

SUNDOWNER

FOR THE INSPIRED TRAVELLER • SUMMER 2023

— INSIDE —

BOTSWANA

SPAIN

PATAGONIA

GREECE



Abercrombie & Kent

FOUNDER'S NOTE



WELCOME TO OUR SUMMER 2023 ISSUE

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy New Year and to thank you for your ongoing support of Abercrombie & Kent. I hope that many of you have been able to resume, at least in some way, old travel habits, getting back on planes and discovering new destinations or revisiting old favourites. While the world gets used to the new normal, we have been busy enhancing our portfolio with the addition of new offices, safari camps, cruise ships, vehicles and more dedicated staff so we can deliver more of what you expect in more places and do it even better.

For those of you still planning your next adventure, I hope that you find inspiration in the following pages. There is an Insider's Guide to Greece (page 18) with its ancient and modern attractions, a feature on sunny Andalusia (page 30), magical wildlife encounters vividly described in Botswana (page 24) and an inspiring account of wanderings in Chile (page 36).

Our keenly anticipated Hot List (page 50) has also been released and singles out the places we think you need to know about. The inventory lists Mexico, Finland and Israel amongst other captivating destinations and you'll find new hotels and experiences throughout Asia (page 42) as well. So, stay ahead of the game and ask an A&K travel specialist to map out your next inspiring journey.

Bon voyage.

Geoffrey Kent

Founder, Co-Chairman & CEO of the Abercrombie & Kent Group of Companies



follow me on Instagram and hear
about my latest A&K adventures
[@geoffrey_kent](https://www.instagram.com/geoffrey_kent)

CONTENTS

SUMMER 2023



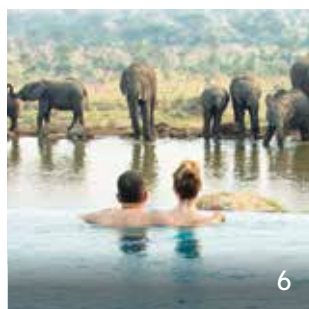
Follow us on Instagram to stay updated
with the latest A&K adventures
@aktravel_au

FEATURES

- 24 **EVERY DOG HAS ITS DAY**
Botswana's less heralded species revealed
- 30 **ANOTHER SIDE OF SPAIN**
Touring Andalusia with an expert
- 36 **PUMA PURSUITS**
In search of big cats in the wilds of Patagonia



4



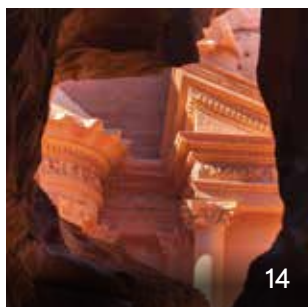
6



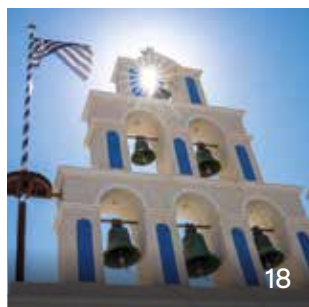
10

REGULARS

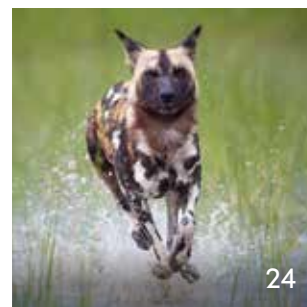
- 4 **NEWS**
Goings-on around the A&K world
- 10 **A&K PHILANTHROPY**
Latest update from Uganda, Egypt and Zambia
- 56 **NOTES FROM THE FIELD**
Living *La Dolce Vita*



14



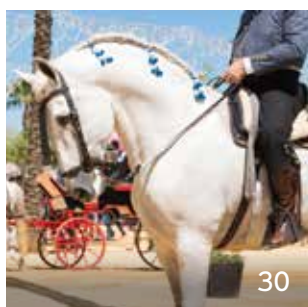
18



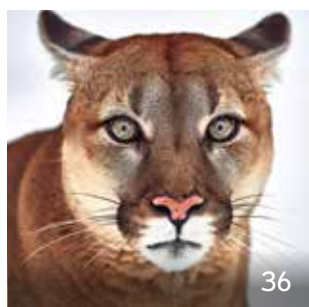
24

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- 6 **AROUND THE WORLD**
2023 Luxury Small Group Journeys
- 12 **WISH YOU WERE HERE**
Colours & scents of India
- 18 **INSIDER'S GUIDE**
Greece
- 14 **RECENT TRAVELS**
A photo essay from Jordan
- 42 **TOP TEN**
Spotlight on Asia
- 48 **A JOURNEY ILLUSTRATED**
French Polynesia to Easter Island
- 50 **HOT LIST**
Where you'll want to be in 2023



30



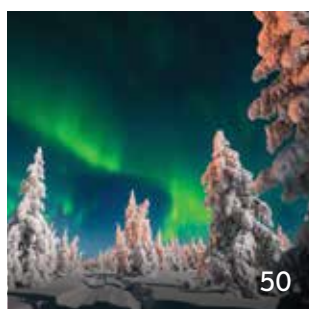
36



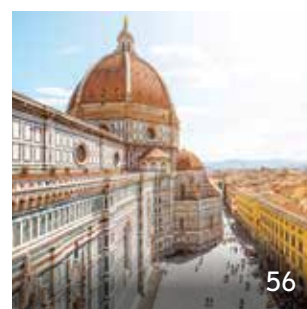
42



48



50



56

Abercrombie & Kent
Level 3, 290 Coventry Street,
South Melbourne,
Victoria 3205
www.abercrombiekent.com.au

contact@abercrombiekent.com.au
All enquiries to +61 3 9536 1800
or 1300 551 541.



[aktravel.au](https://www.facebook.com/aktravel.au)



[abercrombiekent.com.au/youtube](https://www.abercrombiekent.com.au/youtube)



[aktravel_au](https://twitter.com/aktravel_au)



issuu.com/abercrombiekentau

Sundowner is published by Abercrombie & Kent Australia. The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Abercrombie & Kent. While Abercrombie & Kent has taken all reasonable precautions and made all reasonable effort to ensure the accuracy of material contained in this publication, Abercrombie & Kent does not assume any responsibility or liability for any loss or damage which may result from any inaccuracy or omission in the publication, or from the use of the information contained herein. Copyright 2023.

All prices shown in this publication are shown per person and in Australian Dollars unless otherwise specified. 'From' prices are indicative only and usually for travel during low season. Prices are subject to availability and to change, and may vary across date ranges. Contact A&K for the best available prices for your preferred travel arrangements and travel dates. And see the website for complete booking terms and conditions. Abercrombie & Kent Australia, ABN 55005422999.

Editor: Serena Mitchell; Art Direction: David Kneale; Head of Marketing: Michelle Mickan

CONTRIBUTORS



SUE WATT

Page 24

An experienced freelance travel writer based in London, Sue possesses a passion for the wild places and wildlife of Africa. Following a career in law, a year travelling around Nepal and Africa inspired a job change and in 2004 she took the plunge into travel writing. An award-winning writer, Sue has extensively explored Africa and has worked with some of its best conservation organisations recognising the vital role tourism plays in conservation and community development. Her work has appeared in UK national broadsheets including *The Telegraph*, *The Times* and *The Independent*, and in various magazines and international titles.



PENELOPE RANCE

Page 30

Penelope attended the University of Oxford and is a self-confessed obsessive with accurate and inventive use of the English language. Over 20-plus years, she has edited glossy magazines, been chief sub-editor on a national tabloid, launched international technology titles and run multi-channel campaigns for corporates.



JAN MASTERS

Page 36

Based in London, Jan is a columnist for the UK's *Daily Telegraph* as well as contributing to their features and beauty sections. She spent a number of years at *Harrods* magazine and has written for *Vogue*, *Luxury London*, and worked with luxury brands such as De Beers and Chanel. Writer, copywriter, shoot director and content editor, Jan's writing is quirky and engaging and her career has spanned beauty, travel and lifestyle brands. A passion for travel, and travel photography, sees her regularly abroad in such far-flung places as Antarctica, the Arctic Circle, South America, Papua New Guinea and Namibia.

Check us

OUT

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

FACEBOOK



aktravel.au

Like our Facebook page for updates on all the latest news, special offers and online competitions!

INSTAGRAM



aktravel_au

Join us on our travels around the world, as we share our favourite photos from the field. Tag your A&K travels with #GoBeyondtheOrdinary.

YOUTUBE



abercrombiekent.com.au/
youtube

Discover more about A&K Philanthropy projects.



On the Cover: Torres del Paine National Park, Chile (page 36).

Our appreciation for imagery to: Sanctuary Retreats, A&K Philanthropy, Shutterstock, Getty Images, and all our partner airlines, hotels, vessels and properties.

Illustrations: Joy Gosney.

SMALL GROUP JOURNEYS

Shared Adventures in Extraordinary Places.

For over 60 years, Abercrombie & Kent has been creating inspiring adventures exploring the world's most remarkable locations and cultures. Our portfolio of Small Group Journeys includes the eternal travel favourites – Africa, Egypt, Japan, India, Spain and Morocco – as well as more off-the-beaten-track, emerging destinations that are full of fascination and intrigue such as Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Mongolia, Madagascar, Georgia and Armenia.

If you're looking for a shared adventure in true A&K style – exquisite accommodation, perfectly-paced itineraries, group sizes averaging 14 guests, curated cultural experiences, exclusive access and privileges, expert resident tour directors, and unforgettable encounters with local people and wildlife – start exploring now and find yourself somewhere amazing on an A&K Small Group Journey.

Call Abercrombie & Kent on 1300 551 541 or talk to your travel agent.
www.abercrombiekent.com.au



Abercrombie & Kent

A&K NEWS



KIMBERLEY 2023

Experience a thrilling adventure exploring the Kimberley, one of Australia's most spectacular locales combining one-of-a-kind wildlife with awe-inspiring scenery and vital indigenous culture. Departing 12 May 2023, 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.

For a limited time, save \$3,115 per person on all stateroom categories and suites. Plus, book a cabin category 1 or 2 and receive a complimentary category upgrade. In addition, save 75% on the single supplement on cabin categories 1-3.

A&K ARRIVES IN SAUDI ARABIA

A&K's Middle East Product Manager, Patrick Clementson, and Head of Sales & Partnerships, Susan Haberle, recently travelled to Saudi Arabia where A&K has established one of the latest additions to its network of over 55 offices around the world. Our very own Kathie Sikkies, General Manager of A&K Australia Inbound, is also currently residing in Riyadh assisting in the establishment of the new operation.

An opportunity to explore this exciting and emerging destination, closed to much of the outside world until 2019, was relished by all. The extraordinary carved temples of Hegra, known as the second Petra, were a highlight, as was Jabal Ikamah, the vast open-air museum located on the ancient incense route. Add in cosmopolitan Riyadh and Jeddah's World Heritage coral architecture, and an exclusive glimpse of a realm veiled in secrecy was revealed.





SSO: SYMPHONY IN THE VINES

In September 2022, A&K again joined forces with the extraordinary Sydney Symphony Orchestra to host guests on an exclusive weekend away in the Hunter Valley. Assistant Concertmaster, Fiona Ziegler, led a rich musical journey across three days introducing guests to the musicians who shared the stories behind the music in the intimate setting of Spicer's Vineyards Estate. Sydney Symphony Orchestra Interim CEO Craig Whitehead joined as a special guest speaker and celebrated landscape painter Paul McCarthy, represented by Rochfort Gallery, added a fascinating element to the weekend demonstrating his *plein air* talents and skilful use of colour at the estate.



A CRYSTAL ACQUISITION

In exciting cruise news, A&K has acquired the luxury vessels Crystal Serenity and Crystal Symphony. The two ships will resume service later this year after undergoing extensive refurbishment and will operate under the award-winning Crystal Cruises brand that has also been acquired by A&K. "The idea of combining the unparalleled onboard service that Crystal Cruises is known for with the extraordinary tailor-made experiences Abercrombie & Kent has been successfully providing for the past 60 years, fills me with excitement, enthusiasm and pride," said Geoffrey Kent Co-Chairman of A&K Travel Group Ltd. and Founder and Co-Chairman of Abercrombie & Kent.

PLAN YOUR NEXT GETAWAY

At A&K, the notion of luxury travel is constantly being reimagined and so too is our portfolio. Through our new brochure collection we invite you to see the world in a new light and find yourself somewhere amazing. Download your copy at www.abercrombiekent.com.au, or call 1300 551 541 to find out more.



Tailor-Made Journeys



Small Group Journeys



Luxury Expedition Cruises



Australia & New Zealand



Africa



North Africa & Middle East



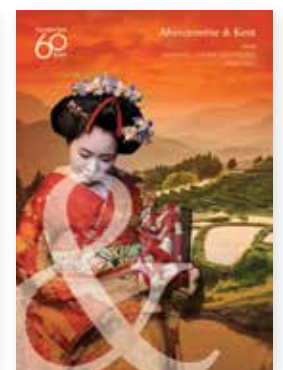
Europe



India, Sri Lanka,
Nepal & Bhutan



The Americas



Asia



LUXURY SMALL GROUP JOURNEYS

ENCOUNTER *the Unexpected*

From the rare wildlife experiences of Botswana, to Morocco's colourful souks and the ancient wonders of Egypt, discover unique and lesser-known locations while still exploring the eternal favourites on our Luxury Small Group Journeys in 2023. Travelling with intimate group sizes averaging 14 guests on expertly designed itineraries, you'll stay in the finest hotels and enjoy unrivalled insider access to the most iconic sites, often before the crowds arrive. Resident Tour Directors and expert guides offer an enriching experience through their own intimate understanding of the destination and its culture, ensuring your trip is one you'll never forget. With over 30 itineraries across six continents, our Luxury Small Group Journeys allow you to discover the world's most exquisite destinations in unbridled style and comfort.

BOTSWANA SAFARI IN STYLE

Wild and remote, blessed with abundant wildlife and unashamedly luxurious lodgings, Botswana is a safari destination par excellence. On this flagship journey, you'll glide through the palm-fringed waterways of the beautiful Okavango Delta on a traditional dugout canoe, drive across rich floodplains on the lookout for predators and their prey, explore the elephant-rich Chobe National Park on land and by water, and marvel at the awe-inspiring Victoria Falls from several viewpoints. You're invited into a Zambian village to see the life-changing work being done there by A&K Philanthropy, and cruise along the mighty Zambezi River at sunset.

