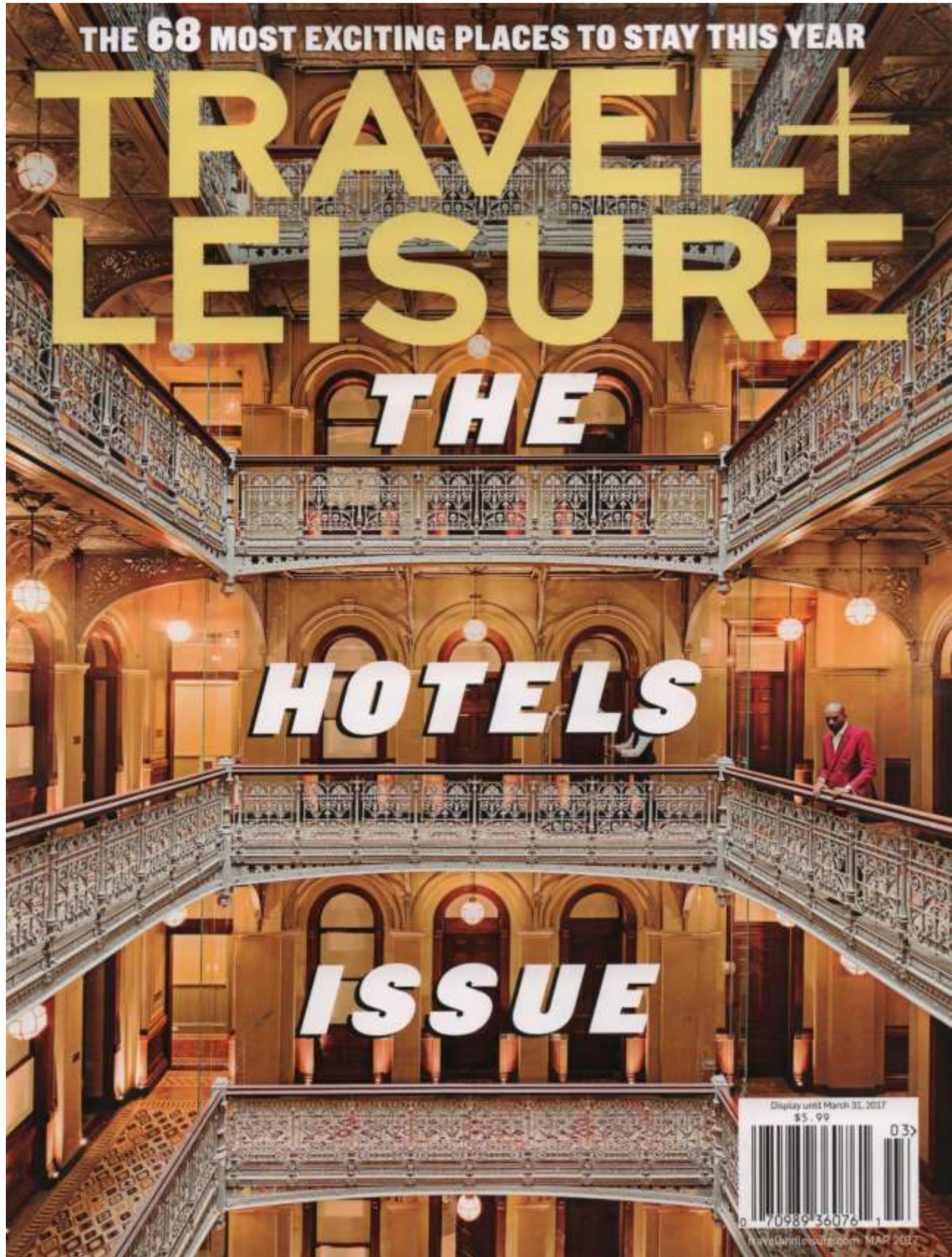


Inkaterra | Travel+Leisure | March 2017 | Circ: 962,488



A pool at  
the Soneva Jani,  
a resort in  
the Maldives,  
page 98.

# Contents

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## Peace in the Valley

**WHERE** Sacred Valley, Peru

**WHAT** High in the Peruvian Andes lies the fertile paradise that gave rise to the Incan empire. Even today, it remains a place of almost divine communion between the land and its people.

**WRITER** Stephanie Danler, author of the critically acclaimed novel *Sweetbitter*, was on a quest to eat guinea pig, a specialty in the Andes. "My boyfriend, Matt, has no fear when it comes to any outdoor activity, but he looked at the crispy, fire-roasted animal—served with its head on—and said, 'I don't think I can do this.' He made it through a couple bites," she says. "I found it tasty. You have to try it when in Cuzco."



**PHOTOGRAPHER**

Nick Ballon, who grew up in London, is currently working on a book called *The Bitter Sea*, a visual exploration of the landlocked country of Bolivia's painful longing for its coastline, which it lost to Chile in a war more than 130 years ago.

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## Turquoise Dream

**WHERE** The Maldives

**WHAT** Why go halfway around the world for a beach? Because, as four new resorts prove, nowhere else combines sea, sand, and splendor quite like these islands in the Indian Ocean.



**WRITER**

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Maria Shollenbarger had to travel twice to the Maldives from Singapore, where she "mostly" resides, to see all of the hotels in this story. "I realized that these islands are so much more than the conventional story," she says. "There's deep culture and deep concern for the environment, all across the country."

