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SICILY

SAVOR **LA BELLA VITA**
ON THE ITALIAN ISLAND p. 68

PICK YOUR THRILL
IN **AUCKLAND** p. 64

SHENZHEN IS BIG
ON BUSINESS p. 57

BELFAST SETS
A COURSE
FOR AMBITIOUS
EXPANSION p. 48

PLUS
HOTELS CATER TO
CHINESE TRAVELERS p. 36

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Savvy businesses pay attention to the ebb and flow of their customer base, adjusting their products, services and marketing efforts accordingly. The same holds true for the travel and hospitality industries — but on a worldwide basis — where analysts track global trends, study travel patterns and gather data to ensure their products and services remain in sync with a fluctuating market.

This month, Monique Barrett explores how hotels, airlines and travel-related services are adjusting their offerings to meet the needs of a growing population of international Chinese travelers. While the United States has long been a popular destination for Chinese travelers, recent policy changes, including relaxed short-term and multiple-entry visa policies,

are expected to increase inbound travel from China. Gearing up for the expected influx, hotels are rolling out the welcome mat with everything from offering congee and dim sum on the in-room dining menu to providing Mandarin-language television programming.

On the flipside, Allison Voigts runs through a typical business day in Shenzhen, offering Western travelers to China insights about business etiquette, getting around the city and even the best places to close a deal. (Hint: Bring your golf clubs.) Our around-the-world adventure continues with coverage of Belfast, Incheon, Las Vegas, Sicily, Saint Vincent and Toronto.

When all is said and done, be sure to test your travel IQ. In this issue, we invite you to identify some of the world's most famous clocks. Take the quiz, then check your results at globaltravelerusa.com/quizclocks.

Lisa Matte, Editor in Chief

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Looking Ahead

This month I have a whirlwind, around-the-globe trip to Dubai and Abu Dhabi, and then I continue East to Asia, returning just in time for the Thanksgiving holidays and, of course, the Turkey Bowl (our annual Black Friday golf outing), which will be played this year at the Union League at Torresdale Country Club (see review in this issue).

It seems like just a few days ago we were all enjoying beach weather and summer trips, trying to soak in as much as we could before hunkering back down and preparing for a new and challenging year at *Global Traveler*. As I write this letter, we are readying for the annual *Global Traveler* awards, which are in the 12th year and will be held for the fifth year at The Peninsula Beverly Hills. Weather permitting, we hope to move the venue to the magnificent pool area with lanterns and decorations to make for a memorable evening.

I think the one thing we can all be sure of with the New Year is it will bring change. That seems to be the reoccurring theme over the last 12 years, from our launch in 2004 when against all odds we struggled to find our niche and make a voice. We struggled again when the recession hit the U.S. economy in 2008, but made it through that period even stronger. What 2016 will bring us is unclear, but what I do know is it will be full of changes and the magazine will adjust and continue to grow.

In 2016, we will continue to bring the bonus editions. Fifteen issues a year is a commitment very few publications can complete. Readers continue to offer high marks for *The Global City Guidebook* — a city-by-city compilation with bonus distribution to industry professionals; *The Class Act* — a study of all the premium aspects of flying; and the *Leisure Lifestyle* edition (celebrating its 10th anniversary this year) featuring all the products top travelers care about as well as the announcement of the Leisure Travel Awards.

Digitally, we are knee-deep in the planning process for the redesign of our Web-based products: globaltravelerusa.com, *eFlyer* and our other electronically delivered editions. Whether you are online or sitting in the United Lounge reading the printed edition, *GT* is where you are and ready to serve. Be prepared for 2016 and the changes it will bring!

Francis X. Gallagher, Publisher/CEO

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What's happening on GT blogs?

Have you checked out our *Global Traveler* blogs recently? Last month, we featured blogs about everything from discovering Lake Como to Singapore's Golden Jubilee.

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contents

November 2015 | Vol. 12 | Issue 11



features

36 Welcoming China

Hotels develop initiatives to cater to the global Chinese travel market.
BY MONIQUE BARRETT

40 True Originals

Loews defines its niche with luxury, service and a passion for authentic guest experiences.
BY ILONA KAUREMSZKY

44 Center of Energy

Toronto's convenience and cosmopolitan vitality spark the imagination of meeting planners.
BY MEGAN ROWE

business destinations

48 Destination One: Belfast

Shaped by its seafaring past, Belfast sets an ambitious course toward a brilliant horizon.

54 Stateside: Las Vegas

Las Vegas moves the action outdoors.

57 9-5: Shenzhen

Find stylish venues for impressing clients in China's bustling business hub.

60 After 5: Incheon

Incheon awakens as the South Korean sun sets.

on the cover



COVER PHOTO: OLIVE TREE STANDS AMONG ROWS OF GRAPE VINES IN VINEYARD ETNA REGION, SICILY.
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contents

November 2015 | Vol. 12 | Issue 11



leisure destinations

62 Neighborhoods: San Juan Find urban luxury in the center of a Caribbean playground.

64 Business Plus: Auckland Walk, sail, jump, sip and taste your way through Auckland.

68 Add-On: Sicily Sicily overflows with fabulous food and wine, beaches, hill towns and history.

72 Kicking Back: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Slow down in the barefoot paradise of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Known as the City of Sails, Auckland boasts more boats per capita than anywhere else in the world.

34



28



lifestyle

- 26 **Technology**
- 27 **Wine & Spirits**
- 28 **Spas**
- 30 **Chefs**
- 32 **Golf**
- 34 **Cruising**
- 76 **Events**
- 80 **Health**

connections

- 10 **Mail Call**
- 14 **News**
- 18 **Reviews**
- 22 **One on One**
Starwood Hotels & Resorts
- 24 **One on One**
Regal Wings
- 78 **Airport Update**
- 82 **Quiz**

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September Cover Battle

Seoul battled Berlin for the cover position in September. With the kaleidoscope of reds and greens on the Seoul cover, it was our favored choice. But the Berlin nightscape was a close runner-up. What did you think?

The Seoul cover was incredibly interesting, with its intricate details and colors. The door's placement was slightly off-center, lending an interesting perspective to the cover. With the detailing and the perspective coupled, it was simple yet complicated. A stunning selection.

Larry Murphy, via email



Turning the Tide

I visited Manila in 2005 for business, and I haven't been back since. A new prospective client headquartered in the Philippine city means an upcoming trip in December. The Destination One: Manila article in the September issue was a comprehensive look at the city today, and I plan to use it as a go-to guide for navigating the business climate on my upcoming trip, as I'm sure it's quite different from my last visit. As Chadner Navarro notes, Manila is bustling.

Hanson Wells, Dallas, Texas

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Which Would You Pick?

This is a photo of our alternate cover choice for the November 2015 issue. Sicily or Shenzhen? The picturesque vineyard on Sicily called to us — we wanted to be there right then, making it the ultimate winner. Do you like the cover we chose? Or do you prefer Shenzhen? Share your thoughts; did we make the right choice?

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The Trazees

Editor's Note: In our October 2015 issue of Global Traveler, we featured the winners of the first-ever The Trazees, the awards voted on by the readers of our sister publication, trazeetravel.com. Not all winners could join us at the event, which coincided with the 2015 Global Business Travel Association convention in Orlando in July. Here are two more winners we are happy to congratulate!



Cayman Islands, Favorite Snorkeling Spot

Tom Ludington, general manager, USA, Cayman Department of Tourism



Alaska Airlines, Favorite Green Airline

Alaska Airlines' Corporate Green Team: Ashli Austin, project manager, Alaska Airlines; Annette Chanez, cargo accounting manager, Alaska Airlines; Jacqueline Drumheller, sustainability manager, Alaska Airlines; Rhonda Smith, corporate real estate and analytics manager, Alaska Airlines; Lynne Hiemer, human resources coordinator, Alaska Airlines

State Lawmaker Calls for Smoking Ban in All Hotel Rooms

In the Sept. 8 issue of eFlyer USA, we reported a new bill introduced would make it tougher for smokers visiting New York State to light up. State lawmaker Ken Zebrowski proposed a bill banning smoking at all hotels in the state. Do you believe smoking should be permitted or banned in hotels?

Smoking is a legal right. I do NOT agree with a smoking ban. I never have and I never will.

Joanne Davis, New York, N.Y.

Yes, I totally agree with the proposed bill. Smoke not only travels through the ventilation system, but the rooms that are smoked in will always have that nasty, stale smoky smell. Yuck! I don't care how much you try to clean the rooms, they will still smell like smoke.

Leigh Madden, Jackson, Miss.

Is Your Driver's License Valid for Airport Security?

In the Sept. 30 issue of eFlyer USA, we reported that if you reside in New York, Minnesota, Louisiana or New Hampshire, your driver's license will no longer get you through airport security starting as early as next year. One reader living abroad clears up some other potential misconceptions stemming from the license issues.

Good article. However, it really should have mentioned only U.S. states are included in the new regulations. For your readers not residing in the United States who do not have a U.S. driver's license, it's important to note the Transportation Security Administration will not accept a driver's license from outside the United States, even with the proper requirements. I have tried. This is also true for the Clear program — you must have two official U.S. forms of identification.

Donald Feinberg, via email

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China Global Traveler

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A man in a dark suit is seen from behind, standing with his arms outstretched, holding the handles of a large glass door. The door is open, revealing a busy hotel lobby with many people walking around. The floor has a circular pattern. The lighting is bright, and the overall atmosphere is one of openness and activity.

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New Perks Added for Premium Passengers

Airlines around the world are investing in indulging premium passengers — and their furry friends — with the addition of new luxurious features designed to boost customer convenience and comfort in the skies.

British Airways ups the luxury ante with the new first-class cabin on its Boeing 787-9 aircraft. The new stretched Dreamliner comes equipped with the carrier's very latest first cabin, including eight spacious suites. Each suite is gently lit with ambient lighting and boasts extra storage space, a personal suiter for jackets and coats accessible from the seat, a charging point area next to the armrest and a 23-inch in-flight entertainment screen.

Passengers flying Lufthansa's long-haul aircraft can enjoy flying in the carrier's new cabins with the completion of the most extensive cabin renewal program in the company's history. The overhaul involved the refitting of 106 Lufthansa long-haul aircraft with new business- and economy-class cabins as well as the rollout of a new first-class cabin on 76 of 106 aircraft. New business-class features include comfortable seats with a horizontal sleeping surface measuring about 6.5 feet in length, greater distance from neighbors at shoulder level for more privacy and larger in-flight entertainment monitors. The airline also plans to finish installing its new premium-economy class on all long-haul aircraft by this fall.

Major U.S. carriers United Airlines and American Airlines added new cabin features for premium passengers. United passengers flying the carrier's domestic narrow-body fleet are treated to new custom-designed seats recently installed on select aircraft, featuring covers in signature navy and champagne colors as well as convenient amenities like additional storage space, a tray table with a built-in device to hold tablets and smartphones, in-seat universal A/C power outlets and granite cocktail tables. At 21.1 inches, the seats measure 1.85 inches wider than the previous-generation seats and include six-way

adjustable headrests and an articulating design for additional comfort. Retrofits on Airbus A319, A320 and many Boeing 737 and 757 aircraft are expected through 2016.

For jet-setting pets, American unveiled a new cabin dubbed Cuddle Class, allowing first-class passengers to book specially designed travel compartments for their small dogs and cats. Set at the front first-class section of Airbus A321 aircraft the carrier operates on flights between New York (JFK) and both San Francisco (SFO) and Los Angeles (LAX), the pet cabins are ventilated compartments certified for holding pets in their carriers.

