

# CL

CELEBRATED LIVING

## EXPLORE

See the world by bike: Upscale cycling trips offer serious adventure and civilized style

PAGE 48

## RENEW

From juices to jumping rope, 14 tips and trends to put you on the right track

PAGE 36

## DRIVE

Where rare and vintage Mercedes-Benzes go to get six-figure makeovers

PAGE 30

A person in silhouette is performing a handstand on a wooden floor. The background consists of large stained glass windows with a pattern of dark, thin lines and yellow, teardrop-shaped accents. The scene is brightly lit from behind, creating a high-contrast silhouette effect.

# HEALTHY ESCAPES

**10 FIT CITIES** for Travelers



# HOW WE TRAVEL NOW

In our fast-paced world, **trends in travel** seem to change almost as quickly as those in fashion and technology. So we checked in with a few experts on the vacation vanguard to find out **what's new** and **what's next** when it comes to our travel tastes.

**A**BOUT A YEAR AGO, Chicago education reformer Sheryl Curcio found herself on safari in the middle of South Africa's Phinda Private Game Reserve, looking on with her husband and two teenage sons as a pair of female lions frolicked with four toddler cubs. "We sat for hours watching," she recalls. "The mother and her sister kind of protected and played with the young ones. It was spectacular, watching these little cubs nipping at each other's tails, climbing all over the adults' faces — basically, just being kids."



“The return on investment is getting to spend time with the people you love the most.”

Eventually, though, they realized this was only part of the show: The cubs' dad was just off in the distance, the Curcios learned from their guides, but the females wouldn't let him get within 30 yards of them. As the safari vehicle began to back away, however, the male approached the group, only to climb a nearby tree when the lionesses chased him away. “One guide said, ‘I’ve never seen this — a fully grown male lion scaling a tree!’” Curcio’s voice is still filled with wonder as she tells the story. “And then he got stuck there. You saw fear on his face. He’s like, ‘How am I going to get myself out of here?’ It was one of those moments where you think: Does it get any better than this?”

That’s something many of us have wondered while on vacation. But in Curcio’s case, this wasn’t the highlight of a typical 10-day or two-week trip. Instead, it was just one of many such revelatory moments she and her family experienced while spending nearly eight months on the road, flying more than 65,000 miles and stopping in some 23 different countries along the way.

**THE CURCIOS** aren’t alone. More and more travelers are finding ways to take just this sort of family sabbatical-style trip. (In this case, the journey coincided with



the retirement of Curcio’s husband, Dominic, and their elder son’s gap year between high school and college; their younger son kept up with his classes via Skype and parent-led tutoring.) Crisscrossing continents and communing with countless cultures, these intrepid families get to spend some serious quality time together, journeying further and connecting more deeply — not just with the places they visit, but with each other too.

“The family sabbatical is the first thing that comes to mind when it comes to trends I’m seeing right now,” says Melissa Biggs Bradley, whose New York City-based bespoke luxury-travel company, Indagare, helped plan the Curcios’ adventure. Bradley reports that Indagare is seeing an ever-greater number of families taking extended trips like this, ranging in length from four months to a year. They plan them, she says, with global education and intense family bonding as their main purpose, frequently including philanthropic activities as well, and they keep in touch with folks back home through blogs and online photo diaries.

“Travel feels like a good investment these days,” suggests Julia P. Douglas of Chicago’s Jet Set World Travel, when asked to explain the current rage for what she calls “radical sabbatical” trips. “You know what the return on investment is: getting to spend time with the people you love the most.” Douglas has planned several such itineraries over the last year, including one for Jody and Barry Conybeare of St. Joseph, Michigan, who spent nine weeks in Europe this summer with their four kids, ages 7 to 17.

Like the Curcios, the Conybeares planned their trip for just before their oldest went off to college: “It was designed so I could immerse myself in the family and we could have a life experience we could never have again,” says Barry, who, as a lawyer with his own private practice, was able to secure the time away. “As our kids get older, they’re going to have lives and spouses and children of their own, and it wouldn’t be the nuclear family of just the six of us. So it seemed like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for us to do something like this.” ▶

#### COMMUNING WITH NATURE:

Watching lions frolic in the Phinda Private Game Reserve in South Africa was one of the experiences the Curcios shared during their eight-month family sabbatical.

**AS TRIPS AT** the long end of the spectrum are growing ever more expansive, those at the short end are getting increasingly compact, with vacationers packing more and more action into less and less time. “People sometimes have to travel for shorter periods,” says Douglas. “But they don’t want that experience to be any less authentic, any less experiential, or any less special.” Usually domestic, to cut down on travel time, and frequently planned to celebrate a special occasion, these small-scale/big-impact trips — which Douglas’ agency calls “jaunts,” in contrast to longer “journeys” — might find folks lobstering along the New England coast, canyoneering in the Southwest, or even making it all the way up to Alaska. Douglas reports that travelers get a lot out of these trips, even at such an abbreviated length: “People have become very good at vacationing quickly, getting that fulfillment, ticking that box, getting that decompression, all in four to five days instead of four to five weeks.”

Philippe Brown, founder of Brown + Hudson, a London-based bespoke luxe-

travel outfit, has also noticed this trend, reporting that clients crave what he calls an “immersion-focused” itinerary, even if only for a weekend. More often than not, Brown finds that communing with nature provides the biggest impact during these limited-time excursions. A few nights in the Caribbean might call for, say, some Robinson Crusoe-inspired island hopping, rather than simply sitting in the sand at a single semi-anonymous five-star resort. Belize is proving to be Brown’s go-to destination when it comes to the (admittedly oxymoronic) fast-and-furious relaxation vacation. Destinations there, including Francis Ford Coppola’s Blancaneaux Lodge and the private-island Cayo Espanto, represent what Brown calls “a real opportunity to get back to nature and to plunge oneself into a world far from reality.”