**PHOTOGRAPHER** "I can safely say that being alone on a \$36,000-per-night private island is something that may never happen again in my lifetime," says Sean Fennessy. Based in Melbourne, he's looking forward to a two-month trip across the U.S. later this year. His last assignment for T+L was to swim with whales in Tonga.

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## Bordeaux Nouveau

**WHERE** Bordeaux, France

**WHAT** The region produces some of the greatest vintages of all time, but it's never taken very kindly to visitors—until now. From the city of Bordeaux to the grand old châteaux beyond, France's premier wine-making region is showing a fresh face to the world.

**WRITER** Author of the *New York Times* best seller *The Only Street in Paris: Life on the Rue des Martyrs*, Elaine Sciolino is at work on her fifth book, *The Seine: A Journey into the Soul of France* (W.W. Norton & Co.).



**PHOTOGRAPHER**

"I love Bordeaux—the city and the wine region," says London-based Martin Morrell. "It has a laid-back, sophisticated, and convivial atmosphere."

**ON THE COVER**

The Beekman hotel atrium in New York City, page 22. Photograph by Floto + Warner.

## Why do we love hotels? Personally, I have many reasons,

from the design ideas I get from them to the childlike joy I feel knowing that I don't have to make the bed. But the thing I most appreciate about hotels is the access they provide to great destinations—the way a hotel can open up places that you otherwise simply wouldn't be able to experience, or at least experience in any degree of comfort. (My camping days are long behind me, I'm afraid.)

I just got back from an incredible trip to Peru, and the hotels my husband and I stayed at were much more than places to rest our heads. On the Sacred Valley–Machu Picchu–Cuzco circuit, we checked in to a trio of terrific properties from Inkaterre—one of them, Hacienda Urubamba, is profiled in this issue (“Peace in the Valley,” page 90). They all offer guests a range of compelling excursions, from hiking trips and farm visits to bird-watching and orchid-hunting, and they provide expert guides to help you make the most of those experiences.

At Lake Titicaca, we stayed at a lovely small retreat called Titilaka, where the cornerstone of any stay is an all-day boat trip to visit the people who live on the lake's famous floating islands of reeds and to meet the traditional community of knitters and weavers on the island of Taquile. Throughout the trip I was struck by how much I liked the hotels as hotels, but what made me really love them was how central they were to my experience of the country. They connected me to people, places, and things and helped enrich my knowledge and understanding.

This issue is packed with hotels we love, and I think you'll find that the positive interplay between properties and the environments in which they place you is a critical part of why we believe they're worth it. Here's hoping you find a hotel (or a few) to lead you to your next adventure.




Nathan

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*P.S. Speaking of hotels, if you haven't yet rated places you've recently stayed in our annual World's Best Awards survey, now's the time. Go to [theworldsbest.com](http://theworldsbest.com) by March 6 to share your opinions with us and your fellow travelers. You'll also be entered to win some great prizes.*

P E A C E *in the*

V A T

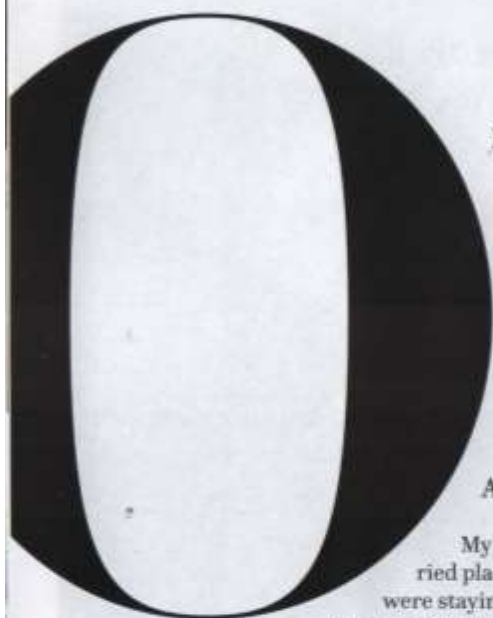


HIGH IN THE PERUVIAN ANDES LIES THE SACRED VALLEY,  
THE FERTILE PARADISE THAT GAVE RISE TO THE  
INCA EMPIRE AND, EVEN TODAY, REMAINS  
A PLACE OF ALMOST DIVINE COMMUNION  
BETWEEN THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE.

*by* STEPHANIE DANLER *photographs by* NICK BALLON

Hiking the Inca Trail,  
the most demanding  
of the more than 20  
Sacred Valley activities  
offered to guests by the  
new Explora Valle  
Sagrado resort.

THE



ON OUR FIRST NIGHT IN THE SACRED VALLEY, WE BLANKETED OURSELVES IN DOWN AND LEFT THE WINDOWS OPEN TO THE CHILL OF THE ANDES. NEAR DAWN, WE WOKE TO GOLD-FLECKED FINCHES TRILLING IN THE FIELDS. THE SACRED VALLEY ISN'T SOMEWHERE YOU GO TO SLEEP IN. YOU GO TO WATCH THE WAY THE LIGHT AND CLOUDS INTERACT, THE WAY DIFFERENT PEAKS ARE SHADOWED, THEN EXPOSED.

