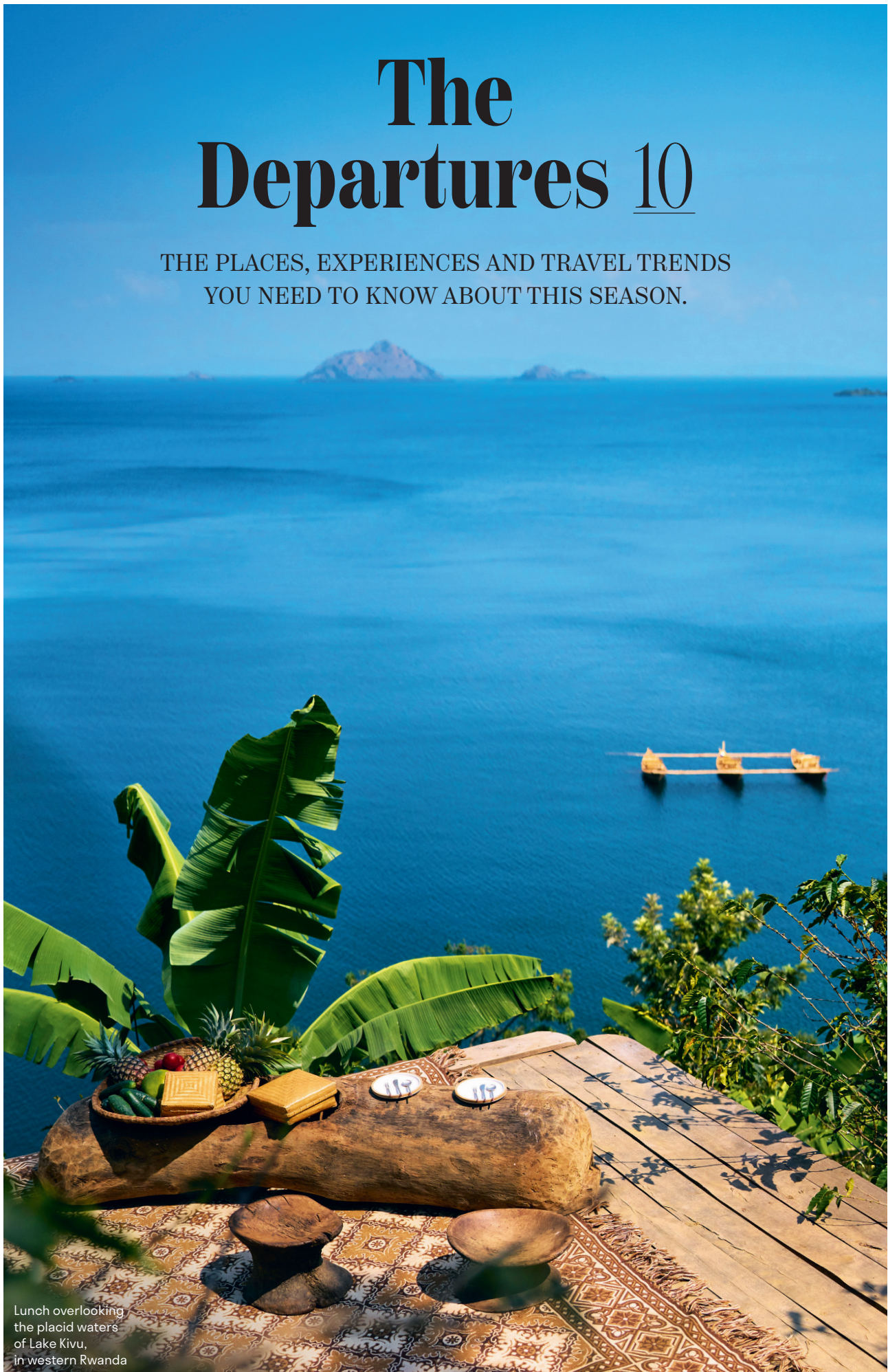


The Departures 10

THE PLACES, EXPERIENCES AND TRAVEL TRENDS
YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS SEASON.



