

Discoveries

A GLOBETROTTER'S GUIDE TO THE LATEST IN TRAVEL

Edited by LILA HARRON BATTIS

Where to Stay in Costa Rica Right Now

From a stylish tented camp to a sun-soaked coastal enclave, here are four new reasons to head to this Central American classic. **BY MADELINE BILIS**

The rooftop pool and lounge at Santarena Hotel.

THE NATURAL BEAUTY of Costa Rica lends itself to accommodations that appear as extensions of their environments. With that and sustainability in mind, several new hotels are raising the bar for both

design and experience. In December, **Nayara Tented Camp** (nayaratentedcamp.com; tents from \$1,200), a highly anticipated safari-style retreat, debuts in a sloth sanctuary at Arenal Volcano National Park, where the animals are

free to roam as they please. Adjacent to the famed Nayara Hotel and Nayara Springs resort, the camp offers 29 family-friendly suites linked by footbridges across the rain forest. All have plush canopy beds and private pools fed by hot springs.

Amid the tropical forests along the Pacific coast, **Kasiiya Papagayo** (kasiiya.com; doubles from \$735, three-night minimum) opened last December as an adventure-focused retreat; walkie-talkies and headlamps are distributed at check-in. Its five sustainably built, ocean-facing tents rest on platforms above the local flora, leaving much of the landscape undisturbed. Nearby, **Santarena Hotel** (santarenahotel.com; doubles from \$220) opened in June in the car-free community of Las Catalinas. Most of its 45 airy rooms have balconies decked out in Cuban tiles, with views of the Pacific surpassed only by those from the hotel's rooftop pool, where a gin cart makes the rounds at sunset.

Farther south is **Kinkára Luxury Retreat** (kinkara.com; doubles from \$190), built on the slopes of the Talamanca mountain range. The wellness resort's 31 glamping tents are centered around a thatched-roof yoga pavilion and a garden. Seriously indulgent bathhouses feature indoor-outdoor rain showers; outside, you can take a dip in the waterfalls and wading pools that dot the property. 🌿

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The garden at Kinkára Luxury Retreat, in Costa Rica.



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A view of the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley, in South Africa.

South Africa's Secret Garden

An easy day trip from Cape Town, the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley is the place to go for pretension-free wine tasting. **BY MARY HOLLAND**

Stellenbosch and Franschhoek have made South African wines world-famous. But southeast of Cape Town, the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley (that's Afrikaans for "heaven and earth") is becoming a scrappy rival to those better-known appellations. With its own compelling Chardonnays and Pinot Noirs, plus tasting rooms, restaurants, and whale-watching, this region—anchored by the seaside town of Hermanus—is worth a detour the next time you visit Cape Town.

Start your morning in Hermanus with a dip at Grotto Beach followed by coffee at **Betty Blue Bistro** (bettybluebistrohermanus.com; entrées \$4–\$8), a sunny all-day café. To explore the area, catch a ride on the **Wine Hoppers** (hermanuswinehoppers.co.za), a fleet of open-air vehicles that make a circuit of top wineries, or rent a car and assign a DD for a DIY tour.

Begin on Hemel-en-Aarde Road, a mountain-flanked route that meanders through the valley past terraces of vineyards. Stop first at **Creation Wines** (creationwines.com) for a taste of its reserve bottlings. A few minutes away, **Ataraxia** (ataraxiawines.co.za) makes a standout Sauvignon Blanc, and

nearby **Storm Wines** (stormwines.co.za) produces unfiltered basket-pressed wines in small batches. Break for lunch at the **Restaurant at Newton Johnson** (newtonjohnson.com; prix fixe from \$19), a swank, mountain-facing dining room serving seasonal dishes like West Coast mussels with herbs foraged by the shore. Then move on to **Hamilton Russell Vineyards** (hamiltonrussellvineyards.com) for a sample of its estate Chardonnay. At the luxe tasting room of neighboring **Bouchard Finlayson** (bouchardfinlayson.co.za), don't sleep on the Tête de Cuvée, a rich, bold Pinot Noir with notes of cherry.

