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January 10, 2010

The 31 Places to Go in 2010

1. [Sri Lanka](#)

For a quarter century, Sri Lanka seems to have been plagued by misfortune, including a brutal civil war between the Sinhalese-dominated government and a separatist Tamil group. But the conflict finally ended last May, ushering in a more peaceful era for this teardrop-shaped island off [India's](#) coast, rich in natural beauty and cultural splendors.

The island, with a population of just 20 million, feels like one big tropical zoo: elephants roam freely, water buffaloes idle in paddy fields and monkeys swing from trees. And then there's the pristine coastline. The miles of sugary white sand flanked by bamboo groves that were off-limits to most visitors until recently are a happy, if unintended byproduct of the war.

Among the most scenic, if difficult stretches to reach, is Nilaveli Beach in the Tamil north. While a few military checkpoints remain, vacationers can lounge on poolside hammocks under palm trees or [snorkel](#) in its crystal-clear waters. Or they can order cocktails at the Nilaveli Beach Hotel (www.tangerinehotels.com/nilavelibeach), a collection of recently renovated bungalows with private terraces.

An international airport in Matara, on the island's southern shore, is under construction, which will make the gorgeous [beaches](#) near the seaside village of Galle easier to get to. Decimated by the tsunami in 2004, the surrounding coastline is now teeming with stylish guesthouses and boutique hotels.

Unawatuna, a crescent-shaped beach a few miles south of Galle, may be furthest along. Higher-end hotels there include Thambapanni Retreat (www.thambapanni.biz), which features four-poster beds, [yoga](#) and an ayurvedic [spa](#). The Sun House (www.thesunhouse.com), in Galle, looks like a place where the Queen of England might stay, with its mango courtyard and colonial décor. One stylish place tucked within Galle's city walls is the Galle Fort Hotel (www.galleforthotel.com), a refurbished gem merchant's house run by a couple of Aussies. — Lionel Beehner

2. [Patagonia Wine Country](#)

Ten years ago, a group of adventurous winemakers set their sights on an Argentine valley called San Patricio del Chañar, an unusually fertile and eerily beautiful corner of Patagonia. They plowed, planted and waited. The outcome? A blossoming wine country with delicious pinot noirs and malbecs and smartly designed wineries.

One of the area's pioneers, the 2,000-acre Bodega del Fin del Mundo (www.bodegadelfindelmundo.com), which works with the influential wine consultant Michel Rolland, is racking up international medals for its complex merlot, cabernet and malbec blends. And NQN (bodeganqn.com.ar), which is associated with the Argentine oenologist Roberto de la Mota, has seen its 2006 Colección NQN Malbec get 92 points from Wine Enthusiast. Nearby is the new Valle Perdido winery (www.valleperdido.com.ar), which includes an 18-room resort surrounded by vineyards. At the spa, ask for antioxidant wine-infused treatments. — Paola Singer

3. [Seoul](#)

Forget [Tokyo](#). Design aficionados are now heading to Seoul.

They have been drawn by the Korean capital's glammed-up cafes and restaurants, immaculate [art](#) galleries and monumental fashion palaces like the sprawling outpost of Milan's 10 Corso Como and the widely noted Ann Demeulemeester store — an avant-garde Chia Pet covered in vegetation.

And now Seoul, under its design-obsessed mayor, Oh Se-hoon, is the 2010 World Design Capital. The title, bestowed by a prominent council of industrial designers, means a year's worth of design parties, exhibitions, conferences and other revelries. Most are still being planned (go to wdc2010.seoul.go.kr for updates). A highlight will no doubt be the third annual Seoul Design Fair (Sept. 17 to Oct. 7), the city's answer to the design weeks in [Milan](#) and New York, which last year drew 2.5 million people and featured a cavalcade of events under two enormous inflatable structures set up at the city's Olympic stadium. — Aric Chen

4. [Mysore](#)

You've completed 200 hours of teacher training, mastered flying crow pose and even spent a week at yoga surf camp. What's next? Yogis seeking transcontinental bliss head these days to Mysore, the City of Palaces, in southern India.

The yogi pilgrimage was sparked by Ashtanga yoga, a rigorous sweat-producing, breath-synchronized regimen of poses popularized by the beloved Krishna Pattabhi Jois, who died at 94 in 2009. Mr. Jois's grandson is now director of the Ashtanga Yoga Research Institute (www.kpjayi.org). First month's tuition is 27,530 rupees, or \$600 at 46 rupees to the dollar. Classes generally require a one-month commitment.

