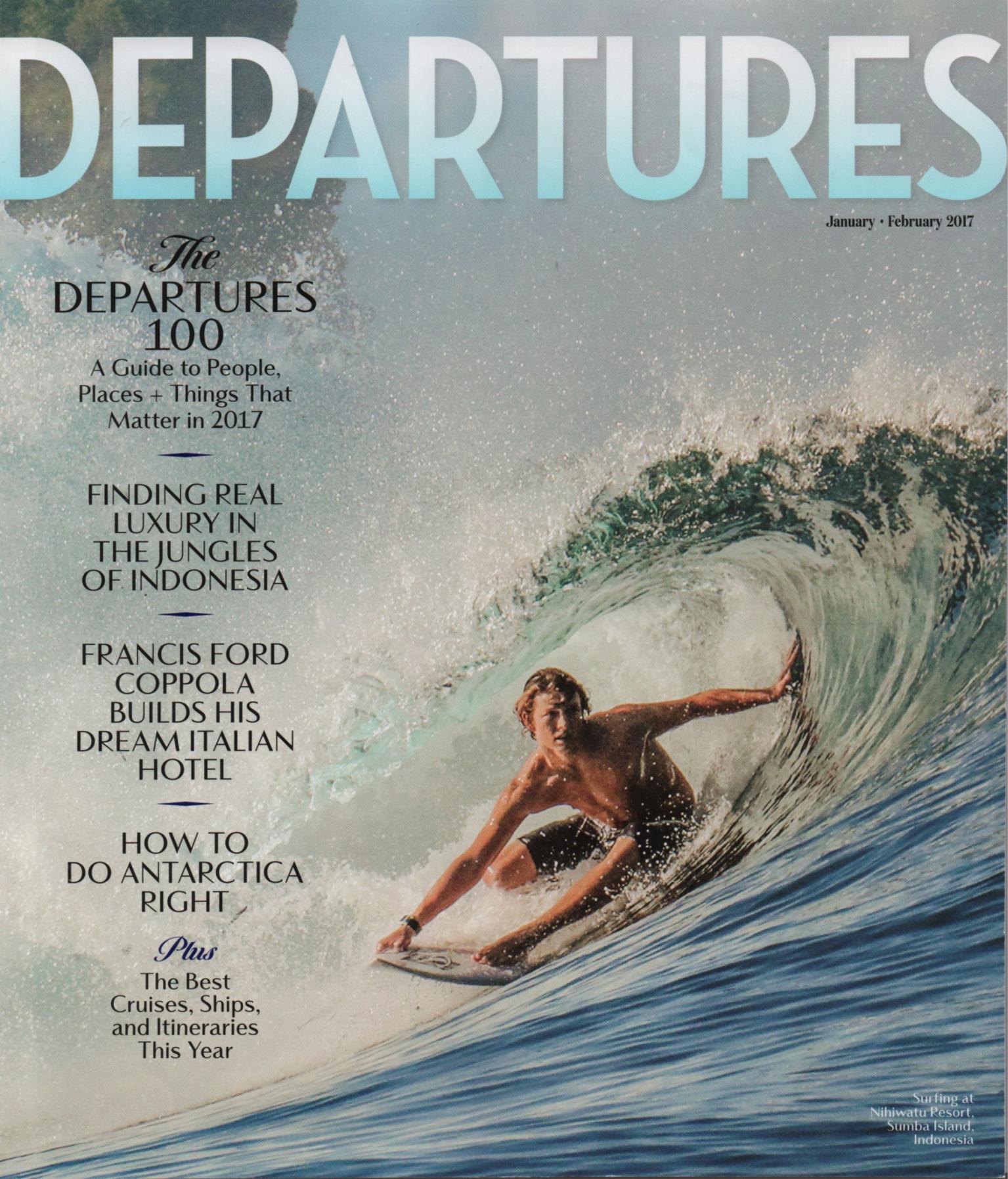


# DEPARTURES



January • February 2017

## The DEPARTURES 100

A Guide to People,  
Places + Things That  
Matter in 2017

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FINDING REAL  
LUXURY IN  
THE JUNGLES  
OF INDONESIA

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FRANCIS FORD  
COPPOLA  
BUILDS HIS  
DREAM ITALIAN  
HOTEL

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HOW TO  
DO ANTARCTICA  
RIGHT

