

AWASDEE



A NOTE FROM THE TEAM

e know you're raring to gallop out of the gates to roam the world as freely as we once did. After a surreal and protracted season of generally keeping trips local or not traveling at all, we truly have turned a corner. We can start planning again without the anxiety of Covid testing, fast-changing border restrictions and a laundry list of entry requirements.

Still, the hope is that we approach the next 12 months of travel with a greater sense of intention and purpose. And what better way to begin by tuning in to ask: What really moves us?

Is it the beauty and spectacle of nature?
The wonder and comfort of finding the familiar in a strange place? Is it the magic of history unfolding before our eyes? Or is it the sense of being alive in a moment of calculated risk, embracing a new and extreme sport to test our limits?

We looked at our network and found a rich and deep pool of ideas for extra meaningful trips, and pared them down to 23 travel experiences, big and small, to aim for in the new year. May they inspire even more unique and soulful adventures out in the world.

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IN THIS ISSUE

Looking for travel inspiration? Here are 23 travel experiences in 23 destinations across the Thai Airways network

A WORLD OF NATURAL WONDERS The beauty of the planet, from the depths of the Red Sea to the highest point on the earth ART & PAGEANTRY A celebration of Vincent Van Gogh and a coronation for Britain's new monarch STORIED SETTINGS Escape to the world of your favorite stories, from the classic fairy tales to sweeping Korean drama shows CITIES IN FLUX Catch places that are changing at a faster-thanusual clip in an interesting moment in time **HEART-POUNDING THRILLS** Nothing like a burst of adrenaline against a breathtaking backdrop **AMAZING TRAILS** This one's for the books - cross-country holidays that require commitment and grit

CULINARY ADVENTURES

Taste the trending flavors



Q CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

Be a responsible steward of nature and protect wildlife

t's 2023 – it's time to embrace a regenerative approach to tourism, to be more mindful of our impact on the places that we visit and to actively protect wildlife and the environment. Don't be the tourist who still rides elephants;

help them thrive instead. In October of 2022, the Elephant Nature Park in Chiang Mai was bestowed the Best Animal Welfare Award at the Responsible

Thailand Awards 2022 from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). This animal rescue sanctuary and rehabilitation center first came up in 1996 and now has over 100 elephants in their care, as well as other rescued animals such as buffaloes, dogs, cats, horses, goats and birds.

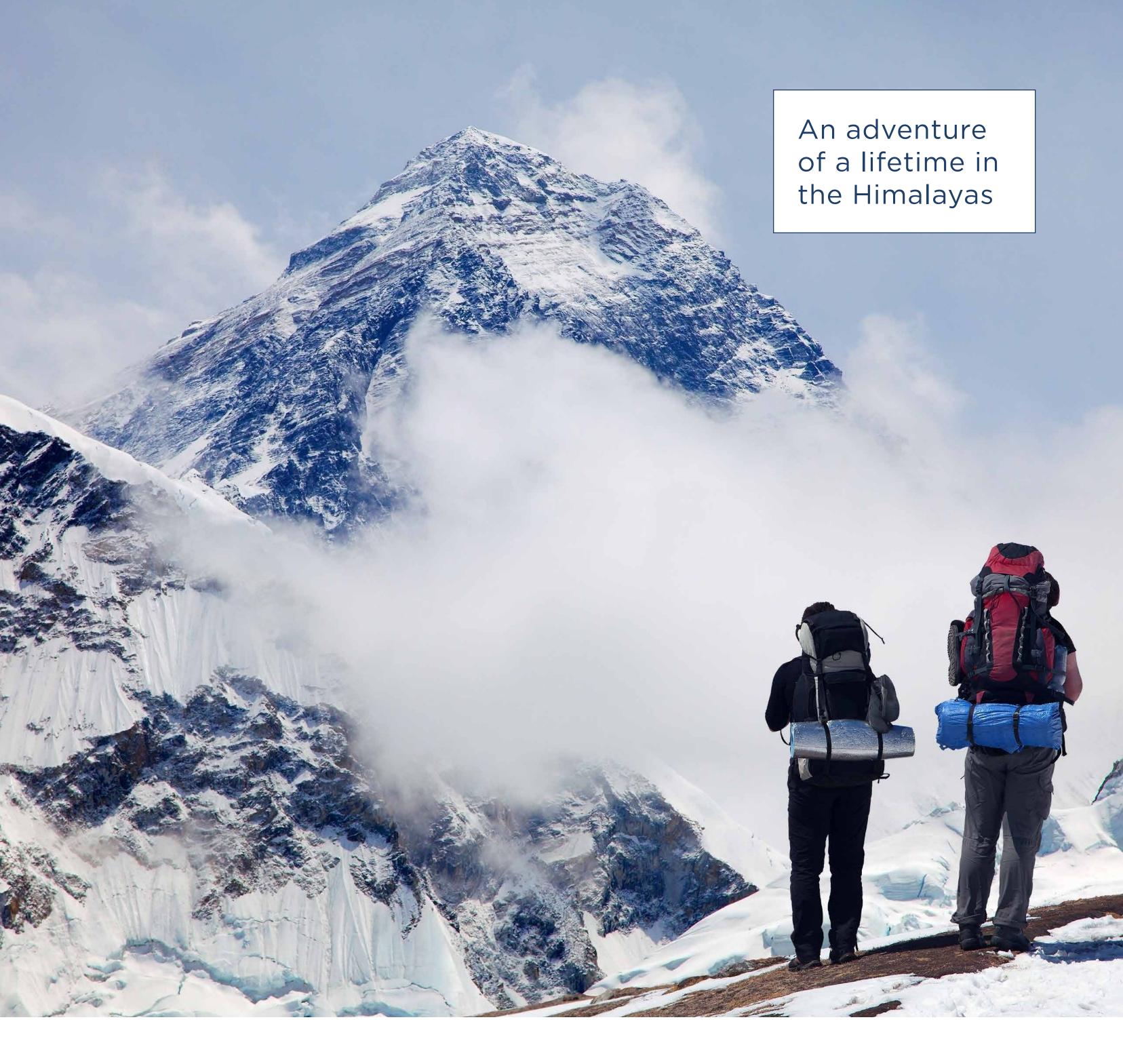
The sanctuary lets visitors feed and observe these majestic giants playing, feeding, bathing and interacting in their natural surroundings. The chance to wander alongside these humungous creatures amid a beautiful jungle scenery can be a very relaxing, educational and deeply meaningful experience. Volunteer at the park where you can actively participate in the animals' healing and conservation. When you do visit, stay the night, as the park's accommodations have just gotten a a post-Covid renovation. *By Parisa Pichitmarn*



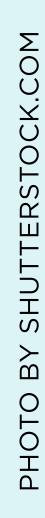
• KATHMANDU

Behold the top of the world

Could this be the year you embark on an Everest quest? Not yet? Perhaps seeing the world's highest peak, whose Nepali name is Sagarmatha, might inspire the adventure of a lifetime. For compelling views, head west of Kathmandu to Thankot village, where a 2.5-kilometer cable car ride through lush wilderness takes you to



Chandragiri hillock. At 2,547 meters above sealevel, the view tower at Chandragiri Hill offers an unobstructed 180-degree view of the snowcapped Himalayas - from the Annapurna ranges to Mt Everest. While here, pay a visit to nearby Bhaleshwor Mahadev temple for a dose of interesting Hindu legend and Nepali architecture courtesy of the temple's affable priest. Other viewing spots include the hilltop village of Nagarkot, east of Kathmandu and a little further from the Unesco World Heritage-listed Bhaktapur City. Or better yet, travel in luxury and stay at Hotel Everest View - the world's highest situated hotel at 13,000 feet, offering a spectacular 360-degree view of the Himalayan range. The hotel arranges helicopter rides from Kathmandu at a price. By Meenakshi J





Q KUALA LUMPUR

Explore the 130-millionyear-old rainforest in Taman Negara

Living history doesn't get more alive than Malaysia's oldest, and largest, protected rainforest. The lushness of Taman Negara (Malay for national park) sprawls for more than 4,000 square kilometers across three states and is home to wild boar, tigers and the rare and endangered Malaysian Tapir. Intrepid botanists might also find the world's largest flower, the spectacular Rafflesia, whose blooms can grow up to three feet across.