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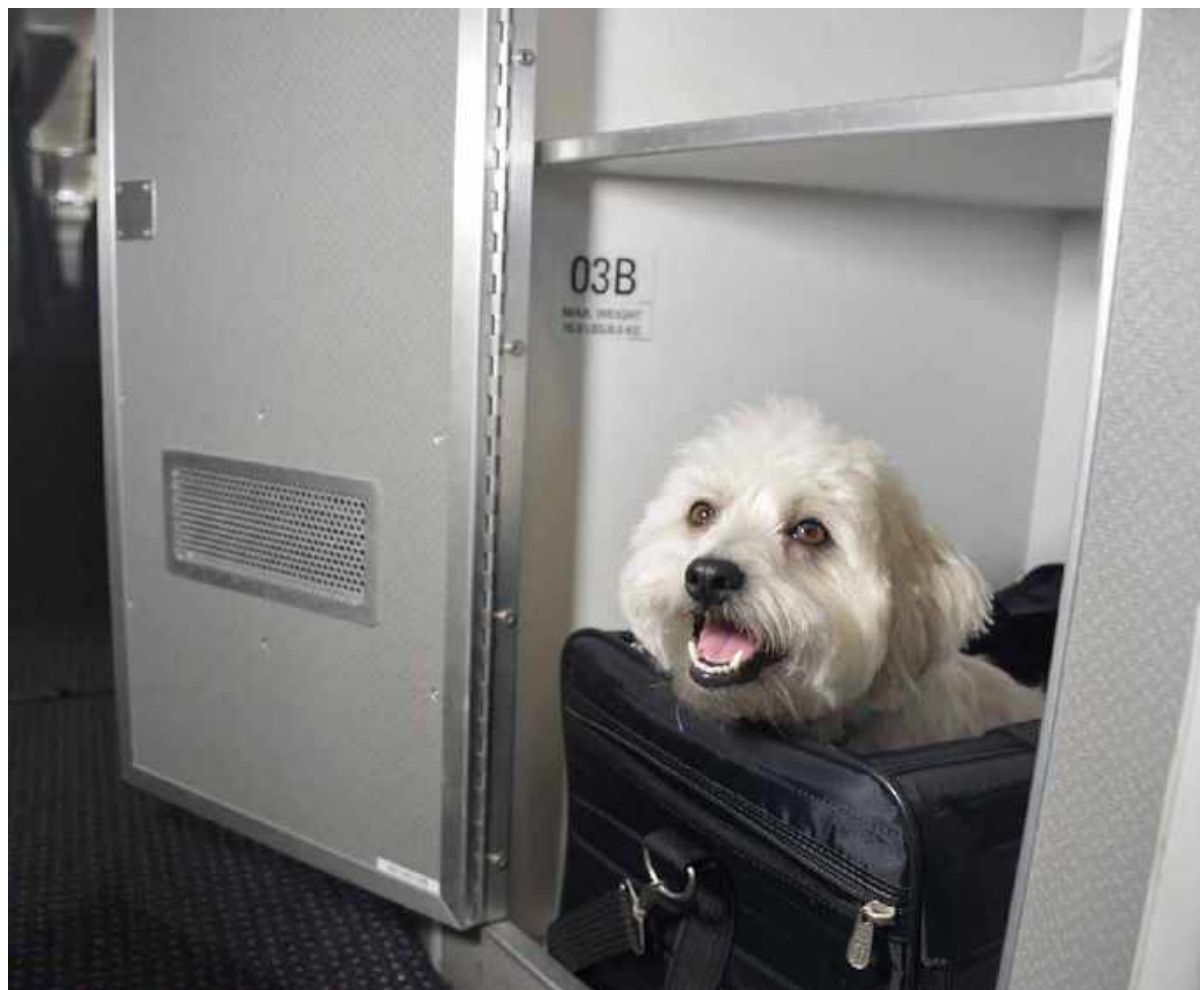


PHOTO: © AMERICAN AIRLINES

Direct to Dubai, Delhi

Air Canada extends its international network with the launch of new non-stop service to Dubai this month, offering more options for travelers between North America and the United Arab Emirates, as well as direct flights to Delhi. The carrier will operate four flights per week from Nov. 1 between Toronto (YYZ) and Delhi (DEL) and will then launch three flights per week from Nov. 3 between Toronto and Dubai (DXB). Both routes will operate with Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft, equipped with next-generation lie-flat seats in International Business Class. The new Delhi service becomes the only non-stop flight from Canada to India.

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South American Service

Delta Air Lines grows its route network in South America with the launch of direct service from Orlando to São Paulo next month. Service to the Brazilian city starts with four flights per week Dec. 19, with daily flights expected to begin Feb. 20, 2016. The route will operate with Boeing 767-300ER aircraft, equipped with 35 flat-bed seats with direct aisle access in the Delta One cabin. Delta offers American and Brazilian customers to São Paulo (GRU) the option of flying through New York (JFK), Atlanta (ATL), Detroit (DTW) or Orlando (MCO). Delta's alliance with Brazilian airline GOL Linhas Aéreas Inteligentes expands the reach of the Orlando-São Paulo service to 32 Brazilian destinations.

delta.com

Colombia Collection

The first of two Four Seasons located in the Colombian capital opened its doors to guests at the start of this fall, offering visitors a signature Four Seasons experience in the beloved city landmark of Casa Medina. Four Seasons Hotel Casa Medina Bogotá carefully restored the residential-style hotel to retain the French- and Spanish-influenced design details of artist and architect Santiago Medina Mejia's original 1946 building while it also added updated and modern luxuries. Features include 62 beautifully redecorated rooms and suites, no two alike, boasting amenities like fireplaces or beamed ceilings, as well as a new dining concept serving a Spanish-influenced menu, a full-service spa retreat and unique event spaces. The new property becomes the brand's first opening in the capital, to be followed by Four Seasons Hotel Bogotá in early 2016.

fourseasons.com

Regional Boost

Alaska Airlines expands its regional route network with new flights connecting key cities in California, Idaho and Nevada as well as a new ski destination for Southern California customers. From Nov. 5, the carrier offers new daily round-trip service between Los Angeles (LAX) and Monterey (MRY) and between Boise (BOI) and Reno (RNO), while new seasonal service between Los Angeles and Gunnison/Crested Butte (GUC) will shuttle skiers and snowboarders from California to Colorado starting in December. Alaska's sister carrier Horizon Air will operate the routes with 76-seat Bombardier Q400 aircraft, giving passengers a taste of the Northwest with complimentary wine and microbrews.

alaskaair.com



PHOTO: © JUKURAESAVURAI | DREAMSTIME.COM

Japan's Winter Wonderland

One of Japan's most famed year-round resorts for winter recreational activities welcomes the debut of the first Starwood ski resort in the country and the Westin brand's entry in the renowned Rusutsu region of Hokkaido. The Westin Rusutsu Resort features 210 guestrooms, including suites with up to seven beds for large groups or families, as well as extensive leisure facilities ideal for the ski location, including a hot spring, sauna, outdoor baths, tennis courts and a WestinWORKOUT studio. Set 90 minutes from Sapporo's Chitose International Airport, the resort is conveniently located near a number of popular mountain ranges, slopes and ski operations.

starwoodhotels.com/westin

Get Teleported

Marriott Hotels are going virtual with new gear enabling guests to journey on a virtual-reality travel experience without ever leaving the hotel. The flagship brand of Marriott International partnered with Academy Award-winning Framestore to give guests and the public the opportunity to teleport themselves with virtual-reality headsets and headphones to unique locations at select major cities across the United States through November. While "traveling" to a black-sand beach in Maui or to the top of a skyscraper in downtown London, participants experience 4D elements like warm sun on their face, breeze in their hair, rumbles of waves under their feet and ocean spray in their face.

marriotthotels.com

Connecting at Sea

Staying in touch while cruising the high seas is now easier for premium passengers, thanks to free WiFi from Crystal Cruises. The company's *Crystal Symphony* and *Crystal Serenity* ships now provide one hour daily of complimentary WiFi to guests in deluxe staterooms and penthouses and 90 free minutes for penthouse suite guests. Previously only available to Crystal Society members, the cruise line's free WiFi program is designed to make life aboard ships as convenient as possible for those who don't wish to stay unplugged on vacation and want to keep in contact for business purposes or with loved ones. Crystal Yacht Cruises' *Crystal Esprit* ship will also offer 24-hour satellite-enabled wireless Internet when it sets out on its maiden voyage Dec. 23.

crystalcruises.com

deals

PHOTO: © WALDORF ASTORIA DUBAI PALM JUMEIRAH



Dubai Discount

Members of the Emirates Skywards frequent-flyer loyalty program can save 30 percent on best available room rates and 30 percent on food and beverage expenses at select Hilton hotels in Dubai as well as earn triple Skywards miles on stays through Nov. 30. Participating properties include Waldorf Astoria Dubai Palm Jumeirah, Conrad Dubai, Hilton Dubai Creek, Hilton Dubai Jumeirah Resort, Hilton Dubai The Walk, DoubleTree by Hilton Dubai Jumeirah Beach, DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel and Residences Dubai Al Barsha, Hilton Garden Inn Dubai Al Mina and Hilton Garden Inn Al Muraqabat. Guests must book the reservation with their membership number and present their membership card at check-in.

hhonors.com

Paradise Just Got Closer

Starwood Preferred Guest offers members of the loyalty program the chance to book a reward stay at some of the most luxurious Starwood resorts for fewer Starpoints versus the usual redemption rate through March 8, 2016. SPG members receive a 35 percent Starpoints redemption discount at select resorts in Thailand, the Maldives, French Polynesia and Dubai. In addition, guests who stay five consecutive nights at any of the participating resorts can receive the fifth night free. This offer cannot be reserved online and must be booked by calling the SPG Customer Contact Center. Discounted Starpoints will be deducted from member accounts at time of booking.

spgresortredemption.com

Villa Savings

Marriott Rewards members can enjoy low rates on spacious villas this fall in destinations around the world. Through Dec. 17, save 20 percent on leisure rates at more than 45 Marriott Vacation Club resorts when staying any night Sunday through Thursday. Participating hotels include locations in Aruba, France, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Spain, U.S. Virgin Islands and

the United States. This deal is available any night of the week at locations in Hawai'i and the Caribbean. Valid with promotional code M11. Expansive villas include comfortable and convenient features such as separate living and dining areas, fully equipped kitchen, master suite and a private balcony or patio.

marriott.com

Free Weekend Nights

Book any five eligible nights for other travelers at Sheraton hotels and resorts worldwide and earn one free weekend night at any Sheraton location with a promotion exclusively for SPG Pro travel professionals and executive assistants. The deal is valid for stays that occur through Dec. 31. For every five eligible nights booked, SPG Pro members earn a free weekend night award, up to three, for personal travel through March 31, 2016. Nights do not need to be consecutive or for the same booking or traveler. Simply add up the eligible room nights from multiple bookings at Sheraton hotels. Free weekend nights are valid Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, except in the Middle East, where they are valid Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

spgpromos.com/prosfw

rewards

Hong Kong Bonus

Earn up to quadruple Asia Miles on round-trip flights between select cities in North America and Hong Kong (HKG) with Cathay Pacific this fall. Through Nov. 30, members of the frequent-flyer loyalty program can earn quadruple Asia Miles on flights in first class, triple miles on service in business class or double miles on flights in premium economy. Choose from Boston (BOS), Chicago (ORD), Los Angeles (LAX), New York (JFK), Newark (EWR), San Francisco (SFO) or Vancouver (YVR) to make this autumn more rewarding.

asiamiles.com

Quadruple Avios

Hilton HHonors and British Airways Executive Club partnered to offer members of both loyalty programs the chance to earn up to quadruple Avios on Hilton stays this fall. Through Dec. 13, members can earn quadruple Avios for stays at participating properties in London and triple Avios for stays at select hotels across the rest of Europe, the Middle East and Africa. To take advantage of the promotion, members must select British Airways as their preferred travel partner, set Points and Miles as their preferred earning style and register for the offer online.

hhonors.com

Bonus KrisFlyer Miles

Members of the Singapore Airlines frequent-flyer loyalty program can earn bonus KrisFlyer miles on Rocketmiles hotel bookings through Dec. 31. Members who have not previously made a booking via Rocketmiles will be eligible for a 3,000 KrisFlyer miles bonus, in addition to the standard award rate of 500–10,000 miles earned per night, through registration with Rocketmiles. Reservations must be made with promotional code KRISFLYER on the Rocketmiles iOS app or using the promotional link.

rocketmiles.com/krisflyer-3k-bonus

Accelerate Your Points

Accelerate your Hertz Gold Plus Rewards points to earn free days fast with a new promotion offering up to triple points on rentals this fall. Through Dec. 15, members can earn double Gold Plus Rewards points on their first qualifying rental after promotion registration, then accelerate to triple points on all the rest of their qualifying rentals. Valid on paid rentals picked up at participating Hertz locations in the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand. Online registration is required.

hertzfallbonus.com



Hotel ZaZa

Reviewed by Mike Donahue

Arrival/Check-In: I recently traveled with a colleague to Texas for a series of meetings in Dallas and Houston. After a productive day in Dallas, we took a short flight to Houston and went to the ZaZa Hotel. ZaZa is a Texas-based boutique property with locations in Dallas, Houston and one on the way in Austin. As we arrived, the strings of lights illuminating the driveway provided a warm welcome, and the valets tended to our vehicle and luggage quickly and professionally. At the registration desk, cheerful hosts greeted us and helped us on our way to our rooms. There was also a clever display of Tootsie Pops on the counter, a nice touch for guests after a long day of travel.

