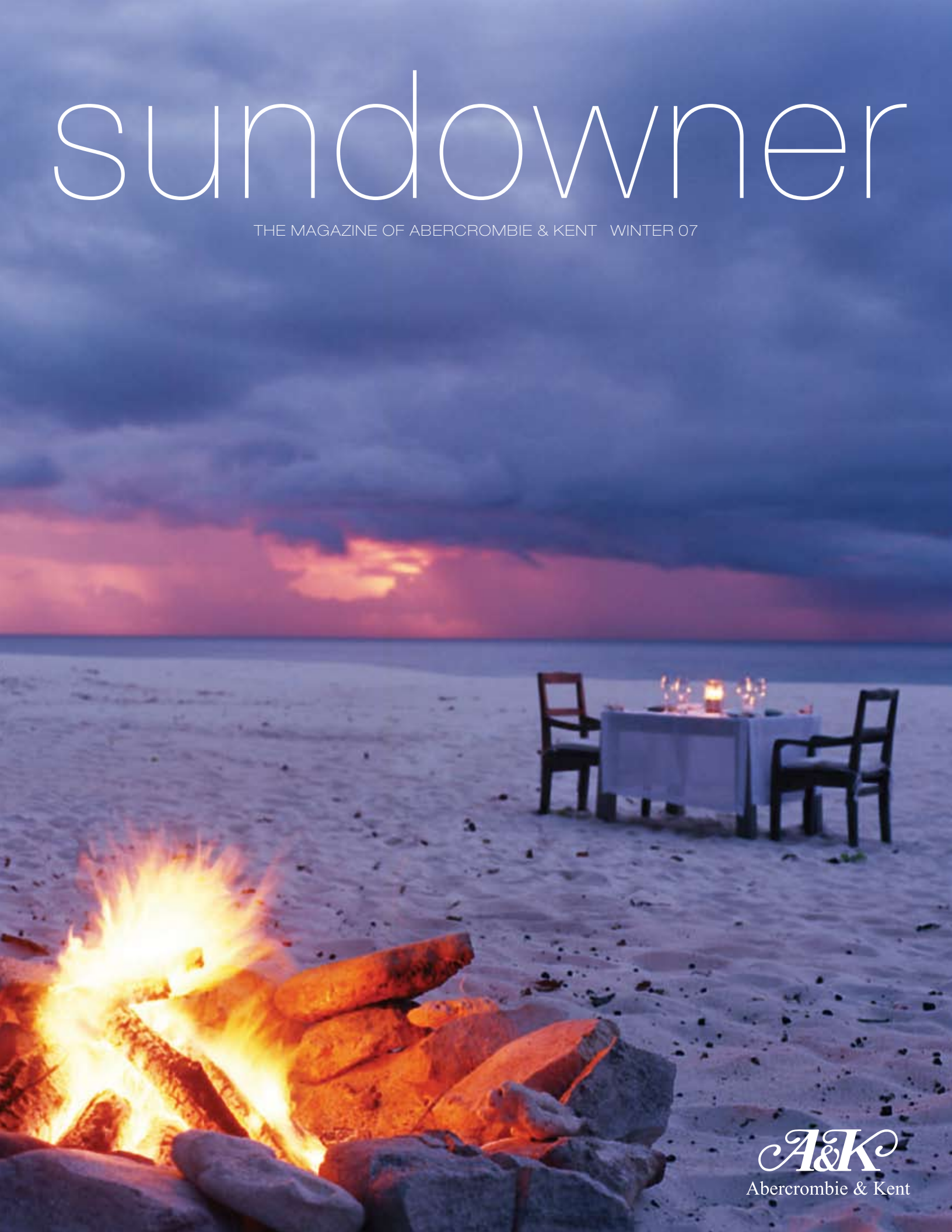


# sundowner

THE MAGAZINE OF ABERCROMBIE & KENT WINTER 07



*A&K*  
Abercrombie & Kent





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## Winter 2007

**Editor:** Nancy Jacobson Taubin

**Designer:** Mary Kazak

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### For advertising inquiries:

800.554.7092, x435; njacobson@abercrombiekent.com

**On the cover:** North Island, the Seychelles — one of many ideal locations worldwide for your memorable celebration with Abercrombie & Kent.

**Photography:** Barbara Cunningham, David Bromham, Doug Beeler, Chobe National Park, Hugh and Juliet MacMullan, Hiroshi Takeuchi, Karoki Lewis, Richard Nowitz, Della Kelly, Ian Johnson, Tim Beddow, Cheli & Peacock, John Webley, India Tourism Board, Orient-Express, Six Senses Resorts, Pearl Resorts & Spa, Peninsula Bangkok, Tim Beddow, Peter Distefano

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# news

# in brief

## Dear Friends,

With the holidays just ending, images of time spent with family and friends remain vivid in our minds. If you are like me, you cherish these moments and want to discover new ways to share experiences with loved ones. And I cannot think of a better experience than travel to bring together the people for whom you care the most.

No matter whether you are celebrating a birthday, anniversary, retirement or a new beginning, A&K Celebrations take you to the ends of the earth to mark life's milestones. Imagine celebrating your honeymoon (or 25th anniversary) on a yacht in Bora Bora, atop Machu Picchu at sunset, or in your own luxury cottage in Botswana, surrounded only by the magnificence of nature...and A&K's attentive yet unobtrusive staff.

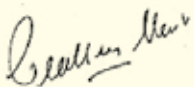
And we have not forgotten young adventurers. Nothing can match the joy of a parent watching their child view their first giraffe...tortoise...koala...in an indigenous setting.

In this issue of Sundowner, we offer suggestions for your celebratory journey anywhere in the world. In fact, no reason is necessary to celebrate. The desire to explore new places, meet other cultures or perhaps trace the history of mankind signifies you as an A&K traveller.

From "China on the Rise," written by Diana and Gene Korte, to the "Soul of India" on a private jet, exotic spas to cap any adventure, or an intrepid Marco Polo Club invitational tour to pique your imagination, A&K offers you the world.

Where will you travel in 2007? We cannot wait to find out!

Happy travelling,



Geoffrey Kent



For Chief's Camp in Botswana, going above and beyond is par for the course. Consistently rated as one of the top safari lodges in Africa, this Sanctuary Lodge has once again raised the bar even higher, transforming itself into an enclave of luxury tented suites that provide a level of comfort almost unheard of on a safari adventure.

The renovation began with increasing the size of each luxury bush pavilion from 420 to 538 square feet — giving guests even more room to relax, socialize and feel free to spread out within the privacy of their own home-away-from-home.

