

Virtuoso Traveler

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We make a world of difference in the way you experience travel.



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All travel offers are shown in U.S. dollars, and subject to change, availability,
and alteration without notice. Restrictions apply.

EXPECT THE WORLD

OUR
WINE & DINE
ISSUE

On the Menu

VINTAGE
NAPA VALLEY
COCKTAIL LOUNGES
AT SEA
MICHELIN-STARRED
MEALS
AND MORE

***What's new
in Napa: Wine
tasting at
Durant & Booth.***



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SPECIALISTS IN THE ART OF TRAVEL



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Explore the authentic beauty of Alaska—
with the people who know it best.



Holland America Line®
SAVOR THE JOURNEY





— AMERICA'S — TEST KITCHEN

ANNOUNCING A DELICIOUS NEW ONBOARD EXPERIENCE.

The most popular how-to-cook show on TV is now on board Holland America Line. Thanks to a sponsorship with America's Test Kitchen, guests can now experience an enticing selection of live onboard cooking shows and hands-on workshops—with great recipes inspired by the Great Land.



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GATES OF THE ARCTIC NATIONAL PARK

1-HOUR FLIGHT FROM FAIRBANKS TO DAWSON CITY

ARCTIC CIRCLE

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Discover breathtaking wilderness and North America's tallest mountain from our very own magnificent Denali Square™. Included on all Land+Sea Journeys.

Fly to the Yukon's gold heart: the incredible wonders of the Yukon are just a one-hour flight from Fairbanks.

Fairbanks

Denali

Dawson City

Don't miss this rollicking gold-rush Yukon town near majestic Tombstone Park. Just a one-hour flight from Fairbanks, included in your Yukon+Denali Journey.

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Anchorage

Alyeska

Seward

KENAI FJORDS NATIONAL PARK

Kodiak

HUBBARD GLACIER

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*Available on select ships.

VIEW & VERANDAH

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SAVOR THE JOURNEY

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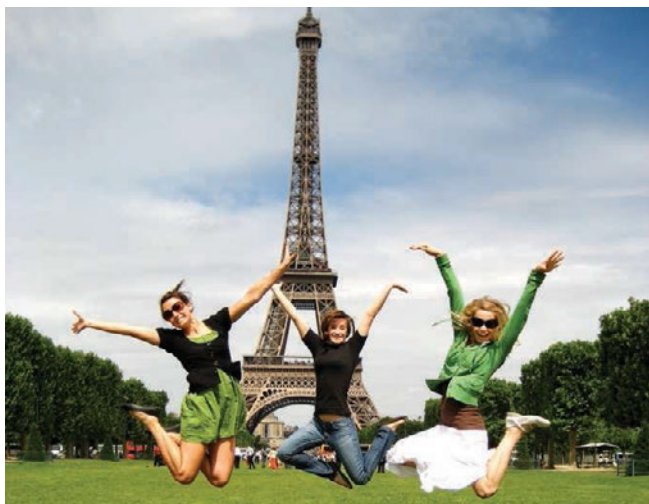
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Munich: Order a pilsner – and shout *Prost!* – in the world's only airport *biergarten*.

What Is Virtuoso?

Virtuoso connects travelers to the world's top travel advisors, along with a coveted portfolio of nearly 2,000 top hotels, cruise lines, tour operators, destination specialists, tourism boards, and more. It's a curated group of the best the travel industry has to offer.



WHY WORK WITH A TRAVEL ADVISOR?

*Virtuoso travel advisors elevate every trip.
A great advisor ...*

Takes It from Ordinary to Extraordinary: Virtuoso advisors can assist with everything from big-picture aspects (including knowing where to go – and when) to the details that matter (think booking hotel rooms with the best views).

Knows the World: The best advisors travel the globe – scouting out hotels, deepening relationships with tour guides, and gleaning firsthand knowledge of destinations for you.

Knows Your Travel Style: Virtuoso advisors understand what's most impor-

tant to you, whether it's taking private cooking classes or simply lounging by the pool.

Expands Your Horizons: Your advisor will help you think creatively about where to go and what to do. Count on recommendations for hot new destinations, plus new ways to experience those places you've already visited.

Can Handle Anything: When problems occur away from home, consider your advisor your personal help line and "fixer" who knows how to quickly turn things around for the better.



WHAT ELSE DO YOU GET?

Virtuoso advisors provide customized itineraries, VIP treatment, and insider access all over the world. They're also able to secure special benefits you can't get on your own, including:

- **Exclusive hotel amenities** such as preferred rates and availability, room upgrades (if available), breakfast daily, early check-in and late checkout (if available), and special perks like spa treatments, dining credits, and exclusive hotel/resort activities.

- **Extra perks on special "Virtuoso Voyages"** sailings such as a welcome-aboard reception and the services of a dedicated onboard host, plus your choice of an exclusive cultural shore excursion, a private car and driver in port (on select sailings), or a shipboard credit. Nonhosted cruises include added benefits such as specialty dining, spa treatments, shipboard credits, and in-cabin amenities.

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Argentina

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Argentina



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2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016



THE PERKS AND PRIVILEGES OF USING A VIRTUOSO TRAVEL ADVISOR
PLUS OUR PICKS FOR WHERE TO GO NOW (AND WHAT TO PACK)

VIP

PROUD MARY

The Bloody Mary's boozy beginnings can be traced back to 1934, when bartender Fernand Petiot introduced his recipe of vodka and tomato juice seasoned with celery salt, black and cayenne pepper, lemon, and Worcestershire at **The St. Regis New York's** King Cole Bar. The cocktail, traditionally known at the hotel as the Red Snapper, has remained the same since. Beyond ringing in the New Year, The St. Regis is counting down to something it considers a bit more monumental: the sale of the **1 millionth** Red Snapper. The drink will be served sometime this winter; on January 1, an official countdown ticker will go up outside the hotel's 55th Street entrance. When number 1 million is sold, the St. Regis promises revelry for the lucky patron *and* everyone in the bar - cheers to that. *Doubles from \$695; Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily and one afternoon tea for two.*

BUY IT

In celebration of the milestone, St. Regis Hotels & Resorts has teamed up with Arrowhead Farms to bottle and sell its Bloody Mary mix. \$28, arrowheadfarms.com.

VIP IS REPORTED BY ANITA CARMIN,
SUSAN HANSON, AND JEN LYONS

CHECK-IN

SIPPING NOTES

Get a taste of local culture through these hotels' signature beverage experiences.



HOLY BREW

The Augustinian monks of Prague's Saint Thomas Monastery, on the grounds of the 101-room **Augustine**, created the recipe for their **St. Thomas dark beer** in 1352. While the divine ale is now made off-site, the only place to sample it is at the hotel: in your minibar, at the Refectory Bar (housed in the former brewery's cellar), or via the spa's St. Thomas Beer Body Ritual, a body scrub that uses finely ground hops and the resort's signature ale. *Doubles from \$325; Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily and a \$95 dining credit.*

AFTERNOON DELIGHT

With its Chinese roots and years of British colonial rule, Hong Kong has developed quite the tea culture. See for yourself at the 503-room **InterContinental Hong Kong**, which hosts one of the city's most elegant afternoon teas, complete with **house-made scones** and panoramic harbor views. *Doubles from \$350; Virtuoso travelers*

receive breakfast daily and a \$100 dining credit. Afternoon tea from \$78 for two.

TIP: "After tea, head to **Yan Toh Heen** on the InterContinental's lower level. The two-Michelin-starred restaurant has the best dim sum in Hong Kong; chef Lau Yiu Fai showcases seasonal Cantonese specialties." – *Tony Huffman, Virtuoso agency owner, Dayton, Ohio*



ALOHA, JOE

Hawaiians love their coffee, and rightfully so, as the islands are the only place in the U.S. that produces beans commercially. Guests at the recently remodeled, 383-room **Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea** can experience Hawaii's coffee culture in true VIP fashion on a new helicopter adventure over to a Kona, Hawaii Island, estate, where the owner welcomes you with an exclusive tour, a **farm-to-mug tasting**, and brunch. *Doubles from \$539; Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily and a \$100 dining credit. Private daylong helicopter tour from \$13,500 for two.*



SPIRITED TRADITION

Saint Petersburg's 266-room **Belmond Grand Hotel Europe** stocks 35 types of vodka at its Caviar Bar & Restaurant, and that's also where you'll find the city's only full-time **vodka sommelier**, Alexander Dmitriev (pictured at left). Take part in a classic Russian pastime with Dmitriev, who leads private lessons on how to best

imbibe the country's beloved liquor. *Doubles from \$217; Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily and one lunch or dinner for two. Vodka lesson, \$81.*

TIP: "Vodka should be served very cold, in a shot glass, and with a few **zakuski** (appetizers). And one must always drink in good company." – *Lana Lewis, Virtuoso travel advisor, Jasper, Tennessee*



Cuisine at its finest

Six islands. Endless edible experiences. Send your palate off the beaten path and discover what makes Hawai'i's flourishing food scene so deliciously unique. At the heart of both traditional and innovative local dishes are fresh, pure, farm-to-table ingredients grown under the most pristine conditions, 365 days a year. You won't need a menu to discover your most mouth-watering experiences when you "Let Hawaii Happen."



Call Your Virtuoso Travel Advisor



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CHECK-IN

Rancho Relaxation

An ideal way to end a day full of yoga, meditation, and mountain hiking: a glass of wine and a visit from a massage therapist. Three new Villas Cielo (“Heavenly Villas”) at **Rancho La Puerta** bring a new level of privacy to the accommodations at the Tecate, Mexico, fitness resort and destination spa. The 2,200-square-foot villas – Azul, Terra, and Verde – feature traditional Mexican decor touches and have private patios and dipping pools, complimentary Wi-Fi, and minibars stocked with Valle de Guadalupe vintages. The 89-casita resort’s fitness classes and pescatarian meals are all-inclusive for everyone, but villa guests receive an added bonus: a complimentary **90-minute massage** and Reiki treatment performed en suite. *Seven-night villa stays from \$5,750, including an in-room spa treatment and two private fitness assessments; Virtuoso travelers receive an additional 50-minute massage and 30-minute herbal wrap.*



There's room to lounge inside and (right) out at Rancho La Puerta's new Villas Cielo.



S'morrier Frank Badger and (inset) his gourmet desserts.



GIMME SOME S'MORES

As the new “s’morrier” at Georgia’s 40-room **Lodge at Sea Island**, Frank Badger has set out to elevate the classic campfire snack. Badger preps a gourmet collection of the gooey treats at the resort’s fire pit nightly, mixing it up with ingredients such as mint chocolate and **passion-fruit marshmallows**. The menu changes seasonally, but s’more purists will be happy to know that the original recipe – chocolate, graham crackers, and vanilla marshmallows – is available year-round. *Doubles from \$395; Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily and a \$100 resort credit.*

(CHRISTMAS) PELICAN HILL



Deck the Hill

Hotels like to get in the holiday spirit too. Newport Beach, California’s **Resort at Pelican Hill** will deliver a Christmas tree to your bungalow or villa; you can even ship your own ornaments from home. Other festive perks at the 332-room resort: themed dinners, bedtime stories read by **Santa’s elves**, and visits from Saint Nick himself. *Bungalows from \$425 and villas from \$795 in December and January; Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily and a \$100 golf or spa credit.*

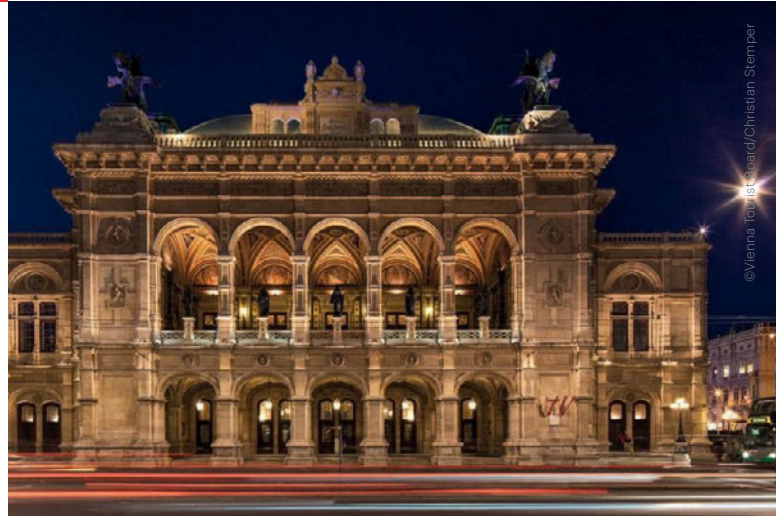
On a 147-year-old
dancefloor.

