

SUNDOWNER

FOR THE INSPIRED TRAVELLER • WINTER 2022

— INSIDE —

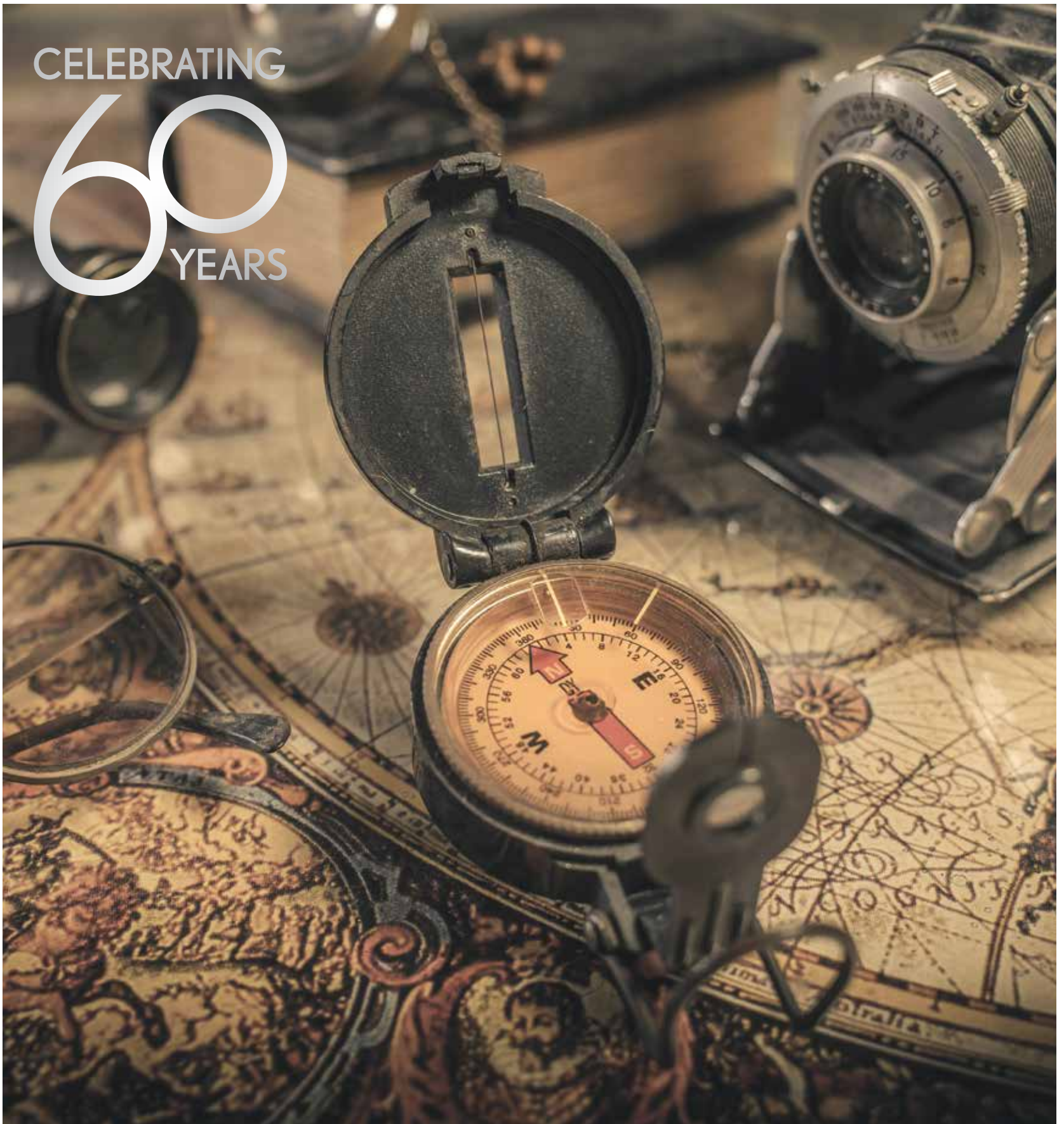
EGYPT

INDIA

TANZANIA

PERU

CELEBRATING
60
YEARS



Abercrombie & Kent

FOUNDER'S NOTE



WELCOME TO OUR WINTER 2022 ISSUE

2022 marks the 60th anniversary of Abercrombie & Kent and so it is with the greatest pride that I thank you, our dedicated travellers, and all our people right around the world who bring our vision of transformative travel to life.

And it all started with a simple ethos: adventure by day, luxury by night. When my family founded A&K in Kenya in 1962, 'luxury' was keeping food fresh on safari. Making someone feel at home in the middle of nowhere was as simple as a hot meal and a cold drink but refrigeration was needed so we introduced refrigerated safari trucks - the first in a six-decade-long line of innovations that has pushed A&K to the forefront of luxury travel.

Today, A&K is a very different animal, with operations across more than one hundred countries on all seven continents. Yet we are one family, with one common goal to deliver the finest travel experiences on Earth. So, whether it is beside a palm-fringed lagoon in southern India, meeting artisans on the high altiplano in South America or on a rugged outback safari in Africa, A&K ensures any adventure is elevated into a true luxury experience.

This special issue celebrates our history, our heritage and what makes A&K tick. We share insider information on one of our favourite countries — Peru (page 22); showcase some of our most iconic destinations — Egypt (page 28) and Tanzania (page 40) as well as others which are lesser known — the Indian Himalaya (page 34) and South Korea (page 54). And there is news of future plans and pioneering innovation (page 4) which will ensure A&K continues as the world's greatest luxury travel company well into the future.

So enjoy the read and join me as I celebrate A&K's Diamond Jubilee.

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](#)

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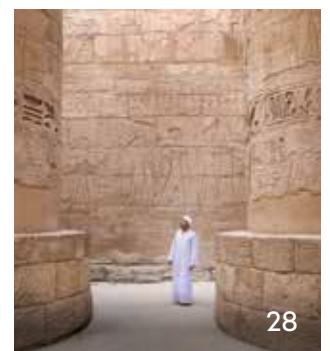
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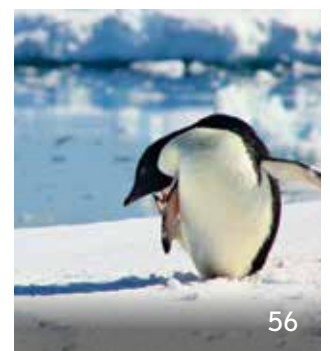
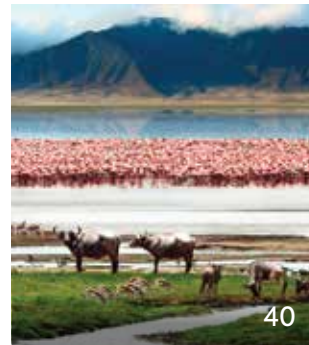
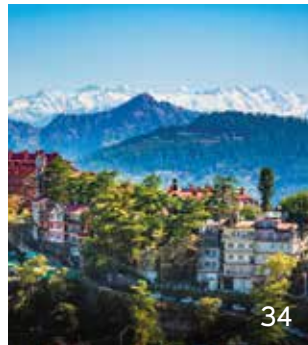
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Abercrombie & Kent
Level 3, 290 Coventry Street,
South Melbourne,
Victoria 3205

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

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

CONTRIBUTORS



GEORGE EPAMINONDAS

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George Epaminondas, a Sydney-based writer and editor with over two decades of experience in media and marketing, is drawn to destinations that combine grit, glamour and a heady dose of intrigue. Little wonder his favourite cities include Marrakech, Istanbul, Miami and Rio de Janeiro. George's work has appeared in publications including *InStyle US*, *Harper's Bazaar US*, *Time*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. He is currently the managing editor of *Travel + Luxury* magazine in *The Australian*.



TRICIA WELSH

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Tricia Welsh is an Australian freelance career journalist/photographer who has specialised in food and travel writing for more than 30 years. Early in 2020, just before the pandemic closed international travel down for the next two years, she spent a month travelling around India. On this her seventh visit to the subcontinent, she was able to tick off several bucket list destinations — the Le Corbusier-designed city of Chandigarh, the near-mythical hill station of Shimla and the magical foothills of the Himalayas.



OLIVIA PALAMOUNTAIN

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Freelance writer and editor Olivia Palamountain is an expert on the new and the next, covering travel and lifestyle for the likes of *The Sunday Times*, *Elle*, *Globetrender* and *City AM*. From the thrill of hitting 160 mph in an Aston Martin Vanquish to mingling with the A-list at the Los Cabos Film Festival, heli-mustering in the Outback and kneading noodles with Tokyo's soba master, if it's a hot story, she's there. Next adventure? Walking the West Highland Way in Scotland.



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

Illustration: Joy Gosney.

Check us OUT

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FACEBOOK



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Like our Facebook page for updates on all the latest news, special offers and travel inspiration.

INSTAGRAM



[aktravel_au](https://www.instagram.com/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](https://www.instagram.com/GoBeyondtheOrdinary).

YOUTUBE



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

Discover more about A&K journeys, destinations, our exclusive access and Philanthropy projects.

Pioneers of Luxury Safari Adventures

SOUTH AFRICA | BOTSWANA | NAMIBIA | ZIMBABWE | ZAMBIA
MOZAMBIQUE | KENYA | TANZANIA | RWANDA | UGANDA

Africa was where it all began for A&K, pioneering the world's very first luxury safari in 1962. Sixty years on, we are the world experts in tailor-made experiential travel – journeys that inspire real human connection and life-long stories. We operate dozens of offices, luxury camps, and conservation and community development projects throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, with experts on the ground to serve the world's most discerning, intrepid and enlightened travellers. From the Great Migrations of the Serengeti and Masai Mara, to the wildlife-rich waterways of Botswana's iconic Okavango Delta, experience the world's greatest theatre in unmatched style.

With privileged access, expert insight and a long-standing presence on the ground, A&K sets the benchmark for tailor-made itineraries across Africa. No matter your dream, A&K can curate the perfect luxurious safari adventure just for you.

Call Abercrombie & Kent on 1300 551 541 or talk to your travel agent.

www.abercrombiekent.com.au

A&K's
2022-23 Africa
portfolio is out now. Visit
abercrombiekent.com.au
to download and find
out more.

Abercrombie & Kent



SIX DECADES OF ADVENTURES ON EVERY CONTINENT

When Geoffrey Kent and his parents founded Abercrombie & Kent 60 years ago on the plains of Africa, a new style of adventure travel was pioneered that brought ground-breaking luxury and uncompromising authenticity to far-flung places. From the company's first journeys in 1962, A&K has grown into the world's premier luxury travel company, with over 55 offices in more than 30 countries.

With it has come an unrivalled legacy of creating memorable, inspiring adventures on all seven continents, putting people in touch with people, cultures in touch with cultures, and transforming the experiences of travellers the world over.



CELEBRATING
60
YEARS

A&K'S 60 YEAR JOURNEY

Join us on a pictorial history charting our pioneering six-decade journey from safari outfitter to world's leading luxury travel provider.

1960s



1960s

- 1960: Geoffrey Kent is the first to ride solo from Kenya to Cape Town by motorbike
- 1962: Abercrombie & Kent is founded in Kenya by Geoffrey Kent and his family
- A&K introduces the first mobile tented safari
- 1967: Geoffrey Kent named CEO

1970s



1970s

- Partners with Jorie Ford Butler and expands into the US
- Opens an office in London
- Earns increasing recognition for its sophisticated adventures

1980s



1980s

- 1982: Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy (AKP) is founded
- 1982-85: Offices are opened in Egypt, Zimbabwe, South Africa and China
- 1985-86: India becomes A&K's second office in Asia, followed by Australia and New Zealand
- Pioneers 'Around the World' by supersonic Concorde
- Builds two luxury safari camps in Kenya

1990s



1990s

- Introduces Adventure Cruising in Antarctica, the Amazon and the Galápagos
- Multi-generational Family Holidays introduced around the world
- Jorie Butler Kent named Vice Chairman
- 1997: Opens on office in Myanmar
- Expands luxury camp portfolio into Botswana and Uganda for gorilla tracking

2000s



2000s

- Camp portfolio expands into Zambia
- Introduces Private Villas in Europe, with concierge service
- South America offices open in Peru, Chile, Ecuador, Brazil and Argentina
- Introduces Extreme Adventures
- AKP extends its support to over 40 projects worldwide
- 2007: Launches the first five-star Yangzi River cruiser
- 2009: Opens A&K flagship store in Harrods

2010s



2010s

- 2014: Launches Irrawaddy River cruiser in Myanmar
- 2015: A&K Private Jet lands in Sydney on its round the world journey and AKP bike programme is established
- Offices open in Sri Lanka and USA
- 2019: Manfredi Lefebvre and Geoffrey Kent form strategic partnership in A&K
- Cox & Kings joins the A&K stable

2020s



2020s

- 2020: Successfully repatriates guests from all over the world during COVID emergency
- 2021-22: Offices open in Saudi Arabia, Namibia, Canada and Colombia
- 2022: 60th anniversary. A&K operates in more than 100 countries on 7 continents with a network of over 55 offices in more than 30 countries around the world
- 46 projects in 24 countries supported by AKP

A&K NEWS



NEW A&K OFFICES ON 3 CONTINENTS

Continuing its global expansion, A&K is pleased to announce the opening of new offices in Namibia, Canada and Colombia, all countries offering a wealth of natural wonders and cultural attractions. Tailor-made adventures, small group journeys and specialised itineraries will continue to be crafted in each of these places with the same meticulous care that A&K takes in each and every one of its destinations and with the 24/7 support that comes with dedicated destination management companies.



NEW MD FOR A&K

A&K Australia welcomes the arrival of Debra Fox who has been appointed Managing Director for Tour Operations (outbound) based in A&K's Melbourne office. Highly respected, Ms Fox has more than 30 years of industry experience.

"It is a privilege to join the A&K family as we celebrate our 60th anniversary! As the world reconnects and we once again embrace the transformative nature of travel, together we will continue to expertly handcraft unique and inspiring experiences that take you beyond the ordinary. I look forward to seeing your travel dreams come to life as we move into an exciting new chapter together."



NEW AFRICA OPENINGS FOR SANCTUARY RETREATS

NAMIBIA

Sanctuary Retreats welcomes its first luxury camps in Namibia. The beautifully intimate Okahirongo River Camp set on a ridge above the Kunene River in the country's northwest comes with just five tents. The stillness of the desert here is captivating and sometimes the ripple of the rapids below is the only sound you'll hear. An inspiring conservation project in the area is working to reintroduce the desert adapted elephant whose numbers were decimated through poaching in the 60s and 70s.

Okahirongo Elephant Lodge sits perched on the banks of the ephemeral Hoarusib River in remote Kaokoland. Its dramatic earth-coloured architecture is styled after the traditional Himba homes of the region. Few people have set foot in this extraordinary place and when you do you'll encounter rare wildlife, track black rhino and meet the local Himba tribespeople.

KENYA

Joining these is Sanctuary Tambarare, which nestles peacefully amongst fever trees in the shadow of Mount Kenya. From your luxury tent, you'll gaze over the grassy plateau of the award-winning Ol Pejeta Conservancy — 90,000 acres of unspoilt African landscape, where Africa's iconic species roam, including the last two northern white rhino on earth. Sanctuary Tambarare is a peaceful haven that reflects its surroundings — with a generous helping of indulgence. After adventurous days tracking lions, riding horses, spotting rhino and other plains game you'll retreat to the comforts of a secluded camp where sundowners and five-star service awaits.



1: Okahirongo Elephant Lodge, Kaokoland, Namibia
2 & 3: Okahirongo River Camp, Kunene River, Namibia
4: Okahirongo Elephant Lodge, Kaokoland, Namibia
5 & 6: Sanctuary Tambarare, Ol Pejeta, Kenya



A&K PHILANTHROPY

LOOKING AFTER THE WELLBEING OF PARTNER COMMUNITIES

With global travel returning, Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy (AKP) stands poised to welcome guests back to meaningful projects, old and new. AKP remains committed to bettering the lives and livelihoods of the communities in which it operates, with a focus this year on the education, nutrition and health of people who live on the edge of wilderness.

School Infrastructure Improvements and Meal Programmes

In Africa, AKP generally invests in schools near Sanctuary Retreats' boutique camps and lodges, where there is the ability to make a difference in the surrounding communities and where guests have the opportunity to conveniently visit a project and interact. In the first quarter of 2022, AKP funded the

construction of two new kitchens — at Ntungamo Primary School in Uganda and Partakilat Primary School in Kenya, respectively — with a daily lunch programme launched in May. To date, more than 1.2 million lunches have been served by AKP to partner schools globally.

Because there is so much need in the communities that border all sectors of Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, AKP saw an opportunity to expand its school partnerships and lunch programmes. Local AKP Coordinator, Dennis Nyambworo, is currently conducting a survey of all schools in the immediate area and identifying which are most in need of help. AKP plans to realise one of its related 2022 goals, to expand its daily lunch programme to seven new schools in the Bwindi area before the end of the year.

Safe Drinking Water Worldwide

In 2021-22, AKP expanded clean water access to remote communities within Myanmar's Inle Lake. Access to clean water remains a major issue, as the lake water is no longer safe to drink due to fertilisers being used to grow crops on the floating islands. After this need was identified, AKP installed 12 new LifeStraw filters within schools and monasteries in the region, with plans to expand to additional locations during the year.

Early 2022 also saw the advent of a partnership between the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and AKP for the first time. A total of 10 LifeStraw filters were distributed to five separate UWA offices and training provided on how to use and maintain the filters to ensure their longevity.

