

SUNDOWNER

FOR THE INSPIRED TRAVELLER • WINTER 2019

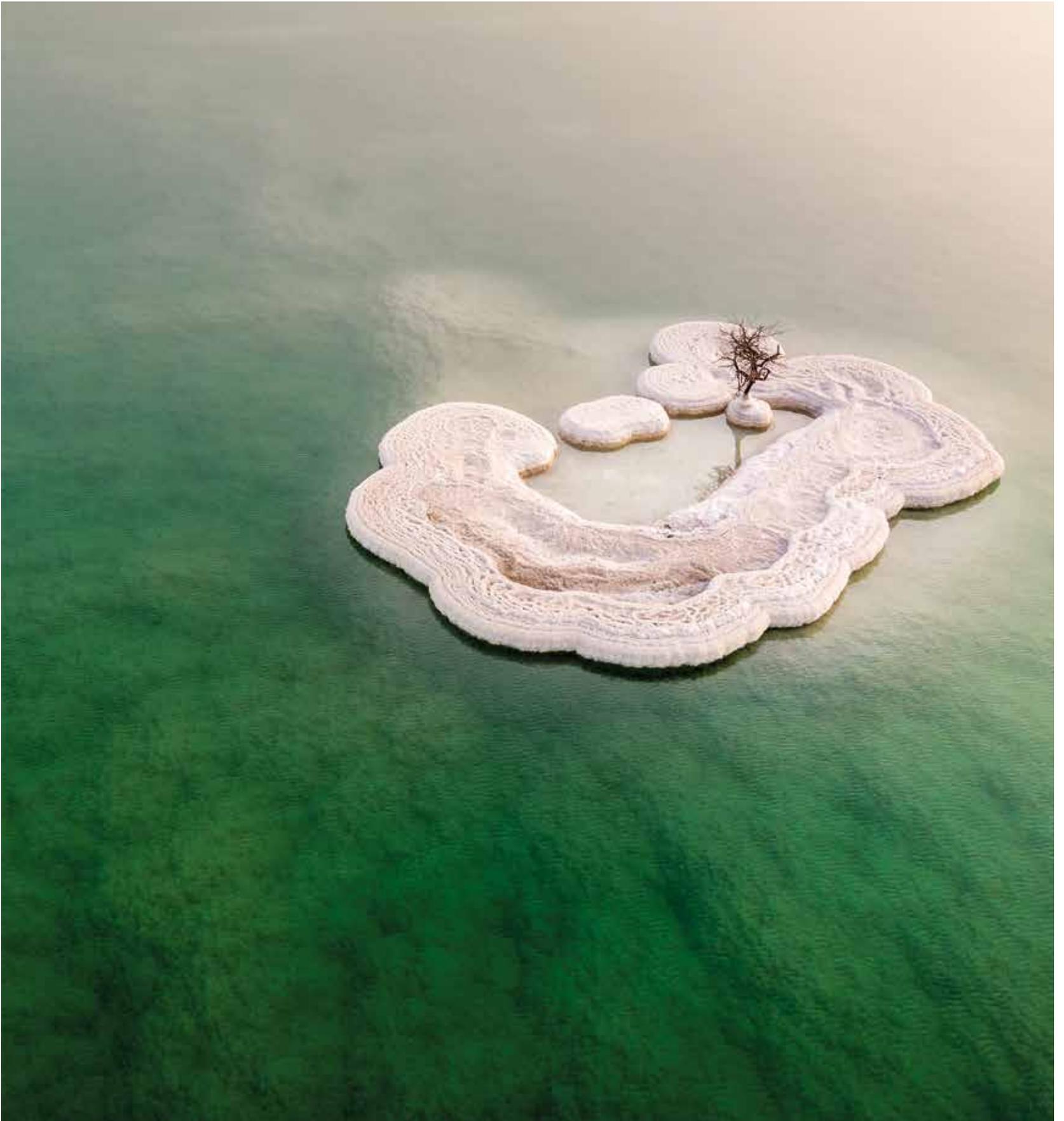
INSIDE

ISRAEL

BOTSWANA & ZAMBIA

EUROPE

SOUTHERN INDIA



Abercrombie & Kent

FOUNDER'S NOTE



WELCOME TO OUR WINTER 2019 ISSUE

While winter sends icy blasts to those of you in the far south of the country, others in warmer climes will be relishing the cooler temperatures. We, in the northern hemisphere, are welcoming clear skies, sunny days and extended holidays. Wherever you are in the world and whatever the season, the lure of new travels and encounters beckons.

And that's where we come in. At A&K we are so fortunate to have a wealth of extraordinary travel talent at our fingertips – a global staff of more than 2,500, 56 offices worldwide, a luxury hotel and cruise company and an active philanthropic arm. This means we can deliver the perfectly curated journey to suit your exact needs. It may be a bespoke tented safari for you and your family with the finest wildlife experiences and inspiring community interactions, or an expedition cruise with new companions to the polar reaches in the company of enrichment experts. It may be participating like a local in a unique and meaningful festival with your partner, or taking a timeless journey down one of the world's great rivers with an old friend. No matter where you travel with A&K, the common thread which connects all our journeys is our deep desire to transform your view of the world. And we do that by giving you privileged access to incredible people and experiences wherever you go.

So, who will you meet and how will your world be transformed? Read on for inspiration. We're showcasing some of our favourite destinations like India, Egypt and Europe but in ways you may not expect. There are several new small group journeys including an exploration of Ethiopia and a beguiling adventure in Turkey and Malta.

Some of our favourite travel writers have contributed tales about their adventures in Israel (page 26) and southern India (page 42). There's an insider's guide for travel to Kerala (page 20), an article on wines in Argentina and news about our partnerships (page 7). Our latest philanthropic activities are highlighted (page 10) and you'll hear from one of our Travel Specialists about her top tips in South Africa (page 58).

I hope you find your transformative travel inspiration here or on our website, where the world's your oyster.

Geoffrey Kent
*Founder, Chairman and CEO of the
Abercrombie & Kent Group of Companies*



follow me on Instagram and hear
about my latest A&K adventures
[@geoffrey_kent](#)

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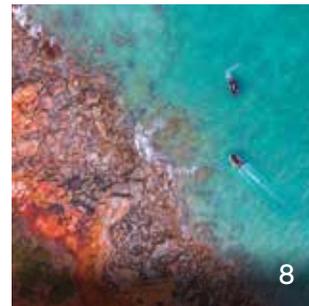
WINTER 2019



Follow us on Instagram to stay updated with the latest A&K adventures @aktravel_au

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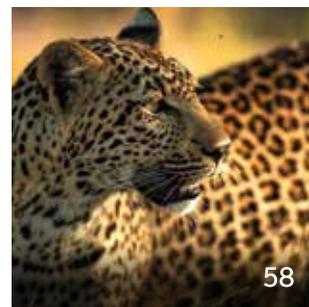
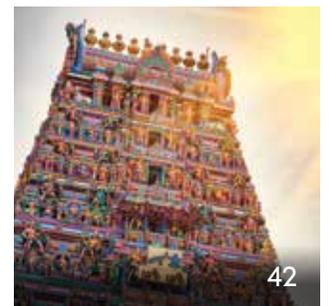
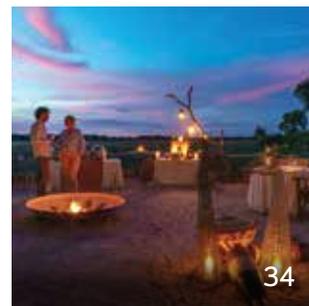
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TRICIA WELSH

Page 26

Tricia is a career travel journalist based on the Sunshine Coast. She has visited all seven continents and this year expects to tick off 100 countries visited. The Middle East keeps drawing her back having witnessed ancient Syrian marvels such as the oasis city of Palmyra, the Citadel and medieval labyrinthine souk in Aleppo before they were devastated by war; Petra and Jerash in Jordan; the ancient Roman city of Leptis Magna and berber Ghadames in Libya; and of course the pyramids and treasures of ancient Egypt. Her recent trip to Israel was her second to the Holy Land and now she can't wait to go back yet again.



HELEN ANDERSON

Page 42

India was the first overseas destination for journalist and editor Helen Anderson. "India was overwhelming, fascinating, frightening and totally addictive," she recalls. "It set me in motion for a lifetime of travel." The travel editor of premier food and travel magazine *Gourmet Traveller* headed south, to Tamil Nadu, to explore the state's remarkable temple art, distinctive French flavour and, of course, the world's best masala dosas.

SUNDOWNER



On the Cover: Dead Sea, Israel (page 26). Our appreciation of imagery to: Melbourne Theatre Company, Sanctuary Retreats, A&K Philanthropy, Shutterstock, iStock Photos, Tricia Welsh, Philip Koschel, visumate, and all our partner airlines, hotels, vessels and properties. Illustrations: Joy Gosney.

Abercrombie & Kent

TRUE LUXURY ADVENTURES IN AUSTRALASIA

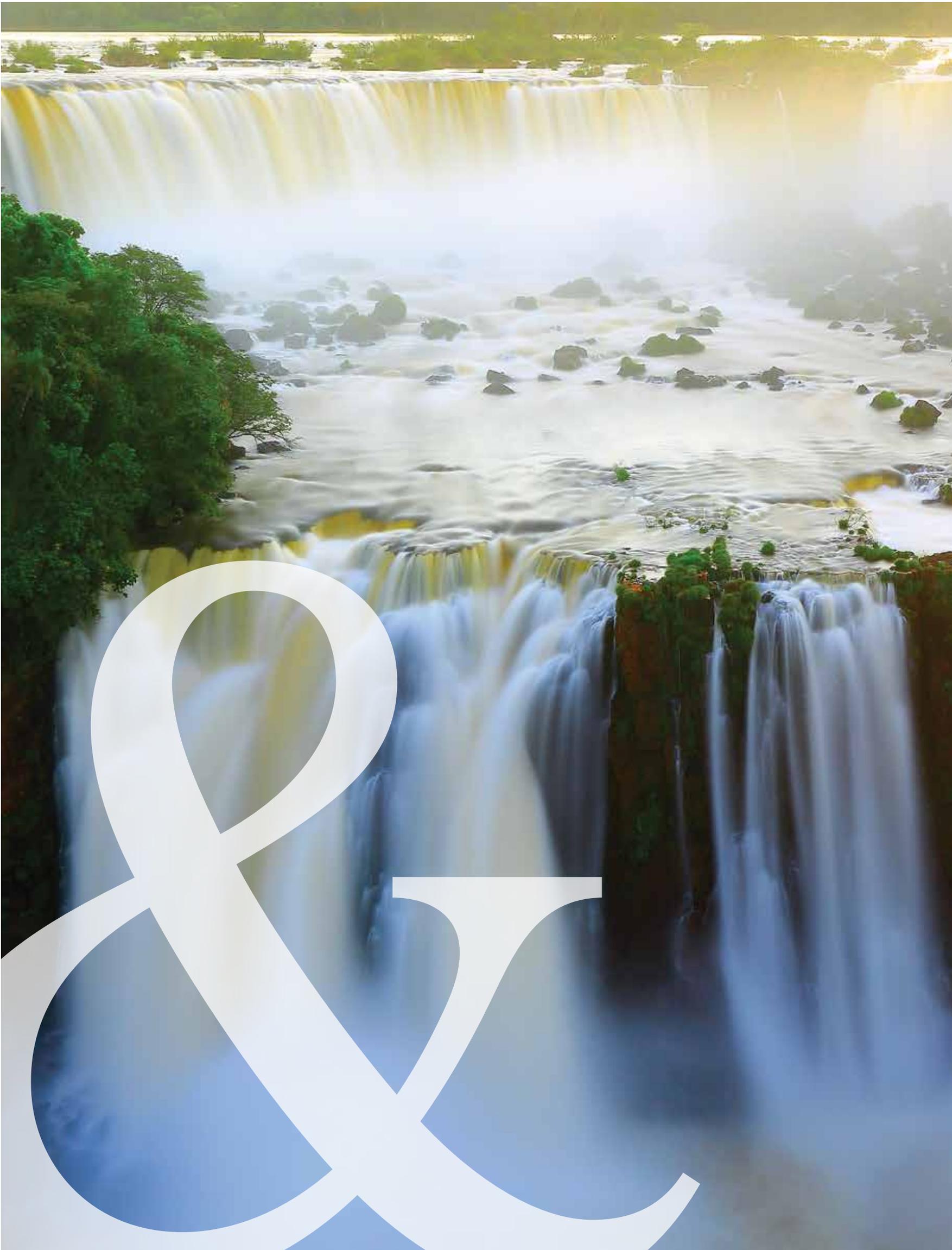
“A wise traveller never overlooks his own country.” – Carlo Goldoni

Abercrombie & Kent takes the world's most discerning travellers on luxury adventures to more than 100 countries. Yet some of the world's most extraordinary travel experiences are right in our own backyards. Tropical islands, red deserts, windswept beaches and snow-capped mountains. Glaciers, fjords, world-class wineries and sumptuous regional produce. Bracing eco walks, private cycling tours and bragworthy fly fishing. Whether it's swimming with whale sharks, gazing out over the Marlborough Sounds or the Southern Ocean, on a gourmet getaway, a luxury cruise in the Kimberley, a private island in Tasmania or family time in Middle Earth, Abercrombie & Kent has an Australasian adventure for you, close to home and a world away from the everyday.

Talk to your travel agent or call Abercrombie & Kent on 1300 551 541.

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Abercrombie & Kent guests can earn 1 Qantas Point for every \$1 spent on eligible A&K itineraries, including 2019 & 2020 Limited Edition Small Group Journeys*.



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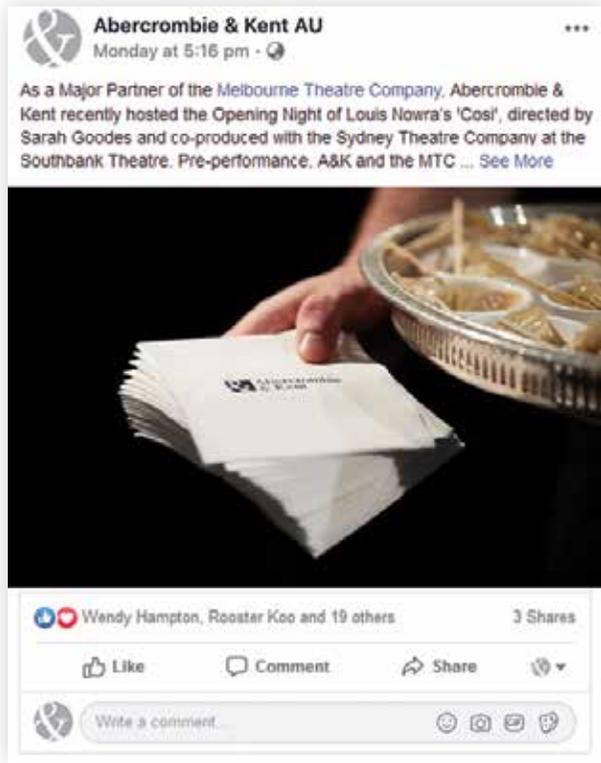
Iguazú Falls, Brazil

'Brazil: A Cultural Odyssey' – A Limited Edition Small Group Journey

Check us

OUT

Follow A&K online for recent happenings, news and travel inspiration.



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 Abercrombie & Kent Australia

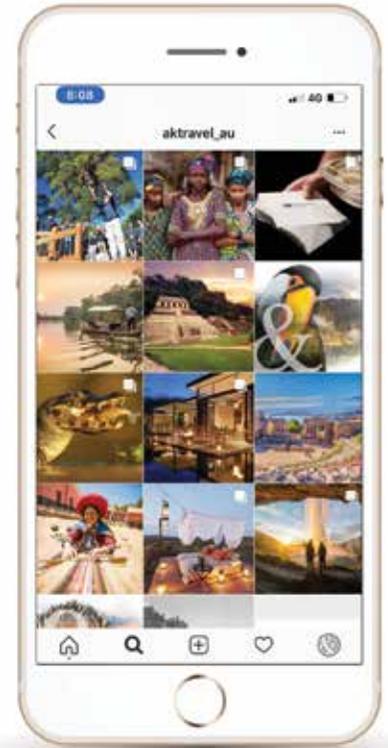
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YOUTUBE

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Discover more about A&K Philanthropy projects, such as the Chipego bike shop, in Nakatindi Village, Zambia. This project is built with support from many of our guests and travel advisors.



TWITTER

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Followers on Twitter get daily A&K updates from around the world.



LIFE

Partnerships & Events



TAKING AUDIENCES AND GUESTS ON INSPIRING JOURNEYS

A&K has recently announced a new multi-year partnership with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra as part of its Masters Series, which showcases some of the world's most exciting music. The partnership officially launched in February at the series' first performance at the Sydney Opera House of Bartok's Concerto for Orchestra led by Chief Conductor and Artistic Director David Robertson.



ACCA

A&K is delighted to once more be a presenting partner of ACCA (Australian Centre for Contemporary Art) in support of their lecture series on the landmark exhibitions that have shaped Australian art since 1968. Guest lecturers will analyse the game changers, addressing key contemporary art exhibitions staged over the last three decades of the twentieth century and reflecting on the ways these exhibitions shaped art history and contemporary Australian culture more broadly.



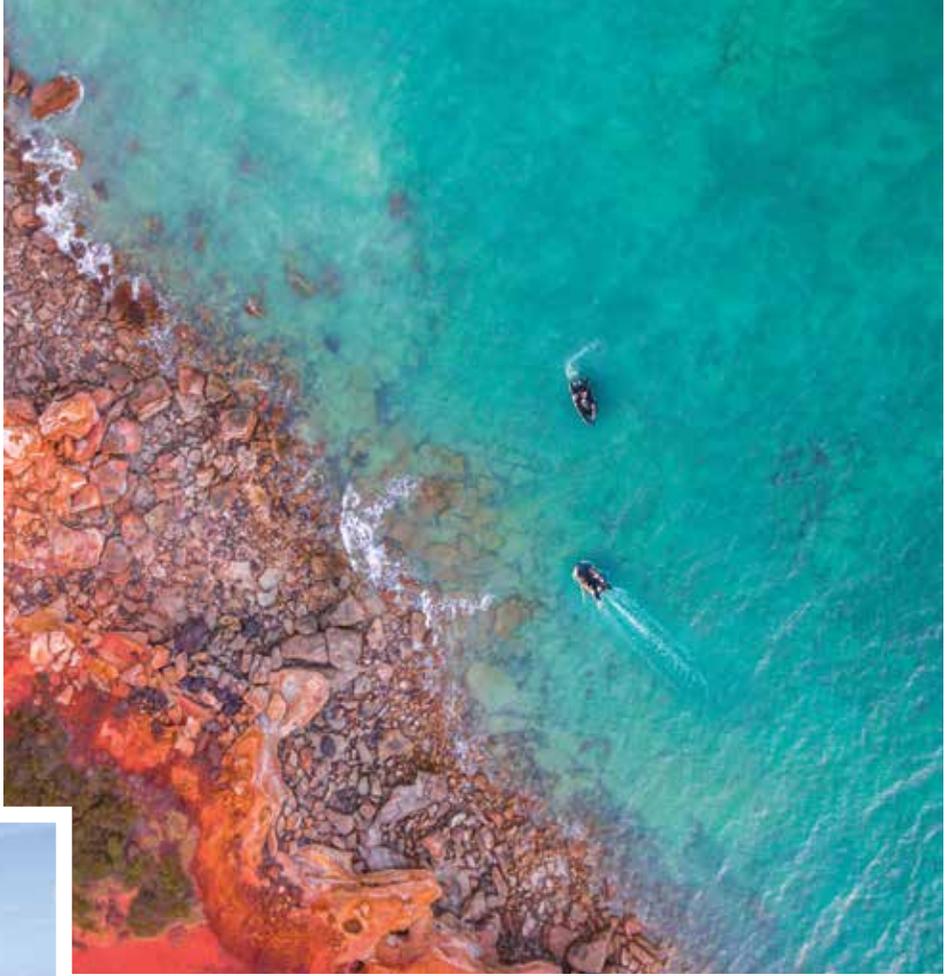
LADY IN THE VAN

As a Major Partner of the Melbourne Theatre Company, Abercrombie & Kent recently hosted the Opening Night of Alan Bennett's 'The Lady In The Van', directed by Dean Bryan at The Arts Centre Melbourne. A&K and MTC guests and VIPs witnessed an extraordinary performance, most notably from Miriam Margolyes in the title role. Celebrations continued long after the show with A&K supporting the official after-party where guests mingled with the cast and crew, enjoying British-inspired food, music, imagery and styling, all in keeping with the theme of this stellar production.