The park's beauty is best observed from the world's longest canopy walk, a series of 10 precarious rope bridges hanging 40-meters above the jungle floor where boisterous macaques swing and hornbills are just out of reach. The canopy walk is located a 30-minute hike from the park's headquarters in Kuala Tahan, which is also where you'll find the trailhead for some of the park's more adventurous hikes. For a truly immersive Malaysian jungle experience, hire a guide for the Keniam Trail, a 35-kilometer multi-day trek via Gua Kepayang, a bat-filled limestone cave the size of an aircraft hangar where you can set up camp for the night. This cavern is also home to porcupine and cave racer snakes, so beware!

Kuala Tahan is just over three hours' drive from Kuala Lumpur. Travel and guiding can be arranged in advance from companies like Taman Negara Travel. *By Sharon Crowther*



Scuba dive in Jeddah's Red Sea Coast

Saudi Arabia's tourism industry is about to go through the roof, but a visit in 2023 will still put you well ahead of the crowds. The historic city of Jeddah, is not only the gateway to the Holy City of Makkah, but also to the Red Sea, which offers some of the world's best scuba diving sites.

A year-round scuba destination, the Red Sea off Jeddah offers diving experiences ranging from coastal dives to wrecks, fabulous reef diving, and depths ranging from shallow down to 500 meters. Marine life in the Red Sea is varied, covering the small reef fish, such as clownfish, to shoals of barracuda, sharks, and, if you are lucky, whale sharks, which can be spotted between March and June. While there is plenty of scuba diving around Jeddah, making it a perfect destination for a city-slash-adventure break, dedicated scuba divers should also look to places further north, in and around the city of Yanbu. By Ulrike Lemmin-Woolfrey





STOCKHOLM

Make your way to Swedish Lapland for the Northern Lights

The events of the last few years have left many travelers searching for remote escapes and unique natural sights. To fulfil both of these wishes in one go, head to the wilderness of Swedish Lapland, a vast, wild, snow-covered expanse of land in Sweden's northwest, to witness the Aurora Borealis – the Northern Lights. There are no guarantees, but the best place on earth to see this unique phenomenon is at the Aurora Sky Station in Abisko National Park. Located 195 kilometers inside the Arctic Circle and surrounded by mountains, the park is famous for its clear skies that, between September and March, draw visitors from all over the world hoping to witness the spectacular streaks of purple, pink and green. *By Christie Dietz*



LONDON

A 2023 exclusive: The coronation of King Charles III



Visit London in May, and you'll be timing your trip with a truly historic event: the coronation of King Charles III. Rooted in longstanding tradition and stately splendor, the symbolic religious ceremony will take place in Westminster Abbey on May 6th - the only remaining ceremony of its kind in Europe. To see the King's crown up close - an impossibly

heavy, solid gold 17th century crown that's only used for the moment of crowning itself - head to the Tower of London, where it is displayed amongst other regalia that's used during and after the coronation ceremony.

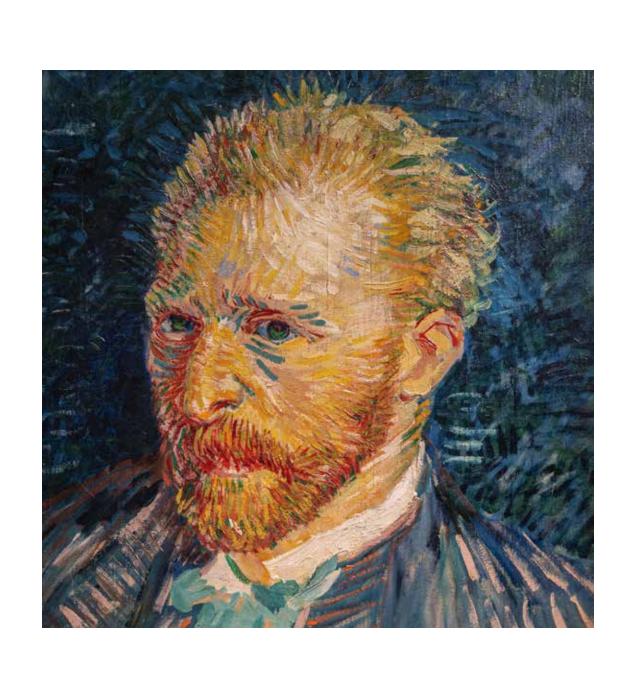
Whilst you're there, immerse yourself in the lives of the royal family at unique exhibitions and tours around Kensington Palace, Hampton Court Palace and Buckingham Palace. Turn your travels into your own royal excursion by heading out into the English countryside to visit some of the locations used in Netflix's *The Crown*: don't miss Winchester Cathedral or Salisbury's Wilton House – the series' most Instagrammed location - which was used to recreate the sumptuous interiors of Buckingham Palace. *By Christie Dietz*

