

THINK BIG

Make 2021 the year to check out the best overwater villas in the Maldives

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BLUER PLANET

Cruise the Raj Ampat archipelago in the wake of naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace

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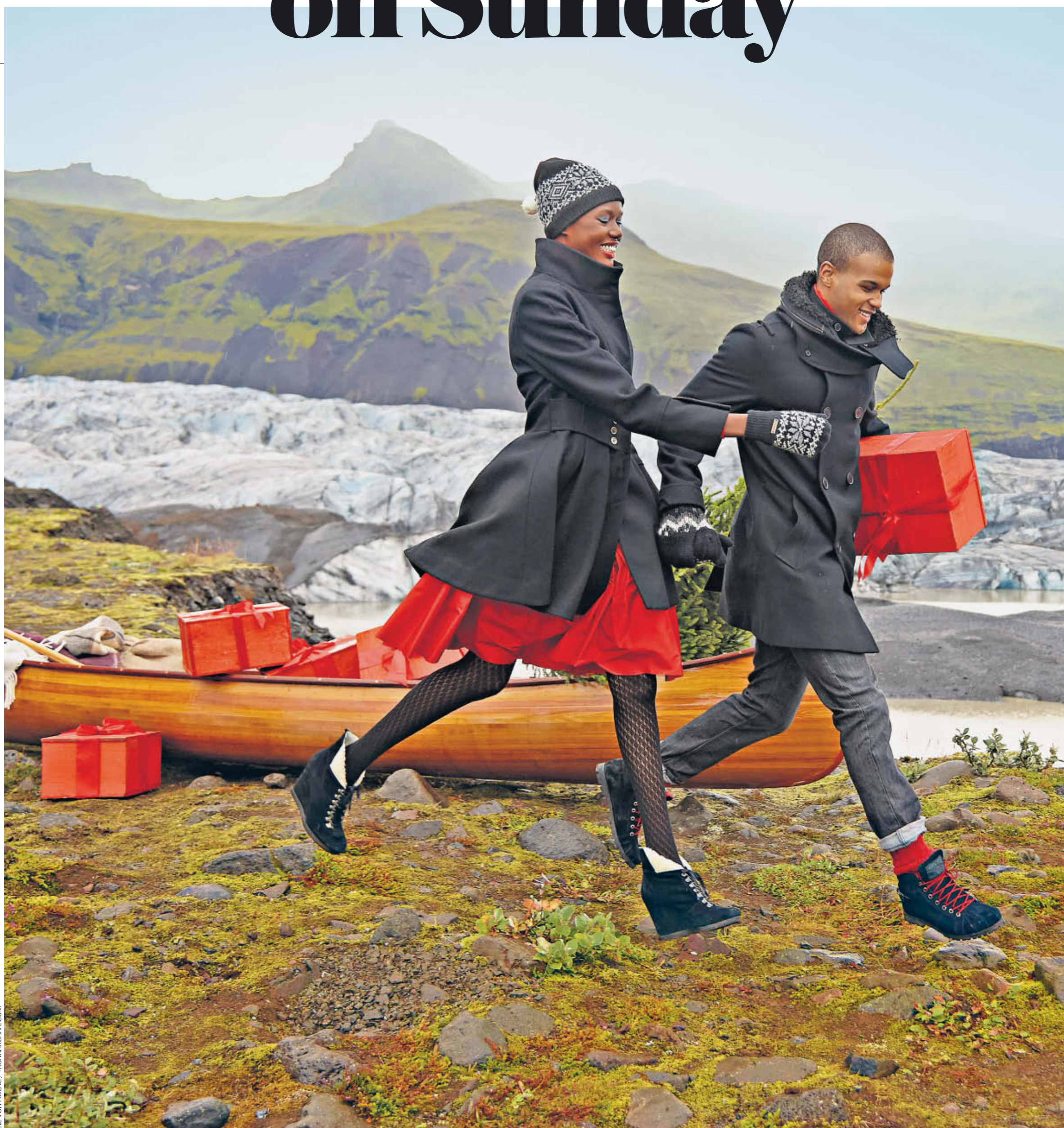
KIRSTY GALLACHER

'I went on a school trip to Val d'Isère and was the only one who hadn't skied'

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Travel on Sunday



LE VON HOENIE / TRUNKARCHIVE.COM

Christmas isn't cancelled!

Well, not yet – but whatever happens in December, there are still hotels and self-catering options left which, restrictions permitting, will help you end the year on a happier note, says Fiona Duncan

It's not going to be the same, that's for sure, but with a full lockdown imposed upon all of us until at least Dec 2, Christmas is certainly going to be curtailed this year. And even once the national lockdown has ended, there are sure to be varying restrictions around Britain. As before, it is possible that household mixing will be forbidden for many and gatherings of more than six for all, but if we are stoic, imaginative and

flexible we can still have a memorable, if very different, Christmas.

Since my husband and I are unlikely to be able to spend Christmas with our family, as that would make more than six, we have decided to spend it away – though admittedly not very far away – and it's a huge relief to have a plan in place, even though it all feels very strange.

On Sept 1 every year without fail, our dear

departed mum would call my sister and me "to talk about Christmas". Who would be coming, what exact time would we be arriving and leaving, who would sleep in which bed, should we brine the turkey or cook it upside down this year, or perhaps one of us could sleep on a camp bed by the Aga and baste it as it slow-roasted through the night? Who would bring the Neapolitan chocolates, cheese footballs, nuts and crackers? The

build-up was relentless and exhausting but the result, as a dozen or so of us crammed around the dining table, opening my mother's famously teasing table presents (the best being a series of tiny empty boxes, one inside the other, that finally revealed a much appreciated and very generous cheque) was always memorable and joyous.

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