



### Opening Act

This double-duty tool can handle oysters...and beer  
**D7**

# OFF DUTY

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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### Corvette Stunner

A very excitable Dan Neil on the best 'Vette yet  
**D10**



FASHION | FOOD | DESIGN | TRAVEL | GEAR

Saturday/Sunday, August 22 - 23, 2020 | **D1****D4** | Saturday/Sunday, August 22 - 23, 2020

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## ADVENTURE & TRAVEL



**POSH PODS**  
Maryland's Inn at Perry Cabin offers guests their own greenhouses

### Safer Havens

These four resorts make it relatively easy to keep to yourself



One of the four pools at Terranea.

**TERRANEA, CALIF.** If social distancing is the key to staying healthy, Terranea's a good bet. Set on ocean cliffs in the Palos Verdes peninsula, it is an enormous resort with four pools and five open restaurants. The gym is sealed shut, but exercise bikes are set up outside. Staff are sticklers for making sure everyone wears masks. Guests can stroll ocean paths, play golf and go kayaking. In keeping with California's strict Covid regulations, the bars are closed and even the alcoholic drinks offered poolside must be served with food—inebriated people tend to flout social distancing guidelines. From \$499 a night, [terranea.com](http://terranea.com)

## Forget the Mint. Get Me Lysol.

Upscale resorts are touting their new virus-busting measures, but when you're surrounded by masks and hand sanitizers, does it really feel like an escape?

By NINA SOVICH

**L**AST MONTH Vickie Cunniff spent a weekend at Terranea, a cliff-top resort on the southern coast of California with a 102-acre campus. She drove with her husband up from her home in Orange County, arrived at the resort, checked in through a plastic barrier, walked by a temperature sensor and was given a welcome package that included hand sanitizer, masks and gloves. After she and her husband carried their bags to the room, Vickie broke the seal on its door which certified it had been left empty for 24 hours and then cleaned. Before her first much-earned piña colada and long look at the sunset, she set to work. "I brought my own Lysol and wiped down the obvious stuff—handles, toilet flushes, bedside tables, light switches, lamp pulls, the remote control. I tried not to be too crazy," she said. "But I am a nurse."

Welcome to luxury resorts in the age of Covid, where the rituals and assumptions of checking in have been upended. What passes for indulgence now: hand sanitizer at every turn and staff in PPE scrubbing down deck chairs around the pool. Luxury is the 6 feet of social distancing that large resorts make easier and the vision of fellow guests wearing masks without complaint. Your ability to relax relies on your faith that the resort has both the will and resources to train its staff in health procedures, keeping them healthy



At Terranea, a plastic barrier now adorns the check-in desk.

and Global Public Health at U.C. San Diego School of Medicine, suggests a hotel with bungalows. "A place where you don't have to interact with anyone—that could be safer than almost anywhere."

After five months at home with the children, my husband and I bolted for the Inn at Perry Cabin on the shores of Eastern Maryland.

### Velas Resorts requires staff to take a smell test every morning.

The Inn has golf and tennis and uninterrupted views of the Miles River. Equally appealing: The Inn, like many resorts, said it was capping occupancy to make social distancing easier (though the resort recently raised the cap to 70%). Ev-

hotel uses HEPA filters, which can eliminate any lingering virus. I still nervously watched patrons merrily eating and drinking indoors. (Dining indoors is riskier than outdoors, where circulating air minimizes the chances of transmission). Many guests also appeared to be in their 60s or 70s, despite the CDC's explicit warning that older adults are at increased risk for falling seriously ill from Covid-19.

Joy Cooper, 80, wrestled with some of these issues when she devised a trip to ultra-swanky Ranch at Rock Creek in Philipsburg Montana for her children and five grandchildren. She put off the trip in June but rescheduled it for July. "The grandchildren were begging me," she said. "We don't have trips or plans or jobs."

The part of the trip that worried her most was the flight from her home in Alabama. Once at the

be alone. She even got her own golf cart to tool around. "They explained everything. How to get dinner, when to wear masks. The more they explained, the better I felt."

According to the American Hotel & Lodging Association, resorts continue to pull in guests during the pandemic, albeit still far fewer than they did before Covid. Occupancy rates have crept up to 46% this summer, much higher than in March and April though down about a third from 2019.

Resorts are having to contend with the increased costs of training staff, but the virus is also forcing innovation. Juan Velas, the vice president of Velas Resorts, with six hotels in Mexico, requires staff to take a smell test every morning. They come to work, have their temperature taken then are invited to close their eyes and smell coffee beans, garlic and lemon laid out on towels. "Having a headache and losing sense of smell are common signs of Covid," said Mr. Velas, "if you can't smell the coffee you have to go home."

Sea Island in Georgia is a sprawling resort with both year-round residents and seasonal guests. Managing Director Vijay Singh said one of the biggest problems the staff had to solve was how to handle guest sheets. Ripping them off the beds could spread virus. The resort had to teach staff how to change sheets safely.

