

TheLuxeList

15 SMART LUXURY DEALS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Our expert editors, deal specialists, and researchers have scoured the Web and scanned the globe to find the best luxury deals of the season. The result? Fabulous hotel and spa packages, and exotic trips—all *you* have to do is go.

By Molly Fergus, Darren Frei, Amber Nolan, Elissa Richard, Andrew Skwarek, and Liz Webber



CITIES
In need of a cosmopolitan escape?
Go to **P.58**



BEACHES
Desperately seeking surf and sand?
Go to **P.60**



CRUISES
Exotic ports of call beckoning?
Go to **P.62**



OFF THE PATH
Looking to bring home bragging rights?
Go to **P.64**



GOLF & SPA
Play the links or work out the kinks?
Go to **P.66**



WANT MORE DEALS? Look for the **Smart Luxury** tab on **ShermansTravel.com**.



West Hollywood's Sunset Marquis



Hong Kong



New Orleans's International House

1 New Orleans

Indulge in the Big Easy

SHERMAN'S EXCLUSIVE

THE LUXURY Just blocks from the French Quarter, International House is a boutique hotel that exudes a decadently plush vibe without feeling gaudy or outdated. Johnny Depp's designer of choice, LM Pagano, renovated the 1906 Beaux Arts building three years ago. It now showcases antique velvets, objets d'art from around the world, and room details that tastefully pay homage to the Big Easy's jazz history. The 117 rooms include spalike bathrooms, Aveda bath amenities, and complimentary Wi-Fi access.

THE VALUE Book by February 13 for stays through the end of March and get a deluxe queen room for \$199/night, a 25 percent savings. On-site extras for *Smart Luxury Travel* readers include two drinks at voodoo-chic bar Loa and breakfast at Basque-influenced restaurant Rambla.

THE CATCH Some dates are not available, including several days before and during Mardi Gras (from late February to early March).

THE DETAILS 800/633-5770 (mention Luxe List); ihhotel.com



2 West Hollywood, Calif.

Get the Celebrity Treatment in LA

SHERMAN'S EXCLUSIVE

THE LUXURY The Sunset Marquis is a favorite hideaway for celebrities like George Clooney, Brad Pitt, and Angelina Jolie. The 150 suites and villas located right off LA's Sunset Strip deliver star treatment with Frette linens, marble bathrooms, and balconies; the deluxe suites and villas provide great garden views. The spa pampers guests with Porsche massage beds and Erbe herbal products. Dine on French contemporary cuisine with a California twist at Restaurant, and unwind with Hollywood A-listers at Bar 1200.

THE VALUE Readers booking a deluxe one-bedroom suite (from \$330/night) in January, March, and April will get upgraded to a deluxe one-bedroom villa (if available), an extra 30 minutes when booking a 50-minute facial or massage, and daily breakfast, all worth \$290.

THE CATCH The package is not available in February, during awards season.

THE DETAILS 310/657-1222 (mention Luxe List); sunsetmarquis.com



3 China and Hong Kong

Explore an Ancient Culture

SHERMAN'S EXCLUSIVE

THE LUXURY Top China tour specialist Wendy Wu Tours offers a 12-night sampler itinerary mixing well-known attractions with lesser-known charms. A China Experience for *Smart Luxury Travel* readers includes a mainland visit and a Hong Kong extension, with excursions led by expert local guides. Highlights include the Terracotta Warriors in Xian, the Forbidden City in Beijing, and cosmopolitan Shanghai.

THE VALUE Rates start at \$2,880 and include airfare from LA or New York, stays at four-star hotels, most meals, tours, entertainment, transfers, and visa fees. Readers will receive perks totaling \$320, including a spa package and a guided day trip to Macau or a sunset dinner cruise in Hong Kong.

THE CATCH The group tours typically include 20 or fewer travelers. An upgrade to a private tour runs an extra \$800 a person.

THE DETAILS 877/993-6399 (mention *Smart Luxury Travel*); wendywuschina.com



4 Montego Bay, Jamaica

Delight in Classic Beachside Glamour

SHERMAN'S EXCLUSIVE

THE LUXURY Jet-setting beachgoers have been flocking to the glamorous Round Hill Hotel and Villas since the resort debuted in the '50s. Situated about 8 miles west of Montego Bay, the lodgings include 27 private villas, 58 villa suites, and the Pineapple House's 36 Ralph Lauren-designed hotel rooms. The setting is prime for water lovers, with private pools in numerous villas, an infinity pool overlooking the Caribbean, and 400 yards of private, golden-sand beaches.