My boyfriend, Matt, and I had come to this storied place in the mountains of Peru for a week. We were staying first at the Explora Valle Sagrado, a resort on an old corn plantation outside the village of Urquillos that is set up to help guests get outside and experience the area as fully as possible. Our first activity, at eight that morning, was an easy bike ride along the Urubamba River. After multiple cups of coffee and seconds on avocado toast and bowls of papaya, we met our guide, Luis, who made sure we were equipped. We could refill our water bottles with filtered water all over the property, he told us. At reception, there were snacks—cashews, almonds, dried mango, bitter dark chocolate, and “power balls” (quinoa, honey, dates, amaranth) to scoop from overflowing bowls. We were encouraged to dip into the huge containers of pasty white sunblock—SPF 100.

A bus took us to Taray, which sits just across the river from Pisac, a picturesque Andean village below a beautifully preserved Incan citadel with terraces that cascade down the mountain. From there, we pedaled for 20 relatively flat miles along a dirt trail. We rode past scenes of agrarian life that were so idyllic they almost looked staged: farmers working cornfields by hand or by donkey, women walking llamas. We passed crumbling manors and corrugated-steel sheds that were exquisitely juxtaposed against summits and glaciers. The sky was so broad, the panorama so dynamic, that we kept twisting around on our bikes to see more. Every time I finished an incline, I felt the elevation: a slight vertigo that caught me by surprise.

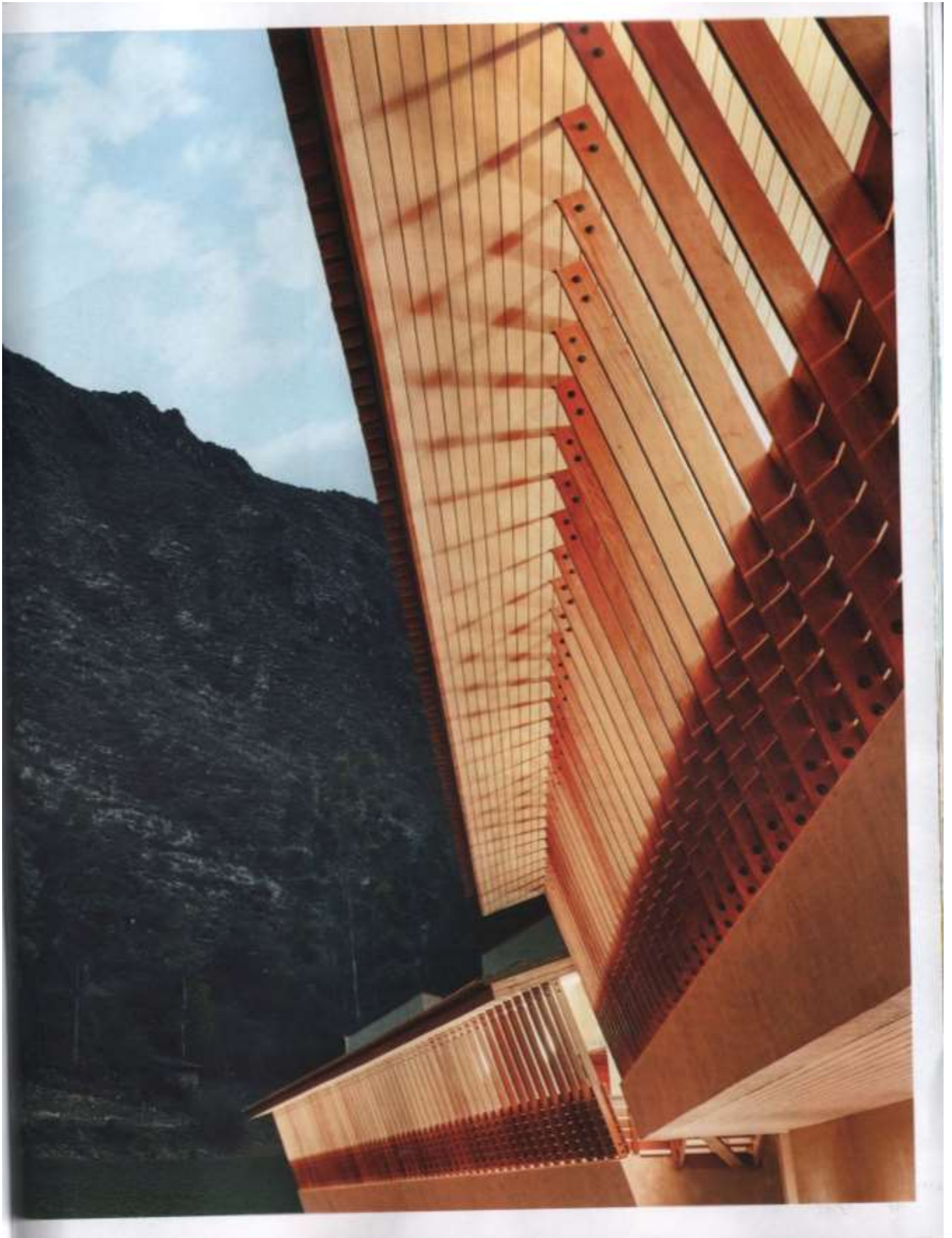
On breaks, there was hot tea made from *muña*, an Andean herb similar to mint that is excellent for digestion and altitude sickness. When we finished the ride, we found a table set up with raw vegetables, avocado dip, and a bucket of water and beer. This was in a quiet plaza in Urquillos, less a town than a small outcropping of adobe buildings with terra-cotta-tiled roofs. We sat under a towering *pisonay* tree with scarlet-red

blossoms. Luis told us that the *pisonay* was sacred to both the Incas and their descendants, the Quechua, who have inhabited the Andes for the past six centuries. Whenever the Spanish built a church, the Quechua planted a *pisonay* tree nearby.

