

A PRIVATE GROUP TRAVELLING WITH **BROWN + HUDSON**, ONE OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF TOUR OPERATORS, EXPLORED PERU'S SACSAYHUAMAN RUINS THEN SPENT THE NIGHT IN A TRANSPARENT POD



# THE SUPER FIXERS

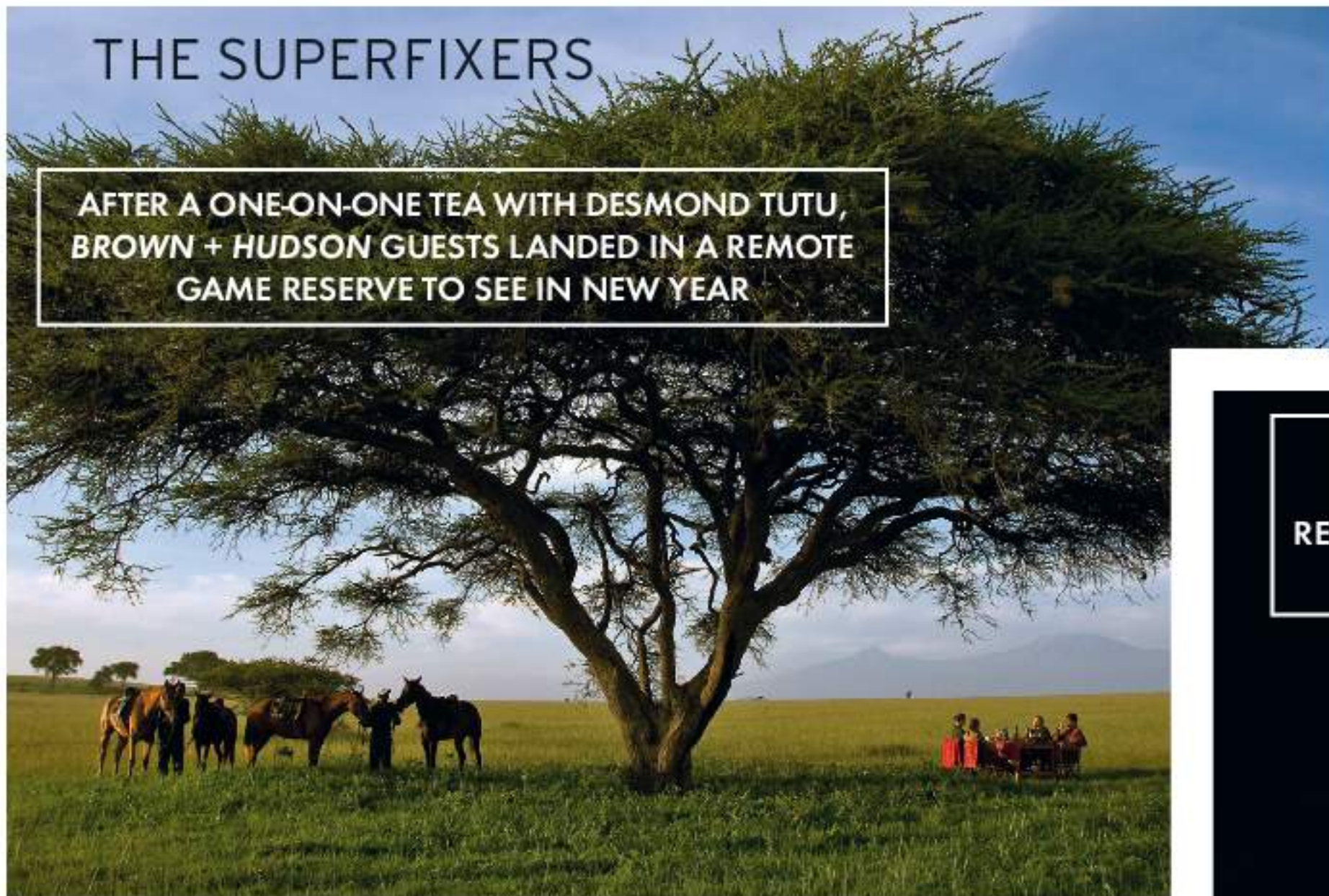
ONCE IT WAS ENOUGH TO HAVE A MEGA-YACHT AND INVITE A BUNCH OF FRIENDS ALONG FOR THE SUMMER. MAYBE A CHALET IN GSTAAD, A VILLA IN MUSTIQUE AND AN ESTATE IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE. TO ALWAYS TURN LEFT. NOW, HOWEVER, THE RICH ARE, WELL, RICHER.

