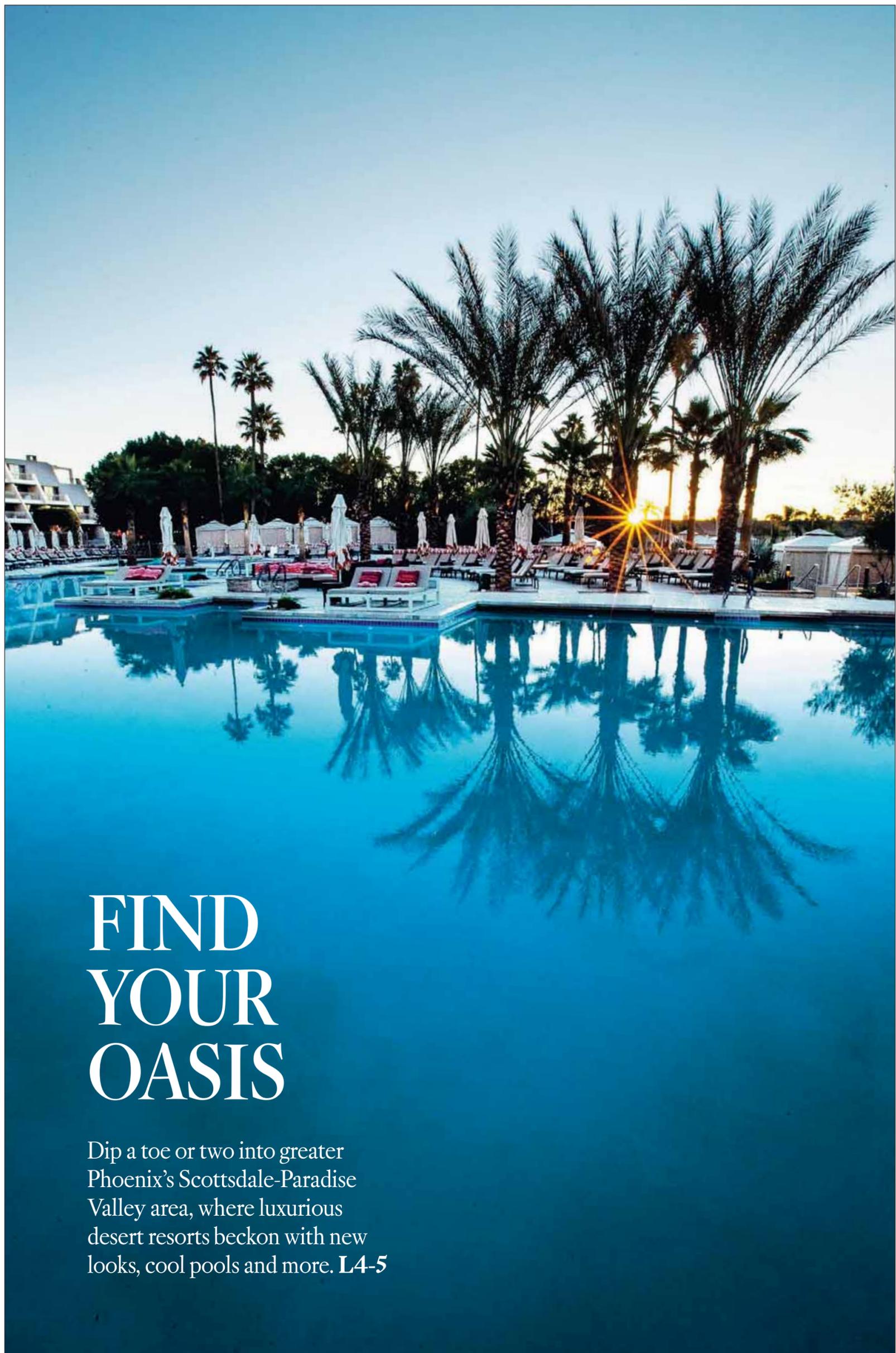


# TRAVEL



## FIND YOUR OASIS

Dip a toe or two into greater Phoenix's Scottsdale-Paradise Valley area, where luxurious desert resorts beckon with new looks, cool pools and more. **L4-5**

Photo of the redesigned pool area at the Phoenician in Scottsdale, Ariz., by BRIAN VAN DER BRUG Los Angeles Times

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# THE CONCIERGE

## GEO QUIZ

The Aletsch Glacier, one of the longest and largest in Europe, is in what country?

