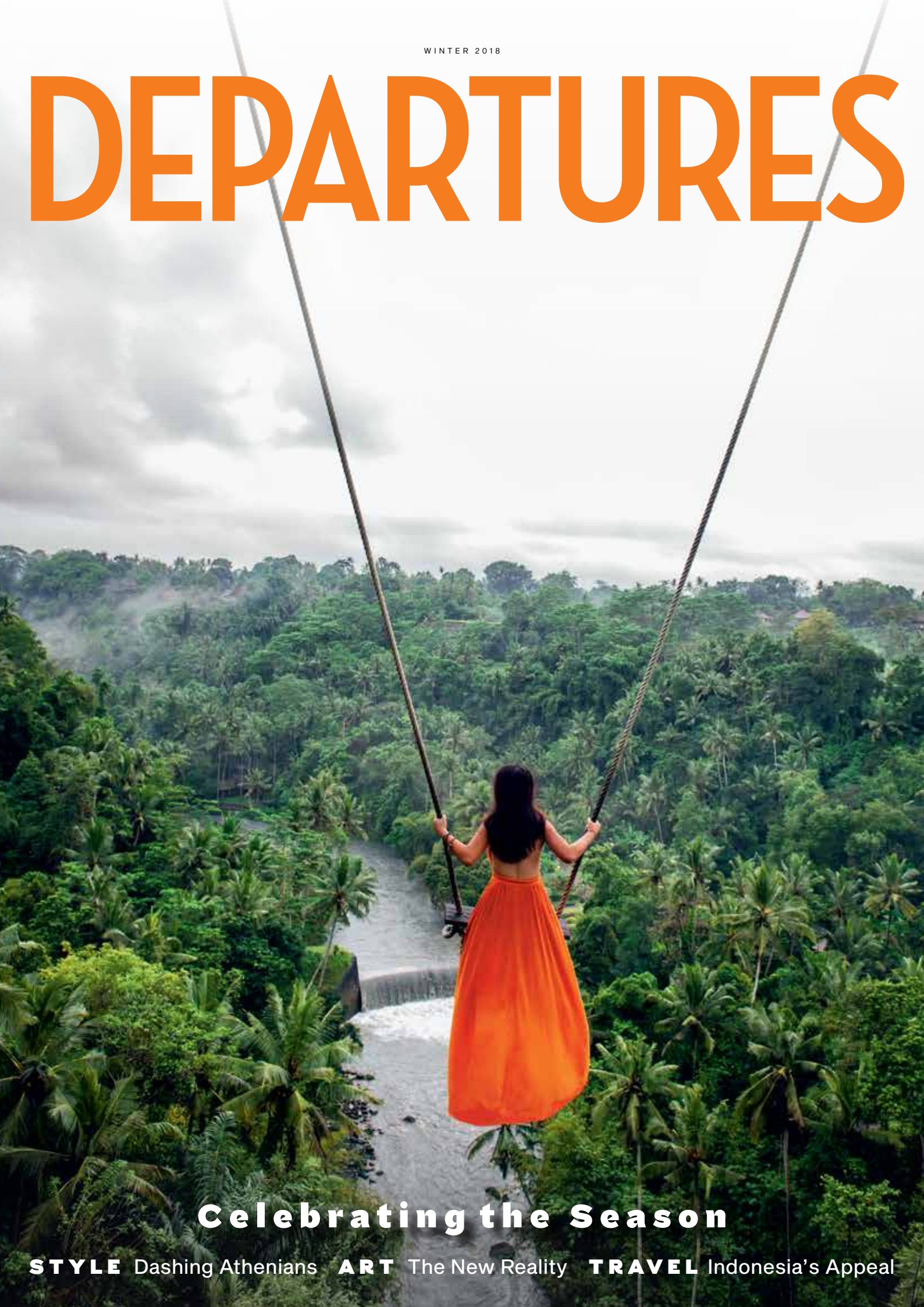


WINTER 2018

DEPARTURES



Celebrating the Season

STYLE Dashing Athenians **ART** The New Reality **TRAVEL** Indonesia's Appeal

Embracing the Moment Reconnect with nature and your inner self at mindful escapes in locales far and away that soothe body and soul. *by Lauren Ho*



Delightfully secluded in the Alaskan wilderness at Sheldon Chalet

WITH THE DEAFENING silence broken only by the sound of exploding avalanches reverberating in the distance, there is no better spot to pause, unplug and slow down than at **Sheldon Chalet** (*sheldonchalet.com*), a five-bedroom retreat perched on a glacial island within Alaska's 24,464sq km Denali National Park. Should you not be lucky enough to experience the aurora borealis during your visit, the star-filled night skies are more than an adequate substitute

that will no doubt take your breath away.

