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BE HAPPY

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ON THE
**Science
of
Happiness**



PLUS:
21 THINGS
TO LOOK
FORWARD TO

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FEATURES

ETERNAL QUESTION

Which is going to produce more happiness: eating one (or several) of these delicious-looking doughnuts or meeting your New Year's weight-loss goals?

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Photograph by **Beton Studio/**Getty



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BY LAURIE SANTOS

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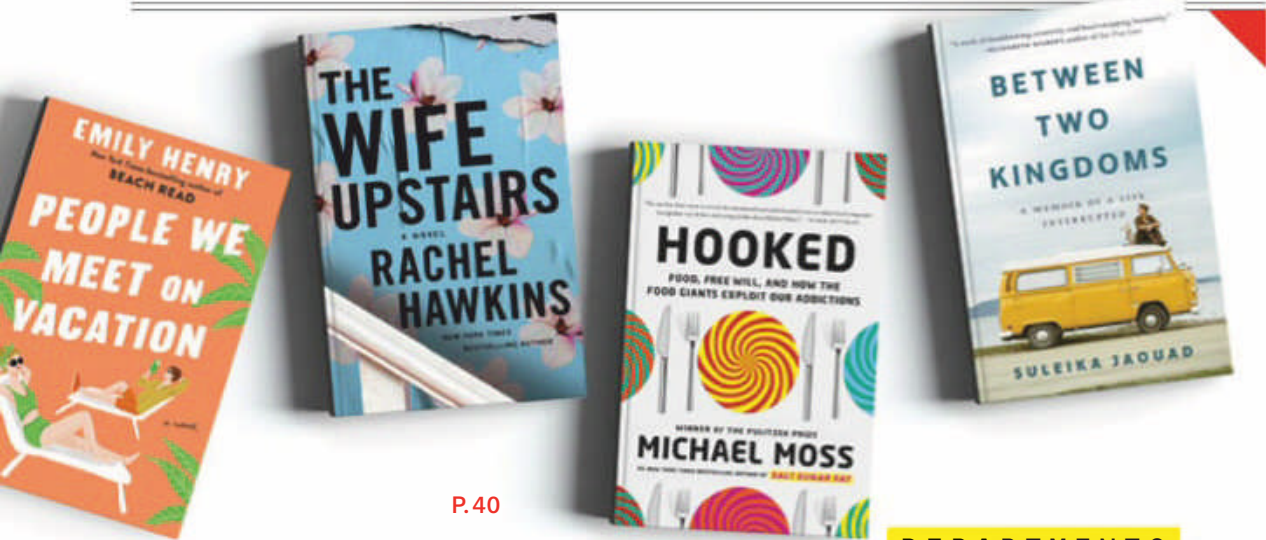
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ACTION HERO In the new season of *Cobra Kai*, “We’ll see if Miguel survives getting kicked off a balcony.”

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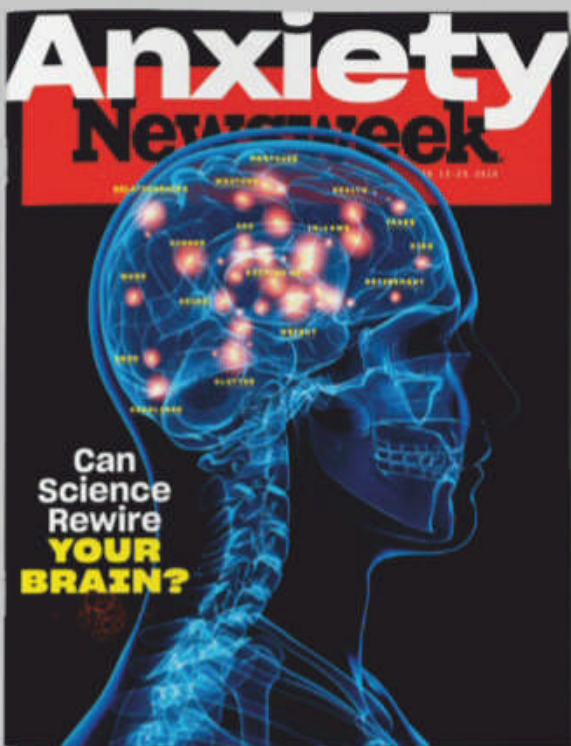
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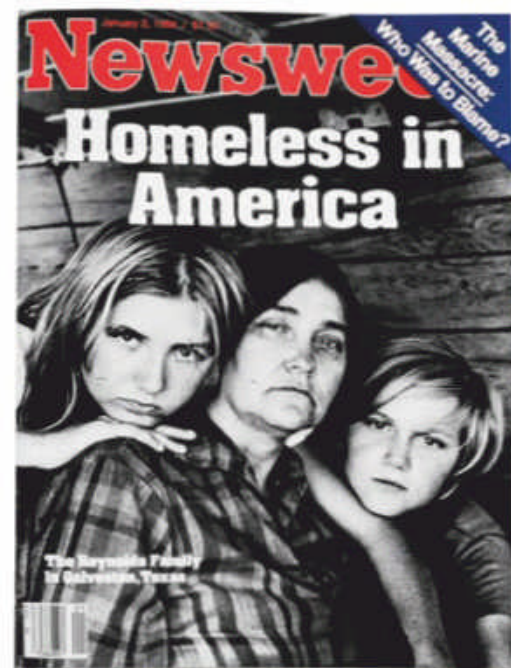
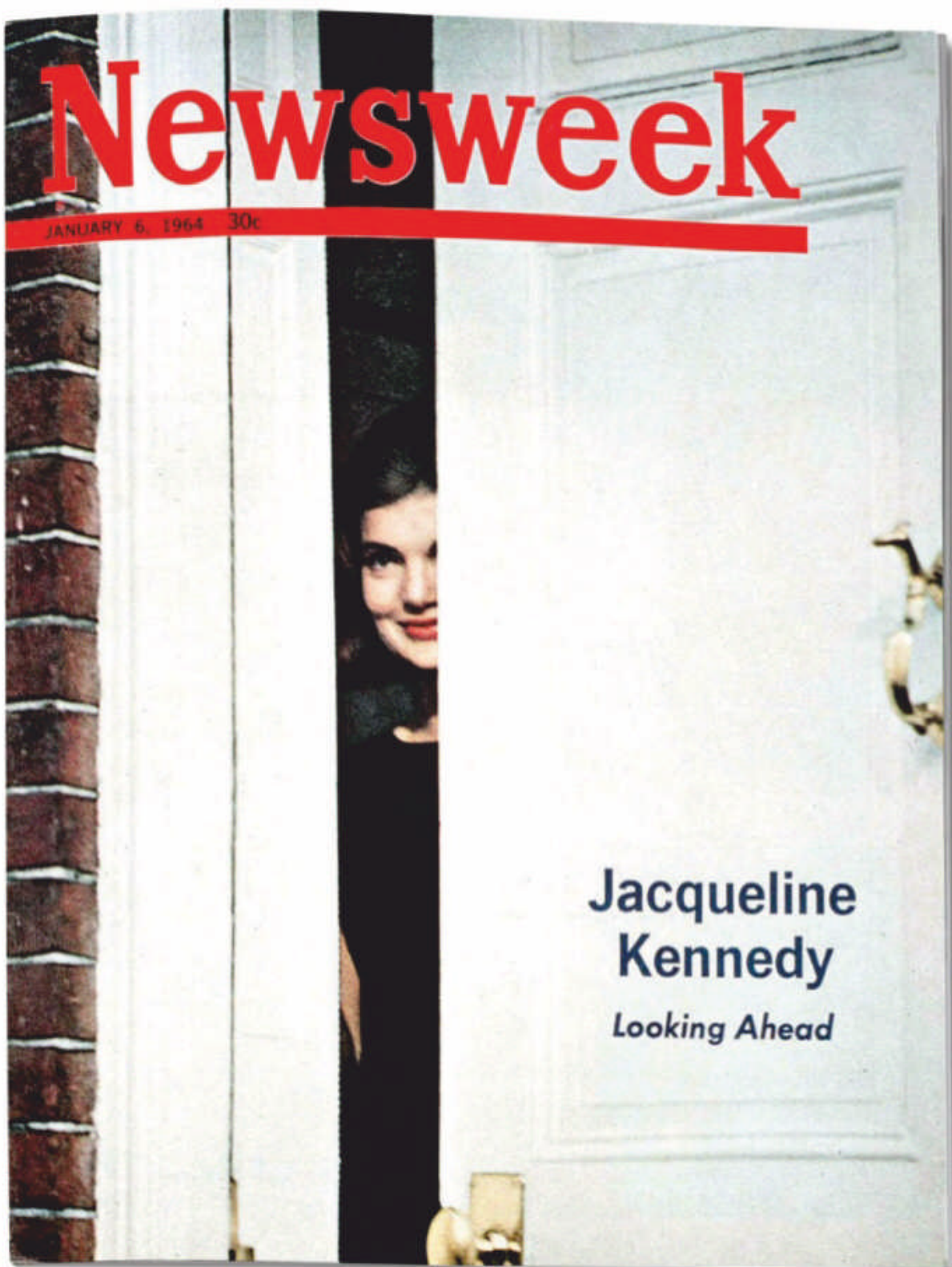
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The Archives

1964

“The widowed Jacqueline Kennedy is finding a way to live with her sorrow,” wrote *Newsweek*. “In these incredibly painful days, no detail of the Kennedy legend is too insignificant to console her, no aspect of her husband’s life too alien to offer solace...With the fervor of a curator, Mrs. Kennedy culls the memories of those she talks with for stories about her husband.” The nation looked to her as a symbol of poised “Spartan grief.” In 1999, five years after her death, Gallup listed Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis as one of the most admired people of the 20th century.



1984

Newsweek reported “the tattered ranks of America’s homeless are swelling,” from 250,000 to 2 million. Lacking an address, they are “unable to receive food stamps and welfare in most states, invisible in unemployment statistics.” Nationwide homelessness has been increasing since 2017, and experts warn the pandemic could plunge even more into the ranks.



2001

“Perfectionist. Optimist. Diva. The woman behind the most successful magazine launch ever...a multimedia tycoon,” *Newsweek* said of Oprah Winfrey. On this year’s September cover, *O* magazine featured Breonna Taylor, who was killed by police, marking the first time Winfrey did not grace the cover of her magazine. 

Antigua and Barbuda: Invest, live and work in paradise

Discover diverse opportunities to enjoy a better quality of life in an island state at the heart of the Caribbean



Famous for its 365 pink and white sandy beaches, pristine turquoise seas, fabulous climate and uniquely welcoming population, the beautiful twin-island Caribbean state of Antigua and Barbuda is rightly ranked as one of the best places in the world to visit, live in and work from.

Less appreciated is the extent of its strong and resilient economy. “Pre-COVID, it grew by an average 5 percent a year for the six years my government has been in office. In 2018, it grew by 7.4 percent, the tenth-highest rate worldwide, despite our nation being decimated by Hurricane Irma in 2017,” states Prime Minister Gaston Browne. He is optimistic that his government’s comprehensive management of the global health crisis will result in another rapid recovery. “Our officials have done an excellent job in identifying, tracing, quarantining, isolating and establishing health protocols, which led to us having very few incidents of the virus. While the rest of the Caribbean was paralyzed by COVID-19, we threw open our doors on 1 June and restarted international flights. We are almost back to normal,” he says. To ensure residents and guests remain safe, the government has invested in state-of-the-art health infrastructure, strict protocols are in place at air and sea ports, hotels and Airbnb properties have been inspected, vaccines pre-purchased and the tourism sector has received training from medical professionals.

International investments in tourism, which contributes nearly 60 percent of gross domestic product, are going ahead despite the pandemic. “Some of the largest investments in the Caribbean are taking place in Antigua and Barbuda. For instance, we have our high-end Discovery Land Co. project that entails the use of over 700 acres, while a \$100-million beach club will be built by Royal Caribbean,” notes Browne. But there is much more to the islands’ economy than luxury tourism. “Antigua and Barbuda is emerging as the innovation center of the Caribbean and we have attracted several large investors in the digital arena. We have been diversifying the country’s economy into the blockchain, medical cannabis and stem-cell therapy spaces, creating the legal and regulatory frameworks for businesses in those sectors,” he points out. “In addition to technology, there are significant opportunities to invest in our agriculture, manufacturing and export industries,” adds Charmaine Quinland-Donovan, CEO of Antigua and Barbuda’s Citizenship by Investment Unit.

An excellent way to take advantage of these opportunities is through the Investment in Business option of its Citizenship by Investment Programme, a regionally unique offering. There are three other enticing options for those wanting to gain citizenship for themselves and their families: investing \$100,000 in the National Development Fund, purchasing real estate worth over \$400,000, which can be split between two families, or investing in Antigua’s campus of the University of West Indies. “There is something for every investor in our program. We are very responsive to clients’ needs and try to make required amendments. But this is not a passport-for-sale program—it encourages active investment in a country

with extreme potential. Antigua and Barbuda applies the highest transparency and due diligence standards available without putting the safety of applicants at risk,” stresses Quinland-Donovan.

The program has seen a recent surge in applications, she says: “There is a buzz about Antigua and Barbuda and, through our new electronic platform, we have been able to process applications efficiently.” In October 2020, to complement the program, it was amended to allow more people the chance to live in paradise with the launch of a two-year Nomad Digital Residence Visa for remote-working professionals earning at least \$50,000 a year. The country has excellent connectivity that facilitates these digital workers and investors. As well as first-class telecommunications, it is a central hub for the Caribbean just 3.5 hours from the U.S. “We have one of the region’s most modern airports and are putting infrastructure in place to ensure our cruise and cargo ports are among the most modern too,” says Charles Fernandez, Minister of Tourism and Investment.

“While the rest of the Caribbean was paralyzed by COVID-19, we threw open our doors on 1 June and restarted international flights. We are almost back to normal.”

Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda

There are many other advantages to living on the islands. Not the least is an incredible, stress-free quality of life. Antigua and Barbuda is Lonely Planet’s, Emerging Sustainable Destination of the Year and, as well as stunning beaches, protected reefs and a rainforest are waiting to be explored. The country is rich in historic sites, restaurants cover a world of culinary delights and top-class sporting facilities allow you to enjoy activities on land or sea. The highly multicultural society has very low crime rates, education is strong at all levels and there are a myriad of prime properties to buy or rent. When it comes to doing business, “We offer tax-free concessions for up to 25 years and there is no personal income tax on your earnings, local or worldwide. We uphold democratic values, the rule of law and have a constitution that protects investments and rights,” Browne explains. Quinland-Donovan would like to encourage individuals to apply to become citizens or remote-working residents: “We want them to experience the warmth of the sun and the people but also to capitalize on the countless opportunities to invest and live in Antigua and Barbuda.”