- Austria  
 Czech Republic  
 Switzerland

Answer below. Source: National Geographic Bee

## TIPSHEET

### Hotels that know what guests crave

By ELYCIA RUBIN

Once upon a time, a TV in your hotel room was a cool perk. These days, in-room blow dryers and free bicycles no longer cut it. Hotels spend billions on carefully curated amenities and cool activities designed to keep guests coming back. Here are four places where you can indulge.

#### Lake Tahoe, Nev.

Waking up in paradise is even easier, thanks to Edgewood Tahoe's Après Sleep Cart, designed to spur a soothing start to the day. It's stocked with freshly brewed Naturopathica tea infused with healing extracts, rose geranium mist, homemade granola and juice. Guests are primed to glide right into their daily Mindful Mountain Yoga class with views of the lake and majestic pine trees. Rooms start at \$249 a night.

Info: [edgewoodtahoe.com](http://edgewoodtahoe.com)

#### Aspen, Colo.

A 54-foot indoor rock climbing wall, ice skating, snowshoeing and fatbiking (oversized tires that work on snow) are some of the highlights at the new Lime-light Hotel Snowmass. Top off the adventures at the marshmallow-shaped s'mores carts that are steps away at Base Village and Snowmass Mall from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. daily throughout the winter. Rooms from \$350 a night.

Info: [limelighthotel.com](http://limelighthotel.com)

#### Amsterdam

Pulitzer Amsterdam gives a daily guided tour of 17th and 18th century canal houses and their famous inhabitants, including Rembrandt. Kids also receive pillowcases personalized with their name and hobby, a new bedtime story placed on the pillows each night and a treasure hunt with a prize at the end, among the programs just for them. Rooms from \$335 a night.

Info: [pulitzeramsterdam.com](http://pulitzeramsterdam.com)

#### Paso Robles, Calif.

Allegretto Vineyard Resort houses one of the most robust art collections in the area, with daily, docent-led tours. Tandem bikes for cruising the vineyards, chef-accompanied garden tours and the world's first sonic labyrinth featuring tones created by wind instruments are among other offerings. Rooms from \$270 a night.

Info: [allegrettovineyardresort.com](http://allegrettovineyardresort.com)

## GEO QUIZ ANSWER:

Switzerland



DAVID DE LOSSY/Getty Images

**CREDIT CARD** reward programs can be tricky to navigate, which means you could miss out on savings.

## MONEY MATTERS

# Rewards are in the cards

Those airline flights, hotel rooms and meals out can pay off more than ever this year with new loyalty programs. Here's what to watch for.

By LUCAS KWAN PETERSON

With a new year come new opportunities to save on travel with credit card miles and points — cash back, bonus points and statement credits on certain purchases. The world of points and miles can be tricky to navigate, which means you could miss out on potential savings. Here are some things to keep in mind as you scan the credit card landscape for 2019:

#### Citi Prestige revamp

The Citi Prestige card has pumped up its benefits for the new year, propelling it higher in the echelon of luxury-tier credit cards such as American Express Platinum and Chase Sapphire Reserve. The card now offers quintuple points on dining and travel and triple points on cruise lines and hotels.

Not all the changes are positive. The card's annual fee will increase \$45 to \$495 in September, and the card's unlimited complimentary-fourth-night benefit will be curtailed to just two uses per year.

The other caveat: The card is not currently accepting applications. Although several travel blogs had reported that applications would reopen in January (and with, in theory, a nice sign-up bonus), when I called the Citi application center ([800] 456-4277), neither the representative nor her supervisor could confirm when the card would be accepting applications again.

#### Dining and delivery perks

The American Express Gold Card has a new look and different benefits as of fall 2018, the most noteworthy of which — quadruple points on restaurants — will excite those who dine out frequently.