My heart beats in
time to the waltz



VIENNA

NOW ♦ FOREVER



BON VOYAGE



Kitchen Prep with Pépin

Anthony Bourdain once quipped, “I feel that if Jacques Pépin shows you how to make an omelet, the matter is pretty much settled. That’s God talking.” The French master chef is likely to crack a few eggs preparing, say, a leek quiche, potato pancakes with gravlax, or other regional specialties when he joins **Oceania Cruises’ Marina** for a ten-day, epicurean-themed journey around the Baltic. Pépin – who has served as the line’s executive culinary director since its inception in 2002 – will create signature menus for the voyage, give lectures, and **lead cooking demonstrations** in the Marina Lounge as the 1,250-passenger ship sails from Southampton to Copenhagen. Guests can try out his tips at individual workstations when Pépin co-hosts classes in the onboard Culinary Center. *Departure: June 2, 2017; from \$3,599.*

COCKTAIL HOURS

New lounges and mixology programs make every hour a happy one aboard these cruise ships.



From top: Mixing it up in Celebrity’s Sky Observation Lounge and Queen Mary 2’s Carinthia Lounge.

Carinthia Lounge

SHIP: Cunard’s newly refurbished *Queen Mary 2*

BEHIND THE BAR: The largest collection of sherry and port at sea, with some ports dating back to 1840 (the year of the line’s first sailing).

MIX IT UP: A Messicano, made with two shots of espresso, Patrón Silver tequila, and coffee liqueur.

Sky Observation Lounge

SHIP: Solstice-class ships in Celebrity Cruises’ fleet

BEHIND THE BAR: New hand-crafted cocktails from mixologists trained by Christian Delpech, considered one of the world’s finest flair bartenders.

MIX IT UP: Zodiac-themed cocktails such as the Sagittarius, which blends Ketel One vodka and sherry with maple syrup, lemon juice, strawberries, and a dash of Veuve Clicquot.

Meridian Lounge

SHIP: *Seven Seas Explorer*, Regent Seven Seas Cruises’ latest

BEHIND THE BAR: An impressive selection of cognacs, including a century-aged Rémy Martin Louis XIII.

MIX IT UP: The Explorer Martini, a signature mix of Aperol, sour apple liqueur, mint leaves, pomegranate juice, and lime juice that’s garnished with blueberries and a mint leaf and served in the shaker with a hand-blown blue-stemmed Orrefors glass.

SWEET SPOT A tour and **chocolate tasting** at Finca Köbö, a traditional cacao plantation outside Golfo Dulce, is just one of the tasteful shore excursions offered on **Windstar Cruises’** seven-day Costa Rica voyage, which also transits the Panama Canal. *Departures: Multiple dates December 2, 2016, to April 1, 2017; from \$1,159. Tour and tasting, \$119.*





SUITE SAILING

AVE, MARIA

Today's cruise ships go all out in their top-tier cabins. One of our favorites: Uniworld's **Royal Suite** aboard **Maria Theresa**, known for its luxurious wall and window coverings, handwoven carpet, original artwork, and antiques. This one-of-a-kind suite belongs in a royal palace – albeit one with every modern convenience.

- **SQUARE FOOTAGE:** 410
- **WHAT YOU'LL LOVE:** Butler service (a rarity on river ships), a walk-in closet, a bathroom with a rain shower and tub, and a French balcony
- **MORE ON BOARD:** Personalized port experiences, including the use of complimentary bicycles and Nordic walking poles; a fitness center with yoga and TRX suspension training; Habsburg Salon with a full-service bar; Lipizzan Cinema; and an enclosed heated swimming pool
- **AT THE TABLE:** The ship's Baroque Restaurant serves regional fare using ingredients supplied by local farms, markets, and artisanal producers.



Explore The Wonders of

MEXICO

TASTE A WORLD OF FLAVORS IN CANCUN & RIVIERA MAYA THIS SPRING

While Cancun – Riviera Maya is known for its exquisite culinary offerings in the form of all-inclusive delights, the beachfront destination is also home the Cancun-Riviera Maya Wine & Food Festival. Every spring, this four-day festival brings the flavors of the world together to create inventive and delectable dishes at extravagant tasting events. Don't miss the Gourmet Tasting Village, which also features the scrumptious offerings from the nearby gourmet hotels, or the hands-on classes, where amateur cooks test their skills side-by-side with star chefs.

Since predominant hotels in the area host various events, accommodations sell out fast. **Book early before you miss the show!**

BON VOYAGE



Clockwise from top left: Vineyard views along the Rhine, Arthur's bistro, and *Inspire* in Koblenz, Germany.



LAUNCHED

2014

PASSENGERS

130

HIGHLIGHTS

All outside cabins, most with floor-to-ceiling windows, including 22 suites measuring 300 square feet; bicycles for exploring ashore

SHIP REVIEW

Floating Feast

A European river cruise delivers sustenance for the eyes and the palate.

Austin, Texas-based Virtuoso advisors Cyndi and Mark Worgan report back on their recent river voyage – a journey, they say, that was full of pleasant surprises and culinary discoveries. The couple slipped past castles, vineyards, and storybook villages while sailing aboard *Inspire*, a ship that cruises exclusively for Tauck on Europe's Rhine and Moselle rivers.

SPEAKING OF PLEASANT SURPRISES ...

"We were amazed at how *Inspire* navigated through locks and under low bridges. And the ship was very comfortable – with contemporary decor, yet a **warm and inviting ambience**."

ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE:

"One night at dinner, we casually mentioned to the maitre d' that, as Texans, we were craving guacamole. At breakfast the next morning, the chef surprised us with **house-made guacamole and flour tortillas**."

OENOPHILES WILL LOVE:

"Local vintages are served in both the ship's main dining room and Arthur's, its small, alternative bistro. (Book early for dinners in Arthur's, as tables fill up fast.) Our itinerary also offered an excursion to a **Moselle Valley winery** for a private tasting."

SPEAKING OF EXCURSIONS ...

"Tauck had three guides on board who gave briefings every afternoon on the next day's activities ashore. Something else we liked: Tauck's buses followed us from port to port, so we had **familiar transportation and drivers** throughout our cruise."

TALK ABOUT HIGH TEA:

"Nothing beats afternoon tea on the **ship's top deck** while cruising past castles."

WE'RE SUITE ON:

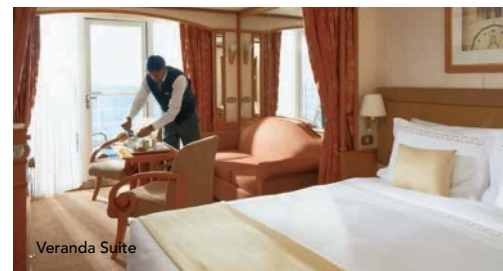
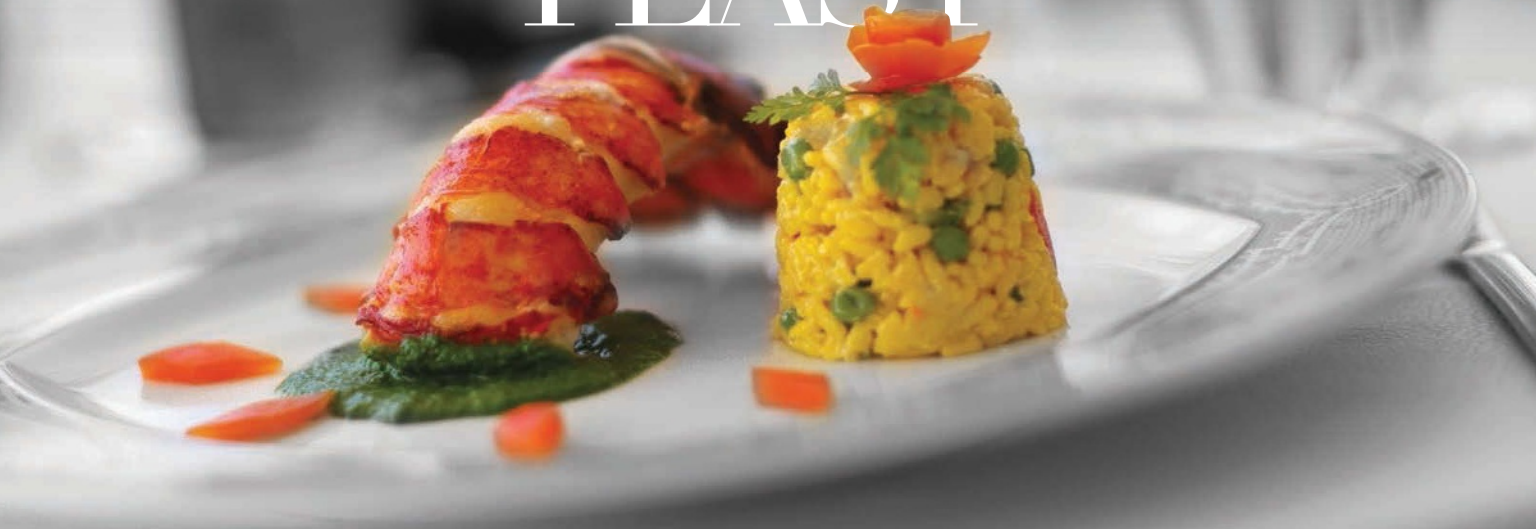
"The suites on the Diamond Deck are wonderful and feature two floor-to-ceiling **French balconies**. We've also had several discerning clients tell us they loved them."

ITINERARY TO BOOK:

"The 13-day Rhine and Moselle voyage between Amsterdam and Basel, which includes a **private gala evening** at Germany's twelfth-century Satzvey Castle."



A CULTURAL AND CULINARY FEAST



Immerse yourself in the cultures and cuisines of far-off lands as you indulge your passion for great food. Three Silversea voyages have been hand-selected to showcase the rich culinary traditions of Asia, South America, and Arabia. In Asia, witness skyscraper-filled cities and ancient temples as you savour a unique tapestry of tastes, colours and aromas. In South America, amid rainforests and golden beaches, stop to sample mouthwatering steaks and empanadas. Beyond the architectural wonders and amazing sand dunes of Arabia, discover succulent grilled kebabs, fragrant rice dishes and tasty confections. As you enjoy your voyage, Silversea's culinary team will celebrate the itinerary's cultural flavor by revealing local cuisine and vintages at their most delectable.

