

# My travels of the year

*From glamorous cultural escapades to extreme voyages, five of Tatler's favourite globetrotters describe the thrills of their best adventures*

## Lily Bertrand-Webb

### Photographer

Aside from my love of photography, one of my favourite pastimes is riding waves as a member of the London Girls Surf Club. Taught by my Dad, I'd only ever spent summers surfing in Cornwall, Devon and Wales, so having the opportunity to surf in the tropics with him was a dream, especially on the North Malé Atoll of the Maldives, staying at the paradisiacal Four Seasons Kuda Huraa. You never think of the Maldives as a surf hotspot, but don't let the calm waters fool you – it's much harder than you think, as the reef breaks are quite different to beach breaks. On the plus side, though, the warmth of the water here means not having to wear the usual uniform of wetsuits, booties and gloves. Driving past beautiful isolated islands and heading towards the big blue waves is an amazing feeling. Every day I would catch six-foot-plus waves. I'd never caught a wave higher than three feet back home in Cornwall. I cried with joy at the end of one six-foot ride, after I looked to my right and saw a fish gliding through the swell next to me: the water was that clear. If you've never been to the Indian Ocean, the clarity of the water and the different shades of blue blows your mind. Aside from surf, I found the Sunrise Kayak experience breathtaking, for many reasons, and a great workout. Afterwards I felt I deserved a pampering massage in the heavenly Four Seasons spa before a sundowner at the Sunset Lounge. Sitting back, I gazed at the most Turner-esque sunset seen outside the Tate Britain.



*Lily Bertrand-Webb on her way to ride the waves breaking on the reefs close to Four Seasons Kuda Huraa (fourseasons.com). The resort's expert guides track the biggest waves in the Maldives and transport guests by seaplane into the heart of the surf wilderness. Book through Scott Dunn (scottdunn.com).*



PHOTOGRAPHS: DANNY WEBB/GETTY IMAGES

## Bella Somerset

### Health coach

I've never laughed as much as I did when leading three clients on a trek through the Himalayas back in February. I feel that one of the strongest roots of dissatisfaction in today's society is a lack of authentic connection, so there's something really grounding about being in the mountains. Trekking roughly six hours a day – through remote villages and rhododendron forests, the horizon dominated by snow-capped mountains – you feel yourself settle into the route, gradually surrendering control, allowing your mind to calm and your natural sleep pattern to return.

As the days progress, the views get more and more extraordinary, until, eventually, the altitude kicks in: you feel properly high, laughing all the time. And that's why it's always a trip of a lifetime, because you realise that happiness is infectious, and that is a gift as precious as the magic of the Himalayan mountains. *Bella's Magic Mountains (bellasmagicmountains.com) organises group treks in Nepal, the Pyrenees and the Lake District throughout the year. Private tours are also available.*



*Bella Somerset leads a client trek through the Himalayas*



## Henry Cookson

### Founder, Cookson Adventures

This year I was lucky enough to embark on my fourth visit to Antarctica, my fascination with the continent dating back to 2007 when I was part of the first team in history to reach the Southern Pole of Inaccessibility on foot. The white wilderness of the world's highest continent never loses its appeal: whether it's meeting resident wildlife, sea kayaking between cathedral-esque icebergs or taking to the skies in a helicopter, there's enough to impress even the most seasoned traveller.

To get there, yacht charter is an increasingly viable means of crossing the Drake Passage, with long-range explorer yachts now designed to withstand the treacherous conditions. Once in situ, having one of these impressive vessels at our disposal, equipped with all manner of 'toys', fills me with glee. After taking flight in a helicopter from the yacht's deck, I donned my snowshoes for a hike over Anvers Island, looking out over the Antarctica Peninsula and down to the historic Port Lockroy base, home to the fondly named Penguin Post Office.