Global Medical Assistance Programme

The AKP Global Medical Assistance Programme has been delivering medical supplies and equipment to resource-limited communities in cooperation with the U.S.-based non-profit Project C.U.R.E. AKP has delivered more than US\$3 million dollars in medical supplies and emergency relief to partner communities in Bhutan, Cambodia, Peru, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. At long last, a container of much-needed medical supplies has reached the Bwindi Community Hospital in Uganda and a new container of medical equipment will be sent to Zambia, benefitting the AKP-supported Nakatindi Health Clinic and Maternity Ward as well as Livingstone Hospital which serves the greater Livingstone community.



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



AROUND THE WORLD: LIMITED EDITION SMALL GROUP JOURNEYS

Immersive, intimate small group journeys to some of the world's most unique locations

Rediscover the world with our newly-released range of 2023–24 Limited Edition Small Group Journeys; expert-led, shared adventures to some of the world's most beautiful, remote and fascinating places. Originally designed for more intrepid, yet still fastidious Australian luxury travellers, they are fast-becoming favourites of inquisitive travellers from around the world. Each of these unique journeys has been creatively designed with educational elements and local encounters along the way that will broaden your mind and ensure many unforgettable experiences.

Group sizes on A&K's Limited Editions journeys are typically 8-12 guests.

SOLO TRAVELLER SPECIAL ON 2023–24 JOURNEYS

A&K Small Group Journeys are perfect for solo travellers. For a limited time, we will waive the single supplement for the first two solo travellers booked on select departures of our 2023–24 Limited Edition Small Group Journeys. Please talk to your travel agent or see our website for more information.



NORWAY & ICELAND: FROM FJORDS TO FIRE

Shaped by ancient glaciers and volcanic eruptions, the landscapes of these Nordic nations are simply breathtaking. Thundering waterfalls, bubbling geysers and deep, sparkling fjords are ripe for the myriad outdoor adventures that await on this unique journey. Alongside impressive natural wonders, discover rich cultural experiences — music, art, history and architecture — and a good dose of *hygge*. Travel by rail, road, bike and boat. Venture inside a volcano, soak in a mineral pool and savour the fresh flavours of Nordic cuisine.

13 Days

Departure dates: 19 May, 18 August & 8 September 2023

Per person twin share: From \$15,995

Single supplement: From \$4,675

GEORGIA & ARMENIA: JOURNEY TO THE CAUCASUS

Beautiful and beguiling, these countries traditionally positioned at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and the Middle East deliver endless surprises. Uncover medieval history in captivating churches, cathedrals and monastic complexes. Sip wine from earthenware pots in the world's oldest vineyards. Delve into the unique art and craft traditions of the Caucasus. Float across the high-altitude waters of Lake Sevan on a private boat trip and meet the friendly locals in their kitchens and cellars.

13 Days

Departure dates: 3 May, 18 June, 24 August & 11 October 2023

Per person twin share: From \$8,995

Single supplement: From \$2,695



ANCIENT TRADE ROUTES OF CENTRAL ASIA

Walk in the footsteps of emperors and priests on a discovery of the ancient civilisations which lay along the Silk Road. Marvel at some of the world's most impressive and intricate tile work in the famous mosques and minarets of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, two countries steeped in antiquity. Discover the rich cultural traditions of Central Asia and its passionate artisans, craftsmen and performers. And appreciate the world's second largest collection of Russian avant-garde art in remote Uzbekistan.

16 Days

Departure dates: 21 April, 19 May, 1 September & 6 October 2023

Per person twin share: From \$11,295

Single supplement: From \$2,065

MADAGASCAR: OTHERWORLDLY MARVELS

Curious wildlife, rare indigenous cultures, a primitive landscape and pristine beaches make Madagascar nothing short of fascinating. Home to hundreds of endemic species, including lemurs, chameleons and butterflies, you'll seek out these rarities on escorted wildlife outings by day and night with expert local guides. Hike through 500-year-old baobabs in the Sacred Spiny Forest, one of the oldest on the planet, and experience the culture of the unique Atandroy tribe. Immerse yourself in the idyllic island life of Nosy Kombo, with its picturesque beaches of white sand and turquoise waters, dense forest and extraordinary variety of fauna and flora.

13 Days

Departure dates: 16 April, 7 May, 11 June & 3 September 2023

Per person twin share: From \$9,995

Single supplement: From \$2,460



WEST AFRICA: PEOPLE PAST & PRESENT

One of the most ethnically diverse places in Africa, venture to the vibrant West African countries of Ghana, Togo and Benin and be swept up in the colour and movement of local markets and festivals, the healing magic of voodoo, tribal drumming and trance-dances. Witness the splendid Akwasidae Festival of the Ashanti people in Kumasi. Attend a voodoo ceremony in Togo and encounter a traditional 'witch doctor'. Meet local African artists and artisans revered for their sculptures, carvings and whimsical hand-crafted coffins and celebrate a life at a traditional Ashanti funeral.

16 Days

Departure dates: 11 July & 14 November 2023

Per person twin share: From \$12,495

Single supplement: From \$2,795



SAUDI ARABIA: DESERT KINGDOMS

Be amongst the first to discover the mysterious desert kingdom of Saudi Arabia which has been closed to much of the outside world until recently. Marvel at the carved temples of Hegra, known as the second Petra, explore the vast open air museum of ancient Al Ula and the sophisticated rock art of Jubbah. See cosmopolitan Riyadh and Jeddah's World Heritage distinctive coral buildings and a host of architectural marvels and ancient icons revealing an exclusive glimpse at a realm veiled in secrecy.

9 Days

Departure dates: 19 October, 23 November & 15 February 2023

Per person twin share: From \$15,995

Single supplement: From \$4,560

SOUTH KOREA: SUN & MOON

Go behind the scenes to discover why South Korea is emerging as one of Asia's most talked-about destinations. Browse traditional street markets and admire unique architecture; watch adrenalin-pumping taekwondo artists perform; visit the DMZ with a North Korean defector to learn about this sombre chapter of Korean history; dress in the traditional hanbok and share tea with Buddhist monks; Seek out the magical springtime cherry blossom display when parks, gardens and hillsides are veiled in a mass of pink. You'll uncover absorbing local customs, flavoursome culinary delights, picturesque scenery and awe-inspiring architecture.

12 Days

Departure dates: 22 March, 11 October, 15 November 2023 & 22 March 2024

Per person twin share: From \$12,295

Single supplement: From \$3,370





INDIA: THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH

Discover India's more spiritual side on a journey through the relaxed southern states. Be swept up in bustling, sophisticated cities. Marvel at temples, sculptures and shrines. Meander through sleepy fishing villages and colonial ports. Discover the New Age Auroville and the vernacular architecture of Chettinad. Enter a world of tea in the plantations of Munnar and soak up the serenity of Kerala's backwaters. Certain departures are timed to coincide with Diwali, the spectacular festival of lights, Holi, the festival of colours, and the Pongal Festival, a famous thanksgiving celebration dedicated to the Hindu sun god.

15 Days

Departure dates: 13 September, 4 October, 1 November 2023, 10 January & 13 March 2024

Per person twin share: From \$8,465

Single supplement: From \$2,195

SRI LANKA: SECRETS OF THE SPICE ISLAND

Deeply spiritual with a rich tapestry of natural wonders, World Heritage sites, a flavoursome cuisine and lots of tea, Sri Lanka packs a punch. Climb Sigiriya rock fortress and admire 5th century frescoes along the way. Hear fascinating insights over dinner with Sri Lankan architect, historian and critic, Dr. Shanti Jayewardene. Join pilgrims for a nightly prayer ritual at the Sacred Temple of the Tooth. Admire the Kandy Botanical Gardens in the company of a local botanist. Seek out elephants and endemic wildlife at Minneriya National Park. Learn the secrets of Ceylonese tea in the lofty plantations and meander through Galle Fort with an archaeologist leading the way.

14 Days

Departure dates: 10 September, 10 October, 10 November 2023, 12 January, 12 February & 10 March 2024

Per person twin share: From \$9,995

Single supplement: From \$2,895



CUBA AWAKENED

Ernest Hemingway, rum and cigars — just some of what defines Cuba and its quintessential style. On this journey you'll cruise the cobbled streets of Havana in a classic vintage convertible and discover rich culinary highlights. Venture into some of Hemingway's haunts and learn about the history and delicate processes involved in the country's rum and cigar production. See the memorial of Che Guevara, and pay a visit to the Bay of Pigs, reliving revolutionary moments in time as you explore with local experts. You'll be amazed by all you see.

13 Days

Departure dates: 10 April, 13 November 2023 & 11 February 2024

Per person twin share: From \$8,995

Single supplement: From \$2,585

For more information on any of these small group journeys, please call A&K on 1300 551 541 or your local travel agent.

ITALY

LA SERENISSIMA

Surely one of the most beautiful cities on Earth, Venice gained its prosperity through centuries of lucrative maritime trade. This great wealth supported a rich tradition of art and artisans, a legacy seen today in its great museums, galleries and studio workshops. From as early as the 15th century, state and religious communities sponsored vast building projects and grand statuary which combined to make this glorious city built on a lagoon one of the world's finest. Meander down its narrow alleyways and cobbled streets, pause for cicheti in a local bacaro, admire masterpieces from the great Venetian School, marvel at the grand palazzos and float gently down its atmospheric canals in the company of a gondolier. There's no place quite like Venice and with a new push to protect the city's heritage and residents, her survival is secured.





OUR SUGGESTED JOURNEY

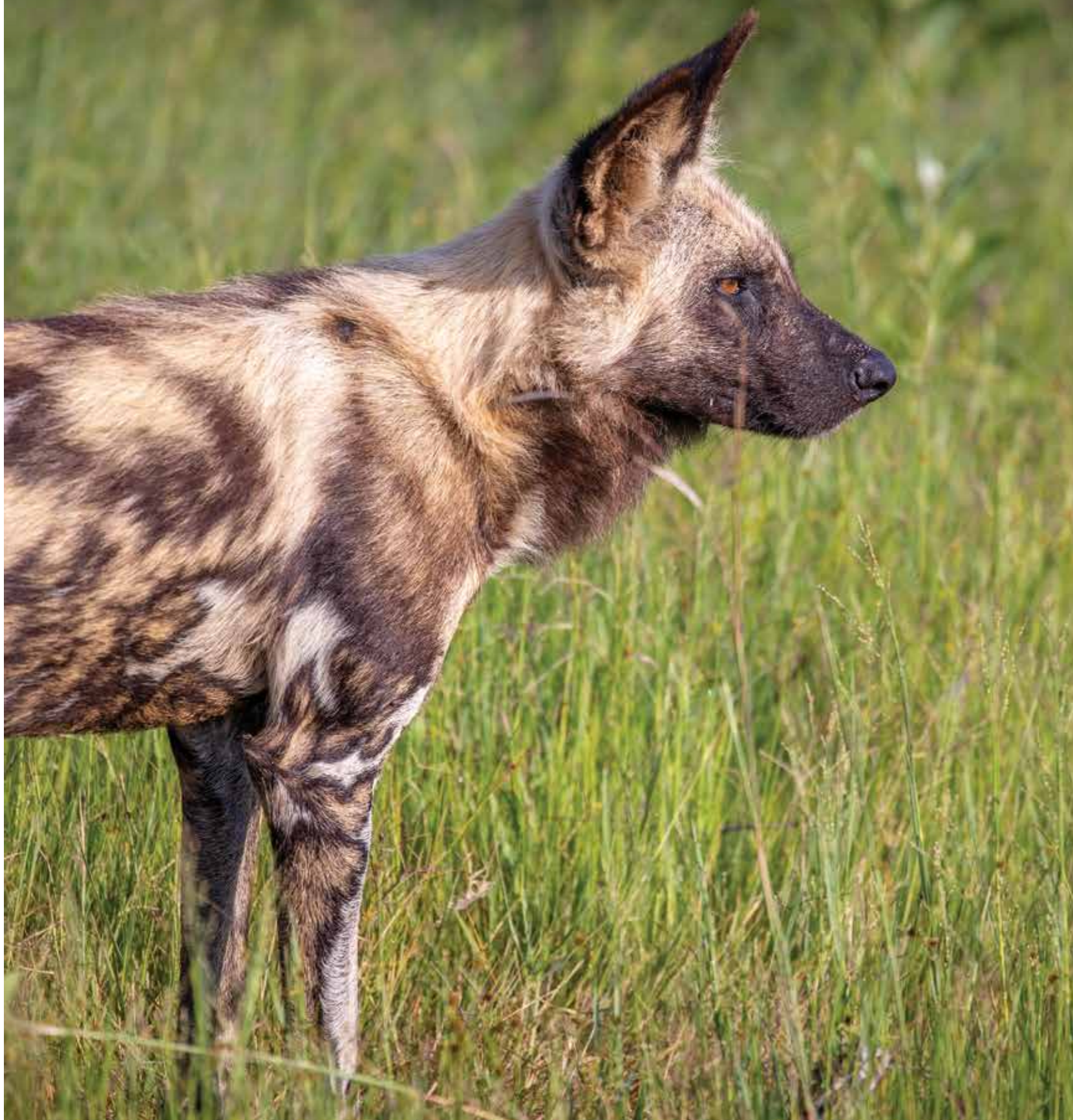
A&K's 12-day 'Rome to Venice:
A Connoisseur's Italy'
tailor-made journey from
\$17,355 per person.

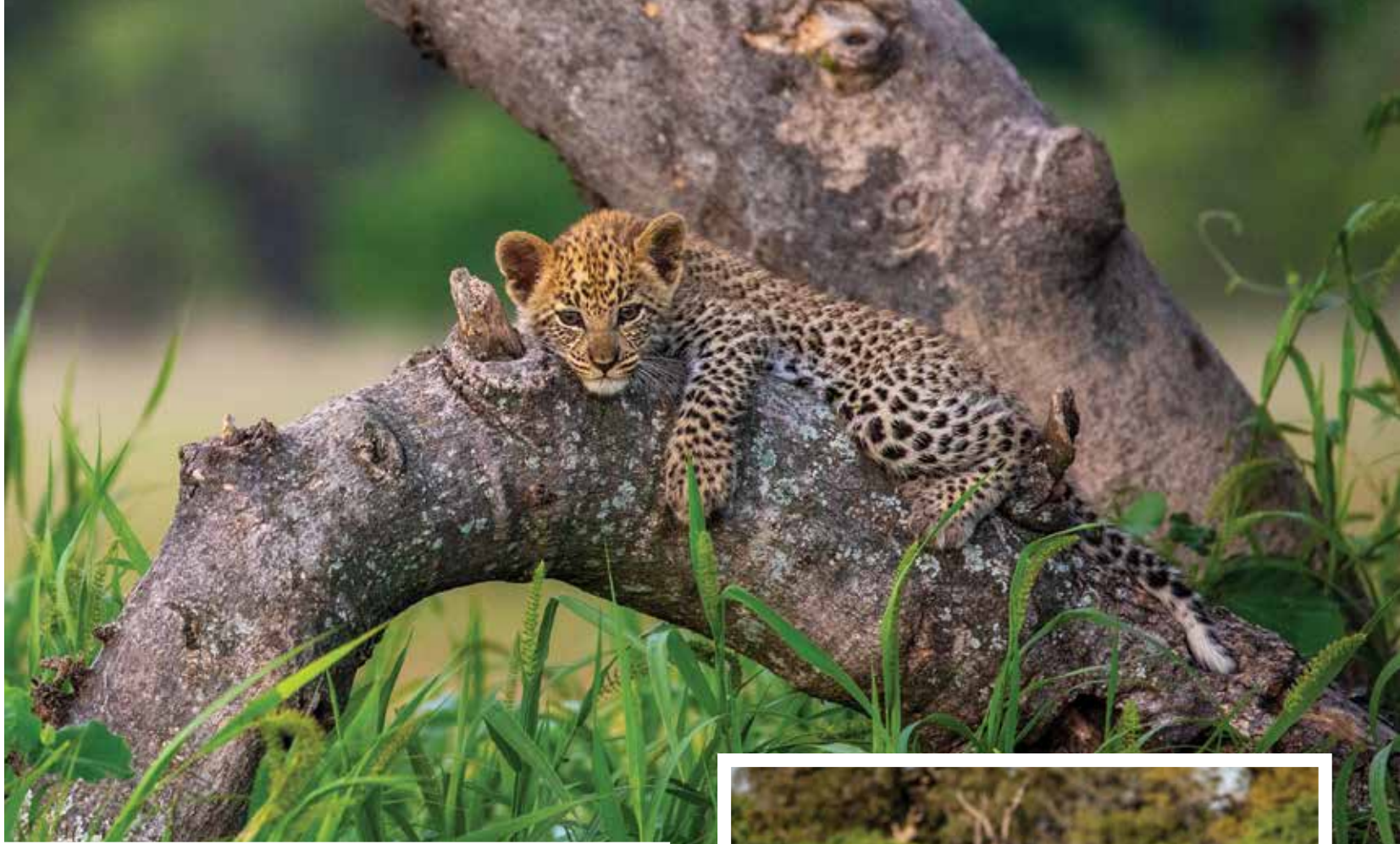
For more information call A&K on
1300 551 541 or your local
travel agent.

