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TRAVEL

The Snob's
GUIDE TO
SUMMER

Don't have any plans yet? We can help. How does a perfect little hotel right on the water in Portofino sound? Or a 10-day walk through the Serengeti (kids welcome)? A fancy ranch in Montana? A reborn resort in Hawaii?

BY SARAH KHAN

A beach at Positano on the Amalfi Coast. The water is swimmable well into the fall.

EXPERIENCE BOLIVIA'S BIG EMPTY

This sleeper of a country suddenly has all the elements for an avant-garde getaway. One-year-old **Kachi Lodge**—seven deluxe, artfully decorated geodesic domes on wooden platforms—has made the alabaster expanse of Salar de Uyuni, the world's biggest salt flat, not just a stunning drive-by but a chic stay. Have breakfast on a cactus-covered “island” (in ancient times this was a high-altitude Andean lake); hike to the rim of the Thunupa volcano; identify constellations with the help of the camp’s telescope and staff experts. La Paz, at 12,000 feet the highest administrative capital in the world, is home to one of the most exciting emerging dining scenes in South America, inspired by the produce of Bolivia’s diverse climates. Claus Meyer, co-founder of the groundbreaking Copenhagen restaurant Noma, started the ambitious **Gustu** here in 2013—in part to create a cooking school for disadvantaged Bolivian youth. The experiment paid off. You can now enjoy vegan fine dining at **Ali Pacha**, a fresh spin on arroz con leche at **Popular Cocina Boliviana**, and grilled trout with Andean pesto at **ONA**. Completing the picture, a smart new design hotel, the **Altu Qala** (“high rock”), opens in July in a neoclassical building near historic Plaza Murillo. Its 10 suites mix such Midcentury Modern details as Motoko Ishii lamps with stonework that pays tribute to Bolivia’s pre-Columbian Tiwanaku culture.



The lounge at the Kachi Lodge, on Bolivia's otherworldly Salar de Uyuni salt flat.



TREK TANZANIA'S TRUE WILDERNESS

The Serengeti is one of the largest protected pieces of land in Africa. Still, especially at prime game viewing times in the summer dry season, people and vehicles abound. But not in the park’s vast Wilderness Zones, which are off-limits to development: no camps, no roads, no cars. Mark Thornton’s **Great Serengeti Traverse** is a unique, completely private 60-mile, 10-day walk across these untouched areas—as “pure” as a walking safari in Africa can get—and it can be organized for two to 10 travelers. You’re on foot the entire time, carrying only a camera and a water bottle (with guides, of course, two of them armed). Every morning a three-man crew packs up the lightweight, low-impact mobile camp (the crew also cooks up some mean meals) and moves it to the next location while you make your way along rivers and rocky outcroppings, past elephants, buffaloes, zebras, giraffes, warthogs, leopards, lions, and those mesmerizing forever savanna views.



You'll have tête-à-têtes on the Serengeti trek—but not with people.

CRUISE RUSSIA'S FORGOTTEN FAR EAST

Feel that Antarctica is already so *done*? Fresh bragging rights are to be had with **Silversea Cruises'** five summer expeditions to the Russian Far East, a wildly remote and beautiful region that for reasons of geopolitical tensions was kept under wraps by the Soviet regime until 1989. (It still lacks basic infrastructure—only one road links it to Russia’s metropolises.) The 144-passenger **Silver Explorer** makes four different runs. The main attraction on the sailing to Chukotka, which lies on the Bering Strait and stretches into the Arctic Circle, is wildlife: 200 bird species nesting in granite cliffs, congregations of up to 50 polar bears, and whales—orcias, belugas, bowheads, humpbacks, and more. The voyage to the Kamchatka Peninsula, part of the Pacific Ring of Fire, is more dramatic in scale and geology. You’ll see brown bears, fur seals, sea lions, and such, but the draw here is towering volcanoes, misty calderas, and steaming hot springs. And Moscow and Vladimir Putin are nine time zones away. *Carolyn Spencer Brown*

SERGIO SANDONA (GIRAFFE); AMAZING ESCAPES (KACHI LODGE)

WHO TO CALL

Bolivia: Marisol Mosquera specializes in Bolivia and Peru and can connect all the dots, MARISOL@ARACARI.COM. Tanzania: The 10-day Serengeti traverse is \$9,000 per person; other trips, including lodge stays, are also available, THORNTONSAFARIS.COM. Russian Far East: FROM \$7,920 PER PERSON, SILVERSEACRUISES.COM.