A new native thatch-style roof adds height, improving ventilation and comfort during warm Botswana days and cool Botswana evenings.

And because the whole reason for coming to Africa is the wildlife, each private game-viewing deck is now bordered by expansive windows — perfect for wide open, unobstructed views of some of the most amazing scenery on earth — all just a few yards away.

Find out for yourself what makes this award-winning lodge a favorite among seasoned safari travellers. Contact your travel professional or phone A&K at 800.554.7092.



# Get Into Down Under

Care for a private behind-the-scenes visit to Sydney Opera House? Or flying to Milford Sound by helicopter for a picnic in New Zealand's most breathtaking landscape? Whatever your pleasure, Australia and New Zealand teem with opportunity for travellers of all tastes and temperaments. A&K offers a range of options for those ready to experience these exotic lands, and to meet the warm and friendly people who call them home.

For more information contact your travel professional or call **800.554.7092**.



## Southern India: A New Destination to Discover

## See Eastern Europe in Grand Style with Orient-Express

Venice-Vienna-Krakow-Warsaw-Prague

The name "Orient-Express" conjures images of glamour, opulence and extravagance. This July the legendary train departs on a seven-night journey across five countries, from Venice or Vienna to Prague, stopping in Krakow to mark the 750th anniversary of the founding of the city.

One step aboard the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express and you step back into a more gracious, elegant age. Your personal steward shows you to your compartment of polished wood and gleaming brass, soft towels and crisply-pressed linen. Meals on board are unforgettable, with three dining cars where fine linen, French silverware and heavy crystal provide a fitting setting for a memorable meal.

Extend your journey for two nights to explore Prague, then rejoin the onward VSOE service to Paris or London departing Wednesday 18th July.

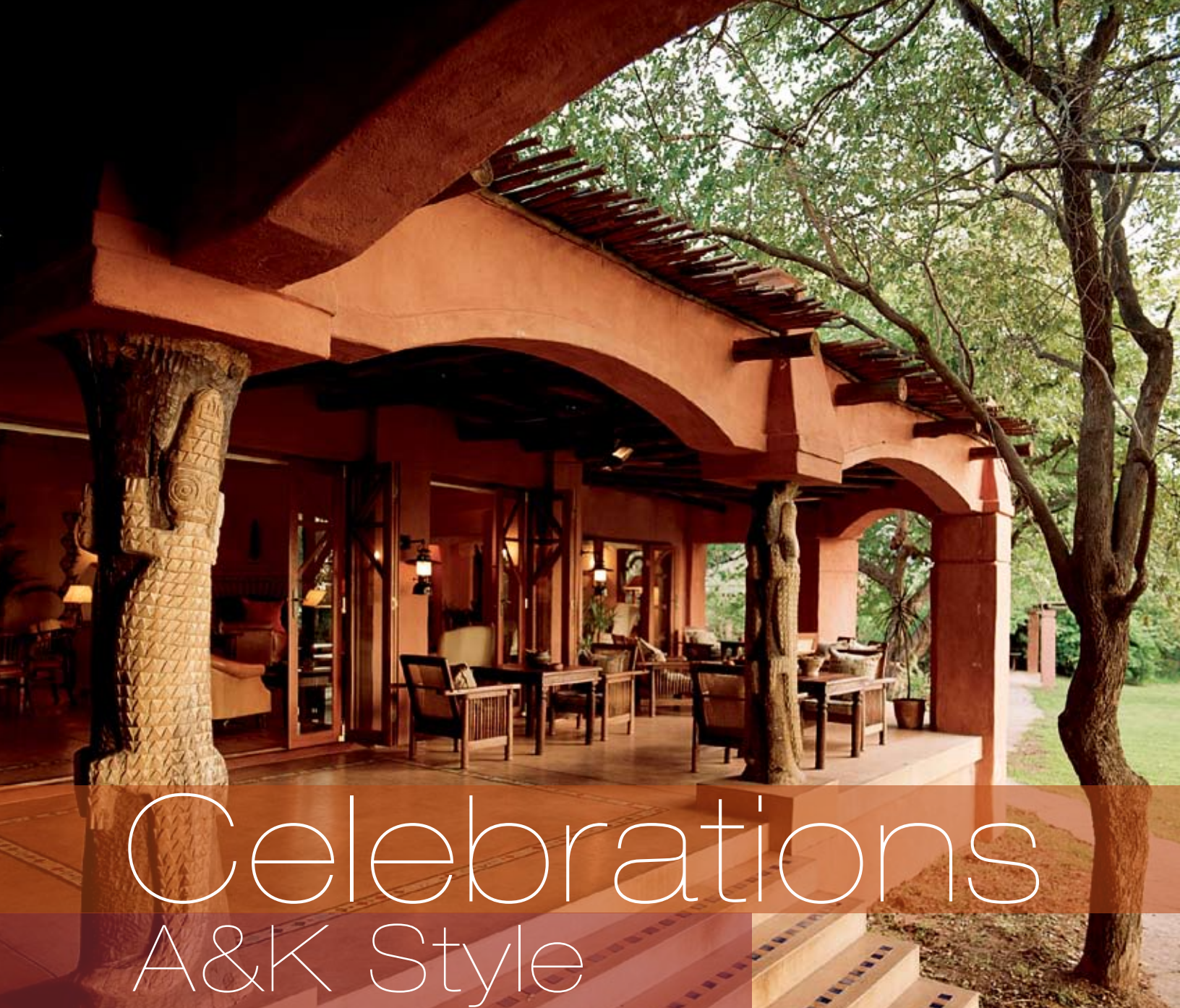
For details, contact A&K at **800.554.7092**.



You may have trekked northern India before—the bustling cities of Delhi, Jaipur and Agra, the splendor of the Taj Mahal and the timeless Ganges River. Southern India, however, presents a new and exciting opportunity: from the formal meals of fish and curry served on traditional plantain leaves, to the bustle of a working Bollywood film set, Southern India is a whole new set of rich traditions to discover, of surprising convergences of ancient and modern to experience.

A&K is proud to offer a new Discovery journey exploring an aspect of India few know well and even fewer have seen firsthand. Book your reservation to Highlights of Southern India today by contacting your travel professional or calling **800.554.7092**.