Recent Travels

BOTSWANA

A&K's resident Africa expert, **Patrick Clementson**, recently returned to the continent he holds so dear, and has been visiting for 25 years. This visit allowed him to fully focus on Botswana, one of the great safari destinations, and his impressions illustrate that a safari in the emerald season can deliver sensational game viewing, clear air, green foliage and spectacular thunderstorms.

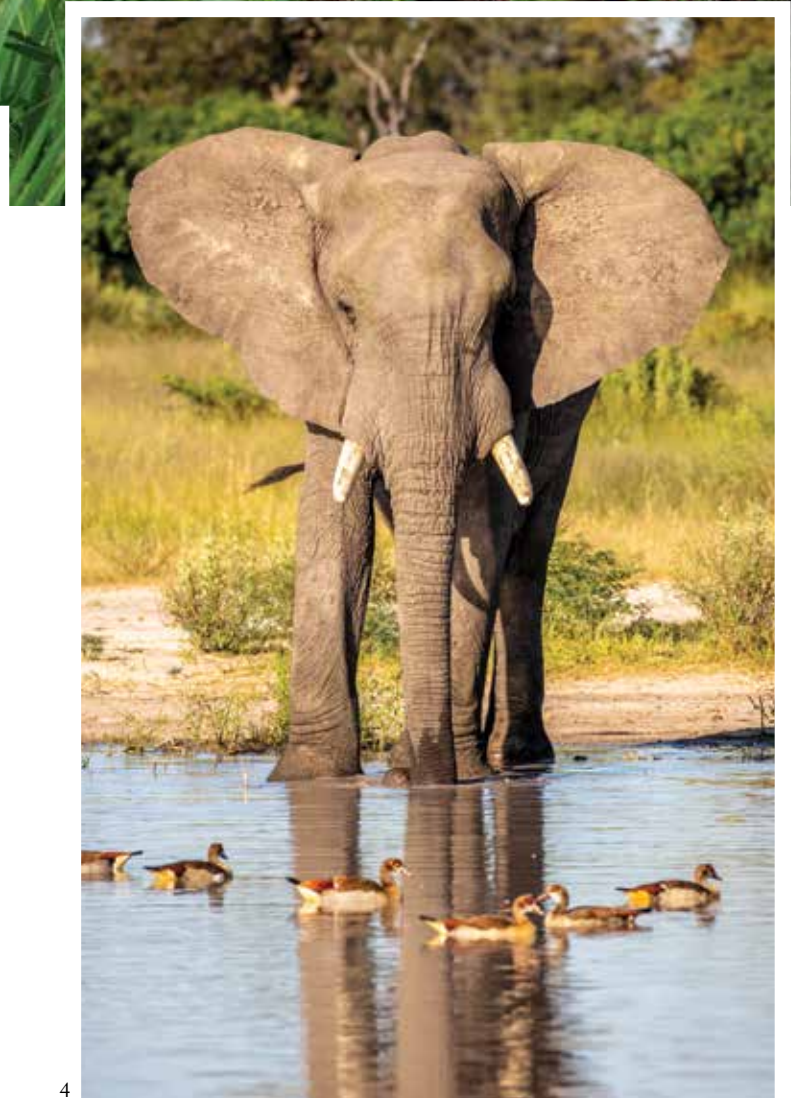




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3



4

The magical Southern African nation of Botswana is justly famous for its pristine landscapes, abundant wildlife and the responsible way it manages tourism. Boasting 12 national parks and reserves and a variety of different ecosystems, my journey concentrated on the country's north and in particular the Selinda Reserve and Okavango Delta.

The Okavango is the world's largest inland delta. A pristine wilderness comprising over 15,000 square kilometres of Kalahari desert sands, washed by the seasonal floodwaters of the Okavango River and dotted with palm islands, it is criss-crossed by watery reed-lined channels and scattered with stretches of grassy plains and woodland. Because of its remoteness, the most popular way

of getting from camp to camp is by light aircraft. Seeing the landscape from above and some of the herds I will soon see from the ground, I appreciate the vastness of this special place.

Touching down at Selinda Airstrip I was overjoyed to be back in the bush and the transfer to camp was by boat skimming through the waterways. On our approach the tuneful sound of an a capella chorus could be heard through the trees and upon disembarking a happy ensemble greeted me with joyous song, one of the most heart-warming experiences on any Botswana safari.

The 130,000-hectare Selinda Reserve is, in my opinion, one of the best game viewing areas in

Southern Africa with large herds of elephant and significant prides of lion. The highlight of my stay was watching a coalition of three male lions frantically searching for the resident pride. It was amazing to see such big cats highly mobile.

From Selinda it was a short hop to Duba Plains Camp; a small and

- 1: African wild dog, Duba Plains
- 2: Leopard cub, Duba Plains
- 3: Duba Plains Camp
- 4: Young bull elephant, Selinda Reserve



5



6



8



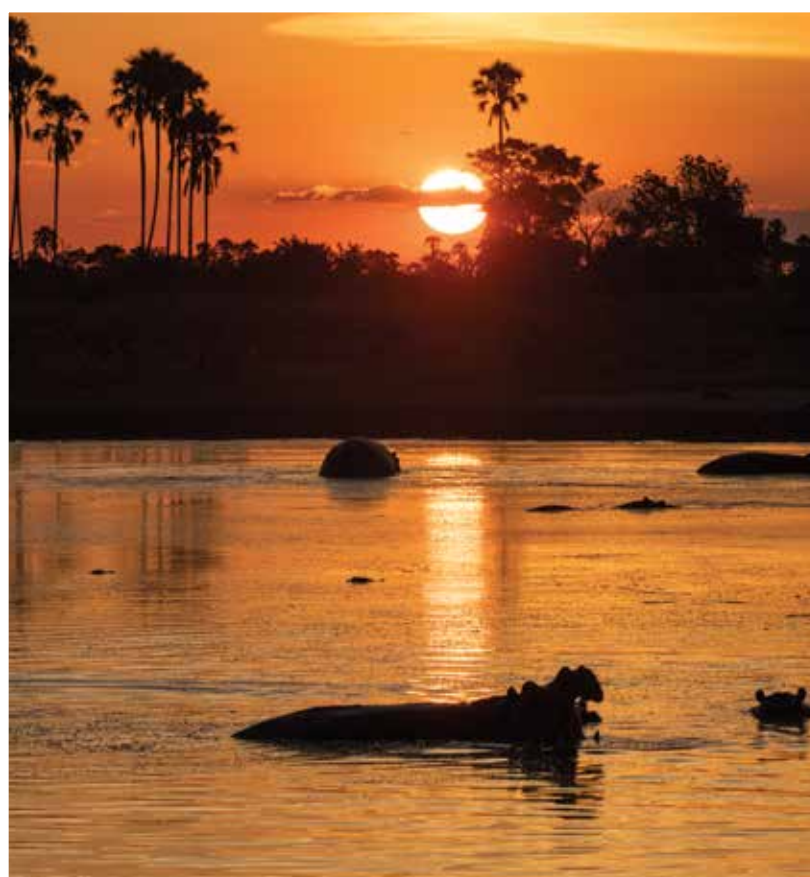
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sophisticated safari camp with just five suites and a minimal footprint. National Geographic filmmakers, conservationists and explorers Dereck and Beverly Joubert, chose this 33,000-hectare reserve as their base for filming which shows just how unique this part of the Delta is. Reminiscent of the classic 1920s safari style, each spacious tent boasts muslin-draped beds and Persian rugs, campaign furniture, a private plunge pool and a hand-beaten brass bath all with views of the floodplain beyond and the steady parade of wildlife which passes by at all hours.

Another highlight was an exhilarating helicopter ride where the doors were removed to maximise the breathtaking aerial views. Next stop was the beautifully reimagined Xigera, whose new design aesthetic is inspired by the natural surrounds and is a celebration of African art and craftsmanship. Sitting lightly in the landscape, this unique camp was the perfect spot to encounter some memorable wildlife experiences before moving on to Sanctuary Chief's Camp where I am greeted once more by a friendly team and an expansive suite which comes



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with its own plunge pool and private deck. I gaze over grassy plains watching elephants in the distance, I even awake to the fresh tracks of a leopard uncomfortably close to my tent.

I am blessed with extraordinary wildlife sightings throughout my stay — lions on the hunt, plenty of cubs (lion and leopard), elephant wallowing in the shallows, giraffe

striding across the plains, a buffalo kill and most evenings a classic fiery sunset, sometimes set to the soundtrack of rumbling thunder in the distance, and always toasted with a traditional sundowner (or two). I will always treasure Africa and its wildlife but on this particular occasion it was the genuine care I was shown by the friendly people I encountered along the way which has resonated so deeply.

- 5: A dazzle of zebra, Chief's Island
- 6: A pair of male giraffe
- 7: Xigera Safari Lodge overlooking the floodplains
- 8: Iconic Okavango Delta from above, Xigera
- 9: Classic Okavango sunset
- 10: African buffalo, Chief's Island
- 11: A lion pride, Xigera

OUR SUGGESTED *Journey*

'African Waterways' Tailor-Made Journey
8 Days

Priced from \$8,440 per person twin share

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

2023-24
NEW
RELEASES

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Arctic Cruise Adventure: In Search of the Polar Bear

15 days | 17 Jul 2023

From **\$26,040** per person twin share
(was \$29,560)

Discover geological wonders and see the majestic polar bear in its natural environment on a thrilling voyage to Svalbard, Greenland and Iceland.



Limited Availability for 22 Aug 2022 Departure

The Northwest Passage: From Greenland to the Bering Sea

25 days | 25 Aug 2023

From **\$54,565** per person twin share
(was \$60,200)

Follow in the footsteps of legendary polar explorers and under the wing of A&K's famed Expedition Team on an epic expedition from Greenland to Alaska.



Limited Availability for 9 Dec 2022 Departure

Antarctic Cruise Adventure

13 days | 10 Dec 2023

From **\$20,970** per person twin share
(was \$25,195)

Explore Antarctica and the Southern Ocean in the height of the austral summer, encountering rare wildlife, towering icebergs and vast glaciers.



Limited Availability for 19 Dec 2022
& 3 Jan 2023 Departures

Antarctica, South Georgia & Falklands

18 days | 20 Dec 2023 & 4 Jan 2024

From **\$30,830** per person twin share
(was \$28,905)

Explore the Falkland Islands, unspoiled South Georgia with its rookeries of king penguins, and the incomparable Antarctic Peninsula.



Limited Availability for 18 Jan 2023 Departure

Antarctica Discovery: Beyond the Antarctic Circle

15 days | 19 Jan 2024

From **\$31,535** per person twin share
(was \$36,465)

Embark on a thrilling voyage beyond the Antarctic Circle to the most historic and rarely explored treasures of the Southern Ocean.



NEW!

Cruising the Seychelles & Coastal Tanzania

14 days | 11 Mar 2023

From **\$21,115** per person twin share
(was \$23,230)

See Africa from a unique perspective on an expedition from Zanzibar through the remote tropical paradise of the spellbinding Seychelles.



Limited Availability for 13 Sep 2022 Departure

Italy Cruise: Hidden Treasures from Florence to Venice

12 days | 9 Sep 2023

From **\$19,005** per person twin share (was \$20,415)

Cruise an exciting and comprehensive itinerary that explores nearly the entire navigable coastline of Italy and visits its most unique ports.



NEW!

Adriatic Voyage: Croatia, Montenegro & Greece

8 days | 20 Sep 2023

From **\$14,075** per person twin share (was \$15,485)

Discover the gems of the dazzling Adriatic on a luxury culture-rich cruise highlighting the best of Croatia, Montenegro and Greece.



Cruising the Greek Isles

10 days | 27 Sep 2023

From **\$16,895** per person twin share (was \$18,305)

Set sail on A&K's most popular cruise voyage to idyllic Greece, exploring ancient ruins, volcanic vineyards and hidden gems from Patmos to Syros.

Combine these three cruises into one Grand Mediterranean Voyage

Experience the Mediterranean in all its splendour on A&K's Grand Mediterranean Voyage, a uniquely comprehensive 28-day expedition that combines up to three cruises encompassing five countries and countless kilometres of beautiful coastline. Please contact A&K or your travel agent to find out more.



NEW!

European Coastal Cruise: Portugal, Spain & France

9 days | 27 Apr 2023

From **\$14,075** per person twin share (was \$15,485)

Embark on a unique Western European cruise highlighting Porto's wine country, the cultural heritage of Spain and historic regions of France.



Cruising Scandinavia & the Baltic Sea

10 days | 15 Jul 2023

From **\$16,895** per person twin share (was \$19,710)

Set sail on an all-encompassing luxury cruise to the grand and historic cities of seven countries, enjoying visits with renowned cultural experts.



Wonders of Japan Cruise: Cherry Blossom Season

14 days | 29 Mar 2023

From **\$29,570** per person twin share (was \$32,385)

Experience this fascinating island nation in cherry blossom season, exploring famed coastal cities, mesmerising gardens and museums, and UNESCO World Heritage Sites.



Kimberley Cruise: Australia's Last Frontier

13 days | 12 May 2023

From **\$20,415** per person twin share (was \$22,530)

Venture to a spectacular wilderness, resplendent with dramatic reefs and waterfalls, astonishing wildlife and Indigenous culture.



Limited Availability for 21 Nov 2022 Departure

Indonesia Voyage: Komodo, Papua & Great Barrier Reef

17 days | 20 Oct 2023

From **\$24,640** per person twin share (was \$28,865)

Discover tribal traditions, natural wonders and the paradisiacal shores of Komodo, Papua, and Australia with an unmatched Expedition Team.



NEW!

French Polynesia to Easter Island Expedition

14 days | 27 Oct 2023

From **\$23,230** per person twin share (was \$25,345)

Embark on an adventure into the heart of French Polynesia, retracing the route of the legendary 'HMS Bounty'.



INSIDER'S GUIDE TO PERU



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Rainforest, coastal desert and high altiplano – Peru’s landscapes are spectacularly diverse and alive with colour, wildlife and natural wonders. And there’s a 3,000-year-old history to match, just waiting to be discovered. Remarkable archaeological relics and ancient treasures fill the museums while mysterious Incan ruins dot the countryside and scores of towns and villages teem with coloured textiles piled high in market squares while colonial churches and terracotta-roofed houses frame the views. For a unique snapshot of this mesmerising country, be guided by the following favourite recommendations.

- 1: Lima Cathedral, Plaza de Armas, Lima
2: Hotel B, Lima

LIMA

Peru’s vibrant capital, the “City of Kings”, is awash with pre-Columbian ruins and relics, Spanish colonial cathedrals and grand residences as well as a lip-smacking cuisine that owes much to its multi-cultural influences. Its unique position sandwiched between the Andes and the Pacific Coast gives it its unusually mild, and dry, climate — perfect for days of exploration.

DO

Bike and tapas

Pedal your way through the barrios of Miraflores, San Isidro and Barranco soaking up the street vibe along the way and discovering the flavours, colours, aromas and stories behind Peru’s renowned cuisine. Taste local seafood and traditional dishes like causa peruana, lomo saltado and picarones for a sweet finish. Wash it down with a craft beer or a pisco sour.

DINE

Central

A regular on the world’s top restaurant lists, Central is steeped in Peru’s culinary heritage. Chefs Virgilio Martínez and Pía León, an extraordinary husband-and-wife team, have a deep commitment to sustainable dining and focus their menu on the finest ingredients from land and sea. Imaginatively plated dishes and innovative flavour combinations add to the drama of the degustation experience here. Be sure to book and settle in for a feast to remember.

STAY

Hotel B

The arty vibe of the Barranco barrio envelops Hotel B, Lima’s only Relais & Châteaux accredited lodging. The thoughtfully restored Belle Époque mansion has been tastefully converted from a glamorous summer residence to a palatial boutique



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hotel where hundreds of artworks adorn the walls. Boasting just 17 rooms, the décor is sophisticated and welcoming and is the perfect base for exploring nearby boutiques, museums and churches on foot.

SHOP

Las Pallas

Artisan handicrafts and one-of-a-kind Peruvian artworks are at the heart of British expat Mari Solari's gem of a boutique in Barranco. Working with some of the best artisans in the Andes and Amazon basin, Mari brings beautiful, colourful pieces of folk art and jewellery to the world at the same time showcasing the intricate techniques practiced by native artisans.

AMAZON

Representing a staggering 60% of the Peruvian landmass, the Amazonian rainforest is an area of extraordinary biodiversity, some of the most biodiverse on Earth.

Hundreds of species of birds, mammals, butterflies, reptiles, fish and flowering plants occupy this rare natural wonderland and local naturalists will share their fascinating insights on rainforest explorations.

DO

Canopy Walk

30 metres above the forest floor, stroll the canopy walk at the Inkatererra Reserva Amazonica and discover a perfect vantage point for sighting the resident wildlife — colourful toucans, woodpeckers at work, the beautiful trogon with its iridescent hues, monkeys and the three-toed sloth. As you wander, learn from your guide about the interaction between flora and fauna at the various levels of the forest and their importance in the rainforest ecosystem.

Flavours of the Amazon

Inspired by the tropical flavours of the Amazon, meals and beverages

at Inkatererra Reserva Amazónica are prepared with fresh local ingredients. A breakfast speciality here is tacacho, a popular dish in the Amazonas region, which consists of grilled plantains mashed with salt, lard and tiny pieces of pork rind served up with vegetables and chorizo on the side. Muy delicioso!

