitions, concerts, and gatherings for townspeople old and new. Driven by their desire to revive the Cammarata they love, StreetTo's members offer these services free of charge.



("At the moment, it is a project geared toward foreigners, but what we want is to also bring Cammarata's citizens back, just as Gianluca and I have come back," Giracello says.)

It's not pure altruism, though. Their town gets something in the way of revitalization. As we slowly make our way up Cammarata's steep streets, the silence gives way to the sound of hammers and saws. "Hear that?" Giracello asks. "It's working."

Panting from the climb, we reach the first property, where Giracello introduces me to the reality of what one euro buys you: not much. The home, more vertically challenged shed than house, has what real estate ads might call "significant structural issues" and what I might call "a massive hole in the roof."

This page, from top: The members of StreetTo want to rejuvenate Cammarata; Sambuca di Sicilia was a prominent trading hub centuries ago.

Opposite page: Mussomeli Castle was built in 1370. Sitting atop a limestone crag, it is a popular attraction on the island.





For an extravagance like a ceiling, Giracello says, you'll need to spend a bit more. We press on to another house. Pushing open the heavy wooden door, she mentions its price—just over \$10,000. The tall, narrow home is built, like many older Sicilian dwellings, with a single room per floor, its stairwell is carpeted in debris, and the battered sink and laminate countertops make it look like the kitchen was outfitted sometime around World War II. But the floor is adorned with beautiful geometric tiles, and a view of the valley spills through the windows. "We try to find houses in not really good condition," Giracello says. "Because the purpose of the project is to help the town get better."

StreetTo has helped negotiate the sale of 18 houses so far, but contract negotiations and renovations are still in progress, and none of the buyers have been able to move into their homes yet. But Giracello is confident it won't be long before her village swells with new life. She pulls out her phone to show me a video.

"When a German nurse and her husband bought a place, a local couple were so happy to see new people that they held a dinner for them, and invited us," she says. "Even though the Germans didn't speak Italian and the Italians didn't speak German, now they are all friends." She pauses. "We are all friends."



MY NEXT STOP is Mussomeli, located nearly in the center of the island. Unlike many Sicilian towns, which drape themselves seductively across a ridge, Mussomeli is all about the vertical. On the morning I approach, the craggy volcanic outcroppings that rise from the valley below have trapped pools of mist, making the town appear to be floating on clouds. It feels like entering Middle Earth.

The illusion doesn't last: With a population of nearly 11,000 people, Mussomeli is large enough to support a Carrefour supermarket and even a mini traffic jam. But as I push on to the town's core, the fantasy returns. Mussomeli's heart holds ancient churches, tiny squares where kids play ball, and views from its tangled streets of that mystical valley and a hilltop with the ruins of a 14th-century castle.

Streets so tangled, in fact, that I get lost, and ask for directions in a dark, tiny bakery selling nothing but focaccia. I pay for an oily square, and ask the elderly man behind the counter what he thinks about the foreigners moving to town. "There aren't so many here now," he says. "But in summer they buy a lot of focaccia."

Seems a fair trade. Mussomeli doesn't cater to tourism, but between its services and charm, more than 200 inexpensive homes have been bought by foreigners in the past few years. Australian Danny McCubbin owns one of them. Ready for a quieter life after 17 years of working in London for the chef Jamie Oliver, McCubbin was recruited by producers late in 2019 for a television show that planned to follow people on their one-euro adventures in Mussomeli. The pandemic intervened and the show was never finished,

but McCubbin had found his purpose. By the end of 2020, he had decided to move permanently to Mussomeli and turn his home into a community kitchen to help people with inadequate access to food.

After I make several wrong turns, I find McCubbin, clearing dishes from a long, communal table. He'd just served lunch to local residents and Ukrainian children welcomed by the town after fleeing the war. These days, the Good Kitchen also supplies weekly meals for the elderly and has taught some of Mussomeli's youth to cook. A clutch of older men use the space as an afternoon hangout, and there's also a free Sunday afternoon lunch. (The only requirement for those with means is that they bring something to share.) Not long ago, Mussomeli's mayor told McCubbin that he had planted a seed, and that more in Mussomeli were now thinking about social projects. "My whole way of living is so simple and joyful now," McCubbin says. "I don't know where else I could have done this."

Rubia Andrade Daniels has also adjusted her expectations. One of the earliest buyers in Mussomeli, she fell in love with a vibe that reminds her of the Brazil where she was born and spent her childhood, but that also seems open to the kind of diversity she's found in California, where she has lived for the past 30 years. "For the first few days, I couldn't figure out why people here were being so nice to me," she says with a laugh. "Then I realized they're like that to everyone."

Andrade Daniels, who works for a renewable energy company, loved the town so much she purchased three one-euro houses on her first visit in 2019. Four years later, her enthusiasm remains undimmed, but her timetable has shifted: The kitchen in the house where she plans on living part time once she retires wasn't finished until August 2023, and progress on the other two—an art gallery and a wellness center—has been pushed to an undetermined future, in part due to the pandemic and the delays in its wake. "You can't have American expectations," she says. "Here, things take the time they take."

I THINK ABOUT THAT PACE each day when I return to my base in Sambuca di Sicilia. There, too, there's been such demand for the listed houses that one euro is no longer the final sale cost but rather the opening bid in an auction that could see prices rise into the thousands. Even then, the campaign was so popular that the municipality launched a second round in 2021, with an increase in the starting price—to two euros.

Margherita Licata, who has been summering in Sambuca since childhood and eventually settled here full time about 20 years ago, says that "99 percent" of Sambucans welcome the newcomers. The other 1 percent? "They worry they have been invaded by Americans," says Licata, who works for a real estate agency in town. "If Sambuca one day has a thousand outsiders living here, of course it will change our lives. But it will maybe mean the young [people] can find a job and not go somewhere else. If we want that change, we must accept other changes too."

Of course, it's possible that Sambuca could become transfigured by take-out coffee joints and big-box stores and other supposed comforts that the town's new residents like. Already, some Americans have complained about the local teenagers who cruise the streets on their motorbikes at night. And imported class divisions are also emerging: Among the more free-spirited DIYers who have purchased homes, rumors circulate that some of the wealthier buyers want to build an exclusive, members-only swimming pool.

