



RESORT TO LAURA MADRID

EXPERT TRAVEL PLANNING

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*Kayaking around
James Ross Island,
Antartica with Gil*

Dear Loyal Travel Enthusiasts and
Friends of Resort to Laura Madrid,

Here we are again in your mailbox at the top of one. more. new. year! 2023 was a monumental year for the travel industry and I hope that we were able to help you achieve all of your travel aspirations. Please enjoy reading about where 2023 took me!

I am humbled and proud to have been named among the top producing travel advisors in the industry, and the #1 Producer within my vast Travel Experts network of advisors this year! It is because YOU continue to entrust me and my Resort to Laura Madrid (RTLMD) team to manage your greatest asset — your leisure time and your discretionary income — to satisfy your most wonderful travel dreams. Your referrals continue to be tremendous, for which I am grateful, as there is no greater testament to our RTLMD winning formula of service, trust, and creativity. People ask me all the time what my expertise is, and I always reply that it is my clients! Getting to know you, your friends, and your families is our greatest accomplishment, as that allows us to deliver meaningful travel to you and as a bonus, we get to work every day with friends!

The world can be a challenging place, as geo-political strife, natural disasters, and health concerns remain top of mind. I am convinced that one of the best ways we can contribute to a greater understanding of humankind is to continue to travel, to seek to understand, to share the best of ourselves, and to responsibly contribute to local economies.

My fantastic team and I are always here to help you make the most informed decisions and to ensure you are in the very best of hands, no matter where in the world you go. Happy New Year and thank you very much for your support and most of all, for your trust!

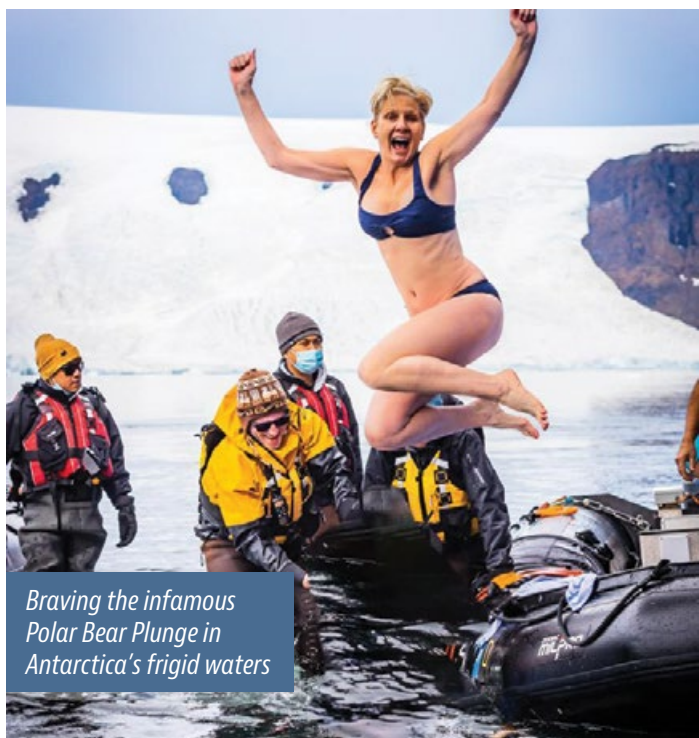
Warmly,

Laura and the Resort to Laura Madrid team –
Celeste, Holly, Gil, Mylène, Kiplyn, Christina, and Bailey

LAURA'S 2023 RECAP

ANTARCTICA: Journey to The White Continent

Getting to Antarctica is an important part of the journey, so the vessel you choose really does matter! Ideally, a sophisticated, top-in-class ship, purpose-built for polar waters, with all the bells and whistles — introducing Lindblad's National Geographic sister ships: **The Resolution** and **The Endurance**. Food and beverages are outstanding, accommodations are excellent, and there are plenty of areas for relaxing, socializing, and taking in Antarctica from the observation deck, library, ice lounge, dining room, and bar. I personally found the experience of cruising the Arctic exhilarating; in fact, some of my best periods of sleep ever were on board the Resolution.



Braving the infamous Polar Bear Plunge in Antarctica's frigid waters

The journey to Antarctica is certainly not for the faint of heart, but once there, it is like no other place in the world. I was not quite prepared to visit a continent that is not a country — it belongs to no one, there is no government, and there are no settled populations except for scientific outposts. Antarctica is vast, wild, remote, and completely indescribable. That is why Lindblad Expeditions' long experience here is key — five decades of exploration have provided an unparalleled knowledge of the region, allowing them to be flexible and respond to changing conditions, turn on a dime, and select the optimal activity for each day. You'll get to know the endless frozen landscapes up close and personal while hiking, kayaking, and cruising in the Zodiacs. Antarctica is a remote and astounding destination that intrepid travelers dream of seeing at least once in their lifetimes.

