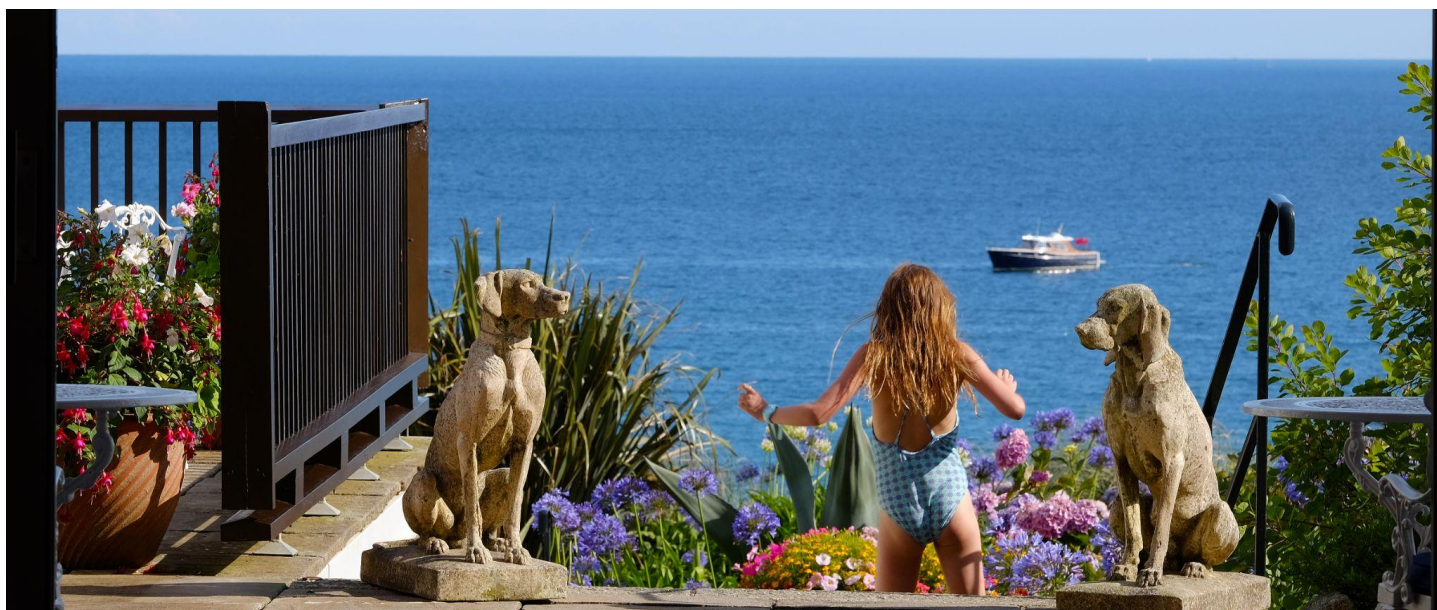


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## February Group and Family Travel Newsletter

Dear Friends,

When you travel with those you love the most, every day is a celebration. Whether with family, friends, or friends who feel like family, when we come together and experience new destinations and fresh experiences with each other, a special kind of magic emerges from the camaraderie, the chatter, and the clinking of cocktail glasses.

Gathering with my own family and friends is truly what travel is all about - either with several generations of family in the indulgent, all-inclusive Curtain Bluff in Antigua, or sitting around a table with friends in a private villa at Blanket Bay in New Zealand, toasting to another day of new adventures.

We've pulled together some of our favorite family and small-group travel opportunities that have not only caught our eye, but that we just know will entice your clients. These members of the [Rebecca Recommends portfolio](#) have family top of mind - and many of them are family-owned themselves.

Here's a taste:

- Watching little ones' eyes light up as they walk along the walls of Windsor Castle on a day out arranged by Great Fosters.
- Picking fresh fruit for breakfast from an orchard at Babylonstoren in South Africa, or gathering fresh herbs at The Newt's gardens in Somerset, England.