But for now, there's little evidence of a non-Sicilian presence in Sambuca, and it remains difficult to find anyone who speaks English. What I did find was an archaeology museum where, after I inquired if it was open, a woman rushed

Clockwise from top left: The Valley of the Temples has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1997; Australian Danny McCubbin moved to Mussomeli in 2020; the town of Cammarata has worked with StreetTo since 2021; the Good Kitchen rescues surplus food from supermarkets to provide for people in need.



This page, from left: Margherita Licata has lived in Sambuca for roughly 20 years; Mussomeli is one of the most popular towns in Sicily for one-euro home programs.

Opposite page: About the size of New Hampshire, Sicily has 4.8 million residents.

out, turned on the lights, and marched me at breakneck speed through the antiquities on display while barking descriptions of them at me in Italian. I also found a market that popped up alongside the traffic circle where the fishmonger told me how to cook the sardines I bought from the back of his van, as well as a café whose arancini made me finally understand why anyone would want to eat fried balls of rice, and where the elderly man who glared at me as I drank my breakfast cappuccino turned out not to be annoyed with the foreigner invading his morning sanctuary, but just waiting for the opportunity to ask me if I knew his cousins in New Jersey.

I'd arrived in Sicily wondering if the one-euro initiative would ruin the towns that adopted it, replacing their traditional culture with more consumerist ones and destroying their lifestyle and easy sociability. And when that turned out not to be the case, I also wondered if it wasn't simply a matter of time: Perhaps the pandemic had slowed an already slower way of doing business, and the reckoning would still surely come.

But as I sat again in that same restaurant from the first night, it seemed to me that Sicily would be just fine. Maybe the slower pace was not a flaw that would eventually be overcome, but instead a feature that would ensure Sicily remains alluringly and unequivocally itself. After all, I thought, as I remembered the

Valley of the Temples, different peoples have been arriving on these shores for millennia. They may leave an imprint; they may shape the culture. But it's clear that a distinctively Sicilian spirit still dominates.

And so, just before my departure from the island, I went to visit Margherita Licata again, but this time for reasons slightly more personal. Because I had seen enough one-euro homes to know that my powers of imagination were no match for their state of decrepitude, we skipped right to a "premium" home. As soon as she pushed open the doors to the arched courtyard, I was entranced. The rooms were rundown and furnished with old-fashioned chandeliers and faded wallpaper. But they were also large and bright, with intact walls and floors covered with gorgeous patterned tiles. Downstairs, there was an attached space that would make a perfect rental apartment. Upstairs, two rooftop terraces offered views of the town center in one direction, and a lake in the other.

"Fifty thousand euros," Licata told me with a wink. "But that's just what the owner's asking."

The money in my bank account had not magically grown during my time in Sicily. But my imagination must have. Because in that moment, it all seemed possible. **A**

Contributing writer Lisa Abend explored Italian aperitivo culture for AFAR's Summer 2022 issue. For AFAR's Fall 2023 issue, photographer Julia Nimke shot Slovenia.



THE AFAR GUIDE TO SICILY

Italy's largest island has hit travelers' radars in a major way, thanks in large part to the second season of HBO's *The White Lotus*, which was filmed in Taormina. But beyond that picturesque cliff-top town, visitors will find baroque architecture, beautiful beaches, lively street markets, volcanic peaks, and sprawling vineyards. —*Laura Itzkowitz*

WHAT TO DO

Palermo

At various points in history, the island's capital has been under the control of Romans, Byzantines, Normans, Arabs, Germans, French, and Spanish—and their influences can be seen in the art, architecture, and food. Palermo's notable center includes the Teatro Politeama Garibaldi, Santa Caterina d'Alessandria church, and Cappella Palatina (royal chapel); at Ballarò and Vucciria markets, try specialties like arancini (fried rice balls) and *panelle* (chickpea fritters).

The Southeast Coast

The charming island of Ortigia, which is connected to the city of Syracuse by bridge, has both cultural and beach offerings. Try fruit at the Antico Mercato di Ortigia, admire Arethusa Spring, tour the ancient Cattedrale Metropolitana della Natività di Maria Santissima, and sunbathe on Fontane Bianche beach—all in a day.

Back on Sicily proper, Noto is famous for its well-preserved architecture and beaches, including the Lido di Noto, lined with beach clubs, and the wilder Vendicari Nature Reserve. Don't miss the granita at the famed Caffè Sicilia.

The whitewashed fishing village of Marzamemi, 30 minutes from Noto, comes alive on summer evenings. Book a table at Taverna La Cialoma on the main piazza, or grab some fritto misto (mixed fried seafood) from one of the casual spots on the side streets.

Agrigento and the Scala dei Turchi

On the island's southwestern coast, Agrigento is home to the historic Valley of the Temples. (In the summer, it stays open until 11 p.m. so you can evade the sweltering heat and crowds.) But first, stop at Lounge Beach Scala dei Turchi for a sunset *aperitivo* overlooking the Scala dei Turchi, a terraced cliff of bright white marl rock.

WHERE TO STAY

Villa Igiea

Though it was initially built in the 1900s, the art nouveau Villa Igiea got a top-to-bottom renovation in 2021 courtesy of the Rocco Forte Hotels group. Thanks to a restaurant and bar overlooking the sea, extensive gardens, a spa, and pool, it's the toast of Palermo.

Il San Corrado di Noto

Occupying a *masseria* (a type of farmhouse common in southern Italy) that once belonged to a prince, this Relais & Châteaux hotel has 34 gleaming rooms, suites, and villas—plus a casual grill and gourmet restaurant, swimming pools, a tennis court, and a spa. A grand beach club is a short drive away.

Verdura Resort

Rocco Forte Hotels' first property in Sicily, Verdura sits on 568 acres just outside Sciacca, a town known for artisan ceramics. Standalone villas are ideal for families and privacy-seeking guests, as is the private beach.