FEATURED 2016 VIRTUOSO VOYAGER CLUB® VOYAGES

Onboard Host Services | Welcome Aboard Reception | Exclusive Shore Event or Custom Credit

DATE	DAYS	VOYAGE	FROM / TO	SHIP	FARES FROM
Apr 1	18	1708	Abu Dhabi to Athens	Silver Cloud	\$6,750
Sep 22	16	3727	Tokyo to Hong Kong	Silver Shadow	\$9,150
Nov 17	19	6732	Buenos Aires to Bridgetown	Silver Muse	\$9,050

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Havana highlight: Dinner in a privately run *paladar* offers a true taste of Cuba's capital.

HOME-COOKED MEALS

At locals' dinner tables, sustenance comes with a side of culture.



THAILAND

The Setting: The traditional teakwood home of noted academic and designer **Samrit Haikam**, an exquisite example of northern Lanna-style architecture in Chiang Mai.

On the Menu: Guava salad, **ruby fish with tamarind sauce**, and other regional fare.

Reserve a Table: Your travel advisor can work with one of Virtuoso's on-site tour providers, **Trails of Indochina**, to include the meal and a tour of Haikam's home in a custom-made Thailand trip.

CUBA

The Setting: Local *paladares* – privately run restaurants in people's homes around Cuba's capital of Havana.

On the Menu: Classic Cuban dishes such as *malanga* fritters and *ropa vieja*.

Reserve a Table: Those traveling with **Abercrombie & Kent** can sample a few menus on the company's people-to-people educational exchange tours.



PORTUGAL

The Setting: **Casa de Juste** in Lousada, a 500-year-old manor house tucked within the vineyards of Portugal's Minho region.

On the Menu: Sip light, crisp **vinho verde** ("green wine") at a private tasting, then sample estate-produced olive oil during a homemade lunch with owners Fernando and Ana Guedes.

Reserve a Table: Visit Minho as part of a personalized vacation crafted by your advisor and one of Virtuoso's local tour providers, **Tours for You**.

ADVISOR INSIGHT "The soul of a culture is in its food, and when travelers have the chance to make traditional dishes with locals, or even dine in their private homes, they gain a tangible connection to the destination they're visiting." – **Damien Martin, Leawood, Kansas**

FOODIES AFOOT

Active travelers are trading in their energy bars for tables at **27 Michelin-starred restaurants** in California Wine Country and Europe, including Piedmont, Italy's Ristorante Villa Crespi and Alsace, France's Auberge de l'III. New culinary journeys from **Backroads** offer epicure-adventurers secured reservations to five-star meals, as well as cooking classes, winetastings, and meetings with farmers, winemakers, and artisan producers – all while hiking and biking in the countryside where the food and wine are sourced.

(ROPA VIEJA) ANTONY SOUTER/ALAMY, (VINHO VERDE) FOODFOLIO/ALAMY, (COOKING CLASS) JENNIFER ROSKOFZ/BACKROADS, (DRINK ICON) XYCAI/THE NOUN PROJECT



THAT'S THE SPIRIT

On customized England vacations crafted by your advisor with one of Virtuoso's local tour providers, **Dream Escape**, guests can now **study the history of gin** during a master class at the fashionable Sipsmith distillery in London. Also on tap: riverside dining at the Bombay Sapphire distillery in Hampshire.

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DISPATCH



Clockwise from top left: The port of Dubrovnik (with Bokar Fortress at bottom right), Plitvice Lakes National Park, Kabola Winery, and the estate's muscat.



CROATIA CALLING

On the itinerary: Truffles, UNESCO treasures, and settings befitting a fantasy.

While Croatia remains a below-the-radar destination for many U.S. travelers, this eastern European gem and home to dozens of sites in the HBO series *Game of Thrones* is “a must-see that offers plenty of immersive experiences – especially for epicures,” says Patricia Shachat, a Virtuoso advisor from Lakewood Ranch, Florida. Here, Shachat shares insights garnered during her recent nine-day journey with Calvados Club Luxury Travel, one of Virtuoso’s on-site tour providers.

PALATE PLEASERS

Shachat raves about her tour of the food-centric Istria peninsula, which included a **hunt for white truffles** in the village of Livade and a private winetasting in Momjan, epicenter of Istria’s wine country. She

recommends a visit to the **Kabola Winery** to sample its muscat, malvasia, and teran vintages. “The cellar is located underground,” Shachat explains, “and the wine undergoes a prolonged fermentation in amphorae [two-handled storage jars] – a process that goes back millennia.” Her trip also included opportunities to sample Croatia’s regional specialties, many of them seafood based, including “a memorable meal in Rovinj featuring a fusion of traditional and modern Mediterranean dishes.”

FEASTS FOR THE EYES

Ranking high on Shachat’s list of must-see attractions is the UNESCO-designated **Plitvice Lakes National Park**. “It comprises 16 distinctively colored lakes

interconnected by a series of waterfalls and set in deep woodland populated with wildlife and rare bird species. Each turn brings yet another picture-perfect photo op.” Another favorite destination: the **island of Hvar**. It’s especially popular in summer, she says, “when the small harbor is dotted with celebrities’ yachts.” To get there, Shachat suggests flying via floatplane from Split (“my favorite port city in the country”), to take advantage of the spectacular views of the Croatian archipelago.

IF YOU ONLY HAVE A WEEK

Shachat recommends building your itinerary around **Dubrovnik** (Croatia’s best-known port), Hvar, Split, and Plitvice Lakes National Park. If time permits, add Istria and Zagreb, Croatia’s capital. *Game of Thrones* enthusiasts can visit settings featured in the series, including Dubrovnik’s Bokar Fortress (King’s Landing), nearby Trsteno Arboretum (the Red Keep’s gardens), and Split’s Diocletian’s Palace (site of many of Daenerys’ scenes).

WHEN AND HOW TO GO

April through June and September through October are ideal months to visit, Shachat notes. Your advisor can work with **Virtuoso’s local tour providers** to create a tailor-made trip.

(DUBROVNIK) GUNTER KIRSCH/ALAMY, (PLITVICE LAKES NATIONAL PARK) MICHEK/GETTY IMAGES

SPACE TRAVEL

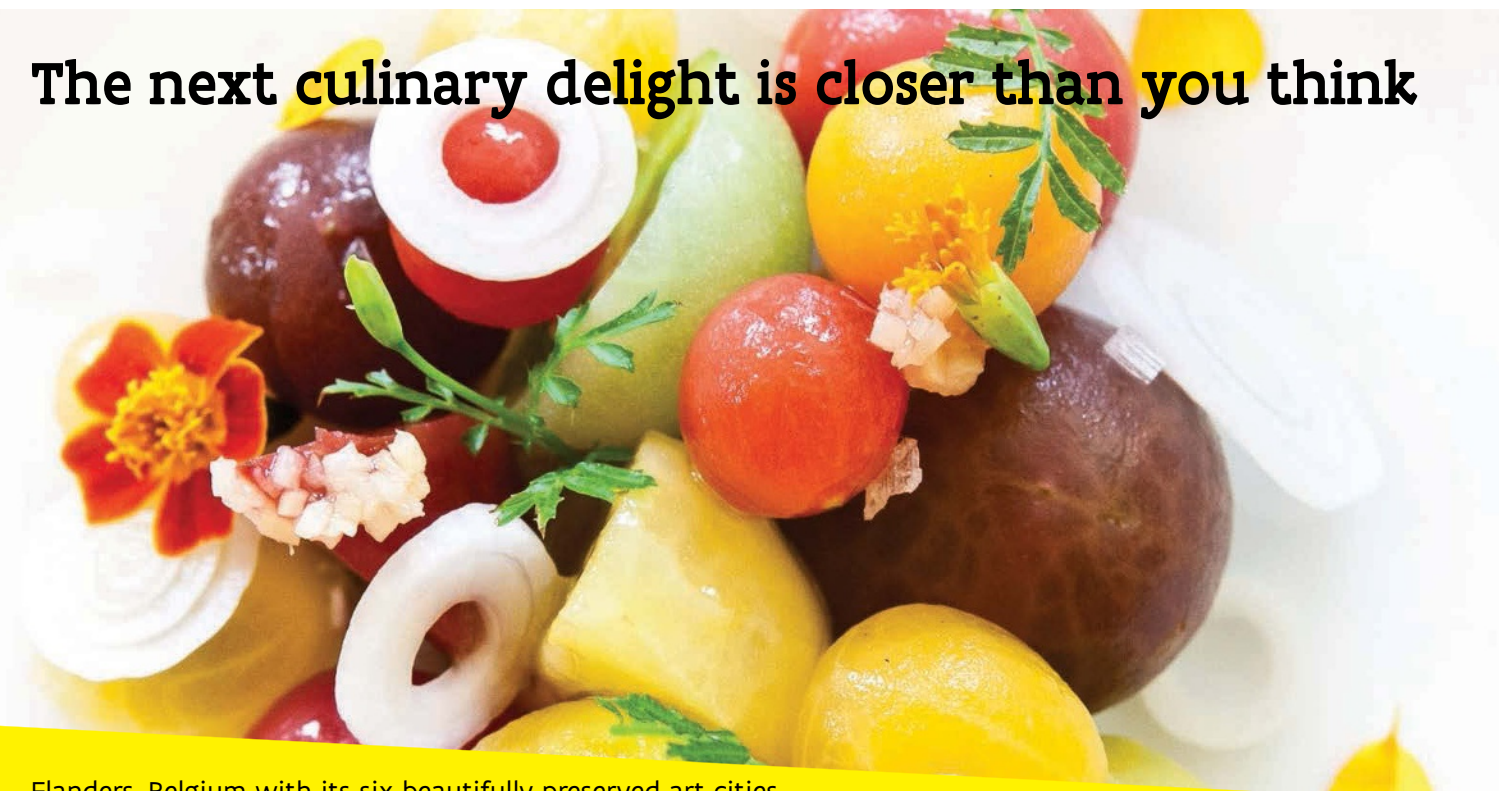
Strength in *Unity*

Two years after the loss of **Virgin Galactic's** original *SpaceShipTwo*, the company's new spaceship *Unity* took to the skies, making its **first successful test flight** attached to mother ship *Eve*. While spacecraft systems have traditionally launched from a platform on the ground, *Unity*, following future tests, will ultimately release from beneath *Eve's* wing to blast passengers into suborbital space. The recent "captive carry" test flight marks yet another significant step in the company's mission to become the world's first commercial spaceline.

Sky-high: Virgin Galactic's *Unity* attached to mother ship *Eve*.



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POSTCARD

THE COOLEST VIEW

A couple gets front-row seats to Antarctica's rugged beauty.

► **IN THE MOMENT**

"We loved the idea of being all by ourselves, away from our cruise ship, amid so much stunning scenery," says Vancouver, British Columbia-based Virtuoso traveler Vincent Tan, who propelled this tandem kayak through the icy waters of **Antarctica's Neko Harbour** with his wife, Zelig. "The blue sky and cloud patterns that day were especially striking."

► **THE TRIP**

The couple called on their Virtuoso travel advisor, Carly Renshaw of Vancouver, to plan their **once-in-a-lifetime expedition cruise** to the White Continent on board Lindblad Expeditions' *National Geographic Explorer*. "Antarctica was unlike any other place we've traveled. Growing up in the Philippines, the only ice we saw floating in water was in a cold drink," Vincent jokes.



Just chilling: Exploring the White Continent by kayak.

► **WHERE NEXT?**

While the scenery will be vastly different, the accommodations and fellow travelers will likely seem familiar – Vincent and Zelig have booked another Lindblad voyage aboard the *Explorer*, this time in the **Canadian Maritimes**.



Send your best travel shots to editors@virtuoso.com for a chance to be featured in *Virtuoso Traveler*.