“For Pachamama,” Luis said, pouring beer onto the roots of the tree before drinking some himself. Pachamama, the benevolent fertility deity of Incan mythology, is the Mother Earth of the Andes. The Quechua perform this toast—called a *challa*—constantly. It’s just one of the many ways they act out their gratitude for their awe-inspiring natural surroundings.

I have a long history of hiking and a fondness for the remote, and I still plan trips around walks. Matt must have recognized this immediately, because within a month of meeting he had me winter-camping in Death Valley. I shivered and grinned in a freezing rain, got up in the pitch-black to watch the sun rise over the salt flats. And while I do cherish time in a lounge chair reading and diving in to the cuisine of a place, the truth is that when I travel I’m often seeking

Opposite: The design of the Explora Valle Sagrado maximizes guests' experience of the surrounding mountains.



Right: Salt evaporation ponds outside the town of Maras that date from Incan times.

some holier connection. A moment of quiet that will leave its mark on me. And that usually leads me outside.

We had arrived the day before, from Los Angeles by way of Lima and Cuzco. Most visitors don't stay in the Sacred Valley nearly as long as we planned to. More often, they spend a night on their way to Machu Picchu, going to Pisac and Chincero on a day trip to take a few photographs and buy textiles, skipping the ruins in the hills above Ollantaytambo, the multiple UNESCO World Heritage sites, and the traditional farms and fields that still power this fertile center of Andean civilization. Recently, though, elegant properties like the Explora Valle Sagrado have begun catering to active travelers like us by offering more intimate, less mediated ways to experience the region's natural splendors.

Everyone brings up altitude sickness when you tell them you're visiting the Andes. Even the flight attendants warned us about it as the plane descended. But I only took it seriously with my first woozy step onto the tarmac in Cuzco, elevation 11,000 feet.

"I think I have it," I told Matt.

"You barely slept," he replied. "You don't know what you have." He was thoroughly energized, as usual. Whether I had it or not, I was definitely in better shape than the woman I saw in the airport bathroom leaning over the sink, heaving, her face drained of color.

Uneasily, I boarded the Explora charter shuttle. As it wound along the curvy mountain roads, I sipped from a canteen of chilled water I'd been given and studied an elegant hotel brochure, *The Art of Travel*, which asked pseudo-philosophical questions like, *¿Por qué exploramos?* Matt, who speaks fluent Spanish, struck up a conversation with the man behind us. I heard the word *arquitecto*.

"Architect of what?" I whispered.

"The architect. Of all the Exploras."

The man was José Cruz Ovalle, who has worked for Explora since 1993, when the company opened its first property in Torres del Paine National Park in Chilean Patagonia. He designs his buildings, he told Matt, to be in conversation with nature, to enhance and expand the outside rather than insulate guests from it. Explora applies the same ethic to the overall experience, offering guests unique itineraries, or what it calls explorations, that often follow new trails or routes and access remote parts of the countryside.

Our shuttle stopped high on a hill, allowing us to approach the hotel on foot. Bridges spanning terraces linked us to a low building down below where the lights were coming on. I tried to follow Cruz Ovalle and Matt's conversation about the 15th-century cornfield the hotel sits beside. Corn was akin to gold for the Incas, Cruz Ovalle explained, and this heirloom variety of *paraqay sara*, a large, white-kerneled corn also called the "giant white maize of Cuzco," is still regarded as the best in Peru. The jade of the corn leaves was a color I'd never seen before. Rimming the field were purple-flowering quinoa plants that twitched with birds. Jagged, snowcapped mountains loomed beyond. The sky was dusky, as if stained by the purple of the flowers.

That evening set the pattern for our nights at the Explora Valle Sagrado. We ordered pisco sours at the bar, which came accompanied by endless trays of Andean bar snacks that I couldn't stop eating: crunchy plantains, fava beans, corn kernels, some the size of tiny raindrops, some as fat as a knuckle. Then, in the lounge, a guide found us to sort out our explorations for the next day. What's your activity level at home? How are you feeling? The hyper-personalized interaction with an expert makes you feel like you can accomplish anything.





Still, I had second thoughts when Matt announced what he wanted us to do the day after our bike ride: a hike called Incañan that is considered the pinnacle of all Explora activities. It is 11 miles long and climbs more than 3,000 feet, reaching an elevation above 15,000 feet. It features three distinct topographies, passing glaciers, remote Quechuan villages, and Mount Sawasiray, which soars to a majestic 19,088 feet. It is supposed to require three to four days of acclimation. We'd had one. Matt seemed not to care at all.

"It's against our policy," our new guide, Bruno, said carefully. He was beloved by the English-speaking guests because he had perfected the language while living in New York City.

"We can do it," Matt said.

"Well, you seem fit," he said, "but, you know, I had these Americans earlier this month—just like you, city people—and we let them go after three days of acclimation. It took us almost ten hours on the trail and the lady was throwing up the whole time. I think she was fairly...unhappy."