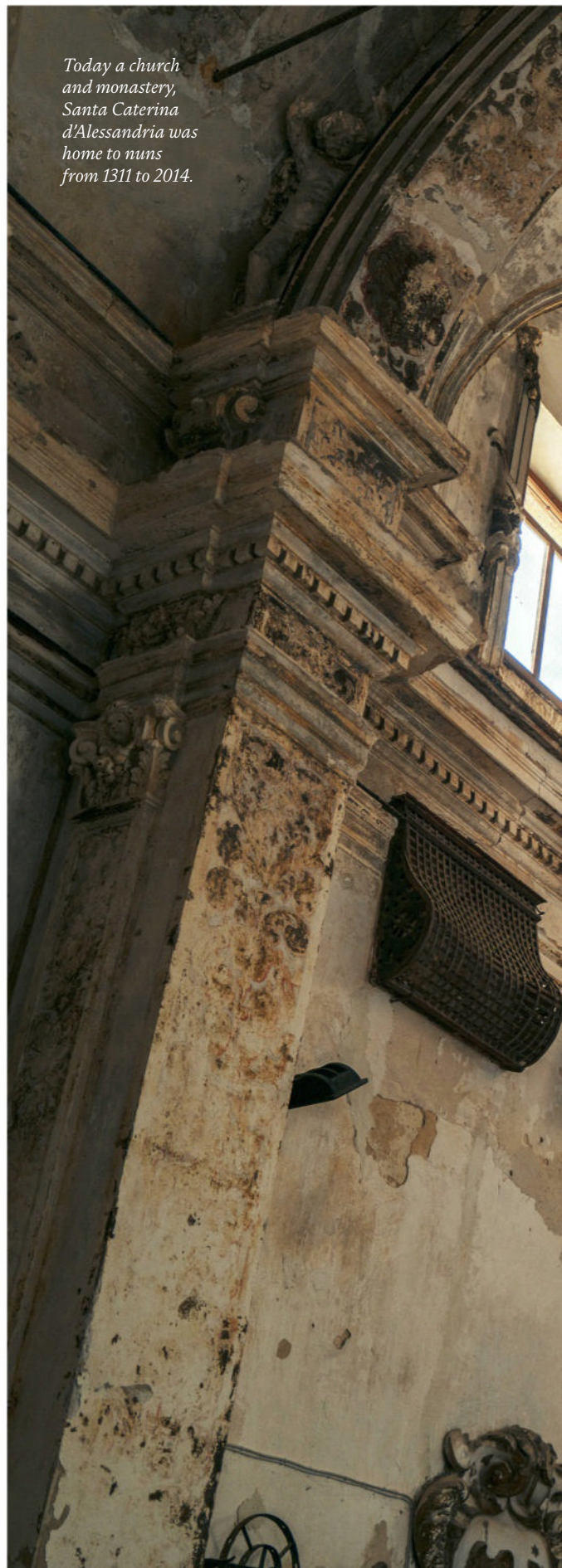
San Domenico Palace

Known most recently for its turn in *The White Lotus*, the Taormina-based San Domenico Palace was a convent in the 14th century and converted into a hotel in 1896; today, it is a Four Seasons property. With incredible views of the coast, it also offers two bars, three restaurants, gardens, and an infinity pool.

WHEN TO GO

In the summer, Sicily bustles with people who flock to the beaches by day and the towns by night, and many shops and attractions stay open late. To avoid the crowds and find more affordable rates at hotels, visit in the spring or fall, when temperatures hover in the mid-70s.

Today a church and monastery, Santa Caterina d'Alessandria was home to nuns from 1311 to 1914.





by Tess Taylor

IRELAND'S DINGLE PENINSULA IS RUGGED, REMOTE, AND



WILD—AND BELOVED FOR THOSE VERY REASONS.

Photographs by Michelle Heimerman



I don't see how we're making it to dinner,
I said to my husband, Taylor,
as we picked our way up a craggy hill, our backs to the North Atlantic.
We were 13 miles into
a 43-mile, three-day trek across the Dingle Peninsula,
Ireland's westernmost promontory.
We had set out that morning from the music-filled port town of Dingle,
hiking toward Dunquin, a tiny settlement
facing the Blasket Islands archipelago.
Just before lunch, we'd wandered off the path to explore the ruins
of a 7th-century monastery and had gotten slightly lost finding our way back.

Now we were late cresting the peninsula's shoulder.
Over the ridge we could just spy Mount Brandon,
a 3,000-foot-tall pilgrimage site, once an outer edge of the known world.
Below us, scalloped beaches beckoned.
This was all made less glorious by knowing we had five miles to trek
before we could sleep, and that
the one year-round restaurant in Dunquin might close before we got there.

We were walking the Dingle Way
to mark our 15th wedding anniversary. Our years together
had been mostly lucky and happy,
but during the pandemic
we'd faced illness and disappointment in close quarters.
Our kids had been home for a year and a half;
California's wildfires had raged near our house.
It felt like the right time to reset,
to reflect on our lives.

We'd arrived in Dingle exhausted
and frazzled the day before.
Hiking out of town that morning,
along the shoulder of a busy road,
I wasn't sure I'd chosen the right sort of celebration.

*Wouldn't it have been
better just to rest?*

But eventually we had walked
down flowering hedgerows and picked
through sparkling pastures.
We'd admired the village of Ventry
and eaten lunch on an empty beach.





Now it was late afternoon.

As we walked across

the knobbled hillsides toward Dunquin

and watched the sun's shadow cross stony ridges,

I considered the ways that hiking here was inviting us into a different rhythm,

where we might imagine time at the scale of centuries,

space at the pace of the foot.

It felt intimate to take paths

that people had traversed for thousands of years.

A few miles back,

in a pasture overlooking the water,

we'd passed beehive huts,

round stone enclosures where early Christian hermit monks

had passed solitary lives.

A few hillsides over there was a prehistoric henge.

The stones began to call me.

They evidenced such ongoing, deliberate work:

to shelter,

to worship,

to survive.

No less than great European cathedrals,

the henges and huts around us were incredible, anonymous

feats of intergenerational labor.

Even the stone pasture walls we walked alongside,

marking a remote hill line, must have been there for centuries.

Now they were woven with bluebells, gorse, and orchids:

They held lives

within lives.

I thought of all the people who had worked here,

high up, hefting one stone at a time.

What if you imagined this was your whole life's work?

I said to Taylor, as we clambered over

one more stone wall perched on an improbably high rocky slope.

To raise some sheep,

to mend some walls that would outlive you?

We listened to the burble of a ferny stream.

Then Taylor rejoined me,

turning the question toward our lives:

If you could only move a few stones in a lifetime,

what stones would they be? What walls do you want to mend?

His words hung in the air.

