

ROMANTIC PARIS HOTELS | MEXICO'S NEW HOT SPOT | INTRODUCING EXCLUSIVE EXPERIENCES

ANDREW HARPER'S Hideaway Report[®]

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TRAVELING THE WORLD IN SEARCH OF TRULY ENCHANTING PLACES



PKHEAWTASANG / ISTOCK

Heralding the Olympics at the French National Assembly

This month, all eyes are on Paris, host of the XXXIII Olympiad. We seized on this as an excuse to return to France's capital, where we reviewed six boutique hotels and numerous restaurants (plus dinner cruises, shopping and more — everything that we couldn't fit into print is on AndrewHarper.com). We also made our first editorial foray to

Oaxaca, another destination known for its cuisine, where we discovered a hideaway in a mezcal distillery and a refreshingly affordable beach escape. Our website debuts a new "Exclusive Experiences" section that we're all quite excited about. And we highlight the globe-trotting of several of our travel advisors, who can offer members firsthand advice when planning vacations.

EXCLUSIVE EXPERIENCES LAUNCH

As someone who reviews hotels for a living, it's a bit embarrassing to admit that some of my favorite trips have had nothing to do with hotels at all. Sailing amid Indonesian archipelagoes aboard the charter-only *Celestia* ranks high on my all-time best list, as does my lazy, glamorous week with friends at a villa in St. Barths. Having a space that's entirely your own feels like luxury indeed. Our advisors in the Travel Office have helped members organize villas, yachts and private jets for many years. To make browsing them easier, we've now put a rotating selection on our website: a portal called Exclusive Experiences. Creating it was a true labor of love, and it inspired no small amount of wanderlust on our part! Here is a sampling of what you can find there.

VILLAS

Booking your own private base of operations has many advantages, especially for families and groups of friends traveling together. What I particularly appreciate about staying in a villa is having my own gathering spaces, which take on added importance when traveling with children. They're free to make as much noise as they please in the lounge or at the pool, where we're the only guests.

Our advisors can find the property that's precisely suited to your party, whether you're looking for a Tuscan farmhouse, a seaside escape or a castle perfect for a wedding. One place I have my eye on for a couples' getaway is

a staffed apartment in Paris on the Place du Trocadéro, with Eiffel Tower views. I would love to host a (catered) dinner party in its dining room! A villa on a private peninsula in the Dominican Republic that holds up to 28 guests has me contemplating going to celebrate a milestone birthday.

We have villas in all sorts of less expected places as well. For example, *Hideaway Report* readers may recall us describing our unforgettable stay at Ol Jogi, in Kenya, surrounded by a private 58,000-acre wildlife conservancy.

HOTEL BUYOUTS

Many of the hideaways we recommend are small enough to book in their entirety. Then the hotel, in effect, becomes your own personal villa. It comes with staff, of course, and your party has the run of the property.

Several of our favorite luxury safari camps and lodges are ideal for buyouts. I'm considering bringing my family to Waterside, Royal Malewane's newest set of accommodations in a private conservancy near Kruger National Park.

Closer to home, Caldera House has eight stylishly appointed two- and four-bedroom apartments in Teton Village. Its location adjacent to the Aerial Tram and a short drive from Grand Teton National Park makes it ideal for both skiing and hiking seasons.

PRIVATE ISLANDS

The idea of reserving an island all to oneself is so alluring, we created



Dream Island, near Kudadoo Maldives Private Island

an entire category dedicated to the experience. Private islands aren't just for those seeking exclusive beachside relaxation. They can be bases for itineraries full of memorable excursions.

Not that there's anything wrong with exclusive beachside relaxation. In fact, if I ever take a long enough break from editorial trips, I would escape with a group to Kudadoo Maldives Private Island, a 15-Residence resort that was also our 2023 Hideaway of the Year. It's possible to book just a single accommodation there, as we did. But secur-



Echo camp, Antarctica

ing the entire place for your family or friends would make for an even more extraordinary experience.

Another place I'd love to bring a group is Cayo Espanto, set on a 4-acre islet off the coast of Belize's Ambergris Caye. It can host up to 18 people in its seven cottages, from which you can go bonefishing, sailing and snorkeling.

YACHT CHARTERS

Sailing around the Virgin Islands and motoring down the spectacularly scenic coast of Croatia rank among the world's great travel experiences. I recommend both wholeheartedly, and our travel advisors would be happy to assist with either. But we don't just work with yachts in the classic destinations.

Not long ago, we had a marvelous week aboard the *Aqua Mare* in the Galápagos Islands, for example. We booked a single cabin, but the plush 164-foot vessel has just seven staterooms in total, making it quite feasible to reserve for private use. The aforementioned *Celestia* also has seven staterooms, but as a *phinisi* (a sailing yacht built using UNESCO-recognized techniques), it has a completely different style from the sleek *Aqua Mare*.

ECHO CAMP: ANDREW MACDONALD

Of the vessels I've yet to try, one that caught my eye was the 171-foot *Scorpios*, a two-masted sailing yacht that's usually in the Adriatic. I love its richly textured interiors that wouldn't feel out of place in a fashionable pied-à-terre. Six plush cabins sleep 12 guests, who have the support of a crew of 10.

PRIVATE JETS

One of the most unforgettable trips I've ever done was with TCS World Travel, which runs private-jet itineraries. The ease of transferring from one destination to the next astonished me every time. I never got used to it until the end, when a business-class flight home felt like absolutely slumming it. Just as important, TCS gave us insider access to attractions in each destination. I have rarely felt more like a VIP.

TCS is perhaps best-known for its Around the World journeys, which include extraordinary places that would ordinarily be hugely inconvenient to connect with commercial flights: Machu Picchu, Easter Island, Tahiti, the Great Barrier Reef, Angkor Wat and so on. The itineraries read like rosters of the world's wonders. If you book a TCS World Travel trip with our Travel Office,



Spaceship Neptune

you'll receive benefits like a complimentary pre- or post-trip overnight stay.

We also have relationships with various other companies that run private jet journeys. But we can also help you create your own customized itinerary using private flights. What better way to, say, hop from Provence to Porto Cervo to Paros?

UNIQUE AND SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCES

This last category is admittedly something of a catchall, but what a catchall! Here you can find information about our partnerships with particularly unique and exclusive travel providers. Space Perspective is a good example. Lifted by a balloon, its *Spaceship Neptune* will take eight passengers and a captain up to the edge of the atmosphere. Only about 600 people have ever been in space so far, so you might easily be among the first thousand.

Nor do many people make it all the way to the South Pole. We can arrange that, too, with the assistance of *White Desert*. Its two camps, both with six Polar Pods, are some of the only places nonscientists can stay overnight on land in Antarctica. Here you can walk across "ice waves" and visit colonies of penguins. But perhaps most exciting is the opportunity to visit the planet's southernmost point. The bragging rights alone would make the trip worthwhile.

Visit our *Exclusive Experiences* page at AndrewHarper.com, and contact our Travel Office at 800-375-4685 for more information or to book your trip.