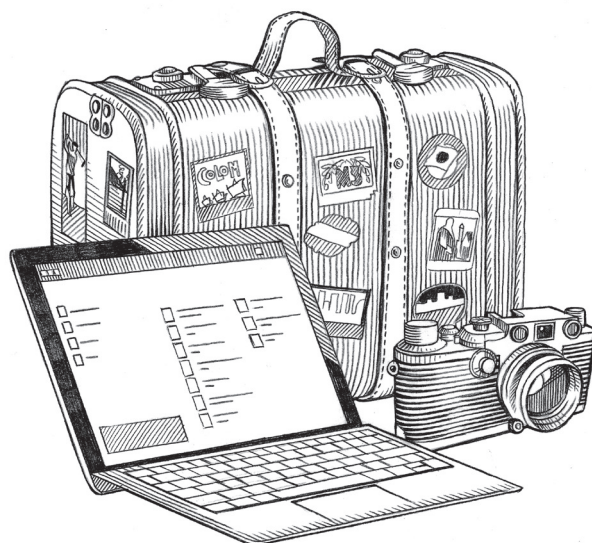


BROADEN THE MIND

FOR 2016, THE EDITORS
OF *CENTURION* HAVE
COLLATED 20 EXPERIENCES
THAT, AS PETER SWAIN
PROFILES, WILL SATIATE
AND SURPRISE EVEN THE
MOST SEASONED TRAVELLER



The idea of seeing the world for sport, for intellectual enrichment or to tick off another destination on life's great bucket list harks back hundreds of years – in Europe, the well-heeled embarked on so-called Grand Tours, alighting in places like Rome, Paris and Vienna to survey ancient ruins, to learn a new tongue, or scale a mountain or two.

Then came the Industrial Revolution, and, eventually, the Digital Revolution. Today, visions of lands known and uncharted are accessible anywhere, any time – we can fall asleep by swiping images of Manhattan's twinkling lights or rise to a spectacular sunrise over the Serengeti at the click of a mouse. And we can use the vast online world to cogitate over places we'd like to visit, anticipate the journey of a loved one thanks to flight-tracking apps and use translation on the go.

Travel, then, is no longer for the few – but what can set it apart for the more discerning among us are the extraordinary experiences that it still offers up in destinations

both long-loved and off the beaten track. This is, in essence, what the editors of *Centurion* have always striven to offer – to make sure our readers are the first to hear about the newest, most noteworthy offerings across the planet, be it a recently unveiled resort on the shores of an unknown island, a city with a newfound verve or a feat of architecture so magnificent you need to see it in the flesh.

It is in this spirit we have compiled a selection of timely, and timeless, destinations: 20 standout places that we are excited, passionate and intrigued about and we think you should be as well. From the serrated peaks of the Alps to the topaz coves of the Caribbean and everything in between, we have assembled a shortlist for 2016. Its global scale and scope may be more ambitious than those European Grand Tours of yesteryear, but its blending of the old and new, with opportunities for both insight and delight, speaks to the same curiosity and penchant for wonder that has sparked the impulse in us to travel for centuries. ■

ILLUSTRATION DANILO AGUTOLI



NORTHWEST PASSAGE

SPRIT OF ADVENTURE

The 2014 discovery of the sunken remains of HMS *Erebus* from Sir John Franklin's ill-fated 1845 expedition to explore the Northwest Passage has reignited international interest in the potential for ships to sail from the Atlantic to the Pacific through the Arctic Ocean. Changes in the pack ice since 2009 have encouraged several cruise liners to pursue Franklin's dream, with Crystal and One Ocean's 96-passenger *Akademik Ioffe* now offering adventurous travellers the opportunity of seeing the spectacular scenery and wildlife right across Canada's icy northern seaboard in summer 2016.