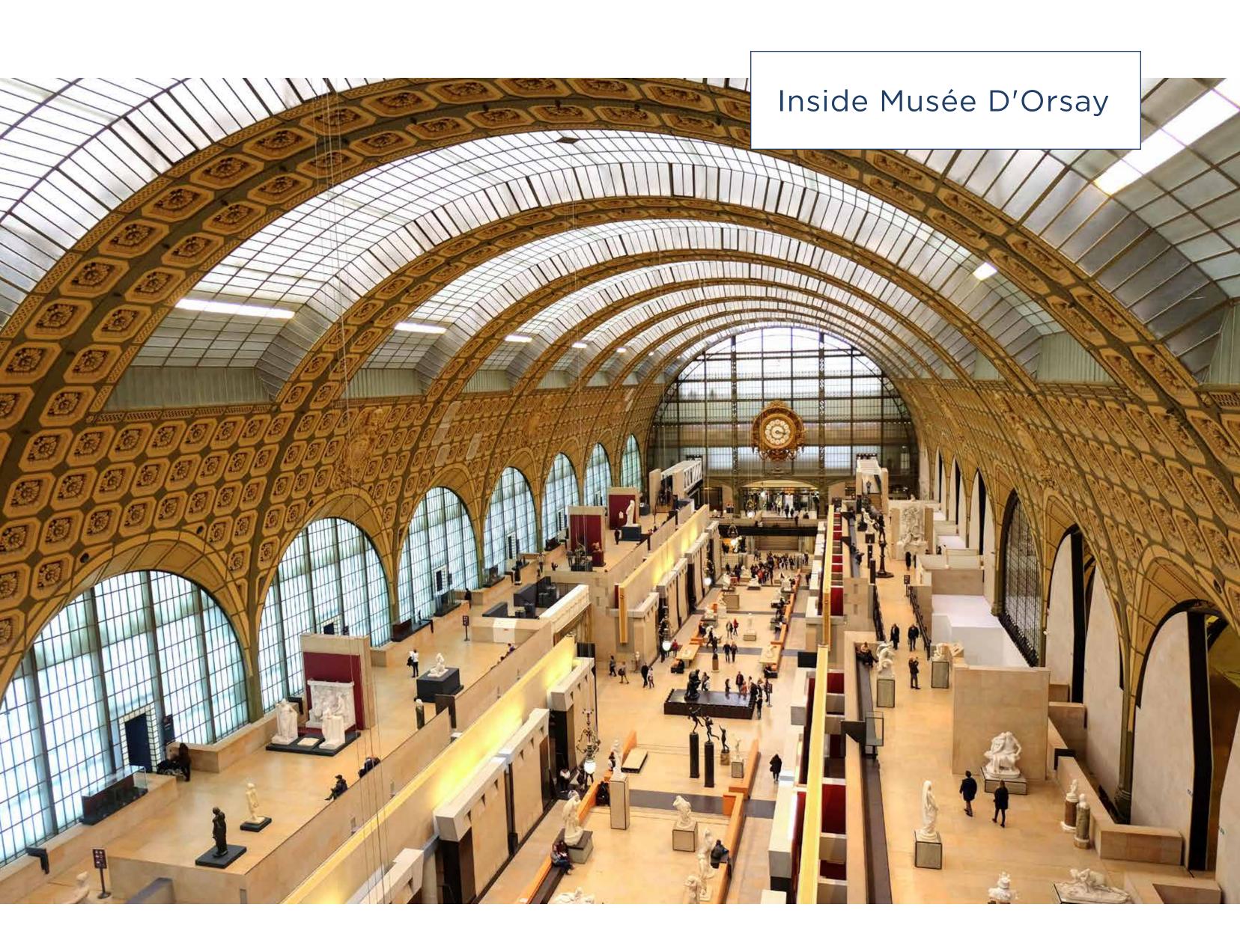


PARIS

Van Gogh like you've never seen before

Housed in a 19th century railway station and home to the largest collection of impressionist and postimpressionist masterpieces in the world, the Musée d'Orsay is a must-visit for art fans on any trip to Paris.





However, with 2023 being the 170th anniversary of one of Western Europe's greatest post-impressionist artists, Vincent van Gogh, there's no better time to go.

The Dutch painter spent the last years of his life in France, and his final months living in an artists' village north of Paris called Auvers-sur-Oise, where he completed almost one work a day until his death. The Van Gogh in Auvers-sur-Oise will be on display at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris from 26 September 2023 to 28 January 2024. This exhibition of his final months features 50 of his paintings, as well as some of his drawings and sketches, that have never been exhibited together. The location where Van Gogh painted his final masterpiece, "Tree Roots", was discovered in 2020 and can be visited on a private tour of Auvers-sur-Oise; a unique opportunity to visit the site where Van Gogh put brush to canvas for the last time just hours before he ended his life. By Christie Dietz



OPENHAGEN

The stuff of fairy tales

Copenhagen's allure is enduring and is just as inspiring today as it has been for centuries. Its atmospheric harbor quays have long inspired writers such as Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) who spent most of his life in the city. Andersen, although a prolific writer of novels, plays and poems, is best known for his fairy tales, such as The Ugly Duckling, The Snow Queen, and The Emperor's New Clothes, all of which have enchanted children of many generations. But Copenhagen has not only inspired fairy tales with its magical surroundings, but also more serious narratives, such as *Hamlet* by none other than the Bard himself, William Shakespeare. Follow in the footsteps of fairy tales, history and enchanting surroundings -and maybe even write a story of your own. By Ulrike Lemmin-Woolfrey

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SEOUL

The curious case of Nami Island

It's a favorite K-drama filming spot whatever the season. The 2002 classic *Winter Sonata*, partly shot in Nami Island, is often credited with having played a large part in kicking off Hallyu, or the Korean wave, a pop culture phenomenon that's captivated the world. In the spring, Nami Island is covered in cherry blossoms, making its annual Cherry Blossom Festival a popular tourist attraction. The island turns lush and green in the summer. For the more active visitor, water sports during this season are highly recommended. Later in the year, autumn colors are vibrant with hues of red and orange all around, quite the opposite of the striking all-white landscape in winter.

Apart from the scenery, Nami gives visitors the unique experience of being in a place that is *not* in Korea. This is because the half-moon-shaped island has declared its cultural independence from the Republic of Korea. This micro-nation has its flag, anthem, currency, and even an entry visa. But don't worry – the entry visa is just another name for the entry fee that already includes the ferry ride to the island. Also, the South Korean won is widely accepted everywhere on the island.

Because the place covers over 40 hectares, head off to these five places first to make sure you catch the most scenic spots of the island: The Gingko Tree Lane, Baekpungmilwon Maple Garden, First Kiss Glass Sequoia Bridge, Tulip Tree Lane and Weeping Willow Lane, and the Nami Island Millennium Waterfall. *By Mae Young*

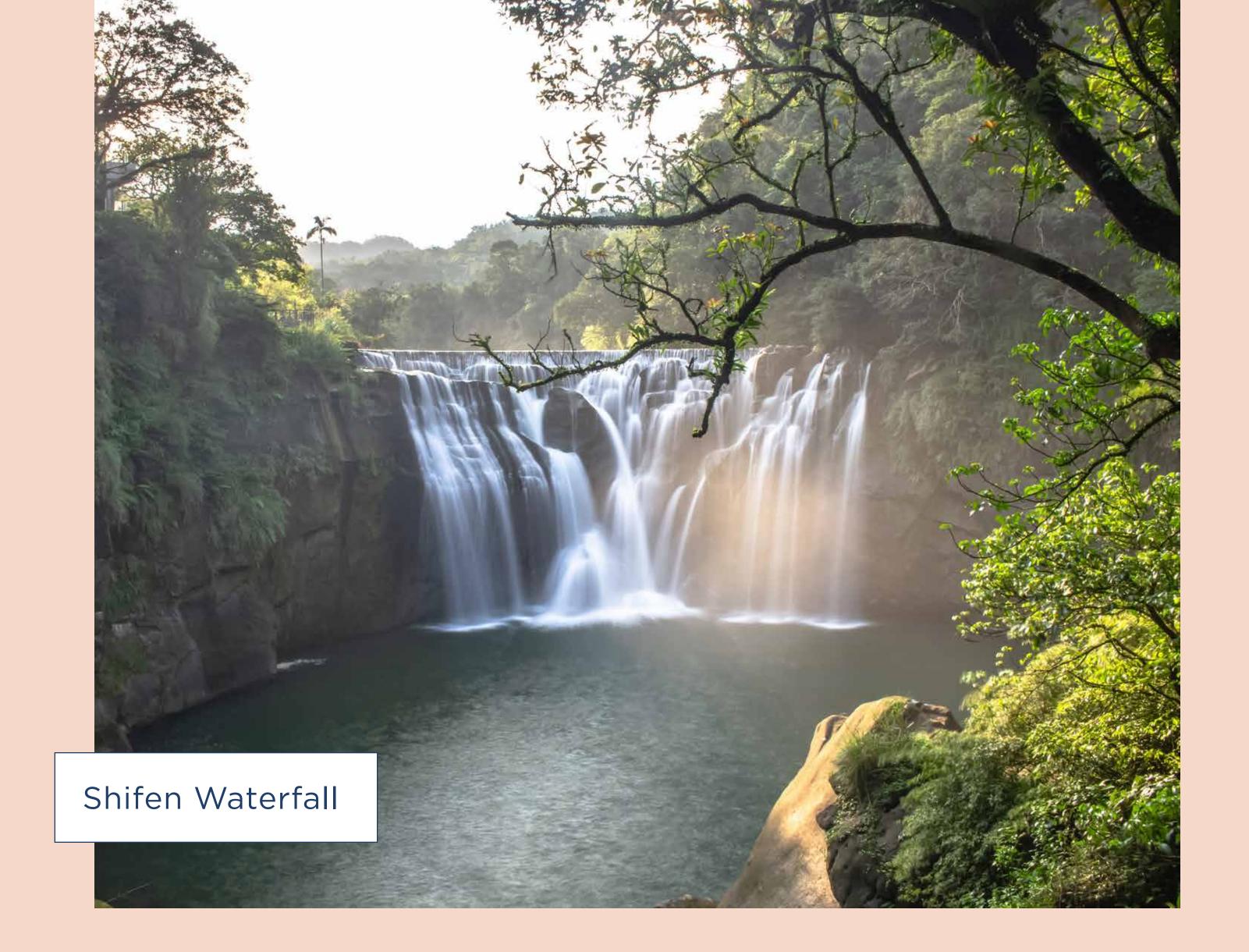
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Q TAIPEI

