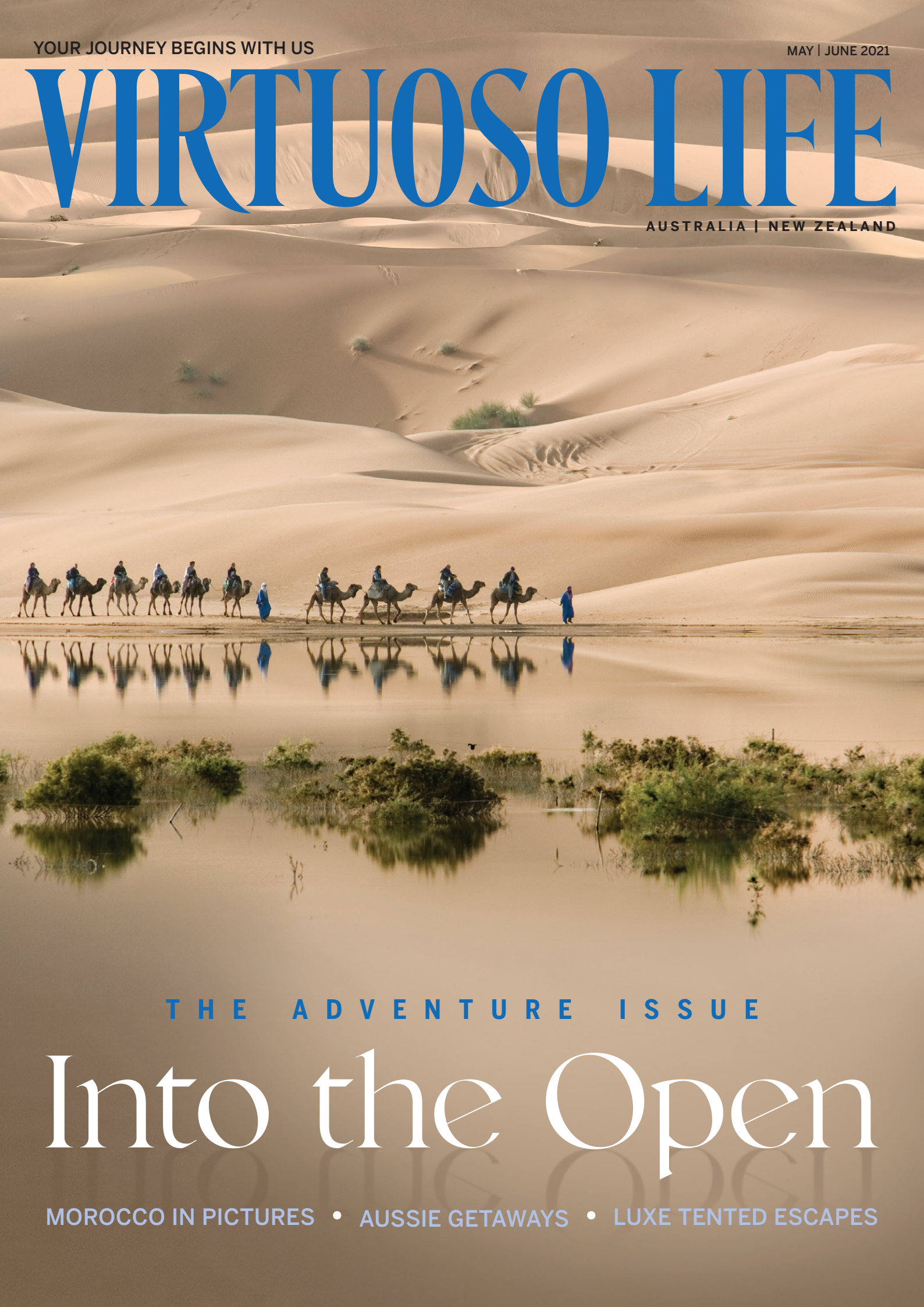


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MAY | JUNE 2021

VIRTUOSO LIFE

AUSTRALIA | NEW ZEALAND



THE ADVENTURE ISSUE

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BY ELAINE GLUSAC

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BY KIM BROWN SEELY

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From snowy High Atlas peaks and windswept Sahara dunes to crashing Atlantic surf, Morocco goes big on adventure.

BY ALAN KEOHANE



54 DOMESTIC BLISS

There's a world of great escapes worth exploring inside Australia. Here, a little inspiration for your next close-to-home getaway.

BY ALEXANDRA CARLTON

Covid-19 has changed the way we travel. We hope this issue inspires you to plan for future adventures and serves as a reminder that Virtuoso advisors stay up to date on current restrictions and health and safety protocols you'll encounter when you're ready and able to travel.



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Camping in comfort: Longitude 131.

On the Cover

MOMENT OF REFLECTION: A lake forms after a rare downpour in Morocco's Erg Chebbi dunes.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALAN KEOHANE



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Choose Your Adventure

I HAVE A SET OF COCKTAIL NAPKINS THAT say, “I’m outdoorsy in that I like drinking wine on patios” – which pretty much sums up my attitude towards adventure. I’m typically more of a lounge-around-the-pool kind of traveller, but after a year of being cooped up, my definition of adventure has morphed: The notion of just getting back out there, anywhere, promises its own kind of adrenaline rush.

As Covid vaccinations roll out, the option to travel is transforming into reality for more people – and the *Virtuoso Life* staff couldn’t be more excited. In anticipation, we’ve put together some ideas and inspiration for your next big outing, from a roundup of tented camp stays (glamping, Virtuoso-style) to a photographic visit to Morocco, interviews with travel insiders on the importance of connecting with nature, and more. Even if you prefer your holidays with air conditioning, there’s something for everyone in this issue, including a look at Kangaroo Island’s post-bushfire renewal and a wide-ranging collection of great Australian getaways.

With every issue we create, even our well-travelled team learns a thing or two about the world. Here are a few fun finds from this issue:

- That reflection in the cover image isn’t a mirage – it’s from a **temporary lake** formed after a rain-fall in Morocco’s Erg Chebbi dunes (“Desert of Plenty,” page 44).
- Hotel designer Bill Bensley has a great way to use those souvenir patches my kids always bring home but leave forgotten in a drawer (“My Travel Essentials,” page 25).
- Mexico’s **Copper Canyon** has more than four times the volume of the Grand Canyon (“In the Field,” page 34).
- **São Tomé and Príncipe** isn’t on the continent you might think (“Pitched Perfect,” page 28).



Elaine Srnka

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OCEAN APPROVED: Katonya Breaux (fun fact: She's singer Frank Ocean's mom) created Unsun after realising there weren't many sustainable, reef-safe, and residue-free sunscreens on the market for women of colour.
unsuncosmetics.com.

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Tasmanian Trek

Walking in Maria Island National Park and more.

MELBOURNE-BASED VIRTUOSO AGENCY owner Melanie Ford recently spent five days exploring Tasmania, mostly on foot. Here, a few of her highlights.

GO NOW While the international borders are shut, it's a perfect time for Australians to learn more about our fabulous country, which is full of magnificent places to visit. And our Aboriginal culture is something we all should learn more about.

RETURN TO TASSIE My first visit to Tasmania was more than 20 years ago – it was one of my first travel work trips. I had forgotten how beautiful Hobart is, especially when you drive over the Tasman Bridge with the harbour below and Mount Wellington in the distance.

HOBART STAY I was looking forward to staying at the Hotel Islington, a beautifully restored mansion overlooking Hobart. I had been told that their service and beds are amazing. That wasn't a lie!

MARKET TIME At Hobart's Salamanca Market, open on Saturdays, everything sold is locally grown or made. I enjoyed tasting all the gins, vodkas, and whiskies. The local apples looked unappetising but tasted delicious – and the fudge was addictive.

ART IMMERSION Even getting to MONA (Museum of Old and New Art) was fabulous – we arrived on their high-speed catamaran, seated in the Posh Pit private lounge, sipping bubbles and eating canapés. The museum itself is eclectic – I'm dying to go back. I loved the cabernet sauvignon at their on-site Moorilla Estate Winery, and dinner at their Faro Bar & Restaurant, with the totally bizarre band and the light exhibitions that felt like a scene from Willy Wonka.

WILD ISLAND All I knew about Maria Island was what I had seen in pictures: wombats and white beaches. I am not known as an avid walker but was keen to find out why people "walk" on their holidays. Maria



Clockwise from top: Maria Island, en route to MONA, and Melanie Ford (second from right) and friends.



Island National Park is approximately 90 minutes from Hobart. After a transfer to Triabunna, a private boat takes you to the starting point of the four-day trek.

EASY ADVENTURE Our trip was portered, so we just carried our day packs; our duffle bags were transferred to each overnight stop, of which two were glamping camps (with hot showers). We spent the final night in a renovated original house. Walking was at your own pace, on paths or beaches, with a few uphills.

ANIMAL KINGDOM The wildlife-spotting was magnificent: plenty of kangaroos, wombats, birds, and a friendly snake. The resident huntsman spider that lived in a tent had to be escorted out at bedtime.

BLUE HEAVEN The ocean looked like the Maldives. The greens and blues stood out

against the white sand. (The temperature, however, was definitely different.)

BRISK SWIMS The brave ones among us swam while the rest of us drank wine and listened to the swimmers scream as they entered the water.

PACKING LIST Take excellent walking boots that have been worn before and are worn in; your feet will thank you for it. Bring layers: Our days started with thermals and finished with T-shirts and shorts. You'll also need proper walking socks, a moderate level of fitness (think walking your neighbourhood with your boots on), and a sense of adventure.