To find out more about these opportunities, read or download our exclusive special report on Antigua and Barbuda. Access it now using the QR code or visit www.newsweek.com/newsweek-country-reports



In Focus — THE NEWS IN PICTURES



QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

Bubble Beach

On December 15, tourists walked in and around beach foam whipped up by cyclonic conditions at Currumbin Beach. The wild weather lashed Australia's Northern New South Wales and South East Queensland with heavy rain, strong winds and exceptionally high tides—often referred to as “king tides”—and caused power outages for thousands.

📷 PATRICK HAMILTON

NOT ON PURPOSE

Former Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams says the British politicians who pushed for Brexit gave an inadvertent boost to the movement to unify Ireland.

"Tell it to the people who are losing their f***ing homes..." »P.11



OPINION

Brexit is One More Good Argument for a United Ireland

The threat of a hard border between North and South has underscored the failure of partition and strengthened public support for unity

BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS, A DEAL MAY HAVE been agreed upon between the European Union and the British government on Brexit. It is equally possible that no deal will have been agreed.

This deal/no-deal crisis has been ongoing since the 2016 referendum decision by the British to leave the EU. It should be remembered that the people of the North of Ireland and of Scotland voted to remain in the EU. Every decision taken since then to advance the Brexit agenda by Prime Minister Theresa May and her successor Boris Johnson flies in the face of the democratic vote of the people of these two places.

Brexit was driven by a Little Englander mentality—a particularly myopic view of the world mixed with an idiotic Colonel Blimpish conception of British of greatness. Ireland's interests north and south were never a consideration. Irish issues did not feature in any of the debates pre-referendum. Ireland only became an issue in the Brexit negotiations when it became clear that Brexit posed a significant threat to the Good Friday

Agreement, and the avoidance of a hard border on the island of Ireland became a central objective of the Irish government, EU negotiators and members of the U.S. Congress all actively encouraged by Sinn Féin.

Whatever the outcome of current negotiations, the end result will be bad for the people of the island of Ireland, as long as the union with Britain remains. The danger to the Good Friday Agreement will intensify. The British Conservative Party is committed to scrapping the Human Rights Act as well as ridding itself of the European Convention on Human Rights. The incorporation of the Convention into law is an explicit commitment in the Good Friday Agreement which underpins the equality and human rights ethos of that Agreement, in particular on policing. It is also about holding the British government to account for the actions of its armed forces during the conflict.

Whatever the outcome of current negotiations, the end result will be bad for the people of the island of Ireland, as long as the union with Britain remains.

Brexit will also test increased North-South cooperation on the island of Ireland. Currently, there are 156 areas of cooperation, covering

BY

GERRY ADAMS

[@GerryAdamsSF](#)

sectors like health services, energy, the environment and infrastructure. We know from past experience that what British governments sign up for in agreements is rarely what they actually implement. Boris Johnson, the British PM, has broken a number of commitments, including to the Unionist parties, already. So caution is needed. Whatever emerges is unlikely to avoid a hard border or to protect Irish interests or defend the Good Friday Agreement.

A United Ireland for Everyone

ONE POSITIVE CONSEQUENCE OF THE Brexit debate has been renewed interest in the idea of a United Ireland. What would be the shape of that new Ireland? How can we make it a shared space for everyone who lives on the island? What new constitutional arrangements and political structures would be needed? How can we confront sectarianism and ensure that a new Ireland is based on agreement, equality, respect and inclusivity?

The debate on Irish unity has also been accelerated by political and demographic changes that are taking place. Over recent elections, the Unionist electoral majority, which was the very basis of the foundation of the northern state, has disappeared.

The Good Friday Agreement provides the means by which constitutional change can be achieved democratically and peacefully. It provides for a referendum on the future—a “Unity or Union with Britain” referendum. Brexit has accelerated the conversation around this. So too has the commitment from the EU that a united Ireland would

automatically be reabsorbed into the European Union. Irish unity provides a route back into the EU for those who wish it.

Several important academic papers on a unity referendum have recently been published by influential institutions. All of them highlight the need to plan for a referendum and to plan for unity. The Ulster University published “Deliberating Constitutional Futures,” which examines the arguments around possible constitutional futures, including a unity referendum. The Constitution Unit of University College London published an interim report in which its authors emphasized the danger of failure to plan for a unity referendum: “All these criteria point towards the importance of advance planning: of the referendum processes; and

“The arguments in favor of self-government and for Irish Unity are increasingly making sense to more and more people.”



DIVIDED Policemen of the Royal Ulster Constabulary look on as a building goes up in flames during rioting in Derry in 1969.

about the shape of a united *Ireland*, or a continued Union.”

Ireland’s Future, an influential group of civic nationalists, also published a discussion document entitled: “The Conversation on Ireland’s Future. A Principled Framework for Change.” Like the Constitution Unit, Ireland’s Future “place emphasis on advance planning and the need for an evidence-based and informed debate. That is why we have suggested an all-island Citizens’ Assembly to underline the centrality of civic leadership in preparing the ground for change.”

Regrettably, the Irish government is opposed to the holding of a unity referendum at this time, even though there is a constitutional obligation to pursue this. This will come as no surprise to Ireland watchers. Successive Irish governments have been slow to rise to the challenges presented by the popular desire for positive change which has seen Sinn Féin emerge as Ireland’s largest political party.

Partition Is Failing

BREXIT IS DUE TO COME INTO EFFECT on the night of December 31. December 23, just a week before, will mark 100 years since the passing into law of the Government of Ireland Act which partitioned Ireland. Its failure is self-evident. The weakness of the northern economy is proof of this; so were the years of conflict. Brexit and COVID-19 have only highlighted the disadvantages of partition and the obvious benefits of a United Ireland. The arguments in favor of self-government and for Irish unity are increasingly making sense to more and more people.

I believe we can be the generation that achieves a United Ireland. **N**

→ **Gerry Adams** is an Irish republican politician and former president of Sinn Féin.

Talking Points

Sun

"If I see you do it again, you're f***ing gone."

—TOM CRUISE TO CREW OF THE SET OF *MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE 7* WHO WERE NOT STANDING 6-FEET APART

Medium

"THIS PANDEMIC HAS BEEN A WRECKING BALL IN THE LIVES OF AMERICANS ALREADY STRUGGLING."

—MacKenzie Scott, on making billions in donations



MacKenzie Scott

Travel in my mind is synonymous with growth, with adventure—even love. So much so that I proposed to my husband Chasten in an airport terminal. Don't let anybody tell you that O'Hare isn't romantic."

—PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION APPOINTEE

AP

"His name is Joe."

—THE ASSOCIATED PRESS CORRECTING A STORY THAT CALLED THE U.S. PRESIDENT-ELECT "JOSE BIDEN"

POLITICO

"IT MAY BE THAT IT WILL BE BEST IF WE OPEN UP AND FLOOD THE ZONE AND LET THE KIDS AND YOUNG FOLK GET INFECTED."

—Former Trump science advisor Paul Alexander

"I DO NOT KNOW WHO THIS IS. INVENTOR OF THE SWIFFER?"

—ACTOR RAINN WILSON ON TAYLOR SWIFT



Rainn Wilson

"I've just been informed that although the Covid vaccine won't contain microchips, it will have the new U2 album"

—BLONDIE GUITARIST CHRIS STEIN



Pete Buttigieg

FROM LEFT: ISIAH TRICKEY/FILMMAGIC/GETTY; RANDY HOLMES/GETTY; TAYLOR HILL/FILMMAGIC/GETTY



BY
Laurie Santos

HOW TO BE HAPPIER

A leading Yale psychologist offers
FIVE SCIENCE BASED TECHNIQUES to boost your mood
and protect your mental health

A

AS A PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY AT Yale and host of *The Happiness Lab* podcast, I've spent the last few years teaching simple science-backed tips to improve our well-being. I know the research inside out—but the giant dumpster fire of a year that was 2020 has had me struggling, too.

The COVID-19 pandemic has cheated us out of all the good times we live for—the weddings, the vacations, the graduations and celebrations. Our work lives have been upended and our livelihoods threatened. There are people we love who we haven't seen in months and some we'll never see again; millions of us are mourning someone close who's been taken by this awful disease. These overwhelming losses have had a devastating effect on our mental health, with rates of depression, anxiety and even suicidality surging around the world.

The good news is that there's a lot to be hopeful for in the new year. With a vaccine on the way, there's a real hope that we'll soon be returning to the way of life we miss so much. But we can't toss out our masks just yet. Even under the best public health scenarios, we're in for several more months of cancelled plans, social distancing, and skyrocketing COVID cases, all during the coldest and darkest times of the year. For a while at least, 2021 is going to feel like 2020 2.0.

So how do we get it through it? Most of us realize that we need to take steps to manage our stress and emotions during tough times. The problem is we tend to go about managing those feelings in surprisingly ineffective ways. If you listen to my podcast, *The Happiness Lab*, you'll know this is a common refrain. Our minds have really bad intuition about what we should do to become happier and feel better. So even when we put in some work to improve our well-being, we often wind up doing it wrong.

But there is a better, scientific approach to improving our own happiness. Over the last two decades, psychologists have studied the kinds of behaviors and mindsets that really can boost well-being.

I started gathering these scientific findings together long before anyone had heard of COVID-19. It was back in 2018 when I had just come face-to-face with a different mental health crisis: the one facing my students at Yale. I had just taken on a new role as a Head of College, which meant living with students on campus and seeing their daily lives up close. I witnessed the high rates of stress and anxiety my students were facing first hand. Too many of the young people I cared about were lonely, stressed about the future and intensely worried about their grades. But it wasn't just Yale students who were struggling. A 2018 survey of college students nationally reported that more than 40 percent were so depressed it was difficult to function, more than 60 percent had experienced overwhelming anxiety, and more than one in ten had seriously considered suicide in the previous year.



Faced with these awful statistics, I wanted to do something to help. I decided to create a new class on the science of happiness—one that gave students practical, evidence-based tips for reducing their stress and improving their well-being. And the students showed up in droves. Over a thousand students attended class the first week. We had to move to a concert hall. In the end, it became the largest class in Yale's history with just under a quarter of the entire student body registered. The popularity of the class prompted Yale to share the happiness class more broadly. We put a six week version of the course—called The Science of Well-Being—on Coursera.org so that anyone in the world could take it for free. Hundreds of thousands of people signed up.

But that was all before COVID hit. Starting in March of 2020, enrollment in my online happiness class doubled, tripled—then octupled. In the middle of a pandemic, more than three million people signed up to take an Ivy League class about how to feel happier.

But did it work? Could taking a scientific approach to happiness help people feel better in the midst of a deadly pandemic?

My team and I are still compiling the results formally, which

FROM TOP: PATRICK T. FALLON/AFP/GETTY; MARS LAND MICHAEL; COURTESY OF LAURIE SANTOS



requires months of careful data analysis and review. But I had a chance to see for myself the powerful impact the class was having on my learners' well-being. The evidence, it turns out, was there in my university mailbox.

"Your mailbox is overflowing." So began the terse email I received from our psychology department administrative assistant. "And there is more mail on the counter, too. Please stop by some point." With so many COVID restrictions on campus, I had neglected to pick up my office mail for a few months. I expected to be greeted by the normal stack of flyers and junk mail. Instead I found letter after letter from people writing to thank me. I saw just how powerful the lessons I was teaching could be.

Through happy tears, I read literally hundreds of stories of my students using what I taught them to make it through the anxiety and frustration of the pandemic dark times. But one story in particular struck me, from Susan, an 81-year old retired social studies teacher. Susan had spent most of 2019 nursing her beloved husband before he died that Christmas Eve. They'd been in love since seventh grade. "He was the kindest, sweetest and—I think—most handsome man," she wrote. Susan was devastated by her loss, and thought things couldn't possibly get worse. And then COVID hit.

"Your psychology of happiness was a godsend." Susan decided to put the evidence-based tips I taught in class into practice in her daily life. Did these new practices fully eradicate the pain of her loss? Of course not. But when 2020 plunged Susan into the dark-

est time of her life, the five main takeaways of my class really helped. By incorporating these tips into her life, she said, she wound up significantly happier than she otherwise would have been. And that's the message I heard over and over again from all those letters: scientific research gives us a set of small practices that we can use to make things a little better. And these days, a little bit of happiness counts for a lot.

So what are these five practices I share with my students? Here are the key ideas that worked for Susan and—as you'll see from the evidence below—are backed up by science.

Get Social

ONE OF THE MANY CRUELITIES OF COVID-19 IS that it has robbed us of one of the primary behaviors we can engage in to improve our happiness: being with other people.

When psychologists Ed Diener and Marty Seligman looked at people who scored in the highest 10th percentile on happiness

HAPPINESS IN THE TIME OF COVID

The overwhelming losses people have experienced during the pandemic have taken a devastating toll on their mental health, notes Yale psychology professor Laurie Santos (right), whose class on the science of happiness is the most popular in the university's history. Enrollment for the free online version has skyrocketed since COVID, as people search for ways to be happy amid tragedy. An outpouring of thank you letters (bottom) attests to the course's success.



surveys, they discovered that there was one activity that set happy people apart from the rest of us—happy people were more social. The results were so strong that these researchers deemed being around other people as a necessary condition for very high happiness.

We think that solitude feels good, especially when we're having a tough time, but in truth being with other people will almost always make us feel better. Even if those people are strangers.

Of course, social distancing has made connecting with other people a lot trickier over the past months. But if you want to feel happier, research suggests you should redouble your efforts to connect with the people you care about. Try a socially distanced walk with a neighbor. Or use online tools like Zoom and FaceTime to connect not just with people who live near us, but friends in far-off time zones. If you put in some work and get creative, the possibilities for social connection are endless, even during COVID. I've started a monthly virtual spa night with my college roommates, as well as an online morning yoga practice with some professor friends in four different cities. It requires a bit more of a start-up cost than running into a colleague at the water cooler, but if we put in the effort we can reap the rewards of a richer social life.

Give Thanks

ANOTHER WAY TO SUPERCHARGE YOUR WELL-BEING IS WITH A DOSE of gratitude—the simple act of stopping to consider all the good things in your life.

Now, I freely admit that feeling thankful in the midst of a terrible pandemic isn't always easy. But research shows that grateful people—those who count their blessings on a regular basis—experience a host of benefits. Grateful people tend to be happier and show lower levels of stress hormones like cortisol. Health care workers who keep a gratitude journal show reductions in stress and depression. And people suffering from chronic pain who practice gratitude show improvements in both sleep quality and mood.