STAY

Inkatererra Reserva Amazónica

Pristine, remote and yet easily accessible, Inkatererra Reserva Amazonica is located on the banks of Peru's Madre de Dios River, a tributary of the Amazon near the borders with Bolivia and Brazil. A slow boat ride through the rainforest delivers you to this unique eco-lodge where you bed down in thatched wooden cabañas which exude a rustic luxe vibe. Beds are draped in soft mosquito nets and a hammock beckons in your private siesta lounge.



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SACRED VALLEY

Once the epicentre of the Inca Empire, Peru's Urubamba Valley is still considered sacred by the locals. Dotted with spectacular ruins and archaeological sites, remote farming communities and weaving villages which have changed little in generations, the valley also boasts a rich heritage of ancestral customs and traditions. Its terraced hills and valleys are beautifully scenic and provide a playground for both adventurous and cultural travellers.

DO

Trek with llamas

Discover ancestral trails in the Sacred Valley on a hike with a difference. Meet your specialist guide at Chinchero, a cultural heritage site, and accompanied by llamas and alpacas you'll hike through the countryside along ancient paths capturing impressive mountain views along

the way. An alfresco lunch set against a stunning background of mountains and glaciers is a well-earned reward.

High altitude picnic

Huaypo Lake is a crystal-clear high altitude lake surrounded by breathtaking mountain scenery — the perfect spot for a picnic. Recline on locally woven cushions and savour the ultimate alfresco lunch before being visited by a local shaman, or witchdoctor, who will read your fortune in the coca leaves.

DINE

From on high

Hike or zip-line to a high-adrenalin lunch at Sky Lodge where you perch in a transparent pod that clings to a granite slope 600 metres above the Urubamba Valley. Dine on local delicacies as you gaze over the stunning mountain landscape, down into the raging Urubamba river below and

in the distance the Hiram Bingham train as it winds its way towards Machu Picchu. Those prone to vertigo should reconsider.

STAY

Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba

Inspired by Peru's history and local traditions, this charming boutique hotel is peacefully positioned against a breathtaking backdrop of the Andes mountains. Interiors richly inspired by the country's Spanish colonists and its pre-Columbian roots, the hotel is reminiscent of a grand hacienda with high ceilings, wooden beams, terracotta floors and antique furniture with splashes of colour in the soft furnishings. The restaurant dishes up tasty fare sourced from the hotel's own organic farm and the all organic Mayu Spa offers welcome respite with Andean hot stone massages and treatments infused with freshly picked herbs from the garden.

- 3: Canopy walk, Peruvian Amazon
- 4: Traditional handicrafts, Las Pallas, Lima
- 5: Inkaterra Reserva Amazónica
- 6: Popular breakfast dish, tacacho
- 7: The Sacred Valley
- 8: Wildlife encounters of the Amazon, Inkaterra Reserva Amazónica
- 9: Sky Lodge, Sacred Valley



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- 10: Inca Trail, Machu Picchu
- 11: Belmond Palacio Nazarenas, Cusco
- 12: Plaza de Armas, Cusco
- 13: Titilaka, Lake Titicaca
- 14: Floating Uros Islands, Lake Titicaca
- 15: Machu Picchu
- 16: Dining cart, Hiram Bingham, a Belmond Train

CUSCO

Gateway to Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley, and at an altitude of 3,400 metres, Cusco is a place to take things slowly. Discover its rich tapestry of Spanish and Quechua influences as you wander the cobbled streets and alleyways through the Plaza de Armas, into the atmospheric San Blas neighbourhood whose streets are lined with artists' studios and beyond to the Incan fortress of Sacsayhuaman.

DO

Photo Tour with Photographer

Want to get the most out of your holiday snaps? Join a professional photographer in Cusco and wander through the Cusco streets receiving technical advice along the way and gaining a unique insight into the city through the lens of a local. You'll be taken to some of the most photogenic spots in the city, the most colourful markets and instructed how to frame the perfect shot.

DINE

Kion

Peruvian Chinese has become one of the country's favourite cuisines taking its influence from the Cantonese who came to Peru in the mid-late 19th and early 20th centuries to work the sugar and cotton plantations and mine guano. The interiors of elegant Kion invoke 1950s Hong Kong while the menu showcases unexpected highlights of this popular cuisine.

STAY

Belmond Palacio Nazarenas

Built on Inca foundations, this elegant hotel is set around cloistered courtyards within a restored 17th-century palace and convent. Original Inca stonework is cleverly blended with colonial frescoes and Spanish-inspired artworks to deliver a stylish bolthole in this remarkable city. Oxygen-enriched rooms, an outdoor heated pool and Hypnôze Spa all make this a welcoming haven after days of discovery.

SHOP

San Blas

Stroll uphill from Cusco's main square and you'll discover the artisan's quarter of San Blas. Full of galleries and handcraft stores, watch artists at work and seek out sculptures of religious icons as well as handmade musical instruments, jewellery, art and beautiful hand-knitted alpaca garments.

MACHU PICCHU

Synonymous with Peru, the ancient Inca ruins of Machu Picchu perched high on an Andean peak continue to inspire awe from all who visit. Said to have been the summer retreat of the Inca emperor Pachacutec, the site was famously rediscovered by American archaeologist Hiram Bingham in 1911 and the construction of its sophisticated dry-stone walls remains a mystery even today.



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DO**Locally-led Inca Trail**

Gain a unique understanding of life in a local village as you are joined by ladies from Chinchero on a one-day walk along the Inca Trail. Marvel at ruins, cloud forest and mountainscapes along the way and hear, via your guide, what life is like in this magical part of Peru. Your experience empowers these local women and in turn gives them a unique view of the outside world.

DINE**Dinner on the Rails**

After a memorable day of discovery amidst the ruins of Machu Picchu, return to Cusco in old-world style aboard the elegant Hiram Bingham train. Sit down to dine on classic local flavours amidst gleaming wood-panelled interiors and shiny brass fittings as the stunning Sacred Valley scenery passes you by. And celebrate the vibrant South American spirit as local musicians and artists perform along the way.

LAKE TITICACA

Tucked between snow-capped mountains along the border of Bolivia and Peru, Lake Titicaca is not only the world's highest navigable lake at an elevation of 3,812 metres, it's also one of the most beautiful. The lake is surrounded by reed beds and dotted with many islands, each of which has its own unique history. Visiting the colourful communities living on the islands provides a rare insight to the age-old traditions and customs practiced by the Quechua speaking locals.

DO**Islands of Titicaca**

The floating islands of the Uros Titino lake communities are an extraordinary phenomenon peculiar to Lake Titicaca where totora reeds are skilfully used to construct the islands using ancestral techniques. During a visit, meet the skilled craftsmen and expert weaver women who keep their islands afloat.

STAY**Titilaka**

Tucked away on a remote peninsula on the shores of Lake Titicaca is the superb Relais & Châteaux accredited Titilaka. 18 lake-facing rooms provide a sophisticated base for exploring the lake and its surrounds. Lofty interiors and floor-to-ceiling glass maximise the magnificent views with textiles from the local area injecting a splash of colour. The food here is top-notch with reimagined traditional and contemporary offerings inspired by the lake and its surrounds as well as an excellent wine list.



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OUR SUGGESTED *Journey***'Peru in Depth' Tailor-Made Journey**

14 Days

Priced from \$11,870 per person twin share

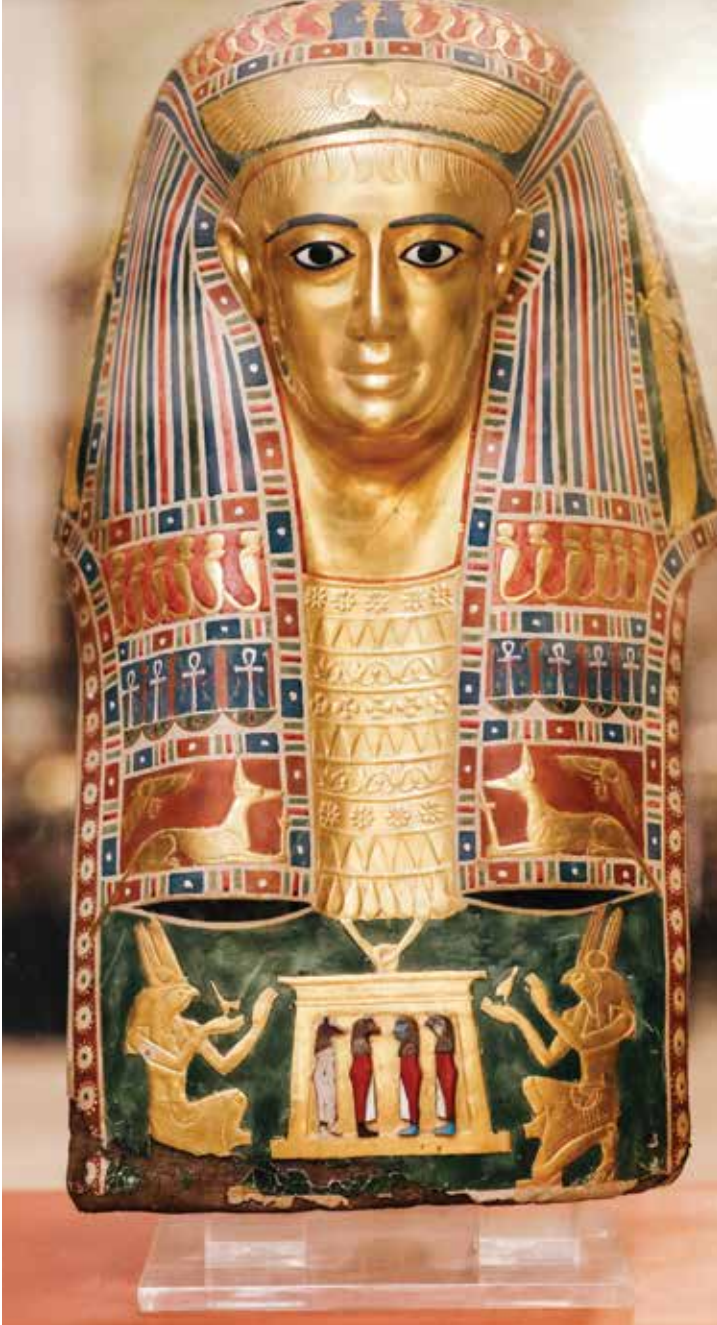
For more information call A&K on 1300 551 541 or your local travel agent

PHARAOHS & *Pyramids*

Egypt's enduring appeal is revealed by a spellbound
George Epaminondas who marvels at honeyed sunsets,
ancient artefacts and Nile-side temples.







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EGYPT

Previous spread: The Great Sphinx and pyramid in the background, Cairo

- 1: King Tutankhamun artefact being prepared for display in the Grand Egyptian Museum
- 2: Traditional Egyptian fare cooked by the chef aboard Sanctuary Zein Nile Chateau
- 3: Alabaster worker, Luxor
- 4: Four Seasons at the First Residence, Cairo
- 5: Island dinner, Sanctuary Zein Nile Chateau, Nile River
- 6: Khan El-Khalili bazaar, Cairo

Egypt casts a spell like no other place: as a cradle of civilisation, a wellspring of cultural inspiration and a bucket-list destination. Foreigners have flocked to the land of the pharaohs since Roman times but there's never been a better time to visit than now. This year marks the centenary of Howard Carter's excavation of Tutankhamun's tomb in the Valley of the Kings. Opening soon is the long-awaited Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) in Cairo, a billion-dollar complex whose collection includes never-before-seen artefacts and the entire collection of King Tut's riches. Meanwhile, *Death On The Nile* is back on the big screen to whet our appetites, while Gal Gadot will play Cleopatra in an upcoming film about the charismatic queen.

Abercrombie & Kent, which has been bringing travellers to Egypt for more than four decades, is the ultimate tour operator, as I

discovered on a pre-pandemic foray. We scooted from Cairo to the historical attractions of Aswan in the south to the coastal glamour of Alexandria in the north. It was a dream trip and one that I would happily repeat. Our odyssey began at the Four Seasons Hotel Cairo at Nile Plaza. The elegant lodging, an oasis of serenity in this teeming metropolis of more than 20 million people, is in a leafy quarter of the capital. Standing in the lobby was a man with an infectious grin, eminent qualifications and a passing resemblance to the late actor Robin Williams. "My name," he told me, "is Hesham Abdulla and I will be your Egyptologist." It was music to my ears, not least because I was carrying a dog-eared copy of Toby Wilkinson's seminal book, *The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt*.

Our first outing was a walking tour of Old Cairo with its mosques, minarets and markets. Sultan

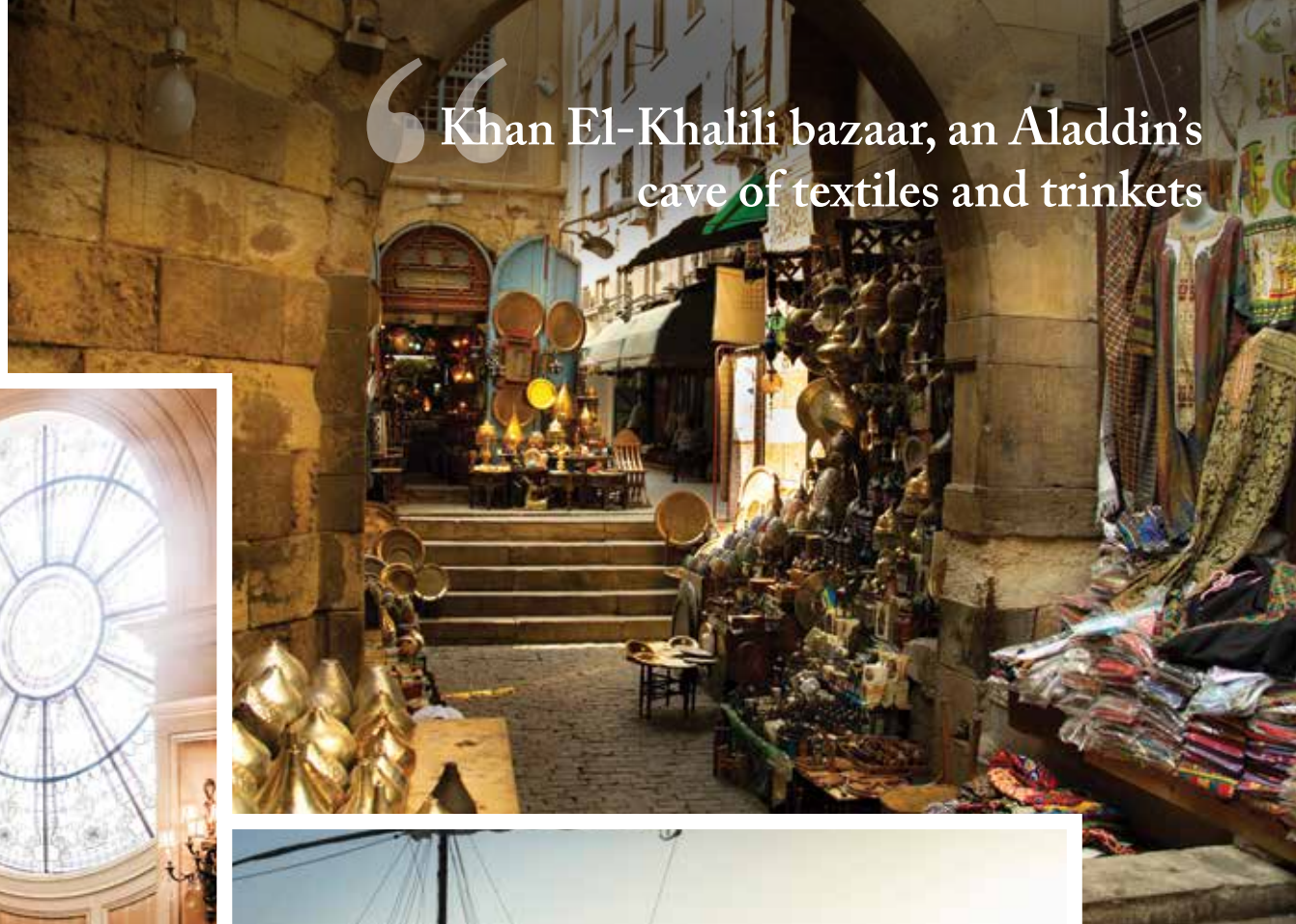
Hassan Mosque, a stately 14th-century building, was a standout with its four vaulted halls, ornate niches and mosaic floors. At Khan El-Khalili bazaar, an Aladdin's cave of textiles and trinkets, a wisecracking shopkeeper asked, "How can I take your money?" But I was distracted by a teenager who balanced multiple loaves of bread on his head. At El Fishawy cafe, Cairenes were enjoying hibiscus juice and hookah, and an oud player performed. Later, I took an Uber to Zöoba, a fast-casual eatery across town, for exceptional ta'ameya, the local falafel made with fava beans instead of chickpeas.

The next day, in an air-conditioned van manned by an unflappable driver, we made the 30-minute commute past dusty residential buildings to the pyramids of Giza. Visibility was poor but when the necropolis came into view it was truly staggering. Made from 2.3

“Khan El-Khalili bazaar, an Aladdin’s cave of textiles and trinkets



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million blocks and standing at 146 metres, the Great Pyramid of King Khufu was the tallest structure in the world for 44 centuries. Hordes of visitors scrambled up the massive lower blocks, while others rode camels around the perimeter of the plateau or snapped Sphinx selfies. How these architectural marvels were constructed is still a matter of intense debate, but Hesham confirmed a vital ingredient: milk. “They sprinkled it under the pulleys, so they could pull the sleds carrying the rocks,” he said.