A&K NEWS

- 1: Zodiac excursion, Kimberley coastline
- 2: Le Lapérouse
- 3: The Bungle Bungles
- 4: Horizontal Falls
- 5: Ancient indigenous rock paintings



1



2

KIMBERLEY 2020

Dates have just been released for the 2020 sailing of our incredible luxury expedition cruise through the untouched Kimberley region. This 13-day shore-hopping voyage from Broome to Darwin reveals the rugged coastline at its most spectacular and in true luxury aboard 'Le Lapérouse', exclusively chartered and reimagined by A&K. You'll be joined on-board by the world-renowned A&K Expedition Team, which comprises award-winning geologists, marine scientists, photographers and indigenous experts, who will bring to life some of the world's most spectacular terrain and seascapes as you meander through far-flung islands, ancient cultures, stunning tidal waterfalls, and biodiverse coral reefs.

Book now to secure the very best suite and stateroom categories, or take advantage of the Early Booking Discount on stateroom categories 1, 2 and 3 and save up to \$4,350 per couple, with prices starting from \$18,830 per person twin share.

Tour dates: 25 June–7 July 2020.



3



4



5

NEW OWNERSHIP FOR A&K

Geoffrey Kent, A&K's Founder, Chairman and CEO, has formed a strategic partnership with Manfredi Lefebvre d'Ovidio, Chairman of Heritage group, to jointly acquire 100% of the Abercrombie & Kent Group of Companies. The union brings together two luxury travel visionaries with the common aim of developing Abercrombie & Kent as the premier brand in luxury and experiential travel. Friends and business partners for many years, the two have a track record of delivering the most amazing travel experiences to the world's most astute travellers. Stay tuned for more developments.



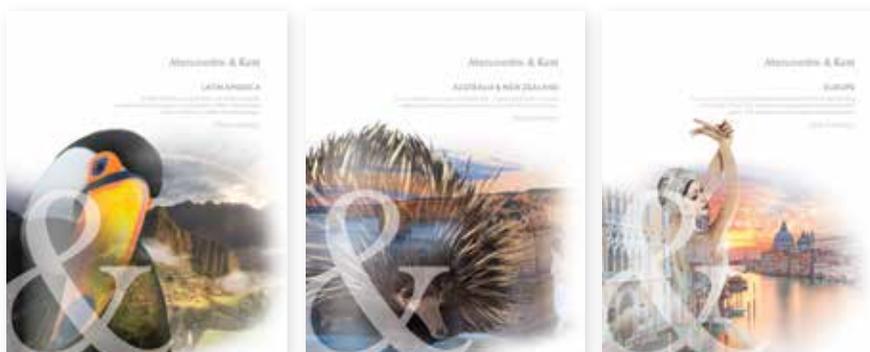
A&K PHILANTHROPY SUPPORTS AUSSIE RAPTOR REHABILITATION

Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy (AKP) has recently announced its support of Tasmania's inspirational Raptor Refuge Inc. south of Hobart. It is the only refuge of its kind in the southern hemisphere which, under the guidance of passionate conservationist Craig Webb, takes in injured birds of prey and, with a small team of volunteers, rehabilitates them for return to the wild. Threatened by power lines, farming, habitat loss and wind farms, well over a hundred wedge-tailed eagles, and many more raptors, are killed each year and the threats are constant. As part of the agreement, A&K travellers in Tasmania will have the unique opportunity of visiting the refuge and enjoying a level of access beyond anything that is offered to any other guest.

PLAN YOUR NEXT GETAWAY

At A&K, the notion of luxury travel is constantly being reimagined and so our portfolio increases. Through our new brochure collection we invite you to see the world in a new light and find yourself somewhere amazing.

Call 1300 551 541 for your copy or download on abercrombiekent.com.au





A&K PHILANTHROPY

AUSTRALIAN BIKES ARRIVE SAFELY IN TANZANIA



Late last year, Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy Australia mounted a successful campaign to collect and ship a container load of secondhand bikes to northern Tanzania where a new bike shop is being established near the World Heritage listed Ngorongoro Crater. Thanks to the generous residents of Melbourne, and beyond, over 400 bikes were donated and have safely arrived at their destination.

A&K Australia staff, friends and family co-ordinated the project spending two weekends gratefully receiving bikes from right across the city. Every bike came with a story and the next chapter is being written as another transformational community bike shop opens in Africa.

AKP's inspirational bike programme enables mobility in the communities where the shops are established. This means health care workers can see more patients, students can get to school, workers can get to work more easily, and families can carry more goods to and from home. In turn, the passionate women who run the operation earn an income enabling them to support their families. A&K travellers visiting the destination are encouraged to stop by the project and see firsthand the difference being made, even hiring a bike for a morning's ride around the neighbourhood.

In addition to Tanzania, AKP also supports the operations of bike shops in Zambia, Botswana, Uganda and Jordan with each bike shop employing five women and close to 10,000 bikes already shipped by AKP.



To learn more about projects supported by AKP visit akphilanthropy.org



Malbec & More:

WINES OF ARGENTINA

Argentina - a country of incredible scenic beauty, famous for the tango, asado, 'Che' Guevara and Diego Maradona - with a national drink that may well be yerba mate, but whose wine industry revolution has planted it firmly on the international stage, writes **Jane Perry**.



1

- 1: Bodega Salentein cellar, Mendoza
 2: Cafayate scenery
 3: Bodega Septima, Mendoza

Boasting a terroir of landscape extremes, Argentina's expanse of untouched acreage, micro-climates and widely divergent temperature variables, produce grapes with distinct characteristics. Much of the main wine producing area is high altitude and low humidity ensuring issues of mould, fungi or insects rarely affect the vineyards and largely obviate the need for pesticides. The resultant lack of necessity for viticultural interference has assisted an increasing number of Argentinian wineries to produce quality organic wines.

Argentina is the world's fifth largest wine producer with five regions of significance - Mendoza, Salta, Catamarca, Rio Negro and Córdoba. High altitudes, fertile soil and many hours of sunshine create perfect conditions for producing

Malbec, the country's flagship wine. Today, Argentina leads the world in Malbec production and has arguably reinvigorated it as one of the top 18 noble grapes.

Sprawling out across the foothills of the Andes is Mendoza, the most widely recognised viticultural region in Argentina; home to over 1,200 wineries and 300,000 plus hectares of vineyards making it the largest national producer of Malbec.

Closest to Mendoza city is the district of Lujan de Cuyo, an area particularly suited to a classic style of Malbec that's fruit forward and deeply purple-red with velvet tannins. Among its many older and established wineries, including Bodega Septima and Cheval des Andes, is Bodega Catena Zapata, an iconic family run stable of vineyards and brands founded in 1902, and a pioneer of Malbec production.

Look to the cellar door of renowned wine makers, Achaval-Ferrer, for insight into the true influence of the Mendoza terroir. Focused on negligible viticultural intervention, they produce a benchmark Argentinian Malbec and are the first winery to achieve a 100 point score.

No trip to Mendoza is complete without a visit to 1884 Restaurant. Owned by celebrated chef, Francis Mallmann, and part of the Romanesque Bodega Escorihuela in Godoy Cruz, the restaurant is a tribute to Andean cuisine and the wines of Mendoza. Grab a late reservation in the courtyard, order

the local speciality of goat cooked in a clay brick fire and enjoy people watching with a glass of Fernet Branca under the stars.

Further out, about an hour south of the city, lies the Uco Valley, where the temperature is slightly cooler and the alluvial soils contain granite and limestone. The resultant wines are fresh and vibrant, pungent with minerality and vividly violet in colour, yet still decidedly ageworthy.

Bodega Salentein is one of the oldest and most prolific wineries in the region with a subterranean cellar that's well worth visiting. By contrast, Ernesto Catena represents the new guard of creative wineries, with a 'zero input' solar and gravity powered winery producing certified biodynamic wines.

A not-so-secret gem tucked away in Northern Argentina is the country's second quality wine producing region - Cafayate, in the Salta province. Home to the highest vineyards in the world, almost 1,700 metres above sea level, the region produces intense Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon and Tannat, and is renowned for its fresh white Torrontés. Known locally as 'the liar', it possesses a sweet aroma but remains bone-dry on the palate.

Stop in for a tasting at Bodega Colomé, Argentina's oldest winery with the highest commercial vineyards in the world and be sure to leave time for a visit to the incredible contemporary art installations at the James Turrell Museum.



2

Situated in the northwest of the country lies Catamarca province, a smaller wine district in a stunningly mountainous region off the beaten track. Considered up-and-coming, many of Catamarca's vines are planted along the banks of the Abaucan River producing noteworthy Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and the ubiquitous Malbec.

Strap on your hiking boots and call in at both Bodega Alta Esperanza for a tasting with jaw dropping panoramic views of the

valley, and the famous Finca Don Diego for their excellent organic Syrah while you explore this highland region.

Along with Patagonia's Rio Negro valley and Córdoba province in the heart of the country, each of Argentina's respective wine regions delivers unique and noteworthy wines against a backdrop of striking natural beauty, and no true oenophile should miss the opportunity to experience the adventure!



3

LOCAL DROP'S JAG SHARES HIS TOP 3 ARGENTINE PICKS



Bodega Colomé Estate Malbec, Salta, Argentina
\$47

Located in Northern Argentina, Bodega Colomé is an Argentine icon. It's the oldest winery in Argentina (180 yrs) and home to the highest vineyards in the world (3,100m).



Achaval-Ferrer Mendoza Malbec
\$65

Founded in Mendoza by winemaker, Santiago Achaval, this was the first winery to achieve 100 points for a wine, setting a new benchmark for Argentina.



Tikal "Natural" (Malbec/Syrah)
\$48

The Tikal wines are made by Ernesto Catena, son of the great Nicolas Catena (Catena Zapata), and farmed bio-dynamically on his own vineyard in the Uco Valley, Mendoza.



PREMIUM WINE • PERSONALLY DELIVERED

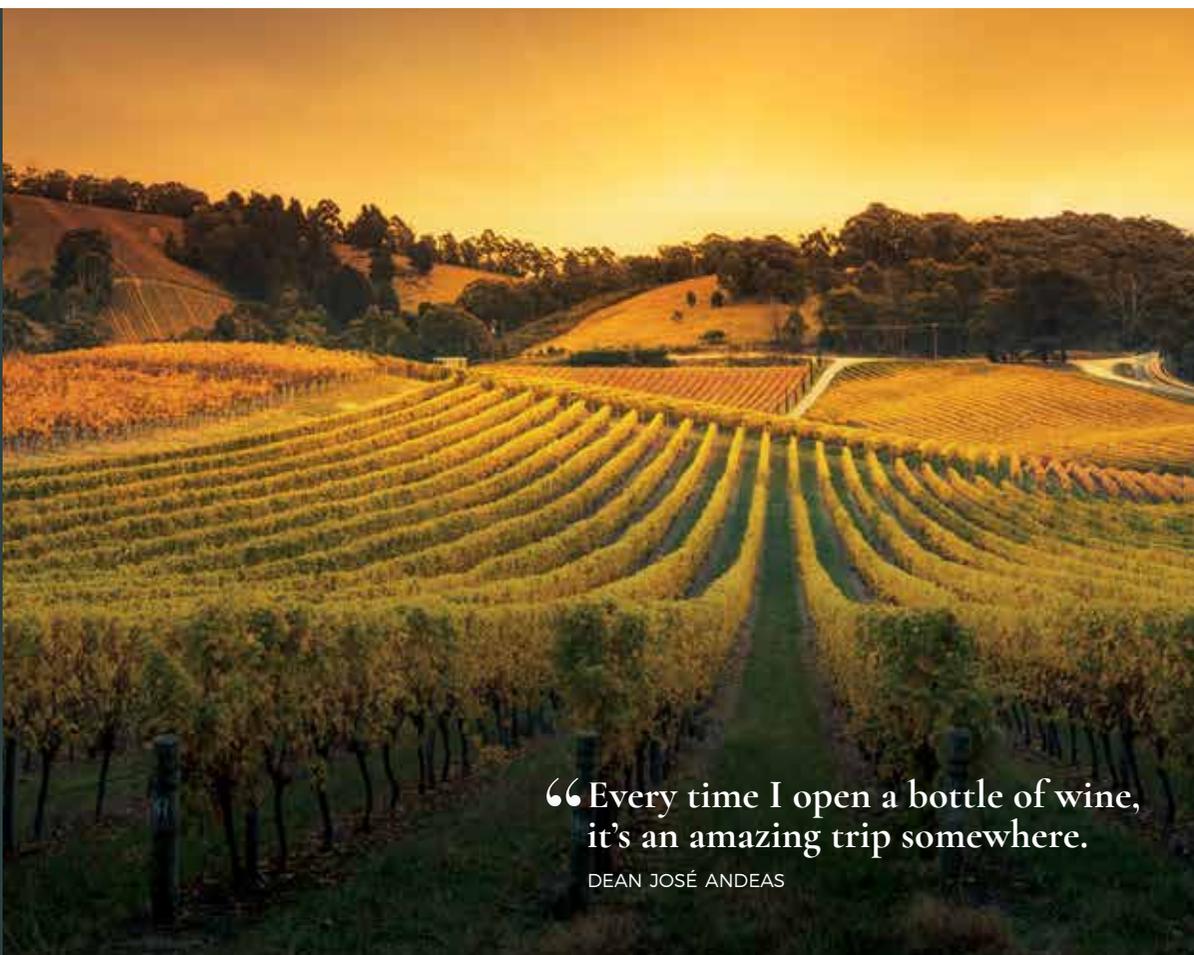
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“Every time I open a bottle of wine, it's an amazing trip somewhere.

DEAN JOSÉ ANDEAS

AROUND THE WORLD SMALL GROUP JOURNEYS



Are you an inquisitive traveller? Someone seeking a shared adventure? Still planning that dream trip? Then read on for a snapshot of what A&K's small groups team has on the drawing board for the year ahead. These are extraordinary small group journeys to destinations which are eternally appealing and spectacularly emerging. They're inspired and highly experiential journeys, some with wellness components incorporated that travel at a slower pace, and all which allow a full immersion in, and appreciation of, the destination.



when

AUGUST

where

CHINA & TIBET

Explore remarkable cultures on this intriguing journey through China. Discover imperial Beijing and walk a picturesque stretch of the Great Wall. Marvel at the Terracotta Army in Xian, the city on the Silk Road made famous by Marco Polo. See giant pandas in Chengdu before travelling to magical Lhasa, one of the highest and most spiritual cities on earth. Cruise the Yangtze River through the stunning Three Gorges and end your journey in fabulous Shanghai.

17 Days | Across China: Tibet & the Yangtze

12-28 August 2019

Twin share per person from: \$14,280

Single supplement: \$3,995

when

SEPTEMBER

where

GEORGIA & ARMENIA

Discover a surprising taste of old world Eastern European charm when you visit these former Soviet Republics where thousands of years of history, jaw-dropping scenery and a rich cultural heritage make this journey unforgettable. Uncover medieval history in extraordinary monasteries and sip wine from earthenware pots in the world's oldest wine growing region. Float across the waters of a high altitude lake and meet local artisans in colourful markets and workshops.

13 Days | Journey to the Caucasus

21 September-3 October 2019

Twin share per person from: \$8,995

Single supplement: \$2,995





when	where
OCTOBER	INDIA

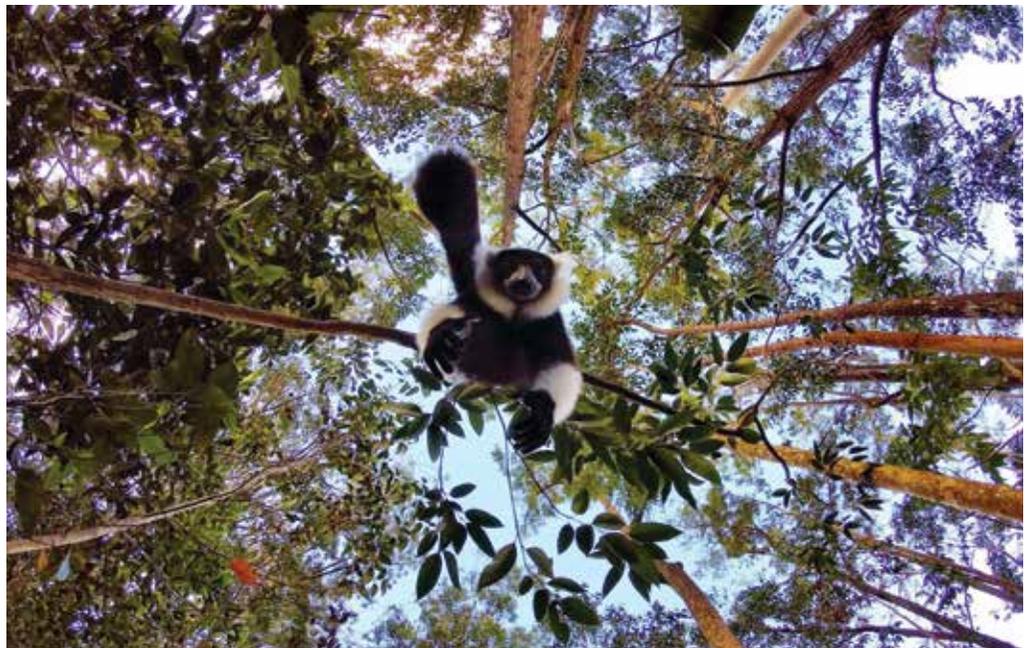
Embrace the soul of intoxicating India on a wellness-inspired cultural journey connecting you to the unique spirit and cultures of the Golden Triangle, Rajasthan and Varanasi. Experiences include guided meditation and cycling in Udaipur, a private consultation with an ayurvedic doctor and a spa treatment in Rajasthan, a visit to an A&K Philanthropy-supported school and taking part in an ancient ceremony on the sacred Ganges River.

13 Days | Wellness India: Ancient Traditions & Inspiring Icons
 5-17 October 2019
 Twin share per person from: \$15,720
 Single supplement: \$7,345

when	where
NOVEMBER	MADAGASCAR

Take yourself to a country where the people, wildlife and landscapes are like nowhere else on Earth and in the company of wildlife expert and Madagascar specialist, Dr Charlie Gardner, who knows the destination and its inhabitants like the back of his hand. Still largely untouched by tourism, Madagascar is astonishing. You'll be amazed by its rainforests, its clear blue seas, white beaches and spiny forest habitat and your guest host brings this curious natural world to life.

12 Days | A Naturalist's Guide to Madagascar
 10-21 November 2019
 Twin share per person from: \$10,465
 Single supplement: \$1,865



when	where
DECEMBER	PERU

Let the mystical beauty and sacred rituals of the Incas take you away on a wellness-inspired cultural journey in Peru. Partake in a traditional earth ceremony honouring Pachamama and a coca leaf reading by a local shaman. Be guided on a hike through the lost city of the Incas and kayak through a remote Andean lagoon. Learn about healing plants and traditional medicines and unwind with a restorative spa treatment.