PHOTO JÖRG GLÄSCHER/LAIF

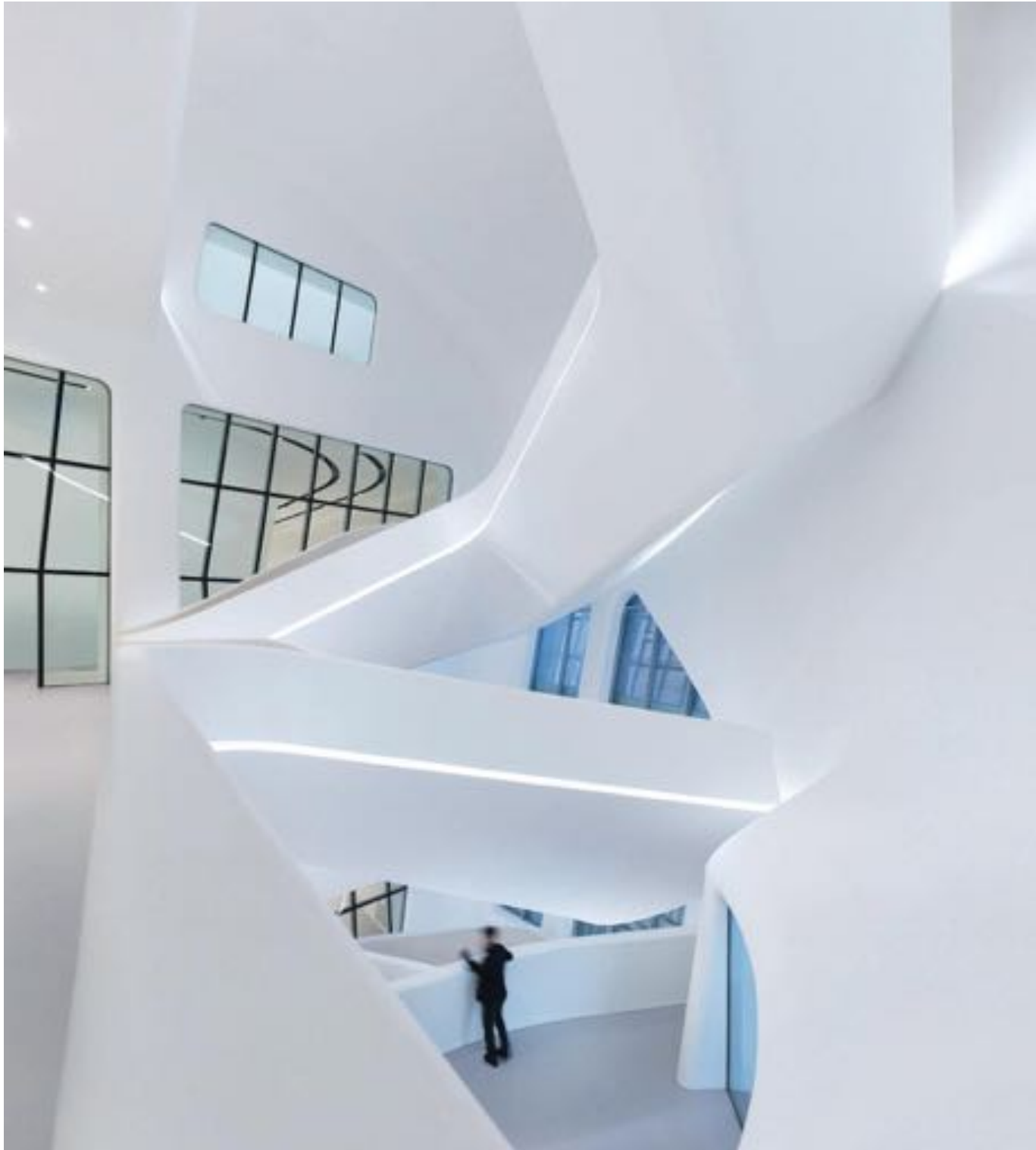