WHERE TO GO THIS SUMMER

For real bragging rights, go off the grid.

AndBeyond's Sossusvlei Desert Lodge, near Namibia's famed red dunes. The sky puts on a show too.

SPOT SHOOTING STARS IN NAMIBIA

With just 2.5 million people spread across 300,000 square miles, Namibia is one of the least densely populated places on earth. It's also one of the most weirdly beautiful, with high red dunes, stupendous rock formations, and unique desert-adapted wildlife. The Southern Hemisphere winter is the time to go—blue skies by day, cool desert nights—and now there are several new and revamped lodges in the country's classic beauty spot, the Namib Desert's Sossusvlei dunes (those red ones). Natural Selection's **Kwessi Dunes**, in the Namib-Rand Nature Reserve, has 12 thatch and canvas tents with separate "stargazing rooms" with beds—to optimize your chances of spotting shooting stars. AndBeyond's **Sossusvlei Desert Lodge** has reopened with 1,400-square-foot, solar-powered suites—like stand-alone villas in the desert. Wilderness Safaris' updated 11-cabin **Little Kulala** has star beds too, and private gates to the windswept landscape, which brings only one place to mind: Mars.



ANDBEYOND (SOSSUSVLEI LODGE)

WHO TO CALL

Namibia: For a longer trip, contact Cherri Briggs, CHERRI@EXPLOREAFRICA.NET. Greenland and Lapland: London-based George Morgan-Grenville organizes high-end trips, GMORGAN-GRENVILLE@REDSAVANNAH.COM. Camp Kiattua: from \$1,368 per person, per day, ARCTIC-NOMAD.COM. Lindblad cruises: from \$12,520, EXPEDITIONS.COM.

LIVE IN A CHIC TEEPEE IN GREENLAND

Fancy lying on a sheepskin rug at the entrance to your chic tent and watching icebergs and whales offshore? You can do just that in Greenland, which is no longer just the stomping ground of scientists and hardcore adventurers. **Camp Kiattua**, originally conceived as a one-off for a wealthy traveler yearning for something truly off the grid, now pops up every summer for 13 weeks at the edge of an icy inlet on the island's west coast, near the capital, Nuuk. There are plenty of amenities: wood stoves, private guides, a hot tub and sauna, meals prepared by Michelin-starred chefs—and a silence broken only by the cracking of icebergs. Activities include boating, fishing for arctic char, trekking, diving for sea urchin, picnicking—or floating in a survival suit among the icebergs and contemplating the drama of climate change. (Greenland's ice sheet shrank by 329 billion tons last year alone.) Prefer a shipboard experience? Lindblad Expeditions' new 69-cabin **National Geographic Endurance** is designed for polar routes and will be visiting Greenland this summer. On the agenda: spotting polar bears, kayaking up fjords, hiking the tundra, and looking out for the Northern Lights.

GO ARCTIC SWIMMING IN SWEDEN

Swedish Lapland gets 24 hours of daylight in the weeks around the summer solstice, all the better to take in the ethereal beauty of a game-changing new wellness-and-high-design property appropriately called **Arctic Bath**. Six of the slanted glass and timber cabins sit on land, but the other six float on the Lule River (they get frozen into it in winter). The focal point of the complex is a central spa structure out on the water that is encased in a halo of tree trunks like a giant bird's nest; it houses a treatment room, saunas, hot tubs, and a central outdoor cold bath that stays at a therapeutic 39 degrees year-round. If that's not enough blissful isolation for you, continue on to **Logger's Lodge**, a five-star cabin 10 miles from the nearest village (pop. 500) and built—get this—just for two (although this summer another room is being added, making it not only honeymoon- and anniversary-friendly but small family-friendly, too). There's a full array of arctic activities, and the paparazzi won't find you. Also, endless caviar—or drinks in the hot tub at 2 a.m.—are at your command.

