

FINANCIAL TIMES

# HOW TO SPEND IT

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2020

THE  
TRAVEL  
ISSUE

## *...in* SPLENDID ISOLATION

SOPHY ROBERTS  
DISCOVERS A WILD OASIS  
IN CHAD

MARIA SHOLLENBARGER  
GOES HOME  
TO MONTEREY

JOHN GAPPER OBSERVES  
SAKURA SEASON  
IN JAPAN



Right: Domaine des Etangs, Charente.  
Below: the entrance hall



TRAVEL NEWS

## Holiday SOS

Book now, go later – and other ways to help the travel ecosystem

WORDS BY MARIA SHOLLENBARGER

A December report commissioned by International Luxury Travel Market defined a luxury travel “ecosystem” – consisting of every business that benefits directly from tourism, from the obvious ones to spectator sports and street-food vendors – worth in excess of \$1.5tn. That figure would put it in the top 15 economies in the world. With many countries having closed for business since, the toll on the millions that ecosystem employs is devastating. The World Travel & Tourism Council estimates as many as 100m jobs could be lost before recovery begins in earnest. And that’s just the human factor: conservation of wildlife the world over is equally imperilled. Projects from Namibia to Nepal rely heavily on tourism dollars, and the dearth of funding since the pandemic hit could have dire consequences for threatened species and local communities.

So how best to support *all* the industries that make up the travel ecosystem? One very simple directive holds true: postpone, don’t cancel (there’s a reason the phrase proliferated so quickly as a hashtag online). A host of providers, from airlines to private-villa companies, have instituted ultra-flexible protocols and dispensed with change and rebooking fees to make this easier for clients. **OneFineStay** ([onefinestay.com](http://onefinestay.com)) – which, with 5,000 properties worldwide,

is offering vouchers good for 12 months at any of them – is just one example (it’s also hosted healthcare workers at properties in London, and so is especially worth supporting).

**Singita** ([singita.com](http://singita.com)), whose safari camps and lodges in Tanzania, Rwanda, South Africa and Zimbabwe provide crucial funding to conservation components, has stood by its no-refund policy (though allowing postponement of trips and payments): “Since 1993 our focus has always been conservation. As we’ve grown the Singita brand, it has been paramount in the choice of opportunities that we’ve pursued,” says founder and executive chairman Luke Bailes. “Everything Singita does revolves around our 100-year purpose.” Wild Philanthropy, the philanthropic arm of Will Jones’ excellent Africa fixers **Journeys By Design**, launched the African Tourism Crisis

### THE DEARTH OF FUNDING COULD HURT THREATENED SPECIES AND COMMUNITIES

Fund in April with \$15,000. Tapping his extensive network to identify the truly community-led initiatives most in need of money, Jones has just allocated its third grant (donate at [wildphilanthropy.com](http://wildphilanthropy.com)). Other operators, from **Great Plains Conservation** ([greatplainsconservation.com](http://greatplainsconservation.com)),

to **Wilderness Safaris** ([wilderness-safaris.com](http://wilderness-safaris.com)), have taken actions ranging from rate freezes through to the end of 2021 to waiving internal-flight fees. Which brings us to another equally simple guideline: book now, travel later. By putting money against travel at a future date, you instantly inject capital into a system that supports employment chains that go ultra-local. An enterprising cohort of independent hotels makes up the **Buy Now, Stay Later** scheme ([buynowstaylater.com](http://buynowstaylater.com)); available until the end of August, bonds sold in increments of \$100 are redeemable for \$150 when activated later for a booking. This helps the myriad hotel dependants who keep the show running – from housekeepers to bartenders – stay solvent. Among the impressive signatories are **Nihi Sumba** ([nihi.com](http://nihi.com)), **Round Hill Hotel** and **Villas in Jamaica** ([roundhill.com](http://roundhill.com)) and **Labotessa** in Cape Town ([labotessa.com](http://labotessa.com)).

And in the immediate future? As restrictions are lifted regionally, the road trip will be the first point of escape. So choose thoughtfully – hotels that entwine themselves with the places they’re in are the ones to look for. Summer and autumn see a clutch of such options opening, or reopening, within cruising distance of cities. **Troutbeck** ([troutbeck.com](http://troutbeck.com)), the 36-room upstate retreat that’s become the thinking New Yorker’s redoubt of choice, will reopen with almost 5,000sq ft of wellness facilities and a six-mile trail



Left: Troutbeck, New York. Below: Wilderness Safaris’ Jao Camp, Botswana. Bottom left: OneFineStay’s Via della Chiesa home, Florence

network on its 250 acres (expanded from 40). Two hours north of San Francisco, **Montage** ([montagehotels.com](http://montagehotels.com)) will in autumn open its third California resort outside Healdsburg, Sonoma County’s foodie mecca, near some of

the oldest vineyards in the state; it’s partnered with cult winemaker Jesse Katz for wine and experiences exclusive to Montage guests. Parisians can make for Charente, where the unassailable **Domaine des Etangs** ([domainedesetangs.com](http://domainedesetangs.com)), Garance Primat’s family château-turned-country-house hotel, has a spectacular pair of libraries adjacent to its art gallery, for which a new schedule of exhibitions is in the offing. And in the UK, mother-daughter design-hospitality team Olga and Alex Polizzi – they of hotels Tresanton in Cornwall and Endsleigh in Devon – have acquired the old Star Inn in Alfriston, East Sussex; it will open in late summer, post a top-to-toe makeover in faultless Polizzi style, as **The Star** ([thepolizzicollection.com](http://thepolizzicollection.com)). ■ **HTS!**

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