



# 10 TRIPS OF A LIFETIME

PLUS: Dream destinations,  
new hotels, and pro tips  
from travel advisors.

Over the past decade, tens of thousands of you have responded to our Travel Dreams Survey, sharing the ways you long to see the world. Here, this year's top experiences, as voted by you, and how to make them a reality.

**BY AMY CASSELL**

The family that surfs together stays together.



## VACATION WITH MULTIPLE GENERATIONS OF YOUR FAMILY

"We're so busy in our everyday lives that it's important to take time away to connect," says Montgomery, Alabama-based Virtuoso travel advisor Trish Gastineau. "The experience becomes legendary because families will recall it every time they're together." The travel industry is catering to the demand, with activities and accommodations fit for all kinds of clans. A few highlights:

• Grandpa Jim and Uncle Brian may get along just fine at the annual clambake, but the key to multigenerational-travel success is finding accommodations with enough space for everyone. One option: the Mother Goose house at Cape Cod's

120-room **Wequassett Resort and Golf Club**, with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a full kitchen, a patio overlooking the water, and access to all amenities. *Mother Goose house from \$10,000 for seven nights, available April through October.*

- With its newest fleet of European river ships, including the 158-passenger *AmaKristina*, **AmaWaterways** added connecting staterooms that sleep up to five.
- **National Geographic Expeditions'** family-centric trips entertain kids with child-focused expedition leaders and a pen-pal program that coordinates meet-ups with local children. New for 2017: a nine-day tour of Denmark and Norway. *Departures: June 24, July 15, and July 29, 2017; from \$6,590.*

# 2 STAY IN A POLYNESIAN OVERWATER BUNGALOW

It's the tropical-getaway fantasy realized: idyllic lagoons, coral reefs, and Instagram-ready bungalows perched above it all. Which one is right for you?

### I WANT TO ...

**Go, go, go:** The 143-room **Inter-Continental Moorea Resort & Spa** hosts a dive center, a fleet of speedboats and kayaks, and dolphin and sea turtle sanctuaries.

**Bring the kids:** Two-bedroom suites at the 107-room **Four Seasons Resort Bora Bora** sleep six, and a kids' club keeps the fun rolling with snorkeling, hermit crab hunts, and more.

**Take a trip for two:** Have breakfast delivered to your overwater villa's terrace at the 89-room **St. Regis Bora Bora Resort**, a favorite of honeymooning and anniversary-feting couples.

**IN YOUR WORDS:** "While I am grateful for high-thread-count sheets, what matters most is appreciating the simplicity in your surroundings." – *Christina Miller, Houston, Texas*



The St. Regis Bora Bora Resort.

**DREAM DESTINATIONS** This year's Travel Dreams Survey also revealed the places where you long to unpack your bags, dip your toes, and point your camera. Here are your top ten, along with a few words from *Virtuoso Life* readers who entered the Travel Dreams essay contest.

- 1. AUSTRALIA** Stunning beaches, diverse wildlife, and culture-rich cities: Australia tops the list for the seventh consecutive year.
- 2. ITALY** **In Your Words:** "I would love to return to Italy to spend time enjoying the beautiful Tuscan countryside, eating meals at candlelit tables overlooking olive trees and vineyards as far as the eye can see." – *Shannon Owens, Centerton, Arkansas*