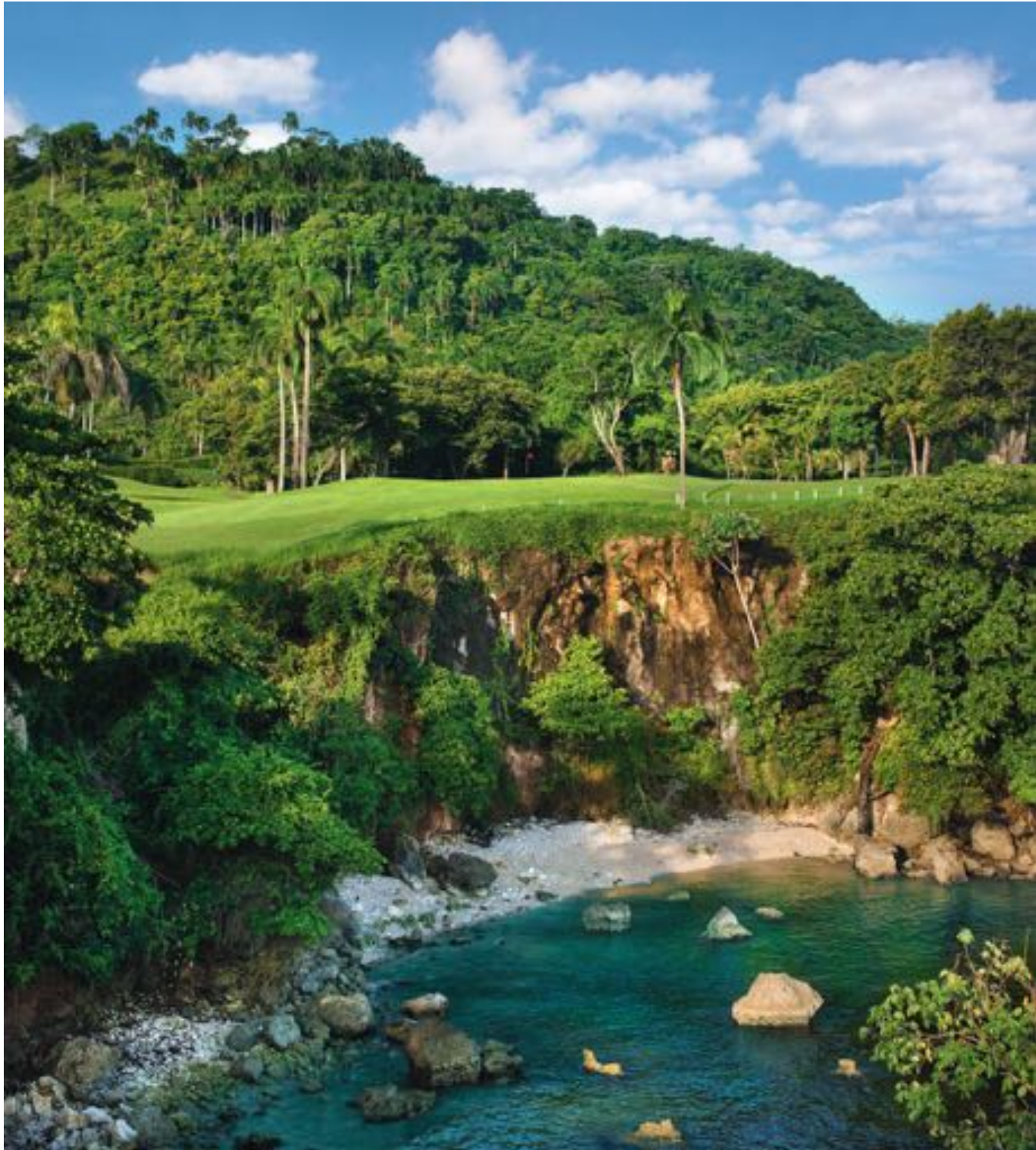