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- Bonding over a Southern Crossings golf, fishing or wine-tasting experience in Australia or New Zealand.
- Getting the best seats in the house at a London theater performance, thanks to the The Hari's well-connected Concierge Team.
- Sea kayaking followed by a dram of whiskey that warms from the inside out at The Torridon.
- Venturing out on safari in Sri Lanka in search of elusive leopards.
- Sharing the rich history and modern charms of Tel Aviv during a stay at The Drisco.
- Gathering at table with loved ones beneath the boughs of a centuries-old tree to indulge in northern Italy's finest wine and cuisine.
- Realigning mind and body with wellness activities and outdoor recreation at Meadowood Napa Valley.
- Marveling at the cherry blossoms in Washington, DC, on a private tour with Beyond Times Square.
- Experiencing unparalleled luxury in the African bush at Xigera Safari Lodge, watching how families interact in the animal kingdom.

Allow us to put you in touch with our Rebecca Recommends clients who welcome families and groups with open arms, offering limitless opportunities for making the most of precious time together.

Fondly,

*Rebecca*

[vip@r-recommends.com](mailto:vip@r-recommends.com)



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## [Resplendent Ceylon](#) - Wildlife Encounters, Tea Estates and Cultural Immersion in Sri Lanka

Family vacations are the perfect excuse to break away from routine and open one's eyes to a fresh hand of experiences. Think wildlife encounters with the entire family while on game drives that aspire to showcase a broad spectrum of nature at Sri Lanka's [Wild Coast Tented Lodge](#). The little ones can also try out the Junior Ranger program, an immersive experience that will enhance their knowledge and open their eyes to observing wildlife.

Embrace the beauty of Sri Lanka whether in a smaller group of four or six, or a multigenerational group of family. The suites and villas at [Cape Weligama](#) are generously sized, contemporary living quarters complemented by tropical gardens that provide the ideal aura of a private space of one's own. For those who wish not to be disturbed, villa and garden clusters are the best way to ensure not just privacy, but ideal bonding between family and friends.

Consider basing a group at [Ceylon Tea Trails](#), from which it's easy to explore the Cultural Triangle, comprised of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Kandy, or hike to the summit of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Sigiriya, or take a day trip to the hill country of Nuwara Eliya and admire colonial architecture. Sri Lanka has no shortage of purposeful experience for families, from discovering kingdoms and temples, to traversing across cobblestone pathways and landscaped gardens, to meeting the welcoming people of the island.

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## **Curtain Bluff - All-Inclusive Luxury, World-Class Service & Island Activities for All Ages**

One of the Caribbean's most iconic luxury resorts boasting fabulous views of the Caribbean Sea, [Curtain Bluff](#) is an all-inclusive five-star sanctuary perfect for guests of all ages. With a wide range of watersports, such as waterskiing, windsurfing, paddle-boating, tubing, kayaking, scuba diving, snorkeling and Hobie Cat sailing, as well as tennis, pickleball, basketball, racket ball and squash on land, Curtain Bluff has all the ingredients for an unforgettable family vacation. Children aged 3-10 can experience the [Cee Bee Kids Camp](#), which offers hands-on activities such as exploration of the property's herb garden, mocktail making and crafting, free time in The Games Room and outdoor physical play such as the mini Olympics. Together, intergenerational families can take yoga, tennis and cooking classes, explore the property's garden areas, or simply relax on the beach or poolside, complete with world-class concierge service. This is a dream-like setting that the whole group will soon want to make into an annual tradition.

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## [Xigera Safari Lodge](#) - Spectacular Safari Stays

As a family-owned and family-run business, these values never stray far from the hearts of those at Red Carnation Hotels.