Fairmont Kea Lani's eco-initiatives include solar power generation and (inset) hawksbill sea turtle preservation.



GREEN TRAVEL

A Bright Idea

While sun seekers soak up rays on Maui's Wailea Beach, more than 1,500 solar panels at the **Fairmont Kea Lani** are now doing the same. The new photovoltaic project is expected to cut the resort's energy demand by more than ten percent annually while reducing carbon-dioxide emissions at a level that's equivalent to removing 100 cars from local roads. The solar upgrade is just the latest in a series of eco-conscious steps taken by the resort, which also recently launched a volunteer program to protect critically endangered hawksbill sea turtles.

(TURTLE) GRAFNER/GETTY IMAGES

ART & CULTURE

Game On

Predating Genghis Khan, the **Naadam Festival**, Mongolia's midsummer celebration, combines pageantry and play. Challengers compete in sports considered essential for the Mongol warrior: wrestling, archery, and horse racing (the festival's Mongolian name translates as "the three games of men"). While the wrestling matches are still limited to men, women now participate in archery, and girls ride alongside boys in the horse-racing events. Naadam festivities take place across the country every July, and further spotlight Mongolia's nomadic culture with traditional foods, folkloric performances, and art exhibitions. **BE THERE:** A newly designed 17-day adventure from **Zegrahm Expeditions** wins with Gobi Desert treks, stays in authentic *ger* (yurt) camps, and passes to both a local Naadam celebration and the national festival in Ulaanbaatar. *Departure: July 2, 2017; from \$14,980.*



Wide world of sports (clockwise from left): Horse racing, wrestling, and archery events at Mongolia's Naadam Festival.

(HORSE RACING AND WRESTLING) HAKBONG KWON/ALAMY, (ARCHERY) HEMIS/ALAMY

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the weekend
can start at the start
of the week.*

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2 OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

The **Burton Gorge Pack** keeps all your gear safe, thanks to a padded laptop/tablet sleeve, tarp-lined pocket, and removable rain fly. A lifetime warranty means it'll always be available for your next journey. *In two colors, \$113, burton.com.*

3 PHOTO SAFARI

Whether you're on an actual safari or snapping family vacation photos, **Jill-E Designs' Juliette Camera Bag** provides plush practicality. Styled with a bright pebbled-leather exterior, it fits a DSLR camera body and up to two lenses, plus accessories. *In three colors, \$170, jill-e.com.*

4 YOGA RETREAT

Feel good and do good with the **Urban Zen Yoga Bag**. Created in collaboration with Haitian artisan Paula Coles, this lightweight tote is made from recycled T-shirts. Ten percent of net proceeds go to the Urban Zen Foundation, which supports Haitian artisans, children's programs, and more. *\$225, urbanzen.com.*

5 BUSINESS TRIP

Briggs & Riley's Flapover Expandable Backpack organizes electronics in a sturdy, water-resistant case. The comfortable travel companion features radio-frequency-blocking stash pockets to prevent illicit scanning of your passport or credit cards. *\$269, briggs-riley.com.*





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Japan has more Michelin-star restaurants than anywhere else in the world, and in fact, our traditional “washoku” cuisine was actually included on UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage list. Local and seasonal ingredients are used to prepare these extraordinary dishes, and it is said that you can actually taste each of our four seasons in them. Few have the good fortune to eat such a meal, and even fewer have the talent to prepare them. Come see for yourself.



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TRAVEL INTEL

New Year's Resolutions

Virtuoso advisors recommend three ways to travel better in 2017.



1

GET GLOBAL ENTRY.

"Not having Global Entry" – which provides **expedited clearance at customs and border-protection lines** at most U.S. (and select international) airports – "is like not having access to Google," says Michael Holtz, an advisor based in New York City. But he cautions, "Be a good citizen: If you get caught smuggling in an undeclared Chanel bag, you can lose the privileges for life!" Five-year memberships run \$100 and include TSA PreCheck. Begin the application process online at cbp.gov/travel.



2

BUY TRAVEL INSURANCE.

"Travel insurance provides **peace of mind** and is always highly recommended," notes Albuquerque-based advisor Alfred Volden. Plans can include coverage for trip delay or cancellation, missed cruise connections, even medical expenses and evacuation. Providers such as MedjetAssist, Travelex Insurance Services, and Allianz Global Assistance offer varying coverage "at tremendous value," says Volden. On certain family policies, he adds, children can be included for free. Consult with your travel advisor regarding which insurance plan is right for you.



3

SHED YOUR BAGGAGE.

"Any traveler who wants to save time and headaches should consider using a **guaranteed luggage-shipping service**," says Stacy Small, a Los Angeles-based advisor whose clients have had great success with the company Luggage Free. The service is ideal for multidestination trips and also active vacations that require traveling with bulky items such as skis and golf clubs, she adds. "It also works well for travelers who just don't want to worry about their bags 'missing a connection' or being delayed if there are issues with their flights."



GOOD READ

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

As Patrick O'Connell, chef proprietor of The Inn at Little Washington and president of Relais & Châteaux North America, says in the introduction to **The Art of Entertaining**, "Visiting a Relais & Châteaux often feels like being an invited guest at a fabulous house party from a bygone era." The book, with its lush photos by Melanie Acevedo and David Engelhardt and text by Jessica Kerwin Jenkins, presents a season-by-season guide to entertaining and feasting, complete with recipes and insights from Relais & Châteaux hoteliers and chefs throughout North America. *Rizzoli, \$45.*

(SECURITY ILLUSTRATION) ASKOLD ROMANOV/GETTY IMAGES, (TRAVEL INSURANCE ILLUSTRATION) MACROVECTOR/GETTY IMAGES, (SUITCASE ILLUSTRATION) -CUBA-/GETTY IMAGES

enjoy

RIVIERA MAYA

Where Should We Go in 2017?

Virtuoso advisors pick hot spots to head to in the New Year.

BERMUDA



Advisor: *Stephanie Whitaker,*
Rochester, New York

WHY GO: The world's best sailors head to the island for the 35th **America's Cup** from May 26 to June 27.

PINK PURSUITS: Bermuda's **pink-sand beaches** are "the perfect place to spend time between yacht races," says Whitaker. Her other suggestions: the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum and Zoo; Crystal and Fantasy Caves; the historic town of Saint George's; and a walk or bike ride along the 18-mile-long Railway Trail.

WHERE TO STAY: Many hotel packages include tickets to various cup events, Whitaker notes. Her top choices: **Hamilton Princess & Beach Club**, the event's official host hotel, and **Cambridge Beaches Resort & Spa**: "It's close to the Royal Naval Dockyard, the teams' home base."

Hamilton Princess & Beach Club and (inset) Saint Peter's Church in historic Saint George's.



SRI LANKA



Advisor: *Michelle Bemis,*
McLean, Virginia

WHY GO: With the conclusion of its 26-year-long civil war in 2009, this **unexplored gem** is just beginning to appear on many travelers' wish lists, so get there before the crowds arrive.

IN RUINS: The island's ar-

cheological ruins, such as the UNESCO-designated **Sacred City of Anuradhapura**, "rival historical sites anywhere," says Bemis. She touts **Abercrombie & Kent** for its comprehensive tours, which also include tea plantations and the rich culture in Kandy.

DOUBLE THE PLEASURE: Given Sri Lanka's close proximity to the **Maldives**, Bemis suggests that travelers pair the two destinations: "They make a great combination for both exploration and relaxation."



(SACRED CITY OF ANURADHAPURA) HELOV/GETTY IMAGES

NASHVILLE



Advisor: Rosemary Warmenhoven,
Lexington, Kentucky

WHY GO:

21 solar eclipse.

WILD TIMES:

Nashville Zoo,

ALSO CONSIDER:

Oak Bar The Hermitage Hotel

(2008 Jefferson Street)

(1711 Division Street)

ACROSS CANADA



Advisor: Dean Barreca,
Toronto, Canada

WHY GO:

150th birthday.

MAPLE LEAF MOMENTS:

Park Hyatt Toronto
Canada

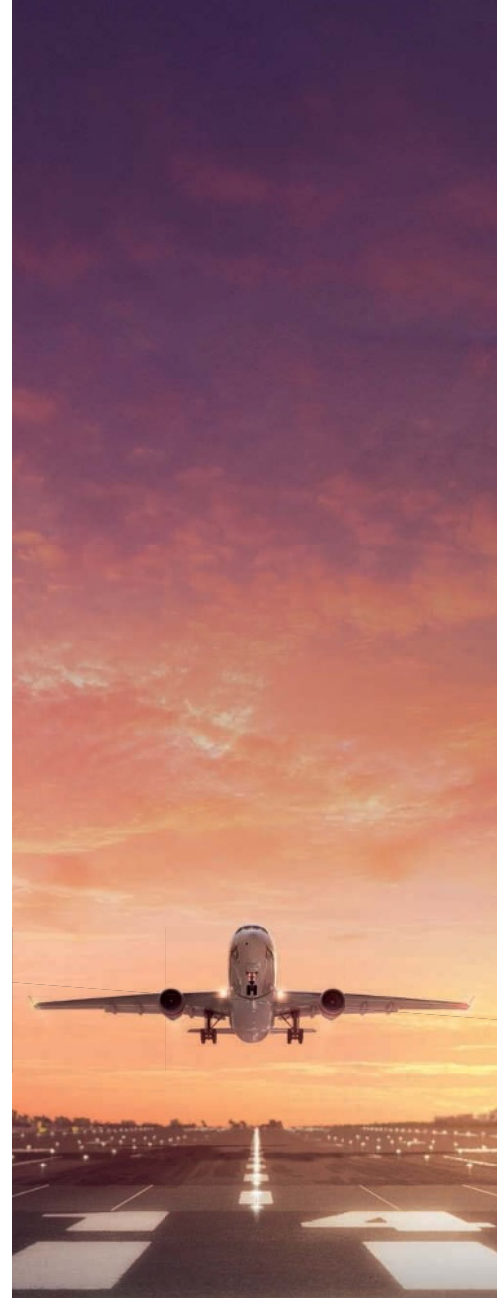
Day Bash
Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth,

MORE TO SEE:

La Machine



The Toronto skyline and (inset) the Hermitage Hotel's Oak Bar.



TWO SKI GETAWAYS FOR TWO BUDGETS

Courchevel or Colorado?

Hit the slopes in the French Alps or explore the Rocky Mountain town of Telluride. **By Susan Hanson**



SPLURGE

Five nights, \$20,000

STAY: In 1946, Courchevel became France's first ski resort to be built from the ground up, its Trois Vallées perch chosen for its prime access to 370 miles of pistes. Today, the hamlet is home to upscale boutiques, Michelin-starred restaurants, and celebrity-beloved accommodations, including the 36-room **Cheval Blanc Courchevel**, a sophisticated, art-filled chalet with a dedicated ski-concierge team that heats up your skis and leaves them waiting on the slopes. Unpack in the bilevel Duplex Suite, which has a loft bedroom and a library. *Duplex Suite from \$18,250 for five nights; Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily and a \$150 hotel credit.*

PLUS: Curl up in a cashmere blanket and set off through the Courchevel countryside on the hotel's **dogsled excursion**. *From \$1,121.*

SOUVENIR: The eclectic home furnishings at concept shop **Lilie Lifestore** (73120 rue de la Croisette) include this sleek Altiligne metal and wood lamp sure to stir up memories of the slopes. *\$179, liliestore.com.*

TOTAL: *From \$19,550 per couple*



STEAL

Three nights, \$500

STAY: The stories of Telluride's gold-mining past remain (Butch Cassidy robbed his first bank here), but travelers come today more for top-notch terrain than Wild West drama. A quick walk from the Mountain Village gondola (which connects guests to the town of Telluride below), the rustic, 32-suite **Inn at Lost Creek** has ski-in/ski-out access and a rooftop hot tub. Dine on crispy duck hand rolls and grilled elk at Siam's Talay Grille, then warm up some hot chocolate in your Junior Suite's kitchenette and settle in by the gas fireplace. *Junior Suite from \$417 for three nights; Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily and a \$100 hotel credit.*

PLUS: Gear aficionados will love the tour of the **Wagner Custom Skis & Snowboards** factory in Mountain Village. *Complimentary.*

SOUVENIR: Stop by **Telluride Distilling Company** (152 B. Society Drive) for a bottle of Chairlift Warmer, the first craft peppermint schnapps produced in the U.S. *\$25, telluridedistilling.com.*

TOTAL: *From \$442 per couple*



Out Here

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Why I Travel

Elan Gale takes off to feel out of place.