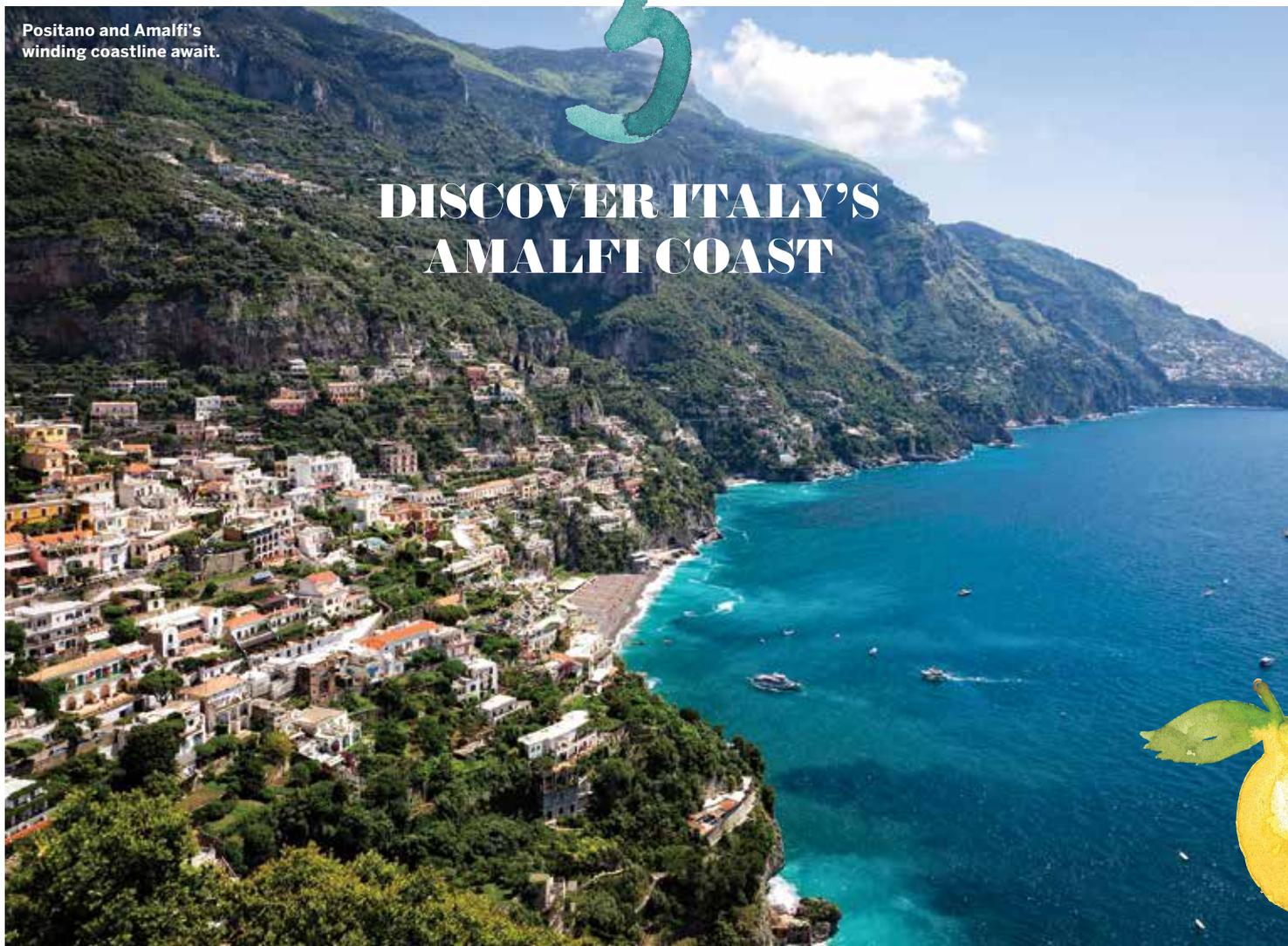
Read the winning Travel Dreams essay (it's about Italy!) on page 22.



# 3

Positano and Amalfi's winding coastline await.

## DISCOVER ITALY'S AMALFI COAST



An exhilarating way to explore this iconic cliff-hugging coastline: rent a car and road-trip it. Your travel advisor can map out a custom adventure; here's Chicago-based Virtuoso advisor Adamarie King's ultimate itinerary.

- "Fly into **Naples** and drive 80 minutes to **Conca dei Marini** and

the 20-room Monastero Santa Rosa Hotel & Spa, an ideal base for a few days of exploring Praiano and Positano. Don't miss **Da Vincenzo**, a simple restaurant in Positano known for fresh seafood.

