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Issue 97

& travel

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Snap happy in China

When it comes to taking an impressive panorama of China, there's little doubt leading Australian photographer Ken Duncan has been spoilt for choice in finding inspirational places to photograph. An annual visitor to China with long-time Asia specialist Helen Wong's Tours, Duncan has been blessed in capturing some of the country's finest imagery, from the steps of the Great Wall to Guilin's evocative Li River and the scenic alpine region around Jiuzhaigou, one of the places he will visit on a photography tour he will lead later this year (2016). It's through the camera lens that Duncan is able to capture the very essence of a country that thrives on offering many a wow factor.

helenwongstours.com



Keemala is king

Nestled in the hills overlooking Kamala Village and the Andaman Sea, Keemala is a world apart from the average Phuket resort in both style and ethos. A retreat from the everyday, Keemala is a sanctuary for those wishing to rebalance, rejuvenate and relax. Designed as an expansion of the surrounding landscape, Keemala makes use of natural features such as mature trees, streams and waterfalls creating a wonderland for guests. Keemala's fantastic clay cottages, tent villas, tree houses and bird's nest villas all boast private pools and are designed around the stunning location. The resort embraces a Thai cultural philosophy with spa treatments, holistic programs and gastronomic choices that will leave guests enchanted. keemala.com





Japan's Autumn Colours

Explore Japan at its brilliantly coloured best on World Journey's 13-day 'Japan's Autumn Colours' Tour. Departing 2 October 2016 the small group hosted journey will travel from Sapporo on the northern island of Hokkaido down to Tokyo. The journey will take guests past flower farms along the so called 'Patchwork Road', via dramatic forested mountains, pristine lakes and idyllic rural scenes all the way to ultra-modern Tokyo. See all the top sights, add amazing food, ancient Buddhist and Shinto temples, heavenly hot springs resorts and all the beautiful autumn foliage for a Japan experience like no other. worldjourneys.com.au



Gourmet Tassie

Active travellers with a taste for fine wine and food can indulge themselves in a new five-day tour that offers the perfect balance of rugged adventure and gastronomic decadence. With a population of only 650 permanent residents Bruny Island is one of Tasmania's best kept secrets, with magnificent scenery, pristine coastlines and abundant wildlife including seals, dolphins and seabirds. Departing Hobart, the Bruny Island Gourmet Hike and Bike Tour includes nature walks, a wildlife cruise and cycling. Revel at the splendour of Hastings Cave - the largest dolomite cave in the Southern Hemisphere, amongst many other attractions, and feed the senses with local oysters, artisan cheese and fine wine-tasting. tasmanianexpeditions.com.au



Versailles by Blue Bike

The Château de Versailles, which has been on UNESCO's World Heritage List for three decades, is one of the most beautiful achievements of 18th-century French art and a wonderful way to discover its beauty is on a tour with Blue Bike Tours. First stop is a visit to the local market to browse the food stalls and pick out what you want for a picnic along the lake, then spend the day discovering the exquisite gardens, the inside of Marie Antoinette's private domain, Grand & Petit Trianons, and then it is off the bike to take advantage of the company's Skip-The-Line access into the Palace itself, to marvel at the Hall of Mirrors. The bikes are excellent and as you ride around from place to place you will learn about the life, legends and scandals of the Sun King, Marie-Antoinette and the French Revolution. bluebiketours.com

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WIN

A SIX- OR SEVEN-NIGHT HOLIDAY WITH PRINCESS CRUISES®

Vacations & Travel magazine and Princess Cruises®, are giving you the chance to win a wonderful cruise to Tasmania. Choose from a six-night cruise onboard Golden Princess® from Melbourne or a seven-night cruise from Sydney onboard Emerald Princess®.

BROADEN YOUR HORIZONS AND RENEW YOUR SPIRIT WITH PRINCESS CRUISES

It's easy to get lost in the routine of daily living. Which is why it's so important to step away and reconnect with your life. And there's no better way than on a cruise with Princess Cruises®.

Out at sea, you're free to relax, unwind and feel the joy of the journey. More than just a holiday, embark on an adventure of thrilling discoveries and enriching experiences – unexpected moments that reawaken your senses of elation and wonder, exotic tastes and cultures that expand your horizons, and shared times with family and new friends you've made onboard that you'll never forget. New Princess offerings inspire your soul – like captivating cuisine designed by celebrity Chef Curtis Stone, decadent creations from master chocolatier Norman Love, theatrical productions from stage show

legends and more. A cruise should also be about discovery, which is why we've partnered with Discovery Communications to create Discovery at Sea, an array of terrific activities and experiences – onboard and on shore – inspired by the TV shows you love. Whether it be Stargazing at Sea or understanding How it's Made, there is something for everyone! You'll come back renewed, refreshed with wonderful memories, and life won't seem quite so routine anymore.

CRUISE TASMANIA WITH PRINCESS CRUISES

Whatever your dream destination – laid-back South Pacific islands, the culturally rich cities of Asia and Australia or far beyond – Princess Cruises can help you make discoveries that defy expectations and leave you with a lifetime of memories.

Explore the 'Apple Isle' with Princess Cruises, cruising from Sydney or Melbourne. Delve into our colonial history, discover scenic coastlines and even meet a Tasmanian Devil. Visit our last penal settlement – the infamous Port Arthur – on the wild and scenic Tasman Peninsula. Visit the historic site for a Discovery Recommended guided tour of the open-air ruins and restored buildings. Or perhaps you would prefer to travel to Cradle Mountain, set in the stunning national park that is part of the Tasmanian World Heritage Wilderness Area. Witness the towering peaks reflected in Dove Lake – a must see!