# Celebrations

## A&K Style

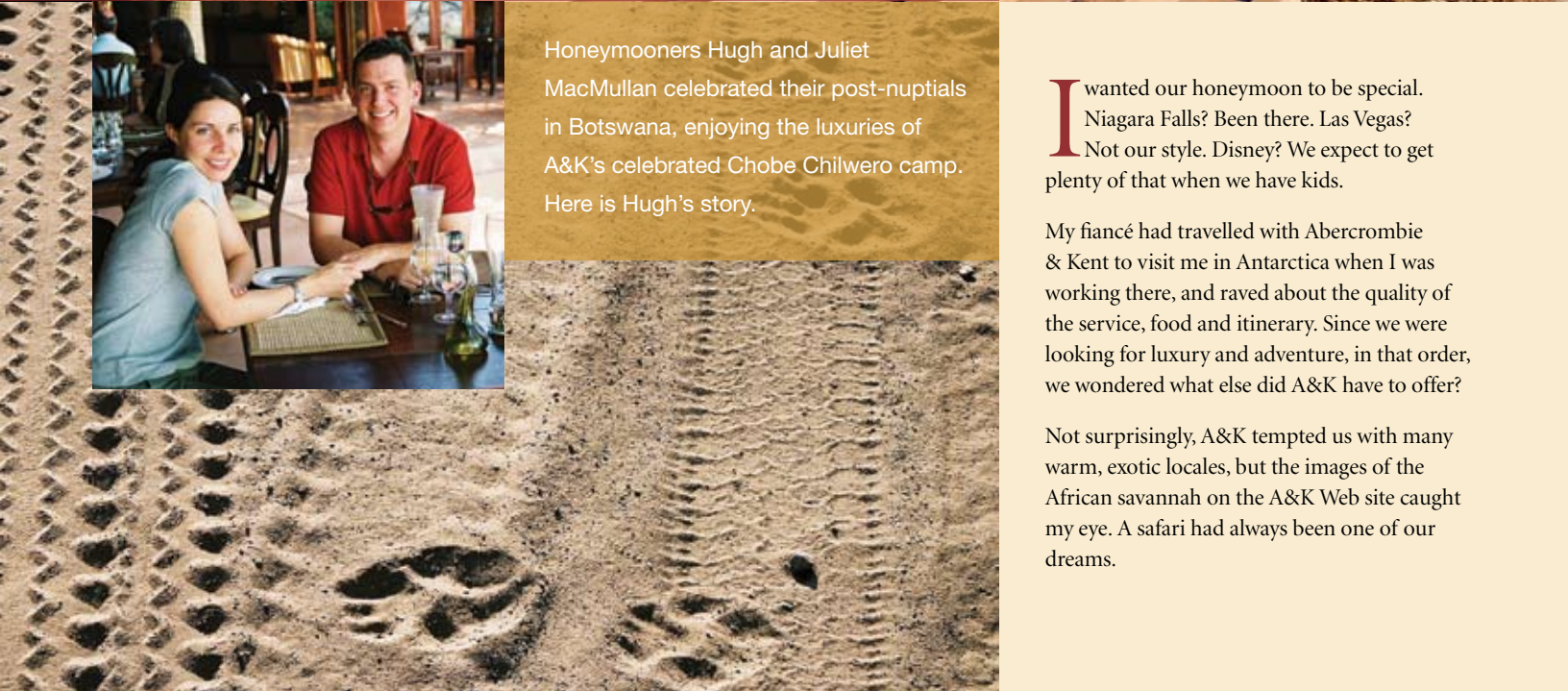


Honeymooners Hugh and Juliet MacMullan celebrated their post-nuptials in Botswana, enjoying the luxuries of A&K's celebrated Chobe Chilwero camp. Here is Hugh's story.

I wanted our honeymoon to be special. Niagara Falls? Been there. Las Vegas? Not our style. Disney? We expect to get plenty of that when we have kids.

My fiancé had travelled with Abercrombie & Kent to visit me in Antarctica when I was working there, and raved about the quality of the service, food and itinerary. Since we were looking for luxury and adventure, in that order, we wondered what else did A&K have to offer?

Not surprisingly, A&K tempted us with many warm, exotic locales, but the images of the African savannah on the A&K Web site caught my eye. A safari had always been one of our dreams.





I spent weeks agonizing over where to go, what to do. So many choices! However, although extensive, none of the scheduled small-group escorted journeys matched our schedule precisely. So I sent an e-mail to A&K who recommended Chobe Chilwero Lodge. Our schedule was quickly and courteously analyzed, reservations were made, and we were set!

The wedding went off without a hitch, and we soon found our newly married selves winging our way to the other side of the world. Once in Botswana, we were met by our guide, Poniso, a bottle of champagne and two hands for our luggage. A short 4x4 drive later, we arrived at Chobe Chilwero Lodge, where we met the staff, and sat down to our first delicious meal.

Satiated and ready to explore, we had a quick tour of our private cottage — complete with air conditioning, a luxurious soaking tub, glass shower and a quaint walled garden housing an invigorating outdoor shower. The main lodge was beautifully decorated with local art, and designed in a style that was eye-catching but didn't overpower the natural beauty around us. From the lodge, we enjoyed breathtaking views of the Chobe River and the plains of the Caprivi Strip, Namibia, on the far shore.

Soon it was time for our first safari. We grabbed our camera gear, and joined Poniso for the five-minute ride to Chobe National Park. Within 10 minutes we spotted impala, kudu and sable antelope. We got incredibly lucky and managed to see a lion and her cub feasting on an elephant carcass. Did I say elephant? As we wended our way down to the river, we rounded a bend and were suddenly right in the middle of a herd of gentle giants. Poniso instructed us



in safe viewing practices while the elephants gazed at us with what seemed unnaturally human expressions of curiosity, caution and a bit of challenge from the youngsters. As the sun began to set, we stretched our legs, champagne glasses in hand, watching the elephants frolic in the cool river water. What a day!

That night we were treated to impala fillet steaks and more delicious South African wines, served with impeccable style by the staff. A bit of mingling with the other guests over a nightcap and a mint chocolate on the pillow completed this incredible day.

We spent the next several days exploring Chobe by open-sided 4x4 vehicle and motorboat, vying for our guide's highest praise ("nicely spotted") when we would point out new or

unusual sightings. We were both startled and amused by numerous hippos and crocodiles, amazed by the flying skills and plumage of the flocks of beautiful birds, and teased by the tracks and fresh kill of an elusive leopard. In the mornings we saw nature at her rawest, right there beside us, and then we frolicked in the pool before lunch, gabbed with the other guests at cocktail hour, and took hundreds of photos. We continued to enjoy some of the best cuisine we have ever had, regardless of the fact that we were in the bush in Botswana.