- Next, head to **Amalfi** and the 67-room Hotel Santa Caterina – the views and gardens alone are

worth it. Sip coffee at Pasticceria Pansa next to the Duomo di Amalfi and pick up a box of chocolate-covered orange peels to bring home. I love **La Scuderia del Duca** near Amalfi's marina for its gorgeous art and paper products. Be sure to make a dinner reservation at **Ristorante Eolo** for one of the terrace tables.

- Drive to **Ravello** and park at the 50-room Belmond Hotel Caruso for a couple of days. Then head to **Maiori**, a charming seaside promenade; have lunch at Il Faro di Capo d'Orso, and continue to **Vietri sul Mare** and its famed ceramics shops. Finally, drop off your car in Salerno and take a train to Naples or Rome for departure."



It's not an Italian road trip without an Italian convertible: Auto Europe's fleet includes the compact Fiat 500 Cabriolet, ideal for navigating the Amalfi Coast's narrow roads.

(AMALFI) GIORGIO FOCESATO/ISTOCK, (LEMON) KORENA BOLDING SINNETT



**3. FIJI** Islands on the move: The South Pacific chain jumped five spots from last year. **4. GREECE** Thanks to a favorable exchange rate, the country of beaches, islands, and ancient sites is a popular destination for summer travel.



Santorini's classic blues and whites.

# 4

## MAKE A SPLASH IN THE GREEK ISLES

Start with these three travel-advisor-approved spots:

### PARTY TIME

"My go-to for easy access to a lively scene is **Mykonos**' 39-room Kivotos hotel. Its Italy-meets-Greece aesthetic sets the tone for the pulse of the island." – *Lila Fox, New Orleans*

### LOVE STORY

"For a romantic getaway, head to **Santorini** and 45-room Vedema, a Luxury Collection Resort. Its secluded Athenian Suites overlook the village." – *Mark Johnstone, Corpus Christi, Texas*

### FAMILY-APPROVED

"Stay on the mainland at the 57-room Amanzoe and have your advisor work with Virtuoso's on-site connection in Greece to hire a speedboat to **Hydra**. It's like stepping back in time: no cars, only your feet or donkeys to take you where you need to go." – *Kelly Shea, Carmel, Indiana*

(GREECE) DANIEL CLEMENTS PHOTOGRAPHY/GALLERY STOCK. (ANIMALS AND CAMERA ICON) ISTOCK

# 5

## PHOTOGRAPH THE "BIG FIVE" ON AN AFRICAN SAFARI

Every safari results in an overwhelming amount of photo ops; even a novice will return home with frame-worthy shots (and an arsenal of #ThrowbackThursday posts). Book one of these tours for prime animal-kingdom action.

ANIMALS	SPOT THEM IN	WHEN TO GO	HOW TO GO
<b>ELEPHANTS</b> 	South Africa	Year-round	Elephants roam free on most safaris, and <b>African Travel</b> 's ten-day tour through South Africa and Zimbabwe provides plenty of opportunities to spot herds in the Kruger Private Reserve. <i>Departures: Any day through December 17; from \$3,895.</i>
<b>LIONS</b> 	Kenya, on the Masai Mara National Reserve	Late June	Beat the crowds and watch lions as they follow the wildebeest migration into Masai Mara on <b>Big Five Tours &amp; Expeditions</b> ' nine-day northern Kenya safari. <i>Departures: Any day through December 15, 2017; from \$8,995.</i>
<b>CAPE BUFFALO</b> 	Kenya and Tanzania	Year-round	Travel via bush plane between game camps and lodges on <b>Micato Safaris</b> ' 14-day tour of Kenya's Masai Mara and Tanzania's Serengeti National Park. <i>Departures: Multiple dates, July 12, 2016, through December 26, 2017 (excluding April); from \$14,650.</i>
<b>LEOPARDS</b> 	South Africa and Botswana	May through October	<b>Swain Destinations</b> ' ultra-luxe 12-day safari includes game drives in Botswana's Okavango Delta and South Africa's Sabi Sand Reserve. <i>Departures: Any day through October 31; from \$26,510.</i>
<b>RHINOS</b> 	Zimbabwe	June through October	Search for the endangered black rhino in Matusadona National Park during <b>Cox &amp; Kings</b> ' private 11-day tour of Zimbabwe. <i>Departures: Any day through November 30; from \$6,670 for two.</i>



**PRO TIP:** Travel photographer and *Virtuoso Life* contributor **Dook**, who shot this issue's cover, recommends packing plenty of memory cards: "The adrenaline will have you hitting the button more times than you think."