Cruising out of Sydney, your journey starts from the moment you step onboard *Emerald Princess*®. This ship, launched in 2007, is one of the largest cruise ships in the Princess fleet, coming to Australia for her inaugural season in 2016. She offers nearly 900 balcony



The prize includes

- Either a seven-night cruise from Sydney onboard *Emerald Princess*® on 12 December 2016 OR
- A six-night cruise from Melbourne onboard *Golden Princess*® on 14 November 2016 or 12 January 2017
- Accommodation for two in an oceanview stateroom



staterooms from which to take in the colourful sunrise over the ocean, or capture a breathtaking sunset in Venice. Leisurely days spent onboard in the Piazza-style Atrium are relaxing and entertaining, with the nearby International Café and Vines wine bar fulfilling your cravings for warm cookies, toasted paninis and even hand-rolled sushi. Whether you're getting refreshed with a workout in the Fitness Centre or putting your feet up at Movies Under the Stars®, your experience onboard *Emerald Princess*® is sure to be unforgettable.

For those cruising out of Melbourne, you will escape completely onboard *Golden Princess*® - a brilliant ray of sunshine in any holiday destination. Pamper yourself with a calming massage in the Lotus Spa® or de-stress as Serenity Stewards offer you refreshing beverages and light snacks in The Sanctuary®. Providing you with a wide array of restful venues onboard, including the Piazza and Movies Under the Stars®, *Golden Princess*® is truly a relaxed, rejuvenating retreat at sea. •



To enter, go to vacationsmag.com, sign up for Vacations & Travel's informative e-newsletter and tell us in 25 words or less why you would love to win one of the Princess Cruises® specified above.

Entries must be received by 31 March 2016, and the lucky winner will be notified by email.

Terms and Conditions:

Competition is open to residents of Australia and New Zealand only. The prize is for two people and must be taken on the dates listed here. Prize includes accommodation in an Oceanview Stateroom, onboard main meals (with the exception of those restaurants which have an additional cover charge), onboard daytime activities, including the sports court, pools and fully equipped gym, evening entertainment, nightclubs (with the exception of those activities and facilities which have an additional cover charge), and all port charges and taxes.

The prize provided by Princess Cruises does not include airfares, transfers to or from the winner's home to the port of Sydney, NSW or Melbourne, VIC, additional accommodation made necessary by flight schedules, shore excursions or drinks purchased onboard, passports, visas, vaccinations, spending money, taxes (other than those mentioned above), additional activities including spending money for the casino, insurance, items of a personal nature, in-room charges and all other ancillary costs. The winner may be required to present their credit card at time of accommodation check in. The prize must be taken on the set cruise dates, which are:

- *Emerald Princess* - 7 nights Roundtrip Sydney - Dec 12, 2016,
- *Golden Princess* - 6 nights Roundtrip Melbourne - Nov 14, 2016
- *Golden Princess* - 6 nights Roundtrip Melbourne - Jan 12, 2017

During the entire duration of the prize, a nominated parent/guardian must accompany any person under 18 years of age. Standard terms and conditions of travelling with Princess Cruises will apply. For details, see Booking and Passage Conditions at www.princess.com which passengers will be bound by.

The Promoter reserves the right to refuse to allow the winner and/or his/her travelling companion to take part in any or all aspects of the prize if the Promoter determines in its absolute discretion that the winner and/or his/her guest are not in the mental or physical condition necessary to be able to safely participate in the prize, or if they pose a risk to the safety and wellbeing of any other passenger.

Subject to the unclaimed prize draw clause, if for any reason the winner does not take the prize at/by the time stipulated by the Promoter, then the prize will be forfeited.

If the prize is unavailable, the Promoter, in its discretion, reserves the right to substitute the prize with a prize of the equal value and/or specification, subject to any written directions from a regulatory authority.

The prize, or any unused portion of the prize, is not transferable or exchangeable and cannot be taken as cash. Vacations & Travel magazine will not be held liable for any loss or harm to prize winners. Travel insurance is the responsibility of all prize winners and we strongly recommend comprehensive cover.


PRINCESS CRUISES
 come back new™



Glasgow by Prior Arrangement

By Prior Arrangement has released a selection of signature bespoke tours that are so much more than just sightseeing. Indulge in the eclectic art lover's paradise that is Glasgow on a five-day tour celebrating Scotland's premiere architect, post-impressionist designer and leading representative of the art nouveau movement – Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Take in world-class architecture, modern art museums and a vibrant music scene with a knowledgeable guide. Or lose yourself in an exotic cultural experience in Morocco; mysterious Marrakesh, the Atlas Mountains, the spectacular Essaouira coastline or the revered Festival of World Sacred Music. Immerse yourself in Morocco's striking interior design and rich traditions, again led by an expert in the field. Other 2016 destinations include epicurean explorations of provincial France and South Africa. bypriorarrangement.com