The good news is that there are easy ways to boost your own gratitude level even if that's not something that comes naturally. For example, grab a notebook and try jotting down three to five things you're grateful for every day. It sounds simple, but research shows that this practice can boost your overall happiness in as little as two weeks. Or write a thank-you letter to a loved one, friend or co-worker. Not only do gratitude letters help you to organize all those grateful feelings into words, but they also strengthen your bonds to the people in your life who matter most to your happiness.

Be in the Moment

THE NEW YEAR IS NATURALLY A TIME OF LOOKING BACKWARDS AND forwards. But that's not the only time our minds tend to move away from the present moment. One study by a team of Harvard psychologists found that we spent more than 40 percent of the

time mind-wandering—not paying attention to the here and now. Which is bad news for our happiness levels, because a growing body of research shows that focusing on the here and now makes us feel better.

So this new year, try getting your mind back on the present moment. If that feels tough, consider developing a meditation practice, something that has worked wonders for me. Studies show that even five or ten minutes of meditation every day can boost not only your daily concentration but also your mood levels.

A regular meditation practice can also help you realize that your thoughts are just...well, thoughts. The practice of sitting with unhelpful emotions like fear, anger or jealousy—even for a few minutes—can help us start to put them in some perspective, and to notice that they often depart just as suddenly as they arrive in our minds, which can help us avoid letting our negative emotions dictate our actions.

And if signing on for a regular meditation practice feels like too much during the pandemic, you can take baby steps towards being present by engaging in a bit more savoring. Commit to noticing the taste of your morning coffee or how nice a warm shower feels. The simple act of intentionally noticing afresh what the world around you looks, sounds, and feels like can help you remember that there are good, pleasurable things all around, if you take a little time to pay attention.

Rest and Move

WHEN MY STUDENTS ASK ME WHAT'S THE FIRST STEP THEY SHOULD take to be happier, my answer is always the same: Get some sleep.

We know that sleep is important for our physical health, but research shows that it's also extremely important for our mental health. Having a solid eight hours of shut-eye is the foundation on which all the other happiness habits rest. The problem is that getting the right amount isn't easy. For me, there's always that one last email to send before bed. Or one more quick peak to take on my Twitter feed. Or that new Netflix show to check out.

So this year, try to embrace healthier sleep hygiene. Ban devices from your bedroom. Instead, read a book or magazine—one made of paper—before bed. And make sure your bedroom is as dedicated to sleep as possible. If you allow your sleeping space to become an office, lounge or home cinema, you end up confusing your body. A pre-sleep ritual (such as a glass of warm herbal tea or a nice bath) can also help reinforce the idea that your waking day is ending and your all-important sleep time is beginning.

But sleep isn't the only healthy habit that promotes better mental health in addition to better physical health. Another great healthy happiness boosting habit is exercise. One study found that doing a half-hour of cardio on a stationary bike reduces the likelihood that we'll feel things like tension, anger, depression, and even fatigue. And the effect was shown to last for over 12 hours.



FROM LEFT: HILL STREET STUDIOS/GETTY; MINT IMAGES/GETTY

PRO TIPS

Research shows that keeping a gratitude journal reduces stress and depression. Studies also indicate people get happiness from lending others a hand when they need it and engaging in random acts of kindness.



Jotting down three to five things you're **GRATEFUL** for every day can boost your overall **HAPPINESS** in as little as two weeks.

Be Kind

AT TIMES OF CRISIS, WE'RE OFTEN TEMPTED TO TURN INWARD: IT seems like feeling better requires putting our own needs first. Treat yourself, as the current mantra says. But the science suggests that these self-centered inclinations are wrong. In fact, the best way to promote your own self-care is to provide other-care.

Research shows that we get happiness from doing nice things for other people. The people who self-report being happiest are focused on those in need—they donate more of their time and money to charity and engage in random acts of kindness. So why not bolster your mental health in an evidence-based way by doing something good for another person? If you're working remotely, donate the money you saved on gas this month to a good cause. Or just check in with a friend who's struggling. Doing kind things for others is a surprisingly effective way of boosting our own well-being.

But do be kind to yourself as well. The season of New Year's resolutions can be a time when it's easy to beat yourself up. We shame ourselves like an inner drill sergeant by ruminating on how badly we've done in the past year and how we need to turn things around for the new year. Or else.

But research shows that our inner brutal drill sergeant isn't as motivating as we assume. Harsh self-criticism and unrealistic

expectations will destroy your morale and make you give up before you even begin. A better strategy for the new year is to extend yourself some kindness, or what psychologists call self-compassion. Self-compassion means remembering that you're human and that—just like everyone else on the planet—you're doing the best you can in some pretty tough times. Giving yourself a bit of kindness doesn't just feel good. It's also a surprisingly effective way to meet your new year goals. Research by Kristin Neff and her colleagues, for example, shows that talking to yourself in the manner of a caring and helpful friend helps us reduce procrastination, eat healthier and exercise more. So try doing unto yourself as you would do unto others and give yourself the benefit of the doubt a little more in 2021.

The tips I've outlined here won't make the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic disappear the moment the calendar switches over to 2021, but research shows these quick practices can boost your mood and give you a bit more resilience—more happiness, even—in the New Year. **N**

→ **Dr. Laurie Santos** is a professor of psychology at Yale University and host of *The Happiness Lab* podcast. To learn more, you can check out her online course called *The Science of Well-Being*, available for free here: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/the-science-of-well-being>.

From science to space, health to business, sports to entertainment, th

21 THINGS TO LOO



WRITTEN BY

**Peter Carbonara, Sarah Dreher,
Hank Gilman, Fred Guterl, Phillip Martinez
and Meredith Wolf Schizer**

PHOTOGRAPH BY BETON STUDIO

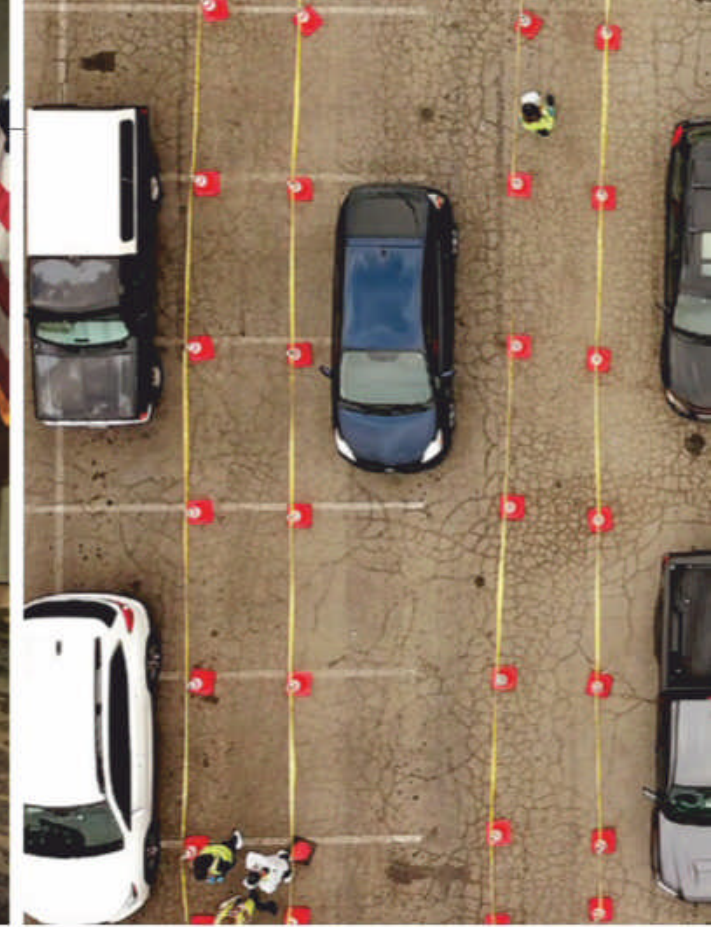
GETTY

ese are the events and people who will help bring joy to the next year

LOOK FORWARD TO IN



AFTER THIS TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD YEAR, maybe the best thing about 2021 will simply be that it isn't 2020. Certainly, an end to the health and financial challenges, the pain, incivility and grief that have marked the past 12 months will be most welcome—although it may take many months into the New Year to get us there. But the absence of awful is not enough to make 2021 a good year; we need not just a respite from the heavy weight put upon us by the pandemic but the promise of actual joy. ¶ Fortunately, there are plenty of things to look forward to next year, and not just the return of, well, everything—at some point, sports, culture, travel, in-person get-togethers with the people you love and care about—although we're eagerly anticipating all that. But a return to normalcy is far from the only thing 2021 has going for it. Here's a sampling of all the other good stuff coming your way over the next 12 months—the events, people, technology, innovations, movies, music, TV shows and more that, hopefully, will make 2021 a very happy New Year.





THE VACCINE ROLLOUT

Without a doubt, the most anticipated event of 2021 is the arrival of the COVID vaccine in large enough quantities to finally help stem the tide of the pandemic. The timeline for the rollout is ambitious, especially given the daunting logistics of distributing two-dose vaccines that must be stored at extremely low temperatures. Bearing in mind that things will inevitably go wrong and there will be delays, here's what you can expect to happen, when.

The first vaccines ship

Following initial shipments of an estimated 6.4 million doses by year end, the Centers for Disease Control are recommending that 17 million healthcare workers and nursing home residents, who account for more than a third of deaths from COVID in the U.S., get the first vaccines. Next up: police, fire fighters, transportation workers, teachers and first responders (about 26 million). By **the end of December**, a "substantial proportion" of this population are expected to be vaccinated, according to Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's leading infectious disease official.

The Moderna vaccine follows

Pending authorization for emergency use of Moderna's vaccine, an additional 20 million doses would go out by **year end 2020**.

Vulnerable populations are protected

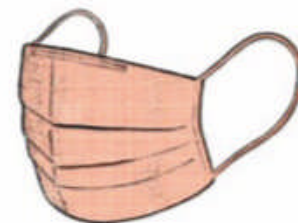
The next priority: Vaccinate high-risk populations—people over 65 years old and those with underlying conditions such as diabetes, heart ailments and cancer. Experts expect this to take place in **January and February**, when about 80 million people will be inoculated.

Vaccines become available to the general population

Dr. Fauci has said that most people will be able to "walk into a CVS or a Walgreens and get vaccinated" by April. Other experts say it may take until **June**.

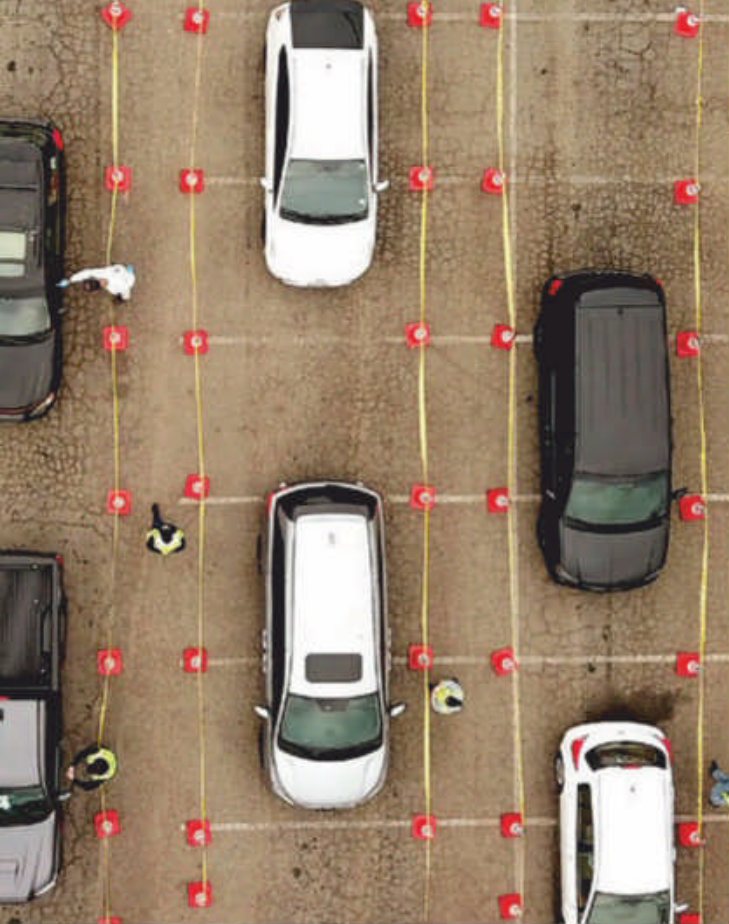
Data is available on risks to pregnant women, children

Studies that focus on pregnant women and children, excluded from the Pfizer and Moderna trials, are expected in the **first quarter**. But pregnant and lactating women shouldn't wait, health officials say.



Masks are no longer necessary

During the vaccine rollout, health experts recommend that people wear masks in public. Given the current rise in prevalence, there's likely to be a lot of virus in circulation for months. Once we reach herd immunity, when 50 percent to 70 percent of the population is vaccinated, masks will no longer be recommended. That probably won't happen before **the second half of 2021**.