10 Days | Wellness Peru: Spirit of the Incas
 3-12 December 2019
 Twin share per person from: \$11,605
 Single supplement: \$3,815

when JANUARY	where EGYPT
------------------------	-----------------------

Journey to the heart of an ancient land that has captured the imagination of travellers for millennia. Follow in the footsteps of pharaohs, emperors and conquerors from Cairo to Luxor and along the Nile to Aswan. You'll cruise aboard A&K's own award-winning Sanctuary 'Sun Boat IV' and explore the country's myriad archaeological treasures and ancient monuments with a leading Egyptologist, bringing both ancient and modern Egypt to life.

10 Days | Egypt & the Nile
 9-18 January 2020
 Twin share per person from: \$12,580
 Single supplement: \$3,760



when FEBRUARY	where CHILE & ARGENTINA
-------------------------	---------------------------------------

Embark on a journey jam-packed with outdoor adventure in some of the most rugged and breathtaking landscapes on the planet. Ease into the experience with an urban exploration of Argentina's cosmopolitan capital before venturing into Patagonia. Hike, ride and boat through glacial wonderlands, rich native forest and awe-inspiring alpine scenery. And visit traditional working estancias to see how the European settlers influenced today's pastoralists.

10 Days | Patagonia: The Last Wilderness
 13-23 February 2020
 Twin share per person from: \$16,145
 Single supplement: \$3,615

when MARCH	where INDIA & NEPAL
----------------------	-----------------------------------

Spellbinding and spiritual in equal measure, India has a magnetic attraction which you'll experience on this unique journey from Delhi through Uttar Pradesh across the Gangetic plain and into neighbouring Nepal. Inhale floral aromas and fragrant spices in markets and bazaars. Witness an extraordinary architectural legacy in cultured Lucknow and track the elusive Bengal tiger and endangered one-horned rhino in the Terai, all the while dining on legendary cuisine making this journey one for the senses.

17 Days | Northern India & Nepal: Sacred Lands
 30 March-15 April 2020
 Twin share per person from: \$13,990
 Single supplement: \$3,990



when
APRILwhere
ETHIOPIA

Pack a sense of adventure on this exclusive journey to rugged and mysterious Ethiopia where you'll discover a rich history, breathtaking landscapes and an extraordinary tribal heritage. You'll visit the source of the Blue Nile, see the skeleton of 'Lucy' and spend a night in the Simien Mountains. There is rare wildlife amidst high peaks, extraordinary rock-hewn churches, World Heritage sites and an incredible number of different ethnic groups in and around the Omo Valley whose customs you'll absorb.

16 Days | Tribes & Traditions of Ethiopia

20 April-5 May 2020

Twin share per person from: \$13,995

Single supplement: \$1,990

when
MAYwhere
TURKEY & MALTA

Contrast colourful histories and a beguiling mix of cultures in this rare combination of two fascinating European destinations. Peel back many thousands of years of history in Malta, which has more historic sites than any other country, and immerse yourself in the even more ancient heritage of Turkey. Both countries have been ruled by powerful civilisations, empires that have come and gone and left behind a unique legacy. Seek out what makes these destinations stand out from the rest.

16 Days | Turkey & Malta: Empires & Outposts

1-16 May 2020

Twin share per person from: \$17,990

Single supplement: \$4,750

when
JUNEwhere
CENTRAL EUROPE

Relive the rich, and often turbulent, history of four central European countries. Meet local characters who will shed light on events which played out in the region from the Holy Roman Empire through medieval monarchies to Prussian rule and World War II, the Soviet era, pre-reunification Germany to today. Explore vibrant cities with rich artistic traditions and remarkable architectural achievements and see where some of the most important moments in history were played out.

13 Days | A Journey to the Heart of Europe

19 June-1 July 2020

Twin share per person from: \$13,950

Single supplement: \$4,880

when
JULYwhere
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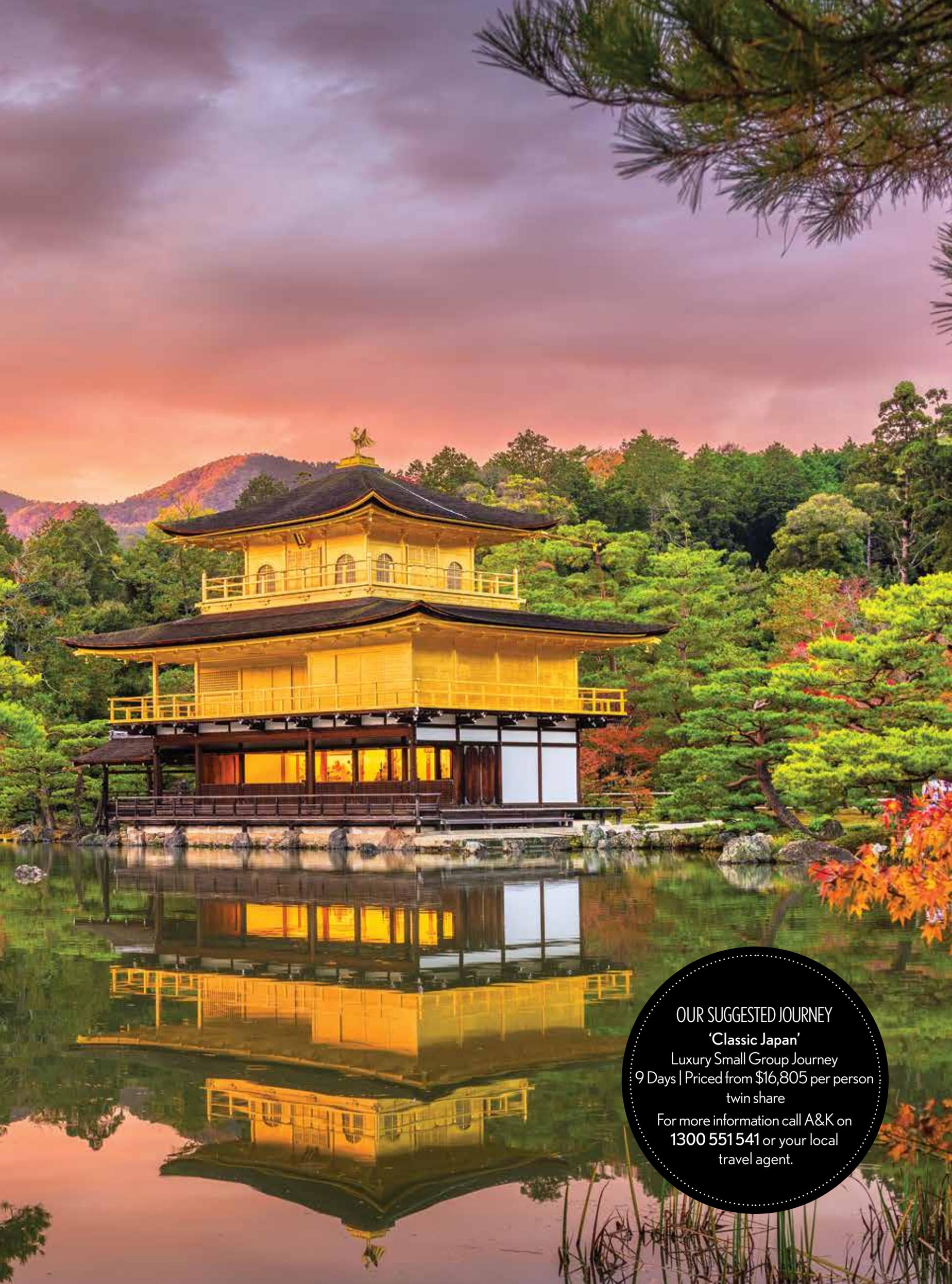
For more information on booking an A&K Small Group Journey, please call A&K on 1300 551 541 or your local travel agent.

JAPAN

THE GOLDEN PAVILION

Shimmering beside the reflective waters of the Kyokochi pond, the Golden Pavilion, or Kinkaku-ji Temple with its gold leaf adornment, is perhaps Kyoto's most widely-recognised image. The temple was originally the retirement villa of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, and upon his death in 1408 it became a Zen temple. Burned numerous times in its history, most recently in 1950, the temple was rebuilt in 1955 and continues to function as a storehouse of sacred relics.





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KERALA



KARNATAKA

TAMIL NADU



Kochi



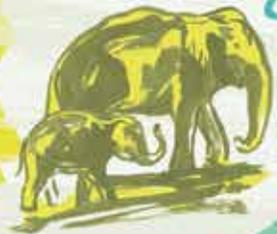
Munnar



Kumarakom



Periyar



ARABIAN SEA

KERALA



1: Dhobi khana, Kochi
2: Chinese fishing nets, Kochi

2

In India's southern state of Kerala, life moves at a languid pace. Candy coloured churches dot every village, lush tropical vegetation arches over winding country roads lined with coconut palms and banana plants. A patchwork of rice paddies is quietly tended by local farmers, while buffalo wallow in the shallows. Blessed with abundant natural wonders, Kerala's diverse landscapes range from the mountainous Western Ghats to glorious golden beaches, endless canals and waterways and wildlife rich grasslands and forest. It's a timeless destination that never fails to charm.

KOCHI

Formerly known as Cochin by the British, and still by locals today, Kochi has a long and colourful history. An important port town since 1341, the city has attracted traders, explorers and travellers for more than 600 years and the influences of Arab, Chinese and European settlements can be witnessed today in its architecture, art, music and multi-cultural cuisine. The Old Fort is the most alluring place to stay with its shady tree-lined streets, Dutch architecture and the sculptural Chinese fishing nets.

DO

Dawn Cycling

Rise early when the streets are quiet and pedal your way around Fort Kochi before the traffic builds. First stop is the old Dutch laundry, the Dhobi khana, where the washing is still pounded by hand on stone slabs before being hung out to dry and pressed with old coconut charcoal irons. Continue down streets shaded by spreading rain trees to St Francis Church, former burial place of Vasco da Gama, the Parade Ground and the Dutch cemetery.



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- 3: Santa Cruz Basilica, Kochi
- 4: Cult Modern, Kochi
- 5: Sue Williamson's installation, Kochi Biennale
- 6: Forte Kochi
- 7: Dining at the Malabar Junction, Kochi
- 8: Backwater cruise
- 9: Gond art, Kochi Biennale

Kathakali

Kathakali is one of the oldest dance forms in the area. Take time out to see the elaborate make-up process before the show, then watch this unforgettable art form which combines classical dance, theatre, opera and pantomime to tell stories from the Hindu epics.

Ramble through the Old Fort

The Old Fort is perfectly explored on foot. Soak up the dreamy tropical vibe and the faded colonial elegance as you stroll the narrow streets where bougainvillea tumbles over crumbling walls, past pastel coloured houses to the cantilevered fishing nets which are a legacy of the Chinese and are built from teak and bamboo. Pause to watch as the nets are raised and the catch unloaded. They are at their most photogenic at dusk!

Kochi Contemporary

Art lovers should plan a trip well ahead to ensure it coincides with

the Kochi Biennale which is next hitting town 2020-21. It is India's largest contemporary art event, the last exhibition representing 90 artists, local and foreign, in a variety of venues across the city, from heritage buildings and galleries to open air spaces and cafés.

SHOP

Cult Modern

Expect chic and timeless in this luxury lifestyle boutique where old school design is reimagined. Alongside beautiful objets d'art and tropical modernist furniture are shirts and pants in muslins and linen, fine voiles and basket-weave cottons, hand-stitched bags from Nappa Dori, wraps from Kashmir Loom and other desirables.

Cinnamon

This boutique treasure trove stocks clothing and accessories from a range of Indian designers. Seek out block-printed cotton dresses, breezy muslins, elegant silk stoles as well

as traditional textiles, homewares and one-off handcrafted pieces of jewellery before sitting down for a chai in the delightful café next door.

Pepper House

This glorious renovated waterfront property, formerly a warehouse for the storage of pepper, comprises two old Dutch buildings with a grassy central courtyard. It houses a gallery space where regular exhibitions and performances take place, a lively café and library plus a design-led store selling jewellery, clothes, books and crafts from across the country.

STAY

Brunton Boatyard

For harbour views and a plum location, this boutique hotel is a perfect recreation of the classic Dutch and Portuguese architecture Fort Kochi is renowned for. Its lime-washed walls and terracotta floors with bedrooms featuring antique four poster beds give it 19th century charm fused with modern comforts. Cool



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off in the harbourside swimming pool and dine alfresco at the Terrace on some of Kochi's tastiest seafood.

Forte Kochi

Situated in the heart of Fort Kochi, this new heritage hotel has a coveted location in the middle of Princess Street. Painted an eye-catching shade of yellow with arched doorways and stained-glass windows, it was once the home of a wealthy Jewish merchant and has been meticulously restored to offer just 27 airy rooms styled with four poster beds, period furniture and beautiful tiled floors which evoke the era of the Portuguese. After a day exploring the endless fascinations of Kochi, the inner courtyard and pool beckon.

DINE

The Malabar Junction

For innovative Keralan cuisine with a Mediterranean influence, Malabar Junction is the go-to Kochi eatery. Housed in boutique hotel Malabar

House, beside the old parade ground, guests dine outdoors at candlelit tables by the pool on such delicacies as tasty fish pollichathu wrapped in banana leaf, Malabar pork vindaloo, Indian Ocean sea bass followed by chocolate samosas or banana stuffed pancake flambé. Then pop upstairs to Divine wine lounge for a night cap.

Qissa Café

For the best coffee and chai in town, head to Qissa on KB Jacob Road. Frequented by Kochi's cool crowd, take your place at the bar under the acid yellow pendant lights or at one of the assorted tables dotted throughout the cheery, but compact, space. Put in your order for coffee and homemade cakes, omelettes, fresh juices and pasta dishes. Smashed avocado has even made it to Kerala.

BACKWATERS

Kerala is justifiably famous for its backwaters, a network of canals and



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waterways which stretches for 1,500 kilometres, inland from the Arabian Sea following the line of the coast. The backwaters are the very lifeblood of Kerala, traditionally relied upon for transport, fishing, and agriculture. Today the palm-lined waterways, small villages and churches are a captivating backdrop for locals and visitors alike.

DO

Slow boats

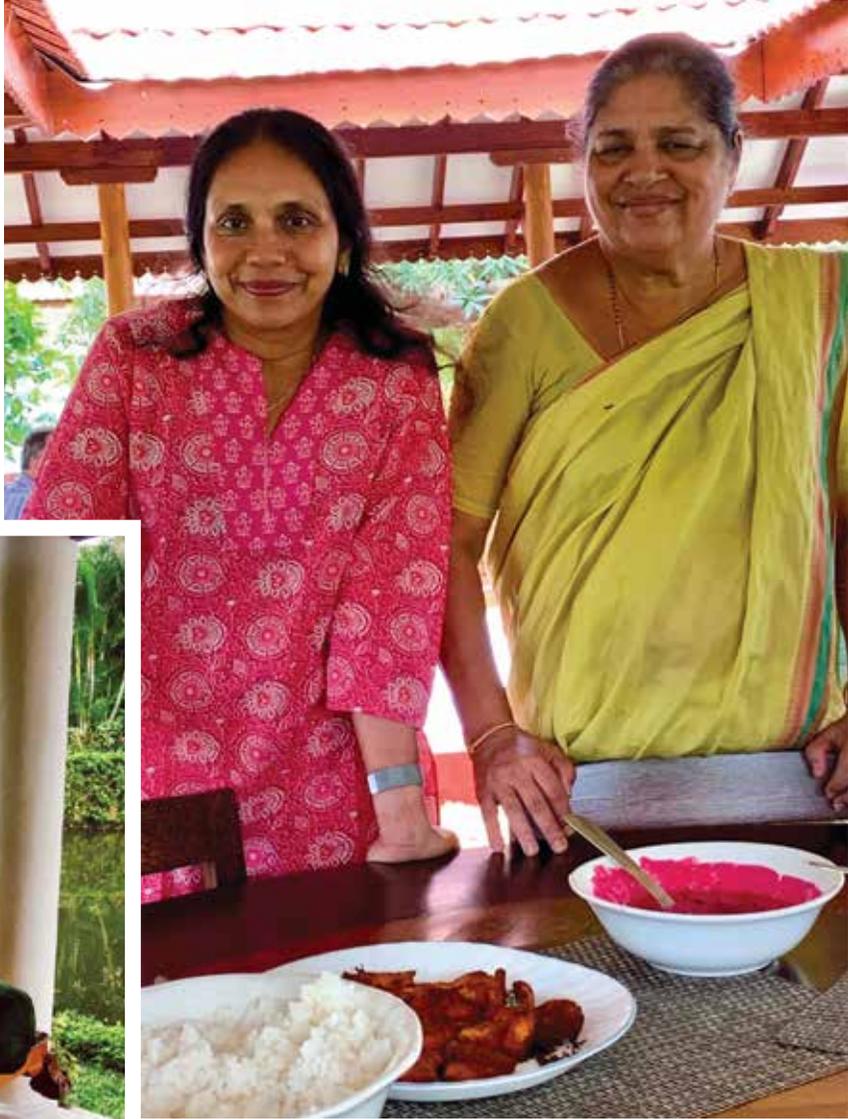
The iconic kettuvallam is quintessential Kerala. These shallow-drafted barges made out of jackwood and coir with thatched rooves were once the principal mode for transporting rice and other goods throughout the region. Today these eye-catching vessels have been converted to house boats for travellers to motor leisurely up and down the canals. Vessels come fully crewed for overnight journeys with comfortable cabins, en suite bathrooms and a chef dishing up the tastes of Kerala.



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DINE

Philipkutty's Farm

This delightful farm in the heart of the backwaters is accessible by water only. A country boat delivers guests to a warm welcome by charming owners Anu and her mother-in-law Aniamma. Join them in a relaxed demonstration of traditional Kerala cooking using fresh produce from the farm and signature spices. Sit down afterwards to a delicious alfresco lunch tasting the farm fresh cuisine - kozhi ishtoo (chicken curry), thoren (coconut vegetables), curried prawns, fried fish and coconut soufflé. Don't take our word for it though, Rick Stein rated Philipkutty's food amongst the finest he's had in southern India!

the verdant gardens. Craftsmen demonstrate pottery making and weaving in open air workshops and early morning yoga by the lake is a must. Ayurvedic treatments at the spa come highly recommended.

MUNNAR

With plantations as far as the eye can see, the rolling hills of Munnar are South India's largest tea growing region. First established in the 1880s, the tea estates today make up the commercial centre of some of the world's highest producing estates. Dating back to the era of British hill stations, charming plantation bungalows beckon and the scenery of the Western Ghats dazzles.

STAY

Kumarakom Lake Resort

On the scenic banks of Lake Vembanad nestled under swaying palm trees, this 50-room resort perfectly captures the allure of Kerala. Its teak villas reconstructed from ancestral homes are dotted throughout the grounds, some opening on to a meandering swimming pool and others to

DO

Tea Immersion

Enter a world of tea, from plant to pour, in the Munnar plantations. Hear from an expert about the complete process from leaf plucking and processing to packaging and pouring. Visit the tea gardens, see the plantation workers and their villages and taste the various grades at the Lockhart Tea Factory.

STAY

Windermere Estate

Gaze over endless tea plantations set against the backdrop of the dramatic Western Ghats at this old-world plantation retreat deep in the hills of Munnar. Stay in traditional comfort in one of the 18 rooms and cottages enjoying misty mountain views and bracing walks through the estate. More boutique home stay than hotel, you'll be welcomed like part of the family.

