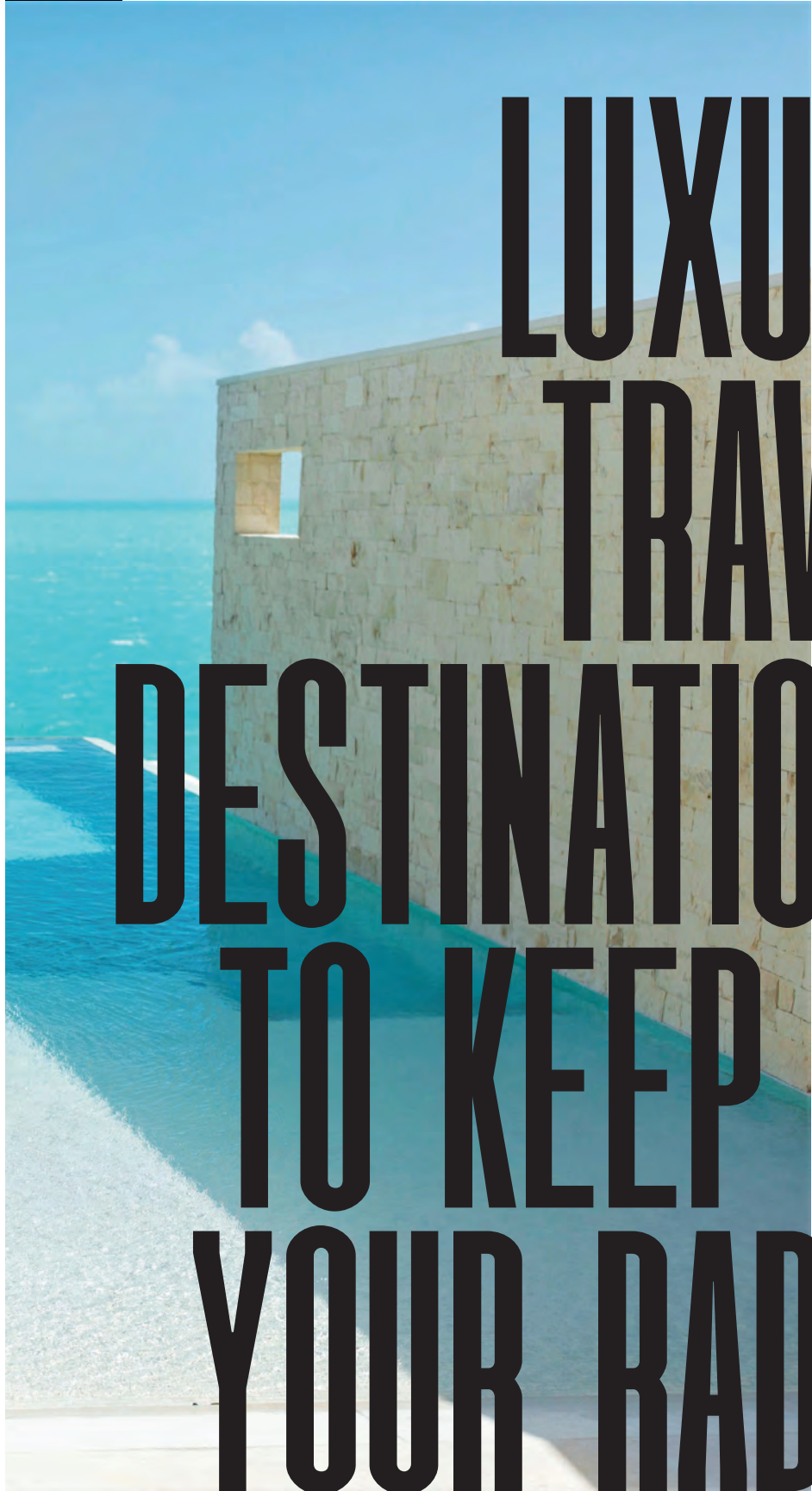




Full-on barefoot chic at **WYMARA**.
Photography **COURTESY OF WYMARA RESORT AND VILLAS**



LUXURY TRAVEL DESTINATIONS TO KEEP ON YOUR RADAR

BY DOUG WALLACE

**TO TRAVEL IS TO DREAM ...
THANKS FOR THE INSPO, DOUG.**

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS, NORTH CARIBBEAN

This island paradise delivers the world's most perfect beaches with ample splurging on the side. The two groups of 40 tropical islands sit at the bottom of the Bahamas, just above the Dominican Republic.

