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How to spend it

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GIVE ME ARMANI
A RARE INTERVIEW WITH THE
MAN BEHIND THE EMPIRE

travelista

Wander woman Maria Shollenbarger
fast-tracks international intelligence
on where to be and what to see

➔ It's the Emirate you may never have heard of. Tiny **AJMAN**, nestled between Sharjah and Umm Al Quwain, is just an hour from Dubai's airport, with a pleasing coastline of alternating mangrove forests and creamy-yellow sand beaches. Now it's been put on the map in a new way, with the opening of **The Oberoi Beach Resort, Al Zorah** (oberoihotels.com; from £315), which brandishes a CV replete with top-shelf names, from Piero Lissoni (whose Milan-based design firm created Al Zorah's 113 rooms, suites and beachfront villas), to Jack Nicklaus (who conceived the par-72, Troon-managed golf course). One of the most

gratifying draws here, though, is nature – specifically the dozens of native and migrating bird species for the spotting.

➔ **SRI LANKA** seems on a nonstop trajectory to becoming South Asia's most compelling destination. One of the main players is Teardrop Hotels, whose charmingly eclectic **Fort Bazaar** (teardrop-hotels.com; from \$176) in Galle Fort won hearts and industry kudos from Santa Monica to South Kensington when it opened last winter. Teardrop's expansion continues with **Camellia Hills** (from \$280), a five-suite new-build bungalow overlooking Castlereagh Reservoir, near Hatton. Guests can immerse themselves in the island's tea-growing culture; the accommodations themselves are

immersed in lush tea fields overlooked by the extensive gardens and swimming pool.

➔ Kilauea, on **HAWAII**'s Big Island, has been in a more or less continuous state of eruption since 1983. Now **Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts** (fourseasons.com) is offering an exclusive 27-hour helicopter adventure that takes guests to previously off-limits areas of Kilauea as well as to Kamokuna, in the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, where more than 1m gallons of lava flow into the ocean every hour. The clincher is the overnight stay in the **Four Seasons Rainforest Cottage** (from £32,000 for four people, all inclusive) – a 170sq m, two-bedroom, ultra-private aerie on Kilauea's slopes, complete with staff, sauna and state-of-the-art tech throughout.

➔ To **CHAMONIX** – like the rest of the Alps, an increasingly popular summer destination – where this month, French hospitality scions the Sibuet are debuting **Terminal Neige Refuge** (refuge.terminal-neige.com; from £130), a redesign of the original 66-room Grand Hotel du Montanvers, the refuge built in 1880 to house the first *alpinistes* to explore



Above: Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts is offering a helicopter trip to previously off-limits areas of Hawaii's Volcanoes National Park. Below: the rooms, suites and villas at Oberoi Beach Resort, Al Zorah, were designed by Piero Lissoni



Above: Sri Lanka is becoming an increasingly compelling destination thanks to charming hotels such as Fort Bazaar in Galle Fort





Above: Ski Verbier Exclusive's villa No 14 offers spectacular views over the Combin Massif. Below: Asilia Africa's Roho ya Selous is a sleek and stylish new camp in the heart of Tanzania's Selous Game Reserve

the Mer de Glace. Blonde wood and hefty woollen textiles abound, but don't expect too much in the way of *gemütlichkeit*: this is Sibuet done city-style and the cool factor is high. Over in **VERBIER**, meanwhile, villa specialist **Ski Verbier Exclusive** (skiverbierexclusive.com) has opened a select number of chalets in its portfolio for summer bookings, so guests can take advantage of the outdoor

fun, music and equestrian events. Villa **No 14** (from £30,700 a week) has 13 ensuite bedrooms, a spa with a 10m pool, and a terrace with two hot tubs and a staggering view over the Combin Massif; the more intimate, four-bedroom **Rosalp 4** (from £6,250 a week) has an open-plan kitchen-sitting room and a nest of cosy bunks for kids.

✈ John Wells is an American potter who's been based in **JAPAN**'s Okayama Prefecture for going on 30 years, immersed in the aesthetics and craft of bizen-yaki pottery. Now, thanks to new boutique experiential travel designer **Wix Squared** (wixsquared.com; from £3,300 for a seven-day Japan itinerary), enthusiasts can spend an entire day with Wells in his studio, exploring inspirations, refining techniques or just absorbing his formidable knowledge of the history of his métier. When Alex and James Wix got together, she was head of Asia and the Middle East at Cazenove+Loyd and he owned the charming Riad Farnatchi in Marrakech. This joining of forces promises considerable selective expertise, especially if Australia, Oman or Morocco are on your list.

✈ The vast Selous Game Reserve, covering 50,000sq km of southeast **TANZANIA**, is a different landscape to the open savannahs of the Serengeti or the soft, blanketed hills of Kenya. It's also a crucible of the conflict between sustainability and development, with uranium mining interests jostling for primacy at its borders and poaching having depleted its rhino and elephant populations. It's therefore heartening that **Asilia Africa** (asiliaafrica.com) – which already has excellent safari and conservation form in the country – is setting up

operations down here, amid still fairly abundant numbers of hippo, giraffe, cheetah, leopard and wild dog. **Roho ya Selous** (from \$700) is Asilia's very sleek and stylish new camp set on a bluff in the heart of the reserve, with eight guest tents and a crack team of guides who are there not just to find singular wildlife encounters, but to engage with the curious to help them understand the increasingly high stakes in this most urgent game of custodianship. ♦



Above: four-bedroom Rosalp 4 is another villa from the Ski Verbier Exclusive portfolio, open for summer bookings