Guest Quarters: While the standard guestrooms are nicely appointed, ZaZa also offers seven concept suites with names like Houston We Have a Problem (a space suite). ZaZa also has seven themed suites they call the Magnificent Seven. I think I used up some of my luck when the hotel put me in the Tycoon suite with a beautiful Texas-themed décor, pictures of guests who have stayed in the suite — a who's-who of the rich and famous — and an unbelievable balcony offering spectacular views of the Museum District and the Houston skyline. A unique

touch on the balcony is a bathtub — not a hot tub but a real ceramic tub, probably requested by one of the rich and famous guests and now a fixture. And, yes, I did take advantage of the bathtub.

Services/Amenities: Given our short stay at ZaZa, we didn't have a chance to experience many of the services and amenities, which was disappointing. We did tour through the spa, pool and state-of-the-art fitness facility, which was just redone. A unique service offered by ZaZa is the Butler Pantry, a coffee bar in the hallway by the elevator, which I took full advantage of. The next morning, we enjoyed breakfast at the Monarch restaurant; the service and food were great. Overall, the staff was attentive.

Hotel ZaZa features an extensive collection of unique meeting venues for occasions ranging from large-scale corporate events to intimate gatherings. Featuring grand ballrooms and one-of-a-kind concept suites, versatile event spaces ensure no two events are ever alike.

The Experience: Having the opportunity to stay in the Tycoon suite was an unexpected, amazing experience. Take the suite out of the experience, however, and ZaZa still creates an interesting and energizing environment through its hospitality and approach to unique décor, including the elevator. When traveling to Texas in the future, I'll be sure to stay at ZaZa.

GT CHECKLIST

- ☒ Doorman/valet
- ☒ Less than 10 minutes for check-in
- ☒ Separate tub and shower
- ☒ Large vanity
- ☒ High-quality towels
- ☐ Powerful, unattached hair dryer
- ☒ High-quality bed linens
- ☒ Large, flat-screen television
- ☒ Large desk with convenient outlets
- ☒ Large, complimentary laptop safe
- ☒ Complimentary in-room WiFi
- ☒ Complimentary bottled water
- ☒ Stocked minibar
- ☒ Ample lighting
- ☒ In-room coffeemaker
- ☒ Iron and ironing board
- ☒ On-site restaurant and bar
- ☒ 24-hour room service
- ☒ 24-hour state-of-the-art fitness center
- ☒ Turn-down service

Hotel ZaZa Houston

5701 Main St.
Houston, Texas 77005
tel 713 526 1991
hotelzaza.com



The Ritz-Carlton, Beijing

Reviewed by Francis X. Gallagher

Arrival/Check-In: Depending on the destination, I either wing it from the airport or arrange for a driver. China is one destination where I prefer a pick-up and The Ritz-Carlton, Beijing met my wife and me in style in a beautiful Rolls Royce. Upon arrival, we were greeted by friendly hotel staff and whisked to our spectacular room. All check-in details were taken care of at the desk in the guestroom for my convenience.

Guest Quarters: We were in a club-level executive suite with a city view. The room featured a large living space separate from the bedroom, which sported a sofa, coffee table, chairs and a large, flat-screen TV. On the far side was a lovely mahogany desk with all the needs I required met since I was working remotely during this trip. Power plugs and convertors were at the ready and I could view the TV while working. I was amused when the Chinese government would black out the protests taking place in Hong Kong or the reports about the dictator in North Korea.

The bathroom was equally large and long, with lots of marble, a 15-inch TV, an oversized tub, a separate shower with a rain feature and Asprey bath products.

A Nespresso coffee machine was set in traditional Ritz fashion — marble top, bottles of water ready with cups and accoutrements — which was useful, and a GT requirement

on our checklist!

The bedroom's king-sized bed was fit for a king or a queen, and its large hallway offered a built-in, substantial armoire.

Services/Amenities: Everyone was ready to help us and they were disappointed we arranged our own driver and guide to see all the required sites, including the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City, Hutongs, Temple of Heaven and Cudixia Village. You could see the disappointment on their faces that the Ritz team was not taking us on the tour.

There are many restaurants and lounge options including the Ritz Bar, the Lounge and Davidoff's Cigar Bar. As if that is not enough, add Yu, Aroma and Barolo for any international cuisine you desire.

As a club level guest, you can hardly beat the experience of sitting back and enjoying a drink and a large selection of dishes and appetizers. Many of the offerings were hot and could easily make a meal for the evening. After sightseeing from 10 a.m.–6 p.m., the last thing you want is to go to a restaurant. I found the staff friendly and able and willing to chat about almost any subject, including politics. They were also helpful in arranging our boarding passes and printing some business materials I required.

The Experience: Built for the Beijing Olympics, I believe The Ritz-Carlton team addresses the local flavor in their hotels while keeping some of their old-world charm. The staff and team at the property make it a must stop!

GT CHECKLIST

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- ☑ Complimentary bottled water
- ☑ Stocked minibar
- ☑ Ample lighting
- ☑ In-room coffeemaker
- ☑ Iron and ironing board
- ☑ On-site restaurant and bar
- ☑ 24-hour room service
- ☑ 24-hour state-of-the-art fitness center
- ☑ Turn-down service

The Ritz-Carlton, Beijing

83A Jian Guo Road
China Central Place, Chaoyang District
Beijing, China 100025
tel 86 10 5908 8888
ritzcarlton.com

Fairmont Towers, Heliopolis, Cairo

Reviewed by Monique Barrett

Arrival/Check-In: After a long day involving a flight from Luxor and hours of exploring the vibrant Khan El-Khalili bazaar, I was eager to quickly check in at Fairmont Towers, Heliopolis, Cairo and shower before a dinner meeting in the hotel. However, my plans were unfortunately dashed when it took about 20 minutes to receive my room key. I was told my luggage would arrive quickly to my room following a security check, but my belongings never arrived; and I had to revisit the front desk before dinner, point out my luggage to attendants and relay my room number to ensure delivery while I was dining.

While waiting to receive a room key, I toured the expansive lobby and was amazed by the size of the hotel, housing 840 guestrooms and suites and an array of dining and recreational facilities. The property completed a \$15 million restoration program in 2011 that updated the guestrooms in the hotel's Heliopolis wing. Incredible artwork and beautiful flowers dot the inviting lobby, and while waiting I was glad to be distracted by the hotel's replicas of ancient Egyptian relics, including a model of King Tut's ornate mask and small Egyptian solar boat.

Guest Quarters: An adequately sized closet stocked with an ironing board, iron and several hangers was set to the right of the main doorway next to a large, brightly lit bathroom providing plenty of space. After my luggage arrived while I was at dinner, I enjoyed a hot shower in the expansive, clean shower that left me feeling refreshed and relaxed, thanks to great water pressure and nice-smelling toiletries.

The rest of the room opened into a large space with warm wooden floors and a king-sized bed facing a flat-screen TV above a spacious vanity. A sizeable desk with a convenient overhead lamp and several outlets sat in the corner by the large windows, next to a small coffee table and comfortable armchair in the other corner. While the windows, featuring blackout curtains, provided a decent view of the pool and grounds, noise from guests outside permeated my room, making me fear I wouldn't get a decent night of sleep before my long flight to New York the next day. Chatter and music eventually subsided, but I recommend asking for a room away from the pool if you prefer total peace and quiet.

Services/Amenities: After checking in and settling my luggage issues, I walked to the hotel's Aqua e Luce venue for dinner, where my dining companions and I enjoyed a range of Egyptian and European-inspired dishes. Guests and visitors can normally choose from 17 contemporary dining venues ranging from traditional Egyptian fare to Thai, Japanese and Asian cuisine and more, but several restaurants were closed for Ramadan during my visit. After a



delicious meal, we ventured outside to relish the nice evening temperature and lively atmosphere at Oriental Café, where visitors were enjoying an array of shisha flavors by the pool.

In addition to a diverse range of culinary experiences, the property caters to business travelers with a 24-hour business center conveniently located at the lobby level and ample meeting and event space, including modern meeting rooms and tastefully decorated ballrooms. Recreational activities are endless, including three swimming pools, three tennis courts, two air-conditioned squash courts, a sand volleyball court, a kids club and a fully equipped fitness center with a Jacuzzi, sauna, spa treatments and a decent selection of machine options and weights.

The Experience: Set mere minutes from Cairo International Airport on the main artery road leading to central Cairo, the hotel provides an ideal location for business travelers, close to the airport while also near the city center, in the heart of its diplomatic and presidential neighborhood. My arrival coincided with the anniversary of 2013 protests demanding the removal of Mohamed Morsi and the funeral of the prosecutor general who was killed in a bombing days before; while street demonstrations took place nearby in downtown Cairo, I felt safe throughout my visit at Fairmont Heliopolis & Towers Cairo, completely removed from the outside buzz. My only warning is for travelers hoping to visit Giza: The hotel is a lengthy distance from the great Pyramids of Giza, with heavy Cairo traffic making the journey even longer during the workweek, so plan ahead.

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- ☒ Ample lighting
- ☒ In-room coffeemaker
- ☒ Iron and ironing board
- ☒ On-site restaurant and bar
- ☒ 24-hour room service
- ☐ 24-hour state-of-the-art fitness center
- ☐ Turn-down service

Fairmont Towers, Heliopolis, Cairo

Uruba Street, Heliopolis
Cairo, Egypt
tel 20 2 22677730
fairmont.com



Conrad Miami

Reviewed by Kimberly Krol

Arrival/Check-In: Pulling into the Conrad Miami, we were immediately greeted by a number of friendly valets. Shortly after arriving, we were in the elevator headed to the 25th-floor lobby. Guests should note, you arrive at ground level, take the elevators to the 25th floor and then use another bank of elevators to access your guestroom. With no one else waiting to check in, my colleague and I were assisted quickly. I asked the front desk attendant for a lunch recommendation, and he offered several options. He was friendly, and we chatted as he checked me in. After a quick trip to drop off our bags, we headed back out the door for lunch and more meetings. Interesting artwork is displayed in the lobby.

Guest Quarters: My corner room opened into a short hallway with a large bathroom straight ahead. The most noticeable feature of the bathroom was the expansive view of downtown Miami and Biscayne Bay. The bathroom, filled with natural light, offered ample space for getting ready.

To the right, down a shorter hallway, was the bedroom. The king-sized bed, flanked by two nightstands, sat across from a desk and a dresser with a TV. I wish my stay had been longer than one night, as the bed was extremely comfortable. After long days of meetings, a good night of sleep helped me refresh. Windows in the bedroom area

lined two walls and afforded downtown views.

One thing I noticed throughout my stay, from the lobby to the guestrooms to the hotel, was the wonderful aroma wafting throughout. It was welcoming and fresh, without being overtly masculine or feminine.

Services/Amenities: If given the pleasure to stay a bit longer at Conrad Miami, I would have enjoyed a visit to the on-site spa and fitness center, or perhaps the rooftop pool or tennis courts. Give yourself enough time to truly enjoy the property.

My colleague and I enjoyed a plentiful breakfast spread at Atrio, on the 25th floor. We worked and dined, made all the more pleasant by, once again, the stunning views over the bay. In addition to Atrio and its wine room, guests can enjoy in-room dining or The Bar at Level 25.

The views provide the theme at Conrad Miami, and they continue in the hotel's 20,000 square feet of meeting and event space, equipped with the latest in technology. The property is also a choice wedding venue in the city.

The Experience: From the views to the accommodations to the on-site amenities, a stay at Conrad Miami is sure to be a standout. When I realized I'd foolishly forgotten my laptop charger at home, the front desk attendant searched high and low, even phoning other hotel departments, to try to find a replacement for me. This above-and-beyond service exemplified the entire experience.

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- ☑ On-site restaurant and bar
- ☑ 24-hour room service
- ☑ 24-hour state-of-the-art fitness center
- ☑ Turn-down service

Conrad Miami
 1395 Brickell Ave.
 Miami, FL 33131
 tel 305 503 6500
conradhotels3.hilton.com

David C. Marr | Senior Vice President, Brand Management, Global Brand Leader, Tribute Portfolio and Sheraton Hotels & Resorts



Name: David C. Marr

Title: Senior vice president, brand management, global brand leader, Tribute Portfolio and Sheraton Hotels & Resorts

Company, city: Starwood Hotels & Resorts; Stamford, Conn.

Number of employees: 180,000 employees

Recent project: We recently launched Tribute Portfolio, Starwood Hotels & Resorts' 10th brand.

First job: My first job was as a banquet houseman at a hotel in New Hampshire.

Little-known fact about you: I enjoy attending trapeze school. I also love drawing.

YOUR BUSINESS

Essential business philosophy: I base one of my essential business philosophies on the motto, "Half of life is showing up." Show up for people when they need you, and show up to events when your schedule is crazy ... you will always be glad you did, regardless of how difficult it might have been to make it happen.

Best way to keep a competitive edge: Keep your energy up by staying fit and surround yourself with positive people who laugh a lot and make you smile during both the good and bad days.

