19 Things the travel industry did in 2019 to MAKE TRAVEL MORE PLANET-POSITIVE
It is no coincidence that this issue of Key Notes On Travel examines the intersection of travel and the wellbeing of our planet. As students marched in the streets, observing weekly climate strikes, and as California announced a ban on travel-size toiletries in hotel rooms, I was packing my bags for back-to-back trips that would have me crisscrossing North America. I’m not a frequent-flying travel editor but I did, for the first time, feel a sense of *flygskam*: “flight shame.”

How can I reconcile my thirst for world travel and an increasing sense of responsibility to the planet? Carbon offsets seem like a good idea. But as the order confirmation hit my inbox, I thought, could it be this easy? Could I really absolve my environmental impact in a few short keystrokes? It seemed so...abstract.

As travel advisors and industry partners, we have a real opportunity to affect change. We can pursue better practices and policy, and design lower-impact products that distribute travel in more sustainable ways. On page 12, we recognize the many ways the travel industry is doing just that. Not every step will be a leap and, while I am still saddled with concern, I feel that positive momentum is building. It’s my hope that we can all lean into 2020 with a critical eye to examine our habits and business models, and then exercise the humility required to improve them. Customers will reward the organizations that endeavour to protect and preserve the world they love so dearly.

*Jenn Hubbert, Editor-in-Chief*
Take a walk on the quiet side:
5 unsuspecting itineraries to avoid the crowds

By Johanna Read

We’ve all experienced FOMO (“the fear of missing out”) when we pack too much into our lives and then enjoy too little of it. So how about switching it up for JOMO instead? On these five, new-for-2020 Trafalgar trips, guests embrace the joy of missing out. As popular attractions hum with visitors, booking your clients onto these unsuspecting itineraries means leaving the crowds far, far behind.

**COLOMBIA REDISCOVERED**
This 13-day journey takes guests from Bogotá through the Coffee Triangle to up-and-coming Medellín and then north to the Caribbean’s Santa Marta and Cartagena. Stops are two or three nights, affording guests the opportunity to truly check in and soak up the atmosphere.

A highlight of any Trafalgar trip is a signature “Be My Guest” experience – exclusive opportunities to delve deeper into a destination with local hosts. On Colombia Rediscovered, this means an introduction to a remote Indigenous tribe made by Dr. Santiago Giraldo, Colombia’s leading anthropologist. It’s a unique cultural encounter that’s decidedly off-the-beaten-path.

**ECUADOR WITH ME TO WE**
Ecuador with ME to WE is a five-day extension that enriches Trafalgar’s South America Revealed and Highlights of Peru itineraries. Through WE Charity and ME to WE’s social and economic development enterprise, guests can add a meaningful and immersive transformative journey to their trip. After flying into high-altitude Quito, visitors spend three nights in the Ecuadorian Amazon learning about native flora and fauna while helping the Kichwa people with sustainable development projects and everyday tasks.

**BALKAN ADVENTURE**
Clients learn about the Balkans’ storied past from royal to Communist (and, yes, even vampiric) on this 14-day journey through seven different countries. The trip starts in Bucharest, Romania and travels loosely along a clockwise route, ending in Belgrade, Serbia. This eastern European sojourn includes stops in Budva (known as “Montenegro’s Miami”) and at several UNESCO sites. A highlight is North Macedonia and its capital, Skopje. Inhabited since 4,000 BC, Skopje’s strategic location in the heart of the Balkan Peninsula means a rich history that will enthrall guests. Guests enjoy the country’s Roman, Ottoman and Byzantine culinary influences at a “Be My Guest” dinner in a private home in Skopje.

**GEORGIA AND ARMENIA UNCOVERED**
Explore these two intriguing countries in-depth during this 11-day trip with an architectural and culinary focus. The region is dotted with stunning monasteries and stops include four UNESCO World Heritage sites. This itinerary has guests learning to make Georgian bread and Armenian lavash and sampling the region’s wine and brandy. The “Be My Guest” lunch and wine tasting in Georgia includes a lesson in making churchkhela, Georgia’s traditional candle-shaped candy that is made by dipping nuts threaded on a string into fresh grape juice.

**COLORS OF SICILY**
While Italy is, of course, a perennial top travel destination, fewer visitors venture as far as Sicily, the island with history and traditions distinctly different than the rest of the country. Trafalgar’s nine-day Colors of Sicily itinerary brings clients to smaller Sicilian villages from bases in Catania, Taormina, Syracuse, Agrigento and Palermo. Guests learn about Greek, Norman and Baroque architecture and about Sicilian culture and gastronomy. A delicious highlight is a visit with a chocolatier in the UNESCO World Heritage town of Modica, which is famous for its Aztec-inspired chocolate with a reputation for aiding weight loss.

Peruse Trafalgar’s 2020 brochure at trafalgar.com/agents