

# COUNTRY LIFE®

PPA MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR 2019

EVERY WEEK | DECEMBER 30, 2020

## It's time to dream



FUTURE

£4.25

53 >

PRINTED IN THE UK

ISSUE: 53

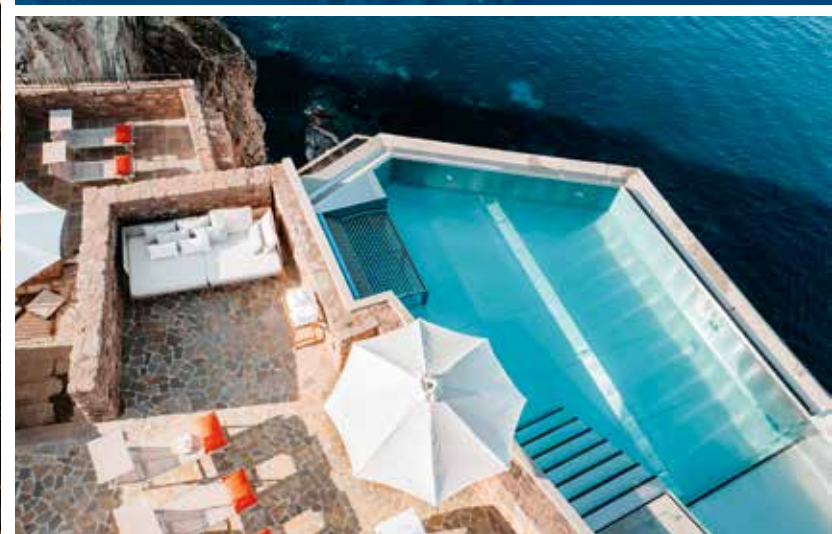
9 770004 548856 2

The top 10 travel destinations for 2021  
 Why we will never forget Thomas Becket  
 Coming up roses: the easiest climbers to grow





Clockwise from left: **Number One Bruton**; a sperm whale off the Azores; **Belmond Cap Juluca**; **Vila Franca do Campo, Azores**; **Forte San Giorgio, off Italy**; the **Matterhorn in the Alps**



# Just go, you deserve it

Rosie Paterson suggests where to go and what to do next year

## Where to be seen

### Bruton, Somerset

Bruton's appeal has never waned, but, in recent months, it's gone stratospheric: new residents (among them George Osborne—who joins war photographer Don McCullin and designer Stella McCartney) and new hotels (**The Newt** and **Number One Bruton**) both made headlines in 2020. This slow-paced and sophisticated pocket of countryside is close enough to Bath for a visit, but far-removed enough to avoid the tourists; others choose to recover here after Glastonbury.

### Ask the expert Natalie Jones, founder of lifestyle shop and B&B Caro Somerset

Bruton is a haven for food and culture. Walking in the forest at King Alfred's Tower is a favourite of mine, as is soaking up the art at Hauser & Wirth gallery. Start your day with buying delicious bread from At The Chapel bakery, before heading to Westcombe Dairy for a hunk of cheese. Osip restaurant is the perfect place for a special meal.



### The Alps, Switzerland

Zermatt may be synonymous with vertiginous snow-sure pistes, but, come summer, its alpine pastures are primed for ramblers. The homemade garlic ravioli at **Z'Mutt mountain restaurant** (00 41 27 967 2710) has been powering in-the-know hikers along the **wildflower-scented trail to Kalbermatten** for decades. This is Switzerland's

Alamy; Getty



Where even your afternoon tea arrives in style: **Petit St Vincent in the Caribbean**

sunniest *canton*, so cool off with a dip in one of Zermatt's **glacial-fed lakes, such as Grünsee**. Then get your artisanal coffee fix at **Aroleid Kollektiv** ([www.aroleid-kollektiv.ch](http://www.aroleid-kollektiv.ch)), which also boasts an in-house ceramics studio, in the shadow of Zermatt's snaggle-toothed Matterhorn. The area's only surviving alpine dairy, **Alpsennerei Stafel** (00 41 27 966 2848) is the place to taste Ziger soft cheese, with a soundtrack of tinkling cow bells at 7,000ft, before hitting the hay in a spruced-up *gädi* (an old stilted sheep barn) in the chocolate-box hamlet of **Findeln** (try [www.backstagehotel.ch/en/luxury-living/mountain-cottage](http://www.backstagehotel.ch/en/luxury-living/mountain-cottage)). *Sarah Freeman*

### The Azores, Portugal

If you're looking for tranquillity and natural beauty, head for the Azores, an isolated archipelago of volcanic islands 950 miles from Lisbon. Each one is unique—from the largest, **São Miguel**, to the smallest, **Corvo**—but all offer excellent walking opportunities across emerald-green hills blanketed by wildflowers (which bloom from May through the summer) and exotic plants. Other attractions in the Azores include **bird- and whale-watching** (available all year round), surfing and island-hopping, thanks to efficient inter-island flights.