A few minutes before 8 p.m., the light sinking low,

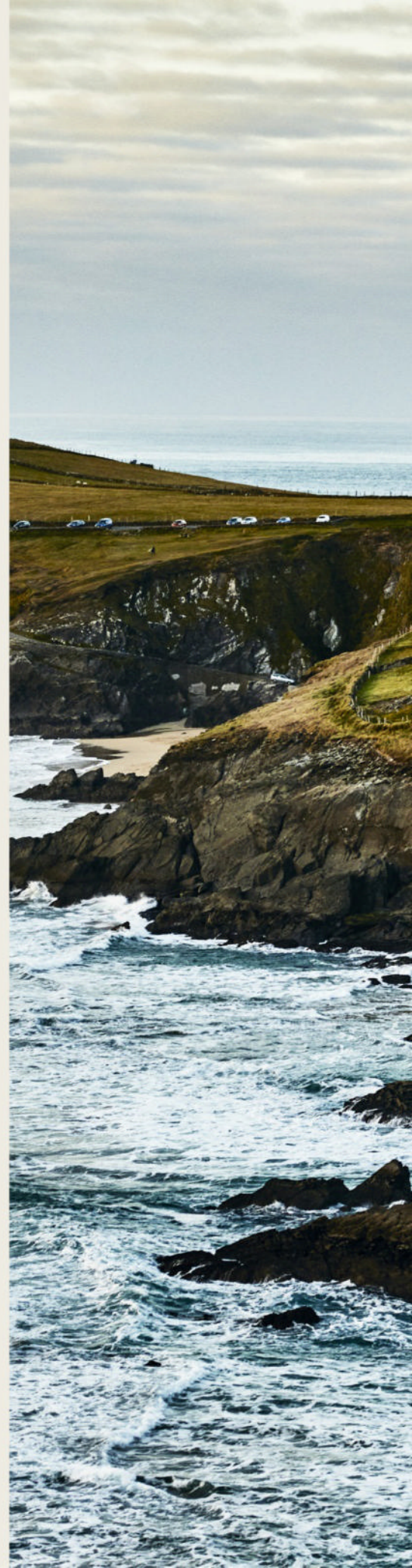
we got to dinner—

an unremarkable but hugely restorative fish and chips at Kruger's Bar,
which bills itself as "Ireland's most westerly bar."

We watched the marigold sun slink between black islands.

We slept like stones ourselves,

and when we woke, surprised ourselves by being ready to walk again.





The next day was less hilly.
 We traced a windy beach,
 identifying lapwings and sea thrift plants,
 grateful for a shorter hike—only 10 miles.
 By afternoon we were drinking cider
 in Ballyferriter, nearer Mount Brandon's base,
 toasting our day's walk over delicious salmon.

Our final morning, we had 15 miles to go,
 this time over Mount Brandon.
 Before our climb, we visited the Gallarus oratory,
 a roughly thousand-year-old structure,
 perhaps Ireland's best-preserved early Christian church.
 It is graceful, spare, and small;
 stone walls narrow to a steep, improbable peak.
 A slim door opens onto a cell with one window.



When we arrived, the window was casting
 a beam of morning light,
 seemingly falling just where a visitor might kneel.
 Taylor and I marveled at the beveled stone, not a bit of mortar in sight.
 We talked again about the labor of sustaining
 something that lives beyond any one life—in this case, a room
 for hope, prayer, and light.

We left the oratory. The sun climbed higher: We began scaling Mount Brandon,
 which was steeper than it looked, and rockier, too.
 High up the slopes, wind rang in my ears.
 I remembered that people had come here for ages to honor Brandon, a 6th-century saint
 who may or may not have once set sail
 for what is now Iceland. Before that, people had worshipped
 the Celtic god Lugh. The hike was also hard going. For long periods
 I couldn't think at all.
 The rise seemed endless. At the crest,
 a fierce wind swept my hat away.



What I love about walking days is this:
 The body falls into rhythm. From this rhythm,
 the mind grows clear.
 On and off throughout the hike, I heard myself thinking:

*What are the walls in my world that need mending?
 How can I leave something strong and lovely to the future?
 What is my work?
 What is my stone?*

The questions had become a mantra.
 As we descended the mountain,
 and the wind grew still, I hoped that clarity, too,
 had a smooth round shape,
 a weight I could touch and carry for the road beyond. **A**

Writer Tess Taylor is profiled on page 16. Michelle Heimerman
 is AFAR's photo editor.

98

HOW TO DO IT

The Dingle Way is a 109-mile loop that begins and ends in the town of Tralee in southwestern Ireland. The walk is divided into eight sections. To learn more, visit thedingleway.ie.



P

H

I

*Great
American
Cities*

L

A

D

In the City of Brotherly Love, culinary creativity and a rich artistic scene reign supreme. Four tastemakers explain why Philly is the place to be.

E

L

P

by Joseph Hernandez
Photographs by Ted Nghiem

H

I

A

Lettering by Ximena Jiménez



*Chutatip "Nok" Suntaranon owns Philadelphia's
award-winning Thai restaurant Kalaya.*

F

For years, travelers have visited Philadelphia to experience stories written long ago: to walk in Benjamin Franklin's footsteps, see the birthplace of the Declaration of Independence, and, of course, check out that broken bell. But the stories unfolding in Philly today show the world its trailblazing present and future.

In 2023, Philadelphia took home more James Beard Awards than any other city in the United States, a testament to the immense talent of its restaurateurs and chefs. Similarly, the city's art scene has been attracting acclaim, and not just for its famed institutions such as the Barnes Foundation. Philadelphia features more than 4,000 public artworks, with murals found everywhere from cobblestoned Society Hill to busy Baltimore Avenue.

We spoke with four of the city's creative leaders about how visitors can best experience Philly today: Chef Chutatip "Nok" Suntaranon of the restaurant Kalaya; Shannon Maldonado, who runs Yowie, a boutique hotel and shop; Conrad Benner, who documents Philly's vibrant street-art scene; and chef Chad Williams of the restaurant Friday Saturday Sunday.





CHUTATIP "NOK" SUNTARANON
Chef & Restaurateur

MY HOUSE, MY RULES

In 2023, Chutatip "Nok" Suntaranon was named Best Mid-Atlantic Chef by the James Beard Foundation, a nonprofit that celebrates restaurants and chefs in the U.S. Prior to rising to the top of the restaurant world in the United States, she spent two decades as a business class flight attendant for Kuwait Airways and Thai Airways. For six years during that time, she also ran a restaurant in Bangkok. She moved to the States in 2010, where she trained at the French Culinary Institute in New York City. In 2019, Suntaranon opened her 32-seat Thai eatery, Kalaya, in Philadelphia's Italian Market, one of the country's oldest open-air markets. Thousands of dumplings and a pandemic later, in 2022, Suntaranon moved Kalaya to an expansive former warehouse in Fishtown.