10 days

Departures available February–December 2023

From \$15,130 per person twin share





THE GREAT MIGRATION SAFARI IN STYLE

From the cradle of civilisation to Africa's highest peak, internationally acclaimed wildlife reserves and a rich tribal culture, a journey to East Africa is full of theatre. On this unique safari adventure, you follow in the footsteps of pioneering explorers who also gazed across the savannah at the same extraordinary wildlife. You'll see elephants against the backdrop of snow-capped Mt Kilimanjaro, hippo snorting in the Mara River, predators on the prowl in the Serengeti, and birds of all shapes and colours gliding over the landscape. Safari accommodation is of the highest standard — glamorous lodges and luxury tented camps — and you'll travel in comfort in A&K's customised 4WD safari vehicles, with expert naturalist guides.

14 days

Departures available March & October–December 2023

From \$25,240 per person twin share

EGYPT & THE NILE

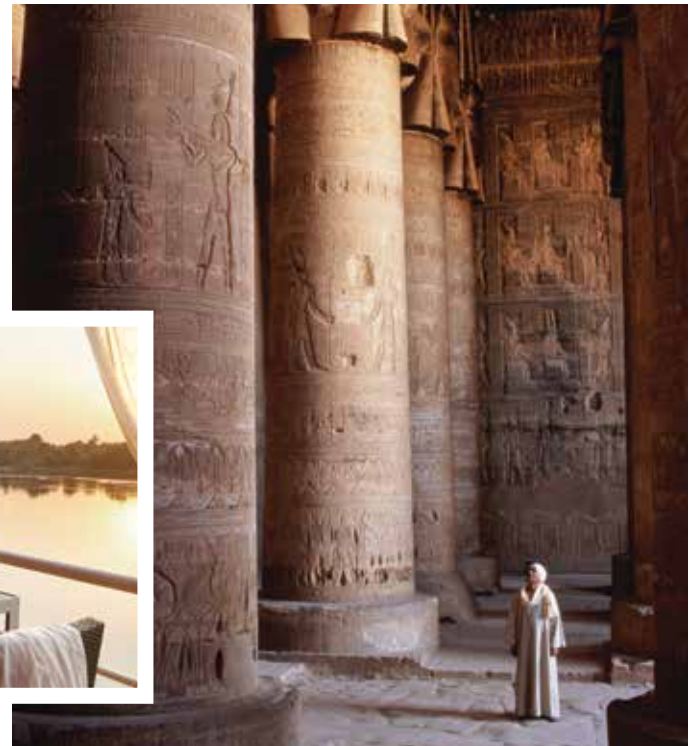
Journey to the heart of an ancient land that has captured the imagination of travellers for millennia. Follow in the footsteps of pharaohs, emperors and conquerors from Cairo to Luxor and along the Nile to Aswan. Explore the country's myriad archaeological treasures and ancient monuments with a leading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

Furnished in a contemporary style with an art deco influence, the modern fittings and cutting edge technology on board are combined with sophisticated public areas with luxurious teak flooring for an elegant finish. Views throughout are magnificent and an intimate, elegant bar and lounge area provide the perfect setting to relax and reflect on the day's activities.

10 days

Departures available February–April & August–December 2023

From \$12,880 per person twin share



SPLENDOURS OF MOROCCO

Uncover vibrant, colourful and exotic Morocco, jewel of North Africa and one of the world's most stylish and fascinating destinations. Journey from the coastal port city of Casablanca inland to medieval Fes, the Atlas foothills and the Saharan desert reaches, to sensuous, legendary Marrakech, where snake charmers, musicians, storytellers and acrobats bring Djemaa el-Fna Square to life. Explore labyrinthine souks full of treasures, savour mouth-watering cuisine, marvel at ancient medinas, bustling kasbahs and towering minarets, and relax in elegant hotels.

12 days

Departures available January–December 2023

From \$11,965 per person twin share



CLASSIC JAPAN

A country of astonishing contrasts, Japan is a wonderful and varied destination. On this journey, you will explore the iconic cities of Tokyo, Hakone, Osaka and Kyoto. Marvel at some of the country's most impressive gardens and glimpse magnificent mountain landscapes as you travel by bullet train. Be introduced to ancient Samurai traditions and visit sacred Shinto shrines. Take the opportunity to appreciate Japan's myriad arts and crafts, and meet a local artist and collector, and savour its extraordinary cuisine in local eateries, fine restaurants and street food stalls. Be amazed at a sumo wrestling bout, find respite in a classic onsen and rest up in a traditional ryokan — just a handful of Japan's cultural highlights.

9 days

Departures available March–May & September–November 2023

From \$16,895 per person twin share

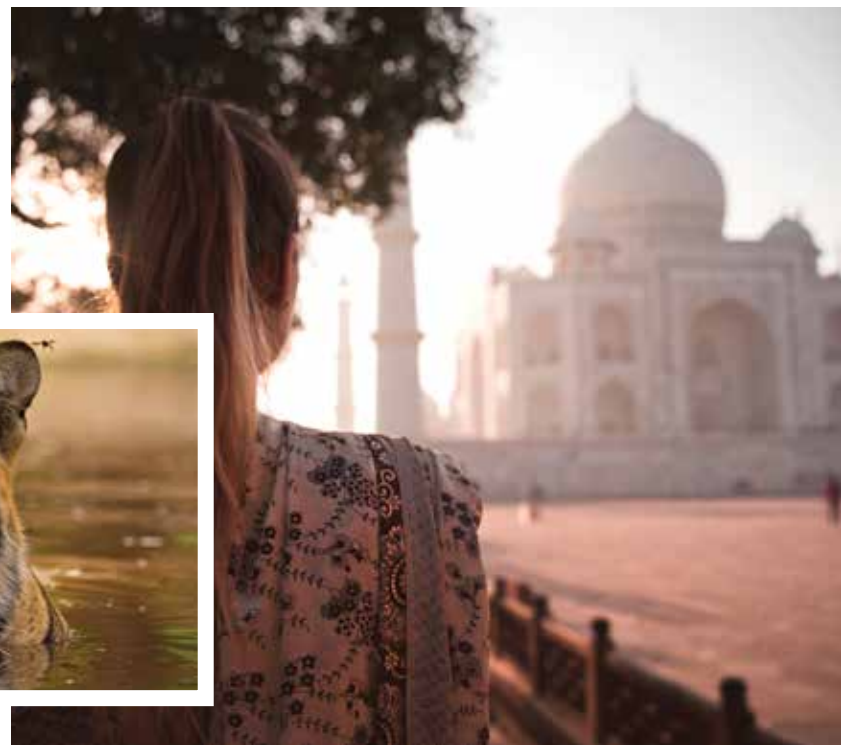
TAJ MAHAL AND THE TREASURES OF INDIA

India is a lively land of vivid colours and endless activity. It is also a profoundly spiritual place with a proud heritage and extraordinarily diverse scenery. From the intense bustle of Mumbai and Delhi, you'll journey through the Rajasthani countryside and gain a fascinating glimpse into rural life. Stay at the country's most iconic hotels, some converted from royal palaces, travel deep into the wilderness in search of the elusive Bengal tiger, and take an intimate look at life and death in the sacred city of Varanasi, where devout pilgrims flock to the holy Ganges to bathe in the sacred waters and cremate their loved ones.

10 days

Departures available February–April & October–December 2023

From \$15,320 per person twin share



SPAIN & PORTUGAL: A JOURNEY ACROSS IBERIA

With Spain's devotion to food, wine and the good life, and the rich traditions of the Portuguese, an Iberian odyssey will feel like a warm and delicious embrace. Explore the best of the entire Iberian Peninsula on one spectacular journey, discovering how Moors, Jews and Europeans influenced the culture, cuisine and arts of Spain and Portugal. From walled medieval cities to lavish private palaces, magnificent Moorish architecture to local markets and proveedores — this magical journey is unforgettable.

14 days

Departures available April–July & September–October 2023

From \$16,640 per person twin share





ITALIAN TREASURES: ROME, FLORENCE & VENICE

With cultural riches aplenty, a deep respect for food and dining traditions, myriad architectural marvels, an extraordinary wealth of priceless art and artefacts and that inimitable dolce vita — few would disagree that Italy is one of the most rewarding destinations in the world. On this quintessential journey to the country's most iconic cities, view legendary masterpieces up close, experience unrivalled insider access at key historic sites, discover local tastes and treats and meet with artisans devoted to timeless traditions.

8 days

Departures available April–October 2023

From \$13,320 per person twin share

PATAGONIA: THE LAST WILDERNESS

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 to the far south of the continent for a Patagonian immersion. 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. Your journey finishes in the sophisticated Chilean capital, one of the world's most remarkably located cities.

10 days

Departures available March & October–December 2023

From \$16,180 per person twin share



WONDERS OF THE GALÁPAGOS & MACHU PICCHU

Perfectly paired, neighbouring countries Ecuador and Peru present a fascinating combination of experiences: from the ancient landscapes and rare wildlife of the Galápagos Islands, which you'll explore by boutique luxury expedition ship, to Peru's extraordinary Inca ruins and colonial cathedrals. Snorkel in the Pacific waters, hike in search of giant tortoises and get up close to endemic birdlife. While in the Sacred Valley of the Incas, meet Quechua farmers whose practices have changed little in centuries. This is a journey sure to inspire.

12 days

Departures available February–November 2023

From \$22,100 per person twin share

For more information on any of these Small Group Journeys including prices for solo travellers, please call A&K on 1300 551 541, visit www.abercrombiekent.com.au or contact your local travel agent.



A&K PHILANTHROPY

IMPACTING LIVES & LIVELIHOODS

Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy (AKP) is dedicated to positively impacting lives and livelihoods in the communities where A&K guests travel. From Africa to Asia, Latin America to the Antarctic, AKP works with partner communities on education, health care, conservation and enterprise development projects with a commitment to ensuring guests learn about these philanthropic investments as an integral part of their travel experience. Here is news of the latest work being undertaken.

Restoring dignity to the disabled in Uganda

AKP in partnership with the Walkabout Foundation and the Bwindi Community Hospital, has enabled the delivery of 100 wheelchairs to disabled people living in the Bwindi area of southwestern Uganda. Arriving direct from Kenya, the wheelchairs were assembled prior to being fitted for their recipients and

delivered to each individual. 85 chairs were delivered, the balance being available for community members who may need one in the future. Kerry Golds, A&K Chief Tour Operating Officer — UK, Europe, USA, Australia was in Uganda at the time of the delivery and observed this life-changing mission of restoring dignity, freedom and independence to those deeply in need.



Building bridges in Egypt

Thanks to a generous donor, AKP's partner in Egypt, Funtasia, has received funding to institute a children's mural project. Funtasia Cultural Centre in Luxor offers an after school programme for local children, between the ages of four and 16. The centre focuses on strengthening confidence, communication, and collaboration among young people using tools such as the arts, gardening, poetry, nutrition, health, and coding. Its aim is to build bridges between rural and urban children, instigating extra-curricular activities that provide understanding through experiential learning and preparing the young for a life of meaningful connections — with people and their surroundings, for the job market of tomorrow — and to promote the use of creativity as a means of solving challenges faced by them and their community.

A new learning centre for Nakatindi

Nakatindi Village in Zambia has benefitted from many AKP projects since the community support began in 2010. Its most recent investment

has been in the planning stages since 2018 when the need for a dedicated extra-curricular learning space was identified by the Nakatindi school's administration and wider community. What has evolved is a library, computer lab and communal workspace which have been combined to create a unique, eye-catching and creative learning environment.

Schools across Zambia are usually built to strict specifications and, as a result, lack individuality. It is unusual to find creative design and engaging learning spaces. This project is big and bold and creates a truly unique space for the pupils at Nakatindi School to engage positively with reading, computer science and extra-curricular activities. Alongside this new space, AKP has been able to support a full renovation of all the school's classrooms, toilet blocks and assembly hall in addition to installing a security fence surrounding the school property.



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

INDIA

COLOURS & SCENTS OF INDIA

Northern India is a land of epics, holy rivers, ancient cities, pilgrimage... and perfume. In markets right across the country, stalls overflow with fresh produce and flowers in every shade and shape. Sought after across the centuries, from the erstwhile Mughal rulers to the village communities of today, flowers and floral blooms are a vital part of the Indian passion for fragrance. Used in celebrations, on auspicious occasions, for medicinal purposes and of course religious offerings, each blossom is highly valued and admired. Golden marigolds in temple worship, creamy jasmine in perfumed garlands, vivid red hibiscus in ayurvedic medicine, lilies, sunflowers and of course roses which are extracted for the essential oils used in traditional perfumery. Flower sellers are up before the crowds, so for those happy to wake early, an unforgettable sensory overload awaits in any of Northern India's local flower markets.





OUR SUGGESTED JOURNEY

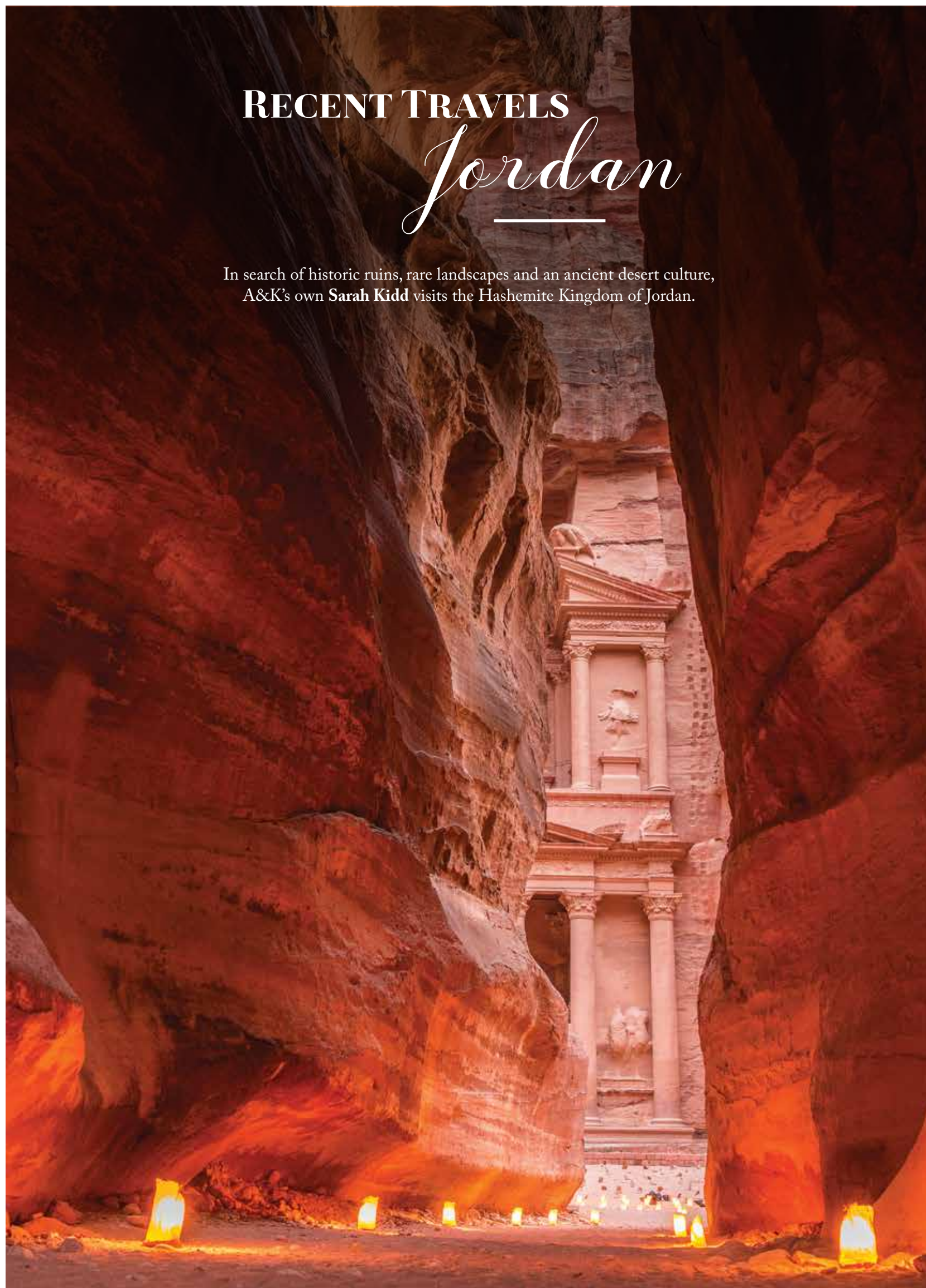
A&K's 16-day 'Icons & Hidden Treasures of Northern India' is priced from \$13,430 per person twin share.