THEY'VE SEEN EVERY CONTINENT, ARE DONE WITH FIRST CLASS AND HAVE PUT A DOWN-PAYMENT ON A SPACE FLIGHT. THEY ARE TECH BILLIONAIRES WHO GO ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGS IN EGYPT, PRINCESSES WHO CHASE THE NORTHERN LIGHTS ACROSS THE ARCTIC CIRCLE BY PRIVATE JET, OFFSPRING OF OLIGARCHS WHO CAMP ON A VOLCANO IN BORNEO. BUT THEY'RE NOT DOING IT ALONE. MEET THE NEW BREED OF OPERATORS SUPERCRAFTING REALITY INTO SOMETHING FAR MORE FANTASTICAL...

BY GISELA WILLIAMS

## THE SUPERFIXERS

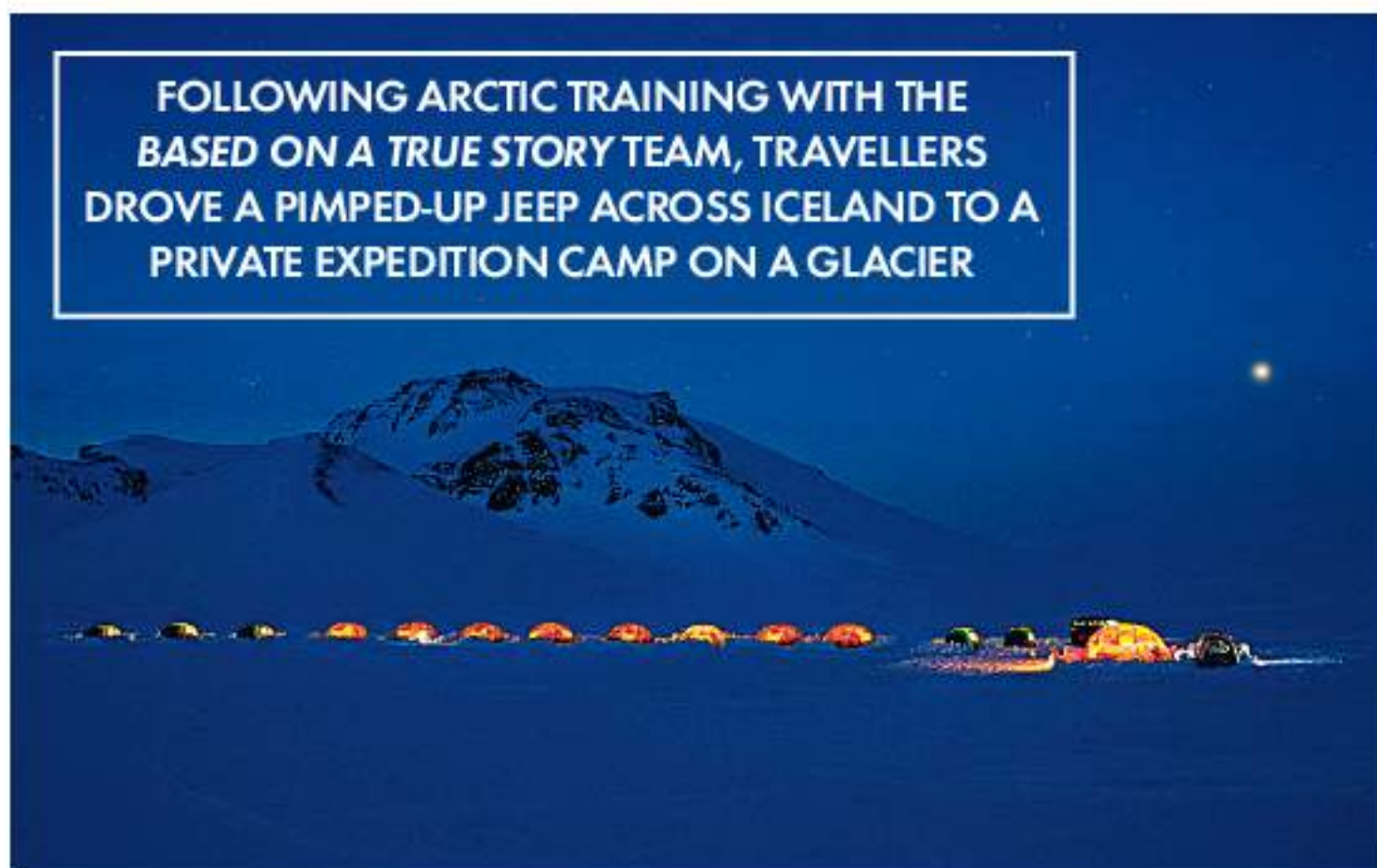
AFTER A ONE-ON-ONE TEA WITH DESMOND TUTU, BROWN + HUDSON GUESTS LANDED IN A REMOTE GAME RESERVE TO SEE IN NEW YEAR



