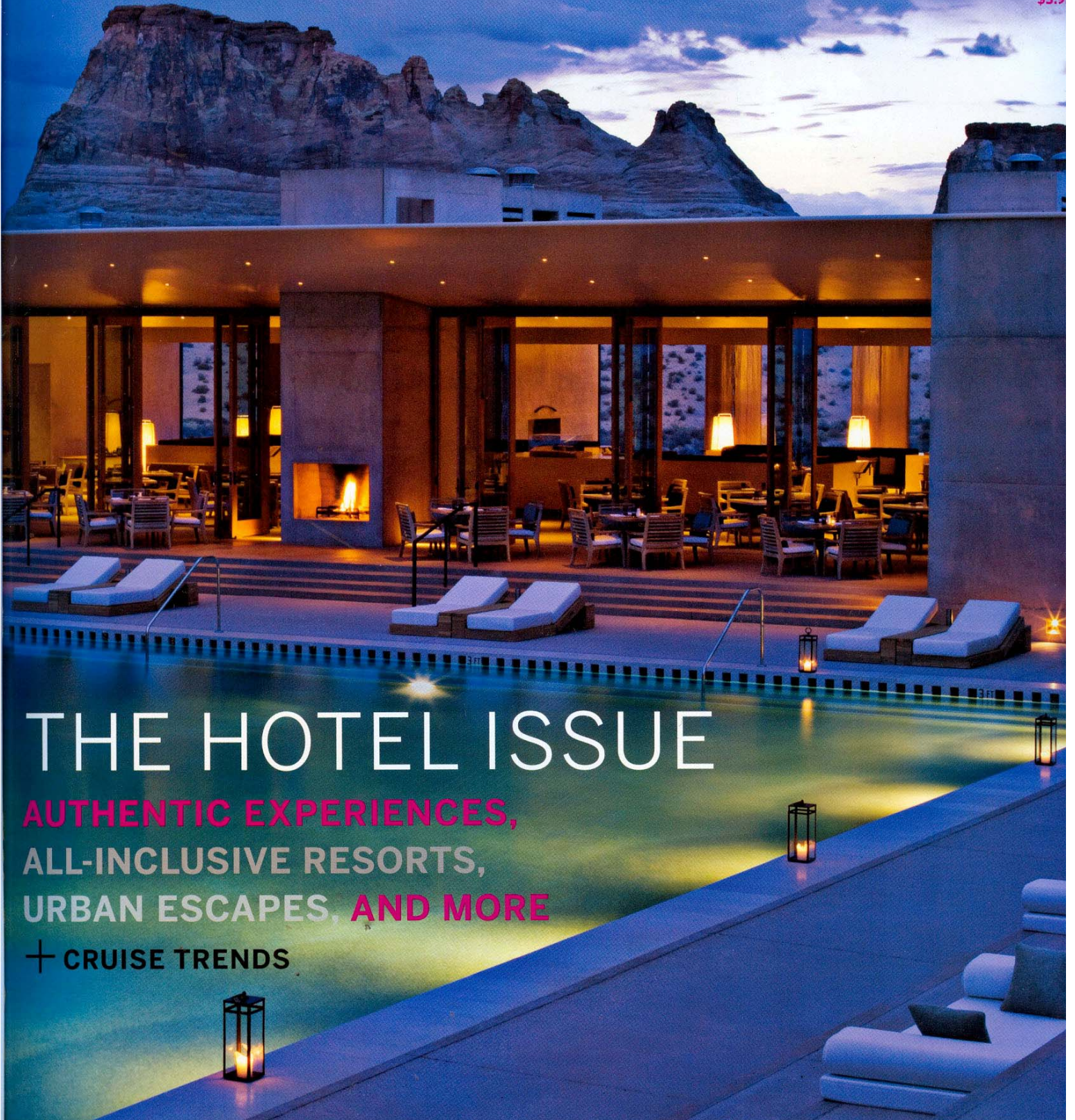


THE TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO INSPIRED PURSUITS

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VIRTUOSO LIFE

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THE HOTEL ISSUE

AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES,
ALL-INCLUSIVE RESORTS,
URBAN ESCAPES, **AND MORE**

+ CRUISE TRENDS



TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

River cruising is booming. By some estimates, Europe's options have quadrupled in the past decade. The big attraction of these comfortable, flat-bottomed boats: hassle-free touring of inland destinations, with 24/7 views. Ships average about 150 passengers (in Europe), which means they're small enough to dock in cities like Budapest and Vienna. Operators such as **Viking River Cruises** and **Avalon Waterways** have introduced quiet new vessels

that offer cabins with French balconies, flat-screen TVs, and even suite accommodations befitting boutique hotels. Whether on the Danube, the Volga, the Yangtze, or the Nile, river cruises immerse travelers in cultures that sprung from the wakes of the world's great societies (in Egypt, the 5,000-year-old sights remind passengers that Cleopatra traversed this same waterway). Read on for five of the world's greatest freshwater journeys.

Relive the legend of Lewis and Clark or chart a course to Pacific Northwest appellations on the Columbia and Snake rivers. **American Safari Cruises** provides eight-day cruises for each aboard the 40-passenger *Safari Explorer*, paired with stunning scenery and a jet-boat excursion in Hells Canyon. *Departures: Multiple dates through November 20, 2010; from \$4,995.*

Peruvian jungle and rain forest highlight eight days in the Amazon with **Aqua Expeditions**. The *Aqua's* 24 passengers embark on jungle walks; board skiffs to spot toucans, monkeys, and macaws in the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve; and browse markets in river villages. *Departures: Multiple dates through December 25, 2010; from \$5,250.*

Tauck's 118-passenger *Swiss Emerald* (and sister ships *Swiss Sapphire* and *Swiss Jewel*) sidle up to such iconic cities as Prague, Vienna, and Budapest during 12-day Danube River vacations. Excursions include walking tours of castles and monasteries, a day trip to Salzburg, and dinner in a Viennese palace. *Departures: Multiple dates through October 20, 2010; from \$3,790.*

Play pharaoh while drifting the Nile on **Avalon Waterways'** 124-passenger *Royal Lotus*. The 11-day passage takes in 5,000 years of history with outings to see the Great Pyramids, the monuments of Karnak in Luxor, and Aswan. *Departures: Multiple dates through December 28, 2010; from \$2,608.*

Explore the Great Wall, Forbidden City, and terracotta warriors on **Viking River Cruises'** 12-day China itineraries. Tour Beijing, Shanghai, and Xi'an, and spend six days aboard the 306-passenger *Viking Century Sun* cruising through the Three Gorges on the Yangtze River. *Departures: Multiple dates through October 30, 2010; from \$4,499.*

FAST FACT | Checklists ready: Cruisers can now tick off the **Taj Mahal**, **Machu Picchu**, and the rest of the **New Seven Wonders of the World** with the boom in experiential shore excursions.