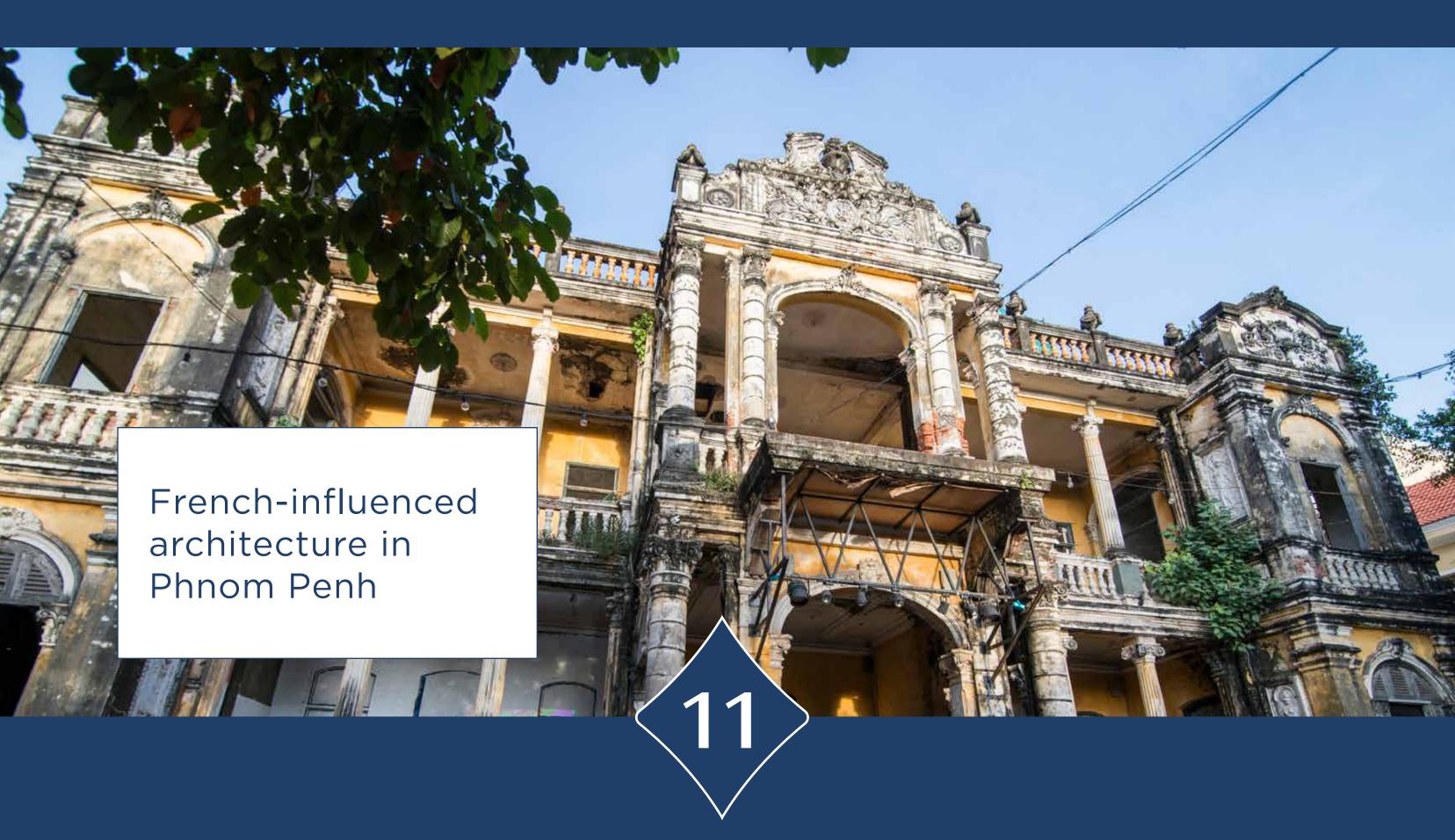
Escape to Shifen

A picturesque settlement in Taipei's mountainous outskirts, Shifen is often bracketed together with Juifen, another nostalgia-inducing village, but the two locations are miles apart and have little in common aside from being old mining areas. Jiufen's famous landmark, A-Mei Tea House, will be familiar to fans of the Studio Ghibli classic Spirited Away, but other locales are largely devoted to eccentric snacks like the decidedly polarizing stinky tofu.



Shifen is an altogether different rural excursion, with the journey as integral to the experience as the destination. Riding the Wenhu MRT line to its penultimate stop Muzha, disembark to board a bus that's also covered by Taipei's iPass, and travel through winding hillsides to Shifen Visitor Centre. Walking around this stunning area in Pingxi County is an unalloyed delight, starting with a 15-minute hike across suspension bridges above Keelung River. This awe-inspiring jaunt culminates in the transporting vision of Shifen Waterfall, Taiwan's "Little Niagara", the broadest cascade in the country.

Shifen Old Street, meanwhile, teems with gently antiquated appeal – it's built around the Pingxi Small Railway Train's tracks, a throwback to the Japanese era now repurposed as a passenger train connecting with Ruifang, central Taipei. Ignore the red-lantern vendors; Shifen's real pleasures lie in the breathtaking confluence of natural and manmade treasures that elevate this village beyond the merely touristy. *By Jonathan Evans*



Q PHNOM PENH

A heritage tour with a difference

When old structures disappear, the stories they hold risk fading from memory. And as skyscrapers continue to rise all over Phnom Penh, taking over entire districts, now is the time to behold the historic buildings that remain. Finding the right guide is key, so for a better appreciation of the city's diverse and storied quarters, sign up for Khmer Architecture Tours' range of themed tours. The 20-year-old company focuses primarily on standout structures from the post-independence heyday of New Khmer Architecture, instigated by Prince Norodom Sihanouk, which fused modernism with distinctly local styles – many of which survived the Khmer Rouge's ravages but fell into neglect in later years. One tour, in a remorque

(four-seater tuk-tuk carriage), focuses on the buildings of Vann Molyvann, Cambodia's most renowned architect, including his remarkably prescient work at the University of Phnom Penh and the National Sports Complex – affectionately known as the "Olympic Stadium" despite never hosting the Games. Another journey around the old Post Office, and near the Central Market, installs guests in a period-appropriate cyclo (pedal-powered rickshaw) to gaze at French colonial architecture, as well as later buildings.