10: Munnar landscape
11: Nilgiri bee hunter, Munnar
12: Kumarakom Lake Resort
13: Anu & Aniamma, Philipkutty's Farm
14: Dried tea leaves

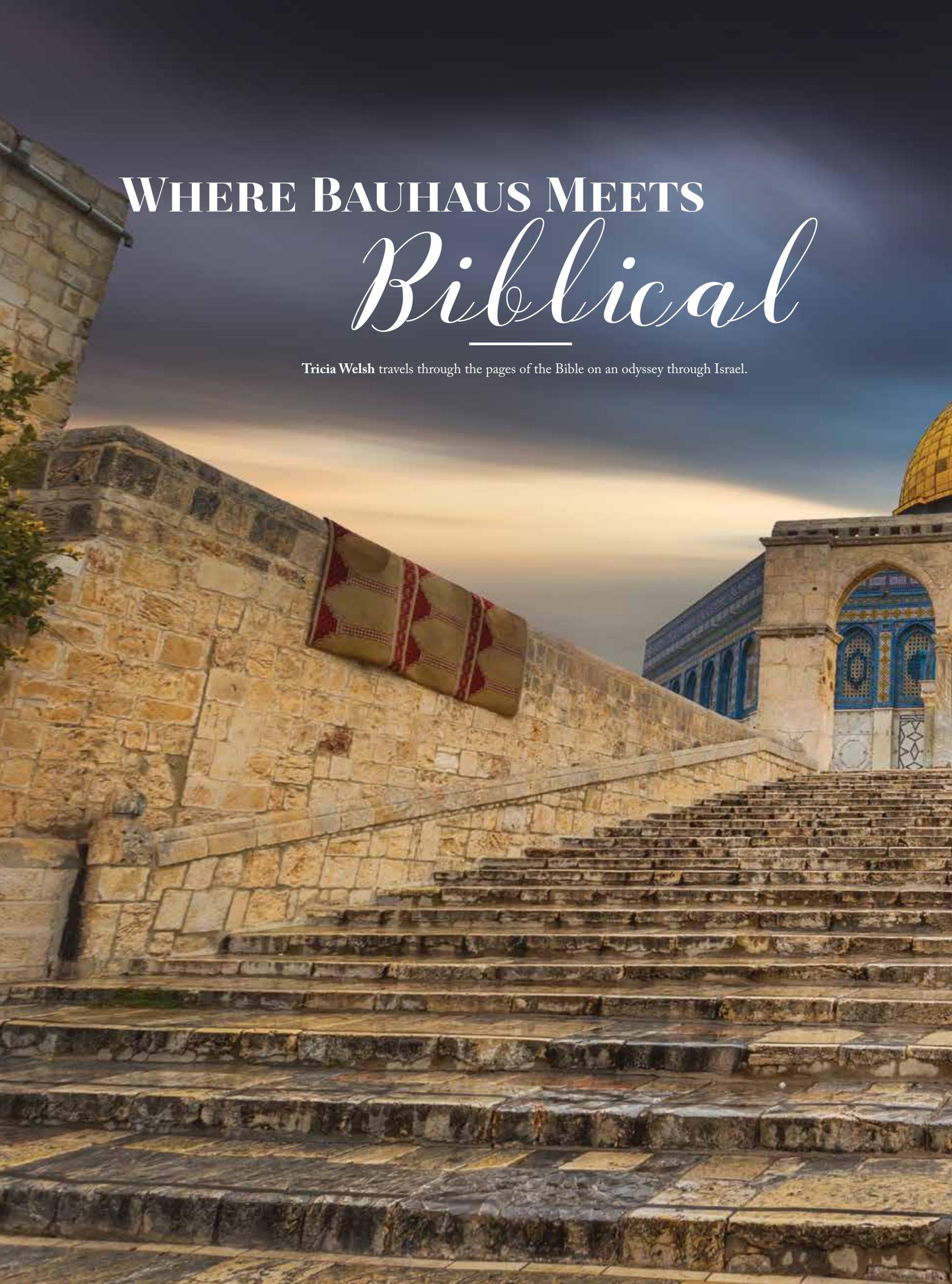


14

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9 Days
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WHERE BAUHAUS MEETS

Biblical

Tricia Welsh travels through the pages of the Bible on an odyssey through Israel.





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ISRAEL

“But is it safe?” ask friends and colleagues when they hear my latest travel destination is Israel. “Well, yes, it must be,” I tell them. “Abercrombie & Kent would not be sending travellers there if it wasn’t,” I add – more to reassure myself.

Our 11-day small group journey starts in Tel Aviv and then takes us north to Caesarea, Akko and Tiberias where we stay for a couple of nights before setting off south through Nazareth to Jerusalem – our base for several more days. We are 18 – all Christians, except one Jewish couple from New York, and all interested in learning more about this incredible country that is held sacred by Jews, Christians and Muslims alike and is usually in the headlines for all the wrong reasons.

Tel Aviv is a surprising city on so many counts: not least of which is

its vibrant beach culture with 13 surf beaches along an attractive 14 kilometre Mediterranean esplanade edged today with large international hotels.

We stay at the stylish boutique hotel, The Norman Tel Aviv, where elegantly chic accommodation is offered in two beautifully restored 1920’s residences, with a rooftop pool and two excellent convivial restaurants. The low-lit Library Bar is the ideal spot to meet friends and sip cocktails.

Those with an interest in architecture will appreciate the number of Bauhaus buildings that proliferate throughout the city. With more than 4,000 Bauhaus style houses and offices, it has the greatest concentration of such buildings in the world. Designed by immigrant architects trained in Europe, they were largely erected in the 1930s and 1940s when many German-Jews left

Previous spread: Dome of the Rock, Old City of Jerusalem
 1: Bauhaus architecture, Tel Aviv
 2: The Norman Tel Aviv
 3: Ruins of Caesarea
 4: Jaffa Old Town, Tel Aviv
 5: Sweets stall, Carmel Market, Tel Aviv

“we stop for lunch in a restaurant atop the historic Crusader city’s walls overlooking the centuries-old ramparts



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Nazi Germany - many settling in Israel. In 2003, its Bauhaus legacy was recognised by UNESCO who declared the ‘White City’ a World Heritage Site.

A visit to vibrant Carmel Market is an opportunity to see the abundance of fresh local fruits, vegetables and produce. We share fresh pita bread with hummus and spicy shakshuka, savour tabbouleh-filled pancakes, freshly-cooked falafel and sip hand-pressed tangy pomegranate juice. Be prepared for a flavour overload.

Our tour guide, Itamar, is young, affable and extremely knowledgeable. As we pass familiar names on signposts indicating Jericho, Nazareth, the Dead Sea, Bethlehem and more, he suggests: “We can travel through the pages of the Bible, here. It’s one of the most awesome countries in the world.”

We follow the coastline north to our first stop, the ruins of Caesarea, where King Herod built an impressive city dedicated to Roman emperor Augustus Caesar in 20BC. Its waterfront 30,000-seat hippodrome shares the same views over the Mediterranean as the country’s long-serving Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s current weekend retreat, nearby. Caesarea is one of Israel’s most important archaeological sites.

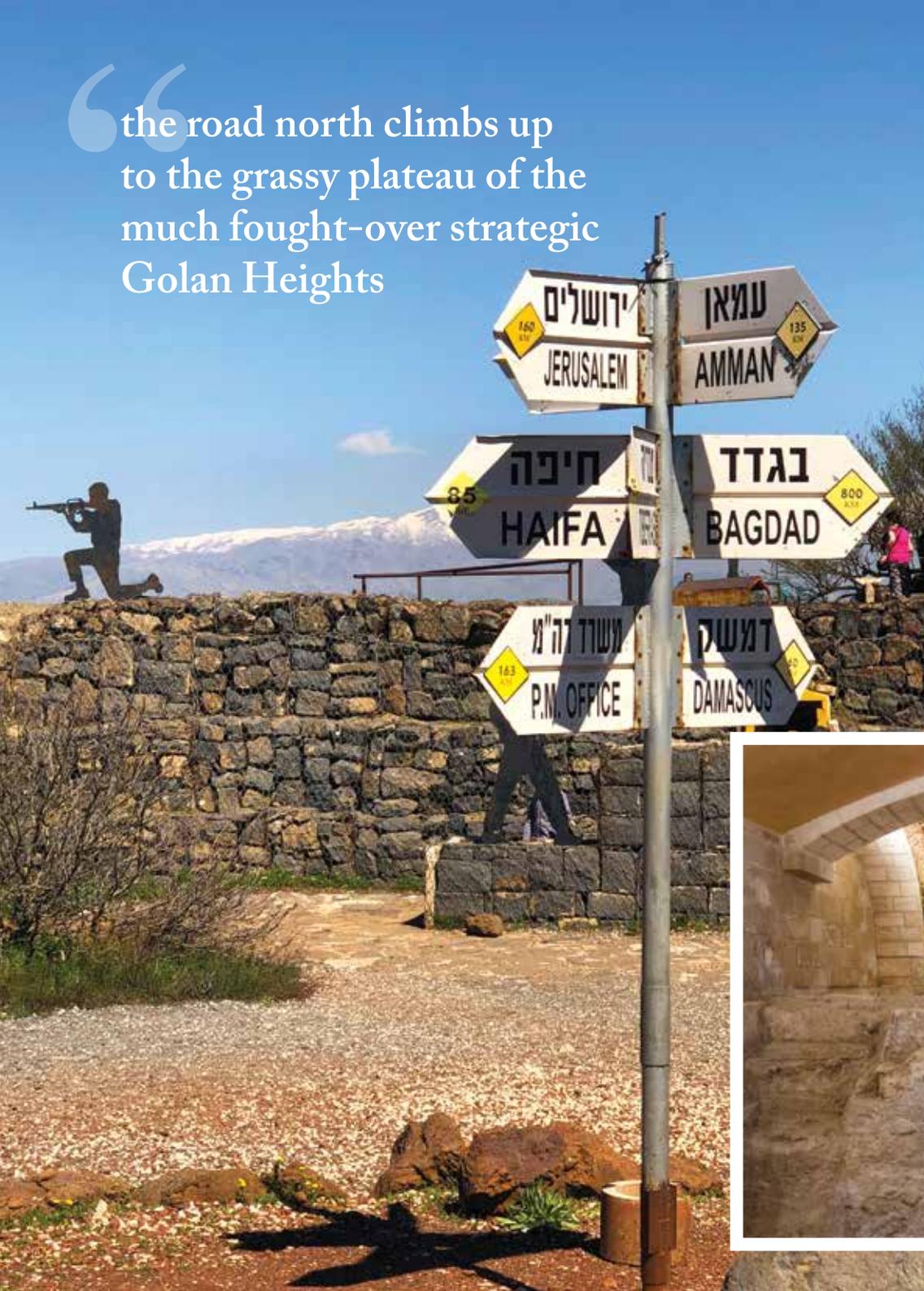
At picturesque Akko, we stop for lunch in a restaurant atop the historic Crusader city’s walls overlooking the centuries-old ramparts. With its atmospheric alleyways, knight’s tunnels, pencil-thin minarets, the painted Mosque of El-Jazzar and food stalls, it is best explored on foot. We visit the Knights’ Halls and can almost hear the clank of armour echoing through the vast subterranean arched spaces built some 800 years ago by the monastic military

Hospitallers order. Today, it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Our base for a few days is Tiberias at the incongruous bluestone Scots Hotel, owned by the Church of Scotland. Tartan-clad hotel staff greet us and usher us at sunset to our spacious rooms overlooking the Sea of Galilee. It is very comfortable with excellent buffet meals, atmospheric dining under bud-lit palms at night and a cellar wine tasting of Israeli wines mainly from the Golan Heights and the Judean Hills.

While Tiberias is holy for Jewish people, it is also Jesus’ territory. He preached along the coast of the Sea of Galilee around Capernaum, an ancient fishing village where he lived; gave the Sermon on the Mount – a doctrine that changed the world; and miraculously fed 5,000 followers with five loaves and two fishes at Tabgha.

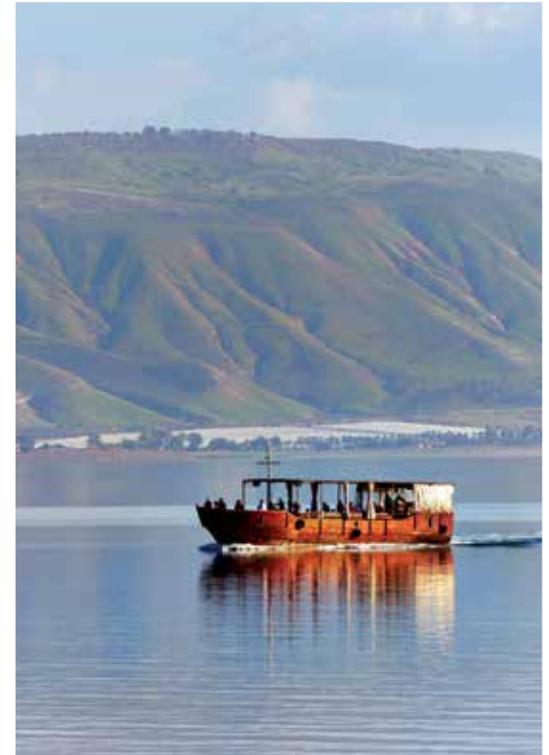
“the road north climbs up to the grassy plateau of the much fought-over strategic Golan Heights



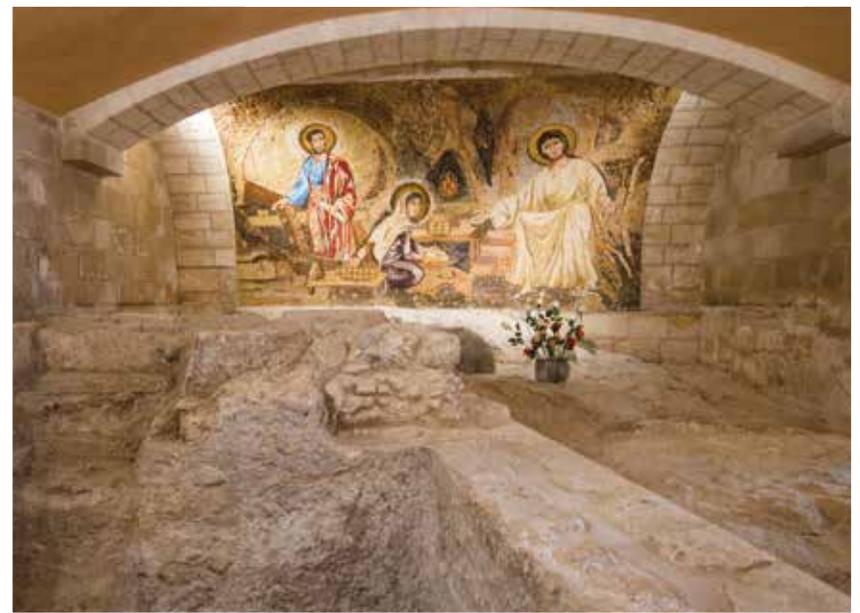
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The road north climbs up to the grassy plateau of the much fought-over strategic Golan Heights where Israel borders with Syria, Jordan and Lebanon – the lush green landscape dominated by snow-capped biblical Mount Hermon. Soldier ‘cut-outs’ defend old hilltop bunkers while a destination signpost reminds us that war-torn regions are not so far away.

Heading back to Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee, we board a private wooden boat reminiscent of those used by the apostles in biblical times. This large natural fresh-water sanctuary is one of the most popular tourist areas in the country, with little perhaps changed since Jesus was a boy.



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The thriving town of Nazareth, where Jesus lived for 30 years, has developed around the Basilica of the Annunciation, its spiritual heart – and Mary’s home, where it is believed the Archangel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would become the mother of Jesus.

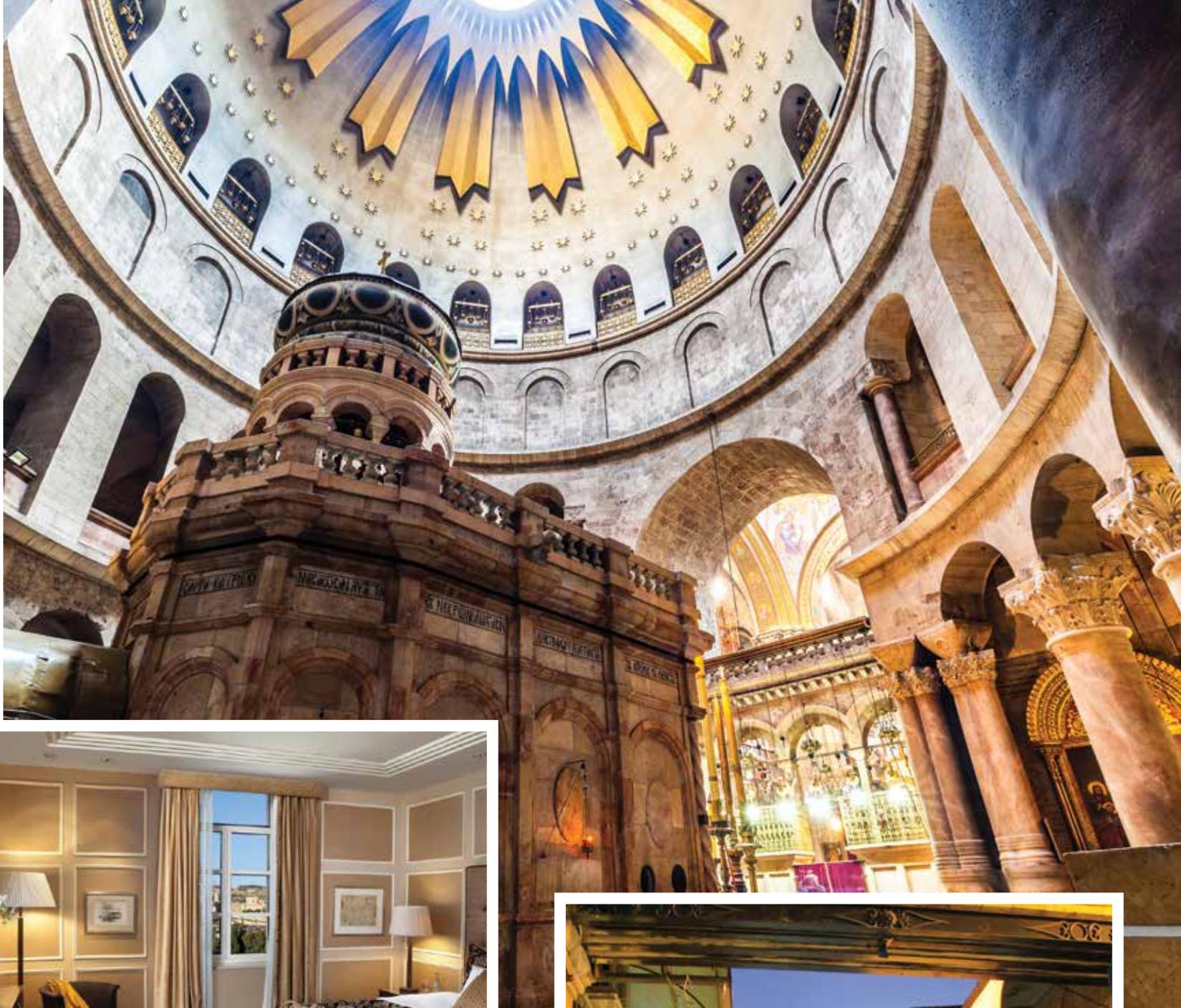
Heading south, Beit She'an comes as a surprise. It is the best-preserved Roman-Byzantine city in Israel with impressive marble colonnades and a gladiatorial amphitheatre.

Simple Bedouin tents and date palms line our route to Jerusalem where our first view of it is from the Mount of Olives. We take in the majesty of the ancient white stone walled city crowned by the gleaming gold-leaf cupola of the

Dome of the Rock - its Islamic heart, and note the Golden Gate through which Jesus is said to have ridden triumphantly on a donkey on the first Palm Sunday and where Muslims believe the Final Judgement will take place.

We check in to the luxurious yet historic King David Hotel where heads of state, royalty and celebrities have stayed over the years. Rooms are spacious, gracious and many have views over the Old City. It’s the centre of the city’s social life.