MAVERICK TRAVEL OUTFIT BASED ON A TRUE STORY ARRANGED FOR LOCAL CHILDREN TO RE-ENACT A KECAK DANCE IN A BALINESE VILLAGE UNTOUCHED BY BOHO BEACH BUMS



FOLLOWING ARCTIC TRAINING WITH THE BASED ON A TRUE STORY TEAM, TRAVELLERS DROVE A PIMPED-UP JEEP ACROSS ICELAND TO A PRIVATE EXPEDITION CAMP ON A GLACIER



FLOATING THROUGH THE DEEP CHANNEL of Sognefjord in Norway with family and friends on a small flotilla of vintage yachts, a few children suddenly spot a mermaid sitting on a rock in the distance. The captain changes course towards her but just as one of the boats gets close, she slips into the water and disappears, the shimmer of her tail becoming submerged in the deep. In her wake, however, she leaves behind an urn, inside of which is a treasure map.

This is not some hallucination or the opening sequence of a Disney movie. This is the beginning of an incredible journey conjured up by London-based mavericks Based on a True Story.

### ONE OPERATOR FOCUSES ON CREATING ITINERARIES THAT ARE CRYPTICALLY CALLED 'TRANSCENDING' WHICH START AT £100,000 AND CAN GO INTO MILLIONS

Part money-no-object travel agent, part immersive-theatre company, this curious outfit was founded in 2006 by Niel Fox, a charismatic Yorkshireman and direct descendant of the last King of Burma, who hitchhiked around the world several times before turning entrepreneur, the ultimate fixer for the turbo traveller.

Most of the trips Fox and his team creates are as complex and expensive as the production of a small film, drafting in hundreds of actors to stage pirate battles off the coast of Mallorca, perform as fairies dancing in the mist in Iceland or sabotage Santa Claus in Lapland. No wonder then that most of his clients are fund

managers, tech-start-up founders or royalty – the cost for one of these adventures can easily run well into seven figures.