INTERVIEWED BY DAVID HOCHMAN



Elan Gale and
Molly Quinn in
Sayulita, Mexico.

“Jet lag is not real. I just load myself full of caffeine, go to the gym as soon as I arrive, and stay up until midnight.”



Ginza in Tokyo and (right)
ballooning near Santa Fe.



Elan Gale is best known for producing *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, but when he's not sending couples to paradise, Gale plots how to get himself and his girlfriend, actress Molly Quinn, there with the help of Virtuoso travel advisor Stacy Small. “She knows my travel quirks and oddball curiosities,” says Gale, who appreciates how L.A.-based Small plans trips with enough flexibility to accommodate a wild left turn.

“Travel to feel like an alien.

I like feeling displaced and a little confused. It's easy to get comfortable in your work environment and in your hometown – we work hard to make our lives predictable – but there's something nice about travel that throws you off. Even a bad hotel is good. Life can't all be perfect. You have to calibrate yourself to new environments.

A lot of my taste in travel

was dictated by the show. I was 23 when I started and got to go places I never would have thought of going: I wouldn't have known about Saint Lucia; I probably wouldn't have gone to Punta del Este; Buenos Aires wasn't on my list. These work trips are almost like audition trips for me. You go to Fiji, you go to Tahiti, you know you'll be back again.

I like to travel in very short spurts. Last year, Molly and

I went to Paris for 48 hours. I spent 36 amazing hours in Anguilla. I've gone to Hong Kong for a day. Something about having a really tightly packed schedule adds to the excitement. We did one day in Tokyo, and had lunch at Sukiyabashi Jiro and dinner at Sushi Yoshitake. They're the two hardest reservations in town, but also the best sushi meals you'll have anywhere. I don't need anything else after that. I'm done.

Stacy leaves no stone

unturnd. I was heading to Bangkok and called her on the way to the airport to say I'd heard about this unusual restaurant called Jok Kitchen. It's in a private home down an alleyway and only has two tables. The 10-year-old son of the chef is the waiter, and they bring whatever they feel like making. I arrived at my room in The Peninsula and saw a note that Stacy had man-

aged, through repeated calls, to get the only other table available for me. It was one of my favorite meals ever.

Sometimes the best meal is the papaya salad in a bag you buy for a dollar outside your hotel in Bangkok. Those kinds of surprises keep travel interesting. Always have a plan, but know the plan doesn't matter. Someone tells you about an underground karaoke club, and next thing you know, you're at the Gigabar in Tokyo's Minami-Aoyama district singing with a live band – and even though you can't sing, they think you're a rock star because you can pronounce all the English words.

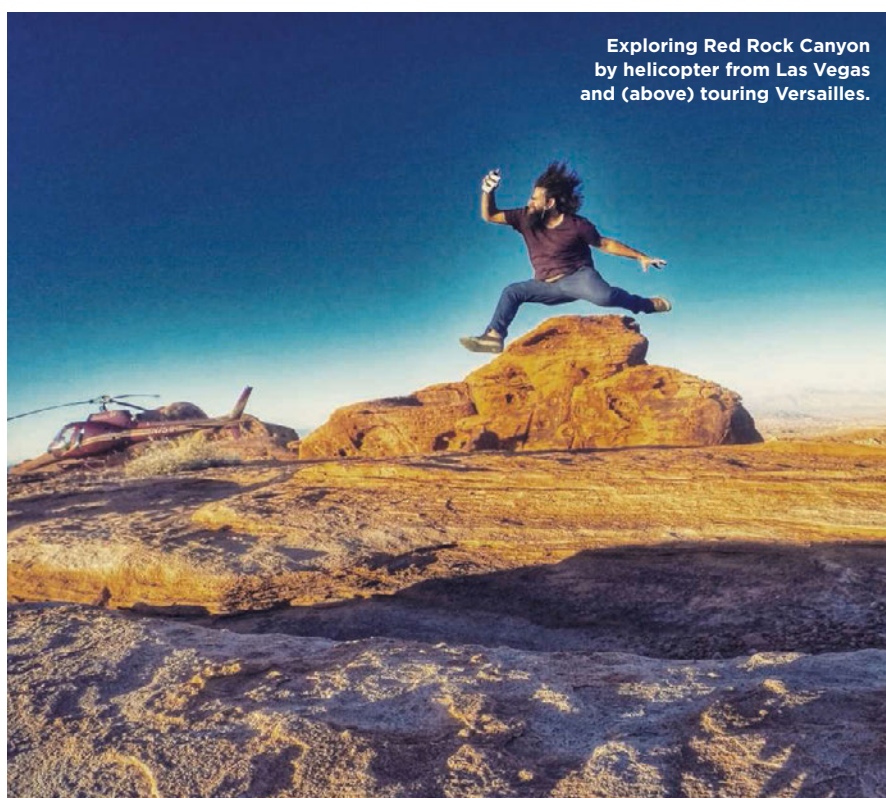
Fine-dining restaurants typically have one thing in common: bad coffee. Seek out the small shops with master baristas. My favorite places in the entire world are Menotti's in Los Angeles – especially when Christopher “Nicely” Abel Alameda is pouring – and a place he recommended, Bear Pond Espresso in Shimokitazawa, Tokyo.

As far as packing goes, I'm very into my Timbuk2 backpack, and my Rimowa Salsa carbonite suitcase is super light and unbelievably durable. I bring ten pairs of ExOfficio underwear everywhere I go – that's really all I need.

Aman Tokyo is my favorite hotel – they put apples in your shower! It sounds weird, but to stand in a black stone shower as you eat an apple nudely, gazing out a floor-to-ceiling window at the soul of Tokyo, is a great way to start the day. ”

WHERE NEXT?

“I'm excited to go to Copenhagen, Finland, and Norway. I'm heading to New Zealand this winter. I want to return to Peru – not to see Machu Picchu, but rather, Urubamba, maybe the most magical place on earth. I've never seen anything like the salt mines there. I can't stop envisioning it. Also, Chengdu, China, for the food.” **VT**



Exploring Red Rock Canyon by helicopter from Las Vegas and (above) touring Versailles.



Cozy chic: Edgar Núñez's Sud 777.

(Re)Made in Mexico

Mexico City's culinary renaissance pays homage to heritage and homegrown ingredients. **BY CHANEY KWAK**

In the past few years, Mexico's capital has reinvented itself as a stylish metropolis. A new generation of tastemakers leading the charge are both cosmopolitan and confident in their country's heritage. And nowhere is Mexico City's transformation more visible than on the tables of innovative restaurants serving creative dishes based on traditional ingredients.

But it hasn't always been this way. "When I started my apprenticeship in France in 1998, there was no such thing as Mexican haute cuisine," says Edgar Núñez, executive chef and co-owner of Sud 777, which recently landed a spot on "Latin America's 50 Best Restaurants" list for 2016. The culinary

talent was present, as was a host of traditional cookeries in the capital city. High-end gastronomy, however, meant anything but Mexican. Aspiring chefs like Núñez would study abroad and, when they returned home, dutifully emulate European food.

"But then I slowly began to remember how well we ate while growing up," Núñez says. "My mother always grew her own vegetables, and I started thinking more about the importance of fresh, local produce." It turns out that Núñez wasn't the only one challenging the status quo. All across Mexico City, chefs young and old were getting reacquainted with their roots.

Here, five of the city's hottest restaurants –

along with the homegrown ingredients they champion – that demonstrate the depth and diversity of today's Mexican cuisine.

SUD 777

At his fashionable Sud 777 (*Boulevard de la Luz 777*) in the stately southern suburb of Jardines del Pedregal, Edgar Núñez serves dishes based on simple ingredients, such as carrots that are simmered for 12 hours in duck fat, charred for seven minutes, and then topped with fresh cream.

Traditional it's not – but this sophisticated comfort food is firmly rooted in the local soil. In fact, Núñez now grows many of his vegetables in a greenhouse behind 777.

Carrots also add life to the chef's signature tostada, which features local tuna ("the world's best tunas are caught off the coast of Mexico," he boasts) tossed in lime, yuzu, soy sauce, and ginger, paired with avocados and green tomatoes. Crowning the dish: a fried corn tortilla, dotted with carrots, this time in the form of a buttery puree.

ANATOL

It may come as a surprise to find black beans, the decidedly unglamorous, unsung hero of Mexican cuisine, on the table at Anatol (*Presidente Masaryk* 390), an upscale restaurant in the boutique Las Alcobas hotel. Justin Ermini, who designed Anatol's farm-to-table menu along with co-executive chef Mayra Victoria, fell hard for the fruity black legumes brought by a farmer who'd traveled all the way from Chiapas to sell them door to door in Mexico City. Ermini decided to celebrate the humble *frijoles* with a black bean *sopa* reminiscent of the classic Mexican cream soup *crema conde*, lightened with fresh cilantro and ripe tomatoes. He serves the thick, silky soup, made with duck fat and Oaxacan *chilhuacle* chiles, with a terrine of smoked foie gras from Guadalajara.

As an American cooking in Mexico, Ermini has a distinct perspective. "I've never seen a food scene change so dramatically and quickly," he says, noting that he moved to Mexico City in December 2012 to open Anatol. "In just a few years, the emphasis has moved from molecular fine dining to traditional, organic ingredients."

ROSETTA

After Elena Reygadas opened Rosetta (*Colima* 166) in 2010, the acclaimed chef found herself leaning more and more toward Mexican flavors, infusing her Italian menu with distinctly indigenous DNA.

"I was trained in Italian cuisine, but I also have a duty to show what makes us proud to be Mexican," she says. Wistfully recalling different kinds of heirloom potatoes from her childhood that are now extinct, Reygadas says that supporting traditional ingredients is a form of cultural preservation. In her airy restaurant housed within an old mansion in the Roma district, she continues to serve handmade pastas, but doesn't shy away from using native ingredients such as *chaya* leaf for her pesto in lieu of basil.

Reygadas has also made pulque, an alco-

holic beverage created from the fermented sap of the maguey agave, a main fixture in her recipes. For instance, she marinates rabbit in the pungent liquor, which tenderizes the meat while imbuing it with a slightly tangy taste. The most impressive use of pulque might be in her simple meringue: The liquor not only lends an unmistakable tartness to the dessert, but also adds extra elasticity.

FONDA FINA

Mexico's traditional *fonda*, the modest cafeteria that serves as a neighborhood meeting place, gets a touch of urban refinement at Fonda Fina (*Medellín* 79), which chef Jorge Vallejo opened in late 2015. Its menu, executed by hometown chef Juan Cabrera, celebrates the uncomplicated dishes that grandmothers prepare, such as freshly made tortillas topped with avocado and coarse salt. Take, for example, Cabrera's spin on the *sopa seca*, a casserole as ordinary and comforting to Mexicans as Americans' mac and cheese. Cabrera's version tosses noodles in rich chipotle sauce, contrasts them with crunchy *chilaquiles*, and presents them as a tower topped with fresh cheese.