Back in Hermanus, stroll the Cliff Path, which hugs the ocean for seven miles, and keep your eyes peeled for whales. Come dinnertime, snag a table in the intimate courtyard of the **Barefoot Cook** (barefootcookhermanus.co.za; entrées \$11–\$13) for crayfish pot pie and lamb tagine. Check in to the **Vishuis** (thevishuis.co.za; doubles from \$78), a collection of restored whitewashed fishermen's cottages with weathered wood furnishings, brightly colored throws and embroidered pillows, and wood-burning stoves. 🌿

T+L A-List travel advisor Tamsyn Fricker (tamsyn@travelartistryafrica.com; 404-414-0549) can help plan a South Africa itinerary that combines a stop in Hemel-en-Aarde with cultural excursions in Cape Town or a safari.



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Alligator Hole, a pool on Jamaica's Black River.

4. CRACKED CONCH RESTAURANT

At this oceanfront restaurant, the crisp callaloo-stuffed wontons are a highlight—as are the views of Bluefields Bay and the mountains to the east. lunaseainn.com; entrées \$10–\$30.

5. YS FALLS

This private estate features seven cascading natural pools, all surrounded by rain forest. Intrepid swimmers can hike up and plunge in on the rope swing; spring-fed pools surrounded by gardens offer a more relaxing alternative. ysfalls.com.

6. APPLETON ESTATE

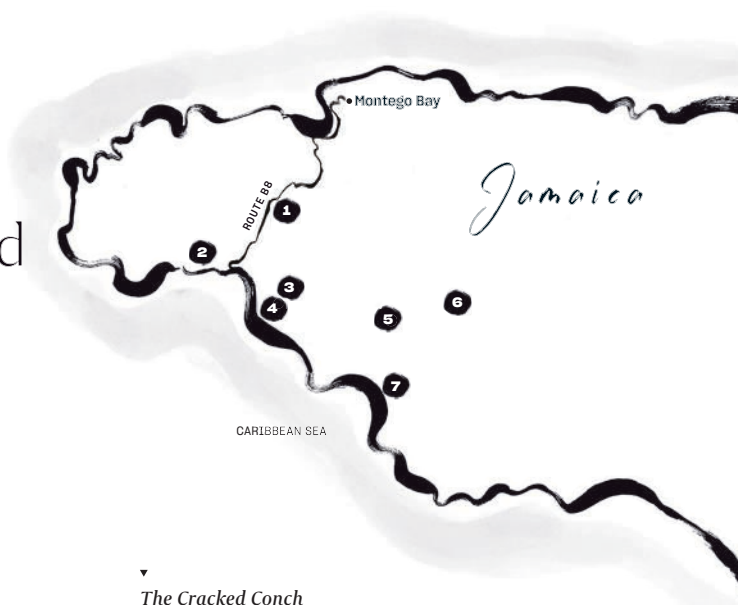
This state-of-the-art distillery in Nassau Valley reopened last year after a \$7.2 million overhaul. The \$30 entry fee gets you a guided tour, an expert-led tasting, and a glass of rum punch. Stop by the shop for a rare bottle to bring home. appletonestate.com.

7. J. CHARLES SWABY'S BLACK RIVER SAFARI

Drive south to the brackish Black River—one of Jamaica's longest—for a jungle cruise, where you'll glide past lush riverbanks, mangrove forests, and big, curious crocs. 876-965-2513.

An Express Route to the Road Less Traveled

Where can you find a laid-back, remote-feeling swath of Caribbean shoreline with uncrowded beaches, unpretentious restaurants, and spots beloved by locals and out-of-towners alike? Jamaica's South Coast—and a new stretch of highway makes it accessible in just an hour from Montego Bay. **BY NINA KOKOTAS HAHN**



1. BORDER JERK

This divey roadside grill in the mountains of Hanover Parish looks unassuming, but insiders know it as the best place for juicy jerk pork, plantains, and corn-bread fritters. fb.com/borderjerk; entrées \$3–\$15.

2. SAVANNA-LA-MAR MARKET

Rise early on Saturday morning to visit the farmers' market in Savanna-la-Mar, the capital of Westmoreland Parish. Zero in on the

mangoes and custard apples, the cinnamon, and the lionfish caught just hours earlier. *Great George St. at Nesbit St.*

3. BLUEFIELDS BAY VILLAS

Stay in one of six oceanside villas at this newly refreshed resort. Laze in your private pool with a piña colada in hand, enjoy dinner made by your personal chef, and try activities from boating to snorkeling. bluefieldsvillas.com; villas from \$491 per person, all-inclusive.

