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Travel

WHERE TO GO IN 2012

25. Chattanooga, Tenn.

A city stages a comeback fueled by artists and retailers.

fueled by artists and retailers, In 1989, Walter Cronkite famously called Chattanooga the "dirtiest" city in America. In recent years, though, it has undergone a dramatic overhall with a radical gentrification plan and an ag-gressive citywide push to lure artists. In addition to a \$120 million clean-up-and-invest 21st Century Waterfront Plan, an incentive program called Arts Move brings artists of all mediums into town; a yearly Southern arts fair called Four Bridges draws thousands each April; and several arts districts have been cul-tivated and nurtured.

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On the heels of this artistic transformation has come the inevitable, yet not unwelcome, boutique boom in places like the recently restored Warehouse Row, a Civil War-era factory turned shopping centre filled with local, upscale and artisanal goods.

SARAH WILDMAN

26. Dakhla, Morocco

In Morocco's south, an arty hideaway.

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Moroccy's cool crowd doesn't want anyone else to discover this remote but strangly beautiful desert town on the Atlantic Coast of the Western Sahara, an area with a tumultuous history now governed by Morocco. On a 30-mile long spit of sand between the ocean and a tranquil lagoon about 600 miles south of Marrakesh, the town is becoming one of the world's greatest wind- and kite-



FROM LEFT Coolidge Park, in Chattar in Chattanooga. The night sky over Dakhla Bay at the Calipau Sahara hotel in Dakhla, Moroc-

co. BOTTOM Rush hour at Golden Gate metro station in Kiev.

In Malacca, Malaysia, a World Heritage site, Jonker Street becomes another world at night as hawkers turn the roads into a buzzing night market.





board surfing destinations.
But there's more to Dakhla than high-flying fun. Many come for its fledgling bohemian status: it's a wild, remote, sun-drenched place with a freewheeling atmosphere and plenty of local Tuarge culture. Water temperatures remain a constant 80 degrees year-round, the desert is a short trek away, and the locally caught seafood is delcious. Sleepy during the day thanks to the often intense Saharan heat, the town comes alive after dark with lively cafes and restaurants. Dakhla also finally has a place for nonbackpackers; the Calipau Sahara hotel, a modern riad that opened two years ago, with a long stretch of private beach and a seawater pool. And although part of Dakhla's charm is its relative inncessibility. Royal Air Maroe offers daily flights from Casablanca.

ALEXANDER LOBRANO

27. Maldives

A cushy place for hard-core surfers? Here it is.

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When one thinks of the Maldives, a necklace of 26 tropical atolis in the Indian Ocean, one might envision \$2,000 suites on stills over turquoise waters and honeymooners dining barefoot on the beach. But world-lass surfers? Not so much. Think again. "It's ideal," said Ross Phillips, founder of Tropicsurf, a leading outfitter in the high-end surfing scene. "Good, consistent waves, warm water, a wide choice of live-star resorts and plenty of things to do for the partners who don't surf." This past summer six world champion surfers headed to the Maldives for what was billed as the world's most exclusive surfing event; Four Seasons Maldives Surfing Champions Trophy, which was held at the Four Seasons Kuda Huraa resort. Early 2012 will see several new splashy resorts, like the Niyama, which has an underwater restaurant, and the Viceroy, 66 villas on the remote private island of Vagaru. GISELA WILLIAMS

tiques shops, gorge on Malacca's out-standing local specialties, like creamy, piquant nyonya laksa at the family-run Donald & Lily's. NAOMI LINDT

29. The Algarve

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Portugal's Riviera gets
a new spate of luxury hotels.
The Algarve, on Portugal's southern
coast, has long been a major packageholiday destination for northern Europeans. But the sun-drenched region is
aiming to attract a wider crowd as it recycles itself with a crop of new or renovated luxury hotels emphasizing style,
authenticity and eco-friendliness. In
Portimão, a perfect example is the just
reopened 38-room Hotel Bela Vista.
This 1918 villa overlooking the famous
seaside Praia da Rocha was renovated
by the French hoteller Thierry Naidu
and features a stunning design by the
Portuguese decorator Graça Viterho.
There are hotels opening in quieter
areas of the Algarve, too, including the
striking Martinha resort in Sagrea, November. Trendy Lisboans are also flocking to Olhão, a former fish-canning town
turned resort with stylish lodging options, like the recently opened Real Marian Hotel & Spa, and natural attractions, including the Ria Formosa, a national park made up of one of the largest
barrier-reef lagoons in Europe, where
you might have the pristine beauty of
white sand beaches to yourself—for
now, at least.