Too much time or money? Mysore's yoga boom now has shalas catering to every need. Off the mat, the yoga tribe hobnobs at Anu's Bamboo Hut or the Regaalis Hotel pool, studies Sanskrit, gets an ayurveda treatment or tours the maharaja's palace. — Mary Billard

5. [Copenhagen](#)

As thousands of environmentalists heckled world leaders in Copenhagen last month for the climate summit, a solitary unifying note could be heard amid the cacophony of discord: the Danish capital has already emerged as one of the world's greenest — and maybe coolest — cities.

Copenhageners don't simply preach the "progressive city" ethos, they live it. Long, flat urban thoroughfares are hemmed with bicycle paths where locals glide around the city, tourists saddle up on the free [bikes](#) that dot the city center, and fashion bloggers take notes on the latest cycle chic (see copenhagencyclechic.com). Over in the harbor district, a public bath at Osterbro, due to open in 2010, will complement the two swimming areas set off on Copenhagen's inner harbor, a formerly polluted waterway recently transformed into the city's summertime hub.

Away from all the modernism and the happy cyclists, cultural thrill-seekers are being coaxed to the once dangerous district of Nørrebro, which has arguably become Copenhagen's edgiest hub. A heady mix of hipsters, students and immigrants mingle in the cafes and galleries around the district's focal square, Sankt Hans Torv, and the city's young and excitable night owls can be found dancing in local clubs until the early hours. — Benji Lanyado

WAITING IN THE WINGS

6. [Koh Kood](#)

Is this the next Koh Samui? The Trat islands are emerging as [Thailand's](#) new luxury outpost. Inaccessible for many years because of tensions with neighboring [Cambodia](#) and a poor transportation infrastructure,

islands like Koh Kood are starting to draw venturesome paradise seekers, thanks in part to new direct flights to the port city of Trat. The recent opening of Soneva Kiri, a 42-villa suite retreat by the Six Senses brand (www.sixsenses.com/Soneva-Kiri), definitely ratchets up the high-end quotient on this [Robinson Crusoe](#)-like island. Coming soon: X2 Koh Kood (www.x2resorts.com), a designer eco-resort with 14 pool villas. — Gisela Williams

7. [Damascus](#)

The next [Marrakesh](#)? Perhaps mindful of the way that renovations of historic riads have drawn upscale travelers to Marrakesh, Damascus hoteliers are trying to mine tourism gold in the rundown buildings of the Syrian capital's Old City. These 18th-century homes — many with inviting courtyards and rooftop terraces — are now boutique hotels, like the nine-room Old Vine (www.oldvinehotel.com) and the Hanania (www.hananiahotel.com), which doubles as a hotel and a small museum. — Don Duncan

8. [Cesme](#)

The next [Bodrum](#)? While revelers continue to descend upon that seaside retreat, another corner of [Turkey's](#) Aegean coastline has begun to emerge as a stylish alternative: the once-sleepy villages of the Cesme Peninsula. The main draw is Alacati, a sheltered beach town that last summer was the site of the Professional Windsurfers Association Slalom World Cup. Scheduled to open in the spring, the seven-room Hotel Nars Alacati (www.nars.com.tr), set in a converted 19th-century mansion, promises to become the popular weekend gathering spot for [Istanbul's](#) smart set, along with the adjoining [garden](#) restaurant, [Mesa Luna](#). — Andrew Ferren

9. [Antarctica](#)

This may be the last year that Antarctica is open to mass tourism — not because the ice is melting too fast (though it is), but because of restrictions that would severely curtail travel around the fragile continent.

Until recently, most vessels passing through Antarctica were limited to scientific expeditions, but an exploding number of tourists now flock to what is arguably the world's last great wilderness. The tourism boom, scientists argue, poses a major environmental threat. Indeed, several passenger ships have run aground in recent years.

Countries that manage Antarctica are calling for limits on the number of tourist ships, for fortified hulls that can withstand sea ice and for a ban on the use of so-called heavy oils. A ban on heavy oil, which is expected to be adopted by the International Maritime Organization later this year, would effectively block big [cruise](#) ships.

With the new rules taking effect within two years, tour operators are promoting 2010 as the last year to visit Antarctica, while, at the same time, procuring lighter vessels that would be permitted. Abercrombie & Kent, for example, is introducing a new ship, Le Boreal (www.abercrombiekent.com), which its public relations firm argues “meets all the environmental regulations, so access to Antarctica via A&K will not be affected.”

Launching this year, the compact luxury ship holds 199 passengers and features an outdoor heated pool, steam rooms and private balconies that offer intimate views of some of the world's remaining glaciers. — Denny Lee

10. [Leipzig](#)

In 2010, Leipzig, a small industrial city in the former East Germany with an illustrious past, will be marking the 325th anniversary of the birth of its former resident [Johann Sebastian Bach](#) and the 200th birthday of [Robert Schumann](#) with concerts, festivals and a reopened Bach Museum (www.bach-leipzig.de).