All too soon, our time at Chobe was over. We packed our bags, put away our bush hats and headed for the airport. Poniso saw us off, and we headed back to our lives. But we took with us memories (and photos) to last a lifetime.




## What Are You Celebrating?

From honeymoons to 50th anniversaries, graduation to retirement, family reunions to private getaways, celebrate your special occasion with A&K. For a list of ideas around the world, order your copy of our **Celebrations brochure**. Then phone your travel agent or A&K at **800.554.7092** to get the party started. [www.abercrombiekent.com/celebrations](http://www.abercrombiekent.com/celebrations)



# CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGE



your children and grandchildren  
could see a different  
world

In every part of the world, climate changes are having a devastating long-term impact, threatening the future of wildlife and marine species and generally displacing ecosystems.

Through Friends of Conservation, Abercrombie & Kent supports projects on all seven continents designed to stem further destruction and slow the impact of global warming. Our goal is to raise \$1 million dollars to support these local grassroots efforts.

## The Challenge

Global Warming is already having an impact on habitats critical to the survival of wildlife in places around the globe. Natural systems are under stress, and fragile environments are being destroyed.

### Snow could be gone from Africa's highest peak by 2020

It is estimated that by the year 2020, there will be no glaciers left on Mount Kilimanjaro. An icon that has come to symbolize Africa's beauty could soon be a thing of the past.

### Rising ocean temperatures are killing coral reefs

Global Warming has had a devastating effect on the world's coral reefs. Surface temperatures are increasing to unprecedented and sustained levels, killing off (or 'bleaching') more than 90% of the coral in many areas.

### Polar ice caps are melting

From January-February 2002, the northern section of the Larsen B ice shelf, an area of 1,250 square miles (Rhode Island is 1,545 square miles), disintegrated in just 35 days. This was the largest collapse event in the past 30 years.





# Support the Climate Change Challenge



## You can make a difference.

Your donation will go directly to grassroots efforts such as planting trees in the Masai Mara, restoring elephant corridors in India and installing research equipment needed to monitor changes in water temperatures and salinity in the ocean surrounding Antarctica.

**\$5,000** provides the materials and labor needed to set up a biogas plant to convert animal waste into usable energy

**\$2,500** supplies 7,500 indigenous seedlings for households, schools and communities

**\$1,000** equips a tree nursery with tools, irrigation system, shade netting, nursery materials, and indigenous seeds and seedlings

**\$500** transports 40 Maasai children from remote villages, where more than 50% of the children are unable to attend school, on a nature-based field trip (via a mobile education unit) and pays for meals and park fees

**\$250** provides material for 35 beehives for local women's groups to earn income from traditional foodstuffs and preserve forest resources

**\$100** purchases two acres of land for carbon sequestration projects that reforest critical wildlife corridors and protect local communities from human-wildlife conflict

## No challenge is too great when we work together.

**I Support The Climate Change Challenge.** Your 100% tax-deductible contribution to Friends of Conservation can make a difference. Donate now at [www.aksundowner.com/cc](http://www.aksundowner.com/cc) or complete the form on this page and mail to: Friends of Conservation • 1520 Kensington Road • Oak Brook, IL 60523-2156 USA

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: FRIENDS OF CONSERVATION

For payment by credit card:  AMEX  VISA  MC

Donation Amount \_\_\_\_\_

CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ EXP DATE \_\_\_\_\_

As part of Abercrombie & Kent's support for the Climate Change Challenge, we will plant a tree for every client travelling this year.





# the new face of family travel

WHO they are,  
WHAT they do,  
WHERE they go.



## *A&K* Adventure Crew

### Adventure Crew Web Site Rocks!

#### A&K gets kids involved

Kids 14 and under can now participate more actively in preparing for their family vacation with Adventure Crew travel club options.

Visit [www.akadventurecrew.com](http://www.akadventurecrew.com) for games and information on some of A&K's most popular destinations. Kids can even take an online travel personality quiz to find out what type of traveller they really are. And just before their trip departs, kids receive a special Crew Kit complete with fun travel items suited to their interests.

To learn more about the Crew, check out the Web site or call **800.554.7092**.

Since the dawn of school holidays, parents have gathered their children for carefully planned getaways with the hopes of spending quality time in places that please everyone.

Not an easy task. Gone are the days when a coloring book, crayons and day-pass to "Rollercoaster World" are enough to satisfy the school holiday appetite. A&K knows that exotic, luxury travel isn't just for grown-ups anymore. From kid-friendly African safaris to something a little closer to home (skiing at Whistler-Blackcomb, anyone?), the family holiday has grown up.

**WHO:** Busy schedules are no longer exclusive to working adults. Between school, tutoring, piano lessons, sports and the precious social life of teenagers, finding the time for a family holiday that works for everyone can be daunting.

Great holidays don't happen by chance. They're carefully planned. The new travel-savvy family welcomes the outside expertise of a professional travel agent working in conjunction with an A&K destination planner. These are families who realize that time cannot be refunded, and an experienced travel company can customize and maximize a holiday experience that accommodates everyone's schedule.





**WHAT:** Why limit your children's observation of wildlife on the Masai Mara to cable television when they can do it accompanied by an expert local guide from their customized game-viewing vehicle? There's truly nothing more rewarding than experiencing the world through the eyes of a child. Show your budding engineer the miracle of the Great Pyramids at Giza — the only survivor of the "Seven Wonders of the Ancient World." Let them experience transportation (beyond an SUV) by rickshaw, camel, elephant, quad bike, gondola or bush plane. And there's an abundance of outlets for the thrill seekers in your family including river rafting in the American West, surfing lessons at Australia's Bondi Beach or a walk across a hanging bridge poised above a Costa Rican rainforest.

A&K's experienced and knowledgeable guides are experts at matching the right activity based on age, preference and pace. Their local knowledge means families have "insider" recommendations for restaurants, babysitters, shops and places off the tourist path.

**WHERE:** Wherever you want to go. Want to live like a cowboy on a ranch without "roughing it"? No problem. Want to teach your children how Chinese food should



really taste? We'll reserve a table at our favorite local restaurant in Beijing. Ready to show them animals *sans* bars and enclosures? Your cruise to the Galapagos Islands has departures year-round.

At A&K, we've done the research for you. We know the best hotels, the best restaurants and the best time to avoid the crowds at the popular sights. And people know us. A&K has built a strong local presence and reputation in all of our program destinations.

Wherever you choose to go, A&K's full-time staff members are on call all day, every day, day and night. There's always an A&K expert right at hand to keep the wheels turning smoothly behind the scenes.