ASPEN: Still the IT Place!

In-the-know travelers come to Aspen for its reputation of being the "it" place, not unlike Manhattan, the Hamptons, Malibu, or Beverly Hills. Even if they don't ski or mountain bike, jet-setters are drawn to this chic yet authentic mountain town for its lifestyle, dining, àpres-ski, shopping, and to enjoy the good life. This charming town is understated and inviting, but yes, pricey!

This snowy Colorado haven is a sporting enthusiast's winter and summer dream location due to easy access to its four stunning mountains: Snowmass, Highlands, Ajax (Aspen Mountain), and Buttermilk. Each mountain has something special to offer for different levels of ski experiences. As for lodging, no location in Aspen is more privileged than **The Little Nell**, with their ski concierge steps from the main gondola and an easy ski into Ajax Tavern for lunch in the sun. But if you're looking for a bit of history, don't miss the **Hotel Jerome**, an Auberge property founded in 1889 at the height of the town's silver boom and "known as the place where all great stories were born and are told... You can't experience Aspen without experiencing Jerome."

THE RANCH MALIBU: My Wellness Journey

While I have sent many clients to the **Ranch Malibu**, I hadn't actually experienced its infamous seven-day program until this year! Those who know me well know me as an "over-functioning" Type-A individual who tends to fire on all cylinders most of the time. Taking the time for myself is not something I often do, and I'll admit the cost of the program is not inexpensive either. After learning of the 5:30am wake-up calls and four-hour hikes with eight almonds (and perhaps more alarming: no alcohol and no caffeine), only one friend agreed to join me at this wellness retreat located in the Santa Monica Mountains.

If you are seeking a getaway with lasting benefits, this retreat delivers sustainable results through a strict, results-oriented, no-nonsense, "no-options" philosophy. Among an intimate group of up to 25 guests, the highly knowledgeable staff tends to your every need while guiding you to achieve your personal physical and mental goals. Those who read my blog know that I don't sugarcoat anything, so I'll be honest: a week at Ranch Malibu is brutal, but highly rewarding. The repeat guest ratio here is off the charts, if that tells you anything!



An early-morning hike at Ranch Malibu

SICILY: Palermo, Sciacca, and Agrigento

Italy's largest island, Sicily, offers exceptional beaches, charming villages and towns, and an abundance of ancient ruins and archeological sites across the warm waters of the Mediterranean. Our best itineraries on the West Coast include Agrigento, Sciacca, Marsala, Trapani, Erice, and Palermo. I have been to Sicily a half dozen times, but there remains so much more for me to discover.

Palermo stretches along a beautiful bay on the Tyrrhenian Sea. I was enchanted by the city's wide boulevards, traditional Sicilian Old Quarter, Baroque palaces, and mouthwatering delicacies at every turn. Discover history, majesty, and serenity at **Villa Igiea**, a turn-of-the-century palazzo on the Gulf of Palermo. Part of the Rocco Forte collection, it is a long-loved seaside-meets-city sanctuary for royalty, dignitaries, and Hollywood luminaries.



Ancient Greek temple in Agrigento in Sicily

Tucked in the Sicilian countryside is Villa Igiea's sister property, **Verdura Resort**, a 500-acre haven with its own vegetable garden and orange and olive groves. It is a golf oasis with nearly two kilometers of private Mediterranean coastline, where the rooms are woven into the landscape with uninterrupted sea views from your private terrace. An absolute trip highlight was in Agrigento, the sight of some of the BEST preserved Greek temples in the world. Nowhere else will you find ancient ruins so faithful to the originals, nestled within the famous Valley of the Temples in the archaeological Park of Agrigento.