But the city's cultural high note is likely to be the Neo Rauch retrospective opening in April at the [Leipzig Museum of Fine Arts \(www.mdbk.de\)](#), a show devoted to the father of the New Leipzig School of artists, a scene that for the past decade has been the toast of the contemporary art world. The art cognoscenti will also make their way to the Spinnerei ([www.spinnerei.de](#)), a former cotton mill that is home to 11 galleries, a cafe and a quirky new pension called the Meisterzimmer ([www.meisterzimmer.de](#)), with rooms starting at 50 euros, or \$70 at \$1.40 to the euro.

The city is also making a splash on the musical front. Moon Harbour Recordings and Kann Records, two indie labels producing innovative electronica from D.J.'s, are based here. Sevensol and Matthias Tanzmann will undoubtedly be lugging their laptops to Leipzig Pop Up ([www.leipzig-popup.de](#)), a trade fair and [music festival](#) taking place in May. Otherwise, gigs can be heard year-round in the city's underbelly of abandoned factories and squats that look a lot like [Berlin](#) — maybe 10 years ago. — Gisela Williams

11. [Los Angeles](#)

Visitors love to bemoan the lack of an old-fashioned cultural neighborhood in Los Angeles. In truth, the city has as many thriving art spots as it does ZIP codes. Last October, the pioneering Culver City gallery Blum & Poe (2727 South La Cienega [Boulevard](#); 310-836-2062; [www.blumandpoe.com](#)) inaugurated an airy 21,000-square-foot space; in July, the veteran local dealer Thomas Solomon (427 Bernard Street; 323-427-1687; [www.thomassolomongallery.com](#)) opened a space in Chinatown. And the powerhouse New York galleries L&M Arts and Matthew Marks are scheduled to open prominent spaces in 2010.

Local museums, many of which struggled financially in recent years, are back afloat. The Museum of Contemporary Art ([www.moca.org](#)) is celebrating its 30th birthday with a huge exhibition of 500 highlights from its outstanding collection of postwar art. In October, the vast [Los Angeles County Museum of Art \(www.lacma.org\)](#) will get even bigger when it unveils a [Renzo Piano](#)-designed addition to its multiacre mid-Wilshire campus. And the billionaire collector [Eli Broad](#), who has been both savior and villain to just about every major museum in town, is now looking to plant his own museum in Beverly Hills, [Santa Monica](#) or a third unnamed location. — Andrew Ferren

12. [Shanghai](#)

To many, the idea of a World Expo might seem like a dated, superfluous throwback from some preglobalized age. (Remember the one in Aichi, [Japan](#)? Enough said.) But tell that to the 70 million who are expected to attend Expo 2010 in Shanghai.

This is [China](#), after all. And following up on [Beijing's](#) spectacular Olympics, Shanghai is pulling out all the stops. From May 1 to Oct. 31, more than 200 national and other pavilions will straddle the city's Huangpu River, turning a two-square-mile site into an architectural playground: [Switzerland](#) will be represented by a building shaped like a map of that country, complete with a rooftop chairlift, while England is in the celebrated hands of the designer Thomas Heatherwick, who is fashioning what looks like a big, hairy marshmallow. Other attention grabbers include [Macao](#), taking the form of a walk-through bunny, and the [United Arab Emirates](#), which hired Foster + Partners to build a "sand dune." (By contrast, the [United States](#) pavilion might be mistaken for a suburban office park.)

In the run-up to the Expo, Shanghai seems to have taken this year's theme, "Better City, Better Life," to heart, spending tens of billions of dollars to upgrade the city. The riverfront Bund promenade is getting a makeover with parks and pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, while the subway is being dramatically expanded — including several new stations serving the World Expo site. — Aric Chen

13. [Mumbai](#)

On the one-year anniversary of the 2008 Mumbai attacks, citizens painted a one-kilometer stretch of wall

in South Mumbai with murals to show their love and hope for the city. The initiative, by a group of organizations that included the Mumbai Arts Project (MAP), which is dedicated to creating public art projects, is just one sign that Mumbai's art scene is on the rebound.

A walk through the newly dubbed Colaba Art District yields no fewer than five contemporary art galleries. In the second half of 2009, two contemporary galleries opened: Gallery BMB (www.gallerybmb.com), which brought in big-name artists from around the globe for its first show (look for an exhibition focusing on new Indian women artists, starting on Feb. 8), and Volte (www.volte.in), a gallery, cafe and bookstore. Just down the street is Project 88 (www.project88.in), an outpost of Gallery 88 in [Calcutta](#), focused on up-and-coming Indian and South Asian artists. The large, simple one-room space will show the artist Hemali Bhuta with an installation on the ceiling and archival prints on the walls, starting Jan. 18. Also nearby is Gallery Maskara (www.gallerymaskara.com), in a converted cotton storehouse; starting March 15, the space will host paintings, sculpture and watercolors by T. Venkanna, a popular artist based in nearby Vadodara. — Lindsay Clinton

