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10 Top Upscale All-Inclusive Resorts

Posted by Correspondent McLean Robbins

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All-inclusive and *luxury* no longer need to be mutually exclusive terms, thanks to a burgeoning number of high-end hotels and resorts that require guests only to bring themselves — and the desire for an unforgettable vacation. From private island paradises to fitness-focused retreats, these 10 all-inclusive properties offer luxury travelers the value of knowing that they've paid for the majority of their trip up front (here, that means lodging, meals and most alcohol is included in the per person price).

Ballyfin Demesne, Ballyfin, Ireland

Downton Abbey lovers will flock to this country manor set on 610 acres in County Laois in central Ireland. One of the best examples of Regency architecture in Ireland, the historic 15-room home reopened in May 2011 as part of the Relais & Châteaux group. You could easily live like Lady Mary Crawley and the Countess as you promenade around the 28-acre lake, follies and grottoes or take part in activities such as fishing, horseback riding, clay shooting, falconry and more. The daily rate includes full board, activities, Wi-Fi, laundry, packing and unpacking, gratuity and tax. *Rates from €475 (US\$637) for weekdays and €580 (US\$778) for weekends per night.*

Amankora, Bhutan

Not a single resort but a circuit of five luxury lodges, Amankora is Aman Resorts' foray into the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan. Spread across five valleys, each property offers a unique experience — from Amankora Thimphu, a 16-suite lodge in the blue pine forest near the capital's sights and shopping, to the eight-suite Amankora



Gangtey, located in a former 16th-century monastery, to Amankora Punakha, accessed by crossing a suspension bridge over the Mo Chhu river. Each of the five properties offers private dining facilities and a small spa. Stay at one or more of the properties during your stay, enjoying all meals, beverages, laundry, visa processing and return airport transfers. *Rates from \$775 per night.*

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Otahuna Lodge, Christchurch, New Zealand

Originally built in 1895, Otahuna Lodge is the largest private historic residence in New Zealand. This Relais & Châteaux property features Queen Anne architecture and just seven individually designed, historically inspired suites. Spend your days soaking up the **South Island's** magnificent surroundings and enjoying horseback riding, fishing, cooking classes, golf, heli-skiing, mushroom foraging, off-property wine tours and more, as well as nightly five-course menus with wine pairings. We'd suggest a visit in September, when the property's grounds bloom with thousands of daffodils. Included in your stay are the aforementioned tasting menu with pairings, pre-dinner drinks and canapés, daily breakfast, laundry services and full use of the lodge's facilities and equipment. *Rates from NZ\$950 (US\$782) per night.*



Rosewood Jumby Bay, Antigua

Perhaps the most traditional of the list, Rosewood Jumby Bay brings to mind many high-end Caribbean resorts with its white sand beaches and beautifully manicured grounds. Located on a private island just a short boat ride from **Antigua** proper, the property is accessible only to resort guests and homeowners, and once made

the news for turning away Princess Diana for fear that she'd bring too much disruption to resort guests. Aside from that high level of privacy, you'll have the finest accommodations (just 40 suites and villas) and service — the property is managed by the Rosewood brand — and get full use of the hotel's watersport facilities, pools, tennis courts, croquet field and putting green. Rosewood Jumby Bay offers an all-inclusive package that includes daily meals; beverages, cocktails and wine by the glass; a culinary welcome amenity, afternoon tea service; and use of the Jumby Bay scheduled water taxi to and from Antigua. *Rates from \$1,350 per night.*

The Point, Saranac Lake, N.Y.

Formerly the great camp of William Avery Rockefeller, this 11-room Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star property is located in the heart of the **Adirondacks** on Upper Saranac Lake, near Upstate New York's Lake Placid. Designed as a rugged log mansion, the hotel hasn't changed much since the time of the robber barons. Each room offers a lake view (and a fireplace, making it a perfect romantic winter escape), hand-built bed and private bath, often with the camp's original fixtures. Rich fabrics, fine antiques, 19th-century oil paintings and whimsical rustic furnishings with a welcoming sitting area facing a huge stone fireplace make each guest room a retreat of great comfort and peace. Rates include activities such as curling on the lake with a full ice bar and bonfire, outdoor snow barbecues each Saturday, and sailing, tennis and croquet in the summer. Keep in mind The Point has its annual closing from April 1 to 30. *Rates from \$1,500 per night.*

