

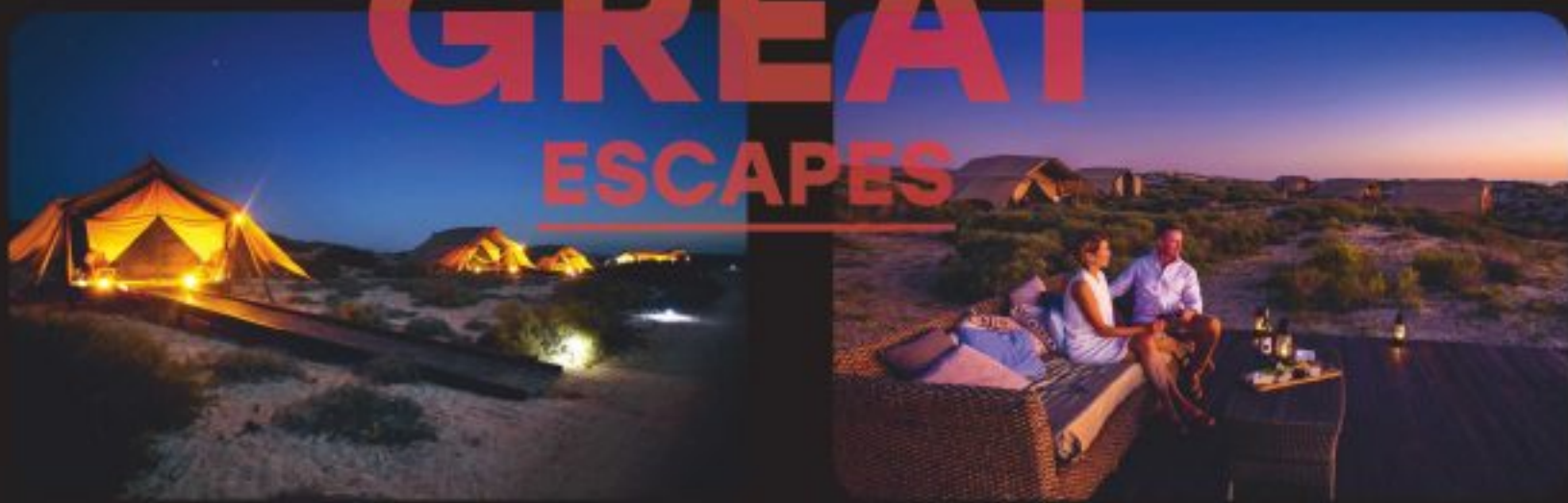
— ESCAPISM —

WORDS
DEBORAH CICUREL



Why do dull when you can do daring instead when it comes to your
much-needed holiday destination?

GREAT ESCAPES



HOLIDAYS ARE NO LONGER ABOUT PACKING YOUR SWIMWEAR, FLOPPING ON TO A SUN LOUNGER AND DIVING INTO A GOOD BOOK. THESE DAYS, LUXURY TRAVELLERS ARE LOOKING FOR THRILLS IN ALL SORTS OF UNEXPECTED PLACES – AND WHILE BEACH-TIME IS FULLY ENCOURAGED, YOU’LL NEED A BIT OF ADRENALINE TOO TO GAIN THOSE SOCIAL MEDIA POINTS. HERE ARE SOME OF THE WORLD’S MOST HIGH-OCTANE, HIGH-END ADVENTURE EXPERIENCES...



Australia

SWIM WITH HUMPBACK WHALES IN AUSTRALIA

✈ Swimming with dolphins not good enough for you? Head to Western Australia, where since last summer visitors have been able to swim with enormous humpback whales. Ningaloo Reef – the world’s longest fringing reef – is also home to whale sharks, turtles, dolphins, manta rays and more, so chances are you’ll spot all sorts of aquatic marvels swimming past. After mingling with the wondrous creatures, you can crash in your luxury wilderness tent in the beautiful eco-retreat that is Sal Salis – and, of course, dream about doing it all over again. Just don’t forget your underwater camera...

A three-night humpback whale swim package costs from £1,655
salsalis.com.au; +61 8 9949 1776



Dolomites

SURVIVE ON A REMOTE MOUNTAIN IN THE DOLOMITES

✈ Ever get sick of the constant mobile phones, work emails and Facebook updates? You probably need to escape to a deserted mountain, with no Wi-Fi or

Snapchat in sight. In the picturesque, UNESCO World Heritage site of the Dolomites, guests who sign up for Rosa Alpina’s mountain survival programme can try their hand climbing, bouldering, orienteering, fishing and abseiling before being left alone for the night at a luxurious and remote mountain cabin at 6,000ft, without a trace of phone signal, Wi-Fi, hot water or electricity. You’ll catch and cook your own food and navigate the Dolomites’ rocky terrain – but can you live without your emails?