Dance with Wolves in South Dakota

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the release of the movie *Dances with Wolves*, a triumph in every way for Kevin Costner. The movie was filmed entirely in South Dakota and visitors can go to many movie sites while enjoying some quintessential South Dakota experiences. Enjoy the chuckwagon dinner and music show at Fort Hays, where scenes were filmed in the Fort's headquarters and the supply house, spend time in Spearfish Canyon, where the winter scenes were filmed, and see the buffalo in Custer State Park on a jeep ride or on horseback. Shop at Prairie Edge where Kevin bought a lot of the clothes and props used in the movie and visit Kevin's own attractions in Deadwood – *Tatanka: Story of The Bison*, and The Midnight Star Casino, which features many of the costumes used in the movie. While in the area, visit Badlands National Park, Crazy Horse Memorial, Mt Rushmore and check to see if there is a Pow Wow on – there are nine Indian reservations in South Dakota. travelsouthdakota.com; realamerica.com.au



Up the Tempo in Europe

Greece, Turkey, Slovenia and Croatia have never looked better and Tempo Holidays has an excellent brochure focusing on these emerging and popular destinations. On the 10-day 'Ionian Odyssey' island-hopping package discover the Greek capital, Athens, before spending five days exploring the majestic beauty of Kefallonia, the island setting for *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*. You will discover the ethereal Cave of Melissani, home to age-old legend and mythology and set amongst the twinkling Mediterranean seascape. A short ferry trip away is Zakynthos, your home for the next three nights, known for its sandy beaches and secluded coves surrounded by stunning cliffs. tempoholidays.com



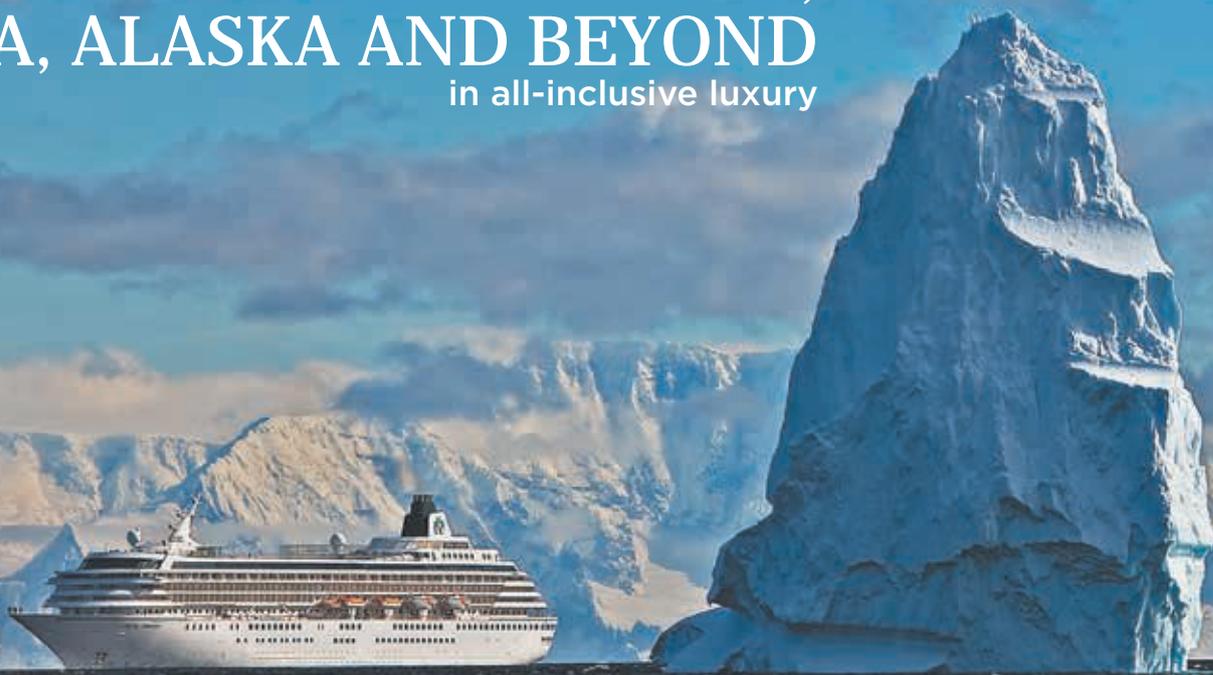
A new Bannisters

Bannisters by the Sea has been very popular at its South Coast of NSW location, thanks to its sea views, stylish accommodation, the highly-acclaimed Rick Stein at Bannisters restaurant and the Day Spa. Bannisters has just opened a new accommodation option – Bannisters Pavilion. With 33 luxury guest rooms and two penthouse suites, the new hotel is steps away from beautiful Mollymook Beach. The expansive rooftop of the property will be a highlight for guests, with its pool, sun beds, private lounge spaces and bar and grill which will offer a menu inspired by Mediterranean, Southern Californian and Mexican cuisines. Guests of Bannisters Pavilion will be able to access all of the facilities of big sister, Bannisters by the Sea. bannisters.com.au



EXPLORE ANTARCTICA, ASIA, ALASKA AND BEYOND

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Where would you like to go?

From the regal wonders of The Hermitage to the Imperial treasures of the Forbidden City, the World's Most Awarded Luxury Cruise Line explores iconic destinations with exceptional all-inclusive Book Now fares. Across the world's great oceans, *Crystal Symphony* and *Crystal Serenity* offer you easy getaways close to home - think Papeete to Auckland 09 December 2016 - or intriguing explorations of faraway lands.