Lunch overlooking
the placid waters
of Lake Kivu,
in western Rwanda



Above: looking down over Grand Forest Metsovo, on a private mountain at the foothills of Pindus National Park; below: inside one of Manna's nature-chic Junior suites

1

GREECE

Higher Ground

How many visitors to Greece spend days on end without ever catching a glimpse of the Mediterranean? A clutch of new and new-look hotels is putting the spotlight on Greece's mountainous inland, hoping to lure travellers away from its mesmerising coastline for at least part of their Hellenic sojourn. Take the forthcoming Elatos Resort, Emblems Collection (emblemscollection.com), a retreat on the slopes of Mount Parnassus with 39 chalets and 15 rooms. Debuting later this year, it presents guests with stunning panoramas across the surrounding forests, a plethora of wellness options, year-round hiking, and skiing in the winter months. Not far away, family-owned Santa Marina Arachova Resort & Spa (santamarina-arachovaresort.gr) is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year with subtle tweaks across its 20 suites and two villas. The two-hour drive from Athens to the region is soon forgotten among the natural wonders and traditional heartfelt hospitality.

Elsewhere, in the shade of Mount Mainalo's ancient fir forest at 1,200 metres above sea level in Arcadia, Manna (mannaarcadia.gr) first opened in 1929 as a wellness sanctuary and escape from the heat in the heart of the Peloponnese. Reimagined with a thoroughly modern palette (it's a member of Design Hotels), the 32-key retreat reopened in 2023 and has become an insider's destination for clued-up Athenians seeking an all-seasons escape. Meanwhile, Grand Forest Metsovo (grand-forest.gr) is set in a landscape you could be forgiven for thinking was much farther north than it actually is. The Pindus Mountains and eponymous national park offer a theatrical backdrop – and playground – for guests staying in the 62 suites on the resort's private mountain, and activities range from skiing in winter to truffle-hunting in autumn.



2

RWANDA

Off-Script in Africa

Thierry Teyssier is one of the travel world's most innovative thinkers – and his latest project, a sprawling multiday immersive theatre experience in Rwanda, may be his most daring venture yet. Exploding onto the scene in 2018 with his “travelling hotel” 700'000 Heures Impact, which sets up temporary locations across the globe where guest experience and social responsibility are seamlessly merged, Teyssier is now taking the same theatrical sense of wonder and unpredictability to the next level in Africa. A former theatre director and actor, the French hospitality mogul has crafted an eight-day itinerary across Rwanda where every conversation, every interaction, has the potential to change the course of the day – and the entire journey. Teyssier and his team, in collaboration with local director Cedric Mizero, have placed nearly 200 actors across three performances in three villages across the country, so guests can never be entirely sure whether the people they encounter are part of the play or simply locals going about their day. A choose-your-own-adventure freedom is built into the itinerary: the guests' choices and interactions will determine what comes next. They become not just spectators but protagonists in one of the most ambitious theatre productions ever staged. Taking place from 30 May to 30 August, guests stay on an exclusive basis (up to four guests in two rooms) for seven nights, and everything is included from the arrival at Kigali International Airport to the departure from the final lodge. 700000heuresimpact.com





Above: the 95-suite *Four Seasons I* kicked off operations this March; right: sculptures at the *Luminara*'s curio-filled Art Bar



A sea-facing perch in an *Amangati* signature suite

Clockwise from left: Cyrille Jerusalem, © Four Seasons, © The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection, SINOT