THE VALUE Readers who book at least four nights at Round Hill by January 31 save 25 percent off standard rates (from \$429/night for ocean-view rooms, or \$519/night for villa garden junior suites). They also receive a \$400 resort credit (valid at the on-site spa and restaurants) and a complimentary bottle of Jamaican Appleton Rum at check-in.

THE CATCH Mandatory service charges tack on \$87 more a night.

THE DETAILS 800/972-2159 (mention code SmartLuxe); roundhill.com



Jamaica



Mexico's Playa Viva

5 Guerrero, Mexico

Unwind at a Lavish Eco-Resort

SHERMAN'S EXCLUSIVE

THE LUXURY Set on 200 private acres, Playa Viva is a 30-minute drive south of Zihuatenejo on Mexico's Pacific Coast. The all-inclusive eco-resort features a mile-long beach, an Aztec archeological site, and a turtle sanctuary. All five of the resort's open-air, thatched-roof casitas have ocean views, canopy beds, and design elements created by regional craftspeople. Meals are prepared from local and organic ingredients when possible. Activity options include surfing, swimming, and whale watching.

THE VALUE From January 2 to March 31, readers who stay three nights get the fourth one free, which brings rates to \$222/night for a studio and \$297/night for a deluxe suite. Two one-hour massages and all meals and airport transfers are included. The overall savings represent a 30 percent discount on high season rates.

THE CATCH Taxes, tips, fees for excursions, bar drinks, and other spa services are not covered.

THE DETAILS 650/585-6770 (use code Sherman11 for 2011); playaviva.com

6 Paracas, Peru

Escape to Secluded Sands

SHERMAN'S EXCLUSIVE

THE LUXURY Well-heeled Limeños head south to Paracas, for its isolated shores and serene desert-meets-the-sea landscape. The recently renovated 120-room Hotel Paracas has two pools, a private dock, cabanas, and sweeping coastal views. Adventurous guests can take a private flight to see the Nazca Lines, a series of ancient geoglyphs.

THE VALUE Those who book at least three nights of this package by January 31 for travel through April receive: superior oceanview accommodations with daily breakfast, a coca massage, a water circuit spa treatment, and a boat tour of the Ballestas islands (a sea lion sanctuary). The cost is \$209 a person nightly, a 43 percent savings off of à la carte prices.

THE CATCH Paracas's breezy Pacific beaches are more suited for windsurfing and secluded sunning than swimming. There is no cabana service or bustling oceanfront scene.

THE DETAILS 877/778-2281 (mention *Smart Luxury Travel*); luxurycollection.com/hotelparacas

TOP: COURTESY ROUND HILL RESORTS & SPAS. BOTTOM: COURTESY GEROLD SINNHOFER/COURTESY PLAYA VIVA

7 Germany, France, and Switzerland

Glide Past Castles and Vineyards

SHERMAN'S EXCLUSIVE

THE LUXURY With a fleet that debuted two years ago, Canada-based Scenic Tours' European river cruises offer in-suite butler service, three dining venues, and full balconies in most of the staterooms. Guests can embark from Amsterdam on a 13-night journey, stopping in medieval German towns, Luxembourg, and France's Alsatian wine region, before winding down in Basel, Switzerland.

THE VALUE The cost of the March 30 Romantic Rhine and Moselle river cruise starts at \$4,105, \$615 lower than other 2011 excursions. Readers who book by February 28 will save \$500 a person on March and April sailings from Amsterdam (March departure only) or Basel. Rates cover all excursions, beer, wine, soft drinks, and gratuities.

THE CATCH Port charges and fees, which total \$265 a person, are additional.

THE DETAILS 866/689-8611 (mention *Smart Luxury Travel*); scenic tours.com

8 St. Thomas, Puerto Rico, and St. Maarten

Experience a New Class of Elegance

SHERMAN'S EXCLUSIVE

THE LUXURY On the 2,850-passenger *Celebrity Solstice*, guests can stroll along a half acre of grass, take in a glass-blowing demonstration, or eat in a dining room with a glistening two-story glass wine tower. Seven-night voyages from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, to the eastern Caribbean stop at San Juan, Puerto Rico; Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas; and Philipsburg, St. Maarten.

THE VALUE Over Presidents' Day and spring break, veranda staterooms are priced at \$1,009. Readers who book veranda staterooms or higher-priced accommodations for the February 20 and March 13 sailings will also receive a \$50 onboard credit. This deal is available to be booked through January 31.