Visions of myself a whitish green, vomiting in front of a group of strangers. Visions of rain and snow and wet socks. I turned to Matt. "No way. I do not want to be unhappy."

"We hike all the time," he said. "It only goes up to fifteen thousand. You hiked fourteeners when you lived in Colorado."

"What is this 'all the time'? And I was sixteen years old!"

Bruno was amused. I grabbed the map.

"Cinco Lagunas sounds pretty. Five lakes. Doesn't that sound pretty?" I reviewed the options. "What's comparable to Incañan?"

"Nothing," Bruno shrugged. "But there's some nice hikes."

"Babe," Matt was about to utter the phrase that is always the nail in my coffin when we travel together. "How many times are we going to get this opportunity?"

**I**t was pouring rain when we got up in darkness at 5 a.m. It bent the quinoa plants, pounded the leaves of the corn. "Pouring," I said, glaring, as we stuffed our backpacks.

We met Bruno and another guide, Moises, as well as two fellow guests who would be joining us. Everyone wore head-to-toe rain gear. "Do you have pants?" Bruno asked about my SoulCycle leggings. "These are pants," I said, gritting my teeth.

It was a long drive to the trailhead, long enough that the rain stopped and the hills greened and I lost my morning angst. I began to feel a nauseated excitement, though it could have just been the altitude.

I stubbornly took the lead as we hit the trail. It only took a few minutes in that bracing air before the muscle memory kicked in, and not just in my legs. It was an emotional muscle memory of going into a space where the only noise is wind. Already above the tree line, we climbed to a high alpine meadow laced with streams and carpeted with moss and petite wildflowers. Alpacas, llamas, and herding dogs dotted the valley floor, tended by women in bright-red woven skirts



**The Details**  
More about where to stay and what to do, page 116

and bowler hats. We passed diminutive stone cottages with thatched roofs, shelters actively used by herding families. I saw

stacks of dried animal dung that, Moises said, the Quechua use for fuel for cooking. Waste converted to energy: another way these people find harmony with their landscape.

As I struggled with the ascent, Moises mentioned that the children who live in these houses hike an hour and a half each way to school. I noticed that rather than following a well-marked trail, we were ascending the contour lines of the hillside. All of the Explora guides had trained for at least five months prior to its opening, so Bruno and Moises knew every footstep of these mountains, in every kind of weather.

They also knew when to offer up the bag of coca leaves. Coca was a divine plant to the Incas, and even today, chewing coca leaves is a mark of the Quechua's connection to the earth. The leaves are a cure for altitude sickness and a mild stimulant on par with a cup of coffee, but because they are also used to produce cocaine, they have long been controversial. A United Nations ban in the 1960s, since relaxed, outlawed their use, but they have remained an integral part of Quechuan culture. As a lover of all things bitter, I was happy to chew them as we hit the final, steepest section of the ascent.

I was soon overcome by two realizations: The first was that I was feeling quite ill. My head hurt. I was nauseated. If I didn't focus intensely on (Continued on page 121)

**WE PASSED SCENES OF AGRARIAN LIFE  
THAT WERE SO IDYLIC THEY  
ALMOST LOOKED STAGED: FARMERS  
WORKING CORNFIELDS BY HAND OR BY  
DONKEY, WOMEN WALKING LLAMAS.**



Clockwise from above: The reception area at the Explora Valle Sagrado; the interior patio at the Inkaterria Hacienda Urubamba, in a traditional Andean farmhouse; beet gnocchi with Brazil-nut sauce and jordan serrano at the Inkaterria Hacienda Urubamba, a dish made from produce grown on the property's organic farm. Opposite: A Quechua woman follows the route of the Explora Valle Sagrado's Incaian hike.





(Peru, continued from page 96) my breathing, my chest would tighten as if in panic. The second was that I was going to be the first up the mountain, even ahead of Bruno. Not because I'm proud, or particularly fit. I was just in a rhythm with my breath, my steps, my arms, the wind, and I wasn't going to break it until I hit the pass. I had achieved both the sickness I feared and the meditative state I desired. I should have known they would come together.

We could only celebrate at the top for a moment, toasting with *muña* tea in the fierce wind before heading into another valley and skirting turquoise glacial lakes, until we found a rocky outcropping large enough to shield us. Lunch—a velvety spinach soup, smoked trout, and quinoa salad—felt well-earned. We spent the rest of the day on the downhill, our knees aching. When we reached the hamlet of Cancha Cancha, we all splashed river water on our faces. Matt and the guides examined the onion-skin bark of the squat *queuña* trees. Only then did I see other hikers, walking past us in the opposite direction.

"They can't be starting now," I said to Bruno. The sun had already passed beyond a ridge.

"Oh no, they are camping," he said. Donkeys followed them, loaded with equipment. The guides, chewing coca leaves, called out to Bruno and Moises.

"They do it in three days," Bruno said, gesturing back at the pass we'd just conquered. "We do it in one. Because we're badass."

I laughed, but he wasn't joking. I looked back at the peak of Sawasiray, shrouded in a mist that moved like exhalations. I imagined what it must feel like to be as well-adapted as those highland children: the thin, pure air stabilizing me, walking these mountains being an act as natural as breathing.

Although the Incas never had a written language (which blew my mind when I found out), they are legendary for their myriad accomplishments prior to their culture's swift and bloody collapse at the hands of Spanish conquistadors. At their peak, the Incas controlled a region twice the size of the Holy Roman Empire. Their engineering feats were unmatched by peers of their era. Their religious practices involved complex mummification and burial processes. Their knowledge of astronomy and agriculture allowed them to become brilliant farmers.

