

how to spend it

The Galápagos by land and sea - plus a top Myanmar tip

From stellar new expedition ships to a modernist eco lodge



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The Galapagos Islands are in the travel spotlight thanks to the just-launched, 100-guest Silver Galapagos (*second picture*; www.silversea.com) – a Silversea ship with balconied suites, marble bathrooms and private butlers (*seven days from £3,550 per person*). Then in 2014 comes Pikaia (*third picture*; www.pikaialodgegalapagos.com; *from \$1,070*), an out-of-the-box modernist lodge on a plateau above two dormant volcanic craters on the island of Santa Cruz. There's nothing particularly subtle about this concrete and glass 14-room hotel flanked by a national park, but then the Galápagos have always had a strange, off-the-map identity, with their peculiar blue-footed birdlife and giant tortoises.

Whether or not these two new expressions of luxury lifestyle fit with a wilderness destination such as this is a matter of opinion. What isn't open to debate, however, is the man to call for intelligent, low-impact access – including cross-island bike trips, meetings with scientists and superior guiding services. US-born Tyler Dillon, now working out of Toronto for travel outfitter Butterfield & Robinson (www.butterfield.com), has visited the islands more than 20 times; he knows all the land-based lodges that are giving a different focus to the traditional cruising itineraries, as well as the best surf breaks on Santa Cruz.

Dillon's other great specialism is Myanmar, where he has spent his winters for the past six years. New expedition boats on the Chindwin and Irrawaddy Rivers include the 20-suite Sanctuary Ananda (*first picture*; www.sanctuaryretreats.com; *from \$1,669 per person for three nights*), launching in December 2014. Myanmar pundits will say you need to book now for Christmas next year, such is the flurry of interest in a country still short of good hotels.