▼
The Cracked Conch Restaurant.



FROM TOP: GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES; @HANDPICKEDJAMAICA/COURTESY OF CRACKED CONCH RESTAURANT AT LUNA SEA INN. ILLUSTRATION BY MAY PARSEY



Living Like a Local

Nohga, a new Japanese hotel brand, immerses travelers in the work of the artisans and craftspeople who make up the surrounding community. **BY BETSY ANDREWS**

▲ From left: The lounge at Nohga Hotel Ueno, in Tokyo; a Japanese-style breakfast at the property.

T+L A-List advisor Scott Gilman (scott@asiaquestjourneys.com; 202-455-0095) can plan a Japan trip with a stay at Nohga Hotel Ueno.

AFTER A NIGHTTIME train ride, I arrived in northern Tokyo's Ueno district hungry. Luckily, my room at Nohga Hotel Ueno held the key to some of the city's best eats: an extensive guide to the neighborhood, created by the hotel's staff. Should I slurp ramen in umami-rich crab broth at Sanji? Dig in to a pork cutlet at *tonkatsu* spot Isen Honten? The choices in this neighborhood of restaurants, artisans' workshops, and quiet pedestrian streets were myriad. That's exactly why the 130-room hotel opened here: the Ueno location is the first community-oriented Nohga concept, which will soon land in other neighborhoods. Well before it opened last fall, staff were on the ground, digging up the district's treasures and collaborating with neighbors to bring their wares to guests.

My room embodied the Japanese approach to minimalist décor, with blond-wood furnishings and splashes of color to

liven things up. I found the printed guide among a host of local luxuries: Dear Mayuko body products; Tomoko Saito Aromatique room spray; a notepad from Ito Bindery. Even the Do Not Disturb placard came from the nearby workshop SyuRo, which specializes in *monodzukuri*, or handcrafting.

The following morning in the lobby, I sipped coffee from area roaster Kabuki and grazed the breakfast buffet for *tsukudani*—soy-braised vegetables, kombu, mussels, and clams—from Funato Shoten, a shop across the street. That evening, I sat down at Bistro Nohga, the hotel's restaurant, for a meal by chef Takero Ebihara. From the cutlery to the silver tumblers, all of the settings for this French-Japanese dinner were provided by Nohga's neighbors. With the help of the guide in my pocket, I could have followed each thread of any dish—a sake-marinated foie gras terrine with caramelized white radish; a dashi made with gold clams poured over mackerel and fried risotto—to its artisan source. It was a delicious introduction to the insider secrets of a slice of old Tokyo. 🍣

nohghotel.com; doubles from \$165.

From River to Sea

AQUA EXPEDITIONS IS KNOWN for ultra-comfortable river cruises along the Amazon and Mekong, but this month, the company launches its first ocean cruiser, the 15-suite *Aqua Blu*. The explorer yacht—originally a British naval ship—will be the only vessel to sail year-round through the East Indonesian archipelago, with itineraries that include Raja Ampat, Komodo National Park, and the Spice Islands. aqualexpeditions.com; seven-night sailings from \$7,525 per person. —JOHN WOGAN





DISCOVERIES

◀ La Scala opera house, in Milan.

State of the Arts

T+L surveyed notable creatives around the globe about the projects they're working on—and can't wait to share with the world.

EUGENE TAN, DIRECTOR, SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

"Titled 'Every Step in the Right Direction,' this edition of the **Singapore Biennale** includes work from more than 70 artists and art collectives, and expresses the belief that every effort to change the world for the better matters. It invites the visitor to take part in the process of thinking about what is right, and to use art to make the first steps toward change." *November 22, 2019–March 22, 2020; singaporebiennale.org.*

STEPHANIE YBARRA, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, BALTIMORE CENTER STAGE

"One of the most coveted experiences as a theatergoer is to be able to say, 'I knew about that artist back when.' That was how I felt when I first encountered **Richard & Jane & Dick & Sally** by the young playwright Noah Diaz, which imagines the children's-book characters Dick and Jane as adults. I'm positive Noah will have a long and accomplished career—it's thrilling to be here at the beginning." *February 6–March 1, 2020; centerstage.org.*

GARRY STEWART, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, AUSTRALIAN DANCE THEATRE

