

Escape



TREK WITH THE
BIG FIVE ON A WALKING
SAFARI IN AFRICA
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Dear Reader

THE 12th interest rate rise in succession was hardly a surprise. Even so, belts will tighten another notch – and, worryingly, not everyone thinks inflation will be cowed by this latest Bank of England move. Where's the growth going to come from? Mind you, there is little evidence that people are looking to skimp on holidays. The Advantage Travel Partnership, which represents more than 350 travel agents, says there have been no more cancellations than normal at this time of year and new bookings are looking strong for peak-season breaks. It has been a week of mixed messages. Tui's chief executive, Sebastian Ebel, seemed determined to manage expectations by announcing that the golden age of cheap flights is over, while continuing to advertise packages with up to 40 per cent off. Mr Ebel, who took over seven months ago, reported a 13 per cent jump in bookings for 2023, reaching 96 per cent of the 2019 figure. By warning of a lack of last-minute deals, the 60-year-old German clearly wants his customers to book now and help



balance Tui's books, a ploy used by Ryanair's Michael O'Leary, who last year also said the days of cheap flights were numbered.

Yet Ryanair has just ordered up to 300 planes from Boeing, and silver-tongued Mr O'Leary said these aircraft will burn less fuel, resulting in 'cost savings which will be passed on to passengers in lower air fares'.

Meanwhile, as our cover story reports, new hotels at a range of price points, including shoe designer Christian Louboutin's Portuguese outpost, are springing up across Europe, which seems to cock a snook at the economic doomsters.

And even though Passport Office workers and Border Force staff have voted to continue industrial action, it's unlikely to deter travellers. We've almost become immune to strikes. The sooner unions realise this, the better it will be for everyone.

Mark Palmer
TRAVEL EDITOR



PICTURES: ALAMY

Season's GREETINGS

Summer's nearly here and there's a flurry of chic new hotels and boutique hideaways to discover across Europe

by NIGEL TISDALL

TIMES may be hard but there's little evidence that people are cutting back dramatically on holidays. We might not be quite back to pre-pandemic days, but that hasn't stopped a host of exciting new hotels from opening their doors – some mega-pricey, others more affordable. The summer of 2023 is shaping up to be a bumper one. Here's our selection...

TURKISH SUN

ON THE Turkish Coast near Dalaman, the Kalkan Han Hotel has been renovated for the 2023 season. It's ideally placed for exploring the cobbled streets and traditional houses of Kalkan Old Town and includes the popular Salonika restaurant. New top-floor suites have a sea view terrace, hot tub and cooking facilities.

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Family fun: Dalaman in Turkey and, Inset, lounging by the hot



SERIFOS, GREECE

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

BOOK IT: Seven nights departing Gatwick on June 4 from £1,370pp, including flights, transfers, breakfast, a day at sea on a gulet, a hammam spa visit and beach club entry (simpsontravel.com).

UNCHARTED GREECE

OPENING on July 1, Nostos is a family-run boutique hotel on the island of Serifos in the Cyclades, which has good walking, secluded beaches and the fortified Taxiarches monastery.

There are 17 rooms in a pared-down style and it's in the port of Livadi, where most visitors stay. The young owners have a firm commitment to sustainability and children are welcome.

BOOK IT: Doubles from £60 B&B (nostosboutiquehotel.com). Fly to Athens, then it's a two-hour ferry ride from Piraeus (seajets.com).

SICILIAN GEM

FAMILY-OWNED Palazzo Previtiera is a boutique hotel in Linguaglossa, on the slopes of Mount Etna, that has taken ten years to restore. Ornate ceilings, heirloom furniture and contemporary paintings are combined with a museum, art gallery, library of rare books and garden.

Guests can enjoy Sicilian cookery classes, e-bike rides and wine tours. The Michelin one-star restaurant Shalal is near by.

BOOK IT: There are three guest rooms from £141, plus two garden cottages sleeping two or six (palazzoprevitiera.com). Fly to Catania, an hour's drive away.

