

THE LUXELIST

ALBERTA P.54
Canadian Rockies road trip with deluxe lodge stays

SONOMA VALLEY P.54
Wine and spa savings with off-season special

SCOTTSDALE P.54
Valentine's package with golf and spa extras

SARASOTA P.49
A winter getaway to Florida's sunny shores

PANAMA, BELIZE, COSTA RICA P.49
Cruise on down to Central America's best beaches

ST. LUCIA P.49
Family-focused Caribbean vacation

AMAZON AND NEGRO RIVERS P.50
Explore Brazil's mighty jungle rivers and Manaus

CHICAGO P.48
Shopping nirvana on the Magnificent Mile

CURACAO P.52
Caribbean combo gives you the city and the beach

SCOTLAND P.52
Manor house stay on the Isle of Skye

ROME P.48
A stylish Christmas and New Year's special

MOROCCO P.48
See it all on a guided four-city tour

THE SEYCHELLES P.50
Cruise exotic Indian Ocean island chain

SPAIN, CANARY ISLANDS, MOROCCO P.50
Valentine's cruise special in the Mediterranean

SLOVENIA P.52
Lakeside villa in emerging ski region

15 SMART LUXURY DEALS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Our expert editors, deal specialists, and researchers have scoured the Web and scanned the globe to bring you the best-value luxury deals available this winter. The result? We've unearthed fabulous hotel and spa packages, exotic trips, and so much more—all you have to do is go.

By Arabella Bowen, Stephanie Johnnidis, Elissa Richard, and Laurel Angrist



WANT MORE DEALS? See the **Smart Luxury** tab for more of our amazing deals, upgraded getaways, and last-minute packages at **ShermansTravel.com**.