Yardstick of success: People who worked on my team getting promoted and moving into bigger roles

AS A TRAVELER

What is the most important item you take when traveling?

Running shoes

How do you spend your time on board?

Thinking about what I need to do on the trip and writing some emails

What is your favorite restaurant in the world?

Charisma Restaurant at the Hotel Mystique in Santorini, Greece

What is your favorite destination in the world? Machu Picchu

ABOUT YOUR BRAND

Starwood recently announced The Tribute Portfolio. What was the catalyst and inspiration behind the launch?

In October 2014 a conversation about independent urban and resort hotels' ever-growing popularity was the inspiration for the brand. Starwood was well-known for its nine brands, but as we talked to SPG guests, we found they were staying in these types of hotels when in destinations not served by one of Starwood's nine brands. We also talked with independent hoteliers.

With The Tribute Portfolio, which is by and for our SPG members, hence the name "Tribute," it is important for us to work with owners who have a clear vision. They are creating a brand

resonating with the community, and our involvement is putting the SPG stamp on the property. We give hoteliers design freedom and have no hard brand standards but clear operating standards. Independent hotels around the world are playing to very broad audiences.

Tell our readers about the first Tribute Portfolio hotels and what makes them unique.

The properties are located in both urban and resort markets and have a local feel. The first Tribute Portfolio hotel was the Royal Palm South Beach Miami, located on the infamous South Beach and adjacent to some of the city's luxury shopping. We also recently announced two hotels on the U.S. West Coast: Riviera Palm Springs and Avenue of the Arts Costa Mesa. And we have expanded internationally with the Great Northern Hotel in London, U.K., and The Kiroro in Hokkaido, Japan. Future locations include Coral Gables, Fla.; Asheville, N.C.; and Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Each property has its own story, and that's what makes them stand out.

What are the long-term plans for the brand?

Tribute Portfolio will be a global brand, with plans for Paris, Milan, Amsterdam, Singapore and more. We have eight hotels currently signed, making us very close to our goal of 10 hotels by April 2016. Our goal by 2020 is 100 hotels, with 70 open and operating and 30 in development. The independent-minded owner combined with the power of Starwood has the potential to spawn great brands. I always say, two good ideas equal one great idea.

Luxury's Continuous Evolution

New hotel history thrives at THE PLAZA, Seoul.



LUXURY BOUTIQUE HOTEL

THE PLAZA, Seoul, located right in the heart of Seoul, has played a role in the city's long and rich history since the hotel's inception. Beginning in January 2016, this high-end address will partner with Marriott International's Autograph Collection luxury lifestyle brand to combine the local hotel's strengths and the international chain's know-how.

STAY IN STYLE

Guestrooms at THE PLAZA, Seoul reflect stylish and unique designs and colors, with the in-room accessories and all interior elements custom-designed by the world-renowned Italian designer and architect Guido Ciampi. All guestrooms now feature free wireless Internet access, touchpad room control systems and furnishings made from eco-friendly materials.

PLAY IN STYLE

Guests can enjoy almost any cuisine and cooking style, from exquisite Italian to high-end Japanese fare, at THE PLAZA, Seoul's six dining outlets. The business center provides full secretarial services, along with a range of office equipment and meeting rooms of various sizes which accommodate up to 20 people. The multiple event spaces, including a 600-person ballroom, offer state-of-the-art technology to meet the challenges of the developing MICE industry.

LIFE IN STYLE

THE PLAZA, Seoul offers a wide array of customized services and amenities for its guests, from the state of the art business centre to the highly qualified concierge team. Their new service incorporates the brand's "Stay in Style" theme, with THE PLAZA, Seoul's concierge team catering to all hotel, banquet and restaurant guests. Each upgraded, luxury boutique guestroom also comes fitted with an automatic room management system to design guests' perfect stay.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

THE PLAZA, Seoul received recognition as a premium Korean hotel throughout Asia and the world. In 2011, Expedia Japan selected THE PLAZA, Seoul as the No. 1 hotel in Korea. Asia's culture and trip information website CNNGo named the property one of Seoul's Best Luxury Hotels and one of Asia's Top 7 Hotels with a Beautiful View. The hotel also ranked among Asia's 25 Best Business Hotels in 2013 in a poll by the renowned online travel website Smart Travel Asia.

Learn more about THE PLAZA, Seoul, your ultimate luxury accommodations in Seoul, at hoteltheplaza.com.

Eli Ostreicher | Founder and CEO, Regal Wings



Name: Eli Ostreicher

Title: Founder and CEO

Company, city: Regal Wings, New York City

Number of employees: 125

Recent project: The exciting launch of RegalCard.com, a one-of-a-kind elite luxury travel membership club

First job: At 18, I was part-time assistant to the editor of a small weekly newspaper in my hometown of London, U.K.

Little-known fact about you: I get goose bumps when I hear an airport, even if I'm not traveling and am just dropping off a friend.

YOUR BUSINESS

Essential business philosophy: Where there is a will, there is a way. If you want something badly enough and are willing to put in the effort and dedication it takes, you *will* get there.

Best way to keep a competitive edge: Never compromise on customer service by even an iota. We don't just fly people first class, we also treat them that way.

Yardstick of success: Without a doubt, happy clients! There is no greater joy than seeing clients praising us and consistently coming back.

AS A TRAVELER

What is the most important item you take when traveling? My MacBook Air and a fabulous super-lightweight set of Tumi luggage

How do you spend your time on board? It used to be about changing into a pair of first-class PJs and enjoying the alone time away from the office chaos. Nowadays, with Internet on board more international airlines, I sadly work through the flight.

What is your favorite restaurant in the world? I keep kosher, so dining options are limited; my pick is Prime Grill in Midtown Manhattan.

What is your favorite destination in the world? My heart is attached to the major Asian cities, and I never turn down an excuse to visit Hong Kong, Bangkok, Saigon, Seoul, Tokyo or Shanghai. But my favorite is the Thai island Koh Samui.

ABOUT YOUR BRAND

What travel benefits are associated with the Regal Card program, and how does membership work?

Regal Card is an elite international club whereby members have instant access to countless luxury travel benefits, perks and upgrades, such as unlimited worldwide airport lounge access (regardless of airline or cabin); full annual travel insurance covering

medical, trip interruption and lost/delayed baggage; 24/7 live concierge; award/mileage redemption assistance; instant Avis First and Sixt Platinum status; and VIP access to wholesale/unpublished fares on international first and business class. We also partner with 50-plus unique travel vendors to bring our members exclusive discounts and perks. Members enjoy specially negotiated deals on things like luggage, tour guides, ground transportation, passport and visa fulfillment, private jets, vacation clubs, baggage shipping and tracking, travel apps, bicycle and walking tours, bed and breakfasts, cellphone rentals and roaming data, airport meet and greet, attraction passes, vacation rentals and more.

While similar benefits might be included with some major credit cards, Regal Card is unattached to a credit card or a specific country of residence and boasts more travel benefits than anything ever done before. We have an entire partnerships team dedicated to constantly expanding our relationships with travel vendors across the globe. Our aim is to have a deal in place for members with every possible travel-related category out there. The most beautiful part is that while Regal Card delivers luxury across all aspects of your trip, the yearly membership is affordable, less than \$42 per month.

What travel providers are Regal Card partners?

The list is large but includes Avis, Priority Pass, Small Luxury Hotels, Home Away, Sixt, CIBT, JetSmarter, Inspirato and GroundLink.

What's coming up for the membership program in the next year?

We are working on adding several exciting benefits, including unlimited worldwide WiFi (ground and in-flight) and instant elite status with a major airline (specifics yet to be disclosed).

Timeless Gift Ideas

Here's what to watch for this holiday season.

BY MONIQUE BARRETT

Just in time for the year-end holidays, *Global Traveler* compiled a wish list of unique timepieces with refined sophistication and uniqueness sure to stand the test of time. Explore some of the latest offerings from three renowned companies — LVMH, Richemont and Swatch — for inspiration this holiday season.

LVMH

Designed with a spirit that appreciates handmade craftsmanship, inventiveness and uniqueness, watches from LVMH have a timeless charm. According to the luxury company, its watchmaking side capitalizes on the complementary positioning of its brands, including TAG Heuer's international stature, Hublot's strong dynamic of innovation, Zenith's age-old savoir-faire and Dior's creativity.

In addition to announcing Tom Brady as its newest brand ambassador to join the prestigious elite corps, TAG Heuer recently officially launched the new TAG Heuer Carrera – Heuer 01, the first of a new, chic collection. The watch features a new design all around, including an innovative 12-part case construction, design and caliber. Priced from roughly \$5,100, the Heuer 01 draws the eye into the mechanism of the timepiece with exposed chronograph controls and openwork date disc as well as a transparent sapphire caseback revealing a bold red column wheel and skeleton chronograph bridge.

Watch for the launch of the new TAG Heuer Connected, a Swiss smartwatch powered by Intel technology and Android Wear, Nov. 9.

lvhm.com

Richemont

Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels, Piaget, Wacheron Constantin, Jaeger-LeCoultre, IWC Schaffhausen, Panerai and Montblanc — Richemont's Maisons encompass several of the most prestigious names in the luxury industry.

Montblanc's newest additions to its famed 1858 collection pay tribute to the past with vintage-inspired yet modern looks designed to revive the spirit of the refined watches the legendary Minerva manufacturer has been creating since 1858. Recently unveiled, the 1858 Chronograph Tachymeter watch and 1858 Small Second watches commemorate some of the brand's most celebrated timepieces of the early 20th century.

The Montblanc 1858 Chronograph Tachymeter boasts a sleek black dial and traditionally shaped hands as well as the iconic Montblanc emblem at 12 o'clock and a notched crown. Developed and handcrafted inhouse with stunning 18k red gold, the timepiece is limited to 100 pieces, starting from about \$33,000. Variations of the exquisite Small Second watches start from about \$3,000 and are sure to impress watch enthusiasts who value timepieces with a contemporary vintage expression.

richemont.com

Swatch

For the global traveler in your life, what could be more fun and unique than a sophisticated timepiece featuring a multicolored map of the world? Swatch recently introduced artist Soonja Han's Swatch Art Special THIS IS MY MAP as the second Swatch Club watch of this year. The vibrant map reaches from the dial across the bezel to the tips of the strap, from the center to the ends of the Earth. For a reasonable \$120, the new Swatch Art Special comes in special packaging, featuring a round box displaying the same multicolored map and including a set of five circular colored cards.

swatch.com



TAG Heuer
Carrera –
Heuer 01



1858
Chronograph
Tachymeter



Swatch
THIS IS
MY MAP

Free to Wander

Venture far from home with style and ease. BY ALEXANDRA KIRKMAN



Boostcase for iPhone 6 and 6 Plus

This innovative two-piece design includes an ultra-thin snap case with a battery sleeve you can attach in a single click when you need a boost of juice and remove when you don't. The rechargeable 2700mAh battery sleeve adds more than a 100 percent recharge for the iPhone 6. You can simultaneously charge and sync your iPhone and Boostcase, and an LED light bar shows your remaining battery level. The iPhone 6 Boostcase comes in clear, black, gold, pink coral and orchid colorways; the iPhone 6 Plus Boostcase is available in gold, black and clear. The Gemstone collection offers eight fashion-forward colors: pink tourmaline, ruby, topaz, emerald, sapphire, amethyst, onyx and clear. \$99.95–129.95.

boostcase.com



Ecoxgear Sol Jam

The industry's first 100 percent water-proof portable Bluetooth speaker with integrated HD solar panels, the Sol Jam uses the sun's rays to charge the internal battery so you never have to plug it in to keep the party rocking (though you can if you'd like — it's also a standard speaker). Its portable size means it can easily come along to the beach or on other outdoor adventures, and its top-facing controls make it easy to navigate your music. \$150.

ecogear.com



CultureWizard Mobile

This handy new app offers cultural, societal, etiquette and business practice information for 150 countries, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. Ideal for business travelers, executives relocating to foreign countries, conference organizers and virtually any company conducting business across borders, the app supplies the skinny on communication habits, business protocols and social etiquette. Created by a business travel consulting firm that's provided cultural training for international travelers and expats for 15 years, it also provides access to local maps, pertinent articles and downloadable pocket guides for each country so you can use it when you're not online. Available on iOS and Android.

rw-3.com



Phiaton Noise-Cancelling PS 202 NC Earphones

New from audio company Phiaton, these sleek earphones block out 95 percent of ambient background noise and emphasize high-frequency clarity and rich bass with newly developed drivers and an optimized vibration system. You can manage your playlists and answer phone calls with an in-line remote and microphone that include a music and call button, and Phiaton's exclusive Everplay-X technology lets you keep answering your phone or listening to your music even if the battery runs out. The half in-ear design means hours of comfortable listening, enhanced by four different sizes of silicon ear tips or Comply foam tips (included). \$89.

phiaton.com

Old-World Wonders

Look to Campania's ancient grape varieties for new tasting delights. BY EUNICE FRIED

The ancient wine land of Campania lies along the shin of Italy's "boot," with the Mediterranean Sea as its western border and Naples as its capital. With a viticultural history dating back to the 12th century B.C., today Campania offers the pleasure of drinking wines made of grapes often found nowhere else in the world. Look elsewhere for international wines — the Cabernets, Merlots, Chardonnays and Rieslings produced in nearly every winemaking country. In Campania, expect wines made of Aglianico, a red grape introduced to the region millennia ago by the Greeks; Fiano, a white grape planted in the region for hundreds of years and first mentioned by name in the 13th century; the white Greco di Tufo, a light-shaded grape introduced by the Greeks to southern Italy 2,500 years ago; Coda di Volpe, also grown in the Campania region since ancient times; and other "new" grapes.