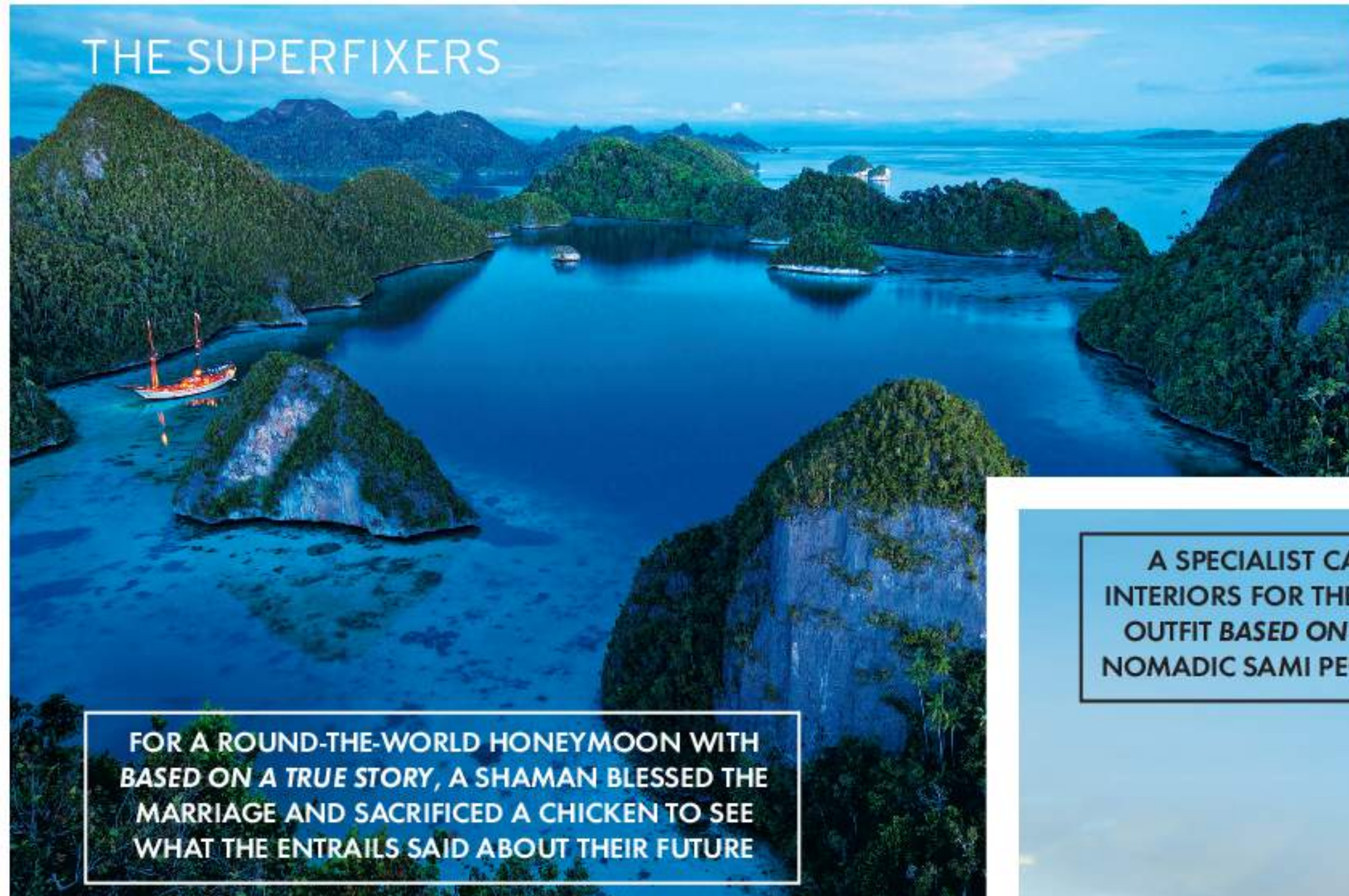
Based on a True Story is just one of a quietly growing number of companies who specialise in offering next-level trips for a thrill-seeking subset of ultra-high-net-worth globetrotters for whom overnighing in super-charged pods in the Antarctic (call White Desert) or being dropped by helicopter to surf a remote wave in West Papua (Tropicsurf will hook you up) is no longer enough of a kick.

