

AUTUMN/WINTER 2018

SUNDOWNER

A/W 2018 £4

Love at first sight

ALL EYES ARE ON IGUAZU

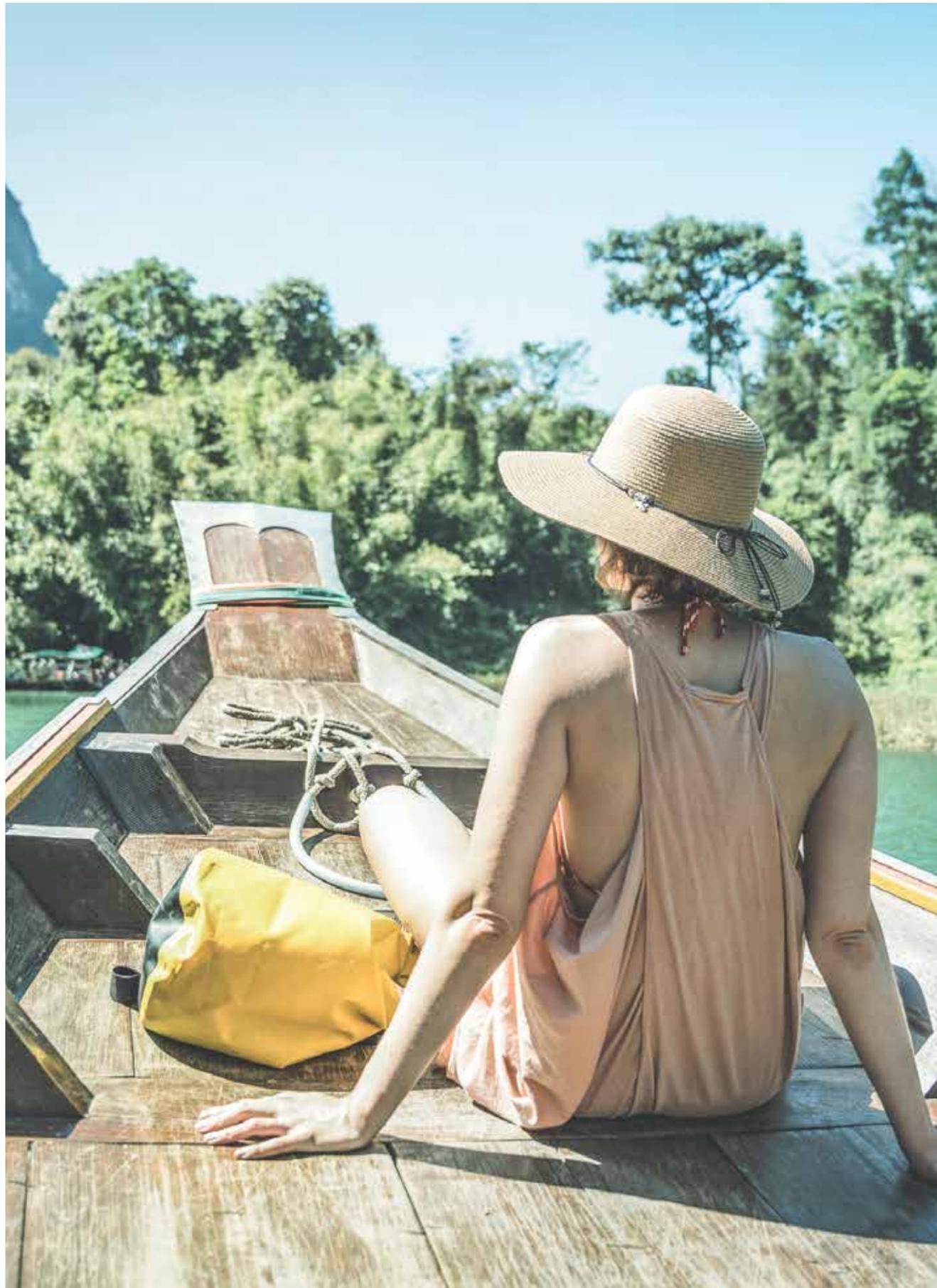
NEW WAYS

THE LUXURY TRAVEL TRENDS
STEERING OUR DIRECTION

ONE FOR ALL

FIND THE FAMILY HOLIDAY
TO SUIT YOUR TRIBE

Abercrombie & Kent



New directions

OUR IDEA OF LUXURY IS AN EVER-SHIFTING STANDARD. AS IT ALTERS, SO DOES THE WAY WE TRAVEL.
IAN THE BUTT INVESTIGATES THE MOST BUZZED-ABOUT TRENDS SHAPING OUR ADVENTURES RIGHT NOW

TRANSFORMATIONAL TRAVEL

Holidays used to be all about sunlounger lazing, doing very little, and returning with a tan. Later fly-and-flops were shunned in favour of over-the-top luxury breaks, with people lusting after caviar and champagne in the smartest suites. More recently, travellers came to crave authenticity, and experiential became the biggest travel buzzword of the last decade; with people wanting to engage with locals and their culture, seeking out immersive experiences – like meeting a Living Buddha in China, or visiting an underground supperclub on a city break. While today's travellers still yearn for that immersion, rather than just experiencing the fabric of a destination, they want to return home with threads of it woven into their DNA. Enter transformational travel; journeying as a catalyst for meaningful, lasting change. It might be a shift in perception, beliefs, or behaviours, with the effects felt long after you've returned home.

Kerry Golds, managing director at Abercrombie & Kent, has first-hand experience of a transformational trip. She trekked the Lares Trail in Peru with her teenage sons. "We had no distractions and we had to motivate each other as it was physically tough," she says. Stuck in a tent together with no mobile phones, a lot of soul-searching conversations happened, and the bond between them strengthened. Back at home it's led to a tangible change in their relationships – they all set aside more time to switch their phones off and communicate with one another.