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*Terms and Conditions: Fares listed are in US dollars, per person, double occupancy are subject to availability and include taxes. Europe fare: V6209, 17 Apr 2016, 7-day Venice to Athens voyage aboard *Crystal Symphony*; Asia fare: V6304, 29 Feb 2016, 12-day Bali to Singapore voyage aboard *Crystal Serenity*; Alaska/Canada fare: V6313, 26 Jun 2016, 7-day Anchorage to Vancouver voyage aboard *Crystal Serenity*; South America fare: V6202, 13 Jan 2016, 14-day Round-trip Buenos Aires voyage aboard *Crystal Symphony*; Fares are reviewed on 31 December 2015. All itineraries, fares, programs and policies are subject to change. Other restrictions and terms and conditions apply. Crystal Cruises offers each guest the opportunity to dine at least once on a complimentary basis in Prego and at least once in Silk Road or the Sushi Bar. Additional reservations or visits are subject to a US\$30 per person fee, subject to availability. **Free WiFi minutes vary per stateroom: Deluxe Stateroom, Penthouse (PH) guests - 60mins per person, per day; Penthouse Suite (PS) guests - 90mins per person, per day; Crystal Penthouse (CP) guests - Unlimited free WiFi/Internet Contact Wiltrans International for full terms and conditions. Issue date: 30 November 2015.

Spaced out

Immerse yourself in an out of this world experience at The Kameha Grand Zurich Hotel. Its newly launched Space Suite, designed by German artist Michael Najjar, who hopes to be the first contemporary artist in space, boasts universe motifs, a zero gravity bed and steam bath with artistic views across space, plus rocket engine inspired spot lights, exclusive novels, films and audiobooks about space travel. With this new suite, one of 12 inspired theme-suites, Kameha Grand Zurich continues to transcend standard approaches to travel, going above and beyond the needs of business or leisure travellers visiting Zurich by offering them something different that will delight guests at every turn. kamehagrandzuerich.com



Elephant Hills

Imagine staying in a luxury camp in scenery so beautiful you have to pinch yourself every morning when you wake up. Add the beauty of much loved elephants, looked after and allowed to free roam in beautiful terrain, and you have Elephant Hills in Thailand. Elephant Hills has two camps, The Elephant Camp and the floating Rainforest Camp on Cheow Larn Lake, both situated in Khao Sok's spectacular rainforest. Choose the popular Jungle Lake Safari and stay in both camps, go canoeing, walk in the jungle, relax in camp and enjoy an experience helping wash and feed the elephants. Despite being tucked away in the forest, these camps are easily reachable from popular beach destinations like Phuket, Khao Lak, Khanom, Krabi and even Koh Samui. elephanthills.com



Spectacular Sonora

Accessible only by sea or air, Sonora Resort is a luxury wilderness retreat located in the Discovery Islands, just off the coast of British Columbia. Nestled in an archipelago surrounded by virgin wilderness filled with wildlife and oceans teeming with salmon, every room of the opulent retreat commands a stunning view of the snow-capped peaks and ocean. Guests can soak in soothing mineral pools, fish pristine trout bearing rivers and calm ocean bays, view grizzlies in their natural habitat, or explore surrounding islands and inlets to find wildlife on an eco-adventure tour accompanied by exceptional guides. To complement Sonora's beautiful natural surroundings, only the freshest local ingredients are prepared by the resort's accomplished chefs, paired with world-class wines and served overlooking the beautiful blue. relaischateaux.com



White Night in Melbourne

One of Melbourne's most celebrated cultural events returns for one night only in 2016. White Night Melbourne offers a mix of free and ticketed entertainment including visual arts, illuminations, music, theatre, special dining experiences, film, design and performances. An initiative of the Victorian Government, the event is Australia's contribution to the major global phenomenon Nuit Blanche, with 23 international cities including Paris, Toronto and Sao Paulo forsaking their cultural institutions to the public for 12 hours. You can soak up all that Melbourne's creative industries have to offer from 7pm on Saturday 20 February 2016. whitenightmelbourne.com.au



Long live Longleat

Wiltshire's Longleat Safari Park will host a year-long program of celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of its safari park with events featuring animals, acrobats, dancers, musicians, gymnasts and more. Still one of the UK's leading wildlife attractions, it was opened to the public in 1966 by the sixth Marquess of Bath. The first of its kind to be created outside of Africa, Longleat, which dates back to 1580, saw animals able to move freely across hundreds of acres of land and interact naturally with each other. The groundbreaking concept of a drive through a safari park proved a hugely popular draw for visitors and began a revolution in zoological collections that spread across the globe. Today the safari park is home to more than 1,250 animals as well as animatronic dinosaurs and attractions that include everything from a stingray pool to a bat cave. The Gardens of Longleat, designed by Capability Brown, are also worth a look. longleat.co.uk; visitbritain.com

Game of Thrones

The sprawling medieval walls, imposing castle tower gate and beautiful surrounding landscapes of Winterfell Castle and Demesne, located just 40 minutes from Belfast, were used extensively for the filming of HBO's epic adaption of the *Game of Thrones* novels by George R.R. Martin. Now, thanks to Winterfell Tours you can jump aboard a Westeros Cruiser bicycle for a Filming Locations Cycle Tour to sites where many pivotal *Game of Thrones* scenes were filmed. Or take an Archery Movie Set Experience and stand on set in exactly the same spot as Jon Snow and Robb Stark taught young Bran the art in the show. You can even dress up in character yourself and fire off live arrows. For a unique overnight getaway, check in to one of the glamping pods deep in the Winterfell woods. gameofthrones-winterfelltours.com