THE VERDICT Even though I'm not a walker, I loved this trip and would do another walk (with better boots). You get a sense of winning when you finish – or of relief. **VL**



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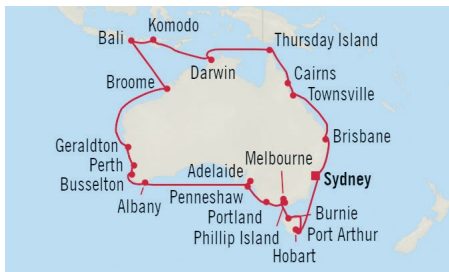
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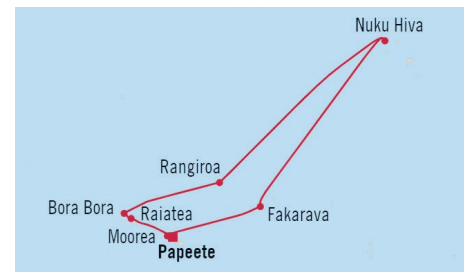


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*Fare shown reflects 7 Feb 2023 voyage.

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PASSPORT ➤

PLACES
TRENDS
CULTURE
& STYLE

Pasadur, Croatia, on
the Dalmatian Coast's
Lastovo Island.

Adventure On

As we emerge from the pandemic, how to responsibly resume travel – from a health and safety standpoint and with an eye towards its impact on destinations – is on many people's minds. One solution: small-group-tour leader **Intrepid Travel**'s new slate of high-end itineraries, which debuts next January. Capped at 16 travellers per group, the journeys feature real moments to connect with locals – dinner with a Zoroastrian family in Iran or a wildlife ranger in Uganda, cooking lessons in Sri Lanka and Morocco, a private museum tour and classical music concert in Saint Petersburg, a boat outing off Lastovo Island to help a Croatian fisherman pull in the day's catch. In all, travellers can choose from 70-plus trips in more than 40 countries throughout Africa, Asia, Central and South America, and Europe, which, like all Intrepid tours, are 100 percent carbon offset and focus on directly benefiting local communities.

IMBIRIDY/GETTY IMAGES

PASSPORT IS REPORTED BY: Joel Centano and Elaine Glusac



The Venice Simplon-Orient-Express' bar car.

Whistle Stops

For decades, the **Venice Simplon-Orient-Express'** elaborate dining cars and restored vintage sleeper cabins have lent a golden era glow to its routes from the Adriatic to the English Channel. This year, the slow-travel icon will range farther across the continent, adding five new stations: Amsterdam, Brussels, Geneva, Florence, and Rome. New overnight routes offer a timeless means of transferring between Venice and Geneva, Paris and Rome, and Paris and Florence, with optional pre- or post-departure stays at the 45-room palazzo Villa San Michele in Florence or the 39-room Tuscan estate Castello di Casole. The new Venice-to-Amsterdam overnight departs on 21 June with stops in Paris and Brussels en route; passengers may return to Venice via any one of those cities on 24 June.

GOODS TO GO

LUGGAGE, WITHOUT BAGGAGE

Through carbon offsets, tree planting, recycling zippers, and upcycling plastic water bottles, the stylish luggage line **Paravel** aims to become the first 100 percent sustainable travel brand by the end of 2021. The commitment goes beyond manufacturing its totes, duffels, wheelies, and organisers: "To ensure that these suitcases are the absolute best option for the planet, we offset not only the emissions created from sourcing, assembling, and shipping them, but also the average CO₂ emissions of our customers' typical first trip with the luggage," says cofounder Indré Rockefeller. tourparavel.com.



82

Percentage of travellers who say the pandemic has made them want to travel more sustainably in the future, according to a recent Virtuoso survey.

BON VOYAGE

FOREST BATHING

Seabourn's first expedition vessel, the 264-passenger *Seabourn Venture*, launches in December with a spa befitting its nature-based voyages. Adam D. Tihany designed the 344-square-metre Spa & Wellness centre in the style of a "floating forest," with a textured, tree-inspired mural; wood accents; a stone floor; and a sauna with floor-to-ceiling windows to soak up the outdoor settings. Spa services range from complimentary guided yoga and meditation to detox massages that draw on the line's Mindful Living Program, curated by health expert Dr. Andrew Weil. While the inaugural 11 December passage is almost sold out, the ship will continue sailing 10- to 14-day journeys along Norway's North Cape through April 2022, including a 12-day cruise from Copenhagen to Tromsø that gives travellers a great shot at seeing the northern lights. *Twelve-day Copenhagen-to-Tromsø departures: 18 January and 31 March 2022.*



When cruising returns in Europe, **Viking** will be ready with a new ship to explore Nordic and Mediterranean coastlines. The 930-passenger *Viking Venus* will offer the line's familiar Scandinavian-inspired decor and plentiful outdoor space – every stateroom has a balcony. After three cruises along the coast of southern England (exclusively available to UK residents), the ship will welcome international travellers with a 16-day passage from Bergen to London, with stops at the Shetland and Lofoten islands. *London-to-Bergen departure: 11 June.*



Clockwise from top left: A preview of *Seabourn Venture* and its spa; a Lofoten islands shoreline; a rendering of Atlantis The Royal, Dubai's presidential suite living area; and Atlantis chefs.

SUITE TALK

CULINARY KINGDOM



A host of celebrated chefs will fire up their kitchens when the 795-room **Atlantis The Royal, Dubai** opens this winter. Among them are Peruvian culinary star Gastón Acurio, who will helm the city's first cevichería, serving his country's national dish alongside Andean cocktails; Heston Blumenthal, representing British cuisine; and Iranian American chef Ariana Bundy, who opens her first Persian restaurant, complete with garden terrace daybeds. In the evening, guests can commandeer private cabanas at Cloud 22, a club on the 22nd storey with an infinity-edge Skypool and views of the Palm Jumeirah archipelago below. *Accommodations include breakfast daily, preferred access and lounge seating at Aquaventure Waterpark, and a \$130 hotel credit.*



(LOFOTEN ISLANDS) STEPAN BEZVERSHUK/GETTY IMAGES
(HESTON BLUMENTHAL) JOHN SCOTT BLACKWELL

SOUTH AUSTRALIA REWARDS WONDER

Bursting with vibrant culture, incredible wildlife encounters, fantastic beaches, and exceptional food and wine, South Australia offers amazing experiences for you to discover, no matter your interests. Catch an acclaimed show or concert in Adelaide; taste your way through the world-famous Barossa, Clare Valley, and McLaren Vale wine regions; swim with sea lions or cage dive with sharks off the coast of the Eyre Peninsula; or get up close with koalas and kangaroos in nature reserves throughout South Australia.



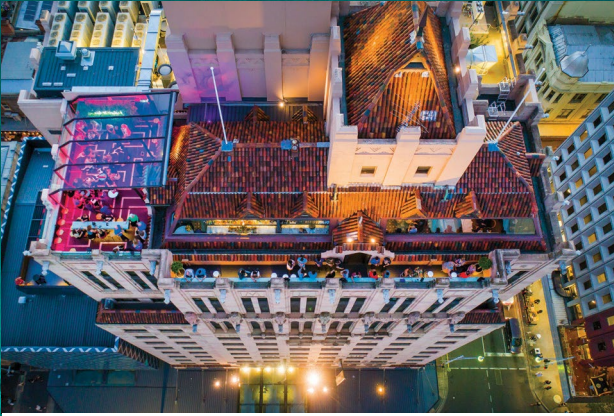
THE LOUISE

Situated in the heart of Barossa wine country, you'll find The Louise, a luxurious retreat with spacious suites and stunning vineyard views. You'll also find some of South Australia's best dining. Appellation restaurant at The Louise is renowned for cuisine that creatively reflects a sense of place. The culinary team creates dishes that tell the story of the Barossa Valley region, its produce, and its people.



THE FRAMES

If you're seeking a romantic getaway or an elegant way to experience the Australian Outback, The Frames is it. Built for discerning travellers, the award-winning, six-star retreat is set on the peaceful banks of the Murray River, and offers exceptional indulgence and hospitality. Explore the property's beautiful location in the Riverland with a range of experiences, like a sunset gondola cruise with Champagne.



THE MAYFAIR

Setting a new standard for luxury in Adelaide, The Mayfair blends five-star accommodation and an unbeatable location in the heart of the city. The Mayfair has also quickly become Adelaide's favourite place to meet, thanks to boutique bar and dining experiences at Hennessy Rooftop Bar, the Mayflower Restaurant, and The Den Bistro.



SEQUOIA LODGE

Nestled in the highlands of the Adelaide Hills, on the iconic Mount Lofty House estate, lies Sequoia Lodge, South Australia's newest luxury lodge. Set to open in July 2021, this sanctuary comprises just 14 contemporary suites offering uninterrupted views across the Piccadilly Valley. Savour a seasonal degustation menu paired with a curated wine selection at Hardy's Verandah, the lodge's esteemed restaurant boasting three Chef Hat awards.



COAST & CO.

If you want more from your holiday, look no further than Coast & Co., your guide to South Australia. Choose from a selection of day tours that are anything but traditional and mix things up with four-wheel-drive vehicles, helicopters, and e-bikes. Coast & Co.'s private charter touring is personalised, intimate, and off the beaten path, taking you behind the scenes of some of the best food, wine, and nature experiences in South Australia.



