

R ADVANCED RETREATS

Luxury and exclusivity exceed all expectations at these singular properties

When most people describe their dream holiday, they are picturing a secluded island or exclusive resort that provides royal comforts and an escape from the bustling outside world. These blissful bespoke stays come with the rejuvenating spa treatments, decadent meals and fun activities. With services that go above and beyond, it is their prime location and other amenities not seen at most hotels that set them apart.

Chalet Zermatt Peak

Overlooking the magnificent snow-capped Matterhorn is a lavish luxury chalet with spectacular architecture, resplendent interiors and top-notch hospitality that conjure a lifetime of wonderful memories. A stay at Chalet Zermatt Peak commences with staff ushering you through a candle-lit tunnel into 820 square

metres of space spanning five deluxe double bedrooms for 10 people with balconies and bathrooms with walk-in showers, living area, a fully equipped kitchen, wine cellar and indoor swimming pool. Floor-to-ceiling windows gift vacationers panoramic views of Zermatt, and there's a terrace that stargazers will adore.

Beyond this, the chalet boasts a wellness space with a sauna room offering wet Finnish and dry Swedish experiences, a hammam featuring bio steam, and indoor and outdoor jacuzzis.

Professional masseuses are on hand to provide a range of refreshing and aromatic spa treatments.

As for gastronomy, the quality of food is credited as one reason why guests choose the chalet time and again. Meals are prepared and tailored to your party's whims by an in-house gourmet chef, and connoisseurs will find wines for perfect pairings. Afternoon tea is also

served every day with Champagne if desired.

The temptation would be never to leave this oasis of consummate comfort, though Zermatt boasts year-round skiing – three ski lifts are conveniently located less than a kilometre from the chalet. Also, within walking distance for the outdoorsy are paragliding, heliskiing, sledging, ice skating and more. Short strolls will take you to the Matterhorn Museum and Gorner Ridge, and if you want to venture further, just hop into a private limousine or helicopter.

Location: Zermatt, Switzerland

Price: 120,000 CHF (HK\$1 million)

for seven nights in peak season

Reservations: chaletzermattpeak.com

Hilltop Estate, Laucala

Only the elite can dream of occupying this exclusive and extremely difficult-to-reserve villa perched at the top of Laucala, a private Fijian island of crystal-clear waters and lush green forests. Home to the COMO Laucala Island resort, this idyllic isle offers a superlative range of activities including an 18-hole golf course designed by David McLay Kidd, stables for horse-riding and a sustainable farm providing wagyu beef for guests – all this besides a full complement of watersports. It is certainly a fantasy holiday destination, with just 25 villas affording privacy and a sense of escape from the outside world.

The Hilltop Estate, which can hold 8





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guests, sprawls over 12,000 square metres, affording enchanting views of the island greenery edged by rugged coastline and dreamy beaches. It comprises three buildings, with the biggest, Delena, encompassing the master suite, living room, library, a stone bathtub and personal swimming pool with waterfalls. Family and friends can occupy Rua, which also has a swimming pool, and Dua. The interior architecture has an earthy vibe and furnishings favour natural materials like sago palms and coconut husks. Your own chef, chauffeur and a nanny if required mean you don't need to lift a finger to care for your guests.

A traditional Fijian Bobo massage, in which experts use their hands and feet to knead tired deep tissue, is the top billing on a menu of calming, rejuvenating treatments that can be enjoyed in the residence or at Shambhala Retreat, Laucala's wellness space. All massages and facials use locally

sourced and natural ingredients.

In addition to the private chef who will prepare the meals of your choice, there are four restaurants on this large private island. A particular favourite for lovers of Asian cuisine is the Seagrass Lounge and Restaurant, a treetop retreat serving pan-Asian delicacies. All food is prepared with fresh produce farmed or grown on the island.

The most fantastic feature of a Laucala sojourn, though, is the charter flight arranged for you on demand. Departing from Fiji international airport, the plane dips down to a private runway surrounded by azure waters, ensuring zero hassle upon arrival.

Location: Laucala Island, Fiji

Price: Starting at US\$455,000 (HK\$3.5 million) per night

Reservations: reservations@laucala.com

Text: Renuka Kennedy



Echo Camp White Desert, Antarctica

If you crave an out-of-this-world vacation, then these unique space-station-like pods located in the Queen Maud mountains of Antarctica should top your bucket list.

Accessed from Cape Town by private plane, there are six accommodation pods, with each allowing 2 guests, at the recently opened Echo camp, two of them being standalone with a king-sized bedroom and ensuite bathroom and the other four interconnected with four bedrooms, lounge area and dining room. Built with sustainable materials, each heated pod has floor-to-ceiling windows and white carpeting, thus blurring the lines between cosy indoors and icy outside.

While you contemplate the pristine vistas all around, a group of well-trained staff, including hosts, guides and personal chefs who cook gourmet meals to your order, assures that your stay is nothing less than memorable. If you book

the Early Emperor package, you can partake in thrilling activities like fat biking, abseiling, ice climbing and skiing right outside your pod. Above all, you should not miss an excursion to the colony of Emperor penguins that usually dwells a few kilometres away.

Given that Echo is a polar camp within the coldest place on Earth – temperatures can plunge below -60°C – guests require a thorough medical checkup and doctor's all-clear before venturing south. The team at White Desert, Antarctica's only hotel, also conduct safety lessons prior to the trip of a lifetime.

Location: Antarctica

Price: Starting at US\$780,000 (HK\$6.1 million) per person for seven days

Reservations: info@whitedesert.com

Season dates: 24th November 2023 - 31st January 2024

