



| Travel |

Parts Unknown

Hotels made for escapists, the most private ways to get around and intel on how to navigate travel's new normal *By Kissa Castañeda*

PRIVACY PLEASE

As borders begin to open, travellers are actively searching for the best place to go for a post-lockdown escape. The safest bet? A private island in a beautiful, secluded setting. That is exactly what's on offer at Kokomo Private Island in Fiji, a multimillion-dollar passion project of Australian real-estate tycoon Lang Walker that satisfies the need for ultimate privacy, in a tropical paradise no less.

Kokomo's new island buyout package includes full board, a suite of tailored activities and can accommodate a maximum of 140 guests across its 21 beachfront villas and five luxury hilltop residences. Each of the latter features three to six bedrooms, an open-plan living space, an expansive deck equipped with a BBQ and an outdoor dining area, a tropical garden and an infinity pool, all serviced by your very own butler.

Not that you'll spend much time indoors—the 55-hectare island is embraced by the Great Astrolabe Reef, perfect for manta ray swims, fishing expeditions and coral reef restoration dives with the in-house marine biologist, Cliona O' Flaherty.

While the price for the buyout package—starting at US\$150,000 per night—sounds steep, if you can fill all the beds, that's about US\$1,000 a head.

kokomoislandfiji.com

Flying High

Freedom of movement is the ultimate luxury—here are two ways to take to the skies with peace of mind



AMAN PRIVATE JET

Whether you're planning to go Aman hopping or visiting a mix of hotels in different destinations, Aman's private jet concierge will carefully plan everything for you and your party of 12. The flights themselves are highly customised, with menus tailored to your preferences and flexible departure times, plus seamless check-in and customs clearance. So hop on this Bombardier Global 5000 and choose your own adventure. aman.com/private-aviation



VISTA JET

The brand's new jet-to-yacht service offers a hassle-free way to get to your own superyacht or chartered vessel. It flies travellers to Malta—a country the World Health Organisation has highlighted as a role model in battling the Covid-19 pandemic—which serves as a convenient jumping-off point to sail the Mediterranean's azure waters. All you need is a passport and visa for travel to Malta and you can leave Vista Jet to sort the rest. vistajet.com

Annandale's sleek, modern cabins are nestled in New Zealand's stunning Pigeon Bay



| *The Shortlist* |

Remote Hideaways

Self-isolation has transformed even the most social people into travel introverts. Expert itinerant James Lohan, who founded boutique hotel platform Mr & Mrs Smith with his wife, Tamara, introduces three places where you can detach from the world but still enjoy your creature comforts

ANNANDALE, NEW ZEALAND

Scrubby Bay is one of four properties on this wave-gazing working farm nestled into New Zealand's picturesque Pigeon Bay. With wood-clad living spaces and enormous windows, it epitomises the trend of bringing the outdoors in. If you're looking to unplug and unwind for a few days, the secluded scenery is just about the best tonic you could wish for.

DEPLAR FARM, ICELAND

A remote sheep croft in the snow-cloaked north of Iceland, Deplar Farm is the ultimate private house hotel. The fire-warmed bar is home to a full-blown band set-up, should musically inclined guests feel like an impromptu jam session; out in the frozen surrounds you can try everything

from snowmobiling to ice fishing. We love the geothermally heated open-air pool (complete with swim-up bar) and, since the skies above are impossibly clear, it's the perfect place to (hopefully) catch a glimpse of those elusive Northern Lights.

MORUKURU BEACH LODGE, SOUTH AFRICA

Hunkering down in South Africa's vast De Hoop Nature Reserve, just three hours from Cape Town, clifftop Morukuru sits beyond a bank of 30-metre-high sand dunes. Wildlife roams freely here, so you'll see zebras, flamingos, ostriches and more, though the star sightings have to be the pods of whales that breach just off the coast between July and October. You'd struggle to design a hideaway that segues so effortlessly into its surroundings. mrandmrsmith.com

| Spotlight |

Tokyo Calling

Get to know the arrivals defining the hotel boom in Japan, starting with a boutique property right at the heart of the city's newest hotspot

The Olympics may be postponed until 2021 but that's no reason to pass up a trip to Japan. Consider it research for next year's big event or a treat after months of being cooped up indoors. With that in mind, why not begin by exploring Tokyo's less trodden districts? Close to the elegant, cobblestone streets of Marunouchi is Kabuto-cho in Nihonbashi, a financial area that is home to the Tokyo Stock Exchange and a neighbourhood currently experiencing a creative renaissance.