STAY: **Wymara Resort and Villas** on **Grace Bay Beach** is full-on barefoot chic, with 90 dazzling suites dressed up with big bathrooms and full kitchens, plus oceanfront cabanas and a quiet infinity pool. For the truly private, the series of four- and five-bedroom **Wymara Villas at Turtle Tail Bay** on the south side of the island offer luxury in the nth degree. The water is even bluer over here, it seems.

PLAY: Truly, it's all about the water sports in Turks and Caicos: diving, snorkelling, fishing, sunset sailing, sand-castling. The ocean is so clear, snorkellers and scuba divers are thrilled with the visibility and with the third-largest barrier reef in the world.

FEAST: The food scene in Turks and Caicos is a blend of culinary cultures and combinations — African, Jamaican, Hispaniolan and Bahamian heritages all play a part in the kitchens here.

VISIT: Boat charters let you explore the coastline, head out for some fishing or whale-watch in the **Turks Island Passage**.

VISITTCI.COM
WYMARARESORTANDVILLAS.COM



EAST ALGARVE's Barril Beach.
Photography **DOUG WALLACE**

NORTH WALES's awesome **Caernarfon Castle**
dates from the late 1200s.
Photography **COURTESY VISIT WALES**



A remote floating sauna created
by **TOFINO RESORT + MARINA**.
Photography **JILL SALTER**

NORTH WALES, UNITED KINGDOM

Along the dashing northern coastline, through the island of Anglesey and into the mountains of Snowdonia, North Wales is an endless stream of stunning seclusion, farm-to-table food and un-stuffy fun.

STAY: Estate homes here are perfect for lolling about, getting lost in all the little nooks and crannies, finding the hidden paths to the pastures and fishponds. These are hotels with updated spas, roaring fireplaces and sofas so soft you can barely climb out of them. Check out **Palé Hall** near **Bala** or the spa-centric **Bodysgallen Hall** near **Llanudno**.

PLAY: Gin! Not the card game, but the gin-nosing! **Aber Falls Distillery** turns out the most tantalizing gin, ripe with flavours that date back to Druid times, while **Dyfi Distillery** employs wild botanicals foraged from the nearby biosphere reserve to kick up a few exquisite London dry-style delights.

FEAST: Michelin-starred destination hotspot **Ynyshir Restaurant and Rooms**, set among the bird sanctuaries of the **Dyfi Estuary**, consistently makes the top-10 lists for its meat-forward, four-hour, 20-course set menu and 10 luxury suites.

VISIT: Do stop in at the architectural folly that is **Portmeirion**, a tourist village on the **River Dwyryd**. A favourite of the famous and the curious, Portmeirion gained cult status as the set of **The Prisoner**, a British spy series from 1967.

VISITWALES.COM
PALEHALL.CO.UK
BODYSGALLEN.COM
ABERFALLSDISTILLERY.COM
DYFIDISTILLERY.COM
YNYSHIR.CO.UK
PORTMEIRION.COM

TOFINO, VANCOUVER ISLAND

This hip oceanfront community on Vancouver Island's west coast is a nature-lover's dream, just north of a magnificent string of surf-worthy beaches and the rugged wonder of the **Pacific Rim National Park Reserve**.

STAY: Rustic comfort rules at **Tofino Resort + Marina**, with extras that include the excellent **1909 Kitchen** and the town's top **Adventure Centre**, which can set you up with fishing charters, whale- and bear-watching tours, cultural tours and sightseeing to all the nearby islands, forests and inlets. New to the itinerary: a remote floating sauna on the territory of the **Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation**.