THE CATCH Three days spent at sea may prove too much for more port-oriented travelers.

THE DETAILS 800/647-2251 (mention code SCW2); celebrity.com

9 Kerala, India

Sail Enchanting Backwaters

SHERMAN'S EXCLUSIVE

THE LUXURY The Oberoi motor vessel *Vrinda*, which sails the backwaters of Kerala, India, shares the elegant appointments typically found in Oberoi hotels. Voyagers will spend three nights in one of eight timber-wood framed cabins, with picture windows providing views of the Alleppey Canal. Onboard, costumed musicians and dancers will provide insight into Indian culture. Separate excursions involve sailing on handbuilt rice boats to temples and traditional homes.

THE VALUE Readers can save 10 percent on trips from February through April; reduced rates start at \$2,060 per cabin (based on double occupancy). Travelers from Mumbai receive two complimentary nights at The Oberoi, Mumbai.

THE CATCH Nonstop routes to Mumbai offer the easiest access from the States, but the hotel is more than 850 miles from the ship's embarkation point, near Kochi, necessitating an extra flight.

THE DETAILS 800/562-3764 (mention *Smart Luxury Travel*); oberoihotels.com



See the South Pacific like never before...



Australia



New Zealand



Cook Islands

South Pacific Islands *in Style*

18-nights from \$11,150* (air inclusive)

Take a journey through Australia, New Zealand, and the Cook Islands. From *Sydney* city life to the secluded *Great Barrier Reef*, from a winery tour outside *Auckland* to a *Queenstown* wilderness safari, and some "down-time" in the *Cook Islands*, experience all the South Pacific has to offer - while bedding down each night in the region's top luxury hotels.

AUSTRALIA • NEW ZEALAND • SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS • AFRICA • CHINA • SOUTHEAST ASIA • INDIA • MALDIVES

With more than 24 years of expertise, trust the Swain team to plan your most extraordinary travel experiences.

Call 1.800.227.9246
Visit www.SwainTours.com

AIR NEW ZEALAND

*Prices are per person/twin share in USD including international airfare from Los Angeles aboard Air New Zealand. Valid for travel 1/11-8/31/11. US and Govt. taxes and fees of approx \$208 are additional. Subject to availability. Conditions apply. CST# 2012413-20



10 Nairobi, Kenya

Explore the African Wilderness
SHERMAN'S EXCLUSIVE

THE LUXURY The seven-night Ultimate Luxury Kenya Experience starts in Nairobi at the boutique hotel House of Waine. Travelers will then spend three nights at the tiny Saruni Samburu lodge set in a private wildlife conservancy harboring elephants, giraffes, zebras, and oryx. Finally, guests stay three nights at Saruni Mara, a six-cottage complex in a private park adjoining the Masai Mara National Reserve, where leopards, elephants, and impalas roam.

THE VALUE Extraordinary Journeys is offering a 10 percent discount on this safari package for readers, as well as the exclusive use of a vehicle each day, a massage for two, and a guided forest walk. The cost per person is \$700/night from January 3 through March 15 and October 1 through December 15. For travelers willing to brave the rainy season, the cost is \$564/night from March 16 through May 31.

THE CATCH International airfare to Kenya, which is not included, runs about \$1,000 round-trip from New York.

THE DETAILS 212/246-7640 (mention *Smart Luxury Travel*); ejafrica.com

11 Stowe, Vermont

Bed Down in Cozy Mountain Digs
SHERMAN'S EXCLUSIVE

THE LUXURY Stowe Mountain Lodge's ski-in, ski-out location in northwest Vermont makes it easy for powder buffs to schuss the resort's 100-plus trails, including those on Mount Mansfield, the state's highest peak. An on-site ski valet can prebook lessons and lift tickets, ship equipment cross-country, and heat boots. The concierge will arrange dinner reservations and stock in-room refrigerators with requested treats. The 21,000-square-foot spa and wellness center can pamper sore muscles. Most of the 312 guest rooms feature marble bathrooms, stone fireplaces, and floor-to-ceiling mountain views.

THE VALUE Readers who book this package by February 28 for travel through March 31 will receive 25 percent off room rates, two one-day lift tickets (worth \$89 each), and a \$50 spa credit. Rates with the discount start at \$194/night.

THE CATCH This package requires a two-night minimum stay, and holiday dates are not included.