Later that day, we were fortunate enough to be granted a preview of GEM. We began in the atrium, ornamented with an imposing statue of Ramesses II, and proceeded to an adjacent building where preservationists were avidly preparing antiquities. “For the first time since 1922, all of King Tutankhamun’s 5,000-plus artefacts will be displayed,” said our guide

Faten Mohamed. As she spoke, I watched staff sprucing up the boy-king’s gilded funerary beds, multicoloured faïence necklaces, and gold and ivory fans missing their ostrich feathers. “He had eight fans,” Mohamed added. How many fanners, I asked. “Maybe two.”

An oversized fan would have come in handy on the terrace of the Sofitel Legend Old Cataract Aswan, where we arrived the following day after a 90-minute flight. It was a sweltering 45°C in Upper Egypt — named for the upper portion of the Nile — which underscores why it’s advisable to visit between October and April. We took a motorboat to the island of Philae and the cinematic Temple of Isis, lovingly fashioned by the Ptolemies and the Romans — Egyptian culture evidently captivated the nation’s conquerors too. But before I can pray to the goddess Isis for relief from the intense sun — she was the

goddess of healing after all — I was spirited back to poolside cocktails at the Sofitel. The A&K team is superb at striking the perfect balance between antiquity and urbanity.

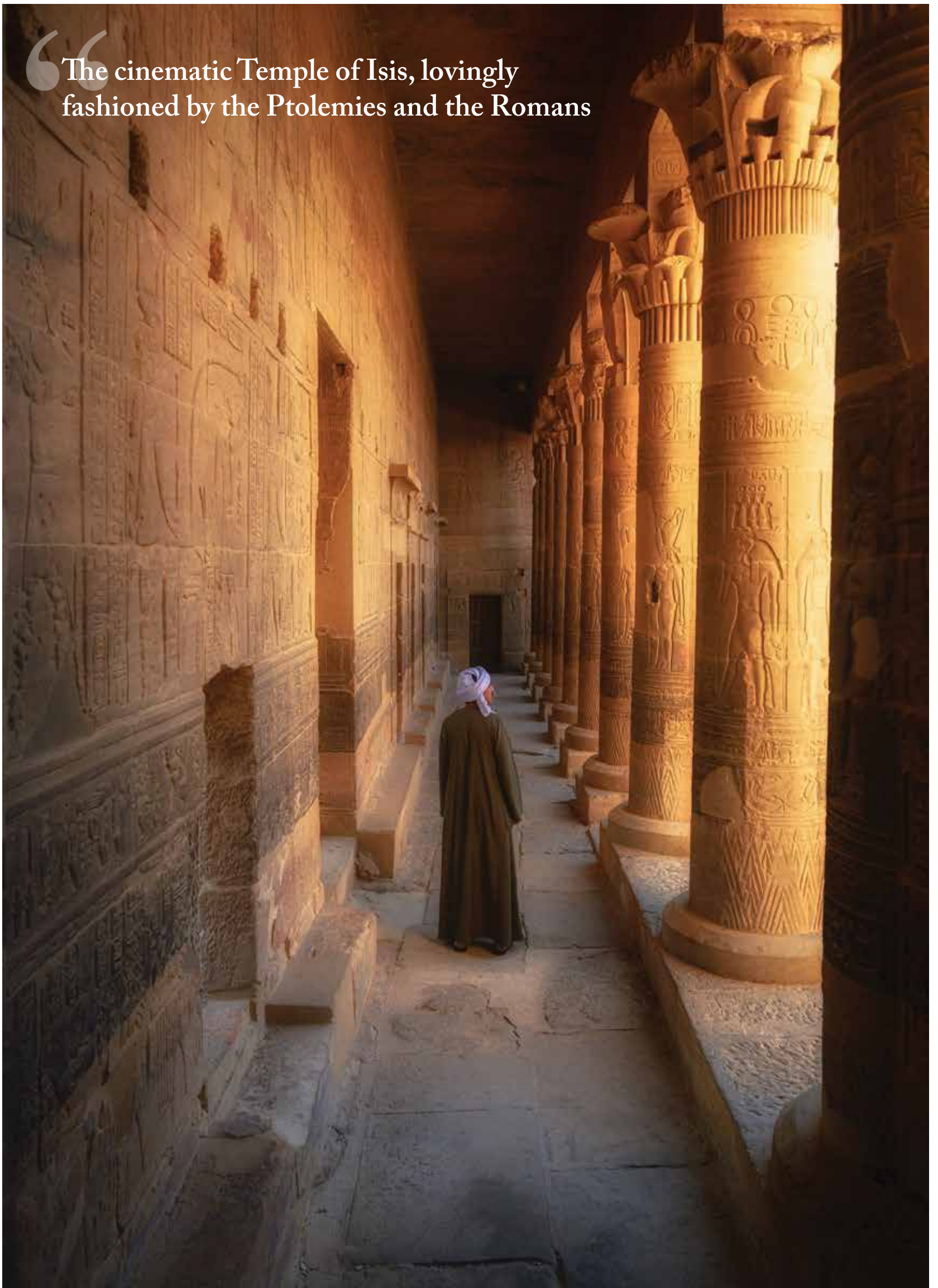
That pitch-perfect mix is on display the following day, too. After a short flight from Aswan, we arrived at Abu Simbel, the jaw-dropping, rock-cut temple commissioned by Ramesses II more than 3,000 years ago. Over 170 pharaohs ruled Egypt across roughly thirty dynasties for more than three millennia yet, as this imposing structure confirms, Ramesses II was the most powerful of them all. The larger of the two temples is fronted by four colossal statues of the acclaimed pharaoh and, perhaps even more impressive, the whole thing was dismantled and relocated in the 1960s owing to Lake Nasser’s rising water levels. Hours later I was admiring the silvery green water of the Nile as we boarded the Zein Nile Chateau, our

floating residence for the next four days. Take that Ramesses.

The sleek Zein Nile Chateau, our *dahabeah*, equipped with every modern flourish you could desire, is available for private charters of up to 12 guests. As an acolyte of Ra, the sun god, my favourite feature was the top deck. Up here, you can’t help but be immersed in the past as we glided by tropical riverbanks, lush farmlands and signs of life as beautiful as tomb paintings — from teenagers splashing in the water to locals riding donkeys into a village. Though it’s a sailboat, a tugboat pulls the craft along to maintain a tranquil journey for its pampered guests. If that isn’t indulgent enough, the Zein’s crew, outfitted in stylish grey *gallabiyyas*, are outstanding in anticipating every need, from a G&T to sunscreen.

As we sailed to temples of the crocodile god Sobek at Kom Ombo

“The cinematic Temple of Isis, lovingly
fashioned by the Ptolemies and the Romans





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7: Columns at Temple of Isis on Philae Island, Aswan
8: Sun Deck, Sanctuary Zein Nile Chateau
9: Sofitel Winter Palace, Luxor
10: Entrance to the historic Karnak Temple, Luxor

and Horus the hawk at Edfu, with Hesham sharing fascinating morsels about the various deities and dynasties, I also had a chance to dig deeper into Egyptian cuisine. Chef Hosni Badawi was generous in explaining classics like *koshari*, a hearty dish of pasta, lentils and rice topped with spicy tomato sauce, and one morning he showed me how to prepare *baba ghanoush* from scratch. He is also adept at making desserts, including *kunafa*, a cream-filled spun pastry confection, and *om ali*, a tastier version of bread-and-butter pudding. Maybe the only thing sweeter is the honeyed sunset that fills the sky every night.

Colour is mostly lacking from the temples we visit, faded or destroyed over time. So it is startling to encounter it at the Valley of the Kings. Many of the subterranean tombs still have technicoloured wall paintings. Seti 1's tomb is especially majestic, inscribed with gorgeous images from the Book of the Dead and other ancient texts

in blue, red and gold. Later that afternoon, we stopped at a nearby alabaster studio, where artisans shaped the pale mineral into fetching figurines that are dyed into equally brilliant shades.

You can glimpse the Valley of the Kings from the windows of the Sofitel Winter Palace Luxor. Built in 1886 by British explorers, it still has a palatial ambience with manicured gardens, stately furnishings and large marble bathrooms in the guest rooms. We bid adieu to our beloved boat — the crew sent us off with an animated Nubian song — and decamped to this hotel where Agatha Christie wrote *Death On The Nile*.

After a flight back to Cairo, our whistle-stop tour continued apace. Next was Alexandria, a seaside city with cosmopolitan flair, pastel-hued buildings, distinguished cafés like *Trianon*, and stellar seafood restaurants. At the Four Seasons Alexandria at San Stefano, a resort-like hotel with its own

private stretch of sandy beach, we gathered for a languorous lunch by the Mediterranean. We enjoyed sublime *mezze*, *fattoush* salad and grilled local prawns. Back at the main building, bedizened guests lounged by a disc-shaped pool, while yummy mummies filed into the spa for pharaonic massages with mint and thyme.

Back in Cairo, I made a beeline for Zamalek. The pedestrian-friendly enclave is peppered with design stores, art galleries and atmospheric eateries. Abou El Sid, for one, is dressed up in 1940s kitsch. On our final night in Egypt, the group

assembled for *iftar*, the evening meal where Muslims end their daily fast for Ramadan. The dinner was orchestrated by the Four Seasons at the First Residence. Situated along the west bank of the Nile, with green-filled vistas of the pyramids, the hotel has opulent rooms and top-notch service. Our sociable host, Hibba Bilal, explained specialties such as *kunafa nabulsi*, a dish that combines shredded filo pastry with stretchy cheese and red dye. It was sweet, savoury and surprising, just like Egypt. 🍷

Double page spread image, and images 1, 2, 3, 5, 8 & 10 © Elise Hassey

OUR SUGGESTED *Journey*

'A Portrait of Egypt' Tailor-Made Journey
14 Days

Priced from \$11,985 per person twin share

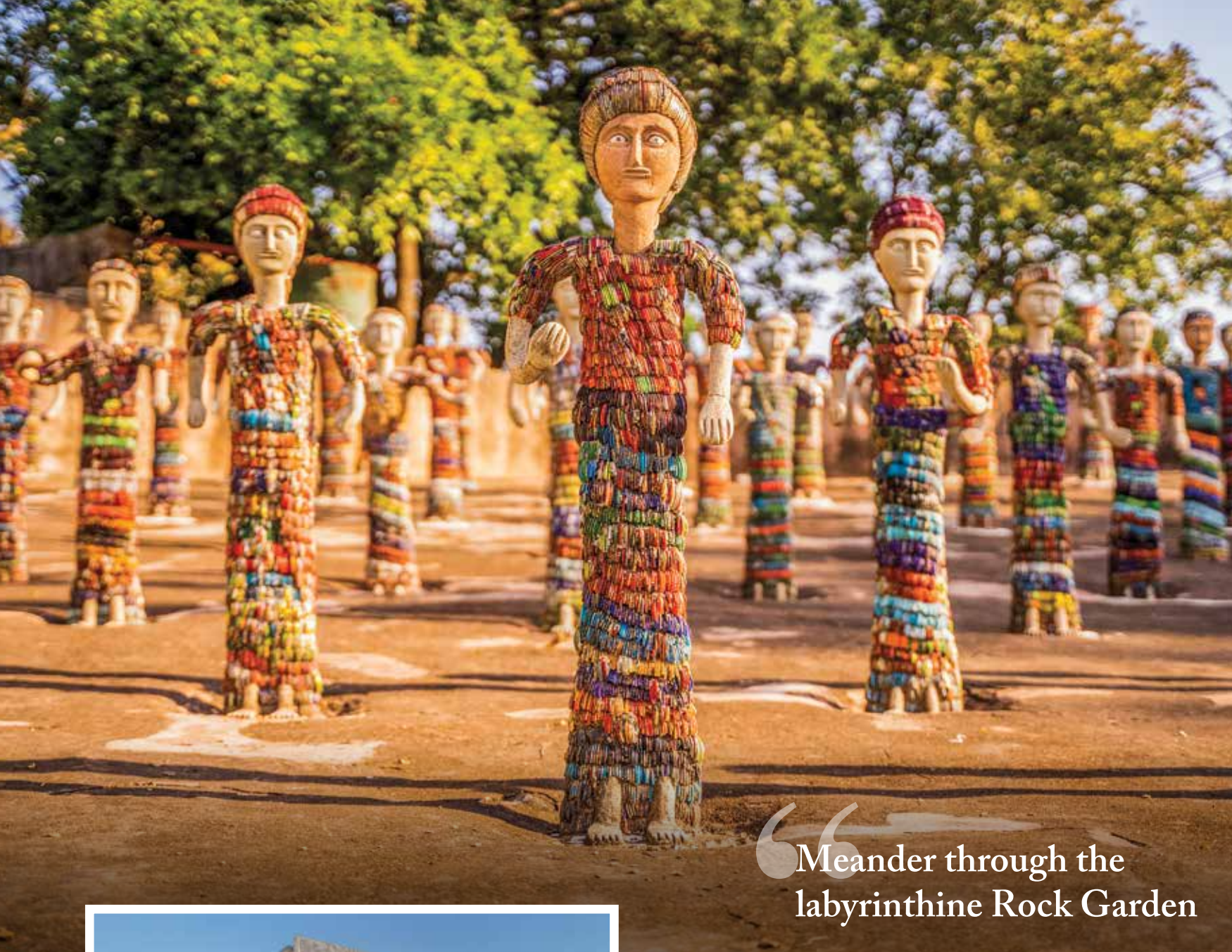
For more information call A&K on 1300 551 541 or your local travel agent



IN THE FOOTHILLS OF *the Himalayas*

Taking to the hills of northern India, **Tricia Welsh** finds cutting edge urban architecture, harmonious green spaces, breathtaking Himalayan landscapes and acres of tea.





“Meander through the labyrinthine Rock Garden

1



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Previous spread: Panoramic view of Shimla
 1: Sculptures of the Rock Garden, Chandigarh
 2: The Legislative Assembly, Capitol Complex, Chandigarh
 3: Himalayan Queen express train, Kalka to Shimla
 4: Christ Church, Shimla
 5: Taj Theog Resort & Spa terrace area, Shimla

INDIA

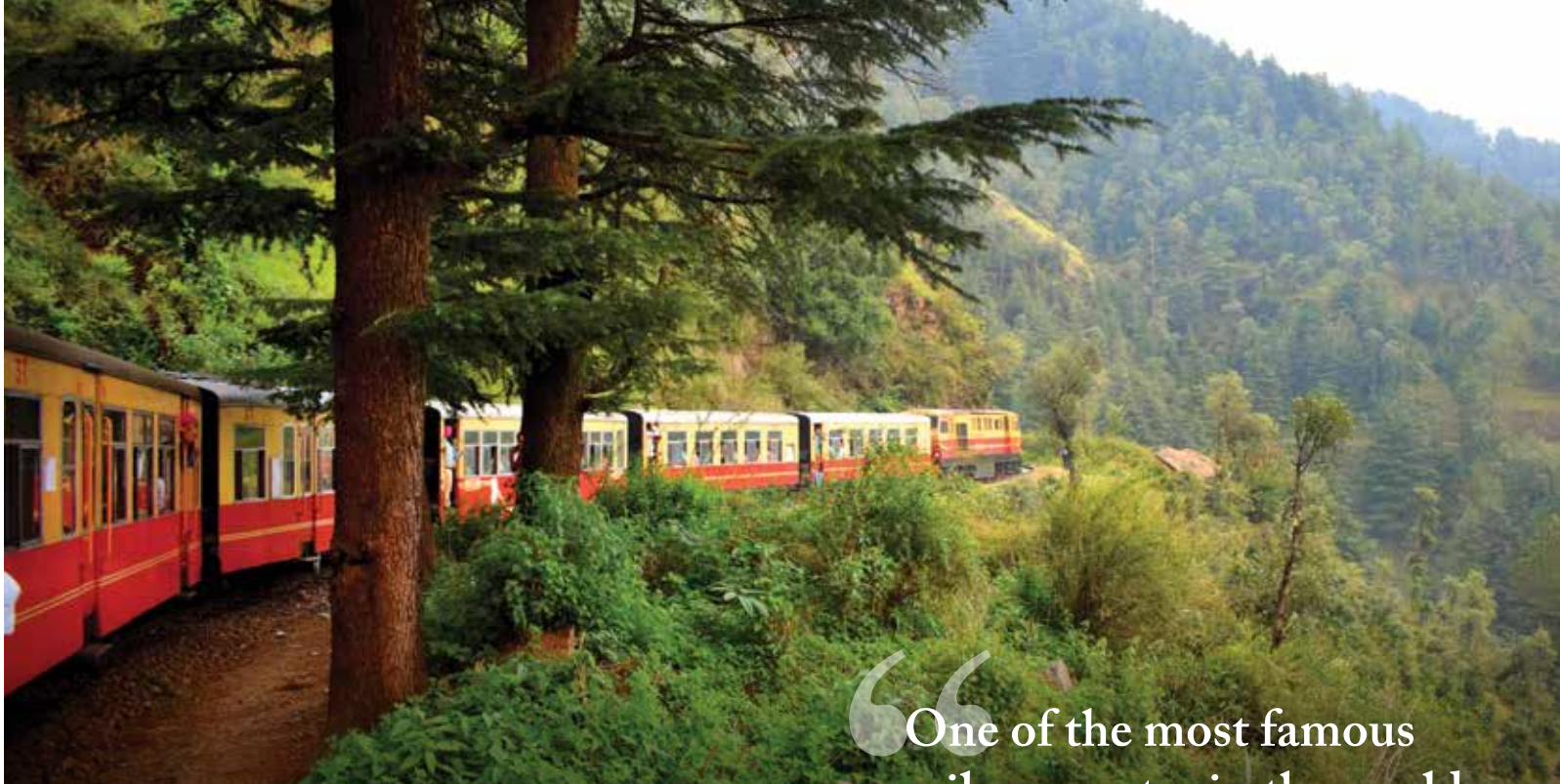
Travelling to the northern states of India is truly a breath of fresh air: to the modernist Punjabi capital of Chandigarh which, thanks to its parks and gardens and flourishing vegetation, is perhaps the greenest state in the country; to Shimla in the foothills of the Himalayas which, during the Raj, became the summer capital of British India where temperatures could be 15 to 20 degrees cooler than on the dusty plains; and further north to Palampur in the lush tea-growing Kangra Valley.