Smart art in Cape Town

Cape Town is abuzz with creative energy, with the streets awash with galleries, public art, street art as well as art, decor and design events. The opening of the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art later this year will add another highlight to the list. The Cape Grace hotel on the V&A Waterfront is the perfect base from which to explore the many attractions, arty and otherwise, of this beautiful city. Cape Grace recommends taking a street art tour of Cape Town with CoffeeBeans Routes, meeting local artists and checking out hipster art in Woodstock. You'll visit the Iziko South African National Gallery, take an art class and browse the galleries of the city. Cape Grace also has a wonderful collection of antique furniture and artefacts from the Cape area, as well as being one of the best five-star hotels in town. capegrace.com

Livingstone presumed

For a taste of Africa in style, The Royal Livingstone hotel boasts a fantastic position on the banks of the Zambezi River, upstream of Zambia's mighty Victoria Falls where it thunders into Batoka Gorge. The Royal Livingstone's 173 rooms are tastefully furnished and decorated and offer stunning vistas of the river. Sit on the sundeck and watch over the Zambezi while sipping a cool drink or enjoying fine dining. For action that is closer up, join a tour on the river or go on safari in a 4WD. The Royal Livingstone delivers the substance and style of a bygone era but with all the mod cons. suninternational.com





A winter less ordinary in New York

There are endless reasons to love New York City in any season, but travellers can take advantage of discounted room rates and great signature dining and theatre promotions between January and March. NYC & Company is promoting winter travel with the new 'Unlock NYC' campaign, showcasing quintessential experiences like walking the Brooklyn Bridge, Lunar New Year celebrations in Flushing and the holiday season lights. Be amazed at the sparkling gems at the Morgan Memorial Hall of Gems at the American Museum of Natural History, visit the Diamond District, take the Staten Island Ferry or marvel at the Coney Island Polar Bear Club, (the oldest winter bathing organisation in the United States) as they brave the frigid waters. And let's face it, there's no better wintery thrill than gliding around on one of the city's famous outdoor ice rinks – think Central Park or The Rink at Rockefeller Centre. nycgo.com; booking.com

Strike the pose at Amilla

Amilla Fushi has become a favourite getaway for Australians and international guests and is a hot spot for celebrities. Erin Victoria Holland, Australia's Miss World Australia/Oceania 2013 is a fan, pictured right taking time out to practice yoga in between swimming with manta rays and enjoying the many delights of this tropical wonderland. One of the attractions is internationally-renowned chef, Luke Mangan, whose signature restaurant, Lonu, has raised the bar in this remote part of the world with fresh seafood and exotic flavours of the East and West. With plenty of stunning overwater bungalows to enjoy, Amilla's point of difference is its huge, luxury two-bedroom tree houses with private plunge pools. If you need privacy then you can disappear into the foliage for a true getaway. amilla.mv





Denver's Art Hotel

Imagine a 165-room luxury hotel boasting unique, multi-sensory installations and a world-class art collection woven through the entire guest experience. Described as an experiential, intimate and refined modern architectural gem and situated in the heart of Denver's thriving cultural scene, the ART opened its doors to the public in June 2015. Take an elevator from the Portico Gallery adorned with avant-garde video art to the fourth floor Welcome Gallery. Guests are met with huge masterpieces in a dramatic space lined with floor-to-ceiling glass windows and doors revealing the expansive cityscape. The aesthetic appeal of this hotel is both stimulating and captivating. Not to mention the diverse historical and cultural experience of Denver itself. preferredhotels.com; denver.org

Paperbark Glamp

Get back to nature in luxurious safari tented style at eco-friendly Paperbark Camp at Jervis Bay on the NSW South Coast. The award-winning Paperbark Camp has debuted a Deluxe Sundown Package which includes a one-hour cruise with Jervis Bay Wild. The tour goes from Huskisson up Currambene Creek to the camp's wharf, followed by a sublime three-course set menu dinner by Chilean chef, Emilio Erazo at Paperbark's renowned fine-dining Gunyah Restaurant. There's also a new cruise and dine package, allowing non-campers to cruise up a river to the camp and enjoy Paperbark's cuisine in the camp's treetop restaurant. Founded in 1999 Paperbark Camp is tucked away in bushland two hours south of Sydney, and is a luxury hideaway with elevated safari tents boasting polished hardwood flooring, luxury cotton linen and private outdoor ensuites where guests can enjoy nature while they bathe or shower. Free canoes and bikes are also available to guests. paperbarkcamp.com.au





Tasmania by Satellite

Ever dream of taking time out on your very own luxury island? Well now you can, in the heart of the magnificent D'Entrecasteaux Channel to the South of Tasmania. Satellite Island is a small island of immense beauty, boasting sheer cliffs that fall away to pristine water. There's an abundance of wildlife and ocean fare with 360 degree views across the Southern Ocean. Satellite Island is a unique and largely undiscovered Tasmanian secret and anyone can book the island to explore and enjoy in absolute privacy in a range of accommodation. There is an island manager on call 24 hours a day. Satellite Island is approximately one hour from Hobart and a short ferry trip across from Alonnah Beach on Bruny Island. satelliteisland.com.au