Every tour, every hotel, every dinner — it was all perfect... Thanks to you and your team for creating such a memorable trip for us. I'm not sure we'll ever be able to travel on our own again after experiencing what you guys can do!! — E&Z



A hot-air-balloon ride above the Teotihuacan Pyramid in Mexico City

Magical MEXICO CITY

Mexico City is truly one of the world's great cities and a mecca for foodies with some of the best restaurants in the world, absolutely delectable street food, and plentiful mezcalerias to wash it all down. Since Mexico City has the second largest number of museums in the world, it's easy to work off all those calories while touring the Anthropology Museum, Museo Frida Kahlo, and the University Museum of Contemporary Art, to name a few. Walk through Chapultepec Park, twice the size of NYC's Central Park, or enjoy a hot-air-balloon ride at dawn over the Aztec pyramids at Chapultepec. The options for a fabulous long weekend are endless. With its elegant gargantuan oasis of a courtyard, **Four Seasons Mexico City** still bestows my heart, but other gorgeous hotel options include the new sky-high **Ritz-Carlton**, the fabulous **St. Regis**, or many boutique hotels housed in wonderful mansions in leafy trendy neighborhoods. Combining Mexico City with a beach holiday in Puerto Vallarta — or a historic city such as Puebla, San Miguel de Allende, Oaxaca, or Merida — makes for a culturally immersive journey for which you do not need to travel across the globe!

SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE: Mexico's Most Enchanting City

Located in the Central Mexico state of Guanajuato and known for its preserved cobblestone streets, Spanish colonial style architecture, and creative cuisine, this UNESCO World Heritage City is also called "Mexico's Gift to the World." One of the best ways to spend a day in San Miguel de Allende is to wander the 68 blocks of historic streets and its picturesque city center, which is eye-candy for photographers. Visitors sample local mezcal and tequila at neighborhood watering holes or rooftop bars with staggering views. We were fortunate to be there to celebrate the colorful holiday of Dia de Los Muertos, where locals honor their dead ancestors. Homes, businesses and people are decorated to the nines — it was gorgeous! The **Belmond Casa de Sierra Nevada** and the **Rosewood** are very special properties located right in the mix.



No filter needed for this Costa Rican sunset at THE HIVE

THE HIVE Private Residence: Peninsula Papagayo, Costa Rica

Perched on a hillside overlooking the Pacific Ocean, THE HIVE is the most luxurious secluded hideaway on Costa Rica’s Peninsula Papagayo. A design aficionado’s dream, this sleek modern home seems to float between the sea and sky. This private residence has an infinity pool, screening room, fitness area, games area, spa treatment room, hammam, show kitchen, chef’s kitchen, and will soon have access to a private beach club. Top-quality meats, seafood, and a dizzying variety of colorful vegetables, fruits, salsas, pestos, and chimichurris are beyond amazing under the direction of Executive Chef Diego and his team of magicians. Expert cocktails and wines are ever-ready at the pour!

The surrounding Peninsula offers an abundance of outdoor sports: tennis, golf, mountain biking, hiking, scuba diving, water skiing, spearfishing, canoeing, bird watching, and so much more. THE HIVE comes with a dedicated, full-time concierge who will plan activities — zip-lining through the rainforest, hiking the volcano, deep sea fishing, and private surf lessons — while also serving as your in-the-know, local guide to Costa Rica’s authentic culture.

PS ATL: Navigate the Airport in Style

Enjoy the benefits of a private plane travel while flying commercially! This year, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport welcomed a new private terminal for travelers who want to escape the chaos of the airport. The most VIP way through ATL isn’t at ATL at all, but via a separate terminal on the far side of the runway. RTLM can get you there seamlessly in style—contact me for membership types and check out the video on social media of my recent PS Suite Experience on my way to Spain. ▶



Skip the chaos of the airport with the new PS ATL terminal

ESPAÑA ESPAÑA

IBIZA: A New Vibe on This Balearic Island

Just off the coast of Spain, Ibiza is known for its vibrant nightlife and iconic nightclubs that attract top DJs and electronic music artists from around the world. The Northern part of the island, however, offers private and peaceful coves and bays, tranquility, and a free-spirited, artsy vibe. This is where **Six Senses Ibiza** has opened in recent years, attracting a whole new clientele to this Balearic island. Located just 35 minutes from the airport, the resort is tucked away on Ibiza’s secluded northern tip, capturing its authentic sense of community, spirituality, and celebration.



Cycling in Ibiza along the Mediterranean coast

Six Senses Ibiza offers guest accommodations across a 20-acre site including fully appointed suites, cave suites, three- to seven-bedroom residences, and two stunning five- and ten-bedroom mansions, all blending into the contours of the pristine Xarraca Bay. The main infinity pool overlooks the exhilarating waters of the Mediterranean. The spa houses a steam room, hammam, and multiple wellness programs including nutrition guidance, modern healing methods, and a state-of-the-art fitness area. Six Senses Ibiza operates a farm-to-table ethos in each of its signature restaurants by nurturing an organic farm in nearby Santa Gertrudis. Yes, you can enjoy the nightlife and beach clubs in Ibiza City, but it may be hard to leave the island’s peaceful and more bohemian side once you settle in at the Six Senses.

