

BESPOKE™

LUXURY MAGAZINE



20/20 VISION



BESPOKE'S SIGNATURE ROUNDUP
OF MUST-SEE DESTINATIONS

JOURNEY WITH BESPOKE

WORDS — SANDRA RAMANI

Though global travel has nearly grinded to a halt, many have found a renewed appreciation of the earth's natural beauty, as well as their own personal freedom to discover it at whim. As we slowly emerge back into the world we once knew, our once far-off dreams of travel are nearing closer into our grasp. As you plan your next trip, consider these off-the-radar natural wonders.

DIVE INTO JUMBY BAY

For a new take on the crystal Caribbean islands, consider a visit to the tucked-away island of Jumby Bay, right off the coast of mainland Antigua. Originally developed by a community of bespoke vacationers in the '80s and now operating under the Oetker Collection, the serene island is home to the next generation of international estate and villa homeowners hailing from North America, the U.K., and Europe. In addition to their ultra-luxury residences situated on 15-25 square miles of private land, residents retain part ownership in the five-star eponymous Jumby Bay Resort hotel, the island's only luxury retailer, the Jumby Bay Boutique, and its handful of fine dining spots. Breezy canopied dinners, sunny beachside picnics, and age-old rum tastings are some of the few things to be enjoyed at restaurants like The Estate House or 1830 Bar, which serve farm-to-table, organic options

inspired by West Indian culinary traditions. What's more, the small community is staunchly committed to the island's ecological preservation, making it a haven for exquisite tropical birds and sea turtles, and is dedicated to the philanthropic Jumby Bay Fund, which supports local Antiguan communities. "It's like a giant clubhouse in paradise," says Wayne Kafesak, the CEO of Jumby Bay, who has worked on island hospitality concepts in Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean for over forty years. "The relationship with the staff is like nowhere else that I've seen in terms of hospitality and closeness. Our facilities have that feeling where you go in and everyone knows you and gives you great service. The commitment of the board and homeowners is really extraordinary. We're all held to a high standard and it feels very organic and natural."

INSIGHT

With one of the most devoted ecological sustainability programs in the Caribbean, Jumby Bay's efforts include preserving endangered indigenous species like the Hawksbill Turtle, the White Egret and the Persian Black-Headed Sheep.

SOAR TO NEW HEIGHTS IN NEW ZEALAND

INSIGHT

New Zealand has the highest number of helicopters per capita.



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It's the ultimate ski lift: getting helicoptered to the top of a mountain in a matter of minutes to access untouched landscapes and adrenaline-pumping thrills. There's no better place in the world to go heli-skiing (and heli-snowboarding) than Queenstown, New Zealand, where the world-class skiing spans the region's eleven mountain ranges. Companies like Harris Mountains Heli-Ski can ferry you to backcountry runs, accompanied by certified mountain guides and gourmet picnics. Tucked into a mountain hideaway is the Minaret Station Alpine Lodge, a hotel that's only accessible by helicopter and which offers its own heli-skiing excursions along with lots of other soaring experiences.

*Heli-skiing on Mount Cook in Queenstown, New Zealand.
Courtesy Harris Mountain Heli-Ski*

CONNECT WITH NATURE IN MAURITIUS

INSIGHT

After he visited Mauritius in 1896, Mark Twain famously wrote, "Mauritius was made first and then heaven; and heaven was copied after Mauritius."

If it's beaches you're craving, head to Mauritius. Relatively unvisited by Americans, the Indian Ocean island nation off of Africa's East coast is born of French, African, Indian, and Chinese influences. Best of all, it is home to pristine beaches, rainforests, and hiking trails that have been largely insulated from mass tourism. The island hosts several five-star resorts, like the Four Seasons Mauritius at Anahita where you can reserve your own private beach, or the brand-new Anantara Iko Mauritius Resort & Villas whose "Streetwise Gurus" will lead you on off-the-beaten-path excursions. You'll be poised to explore attractions like the protected Blue Bay Marine Park, where the snorkeling and diving showcases over 40 species of vibrant coral, the Ile aux Aigrettes nature reserve, which is leading the way in conservation efforts, and the Black River Gorges National Park, famous for its waterfalls and zip lining.