Another of their number is The Key. The man behind it, Antoine Sepulchre, started as a concierge and events planner,

setting up elaborate camps at Burning Man festival and building parties in the middle of nowhere – such as in a glass-topped tent in deepest Siberia. Over the last two years, however, The Key has focused on creating itineraries that Sepulchre cryptically calls 'transcending' and which frequently start at £100,000 and often cost more than a million. Although details are closely guarded, Sepulchre says, 'We have led clients on spiritual journeys through the Amazon and created unique healing ceremonies in California.' But his off-the-record stories confirm that for the hyper-charged high-flyers it's no longer about where you go on

PHOTOGRAPHS: BASED ON A TRUE STORY; DANA ALLEN/GREAT PLAINS

## THE SUPERFIXERS



FOR A ROUND-THE-WORLD HONEYMOON WITH BASED ON A TRUE STORY, A SHAMAN BLESSED THE MARRIAGE AND SACRIFICED A CHICKEN TO SEE WHAT THE ENTRAILS SAID ABOUT THEIR FUTURE


your travels, it's where your travels take you. Why merely charter a superyacht in the Caribbean when you can change your religion on a mountaintop in Nepal?

Philippe Brown, the founder of Brown + Hudson, another tech-jetter favourite, agrees, 'Our thing has never been destinations. We ask our clients, 'Who are you?' and 'What are you looking for?' We create trips all about the feeling you want to have.' That might mean organising a connecting flight on a MiG-29 fighter jet or literally planning what they call a Journey with No Destination where the client doesn't know until the last minute where they are heading.

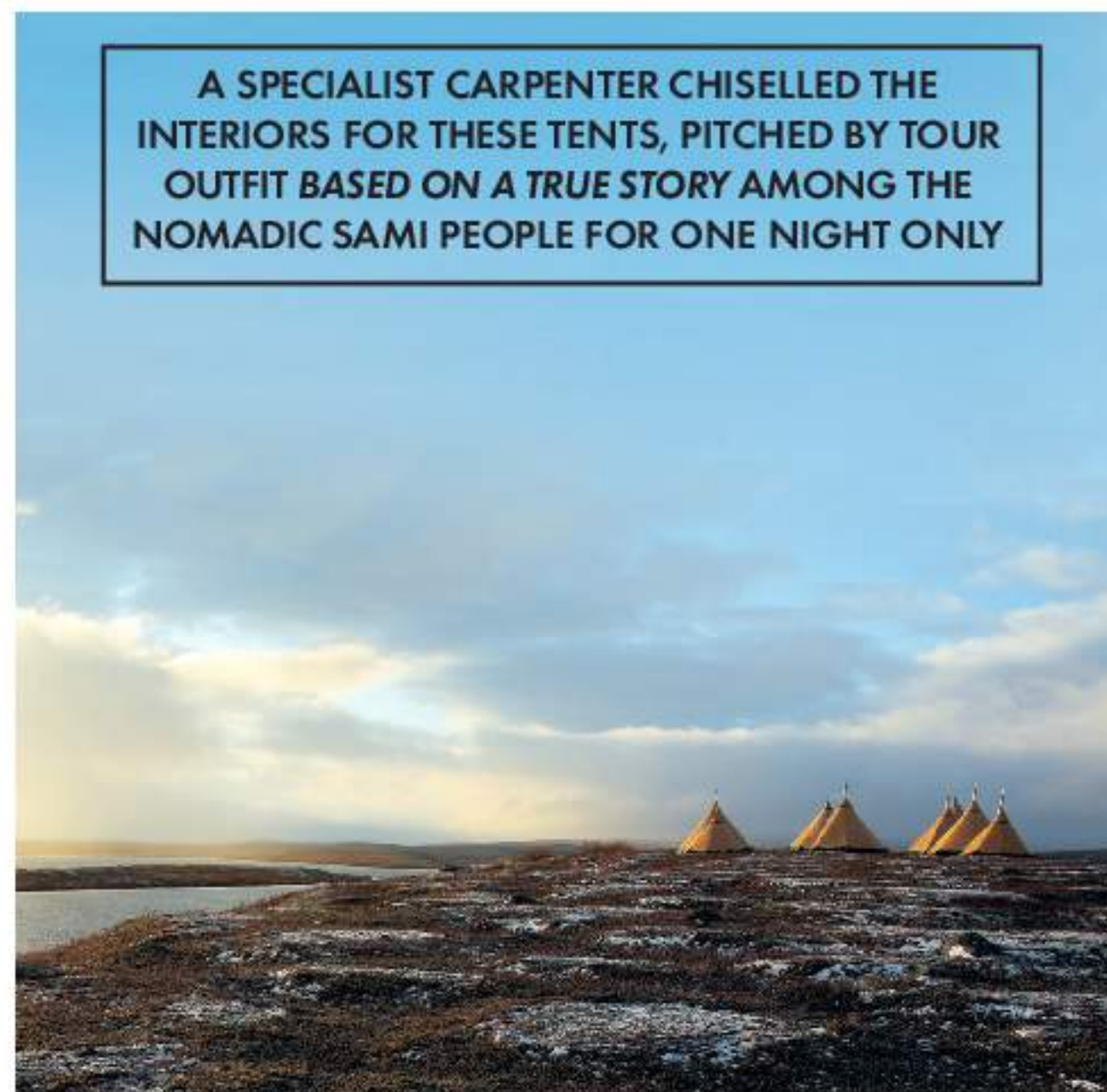
But trends in these kinds of fantastical trips are, in some ways, more influenced by technology than budgets, adds Brown. 'Look at the way virtual reality and video games have developed. The world, as it is, is no longer enough. We need to make actual reality more exciting.'