"I STARTED TO FALL IN LOVE with Philly slowly. I moved here for my relationship. I did not think of it as my home, since I was coming from Bangkok, where I had a full life. In my hometown [Yan Ta Khao in southern Thailand], my family took care of everybody. Hospitality is in my blood.

When I conceived of Kalaya, I started to think about how I was going to do the food I wanted to do. Everything would come out at the same time, family style. We would eat like how we eat at home. This is my food. This is the food that my family eats. It is our culture. [As a guest at Kalaya,] you are coming into my home. My house, my rules—we don't change our food to suit other people's tastes.

It's your choice to walk through our door, and it's your choice to be happy or not happy. If you already have a perception about how 'ethnic food' should be seen the minute that you step foot in our restaurant, I can't help with that. All I can do is stay true to myself.

When I opened Kalaya in the Italian Market, I started to build relationships with my neighbors. And Philadelphia's food scene always inspired me: chef Marc Vetri, longtime restaurateur Ellen Yin, and more. I can't imagine another city that's small but has such a big personality.

Philly has a lot of potential, each neighborhood is so unique. Philadelphians support small businesses and know what they want to live a good life. No matter what is going on in Philly, we thrive, we're resilient, and we're not cookie-cutter."

At her Philadelphia restaurant, Kalaya, chef Chutatip "Nok" Suntaranon serves dumplings, curries, and other foods inspired by her Thai childhood. Drinks include a tom kha colada and a hibiscus soda.

SHANNON MALDONADO
Fashion Designer & Hotelier

A LIFE IN COLOR

In 2015, after a decade working in fashion in New York (Tommy Hilfiger, Ralph Lauren, American Eagle), Shannon Maldonado wanted to bring a sense of whimsy and design to the city where she grew up. She opened her housewares shop Yowie online in 2016, followed by a brick-and-mortar store in 2018. Named after Australia's version of the yeti, Yowie quickly gained acclaim for showcasing local artists and stylish decor. In 2021, Maldonado and her business partners bought two adjacent row houses on South Street, where they built a 13-suite boutique hotel and store, plus a café called Wim.

"I GREW UP ON Fourth Street and Dickinson in South Philly. I always liked drawing and art. My mom is a talented seamstress; she didn't go to school for design, but she always made her own clothes and our Christmas and Easter outfits. I started sewing thanks to her guidance when I was about 10.

My mom would purchase patterns from McCall's and Butterick on Fourth Street, in an area called Fabric Row. One of my favorite shops there, now gone, sold 'notions,' like zippers and buttons and rhinestones. I was obsessed because it was all about embellishment, all the little things that make a product unique.

When I was looking for a location for Yowie's first store, I happened upon a space on Fourth Street and I didn't think twice. People were saying, 'You should look at other spots.' I said, 'No, it's meant to be on Fabric Row.' I'm a big believer in serendipity and timing, and it just felt like the right place for me, to know that I had been on that block so many times as a kid.



Some of my childhood inspirations [led] to Yowie's aesthetic today, which I describe as minimal, no clutter, but mixed with bright primary colors. I believe design can be both functional and playful. You'll see that in the hotel rooms, which juxtapose modern furniture from Blu Dot with bold ceramic pieces from artists such as Sara Ekua Todd and Jeff Rubio.

When I opened the shop in 2018, I wanted to bring in an element of community building. This was mostly self-ish because I wanted to make new friends. We're always trying to be seen as more than just a place to sleep or buy things. We want you to connect with us, and the artists that we work with, through events that we do in the space, such as our craft workshops and our multicourse dinners with local chefs.

One of the biggest ways I've found to create community is to simply show up. I go to neighborhood stuff all the time. I go to zoning hearings. Being present and helping people is how I've always tried to do it."



Shannon Maldonado was drawn to South Street as a location for her hotel and shop, Yowie. Over the decades, the area has been home to art galleries, vintage stores, jazz clubs, sneaker retailers, and a punk rock scene.



THE AFAR GUIDE TO

If there is one word to describe Philadelphia, it's "proud." The city of 1.6 million people is a hub of creative energy, supported by a loud and loyal populace passionate about their home.

by Joseph Hernandez

WHERE TO EAT

Every few years, Philly seems to undergo a pizza boom. The latest entry in must-have pies is the samosa pizza at **Carbon Copy**, a brewery in West Philly. A white pizza topped with potatoes and Madras curry oil, it is a contender for one of the city's best new dishes. Mexican food is equally ubiquitous; head to **Cantina La Martina** for *aguachile* and frozen cocktails. Over at **Honeysuckle Provisions**, an Afrocentric grocer, the café serves such items as grits and eggs, a West Indian patty, and a "Dolla" hoagie (a turkey or turnip

sandwich with sesame-seed mayo and Havarti cheese). Historic **Reading Terminal Market** is a perennial favorite, with 70-plus vendors selling everything from Pennsylvania Dutch baked goods to Georgian *khachapuri* to, of course, cheesesteaks. Meanwhile, the **Breakfast Den's** diner-style *thit kho* hash (with pulled pork, jalapeños, and cheddar) is an American-style dish with bold Vietnamese flavors.



PHILADELPHIA

WHERE TO SHOP

Harriett's Bookshop, located in Fishtown, celebrates women authors, artists, and activists, and is best known for its salon-like events. Two miles away, in Old City, **Omoi Life Goods** specializes in stationery, candles, and textiles. In South Philly, visit **South Fellini**, a favorite for cheeky local apparel and gifts, or **Latchkey**, a record store that also stocks band merch, graphic novels, and collectibles. Swing over to South Street and peruse the books, art, and records at **Wooden Shoe Books**.

WHAT TO DO

Philly's Logan Square and Fairmount areas are packed with cultural institutions. Spend an afternoon wandering through the expansive collection at the **Barnes Foundation**—its galleries are filled with impressionist and post-impressionist works by Renoir, Cézanne, Matisse, and Picasso. Nearby, the **Philadelphia Museum of Art** (with its famous “Rocky Steps”) hosts touring exhibitions, the

work of Philadelphian artists, and more. Benjamin Franklin Parkway is the main artery for this part of town, with such cultural heavies as the **Rodin Museum**, Drexel University's **Academy of Natural Sciences**, and the **Franklin Institute**, a family-friendly science museum.