PHOTO VIRGILE SIMON BERTRAND

SEOUL

A CITY IN FULL BLOOM

The vibrant palette that is the South Korean capital's hospitality scene has a dazzling new splash of colour in the form of the recently opened 317-room Four Seasons in the city's CBD. The hotel's seven restaurants and bars speak to the locale's fiery obsession with food, whether it comes from the Noryangjin fish market, the many street vendors, or award-winning eateries like the divine Jungsik Dang. Add to this the ancient Gyeongbokgung Palace, Zaha Hadid's ultra-contemporary new Dongdaemun Design Plaza (*above*) and such seasonal splendours as the kenari blossom in spring, and you have an international hangout of the highest calibre.

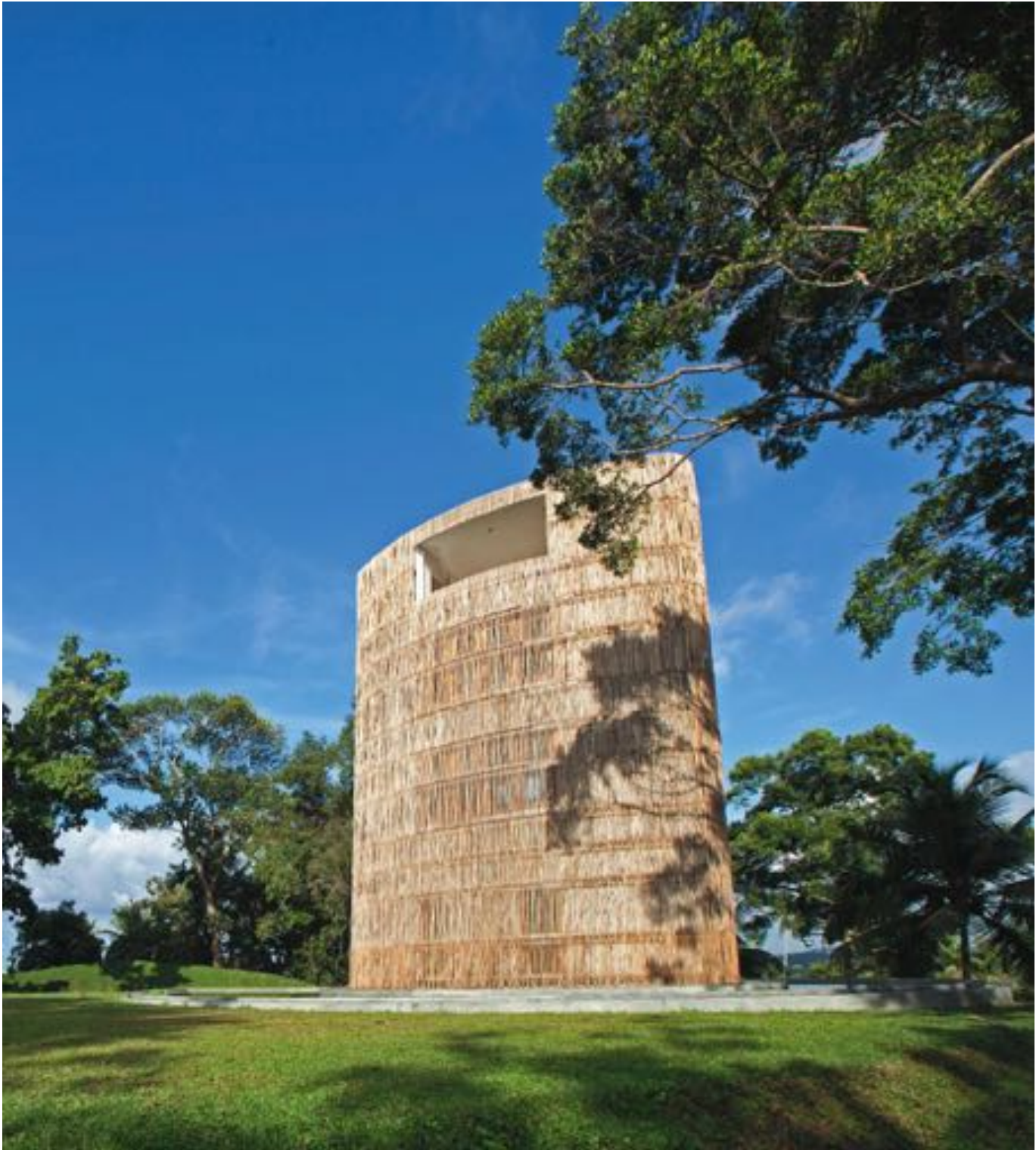


DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

CARIBBEAN SPLENDOUR TO A TEE

A new Aman is always cause for celebration, but golfers are particularly excited that the new 25-casita Amanera is the group's very first golf-integrated resort. As well as the clifftop 6,478m Playa Grande course, the John Heah-designed property also boasts a *soigné* spa and fitness centre, distinctive dining and a secluded beach, making it one of the most generously appointed resorts in the region. The 2016 DR calendar features Carnival in February, the Merengue Festival on El Malecón in the summer, fashionable DominicanaModa in the autumn and spectacular year-round kiteboarding competitions at Cabarete.