To order A&K's new **Family Holidays** brochure, phone your travel agent or A&K at **800.554.7092**. Visit us on line at [www.aksundowner.com/family](http://www.aksundowner.com/family)

## New A&K Family Holidays for 2007

**EGYPT** Marvel at the wonders of ancient Egypt on a family itinerary that includes a three-night Nile Cruise — the most comfortable, secure and convenient way to travel. A children's activity coordinator on board gives parents (and grandparents) time to relax.

**SOUTH AFRICA** Search for South Africa's "Big Five" (lion, leopard, elephant, rhino and buffalo) on 4x4 game drives with time for bush walks, tracking courses and treasure hunts in this new program.

**ARGENTINA** Cowboys and Indians takes on a new dimension in Argentina. Get a taste of life on a typical polo *estancia*, with horseback riding and a chance to try your hand at *taba*, a traditional gaucho game, and basque bowling. Also spend three nights in Bariloche, Argentina's "Little Switzerland," with a choice of activities including polo, mountain biking, horseback riding and golf.

**RUSSIA** Learn more about Russia's rich history and fascinating culture. Get acquainted with medieval Russia through games, dances and songs on a private estate. Learn about the crafts of Old Russia in a traditional village and travel from Moscow to St. Petersburg on the Grand Express deluxe overnight train.

**MAJESTIC CANYONS RIVER RAFTING** Explore Utah's Desolation Canyon on Majestic Canyons River Rafting program. Once a refuge for outlaws, a trapper's hunting ground and home to ancient tribes, the Green River is a playground of roller-coaster rapids, perfect for paddle boats or inflatable kayaks.





# Great Barrier Reef

## QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

Queensland is Australia's Great Barrier Reef state. Enjoy the best Aussie hospitality while immersing yourself in the natural wonders of the land Downunder. Walk through ancient rainforest or dive into the Great Barrier Reef while enjoying the luxury of Australia's premier resorts.



### *Hayman Island Resort*

World-acclaimed Hayman is nestled amid a lush tropical paradise in the Whitsunday Islands in the magnificent Great Barrier Reef. Featuring beautifully appointed rooms, suites and penthouses; internationally renowned restaurants; a chapel for weddings or a reaffirmation of vows; Spa Chakra Hayman health retreat; beauty salon; and children's activities center. Marine facilities offer Reef cruises, game fishing, diving, helicopter and seaplane flights. Island activities include swimming in salt and fresh water pools and extensive sporting facilities. Hayman is a member of The Leading Hotels of the World and a winner of over 50 Australian and international Best Resort and Excellence awards.

[www.aksundowner.com/hayman](http://www.aksundowner.com/hayman)



### *Voyages Bedarra Island*

At Voyages Bedarra Island, guests do as they wish, when they wish. This is Australia's most exclusive resort, an indulgent tropical private haven, lying off the coast of Cairns. While the focus is on peace and relaxation, there are also many activities to enjoy, including day trips to the Great Barrier Reef. The tantalizing menu changes daily, with an emphasis on fresh seafood and exotic tropical produce. A maximum of 32 guests are accommodated in 16 secluded Villas, each hidden in the rainforest, only minutes from the beach. This is the perfect island to charter for a special family celebration.

[www.aksundowner.com/bedarra](http://www.aksundowner.com/bedarra)



# African Elegance

Once known as the “Dark Continent,” today’s Africa boasts an attractive selection of elegant, boutique camps and lodges — from A&K’s acclaimed Chief’s Camp in Botswana, named a top safari lodge by readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* and *Travel + Leisure*, to Olonana in Kenya, named a “favorite” in Andrew Harper’s Hideaway Report.

## 1. Chief’s Camp, Okavango Delta, Botswana

Chief’s Camp has rebuilt its pavilions, transforming them into airy private suites. Windows look out onto a private game-viewing deck, equipped with hammocks and lounge chairs. Hand-woven carpets add a touch of warmth, while star-shaped light fixtures accentuate the natural reflections from the Pijio Channel and lagoon. For true luxury in the wilderness, look no further than Chief’s Camp.

## 2. Olonana, Masai Mara, Kenya

Named after a legendary Maasai leader, Olonana is a permanent luxury tented camp on the banks of Kenya’s Mara River. Game drives and walks introduce visitors to a wealth of species, though game viewing is possible – and rewarding – without leaving camp.



## 3. Shompole, Nguruman Escarpment, Kenya

Part of a community development project to conserve this important habitat in the Rift Valley, Shompole’s architectural influence is a combination of African, Indonesian, Japanese and European design. Each of the six rooms incorporates rock, sand, wood and water into the décor and has a plunge pool and views of the Rift Valley.



## 4. Birkenhead House, Hermanus, South Africa

A luxury hotel with just 11 studios, Birkenhead House sits directly on the Indian Ocean where, from the marble terrace, visitors can view the southern right whale. Once endangered, southern right whales now come here by the dozens to calve, their huge fins unmistakable in the surf just 300 feet away.

Each of these African “hideaways” is featured in a variety of A&K escorted and independent safaris. Contact your travel agent or A&K at 800.554.7092 to plan your luxury adventure.





# the marco polo club

For more than 20 years, Abercrombie & Kent's Marco Polo Club has provided exceptional travel opportunities, travel privileges and benefits to a small, exclusive group of dedicated travellers.

Membership brings with it numerous advantages, such as a 5% savings on most A&K, Inc. land arrangements, personal service, innovative itineraries and a unique "insider's" point of view available nowhere else in the travel community.

Complete membership information and a full list of upcoming invitational tours are just a few clicks away.

## Marco Polo Club Launches New Web Site!

Marco Polo Club members now have their own Web site at  
[www.akmarcopolo.com](http://www.akmarcopolo.com)

launched in November, the site is dedicated to member services and special amenities. For instance, members can easily view available invitational tours by both date and destination, check their membership status, join the photo contest, upload their own photo scrapbook, and participate in discussions and surveys. Non-members may visit the site for an overview of our invitational tour offerings and other benefits of membership. Sign up using the online Membership Application and save 10%.

Visit the Marco Polo Club on line at [www.akmarcopolo.com](http://www.akmarcopolo.com) and share your photos, your opinions and your passion for travel!





# 2007 Invitational Tour Calendar

Contact the Club to reserve your place on these coveted members-only journeys. Many (marked by \*) have or soon will sell out, so phone today! For complete details on each journey, visit [www.aksundowner.com/mpc](http://www.aksundowner.com/mpc). To join the Club, phone 800.554.7092.