PLAY: Go for surf lessons, crabbing excursions, scenic flights, food tours, even skydiving.

SHOP: The take-home in this town is the local artisanal treats, all of which make great gifts. Check out **Two Trees** for a variety of tasteful souvenirs and **Dockside Smoked Fish Store** for hot- and cold-smoked fish, including chum jerky and chinook candy.

FEAST: Step out for at least one fabulous evening at the award-winning **Wolf in the Fog** for decadent seafood splendour.

VISIT: The village of **Ucluelet**, just a 30-minute drive south, delivers even more natural wonder, along with Canada's first collect-and-release aquarium.

TOURISMTOFINO.COM
TOFINORESORTANDMARINA.COM
TWO TREES.CA
HIMWITSA.COM
WOLFINTHEFOG.COM
UCLUELETAQUARIUM.ORG



Scenic Jasper
Photography COURTESY OF
SCENIC CRUISE LINES

LYON, FRANCE

At the confluence of the **Rhône** and **Saône** rivers, Lyon has been a hub for traders and travellers for centuries, extending its gracious hospitality long before train travel became commonplace. Please take a seat — this is the gastronomic capital of France ...

STAY: Opt for the panoramic views from **Villa Maïa** on **Fourvière hill**, the Relais & Châteaux–designated **Villa Florentine** or the fantastic five-star **Cour des Loges Lyon**.

PLAY: The medieval and Renaissance auras of **Old Lyon** deliver narrow laneways, serene courtyards, artisanal ateliers and ample cafés. Just sit and watch the world go by!

FEAST: The traditional Lyonnaise **bouchons** are the places to hit — bistros that serve French classics like creamy pike dumplings in crayfish sauce, perfectly spiced steak tartare and succulent Bresse chicken. (This is France, so even the chicken has an appellation.) The tasting menu at Michelin-starred **La Mère Brazier** will send you right over the edge.

VISIT: Be sure to pop into the **Lyon Cathedral** for a whiff of Gothic goodness, then trek up **Fourvière hill**, for the incredible views and for the **basilica Notre-Dame de Fourvière**, both gorgeous in the extreme. The **Musée des Beaux-Arts**, housed in a former convent, is considered the best museum in France after the Louvre.

VISITERLYON.COM
VILLA-MAIA.COM
VILLAFLORENTINE.COM
COURDESLOGES.COM
LAMEREBRAZIER.FR

EAST ALGARVE, PORTUGAL

Sift through the secluded beaches and centuries-old towns of Portugal's southeast coastline, where the smarter Europeans are buying properties and the hip ex-pats are opening boutique hotels and great restaurants.

STAY: Embrace a minimal feel here. **Convento** is a whitewashed haven in the centre of **Olhão**, a former convent where dorms have been converted into airy bedrooms with marble-finished bathrooms. Farther out in the countryside near **Tavira** sits **Pensão Agricola**, a six-room, all-white rural retreat with a quirky farmhouse vibe, filled with gorgeous vintage finds that you will want to take home.

PLAY: Designed by **Jack Nicklaus**, the 1,000-plus-acre **Monte Rei Golf & Country Club** is just 20 minutes northwest of Vila Real.

SHOP: Keep an eye out for things like cork home furnishings, ceramic bowls and tiles, terra cotta cookware, wool rugs and fine-milled soaps, all authentic and homespun — and packable.

FEAST: Traditional restaurants are plentiful and delicious: salt-cod fritters, octopus salad, seafood rice and the freshest bread top the list, as do the ubiquitous and very tempting custard tarts.

VISIT: In the pretty city of **Tavira**, you'll find white stone-tiled streets, grand boulevards, picturesque church squares — and, happily, a gelato shop every 10 metres.