A taste of Mandarin in Milan

Experience la dolce vita with an oriental twist with the opening of Mandarin Oriental in Milan. The intimate and contemporary hotel is housed within four elegantly redeveloped 18th century buildings with 104 sumptuous rooms and suites offering some of the most stylish and spacious accommodation in the city. The hotel's fine dining restaurant, Seta, with al fresco dining in its beautiful courtyard as well as year-round seating indoors will be presided over by renowned Chef Antonio Guida. The Spa at Mandarin Oriental, Milan is a relaxing, holistic retreat and, along with a beauty studio, an indoor heated swimming pool and a state-of-the-art fitness centre, there's a world-class hair salon headed by celebrity stylist, Massimo Serini. mandarinoriental.com



Heli safaris with Truenorth

Experience Australia's north in style on a luxury Australian outback and coastal helicopter safari in remote Northern Territory and the Kimberley. The new 2016 Luxury Heli-Safari Experiences give guests a first-hand experience of a working cattle station – Bullo River – as well as flying to and over amazing natural wonders such as the Bungle Bungles, Mitchell Falls, the majestic Ord River and other spectacular Australian waterways, all in a private helicopter with your own pilot. Accommodation is Australia's remotest five-star luxury lodge – the Berkeley River Lodge on the Kimberley Coast. There are six luxury outback helicopter safaris available from June to August 2016.

truenorthhelicopters.com.au



Contemporary Georgia

Rooms Hotels Kazbegi is a spectacular mountain retreat nestled in the picturesque landscape of the Caucasus uplands in Georgia. One of the country's most diverse and culturally rich regions, Kasbegi is an adrenaline junkie's heaven, with a wealth of extreme and outdoor sports on offer – hiking, climbing and quad-biking – and some of the best heli-skiing in the world. The Hotel is located at the foot of dramatic Mount Kazbek and was the first of its kind in Georgia, featuring an avant-garde aesthetic with spectacular surroundings. A second property, Rooms Hotels Tbilisi, offers an alternative hub for young and creative travellers with its conceptualised 'living space' a lesson in industrial chic. Georgia is a diverse and culturally rich country brimming with creativity, authentic experiences and inspired renaissance, with a commitment to unique tourism opportunities and memories. designhotels.com



Action Stations in Sydney

The Australian National Maritime Museum has a new interactive experience that ties together the history of the Royal Australian Navy with two of the Museum's biggest vessels – the *HMAS Onslow* submarine and the *HMAS Vampire* destroyer. The brand new \$12 million experience opened in November and brings the submarine and destroyer to life like never before. The purpose-built pavilion on one of the Museum's main wharves includes a dramatic immersive cinematic experience, a hands-on discovery and exploration space and all-new audio-visual encounters on the vessels that recall the memories of the sailors who once served on these ships. After watching the cinema experience, head down into the submarine and onto the destroyer to gain a whole new appreciation for our sailors.

actionstations.sydney



Iran unveiled

Luxury travel operator Captain's Choice is tipping Iran to become one of the most popular new luxury travel destinations for 2016. According to Captain's Choice Founder Phil Asker, people, places and experiences that are difficult to access, or which are perceived to be 'off limits' are really attractive to the luxury traveller of tomorrow. Iran tops the favourite five, a destination that offers a broad appeal from the delights of Tehran, including the National Archaeological Museum with artefacts dating back more than 35,000 years, to the exotic gardens and lavish mansions of Shiraz and Isfahan, the city that is the pride of Persia with incredible sights such as the 17th century Qeisarieh Bazaar. captainschoice.com.au

Cuba on the rise

Two of the hottest destinations among Australian travellers right now are Mexico and Cuba, according to Contours Travel, Australia's longest running Central and South America tour operator. Contours has found that people like to spend 10-20 days in Mexico before flying to Cuba from Mexico City for another 10-20 days.

Contours advises travellers to book a Cuban holiday including accommodation and tours well in advance as the island has limited hotel rooms and English speaking guides. Contours also suggests adding one or two Caribbean islands or Panama to the trip as there are flights out of Havana. Panama is also gaining in popularity with visitors heading to South America, with the trend shifting from the traditional four-country itinerary of Peru, Bolivia, Brazil and Argentina to Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Panama. contourstravel.com.au



Bunk down in San Antonio

Housed in a former 19th century brewery on the banks of the San Antonio River, Hotel Emma has a grand style all its own. The 146-room boutique hotel is situated in The Pearl, a culinary destination on the River Walk with 17 world-class restaurants and shops, and is a wonderful blend of South Texas extravagance and an industrial aesthetic that pays homage to its roots. Dating back to 1894, the property has vintage furniture and lavish carpets lit by exquisite chandeliers, a library, a rooftop pool and terrace as well as a fine array of unique epicurean offerings. thehotellemma.com



To market on Kangaroo Island

SeaLink and Kangaroo Island Wildlife Safaris have unveiled their Dudley Peninsula Scenic and Wine Coach Tour. On the first Sunday of each month, you can visit the Penneshaw Farmer's and Community Market, with award-winning Island produce – olive oils, wines, honey and home-baked snacks and biscuits as well as local artisan crafts, arts, and bric-a-brac. Travel on board an airconditioned coach for a 3.5 hour tour of this historic island's famous landmarks – including South Australia's first lighthouse at Cape Willoughby. Partake in a free wine-tasting and watch the unsuspecting local wildlife – goannas, echidnas, Tammar wallabies and kangaroos – lazing in the shade or wandering nonchalantly alongside the road. sealink.com.au



