

# When You're Ready to Go Big

If there's one thing pandemic lockdowns have taught us, it's that we're social animals. Whether you're making up for a missed birthday, celebrating an anniversary, or just reconnecting with family, these above-and-beyond hotels are the perfect settings for a memorable (vaccinated) reunion. Here, five members of T+L's A-List of travel advisors give their picks for whatever the occasion.

BY ANDREW SESSA



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## 1. If You're Planning to Toast Again

*Sonoma County, California*

"Set on 258 acres of vineyards and oak groves, the new **Montage Healdsburg** ([montage.com](http://montage.com); doubles from \$995) resort feels like a bucolic estate, though it's close to the town's central plaza," says Michelle Murré ([michelle@azurinetravel.com](mailto:michelle@azurinetravel.com)). It's

well situated for a group of friends planning private tastings of top Pinot Noirs; plenty of Michelin-starred restaurants are close at hand, too.

## 2. If You're Nostalgic for Summers on the Lake

*Saranac Lake, New York*

"The **Point** ([thepointresort.com](http://thepointresort.com); doubles from \$900 per person, all-inclusive) was built in the 1930s as a Rockefeller family retreat. Today, the resort has the vibe of a grown-up summer camp," says Barkley Hickox ([barkley.hickox@localforeigner.com](mailto:barkley.hickox@localforeigner.com)). "It's ideal for a group of couples who like to eat, drink, and revel in the great outdoors—as long as they're up for the twice-a-week black-tie dinners."

## 3. If You're Looking for Adventure

*Banff, Alberta*

"The 133-year-old, castle-like **Fairmont Banff Springs** ([fairmont.com](http://fairmont.com); doubles from \$370) is the kind of place that makes you stop and take a deep breath. The views of the Rockies couldn't be more impressive," says Jennifer Lobb ([jj.traveldesign@gmail.com](mailto:jj.traveldesign@gmail.com)).

Guests can fish or hike in the surrounding forest with the hotel's handpicked guides or reconnect over a traditional high tea or a treasure hunt.

## 4. If You've Been Missing Family Time by the Sea

*Watch Hill, Rhode Island*

"You can't beat **Ocean**



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FROM TOP: CHRISTIAN HORAN/COURTESY OF MONTAGE HEALDSBURG; COURTESY OF FAIRMONT BANFF SPRINGS; COURTESY OF THE POINT



**House** ([oceanhouser.com](http://oceanhouser.com); doubles from \$860), the quintessential New England mansion hotel, which opened on a sprawling stretch of sand here in 1868. It looks like something from *The Great Gatsby*,” says Jack Ezon ([jack@embarkbeyond.com](mailto:jack@embarkbeyond.com)). Staff can arrange just about anything—boating, fishing, bike rides—though Ezon is a particular fan of gourmet picnics on the hotel’s lawn.

**5. If You’re Meeting Friends for a Wild Weekend**

**New Orleans**  
“The tasteful, understated **Maison de la Luz** ([maisondelaluz.com](http://maisondelaluz.com); doubles from \$400) feels like a personal city retreat. You get the intimate vibe of staying over at a friend’s house—but with a concierge team to lead you to the best meals, shopping, and live shows,” says Amina Dearmon ([amina@perspectivetravel.com](mailto:amina@perspectivetravel.com)). The property’s common areas are only for guests—unlike at a typical hotel—so there’s plenty of room to catch up over coffee or cocktails from the honor bar before hitting the town.



FROM TOP: CHIP RIEGEL/COURTESY OF OCEAN HOUSE; STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON/COURTESY OF MAISON DE LA LUZ