PECTACULAR!

From historic towns to top gastronomic experiences to its vibrant culture and colorful traditions, I would love to help you get off the beaten path to explore the richness of Spain's mountains, islands, coasts, and cities.



Tasting beautiful Mencia at its source in Bierzo

The Wine Regions of NORTHWESTERN SPAIN

Spain is the second-largest country in Europe and has 17 autonomous regions, each with its own distinctive personality and characteristics—as seen in each of their cities and heritage buildings, fiestas and traditions, and local cuisine. This gastronomic wine trip through NW Spain was simply one of our many favorite experiences traveling this rewarding country. Remarkably, we did not run into a single fellow American on our eight-day trip, a nod to the authenticity of Northwestern Spain. With our incredible sommelier guide and friend, Raul, we ventured north out of Madrid and spent a few glorious days in the magnificent wine regions of Toro, Bierzo, Ribeira Sacra, and Rias Baixas. We stayed in centuries-old Paradores and feasted on mouth-watering regional foods, including some of the freshest seafood available on the planet, all paired with exceptional wines from historic family-run vineyards.

Beautiful BARCELONA

I have been to Barcelona over two dozen times but this visit was a quick weekend getaway with my in-laws who are so much fun! Since I always mix play with a bit of work, I met some colleagues for a site inspection at the glorious 5-Star **Mandarin Oriental Barcelona**. Highlights are the leafy center courtyard, spa, rooftop pool, the service, and the incredibly spacious, magnificent terrace suite options. And the dining is not to be missed! MOMENTS is their 2-Michelin Star Catalan restaurant overseen by one of the most awarded chefs in Spain, chef Carme Ruscalleda and her son, Raül Balam. We stayed nearby just off Passeig de Gràcia at my favorite boutique hotel on this side of town, **Hotel Alma**. The experience was TOP NOTCH, with sleek, stylish, and high comfort accommodations. Our connecting suites shared a common entrance from the hall, which I highly recommend for families traveling together. The Eixample district, where both hotels are located, is considered one of the most elegant neighborhoods of Barcelona—perfect for shopping, dining, and sightseeing.



Catalan cuisine at its finest



Madrid arrives in Madrid!

Madrid on MADRID

By now you may have heard that the Madrids are living in Madrid — part-time, that is. We have always loved this elegant, under-discovered city and decided when all the top luxury hotel brands started investing and breaking ground in Madrid, it was time to purchase our own urban piece of heaven. I encourage you to **follow my Instagram @MadridOnMadrid** where I share my fashion finds for clothing and jewelry jaunts and my favorite home design, antique, and art stores. And of course, there is no shortage of food and wine experiences to share because that is what Spanish do — they eat out for breakfast, lunch, dinner and in between for tapas, aperitif, coffee. What I have found most rewarding is getting to know the people who own or run or work at each place. Relationships matter in Spain and the charm of Spanish life is that you make friends even in the most mundane tasks of your day. Madrid is astounding and we can only hope that with its well-deserved and long overdue limelight, it stays a true and authentic city, increasingly hard to find in this world.



Everything at Sandy Lane is truly picture-perfect

◀ **BARBADOS: Sandy Lane**

I have known about the legendary **Sandy Lane** for years, but nothing prepared me for this classic beauty that was literally dripping with glamor. If this unequivocally five-star spectacular holiday resort is not on your list, it absolutely should be. Sandy Lane is top-notch for couples of all ages, discerning families, and travelers who value flawless service, wonderful food, a world-class spa, and a peaceful British Colonial aesthetic. Oh and the beach? Bar none, one of the prettiest in the Caribbean.

THE CARIBBEAN CONUNDRUM

ARUBA & CURAÇAO

Visiting the ABC Islands (as Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao are lovingly referred to) is a must-do. Each island is fairly unique from the others and a great holiday might be touching down on each of them for a bit of what they offer. Though they have a strong connection to the Netherlands, their proximity to South America ensures these Caribbean islands are truly multicultural. I loved the culture, color, and vibe of Curaçao and stayed at the breathtaking, romantic, and truly spectacular **Baoase Resort**. This family-owned and run property offers top-notch bespoke service, outstanding culinary offerings, and a really stunning setting. A must for many of my clients seeking a truly unique experience!

Aruba is known for some of the prettiest beaches in the world and here I visited two properties: the adults-only and wonderful family-run **Bucutti and Tara** resort and the sparkling **Ritz-Carlton Aruba Resort & Casino**. Easy puddle-jumper flights are offered between islands, making the ABC's a perfect archipelago from which to island-hop.



