



**WONDERFUL WILDERNESS**

Private islands are just so last year. It's time to get with the travel in-crowd and book a private reserve – trading sunbathing on whitewashed beaches for running wild on savannah plains. Located just three hours north of Johannesburg, South Africa's Leobo Private Reserve is set on a sprawling 8,000-ha plot in the Waterberg Mountains, where guests can skydive, rock climb, stargaze and go on a heli-picnic all in the space of 24 hours. Formerly a private home, the reserve is rented on an exclusive basis, meaning you and your brood have the run of the place. With no timetables or pre-scheduled game drives, guest experiences include quieter pursuits like freshwater swimming and star-lit safaris with a local astronomer, to daredevil activities like self-guided game drives on quad bikes and sleeping in a tree house above a hippo hangout – all you have to do is ask. Stay in The Observatory, which accommodates six adults and three children, or The Lodge, which sleeps up to 14 adults and four children – but no matter which you choose, traditional African style prevails, and a butler and private chef will cater to any desires.

**PRICE:** The Observatory from ZAR 45,000 (US \$3,340) per night, all inclusive; The Lodge from ZAR 35,000 (\$2,600) per night, all inclusive **AVAILABLE:** Now **BOOK:** [WWW.LEOBOPRIVATERESERVE.COM](http://WWW.LEOBOPRIVATERESERVE.COM)

# ESCAPES

This month we whisk you off in the usual VIP style to eccentric escapes such as mushroom-foraging expeditions in Greece to Heidi-themed sleepovers in Austria and South African safaris with a twist

Words: Sarah Freeman

**GOOD FOR HEALTH**

**CURATIVE CARIBBEAN**

November is Saint Lucia's annual health and wellness month, so the Caribbean resorts of Anse Chastanet and Jade Mountain have curated "Lose the Blues" – a one-off wellness programme designed for those suffering from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). The rejuvenating three-, five- or seven-day packages, which are suitable for anyone seeking some R&R, include a series of daily Ayurvedic and classic spa treatments, sunrise and sunset yoga sessions, as well as endorphin-promoting activities such as kayaking, hiking and tennis. Organic, mood-enhancing food is also on the wellness menu – Jade Mountain will be serving up serotonin-inducing and anti-inflammatory foods like fresh-off-the-tree bananas, just-out-of-the-ocean fish and homemade, organic dark chocolate made from cocoa beans grown on the resort's Emerald Estate. Set against the dramatic Piton Mountains, with azure waters and talcum-powder beaches in every direction, the location alone should help you lose those winter blues.

**PRICE:** From US \$365 (Anse Chastanet) and \$1,050 (Jade Mountain) per night based on two sharing **AVAILABLE:** Now **BOOK:** [WWW.ANSECHASTANET.COM](http://WWW.ANSECHASTANET.COM); [WWW.JADEMOUNTAIN.COM](http://WWW.JADEMOUNTAIN.COM)



**HIGH-ROLLING HEIDI!**

Little ones can now live out their very own Heidi fairy tale at luxury ski-in/ski-out chalet Überhaus, in Lech, Austria, which is hosting traditional Heidi-style sleepovers in anticipation of the new German-language film debuting this winter. Alpine angels will enjoy a midnight feast of chocolate fondue, cute cupcakes, mountain-cheese pizza and marshmallows toasted on an open log fire – all prepared by the chalet's in-house chef. Heidi's Swiss-mountain world is brought to life with hostesses wearing traditional Lodenfrey Alpine dresses and chalet drivers dressed up as goat herders, just like the story's Peter. The fantasy doesn't end there – Überhaus can custom-make miniature Lodenfrey dirndls (at an additional cost), so kids can embrace the Alpine look back home. Once the children retreat to their charming Heidi-style room, adults can enjoy the property's more grown-up amenities, including an outdoor hot tub with snow-capped peak views, a sauna, hammam, cinema room and wine cellar, all spread over four fabulous floors.