**5. NEWZEALAND** "An hour's drive from Christchurch is one of New Zealand's best-kept secrets: the charming settlement of Akaroa," says Leith Sisson, an Auckland-based Virtuoso travel agency executive. "Its waterfront cafés have some of the South Island's freshest seafood."



# 6

## SEE THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

Jason Hillier, Arctic Kingdom trip leader and northern lights aficionado, weighs in on the astronomical wonder.



The aurora borealis illuminates the Arctic sky over Norway's Lofoten islands.

### WHAT EXACTLY ARE THE NORTHERN LIGHTS?

The aurora borealis' bright, dancing lights are actually collisions between electrically charged particles from the sun. As these solar flares head toward Earth, our magnetic fields divert them and they react with our atmosphere's gases, creating auroral ovals around the top and bottom of the planet.

### BEST TIME TO SEE THEM?

Late August through March in northern latitudes near the Arctic Circle and north pole, on a cloudless, new-moon night.

### DO I NEED A GOOD CAMERA TO PHOTOGRAPH THEM, OR CAN I USE MY PHONE?

I've seen great results with some point-and-shoot cameras. If you can stabilize the camera

on a tripod and adjust your exposure and ISO, you'll take home some amazing shots.

### YOUR IDEAL SOUNDTRACK FOR AURORA VIEWING?

Neil Young or The Tragically Hip.

**GO:** On Arctic Kingdom's seven-day northern Canada adventure, guests fly via private plane to a remote cabin in Nunavut to see the aurora borealis and look for polar bears. *Departures: Multiple dates, October 16 through November 13; from \$7,995.*