14. [Minorca](#)

While the beat of disco pounds in [Ibiza](#) and [Majorca](#), their quiet sister Minorca offers a tranquil contrast to the glitz next door. The entire island is a Unesco Biosphere Reserve, so the Spanish megahotel development frenzy of the last decade has largely skipped over this patch of the Mediterranean. That means miles of beaches —some 120 of them, in fact, like the northern sweep of crystal-clear swimming waters in the coves called Cala d'Algaiarens, with fine sand and rolling dunes. And Minorca's eco-diversity extends well beyond the coasts: forests, deep gorges, wetlands, salt marshes and hillsides covered in lush greenery that sometimes look more New England than Mediterranean. Even the island's sun-bleached towns — Mahón and Ciutadella, each combining elements of their British colonial heritage, Moorish roots and modern Spanish identity — are more peaceful than their Majorcan equivalents.

The ideal visit to Minorca celebrates islanders' emphasis on agritourism — sleeping in rural establishments like Ca Na Xini (www.canaxini.com), a dairy farm that offers an eight-room temple to modernism inside the shell of a century-old manor home. It's like spring break for eco-conscious adults. — Sarah Wildman

15. [Costa Rica](#)

Costa Rica has been on any eco-minded traveler's radar for years, but with a new [birding](#) route in the northeast region of the country, there's a new reason to pay the country a visit. Opened in early 2009, the Costa Rican Bird Route (www.costaricanbirdroute.com) encompasses 13 far-flung nature reserves with phenomenal avian diversity — the sites are home to more than 500 bird species. Travelers can explore the route on their own with a map (\$12.95 when ordered online) or hire a local guide to lead the way. The most popular leg of the route centers on the Sarapiquí-San Carlos region, one of the last remaining habitats of the endangered and prized great green macaw. The landscape along the route runs from wetlands and river explorations to high [rain forest](#) canopies and waterfalls; birders can visit renowned tropical biological research stations, stay in newly built eco-lodges and [hike](#) or [canoe](#) through local family-run reserves in search of rare raptors, herons and kingfishers. — Bonnie Tsui

16. [Marrakesh](#)

The ancient walls of Marrakesh must have protected the city from the global recession. Luxury boutique hotels, which began opening a few years ago, are now popping like Champagne corks over this historic and atmospheric North African city.

La Mamounia, a famed playground for celebrities like [Mick Jagger](#) and Charlie Chaplin, reopened in November after a \$176 million face-lift by the Parisian designer Jacques Garcia (www.mamounia.com). At

its dazzling launch party, [Jennifer Aniston](#), Orlando Bloom and [Gwyneth Paltrow](#) walked the red carpet, José Carreras sang, and [Cirque du Soleil](#) acrobats wrapped in Christmas lights scaled the hotel walls.

“There was caviar galore,” said Sandra Zwollo, a Dutch expatriate who lived in La Mamounia for three years. “And not only does the new La Mamounia reflect what is happening in Marrakesh at the moment, it is greatly contributing to it.”

Ms. Zwollo herself is adding to the glamour of the city. Later this month, she plans to open Harem (www.harem-escape.com), a wellness retreat just for women, set on a stunning 12-acre estate in the city’s outskirts surrounded by olive and palm groves.

But it all pales in comparison to the palatial Royal Mansour, scheduled to open in 2010. Owned by King [Mohammed VI](#) of [Morocco](#), who is largely responsible for the country’s newfound glamour, the jaw-dropping resort is built along the city’s ancient walls and has been designed almost like a mini-medina with Andalusian-style courtyards. The 20,000-square-foot royal suite will have a private swimming pool, home theater, gym and private hammam. The resort will also feature three restaurants overseen by the three-star Michelin chef Yannick Alléno.

There’s more. By the end of 2010, the Mandarin Oriental Jnan Rahma, which looks like something out of a Merchant-Ivory movie, and a 140-room Four Seasons are both expected to open, while a Rocco Forte resort and W Hotel are in the works for 2011. — Gisela Williams

17. [Las Vegas](#)

Despite a 4 percent drop in visitors in 2009, and the fact that several Las Vegas hotels have drastically slashed their rates to attract bargain-seeking travelers, a number of ambitious developers seem to think there is still money to be made in Sin City.

CityCenter, MGM’s \$8.5 billion, 67-acre resort complex, is the Strip’s biggest headliner in 2010. Four of the six planned properties opened in December, including three hotels and a 500,000-square-foot luxury shopping mall (www.citycenter.com). The residential Veer Towers and the Harmon, a 400-room boutique hotel, are scheduled to open this year. The complex also houses Haze, a 25,000-square-foot nightclub, and Cirque du Soleil’s seventh show, “Viva Elvis,” a tribute to the king of rock ‘n’ roll.