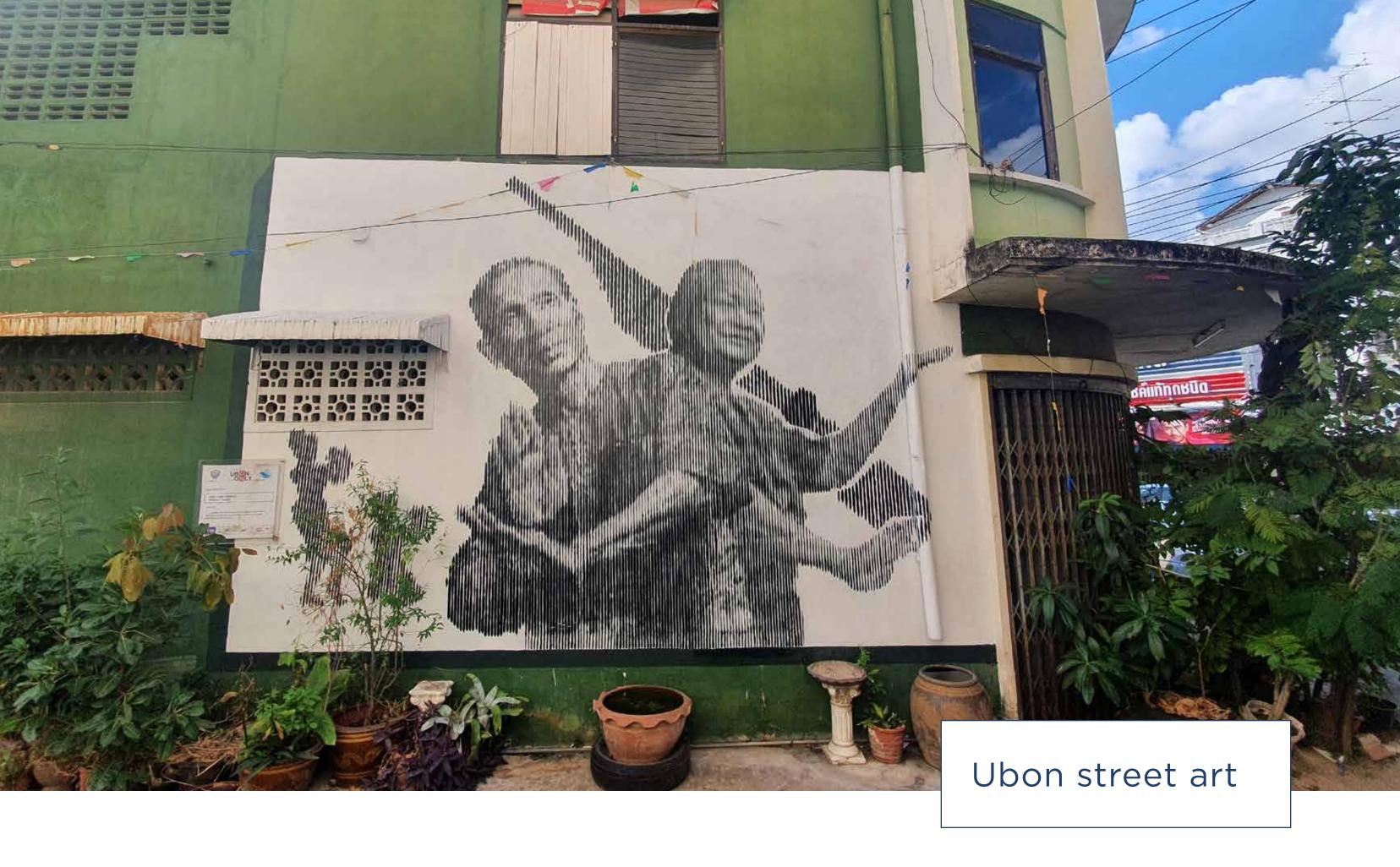
Guides are architects themselves or knowledgeable students, revealing not just the story behind their subjects but also how architects incorporated material, climate considerations and tradition into the buildings. The abiding feeling is that with gatekeepers as informed and enthusiastic as they are, these glorious structures will be safeguarded for some time yet. By Jonathan Evans



Q UBON RATCHATHANI, THAILAND

A bold, new creative scene

This is how creative hubs are born. As a generation of Ubon Ratchathani residents return to the northeastern city – after working in Bangkok and overseas – they're creating a cultural landscape in which temples and temple festivals are no longer Ubon's main draw.



These bold entrepreneurs have taken over abandoned downtown buildings boasting Sino-French architecture more typical of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. One such makeover, Songsarn, draws a loyal daily crowd for its expertly roasted Arabica and pastries, as well as periodic art exhibitions, music events and talks.

On the culinary front, Zao Ubon focuses on authentic, uncompromised Ubon cooking. Even snooty Bangkokians who claim to find *plaa raa* (known locally as *padaek*, a fish sauce made from river fish and sticky rice) disgusting are usually won over by the rich dishes at Zao, including a somtam made with fresh watermelon chunks instead of papaya, and a generous dose of *padaek*.

Complementing trends in coffee and cuisine, Vela Warin boutique heritage hotel started life as a three-story warehouse built in 1937. Five years ago, Apiwat Suparkon, the owner's grandson, retrofitted the building and turned it into an 11-room hotel decorated with Isan fabrics and handicrafts in subtle, updated ways rather than the more cliched Isan-styled hotels seen elsewhere. *By Joe Cummings*



BALI

Surfing in Uluwatu

Stretching from the scallop-shaped Jimbaran Bay to the limestone cliffs and windswept beaches of the famed Uluwatu, Bali's Bukit Peninsula is teeming with sublime beaches, secret coves and stellar surf breaks. With its hilly, rocky terrain and water supply issues, it was one of the last areas in southern Bali to succumb to mass tourism and development, and while luxury resorts and beach clubs have for several years been luring in a new crowd, the region has retained its cruisey surfer vibe.

Uluwatu is a huge, thrilling reef open to all swell directions, with perfect, consistent waves almost every day from March to November – little wonder then surfing luminaries such as Gerry Lopez and Kelly Slater are return travellers to this dreamy spot. Whether you're beginning your surfing journey or a pro, it is still by far the place to go in Bali to catch the perfect wave. *By Claire Knox*

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Rock climbing of Southern Thailand's climbing mecca

Amongst the international outdoor climbing community, Krabi has been renowned for decades as a world-class rock climbing destination. From novice climbers to pros, Krabi provides a slew of enticing reasons to get to grips with its rock, especially as this exciting sport takes increasing mainstream hold. Its Olympic debut in Tokyo 2020 is proof of its global appeal.



A jaw-dropping tropical paradise, Krabi is home to multiple epic, well-bolted, carefully maintained climbing crags, including the famous Railay and Tonsai beaches. Hundreds of routes are all within walking distance of each other. You don't need to arrive fully kitted out, or with a climbing partner. Full gear rental and professional guides are readily available. *By Nikki Busuttil*

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Paragliding in the Bavarian Alps



Experts agree – among 2023's top travel trends are getting out of your comfort zone and exploring the great outdoors, and what better way to tick both off your list than by gliding through the fresh air over some of Germany's most beautiful natural landscapes. Fifty

kilometers south of Munich, towering over the

the rocky peaks of the Bavarian Alps, Wallberg mountain offers endless opportunities for bracing activities such as summer hiking and winter tobogganing. Thanks to its magnificent views and excellent thermals, the mountain is also well known for its paragliding and hanggliding opportunities. If you're not ready to fly solo, the Gleitschirmschule Tegernsee (Tegernsee Paragliding School) offers tandem flights in which you'll be connected to an experienced pilot via a high-tech harness. An unforgettable way to experience Bavaria's dramatic landscapes. *By Christie Dietz*



Skiing in Hokkaido

When skiers talk of Japow, they're referring to the almost mythically fine and fluffy snow that falls in generous quantities over Japan's northern island of Hokkaido, where entire towns are devoted to the singular sport of zipping down the mountain. While Niseko is the best-known of the island's ski spots, just 40 minutes further west and towards the coast is Iwanai, an equally majestic landscape that offers electrifying ski holidays without the crowds.