CITIES
In need of a cosmopolitan escape?
Go to **P.48**



BEACHES
Desperately seeking surf and sand?
Go to **P.49**



CRUISES
Exotic ports of call beckoning?
Go to **P.50**

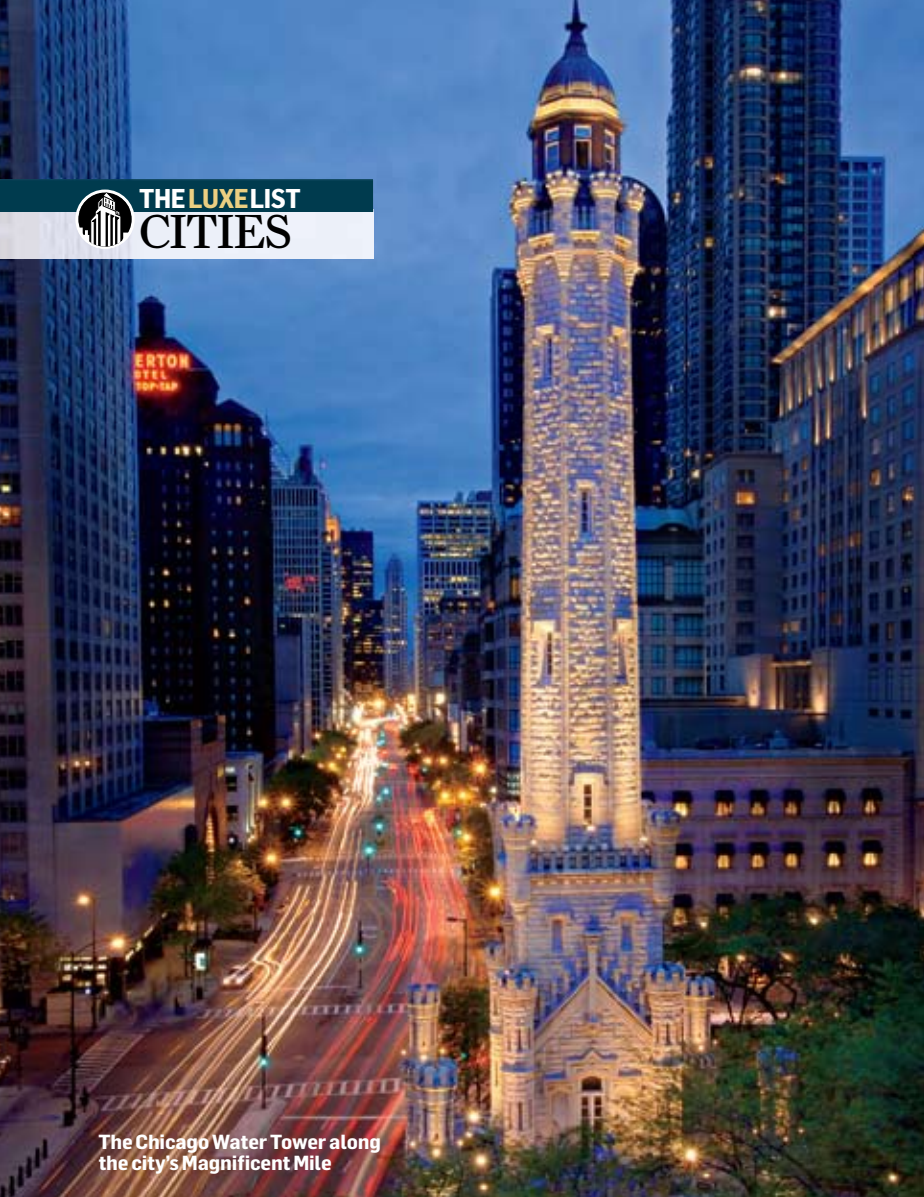


OFF THE PATH
Looking for bragging rights to bring home?
Go to **P.52**



OUTDOORS
Classic outward-bound itineraries more your speed?
Go to **P.54**

ICONS: JON ROGERS AND BELINDA HOOK



The Chicago Water Tower along the city's Magnificent Mile



The Penthouse suite at De La Ville Roma, in Rome



The Red City—Marrakech

1 Chicago *Shopping Sojourn in Chi-town*

THE LUXURY The Hyatt's flagship hotel is a stunner and sits just steps from the city's marquee retail drag, the Magnificent Mile. In addition to its prime location, it possesses an impressive art collection, slick Mies van der Rohe–influenced interiors, an indoor pool, and the popular NoMI restaurant, serving Japanese and French cuisine. This winter, you can get serious about shopping the Mile with the **Park Hyatt's** tailor-made Style at the Park package, which includes deluxe overnight accommodations and a personal style consultant who will create a customized shopping tour. You also get a complimentary cocktail at NoMI Lounge to celebrate completing your retail therapy.

THE VALUE All the perks tack on only around \$100 to regular room rates in December and January, and a scant \$65 for Park Deluxe King rooms.

THE CATCH Chicago winters can be superfrigid (and windy!). Pack a warm coat or buy a new one there.

THE DETAILS For more information, call 312/335-1234 or visit parkchicago.hyatt.com.

2 Morocco *Guided Four-City Tour*

THE LUXURY A country as diverse and exotic as Morocco deserves a well-thought-out itinerary to experience the best of its superb sights in a single trip. **Tauck's** Road to Morocco tour is perfect: It kicks off in Casablanca and covers four imperial cities—Rabat, Meknes, Fez, and Marrakech—in one 9-day tour, complete with top-notch hotel stays, most meals, land transportation, and memorable extras like a private Arabic lesson, a horse-drawn carriage ride, and a guided tour of the splendid Marrakech house once owned by Algerian-born French designer Yves Saint Laurent.

THE VALUE At \$3,790, Tauck's bundled Morocco tour may seem pricey, but it actually costs 40 percent less than what you'd pay if you booked the pieces separately, without any of the extras.

THE CATCH Airfare isn't included in this package, but Tauck will help book your flights at the lowest rates.

THE DETAILS For more information, call 800/468-2825 or visit tauck.com.

3 Rome *Christmas and New Year's in the Eternal City*

THE LUXURY There's never a bad time for a Roman holiday, but being in the city over Christmas and New Year's is definitely a treat. **SWEET SPOT** Piazzas are abuzz with shoppers taking espresso breaks, and Bernini's iconic fountains are surrounded by flickering lights and Christmas decorations. Rejoice in the spirit this year with a stay at the classic **InterContinental De La Ville Roma** at the top of the Spanish Steps, where upper-floor rooms feature balconies with knockout city views.

THE VALUE At press time, rates at this classic hotel start at \$393/night for the holiday stretch (December 24 through January 1), whereas its famous neighbor, Hotel Hassler, charges \$746/night—nearly twice as much—during the same time period.

THE CATCH Stores close early on December 24 for Christmas—and you won't find much open on the day itself either. Plan accordingly.

THE DETAILS For more information, call 800/327-0200 or visit interconti.com.