Adventure-seeking groups can create lifelong memories at Xigera Safari Lodge whose wealth of safari experiences on both land and water will leave generations enthralled in unison. Guests will feel a profound sense of pleasure as they see how their own strong familial bonds are reflected throughout the diverse range of species that Xigera shelters. Make the most of a journey to the African bush by having exclusive use of Xigera Safari Lodge. Whether a wedding, a private party, or even an extended-family holiday, the 12 individualized suites will grant a private party unparalleled luxury access to the African wilderness.

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## [The Milestone Hotel & Residences](#) - Essential London Experiences

Located just minutes from Kensington Palace and the Royal Albert Hall, [The Milestone Hotel](#) boasts six luxury Residences, with their own private entrance, providing guests the perfect “home away from home” experience in London. With access to all hotel services, including concierge, room service and housekeeping, as well as thoughtful touches like kitchen pantry essentials, a coffee maker and a fresh-fruit platter, everything is covered to ensure stays are both comfortable and memorable. Create new memories in world-famous museums, spend an afternoon on The Serpentine boating lake in Hyde Park, with a picnic provided by the hotel, or take in a breathtaking show in London’s vibrant West End, all easily accessible from this exclusive location.

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## **Blanket Bay - Gather Your Favorite People at The Villa at Blanket Bay**

Designed to offer enriching shared experiences crossing generations, the Villa at Blanket Bay has been delighting families and small groups since opening in 2017. Enjoy time with loved ones in one of the Villa's four king-sized suites, complete with cozy fireplace and living area, decadent bathroom and spectacular views, or come together in the grand central atrium offering multiple living and dining areas in a truly unique setting.

An on-site chef prepares exquisite dishes for villa guests at any time of the day in the full commercial kitchen, using fresh, local produce from around the region. Choose to dine privately with your group inside or outdoors under the stars.

This secluded hideaway is on the doorstep of New Zealand's adventure capital - Queenstown - and some of the country's most stunning locations. Blanket Bay can create a bespoke itinerary of experiences, whether guests are seeking adrenaline or relaxation. From horseback treks to fly fishing, scenic helicopter flights to jetboating, funyacking or river canyoning, the thoughtful staff help guests make the most of their villa stay. Or, stay put and choose a pampering treatment from the day spa or try out the gymnasium, heated lap pool, steam rooms, or jacuzzi in magnificent surroundings.

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## [Babylonstoren](#) - Inspire Little Farmers in the Winelands of South Africa

Guests can ground themselves, breathe and feel the freedom of farm life at Babylonstoren Farm Hotel in the Winelands. Cycle between the vineyards and pick fresh fruits from the orchards or go fishing with the little ones in a farm dam. Every season is celebrated on the farm, which ensures an experience that's perfectly attuned to nature.

As befitting for a five-star establishment, the Farmhouse, Manor House, Garden Cottages, Fynbos Cottages and family-focused Fynbos Family House are all rooted in modern farm luxury with every indulgence considered. Crisp white linens, world-class farm-to-table restaurants and a state-of-the-art winery all contribute to complete a luxurious farm stay. The recently renovated spa, complete with an authentic hammam and Rasul chamber, offers decadent mud scrubs and deep soaks for the ultimate unwind.

While it remains a working farm, Babylonstoren presents a unique opportunity to immerse oneself in a most magnificent setting at the foothills of Simonsberg Mountain - the perfect base from which to explore the garden and surrounding Winelands.

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## [The Newt in Somerset](#) - Into the Garden in the English Countryside

For ages 0-100, and the green-fingered or curious sorts, The Story of Gardening at The New is an immersive experience taking visitors on a journey through time and place to explore the human obsession with shaping beauty from the ground at our feet. This modern exhibit, set beneath the grounds of the estate, digs into the history of garden design from the ancient world to the modern day and beyond, engaging guests through interactive garden rooms, hands-on sensory displays and a unique tool collection wall. Don't miss the virtual reality pods that transport you to other gardens around the world, including Monet's Giverny in France and Babylonstoren in South Africa. Reconnect and relax in this incredible garden sanctuary just a 1 hour, 20-minute train ride from London.