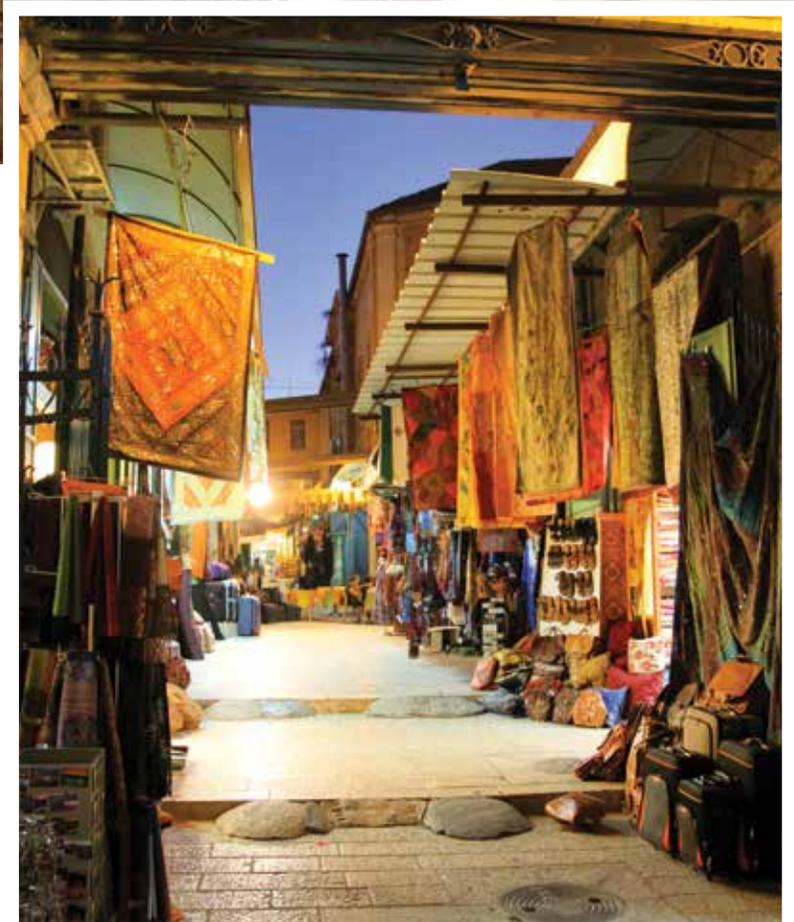
Built by King David around 1000BC, the religious and political capital of Israel is one of the oldest continually inhabited cities on earth. On Sunday mornings, Christian



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church bells ring intermingled with the muezzin call to prayer from nearby Arabic mosques. Possibly no other city on earth has such a deep and profound effect on residents and visitors alike.

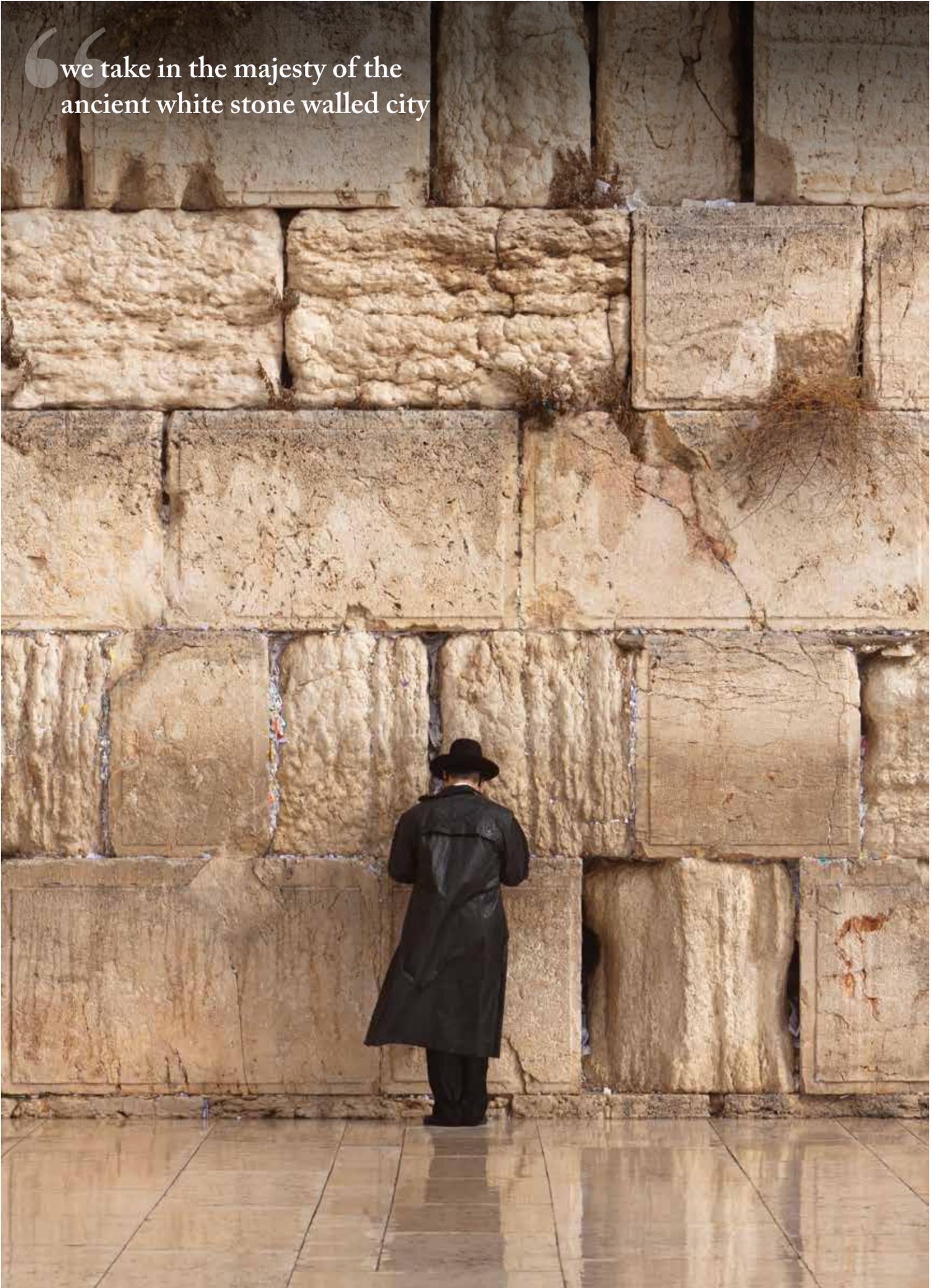
We discover that the Via Dolorosa or Way of the Cross, actually passes through the narrow shop-lined streets of the Old City. It even wends its way through the old covered Arab souk where we hear the lilting hymns of religious pilgrims as they complete their holy journey. Each station is marked along the route, culminating with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre – the most important in Christendom. Six different Christian denominations claim rights to it: Greek Orthodox,

Armenian Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Coptic, Assyrian and Ethiopian Orthodox.

Inside, we feel like extras in a Dan Brown movie as we shuffle on marble flagstones, smoothed over the centuries by worshippers, through the maze of high sandstone arches amid the hushed throng of Christians and visitors, queuing and bending low to kiss the most sacred spots within. As we consider joining the long queue to enter the inner sanctum housing Christ’s tomb – the holiest of all – a procession of Armenian priests, some wearing elaborate regalia, walk briskly to a nearby chapel, chanting and wafting incense over us in blessing.

- 6: Golan Heights
- 7: Sea of Galilee
- 8: Basilica of the Annunciation, Nazareth
- 9: Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Old City of Jerusalem
- 10: King David Hotel, Jerusalem
- 11: Narrow shop-lined alleyways, Old City of Jerusalem

“we take in the majesty of the ancient white stone walled city





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12: Western Wall, Old City of Jerusalem
13: View over Jerusalem
14: Afloat in the Dead Sea

You can almost feel Shabbat in Jerusalem. Jewish businesses close and Orthodox Jews in traditional garb – some with fur hats and cream coats, make haste through the Old City for the Wailing, or Western, Wall. Men and women are segregated for prayer – many secreting hand-written prayer notes into crevices in the high stonewall. There is great excitement as the scrolls of the Torah move around, where young bar mitzvah candidates read the lessons.

We take day trips to Jericho where Christians are still baptised in the muddy waters of the River Jordan, and to the Dead Sea where we float in its ultra-salty water and revel in its weird and unique

buoyancy, to Herod's mountaintop fortress palace at Masada where 1,000 Jewish zealots held off 6,000 Romans camped at the base of the mountain for two years in AD73 and to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem where Jesus was born.

Lunch with a Palestinian family is a chance to hear the other side of life in Israel while a high concrete graffiti-covered wall in Bethlehem says it all. Our guide Motek explains: "The Israelis see it as a 'security' barrier; the Palestinians as an 'apartheid' wall". But it's a stark reminder that these are countries at war and while everything looks smooth on the surface, in reality, there is much still to resolve. ☘

OUR SUGGESTED *Journeys*

'Classic Israel' Private Journey

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For more information call A&K on 1300 551 541 or your local travel agent



MAGICAL MOMENTS

on Safari

Travelling to Africa with her tribe, **Marta Dusseldorp** marvels over rare wildlife and the dignity of the African people.





1

BOTSWANA & ZAMBIA

Fulfilling a lifelong dream, acclaimed Australian actor Marta Dusseldorp recently travelled to southern Africa as a guest of Abercrombie & Kent. For years, she and her husband had imagined heading off with their two daughters in tow on an adventure into the wilds of Africa, going beyond nature books and TV documentaries, stepping out of the pages of National Geographic and into a wondrous wilderness where rare and extraordinary animals exist. Gazing out across the floodplains of Botswana's magical Okavango Delta last summer, a herd of zebra feeding on the grasslands and a lone bull elephant in the distance, it was clear the moment had arrived.

Taking two weeks out of a busy schedule, the family departed.



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First stop, the fabled Okavango Delta, where they were flown in by light aircraft. Says Marta of the experience, “the excitement of gliding low over that breathtaking landscape of palm dotted grasslands, watery channels and lagoons with herds of elephant and pods of hippo visible from above is like nothing else. It simply took our breath away.”

Sanctuary Stanley’s Camp was a fitting introduction to the A&K style of safari camping. In its own private concession, the camp has only 10 impeccably appointed canvas tents with every anticipated luxury from en suite bathrooms and private viewing decks to billowing mosquito nets and stylish campaign furniture. For Marta, the blend of traditional and modern was perfect and she was impressed by the

way it had been very deliberately constructed with a deep sensitivity to the environment. “The whole camp is designed to be sustainable. Lights are solar powered and we were asked to tread as lightly as the animals themselves. Instead of taking from a place, you find yourself becoming one with it and it is an honour, a relief even.”

But of course, the standout feature of any safari holiday is undoubtedly the wildlife and on twice-daily safari drives the family saw lion, elephant, zebra, wildebeest, hippo, rhino and many of the more elusive species. A particular highlight for Marta and her girls was participating in a unique elephant interaction project which has been created in partnership with the Living with Elephants foundation.

This extraordinary initiative meant they were able to walk alongside two semi-habituated elephants, who were saved from brutal culling operations, learn more about this iconic species and see the world from their perspective.

“It was such a privilege. We talked and walked with Jabu and Morula as they ambled through the bush and then, eventually, after hearing their stories of captivity and escape from poachers we all sat down and had lunch together in the shade of a spreading acacia tree with Jabu and Morula quietly foraging beside us. The whole experience was beautiful, intimate, and a truly amazing way to learn about the challenges facing African elephants, and the importance of conservation in general.”

Previous spread: Sanctuary Chief’s Camp private boma dining
 1: Mokoro excursion, Sanctuary Stanley’s Camp
 2: Lion viewing on safari
 3: Living With Elephants interaction, Sanctuary Stanley’s Camp
 4: Sanctuary Stanley’s Camp tent



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5: "Leaving old friends", Sanctuary Chief's Camp
 6: Beautiful Okavango sunset
 7: Geoffrey Kent Luxury Suite, Sanctuary Chief's Camp
 8: Rare black rhino viewing

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After a few days, the family moved on to Sanctuary Chief's Camp, in an especially game-rich part of the Okavango Delta, where the opulent Geoffrey Kent Luxury Suite was their exclusive haven. Whilst their lodgings were extraordinarily comfortable and pleasantly private, the essence of Sanctuary Chief's went a little deeper for Marta.

"Our three days there were almost akin to meditation – the slow, gentle pace, the generosity and friendliness of the people who looked after us, the warm welcome we were given and the stunning surroundings. It fills the

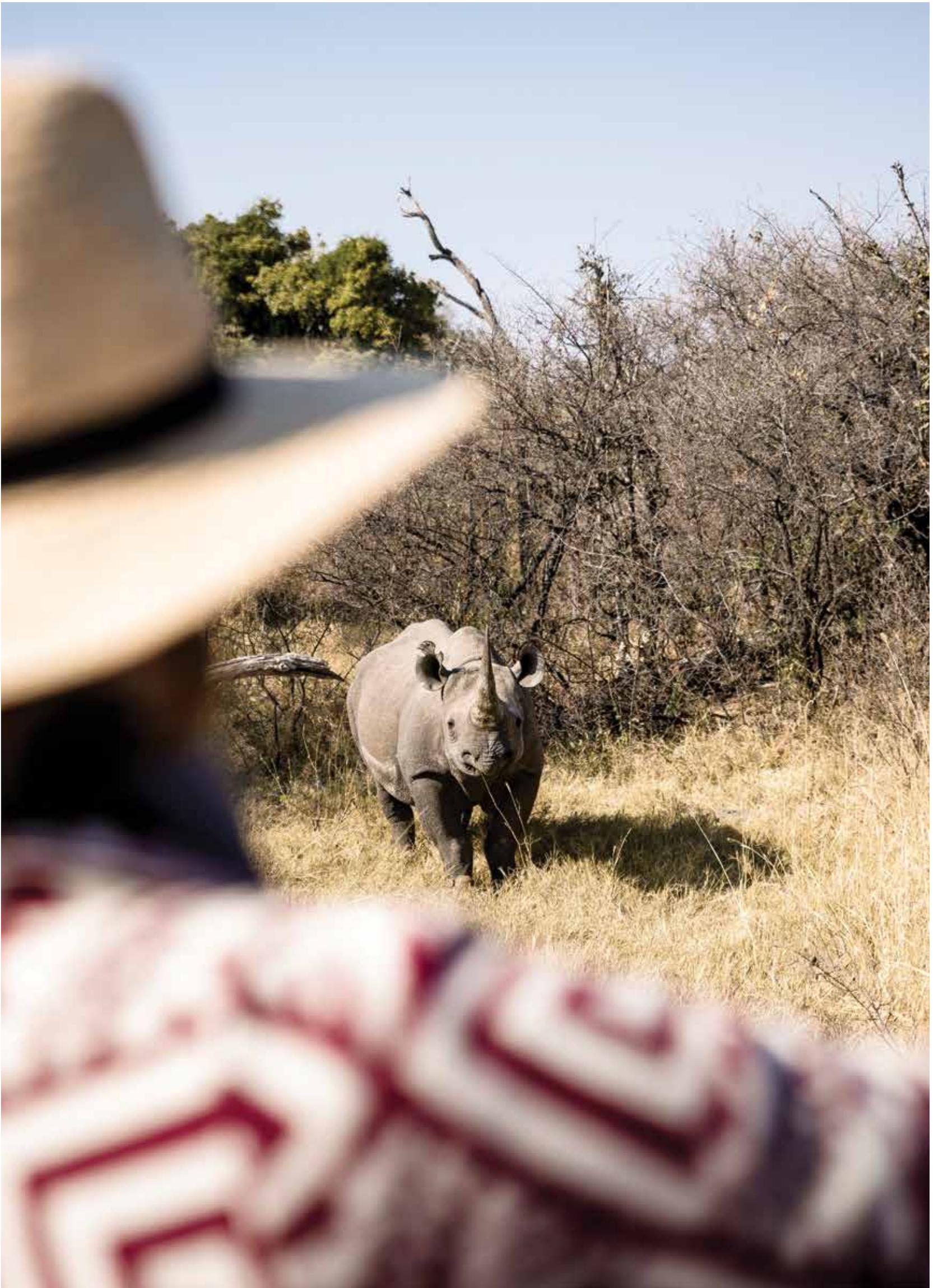
soul. When the time came to say goodbye, it truly felt like we were leaving old friends."

Last stop on the family's safari odyssey was the perfectly positioned Sanctuary Sussi & Chuma which sits peacefully on a bend of the mighty Zambezi River, just upstream from Victoria Falls. Exclusively ensconced in one of the Chuma Houses, the family passed many hours gazing out at the river from their private swimming pool, spying hippos mid-stream and crocodiles adrift.

Beyond the thundering waters of Victoria Falls and the iconic

wildlife which they had travelled so far to see, Marta was eager to see how A&K's philanthropic arm, A&K Philanthropy (AKP), was working in the local community. As a longstanding ambassador for the UN's refugee agency, UNHCR, Marta is all too familiar with the myriad challenges facing many remote African communities so the visit to nearby Nakatindi village was much anticipated.

AKP has been supporting the community at Nakatindi for nearly ten years with many projects including the construction of boreholes for clean water, a new classroom block, establishment





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- 9: Zambezi River sunset cruise
- 10: Nakatindi Medical Clinic
- 11: Nakatindi Community classroom
- 12: Chuma House, Sanctuary Sussi & Chuma, Livingstone, Zambia
- 13: Victoria Falls
- 14: Handwoven bracelets

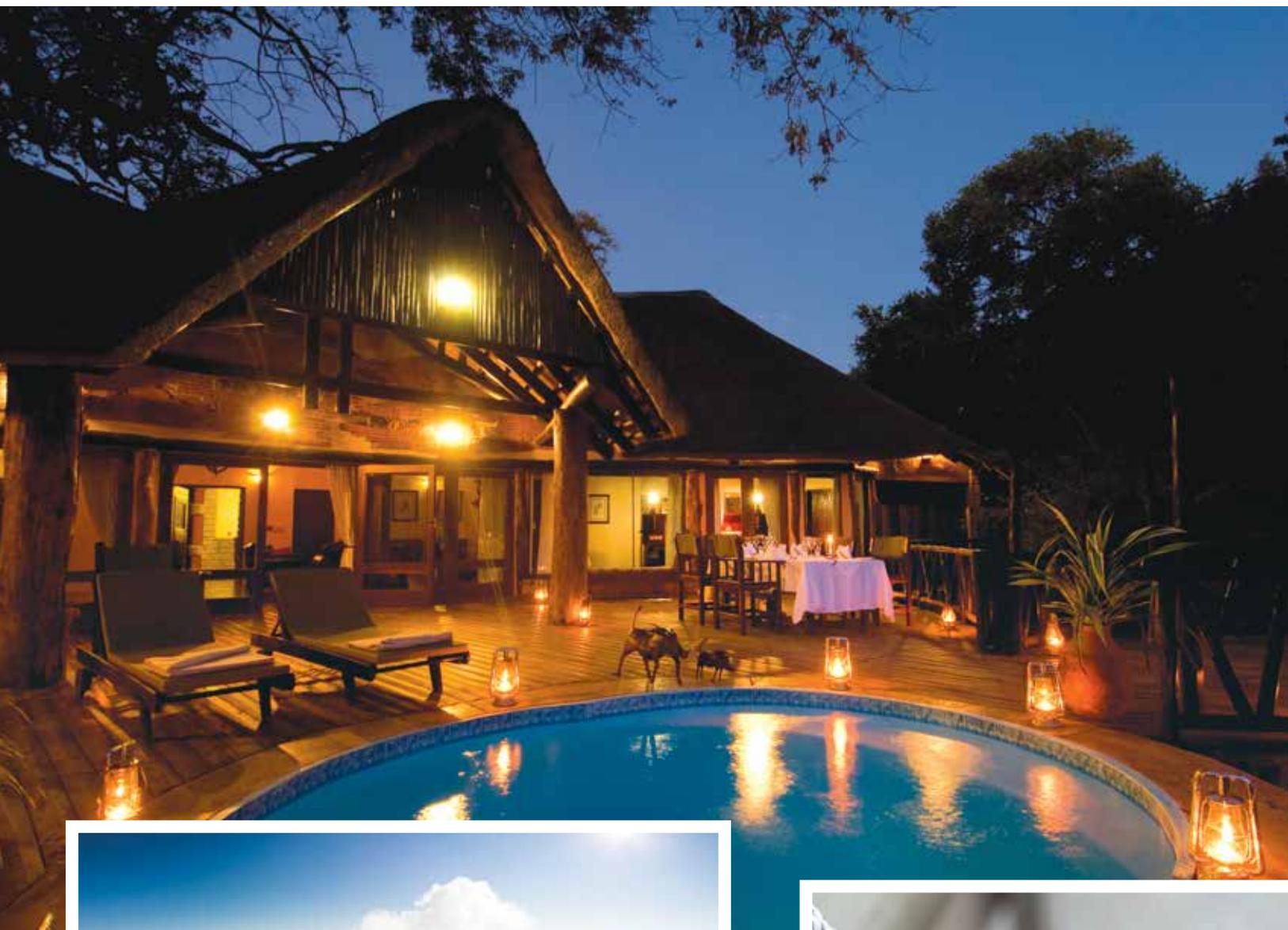
of a school lunch programme and expanding the school vegetable garden to generate income and supplement the children's diets. One of the most successful projects is the Chipego Bike Shop which was established through a global initiative where A&K's offices worldwide teamed up with local not-for-profit organisations to ship thousands of donated bikes to the village. The shipping containers were used as workshops and five local women now successfully run the enterprise.