WHERE TO GO THIS SUMMER

Revisit the classic retreats of America.

Thousands of square miles of forest—and you, fly fishing. That's at least one of Montana's charms.



PLAY LIKE A MODERN DUDE IN MONTANA

The wooded landscapes of the **Resort at Paws Up**, a 37,000-acre ranch and luxury retreat in Montana's Blackfoot Valley, resonate with U.S. history. This was the stomping grounds of the Nez Perce, Flatheads, and Blackfeet before it was discovered by homesteaders, trappers, miners, and loggers. Even Meriwether Lewis (of Lewis and Clark fame) made a pit stop. The resort, which opened in 2005, is no traditional dude ranch. Its 28 spread-out homes (two to four bedrooms) and 36 luxury tents come with "camping butlers," spa treatments, encyclopedic wine lists (and in-room dining), a Lexus at your disposal, a staggering menu of 50 activities, and a children's program. This summer sees the debut of the adults-only **Green O**: 12 glass and wood cabins and a restaurant named for the identifying symbol a rancher on this land used to paint on his sheep. Some of the cabins are on stilts, like tree-houses, 15 feet up; others have rooftop gardens or 180-degree views. And the Light Haus features a vast skylight in the bedroom for stargazing—just the spot, after a day spent fly fishing, forest bathing, or testing your mettle on the Grizzlyman Fitness Trail, to curl up with the Pulitzer Prize-nominated novella *A River Runs Through It*, which was set right here.

WHO TO CALL

Montana: Going West and want a longer itinerary after Paws Up? Contact Sam Highly, ASK@ALLROADSNORTH.COM. Hawaii: Dani Johnson knows both the islands' five-star resorts and out-of-the-box experiences, DANI@COASTLINETRAVEL.COM. Berkshires: Book via MIRAVALBERKSHIRES.COM, FROM \$649 A NIGHT PER PERSON, ALL-INCLUSIVE.



GO VOLCANIC IN HAWAII

The Big Island's sunny northern Kohala Coast was the birthplace of Kamehameha I, first king of the unified Hawaiian Islands, and lore has it that the archipelago's royals came here when they wanted to luxuriate. Be that as it may, the **Mauna Lani** resort (the name means "mountain reaching heaven," in homage to the island's five volcanoes) has been a mainstay since 1983. Its 32 acres of green lawns and palm trees reopened last January as an Auberge resort—and what a difference \$200 million makes. The rooms are larger, the lobby is now an airy atrium, and local touches have been woven throughout the experience, from the centrally installed outrigger canoe to the sandalwood-infused pa'akai salt stone massage in the spa. One pool has become three (family, adults-only, and children), one restaurant has morphed into four (Canoe House is already the hot dinner spot on the Big Island), and there's a cultural center focusing on Hawaiian history. Activities include a sea turtle hatching program; canoeing excursions; swimming with manta rays; horseback, bike, and ATV rides; and, of course, trips to Volcanoes National Park, where you can witness, like nowhere else, the earth being created anew.

LIVE LIKE A GILDED AGE DIVA IN THE BERKSHIRES

There is a dreamy timelessness to the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts that was drawing the arty crowd as far back as the mid-1800s. Then, in the latter part of the 19th century, the upper crust from New York and Philadelphia came and built their country "cottages" here. It can seem—though it's part of the area's charm—that not much has been updated since the Vanderbilts' last holiday. But next month the **Miraval Berkshires** opens in Lenox at Wyndhurst Mansion, the furnishings magnate John Sloane's estate, which has a 380-acre garden designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. Indoors there's a 29,000-square-foot spa called Life in Balance, with 28 treatment rooms, and a Williams-Sonoma culinary school. In summer you can tee off at the property's 18-hole golf course, go kayaking at Stockbridge Bowl, visit Mass MoCA and the Clark Art Institute, or catch a Boston Symphony Orchestra performance while picnicking on the lawns of Tanglewood. You're landlocked, but that didn't stop Herman Melville from writing *Moby-Dick* nearby.