VISITPORTUGAL.COM
CONVENTOOLHAO.COM
PENSAOAGRICOLA.COM
WHITETERRACES.COM

DANUBE RIVER, CENTRAL EUROPE

A legendary river, quaint medieval towns, stunning scenery and five different countries make for a busy week on the water. It was only a matter of time before somebody like **Scenic cruise line** turned river cruising from codgery to cool.

STAY: The beauty of cruising is that you only have to unpack once — and that suites are getting more **luxury-leaning by the minute**.

PLAY: Enjoy concerts by some of Europe's top music scholars, evenings of Strauss and Mozart set within opulent palaces, wine-tastings in some of the oldest vineyards in Europe. Cities like Vienna are just so beautiful that you don't really need to do anything except sit still with a glass of wine in your hand. Cruise companies like Scenic are also offering longer stays in port, so you have time to get a better feel for the different cities on your own, even after dinner.

SHOP: Antiques, silver, leather goods, fashion, ceramics — this part of Europe yields treasures at every turn.

VISIT: Experience the towns of **Budapest** and **Vienna**; followed by **Dürnstein, Melk** and **Linz** in **Austria**; and on to **Passau, Regensburg** and **Nuremberg, Germany**. You may also manage an afternoon in **Bratislava**, the capital city of **Slovakia**, and in the medieval town of **Cesky Krumlov, Czechia**.

SCENIC.CA

Marvel at massive icebergs in **ANTARCTICA**.
Photography **TIM STEWART**



SAINT BARTHÉLEMY, EAST CARIBBEAN

An augmented sense of style and exclusivity meld to form the aura that emanates from Saint Barthélemy, the chicest island in the Caribbean. Indeed, the atmosphere is equivalent to the sophisticated and celebrated shorelines of Europe.

STAY: To get the best of both worlds, sign up for a week or two in one of the more than 400 luxury villas here as well as in one of the 25 boutique hotels. All of the above sport lavish interiors, excellent spas and postcard vistas. Favourites include the upscale **Le Barthélemy Hotel and Spa** and **Hôtel Barrière Le Carl Gustaf**.

PLAY: St. Barths is a volcanic island, which has made for many shallow reefs, all protected by marine conservation. The abundance of water sports is anchored to more than 20 beaches, each with its own unique vibe and beach clubs.

SHOP: The boutiques of St. Barths are some of the most luxurious in the Caribbean — fine art, jewellery, antiques, homewares and much more. Make sure the credit card is topped up.

FEAST: Top-tier restaurants are everywhere here; take your pick. Warning: luncheon has the capacity to last all afternoon.

VISIT: When you're not rubbing shoulders with **Beyoncé**, **Derek Jeter** or **Paul McCartney**, you're out exploring the sultry beaches and the rugged cliffs that overlook them: **Saint-Jean Beach** on the north coast, **Colombier Beach** on the leeward coast and **Saline Beach** in the southeast.

ST-BARTHS.COM
LEBARTHELEMYHOTEL.COM
HOTELSBARRIERE.COM



The 23-room **Baoase Luxury Resort** in Steenrijk, Willemstad, **CURAÇAO**. Photography **COURTESY OF BAOASE**

CURAÇAO, SOUTH CARIBBEAN

Boasting a cultured, European flavour, colonial-style architecture, aquamarine-blue beaches and an inventive food scene, Curaçao is one of the top luxury touchpoints of the southern Caribbean.

STAY: Tucked away within the **Santa Barbara Plantation** community in the island's east end, the new, hacienda-style **Sandals Royal Curaçao** stretches across 800 hectares. The 23-room **Baoase Luxury Resort** in **Steenrijk** is a treasure, all lush vegetation, hardwood floors, private infinity pools and sumptuous Balinese-style furnishings.

PLAY: The Willemstad neighbourhood of **Pietermaai** is where the action is. Hit **Mundo Bizarro** or the **Saint Tropez Ocean Club** for cocktails, then **Miles Jazz Café** for live music after dinner.

FEAST: At **BijBlauw** — a hotel and restaurant — diners delight in decadent truffle risotto, smoked vegetables and tuna tataki on the candlelit oceanfront patio. And at **Kome Restaurant**, a generous charcuterie can be followed by mouth-watering saffron seafood paella or an Argentine rib-eye with onion marmalade.

