

~ Thirst for ~
ADVENTURE

TAKE THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED WITH THESE ALTERNATIVE HOLIDAYS,
FROM LUXURY SAFARIS TO TRIPS WITH A PHILANTHROPIC HEART





Paro Taktsang monastery, Bhutan

INTO THE WILD

The sight of dramatic mountains and untamed wilderness is enough to set adventurous hearts aflutter. If exploring remote valleys while discovering authentic culture is your thing, make tracks for Bhutan, where you and your loved one can hike through valleys, discover ancient temples and soak up incredible views of the Himalayas. **Black Tomato's** 10-night itinerary begins in the serene Paro Valley for some cultural delights in Thimpu, Bhutan's capital city, before heading towards the Punakha Valley for a trek up to the mystical Chimi Lhakhang Monastery. You'll enjoy a night at the luxurious **Amankora** resort before hiking to a dizzying 11,000 feet to take in the spectacular mountain views. As for the highlight? It's surely the three-day trek through the stunning Bumthang Valley, where you'll have porters, an expert local guide and a chef to make your experience comfortable (+44 20 7426 9888; www.blacktomato.com).

If the wilds of the African savannah get your hearts racing, look no further than **Scott Dunn's** (+973 1619 8244; www.

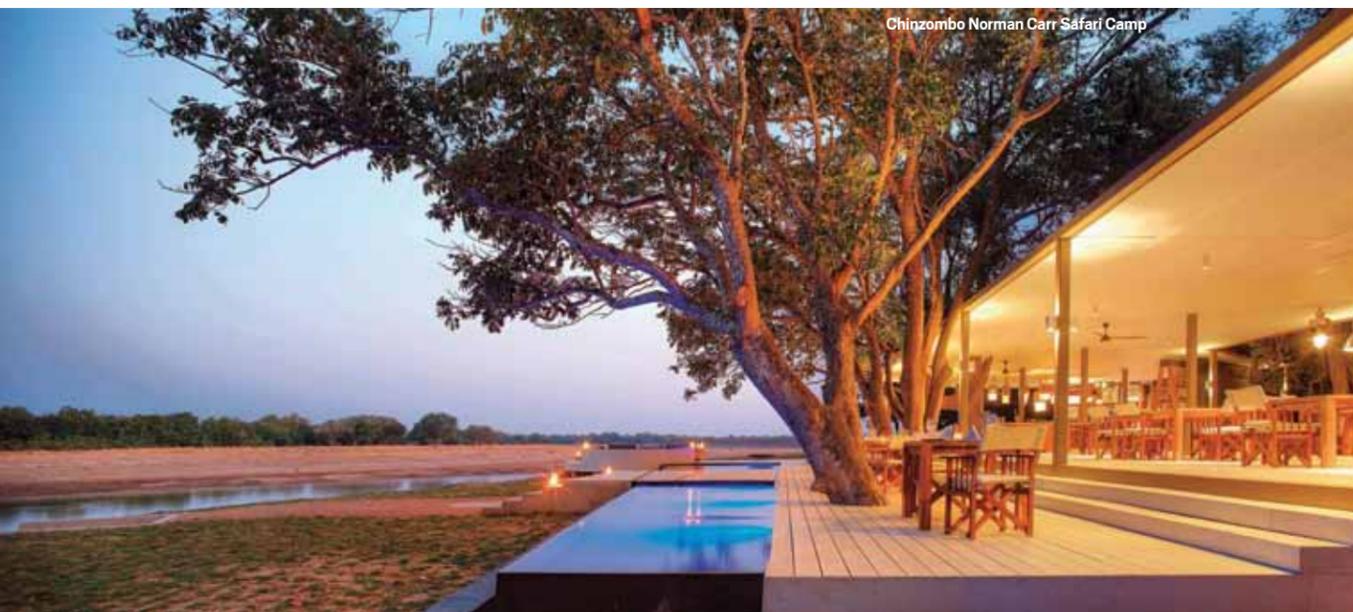


El Questro Homestead, Australia

scottdunn.com) 'Ultimate Zambia Safari' package. It takes in two of Zambia's top game-viewing areas, staying at the **Chinzombo Norman Carr Safari Camp**, with oversized tents that look out directly over the wilderness. A trip to the majestic Victoria Falls rounds off the 14-night trip, with accommodation on **Sindabezi** private island.

Of course, there's the option to just sit back and drink in the beauty of nature (and your loved one). In Northern Australia's wild Kimberley landscape, **El Questro Homestead** (+61 3 9426 7550; www.elquestro.com.au) makes it well worth the long flight south, particularly when kicking back in one of the three Cliff Side Retreats. Each features feather-topped beds and freestanding tubs on the verandahs, which look out over the Chamberlain Gorge escarpment. They're also set apart from the homestead for complete privacy.