EXCEPTIONAL KANGAROO ISLAND

Go on a luxury small-group or private tour with Exceptional Kangaroo Island and gain a local's knowledge of the island. Travel through spectacular remote locations and enjoy the best local produce, with elegant picnics along the way. Observe a variety of wildlife in their natural habitats, like kangaroos, koalas, and sea lions. Choose from a range of day and multi-day tours that capture the most amazing parts of Kangaroo Island.

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA IS READY WHEN YOU ARE.
YOU HAVE TO SEE IT TO BELIEVE IT.**

ON TOUR



Polar goals: A White Desert expedition.

Antarctica Made Easy

Early pioneers of Antarctic exploration, please look away: A five-hour flight from Cape Town via private jet now makes setting foot on the seventh continent a total breeze. And it's possible to do it with a light footprint. On its range of 1- (yes, that's possible) to 24-day journeys, tour company **White Desert** offsets all emissions from flights, warms stylish sleeping pods using solar power, skips single-use plastics, and ships all waste back to South Africa for recycling and responsible disposal. Travellers can also participate in critical citizen-science efforts, including emperor penguin research. Five trip options, all customisable and available for up to 12 people, include an eight-day programme to commune with the penguins and visit the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station. *Departures: Eight-day trips, multiple dates, 13 December 2021 through 26 January 2023.*



Japanese tradition, upheld and beheld.

Shining a Light

Dento in Japanese translates as “tradition.” But using the old characters for the word, it means “passing of the light,” a philosophy *shokunin*, or master craftspeople, have practised for centuries, transferring their knowledge from one generation to the next. Yet as Japan's population ages and its young people trade tradition for technology and rural villages for cities, time-honoured techniques are in danger of disappearing. Enter Virtuoso on-site tour provider **Windows to Japan** and its newly formed Dento Foundation, which works with universities and art schools to create internships and connect apprentices with mentors, especially in Japan's countryside. Light extends to travellers, too, who can meet *shokunin* in their studios and study everything from *shikki* (lacquerware) making to sake distillation. The experience, says company cofounder Avi Lugasi, “opens a window not only to authentic Japanese crafts, but the craftspeople and communities behind them. The human connection is at the centre.”

GIVING BACK



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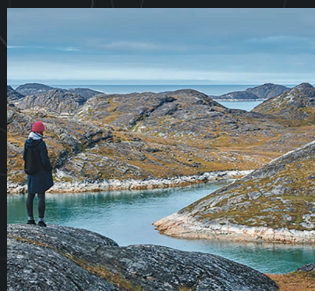
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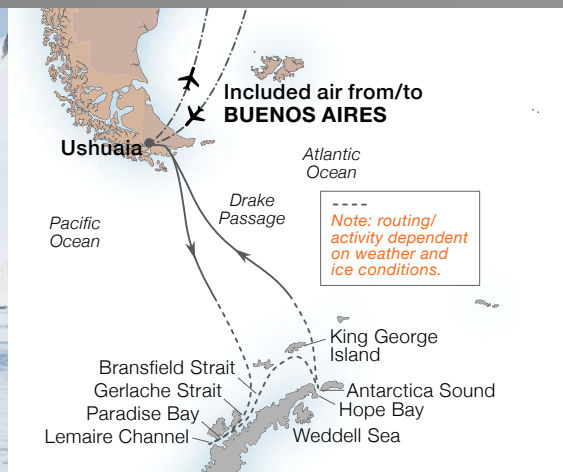
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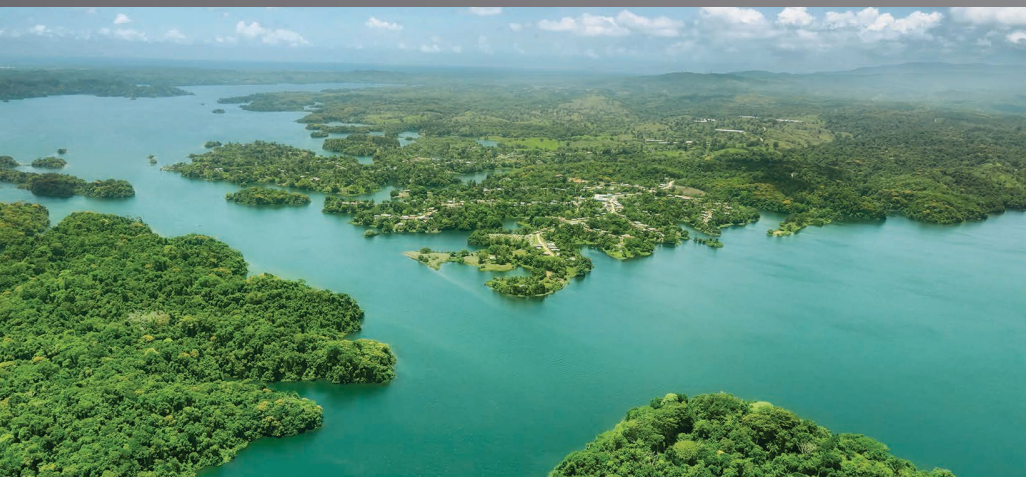
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View to recovery: Kangaroo Island's Hanson Bay, post bushfire.



The Great Rebounding

The 2020 bushfires threatened to destroy Kangaroo Island. Now its landscape, flora, and fauna are rising from the ashes.

BY ALEXANDRA CARLTON

IT'S CALLED KANGAROO ISLAND – A VAST, REMOTE WILDERNESS of bush, beaches, and rugged cliffs that sits just off a great curve of coastline in South Australia, a short ferry ride from the Fleurieu Peninsula or a 30-minute flight from Adelaide. Really, it could be called Koala Island or Wallaby Island, Echidna Island or Whale Island, such is the abundance of Australian native animals that call it home. But in late 2019 and early 2020, devastating bushfires came close to obliterating



Bouncing back: A towering yacca and (right) a Kangaroo Island cutie.

What's astonished almost everyone is just how beautifully life on this wild southern paradise has recovered.

it all, ripping through nearly half the island's 4,400 square kilometres, including Flinders Chase National Park, home to natural landmarks such as the Remarkable Rocks and Admirals Arch, and its signature luxury accommodation, the grand and gracious Southern Ocean Lodge. Australians will never forget that terrible summer, when we crowded around radios and stared at websites waiting for news, then mourned all that the fire devoured.

But what's astonished almost everyone who lives on Kangaroo Island, as well as the rest of Australia, is just how beautifully life on this wild southern paradise has recovered. "I think 'resilience' is the word that first comes to mind when considering the landscape and wildlife of Kangaroo Island, as well as its close-knit, hard-working community," says Hayley Baillie, cofounder and creative director of Baillie Lodges, which owned, operated, and – pending approval – is now

planning to rebuild Southern Ocean Lodge by early 2023. "Businesses and homes have been rebuilt. National parks have reopened. And injured wildlife has been nursed back to health."

Much of the island's fauna and flora have not only survived the fires, but now appear to be thriving. Australia is, after all, a continent that's regularly ravaged by bushfires, and even needs them to regenerate and replenish its vegetation. Mere months after the fires ended, green

Much of the island's fauna and flora have not only survived the fires, but now appear to be thriving.



Renewal in action.

shoots began bursting from the ashes. In some cases, plants that were rarely seen – because they rely on fire to regenerate – suddenly dominated the landscape. “They called this a once-in-200-years fire, but I’m calling it a once-in-200-years yacca flowering event,” says Jim Geddes, co-owner of the Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, on the island’s western side. Yacca is an arresting, almost architectural native grass tree known for its towering spears of flowers, which normally grow at a glacial pace. “To see these giant forests of yaccas, with their huge spikes – up to eight metres high – that usually only appear every five years, is amazing,” he says.

Flourishing plant life means plenty of food for the island’s most abundant animal species: kangaroos, wallabies, koalas, brushtail possums, and Cape Barren geese. Each of their populations was affected by the fires, but reports suggest they have all rebounded and – to the delight of naturalists observing them – at lower but healthier and more sustainable levels than before. Southern Ocean Lodge’s Hayley and James Baillie have made regular trips to Kangaroo Island to help friends and colleagues with cleanup around the Southern Ocean Lodge site. The couple say the lodge’s managers have reported regular sightings of two of the island’s favourite residents, Enchilada the echidna and Sol the kangaroo, who like to snuffle and explore around the site.

Another silver lining of the fires is that the island’s eastern side, home to restaurants, artists’ studios, and many other businesses, is enjoying new interest. “The east side of the island is just as beautiful as the west, and in fact allows

visitors to experience different types of natural beauty,” says Ian Swain, owner of Swain Destinations, a tour operator that designs custom holidays, with a special focus on Australia.

While he, like everyone, was devastated by Southern Ocean Lodge’s destruction, he points out that several exceptional accommodation options on the eastern side are now on every traveller’s must-visit list, as well as relatively unexplored pockets of natural

beauty such as the D’Estrees Bay area and Lashmar Conservation Park. Covid-related travel restrictions are still making it difficult for visitors to enter Australia, but Swain says this is the time to be planning a getaway for when borders reopen. “Kangaroo Island truly is Australia’s Galápagos,” he says. “By coming back, you’re helping the community – local artisans, beekeepers, winemakers. And, of course, seeing an incredible part of the world.”

HOP TO IT

See the KI renewal in person.