BURGUNDY BEAUTY

COMO Le Montrachet, which opened last month, is devoted to the enjoyment of fine French wines and gastronomy in the heart of Burgundy. It has 30 rooms set in a trio of heritage buildings in the village of Puligny-Montrachet, with four Grand Cru vineyards close by. Its restaurant offers seasonal wine-paired menus featuring Charolais beef and pigeon en croute, while sommelier Andre Berthier runs tasting tours.

BOOK IT: Doubles from £486 B&B if booked before May 30 (comohotels.com). Fly to Lyon, a 90-minute drive away, or take a TGV train from Paris to Le Creusot, from where transfers take 40 minutes.

GO ALL OUT IN LANZAROTE

MINIMAL packing is required for a stay at the five-bedroom Eco Beach Villa which is set on a clothes-optional resort at Charco del Palo in Lanzarote in Spain and includes a private pool and roof terrace. From £707 a night for up to ten guests (lanzaroteretreats.com).

CHATEAU HEAVEN

SLIP away with friends to Chateau Mont des Anglais in the Dordogne in France, which is set on a 90-acre estate and comes with ten bedrooms and a heated pool. Seven nights costs from £4,524 for ten guests including a complimentary wine tasting (oliverstravels.com). Fly to Bergerac or Bordeaux.

SPORTY SPAIN

OPENING on Monday, the extensively refurbished Grand Hyatt La Manga Club Golf & Spa is a 192-room resort set in a lush, 1,300-acre estate in Murcia.

Well-suited to sporty couples and families, it has three golf courses, 28 tennis courts, a football centre and a new spa with an extensive choice of rituals using honey, rose oil or amber essence.

Take advantage of a 30 per cent discount on stays up to July 16 using the code 'SUITE30'.

BOOK IT: Doubles from £277 B&B (lamangaclub.com). Fly to Alicante, then it's a 75-minute drive.

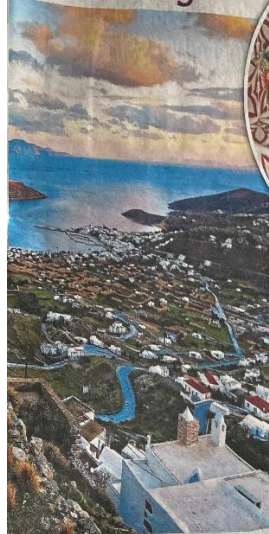
SCENIC NORWAY

ESCAPE to Hattvik Lodge in the enchanting Lofoten Islands, above the Arctic Circle, where you can combine hearty outdoor activities with cool Scandi interiors.

Guests can stay in a rebuilt traditional rorbu (fisherman's cottage) overlooking Ballstad harbour or in freestanding wooden cabins. New this summer is Fangst, a fish restaurant offering locally inspired dishes such as Arctic char with seaweed pasta and sea buckthorn tart.

BOOK IT: Doubles from £210 (hattviklodge.no). Fly to Leknes via Oslo and Bodø then it's a 15-minute transfer.

Cover Story



Enticing: Left and below, Christian Louboutin's hotel. Far left, the view of Serifos island in Greece from its castle

VERMELHO HOTEL, PORTUGAL

TEMPTING NEW SELF-CATERING HOLIDAYS

SWEDISH CHEER

OPENING on Monday in the Kloster Islands in the west of Sweden, Klapphagen is a farm with six self-catering apartments, a restaurant and a brewery where you can learn about making beer. From £208 a night for up to five guests (klapphagen.se). Fly to

Gothenburg then take a train to Stromstad for the ferry.

GREEK ISLAND GLORY

VINTAGE travel has added the tiny Ionian island of Meganisi to its summer programme on account of its quiet beaches and traditional ways. Seven nights at lofty Villa Kallia, which sleeps four and has a pool, costs from £1,725 (vintagetravel.co.uk). Flights to Preveza are extra.