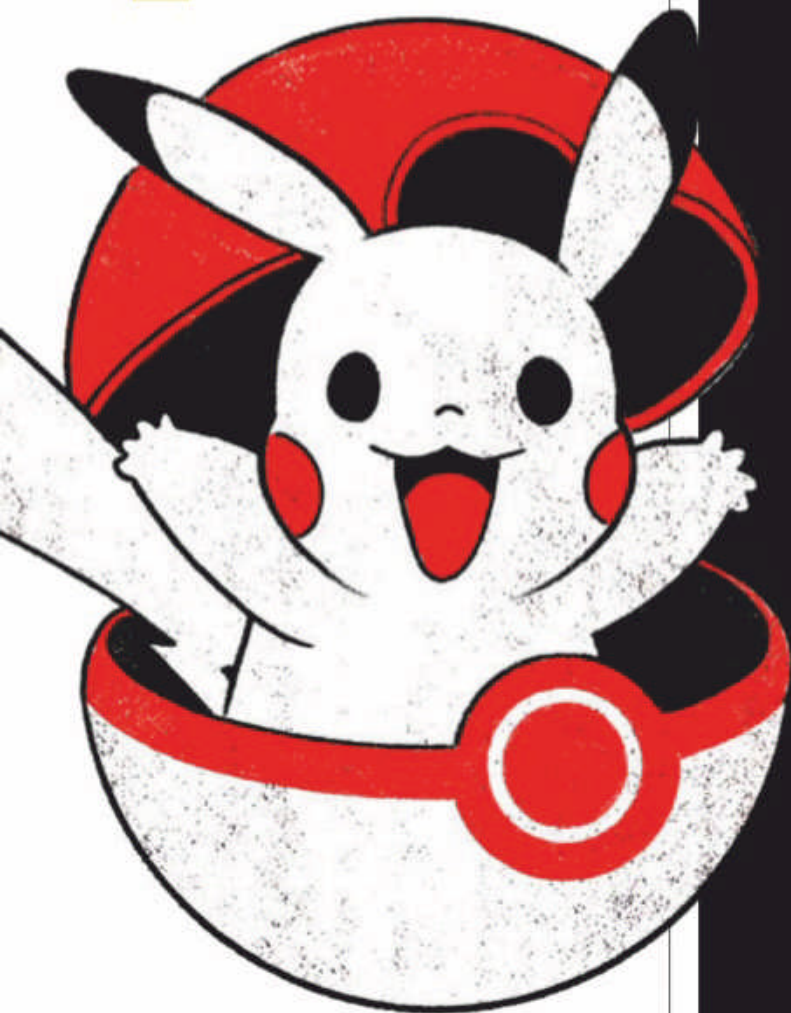


CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JACQUELYN MARTIN/AFP; ROBYN BECK/AFP/GETTY; GUIDO MIETH/GETTY; F.J. JIMENEZ/GETTY; JOHN TLUMACKI/THE BOSTON GLOBE/GETTY; DAVID L. RYAN/THE BOSTON GLOBE/GETTY

Pokémon's 25th Anniversary

Pokémon fans had a lot to be thankful for in 2020 with the release of both *The Isle of Armor* and *Crown Tundra DLC*. But 2021, which marks the 25th anniversary of the release of the first Pokémon games in Japan, promises to top that as The Pokémon Company and developer Game Freak are known to pull out all the stops to celebrate milestones.

Details are sparse so far, with the big reveal likely to come on February 27, a.k.a. Pokémon Day. Already announced: the first new *Pokémon Snap* game in 21 years is set to debut in 2021. What else? Generation 9? Sinnoh remakes? We'll just have to wait and see.



A BIG WIN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

In July, the European Union's ban on single use plastic items is set to go into effect. (Although the United Kingdom is leaving the E.U., it plans to implement a similar ban in October.) While industry groups have asked for delays, the E.U. so far says it will stick to the deadline. The idea is to halt the use of a lot of the throw-away goods that have a way of ultimately winding up in the world's oceans, among them: disposable plastic cutlery, plates, straws and coffee stirrers, polystyrene cups and food containers and cotton swabs made with plastic. The ban doesn't include plastic bottles, but the E.U. has separately set tough collection and recycling requirements for those.



FROM LEFT: SHANA NOVAK/GETTY; VIKTAR HAURYLENKA/GETTY; OMNIPOD DASH



BRIGHT, SUNNY COLORS EVERYWHERE

Out of the darkness into the light? For the past 22 years, the color experts at Pantone have chosen a color of the year, which has in turn influenced textile and graphic design, fashion, home furnishings and other products. Feeling a little blue after the last year? (Pantone's 2020 color of the year was, after all, Classic Blue.) Not to worry. With Pantone's 2021 optimistic and reassuring colors of the year, Illuminating and Ultimate Gray, you'll perk right up with everything from coffee mugs and dog bowls to umbrellas and T-shirts popping up in sunshiny yellows and grounded in rock-solid gray.



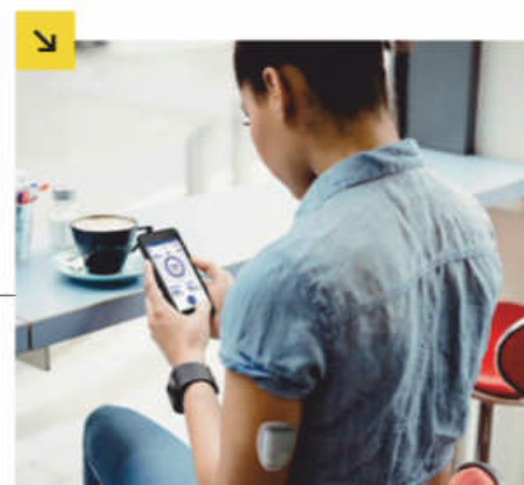
Halo Infinite

The big news of 2020 for the video game industry was the release of the game-changing Sony PlayStation 5 and Microsoft Xbox Series X/S. Now 2021 promises to bring some of the most highly anticipated games to play on those next-gen consoles.

Topping the list for Microsoft: *Halo: Infinite*, the first new main installment in the best-selling series since 2015, scheduled for year end. Also in late 2021, Sony will release *Horizon Forbidden West*, the sequel to the popular *Horizon Zero Dawn*. Other highly anticipated titles due out include *Resident Evil 8*, *Deathloop* and new games for Nintendo Switch such as *Monster Hunter Rise*, *Shin Megami Tensei V* and, possibly, a sequel to *Breath of the Wild*.

A Game Changer for Diabetics

The closest thing to a working pancreas for the 34.2 million Americans with diabetes, the first tubeless automated insulin delivery system will be released in the first part of the year. The Omnipod® 5 powered by Horizon pairs with the Dexcom® G6 continuous glucose monitor to keep blood sugar levels within the healthy range by delivering necessary insulin automatically, with settings that can be adjusted via a smartphone. Use for people with type 1 diabetes who use insulin daily will be approved first, followed by later approvals for those with type 2 diabetes.





BLOOD MOON

The last time the moon passed through earth's shadow, on January 20, 2019, the news was not good. The U.S. government had shut down, President Trump reported "a lot of progress" on denuclearization of North Korea, Michael Cohen was still blabbing about his former boss and no one had ever heard of COVID. The next total lunar eclipse is scheduled for May 26, over the skies of Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii and the western U.S. If the weather allows, the moon will turn a deep orange for about 14 minutes. It will be a beautiful sight.

Serena's Pursuit Continues

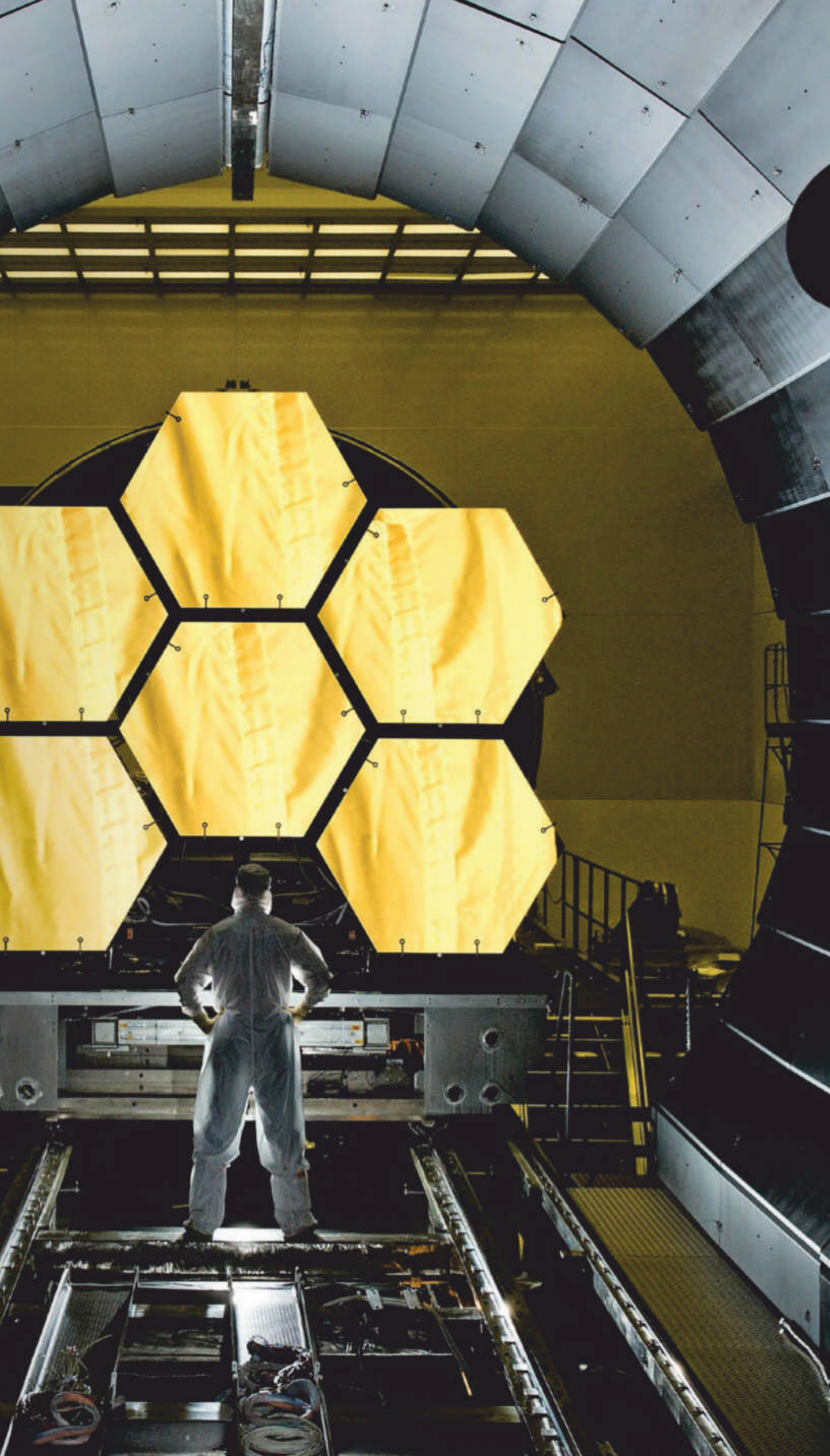
Play starts on February 8 at the Australian Open in Melbourne. That's where Serena Williams, 39, will resume her late-career run at Margaret Court's long-standing record of 24 career Grand Slam women's singles titles (Williams has 23)—thereby giving hope to anyone who has been dismissed by some as past their career prime. Although Williams has reached four Slam finals since then, her last win was in 2017, in Melbourne as well. Also in February, of course: a little football game known as the Super Bowl.



James Webb Telescope

Most people under the age of 40 never got to experience the collective thrill of the early, surprising photographs from the Hubble Space Telescope, which revealed, among other things, spectacular billowing clouds of dust and gas where stars are born. Next year may bring a new age of cosmic shock and awe. On October 31, after decades of delays, cost overruns and political wrangling, the James Webb Space Telescope, Hubble's successor, will take off on an Ariane 5 rocket.

If all goes well, it will park itself in a gravity-free spot in earth's shadow, shielded from the sun's glare, and train its powerful infrared telescope farther into deep space than any other telescope has been able to see, cutting through the cosmic fog to reveal galaxies, stars and nebulas beyond. Whereas the Hubble saw mainly visible and ultraviolet light, the Webb's infrared sensors are expected to give us a glimpse of the golden age of the universe, a mere billion years after the Big Bang, when many of the stars and galaxies we see today began to form in the void. To go that far back into the beginning of all things may provide a welcome perspective on our earthly worries.



DISNEY WORLD TURNS 50

If theme parks are your thing, the New Year should have a lot to offer. This summer Universal Studios in Orlando is expected to unveil the “Jurassic World VelociCoaster,” a high speed ride with dinosaurs at every turn poised to chomp on you and your family. In Japan, the Super Nintendo World theme park is scheduled to open early next year in Osaka. Back in Orlando, SeaWorld will unveil the roller coaster “Ice Breaker,” which will feature “the largest vertical drop in Florida.”

But the big kahuna for 2021 is Disney World’s 50th anniversary celebration, kicking off around the park’s October 1 birthday. New rides will include a *Ratatouille* ride for families in Epcot and a couple of more thrilling adventures; an indoor coaster modeled on *Guardians of the Galaxy* (Epcot) and *TRON* (Magic Kingdom.) Also scheduled to open: the luxury hotel *Star Wars: Galactic Cruiser*. Lucasfilm, creator of the *Star Wars* franchise and a subsidiary of Disney, is, coincidentally, also turning 50 next year, which will kick off a year-long slew of new merch for fans starting in January.



A BIG YEAR FOR BIG MOVIES

Following a dearth of offerings in 2020 as filmmakers put off releasing movies into near-empty theaters—that is, when theaters were open at all—fans in 2021 will benefit from all that pent-up supply. Among the biggest releases, all in December: Steven Spielberg's *West Side Story*; *The Matrix 4*, the first new release in the franchise in 17 years; and *Dune*, an adaptation of the sci-fi classic. Plus, for action fans, in April, there's the ninth installment of *Fast and Furious* and *No Time to Die*, the twenty-fifth James Bond film, starring Daniel Craig, presumably for the last time as 007. Other highly anticipated titles include Marvel's *Black Widow* in May; *In the Heights*, the filmed version of Lin-Manuel Miranda's first big Broadway hit, in June; and in November, *Elvis*, directed by Baz Luhrmann and co-starring Tom Hanks as Presley's manager Colonel Tom Parker and Austin Butler, a relative unknown, as the King himself.



Summer Olympics

Another entry in 2021's long better-late-than-never category, the Summer Olympics in Tokyo is now scheduled to run from July 23 to August 8, a year after it was originally supposed to take place. Among the highlights: Four new sports—karate, skateboarding, sport climbing and surfing—will make their debut and baseball and softball return to the Games for the first time since 2008.

Eurovision

Like so many other live-music events in 2020, Eurovision, the international singing competition, with a global audience of 182 million, was cancelled last year. But organizers are committed to holding the 2021 event this May—it's a sometimes bizarre combo of novelty acts, like singing Russian grandmas and Latvian pirates, and career-launching performances from past winners such as ABBA and Celine Dion—with various contingency plans in place, depending on what's happening with the pandemic then.

Other signs of resurgence in the live-music industry: Tours due to resume next year include Shawn Colvin (March), Chris Stapleton (April), Queen (May) and Justin Bieber (summer). And June is the new date for the 50th anniversary of the Glastonbury Music Festival, postponed last year, though the timing is still tentative due to the pandemic.

Brood X

A swarm of insects may not seem like the kind of thing you'd look forward to. But Brood X, a massive cloud of cicadas that emerge once every 17 years to mate and lay eggs, are not your typical bug. Expected to come out of hibernation in May for the first time since 2004 by the billions, these cicadas mate so loudly the sound can reach 100 decibels and be heard from a mile away. What's in it for you? The insects—which do not bite, spread disease or harm crops—die after laying their eggs, and help the environment by replenishing the topsoil with nitrogen as they decompose.