Even outdoor activities can be fraught. "Shooting was one of those things we grappled with,"

**RANCH AT ROCK CREEK, MONT.** A luxury dude ranch set in Philipsburg, the Ranch at Rock Creek stretches across 10 miles of property. Normally able to accommodate up to 125 guests, the ranch is operating at 60% capacity. Most activities like horse riding and fly fishing are outdoors, but for those who want to bowl, play shuffleboard or watch a movie, the ranch will reserve the Silver Dollar saloon during the day so guests can isolate. From \$1,800 per night per person, including all meals, [theranchatrockcreek.com](http://theranchatrockcreek.com)

**MIRROR LAKE INN RESORT AND SPA, N.Y.** On the shores of Lake Placid, Mirror Lake Inn is known for its winter and summer activities, including fishing, boating and skiing. Among its Covid-combating measures, the hotel leaves rooms empty for 72 hours between guest stays or disinfects them with Ultra-violet-C light-emitting units before the next visitor's arrival. The resort also upgraded the HVAC system in the restaurant and offers check-in via app to minimize interaction with the staff. From \$449 a night, [mirrorlakeinn.com](http://mirrorlakeinn.com)



New York's Mirror Lake Inn Resort and Spa.



and by extension, you.

"The best advice, given the disarray our country is in, is to stay put, rather than do recreational travel," said Dr. William Greenough, infectious disease expert at Johns Hopkins. If you are going to travel, avoid places with large scale outbreaks. "Perhaps Vermont instead of Texas," he said. Dr. Davey Smith, head of Infectious Diseases

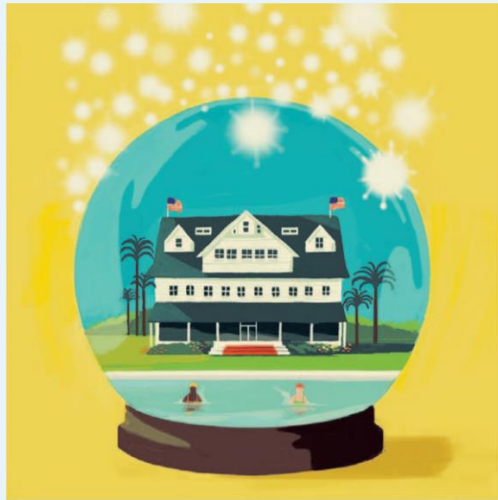
everyone wore a mask unless they were eating or drinking. It felt both rarefied and tinged with guilt. Guests seemed to be shooting each other furtive glances that said: "I know it's safer to stay home, but I really need a vacation."

I also never entirely rid myself of that nagging feeling of looming danger. Even though the Inn at Perry Cabin assured me that the

lodge she felt safe. Social distancing was easy and people wore masks. Families stayed together and did not interact over drinks or after dinner. "Usually you go to the bar after dinner and chat with the other guests but there was no bar," she said. "That was weird." When they wanted to go bowling the resort closed the building with the bowling alley so the family could

said Mr. Singh. "How do you give a shooting lesson with social distancing?" The resort established new protocols for disarming guns and instructors stand 6 feet away. Once a firearm has been used, it is disinfected. All this slows down the natural rhythm of a resort, but perhaps the slowing pace is worth it. After all, the luxury always has and always will lie in the small things.

**SEA ISLAND, GA.** Situated off the coast of Georgia, Sea Island unfurls over 1,200 acres and includes six pools and five restaurants open even during Covid. Guests are required to wear masks and can golf, go on turtle walks and take shooting lessons. Sheer space affords social distancing. From \$395 a night, [seaisland.com](http://seaisland.com)



FABIO CONSOLI

## Trouble In The Bubble?

Staying in a hotel during Covid is neither foolhardy nor foolproof. Here, the truth behind five big myths.

### 1 People who vacation in hotels right now are reckless

Not really. "I'd go to a hotel," said Dr. Davey Smith, head of Infectious Diseases and Global Public Health at U.C. San Diego School of Medicine. "But I'd avoid the elevator and indoor dining and skip daily housekeeping service so you don't risk infecting the staff. Still leave a big tip because those people have to work too." Dr. William Greenough, an infectious disease expert at Johns Hopkins, points out that hotels have varying degrees of commitment to health and safety protocols. "I don't think

it's a bad idea to call a travel agent and get a sense of which resorts are really bending over backward to [take the necessary precautions]," said Dr. Greenough. "And when you get to the resort keep your eyes open. Is staff keeping masks on? Are they trying to distance from each other? Most of the time, you can tell right away."

### 2 The pool is totally safe

The pool might be one of the least risky areas to hang out because UV light, present in sunlight, kills the virus in about 15 minutes. Chlorine in pools also kills most viruses. But Dr. Greenough cautions it's still important to stay 6 feet away from people. Make sure you wipe down deck chairs. Use fresh towels and keep your mask on as much as possible.

### 3 Masks are created equal

Wearing a mask even outdoors is probably a good idea, but make sure your mask is of

good quality and covers your face well. "I have seen some very flimsy masks out there," said Dr. Greenough.

### 4 Gloves help

Washing your hands regularly is considered safer than wearing gloves since they might give you a false sense of security. If you wear gloves, touch a surface with Covid and wipe your nose, you are susceptible to the disease. Do you really want to wear gloves at a resort anyway?

### 5 No one cares about the staff's health

Your health is directly correlated with how the staff at resorts are treated. Good establishments try hard to keep staff safe, partly to avoid the bad publicity around a Covid-19 outbreak, but there is a good economic reason for prudence as well. A healthy staff also translates into healthy clients who come back.