Resonating most strongly with Marta, however, was the Nakatindi

Medical Clinic and Maternity Ward which opened in March last year. AKP's largest investment to date, the clinic was initially constructed in 2013, and already catered to a catchment area of some 6,000 people, serving well over 50 patients daily. But the opening of the new maternity ward has seen this figure jump even further. "Facing long distances without access to transportation, many women in Zambia still give birth at home without the assistance of skilled health workers", says Marta. "But the new maternity ward at Nakatindi means local women now have access to antenatal care for the

first time – and the outcomes are very positive. Not only has there been a significant increase in early diagnosis and assessing treatment since the ward was completed, but the early detection of HIV has helped prevent the transmission of the virus from mother to child, which means the future for Nakatindi's mothers and children is now a lot brighter."

While contemplating their African adventure and the shared experiences they enjoyed, Marta reflects, "for us, the philanthropic activities supported by A&K were a really enriching part of



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our trip. Being able to go into the communities, to meet the people and see how they live day to day was so rewarding. But also to see the profoundly positive impact A&K is making to their lives. From building and staffing clinics for childbirth and general wellbeing, to new schools and hot meals being provided every day for local children to learn in a healthy supportive environment. A&K is continuously in touch with these communities to identify what is needed most, encouraging business opportunities and improving livelihoods."

In summing up the trip, Marta said, "I now have memories that will stay with me forever and hopefully inform the choices I continue to make in my life. I will try and carry forward the dignity of the African people we met, the peace and harmony the environment and its rare wildlife taught us, and the hope for a better future for all people across the world."

"As I get older, I want to travel in a way that is significant, and holistic and fulfilling, and our journey to Africa delivered that wholeheartedly." ❧



14

OUR SUGGESTED *Journey*

A similar nine-day private journey including stays at Sanctuary Stanley's, Sanctuary Chief's Camp and Sanctuary Sussi & Chuma
Priced from \$29,600 for a family of four.

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TEMPLE

Territory

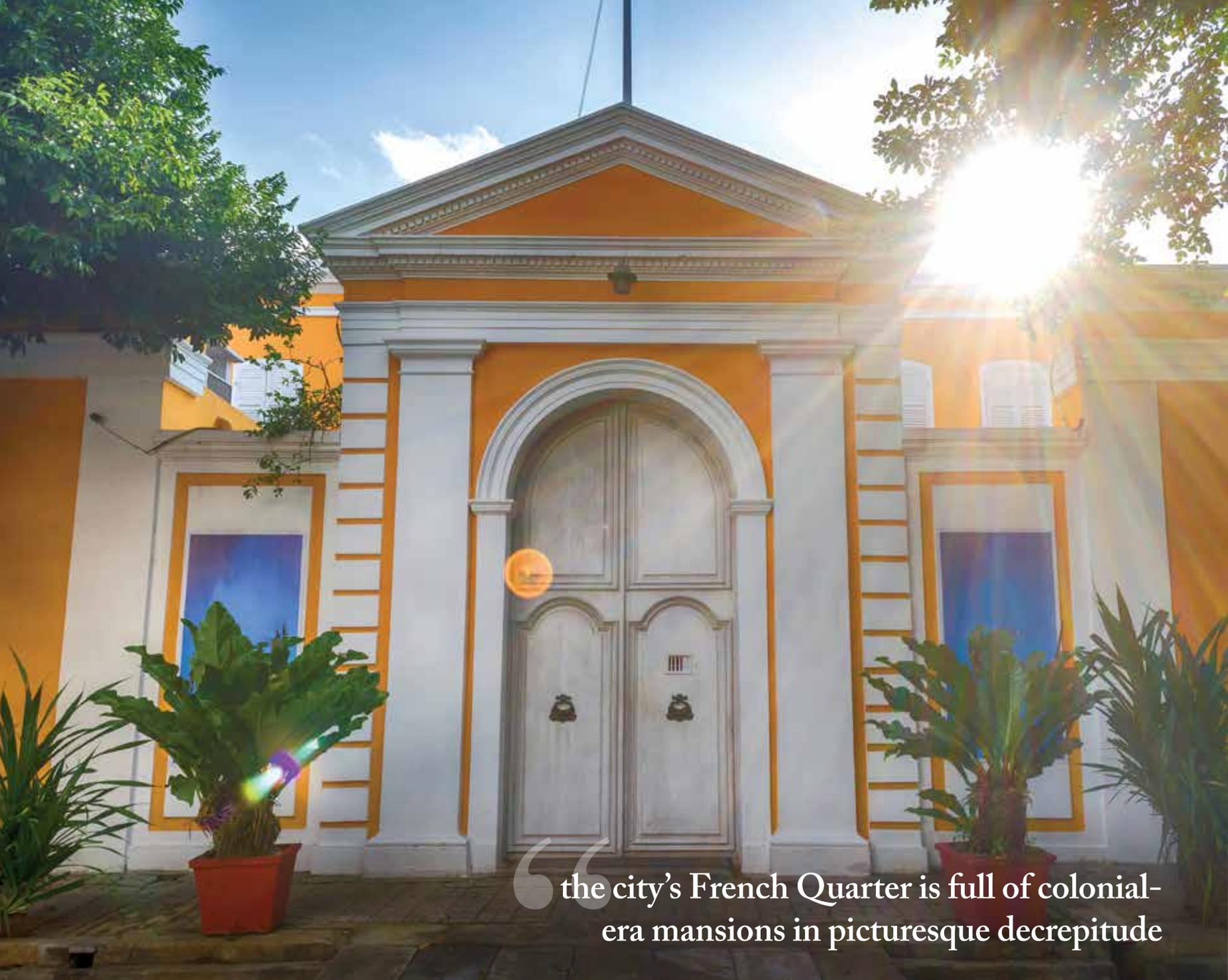
On a temple circuit of Tamil Nadu in India's vibrant deep south,
Helen Anderson is buoyed by ancient rituals and everyday spirituality.





ன்பசிவம்

சிவ சிவ



“the city’s French Quarter is full of colonial-era mansions in picturesque decrepitude

1

INDIA

There’s nothing quick or simple about a lesson in Hindu cosmology. “First there’s Brahma, the creator of the universe, with his wife, Saraswati.” Charles points to a candy-coloured riot of gods and monsters gazing beatifically from the temple façade at Mylapore, in old Chennai. “Then there’s Vishnu, with blue face and four arms, the preserver and protector, with his wife Lakshmi, goddess of wealth and good fortune, in the red saree, though she changes with Vishnu’s incarnations...”

With royally rounded vowels, our guide continues at length, describing the powers of the supergods, their chariots of choice (eagles, bulls, rats, peacocks) and the names of their many avatars.

And their children’s names. Some say there are 33 million Hindu gods; others 330 million. Occasionally Charles will test me gently: “And Shiva is transported by which creature?” He smiles gravely when I answer correctly (“a bull”) and continues describing the bull-rider’s incarnations.

There’s a lot to remember and much that needs explaining in a Hindu temple, and the divine genealogy is only the half of it. In the temple courtyard, a priest wearing a flimsy white dhoti is making an unholy racket on something that sounds like a snake-charmer’s horn, and a long queue shuffles past a little red room full of sweating priests and golden treasures. People lie in front of shrines, daub ash on their foreheads, sit in the shade

and chat with their neighbours. A pen of holy calves ruminates. The air smells of incense and cow dung – like the profusion of rituals and observances, it’s a mix of the sacred and the profane that pervades almost everything in India’s deep south.

Though Tamil Nadu is big and populous, a state approaching 80 million people with the nation’s second largest economy, it feels distinctly different to the “golden triangle” tourist circuit of northern India. In the capital, Chennai, the traffic jams are more civilised, the touts fewer and less persistent, the dress code saree-specific. Several young women tell me they’re safer here than in the north. “Tamil is the world’s oldest language,” says one guide proudly, and points out that this is one of the few



Previous spread: Kapaleeswarar Temple, Chennai
 1: Colonial architecture, Puducherry
 2: High Court, Chennai
 3: A cow on the streets of Chennai
 4: Local children, Chennai

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Indian states that doesn't teach Hindi in government schools. This goes some way to explaining the palpable north-south divide that pervades everything from politics to cuisine.

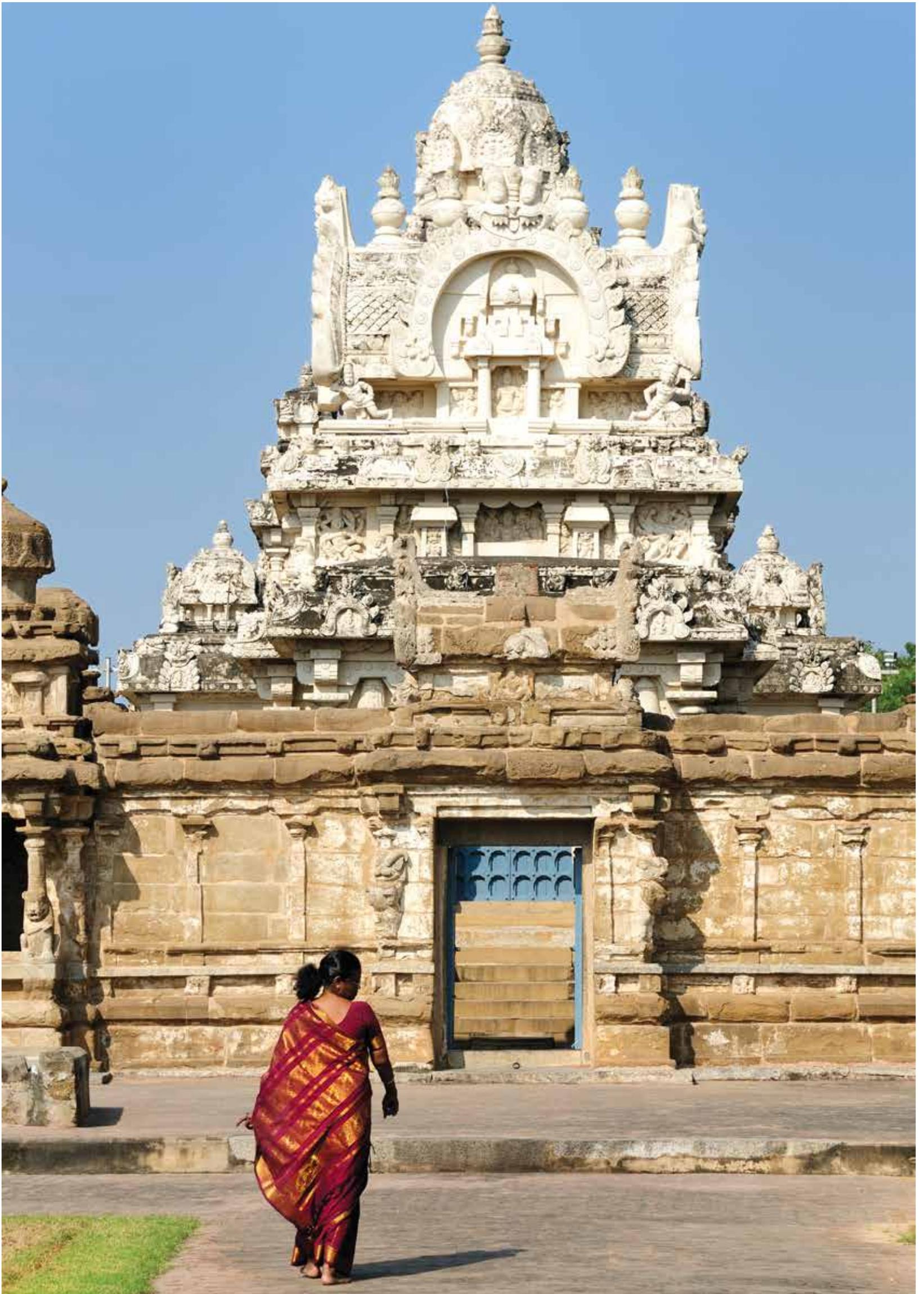
Pilgrimage, the world's oldest form of tourism, motivates most visitors here. Travellers flock north to Rajasthan for crumbling forts and desert palaces, and south to Kerala for languid backwater cruises in the tropics. Tamil Nadu is officially the Land of Temples, some 33,000 of them, many dating back 1,300 years to the halcyon days of the Pallava dynasty. Kapaleeswarar in Mylapore is the first of several temples we explore on a week-long road trip from Chennai, but Tamil Nadu isn't just temples and towers.

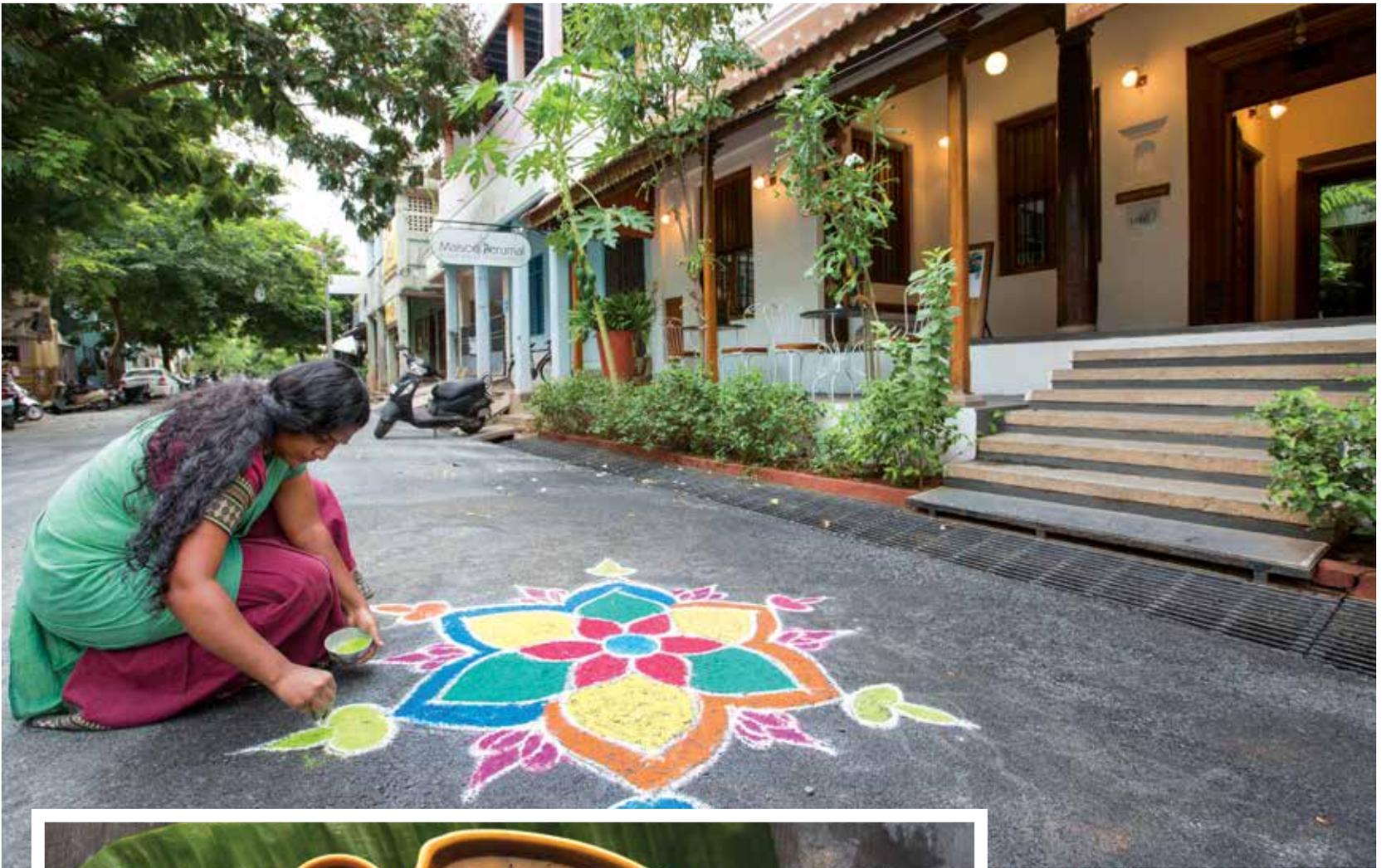
The French left a striking architectural legacy and an anthology of outlandish stories in Pondicherry, since renamed Puducherry (though residents continue steadfastly to call it Pondy), about 170 kilometres south of Chennai. The city's French Quarter is full of colonial-era mansions in picturesque decrepitude, while the much-diminished Tamil Quarter has its own distinctive style featuring deep verandahs beneath steep roofs and fringed by iron lacework.

The British left a florid version of Victoriana in their southern stronghold of Madras, renamed Chennai in 1996. Charles points out the handsome 19th century edifices of the Madras High Court, Victoria Public Hall, and the Ice House, named for the huge blocks

of ice that were once shipped from New England in crates lined with rice husks and stored here, before chilling the colony's cocktails.

Breakfast becomes a search for the perfect masala dosa, the south's crisp super-sized rice-flour crêpe, always made to order, with a spoonful of potato stew and the customary chutneys: coriander, coconut and tomato. I love watching the ritual of dosa batter being poured, spread, lifted and folded like a parchment scroll. The more theatrical morning ritual, however, is the making of filter coffee, performed across southern India. I fail to find a "metre coffee", named for the length of the continuous arc of boiling milk and thick sweetened coffee that's cooled and frothed as it's poured between jugs, but several coffee-wallahs come close.