GO During 12 days in southern Australia with Aussie-owned **Swain Destinations**, travellers can take a dawn balloon ride over Yarra Valley vineyards and cure their own olives and bake sourdough loaves at the Jackalope Hotel on the Mornington Peninsula. At Pelican Lagoon on Kangaroo Island’s east end, there’s a chance to spy the island’s namesake marsupial, as well as tammar wallabies sheltering in thickets of tea trees. *Departures: Any day through March 2022.*

A private tour of the Sydney Opera House (and tickets to a show) kicks off a wide-ranging 16-day Australian exploration with **Artisans of Leisure**. Take a deep dive into local heritage with an Aboriginal elder in the rugged Flinders Ranges, build wildlife shelters on Kangaroo Island, and paddle sea kayaks offshore of the ancient Daintree Rainforest. Last stop: the Great Barrier Reef’s Lizard Island. *Departures: Any day through 2022.*

CRUISE Fremantle (Perth’s coolest neighbor) is the west coast gateway to Australia on a 16-day **Silversea** sailing from Singapore to Melbourne. The 596-passenger *Silver Muse* cruises south along the coast, docking in beachy Busselton and the colonial city of Albany before arriving at Kangaroo Island, where travellers can take in a sheep-shearing demonstration, taste honey from Ligurian bees, and visit a eucalyptus oil distillery. *Departure: 2 December 2022. VI.*



From left: The pool deck on *Norwegian Bliss* and fun on the ship's surf simulator.



Bring the Crew

Expert tips for your best family cruise once travel resumes.

BY SHIVANI VORA

SINCE COVID BROUGHT CRUISING TO A HALT LAST YEAR, LINES have worked hard to make sailings safe once cruises resume – without compromising fun. Ralph Bias, a Virtuoso travel agency president, says the numerous hygiene and safety protocols include requiring guests and crew to be vaccinated, Covid-19 testing pre-cruise and during the cruise, reducing the number of passengers on each trip, social distancing in dining rooms and lounges, eliminating self-service food options, and increasing the frequency of cleanings.

While many cruisers hope to set sail this summer and fall, Bias notes that pent-up demand is driving a huge interest in 2022 and 2023 itineraries.

“Bookings are through the roof, and the majority of my clients are opting for longer, extended voyages,” he says, adding that lines are offering attractive incentives to travellers who book early. “After being homebound for so long, people are looking to make up for lost time.”

With activities for all ages and interests, endless food options, and the convenience factor, cruises have long been family favourites. “They’re easy and successful trips for families because they can accommodate everyone’s needs and wishes,” says Virtuoso advisor Leah Bergner. But there’s no one-size-fits-all family cruise. Here, Bergner and other members of Virtuoso’s cruise advisory board offer insights on finding the best option for your brood and making sure that next family getaway is worth the wait.

PICK THE RIGHT SHIP AND ITINERARY

“The options are vast, and the best pick depends on your kids’ ages and your family’s interests,” says Virtuoso agency owner Rob Clabbers. Don’t rule out smaller vessels, but know that larger ships have a broader range of activities, along with a greater breadth of choices for accommodations.

Parents with younger children should look for a ship with amenities such as babysitting, a kids’ club, and children’s menus or express meal options.

For families with teenagers, ships with waterslides, rock-climbing walls, and zip lines may be the best pick. Older kids who appreciate history, on the other hand, may get a kick out of a cruise that hits Pompeii and other sites in the Mediterranean.

BOOK THE IDEAL CABIN

John Upchurch, owner of a Virtuoso agency, suggests midship cabins. “You’re at the heart of the ship, and no activity is too far away,” he says. A two-bedroom suite with attached baths gives families enough room to spread out; two connecting rooms also work well. For families with older children who don’t need to be in an interconnecting room, Upchurch suggests booking inside-outside cabins: a balcony cabin and one across the hall that’s much cheaper.

“What you don’t want is a family that’s used to three bathrooms at home jamming into a cabin with one

bathroom. It makes for a long week,” he says. Also, avoid booking cabins next to or near stairs, lifts, smoking areas, and entertainment venues, as they can be noisy.

DON’T CUT IT CLOSE

Rushing from the airport to port on embarkation day can be stressful for both children and adults – especially if a flight is delayed or cancelled. Bergner suggests arriving at the port of call a

day or two before the cruise departs. “Some lines have the option to overnight on the ship at the embarkation port, which is great because you get a bonus day to explore the destination without making transfers from a hotel to the vessel,” she says.

PLAN IN ADVANCE

Sign up for shore excursions and reserve onboard restaurants as soon as you book your cruise. Advisor Jessica

**After being homebound for so long,
people are looking
to make up for lost time.**



Paddleboarding with UnCruise Adventures in Alaska.

Griscavage says tables at speciality eateries (like that burger bar with an arcade) and excursions to view wildlife, zip-line, mountain bike, and other active adventures fill up fast. “I’ve seen several instances where families end up disappointed for not planning in advance and wind up wasting precious holiday time trying to see what’s still available that will please the children,” she says. “A little bit of planning ahead of time with

your travel advisor will ensure a seamless holiday without disappointment.”

PACK SMART

On embarkation day, your suitcases might not be delivered to your room until hours after you board. Don’t wait for them to show up to start the holiday, Clabbers says – “Tote a carry-on with items such as swimsuits, sunblock, and books, and get going.” Also,

when packing for multiple people, spread some items for each person (sneakers, shorts, polo shirts) over numerous bags; if one goes missing, at least everyone in your family has some essentials for the trip. Keep in mind that with all the excitement, transfers, and check-in, embarkation day can be overwhelming for children, so bring extra snacks and some activities to help pass the time.



SHIPSHAPE

Two vessels to keep your eye on for your next family cruise.

● Boutique expedition cruise line **UnCruise Adventures** counts active adults as its primary passengers aboard the 76-passenger *Wilderness Discoverer*. Its special family-focussed summer itineraries to Alaska, however, are great options for outdoors-loving children ages 8 and up. A team of guides leads kids (and their parents) on nature-focussed excursions such as sea kayaking,

paddleboarding, whale-watching, snorkelling, and wildlife walks to spot black bears, otters, mink, and more. Expect treasure hunts, polar plunges, boat races, beach bonfires with s'mores, and games of I Spy with leaping dolphins.

● Upchurch describes **Norwegian Cruise Line's** 4,004-passenger *Bliss* as a self-contained amusement

park. The ship sails the U.S. Pacific Coast from Alaska to the Panama Canal, as well as Caribbean itineraries. “*Bliss* hits all the marks for the perfect family vessel,” he says. “Even on a weeklong sailing, you won’t be able to get through everything there is to do.” The upgrade: a suite in The Haven, a boutique ship-within-the-ship that’s accessible by key card

and has its own pool, restaurant, and bar.

This mini-city is home to 19 dining venues – from a classic diner to a brewhouse – and boasts a go-cart racetrack, open-air laser tag, two water-slides, two huge pools, a casino, an arcade, and multiple cinemas showcasing magicians, comedy shows, and Broadway productions such as *Jersey Boys*.

The kids’ club is divided into three age ranges: 3- to 5-year-olds enjoy parades and treasure hunts, 6- to 9-year-olds can learn to juggle, and 10- to 12-year-olds participate in video game competitions and themed spy nights. Teens, meanwhile, meet up at Entourage, a venue with a dance club, a cinema, and classes such as the art of improv. **VL**



I DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT:

- 1.** My **backpack** of 15 years. It's covered in patches collected wherever I go.
- 2.** The **Audible app**, to listen to books. I recently finished the *MaddAddam Trilogy* by Margaret Atwood.
- 3.** My **painting equipment**: a block of watercolour paper by Arches and a Winsor & Newton travel watercolour kit.
- 4.** A **converter** that I can plug into a vehicle's lighter socket, so I still have a bit of juice. It works anywhere, even in Mongolia, where we are super off the grid.
- 5.** **Izipizi glasses**. They come in all sorts of colours – sunglasses, reading glasses, screen light glasses. I have many pairs around the office.
- 6.** A lightweight **Mongolian cashmere sweater** for the plane because it rolls up and never creases.
- 7.** **Keen running shoes**. I run every day without fail, no matter where I am.
- 8.** Last but not least, some mismatched **Paul Smith socks**. VI.

My Travel Essentials

Celebrated hotel designer Bill Bensley treads lightly and brings his backpack.

BILL BENSLEY, the 62-year-old founder, creative director, and force of nature behind the Bensley architecture, interior design, and landscape design studio, based in Bangkok and Bali, says the pandemic has changed his travel ethos. "Before Covid, I travelled every week, sometimes to three countries, presenting projects all over the globe. Now, with the whole world having learned to Zoom,

I'll skip all of that and reserve my air footprint for travel to places I've never been before." Or, he says, he'll go to his favourite place in the world, Mongolia, where he spends a month every summer with his husband, Jirachai, and friends, for off-the-grid fishing, camping, and trekking. The creative mind behind some of Asia's most opulent hotels – including his own Bensley Collection Shinta Mani Wild and Shinta Mani Siem Reap

in Cambodia, The Siam in Bangkok, and Agra's Oberoi Amarvilas – classifies himself as "more of a backpacker, really." The sentiment jibes with the dedication to sustainable development he brings to all his projects. "Rather than ripping out the natural features of the land to plonk down something new, one gets to know it, and tries to complement it," he says. "Nothing is made more perfectly than what Mother Nature presents to us."