VISIT: Wandering the narrow streets of the **Punda**, **Otrobanda** and **Scharloo quarters of Willemstad** is de rigueur. Be sure to hit the **Kurá Hulanda Museum**, which holds the largest collection of African artifacts in the Caribbean. The best way to beach-hop is by private yacht, exploring the 35 beaches along the coast to Westpunt, swimming with wild turtles and snorkelling the dazzling coral reefs.

CURACAO.COM
SANDALS.COM/ROYAL-CURACAO
BAOASE.COM
MUNDOBIZARROCURACAO.COM
SAINTTROPEZCURACAO.COM
BIJBLAUW.COM
8CURACAO.COM



The magic of the **SINGAPORE** skyline. Photography **COURTESY VISIT SINGAPORE**

ANTARCTICA, THE SEVENTH CONTINENT

Whether zipping through icy bays on pontoon boats, hiking up glacial hills, kayaking or just penguin-watching, a cruise through the islands of the Antarctic Peninsula is the perfect bucket-list adventure.

STAY: While many luxury expedition cruise companies now head into the Antarctic region, polar pioneers **Quark Expeditions** is one of the best. The new **Ultramarine** features a water-level Zodiac hangar, wraparound decks and two helicopters for sightseeing.

PLAY: Morning and afternoon shore excursions take you into glacial inlets to visit penguin colonies, comb through abandoned whaling stations or marvel at massive icebergs. The incredible wildlife also includes whales, dolphins, seals and birds. In addition to summaries of what you did that day and what you're doing tomorrow, time on board includes talks by biologists, geologists, zoologists and ornithologists — all helping you get to know the magical seventh continent a bit better.

FEAST: Expect five-star meals — for which you will be very hungry. Dining room chairs can all be hooked to the floor, but you're responsible for keeping the cutlery on the table yourself.

VISIT: Various itineraries can take you to **Patagonia**, the **Falkland Islands**, **South Georgia** and, of course, the **Antarctic Peninsula** — perhaps even crossing the **Antarctic Circle**.

QUARKEXPEDITIONS.COM



Luxury retail along **Orchard Road, SINGAPORE**. Photography **DOUG WALLACE**

SINGAPORE, SOUTHEAST ASIA

Singapore sizzles with a fascinating mix of sophisticated, multicultural fusion, fun and flavour. The extraordinary architecture is a profusion of colourful, mixed-use “shophouses,” astonishing Buddhist and Hindu temples, and edgy new skyscrapers.

STAY: The **Andaz Singapore** immerses guests in Singaporean culture, its public areas mirroring the city's intimate laneways and quaint customs. Expect an international crowd at the sexy and modern **Warehouse Hotel**, a boutique gem on the **Singapore River**.

PLAY: The trendy neighbourhood of **Tiong Bahru** is filled with cool boutiques, design shops, bookstores and small cafés and bars. The **Katong** area is a multicultural community filled with fun concept stores, great restaurants, massage parlours and karaoke joints. **Kampong Glam**, **Little India** and **Dempsey Hill** should also be on your wander list.

SHOP: At one time merely fruit trees and pepper farms, **Orchard Road** is now Singapore's grand shopping boulevard, home to all your fashion favourites — the higher-end retailers, landmark plazas and more.

FEAST: Singapore is also a foodie paradise. The traditional dishes sold in the “hawker stall” food courts lay the foundation for the modern Singaporean restaurants (**mod-Sin** for short) that yield homespun food with a twist.

VISIT: **Gardens by the Bay** is a nature reserve complete with a grove of “supertree” structures and two domed conservatories. And **National Gallery Singapore** exhibits the largest collection of Southeast Asian art in the world.

VISITSINGAPORE.COM
THEWAREHOUSEHOTEL.COM
GARDENSBYTHEBAY.COM.SG
NATIONALGALLERY.SG