ALEXANDER LOBRANO

30. Tahoe, Calif.

New lifts, lodging, trails and snowcat rides Lake Tahoe's seven major ski areas have been undergoing a dizzying slate of improvements that will eventually tally at least \$100 million. Most notable is Squaw Valley's November merger with adjacent Alpine Meadows; at 6,000 acres, it now offers the most ski terrain in the United States. Guests can take a free shuttle between base greas and will free shuttle between base areas and will find, among other upgrades, new ski nno, among otner upgrades, new sa school services, expanded terrain parks, a kids' snow-play area with min-snowmobiles, and new restaurants, in-cluding Rocker @ Squaw, a burger joint where skiers can upload their own hel-met-cam videos to TV. Improvements at Northstar, recently acquired by Vail Resorts include a nuel

31. Wales

A new hiking path brings new views of rugged shores.

Wales's many hiking trails are known for their views of rugged highlands and cliff-hemmed coasts. Exploring the country by foot will become easier in May, when the Wales Coast Path is com-May, when the Wales Coast Path is com-pleted, connecting several disparate paths and creating a 1,000-mile pedes-trian route that rings the country. The Wales Coast Path — which in stretches will be open to cyclists and horseback riders — follows the Atlantic and the Irish Sea over the length of the country, passing medieval castles and threading through cities including Cardiff and seaside resort towns like Tenby,
While few will have the legs to tackle
the entire trail, outfitters including Celtic Trails and Contours Walking Holidays
lighten the load by offering inn-to-inn
luggage shuttles over several portions

ELAINE GLUSAC

32. Antarctica

Still remote and exotic. Now luxurious too.

A hundred years ago the race to the South Pole held the world in thrall — poor Robert Falcon Scott lost the title as the first man there, by a month, to the Norwegian Roald Amundsen, and died on his way back through the unforgiving landscape.

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The 109-year anniversary of the arrival of these rugged explorers is a reminder of our continued fascination with a region that remains in many ways as remote, exotic and evocative as it ever was. White Desert is marking the event with a new camp that allows travelers to spend the night in accommodations that Amundsen and Scott could only have dreamed of: fiberglass pods with ensuite bathrooms, dressing rooms and comfy beds. During the day, groups (limited to 12) pass the time ice climbing, abseiling through open crevasses, kite skiing and visiting colonies of Emperor penguins.

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Another way to see the icy scapes is by ship: Abecrombie & Kent's Le Boreal, for example, can navigate some of the smaller fjords and has onboard experts who lecture on everything from wildlife to the history of the region.

Luckily though, the number of overall visitors will remain restricted, guaranteeing, it is hoped, at least another 100 years of relative isolation and pristine wilderness.

ONDINE COHANE

33. Uganda

Stability and sustainable tourism

Stability and sustainable tourism restore luster to Africa's pearl.

Marred by the murderous regime of Idi Amin in the 1970s, Uganda remained largely off the typical African safari tour map. But after more than two decades of relative stability under President Yower Museveni, the country that Winson Churchill called the "pear of of-Arica" is regaining some of its allure for tourists.

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While Uganda has not been without

while Uganda has not been without problems, including twin bombings in Kampala during the 2010 World Cup, some street clashes during political protests last year and a history of extreme antagonism toward gay people, it's still considered one of the more stable countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

The country is perhaps best known to tourists as the home of half of the world's last remaining mountain gorillas, and this year there are more opportunities to spot the elusive creatures. The Uganda Wildlife Authority recently added two gorilla families to the groups it tracks on tours in Bwind Impenetrable Forest, a Unesco World Heritage site in southwest Uganda. Sanctuary Gorilla Forest Camp, a luxury tented camp inside the forest, is working with the Batwa Pygmy tribe, indigenous hunter-gatherers who were relocated their history and culture with guests. And Country Walkers, based in Waterbury, VI., is offering its first safari ever in Uganda.

Beyond up-close gorilla encounters, Uganda is also the source of the Nile, boasts mountains that are among the highest in Africa — the Mountains of the Moon in Rwenzof Mountains National Park — and offers formidable white-water rapids for thill seekers.

MICHELLE HIGGINS