There are direct flights (just under four hours) with Ryanair throughout the year to São Miguel. Seasonal flights are also available to **Terceira**, home to the islands' oldest city, **Angra do Heroísmo**. For more information, visit [www.visitazores.com](http://www.visitazores.com) or [www.azoreschoice.com](http://www.azoreschoice.com) *Richard Webber*

### The Caribbean

Ever since some semblance of international travel returned

### Ask the expert James Bell, co-founder of Turquoise Holiday Company

St Vincent and the Grenadines is often referred to as the jewel of the Caribbean. My favourite hotel has got to be Petit St Vincent—a private island with only 22 cottages, where you can totally switch off and enjoy endless beautiful beaches in your own little bubble. I always think the



best time to go is earlier on in the year—January. Then, you can expect glorious sunshine with fewer people around.

### In the know

The first flight from Europe to the island of St Vincent launches in June 2021, courtesy of Virgin Atlantic. The twice-weekly journey will depart from London Heathrow and land at the brand-new airport on St Vincent, which will also serve as a gateway to the Grenadines ([www.virginatlantic.com](http://www.virginatlantic.com))

in July 2020, the Caribbean has remained an attractive long-haul option, thanks to the island states' well-coordinated defence tactics against Covid-19. Both **Antigua and Barbuda** and **Barbados** have launched year-long visa packages for remote workers and hotels such as **Belmond Cap Juluca**, on the island of Anguilla, are offering long-stay discount packages ([www.belmond.com](http://www.belmond.com)).

### The minor Italian islands

Few believe that there is much left to discover in Italy, one of the world's most popular tourist destinations for centuries. But, chances are, they've never even heard of places such as **Ponza**, largest island in the Pontine archipelago, **Panarea**, smallest in the Aeolian archipelago or **San Domino**—an island off the coast of Puglia with excellent snorkelling opportunities. Unlike their larger, less-touched counterparts, they've escaped the ravages of mass tourism.

On **Capraia**, the most north-westernmost island in the Tuscan Archipelago National Park, little can come close to **Forte San Giorgio**—a listed national monument that sleeps 21 guests. One of the two swimming pools juts out over the protected sea—home to passing sperm whales, dolphin, tuna and swordfish; honey buzzards hover overhead. Trips can be arranged via The Thinking Traveller ([www.thethinkingtraveller.com](http://www.thethinkingtraveller.com))





# Take to the road

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON once said: 'I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move.' He may have been onto something, although it's unlikely that the *Treasure Island* author was talking about road trips specifically—given that the automobile was invented less than a decade before his death. There's a greater kind of freedom attached to travelling by car (as opposed to a train or plane). You are free to change your route on a whim; to explore what's not marked on the map. There are no wrong turnings. There is no singular destination. In 2021, there will still be many of us who feel uneasy about travelling on communal transport, but still want to venture from home and, potentially, abroad. This is your chance.



## The UK

A staycation doesn't necessarily mean a perfunctory two-week trip to Cornwall. **Abercrombie & Kent** now offers a nine-night Best of British road trip, which takes in some of the UK's best hotels (01242 386463; [www.abercrombiekent.co.uk](http://www.abercrombiekent.co.uk)). Start in the rolling hills of Surrey at **Beaverbrook**, once home to Press baron and wartime MP Baron Beaverbrook, where you can limber up for the road ahead with an invigorating biodynamic massage. Head north to Cumbria and the

boutique **Holbeck Ghyll**, situated between Ambleside and Lake Windermere. Chart the changing terrain and stop off at Stirling Castle, where Mary Queen of Scots was crowned, on the drive to your next destination: **Gleneagles** in Auchterarder. Its 850-acre sporting estate offers guests myriad activities, from falconry to fishing. Finish up in **Grantley Hall**, North Yorkshire, via sandy Milsey Bay in Berwick, the perfect spot for a proper picnic. The hall boasts an English Heritage-listed Japanese garden and is a short drive from the beautiful Yorkshire Dales.