THE DETAILS 888/478-6938 (mention code LuxeList); stowemountainlodge.com

12 Cairns, Australia

Dive by the Great Barrier Reef
SHERMAN'S EXCLUSIVE

THE LUXURY The 128-room Pullman Reef Hotel Casino, on Trinity Inlet in Cairns, Australia, features rooms with Jacuzzi-style baths, plush linens, and verandas with water or city views. A special package includes a five-day Learn to Dive course with Pro Dive Cairns and culminates with three days of exploring the Great Barrier Reef.

THE VALUE The *Smart Luxury Travel* special covers four nights in the hotel, two nights on a dive vessel (expect bare-bones accommodations), nine dives, use of scuba equipment, all meals onboard, and the cost of PADI Gold Open Water Certification. Rates start at \$1,265 a person, a savings of more than 25 percent off the standard Learn to Dive course, for travel through March 31.

THE CATCH Airfare is extra; a round-trip ticket from LA to Cairns, with a stop in Sydney, Brisbane, Singapore, or Hong Kong costs about \$1,300.

THE DETAILS 61/740-315-255 (mention code ShermanTravelSpecial); reefcasino.com.au and prodivercairns.com

13 Avon, Colorado

Relax at a Rockies Ski and Spa Retreat
SHERMAN'S EXCLUSIVE

THE LUXURY Nestled near the Beaver Creek ski resort (and connected to the lifts by gondola), the Silver LEED-certified Westin Riverfront Resort & Spa has 230 residences, with full kitchens and gas fireplaces in the suites. The environmentally friendly 23,000-square-foot Spa Anjali offers mountain-inspired treatments, such as a glacial-mud body wrap. Guests can dine on a seasonal menu at the West Coast-influenced Restaurant Avondale or visit the lobby wine bar.

THE VALUE Through April 17, the Ski & Spa Escape package includes four nights' accommodations in a studio suite, a \$300 spa credit, two three-day ski passes, and daily breakfast for two. Rates start at \$531/night—a savings of more than \$1,000, considering à la carte rates for the lodging and extras.

THE CATCH There is a four-night minimum stay required for the package.

THE DETAILS 866/949-1616 (use code LLSLTPLH); westinriverfrontbeavercreek.com

14 Big Sur, California

Find Refinement in a Rugged Paradise
SHERMAN'S EXCLUSIVE

THE LUXURY The elegant digs at the Ventana Inn and Spa grant a lavish retreat seamlessly integrated into 243 private acres of redwoods and craggy cliffs, with ocean views. Visitors can soak under the stars in Japanese hot baths, rejuvenate at the spa, savor locally sourced meals at the Restaurant at Ventana, or merely contemplate the wilderness from one of the 60 spacious suites and guest rooms. Most come with woodburning fireplaces and private balconies or patios.

THE VALUE Available through April, the three-night Starry, Starry Nights package includes \$200 in dining credits, two 50-minute spa treatments, daily breakfasts, a wine and cheese reception, and guided property walks and yoga sessions. Rates start at \$469/night. (In comparison, à la carte room rates begin near \$500/night.) Readers will also receive a complimentary room upgrade, if available.

THE CATCH It's not available on weekends.

THE DETAILS 800/628-6500 (mention *Smart Luxury Travel*); ventanainn.com

15 Scottsdale, Arizona

Tee Off on Sophisticated Desert Greens
SHERMAN'S EXCLUSIVE

THE LUXURY The 15-story Talking Stick Resort's 497 rooms and suites overlook sparse mountain-and-desert landscapes and verdant golf courses. The Scottsdale, Arizona, retreat opened in April and has seven restaurants, four lounges, and a 240,000-square-foot casino. Guests can visit the two courses at sister property Talking Stick Golf Club, designed by Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw. Golfers may select tee times at the grassy, links-style North course or the traditional, tree-lined fairways of the South course.

THE VALUE The Par Fore the Course package (offered through March) includes deluxe accommodations. Prices start at \$299/night (\$100 off standard rates) and cover a round of golf at Talking Stick's two courses. Readers will also receive a \$50 resort credit.

THE CATCH Only one guest can redeem the round of golf; winter greens fees start at \$80.

THE DETAILS 866/877-9897 (mention *Smart Luxury Travel*); talkingstickresort.com

The Caribbean you're looking for

CARIBBEAN



From the lush greenery of St. Vincent to the beautiful white sands of the Grenadines, our unspoiled islands are the Caribbean you're looking for.

For more information, please visit www.discoversvg.com or call 1-800-729-1726.



ST. VINCENT
& THE GRENADINES
www.discoversvg.com

Photo Credit: www.insandoutsafsvg.com