Wild Florida

In 2014, Orlando attracted over 62 million visitors, a record for the travel industry in America. That is a mind blowing statistic but Orlando has a lot going on and a lot of reasons to visit. Universal Studios with the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, Walt Disney World, SeaWorld, the Kennedy Space Center, the Orlando Eye and more. Apart from theme parks, sport, conventions, shopping and other attractions, check out the wildlife on an airboat tour at Wild Florida. See alligators, eagles and other wildlife as you zip around this other worldly place, then wander around their wildlife park or go for buggy ride on the ranch. wildflorida.com; visitorlando.com

Swiss star

The Hotel Villa Honegg is a spectacular five-star property on Mount Bürgenstock in the heart of Switzerland. Built in 1905 and with a major refit in 2011, the Villa Honegg is a dream destination in a jaw-dropping location. Sit by the pool and be mesmerised by the sheer beauty of the alps surrounding you, or if you go in winter, take advantage of the many world-class ski resorts nearby. Go up Mt Titlis, Rigi or Pilatus for alpine splendour. Head into Lucerne for art and culture, go flightseeing, or do a very scenic road tour in a sports car. When you return from your exploration of Central Switzerland, relax in the elegant and luxurious Villa Honegg, with accommodation, cuisine, a spa and service that is almost as spectacular as the views. villa-honegg.ch



Taste of Sydney

Taste of Sydney will be on in Sydney's Centennial Parklands from Thursday 10 March to Sunday 13 March. A highlight event on Sydney's food and social calendar, the Brazilian Fields in Centennial Parklands will transform into the ultimate food lover's paradise. Wander around and enjoy an incredible line up of food and wine attractions from Sydney's latest, greatest and hottest restaurants and taste the fare of local artisan producers. Guests will have the opportunity to meet and greet Sydney's celebrated chefs as well as test their culinary skills in hands-on cooking classes, panel discussions regarding the latest trends in food and premium wine tastings and masterclasses. Taste of Sydney 2016 will welcome international guest chefs including South Africa's *MasterChef* judge, Chef Benny Masekwamang, who will share his culinary knowledge and signature food offerings throughout the weekend. tasteofsydney.com.au





COMPILED BY HELEN HAYES

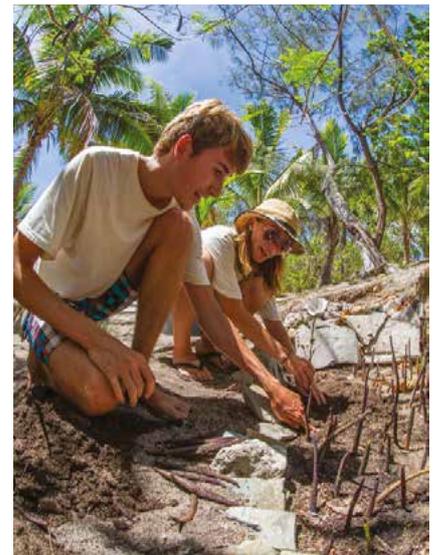


Global Vision

Global Vision International (GVI) offers over 150 different volunteer abroad projects in 25 countries all over the world. While volunteering abroad you can play a crucial role in a wide range of conservation, education and community projects in Africa, South America, Asia, Europe and Central America. Make an impact, experience new cultures and explore locations restricted to normal tourists. Volunteer on a marine conservation project in exotic locations such as Fiji, Mexico, Thailand or the Seychelles. Teach a variety of sports such as surfing and soccer in South Africa, Costa Rica and India. Work in wildlife conservation assisting the rehabilitation of elephants in Thailand, researching the endangered Jaguar in Costa Rica or tracking lions in South Africa. Help with healthcare in Nepal and childcare in places like India. GVI programs range from one week to one year. gviaustralia.com.au

Vinaka Fiji

Through fundraising and volunteering programs, Vinaka Fiji is improving the lives of 27 remote communities scattered through the Yasawa Island Group of Fiji, bringing standards up from third world and giving something back to the villagers to say thank you (*Vinaka*) for welcoming visitors to their islands. Vinaka Fiji works directly with these communities so that villagers are active in determining their own needs, participate in the planning and implementation and share responsibility for the completion of projects. Volunteers stay at Barefoot Island Resort, and as well as lounging on a beach or snorkelling coral reefs, they work on a range of projects aiming to improve villagers' lives through Children, Schools and Education; Sustainable Communities; and Marine Conservation. vinakafiji.org.fj



Slumdog Travels tackles illiteracy in India



Slumdog Travels is a leading tour provider to India and believes in providing both an experience of a lifetime that showcases the real India and has a positive impact on the Indian society. The company offers a range of specially designed packages – Traditional, Adventure, Cultural and Grassroot tours – to give travellers a flavour of the real India and uses funds generated from the tours to eradicate illiteracy. Along with key partners, CRY UK and Pratham UK, Slumdog Travels runs three education projects based primarily in rural parts of Gujarat and Jharkhand, India. Whenever someone buys a tour through Slumdog Travels, they will be able to choose the specific education project that they wish to support which Slumdog Travels then invests in on their behalf. This empowers the travellers to feel more connected with the project and track their contribution through the lift cycle of the project selected through the online platform Makerble. For every tour sold, Slumdog Travels ensures 10 children are educated for a year. slumdogtravels.com



