

LIFESTYLE | TRAVEL

Eddy Downpatrick is in search of the world's most epic adventures—and he wants to take you with him

By Coco Marett | Apr 28, 2024



COVER Eddy Downpatrick is the founder of Aristeia Travel

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Eddy Downpatrick, a member of the British royal family, is the founder of Aristeia Travel, which takes its guests on epic adventures, be it on the Scottish Highlands or the Himalayas

Eddy Downpatrick's travel plans for this year read like someone's lifetime bucket list: seeking out Europe's last free-flowing rivers in the Balkans, combing the wilds of the Mongolian steppes, taking on adventures in the hidden realms of Kyrgyzstan, exploring the Nepali portion of the Himalayas by helicopter, trekking the reopened ancient paths of the Trans-Bhutan Trail, and then to Norway, "where the aurora is likely to be at its very best for at least a decade", he says.

He'll also be sharing "the magical experience of being in the water with orcas [killer whales] in northern Norway as they cruise the fjords on their annual hunt for huge schools of herring. You can listen to these creatures underwater and gain an understanding of mammals whose levels of sophistication and intelligence we are only just beginning to appreciate."

Finally, he'll continue to explore the place closest to his heart: the Scottish Highlands, where he'll indulge in the region's "incredible, not to mention romantic, natural and cultural history". Downpatrick's affinity for the Scottish Highlands runs deep, and runs in the family.

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His full name is Edward Windsor, Lord Downpatrick (yes, that Windsor), and he is the second cousin, twice removed, of the late Queen Elizabeth II, who was known for her great love of the Highlands and spent her final days at Balmoral Castle in Scotland. Following her death, Downpatrick shared a photo of the monarch hiking in the area with the caption "To the eternal realms of the Heilan hikes"—Heilan being the Gaelic word for "highland".

The low-key member of the British royal family enjoys a comfortable distance from the pressures of working royal life, which allows him to explore and pursue his passions, namely traversing some of the most inhospitable corners of the Earth. In 2021, following stints in the finance and fashion worlds, he founded Aristeia Travel—a travel concierge that takes intrepid travellers to far-flung, breathtaking destinations.

Last year, he took a group of guests to Ladakh, where he guided them on one of the highest white-water-rafting trips in the world, starting at some 4,400 metres above sea level, along the Zaskar River "complete with what are, at times, kilometre-high rock-walls looming above", he recalls. "This was combined with visits to Buddhist temples set against cliff faces, one of which is run by the Dalai Lama's brother, and in the midst of high-altitude plains."

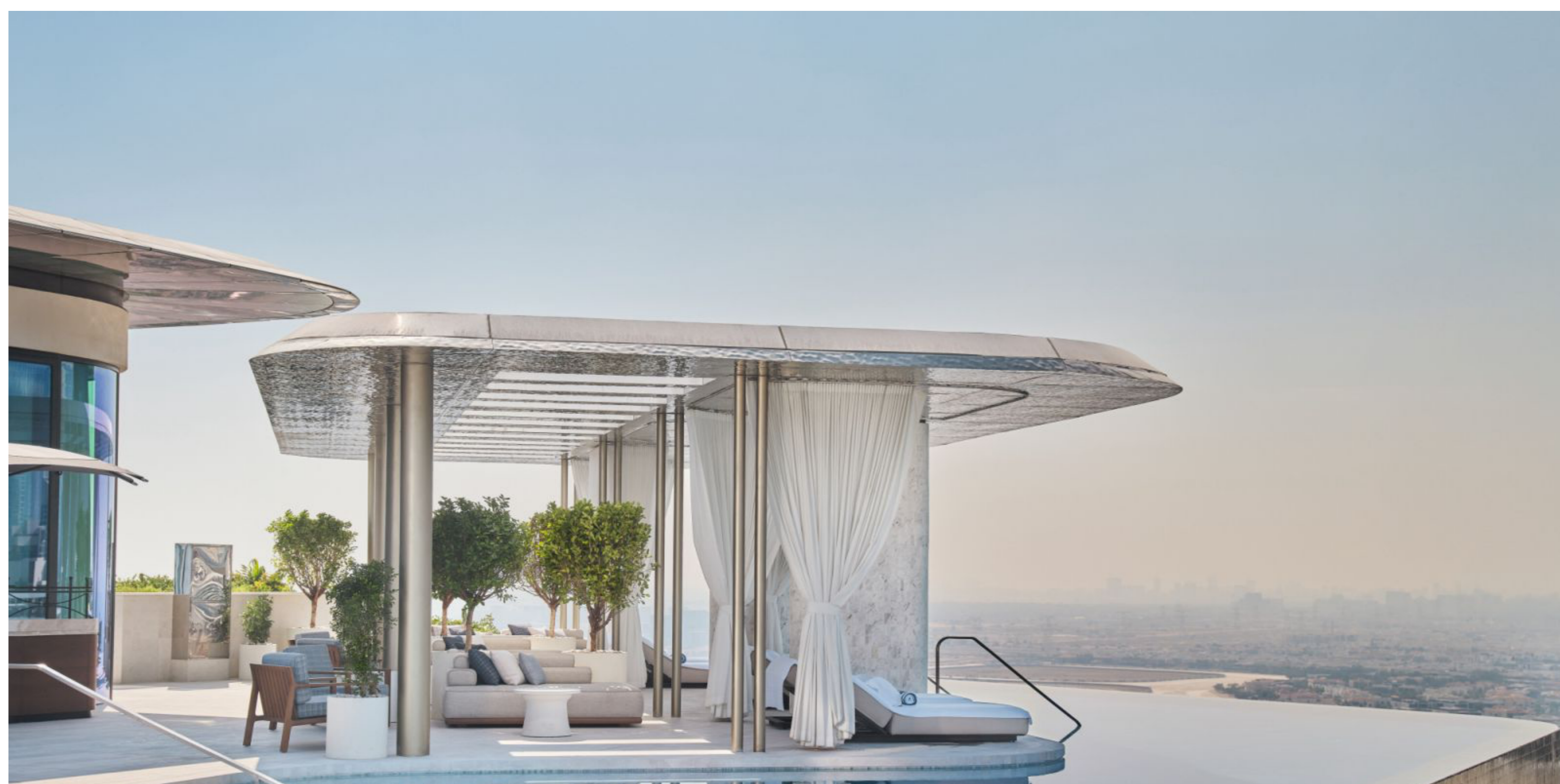
Aristeia Travel also customises trips that combine adventure and luxury to destinations such as Patagonia, Antarctica and Kazakhstan—taking on the regions' wilderness by day and staying in beautiful, environmentally minded lodgings that foster meaningful connections between people and place by night. "We are a highend travel business, [but] it is not that which makes us unique. Rather, [it is] the curated access we offer to the special places of the world [and] the ways in which we let our guests experience them," Downpatrick says. "This stems from an imaginative way of looking at the world, but also from what you might say of me is an unusual, esoteric background, knowledge base and cast of connected characters."

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