PHOTO © AMAN



SRI LANKA

IMMERSED IN PARADISE

PHOTO © TRI

Simply going on holiday is so last century. The recently opened ten-suite Tri Lanka (*above*) near Galle promises “cultural, active and intellectual immersions” as part of its wellness regimen, which includes a treetop yoga shala, steam cavern, temple visits and kayaking on nearby Lake Koggala. The new 152-room and pool villa Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort and Spa on the south coast is a rather larger affair, but also promotes an holistic approach to relaxation. Adventurous guests wanting to see elephants, leopards or even sloth bears can head to the nearby Yala National Park.



BOLOGNA

A TEMPTATION OF TORTELLINI

For some, 2016 means the Rio Olympics. But in Emilia-Romagna's capital, the major competition is February's tortellini Mondiale at which local chefs battle to create the best "bellybutton of Venus", as this prince of pastas was once described. Massimo Ratti favours tortellini stuffed with artichoke and sprinkled with coconut on a raspberry purée, dissected by a line of ground coffee beans; Mario Ferrara prefers his in a lemongrass-and-cheese sauce; Francesco Carboni fills his with stingray, mozzarella, anchovies and zest of Sorrento lemons. The real winner, of course, is the travelling gourmand who can enjoy each variety in local restaurants throughout the year.

PHOTO CATHERINE STUKHARD/LAIF



PHOTO DANIEL ROMERO/VWPICS/REDUX/LAIF

MEDELLÍN

SPRINGING BACK TO LIFE

Once the heart of Pablo Escobar's drug operation, Colombia's second city has become a shining Latin American exemplar of innovative architecture and design-led urban renewal. Set in the Aburrá Valley, surrounded by lush mountains, the City of Eternal Spring now features such gems as the ultra-contemporary Biblioteca España and newly expanded Museo del Arte Moderno. The city's aerial gondolas and outdoor escalators lead the transport revolution, while the likes of the colourful Charlee Hotel and chicharrón-serving La Gloria de Gloria restaurant in Envigado, not to mention many high-energy salsa bars, round out a truly vibrant destination.



SOUTH TYROL

REACHING A NEW PEAK

This largely German-speaking semi-autonomous Italian region, high up in the Dolomites, is celebrating the opening of the Messner Mountain Museum. Of the six sites that make up the institution, the Zaha Hadid-designed MMM Corones (*above*), clinging to the summit of Mt Kronplatz, is particularly eye-catching – at 2,275m, it affords spectacular views of the peaks loved by its eponymous founder. The MMM Firmian, inside Sigmundskron Castle near Bolzano, has an extensive display of mountaineering artefacts, while the Museum in the Clouds on 2,181m Monte Rite houses a collection of paintings of the Dolomites, from the Romantic period up to today.

PHOTO © INEXHIBIT.COM



PHOTO PER-ANDERS JØRGENSEN

KYOTO

AN EXPERIENCE TO SAVOUR

There is a 2016 trend for restaurants, hotels, museums and indeed travel itself to become an immersive experience. Hisato Nakahigashi, owner and chef of the remote Japanese inn Miyamasou (*above*), in the hills north of Kyoto, is a foraging pioneer who fishes the streams behind the property and works with local hunters to source produce for his cuisine. The inn's secluded location and minimalist interior heighten the experience of the food, making a visit more than a meal – it's a meditation on time and beauty. Other classic *ryokans* in the Kyoto area include the sublime Tawaraya, the "hidden" Tamahan and riverside Hoshinoya.