Stars are one of the natural wonders Namibia is known for, and local conservation travel company **Ultimate Safaris** (*ultimatesafaris.na*) makes the most of this with its open-air experience, where you can bed down under a blanket of stars as you slumber to the sounds of lions roaring in the distance. This soundscape is familiar to anyone who has visited a **Wilderness Safaris** (*wilderness-*

safaris.com) camp, whose wifi-free "disconnect to reconnect" philosophy motivates guests to stay focused on the present moment. Better known as a conservation-oriented ecotourism operator, the safari company is big on sustainable-energy solutions, running 17 of its 40 camps on 100% solar power.

Using the sun was a no-brainer for **Tierra Atacama** (*tierrahotels.com*), which has smartly made the most of its desert location by becoming the first hotel in South America

“Mindful travel has become increasingly important, as it’s one of the few methods that allow us to forget about our real lives and connect with ourselves”

-TOM MARCHANT, CO-FOUNDER, BLACK TOMATO

with 100% solar power. Further adding to its mindfulness is a dreamy spa, where you can soak in an alfresco hot tub against a dramatic backdrop of the Licancabur Volcano.

Wellness is, of course, key to mindfulness, with a host of retreats like Puglia’s **Borgo Egnazia** (www.borgoegnazia.com) and

travel companies like **Pravassa** ([pravassa.com](http://www.pravassa.com)) offering curated programmes to keep you focused on the moment. Adventure outfitter **Black Tomato** ([blacktomato.com](http://www.blacktomato.com)) physically disconnects travellers from the outside world by whisking them away to some of the world’s most remote and uncharted destinations in its tailor-made Get Lost programme.



Enjoying the starry Namibian night with Ultimate Safaris

Meanwhile, sprawled out over 250 hectares, Andalucia’s organic farm and equestrian centre **Finca La Donaira** ([ladonaira.com](http://www.ladonaira.com)) not only offers a nature-centred wellness escape, but guests are also invited to suit up and take part in its impressive bee-cultivating project – a sure way to stay in the moment.



OFF-ROAD REVELRY

Seemingly endless Arctic tundra stretching out in front of you, the power of 4x4 at your disposal – an adventure begins. The mysteries of the Arctic wilderness can now be explored from behind the wheel in the company of expert guides from **Off the Map Travel**. The vehicle is specially designed for the harsh conditions on a journey that begins in Tromsø, Norway, and goes through Sweden and Finland. Luxe accommodation counterbalances the terrain with stays in the original Icehotel, an Aurora Dome tent and the Lyngen Experience Lodge, while activities along the way include a private tour of the world’s northernmost distillery and visits to traditional saunas. offthemap.travel
— John McNamara

Natural Selection

Two icy adventures for those gripped by the mysterious, magnetic pull of the North and South Poles.

COOL RUNNINGS

In recent years, the demand for lavish wilderness experiences – that is, safaris or plush camping trips that will have you sleeping under 500-zillion-count sheets in the jungle – has skyrocketed. Still, Patrick Woodhead won’t be swayed to change his extreme offerings. His company **White Desert**’s latest adventure – Race the Jet – is no walk in the park. A polar marathon, 24 fearless participants are shuttled from Cape Town to Wolf’s Fang runway in Antarctica via Gulfstream private jet. As they weave their way past iridescent ice falls and under soaring vertical rock towers, they’re not just racing each other, but the clock as well: since the jet will only wait for five hours, stragglers will find themselves recovering from the ordeal amid bags of garbage in a cargo plane. (For reference, at this year’s Berlin Marathon, on a sunny autumn day, Eliud Kipchoge closed a world-record-breaking run in just over two hours and one minute.) “In a place with 24 hours of sunshine and no real time zone, suddenly it all boils down to just five hours,” says Woodhead. “Sometimes life isn’t about beating others or your personal best. It’s just about getting home.” white-desert.com — Claudia Roelke