The wines of Campania available in the United States include Donnachiaro's Irpinia Coda di Volpe 2014 (\$18). The shade of a pale lemon, with a forward nose of fruity, citrusy tones, especially of tropical fruits, it is full-bodied, young and vibrant with a lingering aftertaste. Coda di Volpe means "tail of a fox," so named because the curve of its grape clusters resembles a fox's tail.

Donnachiaro Esoterico Campania Fiano 2011 (\$30), a concentrated, bright-yellow wine, exudes a deep aroma of melon and other fruits as well as lightly honeyed and nutty hints. This intensely flavored wine presents a round, satiny body and lasts long on the palate.

Tenuta Cavalier Pepe's La Loggia del Cavaliere Taurasi Riserva 2008 (\$75) provides an excellent introduction to wine made of the Aglianico grape. It offers a perfumed nose with hints of plums; a full, almost dense, body; a strong spine; and long finish. Altogether, a fine, well-aged wine.

The red Donnachiaro Campania Aglianico 2012 (\$16) spends no time in oak, leaving its grape flavors pure and unaltered by wood age. A relatively light red, it delivers an earthiness, red berry flavors and a medium-dry finish.

All "new" old flavors of the world.



Wine and Wellness | Spain's Santuario LeDomaine blends classic spa treatments with innovative vinotherapy. BY BECCA HENSLEY



I am wine tasting in the Ribera del Duero, one of Spain's most accomplished wine regions. Though vineyards surround me, I'm not sitting in a bodega. In fact, wrapped in a bathrobe, I tipple at Santuario, a subterranean spa at Abadía Retuerta LeDomaine, a Relais & Châteaux hotel set in a restored 12th-century monastery.

Undeterred by the fact that the clock has not yet struck noon, I swirl, sniff and sip, spa attendants gathered around me. As I comment, they take notes, and with each glass I sample, they offer a vial of essential oil, handcrafted at the spa to match the specific elements of each of the three wines proffered. Part of the recently opened Santuario's innovative vinotherapy concept, the ritual known as spa sommelier digs deeply into the roots of this hotel's bucolic terroir. It's meant to embody the spirit of the property and to honor its history as a place where monks gardened, tended the vineyards and made wine centuries ago. It also celebrates the acclaimed wines produced today in the hotel's own expansive vineyards.

Not a gimmick, the blind tasting procedure allows the spa therapists to assess the client's mood and desires. When the client shows a preference for a certain wine or its corresponding oil, it may reveal what the client needs most from the impending treatment. Opting for a robust Cabernet Sauvignon, for example, might signal the need for a heavier touch on the massage table. Or choosing an aromatic citrus-infused oil could herald the need for mental clarity. Of course, everything gets discussed. But the theory is clients don't always consciously know what they want or need. And the wine they select or the oil they favor allows the senses to respond. Savvy and intuitive therapists interpret the meaning and then turn the chosen spa treatment into an even more bespoke adventure.

It takes several quaffs of the wine and inhalations of the wafted oils before I choose the ones I like the most — at least for my first spa treatment of the week. In truth, I find each one compelling. Complementing the bold, bright, Sauvignon Blanc, an apricot pit-based oil, enlivened by exotic yuzu and lemon, promises balance and alertness. A potent potion of almond oil and thyme produces energizing effects (it pairs with a hearty red), and a macadamia nut and calendula oil infusion, awash with local cedar, mirrors the characteristics of a jovial Tempranillo — and purportedly reduces stress.

With some guidance from the staff, I realize I want to feel peppy after the massage rather than deeply relaxed, so I choose both the white wine (touted as Spain's most

IN THE MOOD: *Spa sommelier ritual*

PHOTO: © LEDOMAINE

popular white vintage) and the citrus-imbued oil inspired by it, in the hope it will vanquish my jet lag. It works, and after back-to-back treatments which utilize a form of cryotherapy (cold-temperature cures) augmented by the yuzu-lemon oil, I depart the spa renewed and ready to explore the hotel and its wine lands.

Inspiringly refurbished and re-envisioned by Swiss master architect Marco Serra, LeDomaine opened in 2012. With Spain's first butler program, the 30-room monastery hotel, located in the heart of Castile-León just 20 minutes from Valladolid, cleverly marries the past with the present. Its rural setting reinforces its mission of serenity and repose. Fields of sunflowers, crisscrossing vineyards, rolling blond-hued hills and timeless Don Quixote-evoking villages surround LeDomaine. Extant Romanesque and Baroque architectural components house contemporary details, and ancient frescoes, columns and ceilings with belt-like vaults showcase the light cast from modern fixtures. Panoramic windows and a flower-filled inner courtyard roll the vineyards and Duero Valley terrain indoors as nature's carpet. Refectory, a Michelin-starred restaurant, serves stylish Spanish cuisine in the room where the monks once gathered for their meals. Vinoteca, a more casual bistro, turns out tapas and small plates which can be tailored to spa vacationers in pursuit of detox or healthier fare. With just the perfect amount of pomp, flawless service ensures every wish comes true, though all the mollicoddling happens with a discretely delivered savoir faire.

Certainly, Santuario, LeDomaine's newly opened spa, is the refitted medieval friary's crowning glory. Also designed by Marco Serra, ensconced in the monastery's former stables, the spa occupies 10,000 sleek square feet underground. A plethora of windows illuminate its treatment rooms, interior pool and hallways. The atmosphere mimics a cozy cocoon, and walking through it elicits a dream-like state, mesmerized by the sound of falling water.

After my spa sommelier ritual, I am led to spend time in Santuario's pristine spa suite, a room ideal for couples with two massage tables, a Goliath-sized soaking tub, lounging sofas, a sauna and steam room. Here I receive my first treatments and while away almost an entire day.

As the week progresses, I relish my opportunity to be enveloped in wellness. I walk through the vineyards with the spa's conceptual designer, Sonal Uberoi. Bringing Eastern and Western techniques into play, she created a spa vibrant with healing and well-versed in the ancient art of transformation. "There's a feeling to this land and to this place," she says on our walk, her arms sweeping through the air like gentle wind. "It exudes a therapeutic, natural energy."

Indeed, I feel it as the next few days immerse me in a salutary journey of discovery. One highlight, The Grand Cru, a two-and-a-half-hour ritual, begins with a foot bath (in homage to how the monks greeted visitors), then continues with an exfoliation, an anti-aging body wrap and a massage, utilizing each of Santuario's dedicated oenotherapy treatments in one session. Another day, I pedal a bike along the Duero River's bank, then indulge in The Diamond Rose

LeDomaine's knowledgeable butlers can arrange activities for guests. Fly over the wine region in a helicopter; learn falconry in the courtyard from instructors in medieval garb; tour the back roads by bicycle; or enjoy the fitness area, yoga room and two swimming pools.



SENSE OF SERENITY: Spa relaxation area (top), and the spa foyer complete with wine for tasting (bottom)

PHOTOS: © LEDOMAINE

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Ritual, an exquisite retreat that transports with Damask rose oil and diamond dust.

When my trip ends, I feel renewed and rested, and my skin shimmers. I've awakened with the roosters, eaten from the garden and imbibed wine made minutes away. A violin quartet has serenaded my meal in the monastery's ancient church. And the hotel's own bees have worked hard to make my honey. I can barely stand to return to urbanity. But bravely I pack my bags, neatly folding the restored version of me to take home in my suitcase.

Star of the Show

Chef Martín Berasategui earns accolades for the fine dining at Paradisus Resorts. BY KIMBERLY KROL



What began as helping with the family business, the Bodegón Alejandro, at age 15 led to being named the Spanish chef with the most Michelin stars for San Sebastián-born Martín Berasategui. And those stars are only a handful of the accolades under the chef's belt.

Through his partnership with Paradisus Resorts, owned and operated by Spanish brand Meliá Hotels International, Chef Berasategui elevates the dining experience at a number of the all-inclusive resorts, including at Paradisus Palma Real, Paradisus Punta Cana and Paradisus Playa del Carmen. At Passion by Martín Berasategui, the resorts' fine-dining establishment, seafood stars, and the dishes and tasting menus are designed for pairings from three separate, carefully curated wine lists.

In addition to Passion by Martín Berasategui, the chef also runs Tempo by Martín Berasategui at Hotel Paradisus Cancún in Mexico; Restaurant MB at The Ritz-Carlton, Abama in Tenerife, with two Michelin stars; Restaurant Fonda España at Hotel España in Barcelona; Restaurant Loidi at Hotel Condes de Barcelona; the two-Michelin-starred Restaurant Lasarte in Barcelona; Restaurant Eme Be in San Sebastián; and Restaurant Martín Berasategui in Lasarte, with three Michelin stars. Other major accolades include the *Tambor de Oro*, three suns from Campsa Guide and Best Spanish Chef, among others.

Additionally, Paradisus Resorts offer several other culinary concepts, including The Grill, an Italian-Argentinean eatery, and Mole's contemporary Mexican. More options include Bana for Asian and the international cuisine at Naos and La Palapa. Acclaimed mixologist Miguel F. Lancha designed unique signature cocktails for Paradisus Punta Cana and Paradisus Palma Real.

WHAT THREE GO-TO INGREDIENTS ARE ALWAYS IN YOUR HOME KITCHEN?

Extra virgin olive oil, hake kokotxas (hake cheeks) and potatoes

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE SEASON FOR COOKING, AND WHY?

I like them all, but I find the spring shopping basket particularly attractive — full of wonderful products such as *guisantes lágrima* (tear-shaped peas), the first asparagus, new potatoes, cherries, raspberries ... a range of colorful and truly delicious raw ingredients. I love them.

ASIDE FROM YOUR CURRENT POSITION, WHAT'S THE BEST JOB YOU'VE EVER HAD?

I can honestly say that throughout my career, I've been lucky enough to cook in many places and for a very wide range of people. It's impossible to say any one is better than the other. Each service is like a different film, and each menu adapts to the specific circumstances.

WHAT'S THE FIRST MEAL YOU EVER COOKED?

Hake in a green sauce

WHAT ARE YOUR FIRST THOUGHTS WHEN YOU HEAR "FARM-TO-TABLE"?

I think we're extremely lucky to have suppliers who harvest, store, process, pack and sell their own produce. It's an organic and sustainable farming initiative. Nothing beats caring about the products like this — otherwise, they're not as organic or as healthy.

Passion by Martín Berasategui

Paradisus Palma Real Golf & Spa Resort

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Saved by the Union

Philadelphia's iconic Union League steps in to revitalize another city icon. BY FRANCIS X. GALLAGHER



GO GREEN: Hole 11

PHOTO: © FRANCIS X.
GALLAGHER

One of the greatest golf course stories to ever be told will be how the Union League of Philadelphia saved the tired, beaten Torresdale Frankfurt Country Club in 2014. The course, designed by one of the greatest golf course architects in history, Donald Ross, had fallen on hard times. Course membership dwindled and the upkeep and changes in the demographics of golf in the area nearly did the course in to potential development.

In came a shining white knight in the form of the most prestigious private city club in the country, the Union League. Founded on the principles of Abraham Lincoln in support of preserving the Union during the Civil War, this patriotic club could not fathom the demise of this historic course. So begins the history of The Union League Club at Torresdale, adding another new chapter in its already steep lineage.

The club started as two Philadelphia golf courses, the Torresdale Golf Club, created in 1896, and the Frankfurt Club, started in 1897. Only a few miles apart from each other, the courses acted independently and were two distinct nine-hole facilities for nearly a quarter of a century. This was long before the Roaring Twenties and the golf course boom; it was the infancy of golf in the United States.

In 1921, the Torresdale Golf Club purchased the current property and built a new nine-hole course. At around the same time, The Frankfurt Club outgrew their location and began to search for a new home. Before you knew it, these two star-crossed lovers decided there

was only one way to be happy and the clubs were combined.