WHERE TO STAY

The five-star **Four Seasons Philadelphia** sits atop the city's tallest skyscraper, the Comcast Technology Center. No surprise then that some of its most stunning attributes include the views. The 219 rooms all have floor-to-ceiling windows. On the hotel's 57th level, an indoor infinity-edge pool gives guests the opportunity to swim in the sky. A few levels up, Jean-Georges Vongerichten's glass-enclosed SkyHigh restaurant delivers cocktails, crudo plates, and shareable dishes with even more showstopping panoramas. *From \$850/night.*





MURAL BY JASON ANDREW TURNER

Philadelphia is sometimes called the Mural Capital of the World, with more than 4,000 public artworks on display. Many pieces touch on social issues affecting the city, including racial justice, incarceration, and climate change.



CONRAD BENNER
Arts Advocate

ART ALFRESCO

Born and raised in Philadelphia's Fishtown neighborhood, Conrad Benner founded his blog *Streets Dept* in 2011. A champion of the city's homegrown art and design scene, he has parlayed his writing into advocacy work in the arts world and beyond, working as a curator and an organizer for voting rights campaigns, social justice organizations, and civics groups. In 2023, he launched *Art Outside*, a podcast that spotlights muralists across Philly and discusses the vitality of public art.

"I GREW UP IN PHILLY, and yet I can probably count on one hand how many times I went to any of the museums. I remember being in high school, going to the Philly Museum of Art, and hearing people say words I had never heard of. It made me feel 'less than.' Museum spaces can feel stuffy and make some people feel like they don't belong.

When I started the *Streets Dept* blog in 2011, I wanted to be a storyteller. I didn't know if it would be a city blog, but I got great advice from friends: *Look at your camera roll. What is taking your interest?* I was shooting photos of street art and murals, and that's how I decided my focus. I wasn't just blogging about it, but also interviewing the artists behind the work. Philadelphia is great for this kind of work because the community helps elevate the art.

The street art scene and the gallery shows I attended in Old City were different from the formal institutions; they were weirder. There was no curator telling you what you were seeing.

Street art is immediate: Do you like it, or do you have feelings about it? You can walk home the same way every day and encounter new works along the way. It is always surprising. Street art breaks down the walls between viewer and artist.

Philly is considered the birthplace of modern graffiti. But back in the 1980s, murals were very much a community-based decision, picked by committee. They would require input from neighbors dictating a vision to the artist, who'd design the piece based on that input. Murals from [that era] kind of look and feel the same. Over time, organizations like Mural Arts Philadelphia [the country's largest public art program] allowed a lot more freedom from the artists they commissioned for work in public spaces.

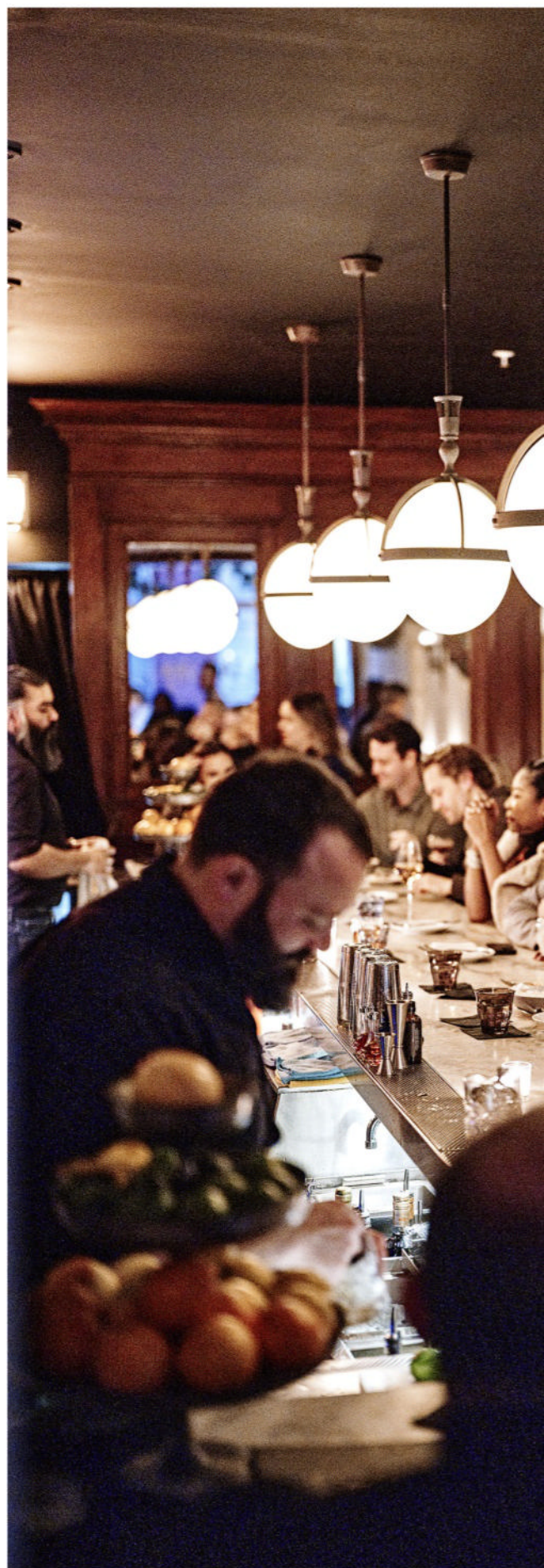
At any given moment, you can take a walk and see dozens of original artworks. The walls of our city tell the story of our city—starring a self-determined, gritty go-getter."

CHAD WILLIAMS
Chef & Restaurateur

PHILLY IN EIGHT COURSES



Husband and wife Chad and Hanna Williams are the owners of Friday Saturday Sunday, a restaurant in Philadelphia's Rittenhouse Square neighborhood. In June, it was named the James Beard Foundation's Outstanding Restaurant of 2023. Chad is a born-and-bred Philadelphian who honed his skills in renowned kitchens elsewhere in the country (Eleven Madison Park in New York, Saison in San Francisco) before returning home. In 2015, he and Hanna purchased Friday Saturday Sunday, which had been a local fixture since 1973. Today, diners add their names to monthslong reservation waitlists to sample the restaurant's tasting menu of inventive American fare.