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breakfast becomes a search for the perfect masala dosa



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5: Kailasanathar Temple in Kanchipuram
 6: The dosa, a classic South India dish
 7: Sri Ekambaranathar Temple, Kanchipuram
 8: Kolam sketching, CGH Earth Maison Perumal

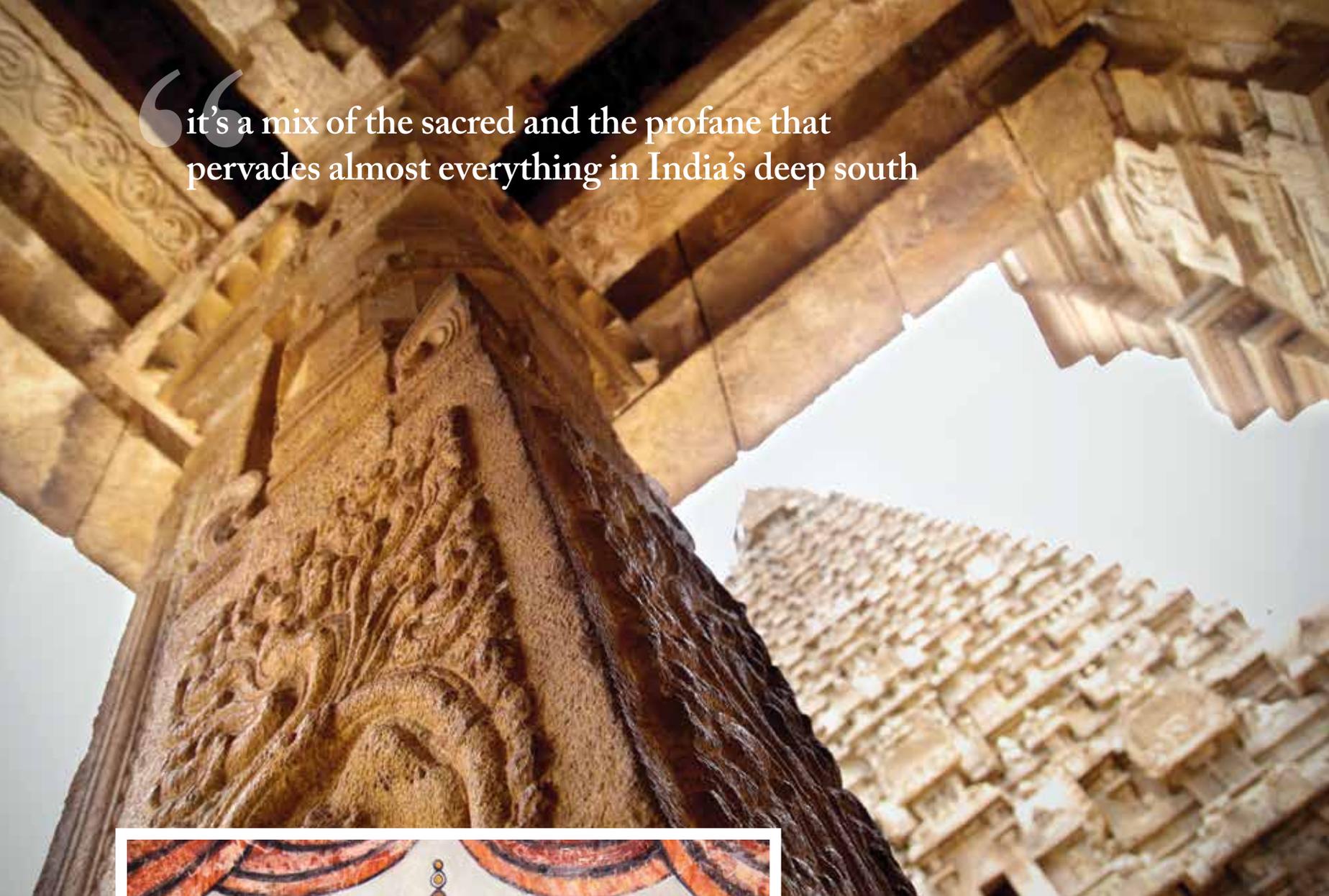
The monsoon is due to arrive within the week, and the heat rises like a wall, a little higher every day. The stories and the temples grow taller as we head west. The streets of Kanchipuram are packed with the nation's finest silk shops but the busiest place in the noon heat is the Shiva temple of Ekambareswarar. Beyond the 59-metre gateway tower is a temple of a thousand pillars, its cool dark halls lined with 108 phallic stone lingams, and a sacred mango tree said to be 3,500 years old.

Under our bare feet are the smudged remains of this morning's kolam, a ritual performed by millions of women throughout Tamil Nadu. These geometric patterns are sketched with coloured rice powder or chalk on the thresholds of houses, temples and shops as a sign of welcome, a humbling gesture refreshed every day at dawn.

At dawn in Pondy, the beachfront promenade is closed to traffic and we join flâneurs strolling in

the French Quarter. Many of the most impressive restorations or "façade interventions", in which new buildings are designed sympathetically with their surrounds, are restaurants and small hotels. The Indian hotel group CGH Earth runs Maison Perumal in the Tamil Quarter, a restored 10-bedroom Chettiar mansion built around twin courtyards, and Palais de Mahé in the French Quarter, a new-build hotel with enough Old-World colonnades and arches to please a marquis.

“it’s a mix of the sacred and the profane that pervades almost everything in India’s deep south



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- 9: Brihadeeswarar Temple, Thanjavur
- 10: Classic Tanjore painting, Thanjavur
- 11: Svatma, Thanjavur
- 12: Bharatanatyam dancing
- 13: Local farmer, south of Puducherry

From Pondy we drive further south on country roads shaded by bowers of tamarind trees, past goatherds and clapped-out tractors struggling under enormous loads of hay and timber, and oxen with painted scimitar horns pulling carts of river sand.

There are rose petals and more jasmine on arrival in Thanjavur, home of Tanjore painting, classical Bharatanatyam dancing, Carnatic music, and bronze casting – and, of course, lots of temples. We’re

greeted with garlands and a red-powder pottu dot on the forehead at Svatma, a family-run heritage hotel that embodies the city’s refinements. The old wing, rebuilt from ruins, holds artefacts, antique veenas and a grand gold-embossed Tanjore painting; the new wing houses contemporary art, a rooftop bar and on-trend spa. Its vegetarian fine-diner specialises in refined versions of Tamil dishes rarely seen outside homes, and guests can join chamber recitals, classes in Vedic chanting and

southern cooking, and lectures on bronze sculpting.

The city’s premier attraction, however, is the mighty 11th century Brihadeeswarar Temple. A moat and two sets of fortified walls surround palatial gateways leading to five temple complexes covered with exquisite stone carvings and topped by a massive central tower. Sundar, our guide, knows all the most Instagrammable angles, positioning me in front of stone guardians and at the entrance to



12



13



long arched arcades. He explains the purpose of dozens of shrines – the most popular today being the “Shrine to Pass Examinations”, crowded with teenage students – and the relationships of the gods and monsters inscribed in stone on towering façades.

Occasionally he’ll test me: “And Ganesha is transported by which creature?” He smiles when I take a guess (“a peacock?”). It’s a rat, Sundar corrects me – though he concedes one of the god’s eight

incarnations gets around on a peacock – and he continues to describe the rat-rider’s various guises.

The happy elephant-headed Ganesha is the remover of obstacles, the god of beginnings, the patron of learning. And, clearly, I have much more to learn. 🐘

This is an extract from Gourmet Traveller, October 2018.

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 & 20 Jan 2021

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TOP 10

Behind the scenes in Europe



When you take your next journey to Europe with A&K, you'll be doing it as a traveller and not a tourist. You'll be taking the back roads and meeting local characters in the village. You'll stay in a secret palazzo or a private castle and meet the conductor of the orchestra. Or taste wine with a sommelier in a country cave. Why not get to know a city through its aperitifs or meet the lady of the manor. Step out and be styled by a fashionista in Milan or learn about the world's finest diamonds in Antwerp. Read on for more ideas on how we can weave authenticity into your next European adventure.

For more information call A&K on 1300 551 541 or your local travel agent.



COOK WITH THE COUNTESS

Learn to cook old school Venetian cuisine alongside Countess Lelia Passi in her lavish palazzo. Visit the Rialto markets where you select the finest fresh produce – from laguna caught fresh fish and cured meats to in-season peaches, cantaloupe, white asparagus and more. With your basket full, stroll back to base where the secrets of Italian cooking will be revealed.



PRIVATE MONASTERY VISIT

In Prague, meet one of the friars from the historic St. Thomas Monastery who will lead you via a secret passage through the Garden of Eden and its arcades into the heart of the Augustinian monastery. Explore the library, which has the largest collection of ancient medicine books in Europe, and then taste the artisan beer, which is still produced by the monks from a recipe created in 1352!

LA DOLCE VITA

Jump on the back of a Vespa and travel like a local with a local. Learn about Rome's great food culture as you visit shops, bars and markets around the city, with your food and wine expert introducing you to the most delicious flavours that the Italian capital has to dish up from suppli and fiori di zucca to baccalà, carciofi alla romana and more.



SLAVIC SAUNA

Experience Russia's national spa tradition at the country's oldest bath house, Sanduny Banya. Promoting good health, detoxification and skin purification, a session in the banya is designed to relieve tension and stress. Join locals in the steamy sauna and let your body be gently slapped with branches of birch or oak, plunging into cold pools between steam sessions.



TRUFFLE HUNTING IN THE LUBERON

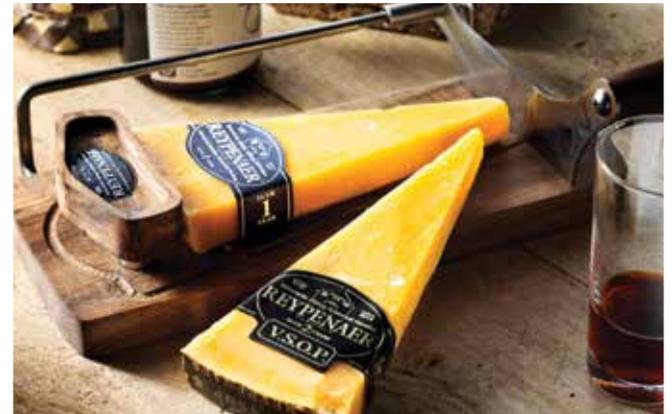
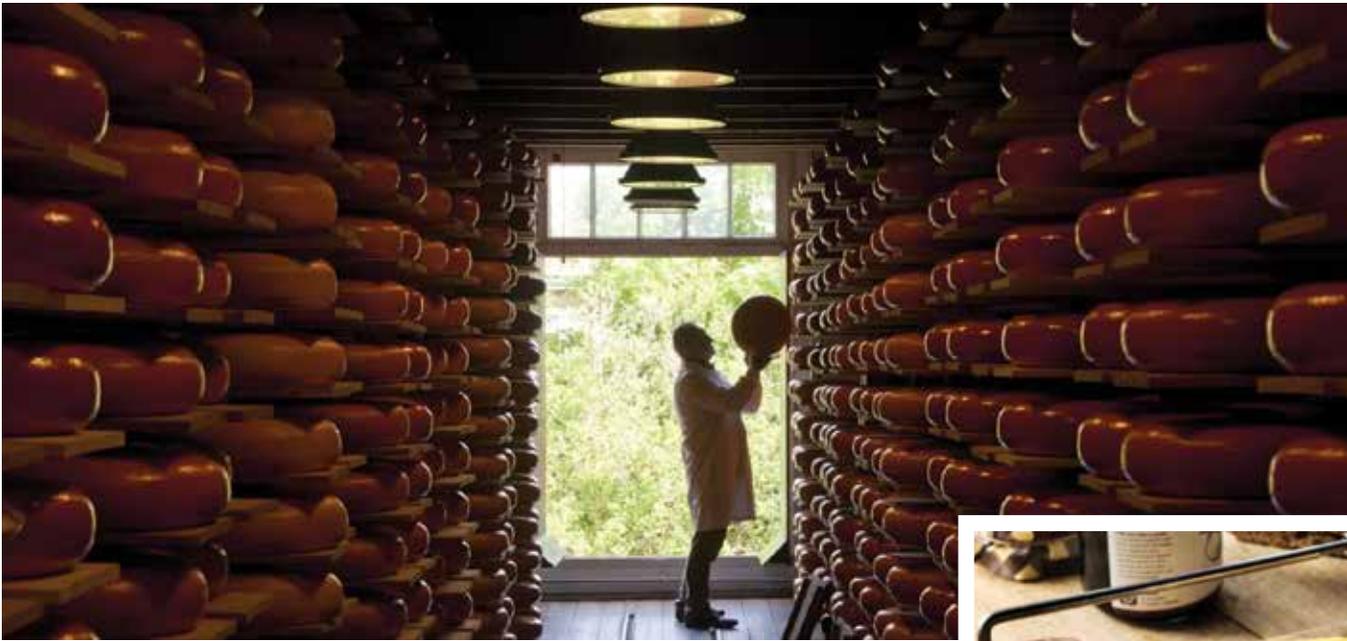
Grown by injecting oak trees with special fungal spores, truffles can take 3-4 years to develop before being ready to harvest. And even then, variable soil and climatic conditions may mean the difference between having a reasonable crop or none at all. Meet a truffle farmer in Cadenet and, together with specially trained dogs, venture into the oak forest to forage for the sought after "black diamond". End your experience with a special truffle tasting.



FISH WITH THE LOCALS IN LECCE

Venture down to the waterfront in Torre Vado, a picturesque fishing village whose crystal clear, turquoise waters have earned it the moniker "the Maldives of Salento". Meet a fisherman and set off for your fishing trip. Lend a hand tossing out the nets and hauling in the catch and watch as it's prepared according to Puglian culinary tradition.





DUTCH CHEESE MARKET

South of Amsterdam, the city of Woerden has a lively history of cheese production with the most authentic commercial cheese market in the country, the Woerden Kaasmarkt, in operation between May and October. A&K invites you into a hundred-year-old warehouse where some of the finest Dutch cheeses are produced. A private tour introduces traditional production methods, what makes a great cheese and how different infusions are used to inject flavour. Afterwards, sit down for a tasting - Gouda, Limburger, Maasdam, Old Alkmaar and more.



STREET ART IN BERLIN

Berlin's street art scene has exploded in recent years so meet one of the artists at the East Side Gallery, where murals decorate a 1300-metre-long remnant of the Berlin Wall. Often used as an outlet for controversial and challenging thought, hear what inspires the artists and the significance of the graffiti. Your visit contributes towards the upkeep of the institution, preserving the East Side Gallery for the future.

VODKA BARS OF WARSAW

Cited by many as the home of vodka, Poland has been distilling the stuff for a thousand years and boasts hundreds of varieties. Considered some of the best in the world, Polish vodka has very distinct characteristics so let A&K introduce you to a local vodka connoisseur in Warsaw who will walk you through a flight of vodkas so you can distinguish Bison Grass from Oak and Sobieski from Żołądkowa Gorzka. Na Zdrowie!



SECRETS OF MICHELIN

In Spain's gastronomic capital, San Sebastian, you'll have a unique opportunity to try your own hand at some avant-garde culinary practices. Join an award-winning local chef at Mimo to learn the latest tips and techniques - from spherification and sous vide to foams and modern plating. You'll be surprised how easy it is to dish up haute cuisine at home. Sit down with new friends and enjoy each course paired with matching wines.



Ask your Travel Professional about including any of these experiences in your next European adventure.



1

ONE&ONLY NATURE RESORTS, RWANDA

Havens of Serenity

2



Nestled within hand-picked corners of the planet, steeped in natural beauty and far from the tourist trail, One&Only Nature Resorts are havens of serenity where the world's best kept secrets are inspirationally brought to life.

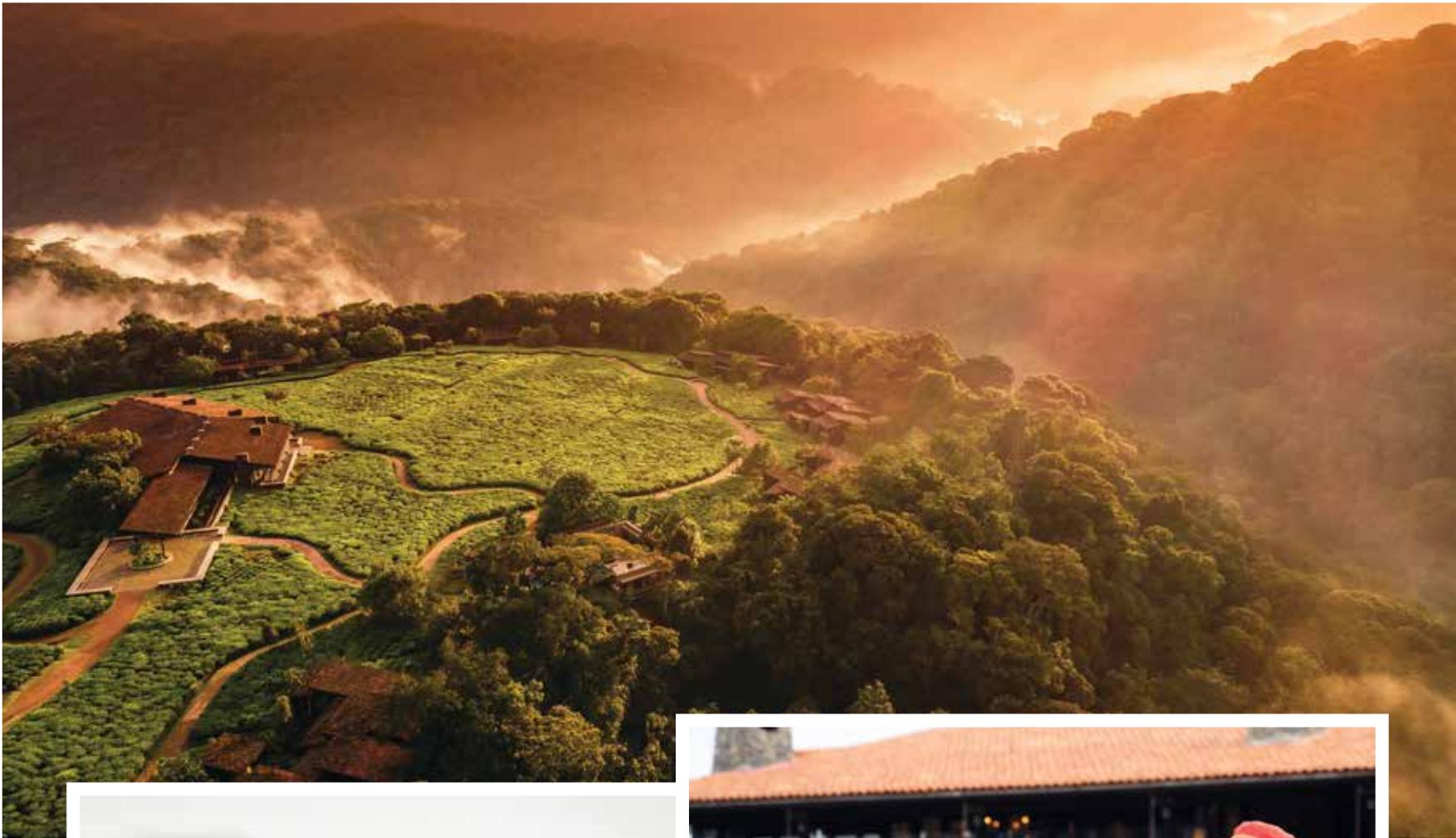
On the fringes of the ancient Nyungwe Forest in Rwanda's mountainous southwest and set within the lush green expanse of a working tea plantation, you'll find One&Only Nyungwe House, an idyllic eco retreat offering once-in-a-lifetime experiences in the heart of magical Rwanda. Immersing you in exotic flora and fauna, connecting you with a vibrant culture, and reawakening your soul, this is Africa as you've never seen before.

Take a guided walk in the thick of the wilderness, as majestic mahoganies and delicate orchids magically surround you. Encounter the rare Mangabey monkey and soak up the knowledge of local elders who share the secrets of traditional crafts. Embark on a gastronomic journey in a private tree-house or indulge with African-inspired spa treatments surrounded by nature. Delight in active adventures, such as mountain biking and canopy-walking or relax by the idyllic infinity pool.