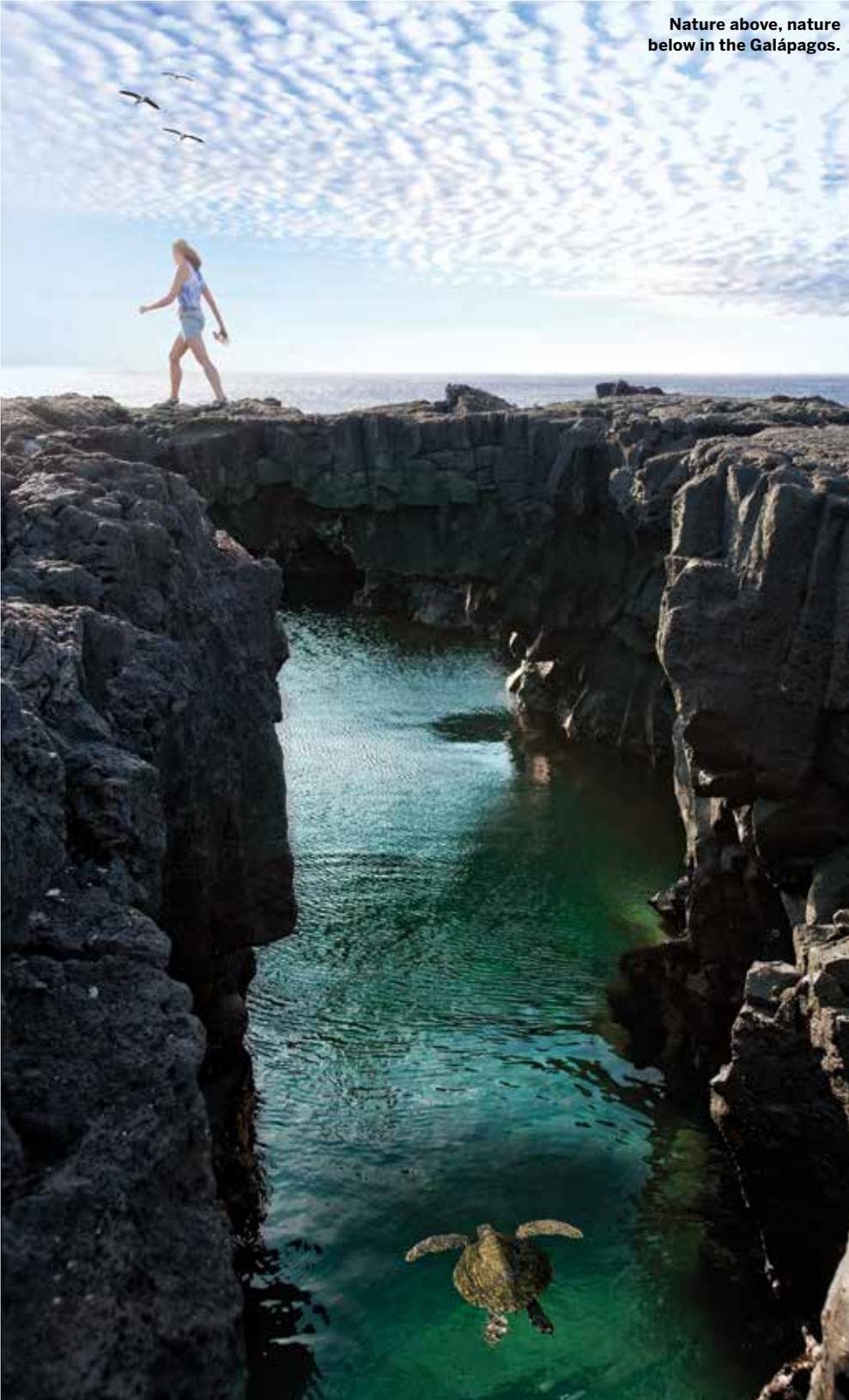


Jason Hillier.

(JASON HILLIER) ARCTIC KINGDOM. (NORTHERN LIGHTS) WESTENSKI/STEFAN SCHURR/GALLERY STOCK

**6. MALDIVES** Rookie of the year: The Maldives makes the list for the first time in survey history, thanks in part to its deserted-island appeal, excellent marine life, and secluded, over-the-top resorts.

Nature above, nature below in the Galápagos.



STEWART COHEN/GETTY IMAGES

# 7

## COMMUNE WITH NATURE IN THE GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

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Those who wish to follow in Darwin's footsteps, take note: "The one-on-one interaction with wildlife in the Galápagos gives you a sense of nature you cannot find anywhere else in the world," says travel advisor Jodi Fox of Calgary, Canada. Most reach the archipelago off Ecuador's coast by ship, but a new high-end ecolodge on **Santa Cruz Island** lets travelers trade staterooms for contemporary sleeping spaces with floor-to-ceiling windows and private terraces or balconies. The 14-room **Pikaia Lodge** welcomes guests for four-, five-, and eight-day stays that include guided hikes, snorkeling and diving day trips on the 100-foot *Pikaia I* yacht, and tours of the on-site giant tortoise reserve. *Four-day packages from \$10,600 for two, including all meals and excursions, and a complimentary massage for two.*

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**IN YOUR WORDS:** "I was thrilled to have an underwater experience in such a unique marine environment as the Galápagos. Swimming alongside sea turtles, colorful fish, and penguins was so much fun. Then I discovered the sea lions – how playful they were! We dove, surfaced, and somersaulted together." – *Mary Pitcher, Fernandina Beach, Florida*

**7. IRELAND In Your Words:** "Travel to Ireland was a dream of mine, to discover my roots. I found my people – they were in the pubs!" – *Maureen Horvath, Truckee, California* (Find out more about bellying up to the bar in Dublin on **page 72.**)



## TRIPS OF A LIFETIME

Silversea's  
*Silver Whisper*.



# 8 SET SAIL ON A WORLD CRUISE

Virtuoso travelers Karen and Max Bellune of Alexandria, Virginia, recently returned from their second world cruise, aboard **Silversea's** 382-passenger *Silver Whisper*. Below, their essentials for making a floating suite feel like home.