THE MEKONG

TALES FROM THE RIVER

Close to the Cambodia/Laos border, the Mekong Falls (above) has become an attraction to rival Angkor Wat for passengers on new river expeditions exploring the region's longest waterway and its environs. The 62.4m *Aqua Mekong*, which carries 40 voyagers, and CroisiEurope's 48-guest RV *Indochine* cruise serenely past flooded emerald forests, bamboo-stilted villages, Chinese wing-tipped pagoda temples and remote Buddhist monasteries in an area overflowing with bio- as well as cultural diversity. Travellers watch flocks of painted stork and spot-billed pelicans, and hopefully see an Irrawaddy river dolphin, of which only an estimated 85 are left in the Mekong, according to WWF.

PHOTO MARIO WEIGT/ANZENBERGER



SEYCHELLES

LIGHTING UP THE INDIAN OCEAN

PHOTO © SIX SENSES

The iridescent necklace of luxe resorts in this tropical archipelago has several new pearls for discerning travellers to enjoy in 2016. The H Resort Beau Vallon Beach on Mahé now offers a choice of 100 beautifully appointed Seychellois-meets-Creole-flavour beachside suites and villas, while the refurbished Oetker Collection Fregate Island Private has a beautifully appointed marina at the heart of its 2sq km sanctuary. Next year also sees the opening of the new Six Senses Zil Pasyon (*above*) on Félicité Island, a helicopter hop from Mahé, featuring 28 one-bedroom villas, a pair of two-bedroom ones and 17 private residences, all with private pools.



NOVA SCOTIA

RAISE A GLASS TO CANADIAN HOSPITALITY

The Cabot Trail around stunning Cape Breton has been wowing visitors to Canada's Atlantic province for some time. Next up for serious tipplers is the Nova Scotia Good Cheer Trail featuring a demanding 14 wineries, 12 craft breweries and five distilleries. Meanwhile, the captivating Cabot Links, open since 2012, has a companion 18-hole course opening in the spring. Cabot Cliffs (*above*), designed by Ben Crenshaw and Bill Coore, promises to complement the existing oceanside masterpiece, and with the chic 48-room Lodge and Panorama restaurant providing soothing hospitality, Nova Scotia has a new world-class sporting destination.

PHOTO LAURENCE LAMBRECHT



PHOTO LEONARDO FINOTTI

BRAZIL

MORE ROOM, MORE VIEWS

Oscar Niemeyer's iconic Niterói Contemporary Art Museum (*above*), with its 50m-wide cupola reminiscent of a UFO, is reopening after renovations. Just across the bay from downtown Rio, the 20-year-old museum, together with the nearby Solar Jambreiro exhibition centre, provides a timely reminder of Brazil's rich cultural as well as sporting heritage. Rio is expecting upwards of 400,000 visitors during August's Olympics, with the city's limited number of hotel rooms being bolstered by 20,000 listings on Airbnb, so 2016 is a good year to take in the Iguazu Falls or visit Manaus before cruising the majestic Amazon.



CABO, MEXICO

COMEBACK ON THE CAPE

The One&Only Palmilla has reopened after a substantial upgrade occasioned by 2014's damaging Hurricane Odile. The Sea of Cortez's 173-key resort has a new spa, beauty salon, steakhouse and designer boutique, but the big news is that the lavish four-bedroom Villa Cortez, complete with private beach, has proved so popular that it is being joined by a second ultra-contemporary, secluded über-villa. Nearby, Thompson Hotels' new 161-room offering in Cabo San Lucas, The Cape, features white-on-white room design with freestanding copper-leafed bathtubs, bins for whale-watching and a maritime-themed restaurant helmed by Enrique Olvera of Pujol fame.