This summer, the [Encore](#), a Steve Wynn property, is unveiling an entertainment complex and “beach club” (complete with three pools and V.I.P. cabanas), and a new nightclub, Surrender. A five-pool addition to Garden of the Gods Pool [Oasis](#) at Caesars Palace, set to open in March, will feature swim-up gaming and an 18-foot waterfall. The Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, which unveiled its Paradise Tower in July, added the all-suite HRH Tower in late December, as well as Vanity, a 14,000-square-foot nightclub. — Allison Busacca

18. [Bahia](#)

All eyes will turn to sultry [Rio de Janeiro](#) when it hosts the [2016 Olympic Games](#), but right now [Brazil’s](#) white-hot destination may be the northeastern state of Bahia. With its distinctive African-influenced flavors, cultural diversity, palm-fringed beaches and a new crop of chic hotels, the region is fast emerging as a jet-set playground.

In the village of Trancoso, a hideaway that gets more fashionable by the minute, the Dutch designer Wilbert Das (longtime creative director of the Diesel label) opened Uxua Casa Hotel (www.uxua.com) using recycled materials including old roof tiles and abandoned [fishing](#) boats. The hotel’s colorful casas and lush gardens were a canvas for the 2010 Pirelli calendar, shot by the bad-boy photographer Terry Richardson.

Speaking of the town's rising cachet, a luxury [Fasano](#) resort — with 30 beachfront villas, a restaurant and a spa — is in the works.

In [Salvador](#), known for its pulsing street carnival and the historic Pelourinho district, head to one of the city's boutique lodgings. Zank (www.zankhotel.com.br) recently opened in the residential Rio Vermelho section and seamlessly blends modern and classic styles, with exceptional views of the Atlantic Ocean just steps away. Nearby is the [Pestana Bahia](#) Lodge (www.pestana.com), with a hilltop infinity pool and sunny sea-view rooms. While there, don't miss "The Kiss" and "The Thinker" by [Auguste Rodin](#), on temporary view at the Palacete das Artes (palacetedasartesrodinbahia.blogspot.com), which opened a gallery devoted to the French sculptor. — Paola Singer

19. [Istanbul](#)

The reputation of Istanbul's contemporary art scene has been steadily growing in recent years, with the Web site ArtKnowledgeNews.com recently calling it "one of the most innovative in the world." That reputation is bound to be burnished even more this year, now that Istanbul has been named the 2010 European Capital of Culture (a designation it shares with Essen, [Germany](#), and [Pecs, Hungary](#)).

There will be a series of events, gallery shows and stage performances throughout the city to mark the occasion. (A complete list of events can be found at en.istanbul2010.org/index.htm.)

But one of the best ways to get a crash course in what Istanbul's leading artists are up to right now is to spend some time wandering around the Misir Apartments (311/4 Istiklal Cadessi), right on the busy pedestrian thoroughfare that cuts through the trendy Beygolu neighborhood. Inside this elegant, early-20th-century building are some of the city's most cutting-edge art venues, like [Galerist](#) (www.galerist.com.tr) and Gallerie Nev (www.galerinevistanbul.com)

Afterward, head to the rooftop terrace and have a drink at [360 Istanbul](#), a stylish bar and restaurant that offers stunning views of the city's skyline (360istanbul.com). — Stuart Emmrich

20. [Shenzhen](#)

Chances are, the iPod in your pocket was made in Shenzhen, China. But this industrial powerhouse of a city on the [Pearl River](#) Delta in the southern region of the country, is more than just a factory town of sweatshops and bad smog — and it has the high-class hotels and high rollers to prove it.

Shenzhen is one of China's wealthiest cities, right up there with Shanghai and Beijing. Situated just a 45-minute train ride north of [Hong Kong](#), the thriving city exemplifies China's breakneck transformation from peasant economy to capitalist giant. Its rapid rise can be traced back to 1979, when [Deng Xiaoping](#) selected the sleepy fishing port as a special economic zone. Money, bulldozers and cheap labor poured in. Dim sum joints and illicit massage parlors gave way to gleaming shopping malls and faceless skyscrapers. A city of 14 million sprang up seemingly overnight.

So did a new travel destination. A 491-room Grand Hyatt (1881 Baoan Nan Road; www.shenzhen.grand.hyatt.com), with bay views, recently opened, joining the ranks of the Kempinski Hotel Shenzhen (Hai De San Dao, Hou Hai Bin Road; www.kempinski.com/shenzhen) and a Shangri-La (1002 Jianshe Road; www.shangri-la.com/shenzhen). Even late-night massage parlors have gone upscale and legit. The Queen Spa (Chunfeng Road; www.queenspa.cn) has sleeping pods, a theater and a juice bar — all for under \$15 a night — plus massages that start at about \$25.