Old Friends Return

Could we *be* any more excited? The *Friends* reunion special, originally scheduled to air last May, will finally tape this March, according to a November tweet by Chandler Bing—uh, actor Matthew Perry. On a break since the show's 10-year run ended in 2004, the six pals will hang out and reminisce on their original soundstage instead of Monica's apartment or Central Perk—but as the real-life actors, not their fictional counterparts.

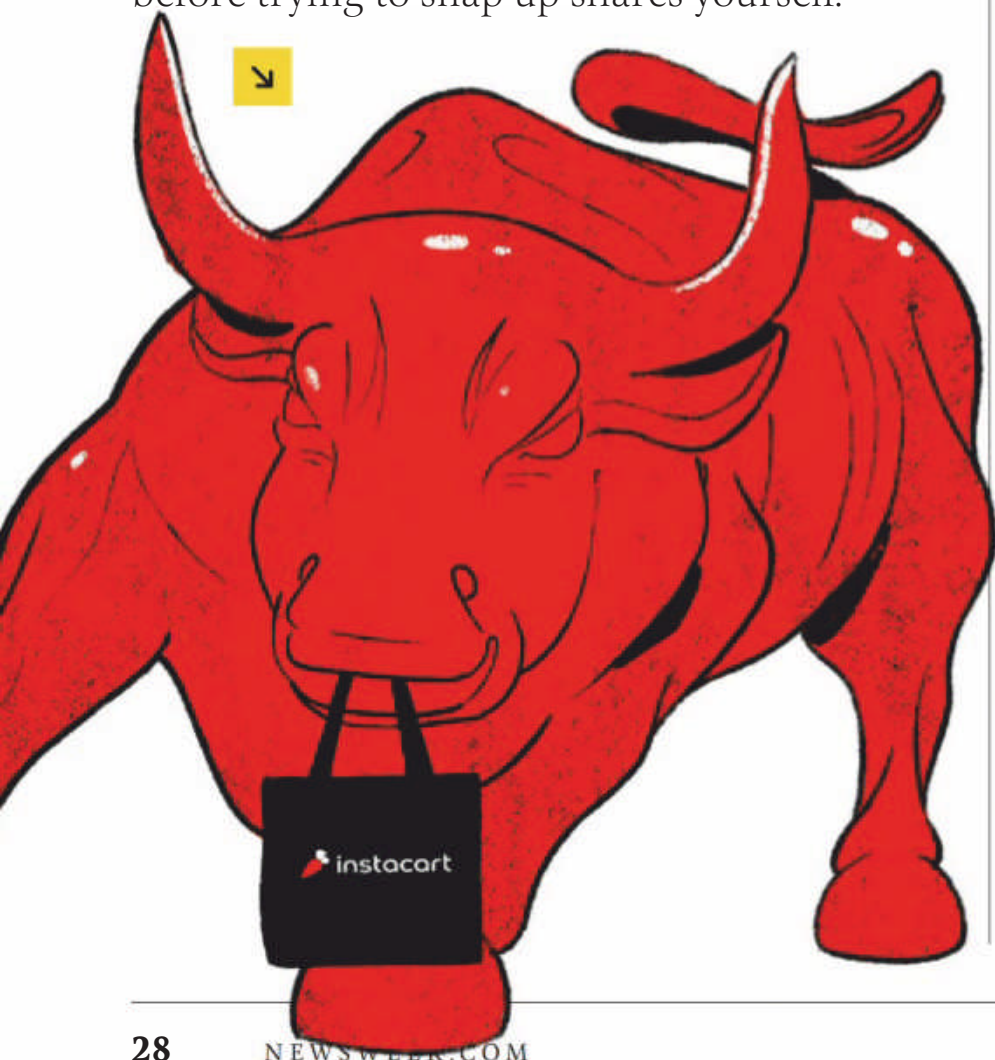
Other noteworthy TV slated for 2021: *Atlanta* returns on FX after a three-year hiatus; HBO's *Succession*, the reigning Emmy winner for Best Drama series, is a likely return as well; *WandaVision*, a blend of classic sitcom and Marvel universe characters, debuts on Disney+ in January; and Amazon takes on the Second Age of Middle Earth in a prequel to the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy.



FROM LEFT: CHIA BELLA JAMES/WARNER BROTHERS; JON RAGEL/NBCU PHOTO BANK/NBCUNIVERSAL/GETTY; EUROVISION; FLYINGV43/GETTY

Instacart and Bumble Go Public

As the impending brutal impact of the pandemic on the world economy started to become clear last year, the U.S. stock market lost nearly a third of its value from January to March. It's been roaring back ever since, though, and young companies—and the investors who love them—have been rushing to cash in. In December vacation rental service Airbnb and food delivery company DoorDash went public and promptly saw their stocks soar to the kinds of valuations not seen since the Dot.Com bubble. In hopes that trend will continue, several hot companies are expected to go public early in 2021, among them dating app Bumble, grocery delivery service Instacart and stock trading platform Robinhood. As veteran investors know, though, the potential for great rewards comes at great risk, so think twice before trying to snap up shares yourself.



HIGHER GROUND EXPANDS

In 2021, recreational marijuana sales becomes legal in four more states: Montana and New Jersey (January), Arizona (March/April) and South Dakota (July). It is already legal in Alaska, California, Colorado, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, Oregon, Vermont and Washington. It could be a while, though, before residents can stock up on edibles. Pot-guide.com says it typically takes one to three years before weed stores are up and running, due to various rules and regulations.

WORLD EXPO, DUBAI

The first world's fair to be held in the Middle East, Expo 2020 Dubai is yet another major event that was postponed because of the pandemic, though organizers decided to keep the old date in the name. Now scheduled to start on October 1, 2021 and run for six months through March 2022, the Expo will feature exhibits from over 190 countries in what's meant to be a showcase for global innovation, technology and cooperation and a celebration of human achievement and progress.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

One of the most anticipated books of 2021, this sequel to political activist Sister Souljah's bestseller *The Coldest Winter Ever*, recently had the highest pre-sales of any novel on Amazon. The book, out in March, picks up the story of Winter Santiago, daughter of a prominent Brooklyn drug dealer, as her jail sentence ends. For more highly anticipated books, see page 40.



BROADWAY COMES BACK

Ticket sales for the Great White Way are officially suspended through May 30 but fall seems more realistic for a return to live theater in New York City. Even with the vaccine up and running, Broadway faces some unique challenges for its comeback: Theatergoers are older on average than the typical audience for live entertainment, so are at higher risk; the majority of the crowd is made up of out-of-towners, so dependent on travel; and the theaters themselves are old and cramped and audiences would have to social distance, which makes some of the shows economically unviable.

Still at some point in 2021, the show will go on. Rumor has it that *Hamilton* may kick off the return on July 4. Also on deck: the world premiere of *MJ the Musical* and revivals of *The Music Man* and *Caroline, or Change*. While you wait, you can check out Broadway online: *Hamilton* is on Disney+ and *The Prom*, *Hairspray* and *The Boys in the Band* are on Netflix.



FROM LEFT: NEILSON BARNARD/GETTY; JOEL KOWSKY/NASA



Mars Landing

A peculiar and wonderful thing will happen on February 18, 2021. A small spacecraft will streak across the skies of Mars. It will deploy a parachute, slow to 200 miles per hour, and then disgorge a smaller, box-like device, which will continue the journey downward on eight retro-rockets. Before it reaches the ground, yet another device will pop out, tethered by nylon strings, and descend to a gentle landing. And you will be able to watch it all live on NASA's YouTube channel.

What's left after the landing, blinking and beeping, will be NASA's Perseverance rover, looking for all the world like an erector set toy of wheels and gizmos. Its mission, though, couldn't be more profound: to search for signs of ancient life on the Red Planet. It will poke around the 30-mile-wide Jezero Crater, the site of a river valley that dried up billions of years ago, measuring the chemical composition of rocks, taking pictures and looking for left-over organic matter. With luck, scientists think the rover could find visible fossils of ancient microbes. **N**

I RESOLVE...

Pro Tip No. 1: Setting too many New Year's goals can feel overwhelming and, ultimately, end up derailing success. Instead, pick the one resolution—work out more, eat healthier, learn a new skill, etc.—that's most important to you and focus all your efforts there.



Want to adopt healthier **HABITS**, improve your **FINANCES** or spend more **TIME** with the

BY Kerri Anne Renzulli



BETTER
RESOLUTIONS
THROUGH
SCIENCE

people you love? No matter what your goal is for 2021, these 12 research-based tips will help →

Photo-illustration by C.J. BURTON

T

HE PANDEMIC DOESN'T SEEM to have dampened Americans' enthusiasm for linking a New Year to a fresh start. More than two-thirds of Ameri-

cans plan to make a resolution for 2021, polls show, which is roughly the same as in years past. What *has* changed: The most common objectives for 2021 look strikingly different from traditional New Year's promises, and attitudes about when, how and why to tackle key goals have changed as well.

The reason: More than half of Americans say their usual pre-COVID January 1 resolutions—think, hitting the gym more often or nabbing a big raise—aren't applicable to their lifestyle anymore. Seven in 10 say they are tossing out materialistic pledges and instead looking to learn life skills, improve overall wellness or savor experiences, like time with family, according to a survey by Affirm.

And while doing a better job of managing money remains a top priority, what's motivating people to make a financial change has shifted, too. Previously, the top reason people gave for pledging to adopt better money habits in a new year was to live a debt-free life, says Fidelity Investments, which conducts an annual poll on financial resolutions for the New Year. In 2021, this year's survey found, they're looking to achieve greater peace of mind.

"People want to feel like they're moving forward and regaining control," says Stacey Watson, senior vice president of life event planning at Fidelity.

Getting there, though, will take a lot more than good intentions. Research shows that people typically abandon their New Year's resolutions within six months and the health, financial and social stresses of the first half of 2021, when the pandemic will still be widespread, will likely make sticking to your pledges even more challenging.

"Uncertainty and hardship related to COVID-19 may make it especially difficult to prioritize New Year's resolutions in 2021," says Charles Herrick, chair of psychiatry at Nuvance Health's Danbury Hospital, New Milford Hospital and Norwalk Hospital. "Many people may cling to old, familiar, comfortable habits to maintain some degree of stability in these uncertain times. This may make it harder to make the changes required to achieve new goals."

What can help steel your resolve: practical strategies and tricks based on a growing body of



"UNCERTAINTY
and hardship
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resolutions
in 2021."



behavioral research about the factors that enable people to successfully change their habits and stick with new ones. In fact, studies show that people who use these science-based techniques are far more likely to achieve their goals or make significant progress than those who don't—in one study at least, up to 10 times more likely.

After the year everyone has had, those seem like pretty good odds to take.

HOW TO MAKE BETTER RESOLUTIONS

Knowing the right way to frame your goal is half the battle. Behavioral researchers and psychologists with expertise in goal setting recommend the following evidence-based strategies:

Commit to the change. People often dismiss New Year's resolutions as a silly or useless exercise given their high failure rate. But research shows the very act of making them greatly increases the likelihood you'll meet your goal, or at least get a lot closer to it than you would otherwise.

FRESH START

The New Year is an opportune time psychologically to adopt a new habit. Doing a better job of managing money is a top goal for many.

In one study, John Norcross, author of *Changeology: 5 Steps to Realizing Your Goals and Resolutions*, tracked nearly 300 people in two groups who had some problematic behavior, such as smoking or failing to exercise enough, that they wanted to change. The only difference was that one group of participants actively resolved to work on changing their behavior starting January 1, the other did not. At the end of six months, Norcross, a professor of psychology at the University of Scranton, found that those who had made an explicit resolution were far more likely to have successfully changed their behavior than those who hadn't—46 percent of resolvers succeeded versus just 4 percent of the non-resolvers group.

Making the resolution at least a few days in advance of the New Year instead of, say, five minutes before midnight on December 31, also likely increases your odds of success. That's because this kind of precommitment encourages you to anticipate and prepare for your new routine. And, it comes with a built-in start date forcing you to take action, not delay for some ideal future time.

Pre-commitment, for example, helped one group of taxpayers substantially increase the amount they saved of their refund. In a study conducted by Common Cents Lab, Duke University's behavioral finance research lab, one group of taxpayers were asked to save a portion of their refund when the money hit their bank account and another was asked how much they wanted to save of their refund before they'd filed their taxes. Those who made a spur-of-the-moment decision put away 17 percent of their refund, compared to 27 percent, on average, for those who pre-committed to saving.

Be single-minded. Most Americans make about two resolutions each year, Norcross found, but for 2021 he recommends scaling back. "Most of us are preoccupied with pandemic concerns," he says. "We can't bring the same commitment, motivation or prioritization to our resolutions as in other years. Think of it like trying to drive while distracted."

Even in an ordinary year, picking a single resolution to focus on can increase your odds of success, as a series of four studies by researchers at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management found. Participants who were encouraged to identify one savings goal, such as saving for a child's



TOP RESOLUTIONS FOR 2021

Losing weight, hitting the gym and nabbing a big promotion are so yesteryear, on the resolution scale. For next year, we're thinking more high-minded.



68%

Focus more on experiences



63%

Improve overall wellness



62%

Save more money for future expenses



54%

Budget money better



52%

Spend more time with family



49%

Pay down debt

NOTE: ONLINE SURVEY OF 2,000 ADULT AMERICANS, OCTOBER 28-29, 2020. SOURCE: ONEPOLL FOR AFFIRM



WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

the biggest Internet portal,
providing you various content:
brand new books, trending movies,
fresh magazines, hot games,
recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price

Cheap constant access to piping hot media

Protect your downloadings from Big brother

Safer, than torrent-trackers

18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages

Brand new content

One site



AVXLIVE **ICU**

AvaxHome - Your End Place

We have everything for all of your needs. Just open <https://avxlive.icu>



58%

Have a more positive outlook



43%

Be more intentional about spending



NEW YEAR, NEW YOU
More than two-thirds of Americans plan to make resolutions for 2021, polls show—roughly in keeping with past years.

education, ended up putting away more money over the six-month period of the study than those who were prompted to save simultaneously for multiple goals, such as saving for college, retirement and health care needs. The researchers concluded that the multiple goals competed with each other and increased the likelihood people would over-deliberate about how to proceed and delay the actions needed to achieve their goals.

Be SMART—and realistic. The SMART strategy, an acronym that stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound, provides a useful rule of thumb to follow when framing your resolution. Using these guidelines, for instance, a vague pledge to “save more money this year” might become a resolution to “automatically direct \$100 from each paycheck into a high-yield savings account for all of 2021.”