PHOTO DOUGLAS LYLE THOMPSON/GALLERY STOCK

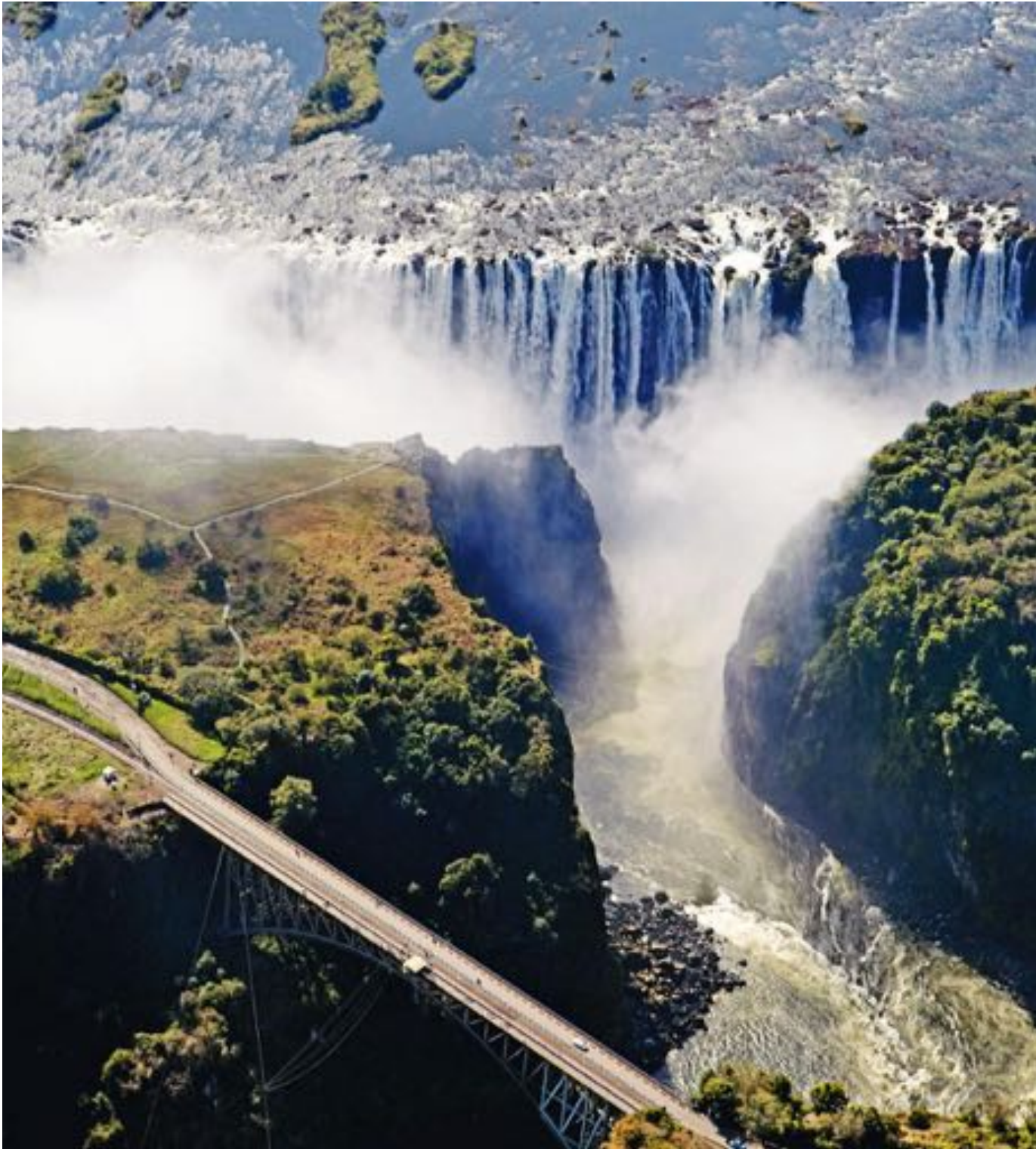


PHOTO HUGE GALDONES

CHICAGO

CHANGES BLOWING IN THE CITY

Visitors to the Windy City's inaugural Architecture Biennial will be reminded that the Chicago skyline is itself the embodiment of modernism, with Jeanne Gang's Wanda Vista Tower, due to be completed in 2019, the latest illustration. The Chicago restaurant scene is also in rude health, with noteworthy openings including Sarah Grueneberg's Monteverde at W Madison Street, Kevin Boehm and Rob Katz's Momotaro (*above*), and the innovative sea-to-table C Chicago on Kinzie Street. Among new hotels, John Pritzker's recently reopened Victorian Gothic Chicago Athletic Association is cutting quite a dash, as is the Virgin Hotel, which offers a "jet-lag" massage.