Outdoor soaking tub at Baoase Resort in Curaçao



Bird's eye view of one of the Zabuco Villas at Secret Bay

DOMINICA: The Nature Island

Dominica is an island of wellness, nature, and adventure. Guests at **Secret Bay** will be delighted to explore its gorgeous unspoiled beaches and enjoy the water sports center activities. Beyond the resort, the tiny island of Dominica is lush and mountainous with many natural attractions, including waterfalls, hot springs, a boiling lake, and endless hiking trails. The people of Dominica are exceptionally kind and friendly and are happy to share their culture, heritage, and local hot spots.

Secret Bay is one of those places that you know if you know: off the radar, low-key, relaxing, stunning, romantic, and special all in one! The all-villa rainforest resort experience features secluded cliff-top, residential-style villas with private plunge pools, dedicated villa hosts, guides, and chefs, on-call concierge, and secret beaches — perfect for those who seek something unconventional, value their space and privacy, and want to unwind. Situated on the farthest points of the Secret Bay's twin promontories, guests feel as if they are floating above the world in an airy, sunlight-filled, yet totally secluded space.



◀ ST. BARTHS/ SAINT BARTHÉLEMY: Oh So Chic!

A jet-set French-speaking island in the Caribbean with nearly 20 spectacular beaches and multiple dreamy hotels and villas... it's no wonder St. Barths is on the top of everyone's list. Oh, and did I mention the superb restaurants and the oh-so-chic boutiques?! Since there are no direct commercial flights into St. Barths, getting to this little piece of paradise is worth the trouble for those in the know. My whirlwind visit included stops at several of my favorite resorts, listed below:

With SO many phenomenal options, how do you choose where in the Caribbean to go? That's easy — you simply Resort To Laura Madrid! Here are some ideas based on Laura's recent Caribbean adventures.

GRENADA: The Spice Island

If you're looking for a unique Caribbean escape, Grenada has so much to offer. This volcanic destination, located at the southern end of the Windward Islands, is about a four-hour flight from the USA. Grenada is charming and laid-back, with white sandy beaches, waterfalls, a rich culture, very friendly people, and some of the top food in the Caribbean. Known as the Spice Island, Grenada produces cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, and other spices, all of which flavor native dishes.

Standing out as a stunning and sleek contemporary beach resort, **Silversands Grenada** is set on a pristine white sandy beach. Within this minimalist setting, visitors enjoy a variety of suite and villa accommodations, locally inspired spa rituals, and the Caribbean's longest infinity-edge pool. [c](#)



An award-winning Relais & Châteaux luxury boutique hotel, **Calabash Grenada** delivers exceptional, personalized, and gregarious service. It is a destination for food lovers, serving some of the best cuisine in the Caribbean. As a family-owned and managed property, the warmth of the owners and the team is evident in every guest interaction. It is the type of hotel that welcomes guests back year after year as they are made to feel like part of the family.

- **Le Sereno:** Pristine, warm, contemporary, calm, privileged location on Grand Cul-de-Sac Beach
- **Hotel Le Toiny:** Discreet, romantic, private, wild, nature, beach club, a Relais & Châteaux property
- **Cheval Blanc St-Barth Isle de France:** Stylish, expansive beach, multi-dimensional, heavenly
- **Eden Rock – St Barths:** Unique, playful, energetic, great people-watching, walk to shops and dining in sassy St. Jean
- **Le Barthélemy Hotel & Spa:** Young and trendy, highlight is the multi-bedroom beach-front private villa



Riding the beach jeep down to Le Toiny's beach club

BELOW: Overlooking Palermo's Old Quarter and cathedral in Sicily • A doorway decorated for Dia de Los Muertos in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico • Exploring the vineyards in Rias Baixas, Spain



“We are so happy to have discovered RTLM. You and your team have reinvented the quality of our travels, making every day for us a “movable feast.” We love the insights, and the recommendations for activities that are just what we want at just the right pacing for us. Of course we have been thrilled at the consistently outstanding selections of the best guides, the perfectly located and comfortably luxurious hotels (with just the right suites), and the always outstanding restaurants that are so perfect for our “relaxed luxury” preferences. And we really appreciate all the personal touches that your pre-trip communications with our hotels and guides have set up for us, resulting in us being treated not just as special guests, but more like treasured family. I never knew travel could be arranged this way. How can we even measure the value of this?” -BK

Laura at the Four Seasons Preferred Partner Insiders Event in Mexico City



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