SEE THE NORTHERN LIGHTS IN REYKJAVIK

INSIGHT

The Northern Lights, known scientifically as Aurora Borealis, occurs when molecules from the sun collide with atoms in the Earth's atmosphere, exciting the electrons which causes them to release light.

"Reykjavik," which means "smoky bay," the world's Northern-most major capital, has lately made its way onto the radar of luxury travelers. Spend the day soaking in the famous Blue Lagoon, a geothermal spring enriched with algae, seawater, and minerals that promote healthier skin. The Retreat at the Blue Lagoon, which is built into a lichen-coated lava flow, part of the volcanic rock that ultimately forms the lagoon, offers seven-course tasting menus and five-star accommodations. Sample local delicacies—from horse mussels to rare bilberries—at Dill, the first Michelin-starred restaurant in Iceland. Reykjavik is one of the few major cities in which you can spot the Northern Lights, so if conditions are optimal, catch the awe-inspiring astral light show from your suite between September and March.

EXPLORE A GOLFING MECCA IN SCOTLAND

Ardfin, the most exclusive Scottish getaway on the Island of Jura, is the U.K.'s newest spectacle for devotees to all things golf. Since opening in April, visitors have already rated it as one of the top ten courses in the world, rivaling neighbors Trump Turnberry and Royal Portrush, home of The Open Championship in 2019. Situated on 12,000 lush acres and flanked by ten miles of crystal coastline, Ardfin's pristine 18-hole championship golf course and its 9-hole par 3 course hosts single parties at a time. Off the course, the estate is recognized as a top location for deer stalking, ocean and loch trout fishing, clay pigeon shooting, and water sports. Amenities include the ten-room Victorian villa Jura House and the collection of private homes known as the Quadrangle, each restored over the last decade to their former glory by architect Stanhope Gate and interior designer Louise Jones. The journey to get there is as exotic as the island itself, accessible only by private flight into the neighboring island of Islay, by helicopter, or by ferry from Glasgow, putting this highlander getaway at the top of our list to visit—before the secret's out.

INSIGHT

In 1164, Somerled, a Norse-Gaelic Lord, conquered the Island of Jura from its Viking occupiers and established the Lordship of the Isles, which ruled Jura independently for nearly one thousand years. In the 1930s, Charles Campbell, the last local Lord of the Isles and a distant descendant of Somerled, sold the island into seven estates; Ardfin was purchased by its first private buyer in 1938. Today, Prince Charles is the official Lord of the Isles.

