

MEDIA/PUBLISHING

## Travel + Leisure redesign reflects evolution of luxury travel

March 29, 2019



*Travel + Leisure's April cover. Image courtesy of Travel + Leisure*

By SARAH JONES

Meredith's *Travel + Leisure* is focusing on the human side of travel in a redesign that centers on making the magazine more luxurious and modern.

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For editor in chief Jacqui Gifford's first full issue, on newsstands March 29, the magazine is revamping its layout in an effort to be more engaging and personal through first-person storytelling, hand-drawn details and photography. The affluent traveler has changed, as consumers desire trips that enable them to fully immerse themselves in a local culture, and *Travel + Leisure* is looking to bring that perspective to its pages.

"I've been at *Travel + Leisure* for almost six years, so I've seen the magazine through many different designs and many different editors," said Ms. Gifford.

"This is a natural evolution of the magazine and brand, and something that all editors do," she said. "They go through this exercise and continue to think of new ways to surprise and make the reading experience even better."

### Editorial update

Ms. Gifford, who was previously travel director at the publication, officially began her role at *Travel + Leisure* in November, but the April issue marks the first edition of the magazine that was entirely overseen by her.

*Travel + Leisure* has updated its front of book section to be more easily navigable. As part of the redesign, it is introducing three new sections.

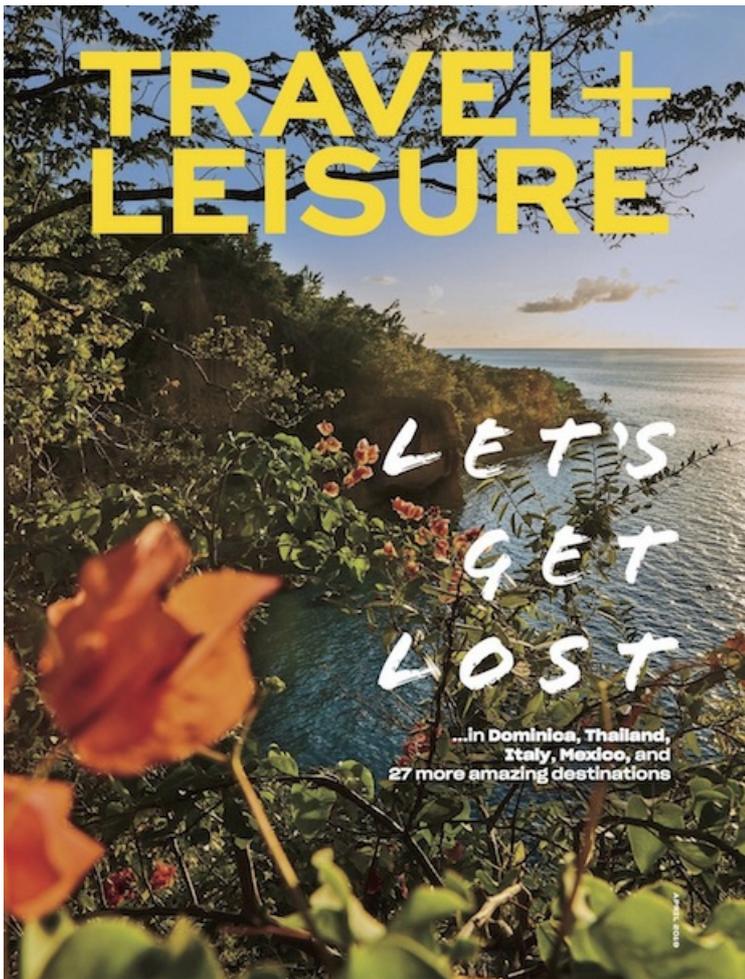
"Discoveries" provides a global look at travel, spotlighting editors' picks along with fashion and beauty content. For the April issue, this section includes a look at the opening of the Qatar National Museum and a feature on a New York pop-up shop.

The magazine is also incorporating first-person storytelling earlier in the book with "Experiences."

Also in the front of book is the "Intelligent Traveler," a section devoted to consumer news, covering everything from the latest travel applications to loyalty points. While this type of news has been featured in *Travel + Leisure* in the

past, the section was rebranded to reflect what the traveler of 2019 needs, allowing them to travel smarter.

