

Romantic getaways in Germany, Italy, California, Morocco, and more.

TRAVEL+ LEISURE



Fall Escapes

Travel doesn't
stop when
summer ends.

52

vacations to
take before
the holidays.

Scicli, near the southernmost tip of the island, the festivities spilled down the curving steps of the Baroque church, San Giovanni Evangelista, to the snack station on the street. In Ragusa, a bride in a strapless gown posed near the Castello di Ragusa Ibla's ramparts, with the duomo's bell tower saluting her across a landscape of shingled roofs.

I was born and spent my entire childhood in Rome, so Sicily was both native soil and deeply foreign. Everyone there speaks Italian to outsiders

like me, but it's really the language of occupiers, bureaucrats, teachers, and mainland tourists, who get lost after a syllable or two of Sicilian. And though Ariella and I knew abstractly that Sicily's hybrid culture is formed out of shards from all over the Mediterranean, we weren't prepared for the polychrome and multiethnic splendor of the cathedral of Monreale. We lingered in the cloister, where a crowd of columns—some with stylized Norman capitals, others with elaborate foliage and biblical scenes executed by stone carvers from as far away as Burgundy, still others inlaid with Byzantine mosaics—formed a festival of intermingled traditions.

Sicily's character was also born of tragedy. An earthquake leveled much of the island in 1693, after which it sprang back in fanciful effusions. Balconies, balustrades, staircases, glistening marble, jubilant turrets, church façades that swing between concave and convex surfaces—all the sensual theatrics of 18th-century architecture

The Best Escapes for Empty Nesters

Let romance blossom again at one of these four sybaritic spots, courtesy of our A-List advisors.

A Perfumery in London

"We take couples into Floris, one of the oldest perfumeries in London. The back room is very traditional, with walnut-paneled walls, and it's filled with perfume bottles. The couple can mix different scents to create their own custom perfume. It's very romantic: that fragrance will always be unique to them." — **Nicola Butler, NoteWorthy** (nicola@noteworthy.co.uk; 44-20-3051-5165)

New Zealand

"This country is the perfect place for long-married couples to reconnect, and spending the night in a PurePod is the way to do it. Imagine being in a glass cottage totally surrounded by nature. It's just the two of you again, immersed in the beautiful landscape. You can see everything through the pod's heavy-duty glass, from the starry night skies above to the native plants growing beneath your feet." — **Donna Thomas, New Zealand Travel** (donna@newzealandtravel.org; 215-741-6155)

Glacier National Park

"There's no better romantic getaway than a wilderness adventure in the mountain solitude of Glacier National Park, followed by a few nights at the rustically elegant Triple Creek Ranch. The all-inclusive property in the Bitterroot Mountains of Montana is the perfect setting for rekindling. The cozy cabins offer plenty of privacy, and the five-star service and gourmet cuisine complete the indulgent experience." — **Melissa Ladvala, MT Sobek** (melissal@mtsobek.com; 510-831-7526)

A Lake in Tanzania

"Many couples need an opportunity to experience something new together for the first time in a while. For this, I would highly recommend Greystoke Mahale Camp on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, in Tanzania. There's a sense of wild freedom there. You can trek to see chimpanzees in the mornings, then dive into the crystal-clear lake in the afternoon." — **Chris Liebenberg, Piper & Heath** (chris@piperandheath.com; 858-698-5559)



▲ A cottage at Triple Creek Ranch, in Montana's Bitterroot Mountains.

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