Situated along the western coast of Hokkaido, the area is home to Mount Iwanai (Iwanai-dake), rising about 1,498 meters above the bay. The mountain is a glorious setting for adrenaline junkies who get their thrills from swooshing through arguably the finest untracked powder in the country, against the most incredible views of the Sea of Japan. To experience the splendor and magic of Mount Iwanai, plan a visit to Iwanai Resort, set to open this month. Among the resort's planned offerings is cat skiing, or offpiste skiing that involves a ride on a snowcat into the back country. By Tara FT Sering





NAGOYA

Through the mountain pass on foot

There's nothing like discovering a country slowly, one step at a time. Among the many rewarding hikes you can do in Japan is the Nakasendo, which translates to "the road in the mountains" an ancient highway linking Kyoto to Tokyo, then

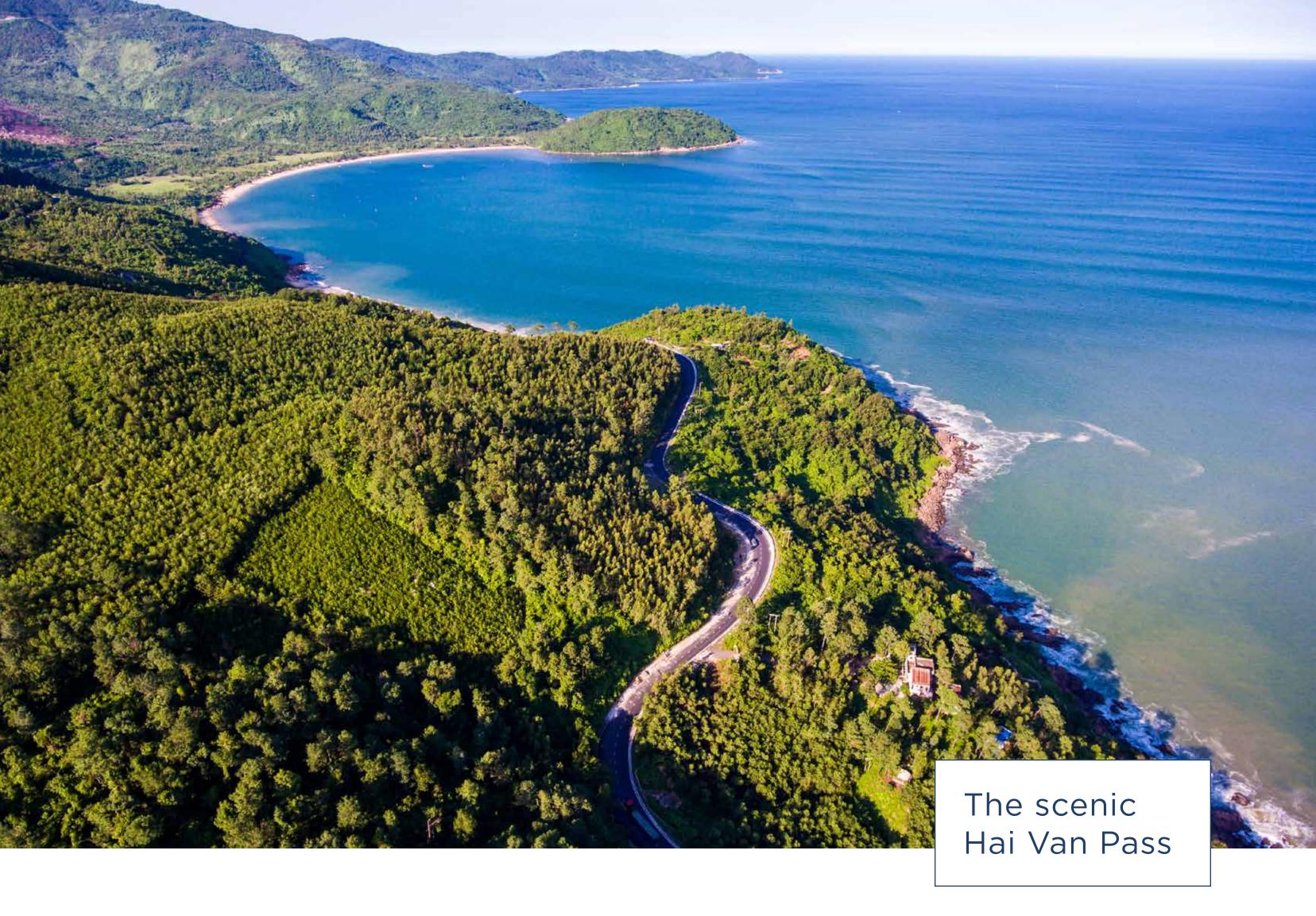
called Edo. During its heyday in the 17th century, nobles, samurai and traders traveled this route, up steep slopes, through deep valleys and thick forest, stopping at one of 69 post towns along the way for a hot meal, a soak in an onsen and a snooze at a ryokan. Following in their footsteps on a guided tour introduces the land and its history – 500 years leading up to the present – in a way that few other experiences can. The most scenic stretches of the Nakasendo are in the Kiso Valley, where the cobbled streets and wooden house of well preserved post towns such as Tsumago and Magome, transport you to a different time. Kisoji is accessed most conveniently from the bustling port city of Nagoya. *By Tara FT Sering*

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Cross-country on two wheels

Navigating this long country's improving main roads never felt easier, and motorcycling this sinuous route that skirts grinding urban traffic – while still taking in many major destinations – is a magnificent way to appreciate Vietnam through a fresh lens.



If you're going solo, here's what you can expect: First, follow the road from Saigon to Vung Tau towards the eastern coast, take the "Ocean Road" to beach resort Mui Ne, past Ho Tram and Ho Coc's beaches, and veer inland towards Central Highlands idyll Da Lat, stopping to admire its waterfalls and colonial architecture.

Heading for the coast again, enjoy views of Ninh Van Bay, Hong Gom Sandbar and Vung Ro Bay, interspersed with relaxation at cosmopolitan Nha Trang; more beaches await at Quy Nhon. Recharge in peaceful Kun Tom before hitting the Ho Chi Minh Highway and the Hai Van ("Ocean Cloud") Pass, which brings you to the Unesco-fêted city of Hoi An. Passing through Danang city, it's a short ride to former capital Hue. Northbound again, stop at Dong Hoi for Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, with the world's largest cave, Son Doong. Then keep following Ho Chi Minh Highway, stopping in Vinh city on this longer stretch; further north in Thanh Hoa province, cruise through emerald paddies, limestone peaks and riverside roads before finally arriving in Hanoi. By Jonathan Evans



Thai food like you've never seen before

Thai chefs are getting curiouser than ever. They're questioning, reinterpreting and dissecting Thai food, all the while giving dazzling presentation techniques worthy of Michelin stars. It used to be mainly Western food if you wanted the fine-dining tasting experience, but lots of groundbreaking

places are popping up all over Bangkok to give a spin on perennial classics, like this bite-sized tom yum from Small Dinner Club. "We pull apart, question and reimagine Thai cuisine, with hopes to create new expectations not just for Thai food, but for food in general," says chef Sareen Rojanametin of Small Dinner Club.