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

RECENT TRAVELS

Jordan

In search of historic ruins, rare landscapes and an ancient desert culture, A&K's own **Sarah Kidd** visits the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.





2



3



4

It's no accident that Jordan is a favourite with film makers the world over. From *'Lawrence of Arabia'* to *'Indiana Jones'* and *'Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker'* to *'The Martian'*, and many more, this ancient land is dominated by otherworldly landscapes which have been the scene of many a daring desert exploit, both real and imagined, and perfectly mimic the surface of the moon and other distant planets.

And it was through these remarkable landscapes that I ventured with a small group of like-minded travellers in the off-season.

While the temperatures soared, I was beyond excited to see Petra after many years of recommending it to my guests. And it didn't disappoint. The 'rose red city' is nothing short of remarkable. But I also discovered many other extraordinary attractions across this ancient land.

Small, biodiverse and blessed with a Mediterranean climate, Jordan is easily visited in a short amount of time. It also combines delightfully well with some of its Middle Eastern neighbours for those seeking an extended experience in the region. Famous for its biblical

landmarks and ancient monuments, it is steeped in history and boasts captivating cultural customs.

The adventure began in the capital Amman, a charming city of contrasts — old and new, East and West. An absolute highlight was the inspiring Iraq Al-Amir, a women's co-op which provides training projects and job prospects in textiles and handicrafts for more than 150 local women. A Jordanian breakfast feast was dished up before visiting the pottery workshop to view the kilns and the finished works, learn about the natural dyes and product development before

- 1: The Treasury, Petra
- 2: Temple of Hercules at Amman Citadel
- 3: Iraq Al-Amir women's co-op, Amman
- 4: Traditional Jordanian cuisine



7



5



6

- 5: Temple of Artemis, Jerash
- 6: Saraya Rum Private Luxury Camp, Wadi Rum
- 7: The Monastery, Petra
- 8: Kempinski Hotel Ishtar, Dead Sea
- 9: Mosaic artisans at work, Nebo's Pearl
- 10: Sundowners at Wadi Rum

admiring the showroom full of colourful textiles, natural papers, rugs and other handicrafts.

Next stop, Jerash — one of the best-preserved Roman cities in the world and just over an hour from Amman. The city was strategically located where the caravans converged bringing silk from China via Mesopotamia, spices from India via Jerusalem and gold, frankincense and myrrh from Petra and the south. While much of the city remains unexcavated, what has been unearthed is extraordinary: cobblestone streets, colonnaded avenues, ceremonial gates, temples and theatres. Hadrian's Arch is one of the more striking monuments. The Temple

of Artemis is another, flanked by Corinthian columns, while the vast oval colonnade of the Forum is an undisputed highlight linking the cardo maximus with the Temple of Zeus.

Travelling en route to the famed 'rose-red city half as old as time', mosaics were the order of the day. Firstly, those in the Moses memorial at Mount Nebo where beautifully preserved Byzantine mosaics have recently been revealed. Nearby, at local workshop Nebo's Pearl we viewed the intricacies of crafting mosaics from cutting the stone to polishing the finished product. In Madaba, known as the city of mosaics, we visited the Greek Orthodox church

of Saint George where a print of a 6th century Byzantine mosaic map represents the oldest map of Palestine in existence and provides enlightening historical insight.

And then the site I had been waiting so long to see — the celebrated rock hewn city of Petra. Formerly the prosperous capital of the Nabateans, and today a World Heritage site, Petra grew rich through trade. The city thrived until a large earthquake in 363 AD destroyed most of it. By the middle of the 7th century, Petra appears to have been largely deserted and it was then lost to all except local Bedouin. In 1812 a Swiss explorer named Johannes Burckhardt rediscovered the



8



9

ancient site and its place on future itineraries was assured.

Approaching in time-honoured fashion on foot through the siq, a narrow slit in the stone, the magnificent Treasury looms large. Though I have seen its picture a thousand times, the sheer mastery of its carved façade is overwhelming.

From Petra, the journey took us south into the desert reaches of Wadi Rum. And it's easy to understand why it's been so popular with film makers as you gaze across the red sandy expanse strewn with monolithic rocks, sand dunes and rocky escarpments sculpted by the wind over millennia into fantastic shapes. Early risers are rewarded

with outstanding photos and an unforgettable sunrise. Sunset too is a special time in the desert when sundowners provide a memorable salute to this unique landscape.

A fitting finale to our Jordanian adventure was a quick diversion to the Dead Sea. Sitting 400 metres below sea level, it is the saltiest expanse of water in the world said to contain highly beneficial mineral qualities. An obligatory lather in Dead Sea mud massaged in by obliging spa attendants is the perfect precursor to a dip in the salty waters. As I bob about, the mud gently washes off leaving my skin feeling smooth and rejuvenated. And just like that, my journey to Jordan comes to an end.



10

OUR SUGGESTED *Journey*

'Jordan Uncovered' Tailor-Made Journey
10 days

Priced from \$10,600 per person twin share

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



INSIDER'S GUIDE TO GREECE



1

ATHENS

The birthplace of democracy, Greece's capital has long been underestimated. In recent decades, Athens may have been considered Athens shabby and unsophisticated, but today it is one of Europe's most dynamic destinations. Dominated by the mighty Acropolis, the city radiates out from the hilltop citadel in a jumbled sprawl but dive deeper and you'll discover a new creative vibe, wide pedestrian streets, a raft of designer boutiques, rooftop terraces galore and a food scene that embraces modern gastronomy, traditional street food and everything in between.

DO

Foodie tour of Athens

Step out on a culinary adventure of Athens and treat your tastebuds to a symphony of flavours: breakfast treats kolouri straight from the oven and dips drizzled in sweet, sticky honey; the classic Greek coffee ritual with a side of lokoumi and calamari straight off the grill in the market. Savour an appetising mezze platter, the best gyros in

town, vegetarian favourites and a traditional Greek yogurt dessert from an old-fashioned dairy bar.

Acropolis & Acropolis Museum

Arguably the world's most famous archaeological site, the Acropolis stands proud at the centre of the Greek capital. Most famous of the ruins atop the 2,500-year-old citadel is the Parthenon whose columns of Pentelic marble gleam in the sunlight. And while most of the original artefacts have been removed, many are housed in the state-of-the-art Acropolis Museum just down the hill.

Benaki Museum

Step inside this superb museum for a comprehensive snapshot of Greek culture and history with exhibits on view from Greece's pre-historic period through to the modern era. Admire statues, pottery, tools and ornaments, Byzantine art and icons, furniture and agricultural implements as well as costumes, textiles and embroidery impeccably displayed in a grand neoclassical building.

2

Cradle of the ancient world and one of the eternal holiday favourites, Greece is a land of sunny skies, azure waters, a flavoursome cuisine and antiquities galore. White sugar-cubed houses in pretty seaside villages glisten against a palette of blue; vineyards and archaeological relics dot pine and olive-clad hills and a rosy-hued sunset ends each day. And with thousands of islands strung like jewels across the sea and a culture-rich mainland, choosing where to go and what to see is a challenge. Below are some A&K suggestions to inspire you.

- 1: The Erechtheion, Acropolis of Athens
2: Traditional mezze platter



3

3: The ancient theatre of Epidauros, Peloponnese

4: Alexandra Bissa

5: AthensWas Hotel, Athens

6: Nafplio, Peloponnese

7: Malia Palace ruins, Crete

8: Spinalonga Island, Crete

9: LALAOUNIS Byzantine Lion Head bangles

5

DINE

Balthazar

For a special night out in the Greek capital, soak up the party atmosphere in Balthazar's beautiful garden setting in the grounds of a 19th century neoclassical mansion. Sip on creative cocktails, choose from the extensive wine list and dine on inventive and tasty dishes from an extensive menu that combines fresh, modern flavours with local ingredients and a stand-alone sushi selection.

Café Avissinia

Dine on traditional Greek dishes in this authentic Athenian bistro situated in the Monastiraki flea market. Choose an outdoor table for the street party atmosphere or upstairs for a view of the Acropolis. Popular favourites include the pork-stuffed cabbage, octopus in wine, Smyrneic meatballs and a traditional Thracian style yogurt dessert. Enjoy live music on weekends.

STAY

Hotel Grande Bretagne

With a perfect location on Syntagma Square, this 18th century

landmark is old world glamour at its finest. Lavishly appointed interiors boast restored antiques, polished marble, rich fabrics and tapestries and rooms on certain floors enjoy butler service. There's a destination spa and outdoor pool plus a host of drinking and dining options including the Roof Garden for prime Parthenon views.

AthensWas

In a magical corner of the city at the base of Acropolis Hill, this design hotel exudes contemporary calm. Paying homage to the classical Athenian era, Greek marble floors and walnut-lined walls blend elegantly with designer furnishings and fabrics. This boutique delight has just 21 rooms and suites here in an unmatched location and rooftop dining at Sense comes with jaw-dropping Acropolis views.

SHOP

Alexandra Bissa

A childhood spent in northern Greece watching her grandmother at the loom has inspired in Alexandra Bissa a deep love for

woven textiles. Based in Athens she produces hand-woven objects that are inspired by ancient and traditional Greek textiles and design including beautiful woollen shawls and wraps, tapestries, cushions and handbags. Her unique collection can be viewed by appointment only in her Psyrri studio.

Ilias Lalaounis

Inspired goldsmith Ilias Lalaounis established his business in the 1960s reviving the ancient techniques of hammering metal, granulation, chain weaving, repoussé and filigree. Sharing these age-old skills with his team of craftsmen, LALAOUNIS has produced sought-after pieces ever since in 18 and 22 karat gold. Visit the flagship store in Athens to make a purchase and admire the important collection at the Ilias Lalaounis Jewellery Museum.

NAFPLIO

One of the most beautiful towns in the eastern Peloponnese, Nafplio was Greece's first capital. Just two hours from Athens, the town's history dates to the prehistoric era

but especially flourished during Byzantine times. Conquerors from Venice, Turkey and the Germanic tribes have all left their mark with ancient walls, medieval castles, monuments and statues, fountains and neoclassical buildings all testament to their influences.

DO

Epidauros

Just half an hour away to the east, is the ancient Sanctuary of Epidauros, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which became famous during ancient times for its unique healing practices. Wander through this beautiful site, considered the birthplace of modern medicine, and take in the well-preserved Greek theatre, considered to be the most beautiful in the world.

Engineering masterpiece

Travelling by road from Athens to Nafplio takes you via the extraordinary Corinth Canal which links the Mediterranean and the Aegean. Rulers from antiquity dreamed of cutting through the isthmus to create a shortcut for their fleets but it was not achieved



6



7



8

until 1893. The canal's steep limestone walls reach 90 metres above the water line and ships must be narrower than 18 metres to pass.

STAY

3Sixty Hotel & Suites

Housed in a renovated 19th century mansion, this smart boutique hotel is perfectly located in the very heart of the historical centre and only a few metres away from the picturesque port. Behind the majestic façade of this grand building, crystal chandeliers twinkle, palatial mirrors gleam and a stately staircase completes the look. Rooms are comfortably appointed and the handsome bar is a perfect spot for a drink after a day of exploration.

SHOP

Worry beads

Komboloi, or worry beads, are a symbol of modern Greece's carefree mentality but their origins date back to time immemorial, when monks made strands of beads by tying knots on a string at regular intervals to mark their prayers. Today they are more often used as a means of relaxation. Nafplio has

the only museum dedicated to worry beads and, while appreciating the collection, you can also buy beads of amber and other natural materials.

Antiminsio

For a unique and unusual memento of Greece, step inside this store which specialises in ecclesiastical art. From Byzantine religious jewellery to incense and prayer ropes, handmade icons of saints and priestly items, there's sure to be something to remember your visit by.

CRETE

With a rich and storied history, Crete is the largest island in Greece, home of the fabled minotaur and birthplace of Zeus. Its location at Europe's southernmost tip has made it a strategic crossroads with an identity shaped by many civilisations from the Minoan and Mycenaean to Ottoman, Arab and Venetian. The remains of these important cultures are admired today right around the island along with glorious sandy beaches, high mountains and forests, and the charming old towns of Chania and Rethymno are full of traditional

tavernas, alleyways and an enchanting laid back vibe.

DO

Spinalonga Island

Just off Crete's northeast coast sits this unusual island Of vital strategic importance during the Middle Ages, and the last Cretan stronghold to be captured by the Ottomans, it became a leper colony in the first half of the 20th century. Abandoned in the 1950s, a visit here is an eerie glimpse back in time as you wander down the old roads, past Venetian walls and through the well-preserved 16th century castle.

Malia Palace

The Minoans were Europe's first major civilisation, flourishing during the Bronze Age in Crete. Known for their palace cities, Malia is the third largest after Knossos and Phaistos, and less visited. Located to the east of Heraklion, it has a wonderful setting at the edge of a fertile valley in close proximity to the sea. First built around 1900 BC, it was destroyed 250 years later before being immediately rebuilt. The ruins today date from this period.



9



10



11



12

DINE

Peskesi Restaurant, Heraklion

Said to be the longest living and healthiest people in the world, Cretans put it down to their simple Mediterranean diet. So, at farm-to-fork Peskesi the focus is on sustainable, seasonal local produce, much of it organic, supplied directly to the restaurant from its 60-acre farm. Housed in a restored sea captain's mansion, stone walls and arches provide the backdrop to some of Crete's best food.