Clockwise from left: Rosetta's Elena Reygadas, getting back to the roots at Sud 777, and Anatol's black bean *sopa*.

Local Flavor

Nixtamal – corn that has been cooked and soaked in an alkaline solution (a Mesoamerican technique that goes back to around 1500 BC) – also plays a leading role at the restaurant. Here, this unassuming maize takes on new personalities as *panucho*, a refried tortilla stuffed with refried black beans and finished with soft beef bone marrow and spicy habanero sauce; *penique*, a puffy tortilla, which takes on a texture like fried tofu skin and serves as a pedestal for a fried egg yolk and grilled poblano peppers; and *memela*, a fried masa cake that Cabrera tops with a medallion of salt-cured beef tenderloin.

AZUL HISTÓRICO

Since the 1980s, Ricardo Muñoz Zurita has traveled around Mexico in search of obscure recipes, cooking techniques, and foodstuffs. His ethno-culinary research has yielded more than ten books, culminating in his renowned 600-plus-page *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Mexican Gastronomy*. He puts his study to good use at his three restaurants, including the atmospheric Azul Histórico (*Isabel la Católica 30*), set in a seventeenth-century courtyard dotted with laurel trees.

The restaurant highlights a particular region or theme each month. You may find a menu dedicated to a single ingredient, like mangos, or a distant state, such as Tabasco. There is one constant, however: “In Mexican cooking, you always need the right chile,” says Muñoz Zurita.

At Azul, nearly every dish contains chiles, all with different flavors, ranging from fruity to smoky to chocolaty to spicy (and more). The pepper, for instance, figures prominently in Azul’s mole, the many-spiced sauce that comes in infinite versions, the most famous being mole poblano, “the chocolate sauce most foreigners think of,” says Muñoz Zurita. But “mole is more complex than that,” he notes. “It’s at least 700 years old, and it varies so much from place to place. It’s a milestone dish, eaten at birthdays, baptisms, weddings, funerals. It’s life.”

Sometimes innovation means returning to your roots, and Muñoz Zurita’s research has done exactly that. “We have incredible restaurants – both traditional and contemporary,” he says. “It’s the best moment in history for Mexican cuisine right now.”

Clockwise from top:
Fonda Fina’s corn *memela*
and chef Juan Cabrera,
and chile Atlixco from
Azul Histórico.



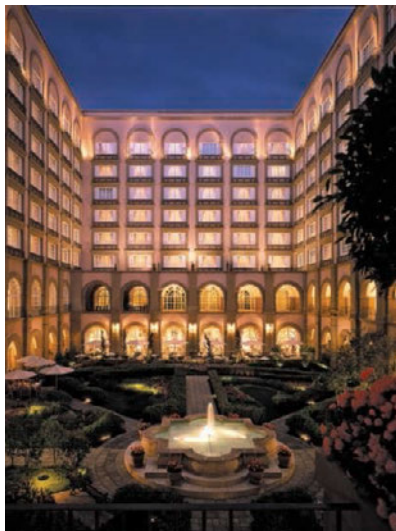
WORD ON THE STREET

“To appreciate how Mexican cuisine has evolved, I suggest my clients visit street-food stands in the upscale Polanco district,” says Carlos Alvarez, a Virtuoso travel advisor who divides his time between Mexico City and Texas. Every neighborhood in Mexico City has a *tianguis*, or street market, and in Polanco, food stalls spring up each Saturday morning in Lincoln Park.

“Seeing the food in its humblest form helps you understand the foundation upon which the city’s top chefs are building,” Alvarez adds. Some of his suggestions: blue corn quesadillas stuffed with *flores de calabaza* (zucchini blossoms); *cochinita pibil*, a spicy pork stew; and, if you’re feeling adventurous, *huitlacoche*, a fungus known as the Mexican truffle, which grows on organic corn.

ON THE MENU IN MEXICO CITY

*Our picks for where to check in
and how to explore.*



STAY

• In the heart of the Polanco district, 35-room **Las Alcobas** is home to two of the city's top restaurants: Anatol and **Dulce Patria**. Throughout the hotel, subtle nods to Mexican heritage range from artisanal soap handmade with traditional herbs to wall etchings reminiscent of Teotihuacan temples. *Doubles from \$360; Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily, a complimentary cocktail at Anatol, and one 30-minute spa treatment per room, per stay.*

• **The St. Regis Mexico City** on skyscraper-lined Paseo de la Reforma offers 189 rooms with floor-to-ceiling city views and contemporary decor by design firm Yabu Pushelberg. A host of gastronomic choices include modern Mexican fare served at **Diana Restaurant** (request a table on the terrace). *Doubles from \$390; Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily and a \$100 hotel credit.*

• Steps from the city's green lung, Chapultepec Park, the 240-room **Four Seasons Hotel Mexico, D.F.** resides in a hacienda-style mansion surrounding a fountain courtyard. Be

sure to check out **Fifty Mills**, where mixologist Mica Rousseau shakes concoctions such as the Bugs Bunny, made with Tanqueray gin, carrot juice, and three-chile bitters. *Doubles from \$475; Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily and a three-course lunch or dinner at Fifty Mills or seafood-centric Zanaya.*

TOUR

• Visits to local markets, street-food tours, and **tequila tastings** highlight a customizable ten-day Mexico trip with **Artisans of Leisure** that travels to Oaxaca, Puebla, and Mexico City. *Departures: Any day through December 31, 2017; from \$9,860.*

• Your advisor can work with Virtuoso's local tour provider, **Journey Mexico**, to craft a vacation tailored to your tastes. Possible excursions in the capital include a cooking lesson in the creative Roma district and a stop at Café de Tacuba to learn about the **history of mole**. The 12-day tour also provides ample time to explore Oaxaca and Puebla. *Departures: Any day through December 31, 2017; from \$5,485. VT*

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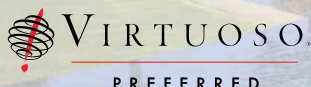
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Ehlers Estate vineyards. Opposite, from top: Cheery times at the Beringer winery, locavore flavor from Carneros Resort and Spa's Farm restaurant, and poolside at Calistoga Ranch.

Vintage Napa Valley

California's classic wine country
is always on the menu.

BY BECCA HENSLEY



It's morning in California's Napa Valley,

and though most people haven't yet poured their first cup of coffee, you've risen with the sun and are ready to explore. Fortunately, knowing your penchant for early starts, your Virtuoso travel advisor has reserved something special: a coveted spot at Ehlers Estate's intimate "Start Your Day" tasting experience. At the historic Saint Helena winery, visitors watch morning's golden light illuminate the surrounding mountains as winemaker Kevin Morrissey walks through the estate's vineyards and speaks about his passion for organic winemaking. Later, in the tasting room, you sample some of Ehlers' finest vintages, paired with flaky pastries from Thomas Keller's French-inspired Bouchon Bakery in nearby Yountville.

Though Napa Valley will never be short on charm, having someone who understands your preferences and tastes can mean the difference between a good getaway and an extraordinary experience. "Virtuoso advisors don't do 'one-size-fits-all.' They create bespoke trips to unlock the secret gems that Napa has to offer," says Jay Johnson, an advisor based in Garden Grove, California. "They're also able to leverage relationships that are available through the Virtuoso network to arrange exclusive winery events, specialty dining experiences, and customized tours that aren't available to the ordinary traveler." What else do advisors bring to the table? They can handle all your reservations and trip logistics, such as scheduling transfers between estates (the better to save you time for tastings), and secure added perks like exclusive hotel amenities and room upgrades.

With so much in the valley to explore, Virtuoso advisors' wealth of firsthand experience is key. From the town of Napa in the south to Calistoga in the north, the valley claims a chain of distinct communities, each with its own diversions and vibe, and to visit just one would be a shame. It's not just about the wine (though that wouldn't be a bad thing). But here, also, seasonal cuisine rules, haute hotels spoil, and activities from mud baths to hot-air balloon rides beckon. How to decide? Your advisor can help, but following are a few of our favorite ways to wine and dine your way through the valley.



THE PORTAL

Napa

Threshold to Napa Valley and big brother to the region's other wine villages, Napa (the valley's largest town) bustles with cutting-edge art galleries, lively tasting rooms, and upscale dining venues such as Ken Frank's Michelin-starred **La Toque** (1314 McKinstry Street). In fact, Napa has so much to offer, including its promenade along the Napa River, that sometimes travelers don't even venture outside the city limits (we highly suggest you do, however).

WINE: In Napa, you'll never be thirsty. Two must-stops along its tasting-room crawl are family-owned **Stonehedge** (1004 Clinton Street), home to handcrafted artisanal wines, and **Uncorked at Oxbow** (605 First Street), which offers private salons for personalized tastings and blending sessions.

DINE: From locally sourced picnic sandwiches at **Oxbow Public Market** (610 & 644

First Street) to five-spice-rubbed duck at **Celadon** (500 Main Street), Napa is long on options. Malaka Hilton, a Virtuoso advisor from Sarasota, Florida, extols the truck-stop-chic **Mustards Grill** (7399 St. Helena Highway), a community hub where you're as likely to find truck drivers as local winemakers and chefs. Her advice: "Order the slow-smoked barbecue pork."

STAY: Highlights of **Carneros Resort and Spa's** recent renovation include a new wedding events venue and updated family pool, along with a bar and outdoor terrace at its quintessential locavore restaurant, Farm. With 86 cottages and 10 suites clustered in tiny "neighborhoods" named for nature's elements, the swank complex embodies the essence of the Napa experience. *Doubles from \$375; Virtuoso travelers receive a room upgrade (if available), a daily breakfast credit, and a \$100 spa credit.*



Clockwise from top left: Cottage life at Carneros Resort and Spa, the resort's Farm-fresh fare, and pack your picnic basket at Oxbow Public Market.

NAPA VALLEY VIP

Your advisor can work with one of Virtuoso's on-site tour companies, **Revealed California**, to craft a number of private experiences during a tailor-made tour of the valley. Tasteful possibilities include, say, a cooking demo and dinner in Saint Helena with celebrated chef Cindy Pawlcyn at **Cindy's Backstreet Kitchen**; a tour of Calistoga's **Villa Ca'Toga**, Carlo Marchiori's residence/art studio, led by the artist himself; and a shopping experience and brunch at Rutherford's **Inglennook** estate with Eleanor Coppola, exclusive curator of the vintage collectibles and antique wine accessories found in Inglennook's boutique.

(MARKET) OXBOW PUBLIC MARKET

THE EPICUREAN

Yountville

Napa Valley's undisputed culinary capital, with more Michelin stars per capita than any other U.S. locale, Yountville personifies the California wine country lifestyle. Designated an official American Viticultural Area (AVA), the hamlet also houses **The French Laundry** (6640 Washington Street), Thomas Keller's storied pillar of New American cuisine and seasonal eating, and a bevy of other much-lauded restaurants, tasting rooms, and bakeries. Expect quiet nights followed by an early-morning parade of fitness mavens, from cyclists to runners.

WINE: You may want to linger all day at **Cliff Lede Vineyards** (1473 Yountville Cross Road), where you'll find blocks of grapes named for legendary rock tunes

such as "Moondance" and "Dream On" (and corresponding "Rock Block" blends like Moondance Dream), along with a variety of tasting options. Walk-ins can partake in bar flights, but those with reservations (hint: call on your advisor) can opt for exclusive veranda table tastings or imbibe in the VIP tasting room called "Backstage," which features signed guitars and a changing, rock-themed art exhibit.