On arrival into Chandigarh, we know not to expect a typical Indian city with teeming masses, general chaos and where traffic rules are only a suggestion. It is clean, tidy and orderly, with white lines on the roads and traffic lights which people respect, wide boulevards and leafy suburbs and an order to everyday life not seen elsewhere in the country.

In August 1947, after nearly 200 years, British rule in India ended — the sub-continent being partitioned into two: India with its Hindu majority, and Pakistan a majority Muslim state. Chandigarh, a city of some 1.2 million, is the capital of both the Punjab and the neighbouring state of Haryana. It replaces the former Punjabi capital of Lahore, which, after Partition, found itself located in Pakistan.

After Independence, India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, wanted to show that India was no longer a regressive country of villages and backward people, pronouncing, “Chandigarh will be a symbol of the nation's faith in the future”.

In 1950, he commissioned celebrated Swiss architect Le Corbusier, known for his unique concepts of private homes and public buildings, to design the new city from scratch. His philosophy incorporated all aspects of living,



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“One of the most famous railway routes in the world”



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working, circulation and the care of body and spirit.

The city is divided into 56 self-contained numbered sectors, each having its own neighbourhood market with shops and services, gardens, jogging track, open-air gym, primary school, meditation point — even a water fountain in the centre of the garden to create positive spaces. Buildings are no higher than three floors enabling all to enjoy sunshine and greenery.

Watching local families relax and stroll leisurely around man-made Sukhna Lake, you could easily mistake the scene for a European lakeside locale — except for the beautiful saris and colourful turbans worn by the locals.

Le Corbusier's architecturally splendid Capitol Complex comprising the High Court, Secretariat and the Legislative Assembly spread over some

100 acres, is one of the city's main drawcards. Today, it is internationally recognised as a modernist masterpiece and has been awarded UNESCO World Heritage status. It is here, too, that the architect's iconic *Open Hand* sculpture swings in the breeze above the park symbolising "peace and reconciliation. It is open to give and open to receive."

At weekends and on holidays, local families love to stroll in the manicured Rose Garden with its 1500 rose varieties, or meander through the labyrinthine Rock Garden created by Nik Chand. The former transport official transformed a rubbish dump full of debris from some 50 villages destroyed to build the new capital, into the second most visited attraction in India (after the Taj Mahal) with between 8,000-10,000 visitors a day.

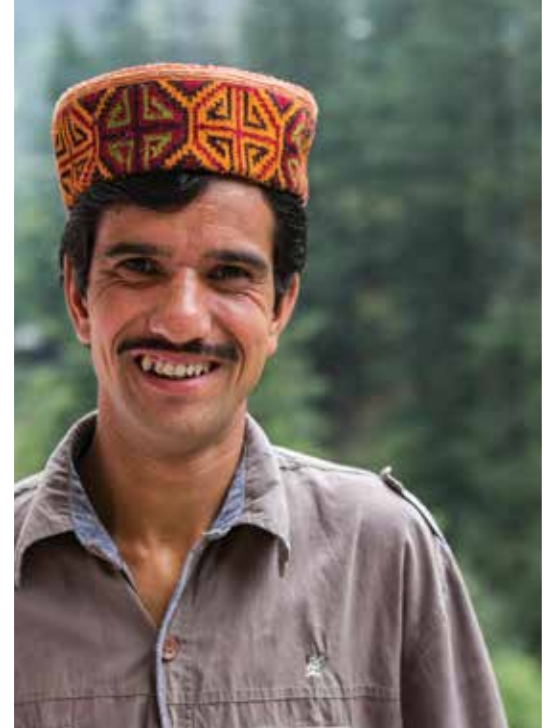
It might be just 115kms north-east to Shimla, but it's uphill nearly all

the way to its 2,073m mountaintop location in the mid-hills of the Western Himalayas. A fun way to approach this doyenne of the hill stations is to take the Himalayan Queen express train from Kalka, considered one of the most famous railway routes in the world. This UNESCO world-protected century-old narrow-gauge 'toy' train negotiates 102 tunnels and 889 bridges as it wends its way through the Himalayan foothills affording passengers beautiful views through pine forests and sleepy villages over its five-hour journey to Shimla.

But spare a thought for the British administration who, around May each year, would set out from Calcutta, the then capital, to decamp to Shimla for some six to eight months to avoid the summer heat. This 'city on the move' historically travelled by horseback, elephant-back, flat-bottomed bargeroles up the River Ganges — some even on palanquins.

Approaching Shimla, our driver/guide, Ramesh, points out the yellow spires of Christ Church that in the mid-1800s served the Anglican British community in this capital of Himachal Pradesh. Today, multi-coloured, multi-storied houses and residences cling to steep mountain slopes as the city continues to spread in its lofty location.

We stay a little out of town at the new Taj Theog Resort & Spa located on a ridge above thick forests of conifers, cedars and rhododendrons with spectacular views to dramatic snow-covered mountains and the Churdhar, the highest peak of the outer Himalayas. Snow edges the winding mountain road and the air is noticeably cooler and cleaner. At nearly 2,500m, the Taj thoughtfully has small oxygen canisters on hand should guests suffer from altitude sickness. Early mornings are brilliantly refreshing as the sun sparkles on the far horizons almost bringing these near-mythical peaks to life.



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- 6: Incense lighting, Tashi Jong Monastery
- 7: *Dham thaali*, the traditional dish of Himachal Pradesh
- 8: Shimla local wearing a traditional *pahari topi* cap
- 9: Viceregal Lodge, Shimla
- 10: Tea pickers, Palampur
- 11: The Lodge at Wah
- 12: Tea tasting, Wah Tea Estate



7

In Shimla, we wander along The Ridge — the central shop and café-lined pedestrian street that is still the heart of the town. We admire charming reminders of the bygone era such as the old Telegraph Office, the main post office, the Gaiety Theatre, Clarkes Hotel and Christ Church whose frescoes were copied from original designs by writer Rudyard Kipling's father. Born in India in 1865, the Nobel prize-winning author spent much time in Shimla in the 1880s, describing it as a "centre of power as well as pleasure". He wrote of Shimla's society, its raunchy social whirl of parties, amateur dramatics and cricket tournaments that gave the hilltop town its racy reputation.

The Ridge converges with the seven-kilometre long Mall, centre of the social scene at Scandal Point, so called because it was here that the Maharajah of Patiala kidnapped a young British girl to add to his harem.

Men here wear the *pahari topi*, a traditional cap worn in the Himalayan foothill regions. Made of pure wool — often in a tweed-style many have beautiful hand-woven *khadi* designs on the front.

A highlight is a visit to the impressive Viceregal Lodge, the 132-year-old Scottish baronial-style castle that became the home of the Viceroys of India for several months each year. It was from this seat of power, that the viceroys ruled the entire Indian Empire, which at that time comprised Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, the UAE, Sri Lanka, Singapore and today's India. It's difficult to comprehend that from this tiny hilltop village, one of the world's most powerful governments ruled more than one-fifth of the human race for nearly a century. Photographic displays in the lodge include images of British leaders who met with Viceroy Lord Louis Mountbatten to discuss Partition that would follow Independence.

The road to Palampur backtracks down the steep mountain whose sides are terraced with bright green wheat sprouts and ravines plunge to dry creek beds below. Women balance large bundles of cut grass on their heads, cows graze scant roadside grass and monkeys skip across the winding road.

After a lunch stop in the market town of Mandi, we pass several processions of musicians beating drums and blowing long brass trumpets called *karnals*, as these devotees of Lord Shiva take local gods 'out for a walk' to celebrate Shivratai festival.

Just out of Palampur, fourth generation tea plantation family member Surya Prakash and his wife, Upasana, welcome us to The Lodge at Wah. This eco-friendly accommodation offers six large bedrooms spread over three cottages overlooking a cared for garden with views through to the snow-capped Himalayas. Built



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from handcrafted bricks made from mud excavated when the foundation was being prepared, it features slate roofs, much recycled pine from the Old Palampur Courthouse plus doors and windows, and cedar from the estate.

The 500-acre tea estate is one of the largest in the little-known but burgeoning Kangra Valley tea-growing region of India. Named after a previous owner who was the son of the Nawab of Wah in Pakistan, what started as a humble two-room cowshed has been transformed into a cutting-edge factory producing a range of fine teas that find a ready market through wholesalers in Kolkata.

We take a tour of the factory including a tea tasting session prior to enjoying an evening sunset picnic in the tea garden around an open fire as the last rays of the sun glow pink on the snowy peaks around us. Dinner back at the lodge is a treat featuring

produce from the kitchen garden coupled with organic and fresh local ingredients. There might be a *dham thaali*, the traditional dish of this state of Himachal Pradesh, followed perhaps by freshly fried crispy *jalebi* — an Indian-style string doughnut dipped in saffron-flavoured sugar syrup.

Next day, we visit Tashi Jong Monastery where resident monks are cleaning up after a ceremony for locals. Home to some 200-plus Tantric Buddhists from Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and India who devote their entire life to meditation, it is a haven of calm and tranquility and we don't want to leave.

Everywhere we venture around here, we are in constant awe of the magnificent mountainous backdrop and aware of the cooler salubrious conditions, understanding perfectly why this pocket of India is, indeed, a breath of fresh air. ☺



12

OUR SUGGESTED *Journey*

'Fabled Hill Stations & the Golden Temple' Tailor-Made Journey
11 Days

Priced from \$5,165 per person twin share

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

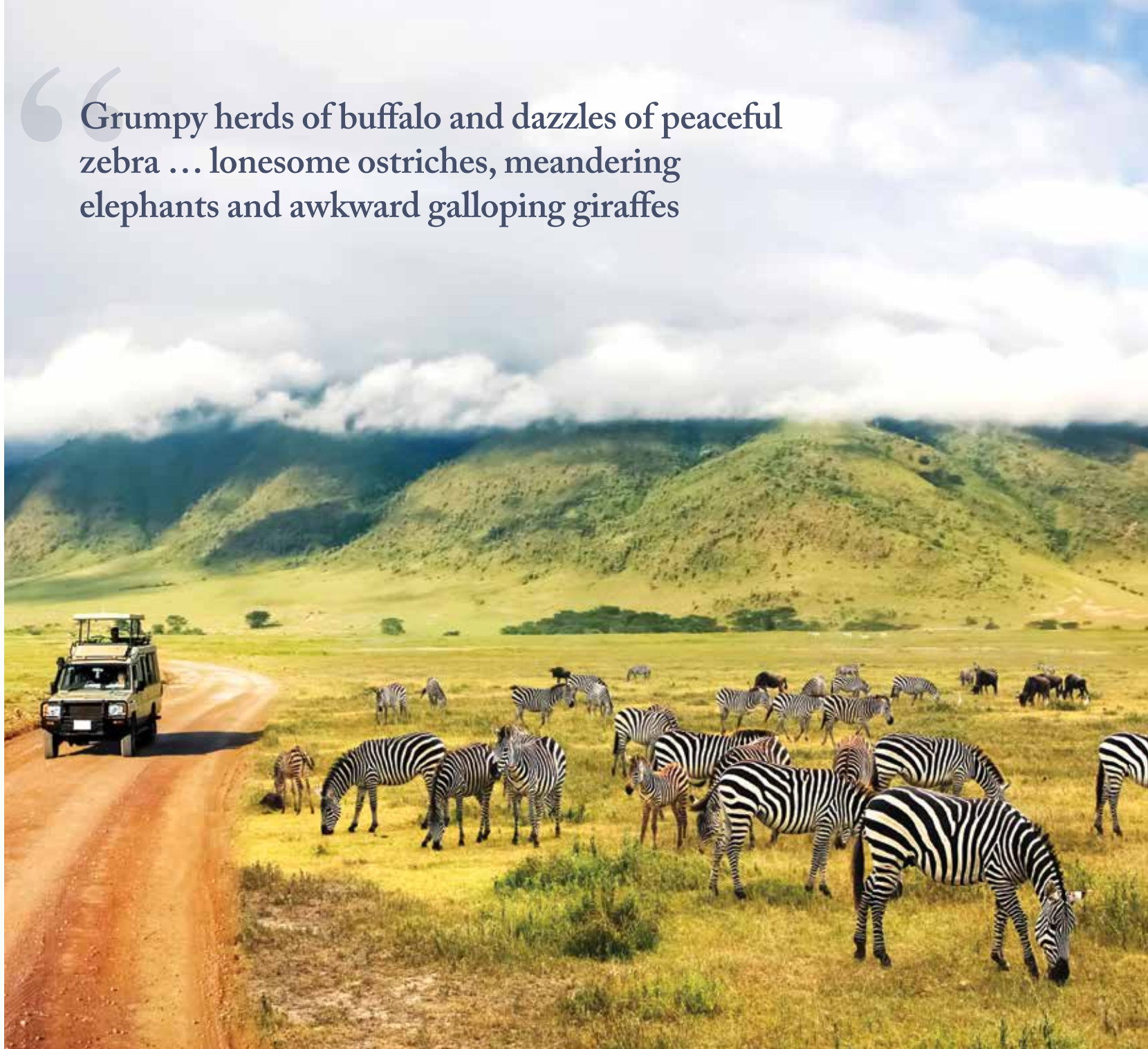


A full-page photograph of a savanna landscape. In the foreground, a large, gnarled tree branch extends across the frame. A lioness is lying on her side on the branch, and a small cub is curled up next to her. The background shows a vast, open savanna with scattered trees and a bright blue sky with white clouds.

CALL OF *the Wild*

With pent-up wanderlust finally released, big ticket trips — with conservation at their heart — are inspiring travellers with cash to spend. **Olivia Palamountain** heads to northern Tanzania for some animal adventures.

“Grumpy herds of buffalo and dazzles of peaceful zebra ... lonesome ostriches, meandering elephants and awkward galloping giraffes



1

TANZANIA

From the rim of Tanzania's breathtaking Ngorongoro Crater, the mystery of what lies 600 metres down is eclipsed only by the suspense of scanning for game on the fertile plains and forest floor below. Some 35,000 animals live corralled in this natural 'pen' — zebra, several big cats, gazelle, flamingo, leopard and even the elusive black rhino — all jostling for life in Africa's great wilderness.

I'm panning across the landscape through a pair of binoculars when a huge male lion jumps into focus. Impassive as a sphinx, his battle-worn face is smeared crimson with blood and a fresh kill — a zebra — lies at his feet. The 4WD falls silent, chatter replaced by the thud of beating hearts as we gawp at the magnificent creature in front

of us before moving on, giddy with adrenaline.

It's a rush to see the big ticket game but encounters with the little ones don't disappoint. The most unlikely and overlooked joker of the jungle has to be the warthog. Crowned with a blaze of bleached hair like your favourite 80s rocker, watching these sassy little tanks frolic en famille or genuflect to graze beats any blockbuster.

We bump and grind around the perimeter of Ngorongoro en route to Sanctuary Crater Camp, expertly navigated by our outstanding guides Dominic and Emmanuel, who manage to avoid the worst of the potholes while fielding 101 animal questions. Out of nowhere, a cluster of safari tents appears. A full bar

gleams in the late afternoon sun, echoed by the beaming team, who get busy offering sundowners and canapés. I've slept in my fair share of tents but they usually consist of budget canvas, hastily erected at a music festival. Transport these digs to Glastonbury and you'd never bother with the acts. Another level of luxe, the tents are filled with beds that swallow you whole, private decks, a shower bigger than my own at home and hair dryers for that all-important safari-chic blow dry. The best bit about 'camping' here? Instead of being roused by late-night revellers expect the gentlest of dawn wake-up calls from your personal butler, accompanied by steaming coffee and homemade biscuits.

In the common area, dinner is served family style. We swap stories

Previous spread: A pride of lions resting in a tree, Tarangire National Park
1: Ngorongoro Crater
2: Coffee break, Ngorongoro Crater
3: Bike repairs at the Doffa Bike Shop, an A&K Philanthropy project in Karatu
4: Sanctuary Ngorongoro Crater Camp



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over great bowls of beef stew, steamed tilapia, shredded cabbage with orange, coconut rice, mash and buttery carrots, blissfully unaware of the bush and its nocturnal creatures rousing all around us.

After a warming feast and a few large glasses of the excellent house wine, it's easy to forget where you are — but the fact that all guests must be accompanied by a member of staff after-dark acts as a sage reminder: we're not in Kansas anymore, Toto.

Heady and happy, I flop into bed, delighting in the knowledge that four Maasai warriors are guarding the camp, ready to wrestle any rogue predators that stray too close. If there's anything cooler than that, let me know.