Numerous research studies have shown that people perform better when striving to achieve specific and challenging goals, rather than equally specific but overly easy goals or vague goals like “do your best.” So set the bar high, but be mindful of putting it in the clouds. Resolving to complete a marathon in six months’ time when you’ve never even gone jogging will likely set you up for disappointment, frustration and eventually quitting. A more realistic ambition to go jogging for 30 minutes three times a week is likely a better starting point, as small wins early on will motivate you to do more, Herrick says.

Target behavior, not results. Jelena Kecmanovic, director of the Arlington/DC Behavior Therapy Institute and a psychology professor at Georgetown University, warns that goals should be centered around factors you can control, such as your own behavior, rather than a particular outcome. Resolving to lose 10 pounds sounds like a clear, realistic ambition, but it is dependent on the weight actually coming off. Instead, focus on things like limiting dessert to one night a week or going for a 30-minute nightly walk after dinner instead of watching TV, which could lead to the desired weight loss.

The goal also needs to matter most to *you*, not someone else. If you’re making this change because of societal pressures or the opinion of someone else, you’re likely to fail, says Herrick. And data backs

this up. Research published in *Canadian Psychology* says that when goals reflect a person’s individual values, they do better at achieving it because they “experience less conflict and feel a greater sense of readiness to change their behavior.”

Anticipate the triggers. To achieve your resolution, you’ll probably need to make some alterations to your daily life to counter the problem behavior. Think about what situations or emotions lead to it and what a better alternative might be. So if you smoke when you’re feeling anxious or stressed, successfully quitting may involve you taking up running, meditation or breathing exercises as an alternate way to ease that tension.

Research has shown that such “if-then” plans can improve your self-control and the likelihood of attaining your goal. A study published in the *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* found that college students who used this technique to curtail unhealthy snacking—by, say, deciding to eat a favorite fruit or vegetable instead of chips or cookies whenever they were feeling bored or in need of enjoyment—consumed more healthy snacks per day and fewer calories of unhealthy foods than participants who lacked such an if-then plan.

The key, says Kecmanovic, is to try to anticipate as many different situations that could tempt you and make a specific plan for what you’ll do instead in each of those moments. That way your brain almost goes into autopilot and you don’t have to deliberate over how to respond.

Go public. Most people naturally desire to avoid letting people down and feel embarrassed when they do. So use that feeling to help you make good on your resolution, Herrick suggests. Tell your partner, family, friends or co-workers that you’ve undertaken a resolution, he says, and how you plan to achieve it. A study by the American Society of Training and Development found that the odds of completing a goal rose to 65 percent for people who shared their objectives with others, and to 95 percent for those who went an extra step and set up regular appointments to check in with that person.

If someone else’s opinion of your efforts isn’t sufficiently motivating, try putting some money on the line. This could mean giving a family member \$100 to hold for you until you reach your

SET UP FOR SUCCESS

Don’t aim to run a marathon if you’ve only just taken up jogging. Want to eat healthier? Remove temptation: Toss the cookies and the chocolate and load your fridge with yummy fruits and veggies.

FROM TOP: INSIDE CREATIVE HOUSE/GETTY; C.J. BURTON/GETTY





“Some
71 PERCENT
of successful
resolvers say
a slip-up actually
STRENGTHENED
their drive
to see the goal
through.”

goal—they get to keep it if you fall short—or using a goal-setting website like stickK.com to make a financial pledge to a charity of your choice if you quit. StickK finds that users who add financial incentives are three times more likely to keep their resolutions than those who don't.

HOW TO STICK TO YOUR RESOLUTIONS

Once you've framed your resolutions in a way that makes them easier to achieve, set yourself up for long-term success with these steps.

Remove temptation. People with strong willpower don't resist temptation, they avoid it by arranging their home, office and social life in a way that limits exposure to situations that trigger the habit they want to change, according to research published in the academic journal *Personality and Individual Differences*. For instance, if you are looking to save money, unsubscribe from all retail email lists, and unfollow brands, stores or influencers on social media, advises Wendy De La Rosa, a behavioral scientist and co-founder of the Common Cents Lab: “The best way to avoid spending temptation is to just not get those notifications at all.”

A survey that the Common Cents team conducted of restaurant diners demonstrates the effectiveness of reducing the times you put yourself in a position to be tempted into behavior you're trying to change. More than 1,300 people were polled about different techniques aimed at curbing spending on eating out; the options included setting a dining-out budget, limiting the number of times you go to a restaurant per week and cutting the amount you allow yourself to spend on a single meal. The best method? Dialing back on restaurant visits. Simply removing access to those tempting dishes gave people greater confidence they could stick to their goal and save more overall. Participants estimated they would save \$74 a month, vs. \$56 for limiting spending per restaurant visit and \$44 for setting a weekly budget for dining out.

Make it easy to be good. If you're looking to eat better, stock your fridge with precut fruits and raw veggies to snack on. Or if you're hoping to save money on takeout, load up on your favorite

ingredients so you're inspired to cook after work and not reach for the UberEats app.

"In the future, we think we will be perfect, we are all going to be our own personal version of Beyoncé," says De La Rosa. "We think our future selves can do more than we can today, so use that to your advantage by making decisions now for the future." One way to do that: Block out daily or weekly time in your 2021 calendar now or set up reminders through your apps to prompt you to, say, practice Spanish for 15 minutes, reach 10,000 steps or call your family for a catch-up.

A study out of the University of British Columbia showed how effective this kind of self-nudge can be when you're trying to change behavior. It found that when individuals who had participated in a diabetes prevention program were prompted to work out by an app, the amount of exercise they reported to be doing significantly increased in the three days after receiving the message compared to the three days before receiving the prompt. One drawback: The strategy only worked for the first six months.

Track your progress. With some goals, like reducing debt, it is easy to see how your efforts are literally paying off, when you watch your outstanding balance drop consistently. But for other resolutions, you may need to get more creative about how you record your efforts, maybe by journaling, taking photos to see incremental changes or downloading an app that automatically tracks your spending or periods of movement. This kind of "self-monitoring" increases the probability that you'll keep up the good behavior, says Norcross.

For example, in a study of overweight women aged 50 to 74 in rural Florida published by the journal *Eating Behaviors*, participants in a weight-loss program were asked to record their food and drink consumption every day. Those with the highest number of entries after six months lost the most: 14 percent of their body weight, on average—and they continued to lose weight over the following year, shedding more than 20 percent of their total body weight when the researchers followed up at 18 months. By contrast, participants with fewer food-and-drink entries lost significantly less weight after six months and regained half of it by the 18-month mark.

Why does the simple act of monitoring your

"In the future,
we think we
will be **PERFECT**,
we are all
going to be our
own personal
version of
BEYONCE."





FIND A CHEERLEADER

Looking to quit smoking or lose weight? Joining a support group of like-minded people who share your goals greatly increases your chance of success.

behavior work so well? Two large-scale studies, one focused on people who wanted to lose weight and the other on subjects looking to curtail alcohol consumption, found that tracking helps people take greater responsibility for their actions, rather than blaming it on external factors. The research, published in the journal *Digital Health*, also found that it inspires helpful interpersonal competition as people strive to break previous records and remain on track to reach their goals.

Recording your progress can also serve as a motivation booster when you begin to flag. The trick is to focus on whatever perspective—the progress you’ve made so far or how much you have left to go—makes the amount of effort involved seem smaller, according to a series of studies published in *The Journal of Consumer Research*. So early in the year, reflect on the 20 percent of the resolution you’ve already completed as opposed to the 80 percent remaining—say, the 2,000 steps a day you’re now taking if your ultimate goal is 10,000, not the 8,000 you have yet to walk. But when you’ve brought the numbers of steps you’re walking closer to the target, flip that perspective and focus on the fact that you only have 2,000 more steps a day to go before you hit the desired 10,000-step level.

Reward good behavior. Changing a habit is hard and initially the benefits from your efforts may not be enough to keep you motivated. For instance, the release of endorphins from a new exercise regime may not outweigh the initial soreness or muscle cramps you feel.

A solution: Reinforce your positive steps with a small treat you’ll only get to enjoy if you engage in that new habit, says Norcross, who became a daily flosser when he decided he wasn’t going to allow himself to play a round of golf, his favorite pastime, at the weekend if he hadn’t flossed each morning of the preceding week.

Just remember the reward shouldn’t undo the good progress you’re making. So a week of saving an additional \$100 shouldn’t earn you a new pair of shoes or dinner out, but rather a chance to indulge in that Netflix series you’ve wanted to watch or a visit to that new hiking trail you’re eager to climb.

Find a support group. “Most of us can get through the first couple of weeks on our own, but our

commitment begins to erode over time and that’s where a support person or group can help,” says Norcross, adding this usually becomes essential toward the end of January.

These people will follow up on your progress and cheerlead your efforts two or three times more than they will critique them, he adds: “Pick positive, enthusiastic people, not naysayers.”

Joining a group of people with similar aims can be a great way to find this kind of positive support and encourage change. A study published in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, for instance, found that when people who were trying to achieve a weight-loss goal did so along with three friends or family members, they shed more pounds than those who went it alone, and they were also more successful at maintaining their new weight: Only one in four doing the program alone did not regain any weight after 10 months vs. two-thirds of those doing it with friends.

We also tend to mirror the behavior of people we like and admire, says Herrick, so surround yourself with like-minded individuals who will help reinforce the new habit.

Get back on the horse. You will slip up—and more than once. It is inevitable. But that slip shouldn’t be an excuse to give up on your goal. Instead, pick yourself up and recommit, says Norcross, whose research found that 71 percent of successful resolvers say a misstep actually strengthened their drive to see the goal through.

And skip beating yourself up over a mistake, too. Harsh self-criticism or guilt doesn’t help and could even prevent you from accomplishing your goal, according to research published in the *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*. The study looked at drinkers who had violated their self-imposed alcohol limits and found that strong feelings of guilt led to poorer self-regulation, and, in turn, actually increased consumption and led to more limit violations.

“We seem to expect perfection, which is maddening,” says Norcross. “If you bake muffins perfectly 300 times and mess them up once, would you give up baking them? No, you’d try again.”

And remember, research shows, it takes three months before a change in behavior becomes routine. Fingers crossed, by April, you’ll be reaping the rewards of your 2021 resolve. **■**

BOOKS

Get Lost in the Pages of 2021's Most Highly Anticipated New Books

ANDRZEJ WOJCICKI/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY/GETTY; TOP RIGHT: AARON RICHTER/CONTOUR/PIZZA HUT/GETTY

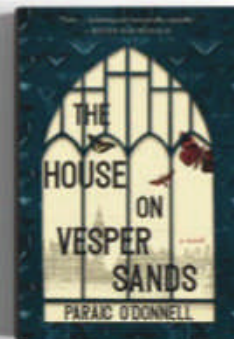
STRIKE FIRST. STRIKE HARD. NO MERCY.

Cobra Kai's Maridueña on the show's popularity and how it builds on the saga of *The Karate Kid*. » P.48



↑ THERE IS MUCH TO ANTICIPATE in the new year, and the thought of getting out and about is not the least of them. But until social distancing is a distant memory, you can still snuggle up with a good read. Enjoy the rare pleasure of turning the crisp pages of some of these intriguing books coming out in the first half of the year. *Newsweek* has chosen some of the best new fiction and nonfiction for your reading pleasure. —Juliana Pignataro

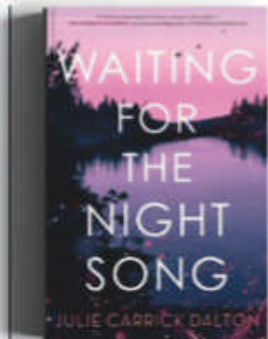
FICTION



The House on Vesper Sands

By Paraic O'Donnell
JANUARY | TIN HOUSE | \$26.95

The world of 19th-century London unfolds like a tapestry in this mystery centered around the sharp Inspector Cutter and his sidekick, Gideon Bliss, who must find out how a rash of sinister events relate to one another, and just who is behind it all.



Waiting for the Night Song

By Julie Carrick Dalton
JANUARY | FORGE BOOKS | \$26.99

In this brilliantly imagined homage to nature's magnificence, Cadie Kessler, a forestry researcher, has spent years guarding a secret. When a message from a long-ago friend summons her home, Cadie must contend with the past and face the future.



People We Meet on Vacation

By Emily Henry
MAY | BERKLEY | \$16

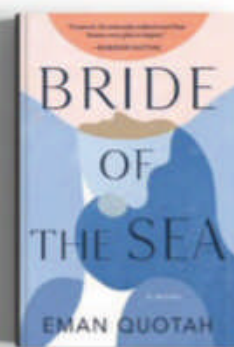
The author of the widely praised *Beach Read* is back with a witty and satisfying trip of a book, where two best friends take a final vacation together and try to determine whether they're really just friends. Henry manages to make the age-old story of friends-to-lovers entirely surprising and exciting.



Girls With Bright Futures

By Tracey Dobmeier and Wendy Katzman
FEBRUARY | SOURCE-BOOKS LAND-MARK | \$16.99

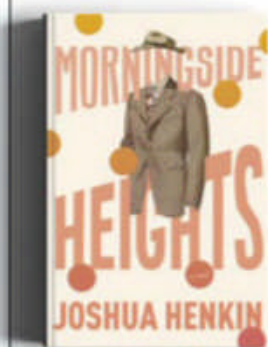
Three women and their daughters embark on a collision course with each other and the secrets they've covered up when the ruthless competition of college admissions at an elite high school leads to some unsavory deeds. Sound familiar?



Bride of the Sea

By Eman Quotah
JANUARY | TIN HOUSE | \$16.95

Newlyweds Muneer and Saeedah watch their marriage unravel, as Muneer leaves Cleveland to return to Saudi Arabia. When Saeedah disappears with their daughter, Muneer frantically searches for her, and deeply held secrets find the light of day.



Morningside Heights

By Joshua Henkin
JUNE | PANTHEON | \$26.95

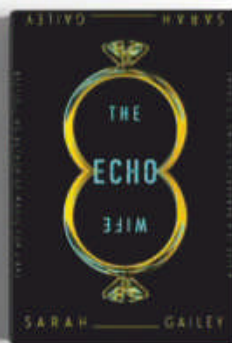
This clear-eyed, tender novel examines the interwoven entanglements of family, love and responsibility through the shared lives of Pru Steiner and the charismatic professor she fell in love with and married—and who later suffers from early-onset Alzheimer's.