3

AT SEA

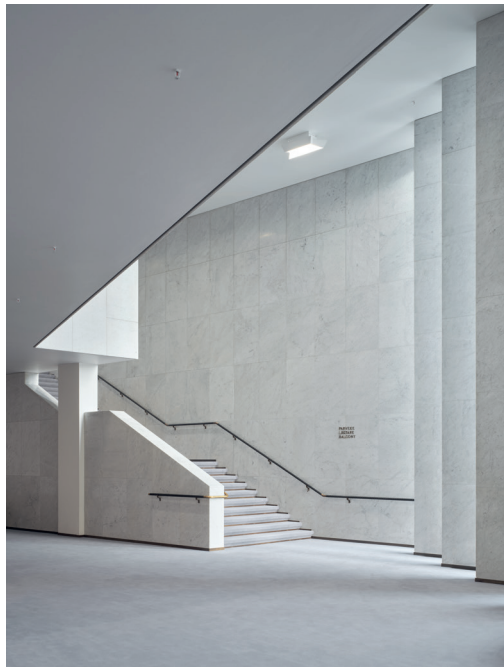
Floating Hotels

Good hospitality has always been a hallmark of cruise ships, so what do hotels have to offer when they build their own vessels? As it turns out, quite a lot. The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection launched its first vessel, *Evrima* (ritzcarltonyachtcollection.com), in 2022, followed by 2024's *Ilma* and 2025's *Luminara*. It set off a trend that has been quickly gaining momentum thanks to exceptionally high standards when it comes to service, design, cuisine and, not least, fascinating itineraries. This year has already seen the christening of *Four Seasons I* (fourseasonsyachts.com) and will soon welcome *Orient Express Corinthian* (orient-express.com), both gamechangers featuring all-suite accommodations and astonishing comforts such as the handmade Savoir beds in every suite on the *Corinthian*. Next year will see the coming of another Four Seasons yacht, another from Orient Express, and the first motor yacht from Aman, a 47-suite stunner called *Amangati* (amanatsea.com).

DEPARTURES

23

Clockwise from right: Oodi, a sweeping, 2018-built library facing Helsinki's parliament; each of Skýra Retreat's 67sq m Log suites are standalone cabins with their own sauna and loft; Alvar Aalto's marble-clad Finlandia Hall



4 FINLAND Northern Exposure

Helsinki has long been a centre for superlative design, from the bodacious prints of Marimekko to the sleek modernism of Artek furniture and the infectious optimism of its ubiquitous modernist architecture. But that aesthetic prowess has never drawn a significant number of visitors – a trend that ambitious Finns are hoping to buck. Finlandia Hall – one of the city's landmark projects, and the creation

of the iconic architect and designer Alvar Aalto – has recently emerged from a €136 million renovation, joining the Finnish National Opera house, the Music Centre, the National Library, the futuristic new Oodi library and the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art as one-of-a-kind destinations for art and design lovers.

The unveiling of the Waldorf Astoria Helsinki (hilton.com) late last year only bolsters the city's appeal – as do the new openings in the country's vast north, for which the Finnish capital serves as a gateway. The country's most fêted rural property, Octola Private Wilderness, has just introduced a sister project, Octola II (octola.com), set completely off-grid in the midst of Finnish Lapland, where pure air and uninterrupted silence are joined – for over 200 nights each year – by the aurora borealis. Also luring visitors to the Lapland of late is the new Skýra Retreat (skyraretreat.com), a lakefront, forest-framed getaway with a high-concept Nordic spa and immersive, timber-clad guest suites. Keep an eye out, too, for the summer opening of Kotona Manor (kotonamanor.com), which will shine a light on the Lakeland region from its perch on the shores of Lake Saimaa. And this year, Oulu will be the European Capital of Culture. The port city will come alive with a range of art projects, best viewed during the summer solstice, which boasts more than 22 hours of daylight.




Lofty Aspirations

Arguably Southeast Asia's most under-the-radar capital, KL is fast emerging as a must-visit destination for reasons altogether separate from its considerable economic clout within the region. There's no more glamorous way to arrive in the Malaysian capital than aboard *Belmond's Eastern & Oriental Express* train (belmond.com), the country's most luxurious rail option (complete with a Dior Spa), which can also take you to the jungles of Taman Negara and the bustling cosmopolitan hub of Penang.