## JANUARY

Southern India:  
A Kaleidoscope of Cultures  
January 12 – 26 with *Sushil Dahiya*

Guatemala & Honduras:  
Legacy of the Maya  
January 16 – 27 with *Jane Garcia*

## FEBRUARY

India Wildlife Safari  
February 8 – 26 with *Vikram Singh*

## MARCH

India Wildlife Safari  
March 14 – April 1 with *Vikram Singh*

Antique Lands: Thailand & Myanmar  
March 4 – 21 with *Randy Ng*

## APRIL

The Red River Road  
April 11 – 26 with *Devin Gwie*

Turkey: A Journey Through Time  
April 28 – May 12, 2007 with *Han Eryilmaz*

The Jewish Diaspora:  
Echoes of Eastern Europe  
April 15 – 25, 2007 with *Abraham Hasut*

## MAY

Shan Shui: Landscapes of China  
May 15 – 31 with *Mei Wah Chao*

The Da Vinci Enigma:  
In Pursuit of the Legend  
May 8 – 17, 2007 with *Enrico de Lucis*

Hill Towns of Tuscany & Umbria  
May 14 – 25 with *Linda Long-Innes*

Strolling in Southern France  
May 9 – 17 with *James and Diana Tamlyn*

Uganda: Gorilla Trekking\*  
May 27 – June 6 with *Toby Fenwick-Wilson*

## JUNE

Along the Chinese Silk Road  
June 2 – 19 with *Devin Gwie*

Cities of the Balkans  
June 18 – 30 with *Matthew Collins*

Krakow to Yalta  
June 17 – 19 with *Anthony Bay*

## JULY

The Baltics & St. Petersburg  
July 9 – 21 with *Ladislav Ciechanowski*

## AUGUST

Madagascar  
(Date TBA) with *guide TBA*

## SEPTEMBER

The Future of a United Europe:  
London – Berlin – Moscow  
(Date TBA) with *Anthony Bay*

Walking in Italy  
September 7 – 16  
with *Diana and James Tamlyn*

Tibet & the Yangzi River  
September 10 – 26  
with *Matthew Hannan*

South Africa Gold  
September 21 – October 5  
with *Tony Staadecker*

Wonders of Japan  
September 28 – October 10 with  
*Chieko Sakihana*

## OCTOBER

Homer's Greece  
October 1 – 13 with *Jeremy Kerrison*

Bucharest to Budapest  
(Date TBA) with *Anthony Bay*

Uganda: Gorilla Trekking\*  
October 12 – 22 with *David Bromham*

Along the Adriatic  
(Date TBA) with *Linda Long-Innes*

Southern Italy  
(Date TBA) with *Enrico de Lucis*

## NOVEMBER

Sandalwood, Incense and Silk  
November 9 – 24 with *Devin Gwie*

Tunisia & Morocco  
November 8 – 20  
with *Simon Butler-Madden*

India & the Pushkar Fair\*  
November 12 – December 1  
with *Vikram Singh*







# China on the rise

By Diana Korte

China is one of those destinations where the tour operator matters so much. And during our nearly 2,000 miles by air, land and water, Abercrombie & Kent was instrumental in guiding us through the intricacies of modern China.



Our small group of 16 was escorted by A&K veteran Tour Director Bill Hurst, the best guide we've ever had. He knew everything about China, anticipated our every need, made us feel safe no matter where we were, knew the best shopping and dining areas, and kept us moving along pleasantly and competently. Those of you who have been on tours know it's rare to get all of this.

We took A&K's **Highlights of China** tour, travelling from Beijing to Xian, Chongqing, the Yangzi River and the towering Three Gorges Dam. Our trip ended in Shanghai, a shopping mecca and one of the most populated cities in the world.

How delightful and relaxing it was to travel with Abercrombie & Kent and not to be concerned about figuring out where we were





going the next day, or even the next minute, or how we were going to get to the airport. Instead we spent our time focusing on enjoying, admiring and learning about China.

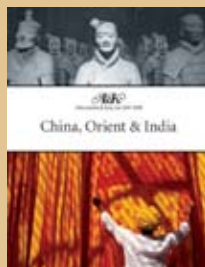
### Here are just a few of our favorite excursions — each with unique A&K touches:

**Great Wall Of China** Construction on the Great Wall began around 221 B.C. The longest and largest of all man-made structures, it was designed as a fortification to keep out marauding Huns from the north. With A&K, we avoided a popular section close to Beijing and visited the well-preserved and less-crowded Mutianyu section, where we walked past stalls of vendors selling everything from baseball hats to sandals. Once actually on top (via tram), we could see that the sinuous wall followed the contour of the mountains and was quite steep in places.

**Xian's Terra Cotta Warriors** In 1974, a farmer digging a well in Xian in central China discovered ancient life-size terra cotta warriors. This proved to be one of the largest and most dramatic archaeological finds of the 20th century. This site was built for Qin Shihuang, the first emperor of a unified China. Like the ancient Egyptians, the Chinese believed that the dead enjoyed all the luxuries of the living, so workers labored 36 years to build their emperor an army that would be at his disposal in the afterlife. With A&K, we entered the terra cotta warrior site before it opened to the public. The morning sun illuminated rows and rows of the cavalry, each warrior having distinctive facial features and uniforms. Although most of the figures have not been refurbished, about 1,200 soldiers, cows, horses and pigs have been brought back to their original magnificence.

**'M/S East King'** When our ship left Chongqing at 6 a.m., it was still dark and cold on deck. The 'M/S East King' holds 196 passengers, but the only other person on deck besides me was a man from New Zealand taking photos of the shoreline. As the ship moved down the Yangzi, we saw areas of massive construction, but miles of rural countryside as well. Each day we left on excursions, just with our small A&K group, to see local sights. On the last day of our cruise, the river narrowed and we went through the 118-mile stretch of the striking three gorges area with its misty peaks. One of my favorite times on this ship after sightseeing all day was dinner in our group's private dining room, arranged by A&K, where the Chinese food and service were outstanding.

**China's Luxury Hotels** We found lots of sophistication in the cities, particularly at our high-end hotels: Beijing's Peninsula Palace, Xian's Shangri-La Golden Flower Hotel and Shanghai's Portman Ritz Carlton. A&K placed our group on the exclusive club floors where rooms are larger and even more luxurious, with numerous complimentary food and beverage services daily, and express conveniences such as concierge access and no-wait check-in and check-out. This comfort and service level was much appreciated given a full itinerary.