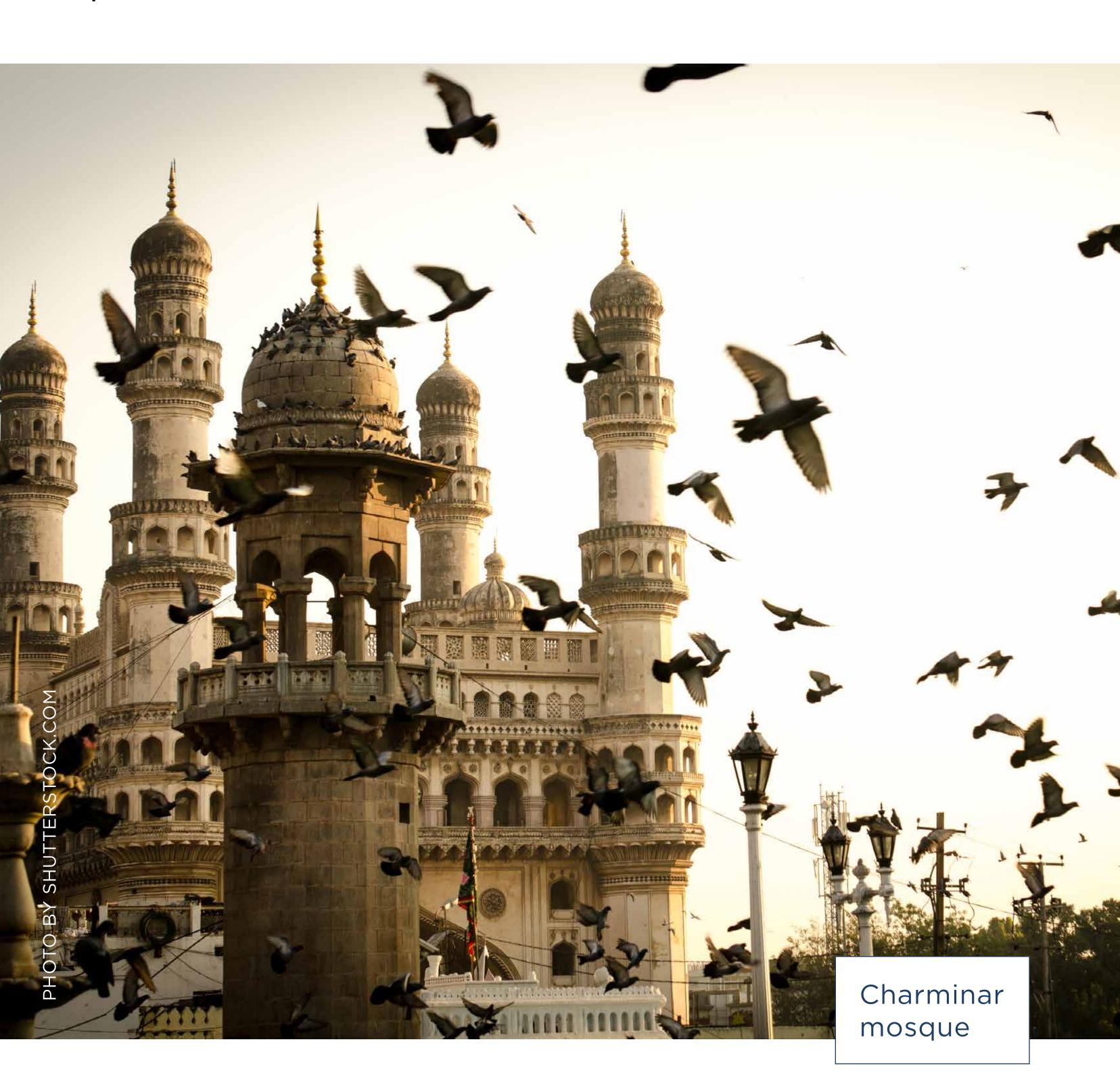
Despite the upscale and reservation-only nature of these chef's tables, the atmosphere to enjoy these lavish gastronomic journeys are also less stuffy and uptight - come as you are and get ready to learn from and interact with the chefs. Besides new-ish Bangkok staples such as Potong, Seasoning 36 and Wana Yook, cutting-edge chefs from other provinces have also done kitchen takeovers, like Samuay & Sons from Udon Thani at Siri Sala. At this exquisite private Thai villa, you can taste scintillating regional cuisine all in the setting of a glamorous, wooden Thai home, with their traveling chef dinners. Destination dining will be worth the trek, because never before has forest plants or fermented fish become so fancy. By Parisa Pichitmarn



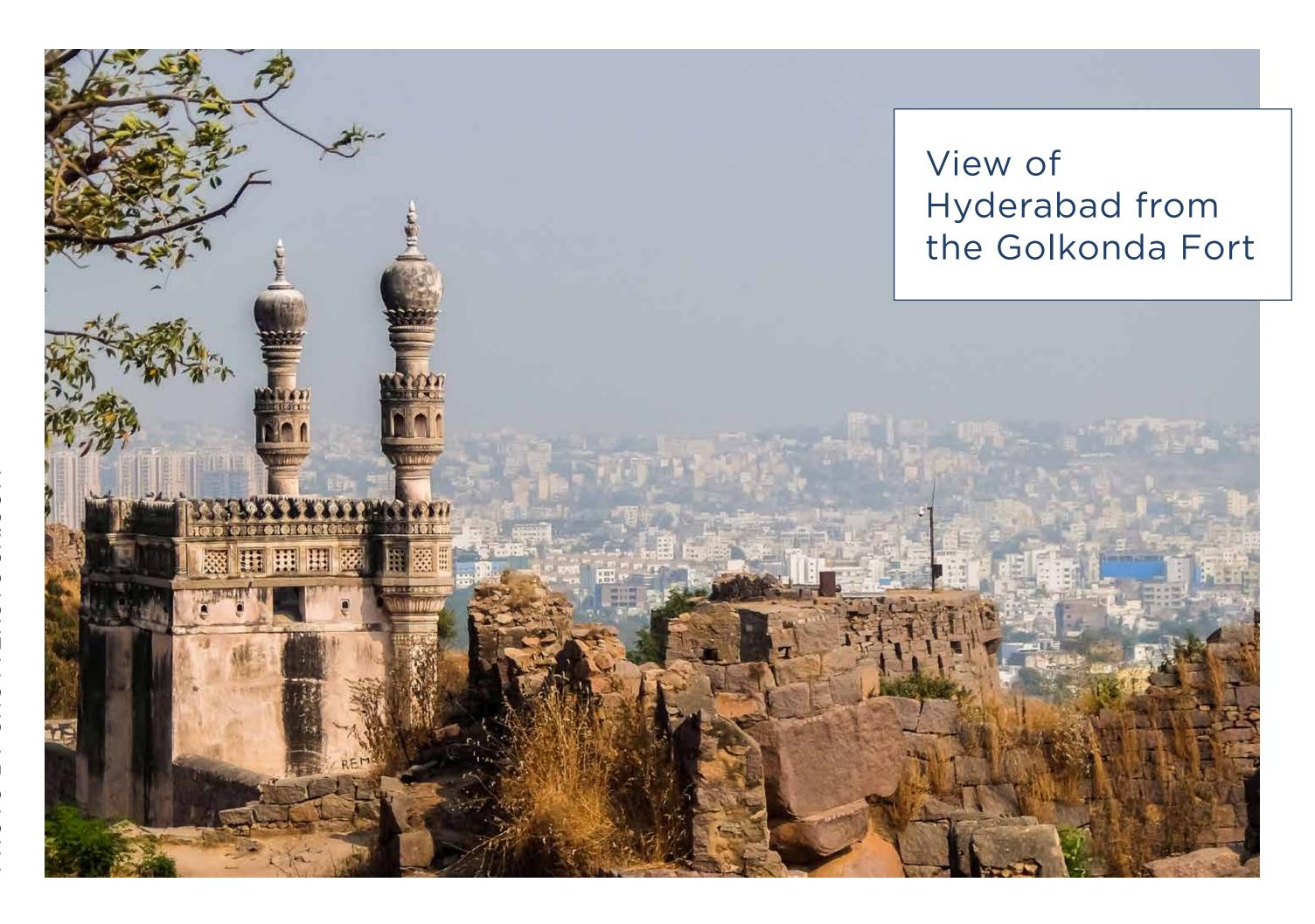


Eat your way around the historic City of Pearls

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic chaos, Hyderabad landed on PETA's 2019 Most Vegan-Friendly Cities list as well as Unesco's Creative City of Gastronomy list, two very good reasons to plan a visit.



For a sampling of the city's rich offerings, embark on a culinary tour by visiting the iconic mosque Charminar, a 430-year-old heritage monument, at sunrise. Take in the views while sipping on a hot cup of Irani chai at Nimrah Cafe and Bakery. Then head over to the nearby Mozamjahi Market and its alleys to dig into delicious varieties of crispy dosa for breakfast at the famous Ram ki Bandi, followed by scoops of handmade ice cream at the adjacent Famous Ice Cream. Make space for lunch at Adaa, tucked away inside a 19th-century Nizam residence perched 2,000 feet above the city on a hill, and now refurbished as Taj Falaknuma Palace. Chef Sajesh Nair follows the time-honored cooking style of the Nizam's Khansama (royal cooks) here, and recommends the Ameer Khuwani Biryani - made with raw, marinated mutton cooked between layers of rice - and the Zimarkand Shikampuri Kebab for vegetarians. By Meenakshi J





• MANILA

Bold flavors and a hot restaurant scene

From Chicago to Paris, Filipino food's global star keeps shining brighter and brighter as dining spots serving elevated takes on the long-overlooked cuisine earn critics' nods and pick up much coveted Michelin stars. But it's in the Philippine capital of Manila that you can have the widest sampling of modern and inventive Filipino cuisine, where favorites such as chef Jordy Navarra's Toyo, as well as Chele Gonzalez and Carlos Villaflor's Gallery by Chele, put little known, almost forgotten indigenous ingredients back on the table, in eye-wateringly gorgeous plates.

