THE WINTER-LUST LIST

Whether you're looking for an extended holiday getaway or a quick trip to shake off the February blahs, **MARYAM SIDDIQI** knows five ways to escape (or embrace) the cold

1 BE THE FIRST TO CHECK IN TO TORONTO'S ST. REGIS

While the exact date of opening is still TBD, this winter will see the debut of the first St. Regis hotel in Canada, in Toronto's Financial District occupying the tower that was once the Trump Hotel. Suites, the lobby, spa and restaurant have all undergone facelifts, and guests can expect signature St. Regis touches, including butler service for its 124 rooms, daily Champagne sabering in the lobby and midnight supper. Make space in your itinerary for the hotel's menu of "local experiences," including a flight to Niagara wine country, or a midnight spa session, in which you get the entire facility to yourself. Room rates start at $650. For more information, visit stregis.com.

3 GET BACK TO NATURE VIA A BELIZE BUNGALOW

For those looking beyond the Caribbean and Mexico for a holiday escape, Central America beckons. Belize is home to the world's second-largest barrier reef, and luxury retreat Matachica, on the island of Ambergris Caye, borders the geological wonder. The focus here is on being immersed in nature, with options for diving, fishing or cave tubing, and experiencing cultural history and traditions, whether it's offsite touring Mayan ruins or at the property's Jade Spa undergoing a facial with a banana-and-brown-sugar scrub. The resort's 21 bungalows are luxuriously rustic, each with a thatched roof, hammocks, fine linens and luxe toiletries. Room rates start at US$275. For more information, visit matachica.com.

2 TAKE A SLOPESIDE DIP IN FRENCH FONDUE

No French skiing experience is complete without a culinary component. The chateau resort, The M de Megève, delivers a classic alpine feast in a personalized fashion at its restaurant, Les Grands Crus de Fondues, where they are serious about fromage. The on-site cheese expert will guide you through creating your own fondue from a selection of regional cheese, including comté, vacherin and l'étivaz. The custom dish can be paired with an assortment of condiments: escargots with garlic, hazelnut bread or Perigord truffles, for example. The five-star property is located in the town of Megève, a mere

4 EAT (AND SPA) HYPER LOCAL ON ANGUILLA

After bearing the brunt of powerful hurricanes last year, the Caribbean is emerging stronger than before, with several islands and properties taking the rebuilding opportunity to give themselves a refresh. Anguilla's iconic CuisinArt Resort has not only revamped its interiors – think porcelain tile, sea glass and teak private cabanas by the pool – but has redeveloped its culinary and spa offerings, both influenced by the resort's hydroponic farm. Alongside body treatments, including scrubs and wraps that use

wellness workshop menu that includes daylong fitness regimes. Room rates start at US$550. For more information, visit cuisinartresort.com.

5 HIT THE HILLS ON SKI OR BIKE IN ROSSLAND, B.C.

The Josie, the first ski-in-ski-out boutique resort to open in Canada in a decade, welcomes snow lovers to the Kootenay Rockies this winter. Located on B.C.'s Powder Highway at the base of Red Mountain Resort, The Josie offers access to downhill skiing, fat biking and Cat skiing over 4,200 acres via a concierge who can plan your experiences. Skating and curling are also on offer. The property will debut a spa – with a