The Lotus Eaters, Elounda

Sourcing meat from the village butcher, fruit and vegetables from the local market and fish directly off the boat, this restaurant always focuses on quality produce. Right on the seafront, an elevated terrace overlooking the bay of Elounda affords views to die for.

STAY

Blue Palace Elounda

A vision of pink-sandstone, this luxury resort tucked into a hillside in the northeast of Crete unfurls to a private pebble beach.

Bungalows, suites and villas are set amidst fragrant gardens and gastronomic experiences showcase vibrant, seasonal dishes. By day, go boating, visit ancient ruins and villages, relax by the pool or at the beach, explore the organic garden and by night dine on spit-roasted lamb on the beach or take in a movie at the open-air cinema. Paradise awaits.

Daio's Cove Luxury Resort & Villas

Gracefully tumbling in terrace-like formation down a gentle slope in northeastern Crete, this resort has a marvellous location overlooking a private sandy beach. Rooms, suites and villas all have sweeping views, some with private plunge pools and terraces. Dining options here are plentiful with six bars and restaurants to choose from. And for the active guest, there are water-based activities galore plus tennis and a smart wellbeing hub with gym, indoor pool, sauna and cutting-edge wellness rituals and treatments.

SHOP

Pottery & Ceramic Art

Since Minoan times, Crete's Rethymnon region has been an important centre of pottery and ceramic art. And the village of Margarites is one of the most famous in the country with some 17 workshops and a host of artisans producing beautiful pieces from the local river clay, some functional, some purely decorative, in designs that range from modern to ancient Minoan.

Bio Aroma

4,500 years ago, the ancient Minoans became the world's first producers of natural beauty products and today the organic cosmetics and fragrances produced by Cretan pioneers Bio Aroma are inspired by these age-old practices. The company's raw materials come from a 100-acre farm where aromatic plants, herbs and bees are organically grown and processed into the ingredients used in their skin-care products. Venture into the cutting-edge concept store in Agios Nikalaos to try and buy.

SANTORINI

Instantly recognisable, this Cycladic island is one of the world's most admired. A devastating volcanic eruption in the 17th century BC shaped its rugged landscape where vertiginous cliffs dominate the flooded caldera and layers of ash conceal ancient wonders. Dazzling white-washed villages perch precariously on the cliffs with blue-domed churches echoing the azure waters below, vineyards in the interior yield crisp dry varietals and those sunsets, simply swoon-worthy.

DO

Akrotiri

Preserved under millennia of volcanic ash, this is one of the most important archaeological sites in Greece. What was a beautiful Minoan town and trading centre was completely buried by the 17th century BC eruption and lay undiscovered until 1967. Likened to a Greek Pompeii, yet with no human remains, it was a prosperous urban settlement on the copper route with wide paved streets, a



13



14

drainage system and multi-storey houses where elegant frescoes were prolific.

Wines of Santorini

Viticulture has been practiced on Santorini for at least 3,500 years but the volcanic eruption wiped out nearly all traces of it. The unique terrain of pumice, ash and lava combined with wind, high temperatures and low rainfall has produced perfect growing conditions for the island's most famous grape, Assyrtiko. These white wines are crisp and dry with traces of minerals and can be enjoyed at one of the island's 20 wineries and in the local bars.

DINE

The Athenian House

Originally a family home, this restaurant perched on the cliffs in Imerovigli village boasts a spacious terrace with some of the finest views, especially at sunset. Expect reimaged traditional Greek dishes that fuse wild greens, native herbs, nuts and fruit with local seafood and sustainably sourced

cuts of meat. A plant-based menu is available and the wine list includes a large collection of rare Santorini wines.

Naos

Housed in an elegant neoclassical villa and former sea captain's home in Oia, Naos is a dedication to fine dining in the best Greek tradition. The menu is based on typical Greek dishes using local ingredients with a modern twist. Freshly caught fish and shellfish, as well as beef and lamb, are combined with herbs and seasonal greens to ensure exceptional meals, every time. Breathtaking views and impeccable service are a given.

STAY

Canaves Oia Suites

Glistening white inside and out, this grown-up hotel carved into the cliffs oozes monastic minimalism yet the welcome is warm. Jaw-dropping views across the caldera, and the Aegean, are the best in town and there are 30 suites and one villa to choose from, all with plunge pools of

varying sizes. Dining is poolside or at on-site Petra restaurant where candlelit tables by night are a dreamy backdrop for flavoursome Mediterranean tastes.

Andronis Arcadia

Elegant and contemporary, this resort hotel is rustic yet refined. Away from the hustle and bustle of Oia, the town is just an uphill walk away, and while there are no caldera views to wake to, sun-bleached landscapes, the glittering Aegean and dazzling sunsets more than compensate. All 44 rooms have plunge pools and are decorated in natural hues with sisal rugs, carefully positioned handicrafts and sisal rugs. Sheer simplicity and sophistication.

- 10: Potter at work, Margarites, Crete
- 11: Grilled calamari, The Lotus Eaters, Elounda
- 12: Bio Aroma Crete
- 13: Famous blue domes of Santorini
- 14: Canaves Oia Suites, Santorini

OUR SUGGESTED *Journey*

'Ancient Wonders: Turkey & Greece' Tailor-Made Journey
16 days

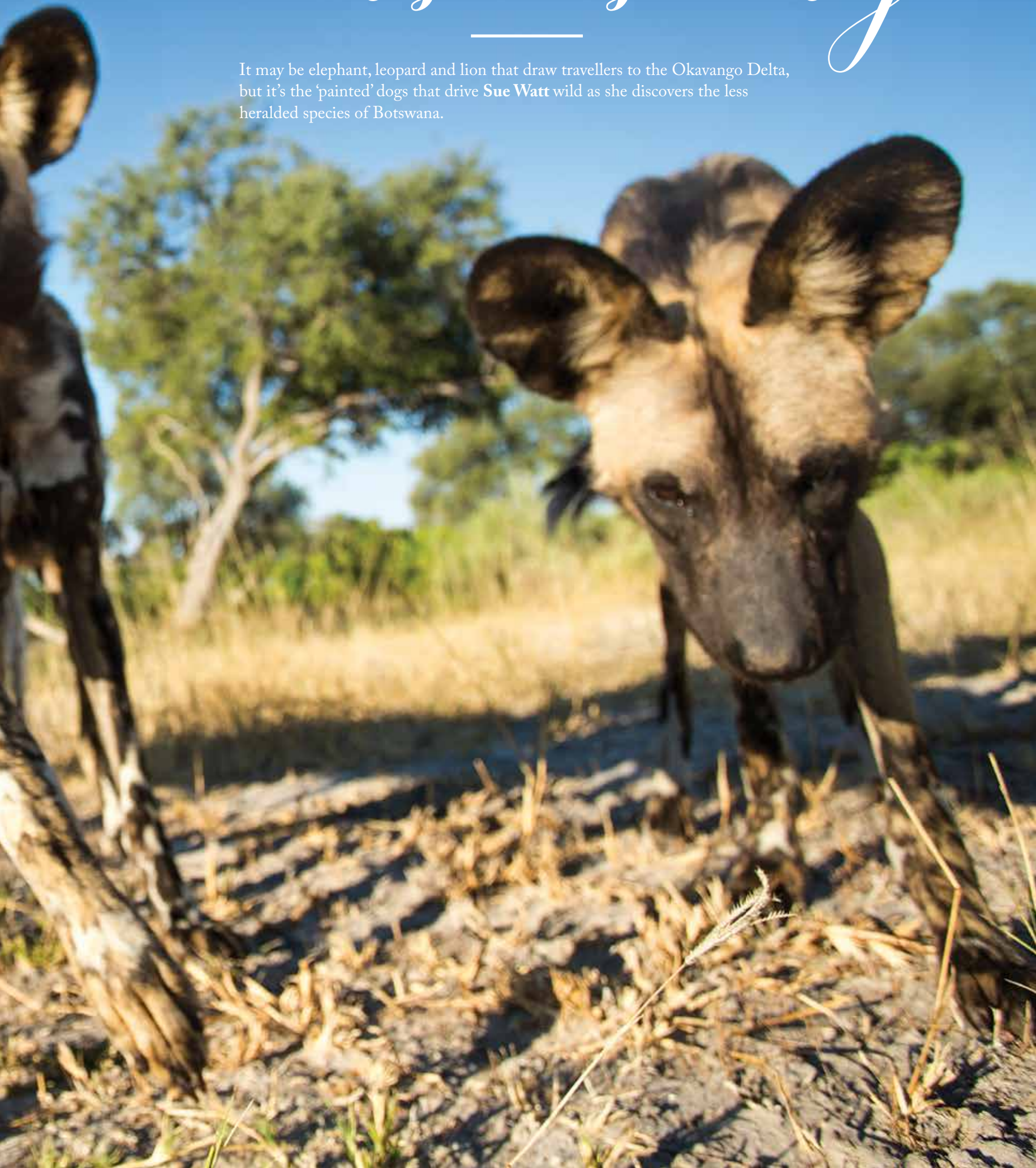
For more information call A&K on 1300 551 541 or your local travel agent

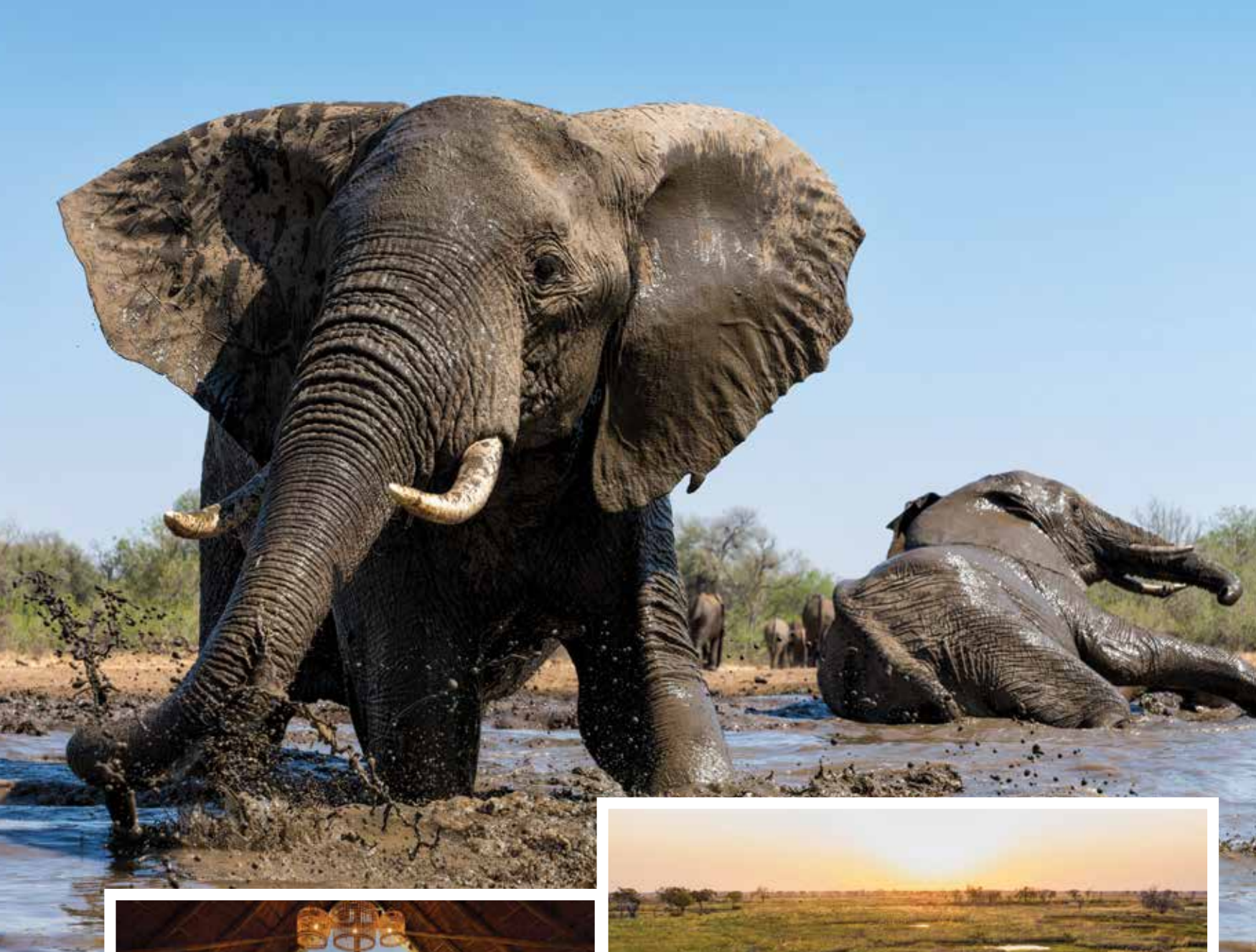


EVERY DOG

has its day

It may be elephant, leopard and lion that draw travellers to the Okavango Delta, but it's the 'painted' dogs that drive **Sue Watt** wild as she discovers the less heralded species of Botswana.





1



2



3

BOTSWANA

Previous pages: Pack of African wild dog

1: Bathing elephant viewed from a hide

2: Sable Alley

3: Mokoros, Khwai Private Reserve

4: Lion cubs

5: A tower of giraffe

As dusk falls over the Delta, I'm transfixed by an enormous elephant heading straight towards me. He comes so close I can see the dense lashes shielding his reddish-brown eyes, the wiry hairs on his trunk and myriad scratches on his tusks. I swear I could reach out and touch him without taking a single step forward — yet he has no idea that I'm here.

Neither do the other 20 bull elephant slurping and splashing around the muddy waterhole. That's because I'm safely tucked

away in a hide, a semi-submerged container with windows just above ground-level, and I'm watching all this unseen. Mesmerised, we stay here for an hour.

It's one of many magical 'Big Five' encounters I get to experience in Botswana's famous Okavango Delta. Traditionally, the term referred to the five most dangerous animals to hunt — elephant, rhino, Cape buffalo, leopard and lion — but today, it denotes the most iconic wildlife species to tick off (by spotting not shooting) while on safari, the ones that pull

in the crowds. Here in the Delta, though, there are no crowds.

Our first stop is Sable Alley in Khwai Private Reserve, a 25-minute bush flight from Maun, the gateway town to the Okavango. With an emphasis on affordable luxury, it's part of Natural Selection's portfolio of small, owner-run camps, brimming with character.

The Delta's cold, clear nights are ideal for stargazing and a night at Natural Selection's Skybeds is the perfect way to do this.