Overall, Manila's dining scene is worth the trip. The menu is becoming increasingly more diverse, the level of craft rising to ever greater heights, and dining halls are chic but not stuffy, carefully considered without being aesthetically overdone. The three-year-old Metronome, for instance, a modern French restaurant in the Makati CBD helmed by chef and partner Miko Calo, is noted for its elegant, Art Deco-inflected interiors as much as for its menu. And the new private dining spot Modan, offering progressive Japanese cuisine courtesy of chef Jorge Mendez, is an emotional tribute to family and the flavors that shaped his childhood, all in an intimate setting, in an unassuming part of town. By Tara FT Sering



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A generous serving of wine, wellness and art



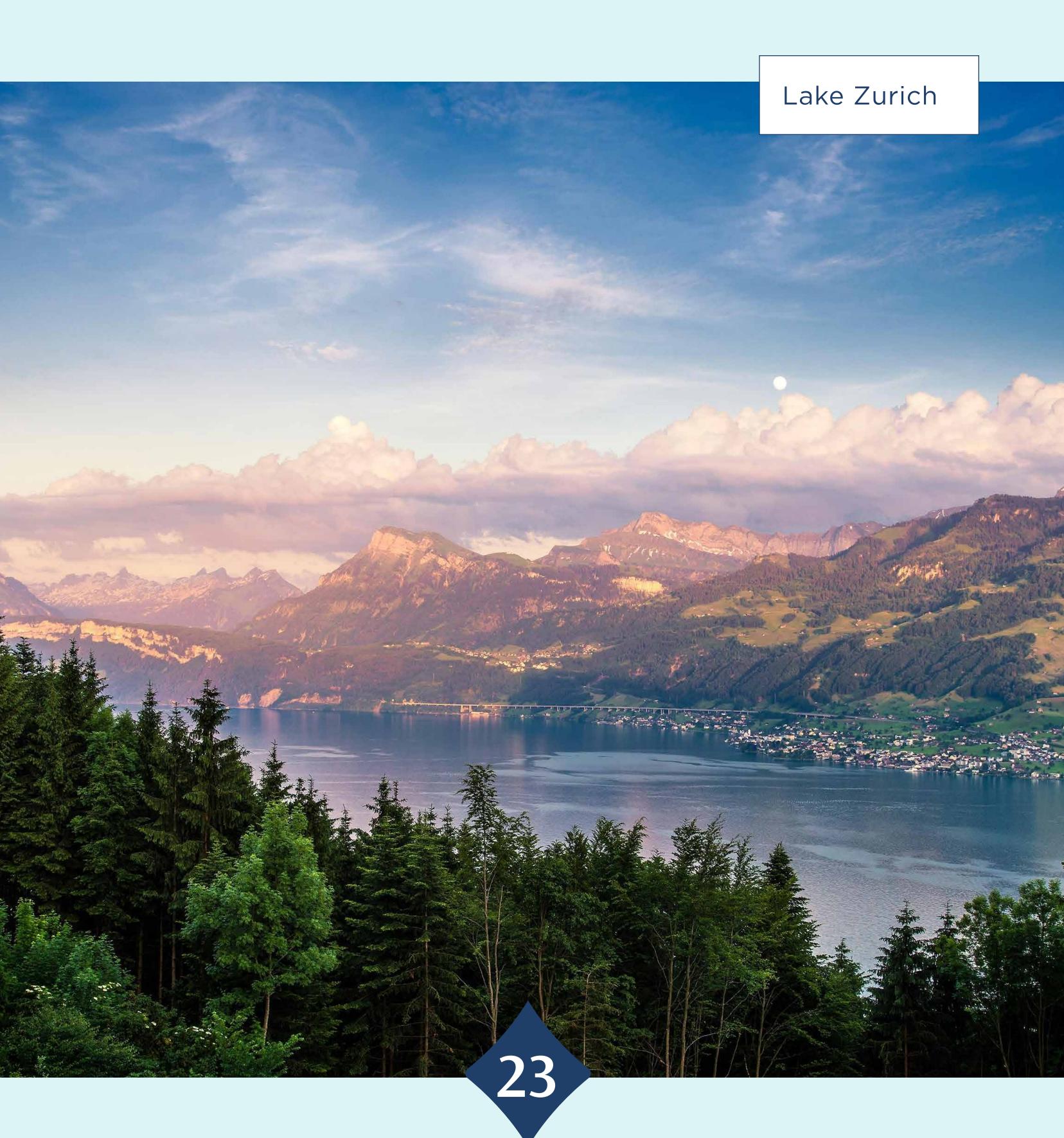
Jump in a car and take a leisurely, southerly cruise along Melbourne's Port Philip Bay for about an hour and a half and you'll arrive at the bootshaped Mornington Peninsula – a multifaceted, sometimes posh playground that's home to lush, rolling vineyards, elegant fine dining restaurants, designer-driven hotels, some of Australia's best contemporary art and acclaimed wellness retreats. To start with, there are the wineries-

slash-art galleries: pinot noir in hand, wander the grand estate of Montaldo in Red Hill, with its Tuscan-esque courtyards and sprawling sculpture trails; or the 330-acre Point Leo Estate and its magnificent sculpture park, featuring towering forms by acclaimed local and international artists such as KAWS, George Rickey, and Tomnakatsu Matsuyama.

Then there's avant-garde Jackalope, a stunning, jet-black modernist hotel framed by bright green vines. It houses two fabulous eateries – Doot, Doot, Doot and Rare Hare – a swish cocktail bar, cellar door, infinity pool and is scattered with intriguing modern artwork throughout. At Everywhen Artspace in Flinders, you'll find stunning First Nations paintings, ceramics and weavings from more than 40 Indigenous-owned art centers, as well as independent artists. You're even spoilt for choice when it comes to beaches – from the peaceful and kid-friendly bay beaches of Rye and Dromana, to the wild waves of the region's "back beaches" such as Portsea and Sorrento.

Bubbling underneath the Mornington Peninsula are thermal waters that are piped into one of the region's star attractions – the Peninsula Hot Springs. This summer, the peninsula has upped the luxe, with the opening of a spectacular new wellness destination: Alba Thermal Springs and Spa. Here, indulge in 31 different bathing pools (geothermal or salt), hidden cave and rain pools, secluded springs, 22 treatment rooms and a much-anticipated restaurant by Aussie celebrity chef Karen Martini. *By Claire Knox*





Q ZÜRICH

Will travel for chocolate

Switzerland is renowned worldwide for its smooth, creamy chocolate, and the long chocolate making history of its largest city, Zürich, makes it a must-visit destination for travelers following their sweet tooth. Visitors can take part in workshops, guided tours and tastings, or simply wander through the

city's picturesque streets, browsing rows of pretty pralines in boutique chocolate shops, learning about innovative chocolate-making techniques at small bean-to-bar manufacturers, or settling down for a Heisse Schoggi (hot chocolate) in one of the city's traditional cafes.

And what better time to visit Zürich than in 2023, when the world famous chocolatier and confectionery company Lindt celebrates its 125th anniversary. The ultra-modern Lindt Home of Chocolate museum, which opened on the banks of Lake Zürich in 2020, offers chocolate lovers the opportunity to learn about the cultivation of cacao and history of chocolate as well as view a demonstration production facility and even join a chocolate course. If that isn't enough to tempt you, the museum is home to not just the largest Lindt shop in the world, but also a 9-meter chocolate fountain, which you can enjoy a glorious view of whilst eating waffles in the museum cafe. *By Christie Dietz*