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*Image credit - NRocknroll*

## [Dream Escape](#) - Experience a Back-to-Nature Neverland

Imagine having an exclusive Scottish island all to oneself? [Eilean Shona](#) is just such a private paradise, full of beautiful beaches, woodlands, and craggy shores, where days are filled with wild swimming, reading, hiking, picnicking, kayaking and nature watching. Families and friends can reconnect as they cook together or sit around the campfire. This very special and secluded island, described by actress Kate Winslet as “heaven on Earth,” is nestled in a tranquil loch on the dramatic west coast of Scotland.

As a retreat for individuals, couples, families and groups that wish to detach and detox from the modern world, the island offers a choice of eight self-catering holiday cottages and a 12-bedroom country home. Within this car-free wilderness heaven, it is easy to fill one’s time - but without the pressures of our everyday lives. Take part in workshops and island activities, or find your own adventures. Kayak around the island, discovering deserted beaches, finishing the day with mussels picked from the pontoon and langoustines delivered by local fishermen. With limitless walks, local wildlife such as seals and dolphin pods, extraordinary birdlife, pristine swimming waters and locally sourced cuisine, Eilean Shona offers something for all who wish to celebrate life together in a one-of-a-kind dream destination.

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## [Beyond Times Square](#) - Cherry Blossoms & History Lessons in Our Nation's Capital

Take your spring vacation to the next level with a blooming experience in Washington, DC! From late March to mid-April, the nation's capital is adorned by a sea of cherry blossoms. When DC is at its peak beauty during the National Cherry Blossom Festival - a spring celebration that commemorates the gift of Japanese cherry trees from the mayor of Japan in 1912 - families and friends can embark on a private pedicab tour and experience the magnificence of the monuments and memorials up close against the backdrop of Mother Nature's dazzling flowery display.

As you sit back in comfort in the pedicab, your expert tour guide will provide detailed explanations of the attractions you pass and will happily make stops along the way at any you wish to take a closer look at. Your colorful bouquet of attractions includes the Washington Monument, the Jefferson, Lincoln, FDR, Martin Luther King, Vietnam and WWII Memorials, the White House and the Capitol. This enriching and customized tour is both entertaining and educating and a perfect shared experience for a small, multi-generational group!

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## **The Nare - Seaside Tennis, Private Yacht Trips and Family Fun on the Seashore**

The Nare is situated in a delightfully secluded bay on the Roseland Peninsula in Cornwall, England - an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Families and friends holidaying together can relax in this serene location known for its gorgeous surroundings, thoughtful amenities and the staff's caring dedication to guest comfort and experience. Located above the uncrowded Carne Beach, families can have fresh-air fun together, exploring the golden expanse of sand, rock pools and hiking the endless miles of coastal path.

The leisure facilities set within the property keep guests of all ages occupied for many hours. Guests may slip away for quiet time in the indoor pool or heated outdoor pool, the spa treatment rooms or the outdoor hot tub, or spend a couple hours on the sea-facing tennis court or croquet lawn.

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For fair weather days, *Alice Rose*, the elegant 38-foot gentleman's motor launch, is a great way for guests to explore the quiet, sheltered coves of the stunning Fal and Helford rivers. Scheduled sailings offer the chance to join other guests for a day on the water exploring, enjoy a picnic lunch at anchor and have a swim - possibly even seeing dolphins. *Alice Rose* is boarded from the pontoons at Smugglers' Cottage, Tolverne. This historic site is where General Eisenhower prepared and briefed his American troops before they embarked for their D-Day landings in 1944. The yacht is also available for custom private charter sailings.

In addition, The Nare provides a range of exciting bespoke activities for all generations to enjoy together, including covert espionage missions (based on The Nare's spy novel "To Snare a Spy"), sea fishing, private tennis lessons and art sessions with the hotel's artist-in-residence. Additional activities are organised and hosted during the summer months.