Rosa Alpina offers its four-night Mountain Survival package from approximately £1,754 per person
rosalpina.it; +39 0471 849500

Norway

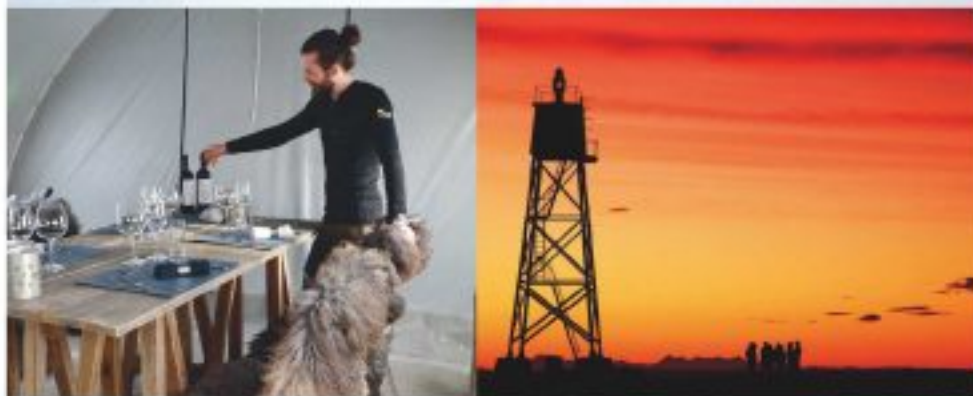
SPOT POLAR BEARS IN NORWAY

 There are few areas in the world more desolate and exciting than an Arctic landscape, which gives this Norwegian Polar Escape a real sense of intrigue. The jam-packed six-day expedition involves everything from hurtling along the ice on snowmobiles to taking a freezing dip in the Arctic Ocean – not to mention watching polar bears roaming right outside your room and sleeping in a North Pole Expedition Camp. Who says heated tents and sleeping bags can't be luxurious?

Best Served Scandinavia offers a five-night Across the Polar Land itinerary from £2,975 per person best-served.co.uk; 020 7664 2241



OT Magazine has to ask: are they heading towards – or speeding away from – the polar bears?




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Rwanda

TRACK ENDANGERED GORILLAS IN RWANDA

 Feeling brave? There are less than 900 gorillas left in the world, which makes coming face-to-face with the endangered primates even more of a breathtaking experience. On a gorilla-trekking safari in Rwanda, through the forested Parc National des Volcans, you might walk for several hours over uneven terrain while trying to find one of the 10 families that live in the national park. And though your feet might ache and your camera battery may be dead by the time you finally find one, just seeing the world's largest living primate with your own eyes makes it worth the wait.

The Rwanda Gorilla Trekking Special costs from £2,885 per person with Rainbow Tours rainbowtours.co.uk; 020 7666 1266



Enjoy the purest powder as you parallel down some truly memorable slopes



Nevada

HELI-SKIING IN NEVADA'S RUBY MOUNTAINS

✈ As exciting as regular skiing is, there's nothing like a helicopter and the promise of untouched snow to lure seasoned skiers into booking a heli-skiing

trip. Nevada's Ruby Mountain Heli Experience promises the wintery paradise you dream of back at home, with tree skiing, wide open bowls, fresh powder snow and more to dive into each day. Plus, with the newly-opened, swanky Ruby 360 Lodge, you can truly unwind after a hard day's ski, with in-room massage services, a fully-stocked bar and plenty of home-cooked grub.

A three day heli-skiing package costs from £4,117 per person
helicopterskiing.com; 00 1 775 397 1215



New Zealand

TWO WEEKS OF HAIR- RAISING EXPLOITS IN NEW ZEALAND

✈ New Zealand has long been known for being one of the world's most adventurous spots, and if you're going all the way there (the flight alone feels like a brave expedition), why indulge in only a couple of adrenaline-fuelled activities? You might as well go all out and cram in as many electrifying thrills as is humanly possible: ziplining, helicoptering, sailing, skydiving, parasailing, zorbing, skyswinging, bungee jumping, glacier hiking, white water rafting, heli-mountain biking and canyoning. Is that enough for you? Luckily, this tour offers all the above and more. There are even some massages thrown in to the mix – you'll most certainly need them.

Hands Up Holidays offers this package for £45,000 per person
handsupholidays.com; 020 7193 1062