Transformational travel doesn't have to mean monumental changes – they might be as small as taking time to meditate after noticing the positive effects of doing so on a hiking holiday in the Swiss Alps; spending more time in nature after a safari in the Serengeti; or scaling back your plastic usage after seeing waste litter South-East Asia's most beautiful beaches.

While the argument that the connection between travel and deep personal journeys is an age-old phenomenon is a fair one, it is a mindset which seems to resonate particularly deeply right now. Indeed Skift, the travel trend forecasting agency, named 'travel focused on personal fulfilment' as a 2018 megatrend. It particularly strikes a chord with recession-hit millennials who increasingly define themselves based on who they are, rather than what they have. A study by market research group GfK showed that millennials deem travel a higher financial priority than buying a home or paying off debt – travel is seen as a more worthwhile investment. "A lot has been said about 'Peak Stuff' – with personal status much more intertwined today with seeing novel and authentic things," says Lucie Greene, chief futurist at J. Walter Thompson, "but as experience culture has become mainstream, what's considered

rare or authentic has become more complex and harder to attain. It's become more inward too – about spirituality, well-being, self-improvement and enlightenment."

It's not just millennials, though: many people are taking more trips in the wake of unexpected life events, hoping for transformation – booking adventures after divorces, when suffering from empty nest syndrome, or even after the death of a loved one. One A&K client had always dreamt of visiting Egypt, but never quite got round to it. After her beloved husband died, she did just that, spurred on by the fact that she felt he would have wanted her to. It ended up being much more than a dream holiday; she found a new purpose, teaching local children. Now, she splits her time between home in the UK and Egypt, taking schoolbooks and supplies each time she visits.