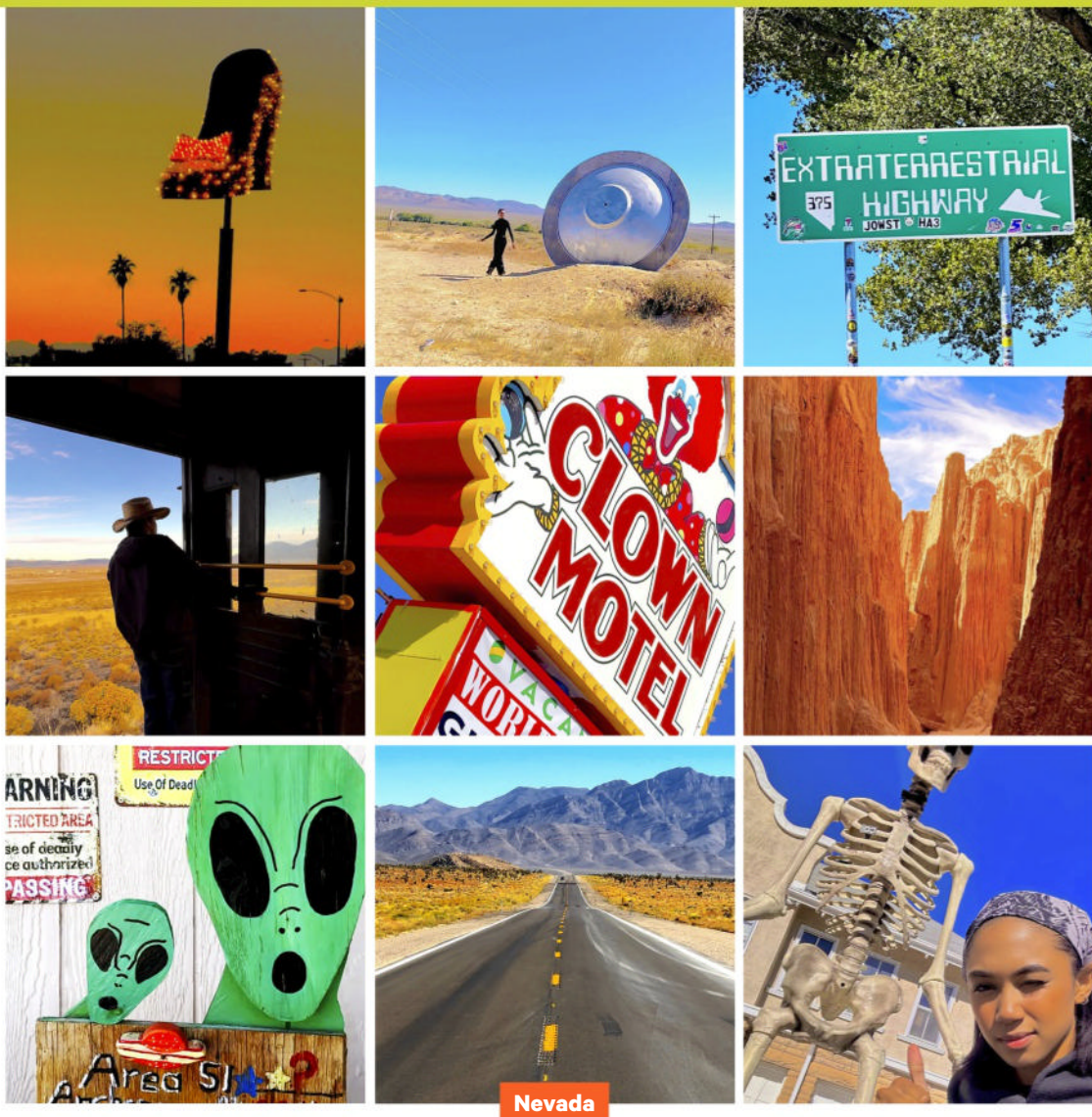
“I REMEMBER FONDLY being a kid in West Philly; there were a ton of eateries we would go to on Sundays. That was my food upbringing here, the local restaurants. Places like Big George’s were our Sylvia’s [an iconic soul food restaurant in Harlem, New York]. Every Sunday at Big George’s, there was a line down the block. It was a big buffet with 20 steam tables—it was pretty incredible. So when I left Philly, I didn’t know much about the fine dining restaurant scene per se.

I didn’t go to culinary school; I learned by working. My career hasn’t been a linear progression. I worked in kitchens in New York, in D.C., in the Bay Area. I knew what I wanted to do, and I wanted to work with the best of the best. I remember the old *Food Arts* magazine, and seeing an article on El Bulli [in Spain]. I thought, ‘Wow, these guys are crazy, they’re doing 20-course tasting menus,’ and I showed it to my chef at the time, who pooh-poohed it. ‘Ah, that’s trash.’ But I was enthralled. At the time, we only had those magazines. There was no Instagram, no social media sharing this kind of cooking. It gave me a glimpse into another world that I didn’t know existed.

Creatively, it was hard to get good ingredients in Philadelphia for a while. Pennsylvania farmers were taking their stuff to New York, where the demand was. Then something happened, and chefs began to cook more locally and seasonally. We [chefs in Philly] started building relationships with our farmers instead of seeing their produce drain out of state. And that’s translated to talent in the kitchen: We’ve got a little bit more gravity now. The city has experienced a really beautiful flywheel of growth. In Philly, it’s a little easier to be young and ambitious.

A few years back, I was at Momofuku Ko [in New York City]; we sat at the bar and were like, ‘We’re from Philly yada yada.’ One of their chefs at the time just scoffed and said, ‘I got good bar food down there once.’ It really lit a fire in me. We’ve been fortunate enough to show that we as a city have more than just bar food. I want to keep pushing a different story. This is where I’m from. It’s my home.” **A**

Though Friday Saturday Sunday serves its eight-course tasting menu in an intimate dining room, the restaurant’s vibe isn’t stuffy. There’s no dress code and the lively first-floor bar serves cocktails with such ingredients as Icelandic aquavit and a Caribbean liqueur called Creole Shrub.