ZIMBABWE

SUPERB SAFARIS ON LAND AND WATER

Neighbouring Botswana and South Africa are long-established safari outposts, but land reform and political turmoil have overshadowed this landlocked natural wonderland for decades. Now Zimbabwe is finally emerging onto the world stage with newfound stability and a first-class airport terminal on its way this summer at Victoria Falls (*above*), where visitor numbers are already up 15% over the past year. Few rivers in the world compare to the Zambezi for water safaris, and both private and national parks are home to flourishing traditional camps, such as The Hide and newly relaunched Linkwasha, as well as remotes lodges like Singita Pamushana in the untouched Malilangwe Reserve.

PHOTO CHRISTIAN KERBER/LAIF



PHOTO TOM PARKER

ETHIOPIA

MUST-VISIT MOUNTAIN RETREAT

For those who enjoy taking the road less travelled, the January opening of Limalimo Lodge in the Simien Mountains National Park in northern Ethiopia marks a major advance in the country's approach to eco-adventure travel. A short flight from Addis Ababa, the 14-room lodge, built by the local community with the philosophy of environmental conservation at its core, offers an opportunity to explore a serene, stunning part of the country and interact with local villagers. Ethiopia is home to the largest number of Unesco sites in Africa, and a colourful range of endemic wildlife. Most experts recommend visiting the country, security permitting, between October and May.



RABAT

MOROCCAN MARVELS RAISE APPEAL

The new Mohammed VI Modern and Contemporary Art Museum (*above*), ten years in the building, demonstrates Morocco's varied artistic life and the King's desire to establish the capital as a rich cultural crossroads. Partnerships with the Louvre and Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée in Marseille demonstrate serious intent, while recent exhibitions have featured works by 150 Moroccan artists. Zaha Hadid's futuristic Grand Théâtre is finally under construction nearby, and the King Hassan II-inspired, Robert Trent Jones Sr.-designed Royal Dar Es Salam golf club continues to thrive – both underline Rabat's international allure.



CAPE WICKHAM, TASMANIA

RUGGED BEAUTY PREVAILS

Off the north coast of Tasmania, King Island was infamous for shipwrecks throughout the 19th century, with the Cape Wickham Lighthouse, built in 1861, Australia's tallest lighthouse. Now the 48m-high structure stands guard over the 15th green of the breathtaking new Cape Wickham Links. The oceanside course plays along a craggy shoreline reminiscent of Pebble Beach, with the difference that the beach is in play here, notably on the 18th, where a bad hook might even catch surfers strutting their stuff on one of Australia's finest surf stretches. The clubhouse and accommodation are at the planning stage.

PHOTOS FROM TOP: IO DONNA RCS/MARTINO LOMBEZZI/CONTRASTO, © CAPE WICKHAM



HAMBURG

GATEWAY CITY GOES FOR GOLD

The announcement of its candidacy to host the 2024 Olympics suggests Hamburg is upping its international game. In line with this, the imminent completion of Herzog & de Meuron's Elbphilharmonie, proudly jutting out into the river on the western tip of the HafenCity, is a significant statement of ambition. The 110m-high glass edifice, built on the massive red-brick pedestal of a former cocoa warehouse known as the Kaispeicher A, will seat 2,100 in the Grand Hall, 550 in the Recital Hall, and 150 in the Kaistudio, and accommodate a hotel, plaza and 45 apartments.



AUSTIN, TEXAS

US WELCOME WITH A MUSICAL TWIST

In presidential election year, the Lone Star State's liberal bastion is showcasing its eclectic food and hotel landscape. On Rainey Street, where the hippest movers and shakers come out to play, the newly opened Hotel Van Zandt presents a refined riff on the state capital's famous music scene. Another boutique property, Hotel Ella, housed in a columned 1910 Greek revival mansion, is part of an explosion of new quality hotels, but it's the food scene that's really buzzing: laV (*above*) provides outstanding Provençal fare, Due Forni serves Italian, with pizza a speciality, while The Capital Grille is the place for classic steak, a generous wine list and live music.

PHOTOS FROM TOP: RALF BRUNNER/LAIF, BUFF STRICKLAND