4 Sarasota, Fla.

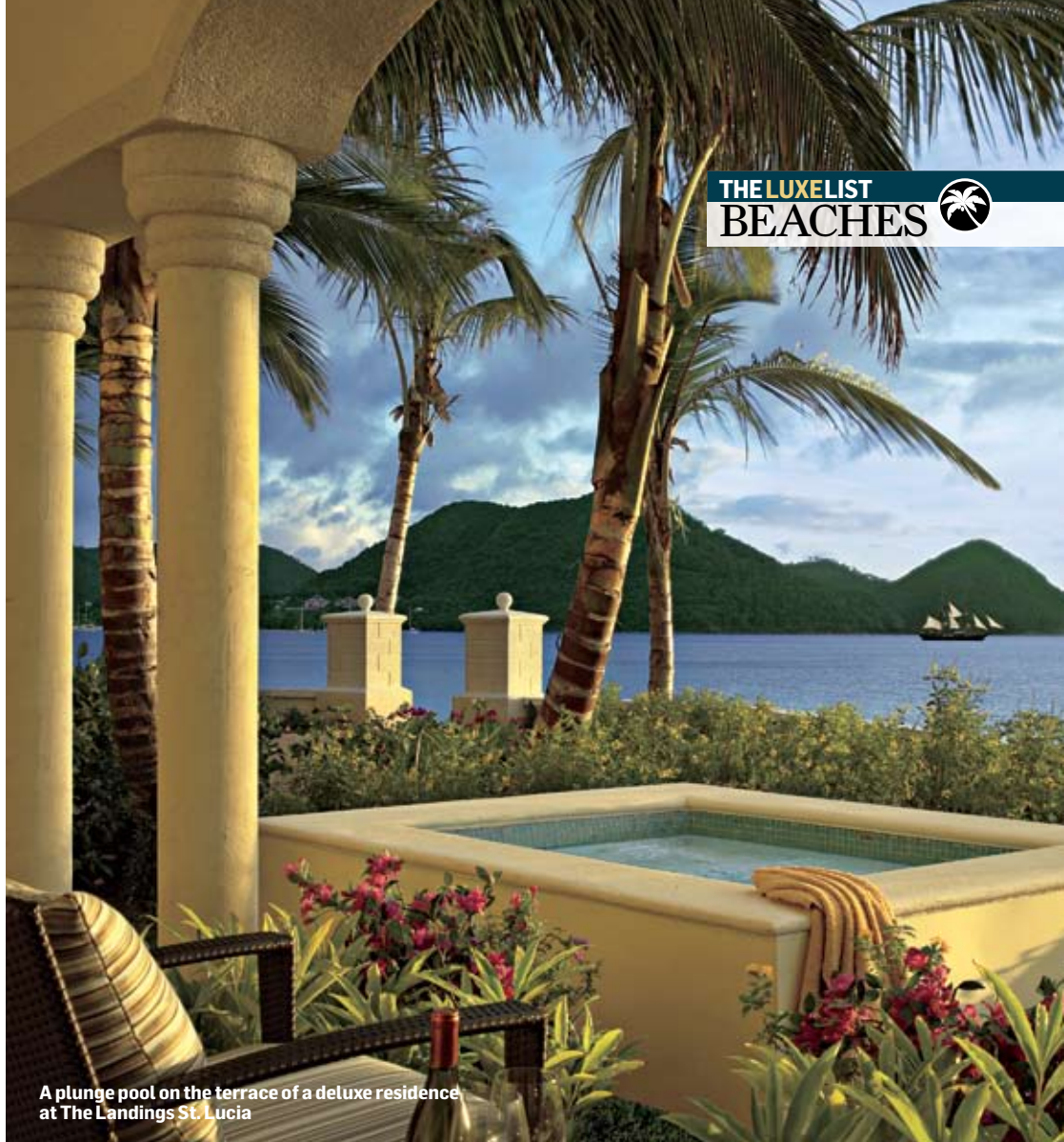
Luxury for Less at Newly Revamped Hotel

THE LUXURY With 3.5 miles of white-sand beaches, the upscale town of Sarasota provides a tranquil getaway in balmy Florida, without the crowds found in Daytona Beach, Fort Lauderdale, and Miami during peak winter months. What's more, the recently renovated **Hyatt Regency Sarasota**, with its contemporary design, large guest rooms, glorious pool, and private marina, is one of the most moderately priced high-end hotels you'll find in the Sunshine State.

THE VALUE Regular rates at the Hyatt Regency reach \$349/night in high season, but you'll pay as little as \$259/night in January and, critically, during Easter Week, when spring breakers head elsewhere.