Silver Muse sailing on iconic Sydney Harbour

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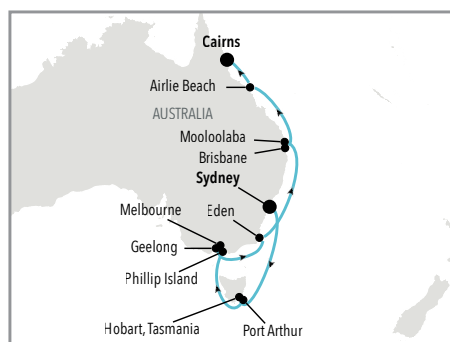
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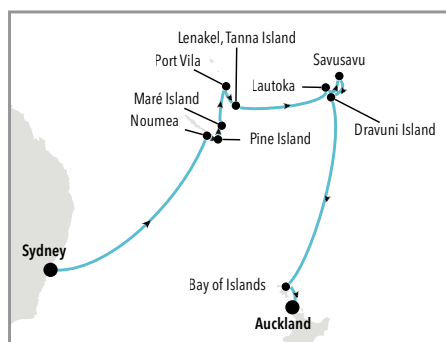
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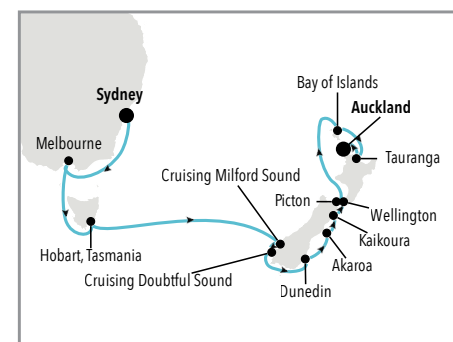
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Prime perch: Elewana's Loisaba Tented Camp overlooks a massive conservancy in Kenya.



PITCHED PERFECT

Suite-like comforts and wild settings: These well-appointed tents call campers of all adventure levels to lace up boots in the great outdoors. **BY ELAINE GLUSAC**

IT'S WELL KNOWN IN COLORADO THAT BLACK BEARS

on the cusp of winter forage far and wide for food. But it wasn't known to my sister and me until a bear visited our spacious tent at Dunton Hot Springs – a stylish affair in the San Juan Mountains with woven rugs, a plush bed, and armchairs by the stove. When the full moon magnified his silhouette across a canvas wall, we bolted for the bathroom. He fled at first shriek, of course, but left a trace – a paw print on the tent – proof that glamping is still camping, in all the best back-to-nature ways.

Nature, a safe and socially distant refuge, has been the balm of the pandemic. Instagram accounts once devoted to rooftop cocktails and luxury suites went full Sierra Club, with images of peopleless sunsets, uncrowded hiking trails, and wildflower-filled plains.

But for those who feel sleeping on hard ground and rustling up campfire fare isn't quite "holiday," outdoors-focused resorts step in to remove the discomforts and handle the chores, freeing guests to revel in the splendour of nature.

As the following illustrate, opportunities come in a variety of climates and cultures – from the African bush to the Australian Outback, far-flung beaches to tropical rainforests, desert canyons to snowcapped peaks – collectively linked by love of the land.



WILDLIFE



MOUNTAINS



WATER ACTIVITIES



RAINFOREST

AUSTRALIA



NORTHERN TERRITORY



Stone-Cold Cool

The sacred sandstone monolith at the heart of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park commands attention from each of 16 white-peaked tents at **Longitude 131°** in the country's Red Centre. A gateway to Indigenous culture, the resort offers sunset trips to Uluru, gorge walks, and visits to the cave paintings of the ancient Mala people. On

the cultural track, guests can learn Aboriginal dot painting; in the adventure vein, they can explore the Northern Territory desert on Harley-Davidson motorcycle tours. When night falls, guides recount the stories of the Southern Hemisphere's constellations over dinner, and fireplaces on the tents' verandas invite private stargazing. *Accommodations include all meals, an open bar, a \$65 spa credit, a \$65 resort credit, and round-trip transfers from Ayers Rock Airport.*



Top and bottom: Outdoor living at Longitude 131°

📌 | BALI



Life in the Trees

No trees were cut to build **Capella Ubud, Bali**, “a 23-tent camp that tiptoes ever so softly on the land,” according to its designer, Bill Bensley (for more on Bensley, turn to page 25). Vintage romance meets Balinese spirituality at the secluded resort on the Wos River, where a Hindu temple offers cleansing rituals. Suspension bridges thread through the jungle highland canopy, connecting one-bedroom suites and the two-bedroom Lodge, each with a pool and styled to tell the story of a shipwrecked Dutch crew at the turn of the twentieth century. Guests can help tend the property’s coffee and cacao groves or hike nearby volcanic Mount Batur, then spend the evening in the social-hub Officer’s Tent. *Tent accommodations include breakfast daily and one 50-minute massage for two.*



Clockwise from top:
A River Tent interior,
a Rainforest Tent and
its saltwater pool, and
offering baskets.



UNITED STATES

COLORADO



Stake a Claim

Originally a mining camp established in 1885 that boomed to a population of about 300, Dunton, Colorado, was a ghost town by 1918. The current owners took seven years to restore the entire town – complete with a dance hall and saloon – as **Dunton Hot Springs**. Historic buildings house most of the 13 accommodations, with the exception of Christy's Tent, an all-season platform tent with a gas stove, en suite bathroom, and chandelier hanging from the central beam above the bed. Exhaust yourself hiking in the San Juan Mountains or fly-fishing on the Dolores River's West Fork, if only to best appreciate the resort's main attraction: the hot springs in five pools, including one in the original nineteenth-century bathhouse. *Christy's Tent accommodations include all meals and beverages and a \$130 resort credit.*

Tip

"Dunton's outside baths are magical at night, but the indoor thermal bathhouse is just as wonderful, with a wood-burning fire off the corner of the large communal bath to set the cosy and warm mood. I highly recommend the nearby cold plunge."

– Dan Lack, *Virtuoso travel agency CEO*



From top: Camp Sarika, and Christy's Tent and fly-fishing at Dunton Hot Springs.

UTAH



Red Rock Retreat

Sharing 243 hectares of slot canyons and sandstone mesas with remote Amangiri in southern Utah, **Camp Sarika by Amangiri** acts as a boutique resort within a boutique resort, with ten tented pavilion dwellings – each with a terrace and plunge pool – and a communal pavilion with a restaurant, pool, and spa. Named after the Sanskrit word for “open space” and “sky,” Camp Sarika invites guests to spread out and steep in desert solitude, whether actively on *via ferrata* climbs or more pensively by stargazing with furnished telescopes. An added bonus: access to Amangiri's resort amenities and restaurants a 30-minute hike (or five-minute drive) away. *Tent accommodations include all meals and a \$130 resort credit.*

KENYA

**Safari Saviour**

Set on the 23,000-hectare Loisaba Conservancy in Kenya and sustainably managed by The Nature Conservancy as a critical corridor for elephants, **Elewana Loisaba Tented Camp** crowns an escarpment, framing panoramas from the Ewaso Nyiro River valley to distant Mount Kenya from its 12 tents, as well as its dining tent, terrace, and adjacent infinity pool. Three family units connect two tented bedrooms with a private walkway, and one family suite has its own swimming

pool. With eight square kilometres of wilderness per bed in the reserve, this is the place to see rare wild dogs and one of Kenya's most stable lion populations, as well as elephants. Travellers spot wildlife on daily game drives, while the more adventurous can set out on guided horseback, camelback, mountain bike, and walking safaris. A standout experience: visiting the Loisaba Conservancy headquarters to learn about conservation programmes and meet the anti-poaching sniffer dogs, followed by sundowners with canapés. *Accommodations include all meals and house drinks, daily game drives, and a guided walking safari.*



SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE

**Isle of Adventure**

On the north shore of verdant Príncipe Island, a UNESCO biosphere reserve 210 kilometres off central Africa's west coast, **Sundy Praia** calls all castaways to 15 one- to three-bedroom tented shorefront villas modelled on traditional wood-panelled fishing huts. Sliding glass doors erase the barriers between indoors, where minibars come stocked with local fruit, and outdoors, where biodiversity thrives. Guests can revel in nature (this so-called African Galápagos has more than 20 endemic bird species) and active pursuits – beach-hopping by boat, showering in rainforest waterfalls, and summiting a volcanic peak – knowing wine-paired tasting menus await in the bamboo-framed dining room. *Accommodations include breakfast daily, one 50-minute massage for two, and round-trip airport transfers. VI*



Loisaba Tented Camp's communal deck and (right) Sundy Praia's dining area.

An aerial photograph of the Amazon River, showing a wide, winding, light-brown river channel that meanders through a vast, dense, dark green forest. The river's path is highly irregular, with many sharp turns and loops. The forest appears as a thick, textured carpet of green, with the river acting as a prominent, light-colored vein running through it.

IN

THE

FIELD

Adventure in full
measure: The Amazon
River from above.



ADVENTURERS' INSIGHT

Hiking, saving the Amazon, dogsledding, guiding: From Zimbabwe's plains to Antarctica's bergs, lives lived out of doors make for great wisdom – and great stories. Six adventurers share their thoughts on why it's important to get outside and what we can learn from nature.

BY KIM BROWN SEELY

PETER GAVA

Professional guide, Wilderness Safaris
Base: Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe



I GREW UP
RIGHT FROM
THE GROUND.
YOU MIGHT SAY.
NATURALLY
LIKING NATURE.

I WAS BORN TO A MIXED BUSHMAN-BANTU FAMILY IN GWERU, ZIMBABWE.

so I was well introduced to liking nature. My mother's mother was a San Bushwoman who taught me at a very young age about collecting berries, collecting melons, catching insects like termites for food. I grew up right from the ground, you might say, naturally liking nature. It was quite inspiring learning useful skills – like, if you're going for a walk, make sure you drink water before you start walking or else, if you start drinking again as you walk, it makes you tired. These were the real skills of becoming a resilient Bushman.