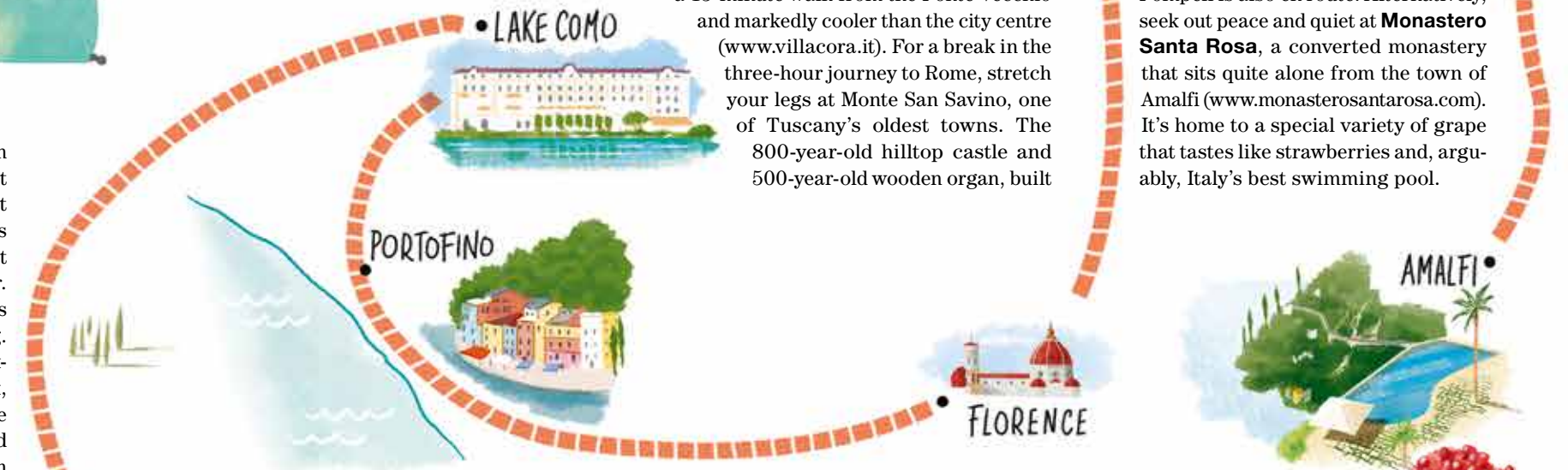
## France

Start in La Baule Bay—a 5½-mile stretch of pristine coast and pine forest in Brittany—and stay at **La Palmeraie**, an Art Deco delight with only nine rooms ([www.mrandmrsmith.com/luxury-hotels/la-palmeraie](http://www.mrandmrsmith.com/luxury-hotels/la-palmeraie)). It's bad luck to travel through France without a visit to the wine lands and **Château Cos d'Estournel**, just north of Bordeaux, is the best of the best. It's home to 56 vintages and an elegant, honey-hued Maison ([www.lamaison-estournel.com](http://www.lamaison-estournel.com)). Thirst sated, head south to the matchless Airelles group hotel **La Bastide** for a couple of nights ([www.aireselles.com](http://www.aireselles.com)). Leave early on your last day for the dramatic Verdon Gorge circuit, Europe's answer to the Grand Canyon. Finish up at **Les Roches Rouges**, a French Riviera retreat in Saint-Raphaël ([www.hotellesrochesrouges.com](http://www.hotellesrochesrouges.com)). It's away from the crowds of nearby St Tropez, but still exudes 1950s glamour. The neighbouring villages of Anthéor, Le Trayas and Théoule-sur-Mer are all worth a visit.