Another firm doing just that is the Athens-based Kudos Life Experiences. In partnership with Swiss-watch company Hublot, it has just launched an adventure called the OneLife Game, in which travellers are sent on a guided mission on the pretext of uncovering the secrets of the Antikythera Mechanism, a mysterious and extraordinary real-life artefact that dates to 100BC, which was discovered in a shipwreck in the early 1900s.

This *Choose Your Own Adventure*-like quest, which crisscrosses Greece by yacht and helicopter, was inspired by the *Crystal-Maze*-style phenomenon. 'Watching my children having fun solving clues in an escape room in Athens made me think, 'What if I organised a similar experience but the room was all of Greece?' says Maria Gregoriou, the managing partner of Kudos.

Kudos can also, given enough budget, transport people back in time: acting out the myth of Chiron the centaur at Mount Pelion or creating a treasure hunt through the Cyclades for three families, each on their own yacht, based on the adventures of Odysseus. 'We are not just guiding someone from A to B,' she says. 'We are evoking a sense of wonder.' Because, for a price, anything is possible. 

A SPECIALIST CARPENTER CHISELLED THE INTERIORS FOR THESE TENTS, PITCHED BY TOUR OUTFIT BASED ON A TRUE STORY AMONG THE NOMADIC SAMI PEOPLE FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY



## HOW TO SPOT A THRILLIONAIRE

Children of Saudi royalty and Russian oligarchs, Silicon Valley founders or just old-school CEOs untethered by mid-life crisis, the next-gen ultra-high-net-worth traveller (UHNW) can be found stalking a desert festival or dancing in the Mexican jungle at Costa Careyes' Ondalinda gathering. The alpha of their species, they network with like-minded creatures not in the boardrooms of Manhattan and Mayfair but at Summit's Power Mountain in Utah or kite-surfing in Cabarete, Dominican Republic. Of course, they have at least one Gulfstream jet on standby (as well as a nutritionist, spiritual guru and divemaster on call), ready to whip them over to Uluwatu or pop down to Trancoso. Although naturally land-based animals, they are rarely off a plane or yacht, migrating from Tulum for New Year to Niseko for the powder, squeezing in a few quick stops at their villa in Ibiza, a private island off Nicaragua and at a pop-up camp in Namibia. The species' diet is dictated by the latest fashionable regime – macrobiotic, paleo, intermittent fasting – sprinkled with yak butter, cacao nibs or Moon Juice's Brain Dust. The transformational drug of choice has always been ayahuasca, experienced preferably with a shaman in the rainforests of Peru (although often actually taken at a dinner party in LA) but, keen to keep the competitive edge, some are now experimenting with micro-dosing LSD to increase productivity. A master of scheduling – their crack squad of assistants insist upon it – they've already booked their spot at Alcor Life Extension Foundation to be frozen after death. That is if they can't actually live forever after dabbling with young blood transfusions from Ambrosia and launching their new biohacking start-up. GW

PHOTOGRAPHS: BASED ON A TRUE STORY