It was this last skill we were headed to see evidence of. The van took us on narrow, rutted dirt roads to Moray, an Incan archaeological site above the town of Maras that consists of elaborate terraces in concentric circles. There is a more direct route in, but we entered above the ruins on a trail that started in a small village called Misminay, where

children walked alongside us and giggled shyly before running back to their games. At first, Moray reminded me of an amphitheater, making me think of the frequent comparisons between the Incas and the Romans. But Moray wasn't built for sport. It is believed that the Incas' goal was to create microclimates for growing crops, like coca leaves or tobacco, that weren't adapted to the harsh conditions of the highlands above the Sacred Valley.

As we began hiking out of the ruins, another spectacular twilight descended and the mountains' aura of mystery deepened. I was struck by how little we could know of a culture that didn't write its own stories. For generations, the Quechua theorized about how Moray got its craterlike shape—our guide told us it was the result of an asteroid strike—though scientists have determined that it was caused by erosion. We have extensive, well-preserved evidence of the Incas, but much of it is inconclusive. The guides are the storytellers, the ones who tell us what might have been. On the way out of Moray, ours collected *muña* and cleaned up trash that had been left behind by other visitors. It didn't feel showy or self-righteous. It felt more like the *challa* to Pachamama—an expression of deep gratitude for the earth.

Following three adventure-packed days at the Explora Valle Sagrado, Matt and I headed across the Urubamba River to unwind at the Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba, a two-year-old property from a company that has been a mainstay in (Continued on page 122)

## LOVE AT FIRST SWING...



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FOR A  
GOOD  
TIME

(Peru, continued from page 121)

Peruvian luxury travel for more than 40 years. It is in a traditional hacienda-style farmhouse with dark wood beams, tiled floors, and lots of colonial grandeur, with jaw-dropping views of multiple mountain ranges. It is furnished in Incan artifacts, worn-in leather, and vibrant textiles. The atmosphere of the rooms, the lounge, and the restaurant was relentlessly romantic. After checking in, we wrapped ourselves in blankets near the fire, with obligatory pisco sours, watched the sun move, and, for the first time since we had arrived in the Sacred Valley, did nothing.

The hotel calls its dining concept "earth to table." Most of the vegetables on your plate are grown on a 10-acre organic farm that runs across the bottom of the property. Matt and I toured it one evening, recognizing various herbs, walking fields of different potatoes, which the farmers identify by their flowers. The farm is a reminder of why the valley has been called sacred for so long. Our guide told us that the fertility of this land was considered Pachamama's greatest gift. The beans, corn, potatoes, quinoa, and amaranth that grow so well are what enabled the Incas to build their empire. There are 50 kinds of corn and nearly 4,000 kinds of potatoes indigenous to Peru. The struggle today is to protect that natural biodiversity.

We feasted in a candlelit hall, the lights of the valley glowing through the floor-to-ceiling windows. The restaurant excelled at traditional dishes done expertly, like *lomo saltado* and *pastel de choclo*, a surprisingly light corn pie, layered with guinea-pig ragù. The *aji de gallina*, a creamy, spicy dish of rice, chicken, and cheese, was so satisfying I had it twice.

The next day, two genial guides took us to a Quechuan weaving cooperative in Chincero (elevation 12,375 feet), which is known as the Rainbow City because the Incas believed it to be the birthplace of the rainbow. The guides pointed out adobe houses topped with ceramic bulls that were supposed to protect the inhabitants. Red plastic flags hanging in doorways signaled that chicha—a fermented alcoholic beverage made from corn—was available that day. The women

of the collective showed us their natural ingredients, from soap made of grated yucca for washing alpaca wool to dyes made from herbs, berries, even bugs. A young weaver smashed a cochineal insect, a parasite that lives on cacti, into her palm to produce a bright red pigment, then spread it on her lips. "Inca lipstick," she said, giggling.

We hiked down from Chincero on one of the original sections of the Inca Trail, built in the 15th century, following ravines and small streams that feed into the Urubamba. It was our same swath of the valley, but we were seeing it from a new angle—and at this point, it did feel like it belonged to us. We had been there less than a week, but I knew that glacier under Sawasiray from multiple vantage points, and I knew when we hit a dirt road that we were almost to Urquillos and the gigantic *pisonay* tree. The Incas called these violet and jade mountains mystical because the gods remain in the earth, and no matter how modern voices might intrude, theirs are the cadences the Quechua still listen to, the ones that call the rest of us to explore. ■

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# The Details

Our guide to this month's featured destinations, including the best places to eat, sleep, and explore.

## BORDEAUX, FRANCE

(Bordeaux Nouveau, p. 106)

### HOTELS

#### Château Cordeillan-Bages

An exquisite hotel with a Michelin two-starred restaurant set on a five-acre vineyard in the town of Pauillac. [jmc.coz.com](http://jmc.coz.com); doubles from \$254.

**La Grande Maison** Bernard Magrez's elegant hotel has silk wall coverings, Carrara-marble bathrooms, and a wine cellar

#### Restaurant Pierre Gagnaire

Chef Pierre Gagnaire has made it his mission to turn this space into the finest restaurant in Bordeaux, with dishes like citrus-rubbed veal with absinthe and quinoa. [lagrandemaison-bordeaux.com](http://lagrandemaison-bordeaux.com); entrées \$69–\$95.