Sometimes things happen for a reason and other times it is about being in the right place at the right time, but signing Donald Ross to design the new Torresdale Frankfurt Country Club was genius. At the same time, a new clubhouse was constructed and the good times continued for 86 years before the club started to struggle.

Today, nearly \$8 million in renovations turned The Union League Golf Club at Torresdale into one of the best facilities in the region. Through the Union League, a new life has been added to the club, drawing its membership from all over the Philadelphia area. This, coupled with the existing club membership from Torresdale, has created a healthy golf environment.

The Union League secured Stephen Kay, a golf course architect with a wealth of experience restoring Tillinghast-, Ross-, Travis- and Emmet-designed courses. He has restored more than a dozen Ross courses in his career. Kay changed the fairways, some of which were 30 yards wide back to the original 40 yards Ross created. Trees, many of which were added in the 1960s and '70s by overzealous Torresdale committees, have been removed or pruned.

The League used its incredible ability to attract the best talent in Philadelphia, including Sean Palmer, director of golf, and Sandee Cataldi, club manager. Many of the leadership and staff at the Union League helped see the course through its transition. It is one of the

most exciting developments in golf in the Philadelphia area.

Global Traveler's annual Advisory Board Meeting took place Sept. 16 at the Union League where key economic data was reviewed for the year, trends were discussed and debated and voting for the Airline and the Hotel of the Year was held. Earlier in the day, we teed up at The Union League Golf Club at Torresdale amid the continued construction as they raced toward the opening of the clubhouse on Oct. 7. Christopher Ottuanick, Mark Lane, Wayne Tallman and Mike Donahue comprised the first group, as I followed with Edward Jefferson and Carlos Cappuccio.

HOLE 1 | 343 yards, par 4

There was a severe slope from front to back on this green, which meant putts from the back would roll off unless the ball hit a ball mark or some other obstacle. Kay cut the sod when designing, labeling each piece and rebuilding the green to soften the surface without losing character. Then, and this is key, the pieces were reassembled in order like a puzzle — in this way you achieve the softening without ending up with a boxy look as the grass re-establishes itself. Each piece connects to the other as a unit. Shifting these pieces would be visible even when the green grows back and matures.

This is a great starting hole and big players can reach the creek before the green — consider a 3- or 5-wood from the tee box. My drive plowed through the fairway and landed not too far from a bridge that crosses the creek. A little out of my comfort zone, I pushed my little chip right and landed nearly out of bounds and near the lovely new driving range. A short chip saved me and I walked away with a bogie.

HOLE 8 | 505 yards, par 4

A great deal of work has been completed on this hole, including the removal of trees behind the green that blocked the view of the clubhouse. Donald Ross's original design had the green positioned before the creek. The creek now runs in front due to the 1963 widening of Grant Avenue that changed hole 17 from a par 3 to par 4. With that, members wanted a little more length and the green was moved.

From the tee box, you can now see the green, which is below the fairway. Kay's team reset the fairway so this view is now possible; many holes were tinkered with in an effort to recoup levels that had

sunk over the years. Fortunately, there are a plethora of photographs, including 1939 aerials, which helped renovators restore the course close to Ross's original plans.

You really need to be ever so slightly left of center on your drive and then you can reach the green in two. I made it clear to Carlos and Ed this was the plan, but I hammered my drive on the right side placing the "white house" on the fairway in play. Our caddie, Michael, thought I had enough clearance to lay a fairway wood on the ball and sculpt the shot to the green. As soon as I hit the ball, I could tell it was a keeper, landing on the front collar. I 2-putted to par. Michael informed us Hole 8 is considered the most difficult par 4 in Philadelphia.

HOLE 17 | 207 yards, par 3

This is the famous hole turned into a par 3 due to widening and construction. Both Carlos and Ed played this so well, I felt it deserved a place in the review. Carlos teed up with a fairway wood and took dead aim and landed on the collar of the green. Ed took another route, landing over the green but then chipping to within 6 inches of the cup. I, on the other hand, hooked left leaving a long chip and 2-putt for bogie. Carlos and Ed high-fived Michael in celebration.

HOLE 18 | 400 yards, par 4

A great finishing hole, it was spectacular to see the clubhouse as you turned toward the green. This is another difficult par 4 that requires real target golf. From the tee box, fire away, trying to land a little right of center so you have a clear shot to the green. My drive was a little left, which caused me to inadvertently favor the right side of the green bouncing off and into the rough. Carlos shanked a drive right, but our intrepid caddie found the ball and he was back in business. Ed played it safe, hitting three shots to the green before putting out.

Kay enlarged this green back to the original Ross design. Greens were reduced over the years during to fuel rationing during World War II and later when Triplex mowers came into fashion in 1969. Hole 18 is a difficult hole and can ruin your scorecard. Kay says, "If you want to score in the 80s, you best need a bogie on 18."

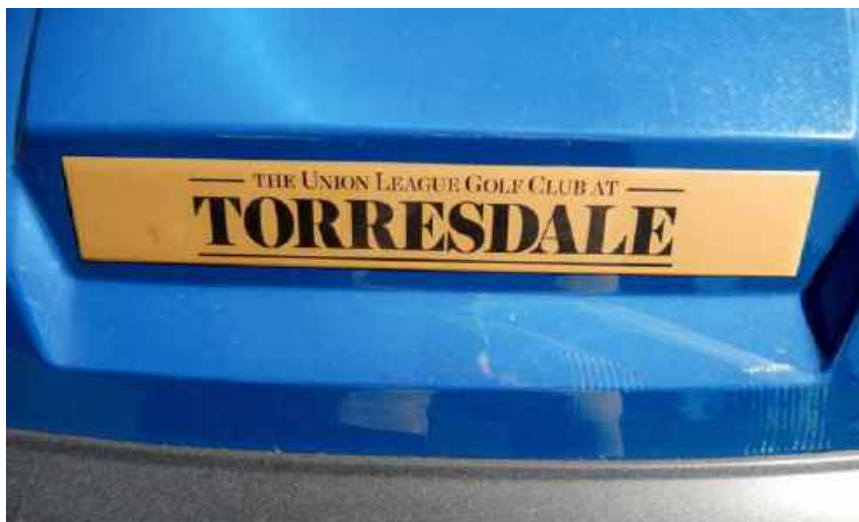
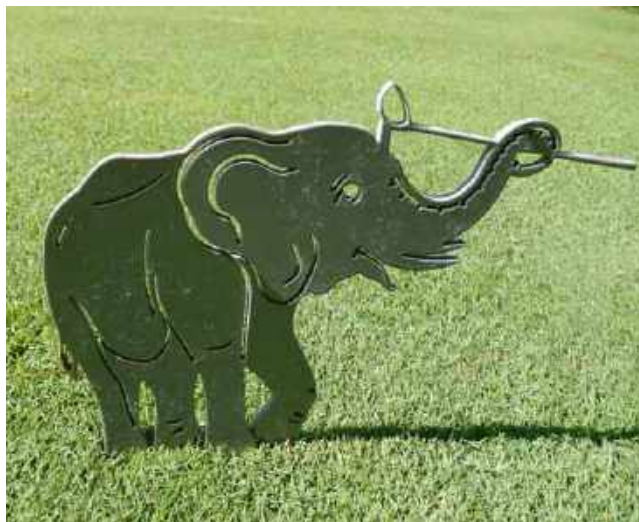
There are additional holes that should be covered, so perhaps a revisit to Torresdale is in order as all the improvements establish and mature.

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Eden on the Equator

Embark on small ships for close encounters with Galapagos wildlife. BY J.D. BROWN AND MARGARET BACKENHEIMER



ORIGINAL SPECIES:

A Galapagos blue-footed booby struts its stuff (left), and a curious sea lion checks out the water below (right).

PHOTOS: © ECOVENTURA

For maritime travelers seeking the closest possible contact with exotic wildlife, the Galapagos archipelago is the unsurpassed choice. Nowhere else are the indigenous birds, reptiles and mammals so at ease with humankind, unafraid, almost tame. “The place is a new creation,” an early visitor proclaimed nearly two centuries ago, and it remains largely so today, a Jurassic Park of sorts, its dinosaurs miniaturized into free-ranging iguanas. The creatures of this Eden are neither fearful of nor hostile to the bands of tourists who island-hop by ship and yacht, disembark from Zodiacs and fan out in small groups on restricted pathways to comb these wild and desolate volcanic islands day after day. From playful sea lions, brown penguins and unruffled blue-footed boobies to the signature giant tortoises themselves, whose life expectancies dwarf those of mankind, these are the residents of a UNESCO World Heritage site and Biosphere Reserve that served as the real-life basis for *On the Origin of Species*, the landmark scientific study penned by Charles Darwin, who was inspired by his own passage to these enchanted islands two centuries ago.

Situated 600 miles west of Ecuador, the 18 major islands forming the Galapagos archipelago lie within the boundaries of a highly regulated marine national park. Nearly 90 registered yachts and ships are available for island expeditions, but shore excursions are limited to groups of no more than 16 persons, organized in two- to four-hour shifts. Naturalist guides, certified by Ecuador's National Park Service, are required to conduct each group stepping

ashore. Moreover, no Galapagos cruise vessel may carry more than 100 passengers. Previously, *Global Traveler* covered three major cruise lines — Silversea Cruises, Celebrity Cruises and Lindblad Expeditions/National Geographic — that serve the Galapagos on an intensive basis year-round. These lines provide many of the amenities of a full international cruise experience, albeit on boutique-sized vessels and with an all-consuming focus on ecotourism. The 100-passenger *Silver Galapagos*, the 98-passenger *Celebrity Xpedition* and the 96-passenger *National Geographic Endeavour* continue to ply the Galapagos in style, but several smaller ships offer some fine options, too.

Un-Cruise Adventures, known for its adventurous high-end tours in Alaska, Hawai'i, the Columbia River and Mexico's Sea of Cortez, launches its first venture into the Galapagos with eight departures in 2016 (Feb. 17, March 16 and 30, May 25, July 6, Aug. 3, Sept. 14, Nov. 9). Un-Cruise's 10-day itinerary begins with a two-day stay in Ecuador's high-altitude capital, Quito, with guests lodged at Casa Gangotena, the 19th-century residence of several past presidents and now a boutique hotel located in the center of Quito's colonial Old Town. After a four-hour flight from Quito, travelers disembark on the island of San Cristóbal, where Darwin began his exploration of the Galapagos in 1835, and then board the 48-passenger *La Pinta* for their own week of exploration, spanning eight islands and islets. *La Pinta* is equipped with a glass-bottomed tour boat, kayaks, snorkeling equipment, wet suits, fitness equipment, a natural history library,

a sun deck and hot tub, as well as two categories of staterooms, all furnished with private baths and floor-to-ceiling windows. The fare includes park fees, taxes, transfers and tours as well as onboard premium wines, beer and spirits. Ten-day full private charters are offered, too — at \$434,545 a pop.

The Un-Cruise cruise calls on islands no Galapagos visitor should pass up, sailing from Isla San Cristóbal to Isla Española (home to nearly the entire world's population of waved albatross) and then to Isla Santa Cruz, where tours of the Charles Darwin Research Station and the Tortoise Center precede a poolside lunch at the Finch Bay Eco Hotel and an afternoon hike into the natural habitat of the iconic giant tortoises which can be observed here. The cruise continues to Sombrero Chino Islet (where there's a chance to swim and snorkel with white-tipped reef sharks and the tiny Galapagos penguins) and both Isla Bartolomé and Isla Santiago (famed for their stunning primeval panoramas, white sandy beaches, flocks of pink flamingos and cavorting sea lions). The last stop, Isla Genovesa, the archipelago's "bird island," is resplendent with Darwin's finches, frigate birds, storm petrels, red-footed boobies and shy short-eared owls. Throughout the sailing the emphasis is on recreation and adventure, with numerous opportunities to walk the rough terrain and plunge into the waters where schools of friendly residents prove always eager to party.

Another new option in high-end small-ship cruising is the 20-passenger *MV Origin*, a luxury yacht owned and operated by Ecoventura, making its Galapagos debut Jan. 3, 2016. Ecoventura's founder, Santiago Dunn, intends "to make the *Origin* the most comfortable and environmentally efficient yacht in Galapagos," reducing its fossil fuel consumption dramatically while maintaining a top speed of 12 knots "so that guests can spend as much time as possible at each visitor site." Two naturalist guides and a concierge will be at the beck and call of the 20 passengers, who will be treated to a complimentary open bar and gourmet meals

While January, July, August and December are the busiest months in the Galapagos, these enchanted islands, spanning the equator, provide pleasant sailing and unparalleled wildlife encounters year-round.

prepared by local chefs. The 10 staterooms, each 140 square feet, feature private bathrooms, panoramic windows, king beds, fine linens and satellite TVs. Laundry service, cooking demonstrations, yoga workouts, sundeck recliners and a Jacuzzi will also be available. The all-inclusive package encompasses shore excursions, snorkeling equipment, wet suits, stand-up paddle boards and sea kayaks.