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*Image credit - Elise Hassey*

## **Southern Crossings - Bond Over Shared Interests, from Golf to Fishing (to Wine)**

For multigenerational family travel and reunions, as well as couples and groups of friends traveling together, staying in the same accommodations and coming together over a shared interest is memorable and meaningful. Whether gathering for golf, fly-fishing on remote New Zealand rivers or sipping new-to-you wines and comparing notes, staying together in a private villa or lodge villa elevates the bonding experience. Southern Crossings' Travel Designers can arrange for a stunning stay, from the Kauri Cliffs Lodge in the beautiful Bay of Islands in New Zealand's North, to luxurious surrounds on renowned Lizard Island in Australia. What's more, they'll pepper guests' stays with shared and individual activities that will delight all ages - while always promising space for everyone to get together and enjoy a little privacy too.

In New Zealand, consider Kauri Cliffs' abundant golfing, surfing, horseback riding, mountain biking, farm tours and fishing - plus a fabulous day spa and private beaches. Head north of Auckland to Te Arai Lodge, an intimate space for up to 12 guests with a swimming pool, sauna, spa, yoga studio and sprawling kitchen gardens. Stay on a working sheep station in the Southern Alps' Craigieburn Valley, close to kayaking and fly fishing, or even float aboard the Rua Moana superyacht to explore some of the country's waterways in style.

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In Australia, celebrate being together once again with a breadth of activities, from swimming and snorkeling while staying at the private House at Lizard, or head to Orpheus Island for an exclusive-use Great Barrier Reef getaway with specially curated experiences - think cocktail classes and sunset cruises. Foodies in your friend group? Come together at the Dairy Flat Farm in Victoria's Daylesford Spa country, a 40-acre working farm that feeds the nearby Lake House's award-winning restaurant. Get busy in the kitchen with sourdough baking classes or let the talented chefs cook up a storm for your group.

Whatever your clients' interests or motivations, milestone or group size, Southern Crossings can design a tailored itinerary to excite, entertain and exceed everyone's expectations.

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## [The Living Circle, Castello del Sole, Ascona](#) - Raise a Toast to Family and Friends in a Private Southern Switzerland Paradise

Imagine a large wooden table in the shade of a majestic hornbeam tree, your loved ones gathered together and surrounded by an orchard and rice fields. At Castello del Sole in Ascona, Ticino, Switzerland, this dream becomes reality. In the heart of a 10-hectare park, tucked away next to mountains and Lake Maggiore, guests will enjoy fresh produce from the garden and fine vintages from our winery with agricultural specialities from Terreni alla Maggia. Executive Chef Mattias Rook (1 Michelin star, 18 Gault Millau points) carefully prepares every detail of the exquisite meals.

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## [Hartwell House and Spa](#) - Quintessential Country House Living

Royalty on the mind? Throughout 2023, England will be celebrating the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, so why not stay as the royals do in an idyllic country house hotel? Hartwell House became a National Trust property in 2008 and offers luxury and comfort fit for, well, a king. In fact, one of its most famous residents was King Louis XVIII of France during his exile, when he set up Court at Hartwell.

Set in 90 acres of landscaped parkland, this is the perfect base for family celebrations or a small group to experience country house living, surrounded by antiques and paintings, and discreet professional attention to detail. Wake up and open the huge drape curtains to reveal views across well-manicured gardens, topiary and tree-lined lawns leading up to follies, and feel you are in another era.

While there are 32 bedrooms in the main building with 16 more in a converted stable block, for more independence there is also The Old Rectory, a Georgian house, sleeping seven, set in its own two-acre garden with an outdoor swimming pool. It's a self-catering option, yet with full access to the hotel and spa facilities.

The house's proximity to London and Heathrow Airport makes it a favorite with many celebrities, from Dame Shirley Bassey to Bill Clinton, Jay-Z to Catherine Zeta-Jones. There's a helicopter pad on the front lawn, and easy access to motorway and railway connections.

