

Positive momentum Global

Preface

This month's best in global travel includes an isolated retreat in the Pacific inspired by a Hollywood great, a look at Buenos Aires' cycling boom and a luxury river cruise up the Mekong.



**Another Country
London**

Homeware manufacturer Another Country has crafted a niche for itself in simple, sustainably made furniture since it began in 2010. Early this May, however, the brand opened the doors of its first bricks-and-mortar retail space: a tasteful two-floor semi in London's well-to-do Marylebone neighbourhood. As well as being the first place to see a complete selection of its inventory, Another Country's showroom-cum-office is a carefully conceived embassy for the brand's values. "We produce a product that's very much about design, quality and provenance," says the company's founder Paul de Zwart. "There's a limit to what we can do solely online." — JAF



**Q&A
Francesco
Galli Zugaro
CEO, Aqua
Expeditions**



By creating custom-made cruise trips sailing down the Amazon river, CEO of Aqua Expeditions Francesco Galli Zugaro established himself as a pioneer of luxury river travel. His next project will set sail in September, taking passengers along the waters of the Mekong.

What is the design ethos of the Aqua Mekong boat?

A clean, contemporary Asian feel with warm earthy tones mixed in as designed by British architect David Hodkinson of Noor Design. Guests will feel like they are in a world-class boutique hotel in Asia.

How sustainable is the vessel?

We have 100 per cent composite Resysta decking exteriors made of rice husk and vegetable oil and we have installed state-of-the-art reverse osmosis water-treatment plants from Holland All our engines are also the lowest in emissions.

How did you decide on this new Aqua route?

I became an expert on the region after exploring it with river pilots and my photographer – and I just fell in love with it. — DS
aqualexpeditions.com

The Brando

French Polynesia
The late Marlon Brando's private isle – the coral-fringed island Teti'aroa in French Polynesia – will soon have a new resort. Hotelier Richard Bailey will open The Brando in July on a site located 30 miles from Tahiti. Once a retreat of Tahitian royalty the luxury resort's location has 35 villas, each with a personal plunge pool and private beach. Dining is devised by Michelin-starred chef Guy Martin. — SK
thebrando.com



**Venice Simplon-Orient-Express
Belgium**

The famous wagon-lit carriages of the Orient Express were produced by Belgian Georges Nagelmackers in 1874. However, they had yet to roll across that country's tracks until mid-May this year, when the Venice Simplon-Orient Express arrived in Brussels on its inaugural journey. With services linking the city to Venice, Vienna, Budapest, Paris and London, Belgian guests are now able to enjoy the art deco cabins stocked with toiletries from Temple Spa and bed linen from Italy's Frette, while perusing a wine list that includes 10 premium champagnes. About 1,700 bottles of bubbly are served onboard each season. — CMG
vsqe.com

Riding it out
Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires has transformed into one of Latin America's premier biking cities since the introduction of cycling lanes, *bicisendas*, back in 2009. Today the network stretches for 120km and is due to be extended by another 30km during the course of this year.

Wander around the downtown neighbourhood of Puerto Madero near the Costanera Sur ecological reserve or along the cobbled streets of Palermo and bicycle culture is everywhere. Restaurants have started to offer discounts for those arriving by bike while shops selling everything from T-shirts to mountain bikes are popping up on street corners.

The city's initiatives include its very own bike-sharing scheme, with plans to increase the 800 bikes currently in circulation to 3,000. There is also the Festival de la Bici, which launched in October last year. "We're transforming the city into the one we'd hoped for," says city transport undersecretary Guillermo Dietrich. "One that promotes public space and favours those who choose alternative transport to the car." — EJS

Top three local bike shops

Belosophy

Biking as a lifestyle with a home and clothing section.
belosophybikes.com

Monochrome

Recycled bikes with strong attention to design.
monochromerecycledbikes.com

Muvin

This store also has an outlet in Punta del Este.
muvin.com.ar



The Hougoumont
Fremantle, Australia

The architects at the Matthew Crawford studio should be proud of their latest design success: the Hougoumont hotel in the Australian port city of Fremantle. A mere 20-minute drive from Perth, this inn is housed in a 19th-century shipping building. Its rooms are a collection of converted sea containers. But fear not: they're fully equipped and include marble bathrooms with Appelles apothecary toiletries. Named after the last ship to transport convicts to Fremantle, the Hougoumont is on Bannister street, not far from Bathers beach. If the beach isn't your thing, the hotel holds daily complimentary wine tastings. — DEP
hougoumonthotel.com



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AIRLINE

Flights of fancy

High standards
St Vincent

Preface

When creating a successful airline it's easier to keep doing the important things well if the fleet stays a manageable size, as is the case with SVG Air in the Caribbean.

Writer

Gabriel Leigh

Based in St Vincent and the Grenadines, SVG Air has run a mix of scheduled and chartered flights around the Caribbean since 1990. Its founder, Canadian Paul Gravel, was also its sole pilot in the early years.

The SVG Air group now includes operations in Grenada and Antigua and runs aircraft for an outfit in Mustique. It has flourished by adapting to a volatile seasonal market, serving small communities and holiday destinations that would

be cut off without an air service – and above all, maintaining high service levels.

"When you fly with us we meet you at the bottom of the stairs of the jet you arrived on, we hand you a boarding pass and we get you on your way," says Gravel. "We started off with VIPs and diplomats. We fly everyone from the president of Brazil to Mick Jagger. We've kept that same level of service throughout the airline."

SVG Air's Twin Otters can land at shorter runways than larger Caribbean carriers. On the charter side, the company is one of the few licensed to fly private-jet charters to Cuba. "The beauty of it is our competition cannot go where we go," says Gravel. — (M)
svgair.com

SVG Air

Fleet: 12 planes: five 19-seat Twin Otters (three more coming this year); five nine-seat Britten-Norman Islanders; two Cessna Citation jets for charter.

Passengers (scheduled): 130,000 per year.

Staff: 28 pilots, 131 ground staff.

Passenger breakdown: 40 per cent locals, 60 per cent international visitors.

Longest and shortest flights: 45 minutes for Barbados to the Grenadines, five minutes from St Vincent to Bequia.