The *MV Origin*'s year-round departures on Sundays from San Cristóbal are slated to cover two distinct itineraries. The seven-night western/northern route visits the islands of Genovesa, Fernandina, Isabela, Santiago and Santa Cruz. The seven-night central/southern route calls on Española, Floreana (Post Office Bay), Bartolomé, South Plaza, North Seymour and Santa Cruz islands. Both routes take in the Charles Darwin Research Station and include snorkeling with the penguins and swimming with the sea lions. Ecoventura also offers special family cruises, women-only expeditions and outings with scuba diving.

If the *MV Origin* lives up to its advance billing, it could become the leading luxury yacht in the Galapagos. Ecoventura, a family-owned company based in Ecuador, certainly has the background to pull this off. In operation since 1990, it transports 4,000 passengers annually on its fleet of three identical 20-passenger motor yachts (*Eric*, *Flamingo* and *Letty*) and a 16-passenger dive vessel (the *MV Galapagos Sky*). Certainly the launch of the *MV Origin* next year, along with the arrival of Un-Cruises, will put more passengers on the higher rungs of the luxury cruise ladder in the ever less rough and remote lost world of the Galapagos.

Celebrity Cruises

celebritycruises.com

Ecoventura

ecoventura.com

Lindblad Expeditions/ National Geographic

expeditions.com

Silversea Cruises

silversea.com

Un-Cruise Adventures

un-cruise.com

LUXURY LAUNCH:

Ecoventura's *MV Origin* exterior (left), and interior (right)

PHOTOS: © ECOVENTURA



欢迎

Welcoming China

Hotels develop initiatives to cater to the global Chinese travel market. BY MONIQUE BARRETT

Growing Chinese international tourism has become one of the hottest topic trends in the travel industry over the past few years, grabbing the attention of a diverse range of tourism authorities, hotels, airlines and hospitality groups that all want to attract this rapidly expanding demographic.

According to the 2015 edition of Hotels.com's Chinese International Travel Monitor, this burgeoning group of travelers experienced a comparatively stable growth period last year, with an increase of 20 percent following prior years of extraordinary growth.

Nevertheless, this outbound market is expected

to grow to around 174 million in four years, spending approximately \$264 billion, according to the CITM, citing a forecast by Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

Along with an increase in population from 1.36 billion to 1.4 billion, China experienced growth in its disposable personal income last year, increasing to an all-time high of \$4,649 (28,844 RMB). As average income grows in China and the middle class with higher disposable income expands, the long-haul portion of the country's outbound travel is expected to increase, especially to areas with accommodating visa policies that eliminate

barriers to entry, such as the United States, South Korea and Australia.

Recent policy changes in the United States are significantly enabling Chinese travel. In November of last year, the United States and China introduced a mutual relaxed reform expanding the validity of their tourist visa from one year to 10 years, allowing Chinese nationals the opportunity to acquire U.S. short-term, multiple-entry visas for both business and leisure travel valid for up to 10 years. While the United States was already the most visited international destination among Chinese travelers in 2014, this visa change is forecast to contribute to significantly increased Chinese tourism to the country over the next several years.

Hoteliers reported an annual increase in Chinese guests for the fourth year running, according to CITM. Almost two-thirds (61 percent) of hoteliers worldwide experienced a boost in Chinese travelers at their properties last year, while 65 percent in North America reported more Chinese guests. Seventy-four percent of hoteliers report Chinese guests account for up to 10 percent of their business.

To crack China's outbound traveling market and take advantage of this huge potential, several hotel groups are investing in amenities designed to nurture this group, rolling out the welcome mat with various services that make guests feel at home, from offering congee and dim sum on the in-room dining menu to providing Mandarin television channels and Mandarin-speaking associates for translation assistance.

Various international chain hotels and 5-star properties are eager to welcome the high-spending Chinese with new initiatives and programs to take advantage of the huge earning potential. The wealthiest top 10 percent of Chinese travelers spent an average of more than \$2,225 (13,800 RMB) daily, while the top 5 percent spent about \$3,368 (20,896 RMB), according to CITM. The top 10 percent spent an average of \$439 (2,723 RMB) per night on hotels alone. Forty-six percent of the top spenders report booking international chains, while only 28 percent opted for independent hotels.

Over the past year, WiFi was the most common amenity request from Chinese guests, according to CITM, followed by a kettle in the room (31 percent) and translated travel and tourism guides (21 percent). The case studies below demonstrate how international hotel chains are catering to this group with their most favored amenities — and then some.

In its continued effort to go above and beyond guests' expectations and experiences, Langham Hospitality Group introduced Ying in 2013, a tailored welcoming program catering to the Chinese culture and traveler preferences before and during travel. Prior to their trip, groups of Chinese travelers can take advantage of services designed to remove potential language barriers, including the flexibility to provide group and event quotes in either the local currency or Chinese yuan and contracts to be



presented in Simplified Chinese.

During their stay, groups booking Ying are greeted at all Langham hotels worldwide with a customized welcome, including location information written in Simplified Chinese, directions to the nearest Chinatown, and Mandarin-speaking employees to help with translations and facilitate transport, as well as in-room amenities such as Chinese tea and a selection of Chinese television channels and newspaper titles. So guests don't miss the flavors of home, authentic cuisine is available at international restaurants catering to Chinese tastes with specialties such as dim sum, congee and noodles.

Taking hospitality initiatives for Chinese travelers a step further, InterContinental Hotels Group introduced the first-ever upscale international hotel brand designed specifically for this market, HUALUXE Hotels and Resorts, with two existing properties and 23 in the pipeline. This culturally specific brand keeps the Chinese customer in mind with unique services emphasizing the Chinese values of etiquette, rejuvenation in nature, status recognition and enabling space.

"The brand was built on over three decades of market insight, experience and leadership in China and epitomizes the finest elements of China's world-renowned hospitality," said Richard Solomons, chief executive officer, IHG. "The brand has been

CHINESE FAVORITES:
Langham's Chinese Executive Chef Tony Su

PHOTO: © LANGHAM HOSPITALITY GROUP

well-received in the market since its launch in 2012, and we are on track with our vision of taking it to 100 cities in Greater China over the next 15 to 20 years.”

To enhance the outbound travel experience for Chinese guests, IHG also recently launched Zhou Dao, its global China Ready training program for employees focusing on Chinese etiquette, culture and hospitality. To offer guests a home-away-from-home experience, IHG’s China Ready hotels abroad provide Chinese-speaking staff at the front desk or via 24-hour phone support, a Chinese welcome pack, Chinese channels on in-room televisions and a selection of Chinese food and beverage options. They also accept China Union-Pay cards. By the end of last year, more than 10,000 IHG employees around the world had participated in Zhou Dao service training.

Starwood Hotels & Resorts began welcoming the emerging class of Chinese travelers with the launch of its Personalized Travel Program in 2011, catering to Chinese guests as they travel to other hotels around the world with services including an in-house Chinese specialist; amenities such as tea kettles, slippers, instant noodles and toiletries; translated hotel collateral; and Chinese-friendly menu items like congee, noodles and rice.

“To Serve with Courtesy” is the meaning of Marriott International’s Li Yu program for Chinese guests, offering a personalized hospitality experience even before arrival at the hotel. Features include confirmation letters or emails in Chinese, front desk greet-

ing by a Mandarin-speaking hotel associate, a variety of Chinese television programs and Chinese-language newspapers, and Chinese cuisine and delicacies included as standard items in restaurants and on in-room dining menus.

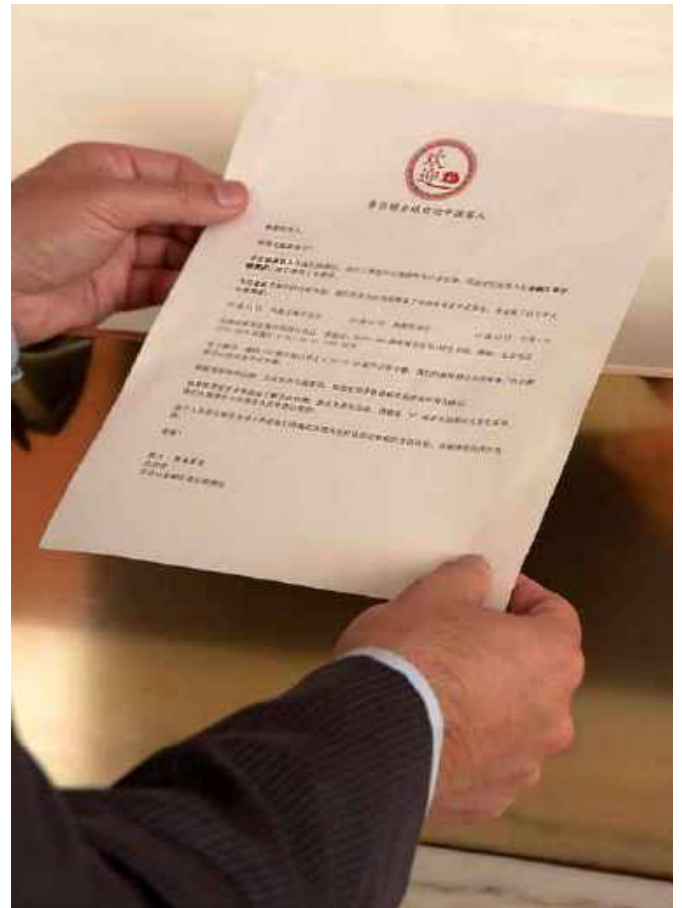
Beyond the standard amenities, the fine-tuned Li Yu program also offers additional subtle touches, such as assigning guests room and floor numbers with “6” or “8,” considered as auspicious; ensuring adapters are suitable for Chinese electrical gadgets; and including popular Asian sauces in condiment offerings of all three-meal restaurants and in-room dining. Li Yu is operational at all JW Marriott, Renaissance, Marriott and Courtyard hotels in Asia as well as select international hotels in key gateway cities.

At the end of 2014, Chinese Internet users numbered 649 million, with 85.8 percent having access to the Internet via a mobile device, according to the latest report from the China Internet Network Information Center. Travel bookings via mobile phones are booming, with half of all Chinese outbound travelers in this year’s CITM referring to their mobile phones to plan and book trips, compared with 17 percent the previous year.

Catering to this technology-savvy market, Marriott Rewards teamed up with DaoDao, TripAdvisor’s official Chinese website, to provide Chinese travelers access to new search capabilities through Marriott Rewards’ WeChat platform, a leading mobile messenger app for Chinese smartphone users. The enhanced functions offer



ON THE MENU: *Chinese breakfast offered at IHG hotels*
PHOTO: © INTERCONTINENTAL HOTELS GROUP



WELCOME: Hilton's Huanying program offers Chinese tea (left) and a welcome letter in Simplified Chinese (right)

PHOTOS: © HILTON

members added convenience with the ability to perform location-based searches for nearby attractions and reference reviews on Marriott International's hotels and restaurants at the touch of a button.

Four Seasons introduced new technology to lure this market as well, offering an updated multifunctional, content-rich global app. The luxury hotel chain operates a website about its hotels in China in both English and Chinese and plans to debut an app in Simplified Chinese and a special version tailored to the preferences of Chinese travelers by the end of this year.

Hilton Worldwide's luxury Conrad Hotels & Resorts brand provides its Conrad Concierge app appealing to the demographic. Featuring a translation service, the app allows a Chinese-speaking client to order room service in Chinese and have the order received in English by the hotel.

Also available at select Conrad properties and a variety of Hilton Worldwide locations is the Hilton Huanying program to address the unique needs of Chinese travelers abroad. The hotel group launched Huanying, meaning "welcome" in Mandarin, in 2011 to adapt its hotels to the Chinese market. It expanded the initiative this year to offer a consistent set of amenities and service standards to the Chinese traveler at participating hotels under brands including

Hilton Hotels & Resorts, Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts, Conrad Hotels & Resorts and DoubleTree by Hilton in more than 30 countries and 65 cities popular among the demographic, including New York, San Francisco, London, Paris, Seoul and Tokyo.

"Since being introduced in 2011 at 51 properties in 13 countries, Huanying has empowered more than a million Chinese travelers to explore new destinations with the comforts of home," said Rob Palleschi, global head, full service brands, Hilton Worldwide. "We are very proud of this program, and the benefits are clear. Chinese travelers who stay at Huanying properties express a greater overall satisfaction in their hospitality experience."