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*Plus*  
The Best  
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# LIVING THE RIGHT LIFE

RICHARD DAVID STORY



## HOW TO STOP SMOKING IN SPAIN

**B**y the time you read this, it will have been nearly one year ago that I stopped smoking. Before turning out the lights in my bedroom in Alicante, Spain, on January 22, 2016, I stepped out onto the terrace in the chill of the Mediterranean night, under the stars, overlooking the sea...and lit my last Marlboro Lights 100's. To be honest, I haven't thought much about smoking since then. Seriously.

If New Year inevitably involves "new" resolutions, last year was a milestone. Europe, and especially Spain and Italy, aren't the easiest places to stop smoking, but then SHA, where I was staying, is a "wellness clinic," built some nine years ago by an Argentinean businessman, Alfredo Bataller Parietti, who was diagnosed with colon cancer. After all traditional Western medicines failed, he turned to a Japanese practitioner specializing in natural remedies, a macrobiotic diet, and healthier lifestyle. Parietti would go on to build, on the site of his own former villa, a hotel-spa-medical center. I wasn't really familiar with the place until a friend asked me to go. He was taking a few days there with his nephew from London. "You're going to be in Milan in January. Why don't you add a couple

of days on your way back to New York?" Geoffrey suggested. Mind you, "dropping by" wasn't quite as easy as it sounds. SHA is two hours from Madrid via an hour flight and an hour drive; it's the same from Barcelona. But I've smoked on and off for more years than I care to talk about. I did a quick Google of the place and saw it had a pretty sophisticated seven-day anti-smoking program. "But I can only stay for four," I told the woman over the phone. "Not perfect but we'll manage." And so we did.

**L**ocated on a hillside overlooking the sea, SHA is a series of white, modernist buildings that accommodate medical treatment rooms, exercise facilities, and 92 guest suites. After I checked in, the first thing I found out was that it has the best "healthful"—in this case, macrobiotic—restaurant I've ever been to. (Then chef'd by Pablo Montoro, who worked under Ferran Adrià at El Bulli; now under chef Javier García.) There were three menus: one for those who needed/wanted to lose weight (me, I can always shed 20 here or there), maintain current weight, or indulge. "This is the only program I know of where you can quit smoking and lose weight at the same time," prom-

ised SHA's head of internal and antiaging medicine, Dr. Vincente Mera. Crazy as it sounds, that's exactly what happened. The program uses mostly Chinese techniques, such as acupuncture, and an Indian breathing method called *pranayama*. They also keep you very busy with exercise, coached by your own personal trainer. The incredible setting encourages hiking and long walks.

And so it went for four days. In addition, there was hypnosis, psychotherapy, blood tests and more blood tests, and something called "ozone therapy," which a doctor friend in New York told me was "completely worthless." All I know is that the program worked for me. Though I wish I had had the full seven-day experience. I'm still not smoking. Yes, the urge can still raise its ugly head, but my ability to say no is much stronger. The program obviously doesn't and can't work for everyone, but a year later, I am its greatest fan, and even if I hadn't gone for the smoking but rather for sleeping, eating, or just plain relaxing, I would recommend it. ♦

Rooms are \$291 a night; a weeklong program starts at \$3,655; [shawellnessclinic.com](http://shawellnessclinic.com).



A typical day in SHA Wellness Clinic's anti-tobacco program begins with blood tests and consultations, but the environment overlooking Costa Blanca is not the least bit medical.