## Italy

It's a 10-hour drive from Calais, France, to Lake Como, in northern Italy. Motor down France's eastern border and through the centre of Switzerland, stopping for the night in Lucerne if need be: the Belle Epoque-style **Burgenstock Resort** presides high above the eponymous lake and is home to a 12,000 square yard spa ([www.burgenstock.ch/en](http://www.burgenstock.ch/en)). After a restorative stay and healthy dose of mountain air at **Villa d'Este**, on the western bank of Lake Como, meander south-west towards the Italian Riviera—**Belmond Splendido Mare** in Portofino will open in spring 2021, after extensive refurbishment ([www.belmond.com](http://www.belmond.com))—or directly south to Florence. In the stickier summer months, the only place to stay is **Villa Cora**: it's a 15-minute walk from the Ponte Vecchio and markedly cooler than the city centre ([www.villacora.it](http://www.villacora.it)). For a break in the three-hour journey to Rome, stretch your legs at Monte San Savino, one of Tuscany's oldest towns. The 800-year-old hilltop castle and 500-year-old wooden organ, built



## ROME

by Giovanni Piffero, are both worth a visit. From Italy's capital city, it's a three-hour drive to your final stop: **Palazzo Avino** in Ravello, on the Amalfi Coast. Drive through the mountains (saving the famous coastal road for the drive home) for fantastic views back across Naples and Mount Vesuvius. Pompeii is also en route. Alternatively, seek out peace and quiet at **Monastero Santa Rosa**, a converted monastery that sits quite alone from the town of Amalfi ([www.monasterosantarosa.com](http://www.monasterosantarosa.com)). It's home to a special variety of grape that tastes like strawberries and, arguably, Italy's best swimming pool.



## Where to stay

### • Villa d'Este, Cernobbio

When Clark Gable dropped by the hotel, on his way from London to Rome (in a car, fittingly), he only intended to stay one night. He ended up staying for three weeks. It's not hard to see why. Despite its visual grandeur—imagine a giant peaches-and-cream wedding cake—Villa d'Este is wholly unpretentious. It is completely timeless and guests are invited to add their own story to the building's long, fascinating and often playful history, which stretches back to 1568. Princesses, marquises, sultans and tsars have all called the walls home; in 1806, 67 years before the villa became a hotel, the then incumbent, former ballerina Vittoria Peluso, built a series of fortresses for her husband and Napoleonic general Count Domenico Pino in which to stage mock war battles (now open for visitors). Alfred Hitchcock stayed every summer and filmed his first motion picture in the grounds. A deliberate lack of branding in the communal areas and bedrooms means that it all still feels like a private house—albeit a house with some of the best service you'll find anywhere on earth. The retro-feel, floating swimming pool is an attractive alternative to the glacial lake on which it bobs—the fifth deepest in the world and the deepest outside of Norway—and it would be a crime

to miss out on a bowl of fresh pasta, served on the sunny lake-side terrace at lunchtime. Beyond the hotel's manicured flower beds and terraced water gardens, it's worth a visit to Cernobbio itself. Rumour has it that Mr and Mrs George Clooney visit for negronis at Harry's Bar, but hotel manager Massimo Dorino favours Trattoria del Glicine, named for the heavy wisteria that blankets it. Dinner there is a no-brainer: order the deep-fried zucchini blossoms and plates of ricotta gnocchi with butter and sage. The towns of Como and Bellagio are easily accessible by water taxi. In the former, visit the Duomo—a melting pot of architectural styles—and brave the steep, 19th-century funicular. You'll be rewarded with unbeatable views of the lake. From €610 (about £518) per night, B&B (00 39 031 3481; [www.villadeste.com](http://www.villadeste.com))

### • Palazzo Avino, Ravello

Ironically, the hilltop town of Ravello is car free, but there's something refreshing about being forced out to explore on foot after a long journey. Thankfully, Palazzo Avino offers valet parking and is a few steps from the last point accessible to cars. The 12th-century hotel, nicknamed the pink palace, still feels small and relatively hidden, despite its popularity. The terraced gardens are among many beauties in the area—Villas

Cimbrone and Rufolo are worth visiting, too—each level framed by beds of rosy-pink touch-me-nots that match the façade, plus the odd runner bean and lemon tree. As well as an on-site martini and lobster bar—which, incidentally, also serves up a mean rosemary-garnished Aperol spritz (we know you won't drink and drive)—there's a complimentary shuttle service to the hotel's own beach club. Brave the million hairpin bends, past houses of every shade of pastel balanced so precariously on the cliffs that they seem to defy gravity, and you'll find a private stretch of Tyrrhenian sea and chunky club sandwiches. Back inside, whitewashed walls perfectly offset the Moorish architecture, vaulted ceilings and antique furniture. Bedrooms and suites with the best sea views cost a premium, but the Frette linens, views across to Salerno and the hazy morning sun make it all worthwhile. Breakfast here is a languid affair—don't bother trying to resist the pastry selection—best enjoyed after an early dip in the picturesque swimming pool. Try to time your visit with the world-class music festival—the concierge can help arrange tickets—typically held in the late summer. From €280 (about £518) per night (0039 089 818 181; [www.palazzoavino.com](http://www.palazzoavino.com))



Scott Jessop





## A home from home

**E**XCLUSIVE hire guarantees all of the privacy of a holiday rental, with the amenities of a fully equipped and staffed hotel. It's a particularly attractive option for very large groups and special occasions.