Affordable luxuries extend to shopping and eating. The jumble of stalls at Dongmen are clogged with pirated DVDs and knock-off handbags, while there are new fashionable restaurants in Shekou, a leafy

district with an expatriate flavor. Shenzhen is getting greener, too. The city recently welcomed the first LEED-certified building in southern China: the aptly named Horizontal Skyscraper, billed to be as long as the [Empire State Building](#) is tall. — Lionel Beehner

21. [Macedonia](#)

One of the deepest lakes on the planet, with a dazzling Unesco World Heritage site of ancient dwellings rising high above its shores, Lake Ohrid in Macedonia is a local vacation star poised for greater international acclaim.

In the tiered, terra-cotta-roofed city of Ohrid, 18 miles from the Albanian border, a lakefront settlement dating back to Neolithic times, Macedonians boast that on their side of the lake is a church, monastery or mosque for every day of the year, each full of resplendent frescoes, mosaics and icons. Notable attractions include the recently renovated church of St. Clement and St. Panteleimon at Plaosnik, an epic Byzantine masterpiece, and the 13th-century [St. John](#) of Kaneo, a limestone and brick monastery that juts out over transparent blue waters.

An estimated \$50 million renovation of the Ohrid Airport is planned for 2010, with more international flights expected by summer, and up to six new luxury hotels are in the works, including a \$33 million property with construction scheduled to begin in March. Tourist attractions on Ohrid's beaches were upgraded last year with swank bars and dining spots complimented by bamboo and leather couches, with the hot spot Cuba Libre (www.cubalibreohrid.com) leading the way.

Meanwhile, new government-financed archaeological digs around the lake regularly unearth treasures, like the 17 fifth-century tombs discovered last July. The find follows the 2008 opening of the Museum on Water, a re-created Bronze Age village built on stilts incorporating Ohrid artifacts. — Dinah Spritzer

22. [South Africa](#)

As host of the 2010 World Cup this summer, South Africa has gotten its game on with a flurry of new stadiums, new hotels and safari lodges.

While soccer is being played across nine cities, much of the action off the field is taking place in [Cape Town](#). Already known for its stunning beaches, mouthwatering cuisine and sophisticated night life, the city is welcoming high-end hotels, including the recently opened One & Only Cape Town and the forthcoming Taj Cape Town (www.tajhotels.com/capetown). Set to open this month, the Taj will have 166 rooms, many with views of [Table Mountain](#). Also scheduled to open in Cape Town this year — but not in time for the World Cup — is the second branch of the nascent Missoni Hotels group (the first property opened in [Edinburgh](#) last year, with future outposts planned for Kuwait, Brazil and [Oman](#)).

Between matches, there's plenty of time to go on a safari. If money is no object, check out the Ulusaba (www.ulusaba.virgin.com), a private game reserve that's part of [Richard Branson](#)'s collection of luxury vacation properties. It has opened the new Cliff Lodge, with private swimming pools and spectacular views of the bush. Prices start at 13,800 South African rand (around \$1,878 at 7.35 rand to the dollar) a night for two. — Denny Lee

23. [Breckenridge](#)

The [ski](#) resort of Breckenridge is not content to be merely the party capital of the Colorado Rockies — now it wants to be the [Amsterdam](#), too. For its 150th birthday, the former mining town — known for its anything-goes reputation among ski fanatics — recently passed an ordinance to decriminalize possession of small amounts of [marijuana](#).

But even without the law, Breckenridge has plenty going for it, and not just the town's main strip, which is already an après-ski bonanza of Irish joints, upscale restaurants and boutique shops. The BreckConnect Gondola now whisks skiers from town to the slopes in a matter of minutes. And the bases at Peak 7 and Peak 8 are barely recognizable from a few years back. A case in point is the recently opened Grand Lodge on Peak 7 (866-664-9782; www.grandlodgeonpeak7.com), which just rolled out a full-service spa and fitness center called Soothe.

Don't expect any Amsterdam-style "coffee shops" near the slopes anytime soon: the new ordinance applies only to the town of Breckenridge, not the mountain. — Lionel Beehner

24. [Montenegro](#)

On the southern edges of Montenegro, almost at the border of [Albania](#), is an unusual land formation: a powdery, eight-mile-long beach called Velika Plaza (Long Beach) and a triangular island where the Bojana River meets the sea. The island is called Ada Bojana, and the area is quickly becoming a party destination for the young surfer set.

While the fantastic weather and soft gray beaches have drawn Eastern Europeans for decades, breezy thermal winds are bringing kitesurfers from Germany, England and France, who are turning Velika Plaza into a wave-riding capital on the Adriatic.