WHERE TO GO THIS SUMMER

Take a fresh look at old favorites in Europe.



The bathroom at Le Meurice's new Belle Etoile penthouse suite. The views of Paris are staggering too.

GET ONASSIS GLAMOUR IN GREECE

Finding a party on Mykonos is easy, but true luxury, not so much. **Kalesma**—25 suites and two villas, all with heated pools and patios on a hillside overlooking Ornos Bay—opens in June, and it will fix that. The aesthetic is soothing, Aman-like Cycladic minimalism, and the service promises to be five-star, with 24/7 butlers and even a “beach concierge.” There’s something fresh on Paros, too, where until now the quaint whitewashed cottages and vivid blue domes recalled Santorini but minus the glamour. When it opens in July, 33-room **Parilio** on Naoussa Bay will give the island a dose of contemporary, less-is-more design: neutral colors, concrete columns, and cues taken from Paros’s rugged natural surroundings—like the two massive boulders anchoring the cross-shaped pool. The swank start or ending to a Grecian holiday is a stay at the **Four Seasons Astir Palace**, on the Athens Riviera 30 minutes from downtown; it only opened fully last summer.

WHO TO CALL

Greece: For a multistop itinerary, contact Athens-based Christos Stergiou, CHRISTOS@TRUETRIPS.COM. France: For à la carte arrangements in Paris or elaborate itineraries beyond, Jennifer Virgilio, JENNIFER@QOFCLUBS.COM. Italy: There’s almost nothing Lake Como-based Andrea Grisdale can’t arrange, ANDREA@ICBELLAGIO.COM.



RETURN TO BELLE-EPOQUE PARIS

Should you need a fresh excuse to visit Paris, here are five. The 17th-century mansion at 19 Place des Vosges opened last fall as the **Cour des Vosges**, the city’s first hotel with full views of the famous square’s pink façades, slate roofs, and plane trees. Its 12 rooms—several of which can be combined, so you can take over an entire floor—are a soothing mix of French château grandeur and contemporary chic. **J.K. Place Paris**, on a quiet street off Boulevard Saint-Germain, is the high-style J.K. brand’s first foray outside Italy. The rooms, most with marble fireplaces, mix modern Italian furniture with antiques unearthed at Paris’s flea markets. On the Rue de Rivoli, **Le Meurice** has completed a \$6 million renovation of its penthouse Belle Etoile: 360-degree views of Paris at your feet. And LVMH’s **Cheval Blanc Paris**, designed by Peter Marino, opens this month in the former Art Deco home of the Samaritaine store, with 72 rooms, a Dior spa, four restaurants and bars, and a kids club. And last, the first hotel ever to occupy the grounds of nearby Versailles, Airelles’s **Château de Versailles-Le Grand Contrôle**, opens this spring with 14 rooms restored to 18th-century grandeur. Marie -Antoinette would approve.

LIVE IN A COUNT’S CASTLE IN ITALY

Think your go-to Italian holiday could use an upgrade? New hotels on the Amalfi Coast are a rare and wondrous thing, but one on a private sandy beach? Well, **Borgo Santandrea** has commandeered a secluded cove at the base of a cliff in minuscule Conca dei Marini, its 45 guestrooms done up with Midcentury Modern accents. In the Umbrian hills there’s a place with all the trappings of the Italian manor of your dreams: Olive groves? Check. Organic farm? Check. Forty purebred Andalusian horses? Check. Owned by a count? Check. Said count is now busy reviving a 10th-century castle on the estate (there are already 10 renovated villas for rent), which will debut this summer as the 36-room **Hotel Castello di Reschio**, with an underground spa. This summer new life will also be infused into an Italian Riviera classic: the 14-room seaside **Belmond Splendido Mare** in Portofino (with full access to its impossibly glamorous hillside sister property, the justly named **Splendido**).