Visitors also have ample choice of hotels, from the new Park Hyatt Kuala Lumpur (hyatt.com) to the classic Four Seasons Hotel Kuala Lumpur (fourseasons.com) and Mandarin Oriental, Kuala Lumpur (mandarinoriental.com) with many newcomers on the horizon: a Waldorf Astoria, an Edition, a Conrad and a Langham, to name just a few. There is an art to eating high and low in the city: its street-food offerings are among the world's best, it touts seven Michelin-starred restaurants (Dewakan (dewakan.my) and Akar (akarkl.com) stand out for their creative use of local ingredients), and there are dozens of excellent semi-casual spots that showcase a spectacular range of regional cuisines.

And don't miss the bustling late-night cocktail scene, which includes four of Asia's top 50 bars. The team behind the intimate Penrose ([@penrose.kl](https://www.instagram.com/penrose.kl)), ranked at number 10, has recently opened a new spot, Lavantha ([@lavantha.kl](https://www.instagram.com/lavantha.kl)), in a former bank vault, already a city favourite since it launched last spring.



The iconic Petronas Towers soar above the city at almost 452 metres



6

INDIA

The Best of Both Worlds

Few wellness traditions run as deep as India's – and now, with the recent opening of *Tulah* (*tulah.life*), few countries have more impressive modern wellness centres. The new sanctuary in Kerala is a \$100m retreat that balances rigorous clinical practices with holistic healing: where else can you discuss blood markers with a doctor in the morning and participate in Ayurvedic rituals that same afternoon? Up at the newly debuted *Oberoi Rajgarh Palace* (*oberoihotels.com*) in Madhya Pradesh, the 350-year-old palace will soon be home to a vast spa, where the *Asmi* programme, rooted in Sanskrit traditions, offers a holistic range of treatments aiming to restore equilibrium.



Right: a glimpse inside the regal Oberoi Rajgarh Palace; *top:* Tulah's flowing architecture overlooks the lush Kerala hillscape



7
UGANDA

Where the Wild Things Are

One of the most geographically diverse countries in Africa, with volcanic mountains, savannah plains, lush rainforests and much of Lake Victoria, the second-largest freshwater lake on Earth, Uganda is only now beginning to hit its stride as a wilderness destination, thanks, in part, to a pair of properties that have helped unlock the country's vast potential for high-end gorilla trekking. Gorilla Forest Lodge, an A&K Sanctuary (abercrombiekent.com), was the first luxe hotel in the mountains of the evocatively named Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, which is home to more than half the world's mountain gorilla population. The lodge reopened in June 2025 after extensive refurbishment and now features 10 standalone villas from which to soak in the jungle and prepare for – and recover from – the day's eye-opening trek deep into the jungle. Later this year, Erebero Hills (asiliaafrica.com) will make its debut on the northern edge of the park, with eight suites boasting panoramic views from its hillside location. The rest of this equatorial country is also ripe for discovery, though the options are more rustic: try Murchison Falls National Park for a traditional safari or parachute into Jinja, the adrenaline capital of East Africa, for a stay at Lemala Wildwaters Lodge (lemalacamps.com), improbably set midstream on the Nile.

Some 500 mountain gorillas reside in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park



8

VENICE

Very Good Bones

Venice has long made an art form of turning history into hospitality, with several new masterpieces poised to bolster the city's enviable collection of heritage-rich hostelries. Joining the vaunted Hotel Cipriani on Giudecca Island this April is *Airelles Palladio* (airelles.com), a 45-key hotel – complete with a 1,700sq m spa – fashioned from a clutch of four 16th-century buildings and set within a hectare of lush gardens.

With a history dating back nearly 600 years, the forthcoming *Orient Express Venezia* (orient-express.com) offers a likewise museum-calibre mise en scène (from original frescoes to a breathtaking octagonal staircase) featuring 47 rooms and suites and a fine-dining restaurant with private boat access.