DINE: The French Laundry may be Napa Valley's Mecca, but Keller's **Ad Hoc** (6476 Washington Street) also delivers — albeit with a more affordable, less complex menu. "I'm also a fan of Michael Chiarello's **Bottega**" (6525 Washington Street), says advisor Malaka Hilton. "Everything's good there, but don't miss the *branzino*."

In homage to Napa's Italian immigrant heritage, **Redd Wood** (6755 Washington Street) fires up hand-tossed pizzas, and sushi cravers can get an ultrafresh fix at **R+D Kitchen** (6795 Washington Street).

STAY: As California's first LEED Platinum-certified hotel, 62-room **Bardessono Hotel & Spa** has led Napa's trend toward sustainable tourism. Likewise, its restaurant, Lucy, celebrates quintessential farm-to-fork fare with an on-site garden. "You'll also love the rooftop pool and the Murphy bed-style massage table that comes in each room," says San Francisco-based Virtuoso advisor Lisa Baserga. *Doubles from \$450; Virtuoso travelers receive a room upgrade (if available), breakfast daily, and a \$100 dining credit.*



From top: Table talk at Bardessono Hotel & Spa's Lucy restaurant, chef Thomas Keller in The French Laundry's garden, and classic rock meets local wines at Cliff Lede Vineyards' Backstage Tasting Lounge.



Clockwise from top left: Culinary art from The Restaurant at Meadowood, Cain Vineyard & Winery, Press' warm atmosphere, and sweet treats from Woodhouse Chocolate.



THE CLASSIC

Saint Helena

Known as “Napa Valley’s Main Street,” this natural beauty can best be described as comfortable in its skin. Home to a half-mile main strip lined with sycamore trees and a host of long-standing wineries – including **Beringer** (2000 Main Street), the valley’s oldest – Saint Helena has grown more chic and charismatic with age. Though it teems with history (Robert Louis Stevenson hung out here on his honeymoon), the town presents today as a well-heeled, modern wine village, festooned with the sort of shops you want to peruse: cookery stores, clothing boutiques, olive oil dispensaries, and artisan bakeries.


WINE: To taste Saint Helena’s finest, says New Orleans-based Virtuoso advisor Lila Fox, have your advisor secure winery appointments with his or her go-to local driver-guide, who’ll have access to all the best wineries and owners. One suggested route: Begin the day at **Ehlers Estate** (3222 Ehlers Lane), then continue to **Hall Wines** (401 St. Helena Highway), whose uber-stylish architecture complements the artistry they bottle. Later, ascend to **Cain Vineyard & Winery** (3800 Langtry Road), which overlooks the valley from the crest of the Spring Mountain district, for a guided vineyard hike and tasting.

DINE: Arrive early to **The Model Bakery** (1357 Main Street) – a Napa staple for nearly 90 years – for its famed oversize English muffins. (Note: You may be tempted to bribe locals for their place in line.) For lunch, Fox sends clients to **Farmstead at Long Meadow Ranch** (738 Main Street) – she promises you’ll swoon over the pimiento cheese deviled eggs. She also urges: “Don’t miss the dark chocolate caramels with *fleur de sel* at **Woodhouse Chocolate**” (1367 Main Street). Outdoor fireplaces and a walnut bar set the scene at **Press** (587 St. Helena Highway), a farmhouse-styled chophouse

where dry-aged beef grills over almond- and cherrywood and whose wine menu exclusively features local bottles.

STAY: **Meadowood Napa Valley**’s 250 acres feel like a village in itself. The resort holds 85 cottage-style suites, tennis courts, a new spa (request the 3.5-hour vino-therapy treatment), a croquet field, and a golf course, but it’s most renowned for its three-Michelin-starred restaurant, one of only five in the western U.S. *Doubles from \$750; Virtuoso travelers receive a room upgrade (if available), a \$50 breakfast credit and a \$100 spa credit, and a box of locally made chocolates.*

(THE RESTAURANT AT MEADOWOOD) ERIN KUNKEL, (PRESS) KRISTEN LOKEN



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THE EARTH MOTHER

Calistoga

Located at the valley's northern tip and less traveled than Napa, folksy Calistoga exudes an unpretentious, accessible ease. Home to **Chateau Montelena Winery** (1429 Tubbs Lane), famous for its win in the 1976 Judgement of Paris, it draws visitors with family-owned businesses, wine-centric cafés, and coffee shops decorated with poetry graffiti. Perhaps most defined by its mineral-rich geothermal springs and curative mud baths, available throughout town, Calistoga offers wellness with a direct connection to the valley's fertile soil.

WINE: A decades-old stone winery and an original Craftsman-style house-turned-tasting room comprise **Frank Family Vineyards** (1091 Larkmead Lane). Though its tasting room is open to the public, your advisor can arrange a private tasting with Frank's legendary winemaker, Dennis Zablosky. For a more whimsical experience, the **Tank Garage Winery** (1020 Foothill Boulevard) occupies a former gas station in which guests can sample stellar local wines amid pinball machines and vintage motorcycles.

DINE: Join locals for breakfast (all day!) at cozy **Cafe Sarafornia** (1413 Lincoln Avenue), where corned beef hash, salmon and eggs, and towering pancakes provide fuel for wine jaunts. For dinner, tuck into classic French,

German, and Mexican dishes at **Johnny's** (1457 Lincoln Avenue), whose chefs make their own charcuterie and forage for local ingredients. At the bar, brioche bun sliders steal the show.

STAY: Eco-friendly, 89-room **Solage** lies a short walking distance from Calistoga's shops and restaurants. Known for its Michelin-starred restaurant, geothermal bathhouse, and Mudslide spa treatment, the hotel also appeals to active oenophiles who appreciate its complimentary fitness classes and saltwater pool. "Solage's Mercedes-Benz program allows guests to borrow from a collection of cars, including a convertible, for off-property excursions," adds advisor Lisa Baserga. *Doubles from \$390; Virtuoso travelers receive a room upgrade (if available), breakfast daily, and a \$100 resort credit.*

Calistoga Ranch offers 50 lodges within a 157-acre site marked by ancient oaks and a private lake. With mountain views, a host of hiking trails, and chef Bryan Moscattello's seasonal menu at The Lakehouse restaurant, the resort firmly roots guests in the setting. Highly recommended: the ranch's on-site beekeeping course, guided meditation walks, and Calistoga-inspired Water Therapy treatment in the spa's healing mineral pool. *Doubles from \$845; Virtuoso travelers receive a room upgrade (if available), breakfast daily, and an estate winetasting experience.*



From top: Tank Garage Winery and a bottle of its finest (and feistiest), get your veggies at Calistoga Ranch's Lakehouse restaurant, and a warm welcome at Solage's geothermal bathhouse.



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MORE TO EXPLORE

A visit to Napa Valley can be a celebratory, once-in-a-lifetime trip – or you could return repeatedly and find something new each time. Here, two other towns in the valley to capture your attention.

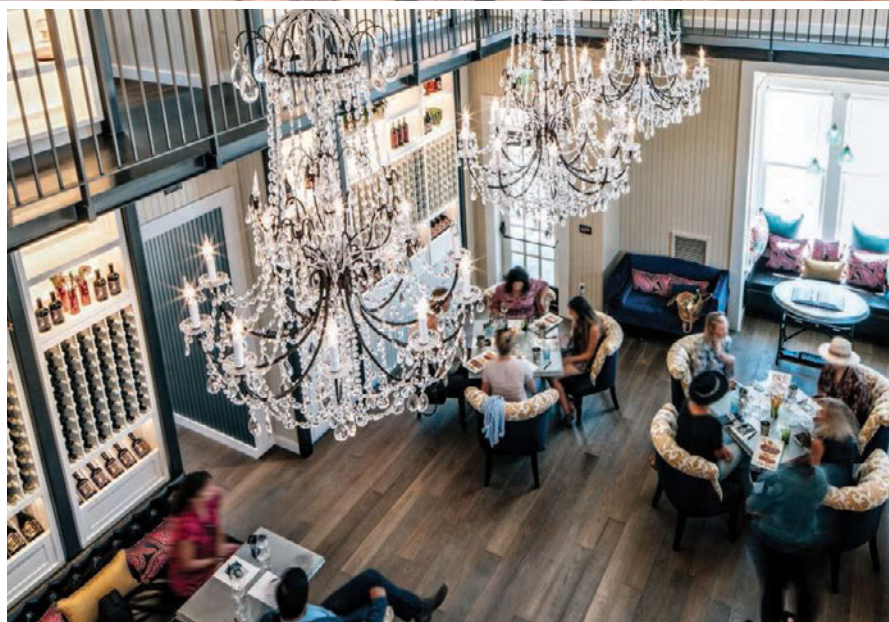


OAKVILLE

Koa, a four-legged family member, greets guests at **Gamble Family Vineyards** (7554 St. Helena Highway), where founder/owner Tom Gamble pours his wine for you (tastings are by referral only, so have your advisor book ahead). Featured on our cover, **Durant & Booth's** recently opened tasting salon (7856 St. Helena Highway) serves wine flights paired with cheese and charcuterie plates within a restored Victorian home built in 1877. Just next door, the **Oakville Grocery** (7856 St. Helena Highway) stocks plenty of gourmet picnic supplies. Pack a basket and dine along a hiking trail or in the back of your car while your private driver steers you safely to the next estate.

RUTHERFORD

With its own AVA designation, neighboring Rutherford is best known for its cabernet sauvignons, which taste different than those grown just a stone's throw away. Full of berry and herb flavors, they have a certain earthy wonder that oenophiles call "Rutherford dust." Your advisor can reserve a tasting at **Alpha Omega Winery** (1155 Mee Lane), a boutique outpost with limited-production cabernets and a terrace overlooking the Mayacamas Mountains. **Rutherford Grill** (1180 Rutherford Road) is where all the winemakers hang out. There's no corkage fee, so you'll find them around the bar, sharing their wine with one another. Order the rib eye, a perfect match for the hamlet's powerful reds. **VT**



Clockwise from top left: Foraging at Oakville Grocery, a sampling of the store's seasonal salads, and, just next door, Durant & Booth's new tasting salon.

