

TRAVEL + LEISURE

INVEST IN
TRAVEL

INVEST IN
YOU



Letter from the Editor



Jacqui and her family shot by adventure photographer **Andrey Josephs** (@andreyjosephs) on a helicopter excursion in the Laikipia Highlands operated by **Tropic Air Kenya**.

IT'S TIME TO retire the term *bucket list*. Especially during a pandemic. Don't get me wrong: some lists will always have a place in my life, and I'm sure it's the same for you. For example, I like to make a record of books that I want to read some day. And that's purely because I'm forgetful.

But the idea that you must itemize the destinations you want to see before you die—and that those select destinations will somehow have a grander impact on your physical being or mental health than others—seems silly. And so very 2019. The truth is, all travel is worthwhile, and if we've taken anything away from the past 18 months or so, it's the realization that life is uncertain and precious. Travel, at its core, is about self-enrichment, which I suppose is a life goal. But should we all expect the Pyramids of Giza or the ice fields of Antarctica to make us feel complete, or more enlightened, by the time we hit 80? I think not.

We used to call our November issue "Trips of a Lifetime," a softer way of selling the bucket-list idea. This year, we've made a switch to "Invest in Travel, Invest in You," focusing on journeys of self-enrichment, whether it be through wellness, sports, culture, or the arts. The investment in you also goes beyond—and into local communities. In Discoveries, we spotlight businesses that give back to the people who make them who they are.

The magic of travel becomes clear, I believe, when you go on a trip not expecting anything epic. That happened to me in Kenya, with top safari outfitter **Roar Africa** (roarafrika.com), over the summer. My family and I decided to fly far, far away—not because I had to see Kenya before a certain age, or to replicate something I'd seen on Instagram. It was to watch my son, Bobby, grow. Kenya may appeal to you now, in five years, or even later. If you do decide to go, my advice is simple: Get ready to be surprised.



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FROM MY TRAVELS

Our journey to Kenya kicked off with an exceptional airline experience. Using the pros at **Skylark** (skylark.com), I got tickets on **Qatar Airways** (qatarairways.com), which earns raves for its Qsuite business-class service; the quad configuration was ideal for our group, with four huge seats that converted into double beds. In Nairobi, we stayed at the secluded and lush **Hemingways** (hemingways-collection.com; doubles from \$1,460) before flying to the family-friendly **Finch Hatton's** (finchattons.com; doubles from \$1,640), in Tsavo West National Park, where the stargazing from our villa was unreal. At **Cottar's 1920s Camp** (cottars.com; doubles from \$1,930), set on a private reserve in the Masai Mara, we came across 22 lions—the Sopa pride, out for a stroll. At nearby **Angama Mara**, we tried the new mobile tented camp (angama.com; camp from \$6,950, three-night minimum) and shared drinks with our guide, Daniel Njiriri, around the campfire. In Laikipia, **Segera** (segera.com; doubles from \$3,800) was our final stop. We did a *Lion King* movie night, then saw real-life drama when a leopard dragged her impala kill up into a tree. The bush is never for the faint of heart.

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bought the property and restored its 50,000 acres. Fences were removed and endemic species, like the African wild dog and reticulated giraffe, were reintroduced. Today Segeera is again vibrating with life, and the lodge, which is designed like a village, feels like a haven in the heart of the bush.

Having chosen the perfect location, Calmeyer devised a sound-meditation program that cherry-picked spiritual and cultural traditions from places as disparate as Armenia and Australia. The technique—a favorite among Silicon Valley CEOs—combines breathing and visualization exercises with the sounds of Himalayan singing bowls, gongs, chimes, zithers, various drums and shakers, and even a didgeridoo.

Before the session started, we each lay down on one of the mattresses set out in a semicircle, and were encouraged to set an intention: a phrase to anchor us on our journey. This could be something big, like trying to get at the root of one's anxiety surrounding change, or it could be small, like prioritizing time to keep a journal. Mine was to come to terms with raising a newly independent teenage boy who, until just a couple of years ago, had never wanted to leave my side. We each placed a notebook and pen beside us to write down whatever might come up, then closed our eyes.

We were told that the quickest way to turn inward and enter a relaxed, introspective state is to listen to instruments that produce harmonic overtones. These are the high, vibrating sounds you hear when someone plucks a sitar string or strikes a gong, for example. We began by focusing on the sounds of singing bowls, and the recording of a instrument called the *duduk* played by Armenian composer Djivan Gasparyan. After just a few minutes I saw the red dots on the inside of my eyelids I used to see at night when I was a child. The vision took me back to the age of seven, when I was haunted by unfounded fears about the

health of my maternal grandmother.

By turns hopeful, nostalgic, and hypnotic, the sounds of gongs and singing bowls were interspersed with recordings of Byzantine chants and the low, mournful voice of the Bhutanese Buddhist Lama Gyurme. Flashes of a young, healthy version of my father, who died 14 years ago after a long illness, suddenly came to me. Then, a veritable flip-book of images of my son as an infant, a toddler, and all the way up to the present day, played behind my eyelids. I felt for a split second his toddler's hand clutching my hair as he pressed his cheek against mine.

After the session, the group dined together in Segeera's lobby-cum-art-gallery (Zeitz is also one of the world's biggest collectors of African art). Dinner was platters of Ottolenghi-style salads made with the fruits of the kitchen garden. I sat next to a woman who said that during the sound journey she had, for the first time, felt compassion for her estranged mother. On my other side was a woman who told me that she felt something akin to self-acceptance after a lifetime of battling body dysmorphia.

Walking back to my room, I spotted two of the three reticulated giraffes that had sidled up to our ceremony earlier. I thought back to a discussion about the physics of resonance earlier that day. In addition to the physiological rhythms we can see, feel, and measure, like circadian rhythms, breath, and heartbeats, our bodies experience countless smaller vibrations that take place on a cellular level. And these can profoundly affect how we function and feel.

Watching the giraffes head off into the bush, I found myself acutely aware of the way our cells resonate, not only in response to sound but to other people, to birds, trees, and insects. I finally got what sound-meditation practitioners mean when they say, "We become one with it." 🌍

roarafrika.com; seven-night sound-meditation retreats from \$15,000 per person.