My first job was as a primary school teacher in my home village where my parents finally settled, in Gokwe, Zimbabwe, but my main interest was environmental science. Researchers from the Sengwa Wildlife Institute in Gokwe's Chirisa National Park came to my parents and said, "Why don't you let him come work with us?" I didn't want to. I liked being a teacher. I said to my father, "Dad, you really want me to get eaten by those lions?" But he was so persistent that I said I'd try it on school holiday. I went to the research station and there was a gentleman who gave me some uniforms. I felt very welcomed and was so impressed by the things I saw. So I said, OK, maybe I'll try it for a month. Thirty-eight years later, I'm still here. Wilderness Safaris is very keen to conserve these otherwise threatened areas of Africa. We're all mourning together because of the pandemic, but it's going to be so exciting for people to return to Africa. We've got to teach the younger generations how to protect all this and pass it on.

(ELEPHANTS) PAULA FRENCH/GETTY IMAGES



CÉLINE COUSTEAU

Filmmaker, explorer, environmental activist
Base: The Var, Provence, France

WHAT I LEARNED GROWING UP IN A FAMILY OF EXPLORERS AND travellers is how important it is to take kids on adventures outdoors. Obviously, travel came to a screeching halt in the past year of Covid, but you can still look for nature. I have a 9-year-old son, and we'll be like, "Let's go on a rosemary-finding adventure!" And we'll crawl through the hills around the house and create things from nature, like a stone tower, and make that a whole new world. If you give kids access to nature, it becomes part of them. It doesn't have to be a formal education, just whatever you're capable of doing. In my case, I feel like I had amazing access and great privilege in travel, getting to spend time on the *Calypso* with my grandfather and in a family of travellers who were not only travelling for exploration, but to bring back stories. And then, at some point, our family legacy became about protecting the environment, so I was imbued with all of that growing up.

My first trip to the Amazon was when I was 9 years old. It profoundly changed my relationship with the world and created a connection with that place. I kept going back. That journey was all about the experiences and the senses. I got to help scientists catch piranha and study them. I walked on a sandbar in the middle of the Amazon River with thousands and thousands of little frogs. Just walking into the jungle, I had a full awareness of what it was just to sense the earth. All of that stayed very much alive in me. As an adult, you intellectualise your experiences much more; as a child, it was all about the senses. I know that my access to the outdoors has profoundly defined who I am. It shapes how I see myself in the world, how I see other people, and the ability, even if I've never been to a place, to understand my connection to it.

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LUCHO VERDESOTO

Expedition leader, Lindblad Expeditions
Base: Villanúa, Spain

AFTER 27 YEARS GUIDING TRIPS FOR LINDBLAD AND TRAVELLING THE world aboard several National Geographic ships, it's still a total thrill when I see something new. People will come up to me and say, "Come on, this probably happens all the time, right?" And I'm like, "No, I've never seen this in my life!"

For instance, just a couple of years ago we encountered a seal that was all alone on an ice floe. It was a glorious afternoon; we'd been heading south towards the Antarctic Circle, when suddenly this pod of killer whales comes along. They were clearly hunting and targeted this seal on the ice floe. They started doing the kind of wave-washing you see on National Geographic, trying to wash the seal right off the ice in front of our eyes. The captain managed to put the bow of the ship maybe less than 50 metres away from the ice floe, very carefully and slowly, and all 150 of us, plus the crew, were leaning over the bow. No one was inside the ship. The whales were teaching their young how to do the washing. And then, the unexpected happened: The seal got away. There was no massacre. That's something that doesn't usually happen in nature.

Leading expeditions in the Arctic is different from Antarctica. The polar bears present a different kind of challenge, because we're getting off the ship and walking with a group and armed naturalists and guides as guards – let's just say that, as an expedition leader, I probably have a few gray hairs from those bears. Mostly, though, it's incredibly moving being in an area that's on the front line of climate change. Everyone wants to see the predator, the iconic polar bear, but it's the whole environment that's threatened. And it's a magical thing to see: The ice, it embraces so much diversity; all the seabirds, the whales – the belugas and narwhals – it's something special.

(ARCTIC) RALPH LEE HOPKINS

OUR OWN
LIVES ARE
RICHER
WHEN WE'RE
SURROUNDED BY
DIVERSITY.



ROMINA DA PIEVE

Chief of exploration experience, Explora
Base: Santiago, Chile

PEOPLE WILL SAY, "I CAME TO TORRES DEL PAINE OR ATACAMA BECAUSE I need to disconnect." But what they mean is, they need to connect! You need to connect with yourself and disconnect the things between you and your thoughts, between you and nature. We see that all the time. People arrive at our lodges the first day, exhausted from the journey, with *that face* – you know, the traveller's face. And then they go outside and, well, they completely change. They start to become real people.

I recommend that everybody do at least one full-day adventure when they visit the Explora properties, because when you spend the full day outside, you really get to connect with yourself. That's what I enjoy the most: seeing the transformation in people after they go out on an exploration. It doesn't matter if it's sunny, if it's raining, if it's snowing. As soon as guests step outside, they change.

One of the things I've learned from nature that I appreciate more and more is diversity. In Torres del Paine, for instance, there's a wonderful diversity of bird species. Even the ground there is diverse. It might look barren, but it's rich with microorganisms, and in the springtime the flowers are amazing. The healthiest ecosystems are the ones that are diverse, and if you think of our own lives, they're richer when we're surrounded by diversity. Diversity in nature. Diversity in people. That's why, when we form our guiding teams, we try to look for diversity. It's good not only for our guests, but for our teams.



(PATAGONIA) KAVRAM / GETTY IMAGES

ALEJANDRA VILLALOBOS

Hiking guide, Journey Mexico on-site tour connection
Base: Chihuahua City, Mexico



MY LOVE OF NATURE LED ME TO BECOME A GUIDE.



I'VE BEEN HIKING IN MEXICO AND THE U.S. FOR 20 YEARS AND HAVE BEEN CLOSE TO nature since I was a girl. My father was a cattleman. He had ranches on the plains of Chihuahua. Working there, I spent a lot of time hiking in the Sierra Norte. My love of nature led me to become a NOLS (National Outdoor Leadership School) instructor. Now I lead hiking trips to Copper Canyon and Oaxaca. Everyone who comes to Copper Canyon is surprised: The landscape is huge, just amazingly huge. People are pretty much speechless when they learn it's four times the volume of the Grand Canyon and is actually made up of eight separate canyons. The deepest is more than 1,800 metres deep. At the top it's forest – pine and oak – and at the bottom it's subtropical.

I'll guide three-, four-, or seven-day hiking trips, and on all of them there's a lot of up and down. It's rugged terrain with different altitudes. But it's fine: We walk slowly and have mules carrying our gear. Anyone in moderately good shape can do this. The camps are very nice; we're not there to suffer. In the bottom of the canyons you'll find mango and avocado trees and papaya; you'll have these bright-green military macaws flying right over your head – it's fantastic.

The other thing I love about leading trips in Copper Canyon is the culture. There are four different ethnic groups, but the major one is the Rarámuri. They're known worldwide because they're really good barefoot runners. My favourite time to hike is September or October, since the rainy season has just passed, it's not too hot, and there's still a lot of water in the streams and little waterfalls. The fields are full of flowers – purple, yellow, white – and everything is super green.

(ALEJANDRA VILLALOBOS) BRUNO REZZA.
(COPPER CANYON) AL ARGÜETA/ALAMY



YOU LEARN
THE MAIN
RULE:
IF YOU
TIP OVER ON
THE SLED,
HANG ON!



CARL DIXON

Dog musher, adventurer, and co-owner,
Within the Wild lodge company

Base: Mile 198, Iditarod Trail, Southcentral Alaska

OUR LODGE IS LOCATED AN HOUR'S FLIGHT NORTH OF ANCHORAGE. AT MILE 198 along the Iditarod Trail. If you're really interested, you can come for our four-day dog-mushing school at Winterlake Lodge, but most guests just want to try running the dogs for a day. First we hook up the dogs, then I'll drive the team, starting out with guests riding in front in the basket. You know how it is just out of the gate – the huskies are all barking and rarin' to go. There's a lot of power in even a six-dog team when they're ready to roll, and we start out *flying*. Then, after a bit of instruction, if our guests feel comfortable, they can drive the dogs, with me in the basket. It's a once-in-a-lifetime experience for folks. We have 16 sled dogs here at Winterlake, and each one has its own personality. You get to learn who the lead dogs are, the team dogs, the swing dogs. You learn how to harness the dogs. And you learn the main rule: If you tip over on the sled, hang on!

Winter is beautiful here. Once you're flying along with a team, the dogs quiet down and all you hear is snow-hushed silence and the rush of the runners. We might see moose tracks, marten tracks, lynx tracks, all kinds of birds, but of course no bears that time of year. It's interesting to learn about all the winter life here, to realise how remote we are. There are no roads. Sometimes people are a little shocked at how remote we are, but that's Alaska. VI

A person with long dark hair, wearing a black and white patterned sweater and tan cargo pants, stands on a large, mossy rock. They are looking out over a vibrant turquoise lake. The background features steep, rugged mountains with patches of green grass and significant snow cover under a blue sky with white clouds.

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to crashing
Atlantic surf,
Morocco
goes big
on adventure.

