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# Openair

magazine

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## Hiking's New Path

Deluxe adventures  
that challenge, pamper  
— and inspire

PLUS

Spring Break  
Grows Up!

} 7 Perfect Beach Retreats

**Mario  
Batali**  
spices up  
camp food

TRY SKEET:  
IT'S A  
BLAST!

**Biker  
Jesse James**  
gets BACK to  
NATURE



and status,” Dockery says. “However, ‘primary pleasures’ — including the physical exercise, inspiring surroundings and genuine camaraderie inherent in the activity of hiking — support overall health, well-being and stability.”

For Ian Mausner, a senior portfolio and hedge-fund manager in San Diego, the mix of scenery, physicality and strong group dynamics has a big impact. “They combine in a unique way to give my mind and body a break,” says Mausner, 47. As for the cushy après-hike lodgings, food and health clubs, they were a bonus to the spectacular places he visited during his heli-hiking (and biking) trip through the Canadian Rockies with travel company Backroads.

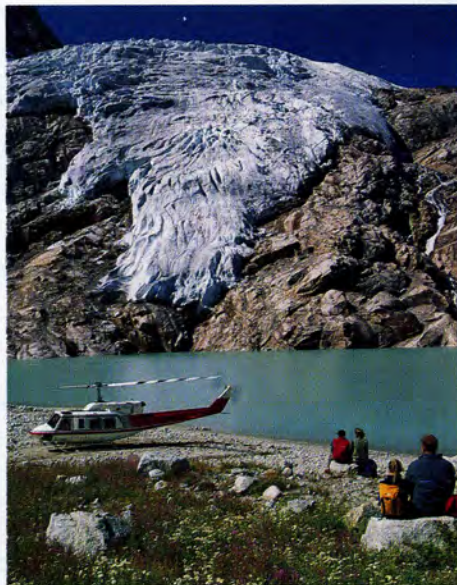
Ken Lyons, 53, a technical supervisor for Cablevision Systems Corp. in New Jersey and a veteran of no fewer than 17 Austin-Lehman adventures, offers his take on the trend: “There’s a spirit to the woods that you don’t find anywhere else, whether you open up on a personal level or just learn about the indigenous flora, fauna and ecosystems.”

The landscape of Hawaii’s Big Island — the beaches, the otherworldly lava fields — fascinated Caroline LeGette, a retired lawyer from

## Hiking’s inherent exercise, surroundings and camaraderie all support **health and well-being.**

Austin, on a recent tour with Country Walkers. “We hiked in Volcanoes National Park at dawn,” LeGette, 56, says. “To watch the sun rise with no one else around was really something.”

Whether you’re game for an expedition that’s



▲ Heli-hiking offers access to unspoiled locations.

gung-ho or laid-back, solitary or group, there’s no shortage of luxury options from which to choose. And there’s no reason why the nurturing that you get from four-star accommodations has to mess with what Mother Nature offers. Steve Burnett, 56, president of the Burnett Group, a

marketing and branding firm in New York City and a member of the storied Explorers Club, regularly hikes and camps without the luxury of a lodge, but he believes that there are lasting benefits to primitive adventures and fancier outings alike. “If you are at all in touch with yourself,” Burnett says, “then ending the day in a hollow log or in a luxury resort shouldn’t separate you from your private muse.”

The following hotels and outfitters will help you get back to nature — the easy way — with tours ranging from two-hour excursions that get you back in time for an afternoon massage to six-day expeditions with lodging that features all of the creature comforts to which you’ve grown accustomed.



▲ Relax and recharge with a soak in a tub at the Inn of Five Graces in Santa Fe.

### Backroads

*Santa Fe and Taos, N.M.*

On this six-day hiking adventure in New Mexico, you will descend 800 feet into the Rio Grande Gorge, trek through the sandstone cliffs of Ghost Ranch (once home to famed artist Georgia O’Keeffe) and explore the ancestral Pueblo ruins of Tsankawi. In the evenings, return to the pot-bellied gas fireplace and soaking tub in your suite at the Inn of Five Graces in Santa Fe. Be sure to book a Rancho-Swedish massage: It will put you a step ahead for the next day’s trek. (Starting at \$2,698 per person; backroads.com.)

### Four Seasons Resort

*Hualalai, Hawaii*

Oliver Fix of Hualalai Sports Club and Spa is more than a hiking guide. Fix is a wellness consultant certified in neuro-linguistic programming and cognitive hypnotherapy. He also won the 1996 Olympic gold medal in the white-water kayak slalom event. Fix will escort you on the three-hour *mauka* (toward the mountains) hike through magnificent terrain on Hualalai volcano to Puhia Pele (a volcanic cone with an elevation of 1,637 feet). At the end of the day, take a dip in King’s Pond, a swimming hole carved out of lava rock and filled with water from both mountain and sea. Then, you can dine on wok-charred shrimp or vegetable stir-fry while sitting on your private lanai overlooking the mighty Pacific. (Ocean-view rooms start at \$975; the *mauka* hike is \$105 per person and includes refreshments; fourseasons.com.)

CANYONLANDS: DARYL BENSON; MASTERFILE; VOLCANO: G. BRAD LEWIS; VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK: HELI-HIKING: CMH; TUB: SLH.COM; CANYON RANCH: TY MILFORD FOR OPEN AIR



▲ Holly Fredericks, Canyon Ranch’s outdoor sports manager, leads the way through Arizona’s Saguaro National Park.