Not to be outdone, the 110-plus-room *Rosewood Hotel Bauer Venice* (rosewoodhotels.com) – the latest incarnation of the 1880-founded mainstay on the Grand Canal's northern banks – makes a compelling case for patience: with striking, eco-minded interiors and a see-and-be-seen rooftop terrace, the results of its multiyear renovation are expected to reward the wait when it finally opens.

Another *grande dame* returning under a new moniker, the *Danieli, A Four Seasons Hotel* (fourseasons.com), debuts this summer in a trio of centuries-old palaces with revamped interiors by French designer du jour Pierre-Yves Rochon. Just steps from Piazza San Marco, expect 120 newly conceived rooms and suites, a rooftop eatery affording vast lagoon views as well as a spa with its own hammam and an intriguing treatment menu, including a signature massage administered with gold-infused stones crafted by Murano glassmakers.



Left: the ornate sitting room of the Doge Dandolo Royal suite at the new Danieli hotel; top, from left: the Orient Express Venezia, set in a 15th-century palace; one of Airelles Palladio's regal Junior Prestige suites

This page: a sunny day at Lucknam Park, a Cotswolds estate dating back to 1720



© Lucknam Park Hotel

9

ENGLAND

A Weekend in the Country

Notable history, exquisite craftsmanship, superlative cuisine: few country-house hotels tick all the boxes quite as well as Lucknam Park, Emblems Collection, the first – and flagship – property in Accor’s Emblems Collection of iconic luxury hotels. While the bucolic stretch from Somerset up to the Cotswolds is rich in promising new stays (check out Charingworth’s Hyll Hotel and the exclusive-use Yarlinton Lodge, a Georgian manor on the grounds of The Newt, in Bruton), the Palladian-style Lucknam is in a class of its own with more than 200 hectares of parkland, equestrian facilities and an expansive spa. emblemscollection.com





Above, from left: outside COMO Le Montrachet; Maison Le Chevreuil's sun-flooded terrace; Jérôme Rioux, Château la Commaraine's head chef;
below: a bird's-eye view of Pommard, home to Château la Commaraine



10

FRANCE

Burgundy Beckons

The famed French region has charm in spades: sleepy hamlets straight out of a storybook, rolling vineyards as far as the eye can see and – for now – far fewer of the peripatetic oenophiles that inundate other historic viticultural regions of this calibre across Europe. Until recent years, that same absence extended to a conspicuous dearth of luxe hotels too, but that’s all changing with the arrival of an intoxicating crop of hospitality offerings that give visitors a reason to linger longer – and in style. Set

among 3.6 hectares in Pommard, the 12th-century Château la Commaraine (chateaulacommaraine.com) just cut the ribbon on its four-year transformation into a 37-key hostelry with two restaurants conceived by Alain Ducasse-alum Christophe Raoux, all while preserving the time-capsule allure of the working Premier Cru vineyard. Meanwhile, the three-year-old COMO Le Montrachet (comohotels.com) rests in a 19th-century inn overlooking a village square with sophisticated interiors by Paola Navone and a seasonal eatery; not far away in Beaune, the 2024-opened Maison 1896 (maison1896.com) – a nod to the year the building was originally constructed – invites guests to an intimate stay in 16 cosy rooms and meals at the Slanted Door, a modern Vietnamese restaurant by James Beard Award-winning chef Charles Phan. Add to that the just-unveiled Les Sources de Vougeot (sources-hotels.com), the third hotel by Les Sources de Caudalie owners Alice and Jérôme Tourbier in a 14th-century abbots’ residence in Château de Gilly as well as the pair of upcoming projects in Meursault – Maison Le Chevreuil hotel (lechevreuil.com) and the Fontenille Collection’s Château de Cîteaux (fontenille-collection.com) – and you could be forgiven for thinking the region’s high-end hospitality is starting to match its wines.



Clockwise from top left: © COMO Hotels and Resorts, Nightnurse Images, Lucille Godet, Jules Focone, John Athimartitis

A Prestige room at the new Les Sources de Vougeot, in Gilly-lès-Cîteaux