**PRICE:** US \$44,527 per week for accommodation only **AVAILABLE:** Now **BOOK:** [WWW.HAUTEMONTAGNE.COM](http://WWW.HAUTEMONTAGNE.COM)

**“STAYING AT THE CHARMING, HILLTOP ARISTI MOUNTAIN RESORT & VILLAS, AN EXPERT MOUNTAIN GUIDE WILL LEAD GUESTS ON DAILY, EDIBLE-MUSHROOM EXPEDITIONS”**



**FIVE-STAR FORAGING**

There's more to Greece than its famed island beaches and well-trodden ruins: How about foraging mushrooms for dinner in the Zagori region's spectacular autumnal forests? Mountainous, north-western Greece – an area hotly tipped for UNESCO World Heritage status – is characterised by dramatic canyons and ancient villages. Staying at the charming, hilltop Aristi Mountain Resort & Villas, an expert mountain guide will lead guests on daily, edible-mushroom expeditions followed by a meal at the hotel's organic farm-to-table restaurant, Salvia, where traditional mushroom-orientated plates are mixed with local wild boar and cheese sourced from nearby farms. Afterwards, guests can retreat to cosy mountain rooms complete with a roaring fire and superb views over the Vikos Gorge and the Towers of Papigo. Mushroom-harvesting season ends around late November so fans of the fungus shouldn't delay in booking.

**PRICE:** From US \$285 for two people for a two-night stay **AVAILABLE:** Until mushroom-hunting season ends in late November **BOOK:** [WWW.ARISTI.EU](http://WWW.ARISTI.EU)





### LIGHTS, CAMERA... POLAR BEARS

Ever dream of swimming with blue whales in Sri Lanka or witnessing the largest mammal migration on the planet in Zambia? These are just a few epic events to be experienced with Natural World Safari's latest series of "Nature's Great Events" packages. The trips are seasonal, so with that in mind, November is the ideal time to embark on a Northern Lights adventure in Churchill, Canada to witness one of nature's greatest phenomena. And if you're eager to check two things off the bucket list at once, combine celestial wonders with a polar bear-migration safari. This specialist-led excursion whisks guests away on a private chartered flight from Churchill to the famous Polar Bear Alley, to lodge in Arviat Polar Bear Cabins and track the elusive animals on foot with an Inuit guide.

**PRICE:** Polar Bear Fly-In Migration Safari from £5,300 per person (US \$8,180) **AVAILABLE:** October to November  
**BOOK:** [WWW.NATURALWORLDSAFARIS.COM](http://WWW.NATURALWORLDSAFARIS.COM)



### “A STAY IN THE ELITE UPPER SUITE INCLUDES EXTRAS LIKE A PAIR OF AIR LOUBI FLATS AND UPGRADES SUCH AS AIR MILES”



### STEP IT UP

To indulge fashion-loving guests, one of Hong Kong's most luxurious hotels, Upper House, has teamed with French fashion house Christian Louboutin and Hong Kong-based spa The Nail Library, to offer an exclusive "Christian Louboutin Beauté" room package. The unique red-soled stay – which includes perks such as a "Red Slipper" welcome drink and pampering with an in-room Christian Louboutin manicure or pedicure – can be booked in any room. A stay in the elite Upper Suite, however, includes extras like a pair of Air Loubi flats, upgrades such as air miles and – for the most ardent of Loubi lovers – a private consultation in the "Tattoo Parlour" at the brand's flagship store, where your shoes will receive a special makeover through their bespoke embroidery service. Strap on those heels and snap this one up quickly, as the package is only available for a few more weeks.

**PRICE:** Rooms from US \$580 per night; Upper Suite from \$1,935 per night  
**AVAILABLE:** Until October 31 **BOOK:** [WWW.UPPERHOUSE.COM](http://WWW.UPPERHOUSE.COM)