Next stop? The Doffa Bike Shop in Karatu, a female-driven project from Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy that trains women (specifically single mothers and those living with HIV) as bicycle mechanics, fixing up imported second-hand bikes to be sold on for around 150,000 Tanzanian Shillings (approx. \$90). The team — Fabiola, Dora and Dora — resplendent in navy overalls, accessorised with chunky silver jewellery, present their handiwork. Soon, a bead shop and café will join the bike shop to create a community hub — but that's not what excites our hostesses the most.

'Even the men come here to get their bikes fixed,' giggles Fabiola, breaking into the most beautiful smile. Considering that most women do not work here, least of all in a

hands-on, consumer-facing trade, these ladies are doing something both extraordinary and important.

There's further interaction with Tanzania's women over a cooking class with Nazay at her homestead deep in the forest. I'm decked out in a vibrant, printed kanga, then set to work on the likes of pilau — a spiced rice dish that arrived here via India, fragrant with crispy onion, cumin, ginger, cardamom, turmeric and tomato. Shy at first, when Nazay realises how much I love to cook, she gets into her groove, scoffing sweetly at my clumsy efforts to recreate her delicious signature dishes.

Over in the Tarangire National Park, a different sort of snack is underway. This area is renowned as elephant country and it's moments



“Trippy flashes of sapphire and emerald iridescence courtesy of the lilac-breasted roller



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- 5: Roaming elephants, Tarangire National Park
6: Maasai, Sanctuary Swala Camp, Tarangire National Park
7: Lilac-breasted roller, Tarangire National Park
8: Sanctuary Swala Camp, Tarangire National Park

before a huge multi-generational herd ambles past, feeding on foliage as we motor past to Sanctuary Swala. A drop-dead gorgeous and eco-friendly permanent camp surrounded by ancient baobabs and acacia trees, with views over the savannah beyond, if magnificent Swala doesn't move you, the staff will. I thought I had rhythm until I danced with these guys.

Game drives offer up incredible animal rendezvous, but a walking safari with Swala's head ranger Joseph manifests low key treasures of the bush. Among trippy flashes of sapphire and emerald iridescence courtesy of the lilac-breasted roller, tiny cream butterflies and the hum of a million invisible insects are towering termite

mounds reminiscent of Giacometti sculptures and myriad medicinal trees used for such things as treating Alzheimer's or brewing beer.

It's from the aerial heights of a hot-air balloon, however, that the most remarkable expression of Tarangire is revealed. From grumpy herds of buffalo and dazzles of peaceful zebra, to lonesome ostriches, meandering elephants and awkward galloping giraffes, this surreal and captivating view of the juxtaposing creatures that coexist here humbles us all.

Action-packed days unfold into dreamy nights spent huddled around the campfire, immersed in the tranquillity of the bush and drinking in the sky as it shifts

from cerulean to pink then inky black, christened by a blaze of glittering stars. On our way back to civilisation, Tarangire delivers its final flourish.

A pride of four juvenile lions rests on a bank beside the road, languishing under a tree, 'waiting for their mother to return with dinner,' says Emmanuel. They eye us up with nonchalant disregard.

Spellbound, we linger, before continuing our journey through the park past sporadic totems of chalky bones that glow white in the heat of the day. Call me macabre, but there's something beautiful about their eerie pallor, a stark contrast to the vitality of the world around them. A warning sign? Maybe. Or just a reminder that death comes for us all — so invest in living while you can. 🦋

OUR SUGGESTED *Journey*

'Tanzania Under Canvas' Tailor-Made Journey
9 Days

Priced from \$10,460 per person twin share

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

Close to home

You don't have to travel far from home to find yourself somewhere amazing, experiencing intimate, authentic encounters and world-beating scenery. There's so much on offer right here in Australia and New Zealand, you can explore natural wonders and cultural attractions, with no language barrier, and with little time difference.

With A&K, you can choose your own adventure — physical, intellectual, cultural — from an incredible palette of natural and enhanced ingredients: tropical islands, vast red deserts, windswept beaches and snow-capped mountains. Glaciers and fiords, world-class wineries and sumptuous regional produce. Otherworldly golf courses, bracing eco walks, private cycling tours and bragworthy fly fishing. Swimming with whale sharks, or relaxing in front of an open fire, gazing out over Kings Canyon, the Marlborough Sounds or the Southern Ocean.

Most of the journeys are private which means travellers aren't locked into set dates or a group departure. You choose to travel privately on your own tailor-made journey, travelling when and with whom you want. Or you can travel on a small group journey limited to between just 6 and 12 guests meaning you'll enjoy more one-on-one interaction with your guides and gain rare access to experiences and unique encounters not available to larger groups.

Here's a snapshot of what you could be doing around Australia & New Zealand.



'Pristine Waters of Ningaloo Reef'
6 Days | Twin Share Per Person From \$5,195

ACTIVE ADVENTURES

There's no compromise on A&K's active adventures. By day, there's abundant activity in some of the region's most pristine natural ecosystems. And by night, fine food, wine and a beautifully-appointed lodge, tented camp or homestead. On A&K's expertly-planned adventures, you are accompanied by skilled guides who will share their extensive knowledge of local landscape, history, wildlife and flora. These itineraries are designed both for seasoned adventurers and those who are new to the delights of stepping out. Indulge yourself as you experience the magic of the great outdoors in fully-supported style.



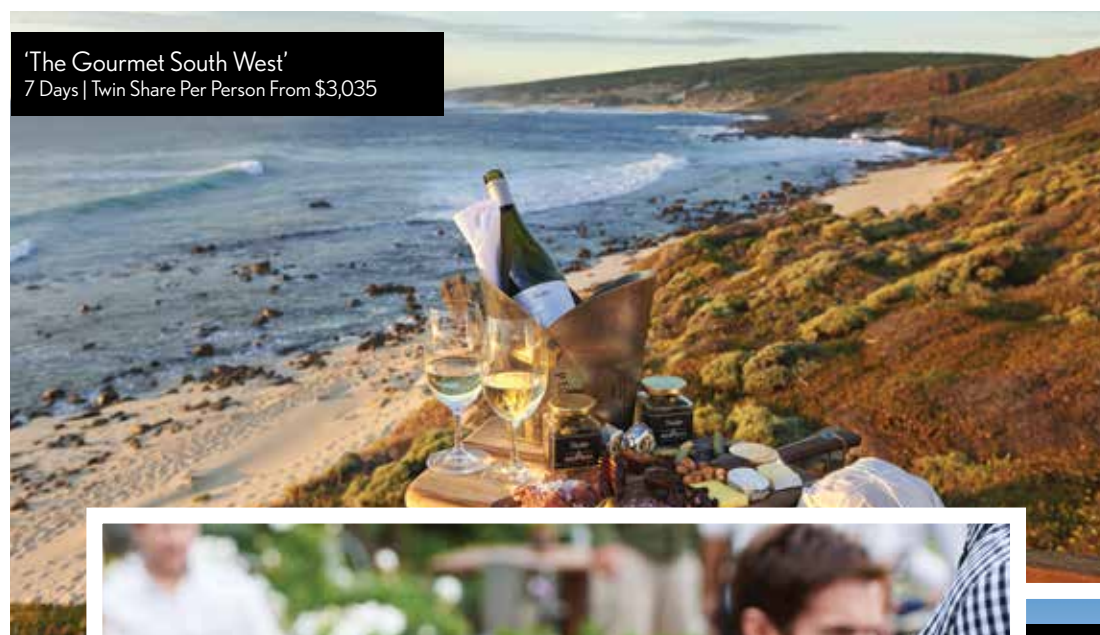
'Flinders Ranges to the Fleurieu'
8 Days | Twin Share Per Person From \$7,200



'Nelson Tasman Active Discovery'
7 Days | Twin Share Per Person From \$8,680



'Wildlife & Wandering: Maria Island'
6 Days | Twin Share Per Person From \$3,285



'The Gourmet South West'
7 Days | Twin Share Per Person From \$3,035

GOURMET EXPLORATIONS

Food and wine has been elevated to new heights in this world of celebrity chefs, reality cooking shows and award-winning produce. Close to everyone's heart and essential to our daily wellbeing, food and wine is also a key focus for many travellers. Australia and New Zealand are blessed with a vibrant and contemporary culinary scene matched by outstanding natural produce and world famous wines from vineyards right across the country. A&K's gourmet tailor-made journeys reveal gastronomic secrets with professional chefs, winemakers and produce merchants on hand to share their passion.



'Connoisseur's North Island'
8 Days | Twin Share Per Person From \$9,820



'Gourmet Secrets of Victoria'
5 Days | Twin Share Per Person From \$4,165

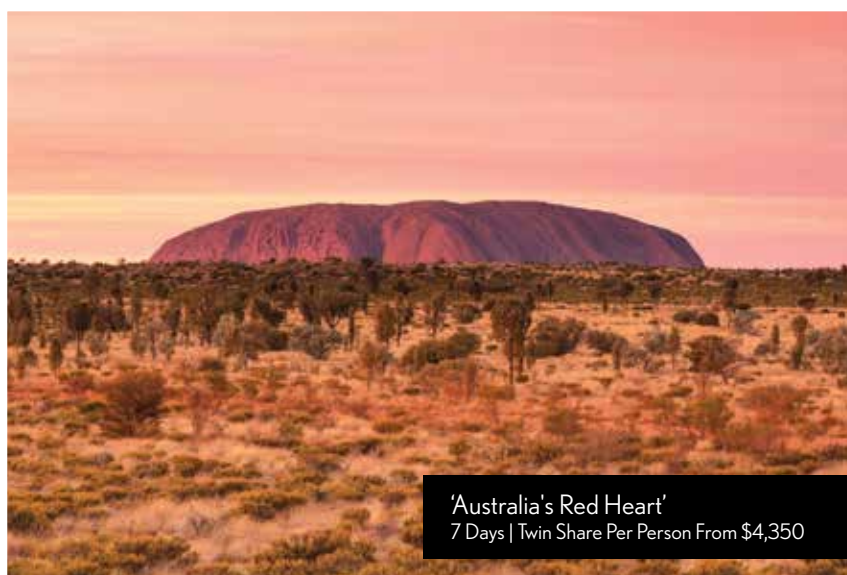
FAMILY ESCAPES

Travelling with children or grandchildren is a pleasurable and rewarding experience, with a powerful and lasting impact on family relationships. A&K, mindful of the needs of both parents and offspring, offers a range of expertly-designed itineraries ensuring a variety of adventurous, entertaining activities in some fascinating and diverse locations. Carefully-selected and comfortable accommodation provides a welcome haven for the whole family at the end of each day's journey. This is a wonderful opportunity to spend quality time exploring new regions together, creating shared memories which will endure as your young folk grow and mature.

'Family Adventure to Middle Earth'
6 Days | from \$6,105 total based on 2 adults +
2 children travelling

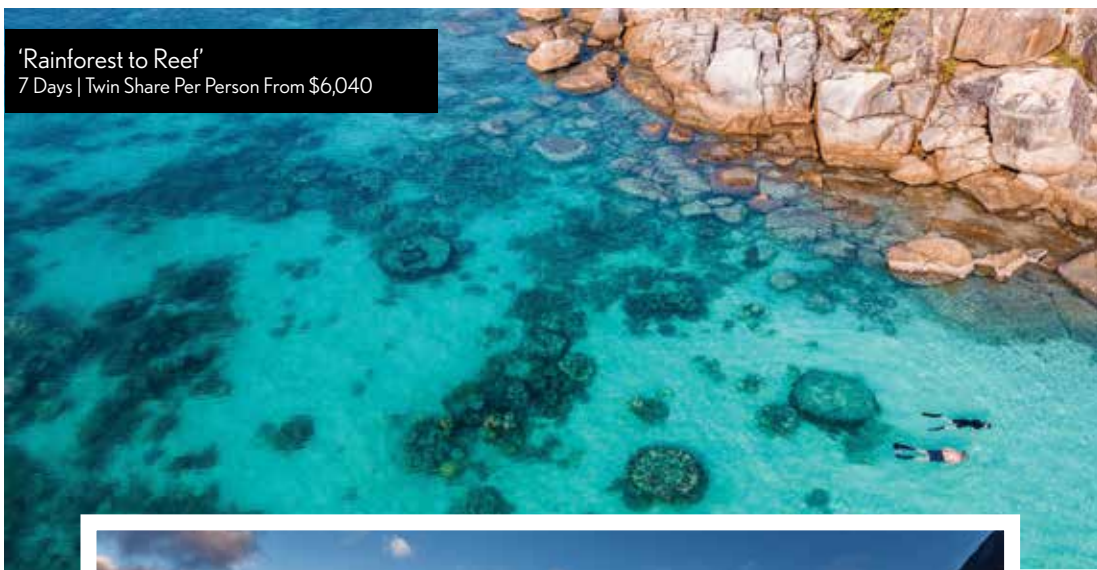


'Family Adventure: Tasmania Coast to Coast'
9 Days | from \$9,490 total based on 2 adults +
2 children travelling



'Australia's Red Heart'
7 Days | Twin Share Per Person From \$4,350

'Rainforest to Reef'
7 Days | Twin Share Per Person From \$6,040

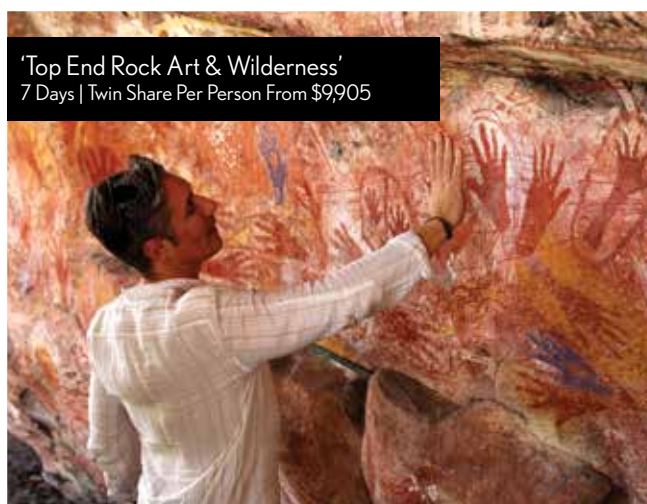


ICONIC EXPERIENCES

The discerning traveller, always seeking the stimulation of new and inviting destinations, knows the lure of a wild, unfamiliar landscape and the irresistible fascination of a new cultural horizon. A&K offers a range of epic journeys to satisfy the longings of the most experienced voyager, drawing on its extensive expertise to create innovative itineraries in truly remarkable locations. Hiking on the glaciers of Franz Josef, swimming with the whale sharks on Ningaloo Reef, and rock art in Arnhem Land will afford life-changing experiences, lasting memories, and a unique opportunity to indulge your curiosity about the world.



'South Island Discovery'
8 Days | Twin Share Per Person From \$5,265



'Top End Rock Art & Wilderness'
7 Days | Twin Share Per Person From \$9,905

'Tasmania: Wine, Wildlife & Wilderness'
11 Days | Twin Share Per Person From \$11,795



SMALL GROUP JOURNEYS

Our Small Group Journeys in Australia and New Zealand are intimate, immersive, shared adventures with a fine balance of guided activity and breathing room, allowing time and space for more exploration and self-discovery. Small groups with an average size of 6–12 guests also means more one-on-one interaction with your guides, and allows A&K to hand-pick distinctive accommodations that might not be an option for typically larger groups. Soak up epic landscapes and ancient cultures. Indulge in epicurean delights and meet the locals. You'll experience more than you ever thought possible on a single journey and with the privilege of rare access as only A&K can deliver.



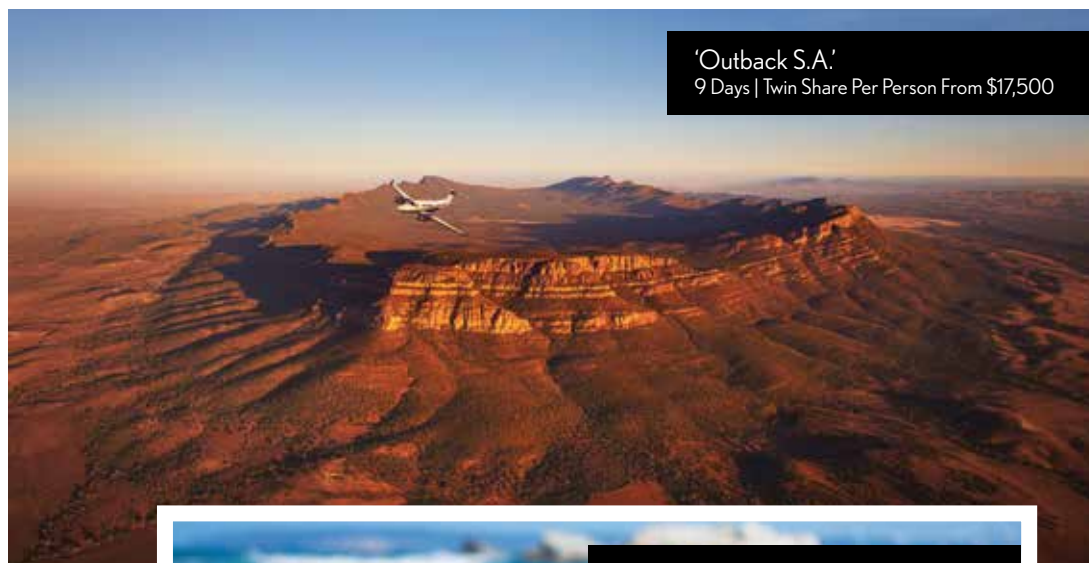
'Outback to the Reef'
7 Days | Twin Share Per Person From \$12,800

'Gourmet Secrets of New Zealand'
11 Days | Twin Share Per Person From \$11,280

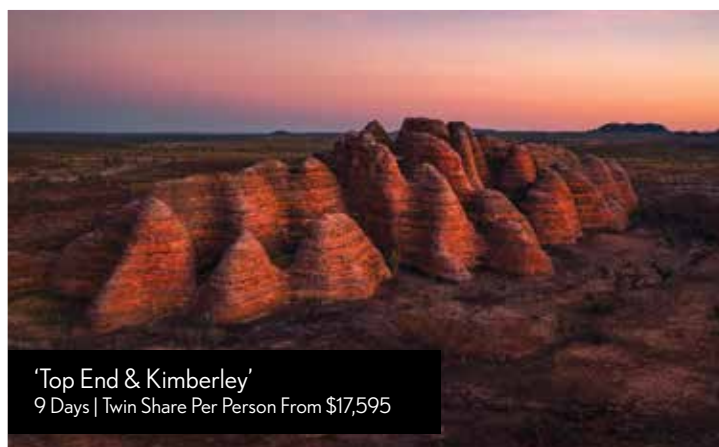


AIR SAFARIS

Discover some of Australia and New Zealand's remote and unique destinations by private charter. Travelling on board a private plane, this style of journey dissolves the distances between destinations, allowing you to see and experience more than you ever thought possible on a single itinerary. Be immersed in exclusive excursions and activities, enjoy handpicked accommodations chosen for their comfort, hospitality and true local character, visit exotic areas not easily accessible via commercial carriers, bypassing long lines, and travelling on a timetable based on your itinerary. It's air travel as it was always meant to be.



