

E S C A P E

THE EYE HAS TO TRAVEL

PEAK *Form*

Head for the HILLS (or higher) for a slew of spots that deliver DRAMATIC SCENERY and COOLER CLIMES

In an issue dedicated to performance, what travel destination could be more on theme than those resorts and respites where one can behold the magnetic majesty of mountains, nature's finest show, up close? For almost every culture and religion, those peaks, shaped by tectonic plates colliding and volcanoes exploding, symbolize transformation and the divine.

More and more travelers are seeking out mountain towns over beaches during summer months for their cooler climates. In the wild north of Norway, where the sun doesn't set for weeks at a time in the summer, guests at the new **Wood Hotel Bodø**, built near the summit of Mount Rønvik, can hike a network of trails even at midnight. For those who would rather take in their surroundings with a drink in hand, the 177-room lodge is topped by a terrace with a bar and heated pool. Historical spa towns in the Alps that were popular in the 19th and early 20th centuries as places to recover from illness are seeing renewed interest. Bad Gastein in Austria has seen a hotel boom, from 1960s-style **The Cōmodo** to the **Straubinger Grand Hotel**. The **Grand Hotel Belvedere**, a 1912 art-nouveau complex in the Swiss Bernese Highlands, is reopening next month after a two-year renovation. Featuring 90 rooms and suites, it overlooks the picturesque Lauterbrunnen Valley. Guests are shuttled in on a cog railway that winds through the mountains to the car-free village of Wengen, where the Belvedere is situated. In the nearby village of Adelboden, **The Brecon**, a 22-room luxury inn and spa, just opened in a traditional chalet-style building from the 1940s. Outfitted by the Amsterdam-based interior-design studio Nicemakers with a stylish mix of vintage and contemporary furniture and objects, it's just as inviting in the summer as it is during ski season.

For a more adventurous mountain experience in a landscape that could double as the surface of the moon, **Highland Base Kerlingarfjöll** in Iceland, set in the volcanic mountain range of the same name, contains lava formations that locals say are giants who were turned to stone. The ecoproperty is a complex of buildings that includes private lodges and A-frame huts as well as the newest addition, a modern angular pine building with 28 rooms and suites with window seats. The Highland Baths, a trio of natural pools fed by thermal springs, opened to the public last month.

Scattered along the **Tea Horse Road**, an ancient trade route in Southwest China that spans rivers and dramatic mountain passes, is a pioneering, evolving collection of small retreats and hotels from the hospitality company Lux*. Guests are meant to journey from one to another, resting up in the likes of an 18-room boutique hotel in the historic seventh-century center of Shangri-La or a 30-room Tibetan-style lodge in Benzilan, a village on the banks of the Yangtze River, deep in the Himalayas. **HB**



From top: The rooftop pool at Wood Hotel Bodø in Norway (woodbodo.com), the Cōmodo in Austria (thecomodo.com), the Brecon in Switzerland (thebrecon.com), huts at Highland Base Kerlingarfjöll in Iceland (highlandbase.is), Lux* Tea Horse Road Shangri-La in China (luxresorts.com), and the pool at Straubinger Grand Hotel in Austria (travelcharme.com)



FROM TOP: WOOD HOTEL BODØ; DESIGN HOTELS; GENEVIEVE LUTKIN; HIGHLAND BASE KERLINGARFJÖLL; LUX* RESORTS AND HOTELS; ARNE NAGEL