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## **The Hari - A Stylish Retreat in Belgravia Near Hyde Park, Museums & Shopping**

For families seeking the comforts of home while away from home, The Hari provides a peaceful getaway. Set in the quintessential neighborhood of Belgravia, the hotel's enviable location places a significant role in its appeal. Wedged between one of Central London's greatest green spaces - Hyde Park - and some of London's leading attractions, The Hari makes for a perfect stay with loved ones.

Whether your clients have little ones to keep entertained, or they are just looking for a wholesome reunion, The Hari offers something for the whole family. Enjoy world-class museums and galleries just moments from the hotel doors, as well as famous shopping destinations (think Knightsbridge and Harrods) and fun-filled activities that transform with the seasons.

The Hari's hospitality ethos is built around the importance of family. The staff understands that time with friends and family is precious, providing a Concierge Team to make the impossible, possible. From sought-after tickets to sports matches and theater shows to table reservations at exclusive restaurants and bars, families and friends staying together at The Hari will have much to celebrate.

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## **[The Torridon](#) - Family Experiences at a Spectacular, Family-Owned Highlands Hotel**

Reunite with family in Scotland's most spectacular scenery. At The Torridon, one can pause and take a deep breath, satisfying all the senses and making it more enjoyable than ever to travel with small groups of loved ones. Experience adventure with Torridon Outdoors, where mixed-ability groups can enjoy a range of activities exploring the unique Torridon landscape, from guided walks to sea kayaking. Return to the magnificent Torridon Hotel, dating from 1887 and join the whiskey expert to journey through the years. If you're lucky, they might have an expression from each generation in the award-winning whiskey bar, with bottlings dating back to the mid-20th century. The guided whiskey tasting is fun for all the family and can be enjoyed as a private group. In the evening, private dining in the cozy Library can be arranged, the perfect place to unwind with family after an adventurous Torridon day.

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## [Great Fosters](#) - A Royal Revelation for the Whole Family

When you stay at Great Fosters, you're not only convenient to LHR but you're perfectly placed for royal exploration. Families can spread out in interconnecting bedrooms, kids can giggle away in super-cute teepees, and the Head Chef, who has young children of his own, delights tiny taste buds with a scrummy menu.

First up should be a day out at nearby Windsor Castle (said to be the late Queen's favorite), the oldest inhabited castle in the world. Pick up a headset (there are separate audio tours for adults and younger visitors) for a more in-depth experience of the sights. Walk along the castle walls to see evidence of Windsor's role as an important royal fortress long ago and spot the battlements, towers, arrow loops, and murder holes! The State Apartments where the King entertains his guests are truly magnificent and one cannot fail to be impressed, while St. George's Chapel, the burial place of 11 monarchs, including Queen Elizabeth II, is one of the finest examples of Gothic architecture in England. And of course, don't miss the spectacular Changing of the Guards ceremony.

Impress the wee ones with the pageantry of an even earlier era at the magnificent Hampton Court Palace. Experience the public dramas (there are many!) and private lives of Henry VIII, his wives, and children in the world of the Tudor court. Admire the impressive Great Hall, Haunted Gallery, and the vast Tudor kitchens.

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## **The Drisco - A Serene Stay Close to the Wonders of Tel Aviv**

Thoughtfully restored over a period of ten years, the enormous investment is apparent at The Drisco which opened its doors in 2018. The hotel is named after the Drisco brothers, a tribute to the two Americans who arrived on the coast of Jaffa 150 years ago with a dream that they never got to see come true. Today, the Drisco is a sublime setting for a luxurious multigenerational experience - just as the brothers imagined it to be.

The location of this historic Tel Aviv hotel, in the heart of the picturesque and pastoral American-German colony established in 1866, puts guests front and center with the top sightseeing and cultural experiences in the city. Browse one-of-a-kind galleries, take a tour of the markets, visit insightful museums, taste the delicacies of exceptional bakeries and restaurants, or simply stroll along the beachfront. Within The Drisco, friends and family will find a variety of rooms in which to relax throughout a satisfying Tel Aviv and Jaffa stay.