Story and
photography
by Alan Keohane

The Milky Way and Toubkal massif
in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains.



I first came to Morocco

I in 1986 to work with the Berbers, the Indigenous inhabitants of the region, organising and leading treks in the highest mountain chain in North Africa, the Atlas Mountains. I'd been studying photography in London and wanted to photograph the country and its people. Britain has had a long historic connection with Morocco: The northern city of Tangier was briefly a British colony, and the two countries signed a treaty in 1721. Yet despite this association, Morocco had always felt remote and unknown.

No one was going to pay me to travel and take photos, so I did the next best thing – got a job that brought me into daily contact with the kind of landscapes and people I wanted to photograph. A few years later I published my first book, *The Berbers of Morocco*, and from that was commissioned for *Bedouin: Nomads of the Desert*. The sheer variety of Morocco's landscapes and cultural heritage I encountered during that time astounded me. In 1993, my wife, Joanna, and I moved from our small London flat to Marrakech so we could explore these lands together.

Morocco's history and culture evolved in the countryside, among the nomadic desert tribes and the Berbers – the Imazighen in their own language – in the mountains. Some of the country's most historic monuments are found there: sites such as Tamegroute in the south's Draa Valley – a religious centre since the eleventh century – and Tinmel Mosque, built in 1156 in the Atlas Mountains. Cities like Fez and Marrakech represent the zenith of Moroccan history and culture; they were the capitals of vast empires that had great wealth and sponsored extraordinary monuments and art. However, it's in the countryside, among the tribal communities and in the small villages, that you can discover the people, their personalities, and the traditions that led them to create the cities and empires that have had such an impact on the rest of the world.



A member of the Berber Ait Atta tribe leads his camel through Erg Chebbi dunes. Opposite: The Atlas Mountains viewed from Marrakech.

As we emerge from this moment, the country's open spaces call out more strongly than ever before. The desert's attraction lies in its combination of majestic emptiness, surprising geological formations, and the hospitality of the people who live there. Travellers, for example, will often be invited to partake in a glass of mint tea, if not to share in a communally eaten tagine. In the desert, the Bedouin tradition of hospitality is called "the bond of salt." Hosts are duty-bound to welcome a guest for three days and three nights; it's a mechanism of survival, but also a matter of honour: Today's guest may well be your host tomorrow.

Morocco is a place of surprises. The desert is austere, yet almost instantaneously transformed by rain, as hidden oases burst with life. The mountains pack so much into a small footprint – they're havens for big-horned aoudads, Cuvier's gazelles, golden eagles, and wildcats such as caracal. And I love the Atlantic Coast's wildness, its huge surf and long, almost empty beaches. If I had to choose one area to take a visiting friend, it would be there in the south for its space and sense of adventure, camping under a huge sky filled with stars where the Sahara's grand dunes literally tumble into the ocean.



✧
Clockwise from top:
Erg Chebbi dunes,
Koran study in Mer-
zouga, an almond tree
blossoming outside
the Draa Valley village
of Tamnougalt, and a
Berber woman weed-
ing poppies from her
field on the road
to Tizi n'Tichka
Pass, gateway to
the Sahara.

Morocco is
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Clockwise from top left: Asilah, an arts hub about an hour's drive south of Tangier, has a fortified medina that dates to the fifteenth century; sheep grazing in the High Atlas Mountains; a kasbah presiding over the Ourika Valley south of Marrakech; and Fantasia horsemen practising near Safi on Morocco's central Atlantic coast.

All for Morocco

Trips that pair city highlights with great outdoor pursuits.

Blue Parallel's custom Morocco itineraries include a ten-day trip with two nights each at Kasbah Tamadot in the Atlas Mountains and Dar Ahlam in the Skoura Valley for hiking, mountain biking, visits with Berber families, and other activities. Two days in Fez and three in Marrakech balance rural pursuits with urban discovery. *Departures: Any day, 1 September through 31 December 2021.*

Photographer and photo editor Krista Rossow shares pro tips on **National Geographic Expeditions'** 12-day trip from Casablanca to Fez. Days focus on outdoor activities – hikes in the High Atlas and Dadès Gorge, four-wheeling in the Ounila Valley, a sunset camel ride on Saharan dunes – and include photogenic city souks and buskers on Djemaa el-Fna Square. *Departures: 11 September 2021, and 14 May and 10 September 2022. VI.*

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DOMESTIC BLISS

From the blue waters of the Whitsundays to the Outback's rugged terrain to Sydney's glittering towers, there's a world of great escapes worth exploring inside Australia. Here, a little inspiration for your next close-to-home getaways.

BY ALEXANDRA CARLTON



CRUISES

Smooth Sailing

Ahoy Club oversees a network of 4,000 professionally crewed charter vessels worldwide, including more than 130 in Australia, with a dedicated concierge service to take care of everything from restaurant bookings to special-occasion surprises. Set sail almost anywhere along Australia's diverse coastline, from the Whitsundays or the Kimberley to Sydney Harbour.



Explore Farther

Coral Expeditions' boutique Asia-Pacific cruises take a maximum of 120 passengers to some of the most remote and uncharted regions around Australia, including Cape York and Arnhem Land, the wild bays of Tasmania, or the Kimberley. Their eight-day Great Barrier Reef itinerary is a classic example: Just 72 intrepid guests get the chance to explore the far-flung Ribbon and Osprey Reefs and deserted coral cays.



TOURS

Immersive and Engaging

Private picnics in the Blue Mountains of NSW or sunrise hikes to the base of Uluru are among the stretch-your-legs and fill-your-soul extras that tour company **Addicted to Australia** might weave into a curated itinerary. Their mission is to encourage Australians to discover the behind-the-scenes secrets of their own backyard, with luxury and authenticity at the core of every journey. All the better if that's by means of traditional smoking ceremonies and cultural talks and walks with Aboriginal elders or a private visit to a Hawkesbury oyster farm for oyster and Champagne sampling.



Best of the Barossa

Coast & Co, known for its Barossa e-bike tours, four-wheel-drive adventures, and private air safaris, also organises one of Australia's most over-the-top wine tours. Guests are collected from their accommodation in a beautifully appointed Land Rover Discovery and spend the day indulging in extraordinary experiences, such as a private tasting of Henschke's iconic \$865 Hill of Grace shiraz.



Kangaroo Island, Customised

It's one thing join a regular group wildlife tour and spot a kangaroo or a koala. It's another thing entirely to have **Exceptional Kangaroo Island** tailor an experience to your interests, however specific. It could be helping researchers collect data on local bird populations, recording endangered nocturnal marsupials, or even having lunch or tracking echidnas with Peggy Rismiller, the world's foremost expert on echidnas.



Close to home and quintessential: Surf's up in Queensland.

HOTELS, RESORTS, AND HOMES

Switch Off in the Outback

No two days are the same at **Bullo River Station**, a 12-suite retreat at the centre of an almost 500,000-acre working cattle station in the Northern Territory. Take a four-wheel-drive nature tour, laze by the pool, or plunge into the freshwater billabong Marlee's Bath, named for former owner and station manager Marlee Ranacher, who loved to cool off here during muster time. *Accommodations include all meals and beverages, land-based touring, and a special Virtuoso gift.*



Culture Cure

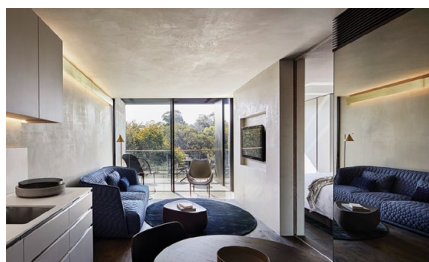
Brisbane's buzzy South Bank – home to the Gallery of Modern Art and the Queensland Performing Arts Centre – is one of the country's most vibrant arts and theatre hubs, and the **Emporium Hotel South Bank** sits right in the thick of it. There are 144 suites to choose from, with the choice pick being the 786-square-metre, four-bedroom, three-bathroom Parklands Suite, which includes its own private infinity pool. *Accommodations include breakfast daily and a bottomless Champagne afternoon tea for two.*



A Roof with a View

Great views stretch in all directions from inside the soaring **The Ritz-Carlton, Perth**: the sweeping city skyline on one side and the mighty Swan River on the other. All 205 of the hotel's rooms and suites take full advantage of the outlook, but the best place to sip sundowners in the fading light of a dazzling Western Australian sunset is the open-air, rooftop Songbird Bar & Lounge. *Accommodations include breakfast daily and a \$140 hotel credit.*





Garden Getaway

United Places Botanic Gardens is a collection of 12 tranquil suites which overlook the rooftops of South Yarra or the lush leafiness of Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens. Room service dinner from hatted neighbouring restaurant Matilda (or another area restaurant), breakfast in bed the next morning, and a sunshiny stroll through the gardens to the National Gallery of Victoria make for a soul-soothing urban escape. *Accommodations include breakfast daily and a \$100 in-suite neighbourhood dining credit.*



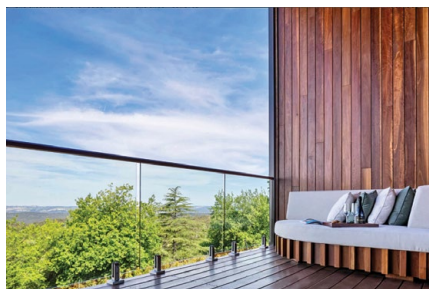
Sustainably Elegant

Elysian Retreat, a ten-villa hideaway on Long Island in Queensland's Whitsundays, recently earned some impressive sustainability stripes, including Advanced Ecotourism certification from Ecotourism Australia. And a stay here is just as good for guests' wellbeing as the planet's: Days are filled with gourmet meals, yoga, spa treatments, reef tourism, or simply slowing down and breathing in the clean, salty air of the tropics. *Accommodations include breakfast daily and a \$130 spa credit.*