It's a similar story some 12,000 km away at **Anantara's Qasr Al Sarab** (+971 2 886 2088; qasralsarab.anantara.com) nestled in the rolling sand dunes of Abu Dhabi's Empty Quarter. Its Royal Pavilion Villas with private pools are set one kilometre from the main resort and offer all-inclusive luxuries with meals and two activities a day, including dune bashing, camel trekking and dune hikes. Of course, all the villas can be rented at once for complete and utter privacy.



Chinzombo Norman Carr Safari Camp



"Philanthropic holidays are rising in popularity, with couples choosing adventures that have the objective of improving the lives of others"

Song Saa Private Island

HOLIDAYS WITH HEART

Philanthropic holidays are rising in popularity, with couples choosing to embark on adventures that have the objective of improving the lives of others, be it by building houses or working with endangered wildlife. One of the must-visits of the Golden Triangle in Thailand's north is **Anantara Golden Triangle Elephant Camp & Resort** (+66 53 784 084; goldentriangle.anantara.com). The on-site Elephant Camp offers guests the chance to get up close with the country's gentle giants.

Set out like a traditional mahout village, the camp cooperates with the Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation to rescue elephants and provide them with a comfortable lifestyle. Resident research assistants from Think Elephants International are on hand to educate you about the projects carried out by the foundation, and you can assist the resident vet to conduct a basic elephant health check, and give an elephant a shower. The resort



Anantara Golden Triangle Elephant Camp & Resort



Los Glaciares National Park

itself provides five-star luxury in the tranquil landscape framed by the breathtaking mountains of Northern Thailand, Myanmar and Laos.

In the Gulf of Thailand, Cambodia's **Song Saa Private Island** (+855 23 686 0360; songsaa.com) is a sanctuary where relaxation and community mindedness are shared objectives. Community and conservation programs range from working with local fishermen to sustainably protect the waterways, to education programs that teach local children about the surrounding flora and fauna, and they ways they can ensure their sustainability.

South and Central America are popular destinations for 'voluntourism.' In vibrant Buenos Aires, you and your loved one can embark on an 18-day experience, moving from your boutique hotel base each day to work in one of two *hogares* (homes for underprivileged children), where you will meet local teens and teach them skills such as photography, cooking or perfecting their English. Included is a chance to see the city itself, as well as other Argentinian sites such as Iguacu Falls, the vineyards of Mendoza and Los Glaciares National Park. The experience is arranged by **Hands Up Holidays** (+44 207 193 1062; www.handsupholidays.com) who also arrange voluntourism experiences in Costa Rica, where you can assist at an animal rescue centre and still have time to get lost in the breathtaking landscape on hikes, kayak tours and stays in jungle-inspired eco-lodges.



Yacht charter holidays let you choose your own adventure

CRUISE CONTROL

There is something truly serene about gliding across the world's most picturesque waterways, with soft sea breezes dancing on your skin and glorious sunsets sinking into the horizon. The quiet backwaters of Kerala, India, are prime places to take your loved one on board your very own converted *kettuvallum*, or houseboat. **Spice Routes** (+91 86 0600 0430; spiceroutes.in) offer a unique journey that takes you through a labyrinth of canals on board a luxury thatched houseboat, kitted out with all modern amenities. The three-member crew (driver, assistant and cook) are on hand, but you will hardly notice they are there, as you get swept up in the romance of the swaying palms, cruising into the sunset, with the smell of coconut curry wafting in the air, as you journey from Allepey across tranquil waters.

In the heart of the Indian Ocean, the some 1,400 islands of the Maldives dot crystalline waters like emerald jewels. Sure, most of the island resorts offer incredible experiences, but why settle on one? A yacht charter with **Sultans of the Seas** (+960 332 0330; www.sultansoftheseas.com) will have you cruising the cerulean waters, dropping anchor to snorkel secluded reefs and stopping at uninhabited islands for an afternoon at your will. A dedicated team of staff will ensure your every whim is heeded, and the course of charter can be completely customised by you.



The magical French Riviera is one of the world's most iconic stretches of coastline. Hop on board **Edmiston's** (www.edmiston.com) *Reborn* and chart a course for romance across the waters of the Cote d'Azur. The yacht isn't modest by any means — 75.5 metres long with a duplex beach club and private cinema, should you want a break from ocean views. While you have everything you could possibly need on board, it would be remiss of you not to dock into the iconic Port Hercule en route, for a romantic night in Monte-Carlo.