

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Black Tomato teams with Auberge, Mercedes for luxury road trips

May 12, 2021



Guests can enjoy some Connecticut hiking with the Mountains and Maritime on the East Coast package. Image courtesy of Black Tomato

By KATIE TAMOLA

Bespoke travel company Black Tomato is encouraging consumers to make up for lost time through personalized road trips, in collaboration with hospitality group Auberge Hotels & Resorts and German automaker Mercedes-Benz.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

The "Remarkable Drives of Discovery" program is designed to offer guests a range of disparate destinations and experiences, from trips around the California coast to artisan adventures in New England, each catering to guests' individual vacation desires. It features five bespoke options, each beginning or ending with a stay at an Auberge resort, highlighting a hidden gem in America and offering guests luxury-laden accommodations, unique opportunities and the option to use Mercedes-Benz vehicles for the duration of their trips.

"What makes this program particularly special is that it's designed by listening to our customers and what makes them tick," said Brendan Drewniany, director of communications at **Black Tomato**, New York. "For the first time in a very long time, Americans want to embrace slower' travel, so we listened and as we predicted, this is the year for low and slow travel where travelers will take fewer internal flights and become more grounded' by literally low' travel by car, train, foot or bike.

"Travelers can deliberately take longer with their journey because the transfers are slower, allowing them to dwell in the landscape and soak up the atmosphere more intentionally," he said. "This way of traveling is bolstered by the trend of Americans increasingly going away for longer vacations this year, which is rare but reflects the cooped up lives we've been living, and the open road is truly a great and safe antidote."

Remarkable drives of discovery

From coast to coast, Black Tomato has crafted five entirely different but equally in-depth bespoke experiences across the United States.

Prices begin at \$7,750 to \$17,250 per person, depending on the travel package. The trips touch on nature experiences, art and cultural offerings and indulgent cuisine to offer unique moments for different types of travelers.

The first package, "Sunrise to Sunset on the California Coast," is an eight-night road trip that pairs the expanse of Big Sur and the iconic wine haven of Napa Valley. The trip begins with a private horseback ride and guided walking tour of Carmel and Monterey from the cliffs of Ventana Big Sur, with later travel to Solage, Auberge Resorts Collection, a newly renovated Napa Valley retreat.



Every guest will have the option to drive a Mercedes-Benz during their trip. Image courtesy of Black Tomato

Additional offerings for this package include dinner at PicoBar, the resort's new restaurant, a hot air balloon ride complete with Champagne and more wine tastings.

Those seeking a trip farther East are not to be left behind, with the "Mountains and Maritime on the East Coast" package capturing the natural beauty of the coast through a lens of luxury. The first stop on this trip is Auberge's Mayflower Inn & Spa, followed by a guided hike, gourmet picnic and private dinner and rose pairing in a rowboat.

Guests will then travel south to The Inn at Perry Cabin in St. Michaels on the Chesapeake Bay, where they will sail on a private oystering experience, walk the town and learn about the life of abolitionist Frederick Douglass. The journey reaches its final stop at Primland in Virginia, a 12,000-acre property in the Blue Ridge mountains.

For the ultimate activity balance, guests can ride recreational terrain vehicles (RTVs) in the mountains and then receive treatments at the spa.

"Wild Gourmet in the Southwest" is a 10-night itinerary that brings guests to the Rockies and the Rio Grande. The trip begins at Auberge's The Lodge at Blue Sky in Park City, a property of 3,500 acres that offers guests the choice between high octane adventures and leisurely pursuits filled with excellent food and whiskey accommodations.

Guests will later travel to Auberge's Madeline Hotel & Residences, exploring Telluride's backcountry through guided trout fishing and 4x4 tours, before heading south to Santa Fe to Auberge's new Bishop's Lodge, which is set to open this summer.



A street mural in Austin. Image courtesy of Black Tomato

Art lovers need to look no further than the "Arts & Culture Through the Desert" experience, a 10-night trip through the deserts of Texas and New Mexico, bringing guests to some of America's most thought-provoking art destinations. The trip begins in Austin at Auberge's Commodore Perry Estate, where guests will have the opportunity to participate in a graffiti street art class by an esteemed street artist.

Guests will then travel out into the desert with a stay at El Cosmico, a one-of-a-kind accommodation with renovated vintage trailers, yurts and safari tents. The trip continues north to the new Bishop's Lodge from Auberge, where

additional arts and cultural experiences await.

To complete the group of offerings is the "Artisan Masterclasses in New England" package, a 12-night discovery that explores New England's traditions with a twist. Guests will begin at the Mayflower Inn & Spa, taking an artisan tour of Litchfield County with a pottery class before traveling to historical Newport and staying at Auberge's The Vanderbilt.

Next up is Kennebunk, where guests will experience an intimate chef dinner at Auberge's White Barn Inn. The trip concludes with a private flight to the bluffs of Nantucket at Greydon House.

Regardless of which coast they venture, every guest will have the option to test drive Mercedes-Benz vehicles exclusively for the duration of their trips. Travelers will be able to select from the 2021 S-Class sedan, the GLS600 Maybach or another Mercedes-Benz vehicle.

Bespoke from coast to coast

Bespoke experiences revolve around brands listening to what consumers want. Black Tomato, along with other brands, continues to consider what consumers want and how to bring them meaningful and special experiences.

Last month, Black Tomato announced it was bringing timeless tales to life in a new travel package offering affluent families the ultimate immersive experience.

After identifying timeless stories beloved by children and adults alike, Black Tomato has introduced unique fairytale-inspired family vacations. The Take me on a Story program provides families itineraries, lodging and activities based on popular children's books ([see story](#)).

In 2018, Black Tomato unveiled a new addition to its Blink project that gave customers completely unique, customized travel experiences that were designed and created specifically for them. Blink ensured every customer gets an individualized travel experience by dismantling and putting aside accommodations after a guest's trip is over ([see story](#)).

Black Tomato continues to study what consumers want and ways to innovate while crafting experiences that aim to stay with guests well beyond the lengths of their trips.

"The magic happens we put our heads together and identify what the most extraordinary experiences are and how we can facilitate what simply haven't been done before," Mr. Drewniany said. "What is especially standout for these trips is that it's all about a cadence we aren't jam-packing itineraries; instead, guests have more time to relax and explore these incredible Auberge properties on their time, at their pace.

"It's a reset of sorts," he said.