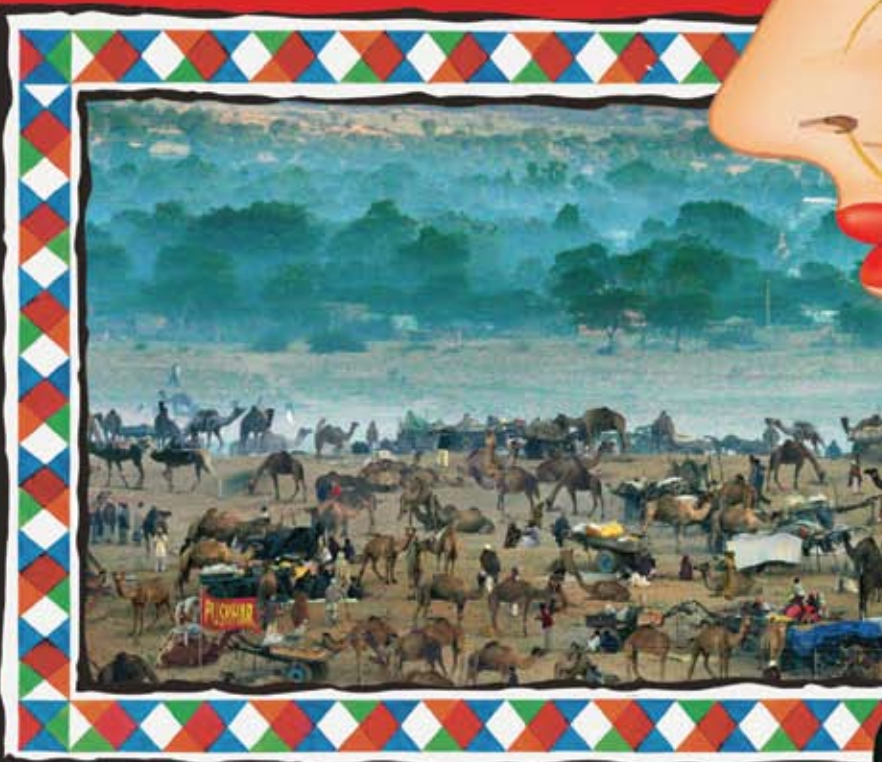
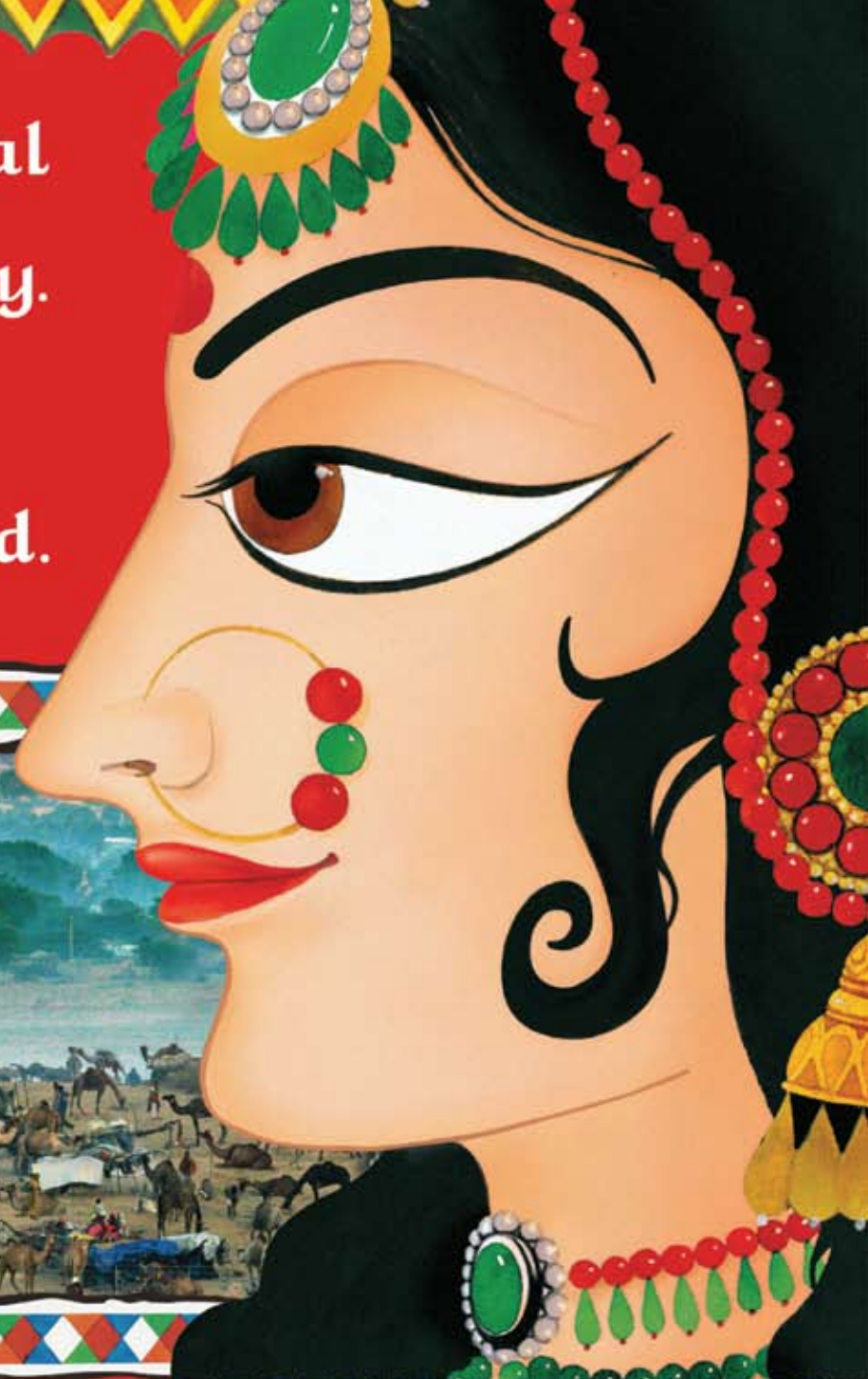
In 2007, A&K offers three escorted and independent journeys that include the Yangzi River: **Highlights of China**, **Yangzi Passage** and **Signature China**. For more information on any A&K journey to China, please consult your travel agent, or A&K at **800.554.7092** or [www.aksundowner.com/china](http://www.aksundowner.com/china).





There's a festival  
every day.