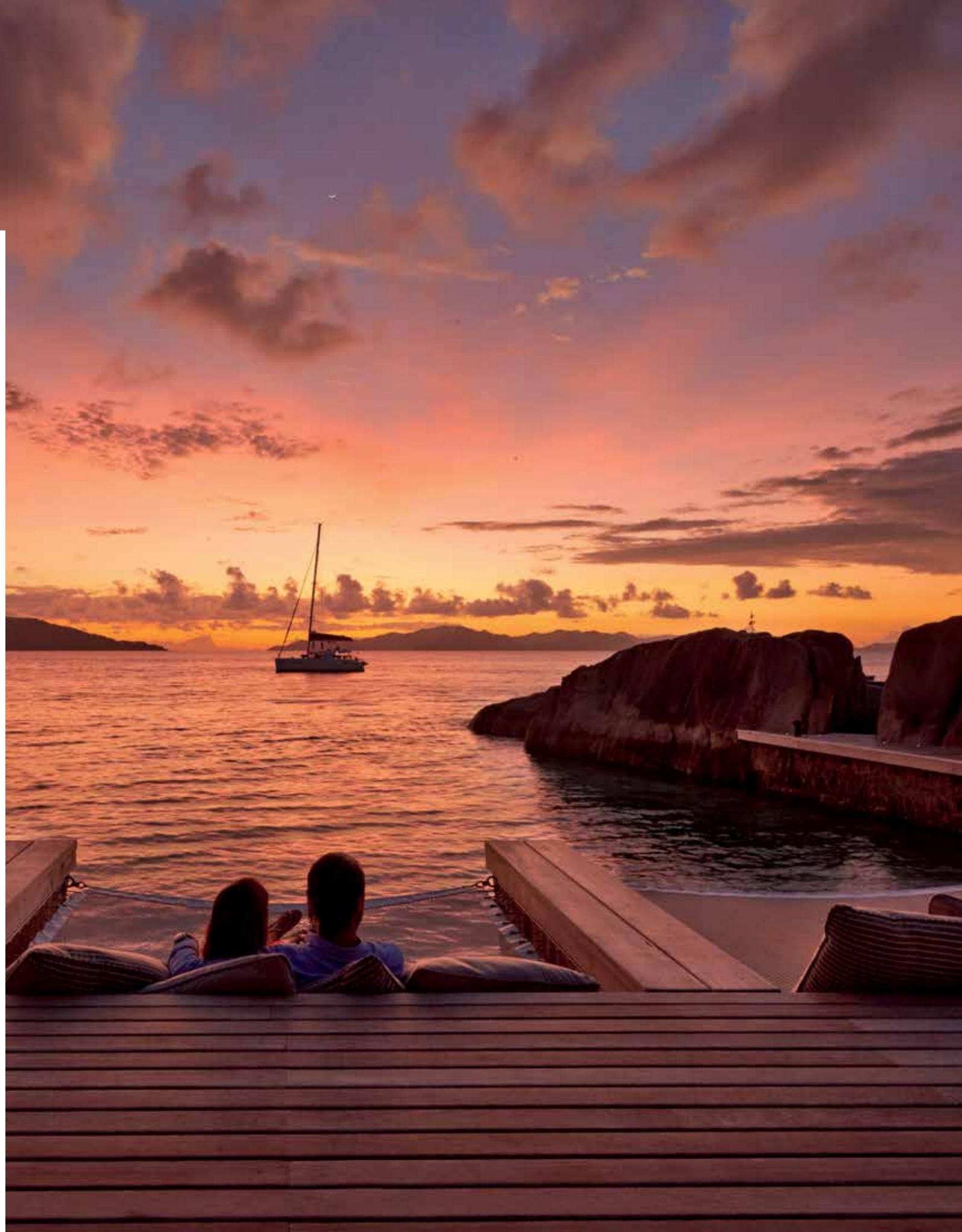
"Transformational travel is travel that puts experience at a transcendental, life-affirming level," adds Greene. "Experiences that make you a better person are rare and special. We are our experiences, and these are the new luxuries people want to invest in."