For guests who book short trips with Atlanta-based Brownell, part of the Virtuoso network of high-end travel agencies, “the immersion starts before the client even leaves,” says Martha Gaughen, a Brownell vice president, who reports

seeing shorter and shorter trips to relatively far-flung places including London and Paris. On these trips, she’s especially focused on helping clients engage with a destination prior to the journey, and then, once they have arrived, maximizing their time with full-time guides who can turn meals, hotel and airport transfers, and more into highly edifying and always enriching moments.

**IF THERE’S ONE** thing both sabbatical-style and small-scale/big-impact trips have in common, it’s a focus on the experiential — a trend that’s been percolating in the world of luxury travel for some time now. Lately, though, the experiences associated with this have veered towards ever-more narrowly defined special interests, with whole trips dedicated to deep dives into single, specific, and often entirely esoteric topics.

When it comes to super-niche trips, Cassie McMillion, an agent with Betty Maclean Travel in Naples, Florida, has seen a particular uptick in folks traveling



**IMMERSION-FOCUSED:**

LEFT TO RIGHT: The Conybeares family, in Capri, spent nine weeks traveling through Europe; Cayo Espanto, off Belize, is perfect for a quick-but-impactful trip.





## ALSO on the RADAR

**WE HEARD** about a few additional modes of travel that might be coming to a vacation near you this year. In a twist on multigenerational trips, so-called **skip-gen travel**, in which grandkids go away with their grandparents but without their parents, is on the rise, according to Haisley Smith at Brownell travel. A certain set of newly moneyed Silicon Valley tech types, meanwhile, are looking to travel as smartly and as well as they can, but in as **low-touch** or even no-touch a way as possible, says Lisa Lindblad, whose eponymous New York agency more often plans carefully curated and highly guided soup-to-nuts trips; these folks aren't looking to be handled, however, but to experience and explore on their own. Julia P. Douglas, meanwhile, of Chicago's Jet Set World Travel, sees **domestic luxe** trending, as more and more five-plus-star resorts come online in the United States. And, in perhaps the most surprising idea that came our way, couples are apparently taking **group honeymoons** these days, bringing friends and even family along for what was once considered a strictly bride-and-groom-only, entirely romantic affair. — A.S.

for sport — that is, people planning trips around big-ticket athletic events. The Olympics are always a draw, of course, but McMillion has lately been fielding requests for golf's British Open Championship, especially for the 2015 outing, which returns to the Old Course at St Andrews. Travelers don't just want to attend the happening, but to have a full itinerary built around the event, the sport, and the destination. "Even if they aren't attending the actual tournament," says McMillion, "it sparks trips to places like Muirfield, which hosted [the 2013] British Open. People want to play the course they see on TV."

Agents at the London-based travel outfit Black Tomato, meanwhile, note that music makes up the *raison d'être* for an increasing number of travelers. "People are making journeys organized around musical events, the origins of a particular genre, or the locations of festivals," says co-founder Tom Marchant. These have included what Marchant describes as a focus on "musical subcultures that define a place and its people." For instance, a Black Tomato-organized stay in Austin, Texas, might feature visits to the best of the city's 250-plus live-music venues, while a reggae-themed trip to the Caribbean might include a stay at Jon Baker's laid-back Geejam hotel in Jamaica, where guests sleep in mod bungalows that once housed music studios (some suites even still have working recording equipment). Marchant says travelers want to "truly immerse themselves in a destination by understanding local styles and genres of music."

At the nexus of the super-niche trip and the family vacation — albeit not one of sabbatical length — comes an interesting phenomenon noticed by Ashley Isaacs Ganz, whose Manhattan-based outfit, Artisans of Leisure, organizes high-flying, culturally minded trips around the world. Over the last two years, she's booked a rising number of ultraspecialized trips for parents traveling with just one of their kids. That way, says Ganz, "the tour can focus entirely on that child's interests

and allow the parents and child to have quality one-on-one time." This past summer, for example, Artisans planned two 10-day one-child adventures for a family in New York. (The son and daughter in this family were in their early 20s, but Ganz reports doing similar bifurcated tours for couples whose children are much younger.) With their watch-obsessed gourmand son, the parents traveled to Switzerland and Italy in June, where, in Geneva, they took a private tour of the Patek Philippe Museum followed by appointments at top timepiece shops; in Lake Como, Bologna, and Florence, they ate at some of the hardest-to-book restaurants. Later, in July, it was off to Turkey with their history-buff daughter for some heavy-duty touring through every classic site in Istanbul, plus off-the-radar contemporary art museums, followed by a boat charter on the Bosphorus Strait, a resort stay in Bodrum, and then a private helicopter to Ephesus, near the country's western coast on the Aegean Sea, to hike and explore its ancient Greek and Roman sites.

As to why we're seeing this trend right now, Ganz thinks it has something to do with the fast-paced times in which we live: "Our clients are traveling so often; they're busy, their kids are busy, everyone is on a different schedule. I think it might be as much a factor of scheduling as it is a desire to make kids feel like they're getting quality solo time with their parents."

**INDEED, FINDING TIME** — and then making the most of it while away — seems to be the theme that runs through each of these trends. Whether impossibly short or expansively long, single-destination or globe-hopping, close to home or far, vacations in 2014 will be marked by our strong desire to experience modes of travel that let us delve deeper, scratch further beneath the surface, and immerse ourselves more completely in a place, a passion, a person — focusing our attention and our energy on one subject, one subculture, even just one child — all as we continue to explore the wider world around us. **CU**