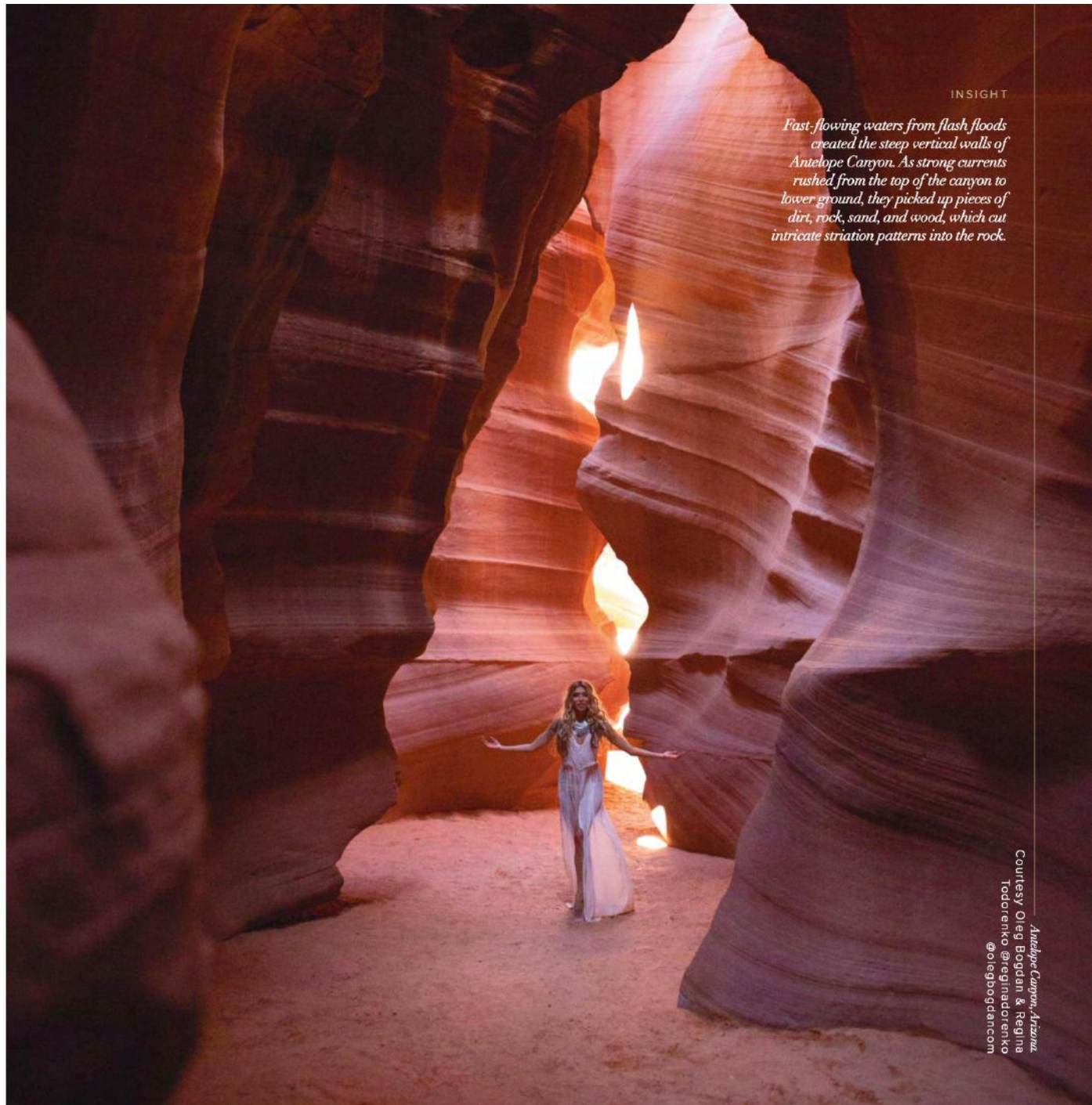
Ardfin Golf Course and Jura House
Courtesy Ardfin

GET OFF THE GRID IN ARIZONA

Wide open spaces and a rich array of outdoor activities make northern Arizona an idyllic place to disconnect. Though the Grand Canyon is an American family classic, few people have yet to access the region's most privileged hideaways, like Antelope Canyon or Horseshoe Bend. Surrounded by spectacular mountain and desert views, camping, hiking, and wellness and romantic retreats immerse visitors in the unhindered natural landscape while paying homage to the native Navajo culture. Amangiri, an Aman collection resort just across the border in southern Utah and a thirty-minute drive from the main Canyon, is a great place to enjoy hot air ballooning, canyon hiking, and native-inspired dining.

INSIGHT

Fast-flowing waters from flash floods created the steep vertical walls of Antelope Canyon. As strong currents rushed from the top of the canyon to lower ground, they picked up pieces of dirt, rock, sand, and wood, which cut intricate striation patterns into the rock.



Antelope Canyon, Arizona
Courtesy Oleg Bogdan & Regina
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INSIGHT

Uruguay is a world leader in growing the little-known grape varietal, Tannat, an obscure red-wine grape that produces high tannin levels. Tannins occur naturally in grape seeds and stems, imparting astringent, bitter notes to wine but also contributing to its ability to age over time.

EXPLORE WINE COUNTRY IN URUGUAY

If you like Malbec, Albariño or other South American staples, make Uruguay your next wine-fueled destination. Set along the southeastern coast, the town of José Ignacio retains a low key beach-chic vibe, despite being a favorite of frequent guests like Leonardo DiCaprio and Mark Zuckerberg. Tucked among the sand dunes, boutique hotel Bahia Vik is just a bike ride away from town's indie boutiques and buzzing restaurants, while less than an hour away sits Bodega Garzón, Argentine billionaire Alejandro Bulgheroni's 2,000-acre temple to wine. Book the four-hour private tour of the vineyards and state-of-the-art winery, which includes a wine-pairing lunch at the on-site restaurant overseen by international celeb-favorite chef Francis Mallmann. The label's private wine club offers the chance to craft your own wines with the vintners, access to all Bulgheroni wine properties worldwide and the opportunity to play on a private, PGA Tour Preferred 18-hole golf course.