This trip was extra special thanks to some incredible conservation work. A highlight for me, and for Cookson Adventures, was brokering a significant donation from a client to a research project into a new species of killer whale. The Type D orca has gone 'undiscovered by science' since the first sightings in the 1950s, but, with this funding, a team of scientists was able to charter a research vessel and locate these magnificent beasts off the southern coast of Chile. They took small skin samples for laboratory analysis, which could well unearth a major new scientific discovery. *Cookson Adventures (cooksonadventures.com) can dream up the most incredible adventures and expedition possibilities.*



*Henry Cookson prepares for a submersible dive in the Antarctic*

PHOTOGRAPHS: MAX AGACE/GETTY IMAGES





Aline Coquelle  
in Zanzibar

## Aline Coquelle

### Photographer

I travel in search of remote lands and cultures to discover the sense of humanity and freedom that inspires my photography. This year I went to the ashrams of India and the source of the Ganges, the polo fields of Argentina, Italy with Gelasio Gaetani d'Aragona to promote our book *The Italian Dream*, but mainly to Zanzibar, where I'm working on my next book for Assouline.

Africa has always been close to my heart. I was lucky to join two extraordinary women, Deborah Calmeyer, founder and CEO of Roar Africa (the luxury African travel specialist), and media tycoon Pat Mitchell on their first ever Women's Empowerment Roar & Restore Retreat across South Africa. On this transformative trip, five hugely influential women from the fields of philanthropy, conservation, business development, education, health and science came together to share their vision on how to provide women with greater economic opportunities.

Over a week we covered a lot of ground, flying from Le Cap to the Camdeboo National Park at Graaff-Reinet in the Karoo. A highlight was being met by a live choir at the SA College of Tourism, established in 2001 by Dr Anton Rupert, the late billionaire philanthropist, and share the stories of these empowered students and their mentors. It helps me believe in a new future. Here, 90 young women and 16 young men from impoverished backgrounds are sponsored through a year-long programme in hospitality and tracking skills.

Next, we journeyed to the southern Kalahari, a semi-arid sandy savannah that has been inhabited by bushmen for 20,000 years, before reaching Tswalu, our thatched private retreat lodge (the epitome of rustic luxe, fabulously reimaged by interior designer Boyd Ferguson). I loved being able to connect to this wild landscape on a horse safari. What struck me was how Tswalu means 'new beginning', and in this conservation wonderland, where black-maned lions, rare pangolin, cheetah, desert black rhino and buffalo are thriving, you can't help but feel protective about the world. Our trip ended in Cape Town with a visit to Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, the largest art museum to have opened in Africa in more than 100 years.

I recalled the words of Keats: 'The poetry of Earth is never dead.'

[roar africa.com](http://roar africa.com)



Clockwise from top, Tswalu  
Lodge in the Kalahari;  
Aline in Zanzibar; Aline on  
the Roar Africa horse safari



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## Amelia Windsor

### Model

After a bank holiday weekend that saw the hottest Notting Hill Carnival on record, I made my way to Florence to immerse myself in even more musical fun at the New Generation Festival. The four-day event was started two years ago by a trio of British producers, Roger Granville, Maximilian Fane and Frankie Parham to celebrate music in all its forms, from opera to classical and jazz, while also providing a platform for rising stars. And so a joyous weekend of music and culture ensued.

You can't help but fall in love with Florence – gazing up at an impressive fresco or facade, wandering through the Boboli Gardens or enjoying an Aperol Spritz on the rooftop of the Hotel Continentale, owned by the Ferragamo family whose glamorous shop and museum is also not to be missed. It's the perfect place to stay, close to the Uffizi Gallery, with romantic bedrooms that look out onto the Ponte Vecchio, the hills beyond and the Basilica San Miniato al Monte in the distance.

It's also very close to the home of the annual New Generation Festival staged in the Corsini Gardens, acquired with the palazzo in 1620 by Philip Corsini. Princess Georgiana Corsini and her family kindly provide this beautiful space for the Festival, its geometric box hedges and scented lemon trees all romantically draped with fairy lights for the occasion.

The opening night started with Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*; director Victoria Stevens transported Lorenzo Da Ponte's libretto into a 1930s film set. This was followed by a divine gala dinner of Tuscan delights created by Nerina Martinelli (of Il Nugolo restaurant fame). Another highlight for me was the night impresario Maximilian Fane guided the orchestra through Elgar's *Chanson de Matin* and *Chanson de Nuit*, followed by Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No.4* in G major – each note was conducted with love and played by Giuseppe Guarrera so effortlessly. It was completely spellbinding. [lungarnocollection.com](http://lungarnocollection.com); [newgenerationfestival.org](http://newgenerationfestival.org)

*Scented lemon trees in the  
Corsini Gardens were draped  
in fairy lights for the New  
Generation Festival*

PHOTOGRAPH: ALAMY STOCK PHOTO