The cheap beer doesn't hurt, either. The area is so undeveloped that the only resort is a faded nudist camp popular with Germans. In the meantime, travelers who want to keep their clothes on can book a 26-euro room (about \$37, at \$1.40 to the euro) at the Hotel Mediteran (hotel-mediteran.com) in the small city of Ulcinj, a 15-minute water taxi ride north. —Gisela Williams

25. [Vancouver Island](#)

[Vancouver](#) will have the sporting world's attention when it hosts the Winter Olympics this year, but the most rewarding outdoor exploration is found outside the city, away from the crowds and off the beaten path. Hop the BC Ferry (www.bcferrries.com) from Vancouver to Nanaimo, on Vancouver Island's east coast, and drive three hours through mountain passes to the wild, dramatic west coast. The new Wild Pacific Trail (www.wildpacifictrail.com) skirts the rocky, rugged shoreline, overlooking sandy coves lined with driftwood and tidepools and the Pacific beyond them.

The hiking trail is being built in sections (there are three of seven set up so far), hand-cut through dense old-growth forests of cedar and spruce, with viewing platforms that let hikers see turn-of-the-20th-century lighthouses, kayakers heading to nearby islands, and the annual gray whale migration (about 20,000 pass by the island from February to late May). The base for the Wild Pacific Trail is a folksy fishing village called Ucluelet, a former First Nations settlement dotted with seaside inns, bed-and-breakfasts and beach cabins like the Terrace Beach Resort (www.terracebeachresort.ca), which has direct access to the trail. BONNIE TSUI

26. [Colombia](#)

Unfairly or not, Colombia is still known for its cocaine cartels and street violence, but cool-hunting travelers are calling it Latin America's next affordable hot spot.

Bogotá, its capital, has emerged as a role model of urban reinvention. Starting in the late 1990s, the city underwent a breathtaking transformation. Sidewalks, once used mainly for parking, are now lined with bicycle paths and tree-shaded cafes. An innovative bus system zips residents across the traffic-congested city. And museums and restaurants have opened in its historic center, including the refurbished [Museo del Oro](#), which houses pre-Columbian treasures.

Getting there is affordable, too. JetBlue recently began nonstop daily service to Bogotá from [Orlando, Fla.](#), joining other carriers including Delta.

Meanwhile, the picturesque coastal city of Cartagena, a Unesco World Heritage site, which has been experiencing a tourism surge in recent years, gets even more stylish. The latest addition is the Tcherassi Hotel + Spa (www.tcherassihotels.com), a seven-room boutique hotel designed by Silvia Tcherassi, a Colombian fashion designer. It has even prompted some travel bloggers to call Cartagena the next [Buenos Aires](#). — Denny Lee

27. [Kitzbühel](#)

Most Austrians know the Austrian town of Kitzbühel as nothing less than a ski paradise, with 53 lifts and 104 miles of powdery slopes. But in the past few years, Kitzbühel has started to earn a reputation for its high-end dining — three restaurants with Michelin stars, with two more Michelin-starred joints outside town — making this small Alpine village of just 8,439 inhabitants an up-and-coming attraction for food lovers as well.

Many of the most celebrated kitchens are in hotels, like the five-star Hotel Tennerhof (www.tennerhof.com), with one Michelin star and three Gault-Millau toques, and the Hotel Schwarzer Adler, which houses the Neuwirt restaurant (www.restaurant-neuwirt.at), serving updated Central European fare like goose liver with baked almond milk and plums. The A-Rosa resort and spa (www.resort.a-rosa.de), is host to no fewer than three restaurants, including KAPS, which was awarded its Michelin star in November 2008 and is known for its “Poor Man’s Menu,” a set dinner of traditional recipes from the region.

The highest fliers, however, seem to hide outside the village: [Rosengarten](#), the only restaurant in the area to earn two Michelin stars (it was upgraded to two in 2009), is less than four miles away in Kirchberg. From there, it is about a 30-minute drive to Restaurant Schindlhaus (www.schindlhaus.com) in Söll, where the Winkler brothers, Christian and Markus, run a kitchen known for its dedication to local ingredients.

Naturally, you can’t expect meals at a top ski destination to go cheap. If the high-end prices are beyond your means, try something a little more bucolic: the barn at the 400-year-old Stanglwirt hotel (www.stanglwirt.com), where a lovely stube, or pub, serves schnitzel and goulash next to grazing cows. — Evan Rail

28. [Norway](#)

With an acclaimed new opera house and plenty of high-end dining options, [Oslo](#) is already a must-visit urban destination. But this year the focus should be on the wilds of the Norwegian countryside. With its dazzling Nordic light and dramatic landscape, Norway is perhaps the most unexplored and exotic corner of [Europe](#). Having convinced the world that its fjords and southern coastline make the country a great summer getaway, Norwegians have begun showcasing its charms as a winter destination.