Culture



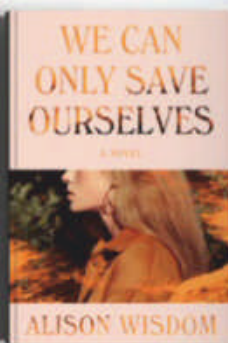
Our Darkest Night
By Jennifer Robson
JANUARY | WILLIAM MORROW | \$27.99

As Nazis encroach upon Italy in 1943, a young woman faced with an impossible choice must leave her family behind to embark on an unknown journey with a man she has only just met. The horrors of war and the darkness of hate are beautifully juxtaposed with the dazzling brilliance of love in this tender and sweeping novel.



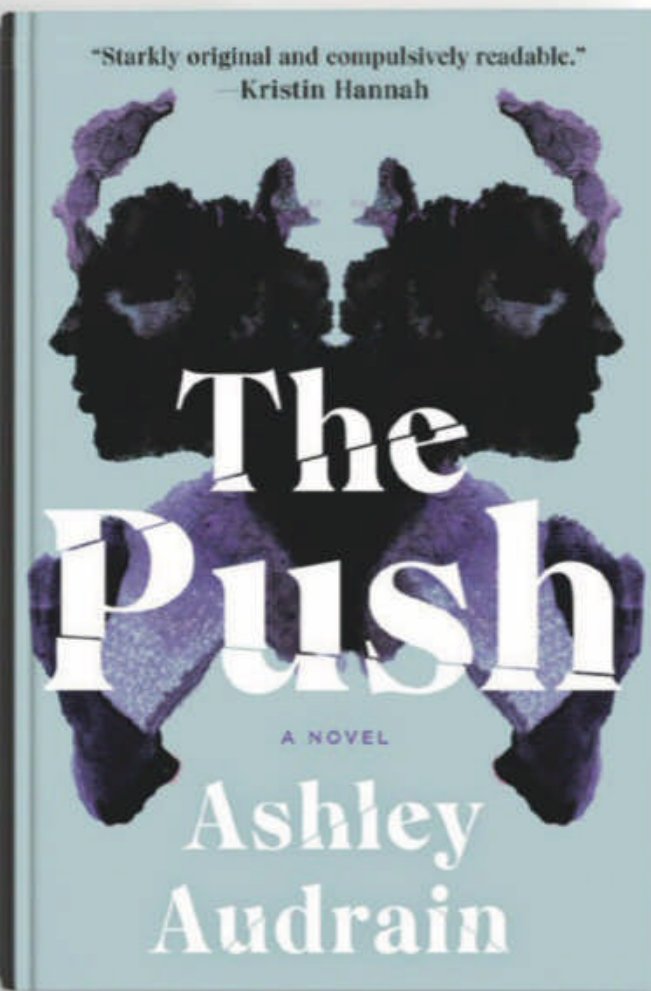
The Echo Wife
By Sarah Gailey
FEBRUARY | TOR BOOKS | \$24.99

Evelyn Caldwell's husband is having an affair. The woman he's seeing is gentle and kind and obedient...and a genetically cloned replica created from Evelyn's own research. This unique and inventive tale is a genre-bending, roller coaster of unsettling fun.



We Can Only Save Ourselves
By Alison Wisdom
FEBRUARY | HARPER | \$26.99

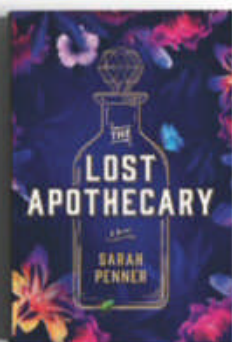
Neighborhood sweetheart Alice Lange disappears one day after an enigmatic stranger comes to town. The collective we of the community narrates this unique and haunting debut that smolders like the embers of an unattended fire.



The Push

By Ashley Audrain | January | Pamela Dorman Books | \$26

Blythe Connor thinks something is not right with her daughter. Her husband is convinced it's all in her head—until their son is born, and everything changes in an instant. This taut and tense hurricane of a debut is best devoured in one sitting.

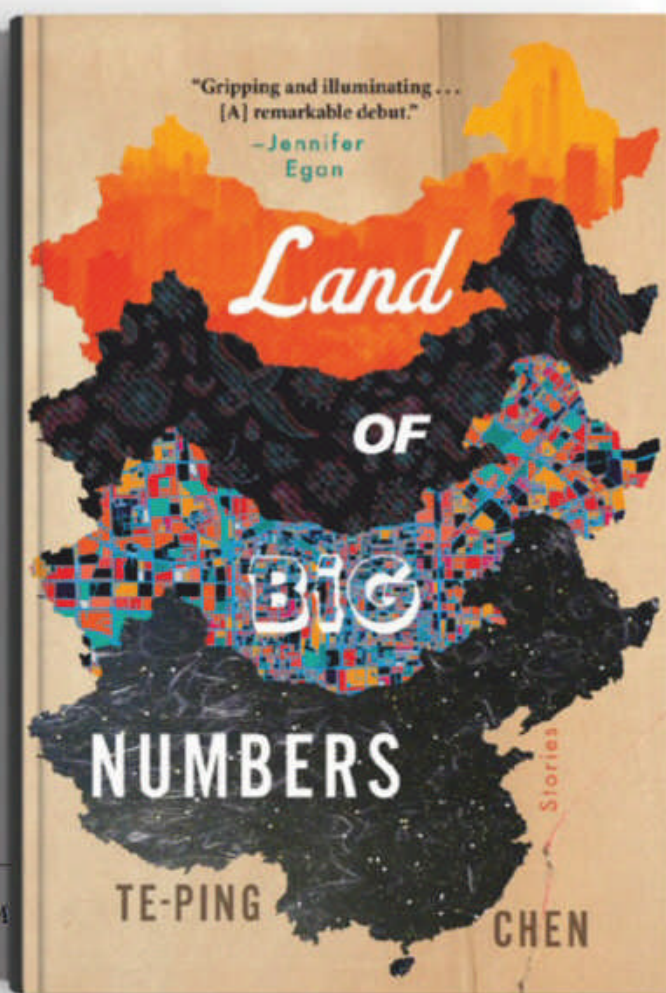


The Lost Apothecary
By Sarah Penner
MARCH | PARK ROW BOOKS | \$27.99

This spellbinding debut spans time, bouncing from 18th-century London, where a female apothecary dispenses potions and poisons to women who wish to get rid of unsavory men, to the present day, where a woman unearths a mysterious vial near the Thames River.

Land of Big Numbers

By Te-Ping Chen | February | Mariner Books | \$15.99
A razor-sharp collection of stories spotlights the varying experiences of the Chinese diaspora through a multitude of finely wrought characters.



The Four Winds
By Kristin Hannah
FEBRUARY | ST. MARTIN'S PRESS | \$28.99

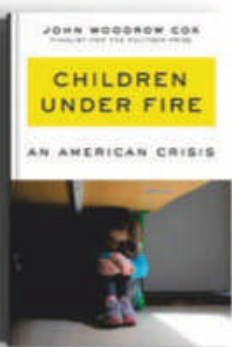
Hannah's brutally beautiful latest novel unfolds in 1930s Texas, where the Martinelli family must choose between the blighted dust of the land they love dearly, or face the unknown country to the west.



The Wife Upstairs
By Rachel Hawkins
JANUARY | ST. MARTIN'S PRESS | \$27.99

A delightfully surprising and suspenseful twist on *Jane Eyre* centers around an enchanting and mysterious widower, Eddie, and a broke dog walker, Jane, fated to meet in a gated community in Birmingham, Alabama.

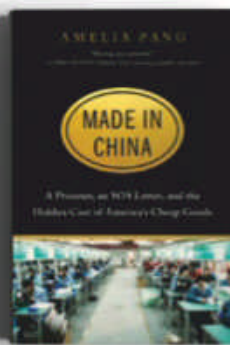
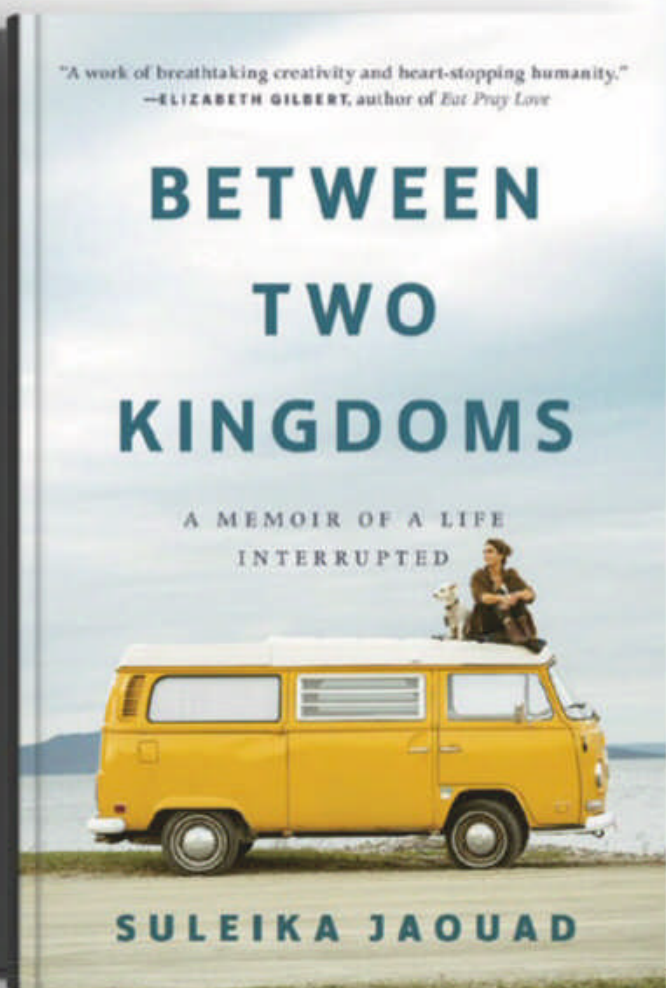
NONFICTION



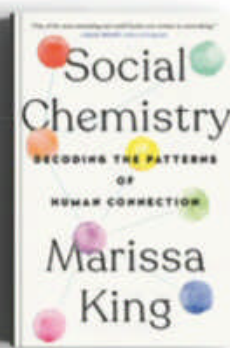
Children Under Fire: An American Crisis
By John Woodrow Cox
MARCH | ECCO | \$28.99
Cox shines a light on America's gun violence crisis through deeply personal and profoundly affecting stories of the children who live with its everlasting repercussions.

Between Two Kingdoms: A Memoir of a Life Interrupted

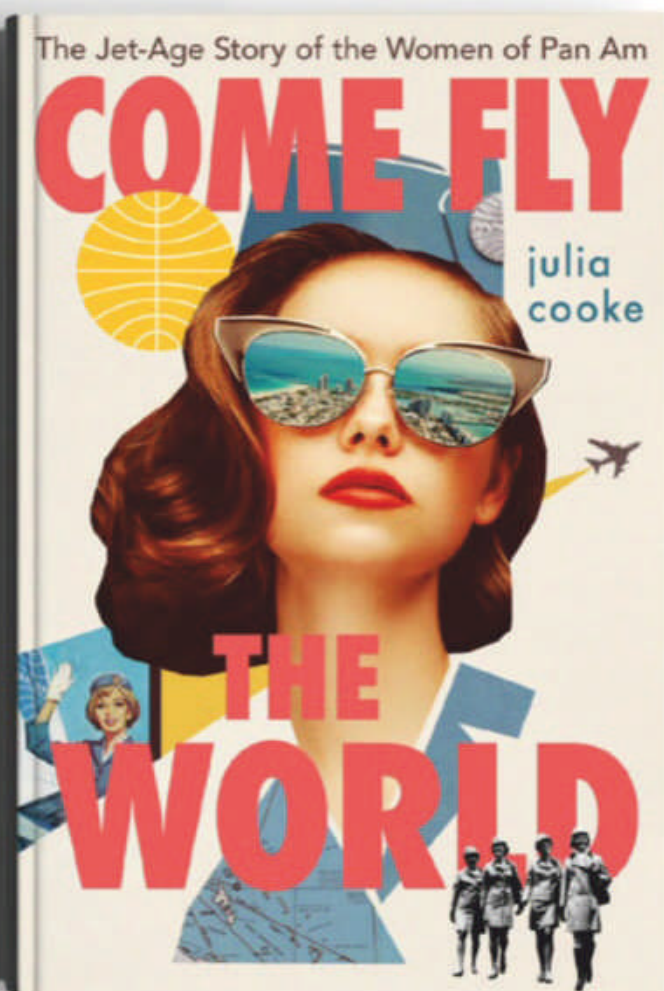
By Suleika Jaouad | February | Random House | \$28
Jaouad's memoir begins where most others end: she's come out on the other side of an earth-shattering cancer diagnosis, and doctors pronounce her cured. Embarking on a 15,000-mile road trip across America, she sets out to meet the strangers she connected with while in the hospital.



Made in China: A Prisoner, an SOS Letter, and the Hidden Cost of America's Cheap Goods
By Amelia Pang
FEBRUARY | ALGONQUIN BOOKS | \$27.95
Investigative journalist Pang scrutinizes the labor practices behind the fast fashion and cheap goods we consume daily by following the life of Sun Yi, a Chinese engineer and political prisoner who secreted an "SOS" note into a Kmart-bound Halloween decoration.



Social Chemistry: Decoding the Patterns of Human Connection
By Marissa King
JANUARY | DUTTON | \$28
Yale professor King deftly explores human connections and social networks, both professional and personal, and how we can identify our own styles and benefit from them during even the most fractured of times.