Waves for Water

Founded by former professional surfer Jon Rose in 2009, Waves for Water started out with a program called 'Clean Water Couriers' that, with partner Hurley International encouraged travellers to carry water filters with them when they surfed, cycled or just travelled in a third world country. That program has reached nearly eight million people in more than 27 countries, including Sierra Leone, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Haiti, Brazil, Liberia, Mexico, India, and Colombia. One in six people in the world do not have clean water - a shocking statistic. The goal is to take portable water filters into countries that need them, with options ranging from ceramic filters that can be transported by one person (\$25 each), to larger filters that can provide clean water to an entire village (\$50 each). Organise a fundraiser for one of the projects on the website, get your child's school involved, become a Clean Water Courier on an upcoming trip, or just donate through the website. wavesforwater.org



Elephant Hills

Elephant Hills combines the best of two worlds in Thailand, offering guests with a love of elephants not only a vacation in a beautiful jungle environment but also a chance to see and work with elephants - but not riding them. Elephant Hills is home to 12 Asian elephants, most of whom had worked in the logging industry until it was banned. As part of Elephant Hill's soft adventure tour packages, guests interact with the pachyderms, watching them bathe in their giant mud pool, before helping clean them using coconut fibres and then feeding them. Afterwards, the elephants go back to the huge, free-roaming area, where guests can watch them play or graze in their natural environment. Elephant Hills offers two- to four-day soft adventure tours in and around the breathtakingly beautiful Khao Sok National Park, with accommodation in either the jungle tented camp or the floating rainforest camp. Elephant Hills is demonstrating that local livelihoods can be improved through conservation-based tourism, while supporting an alternative to captive elephant riding as a tourism attraction. elephanthills.com

On the ground



Eniwe, have a coffee

Robyn Borruso visited an orphanage of children whose parents died of HIV/AIDS in Africa in 2010 with her family, and on her return to Australia, wanted to do something to make the lives of the children a little better. She started her own non-profit charity and has made a big difference to the lives of those kids, and many more.

“Eniwe and its helpers have had a considerable impact on a large number of children that are desperately impoverished and vulnerable. We have a feeding program that feeds 100 children a warm, nutritious meal a day, every day of the year. We have housed 21 Child Headed Households – children who live alone after losing their parents – and set up a block of four classrooms and furnished them with desks and chairs for a school in rural Kwa-Zulu Natal. We also have funded some day trips for orphans to various fun places like the beach, museums and play parks, as we believe that we also need to feed the soul and make these children believe there are actually good days to be had, and to allow them to picture a different future for themselves.”

One of their most recent cases is an orphaned family living in Vrygrond,

South Africa. There are six children ranging from 2-14 years. Eniwe has placed a trained and registered foster mother with the family to take care of them on a day-to-day basis. The family lives in dire conditions and have very little means of income. Eniwe ensures the kids are fed, and has plans to put in a veggie garden, kitchen and bathroom upgrades, an extension to the house and an income generator in place to help them sustain themselves in future.

With so much help needed, Robyn came up with a new way to raise money for the Eniwe Children’s Fund. It is called ‘Change Coffee’ and allows people to give to the charity when they buy their morning coffee.

“We came up with the idea of having a day where we rally coffee drinkers to buy one extra coffee. So essentially they pay for two cups, but just get the one and the value of the second cup goes to help the AIDS affected children. One Change Coffee will feed 15 children for a day or one child for 15 days. 25 Change Coffees will feed a child for a year and 285 will build a new home for a child-headed household. The café receives special Change Coffee Cups and information on Eniwe, and the coffee

NOURISH THROUGH COFFEE

Left, top and above: Eniwe is making a difference to kids in need in South Africa and aims to do even more through funds raised through Change Coffee.

drinker gets a great cup of coffee and the reward of knowing that the donation they made will feed 15 kids in one day. It is simple, fun, and allows people to give a one-off donation without any long term commitment,” Robyn said.

The inaugural Change Coffee Day was held on 4 December, 2015 (the first Friday in December annually), with 57 cafés in Sydney taking part. The aim was to have 50 cafés this year and then next year go national in Australia and then in the future, go global. With almost \$10,000 raised with 57 cafes, imagine how much can be raised when there are 1000? Anyone can make a donation by buying a virtual cup of coffee on the website at any time, and rally their local coffee shop to sign up for Change Coffee Day in 2016. changecoffee.org; eniwechildrensfund.org



Go MAD with Chimu Adventures

Since 2010 Chimu Adventures has made a difference, handing out over quarter of a million dollars in donations and micro financing to various charities and local communities. The projects range from loaning money to a local in Peru to help her buy a sewing machine and start her business, to operating charter voyages to Antarctica and forgoing a substantial portion of the profits to benefit not for profit organisations, such as the Mawson's Huts Foundation. The success of these ventures has let Chimu Adventures to create a new brand to represent, administer and grow their philanthropic activities.

Make a Difference Project (MAD), has been set up to principally support projects where the beneficiaries are given the tools or support to help them build a better future, for themselves, their communities and the planet.

Chimu Adventures is running a charter to Antarctica in early 2017 with special guests Andrew Denton and Jennifer Byrne who are returning, for the second time, to support one of Chimu Adventures fundraisers to Antarctica. A portion of the profits from the voyage will be divided equally amongst the principle programs chosen by the MAD Project.

chimuadventures.com/pureantarctica; madproject.org



The Havannah
VANUATU

Exclusively for adults and located just 30 minutes drive from Port Vila, the Havannah is an oasis of tranquility and your perfect romantic retreat. With only 17 luxurious villas set amidst elegantly landscaped gardens, you can be assured privacy and personalized service, Havannah style.



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