“we see hardly any other vehicles
but plenty of lion



4



5

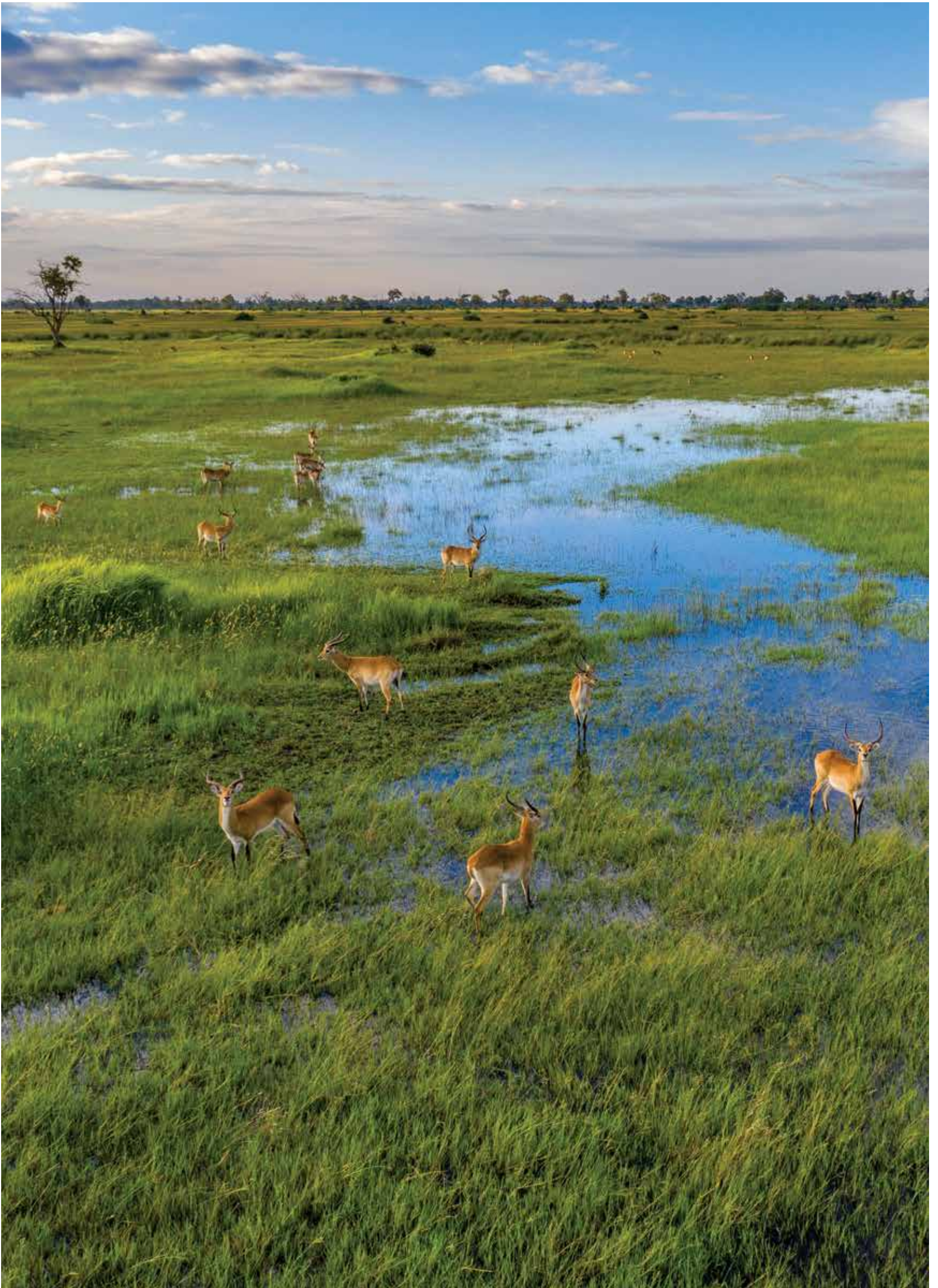
An intimate, rustic camp deep in the bush, it has just three ‘rooms’ — five-metre-high wooden towers like treehouses, open to the elements with the starlit sky for a ceiling.

Our two-hour drive from Sable Alley includes that mesmerising encounter at the elephant hide, and we arrive at Skybeds in time for sundowners. Sipping G&Ts in the bar treehouse, we realise that elephant have joined us, drinking their own sundowner at a waterhole just beyond camp. Dinner is cooked over the

campfire, then we head to bed on the top floor of our tower, snuggling up under thick duvets and that fabulous twinkling sky. But sleep doesn’t come easy — I’m too busy taking in the cosmos and counting shooting stars.

Our next Delta destination is Chief’s Island in Moremi Game Reserve, a half-hour flight away. Renowned for its high density of wildlife, the largest island in the Delta was once the royal hunting ground of local ruler Chief Moremi, who gave it to the reserve in the 1970s.

Our home on this beautiful and bountiful island is Sanctuary Chief’s Camp overlooking the Piajio floodplains in the private Mombo concession. Chief’s exudes relaxed luxury: it’s all cream and wood with sumptuous leather sofas and chairs in the lounge under a high thatch roof and sunbeds shaded by calico umbrellas surrounding the pool. Chief’s 12 spacious suites have private plunge pools and all the mod-cons you need, from Nespresso coffee machines and aircon to well-stocked mini-bars and wifi.





7



9

- 6: Red lechwe on the floodplains
- 7: Painted reed frog
- 8: Sanctuary Chief's Camp
- 9: Leopard on a termite mound



8

The island certainly lives up to its reputation as a predator paradise. On game drives, we see hardly any other vehicles but plenty of lion, either alone or in prides of up to ten, prowling the plains or sleeping in the afternoon sun. We come across a huge dark-maned male lying by the track. As he gets up, he roars then stalks towards a herd of impala. The tension in the air is palpable but the antelope defiantly stand their ground, rooted to the spot as their predator walks past.

But it's not all about the big beasts. On a mokoro, a traditional dug-

out canoe, we glide blissfully along a lily-strewn channel spotting tiny frogs clinging on to grasses and dragonflies fluttering all around us. It's a classic Okavango scene as the floodwaters arrive from Angola. We head back as the sun sets, reflected perfectly in the mirror-like waters.

And for all the thrill of the Big Five, the animal I really love to watch is the wild dog. The following morning, we leave at a chilly 6am, aiming to reach their den before they go hunting. We find these super-efficient killing

machines snuggled up together against the cold, with sated bellies and blood-stained faces. There are 10 in the pack, their huge saucer-shaped ears popping up now and then amid their palette of unique brown, white, gold and black patterned hides — no

wonder these canines are known as 'painted' dogs.

These fascinating, family-focused beasts may not be in the exclusive clique of the Big Five, but they've long intrigued me and my time in their company was truly special. 🐾

OUR SUGGESTED *Journey*

'African Waterways' Tailor-Made Journey
8 days

Priced from \$14,465 per person twin share

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





ANOTHER SIDE OF *Spain*

In search of Iberian idiosyncrasies scattered along the road less trodden,
Penelope Rance takes a tour of Andalusia in the company of a regional expert.



Previous pages: Puente Nuevo Bridge over the Tajo Gorge, Ronda
 1: Medina Azahara, Córdoba
 2: Sherry tasting
 3: Palace of Alcazar, Seville
 4: Zuheros, Córdoba region
 5: Harvesting olives for oil

SPAIN

Hidden between the Costas and Córdoba, there is so much more to southern Spain than a city break or fly-and-flop beach holiday. A journey around Andalusia unlocks a treasure trove of delights overlooked on a standard Spanish sojourn. I am lucky enough to be escorted by A&K expert Simon Butler-Madden, who opens the doors to Seville, Córdoba, and Granada — and beyond, to the monuments of the Muslim occupation and an unspoiled countryside of pretty villages, rolling fields, and farms where fighting bulls are bred and olive oil pressed, spread out beneath the mighty peaks of the Sierra Nevada.

Córdoba & Castles

My journey starts in Córdoba, once an important Roman city, set on the River Guadalquivir. At its heart

is the Mezquita, a cathedral built within a mosque. “Miraculously, unlike most mosques in Andalusia, it was neither destroyed nor converted into a church, but rather became incorporated into the Christian monument,” says Simon. “In the 16th century, they built this late Gothic, early Baroque Christian cathedral in the middle of the mosque’s forest of arches.”

For an unparalleled view of the Mezquita, we walk over another historic monument, the Roman pedestrian bridge across the river, then enter the maze of whitewashed streets and private patios with their famous flowers that make up the Jewish Quarter.

After exploring Córdoba, we drive out of the city to the ruins of the Palace of Medina Azahara

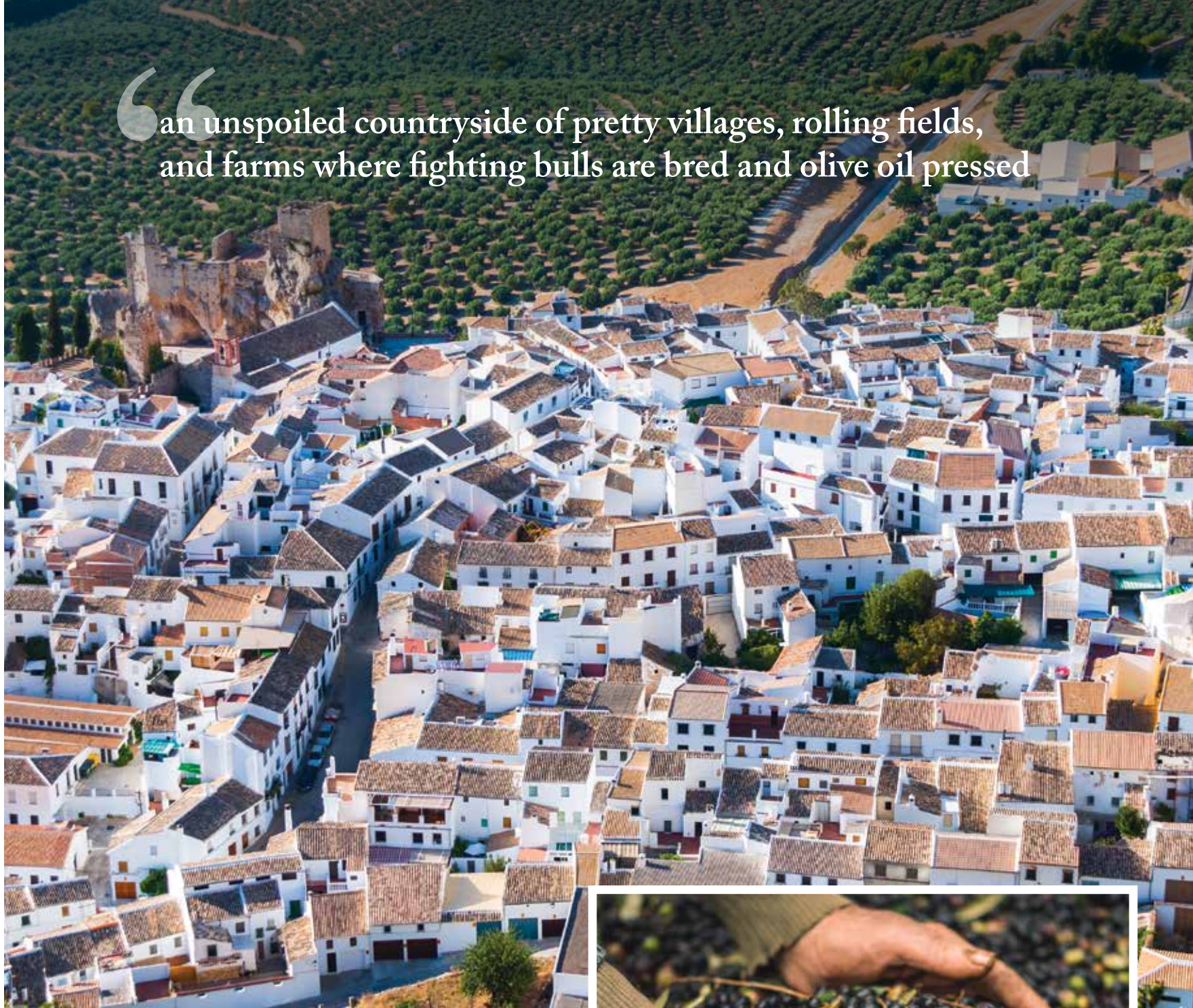
which, until its destruction in the 11th century, was alleged to be the most magnificent building in Moorish Spain. A 24-kilometre detour takes us to Almodovar del Río where, Simon promises, the beautifully preserved castle is one of the most spectacular in the country. And he’s right.

The Road Through the Hills

Rather than following the herd on the charge to Granada, we take a day to drive through the Subbética Cordobesa, a landscape of rolling hills covered in olive trees. The road leads south, through the town of Montilla, famed for its sherry-style wines, which A&K can arrange for guests to sample in a traditional winery.

Of late, Simon has favoured a pit-stop at Zuheros, a typical village

“an unspoiled countryside of pretty villages, rolling fields, and farms where fighting bulls are bred and olive oil pressed



4

in the mountains, surmounted by a castle. “It’s a marvellous place to walk to. Next to Zuheros runs the railway line once used to carry olive oil, which has been turned into a walking and cycling track.” We hire bikes in Zuheros and wheel 20 kilometres to Cabra, where our driver picks us up.

Cabra’s medieval centre, churches, and palaces merit an exploratory stroll before we follow the pilgrims’ route to the Hermitage of the Virgen de la Sierra. From here the road leads to Priego de Córdoba, where A&K organises a private visit to an olive oil mill, and a walk through orchards harbouring 1,000-year-old trees.

The Glories of Granada

In Granada, Simon sidesteps the cathedral in favour of the exquisite

Chapel of the Kings, created as the tomb of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in tribute to their reconquest of Moorish-occupied Spain.

But this city is famous above all else for the Alhambra, the most intact Moorish palace in the world. “It is genuine Arabic architecture and the tile-work is superb,” enthuses Simon. “Built in the 14th and 15th centuries, its highlight is the Court of the Lions, with a fountain supported on six lions, surrounded by columns, patios, and reflecting pools.” Above the Alhambra is the Generalife, originally a hunting lodge and now the site of an early 20th century reconstruction of medieval Moorish gardens.

Across the valley sits Albaicín, an Arab town preserved as a UNESCO Heritage Site. “This is a



5

perfect Moorish town unchanged since 1492, its tiny streets and alleys running up the hill,” reveals Simon. “The streets smell like Marrakech, with shops selling leather goods from Morocco, and shisha cafés.” From the streets, we take in sweeping views over the valley to the Alhambra, backed by the snow-capped Sierra Nevada.

To the south is the Alpujarras, where we spend a day exploring



7



8

- 6: Flamenco dancer, Seville
- 7: Plaza de España, Seville
- 8: Flamingo, Doñana National Park
- 9: Alhambra Palace, Granada
- 10: Olive trees, Subbética Córdoba
- 11: A pair of perfectly presented Andalusian horse

mountains, valleys, and villages — including Lanjarón, famed for its mineral springs — which in the 16th century saw the last resistance of the Moorish inhabitants.

