

FINANCIAL TIMES

how to spend it

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A CAR IS REBORN

travelista

Wander woman Maria Shollenbarger
fast-tracks international intelligence
on where to be and what to see

➔ “The Airbnb of the one per cent” was the moniker that luxury-homestay purveyor **OneFineStay** (www.onefinestay.com) earned almost instantly upon its launch in 2010. After successful expansion from London and New York into Paris and LA, the founders recently set their sights on **ROME**: over the summer, a number of properties in the *centro storico*, ranging from a cosy boho Trastevere loft (from €264) to a sleek contemporary flat in Monti to a couple of very-grand-indeed family homes right on the Via Giulia (from €459), were discreetly signed up; expect to be able to scroll through around 50 by this month’s end.

➔ Across southern France and the Alps, Jocelyne Sibuet has brought her bourgeois-with-an-edge style to enough *fermes* and *chalets* to have become a byword for reliable holiday chic. Habitues

of the Caribbean will be pleased to hear she’s expanded to **ST BARTHS**, with **Villa Marie Saint-Barth** (saint-barth.villamarie.fr; from \$500) – a new sister to her Villa Marie in St Tropez, but writ ever so much larger. Sibuet acquired the old François plantation, high on a hill above Flamands Beach, and reinvented it top to bottom with brazen colour and texture plays, artefacts and unexpected *objets* – and an additional 11 bungalows, bringing the total to 22 (along with two family-style villas). No direct beach access, but wide vistas, and taste, in abundance.

➔ Austria’s Alps aren’t short on fetching places to stay – and the resort town of **LECH** is something of a showcase for them these days. The latest entry is the nine-suite

Blumen Haus (www.blumenhauslech.com; from £2,000), which promises a marriage of unrivalled luxury (from sourced antique-birch beams to €250,000 worth of Revox sound systems) and unsurpassed sporting options (think running track, oxygen chamber and house ski kit courtesy of super-premium brand Indigo). Across the border in **ZERMATT**, meanwhile, are the new-to-market **7 Heavens** (www.7heavens.ch/en; from about £3,900 for up to 12 people), three of which are online for this season. The lounge-reception, cigar bar and gym are the only “shared” aspects of these ultra-exclusive serviced chalets, set roughly equidistant from village charms and access to prime slopes via the Sunnegga funicular; each has a wellness spa, indoor tub, a private chef and a killer view of the Matterhorn all its own.

➔ Big races for big causes are gaining real traction in the conservation-tourism world: witness the massive success of last year’s Travels to my Elephant, a rickshaw



Above: the balcony of Chalet Elbrus at 7 Heavens in Zermatt. Below: a OneFineStay property on Via della Scala in Rome's Trastevere district



Above: a bungalow bedroom at Villa Marie Saint-Barth





Above: the Great Plains Ride for Lions mountain-bike race across Kenya's Amboseli-Tsavo region. Below: the restaurant at The Phoenicia, Malta

the four-day mountain-bike race will cross southeastern **KENYA's** Amboseli-Tsavo region, where the big cat's numbers are reduced to the few hundreds. In a farsighted commitment to local farmers, proceeds will go equally to expanding protected zones and to livestock compensation payments. (Note: this is not a challenge to be undertaken by the casual Sunday cyclist. Terrain hazards over the 220km include crushing heat, scarce water and, well, lions.)

✈️ Down on the south coast of **SRI LANKA** it's all news, all the time: witness the opening in January of **Fort Bazaar** (www.teardrop-hotels.com/fort-bazaar; from \$229), a redo of a 17th-century merchant's house in Galle that fizzes with colour-saturated good looks; and the arrival later this month of **Anantara Kalutara Resort** (www.anantara.com; from £225), whose sleek pool villas surround public spaces originally designed and built by the legendary Geoffrey Bawa. In December it's the turn of George Cooper, the hotelier-retailer behind the much-loved Kahanda Kanda (www.kahandakanda.com; from about \$410). His four-suite **KK Beach** (www.kkbeach.com; from about \$250) is set on the sands of Habaraduwa, midway between Galle and Weligama, and will manifest all the quirky style for which Cooper is known; its beach will be open to Kahanda Kanda guests as well. Cooper has also expanded his retail footprint in Galle's historic fort with **KK by George** (53 Leyn Baan Street), a sister boutique to his KK The Collection, stocking airy cotton beachwear and locally produced jewellery.

✈️ Welcome news; one of luxury travel's original tastemakers is, after a hiatus, back on the scene

– in **MALTA**: Gordon Campbell Gray (who brought us One Aldwych, in its day the London luxury boutique hotel, and Antigua's Carlisle Bay) has once again teamed with longtime partner, decorator Mary Fox Linton, to imbue **The Phoenicia** (www.phoeniciamalta.com; from €250) – a Valletta landmark, dating to 1939 – with the Gray-Linton signature mix of minimalist understatement and opulence cast in icy-sorbet tones. The seven-odd acres of gardens have been totally refurbished, along with the hotel's 136 rooms and suites. The serious sybarite's money has been on Malta moving into the Mediterranean spotlight for some time now; watch this space for more news soon. ♦



Above: a deluxe ocean-view room at Anantara Kalutara Resort, Sri Lanka