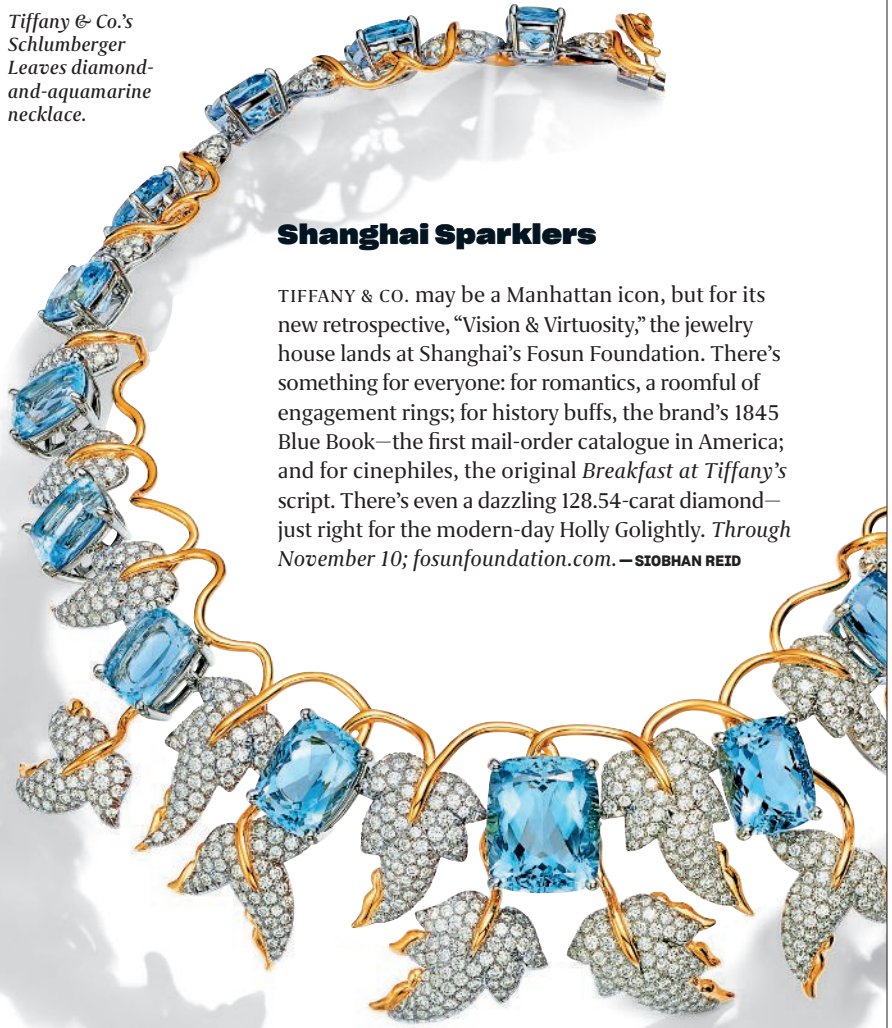
"Our dancers will perform in Romeo Castellucci's stunning new staging of **Mozart's Requiem** at the Adelaide Festival this winter. Castellucci is one of the most enthralling and visionary creators

in the world today, and it's an honor for our company to be associated with this piece." *February 28–March 4, 2020; adelaidefestival.com.au.*

FRANZ WELSER-MÖST, MUSIC DIRECTOR, CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA

"In creating the opera **Die Aegyptische Helena**, composer Richard Strauss and librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal were inspired by the works of Euripides and Stesichorus. The result is incredibly rich and imaginative music, and I'm eager to conduct it in its first-ever performance at La Scala in Milan." *November 6–23; teatroallascala.org.*

▶ Tiffany & Co.'s Schlumberger Leaves diamond-and-aquamarine necklace.



Shanghai Sparklers

TIFFANY & CO. may be a Manhattan icon, but for its new retrospective, "Vision & Virtuosity," the jewelry house lands at Shanghai's Fosun Foundation. There's something for everyone: for romantics, a roomful of engagement rings; for history buffs, the brand's 1845 Blue Book—the first mail-order catalogue in America; and for cinephiles, the original *Breakfast at Tiffany's* script. There's even a dazzling 128.54-carat diamond—just right for the modern-day Holly Golightly. *Through November 10; fosunfoundation.com. —SIOBHAN REID*

FROM TOP: PERSPECTIVES/GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY OF TIFFANY & CO.