Come Fly the World: The Jet-Age Story of the Women of Pan Am

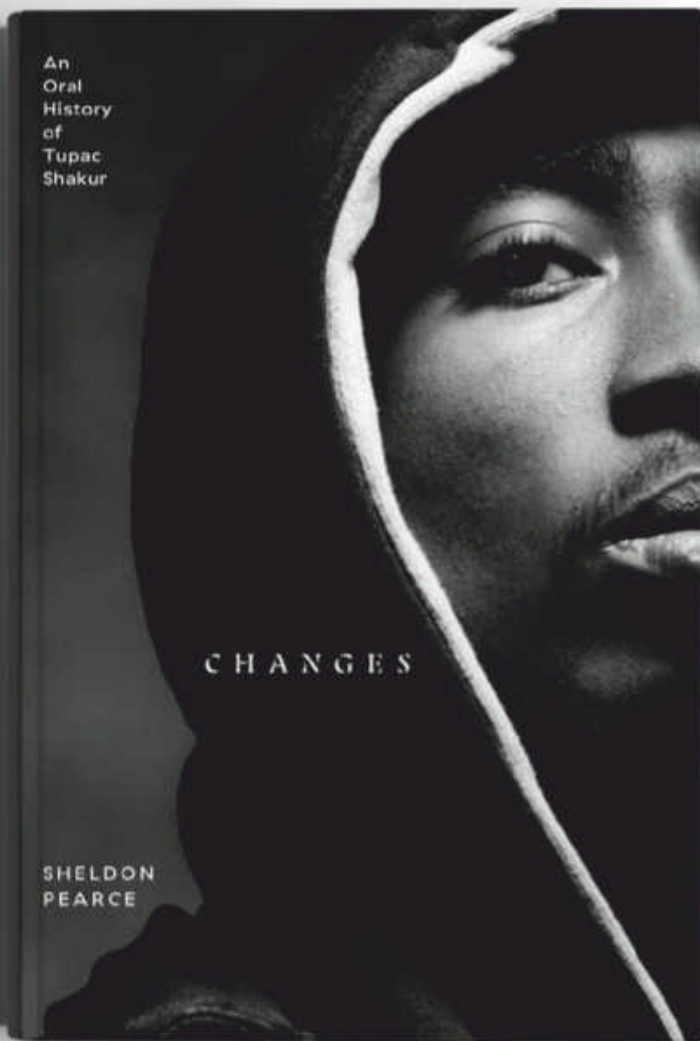
By Julia Cooke | March | Houghton Mifflin Harcourt | \$28

At the height of Pan Am's heyday, a stewardess was required to be under 26, 105–140 pounds and between 5'3" and 5'9". Cooke takes us behind-the-scenes of all this and more in the nascent jet age, from Saigon to Hong Kong and back, through the eyes of these sky-bound women.



Everybody (Else) Is Perfect: How I Survived Hypocrisy, Beauty, Clicks, and Likes
By Gabrielle Korn
JANUARY | ATRIA BOOKS | \$17

Former *Nylon* editor in chief Korn's wry and resonant collection of essays peels back the curtain on fashion media and being a woman in the age of social media in a way that's both vulnerable and empowering.



Changes: An Oral History of Tupac Shakur

By Sheldon Pearce | June | Simon & Schuster | \$28

Published to coincide with the 50th anniversary of Tupac's birth and the 25th anniversary of his death, *Changes* is a history unlike any other, told with breathtaking sincerity by the people who knew him in life.

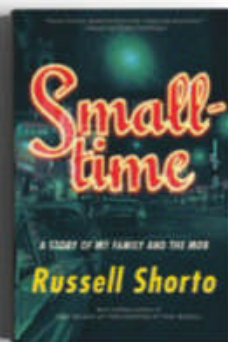


Maniac: The Bath School Disaster and the Birth of the Modern Mass Killer

By Harold Schechter
MARCH | LITTLE A. |

\$24.95

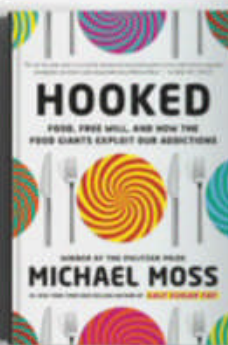
A shocking but little-remembered tragedy unfolded at a primary school in Michigan one day in 1927—leaving 38 children and six adults dead. With careful research and captivating scenes, Schechter probes how echoes of the massacre reverberate even today.



Smalltime: A Story of My Family and the Mob

By Russell Shorto
FEBRUARY | W.W.
NORTON & COMPANY
| \$26.95

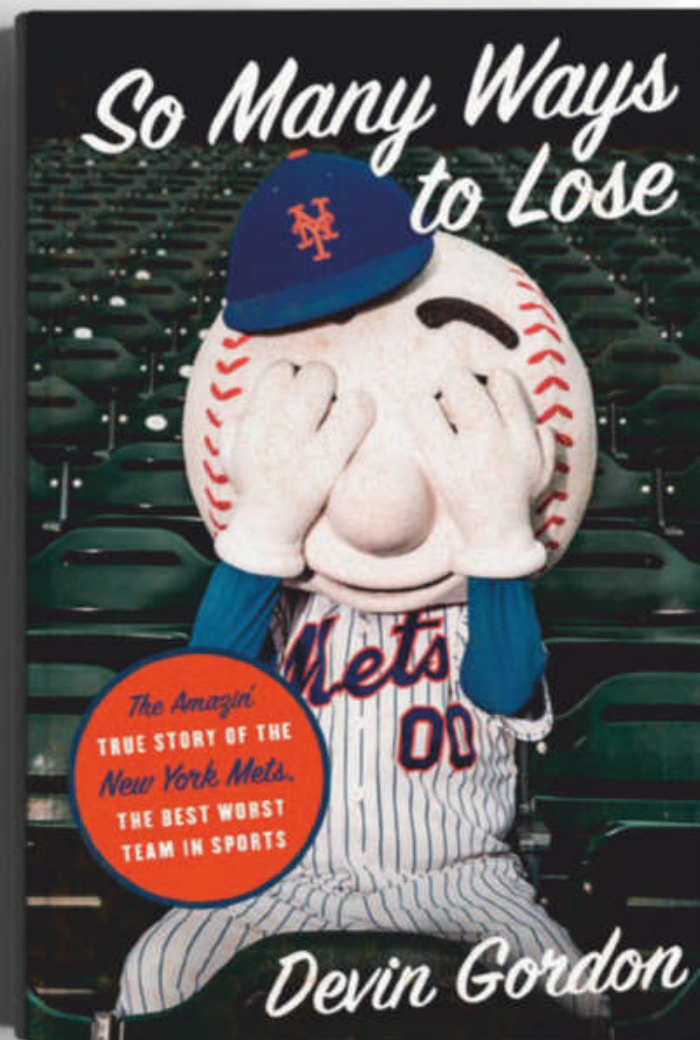
Shorto finally turns a key in the proverbial locked drawer of his family's chest, only to find a web of mob figures waiting to tell their story. He brings us along from New York to California and places in between as the story of his family's hidden figures vividly unfolds.



Hooked: Food, Free Will, and How the Food Giants Exploit our Addictions

By Michael Moss
MARCH | RANDOM HOUSE | \$28

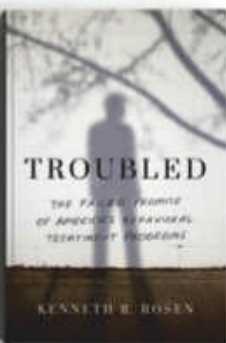
The bestselling author of *Salt Sugar Fat* lays bare the depths of the processed food industry, how our behavior is altered by addictive foods and the dangers that lie in wait surrounding the food that we eat.



So Many Ways to Lose: The Amazin' True Story of the New York Mets—the Best Worst Team in Sports

By Devin Gordon | March | Harper | \$27.99

Lifelong fan Gordon puts together a delightful history of the Mets that's just like the National League team itself: inspiring, heartbreakingly hilarious, miraculous and all around amazin'. **N**



Troubled: The Failed Promise of America's Behavioral Treatment Programs

By Kenneth R. Rosen
JANUARY | LITTLE A. | \$24.95

Newsweek's own Rosen draws on his own experience and more than 100 interviews in this brutally frank expose of America's "tough love" programs, following four graduates on their journey to adulthood and revealing the disturbing truth about the redirection industry.

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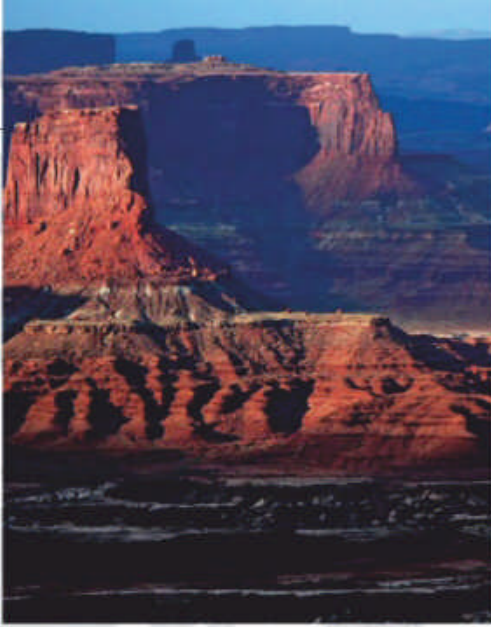
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Culture

01 Visit an Indigenous Lodge

British Columbia, Canada

The “Serengeti of North America,” as Desolation Sound is known, has an abundance of massive wildlife from grizzly bears to orca whales to bald eagles. Experience the region most authentically at Klahoose Wilderness Resort, a new Indigenous-owned-and-operated luxury eco-resort offering a secluded retreat with guided excursions in one of the largest temperate rainforests on Earth.



02 Ride from the Rockies to the Red Rocks

Colorado and Utah

Explore some of the southwest’s most spectacular landscapes on a luxury glass-domed train on Rocky Mountaineer’s new two-day “Rockies to the Red Rocks” route. You’ll wind through Colorado’s Rocky Mountains to Moab’s natural arches, stopping in Glenwood Springs overnight, with enough time to soak in the hot springs.



03 The Great American E-Bike Trip

California to Georgia

Consider a human-powered road trip with an epic cycling adventure—made more accessible with a boost from an electric assist bike. Discover the beautiful and bizarre, from the Mojave Desert to UFO territory to Cajun country on an e-bike-friendly tour. TDA Global Cycling’s Great American Road Trip can be done in full, or broken down to a 10-day trip to explore one region.



04 Swim with Whale Sharks

Espíritu Santo Island, Mexico

Dubbed “The Aquarium of the World” by Jacques Cousteau, the Sea of Cortez is one the best spots in the world to swim with whale sharks and sea lions. Located in Mexico’s least-populated state, Baja California Sur, this island has a natural protected UNESCO World Heritage Site in the heart of it. There are no hotels, but Todos Santos Eco Adventures offers a solar-powered luxury camp experience on the island, private-chef included.



05 Watch a Total Solar Eclipse

Antarctica

2020 might’ve had some dark spots, but there’s one moment in 2021 when you’ll want to be plunged into complete darkness—during the total solar eclipse in December, which would be an unforgettable time to experience Antarctica. Quark Expeditions, the only team to have led a solar eclipse expedition on the 7th continent, has eclipse voyages with experts on board.



6



06 Search for Polar Bears

— Svalbard Archipelago, Norway

Secret Atlas' 12-person micro-cruise expedition is the perfect way to safely adventure in 2021, away from crowds and chaos. You couldn't dream up a more isolated place than the Svalbard Archipelago, only 800 miles from the North Pole, and home to one of the largest population of polar bears on Earth.

07 Gorilla and Chimpanzee Trekking

— Rwanda

Rwanda is ready for 2021 with a recently upgraded UNESCO biosphere reserve, Gishwati-Mukura National Park, that will be open to chimpanzee and primate trekking for the first time, as well as overnight camping. Catch your breath after you see the mountain gorillas and then hike or bike along the Congo Nile Trail.



7

UNCHARTED

Where We Are Dreaming of Traveling in 2021

9

While there are still a lot of unknowns about the coming year, one thing is certain: we need an escape. With a vaccine finally greenlighted, the future of travel is looking up, but what will be the safest trips to take while the world is still in flux? Think wide-open spaces, small-group adventures and responsible tourism. Playing it safe doesn't mean you can't get outside your comfort zone and have a novel adventure next year, though. From a polar bear micro-cruise to Svalbard, the northernmost inhabited archipelago, to chasing the shadow of the moon on an eclipse expedition in Antarctica, to closer-to-home adventures in the U.S., such as a train ride through the Red Rocks or an e-bike tour through Cajun Country, here are the epic pandemic-friendly escapes we're dreaming of right now. —*Kathleen Rellihan*



08 Soak in the Natural Wonders

Hokkaido, Japan

While the world waits for the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, consider Japan's least-developed island as a refuge from the crowds. Rugged and remote, Hokkaido is teeming with unique natural wonders and adventures including trekking in untouched forests, fat biking on frozen lakes, soaking in *onsens*, or natural hot springs, and searching for the island's rare red-crowned crane—the only place in Japan you can find the sacred bird.

8

09 See Kangaroo Island Bounce Back

Australia

Nearly a year after Australia's bushfires devastated over 200,000 hectares and killed billions of animals, new life is rising from the ashes. This 96-mile-long island is one of the best places to view Australia's unique animals in the wild—kangaroos, koalas, wallabies and more. Support the recovery with regenerative tourism, critical in reversing biodiversity loss. Swim with sea lions or sip some Jacob's Creek local wine and watch the 'roos bounce back.



PARTING SHOT

Xolo Maridueña

➔ THE KARATE KID SAGA CONTINUES ON NETFLIX'S *COBRA KAI*, STARTING ITS third season on January 4. The first two seasons started as YouTube Originals. For 19-year-old actor Xolo Maridueña, who plays Miguel, the show is successful because it “caters to both the fans of the original *Karate Kid* and anyone younger.” For this new season, Maridueña says “we’re gonna see some really tough times. I think it’s definitely going to get worse before it can get better” and that “we’ll see if Miguel survives getting kicked off of a balcony.” Besides “two years of karate training in like the first grade [*laughs*],” martial arts was new to the young actor. “There was nothing that could have prepared me for the amount of stretching and body contorting martial arts requires.” With season three shot before COVID-19, Maridueña is gearing up to shoot season four under a whole new set of rules. “We’ve been able to see how different sets are dealing with the pandemic, so hopefully, we can learn from their successes and their failures and make the shoot as safe as possible.”



“Nothing could have prepared me for the amount of stretching martial arts requires.”

Cobra Kai’s fourth season was renewed before the third season even premiered, which is so rare. Why is it so popular?

Our show initially got a big pull because we have the original cast of *The Karate Kid*, and they stay because they realize that the show is actually pretty good. It’s not just drama, there’s also romance and comedy.

Were you a fan of the original films?

I wouldn’t say I knew of the original films and had seen them as a kid, but when I got the audition I was like, “Cobra Kai? This sounds familiar.” It wasn’t until I booked the projects that I sat down and watched.

You’ve been working in entertainment since you were a little kid. Of your past work, what stands out as your first big break?

Cobra Kai is, as a young adult, my biggest break, but before that it was probably *Parenthood*. Working with people who were so professional and so welcoming [*on Parenthood*] really made me realize this isn’t just a hobby.

How have you been holding up in general during all of this?

The first couple of months were probably some of the laziest of my life. A month ago, I started to get back into working out because we’re gearing up to start filming. It’s going to be a really rough month in terms of trying to get back into shape [*laughs*]. It’s going to be an interesting first couple of weeks on set for sure. —H. Alan Scott

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