Desroches Island, Seychelles

Envision more than eight miles of pristine beaches and forest that feel a lifetime away from civilization. This private island resort — best suited for couples — offers a variety of accommodation styles, ranging from suites to private homes. Our favorite is the Madam Zubre Spa Retreat, with three bedrooms, three private pools, a personal butler, a chef and a "spa angel" (therapist) upon request. Spend your days sport fishing, scuba diving or relaxing at the spa. Chefs will prepare meals at almost any location around the island, from champagne beachside picnics to candlelit dining in your private residence. Nearly the entire resort caters to the outdoors-in lifestyle for which so many people visit the **Seychelles**. A stay at Desroches Island includes three meals daily and activities. *Rates from €600 (US\$804) per person, per night for a beach suite and €12,000 (US\$16,803) per night for the Madam Zubre Spa Retreat.*

Singita Castleton, Sabi Sand Private Game Reserve, South Africa

The small yet mighty Singita brand is synonymous with high-end African vacations, and the latest property, Singita Castleton, is no exception. Located in the heart of the Sabi Sand, the former home of Singita founder Luke Bailes' grandfather sits on 45,000 acres of private reserve, a small fraction of the half a million total acres owned by the brand. Castleton is designed as an intimate retreat, featuring six private cottages separate from the main house. It blends the wildness of an African safari lodge with the comforts of a country home, such as a swimming pool, wine cellar, tennis court and gym. Spend your days exploring the Sabi Sand Private Game Reserve (adjacent to Kruger National Park), where you'll spot the Big Five and more from guided safari walks or game drives. Included in the nightly rate is three meals daily, two open Land Rover safaris per day, guided walking and biking safaris, and all drinks (with the exception of champagne). *Rates from ZAR66,500 (US\$6,430) per night for up to eight guests.*

Dunton Hot Springs, Delores, Colo.

A 19th-century-ghost-mining-town-turned-luxury-resort, Dunton Hot Springs draws travelers year-round for its exceptional cuisine and spectacular scenery. Located in the San Juan Mountains near famed skiing destination **Telluride**, accommodations range from luxury glamping tents to a four-bedroom home. Spend days horseback riding the high Rockies, taking photography lessons or yoga classes, or relaxing in the property's namesake hot springs before having family-style meals at a long antique table in the heart of the town's saloon-turned-restaurant. The nightly rate encompasses all meals and beverages (excluding choices from the Reserve List). *Rates from \$600 per night.*

Four Seasons Tented Camp Golden Triangle, Chiang Rai, Thailand

Designed as a three- or four-night adventure, Four Seasons Tented Camp Golden Triangle pampers you from the moment you arrive until you depart on a private airport transfer. Tents with private en-suite baths offer views of the Ruak River, Burma, the Laos mountains or the jungle and Golden Triangle. Rates include a 90-minute massage (designed to relieve sore muscles after the also-included elephant ride), as well as gourmet meals and wine tastings. Billed specifically as a destination for active adults and teens, this Four Seasons is of a different — yet no less luxurious — breed than the brand's other more resort-style destinations. *Rates from THB2,000 (US\$2,994) per night.*

Sonora Resort, Sonora Island, British Columbia

Adventure lovers will relish a visit to this Relais & Châteaux property in British Columbia's Discovery Islands. Accessible only by helicopter, seaplane or boat, the secluded resort is open from May to mid-October each year. Spend days on guided grizzly bear tours, indulging in the Island Currents Spa's hot and cold mineral pools, or simply marveling at the magnificent vistas. Rooms and "lodges" are private and elegantly appointed, but it's the views that make this a magnificent location. Gourmet meals are prepared in tasting menu style and served in a glass-walled dining room with panoramas. Rates include three daily meals, all beverages, use of all resort amenities, Wi-Fi and unlimited world phone access. Sonora also has several all-inclusive packages that involve everything from salmon fishing excursions to photography workshops. *Rates from \$600 (based on double occupancy).*

Photos Courtesy of The Point Resort, Aman Resorts and Rosewood Hotels And Resorts Worldwide LLC

Tags: **all-inclusive travel, Amankora, Antigua, Ballyfn, Ballyfn Demesne, Bhutan, British Columbia, Chiang Rai, Christchurch, Colo., Delores, Desroches Island, Dunton Hot Springs, Four Seasons Tented Camp Golden Triangle, Ireland, N.Y., New Zealand, Otahuna Lodge, resorts, Rosewood Jumbo Bay, Sabi Sand Private Game Reserve, Saranac Lake, Seychelles, Singita Castleton, Sonora Island, Sonora Resort, South Africa, Thailand, The Point**