Embrace the Big Blue

The first detail travellers notice on the descent to Hayman Island, which sits at the northernmost tip of the Whitsundays, are the layers of blue: the turquoise-to-sapphire ombre of the ocean and then the aqua geometric shapes of the 15 pools – some shared, some private – at the 168-room **InterContinental Hayman Island Resort**. And swimming is just the beginning: There are five bars and restaurants, optional reef tours, and the Hayman Spa. *Accommodations include breakfast daily and a \$130 resort credit.*



Run for the Hills

Piccadilly Valley views, gracious service, and Hardy's Verandah restaurant have made the 31-suite **Mount Lofty House** one of the most coveted addresses in the Adelaide Hills. The 14-suite, tree-hugged **Sequoia Lodge**, which will be available for stays in July, will offer yet another layer of luxury, with a private pool, artesian-spring-fed hot pools, a wildlife sanctuary, and experiences centred around nature, wellness, and food. *Accommodations include breakfast daily and a \$100 dining credit.*



Get Centred in Adelaide

The South Australian capital is the gateway to Australia's finest wine regions: The Adelaide Hills are just outside the city limits and the Barossa Valley's just an hour-and-a-half drive away. But there's a good reason not to dash off too quickly; an extended stay at the charming 170-room heritage **Mayfair Hotel** – especially if it includes dinner at the Mayflower Restaurant and nightcaps at the Hennessy Rooftop Bar – turns Adelaide into a destination all its own. *Accommodations include breakfast daily and a \$130 hotel credit.*



Wine, Dine, Unwind.

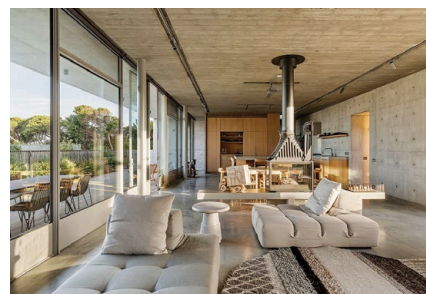
Barossa Valley lodge **The Louise** has long had a reputation for outstanding food, even more so now that its high-end restaurant, Appellation, has debuted a handsome face-lift. The lodge has also added a wellness string to its bow: Guests can book private yoga or meditation sessions, wellness coaching, and massages during a stay in any of the 15 generous suites. *Accommodations include breakfast daily and a private tour and winetasting at Yalumba Winery.*



A grand day out at Montalto Winery & Olive Grove on the Mornington Peninsula.

Home Stays, Elevated

Luxico's upscale home-stay properties are all screened to ensure they meet exacting standards. Guests who like the feel of a private home but want the "someone else can take care of everything" perks of a hotel, can book a VIP upgrade that includes a butler, daily housekeeping, and a fully stocked fridge at one of the top-of-the-range Ultra Villas, such as modernist Prickly Rocks on the Mornington Peninsula, Vic, or the oceanfront Twenty Six in Byron Bay, NSW. *Accommodations include a gourmet welcome hamper and a \$250 credit towards in-home services.*



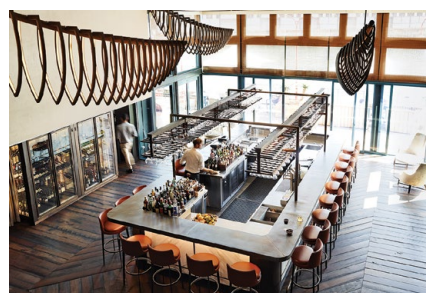
Local Touches

The beauty of a stay at one of the three elegant private villas at river-front escape **The Frames** in the Riverland region of South Australia is that everything – from gourmet safaris to gondola cruises to booking a private chef – is run by owners and third-generation locals Cathy and Rick Edmonds, who are privy to all the region's secrets and can tailor an itinerary to any manner of interest. *Accommodations include daily breakfast provisions and a \$130 hotel credit.*



Harbour Stays and Dog Days

Historic architectural elements, modern design and amenities, and some of the best harbour views in the city make **Pier One Sydney Harbour** an unforgettable Sydney stay. Guests can even bring a canine friend. And while it's unlikely pups will appreciate the chic humans-only Hunter Lab amenities or the signature Archie Rose cocktails served at Bar One, they'll definitely be fans of the doggie room-service menu and the chance to snuggle up in an eco-friendly dog bed. *Accommodations include breakfast daily and a \$130 dining credit*



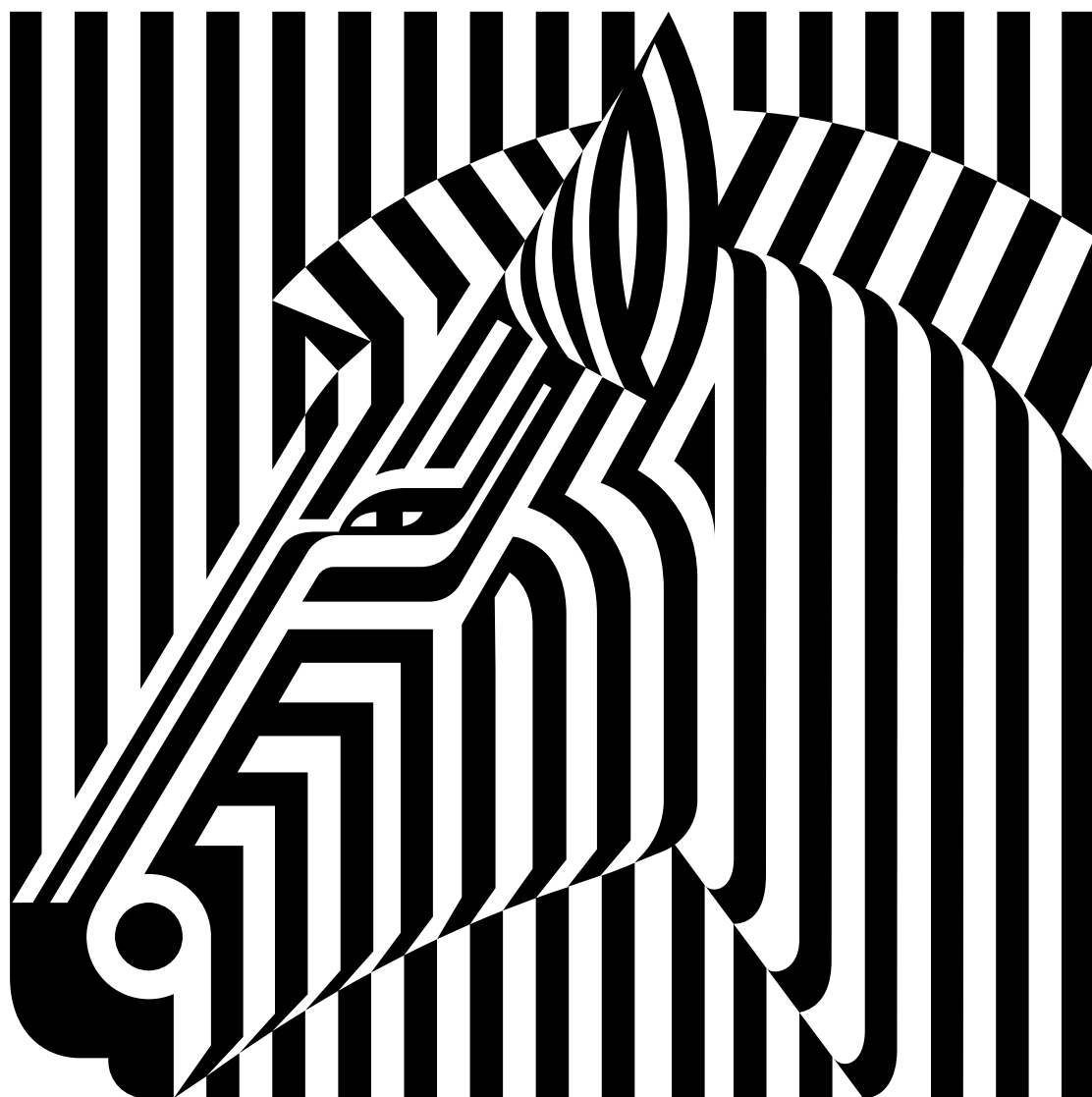
New Sparkle in Sydney

For years, Sydneysiders watched the sparkling blue tower rising from its harbour foreshore. And when **Crown Towers Sydney** opened in late 2020, they quickly learned the interior was just as arresting. With 349 rooms and suites, some of the city's best dining at Woodcut (and ten other bars and restaurants), and a glittering infinity pool, it's a welcome addition to the city's hotel scene. *Accommodations include breakfast daily and a \$130 hotel credit.*



WILD THING

NATURAL STYLE, IN BLACK AND WHITE.



Zèbre

**Limited-edition screen print
on Somerset velvet**

French-born, Barcelona-based Malika Favre likes to reimagine the ordinary. Her bold, minimal style makes clever use of negative space and geometry – as well as humour and a touch of sexiness. She created this image of a familiar safari denizen “as an ode to the perfection of nature itself,” she says. Prints available at shop.malikafavre.com. @malikafavre

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