**Solena** Standouts of Victor Ostronczek's updated French menu include perfectly cooked asparagus carefully finished with pistachio vinaigrette. 5 Rue Chauffour, Bordeaux; 33-5-57-53-28-06; entrées \$36–\$40.

### WINERIES

#### Château Branaire-Ducru

This 19th-century château is a far cry from the stuffy Bordeaux wine scene—be prepared to be welcomed as if you were family. St.-Julien-Beychevelle; [branaire.com](http://branaire.com).

**Château de Cérons** Caroline and Xavier Perromat offer picnic baskets full of gastronomic provisions and wine to visitors at their vineyard. It's an intimate experience not to be missed. Cérons; [chateauducerons.com](http://chateauducerons.com).

**Château la Dominique** This winery is hard to miss with its wonderful bright-red metallic cellar. The attached Terrasse Rouge offers meals highlighting seasonal specialties. St.-Émilion; [chateau-ladominique.com](http://chateau-ladominique.com).

**Château la Grole** Two young vintners produce organic wines on more than 70 acres of land here. St.-Ciers-de-Canesse; [vignobles-hubert.com](http://vignobles-hubert.com).

### SHOPS

**L'Autre Temps** One of the many quirky antiques shops in the Village Notre Dame, a covered mall located in the happening Chartrons district. Bordeaux; [villagenotredame.com](http://villagenotredame.com).

**Petrusse** This boutique stocks scarves and shawls in high-quality silk, wool, and cotton. Bordeaux; [petrusse.com](http://petrusse.com).

### ACTIVITIES

**Cité du Vin** The modern center sticks out on the Bordeaux skyline. It is a must-visit to understand the global impact of wine (from Bordeaux and other parts of the world). Plus, the wine bar,

Latitude20, stocks 800 vintages from more than 70 countries. [lacityduvin.com](http://lacityduvin.com).

**Musée d'Aquitaine** A lovely museum taking visitors on a journey through the ages of Bordeaux and Aquitaine, with collections related to archaeology and ethnology. Bordeaux; [musee-aquitaine-bordeaux.fr](http://musee-aquitaine-bordeaux.fr).

**Musée des Arts Décoratifs et du Design** This former private residence, which houses more than 30,000 works of art, offers a glimpse into what life was like in the 18th and 19th centuries. Bordeaux; [madd-bordeaux.fr](http://madd-bordeaux.fr).

**Musée National des Douanes** This hyperspecialized museum traces the history of the French customs authority, but the real draw is the magnificent landmark building in which it is housed. Bordeaux; [musee-douanes.fr](http://musee-douanes.fr).

seven-day Peruvian itineraries with in-depth visits to the Sacred Valley: a Peru Family Adventure, focusing on outdoor activities for the entire clan, and the Flavors of Peru, designed for epicurean travelers. The company can also create bespoke itineraries to cater to travelers' specific interests. [andbeyond.com](http://andbeyond.com); itineraries from \$4,850.

**Mountain Lodges of Peru** This outfitter's new Lares Adventure is a customizable five- or seven-day itinerary along the Sacred Valley's Lares Trek, concluding at Machu Picchu. The journey includes hikes to Incan sites, visits to remote Andean communities, and more, with each night spent at a different luxury lodge along the way. [mountainlodgesofperu.com](http://mountainlodgesofperu.com); itineraries from \$2,400.

### HOTELS

#### Belmond Hotel Rio Sagrado

Set along the banks of the Urubamba River, this property consists of 11 suites, 10 rooms, and two villas nestled in verdant, terraced gardens. In addition to horseback riding, rafting, and guided tours of archaeological sites, visitors can also experience the region aboard the company's luxury train, *Belmond Hiram Bingham* (\$560 per person for a round-trip). [belmond.com](http://belmond.com); doubles from \$365.

**Explora Valle Sagrado** Located on a working corn plantation, this resort is designed to maximize the quiet and grandeur of the surrounding landscape. Guests can choose from among 26 different excursions to various Sacred Valley destinations. →

## SACRED VALLEY, PERU

(Peace in the Valley, p. 90)

### GETTING THERE

Visitors typically fly in to Cuzco by way of Lima. The valley's southern edge is only eight miles from Cuzco, but many of its destinations, like Pisac and Urubamba, require a 30-minute to two-hour drive. Most Sacred Valley hotels arrange airport transfers, but you can also get there by rental car, taxi, or train.

### TOUR OPERATORS

**andBeyond** The experiential travel specialist offers two

### LOCAL CUSTOM



**You may notice your guide pouring his beer onto the ground before taking a sip. The toast is called a *challa*, and is an offering to Pachamama, the fertility deity from Incan mythology.**



### A QUICK TRIP

This year brings the renovation of Bordeaux-St. Jean, the city's central railroad station, and the completion of a new high-speed train line. Travelers will now be able to travel from Paris to Bordeaux in two hours.

stocked with the region's best. Bordeaux; [lagrandemaison-bordeaux.com](http://lagrandemaison-bordeaux.com); doubles from \$276.

**Le Boutique Hôtel** The rooms at this wine-themed property are named after famous local wineries. Don't miss the beautiful interior garden centered around a wine bar. Bordeaux; [hotelbordeauxcentre.com](http://hotelbordeauxcentre.com); doubles from \$210.