RELAX IN THE ALGARVE

CASA MESTRE is a three-bedroom villa in Vilamoura, Portugal, set on two floors that includes a private pool and garden. It's just a couple of miles from the beach, from £1,244 for seven nights (villaselect.com). Fly to Faro.

PARTY IN IBIZA

OCEAN Drive Ibiza, the Balearic isle's original boutique hotel, opened 25 years ago in the World Heritage-listed Old Town. Now it's had a glamorous Art Deco-style makeover that includes a new rooftop bar and restaurant.

Right by the port, with 40 stylish rooms, it stages art shows and live music. Make a direct booking for one of four suites and they'll throw in breakfast and free use of a Fiat 500.

BOOK IT: Doubles are from £214 B&B (od-hotels.com).

CRETAN CALM

INHALE and exhale. Discover 'breathwork therapy' at Pnue Breathing Life, a centre for wellbeing on the Greek island of Crete, with a preposterously long name.

Pnue, which translates as 'breath of life', aims to restore equilibrium to weary visitors. Just outside the island's capital of Heraklion on the north coast, the hotel has 60 suites, all with private pools. It's also perfectly positioned for enjoying the ancient ruins of Knossos and the island's world-class beaches.

BOOK IT: Doubles at Pnue Breathing Life from £380 B&B (pne-breathinglife.com). Fly to Heraklion, which is a 30-minute drive away.

DESIGNER PORTUGAL

SHOE designer Christian Louboutin has opened a flamboyant 13-room hotel in Melides, a sleepy village 90 minutes' drive south of Lisbon. Fittingly called Vermelho ('red' in Portuguese), the passion project allowed the French icon 'to empty my storage full of antiques bought over many years' and commission local artisans.

Ten minutes from the beach, it has a fine dining restaurant, serving Portuguese dishes such as cod fish stew and wild boar in pastry.

BOOK IT: Doubles from £452 B&B (vermelhoahotel.com).

LESVOS FOR FITNESS FANS

MARK WARNER has added the recently refurbished Aeolian Village Beach Resort on Lesbos to its portfolio.

Sited on Skala Eressos beach, it's good for active families, having two pools, daily fitness classes, tennis, watersports, sailing and a new padel court. Tuition and kids' clubs catering to ages from two to 17 are included. There's a free guided bike tour taking in local beauty spots.

BOOK IT: Seven nights departing Gatwick on May 31 from £851pp based on two adults and two children sharing, including flights, transfers and half-board (markswarner.co.uk).

5 STYLISH CITY HOTELS

PERFECT PARIS

ROMANTIC rooms, a panoramic roof terrace and a buzzing Art Deco brasserie from 1929 are the star attractions at recently spruced-up Hotel Rochecourt in Montmartre. Doubles from £262 (hotelrochecourt.com).

DANISH DELIGHT

LAUNCHED in March, the 25hours Hotel Indre By occupies a former porcelain factory in Copenhagen's university quarter. The 243 funky rooms are themed on 'passion' and 'knowledge' while the NENI restaurant serves superb Levantine dishes. Doubles from £231 (25hours-hotels.com).

SPANISH STYLE

CLOSE to the cathedral in Valencia, Valente Corregenta is a new four-star boutique hotel with 27 tranquil rooms that include a kitchenette and sofa. Doubles from £225 B&B (theredvalencia.com).

SUMMER IN BERLIN

OPENING on June 22 in trendy Friedrichshain, Locke at East Side Gallery will have 115 studio apartments beside the River Spree, plus gym and roof terrace. Doubles from £78 (locketesting.com).

DUBLIN FOR LESS

'LIKE the price, love the design' is the mantra of low-cost hotel chain Motel One which will unveil a 320-room, James Joyce-inspired property in the city centre on July 17. Doubles from £38 (motel-one.com).

■ **RATES** are for June unless stated and are **vat-inclusive** availability.