JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2014

THE 122 PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW THIS YEAR

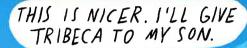
+The HUNT for the \$ 100 MILLION

ARE YOU MOVING HERE FULL-TIME?



DIDN'T YOU JUST BUY A LOFT IN TRIBECA?

THERE ARE TOO MANY LAWYERS DOWN THERE.





11:30 A.M., THE FIRST SHOWING ...

SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

IT'S BREATHTAKING!

OH, GOD. IF MY WIFE SEES THIS, I'LL HAVE TO BUY IT.

YOU HAVE NO KIDS, WHY SUCH, A BIG APARTMENT. WHY NOT?

I'LL NEVER HAVE TO SAY "MINE'S BIGGER" AGAIN.









IT'S \$98 MILLION.

WHAT'S THAT, IN RUBLES?



IF I PAY \$100 MILLION, WILL IT SET A RECORD?

> I CAN BUY MY OWN PENTHOUSE WITH THE COMMISSION!

IF YOU EVER DECIDE TO SELL YOU CAN DOUBLE YOUR MONEY!

OFFER ME \$1 BILLION AND WE'LL TALK.



AFTERNOON





Thanks to new points of entry by land and sea, the archipelago off the coast of Ecuador is more accessible—and luxurious—than ever.

rom the Cerro Mesa viewpoint in the Galápagos' Santa Cruz highlands, a national-park-protected forest flows down toward the Pacific Ocean. East is the island of San Cristóbal, and south, Santa Fé, with no sign of human habitation in between-here, west of Ecuador, 600 miles into the Pacific and just 20 miles from the equator.

In a wilderness such as this, Pikaia Lodge, a new 14-room hotel sitting on a volcanic plateau close to Cerro Mesa, is conspicuous. This is not only simply because the building is relatively high up on the island but also because it's of a dramatically modernist design—a hard-edged linear concoction of concrete, steel and glass, like some bizarre headquarters for Dr. No. Travel consultant Tyler Dillon, who organizes high-end bespoke trips to

the 13 main islands of the archipelago for outfitter Butterfield & Robinson, agrees that the architecture conceived by Ecuadorean Humberto Plaza is odd, that people will either love it or hate it. "In some contexts, the building would be a sore thumb," says Dillon as we look down from Cerro Mesa at the concrete shell of the lodge. "Here it just visualizes the peculiarity of the place." The fact that some travelers won't like looking at Pikaia is beside the point: They will love looking from it through floorto-ceiling windows that reveal the landscape and Pacific beyond.

Pikaia—which will have its soft opening in April 2014 with a limited number of rooms, and launch fully in October-will be for travelers who don't want to sleep in a tent (Pikaia's main landbased rival is Galapagos Safari Camp-an enchanting, low-key tented outpost, also on Santa Cruz) and who want wine lists, gourmet cuisine and a suite with a private pool; who want to mix land and sea on lavish day trips using the lodge's 100-foot oceangoing yacht, Pikaia I, because there's a hot tub on deck and air-conditioned private cabins for switching into a sarong. Beyond wildlifespotting, the lodge offers mountain biking, kayaking and snorkeling trips aboard the 35-foot Pikaia II.

But what the debut of Pikaia really signifies is a change from the old way of doing these islands—by live-aboard boat

WHERE TO STAY ON THE WAY TO THE GALÁPAGOS

We used to consider Quito, Ecuador, little more than a pit stop before heading to the Galápagos. Now there's a luxury hotel that makes one want to stick around. Since opening in 2011,

Casa Gangotena has settled in as if it were a classic, with elegant cuisine and an efficient concierge. The highlight is its location; 8 of the 31 rooms offer Plaza San Francisco views. Rooms start at \$480; Bolivar Oe6-41 y Cuenca; 59-32/400-8000; casa gangotena.com.

moving from island to island either at huge expense (the private charter) or as a group (booking a berth on a fixed-departure trip). Though so as not to be outshined, cruise company Silversea Expeditions has offered up a competitive strike: more luxury, with the September 2013 launch of its first boat in the islands, the 100-guest, 50-cabin Silver Galapagos. About half the ocean-view suites have private balconies, while the seven-day itineraries will get you farther into the archipelago than Pikaia can manage on day

trips. For now this gives Silversea the edge in a destination as otherworldly and varied as its emerging statement architecture.

Rooms at Pikaia start at \$3,230 a person for a three-night package; 877-234-7033; pikaialodgegalapagos.com. Silversea cruises start at \$5,450 a person for six nights; 877-215-9986; silversea.com. For Galápagos itineraries, contact Tyler Dillon, tyler .dillon@butterfield.com.



TRAVELIN ITS DNA

By the time Cobra Society's loafers, boots and espadrilles hit stores, the footwear has racked up some serious mileage. First, artisans in Tangier, Morocco, handweave intricate Betania textiles in patterns like the Stewy loafer's diamond print, shown above (\$295). The fabrics, which are exclusive to the New York-based label, are then sent to southeastern Spain, where, with added supple leathers sourced from outside Barcelona and Florence, each shoe takes shape. For the spring men's and women's collections—awash in deep blues, vibrant yellows and dusty reds-27-year-old designer Alex Davis was inspired by mushroom pigments that Moroccans use to dye their kilims. From \$225; thecobrasociety.com.



98 / LANDING STATESIDE ...

In March the European private aviation company VISTAJET, founded by Swiss entrepreneur Thomas Flohr, debuts donestic flights in the United States, a market previously untouched by the decade-old carrier. A partnership with operator Jet Aviation and Wheels Up (Marquis Jet founder Kenny Dichter's new program), the service requires a minimum though negotiable—commitment of 100 in-flight hours over three years at about \$16,000 an hour. Some might consider a \$1.6 million agreement a steal, given that the company provides terms none of its competitors offer, like guaranteed availability (it owns a fleet of Bombardier Global jets) and no fees for empty flight legs. 855-368-4782; vistajet.com.