At the centre of its transformation is K5, a new boutique hotel housed in a 1920s former bank building revitalised by Swedish design firm Claesson Koivisto Rune. The practice not only designed the Scandi-Japanese minimalist interiors but also dozens of bespoke pieces, from the hotel's seating down to its pencils. K5's converted spaces feature an explosion of on-trend greenery and house a micro-complex of restaurants and bars, including a wine bar set in a library, a Brooklyn Brewery-driven beer hall, a Chinese medicine-meets-mixology concept that produces natural cocktails, and Caveman, the second restaurant by acclaimed Japanese chef Atsuki Kuroda of Kabi.

k5-tokyo.com



If you're looking for a short trip out of Tokyo...

A quick bullet train ride brings you to historical destinations with snazzy new luxury hotel openings



100 Minutes

Those in search of an overnight trip should skip Hakone in favour of mythical Nikko, which has serene lakes and waterfalls and numerous Shinto shrines. Located within Nikko National Park, the new Ritz-Carlton Nikko opens this month featuring views of Lake Chuzenji and the sacred slopes of Mount Nantai, as well as offering Ritz-Carlton's first hot-spring experience.

Images K5/Design Hotels, Marriott Hotels and Resorts



Small Talk

YUTA OKA

The founding partner of InSitu, a hotel development company that includes K5 in Tokyo among its properties, Oka has always been curious about the evolution of cities. Here, he provides his guide to exploring Tokyo as a local

Is it still worth visiting Shibuya? Where should we go after crossing the Scramble?

The most interesting thing about Shibuya is the fact that it's constantly changing and updating itself. The front part of Shibuya station and the former railroad tracks of the Tokyu line are going through a major reinvention. A few years after Hikarie opened, more mega complexes such as Scramble Square, Fukuras and Shibuya Stream—Google moved its Japan HQ to the latter—have made their mark here. However, my favourite joints in Shibuya are hidden within smaller-scale buildings and tucked into the back streets. Umebachee is a great place for chicken sashimi and Japanese sake. After a meal, I go for a deeper stroll over to Kairyō-yū, a renovated public bathhouse, to take a dip and a enjoy a few sauna sessions.

Where should we go to discover the old Tokyo?

The eastern parts of the city, specifically Asakusa, Kuramae and Kiyosumi, are considered the traditional *shitamachi* [downtown] areas. They are full of hole-in-the-wall type izakayas and *kakuuchis*, hybrids of a bar and a liquor store where people can try different sakes. Recently, establishments such as Nui Hostel & Bar Lounge, Blue Bottle and Dandelion Chocolate have taken residence in renovated old industrial buildings, and these social nodes have made the area much more interesting. Creators, artists and designers are now flocking over to the east side from the west, forming communities, opening up speciality cafes, restaurants and charming boutiques showcasing Japanese craftsmanship.

Why did you choose Nihonbashi as the location of your first hotel, K5?

Nihonbashi is the connecting point between the new (west) and the old (east) side of Tokyo. It's largely known as a financial and commercial



hub—if you type in “Tokyo” on Google Maps, you will land at Nihonbashi—but originally it was also home to craftsmen and there has been a recent movement to revitalise the area. The neighbourhood around K5 is expected to welcome a new bistro, a patisserie, a co-working space, several bars and bonsai shops, and I believe it is the city's newest hotspot.

How do you escape the urban jungle that is Tokyo?

One could always go forest bathing in the city, and for me that means being in nature while enjoying a good cup of coffee. The Kiyosumi Garden is a great place to hang out, especially ideal for a walk—or run if so inclined—alongside Sumida River. My all-time favourite green space, however, is Arisugawa-no-miya Memorial Park in Hiroo. The density of greenery and the international vibe of the area work in perfect harmony; plus, my top book-reading cafe, Nem Coffee & Espresso, is right by the park.



4 Hours

Fancy mingling with friendly deer while roaming historic sites? Jump on the shinkansen to the ancient capital of Nara, home to Japan's oldest palace and three Unesco World Heritage Sites (more than any other prefecture in the country). Opening this summer is JW Marriott Hotel Nara, the only international property in the area, which also marks the brand's debut in Japan.