The card, which has a 35,000-point public sign-up bonus after spending \$2,000 in the first three months and an annual fee of \$250, also offers a monthly \$10 credit for a handful of dining and food-delivery partners, including Grubhub, Seamless and Shake Shack.

But be aware: Some cardholders have reported not consistently getting quadruple points when dining out. You may be in for a chat with customer service to claim those missing points.

#### Track your categories

Several credit cards, including the Citi Dividend, Chase Freedom and Discover it cards, offer a rotating quarterly selection of categories that give you 5% back, including gas, airlines and wholesale clubs. Save yourself some time (and money) by making a note of when the categories that are the most potentially lucrative for you fall on the calendar.

Discover and Citi have already released their categories for the year, allowing you to plan for big purchases.

Citi Dividend, for example, gives 5% back on airline purchases in July, August and September. If, come June, you find yourself about to pull the trigger on plane tickets to Europe for the fall, it might pay off to wait until July 1 so you can take advantage of the 5% offer.

Chase Freedom, unfortunately, keeps its categories closer to the vest and reveals them three months at a time; for the first quarter of 2019, it's gas stations, tolls and drugstores.

#### Say bonjour to Bonvoy

The big Marriott news (aside from the massive data breach of its Starwood reservation system that compromised the data of nearly 383 million people) is its rolling together of the Marriott, Starwood and Ritz-Carlton rewards programs into one giant entity now known as Bonvoy (as in "bon voyage").

Bonvoy is expected to introduce a handful of new credit cards with the Bonvoy branding through Chase and American Express in February.

Chase's Marriott Premier Plus card will soon be known as the Marriott Bonvoy Boundless card and will offer a substantial 100,000-point sign-up bonus when it officially launches Feb. 28. That's currently enough points to get you five nights in a Category 4 hotel. (By comparison, Category 7 contains Ritz-Carltons.)

#### Take along a friend

The Southwest Airlines Companion Pass is one of the great deals in all of flying: When you buy a ticket on Southwest, you get to bring a designated companion for free, plus \$5.60 in taxes and fees each way.

If you're not a road warrior, the Companion Pass can be tough to land. It requires 100 flight segments or the accumulation of 10,000 points. Credit card sign-up bonuses, fortunately, count toward that point total, but typically require opening more than one credit card.

For a limited time, three Southwest Rapid Rewards cards — Plus, Premium and Priority — are offering a free companion pass, good through the end of the year, plus 30,000 Rapid Rewards points as a sign-up bonus after you spend \$4,000 in the first three months. Think of it as a great opportunity to take yourself and a friend or loved one on a nice getaway.

## DEAL OF THE WEEK

### Ski free with a stay at Lake Arrowhead

Guests who stay two nights at Lake Arrowhead Resort and Spa can ski or snowboard for free at nearby Snow Valley Ski Resort in Running Springs.

**The deal:** Lake Arrowhead Resort wants you to enjoy the slopes with two lift tickets (each good for one day) for a two-night stay. Lift tickets usually cost \$69 to \$89 each; room prices start at \$302 a night, not including a \$20-a-night resort fee. The offer is good through March 31, based on availability.

Info: (877) 829-2429, [lat.ms/lakearrowheadresortdeal](http://lat.ms/lakearrowheadresortdeal)

— MARY FORGIONE



Lake Arrowhead Resort and Spa

**HANG OUT** by the fire at Lake Arrowhead Resort and Spa after hitting the slopes with free lift tickets during a two-night-stay offer.

## TOURS & CRUISES

### SCOTLAND, SCANDINAVIA

## An Arctic island adventure

Journey across three seas to explore the remote islands of Scotland, Denmark and Norway on a 12-day expedition that travels beyond the Arctic Circle. The June cruise on the polar expedition ship Sea Spirit will focus on the geography, flora, fauna and history of the Orkney, Shetland, Faroe, Jan Mayen and Spitsbergen islands. The cruise, organized by Poseidon Expeditions, will embark from Edinburgh, Scotland, and end in Longyearbyen, Norway. Photo workshops are scheduled.

Dates: June 3-14

**Price:** From \$5,396 per person, double occupancy. Includes accommodations, meals, transfers, excursions and activities. International airfare not included.