Mountain Villages

The road to Seville takes us through a succession of villages, among them Orgiva, where pottery workshops still produce Alhambra-style tiles. We head along the dramatic Poqueira canyon, first to Pampaneira, capital of the Sierra Nevada National Park, then up to Trevélez, the highest town in Spain at nearly 1,400 metres, lauded for hams cured in the pure mountain air. At every turn spectacular views, bubbling streams, or remote farmsteads delight. “The English writer Gerald Brenan lived here in the 1930s and he was a great

lover of Spain,” says Simon, recommending the author’s book *South From Granada* as holiday reading. “You can still see the unspoiled countryside fabled by Brenan in his writing today.”

A second day en route to Seville is spent in some of Andalusia’s enchanting white villages. We stop in Ronda, atop a cliff, and traverse the dramatic gorge of El Tajo. One side of the town is little changed since the time of the reconquest, while on the other stands the oldest bullring in Spain, dating from the 18th century.

Continuing through the ancient landscape of the Serranía de Cádiz mountains, we come to Ubrique, nestling among forests of cork oak and indigenous Spanish fir.

For centuries renowned for its fine leather goods, the town still supplies fashion’s most famous names.

Seductive Seville

“The Moors arrived in 712, and by 720, they had conquered southern Spain. It took about seven years, and it took the Christians seven centuries to get it all back”. Simon’s history lesson underlines how large Arab heritage looms in Seville. We begin at the Giralda, originally a minaret, and now the bell tower of the cathedral. Commissioned in 1171, it is the twin of the minaret of the Koutoubia in Marrakech.

Another product of Seville’s dual heritage is the Alcázar, the oldest functioning royal palace in Europe, built for the kings of Castile after the reconquest. “But its origins

“Alhambra, the most intact Moorish palace in the world



9



10

go back to Moorish times, in combination with more recent Arab architecture called Mudejar, created by Muslim craftsmen living in a then-Christian part of Spain,” says Simon.

We wander through the Santa Cruz district, its squares and alleyways fragrant with orange blossom and jasmine, before stopping at the Maria Luisa Park, created at the end of the 19th century and containing the Plaza de España, a massive neo-Moorish structure with fountains and soaring spires, used as a location for the 1962 film *Lawrence of Arabia*.

Often overlooked is the University, originally the Royal Tobacco Factory, where, points out my guide, Bizet’s Carmen worked;

and the Palacio de las Dueñas, the Seville residence of the Dukes of Alba, private entrance to which can be negotiated on request by A&K.

Later we drive to Jerez de la Frontera, where, avoiding the tourist traps, we sample sherry at the family-run Bodegas Lustau, which dates back to 1896. Jerez is also famous for the Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art, run by the Domecq clan, where the impressive equestrian ballet takes place two or three times a week. This combination of classical dressage, Doma Vaquera (country-style riding) and other traditional equestrian skills is a spectacle not to be missed.

We end with a visit to the Doñana National Park, one of the most



11

impressive wetland wildlife reserves in Europe. Here A&K can line up a tour with a professional naturalist, exploring areas closed to the public. Simon suggests one last look at the green hills of Andalusia from the Sierra Norte, and I cannot resist. This is a land less travelled, and is all the better for it. 🐾

OUR SUGGESTED *Journey*

‘Journey Around Spain’ Tailor-Made Journey
14 days

Priced from \$17,230 per person twin share

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



PUMA *Pursuits*

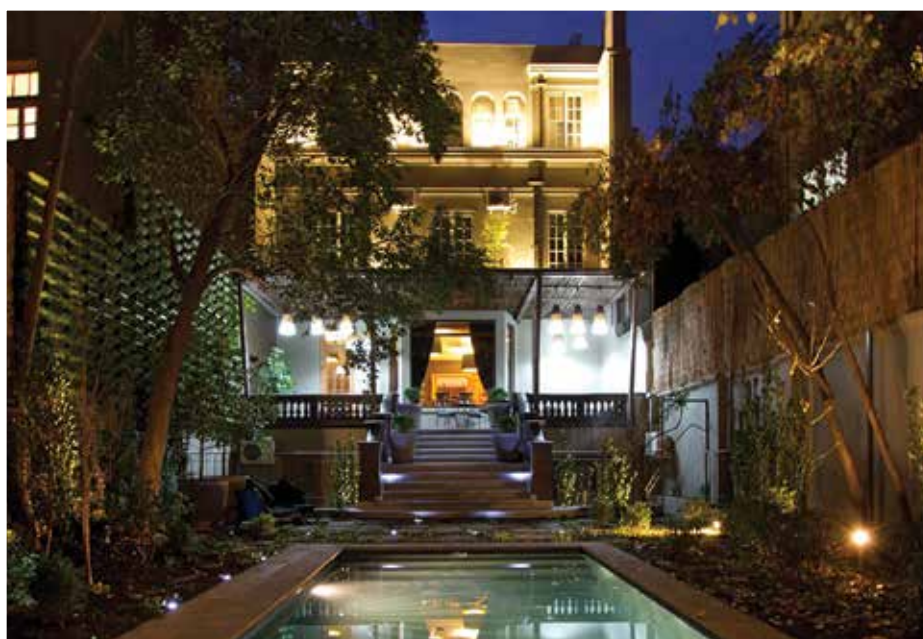
Leaving behind the buzzing streets of Santiago, **Jan Masters** ventures into the wilds of Patagonia in search of elusive big cats, and finds a salve for the soul amid empty landscapes and jagged mountains.



“no trip is complete without a wine tasting in the atmospheric cellars



3



1



2

CHILE

Previous pages: A puma stalks the mountainside

- 1: Casa Bueras Hotel, Santiago
- 2: Cerro Santa Lucia Park, Santiago
- 3: Santa Rita Winery
- 4: Riding with a gaucho
- 5: Explora Patagonia

When I try to pinpoint Patagonia on a giant globe, I'm reminded just how far south it is, because I have to lie on the floor to locate it. It really is a case of next stop Antarctica. An untamed wilderness, geographically isolated by the Andes, ice fields and oceans, it lies at the southern end of Chile, extending into Argentina to the east. For me, it has always conjured a sense of romantic drama. Of electric blue glaciers and gauchos galloping across windswept grasslands. Of condors wheeling over jagged peaks, and empty roads that pursue endless horizons. So, when it comes to taking a holiday that offers a truly meaningful break from urban stress, it is to Patagonia I decide to head — or more specifically, the Torres del Paine National Park, which has been a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve since 1978.

Chile has recently created five new national parks, preserving vast tracts of Patagonia and representing the culmination of 25 years of work by the late US philanthropist Doug Tompkins, founder of The North Face and Esprit brands, and his wife, Kristine McDivitt Tompkins, CEO of Tompkins Conservation. Her recent handover of over 400,000 hectares is considered to be the largest donation of private land to a government. With the Chilean president pledging another three and a half million hectares, the country is cementing its place as one of the global leaders in conservation. And as the country marches into its third century since independence, it's attracting tourist attention like never before.

Any trip to Chilean Patagonia is likely to be bookended with

a stopover in the increasingly cosmopolitan capital of Santiago, so I spend a couple of days exploring. Each barrio (district) has its own character and there are museums, markets, buzzing bars, restaurants and grand buildings aplenty, all lying in a valley with the Andes as a towering backdrop.

Casa Bueras Hotel (formerly Hotel Lastarria) is my base, a boutique hotel in the bohemian neighbourhood of Lastarria with easy access to the city's attractions. Built in 1927, its air of classical elegance is offset with contemporary interiors. And with only 14 rooms, this refurbished mansion still feels homely. The Deli Lounge serves breakfast, tasty plates and snacks, and delicious wines, and overlooks a quaint courtyard with a small



4

pool. A shout out here to the staff, who go the extra mile to make sure you're well looked after.

One of my favourite excursions is a tour of street art with a Chilean artist. Forget random graffiti, the San Miguel barrio is home to the Museo a Cielo Abierto (the Open Air Museum) where artists are selected to create murals that not only enhance the neighbourhood's buildings but help with the ongoing rejuvenation of the area. Another district well worth checking out is Barrio Yungay, which is awash with historic and eclectically painted houses and shops.

For a day out of the city, the impressive Santa Rita Winery, only a 45-minute drive away, has plenty to offer beyond its award-winning wines. The old estate house is now

the grand Casa Real Hotel and you can take a carriage ride around its manicured gardens. There's also an Andean Museum and the Doña Paula Restaurant on site, and no trip is complete without a wine tasting in the atmospheric cellars.

After my short stay, the call of the wild can no longer be silenced, so I board my plane south to Punta Arenas, a three-and-a-half-hour flight that skims the snaking Andes. There follows another four and a half hours by vehicle to my ultimate destination in the heart of the Torres del Paine, Explora Patagonia.

Here, it's all about luxury served up in the heart of the wilderness, and the lodge offers everything from great food and wines to an indoor pool and open-air Jacuzzis. But it's the setting that's a revelation.



5

Lying on Lake Pehoé, picture windows frame the Salto Chico waterfall and the Paine Massif's soaring torres — three granite towers that give the park its name. Sustainably managed, this is a hotel that minimises your eco footprint while maximising the 'ahhh' factor after a long day's exploring.

Let the adventures commence. I'm here in winter, which runs from June to early September. Summer is predictably more popular but all seasons have their charm — and changeable weather. There's a saying in Patagonia: "If you don't like the weather, just wait ten minutes." I wrap up well for my first morning trek around Nordenskjöld Lake to see the Cuernos del Paine, jagged columns of rock resembling horns. The water is so glassy, it reflects

“all around are guanaco, an animal so synonymous with Patagonia, it's become the poster-child of the region





7

9

8

6: Guanaco against the Torres del Paine
7: Pisco Sour, the national drink of Chile
8: Suite Exploradores, Explora Patagonia
9: Torres del Paine National Park

the surrounding spectacular peaks perfectly. All around are guanaco, an animal so synonymous with Patagonia, it's become the poster-child of the region. Related to the camel, it has a long fluffy neck and lashes straight out of a mascara ad.

The sheer number of guanaco tells us one thing. There are no puma in the vicinity. Good news for the guanaco, less so for me, because part of my mission is to spot these big cats that venture further down the mountains in winter. I am told by the guides that we could be lucky and see one anywhere on our travels, and that in said moment, we should remain calm, keep a respectful distance and listen to our guides for safe instruction. Fingers crossed, then.

Explora offers more than 40 daily excursion options that meet differing fitness and experience

levels, with some following parts of the W circuit, a renowned trail that requires at least five days of trekking if you were to go the whole 80 kilometres. Horse riding with the gauchos is also a must, no matter your level of experience. Once kitted out with a must-wear helmet, you can take a gentle amble among skipping hare and strutting flamingo or gallop flat chat over the pampas.

A great hike is to Lago Grey. Crossing the hanging bridge over the Pingo River and traversing a lenga forest, we reach the shores of Lake Grey, where too-blue-to-be-true icebergs break off from the Grey Glacier in the distance. Another is around Lake Sarmiento, a picturesque panorama of tranquillity. But as inspiring as all this is, I still want to see a puma, and so far, nada.

The guides tell me a great chance to see one is on the Aonikenk trek in the eastern part of the park, so I optimistically trudge through early morning snow. Halfway through the hike, we stop to view a cave with 4,000-year-old paintings left by the indigenous Aonikenk people. Fascinating, but puma count: zero.

Back in the van, returning to Explora, I scour the mountains one last time. I want to see a puma so badly that I think I must be

imagining things when suddenly, I catch a glimpse of a sandy-coloured animal way up high. A flash and he's gone. We stop the van and stay put, to wait. And wait. Then he comes back into view, zig-zagging down the rock face. Muscular and powerful, he picks his way over rocks and pads across the road ahead, looking back at us with piercing eyes. I return to the hotel, suitably jubilant. Now if that doesn't call for a pisco sour in Explora's cool bar, I don't know what does. 🍷

OUR SUGGESTED *Journey*

'Wonders of Chile' Tailor-Made Journey

11 days

Priced from \$13,250 per person twin share

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

TOP 10

Spotlight on Asia



Exotic, rewarding and virtually on our doorstep, Asia has natural allure for the discerning traveller. Open for business and ready to welcome, there is a multitude of ways to experience all it has to offer. So, if you need any encouragement, we've handpicked ten of Asia's best for you to consider. From inspiring art and outdoor adventure to one-off culinary experiences and unique places to stay, choose your interest and leave the rest to A&K to customise your perfect Asian escape.

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



JAPAN: WINTER ADVENTURE

Winter in Japan is exhilarating. Think hot springs, knee-deep powder snow, cedar onsen, heart-starting whiskeys and refreshing ales. And that's before you've even admired Hokkaido's landscapes and dined on Japanese delicacies. In Niseko, Japan's top ski area, bed down at the ski-in ski-out Park Hyatt Niseko, Hanazono, an outstanding mountain retreat just a few hours from Sapporo and take to the slopes on skis or snowshoes, snowmobile or snowboard.



JAPAN: TEAMLAB PLANETS TOKYO

A barefoot stroll through water as you interact with digital artworks is just one of the immersive experiences served up by teamLab Planets at its Toyosu location. There are nine installations in total spread out across an expansive 10,000 square metre space including two gardens where you become one with the flowers.





VIETNAM: WINGS OVER HA LONG BAY

Savour more precious time on your Vietnamese adventure by taking the express seaplane route to Ha Long Bay which delivers you from Hanoi in just one hour. Get a beautiful aerial perspective as you soar over the dramatic seascape of limestone pillars, golden beaches and azure waters which define this World Heritage site.



VIETNAM: HIGHLAND TREKKING

The highlands of Vietnam are a dramatic blend of lush mountains, deep gorges, terraced rice fields and hilltribe villages, a perfect place to hike. Home to over 20 minority groups, this is one of the country's most culturally diverse and naturally stunning areas and as you wander through the picture-postcard landscapes you'll meet villagers of Tay, Hmong and Xa Pho hill tribes with time to admire their distinctive costumes and architecture.





CAMBODIA: KHMER COOKING

Less spicy than Thai food but still salty, sweet and sour, Cambodia's Khmer cuisine finds its influences in southeast Asian, Chinese, Indian and French cuisine. Meet a local chef in Siem Reap and discover how to create authentic local flavours using time-honoured methods and unique spice blends to prepare typical dishes such as seafood amok, kampot squid and prahok pork.



CAMBODIA: ECO-LODGE GLAMOUR

You'll feel like an old school jungle explorer when you bed down at the exquisite Bensley Collection — Shinta Mani Wild, an exclusive tented camp in southwestern Cambodia. Sustainability rates highly here with a focus on conservation and the local community. And your nature escape comes complete with personal butler service, unlimited spa treatments and immersive jungle activities, including anti-poaching patrols, fishing and forest foraging.