Specialized trekking and ski tours like those offered by the Lyngen Lodge (www.lyngenlodge.com) can open up pristine areas of the north like the stunning Lyngen Alps, with high-speed boats to shuttle across the fjord to ski trails that would otherwise be inaccessible.

And the country’s indifference to trendy boutique hotels and splashy resorts — long the lament of global tourism professionals — is just what appeals to a more discerning clientele. Bespoke travel specialists like Ziniry (www.ziniry.com) excel at getting visitors deep into the scenery. Who needs a penthouse suite when you can book a lighthouse on a private island? — Andrew Ferren

29. [Gargano](#)

Far from the madding crowds of [Amalfi](#) and Cinque Terre, the Italian peninsula of Gargano sits on the Adriatic and boasts a checklist of summer-perfect Italian holiday options. The offerings are largely a part of the protected Gargano National Park, a swath of terrain encompassing everything from the oak and beech Foresta Umbra to the sheer chalk-colored cliffs and grottoes of the coast's [Caribbean](#)-clear waters to the postcard-worthy whitewashed villages that hug the sea. Twelve nautical miles offshore, accessible by boat and hydrofoil, are the Tremiti Islands, specks of land surrounded by a wealth of sea life and a marine reserve of their own.

Looking for Romanesque churches and seaside fisherman's restaurants? Try Peschici and Vieste, larger than fishing villages but cozier than cities, with white walls and medieval centers. How about mountain hiking? Check. Gargano also offers the rarest of luxuries: fabulous food and lodging on the cheap — campsites offer space for mere pocket change, while hotel rooms can be had for 30 to 60 euros a night (\$42 to \$84 at \$1.40 to the euro) in Peschici. If saving on food is wallet-friendly enough, pay a bit more than 100 euros and stay at the Chiusa delle More (www.lachusadellemore.it), a 16th-century farmhouse in the national park but still only yards from the sea. Meals are locavore, Gargano style, incorporating the farm's own vegetables and eggs. — Sarah Wildman

30. [Kuala Lumpur](#)

While [Phuket](#) and [Angkor Wat](#) are tourism anchors in Southeast Asia, jetsetters in the region are heading these days to Kuala Lumpur, the Malaysian capital that's quietly evolved into one of the area's coolest and friendliest cities.

Not only are K.L.-ites diehard foodies, fiercely proud of a robust street food scene that straddles Chinese, Indian and Malay flavors — check out the food blog EatingAsia (www.eatingasia.typepad.com) — they're also shopaholics, spending weekends trawling boutiques for the latest looks emerging from the sophisticated local fashion scene.

The country's media-appointed King of Fashion is Bernard Chandran, who recently stole the spotlight when Lady Gaga wore one of his candy-pink minidresses to an awards show in [London](#). His concept store is at the KL Plaza on Jalan Bukit Bintang. Another designer to look out for is Khoon Hooi, known for streamlined yet feminine dresses in muted tones, sold at his flagship store in the ritzy Starhill Gallery; and Melinda Looi, who makes vintage-inspired cocktail dresses from chiffon.

Bloggers at Tongue in Chic keep vigilant watch over the city's fashion temples, which are clustered along the streets of Jalan Telawi 2 and 3 in the suburb of Bangsar, a 15-minute cab ride from the city center. To showcase the young designers, the blog recently started Chic POP, a flea market held every three months at one of K.L.'s most prestigious dance clubs, Zouk (www.zoukclub.com.my). — Naomi Lindt

31. [Nepal](#)

[San Francisco](#), Amsterdam and [Provincetown](#)? Been there. [Mykonos](#) and Ibiza? Done that. Looking for the next gay destination? How about the Himalayan country of Nepal? Yes, Nepal.

In the roughly two years since the nation's supreme court ordered that gay, lesbians and transgendered people be afforded equal rights, this conservative, mostly-Hindu country appears to be moving ahead full throttle.

Gay friendly clubs now dot its capital. (Go to www.utopia-asia.com for listings.) A "third gender" category is an option on national I.D. cards. Recently, a transgender beauty queen even got a photo op with the prime minister. And now there's a tourist agency in [Katmandu](#) that is promoting gay tourism to Nepal.

Started by Sunil Babu Pant, an openly-gay legislator, Pink Mountain Travels and Tours (www.pinkyatra.com) promises to marry adventure travel with gay weddings. With talk that Nepal may legalize [same-sex marriage](#) this year as the country hammers out a new constitution (and, perhaps more importantly, deals with recent bouts of civil unrest), Mr. Pant is offering to hold nuptials at the Mount Everest base camp, jungle safari honeymoons and bridal processions on elephant back. — Aric Chen

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