Cushioned in the foothills of the breathtaking Virunga volcano range in the north of Rwanda, One&Only Gorilla's Nest makes the magical possible with once-in-a-lifetime, personal encounters with the rare and majestic mountain gorilla, roaming free in its own natural habitat. Offering an exclusive front-row seat to one of Africa's oldest national parks, you'll be captivated as elephants, exotic birds and one of the planet's greatest array of primate species flourish before your eyes and welcome you into their world. Then retreat to your own world at One&Only Gorilla's Nest, a spectacular modern haven, where every creature comfort is yours to behold. Dine before a multitude of breathtaking vistas, relishing local flavours with your favourite classic vintage. Practice twilight yoga or luxuriate in natural spa therapies.

Experience Rwanda, a place where the exceptional happens, exceptionally curated for you.

One&Only Gorilla's Nest Coming Soon.



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6

One&Only

- 1: Mountain gorillas in Volcanoes National Park
- 2: Bonfire at One&Only Nyungwe House
- 3: One&Only Nyungwe House from above
- 4: Colobus Monkey in Nyungwe Forest
- 5: Picking tea leaves at One&Only Nyungwe House
- 6: Virunga Mountains

Speak to an A&K Travel Specialist on 1300 551 541
or your local travel agent about including *One&Only* on
your next visit to Rwanda.

notes from the field

SOUTH AFRICA

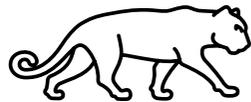
It really is true what they say about travelling to Africa: it does get under your skin. So even on her seventh visit to the Dark Continent, A&K Travel Specialist **Sarah Kidd** found surprises aplenty. A newcomer to South Africa, she was overwhelmed by the wildlife and the breathtaking coastline and shares her favourite moments below.



Sarah Kidd

Travel Specialist,
A&K Australia

BIG CAT SIGHTING



The Sabi Sand in South Africa's northeast has some of the world's best game viewing. Part of the vast Kruger ecosystem, it's home to Africa's iconic species and the guides who work there live and breathe safari. During my stay at Lion Sands Ivory Lodge, I had the privilege of an extraordinary predator sighting. On an evening game drive, our guide, Nigel, alerted us to a movement in the undergrowth. On closer inspection it was revealed to be a handsome male leopard. After trailing him along a dry creek bed for close to 45 minutes, weaving in and out of trees, under low-hanging branches and over rocks (the off-roading was nearly as exciting as the sighting itself), he emerged and came alongside the vehicle, so close I could have reached out and stroked his velvet coat. Magical!



ETHICAL & AUTHENTIC



Used by many of southern Africa's leading luxury safari camps and lodges, the Africology range of beauty treatments is made in South Africa from pure, natural ingredients and essential oils. Always on my Africa shopping list, this rejuvenating body balm is my favourite. It contains mica minerals which give the skin a radiant healthy glow.



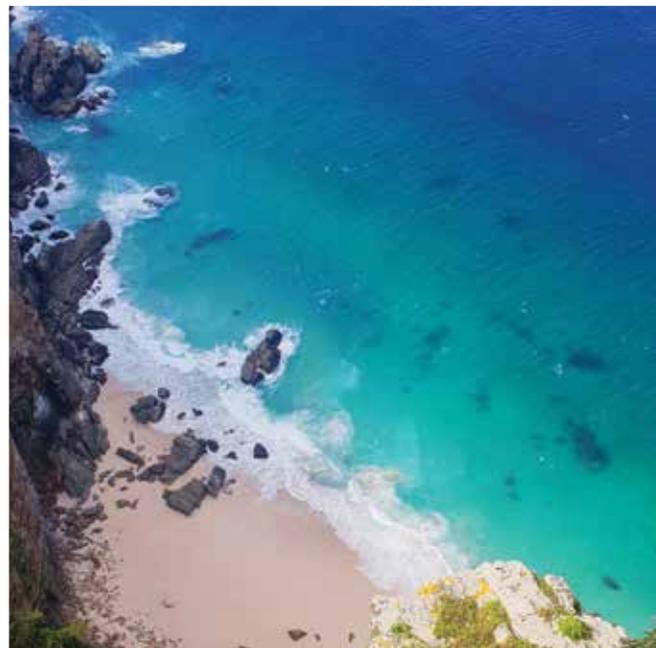
WHALE OF A TIME



Perched on a cliff overlooking Walker Bay in South Africa's Western Cape is the stylish sanctuary Marine Hermanus. An elegant beachside bolthole, the hotel is part of the gourmet Relais & Châteaux collection so the food is a standout. Book a table at the Marine for a Cape Malay curry washed down with a glass of crisp Chenin Blanc and if, like me, you time it right you'll be rewarded with an awesome display of breaching southern right whales and calves just metres from the shore.

THE FAIREST CAPE

Named for bountiful trading opportunities in the 15th century, the Cape of Good Hope, south of Cape Town, is the legendary promontory passed by European explorers and merchants on their journeys east. Today it is the last stop for modern travellers taking one of the world's great road trips through the Cape Peninsula. After a selfie at the Cape of Good Hope, I took a bracing hike up to the old lighthouse, which was built in the 1850s, where the 360-degree views of the rugged coastline and out to sea are simply epic.



MOUNTAIN MEDITATION

Table Mountain is quite simply synonymous with Cape Town. One of the world's most identifiable landmarks, it is a commanding backdrop to the beautiful Mother City which sweeps from its foothills to the golden beaches beyond. Summiting the 1,000-metre-high flat-topped mountain can be done in a variety of ways (weather permitting): either on foot at dawn or for those with limited time via the cable car, my preferred means. Either way, you'll be rewarded with astonishing views.

OUR SUGGESTED *Journey*

'Essential South Africa' Private Journey
8 Days

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a journey illustrated

A PORTRAIT OF EGYPT

Discover one of the world's most enduring destinations where you'll be guided through its museums, around its ancient monuments and to its vibrant marketplaces. You'll also be introduced to unexpected attractions that will take you off the beaten path. See a different side of the capital in its Coptic neighbourhood and browse the stalls of its oldest bazaar. Explore unexpected tombs and key World War II battlegrounds with time to soak up the gritty Mediterranean vibe in Alexandria.

PLANNING YOUR TRIP

WHEN?

Travelling in Egypt is most comfortable between October and May when temperatures are cooler across the country. The summer months (June-September) are hot but there are fewer visitors and prices are lower. Being a visitor to Egypt during Ramadan (generally April or May) has its own appeal and, while some services may be limited, the vibrant cultural experience is more than rewarding.

WHAT?

'A Portrait of Egypt',
14-day private journey

Price:

Twin Share Per Person: From \$11,375

FOR MORE INFO

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Days 1-3: Cairo. Spend two days in the bustling Egyptian capital with your own engaging Egyptologist. Wander through 7,000 years of history at the Egyptian Museum of Antiquities and uncover the treasures of Tutankhamun and the Mummy Room. Continue to the 4,500-year old Pyramids of Giza with access into the Great Pyramid. Admire the legendary Sphinx, visit the Solar Boat Museum and view the more recently excavated tombs of the pyramid builders away from the crowds. Venture into some of the most traditional parts of the magical Khan El-Khalili Bazaar, stopping for refreshments along the way. Be guided through the twisting lanes of Coptic Cairo to the beautiful Church of St Simeon the Tanner and soak up the city views from the Citadel.

Accommodation: Four Seasons Hotel Cairo at Nile Plaza

Days 4-5: Aswan. Fly to Aswan and transfer to the splendid Sofitel Legend Old Cataract Hotel, whose storied guest list includes the likes of Agatha Christie, Winston Churchill, Howard Carter and many more colourful characters. Soak up the views of traditional dhows and feluccas sailing along the river and the palm-tree studded islands in the Nile as you sip a refreshment on the terrace. Explore the sunny capital of Upper Egypt seeking out the vivid paintings in the tombs of ancient governors and nobles and riding a camel to the ruins of St Simeon Monastery.

Accommodation: Sofitel Legend Old Cataract Aswan

Day 6: Upper Egypt. Visit the awe-inspiring temples of Ramses II and Queen Nefertari at Abu Simbel before boarding Sanctuary Sun Boat IV, your luxury home afloat. Cruise on a felucca around Elephantine Island, Lord Kitchener's Botanical Gardens and the Aga Khan Mausoleum.

Accommodation: Sanctuary Sun Boat IV

Days 7-9: Cruising the Nile. The next three days introduce the most important attractions between Aswan and Luxor including the majestic Philae Temple, the Granite Quarries and unfinished obelisk, the extraordinary Temple of Horus at Edfu and the beautifully preserved Graeco-Roman Temple of Khnum at Esna. Luxor's East Bank reveals the graceful Temple of Luxor and the Temple of Karnak, the world's largest religious site. And on the West Bank, the world-renowned Valleys of the Kings and Queens, and the mortuary temple of Queen Hatshepsut, Egypt's first female pharaoh. During the cruise there is a cooking class on board, an Egyptian themed event with traditional entertainment and local cuisine and a farewell gala dinner.

Accommodation: Sanctuary Sun Boat IV

Day 10: Luxor. Disembark and drive north to Denderah to the Ptolemaic temple of Hathor. Return to Luxor and your luxury accommodation. Tonight, witness a dazzling Sound and Light show at the Temple of Karnak.

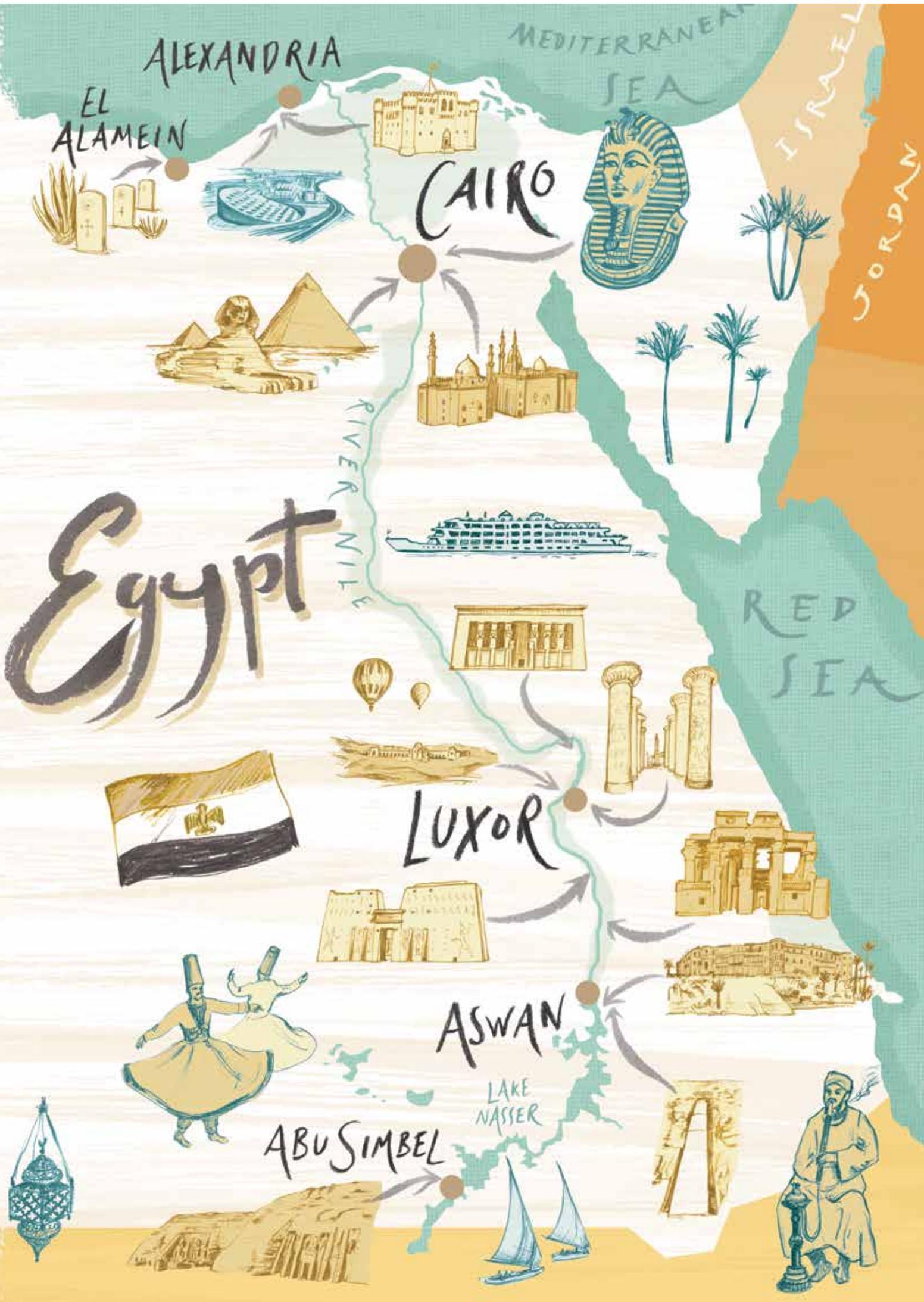
Accommodation: Sofitel Winter Palace Luxor

Days 11-12: Alexandria. Return flight to Cairo and journey by road north to the Mediterranean city of Alexandria whose layers of history will be revealed during your stay. Descend into the Catacombs of Kom El Shugafa, the largest Roman burial site in Egypt. Visit the impressive new Library of Alexandria, reborn on the site of the ancient library, and wander through the Roman Amphitheatre, the only one of its kind in Egypt.

Accommodation: Four Seasons Hotel Alexandria at San Stefano

Days 13-14: Alexandria – Cairo. Journey west along the Mediterranean coast to El Alamein, scene of two of the most decisive battles of World War II. Follow the stories of Australian diggers in the Military Museum and Commonwealth War Cemetery, where 7,000 tombstones overlook the desert battlefield. Return to Cairo.

Accommodation: Four Seasons Hotel Cairo at Nile Plaza



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Backed by more than 25 years of expedition cruising experience, every exclusively chartered A&K voyage is led by an award-winning Expedition Team, features all-balcony staterooms and a maximum guest complement of 199 (148 on the smaller vessels), and includes all excursions, beverages, gratuities and more.

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Experience the vast breadth of this island nation, including atmospheric Kyoto, mediaeval Karatsu and the mountains of Towada-Hachimantai National Park.



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Embark on a comprehensive itinerary that explores nearly the entire navigable coastline of Italy and visits its most unique ports.



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ADVENTURE CRUISES TO EARTH'S FARTHEST FRONTIERS

Explore awe-inspiring Antarctica, the Arctic and Australia's Kimberley on astonishing itineraries found nowhere else. Led by A&K's award-winning Expedition Team – real-life explorers who are experts in their fields – experience a spectacular cruise aboard a luxurious ship purpose-built for adventure.



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Marvel at geological wonders and the majestic polar bear on a voyage to the magnificent Arctic.



NEW! ULTIMATE ICELAND & GREENLAND CRUISE

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Explore breathtaking locales from the western fjords of Iceland to glaciers, villages and archaeological sites across Southern Greenland's stunning coastline.



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Explore wild Antarctica in the austral summer, encountering amazing wildlife and stunning landscapes up close in the company of A&K's renowned Expedition Team.



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Immerse yourself in a panoramic expedition of a lifetime that includes pristine Antarctica and South Georgia, with its rookeries of king penguins.

NATURAL WONDERS

OUR SUGGESTED JOURNEY

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15 Days | 31 July - 14 August 2020

Priced from \$23,895 per person
twin share (was \$26,070)

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travel agent.

SVALBARD ISLANDS, NORWAY

ARCTIC FOX

Vulpes lagopus

Also known as the white fox, polar fox, or snow fox, this hardy mammal is native to the Arctic regions of the Northern Hemisphere where it lives on the tundra and is capable of surviving temperatures as low as -46°C . Its furry soles, short ears, and short muzzle are all important adaptations to the chilly climate and its thick, warm fur makes the perfect winter camouflage. When the seasons change, their coats do too, taking on a brown or grey appearance that provides good cover on the summer tundra. Arctic foxes live in burrows and their life expectancy in the wild is rarely more than three or four years.

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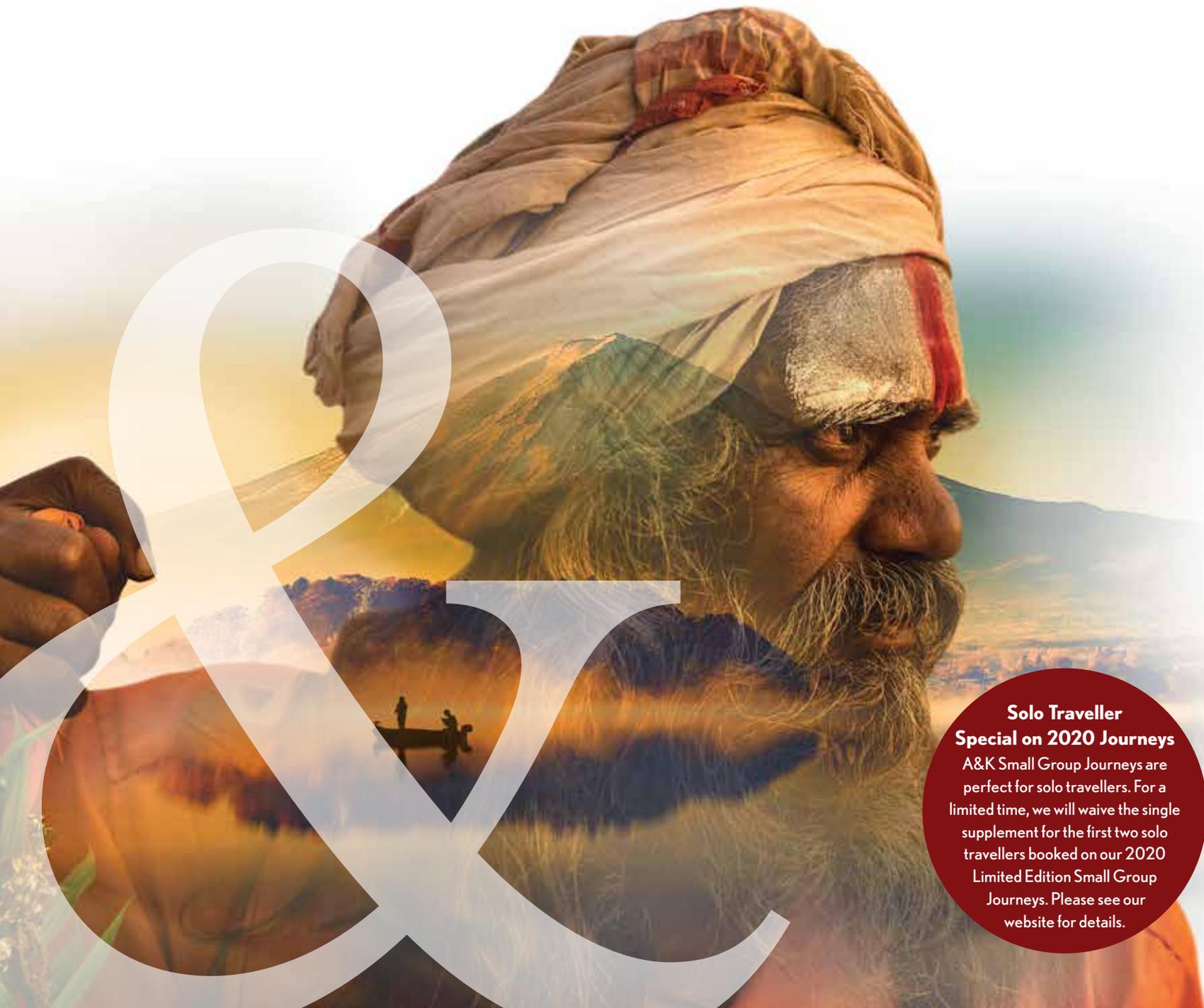
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