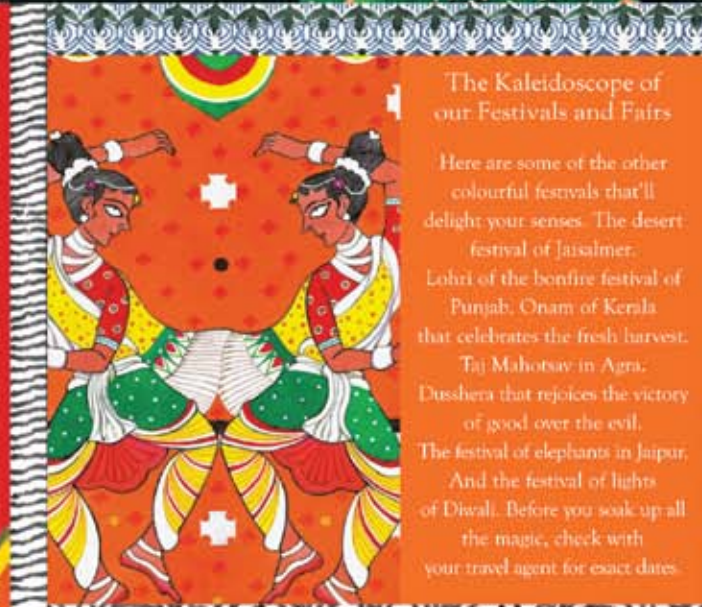
There's a fair  
every second.



No land celebrates life like India. With festivals like Holi, and fairs like Pushkar. Come drench yourself in the days and moments that glorify harvests, seasons, triumphs, joys, sorrows, battles, Gods and kings. This is the land with 365 days of sound and 360 degrees of colour. Incredible India.

# Incredible!ndia

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For inquiries, please phone Abercrombie & Kent at 800.554.7092



### The Kaleidoscope of our Festivals and Fairs

Here are some of the other colourful festivals that'll delight your senses. The desert festival of Jaisalmer. Lohri of the bonfire festival of Punjab. Onam of Kerala that celebrates the fresh harvest. Taj Mahotsav in Agra. Dusshera that rejoices the victory of good over the evil. The festival of elephants in Jaipur. And the festival of lights of Diwali. Before you soak up all the magic, check with your travel agent for exact dates.



# Exotic Values

## White Days

Hotel Astoria, St. Petersburg, Russia, celebrates "White Days" with a special three-night stay that includes:

- Three nights in a Classic double room
- Buffet breakfast daily
- Russian Table in the Davidov Restaurant
- Entrance tickets to the Hermitage Museum
- A half-day city tour with English-speaking guide
- Russian classical massage (30 minutes)
- Upgrades to a Deluxe room overlooking St. Isaac's Cathedral or Junior suite available at an additional cost

This special program is available through March 31, 2007, and must be booked through A&K as part of an independent or escorted journey. Contact your travel agent or A&K for details.

To take advantage of these extraordinary values, **contact your travel agent**, phone A&K at **800.554.7092** or visit A&K on line at [www.aksundowner.com/values](http://www.aksundowner.com/values).



## Wonder Down Under

Experience the must-see sights on your choice of a "Discovery" (an ideal introduction in A&K style) or "Connoisseurs" (ultimate A&K escorted experience) journey. Book any 2007 departure of **Highlights of New Zealand & Australia** or **Wonders of Australia & New Zealand** by April 1, 2007, and receive a complimentary dinner for two, including two glasses of house wine, at an included hotel during your tour.

## European Villas

Book any 2007 Concierge Villa by April 1, 2007, and receive a complimentary wine tasting and lunch for your entire group during one day of your program. A&K Concierge Villas offer all the services of a five-star hotel with the comfort and privacy of your own home. Villas are available in France, Italy and Spain. Consult A&K's **European Villas** brochure, your travel agent or A&K for details.







# exotic spas

The setting: exotic.

The ambiance: indulgent.

The resort: idyllic.



Relaxation has risen to a new level. Resorts no longer depend on beaches and scenery to soothe their guests. Increasingly, hotels in exotic locales across the globe are introducing in-house spas with the most modern treatments to utterly relax their guests.

Always cutting edge, A&K has sought out some of the best spa hotels and resorts for your consideration. Include any of these excellent escapes in your next A&K vacation, whether it be the centerpiece of your journey, or the deserved respite after an active adventure.

### 1. Manea Spa, Islands of Tahiti

For the most authentic spa experience in French Polynesia, savvy travellers seek the experts. Pearl Resorts & Spa and Le Taha'a Private Island & Spa have debuted the Manea Spa luxury brand, committed to Polynesian therapists, authentic décor and indigenous materials. Offering full-service spas on the islands of Taha'a, Moorea and Bora Bora, with signature massage fares on Tikehau and Manihi, the brand has also launched a specialized product line infused with the same indigenous, fragrant elements utilized in all Manea Spa treatments. Demonstrating a commitment to all-natural treatments, the spa has developed a coconut-based concept, exclusively using products purchased from local villagers and incorporating the signature pineapple from Moorea, vanilla from Taha'a and the coral sand from Tikehau. For further details, visit [www.aksundowner.com/pearl](http://www.aksundowner.com/pearl).



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### 2. Soneva Gili Resort, Maldives

The award-winning Six Senses Spa at the stunning Soneva Gili Resort has glass floor panels beneath massage tables to allow an unparalleled view of the water and fish below. One of the spa's most requested treatments is the Maldivian Sand Massage, which takes guests out of the treatment room and onto the beach for a relaxing massage followed by exfoliation with island sand. The Six Senses Spa at Soneva Gili is also known for its Ayurvedic offerings, rejuvenating treatments and emphasis on holistic wellness.

### 3. Peninsula Bangkok, Thailand

The Peninsula Bangkok has opened the Peninsula Spa, a full-service oasis in the heart of the city. Nestled among lush gardens in a three-story Thai-colonial building, the spa has 14 treatment rooms and four suites, two double and two VIP suites, all with en-suite Jacuzzi. The VIP suites also feature a rain shower, floor-to-ceiling windows and a balcony with sweeping views of the Chao Phraya river.

To include an exotic spa resort in your A&K journey, consult your travel agent or A&K at **800.554.7092**. [www.aksundowner.com](http://www.aksundowner.com)





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## Pearl Resorts & Spa, Le Taha'a Tahiti & Her Islands

Many of the world's finest resorts, including this incredible Pearl Resorts setting in French Polynesia, now center around modern spas with treatments ranging from traditional to cutting edge. See page 22 for details.

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