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3 ULTIMATE GETAWAYS

EUROPE & ASIA

By Paloma Villaverde de Rico

We've handpicked three top getaways around the globe that you're going to want to get on your client's radar *asap*.

Sublime Wellness

In northern India, you'll find the 100-acre **Ananda in the Himalayas**, overlooking the spiritual town of Rishikesh and the river Ganges. This uber-luxe wellness retreat recently debuted new suites and enhancements, including the brand-new *Deluxe Suites* and the refurbished *Ananda Suite* and *Viceregal Suite*.

Overlooking the valley, the *Ananda Suite* has a large private garden with gazebo seating, while the historic *Viceregal Suite* boasts its own private terrace with a rooftop gazebo overlooking the landscaped gardens and the distant Ganga Valley.

Manini Sen, Ananda in the Himalayas' Assistant VP, Revenue, says that beyond offering stunning accommodations, the retreat is a "place of meaning that brings back into relevance forgotten traditions, ancient Indian wisdom, something that is so relevant today." Over the years, she says, the property "has evolved, it has been ahead of the curve, but at the core, it has remained the same. We were never a hotel with a spa; we were always a destination spa and we morphed ourselves into a retreat."

All the programs at the retreat begin with personal wellness consultations and follow a holistic approach towards achieving the client's goal. The spa is spread across 25,000 sq. ft. with 24 treatment rooms, a gymnasium, outdoor temperature-controlled pool and hydrotherapy facilities. Additionally, Ananda is acclaimed for its gourmet wellness cuisine, with a menu that embraces Ayurvedic principles and is customized based on individual dosha or the body type of each guest. On average, every program starts at seven nights, says Sen, "but certain programs require you to

stay much longer. Weight management, for example, would be 14 nights."

Guests can also include trekking, nature walks, white-water rafting and jungle drives in the Rajaji National Park in their stay. A

special highlight of this destination

is a tour of the ancient temples and monasteries surrounding Rishikesh, ending with a spiritual experience of the Ganga Aarti ceremony performed on the banks of the river Ganges.

In terms of demographics, Sen says that it's a younger clientele than it used to be. A wellness trip is "no longer a privilege, it's a necessity," she says. anandaspa.com



Sober-Curious Itineraries

In *Contiki's 2024 Voice of a Generation Survey*, 83 percent of respondents aged 18-35 said they'd be interested in a completely sober travel experience. With that in mind, the tour operator, who welcomes travelers of this age group, has announced its first trips curated for the sober curious, including six departures across Britain and Ireland this August.

"The data doesn't lie. Young travelers are not only drinking less in general but are also increasingly curious as to what a completely sober travel experience would look like," said Contiki CEO Adam Armstrong in a press release statement. "Of course, our travelers can still enjoy an Aperol in Rome or some Beaujolais wine at the Contiki Chateau if they want to, but these sober-curious trips are part of a suite of cultural experiences we offer that prioritize the buzz of travel over anything else."

The departures are a twist on Contiki's bestselling Great Britain & Ireland trips



covering everything from Edinburgh to London, Galway to York: 18-day *Great Britain & Ireland*; 11-day *England & Scotland*; 13-day *Scotland & Ireland*; 6-day *England in a Week*; 6-day *Scotland in a Week*; and 8-day *Ireland in a Week*.

Highlights of these itineraries include a magic and comedy show in Bristol (England); a farm-to-fork dinner in Manchester (England); an evening walking tour in Dublin; a yoga experience and lunch in a barn in County Wexford (Ireland); a hike to Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh (Scotland); a Haggis experience, Glasgow (Scotland); and a show at the *Edinburgh Fringe Festival* (Scotland). contiki.com/en-us/travel-styles/new-trips

Uber-Chic Escape

The 202-room and -suite **Shangri-La The Shard, London**, located on the 34th to 52nd floors of Renzo Piano's iconic building, and just across the river from The City of London, knows how to wow your clients—after all,

it's home to the highest hotel pool in Western Europe and one-of-a-kind experiences. Take the yacht experience that Kurt Macher, GM for the property, told us about. "We're the first five-star London property to offer yacht journeys on the River Thames," he says, explaining that clients can customize the experience with sunset cocktails, accompanied by a private chef, with up-close view of London's historic sights.

He also points to the exclusive *Behind the Scenes* programming, which allows guests to discover the local neighborhood.

"We want to bring the neighborhood to life," says Macher. Experiences range from a private jewelry-making workshop at Alex Monroe to a private Chef's Tour of Bermondsey that includes a 2-course lunch cooked by the chef. shangri-la.com/en/london/shangrila

Top to bottom: Viceregal Suite at Ananda in the Himalayas (photo credit: Jubin Johnson); view of London with The Shard (photo credit: Visit Britain); Contiki is offering sober-curious tours in the UK.