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WELLNESS FROM THE WALLS IN

The wellness industry is booming – from the way we eat (more balanced diets and investment in quality produce, checking on food provenance) to how we spend our leisure time (yoga, fitness retreats), putting our well-being at the heart of how we live is a worldwide movement. It's expected that global wellness tourism expenditure will be worth \$808 billion dollars by 2020, and the hospitality industry is taking note; offering a gym or jetlag spa treatment is no longer enough. Instead hotels are now being designed from the walls-in to positively impact guests' well-being. 'Healthy-for-humans buildings', a trend pinpointed at last year's Global Wellness Summit, sees architects focusing on creating spaces with physiological and psychological benefits. And the smartest hotel brands are getting in on the act. At Six Senses Zil Pasyon in the Seychelles, biological lighting to support our circadian rhythms (the natural 24-hour cycle created by the sun) is used in the spa. Disconnection from a dizzyingly connected digital world is encouraged at Soneva's properties in Thailand and the Maldives – all rooms have switches to disable wifi – while Villa Stéphanie in Baden-Baden has copper plates built into the walls, which can be raised at the touch of a button to block internet signal.

Biophilia – the pleasure and positive impact which comes from connecting with nature – is being incorporated into wellness design, hotels using natural materials and natural light, capitalising on and creating leafy views. At Soneva Jani in the Maldives, villas have retractable roofs to allow from-bed stargazing, while at Six Senses Zil Pasyon, spa pavilions are sprinkled through the rugged landscape, some between or on top of rocks, another floating in the ocean. The new wave of stylish and sustainable 1Hotels properties are a biophilic riot. At 1Hotels South Beach, there are terrariums in each room, scores of natural materials (think reclaimed Javanese teak root and driftwood), and one of the largest living walls in North America, its 12,000 plants creating a veritable jungle. A recent study by Terrapin Bright Green reported that lobbies with biophilic elements attracted 36 per cent more guests than those without. People want to spend time in leafy spaces, and the mood-boosting benefits of plants are long-established. Even staff's business cards at 1Hotels reflect an all-natural ethos, doubling as seed packets which can be planted by guests for a botanical reminder of their stay back at home. ☺



THREE OTHER TRAVEL TRENDS TO WATCH

Eco goes up the agenda

What? Checking sustainability credentials has become as important as style for environmentally conscious modern travellers making their where-to-bed-down decisions.

Where? Eco-innovation can be seen at a raft of covetable new addresses: Deplar Farm in Iceland uses energy from a geothermal water source for heating; Bawah Island in Indonesia is powered by a renewable microgrid; Rosewood Phuket harvests rainwater, rather than drawing from the local water system; and the first single-use plastic-free hotel, akya TAS Sukhumvit, has opened in Bangkok.

Ultra-bespoke

What? One-off trips which fit your holiday needs as snugly as a Savile Row suit.

Where? A&K clients staying at Mandarin Orientals can fix a visit to Barcelona's Camp Nou stadium, followed by lunch with one of the players, or an out-of-this-world supper with an astronaut at NASA's Kennedy Space Center. A&K recently temporarily privatised the Sydney Bridge so that a group of pals could climb this architectural Australian legend alone, and left one intrepid family for a night with the tribes in the remote Omo Valley for a truly unique experience – not for the faint-hearted, it featured goats' blood toasts and messy mud baths.

Micro-Adventures

What? Families take children on months-long 'adventures' to expand their horizons outside the classroom.

Where? Some people worry about taking their kids out of school, but that isn't to say the brood can't get ahead of the curriculum while travelling. Learn about the treasures of the Pyramids at the much-anticipated Grand Egyptian Museum, opening in Cairo later this year, or take a tutor with you – A&K has flown in scholars to the Maldives, and had a world-renowned biologist travel with clients in Madagascar.

LEFT: Sunset from Koko Bar at Six Senses Zil Pasyon

BELOW: Deplar Farm in Iceland