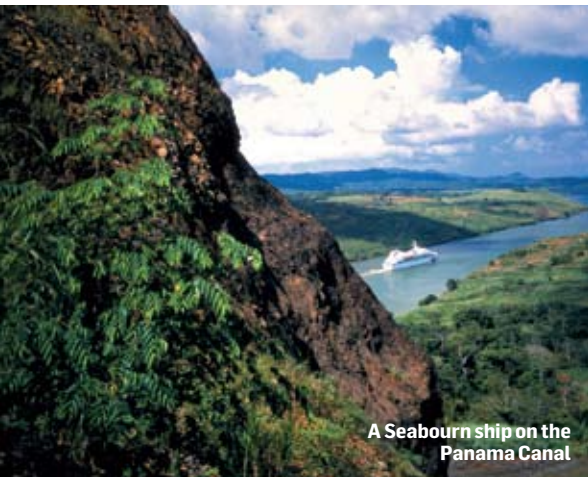
THE CATCH Sarasota is 80 miles from Fort Myers (the region's air hub), so you'll need to rent a car to get there (which will eat into the money you saved on the hotel).

THE DETAILS For more information, call 941/953-1234 or visit sarasota.hyatt.com.



A plunge pool on the terrace of a deluxe residence at The Landings St. Lucia

CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY THE LANDINGS ST. LUCIA; COURTESY SEABOURN; COURTESY RED SQUARE INC./HYATT



A Seabourn ship on the Panama Canal



The palm-lined pool at the Hyatt Regency Sarasota

5 St. Lucia

Family-Friendly Tropical Getaway

THE LUXURY Planning a winter beach escape with the family? The weeklong Teen Island Vacation package at **The Landings St. Lucia**, a new full-service retreat, is bound to enthrall the younger set without breaking the parental budget. Many fun family-centered adventures await visitors at this luxurious Rock Resort, including a thrilling zip-line ride through St. Lucia's rain forest, a guided sea kayak and snorkeling tour to neighboring Pigeon Island, unlimited water skiing and wake boarding, a movie night (with popcorn), and daily breakfast.

THE VALUE Winter rates start at \$871/family per night. This includes a deluxe two-bedroom harborfront villa that sleeps four, which works out to \$217/person per night for four—a great deal for a resort of this caliber during peak season.

THE CATCH A 7-night minimum stay is required (10-night minimum over Christmas).

THE DETAILS For more information, call 877/657-7625 or visit landings.rockresorts.com.

6 Panama, Belize, Costa Rica

Cruise the Best of Central America

THE LUXURY Visit some of Central America's best beaches this winter on a 14-day **Seabourn** cruise aboard the *Seabourn Legend*, where luxury suites come with a fully stocked bar, marble bathroom, writing desk, and flat-screen TV. Departing from Fort Lauderdale on various January dates, two weeks give you plenty of time to unwind and explore Panama's historic sites, relax on a private beach in Belize (which has the world's second largest coral reef), and observe capuchin monkeys in the jungle of Costa Rica before docking in San José, the capital.

THE VALUE At press time, this two-week cruise started at just \$4,373/person—up to 50 percent off brochure rates—for a roomy suite.

THE CATCH Airfare is not included—and requires two one-way tickets (one to Fort Lauderdale and another back from San José).

THE DETAILS Call 800/929-9391 or visit seabourn.com.





A volcanic crater in Timafaya National Park, Lanzarote, Canary Islands

7 Spain, Canary Islands, Morocco

Exotic Valentine's Day Cruise

THE LUXURY Forgo the usual clichés this Valentine's Day and instead indulge in a luxe suite aboard **Royal Caribbean's Brilliance of the Seas**.

An action-packed 10-night itinerary starts February 6 in Barcelona, stopping at the Spanish ports of Málaga and Cádiz, the latter serving as the romantic stopover for Valentine's Day; Lanzarote and Tenerife in the Canary Islands; and Casablanca, Morocco. The megaship offers plenty of entertainment during days at sea, from specialty restaurants, a casino, and a spa to more active attractions such as a rock-climbing wall, basketball court, and golf simulator.

THE VALUE Spacious suite cabins are priced from just \$1,599/person—or about \$160/night—and include a private 57-square-foot balcony, a sitting area, and a bathroom with tub.

THE CATCH With the potential for as many as 2,500 fellow passengers, couples seeking more intimate environs might want to look elsewhere.

THE DETAILS Call 866/562-7625 or visit royalcaribbean.com.