- **A foldable laundry basket.**
- **A portable Bluetooth speaker.**
- **Wall art.** Karen hung a world map on the wall and charted their entire trip.
- **A comfy blanket.**

**TIP:** Pack for three weeks, not four months. "Life on board is casual, and nobody notices what you wear," Karen says. "Plus, there's laundry service available."

### CHOOSE YOUR CRUISE

The 111-day round-trip-from-Fort Lauderdale world sailing aboard **Princess Cruises'** 672-passenger *Pacific Princess* heads through the Panama Canal before crossing the Pacific. *Departure: January 3, 2017; from \$20,000.*

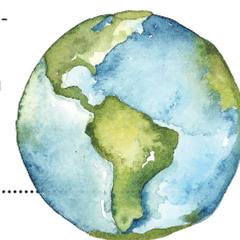
**Regent Seven Seas Cruises'** returns to the world cruise stage after a six-year hiatus with a 129-day sailing round-trip from Miami on the 490-passenger *Seven Seas Navigator*. *Departure: January 5, 2017; from \$56,000.*



A worthy stop on an around-the-world jaunt: Bali and its Tirta Empul temple.

# 9 CALL ON ALL SEVEN CONTINENTS

To set foot on every continent in one whirlwind journey is an ambitious quest, but it doesn't have to be an all-out, *Amazing Race*-style sprint. An ideal course of action: Work with your travel advisor to craft a custom itinerary that fits your schedule, pacing, and destination wish list. Or book **Abercrombie & Kent's** around-the-world private jet tour, a **six-continent**, 26-day jaunt from Miami to Monaco that includes stops in Peru, Bali, Kenya, and more. *Departure: October 17; from \$117,000.*



### DON'T FORGET ANTARCTICA!

Follow the jet tour with **Ponant's** 16-day Antarctic cruise, round-trip from Ushuaia aboard the 264-passenger *Le Boréal*. *Departure: November 15; from \$11,790.*

**8. SOUTH AFRICA** Pair a safari with an urban adventure in Cape Town. For a guide to the capital city, turn to **page 100**. **9. FRENCH POLYNESIA** It's a favorite for honeymooners, but the South Pacific locale also lures adventurers with its mountainous landscapes and great diving.

# 10

## VISIT AUSTRALIA'S HIGHLIGHTS

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We asked travel advisors: What's your must-visit locale in Australia?

- “**Tasmania** is real and authentic Australia. The scenery is stunning – Cradle Mountain is excellent for hiking and seeing wildlife, and the island has a fabulous culinary scene. Have an Aussie burger at a local pub, and try barramundi and fresh Australian oysters too. The 20-room **Saffire Freycinet** is one of the world's best eco-luxury lodges, a great destination for honeymooners and families.”  
– *Lynda Turley Garrett, Saratoga, California*

- “For one of the most beautiful strolls in the world, take a cab from Sydney to Bronte Beach and walk along the cliffside path to **Bondi Beach**. It takes about an hour, and it's worth it. Bring your swimsuit for a dip in the Icebergs pool afterward. As for hotels, I love the Opera View Rooms at the 155-room **Park Hyatt Sydney** – it's hard to beat those views.” – *Chad Clark, Phoenix*

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**IN YOUR WORDS:** “Kangaroo Island is amazing and beautiful! Our guide took us to see a colony of fur seals: As we followed along the seaside walkway, we rounded a corner to find a limestone archway hollowed out by the ocean. The waves were crashing underneath, and the seals were playing. It was an unexpected and stunning surprise.”  
– *Rhonda Gordon, Ontario, Canada*



Sydney Harbour and the city's famed Opera House.

(SYDNEY) BLEND IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES. (BALI) HORIZON IMAGES/MOTION/ALAMY. (GLOBE) KORENA BOLDING SINNETT

**10. ANTARCTICA** Travel to the chilly continent heats up: A record 46,000 visitors are expected to set foot on Antarctica this year. Read one traveler's dispatch on [page 58](#). **VI**