Drive Long and Prosper

Tiana Attridge, AFAR Social Media Editor

NEVADA IS SAID TO BE one of the most paranormally active places in the U.S.—making it an ideal destination for me, a person drawn to the odd and unusual. Ghosts and aliens have (allegedly) been spotted across the Silver State, but many unexplainable occurrences center on a lonely 98-mile stretch of asphalt called State Route 375, or the Extraterrestrial Highway. I knew I had to see it for myself.

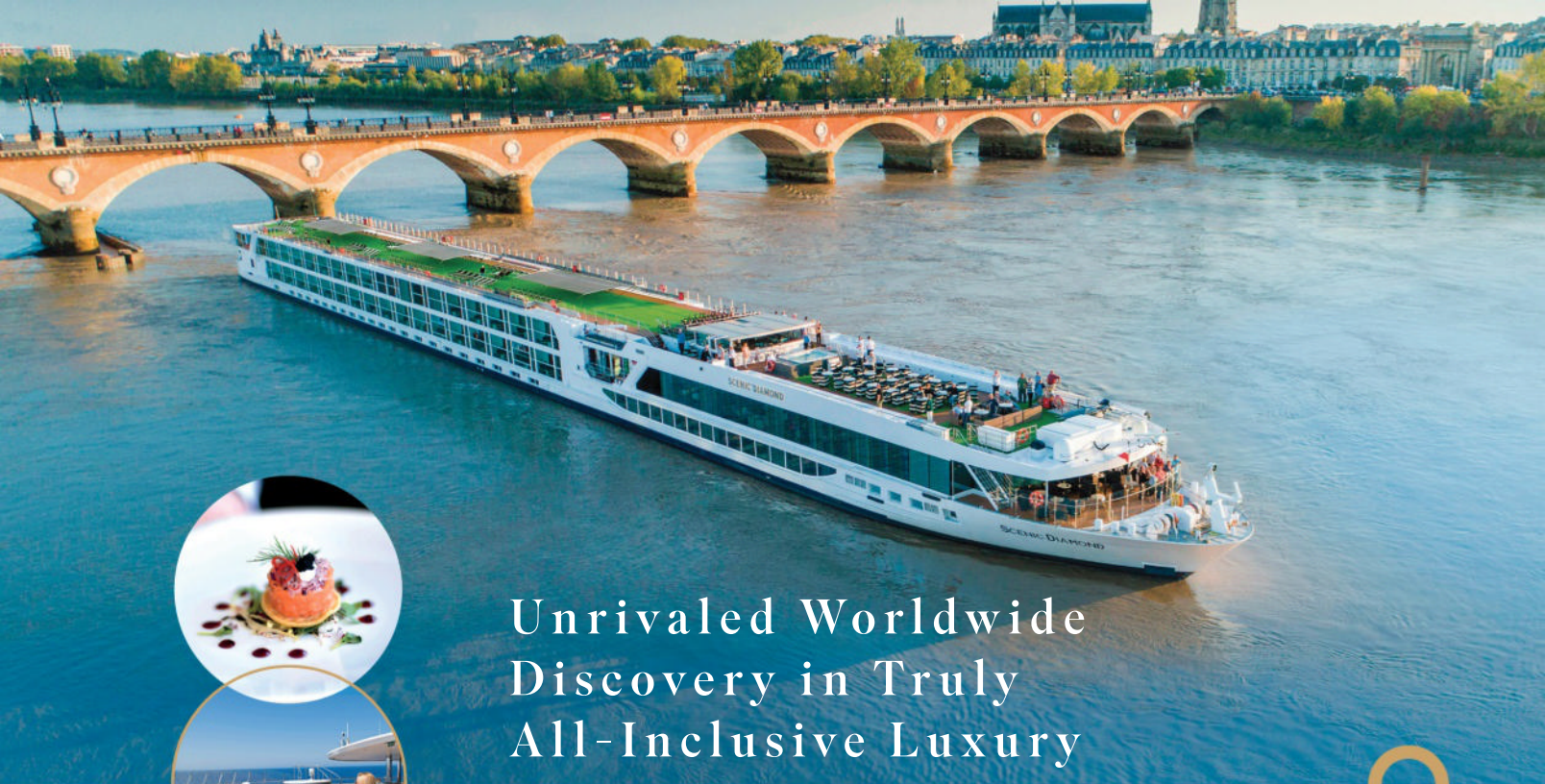
My journey began in Hiko, population 124. This remote corner of the galaxy is best known for E.T. Fresh Jerky, a roadside shop that sells “alien jerky” (which is, perhaps a little disappointingly, made of beef instead of aliens) and out-of-this-world memorabilia.

From there it was on to a series of increasingly stellar stops: the Alien Research Center, a gift shop with a giant silver Martian out front; Rachel, the closest settlement to Area 51; and then the town of

Tonopah, considered one of the best places to stargaze in the country and home to the World Famous Clown Motel, which displays more than 3,000 clown dolls, ceramics, and other artworks.

At times on the E.T. Highway, I'd never felt more alone. There was no cell phone service. The featureless landscape, interrupted only by endless dashes of lane markings and the occasional creosote bush, was brutally hypnotic. But each time the monotony was broken—by, say, a re-creation of a crashed flying saucer or the Black Mailbox, a gathering spot for UFO hunters—I was overcome with childlike glee.

Of course, I never saw any aliens; I'd be halfway to Saturn now if I had. Instead, I relished the chance to explore the fringes of the world, and savored the feeling that anything—no matter how far-fetched—could be out there. **A**



Unrivalled Worldwide Discovery in Truly All-Inclusive Luxury


Sail the world's most idyllic waterways, while enjoying our curated itineraries that uncover the true gems of each destination on our award-winning river cruises. Enjoy charming views of medieval villages along the vast countryside while cruising the historical rivers of Europe. From the Rhine, Main and Danube to the rivers of France and Portugal, explore each port on our included shore excursions.

Or, if you prefer, enjoy one of our expertly crafted yacht voyages visiting any one of seven continents. Go above the horizon in one of two on board helicopters, or dive the ocean depths on our custom-built submersible, Scenic Neptune. Satisfy your inner gourmand with an impressive selection of dining venues, then unwind in our well-appointed suites as you reflect on an enchanted story for a lifetime.



Reserve now to enjoy
your preferred suite and sail date.
Contact your Professional Travel Advisor,
call us at 844.348.5604
or visit scenicusa.com

SCENIC[®]
LUXURY CRUISES & TOURS

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

WE ARE ALL CONNECTED

Connecting more countries than any other.



TURKISH AIRLINES