8 Amazon and Negro Rivers

Ply the Wild Waterways of Brazil

THE LUXURY Discover hidden pockets of beautiful Brazil on a 3-night **Iberostar** cruise along the Amazon and Negro Rivers. Embark from Manaus, the capital of Amazonas state, aboard the luxury **Iberostar Grand Amazon**, and enjoy excursions into the Amazonian jungle for piranha fishing, photo safaris, bird-watching, and

motorboat trips. The 72-cabin vessel boasts two pools, rooftop Jacuzzi, bar, fitness center, and two restaurants.

THE VALUE TAM Vacations is offering a bundled cruise package, with round-trip airfare and 2-night accommodations at the upscale Tropical Manaus Eco Resort. Rates start at \$1,989/person via Miami and New York City for sailings departing after January 10.

THE CATCH Families with young children needn't apply—the cruise line doesn't allow kids under 15.

THE DETAILS Call 866/627-2945 or visit tamvacations.com.

9 The Seychelles

Indian Ocean Archipelago

THE LUXURY Looking for new oceans to sail? Consider cruising the wonders of the Seychelles, the stunning Indian Ocean archipelago situated some 1,000 miles off the coast of eastern Africa. We've found an exciting weeklong **Silverseas** itinerary aboard the five-star **Silver Wind** (departing February 7), which delivers its guests to the dazzling white-sand beaches and indigenous cultures of five Seychelles islands. This floating home features all-suite staterooms, acclaimed restaurants, and an impressive array of other onboard luxuries.

THE VALUE This sailing offers fares from \$2,937/person, a savings of up to 40 percent off brochure rates, with extras like alcoholic drinks and gratuities thrown in.

THE CATCH Expect airfare to Mahé—the largest island in the chain—to put a serious dent in your wallet.

THE DETAILS Call 800/722-9955 or visit silversea.com.

Anse Source d'Argent beach on La Digue, a popular stop in the Seychelles



A cabin with a private deck aboard the Iberostar Grand Amazon



THE LUXELIST
OFF THE PATH



The North House of Kinloch Lodge, Isle of Skye, Scotland

10 Curaçao
Caribbean City and Sand

THE LUXURY If you tend to get restless on a beach vacation, head to Curaçao in the southern Caribbean, where the **Hotel Kura Hulanda's** Best of Both Worlds package grants seven nights split between two luxurious resorts—one in the historic capital of Willemstad, the other at a beachfront setting—capped off with a \$140 dining credit and a free hour-long massage at each hotel.

THE VALUE The Best of Both Worlds covers three nights in a deluxe room in Willemstad and four nights in an oceanfront suite farther up the coast. The price—from \$1,090/person, or \$218/person per night—is excellent for a Caribbean hotel of this caliber in winter, but it also reflects a 20 percent savings and includes all taxes and fees.

THE CATCH You won't find the typically Caribbean endless stretches of sand here, but small, covelike beaches instead.

THE DETAILS For more information, call 877/264-3106 or visit kurahulanda.com.

11 Scotland
Remote Isle of Skye Getaway

THE LUXURY Set along the remote shores of the spectacular Isle of Skye, **Kinloch Lodge**, the highland home of Lady Claire and Lord Godfrey Macdonald, combines modern amenities with blazing log fires and individually decorated guest rooms that have views of the countryside. Plan a holiday steeped in history and heritage with the hotel's Fabulous Winter offer, and enjoy hearty Scottish breakfasts and a five-course dinner in the sumptuous dining room, lined with portraits of Macdonald ancestors.

THE VALUE The deal, from \$170/night per person, is better the longer you stay: Two nights get you complimentary afternoon tea; three nights, a complimentary lunch.

THE CATCH The area's erratic weather: Mist and wind are common, and winter can be quite chilly. Take advantage of the lodge's roaring fire to keep warm.

THE DETAILS For more information, call 44/147-183-3333 or visit kinloch-lodge.co.uk.

12 Slovenia
Great-Value Ski Retreat

THE LUXURY A mere 30 miles from the Slovenian capital of Ljubljana lies tranquil Lake Bled, an up-and-coming ski destination with 20 miles of pistes spread over five resorts with a shuttle in between. Make first tracks on the mountains while staying at the lakeside **Vila Bled**, an intimate hotel with 10 elegant rooms, 20 suites, and a fine restaurant serving regional cuisine. After hitting the slopes, relax in the hotel's Jacuzzi and its Finnish and Turkish saunas.

THE VALUE Double lakeview rooms with breakfast cost just \$314/night through Christmas and New Year's Eve, making it an affordable alternative to the likes of Colorado's Aspen or Telluride at this time of year.

