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Tesla? Caviar? Boots? At These Resorts, Everything's Included

Once seen as a value-for-money vacation, all-inclusive resorts are evolving to include high-end experiences, not just unlimited tropical drinks on the beach.



By Danielle Braff

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In many minds, all-inclusive resorts are associated with value for money, along with inebriated parties, an abundance of riotous children and all the food you'll never want to eat. And people love them: In 2022, almost 111 million all-inclusive nights were sold globally, according to [STR](#), a hospitality data and analytics company.

But the all-inclusive — which dates to the 1950s — is evolving. Since the pandemic, smaller, more luxurious and far pricier resorts have taken off, offering high-end dining, lodging in one-of-a-kind buildings and experiences they can't get anywhere else.





At [the Point](#), an 11-room Adirondacks resort originally built on Upper Saranac Lake as a family residence for the Rockefellers, starting after lockdowns were lifted in 2020 and running through 2022, weekend occupancy rates were 100 percent during peak season (many guests offered to take any room for any length of time, according to the resort), compared with 80 to 85 percent on peak season weekends from 2017 to 2019. And at [Triple Creek Ranch](#), a resort high in the Rockies in Montana, which just celebrated its 30th anniversary and starts at \$1,300 per night for two people, average occupancy in 2022 was 75 percent, compared with 56 percent in 2019.

“The ranch has always been a popular destination during the summer, but since the pandemic, we’ve seen significant growth during other parts of the year,” said Kristen Snavely, the general manager.

[Miraval Arizona](#), a desert resort in the Santa Catalina Mountains focusing on wellness, where the starting rate per night for two is \$1,400, would not disclose occupancy rates, but said guests are taking advantage of the activities three times as much in 2023 than they did in 2019.

Many travel industry pundits credit the 2008 economic crisis with setting off the growth in demand for higher-end all-inclusives, as savvy travel consumers — still wanting luxe experiences in prime destinations — were attracted to the fixed, value-oriented all-inclusive rates, said John Fareed, the global chairman of [Horwath HTL](#), a hospitality consulting company in New York.

While the appeal of traditional Caribbean all-inclusive resorts is affordability in beautiful locations with unlimited alcohol, luxury all-inclusives are catering to travelers who may have previously taken an African safari or a small-boat cruise through the Galápagos Islands. Now, those kinds of travelers are looking for easier, bundled vacations they can book without a travel adviser that still manage to offer new experiences, said Benjamin Verot, a co-founder and the owner of [HotelMinder](#), a hotel management company.

The all-inclusive resorts are happy to oblige.

“Primarily, the difference is in the location, the higher level of accommodations and more personalized guest services — not to mention bragging rights,” said Mr. Fareed, the hospitality consultant. “However, it may also be found in the resort’s food and wine offerings: Think celebrity or Michelin-starred chefs, spa amenities and treatments, unique cultural or educational experiences, and niche market offerings such as fishing, golfing, cooking or even yoga with a recognized celebrity in the space.”



As a result, tiny, luxury, often independent all-inclusives in the United States, Canada and Europe are flourishing, increasing their offerings and opening new locations. Big-name hotel brands including Marriott and Hyatt are entering the scene with their own ultraluxe all-inclusives. W Hotel (part of Marriott) is [planning its all-inclusive Dominican Republic debut](#) in 2025, while Hyatt is opening its new [Inclusive Collection](#) portfolio of resorts in Portugal, Mexico and Bulgaria.

“There’s enough people that will spend \$5,000 to their heart’s content now, so there’s a whole market to go to these ultraluxury spots,” said Haydn Kramer, a partner at [Valley of the Moon Partners](#), a hotel consultancy company. “People are looking for privatized, very special experiences, and they want to pay for them.”

Ikos Odisia is scheduled to open a [new resort on the Greek island of Corfu](#) in May 2023, and the all-inclusive provides guests with a Tesla and passes to the local museums, churches and local restaurants.

[La Maison du Val](#), an all-inclusive castle masquerading as a country house that opened in 2021 in St.-Germain-en-Laye, France, west of Paris, offers complimentary boots so guests can stroll through the forest where kings and emperors of France took their afternoon walks. It follows in the footsteps of the [Château de Villiers-le-Mahieu](#), an upscale all-inclusive estate that opened its doors in 2019 in a wooded park 45 minutes outside Paris.



At [Sonora Resort](#) in British Columbia's Discovery Islands, accessible only by air or sea and where rooms hover around \$1,445 per night, the two-to-four-bedroom private suites and four-bedroom villas have been particularly popular this year, and the occupancy rate has increased more than 30 percent year over year compared with prepandemic rates, according to the resort.



The Point was transformed into an all-inclusive resort in 1983, with rooms starting at \$2,500 per night, but to make sure guests don't get tired of the same old, same old, the hotel adds new amenities annually (with increased rates to match). This year, it rolled out new caviar and liquor tastings. Next year, said Tony Loscavio, the assistant general manager, he is looking into having an on-staff yoga instructor and massage therapist for guests to use at their whims.

Many of the guests vacationing in these alternative all-inclusives have never set foot on a Cancún beach — and the idea of popping up a beach flag to order a frozen strawberry daiquiri would never cross their minds.



Beth Martin, a 39-year-old independent designer, sticks with American luxury all-inclusives, as she's drawn to chef-driven food and creative excursions. She and her husband most recently went to Triple Creek Ranch to see elk, go sapphire hunting and horseback riding, and attend a logging camp where she tried to start a fire with some string and elbow greas

"This type of traveling isn't cheap, but it's an excellent way to see a new part of the country while still being able to unwind," said Ms. Martin, who lives in Charleston, S.C. "I hope we can return in winter for a dog-sledding ride."