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## [Meadowood Napa Valley](#) - Wine & Wellness for All in Napa Valley

Meadowood is a 36-room and suite oasis, ideal for milestone celebrations, as well as gatherings of friends and intimate corporate groups, and offers indoor and outdoor meeting, dining and event spaces. The private dining room in Meadowood's new restaurant, Forum, provides an intimate space for groups of up to 20 persons. Larger gatherings are well accommodated at outdoor venues, including the poolside Cabana Patio and the Terrace Café.

The Estate offers a variety of experiences and activities for varied interests and Napa Valley immersion. Led by a team of renowned experts, The Wine Center at Meadowood can host a private class. Oenophiles may expand their knowledge with "Understanding Napa Valley," or test their palate with a blind tasting.

Add a little wellness to balance out wine tastings with a yoga, pilates, bootcamp or HIIT class. Hike the Meadowood trails to enjoy unmatched views of vineyards and the valley floor and walk the labyrinth for reflection and contemplation. For tennis enthusiasts, engage in a friendly competition on the courts. Recharge in the Forbes 5-star Meadowood Spa, where the garden lounges are ideal for relaxing together before or after a treatment. Reunite after a day of activity poolside in one of the private cabanas to share stories from the day in a picturesque Napa Valley setting.

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*Castle Howard in Yorkshire, an easy visit when staying at Middlethorpe Hall and Spa.*

## [Middlethorpe Hall and Spa](#) - An Ideal Extension for Any London Stay

In 2023, England will be celebrating the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and his Consort Queen Camilla. Extend a visit to London with a stay at Middlethorpe Hall, one of the three Historic House Hotels of the National Trust. Guests may take advantage of Middlethorpe's unique complimentary access to National Trust properties during a stay at the hotel.

Located just a 10-minute drive from the city center of York, Middlethorpe Hall is the perfect base for a family or small group of friends to enjoy the tranquility and hospitality of this historic house after a day spent exploring the many attractions of York and its surrounding North Yorkshire countryside. Whether self-driving or tour guide-chauffeured, discover the magnificent locations where such films as *Downton Abbey* at Harewood House, or *Brideshead Revisited* at Castle Howard, have been shot.

Think ahead to experiencing a family celebration, a very British traditional Christmas when the Hall is decorated in style and offers such special performances from York Minster's choristers singing carols, followed by a traditional afternoon tea, or a visit to Midnight Mass at York Minster itself, returning for a glass of port and mince pies.

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## [Bodysgallen Hall and Spa](#) - Gateway to the Wonders of North Wales

Bodysgallen's elevated position takes full advantage of the breathtaking views across its magnificent gardens to Conwy Castle and the Snowdonia mountain range beyond. It's an idyllic base for exploring the wonders of North Wales, either by self-drive or tour guide, and Bodysgallen offers easy access to the coast, the mountains and the lakes.

Whether tracing history through the medieval castles and villages, walking along the Wales Coastal Path, taking an exhilarating zipline ride above a quarry up to 119 mph or through a labyrinth of cathedral-like slate caverns, there is something to spark and satisfy the interests and sense of adventure for all ages and abilities.

Local professional and well-informed guides can take small groups in comfort to places off the beaten tourist route, adapting their program to suit their guests' wishes and requirements. Perhaps it's a day trip to Anglesey, visiting the salt flats where artisan sea salt is produced, or to the Anglesey Sea Zoo, with its unique aquaria displaying the best of British marine wildlife. Tour Penderyn whisky distillery, stopping for a light lunch at a local pub along the way or enjoying a carefully packed picnic basket of freshly made sandwiches and delicacies from the hotel. At day's end, return to the hotel for a warm welcome and the very best of country house hospitality.