**Yndo Hôtel** A converted 19th-century mansion in the heart of Bordeaux. [yndohotelbordeaux.fr](http://yndohotelbordeaux.fr); doubles from \$234.

### RESTAURANTS

#### Brasserie Bordelaise

The go-to place for tourists and locals seeking traditional dishes, like foie gras and fresh oysters. Bordeaux; [brasserie-bordelaise.fr](http://brasserie-bordelaise.fr); entrées \$13–\$38.

**It's not uncommon to see animals on the thousands of acres surrounding England's country houses. Keep an eye out for barn owls, rabbits, otters, fallow deer, and more.**



**WILDLIFE SPOTTING**

*explora.com; doubles from \$1,950 per person for three nights, all-inclusive.*

#### **Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba**

The newest hotel from one of Peru's most venerable nature travel specialists. It consists of 12 rooms in the Casa Hacienda and 24 stand-alone luxury casitas, on 100 acres surrounded by mountains. On the 10-acre organic plantation, guests can pick their own produce to be used in their meals. *inkaterra.com; doubles from \$482.*

**Inkaterra La Casona** Whether on your way to or from the Sacred Valley, you will want to spend a night or two in the imperial city of Cuzco, the historic capital of the Inca empire. This boutique hotel, in a lovingly restored 16th-century manor house on the Plazuela Nazarenas, offers the finest accommodations in town. *inkaterra.com; doubles from \$418.*

#### **SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES**

The Sacred Valley is filled with important cultural sites. Ask your hotel or outfitter to assist you with visits to each.

**Moray** An Incan site consisting of elaborate terraces in concentric circles. The structure is believed to have been formed to grow crops like coca and tobacco.

**Ollantaytambo** Overlooking its namesake village, this fortress and temple ruin marks the site where Manco Inca, the Incan prince, repelled an attack by the Spanish conquistador Hernando Pizarro.

**Pisac** The ancient Incan ruins here overlook the Urubamba River

and house one of the rare *intihuatanas*, ritual stones used for astronomical observation.

#### **Salt Pans of Maras**

Thought to have been created by the Incas sometime in the 1400s, these salt pools are still in use today.

## **ENGLAND'S COUNTRYSIDE**

(To the Manor Reborn, p. 39)

#### **ACCOMMODATIONS**

**Victoria Inn at Holkham** A renovated inn on the 25,000-acre estate of Holkham Hall, one of the most famous country houses in England. Explore the pastoral property, which is largely off-limits to cars, by bicycle or on foot. *Wells-next-the-Sea; holkham.co.uk; doubles from \$155.*

**Wilderness Reserve** Choose from a collection of cottages, farmhouses, and manor houses on 5,000 acres in Suffolk. Hex Cottage, the property's romantic hut, sleeps two and has a thatched roof and columns made from tree trunks. *Sibton; wildernessreserve.com; doubles from \$265, two-night minimum.*

#### **ACTIVITIES**

**Blakeney National Nature Reserve** This park is the spot for animal lovers: watch seal pups, go crabbing, or bird-watch along the Blakeney Freshes, a 400-acre grazing marsh. *Marston; nationaltrust.org.uk.*

#### **Holkham National Nature Reserve**

One of England's largest nature reserves, occupying more than 9,000 acres of dunes, salt marsh, and grazing marsh beside the sea. *Wells-next-the-Sea; holkham.co.uk.*

**Houghton Hall** Built in the 1720s for Great Britain's first prime minister, this is one of England's most spectacular stately homes. It's surrounded by a magnificent park and has a collection of contemporary sculptures. *King's Lynn; houghtonhall.com.*

**Orford Castle** A 12th-century castle in Suffolk where visitors can explore the many passages and halls. Don't miss the display of Roman brooches, coins, and medieval seals in the Upper Hall. *english-heritage.org.uk.*

#### **Orford Ness National Nature Reserve**

The place to explore the U.K.'s military history. A stroll along the trails will bring you to multiple military structures, from old administrative bases to atomic test sites. *nationaltrust.org.uk.*

**Snappe Matlings** Developed as a music center by composer Benjamin Britten, this complex of Victorian buildings was retrofitted to also include galleries, shops, restaurants, and a concert hall on the edge of the marshes. It holds many performances and festivals throughout the year. *snappe-matlings.co.uk.*



**HISTORIC SAILINGS**

Many resorts in the Maldives offer trips aboard a traditional dhoni boat. Be sure to hop aboard for a sunset cruise or snorkeling adventure. It's a great way to take in the country's surrounding crystal-clear water.

## **MALDIVES**

(Turquoise Dream, p. 98)

#### **GETTING THERE**

Velana International Airport, located on Hulhule Island, is the main international airport in the Maldives, reachable via cities like Frankfurt, Istanbul, Doha, and Dubai. Many resorts can provide air or boat transfers to their properties.

#### **ADVERTISEMENT**

Score a business-class mileage ticket to the Maldives and any other destination using points from virtually any credit card or airline. **Awardinsiders.com** will find you seats even when phone agents can't, and save you hundreds of thousands of miles and hours of frustration.

#### **WHEN TO GO**

December through April, when the weather is dry and the humidity is low, is peak season for travelers. Low season is between May and November, which typically means more rain but cheaper rates.

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