(SALADS) ERIC WOLFINGER



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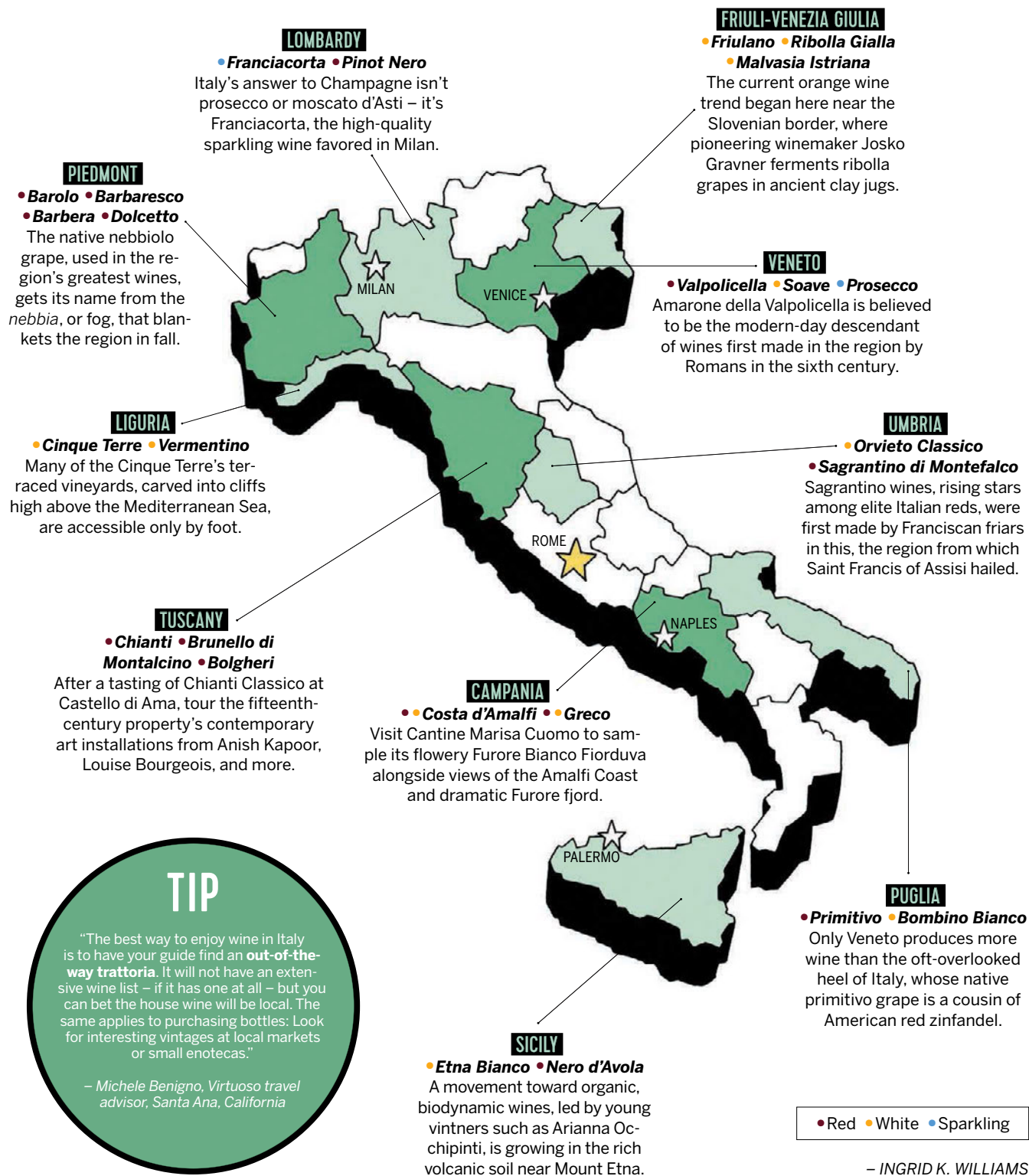
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KNOW YOUR ITALIAN WINE REGIONS

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PICNIC LIKE A PARISIAN

Master the art of the weekend tradition – the Louvre and rue Saint-Honoré boutiques will still be there in the morning.

When the sun shines and the weather is warm, Parisians adjourn to the city's grassy parks, such as Champ-de-Mars and the paved banks of the Seine, for alfresco eating. Plentiful food shops make provisioning *le pique-nique* fun and easy. **SAY CHEESE:** Marie-Anne Cantin's (12 rue du Champ-de-Mars) elegant boutique stands rind and paste above other *fromageries* for hard, gooey, and obscure varieties from small French farms. **YOUR DAILY BREAD:** Who makes the best baguette is an age-old question, but a good place to start is Le Grenier à Pain (38 rue des Abbesses), awarded top honors in last year's Best Baguette in Paris competition. **JUST DESSERTS:** Sweet teeth rejoice over the daily delivery of cakes and confections from some of Paris'

top chefs at **Fou de Pâtisserie** (45 rue Montorgueil), the city's first pastry concept shop. **POUR IT ON:** **Les Caves du Panthéon** (174 rue Saint-Jacques) stocks a wide selection of wines, from inexpensive up-and-comers to fine Bordeaux. **ONE-STOP-SHOP:** Le Bon Marché's **Grande Épicerie de Paris** (38 rue de Sèvres) is a temple for foie gras, caviar, prepared foods, and many more high-end staples. Carry it all in their cute canvas tote – also a fun souvenir for gatherings at home. **TAKE IT EASY:** Travelers short on time can order ahead from the new organic picnic menus prepared by **Épicerie Générale** (43 rue de Verneuil and 1 rue Moncey) that include a mix of salad, fruit, sandwiches, olives, dessert, and even Champagne; the boutique grocer also delivers.

– KIMBERLEY LOVATO

Baguette- and blanket-approved:
Parc du Champ-de-Mars.

TIP

"Champ-de-Mars and the Jardins des Champs-Élysées are great picnic spots. My favorite, however, is between the Louvre and Tuileries Garden at sunset; it's too crowded at lunchtime. Sip wine and enjoy one of the **city's best views** while the sun glides behind the Arc de Triomphe – the spot is so romantic, a friend even proposed to his girlfriend there."

– Stéphane Gattefosse, Virtuoso travel agency owner, Paris

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SNACK IN SPAIN

From tapas in Madrid to Basque *pintxos*, regional bar bites define the country.



– JEFF KOEHLER

TAPEO TALK

Madrid-based Virtuoso travel agency owner **Rocío Huete**'s three favorite tapas bars in the city – for now.

1 **Cuenillas** – order foie Pedro Ximénez (foie gras with sherry on toast). Calle Ferraz 5.

2 Don't miss the empanada de rabo de buey (oxtail empanada) at **Taberna Averías**. Calle Ponzano 16.

3 **Bodega de la Ardosa**'s tortilla de patatas (Spanish omelet) is a classic and delicious choice. Calle de Colón 13. **VT**

(MAP ILLUSTRATION) ANDREW JOYCE/HANDSOME FRANK, (RAZOR CLAMS AND PIQUILLO PEPPERS) KEVIN J. MIYAZAKI, (GUINDILLA PEPPERS) LPO MUSTO/ALAMY, (MANCHEGO CHEESE) RUA CASTILHO/STOCKFOD, (IBERIAN HAM) ALFONSO DETOMAS/ALAMY, (ALL OTHERS) GETTY IMAGES

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Israel: The New Foodie Paradise

With inspired dishes like Wild Fish Ceviche, Red Tuna Bao and Bangalore Chicken, Israel is quickly becoming the world's newest hot spot for foodies. Restaurants throughout Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Jaffa proudly put a local spin on global favorites to create a melting pot of flavors that need to be on your must-try list.



Photo Credit: Dana Friedlander

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After a day exploring Tel Aviv's museums and parks, refuel at Chef Yuval Ben Neria's restaurant, **Taizu**. Recipes here are inspired by the chef's culinary tour of India, China, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia where he immersed himself in the spices and flavors of local street food. From Lobster Dumplings to Andoori Sea Bass with Buffalo Yogurt, dishes are definitely share-worthy, so bring your appetite... and a friend.

Nearby, the juxtaposition of black concrete, lava stone and bamboo wood draws you into **Topolopompo**. Known as Chef Avi Conforti's fire kitchen, the interiors are influenced by the culinary traditions of the Far East. Marvel at the lighting inspired by Asian paper lanterns at night, seating that's reminiscent of tribal bonfires and fiery dishes including Seven Spiced Veal, Jakarta Beef and Kadai Zen Curry.

Over in Jerusalem, you'll find the vibe at **Machneyuda** hard to resist. Think loud, eclectic playlist. Patrons dancing on tables. And cooks beating on pots and pans to the lively music. You can get a sense of the energy with menu items like 'Fatoush Salad Like You've Never Had Before' and 'Black Risotto' with 'A Bunch of Pumpkins, Mixed Nuts and

Salmon'. And while the cuisine is clearly memorable, so are chefs Granite, Navon and Elad — each bringing their own personality to the table, literally.

Of course, with countless restaurants coming onto Israel's culinary scene, including Jaffa's **Al-Ashi**, Tel Aviv's **OCD** and **Eucalyptus** in Jerusalem, there are infinite ways to indulge in the country's fusion of flavors. Discover a mix of eclectic restaurants, globally-inspired dishes and free-spirited chefs in the world's newest foodie paradise and enjoy these diverse dining experiences for yourself.



Photo Credit: Yafit Simcha

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1. Tel Aviv restaurants are a favorite with locals and visitors alike. 2. Trendy and tasteful Asia-terranean dishes are a staple at Taizu. 3. Chefs at OCD are obsessed with precise cooking and elaborate plating. 4. Grab a seat at Machneyuda's bar and watch the exuberance unfold.

Photo Credit: Haim Yosef



Photo Credit: Katya Shepelevaya

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Embark on a culinary journey of Israel with insider guidance and exclusive perks from your Virtuoso travel advisor.



EXCLUSIVE OFFERS

COMPLIMENTARY ISLAND CLUB PRIVILEGES

Depart from the ordinary at **Island Hotel Newport Beach**, where the 20th-floor Island Club boasts sweeping coastline and harbor views, plus a host of exclusive amenities — think enhanced breakfast, evening appetizers and desserts, complimentary Wi-Fi, curbside check-in, and more. There's even a chance to work with a personal shopper from Fashion Island, Orange County's premier outdoor shopping venue.

All 295 guest rooms and 82 suites boast step-out balconies for remarkable views. Suites offer a private bedroom and separate living room, while Lido Flats come with expanded entertaining facilities and three balconies. On the main floor, the Oak Grill beckons with fireside patio dining, contemporary California cuisine, and a robust menu of beers and wines from around the world. The hotel is the closest Virtuoso property to Disneyland and is accessible to Orange County's John Wayne Airport, both within a 20-minute drive.

Connect with your Virtuoso travel advisor for rates. Available until March 31, 2017; book by February 28, 2017. Virtuoso exclusive amenities include a room upgrade (if available), breakfast daily, a \$100 resort credit, and more.

EPICUREAN DELIGHTS IN MIAMI BEACH

If art deco's your look, check in to **COMO Metropolitan Miami Beach**, a 74-room boutique hotel set in an original 1930's art deco building located in the heart of the area's Architectural Historic District. The Miami Beach views are heavenly from the rooftop COMO Shambhala Urban Escape.

Virtuoso rates from \$425 per room, per night. Available until March 31, 2017; book by December 31, 2016. Virtuoso exclusive amenities include breakfast daily at Traymore Restaurant, welcome canapés and a mixologist cocktail or glass of wine per person, and a \$75 dining credit.

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*Virtuoso fares from \$7,299 per person. Seven Seas Voyager® departs June 11, 2017; book by February 28, 2017. *Contact your Virtuoso travel advisor for terms and conditions.*

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ONLY IN

Munich

Nowhere other than **Airbräu** can travelers drink at an airport *biertgarten*.

It's fitting that the world's only beer garden within an airport is in Munich, the home of Oktoberfest and a city with centuries of brewing expertise under its lederhosen. In the public space between terminals at Germany's Munich Airport, **Airbräu** welcomes travelers with a handful of ales brewed on-site and traditional Bavarian fare. The restaurant's sprawling, glass-roofed *biertgarten* may be in an unconventional spot, but chestnut trees, a maypole, and live musicians make it unlike any other airport watering hole. Order a stein of **Jetstream pilsner** (the German cure for jet lag, perhaps?) and shout *Prost!* or drown delayed-flight sorrows with a FliegerQuell bitter ale and schnitzel.

— Amy Cassell

TIP

"Munich is the birthplace of the *biertgarten*. A few favorites are **Chinesischer Turm**, set in the heart of English Garden park, and **Augustiner-Keller**, which serves beer first brewed by monks in 1328."

— Gerhard Lindermeir, *Virtuoso travel advisor, Munich*



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