LAOS: 'LAND OF A MILLION ELEPHANTS'

Once known as the 'Land of a Million Elephants', Laos today is home to fewer than 1000 Asian elephants, many in captivity. However, in the country's remote northern regions, a haven has been established for rescued elephants who spend their days foraging in the forest, splashing in the river or digging, in their natural habitat. Enjoy the rewarding experience of walking alongside these gentle giants and observing them up close.



THAILAND: BANGKOK MINIMALIST CHIC

Located in the bustling Sathorn district, COMO Metropolitan Bangkok is a sleek, urban retreat that oozes minimalist style and luxe. Boasting some of the city's largest rooms with an East meets West vibe, there is Michelin-starred dining at illustrious nahm, a dreamy palm-fringed pool and spa perfection at COMO Shambhala Urban Escape.



INDONESIA: NATURAL WONDERS OF BORNEO

Follow in the footsteps of adventurers and conservationists on a two-week discovery of the wildlife-rich rainforests and intriguing cultures of Borneo. Sail up the Sarawak River, visit a traditional longhouse, encounter orangutans up close and marvel at the extraordinary conservation efforts guaranteeing their future. Take a peek into remote tribal life, admire architectural wonders and discover rare botanical species.

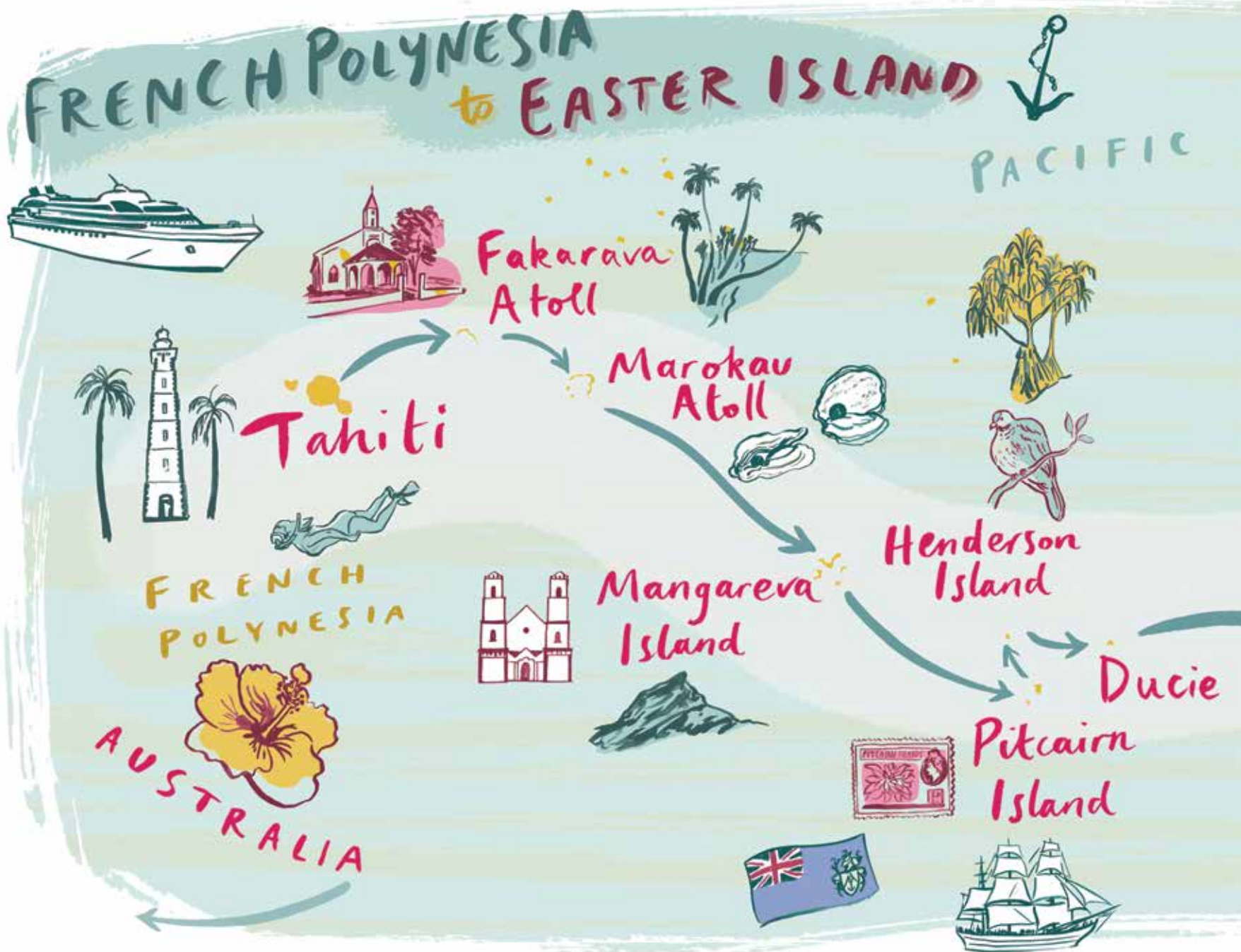


INDONESIA VOYAGE: KOMODO, PAPUA & GREAT BARRIER REEF

Discover the tribal traditions, natural wonders and exotic islands of Indonesia, Papua and Australia on board expeditionary cruise ship La Laperouse. Explore with A&K's remarkable Expedition Team, enjoy nature walks, local village visits, Zodiac excursions, and opportunities to snorkel and scuba. Experience stunning Komodo National Park and its rare dragon; West Papua's brilliant marine ecosystems, the storied spice islands of Maluku and Banda; and the astonishing Great Barrier Reef.



For more information about any of these holiday ideas or for your own Tailor-Made adventure, please call A&K on 1300 551 541 or your local travel agent.



a journey revealed

FRENCH POLYNESIA TO EASTER ISLAND

Embark on an adventurous expedition into the heart of French Polynesia discovering spectacular and rare marine environments, a unique history and UNESCO-designated gems. Led by A&K's celebrated Expedition Team, snorkel the sapphire waters of the Tuamotu Archipelago, step back in time to experience the legendary Pitcairn Islands and their shared legacy with the mutineers of HMS 'Bounty' and trace Polynesian culture to its roots on magnificent Easter Island.

Day 1: Papeete, Tahiti

Arrive in the lively French Polynesian capital, Papeete, where the day is spent touring. Visit the James Norman Hall Home, a memorial museum replica of the famed writer's home, as well as Point Venus, the landing spot of the European explorers who discovered these islands. Next, drive up to Tahara'a "One Tree Hill" for impressive views over Matavai Bay. This afternoon, board luxury expedition ship 'Le Boreal', home for the next two weeks. Accommodation: 'Le Boreal'

Days 2-4: Tuamotu Archipelago

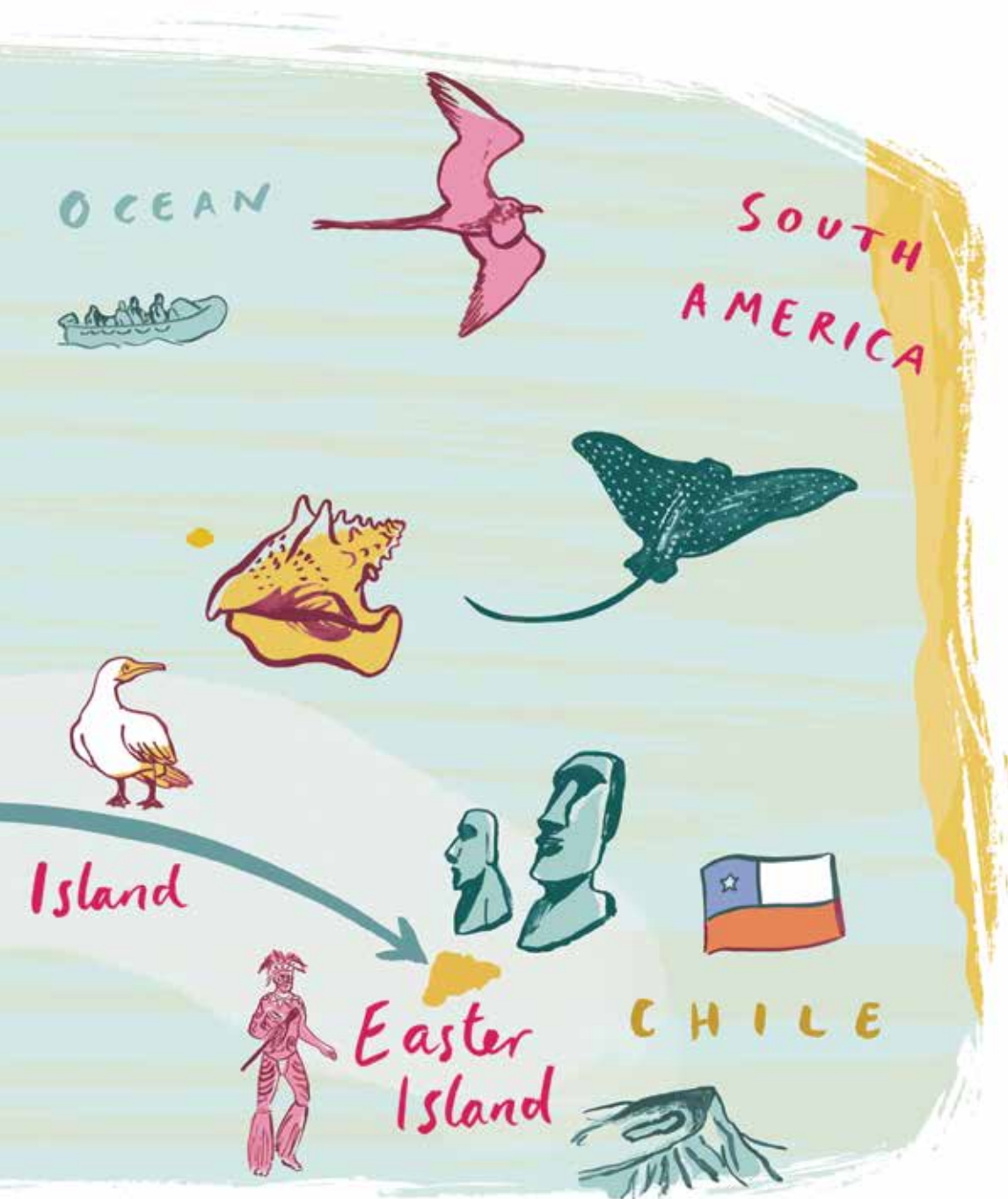
Stretching for almost 1,000 kms, the Tuamotu Archipelago is the oldest, and arguably dreamiest, of all the French Polynesian island chains. Places to explore include: Fakarava, the archipelago's second-largest atoll with a population of approximately 700 inhabitants and a pristine blue lagoon; Rotoava village where a lively welcome ceremony leads into a leisurely stroll around town; tiny Marokau which is home to just over 90 inhabitants and was once a primary

destination for pearl collecting, activities include bird walks, snorkelling, and swimming.

Accommodation: 'Le Boreal'

Days 5-6: Gambier Islands

North of the Tropic of Capricorn and some 1,650 kms southeast of Tahiti, is Mangareva Island, the largest of the Gambier Islands. Formerly a cradle of Catholicism, there are still a surprising number of surviving churches, convents, watchtowers and schools from the 1800s.



PLANNING YOUR TRIP

WHAT?

French Polynesia to Easter Island Luxury Expedition Cruise
14 days
From \$23,230 per person twin share

WHEN?

27 October – 9 November 2023

INCLUDES

13 nights luxury accommodation aboard the exclusively chartered 'Le Boreal'; exciting enrichment programme, lectures, presentations and extensive guided sightseeing conducted by A&K's Expedition Team; arrival Meet and Greet and transfers; personnel-to-guest ratio of 1 to 1.3; all meals of French-inspired cuisine, house drinks, afternoon tea and pastries; 24-hour room service; Zodiac and shore Excursions led by A&K Expert Naturalist Driver-Guides; available aquatic activities; Traveller's Valet laundry service; all gratuities, port charges and taxes; complimentary Wi-Fi on board; onboard Service from English-speaking staff, including an accredited physician; 24/7 A&K on-call support.

FOR MORE INFO

Please call A&K on 1300 551 541 or your local travel agent.

Be sure to get a glimpse of the magnificent mother-of-pearl shell altar in the Cathedral of St Michel of Rikitea. Opportunities also to visit a pearl shell-carving school, enjoy a hike to Mt. Duff, take a guided walk in search of birds and wildlife or snorkel in the beautiful blue waters. *Accommodation: 'Le Boreal'*

Days 7-9: Pitcairn Islands

After the infamous mutiny on the HMS 'Bounty' in the South Pacific Ocean on April 28, 1789, acting Lieutenant Fletcher Christian and his fellow mutineers sought refuge on Pitcairn Island. Today, this namesake island of the Pitcairn Island Group is home to roughly 56 inhabitants – all descendants of the mutineers and the Polynesians who accompanied them – making Pitcairn the least populous national jurisdiction in the world. Setting foot on the island and back in time, discover its fascinating history and explore the island on foot. Bring your passport for the rare opportunity to have it stamped "From the Middle of Nowhere" at the museum and post office, one of the most remote in the world.

Another island in the Pitcairn group is uninhabited Henderson, a UNESCO World Heritage Site,

measuring just over 22 square kms yet with remarkable diversity. Explore its glorious desolate beaches, join guided walks in search of rare flora and fauna and snorkel its pristine waters. Next stop is remote and rarely visited Ducie Island which is home to tens of thousands of seabirds, including masked boobies, various petrels and frigate birds. With your Expedition Team, visit birding colonies, walk on rarely touched sand and snorkel the outer reef.

Accommodation: 'Le Boreal'

Days 10-11: At Sea

Sailing east toward Easter Island, the next two days are at sea recharging after recent days of adventure. Engaging lectures are ongoing and shed compelling insights on the mythical speck of land you will soon have the privilege to explore.

Accommodation: 'Le Boreal'

Days 12-13: Easter Island

Known as Rapa Nui to native Polynesians, Easter Island is more than 3,700 kms off mainland Chile and is considered the most remote inhabited island on the planet. The greatest concentration of its culture

spans UNESCO-designated Rapa Nui National Park, a vast protected wildlife area and open-air museum showcasing the island's iconic moai statues. Explore it as part of a multi-day immersive experience that begins with a lively welcome ceremony. Visit the ruins of the sacred city of Orongo with its low, sod-covered buildings and explore an internal lagoon. Toast wondrous sunsets at the archaeological complex of Ahu Tahai and watch the sun rise at Ahu Tongariki, the island's largest ceremonial ground complete with fifteen moais, including one that weighs 86 tons. Later, travel to Rano Raraku Volcano, one of the most impressive sites on Easter Island. Continue to Anakena Beach to enjoy a BBQ lunch followed by time at leisure on this beautiful beach peppered with palm trees and moais. You might also enjoy meetings with local Rapa Nui who teach the traditional art of body painting and ancient stone carving. *Accommodation: 'Le Boreal'*

Day 14: Depart Easter Island

Bid farewell to your Expedition Team before disembarking the ship. Visit the Sebastian Englert Anthropological Museum, which houses 20,000 artifacts from the island, and head to the airport.