Info: Poseidon Expeditions, (347) 801-2610, [lat.ms/highlandstoarctic](http://lat.ms/highlandstoarctic)

— ROSEMARY MCCLURE

## BOTSWANA

### Zoo safari

Join retired Santa Ana Zoo director Ron Glazier on a 10-day safari in Botswana, known for its elephants, cape buffalo and antelope. The excursion begins (and ends) in Johannesburg, South Africa, where participants will fly to Maun, Botswana, for the start of the safari. Highlights include a visit to Makgadikgadi Pans National Park, home to herds of wildebeest and zebra, and the Okavango Delta, with opportunities to view animals on foot and from safari vehicles, dugout canoes and power boats.

Dates: July 12-22

**Price:** \$7,995 per person, double occupancy. Includes accommodations, all meals and sightseeing. Pre-tour extension to Cape Town, South Africa, for \$2,995; post-tour extension to Chobe National Park and Victoria Falls for \$3,695. International airfare and round-trip airfare from Johannesburg to Maun not included.

Info: Santa Ana Zoo, [santaanazoo.org/saj19b.pdf](http://santaanazoo.org/saj19b.pdf); Ron Glazier, [rjglazier1105@gmail.com](mailto:rjglazier1105@gmail.com).

— ANNE HARNAGEL

## PERU

### Cultural journey

See South America's most famous ruins on a 10-day culturally inspired wellness tour to Machu Picchu with Abercrombie & Kent. The journey, called Spirit of the Incas, includes morning and afternoon walks at the citadel, and participation in traditional rituals, including a ceremony honoring Mother Earth and the goddess Pachamama, and an optional coca-leaf reading by a shaman. Participants also will learn about healing plants, kayak in an Andean lagoon and do morning yoga.

Dates: Nov. 4-13, Dec. 3-12

**Price:** From \$7,395 per person, double occupancy. Includes accommodations, some meals, entrance fees and tour director. International and in-country airfare not included.

Info: Abercrombie & Kent, (888) 785-5379, [lat.ms/peruwellnesstour](http://lat.ms/peruwellnesstour)

— ROSEMARY MCCLURE

## AIRFARES

	ATLANTA	CHICAGO	DENVER	HONOLULU	LAS VEGAS	NEW YORK/NEWARK, N.J.	PHOENIX	SAN FRANCISCO	SEATTLE	WASHINGTON, D.C.
LAX	\$308	\$254	\$202	\$382	\$98	\$386	\$138	\$88	\$157	\$303
SNA	308	318	222	412	122	388	166	88	158	348
BUR	328	294	242	499	146	384	167	92	168	356
LGB	308	318	232	387	119	364	186	104	158	353
ONT	328	303	222	542	192	379	167	112	160	378

INT'L	AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND*	CABO SAN LUCAS, MEXICO	LONDON*	PARIS*	SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA*	TOKYO*	VANCOUVER, CANADA
LAX	\$778-\$1,326	\$230	\$564-\$1,189	\$686-\$1,245	\$743-\$1,279	\$763-\$1,259	\$262

Restricted round-trip airfares are researched on Wednesday, two days before the Travel section goes to press. Fares change daily, and availability is not assured. Fares, which may involve a change of planes, are for airlines serving Los Angeles International (LAX), Orange County/John Wayne (SNA), Hollywood Burbank (BUR), Long Beach (LGB) and Ontario (ONT). Domestic fares and international airfares include taxes and fees. \*These international fares vary because of differing fuel surcharges on different airlines. Sources: Sabre reservation system, airlines and Web.

## \$787 TO PAPEETE, TAHITI

**Fare:** From LAX, \$787 round trip, to Papeete, Tahiti, on a nonstop flight on Air Tahiti Nui, taxes and fees included.

**Restrictions:** The fare is subject to availability and valid for travel until March 31. Tickets must be purchased by Feb. 15.

Info: (877) 824-4846, [www.airahitiniui.com/us-en](http://www.airahitiniui.com/us-en)

Source: [Airfarewatchdog.com](http://Airfarewatchdog.com)