The cover story of the issue is on Dominica, an island nation that was hit by Hurricane Maria. As the Caribbean rebuilds, writer Gina Decaprio Vercesi traveled down to meet with locals and documented her journey, including her experience volunteering to clean trails.



*Travel + Leisure's April 2019 issue. Image courtesy of Travel + Leisure*

Affluent travelers are open to a variety of experiences, from giving back through voluntourism to trying new cuisine.

*Travel + Leisure's* 16 million print and digital readers are sophisticated, frequent travelers, taking an average seven leisure trips per year. They also have a median household income of \$300,000.

“Our readers are a diverse group of people, so I feel like our storytelling has to be just as diverse,” Ms. Gifford said.

The editorial will focus on both introducing lesser known destinations and finding new ways to explore popular spots. For instance, the upcoming May issue will take a different look at Rome with a piece about traveling to the Italian city with children.

While the new *Travel + Leisure* look is a subtle shift from previous issues, design details are aimed at making the magazine more engaging.



*Jacqui Gifford. Image courtesy of Travel + Leisure*

Captions have been moved off photos to not obstruct the imagery, and there is now more photography. Thanks to social media, consumers today are inundated with more travel shots, so the focus for *Travel + Leisure* is on visually surprising readers.

“The writing has to be spectacular, and it always has been,” Ms. Gifford said. “But I think for everybody, travel is first and foremost a visual medium.

“And Instagram has really changed the way we consume travel photography and also how we think about it,” she said.

New fonts are used to give the book a more modern look. *Travel + Leisure* is also bringing in hand-drawn elements, such as maps illustrated by senior designer May Parsey.

Allowing readers to get to know the writers, a contributors section has been reinstated.

Looking to grab the attention of consumers at newsstands, Ms. Gifford has also been working with creative director Paul Martinez to elevate *Travel + Leisure’s* covers.



[View this post on Instagram](#)

Take a look at our March cover: The Hotels Issue! Parisian photographer @francoiscoquerel explains how he got this gorgeous shot at our link in bio. / @djonamarkic

A post shared by Travel + Leisure (@travelandleisure) on Feb...

### *Instagram post from Travel + Leisure*

In honor of Ms. Gifford's first issue, a number of brands have used their advertisements to welcome her.

For instance, Seabourn's inside front cover placement included a note that said, "Welcome on board," to the editor.



Congratulations to Travel + Leisure's new Editor-in-Chief, Jacqui Gifford.



*Seabourn's ad welcoming Jacqui Gifford. Image courtesy of Travel + Leisure*

Dorado Beach, A Ritz-Carlton Reserve property, also congratulated Ms. Gifford while Windstar Cruises is naming a zodiac boat in her honor.

Other advertisers in the issue included Regent Seven Seas, Fairmont and Crystal.

### Brand extension

While authenticity has been a leading focus for heritage hospitality and travel brands, ultra-personalized experiences are set to overtake it, according to a report from Virtuoso.

For affluent travelers, these personalization requests go beyond upscale accommodations and events and instead include specific meals and personal photographers. Social media continues to play a major role in travel planning, from inspiring some adventurers and motivating others to seek out under-the-radar experiences ([see story](#)).

Today, *Travel + Leisure* is more than just a print publication, with the magazine offering digital inspiration through social media and brand extensions.

In 2016, *Travel + Leisure* made its travel advice and tips accessible to readers throughout each point in their journey with the launch of digital travel guides.

In addition to refashioning its online guides, the publication designed a dedicated mobile application catering to travelers' needs while they are on-the-go. While *Travel + Leisure's* print magazine and online content have served consumers in top-of-funnel research, the addition of a purpose-driven app creates a platform for readers to consult once they have arrived at their destination ([see story](#)).

*Travel + Leisure* is also taking consumers on editor-led trips to favorite destinations, allowing for more audience interaction. The inaugural World's Best journey will take place in September to Italy, with photo editor Scott Hall leading the tour.

"Travel has changed, and people are willing to go off the beaten path to have a more tailored, authentic experience," Ms. Gifford said. "So the definition of luxury has changed, too. It's not necessarily marble and glitz and private jets—that seems so dated now.

"What luxury really is for most people right now is time, and time off with their friends and families, because we're all so connected and running around and crazed, and travel is the best way to do that," she said. "So I think the evolution of this brand and what this magazine is looking like right now, there's a warmth to it, and that's what I wanted to emphasize with the photography and the writing. Travel is an escape, and it should be fun."

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