

# How to spend it



**A REAL HEAD-TURNER**



# travelista

**Wander woman** Maria Shollenbarger fast-tracks international intelligence on where to be and what to see

➔ Mei Zhang, the US-based founder of **WildChina** ([wildchina.com](http://wildchina.com)) has long been a go-to for those keen to access art, commerce and culture in **CHINA**. This September, WildChina will debut a

new series of expert-curated and -led journeys in partnership with the Asia Society. The first of these “Asia Revealed” trips, in the company of Dr Ye Wa – who co-directs the International Field School of Archaeology in Shaanxi – will take in points ranging from Xi’an (and its famous terracotta warriors) and Yangganzhai (one of the country’s most prolific neolithic archaeological sites) to Mogao, where a team from the Getty in Los Angeles is piloting sustainable tourism initiatives around the grottoes’ famous art- and artefact-rich temples and caves. Book soon – places are limited to 12 (from Sept 1-10; from \$6,180 per person).

➔ In mid-2017, **Wilderness Safaris** ([wilderness-safaris.com](http://wilderness-safaris.com)) made a maiden foray into **RWANDA** with Bisate Lodge, set just outside Volcanoes National Park; with its six spectacularly designed suites and proximity to mountain gorillas, it aimed to elevate the local paradigm. In May, Wilderness turned its focus to Akagera National Park – a more traditional east African savannah wilderness where huge hippo and crocodile populations thrive, and lion (reintroduced in 2015) and black rhino (2017) appear with increasing frequency. The six tents at **Magashi** (from \$650

per person sharing), all with wide views of Lake Rwanyakazinga, have massive soft, canopied mattresses in the airy, open-plan bed-bathrooms; when not fishing or on a guided bush walk, you can just lie back and admire any number of the 500-odd native bird species kiting to and fro across the water.

➔ In late-1990s-early-2000s **LONDON** there were few hotels that could best **One Aldwych** ([onealdwych.com](http://onealdwych.com); from £385) in the cool stakes; travellers from Sydney to Santa Monica (or just from SW3) revelled in the aqueous, pared-back chic of Gordon Campbell Gray’s rooms and the heady buzz of the subterranean bar-restaurant, all retrofitted into a 1907 building that once housed *The Morning Post* newspaper. After languishing for years, the hotel is back on the radar, thanks to a top-to-toe remake courtesy of two design firms that know about attention-getting reinvention: Robert Angell Design International (which breathed sorbet-hued new life into The Berkeley) for the rooms, suites and two bars, and Fabled Studio



Above: the Crescent Lake and Mingsha Sand Dunes of Dunhuang, one of the destinations on Wild China's first Asia Revealed trip. Below: Fabled Studio designed the Lobby Bar at the newly refurbished One Aldwych hotel



Above: the airy tents at Wilderness Safari's Magashi, in Rwanda's Akagera National Park, look over Lake Rwanyakazinga – seen here are the camp's bar and dining spaces







Above: the pool at 7 Koppies, Ampersand Travel founder James Jayasundera's Franschhoek guesthouse. Below: the light-filled rooms at Alder Lodge Ritten in the South Tyrol are made of sustainably sourced spruce

about creating a dream home. This, fortunately for travellers, has since morphed into **7 Koppies** ([7koppies.co.za](http://7koppies.co.za); from £135), a two-suite, three-room guesthouse kitted out in vibrant Cape-contemporary style – think ebullient textiles, handmade rugs and tiles, gaily painted Malawi chairs and lashings of sisal. The open-plan kitchen and living areas are perfect for mingling with other guests (not forgetting the 40-plus excellent restaurants within a 10-minute drive) – or for celebrating if you're a group buying out the property in exclusivity, which is really the way to go.

➔ Grand country-house hotels are having a moment in **FRANCE**, with the likes of Domaine des Etangs and Château de Montcaud having made their way onto It and Hot Lists this spring. The latest to enter the mix has a quirkier CV, featuring Californian owners who are hoteliers via Park City, Utah. The **Hotel Château du Grand-Lucé** ([chateaugrandlucé.com](http://chateaugrandlucé.com); from €950) – built in the 1760s by the baron Pineau de Viennay, it's one of the Loire Valley's most pristinely preserved 18th-century houses – has 17 rooms and suites, public spaces ranging from cosy dens to a vast patrician salon to a charming orangery, and 30 hectares sequestering a *jardin exotique* and a *potager*, orchards, meadows, a lake and walled gardens. Outbuildings have been cleverly put to use as a ballroom and a spa, but it's the interiors, which reprise exactly the ambience and luxe of the rococo, that stand out.

➔ It's one of Italy's less-sung summer destinations, but with lots going on in the **SOUTH TYROL** in 2019 that could well change. The Adler micro-chain of fine spa resorts and lodges, which spans the north of Italy from the Dolomites to Tuscany's Bagno Vignoni thermal spas, is just now opening its fifth property right here: **Adler Lodge Ritten** ([adler-resorts.com](http://adler-resorts.com); from €912 per person for three nights) promises wellness of the active, fresh-mountain-air variety, with hikes and forest yoga abounding. The rooms – 20 suites in the main lodge and 20 chalets (four with family accommodation), constructed of sustainably sourced spruce and saturated with natural light pouring through floor-to-cathedral ceiling windows – appeal in their sleek simplicity. ♦



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(with everything from Miller Harris boutiques to Mayfair's extravagant Jamavar under its belt) for the Indigo restaurant and the Lobby Bar.

➔ Like many before him, James Jayasundera, the founder of **Ampersand Travel** ([ampersandtravel.com](http://ampersandtravel.com)), fell hard for **SOUTH AFRICA**'s Cape Winelands the first time he visited years ago; unlike most, he invested in 50 hectares of hillside at the mouth of the Franschhoek valley, and set



Above: the 18th-century grandeur of the dining room at Hotel Château du Grand-Lucé in the Loire Valley