'Outback S.A.'
9 Days | Twin Share Per Person From \$17,500



'Top End & Kimberley'
9 Days | Twin Share Per Person From \$17,595



'Shores of the Southern Ocean'
9 Days | Twin Share Per Person From \$16,855

For more information on the full range of A&K Australia and New Zealand Tailor-Made Adventures, Small Group Journeys and Air Safaris, please visit www.abercrombiekent.com.au, call A&K on 1300 551 541 or your local travel agent.

Global Expertise: **A&K'S INSIDERS**



Travel is not only about the places you see and the things you experience but more importantly it's about the people you meet along the way. Not only fellow travellers but those individuals who reside in the locations you visit or spend many months each year in the field. The people who embody a particular culture, whose background is often vastly different to our own yet who provide singular access and understanding of their unique way of life, their customs, their music, their food and wine, their art and the beauty of their surrounds. With A&K, these are our expert guides and we'd like to introduce you to some of our most beloved.



HESHAM ABDULLAH EGYPTOLOGIST, CAIRO

Born and raised in Cairo's cosmopolitan Heliopolis, Hesham attended a private British school before studying history at university. Focusing on Egypt, his studies included ancient Egyptian history, the Greek and Roman period in Egypt as well as the history of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim religions in Egypt. Erudite and charming, Hesham brings Egypt to life with an educated understanding of current affairs, cultural nuances and a singularly engaging way of imparting his country's history. Not only can he name every pharaoh from every dynasty and decode the many hieroglyphs observed on the walls of tombs and temples, he will also take you to his favourite coffee shop overlooking the Nile and the lavish, but little known, Abdeen Palace in Cairo, a personal favourite of his. He will tell you where to eat the best koshari (an Egyptian delicacy) and source the finest Fayoum pottery, and always with a glint in his eye and a smile on his face.



HOUDA SLIMATI GUIDE, MOROCCO

A literary enthusiast, Houda was born in northern Morocco and today resides in atmospheric Tangier, Europe's gateway to Africa. Thanks to her teacher mother, Houda was immersed in literature from a young age and at university majored in English literature. Multi-lingual and with a gift for foreign languages, Houda graduated as a National Tour Guide in 1989 at a time when few women were accepted in the role. Her determination and resolve, coupled with an excellent command of the English language have imbued her with the talent to share all aspects of her homeland in the most engaging way. Always stylishly presented, friendly and open-minded, Houda loves nothing more than enlightening visitors on Morocco's rich cultural heritage, its world-famous cuisine and where to commune with nature. She'll take you to hidden treasures in the imperial cities and the best artisan workshops, to the finest stalls in the souks and into neighbourhood homes for an authentic lifestyle experience. She's the perfect companion on any journey through Morocco.



EVA POLINO GUIDE, ITALY

A born and bred Roman, tri-lingual Eva Polino has a long connection with, and deep passion, for art. After completing a degree in History of Art, with an experimental thesis on British contemporary art, she travelled to The Australian National University where she graduated with a Master's degree with Honours in History of Art. Returning to the motherland, she continued her studies focusing on Renaissance and Baroque architecture in Rome. Working in galleries and auction houses, including Sotheby's, she became a lecturer's assistant at the University of Rome before starting her career as a tour guide where she is able to concentrate her knowledge and personal passion. Eva loves nothing more than connecting visitors with Rome through the city's incredible art, its food and its fashion as well as the hidden secrets only a local can share — she makes the perfect companion on any visit to the Eternal City, your own personal insider in the know.



DR. MARIA PATRICIA SILVA RODRIGUEZ (LECTURER) & DR MARCO FAVERO (EXPEDITION LEADER), ANTARCTICA & THE ARCTIC

Husband and wife team, Patricia (Patri) and Marco are both passionate ecologists specialising in seabirds of the polar regions and conservation management. Born in Uruguay, Patri has worked in the Antarctic and Subantarctic since 1991 and has submitted many scientific papers in relation to the biology of several Antarctic seabird species like penguins, petrels, Antarctic shags and kelp gulls. Marco's background is in the biology and ecology of top marine predators and his more than 33 years of experience in Antarctica, includes seabird research, outreach and expedition leading. Over the past two decades he has been deeply engaged in marine conservation including a role, amongst other things, as Chairperson of the Advisory Committee for the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP).

Both Patri and Marco are regulars on A&K's expeditionary cruises to Antarctica and the Arctic in the capacity of lecturer and Expedition Leader respectively and are inspiring individuals to explore the Earth's far frontiers with. South Georgia is their favourite place for bird sightings but a chance sighting in the Arctic revealed the rare Gyrfalcon, a fierce predator and the world's largest falcon.

GODFREY MATHENGE SAFARI GUIDE, KENYA

Godfrey's story starts in the bush. He was born in 1962 to parents who belonged to the Mau Mau, a resistance movement that helped set the stage for Kenya's Independence in 1963. His parents were hiding in the forest around Mt. Kenya when Godfrey was born and the only initial record of his birth was a card from the British clinic where his mother had sought help after his birth. As Godfrey was growing up, the forest and nature remained a big part of his life. Although being accepted into Nairobi's Kenyatta University after school, a fortuitous invitation to apply for a prestigious new hospitality and tourism institute supported by the Swiss Government came Godfrey's way. His application was successful and he embarked on his current path studying tourism, tour guiding and German.

A professional safari guide for more than 15 years, Godfrey enjoys nothing more than sharing his vast knowledge of the bush and its animals with the many guests he meets from around the world. He has a keen interest in walking and has guided many guests through the Aberdare Range, up Mt Kenya and in the Laikipia area of Northern Kenya on guided camel safaris with the Samburu tribe. His great respect for the environment and preserving local cultures runs deep, an admirable quality appreciated by all who meet him.



BART PIGRAM BROOME, WA

Bart Pigram is a proud Yawuru man of the Broome region. He is intimately involved in a number of tourism operations as well as several successful cultural and heritage projects including the multi-award-winning travelling exhibition 'Lustre - Pearling and Australia' and the state award-winning Jetty to Jetty Heritage Trail, a heritage walk along the foreshore of Broome's Roebuck Bay. Bart is also a versatile musician both in contemporary musical song-writing form and traditional Aboriginal styles and recently has been contracted as guitarist and cultural advisor for Opera Australia's revived musical *Bran Nue Dae*.

Bart's pride in his Indigenous and multicultural heritage gives him a unique outlook on life and he generously imparts his particular knowledge and experience to visitors who join him in walking his ancestral lands. As long-time observers of the natural environment, his elders and those that preceded him have passed down vital information on the local flora and fauna, the surrounding landscapes, the elements and the seasons and how each interact. He in turn shares this with his guests.



DAN WALKER PASTORALIST, LONGREACH, QLD

Dan Walker is a living, breathing, genuine Outback Queensland icon. Fifth generation farmer with country in his blood, Outback Dan was raised and learned the ropes of farming on the family property, Camden Park Station outside of Longreach, a mere 18,000 acres! After 12 years running the family property, drought struck and Camden Park was destocked. Reinvention was required and Dan saw the potential in leveraging the history and scenic appeal of the property, a place visited by the Queen and Prince Phillip in 1970 and the home of Sir James Walker, Dan's respected grandfather who was knighted for his service to the Longreach community in 1972. Dan and his brother opened up the property to visitors wanting to live Australia's story in Outback Queensland.

A cheeky bloke, he's as suited to serving a cuppa with scones and mingling with guests as he is to feeding out and mustering a herd of cattle. Dan is not just a grazier. He's a pioneer, an innovator and a true Outback character.



a journey revealed

SOUTH KOREA: SUN & MOON

A Limited Edition Small Group Journey

PLANNING YOUR TRIP

WHAT?

South Korea: Sun & Moon - A Limited Edition Small Group Journey

12 days

Price from \$11,995 per person

WHEN?

Oct 12 - 23, 2022; Nov 16 - Nov 27, 2022.

INCLUDES

11 nights luxury accommodation; services of a Resident Tour Director, extensive guided sightseeing throughout; luxury transportation on the ground; entrance fees; breakfast daily, five lunches, five dinners.

FOR MORE INFO

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

One of Asia's most surprising destinations, South Korea is utterly captivating with a host of fascinating natural and cultural highlights. Known as much for its street food and high-speed internet as it is for its heavily militarised border, this economic powerhouse is both traditional and ultra-modern. Venture from hip and edgy Seoul, where new meets old and pop culture is alive and well, to folk villages and ancient temples. Uncover absorbing local customs, flavoursome culinary delights and picturesque scenery on this unforgettable adventure.

Days 1-4: Seoul

Four days to explore South Korea's vibrant capital in the company of your Resident Tour Director. You'll wander the expansive pleasure gardens of Gyeongbokgung Palace and peruse the exhibits at the National Folk Museum. Stroll the charming cobbled streets of Bukchon Hanok village, seeking out quaint teahouses and galleries to be immersed in traditional Korean culture. A visit to Gwangjang Market, the first permanent market in Korea, reveals fresh produce aplenty, textiles, handicrafts and items used in traditional medicine. A high energy demonstration introduces you to the 2,300-year-old Korean martial art, taekwondo.

On a journey north to the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), your guide, a North Korean defector, will enlighten you on the hardships of living under the storied censorship of the northern provinces, and share some Korean military history outlining the creation of the DMZ at the end of the Korean War. Much of your exploration is on foot, hiking through tunnels, along rugged paths, to the Unification Bridge and other places of interest.

Returning to Seoul there are intriguing options to further reveal the country's unique culture including a kimchi making class, an artistic immersion at the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art or a pedicab ride through the traditional village of East Bukchon. Added experiences are included at a nearby farming village and Suwon Hwaseong Fortress where guests can try their hand at traditional Korean archery.

Accommodation: Grand Hyatt Seoul

Days 5-7: Gyeongju & Andong

A thrilling journey on the KTX high speed train across the country delivers you to Gyeongju, a city overflowing with tombs, temples, rock carvings, pagodas, Buddhist statuary and palace ruins which you'll explore. A traditional tea ceremony with local monks at heritage listed Bulguksa Temple is a humbling experience before admiring heritage listed Seokguram Grotto with its monumental statue of Buddha considered a national treasure.

Step inside Cheomseongdae Observatory, the oldest existing astronomical observatory in Asia, and visit Kyochon Village where you're invited to dress in the traditional hanbok for lunch. The beautifully restored Donggung Palace and Wolji Pond are sure to impress.

Next stop Andong, known for its open-air heritage museums. At Hahoe Folk Village, observe many preserved cultural traditions and architectural styles and witness the Hahoe mask dance, a ritual originating over 600 years ago, in praise of the local deity. Taste South Korea's most popular tippie – soju – and savour a traditional Korean meal.

Accommodation: Hilton Hotel Gyeongju

Days 8-10: Busan

On the coast in Busan, explore Korea's largest seafood markets and the highlights of this colourful maritime city including Haedong Yonggungsa Temple, Igidae Park and breathe in spectacular sea views on a trek along the Oryukdo Skywalk.

A sobering visit to the UN Memorial Cemetery honours UN troops killed in battle during the Korean War. There is time to wander through Gamcheon Culture Village, home to colourfully painted houses, delicious street food, spectacular street art and a labyrinth of intriguing alleyways.

At Taejongdae Park, marvel at the unique rock formations and dense forests which drop down to the sea and visit the contemporary memorial and conference hall, Nurimaru APEC House, on Dongbaekseom Island. Your coastal experience finishes with a stroll on the crushed shell sands of popular Haeundae Beach.

Accommodation: Park Hyatt Busan

Day 11: Busan – Seoul

On the way back to Seoul, take a cable car ride to the summit of Palgongsan Mountain with astonishing views en route. In Daegu, visit Yangnyeong Market, where natural herbs and products used in traditional Korean healing remedies are sold. At the Yangnyeongsi Museum of Oriental Medicine, learn more about traditional practices. Return to Seoul by high-speed train and celebrate your South Korean adventure at a farewell dinner.

Accommodation: Grand Hyatt Seoul



- 1: Classic Korean bulgogi and side dishes
- 2: Water Pavilion, Gyeongbokgung Palace, Seoul
- 3: Bukchon Hanok Village, Seoul
- 4: Haedong Yonggungsa Temple, Busan
- 5: Tumuli Park, Gyeongju City



ANTARCTICA

After COVID grounded A&K's Latin America Product Manager **Paul Medley** for the better part of two years, the chance to visit one of the world's last frontiers was far too good to refuse. Spending a memorable two weeks on an expeditionary cruise to Antarctica and its far-flung islands, Paul returned with a newfound appreciation for the power and fragility of the White Continent and an understanding of how important it is to protect this pristine part of the world for future generations. Here are some excerpts from the ship's log:



Paul Medley
Product Manager,
A&K Australia



JANUARY 6, 2022 | USHUAIA, ARGENTINA

... we arrived at the pier to our state-of-the-art, home afloat, Le Lyrial. And what a vessel. Embarking, we were welcomed by staff and crew and shown to our staterooms with safety briefings and time to explore the ship before a Champagne welcome. After dinner aboard, the crew weighed anchor and our sleek vessel slipped away into the Beagle Channel leaving the lights of Ushuaia behind. Giant petrels banked and a black-browed albatross soared astern signalling the wonders that awaited us in the Southern Ocean.

JANUARY 10, 2022 | FORTUNA BAY AND GRYTVIKEN

Once anchored, we boarded Zodiacs and soon found ourselves ashore at the head of a large bay, where the beach was awash with seals, fur and Elephant, including pups in abundance. A short hike to a king penguin rookery up the glacial valley, amid driving snow and gusting winds, allowed us to observe the adults incubating eggs, chicks begging incessantly for food and skuas patrolling the skies above.

Landing on a beach just below the Grytviken cemetery, we paid our respects to the great explorer Shackleton who is buried there alongside scores of whalers, while the whaling station's rusty storage tanks, dilapidated boats, old industrial machinery and church are haunting reminders of the industry which decimated whale numbers in the early 20th century.



JANUARY 12, 2022 | GOLD HARBOUR AND COOPER BAY

Early morning revealed the rugged mountains along South Georgia's southeast coast... A king penguin colony was huddled farther down the beach, with groups of brown woolly-coated chicks scattered around the colony's edges. Northern giant petrels stalked their prey while brown skuas alighted on the sand. Over lunch, flocks of blue-eyed shags flew across the ship's bow as we entered Cooper Bay amidst rafts of macaroni penguins.

**JANUARY 15, 2022 | PENGUIN ISLAND
AND TURRET POINT**

Anchored off Penguin Island, a small volcanic cone off King George Island, we ventured by Zodiac onto its boulder-strewn beach and marvelled at a colony of chinstrap penguins amidst the lush vegetation of the island's lower slopes. Southern giant petrels soared overhead, flying to and from their nesting colony on a rocky rise above the beach. Bleached whale bones lay scattered along the beach, presenting chilling reminders of the last century's intense whale harvest.



**JANUARY 16, 2022 | ACTIVE SOUND
AND BROWN BLUFF**

Overnight 'Le Lyréal' crossed the open water of the Bransfield Strait under windless conditions to the entrance of Antarctic Sound navigating through thick ice toward Jonassen and Andersson islands. We boarded the Zodiacs and found ourselves floating amid huge tabular icebergs, some 30 metres high, and low, flat fragments of old sea ice. We nosed up to icy platforms where Adélie penguins rested and preened. Several tobogganed their way across the flat ice, picking up impressive speed.



**JANUARY 17, 2022 | MIKKELSEN ISLAND
AND CIERVA COVE**

Waking to the sight of the Antarctic Peninsula's snow- and ice-covered spine brightly illuminated by the magnificent morning sun heralded another awe-inspiring day. A humpback whale was spotted, and a parade of gentoo and chinstrap penguins coming and going from their colonies. A surprise glass of Champagne in the breathtaking icy surrounds was a fitting way to celebrate the day.

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