### Staycation

Locanda on the Weir, in the harbourside village of Porlock Weir, Somerset, has five double bedrooms and welcomes dogs with open arms ([www.locandaontheweir.co.uk](http://www.locandaontheweir.co.uk)). The chef is known for his Italian-inspired food, created with the best of local produce, and the many glories of Exmoor National Park are right on the doorstep.

### Short haul

For something a little more glamorous, look no further than Casa Privata, hidden away (literally) in Praiano, on Italy's Amalfi Coast not far from Portofino ([www.casaprivata.it](http://www.casaprivata.it)).

It's a former fisherman's house—now transformed by Lecce stone, stylised interiors and natural linens—and the surrounding gardens tumble down to the sapphire sea, where sun loungers perch on rocky outcrops. There are six bedrooms in the main house and a garden suite in the grounds.

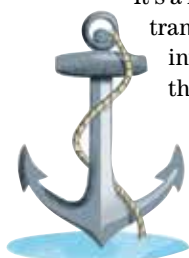


**Top: Simply curl up: the reading room at Locanda on the Weir. Above and right: Privacy at all at Casa Privata, with swimming pool and sea access all to yourself**



### Ask the expert **George Morgan Grenville**, founder and CEO of Red Savannah

Parties made up of family and friends in private, crowd-free locations will be popular in 2021 and where better to gather than aboard a yacht or gulet, which offer the added advantage of allowing you to design each day as it comes. Personally, I can recommend nothing better than a sunny afternoon leaping from the bow into the clear Aegean Sea, followed by a long, lazy evening of delicious Mediterranean cuisine on deck under the stars for restoring the soul. Red Savannah has a fleet of traditional gulets for charter for parties of four to 16 guests in Turkey and Croatia. Each boat has an excellent crew, private cook, water sports kit on tap and strictly-adhered-to hygiene protocols. *Kaya Guneri I* offers exceptional value and sleeps up to 14.







# Keep it familial

**S**EPARATED from friends and family for the best part of half a year, many now find themselves wanting to make up for lost time by traveling with their loved ones. Whether you're with your children, your children's children, your parents or your partner's parents, the key is to find somewhere that will satisfy the majority of tastes and demands.

## Staycation

**Unique Homestays** specialises in luxury, self-catered holiday rentals and represents myriad properties that allow young children and dogs—you can easily filter your search

on its website ([www.uniquehomestays.com](http://www.uniquehomestays.com)). **The Mill of Arun**, on the Arun River in West Sussex, is a new addition to the portfolio. It sleeps up to eight guests across a rustic millhouse and the honey-beamed barn next door. As well as a local produce-stuffed welcome hamper, you'll also have two kayaks and a brand new hot tub to look forward to.

## Short haul

The pace of life in **Île de Ré**—the hidden, holiday island of all well-heeled Parisians—is enviably slow. The Sail House (sleeps 10), available through **SJ Villas** ([www.sjvillas.co.uk](http://www.sjvillas.co.uk)) was renovated with families in mind. There's a large, stone kitchen and alfresco

dining area overlooking the pool, where everyone can cook and eat together. The best way to explore is on a bicycle: paths weave through fields and saltmarshes. Visit the vast **Le Bois-Plage** market and relax on **Plage de la Conche des Baleines** or the more sheltered **Plage du Trousse Chemise**.

## Long haul

The Maldivian *grande dame* **Soneva Fushi** recently announced eight new one- and two-bedroom over-water villas—two even have private slides that plunge directly into the ocean. All have outdoor bathrooms and well-stocked pantries. Book with **Elegant Resorts** ([www.elegantresorts.co.uk](http://www.elegantresorts.co.uk)). ↩



Top: Slide into the sea at Soneva Fushi, Maldives. Above: Curl up in The Mill of Arun, West Sussex. Right: Cook together in Île de Ré