THE CATCH There's no guarantee you'll get snow this early in the season—but the extraordinary lakeside setting is worth the journey all by itself.

THE DETAILS Call 386/4-579-1500 or visit vila-bled.com.



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY KINLOCH LODGE; COURTESY HOTEL KURA HULANDA SPA & CASINO; DAVID EWING/AGE FOTOSTOCK



The Indian Bridal Suite at the Hotel Kura Hulanda, Curaçao



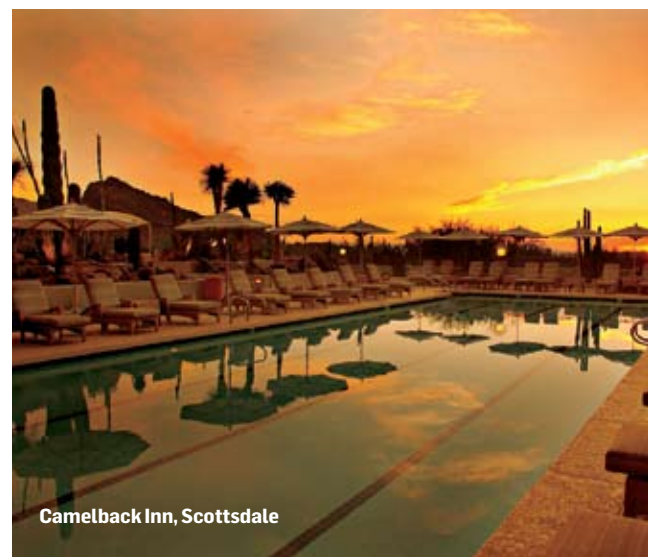
Winter on Slovenia's Lake Bled



Rocky Mountain peaks framing the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, Alberta



An old schoolhouse in Sonoma Valley



Camelback Inn, Scottsdale

13 Sonoma Valley, Calif.

Off-Season Wine and Spa Getaway

THE LUXURY The cool **Hotel Healdsburg** is a smart year-round choice for California wine-country aficionados, what with its posh minimalist design and central location, but you'll spend a lot less by visiting after the harvest crush. This Sonoma hotel's Explore Wine Country package offers great incentive, too, with a 3-night special that includes a deluxe king or double queen room, a tasting menu for two at Charlie Palmer's Dry Creek Kitchen, VIP tasting passes to several of the top local wineries, a bottle of sparkling wine, a daily gourmet breakfast, and complimentary valet parking.

THE VALUE You'll pay just \$429/night to enjoy everything in this package from December 1 to February 26—about \$275 off what you'd pay for the perks individually.

THE CATCH The price is only valid for three consecutive nights from Sunday through Thursday.

THE DETAILS For more information, call 800/889-7188 or visit hotelhealdsburg.com.

14 Alberta

Canadian Rockies Lodge and Drive

THE LUXURY Discover the Canadian Rockies with **Luxury Lodges'** Self-Drive package. Traveling by car from the vibrant city of Calgary through the pristine wilderness of western Canada's national parks, you'll discover a landscape of cascading waterfalls and white-capped peaks, where native elk, moose, and coyotes roam. This 5-night package includes luxury accommodations at your choice of two Banff-area properties—the romantic Buffalo Mountain Lodge and the world-renowned Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise—and at the historic Emerald Lake Lodge in the mountains of Yoho National Park.

THE VALUE Prices for the trip can rise to \$1,085/person in peak season (December through February), but a March outing can drop the price to just \$599/person.

THE CATCH Car rental is not included in this package—but Luxury Lodges can arrange rental discounts for customers.

THE DETAILS For more information, call 866/814-7378 or visit gocanadianrockies.com.

15 Scottsdale, Ariz.

Golf and Spa in the Desert

THE LUXURY Looking for a romantic Valentine's getaway that combines relaxing spa treatments with gratis golf rounds? **Camelback Inn**, a recently refurbished Marriott Resort and Spa in Scottsdale, offers both as part of its His & Her Escape package. It lets each guest choose between an 18-hole round of golf or a 60-minute spa treatment/person per day, plus offers complimentary fitness classes and unlimited access to the resort's driving range and putting green.

THE VALUE This package, which is good through May 19, starts at \$489/night—just \$40 more than a room alone, and includes one round of golf or a spa treatment/person per day, plus unlimited classes and greens access, all for about 60 percent less than you'd pay to book these individually.

THE CATCH Schedule your spa sessions and tee times in advance, because facilities can book up quickly.

THE DETAILS For more information, call 480/596-7073 or visit marriott.com.