THE 2023

Hot List

With 60 years leading the way in luxury travel, our global travel experts here at A&K have identified what's hot for travel in the months ahead. As the world continues to open up, we know you are all seeking that perfect escape. Whether it's an exotic cultural immersion or a hands-on active adventure, the opportunity to learn a new skill or discover a new cuisine, or the chance for a long-awaited celebration or milestone trip. Whatever the motivation, here at A&K our journey designers are ready and waiting to help you achieve your travel goals. And we're helping you get started with our shortlist of the hottest places you'll want to be.





NAMIBIA

Long known for its rugged landscapes, desert-adapted wildlife, towering sand dunes and the legendary Skeleton Coast, Namibia is now home to A&K's latest African operation with a new office in Windhoek and two new luxury camps. This extraordinary destination is a genuine safari for the senses, where the red sands of the world's oldest desert meet the azure waters of the Atlantic Ocean and rare wildlife inhabits shimmering salt pans and lush oases. There is a vibrant ethnic mix too and a rich tapestry of tribal culture. In Namibia, you are guaranteed a very different African experience.

Namibia Desert Discovery by Air

12 days

From \$26,750 per person twin share



ISRAEL

As the birthplace of three of the world's greatest religions, Israel has been a pilgrimage site for millennia. From the ancient cities of Bethlehem and Jerusalem to the modern vibrancy of Tel Aviv, A&K's expert local guides will reveal the many sights which the Holy Land is known for: the hilltop fortress of Masada, the Wailing Wall and Via Dolorosa, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the ancient port city of Jaffa and the Roman capital of Caesarea. A cruise on the Sea of Galilee is a must as is a restorative soak in the Dead Sea.

Israel: Crossroads of History – A Luxury Small Group Journey

9 days

2023 departure dates: February-May and August-December

From \$10,840 per person twin share





COLOMBIA

With a wealth of largely undiscovered natural and cultural treasures ranging from breathtaking landscapes to a vibrant food and fashion scene, boutique hotels and grand haciendas, Colombia is buzzing and beguiling and has become the next place to visit in Latin America. From mountains and tropical grasslands to coffee plantations and sandy beaches, world-class museums and galleries and a host of creative and inspiring locals, an A&K journey in Colombia is not easily forgotten.

Colombia Revealed

14 days

From \$8,995 per person twin share



MEXICO

Full of colour, a rich art and craft tradition, fascinating sights and some of the most beautiful beaches in the world, Mexico is simply magical. Our unique collection of handcrafted journeys there showcase all of the highlights: ancient Mayan and Aztec archaeological ruins; charming colonial towns and villages; dense jungles and beautiful haciendas; colourful markets and vibrant festivals.

Mexico: Cities of the Sun

13 days

From \$14,885 per person twin share





PERU

Boasting over 100,000 archaeological sites including the legendary lost city of Machu Picchu, more than 3,000 years of history, diverse natural wonders and a proud cultural legacy, Peru is overflowing with treasures. From pristine rainforest to jagged Andean peaks, high altiplano to coastal desert, pre-Columbian artefacts to colourful handicrafts and a vibrant culinary tradition, there are few places in the world so alluring. And for the active adventurer, an extraordinary variety of offerings — cycling tours, llama trekking, boating, hiking and so much more.

Peru in Depth

14 days

From \$11,870 per person twin share



JAPAN

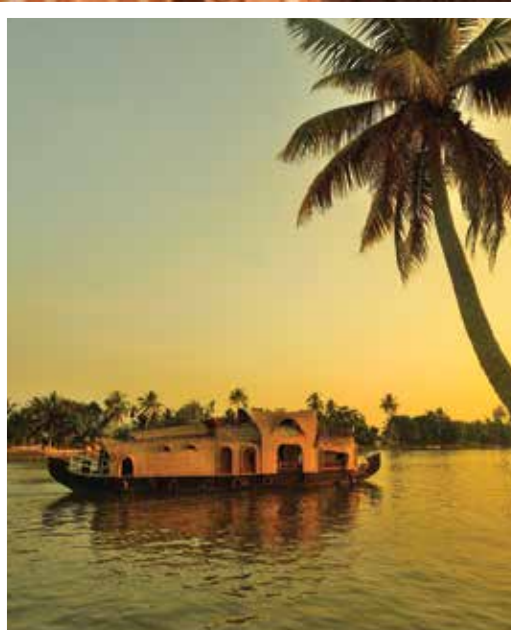
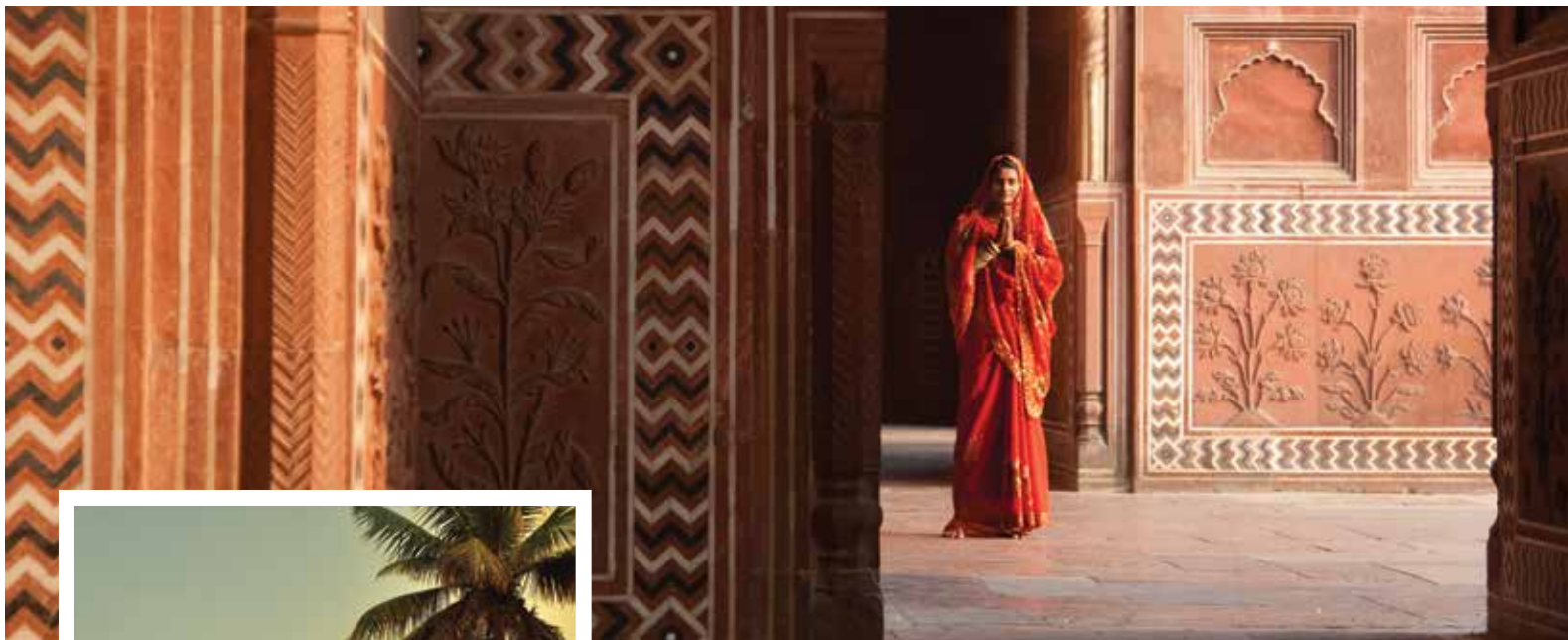
Recently reopened to world travellers, the Land of the Rising Sun awaits. A place of surprising contrasts, tranquil shrines are waiting to be explored alongside giant skyscrapers. Perfectly manicured gardens offer a serene escape from the hustle and bustle of city streets while breathtaking landscapes of mountains, parks and forests beckon. And exceptional museums, galleries and restaurants showcase why art and cuisine play such a vital part in the Japanese way of life.

Essential Japan

12 days

From \$14,505 per person twin share





INDIA

A perennial favourite, India is a dazzling kaleidoscope of colour, culture and contrasts. From the world-famous Taj Mahal and the glittering palaces of Rajasthan to the lesser explored corners of this intriguing country, there are festivals and ceremonies to enjoy, flavoursome cuisine to tantalise the taste buds, rare landscapes to admire and a wealth of history and heritage. Iconic hotels abound, knowledgeable guides bring history to life and friendly locals willingly share contemporary customs. Witness age-old religious rituals, explore vast ruined cities, wander through tea plantations and float along palm-lined waterways... all this awaits.

The Golden Triangle & Beyond

12 days

From \$7,725 per person twin share



FINLAND

A year-round destination, Finland is said to be the happiest country on Earth. And wherever one finds oneself in this breathtaking Nordic nation, nature is always close by. There are thousands of islands and a rich maritime history, emerald-green forests and lakes and indigenous culture in the northern reaches where snowbound winter adventures reveal the Northern Lights and summer forays dazzle under the Midnight Sun. There is a vibrant foraged food tradition and saunas galore plus art, architecture and innovation.

Northern Lights in Finnish Lapland

8 days

From \$15,225 per person twin share





MALTA

Claiming over 6,500 years of history and more historic sites per square kilometre than any other country, Malta may be petite but it packs a punch. Its temples, forts, palaces and churches tell a story of the many civilisations which have contested and ruled its sun-filled shores. Even a short visit to this Mediterranean jewel reveals unimaginable architectural riches, an eclectic food culture, age-old agricultural traditions, beguiling beaches and a surprising modern art scene.

Malta: A Journey through the Ages

5 days

From \$5,970 per person twin share



KANGAROO ISLAND

Lapped by the waters of the Southern Ocean, South Australia's Kangaroo Island is a naturalist's paradise where rare flora, bountiful fauna and a rich array of epicurean delights provide endless enjoyment. Breathtaking landscapes abound from the wild, pounding surf of the rugged south coast to calm north-facing waters, soft sandy beaches and open eucalypt forests plus low coastal scrubland and productive agricultural terrain. And with celebrated luxury retreat Southern Ocean Lodge reopening and a world-class golf course on the cards, there's ample reason to visit.

Boutique Barossa and Kangaroo Island

7 days

From \$7,130 per person twin share



For more information about these destinations and suggested journeys, please call A&K on 1300 551 541 or your local travel agent.

notes from the field

ITALY

On a recent European foray, A&K's own **Chloe Kurts** lives *la dolce vita* on an Italian journey from the eternal city of Rome to the sun-drenched Tuscan countryside and shares below her favourite experiences.



Chloe Kurts

Travel Specialist,
Africa, India, Europe, Antarctica, Arctic,
Australia & New Zealand
A&K Australia



FLORENTINE HISTORY AND TRADITION

After a six-year, multimillion dollar restoration, Florence's Palazzo Portinari Salviati has reopened in stunning style. This 15th century palazzo close to the Duomo was once the grand home of Beatrice Portinari (Dante's muse) and has now been converted into an elegant hotel of just 13 suites and apartments with breathtaking views

of the Duomo, dazzling original frescoes, painted ceilings, priceless antique furniture, polished marble floors, coffered ceilings and the finest interiors. Dining is equally impressive with Vito Mollica at the helm of newly opened Chic Nonna, a gourmet osteria inspired by the authentic flavours of Tuscany.

BIODYNAMIC VINEYARD INNOVATION

Podere Le Ripi near the Tuscan hill town of Montalcino is leading the way in biodynamic viticulture. Owner Francesco Illy, of the famous coffee empire, has planted vines there in far greater density than anywhere else which has forced the plants to put down deeper roots in order to survive and therefore yield far more fruit. Across 34 hectares, Sangiovese, Syrah, Trebbiano and Malvasia grapes are grown with minimal interference allowing nature to do its work. After touring the vineyards, we visited the cellar and finished with a delicious organic lunch and wine tasting. Bookings essential.



HANDMADE WITH HEART

Piedàterre in Venice is the home of the traditional friulane slipper. Originally crafted by artisans in the Friuli region north of Venice, these chic non-slip shoes were adopted by Venetians in 1952 when a vendor began selling the slippers from his

cart on the Rialto bridge. A shop opened sometime later nearby and is today the place to seek the perfect pair, each one lovingly handstitched in velvet, silk or cashmere in an array of colours with contrasting trims and flamboyant details.



HEAVEN SCENT

Founded in the 13th century by Dominican monks, Florence's exquisite Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella is an old-school apothecary with some of the most beautifully scented and swoonworthy interiors you'll find — high frescoed ceilings, marble floors and statuary and ornately wallpapered walls — and it's packed with lotions, perfumes, soaps and other beauty products. I couldn't resist the new release Rosa Novella scent and body lotion.



ROMAN HOLIDAY

Seeing the sights of the Eternal City from the back of a Vintage Vespa is movie star cool and one of the best experiences I've had. Zipping through the traffic, down cobblestone streets, across piazze, along the River Tiber and into neighbourhoods that are hard to find on foot. Flying past the Colosseum, down the Via Condotti, into the Piazza del Popolo and refuelling on caffè or gelato, this is the best way to embrace Rome in quintessential Roman style.



OUR SUGGESTED *Journey*

'Rome to Venice: A Connoisseur's Italy' Tailor-Made Journey
12 days

Priced from \$17,355 per person twin share

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

TAILOR-MADE JOURNEYS

Handcrafted Bespoke Adventures in Extraordinary Places.

Luxury tailor-made travel means seeing the world exactly how you want to see it, on an itinerary fashioned for you and your companions by the experts. These are custom-crafted journeys suited to your unique aspirations, your interests and your style of travel. From the ancient wonders of Jordan and Egypt to the wilds of Botswana, Kenya and Tanzania. The historic splendours of central Europe or India to the breathtaking sights of Peru and Patagonia. Experiences abound.

For over 60 years, Abercrombie & Kent has been a pioneer in the world of luxury travel, redefining the notion of what is possible on holiday and delivering travel experiences that change the way travellers see the world, and themselves. From the kinds of luxury accommodation you'll love to the landscapes we know you'll relish and the specific cultural immersions you'll find rewarding, every moment is expertly curated to ensure a once-in-a-lifetime inspiring adventure that you'll never forget.

Call Abercrombie & Kent on 1300 551 541 or talk to your travel agent.
www.abercrombiekent.com.au



Abercrombie & Kent