In addition to a welcome note in Simplified Chinese and in-room amenities such as jasmine tea and a dedicated Mandarin-speaking television channel, the company expanded Huanying services catering to this group this year to include additional traditional breakfast options and a 24-hour interpretation service Mandarin-speaking guests can access during their travels.

As the number of Chinese travelers is expected to continue growing, the variety of customized hospitality experiences designed to serve the needs of this evolving demographic will likely expand with it.

Hotels.com Chinese International Travel Monitor

citm2015.com

HUALUXE Hotels and Resorts

ihg.com

Huanying

hilton.com.cn/huanying

Li Yu

marriott-liyu.cn

Starwood Personalized Travel

starwoodhotels.com/personalizedtravel

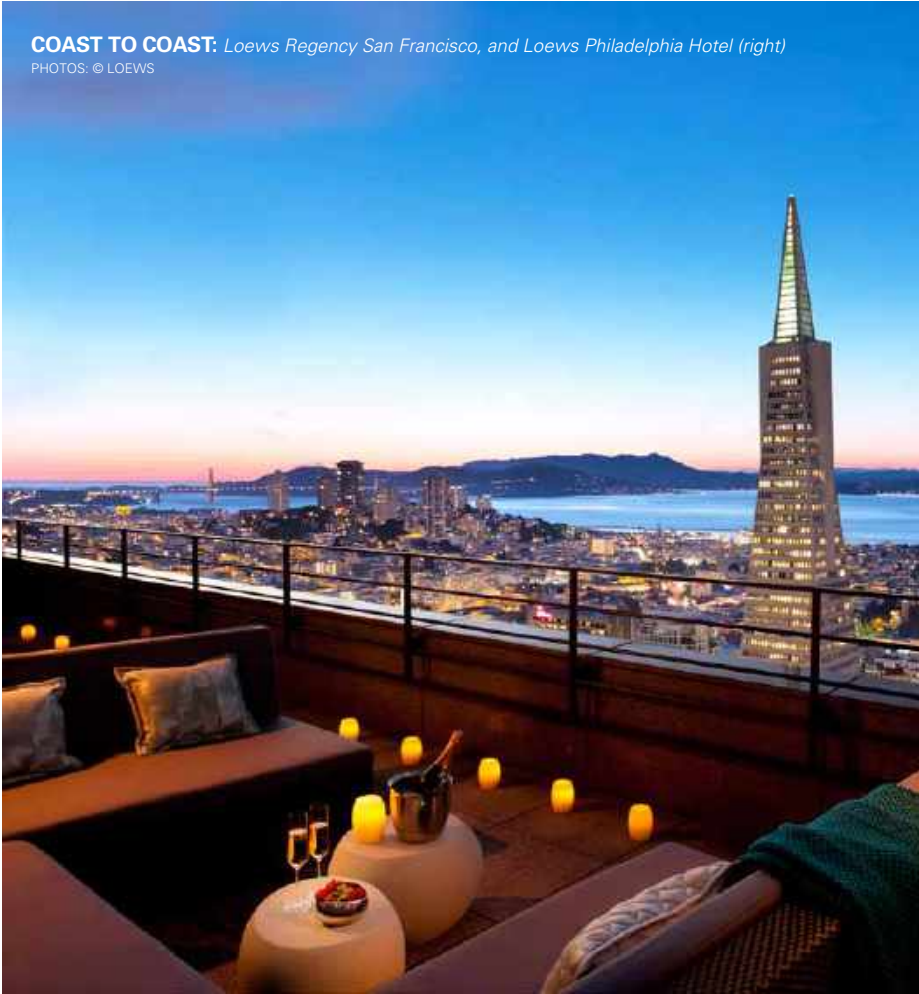
Ying

ying.langhamhotels.com

Zhou Dao

ihgplc.com

COAST TO COAST: Loews Regency San Francisco, and Loews Philadelphia Hotel (right)
PHOTOS: © LOEWS



True Originals

Loews defines its niche with luxury, service and a passion for authentic guest experiences. BY ILONA KAUREMSZKY

It starts at the hotel entrance when I arrive in Philadelphia. The friendly doorman swings open the chrome and glass doors, relieves me of my luggage and escorts me to the check-in counter. Vases brimming with orchids set a calm mood, already beginning to loosen my travel knots. Check-in is no-nonsense: The staff welcomes me and completes my reservation efficiently. Key card in hand, it's time to push the elevator button and ascend to my hotel floor.

Except this is not your typical hotel floor. It's only one of the floors at Philadelphia's iconic landmark, the PSFS building, America's first modernist international-style skyscraper and, for the past 15 years, the home of the Loews Philadelphia Hotel.

With its original neon signage crowning the pinnacle and

its nod to the *Mad Men* era, the luxury hotel wraps itself in a timeless elegance. On the 33rd floor, once the stomping ground of Philly's power brokers, you can still see the impressive, original décor in the boardroom, the kind of ambience befitting a Don Draper meeting. Styled in Macassar ebony and rotary walnut walls, the boardroom features a super-long, decadent table of polished Macassar ebony, a wood imported from the Isle of Celebes in the South Pacific. With a sumptuous city view, you feel as if you are on top of the world in this lofty perch.

These splashes of luxurious, vintage touches appear across the chic Loews property in Philadelphia. Notice the polished Belgium black marble lobby walls, the Algerian marble by the main floor elevators, the retro Cartier

RELAXING MIX: Apothecary Bar & Lounge at Loews Minneapolis Hotel (top) and Loews Ventana Canyon Resort (bottom)

PHOTOS: © LOEWS

clock and the imposing over-the-top bank vault door with its polished chrome ready to crank if inclined.

It's a bold statement, but then again, it's Loews Hotels & Resorts.

The U.S.-based luxury hotel brand certainly appeals to the jetsetter, the traveler who wants a local experience and is consumed with the latest, smartest designs. Toss in award-winning chefs at the various property restaurants and hip bars with even hipper mixologists who know how to concoct shaken and stirred. These attributes are just part of a winning formula behind the acclaimed hotel concept.

Loews Hotels, Inc. is the luxury hotel brand, a dream started in 1946 by two brothers, Larry and Bob Tisch, who opened their first hotel, the 300-room Laurel-in-the-Pines in the sleepy New Jersey woodlands of Lakewood. The winter vacation retreat was intended for the new fledgling road trippers of the post-World War II era.

Today, a second-generation Tisch, Jonathan (son of Bob), runs the hospitality company as its chairman and also serves as co-chairman of the board of Loews Corp., where he runs the company with his cousins, Andrew and James Tisch (sons of Larry). The company headquarters is located in New York City.

This already successful hospitality venture — thanks to the patriarch's philosophy of value, service and commitment — transformed into an even greater success story.

In 2013, the *Today Show* highlighted Loews Hotels & Resorts as the first hotel brand to harness social media to enable bookings via Twitter. "With bigger brands it takes weeks of meetings to get to that point since there are more people involved. At this point, we are a market leader and we said, 'Let's just go,'" recalled Bruce J. Himmelstein, chief marketing officer, Loews, and an industry veteran, in a 2015 *Forbes* video interview.

In the past three years, Loews Hotels & Resorts acquired six hotels and opened two others from the ground up. In the past year alone, it launched two additional brands, converting Loews Hotels & Resorts into a multibrand company. The company currently owns 24 properties across the United States and Canada, located at major gateway cities and resort destinations.

"Each of our hotels has a distinct point of view," said Jonathan Tisch. The hotel company caters to groups, business and leisure travelers as well as families and makes four-legged friends feel right at home with its pet-friendly policy.

Observe some of the most competitive markets undergoing a sweeping expansion in hotel inventory, such as Chicago and Toronto, and you'll notice the gutsy corporate decisions from Loews Hotels. In the Windy City Loews



recently debuted two hotels. The new 400-room Loews Chicago Hotel, sitting one block from the Chicago River, purports to offer the city's largest outdoor rooftop terrace. The hotel opened on March 2, the first day on the job for Kirk Kinsell, president and CEO, Loews Hotels & Resorts. The revamped 556-room InterContinental opened as the new Loews Chicago O'Hare Hotel, which the company reportedly purchased for approximately \$120 million.

Toronto, Canada's largest metropolis, is getting ready for the debut of the OE Collection, Loews' newest luxury hotel concept. Announced in March, the company's first new flag translates as "Original Experiences."

Loews' new OE Collection appeals to the edgier luxury seeker who enjoys local experiences and vibrant cities.

“OE’s public launch was in Toronto because, for Loews, so much is driven by relationships. One of our friends and partners, Charles Khabouth, was launching a hotel concept in Toronto, his home. Charles wanted an institutional-grade operating partner that recognized the nuances of his concept and could help him flourish. Being believers in the right property and the right partners, we made OE public with one of our good friends. Bisha Hotel & Residences will open in 2016,” said Constantine S. Dimas, chief business officer, OE Collection, a division of Loews Hotels & Resorts, on selecting this important North American and world city. He also pointed out Toronto represents the diversity of culture, commerce and guests welcomed at OE hotels.

“We felt that this was the right time for Loews, and also the market, to launch our new innovative hotel management platform, the OE Collection,” added Jonathan Tisch from his New York office, noting the luxury hotel company with its strong brand identity in the marketplace and the company’s future expansion made the timing right.

As a pioneer in the social media hospitality space, the company launched Loews Hotels Social Reservation to allow guests to book hotel rooms via Twitter. In December 2014, industry leader SKIFT ranked Loews as the No. 2 hotel brand on social media, surpassing Kimpton, Marriott, Hilton and Four Seasons.

In July, Loewshotels.com debuted #TravelForReal, a new advertising campaign reflecting the core of the brand’s passion for authentic guest experiences. Inspired by the significant increase in engagement with social media and Loews’ ongoing social innovation, #TravelForReal features real-life images posted by hotel guests during their stays, mostly through Instagram.

“This is the first time in the hospitality industry where a hotel company is letting the genuine guest experience shine through by not relying on focus groups, camera crews or models. Instead, the brand pulled back the curtain and combed social media channels to find guests’ photos taken at Loews properties, showcasing their distinct experiences across the brand,” said Kinsell.

Creating local experiences remains a big driving force behind Loews Hotels & Resorts. This past May, for National Burger Month, Loews Hotels partnered with local craft breweries to devise a culinary pairing concept. “We [were] excited to kick off the summer season with our chefs’ mouth-watering takes on America’s favorite sandwich,” said Mark Weiss, senior vice president food and beverage, Loews Hotels & Resorts. “Our new burgers and brews promotion allowed our talented chefs to incorporate local inspiration from their respective destinations, creating an experience that is memorable for guests and diners alike.”

Kinsell added, “We are a company on the move and have been able to carve out our niches with three different and distinct offerings.”



LOEWS HOTELS & RESORTS

Demographic: The company’s anchor brand attracts groups, business and leisure travelers and families.

Offerings: The leading brand in the upper-upscale category offers 22 hotels and resorts in North America.

Highlights: The most recent openings are in Chicago and downtown Minneapolis (formerly Graves 601), now known as the Loews Minneapolis. Look for the 1,000-room Sapphire Falls Resort at Universal Orlando, scheduled to open in mid-2016.

LOEWS REGENCY

Demographic: The company’s second new flag debuted in April within the luxury category and already attracts top professionals and celebrities.

Offerings: The Loews Regency brand combines the finest amenities and conveniences and offers prime locations and bespoke service mixed with a vibrant energy associated with its fashionable lobby bars and the acclaimed power breakfast concept rooted in the historic New York property.

Highlights: The Loews Regency San Francisco in the Financial District and the iconic Loews Regency New York Hotel

THE OE COLLECTION

Demographic: Millennials and others loyal to Loews who seek edgier design, unique food and beverage, and locally themed experiences

Offerings: A curated collection of independent hotels in markets where commerce and culture intersect: New York, Downtown Los Angeles, Miami and London, plus smaller but special markets like Charleston, S.C. This is for smaller, independent hotel companies who see a benefit in accessing Loews’ distribution channels and marketing programs.

Highlights: The 100-room Bisha Hotel & Residences in Toronto will be a 41-story, mixed-use development in the heart of the city’s entertainment district, set to open in 2016.

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Center of Energy

Toronto's convenience and cosmopolitan vitality spark the imagination of meeting planners. BY MEGAN ROWE

Toronto is a dynamic, young, diverse and unapologetically modern city that benefitted from a boom in the technology and financial sectors. It's also a prime choice for group events, thanks in part to its location between New York City, Chicago and Montréal. More than half of the Canadian and U.S. populations can reach Toronto by air in 90 minutes or less.

This city of 2.8 million offers plenty of diversions, including live theater and music, a variety of museums, professional sports teams, spas galore, colorful ethnic neighborhoods (including five Chinatowns) and excellent shopping.

The hot spot for shoppers is Toronto Eaton Centre, centrally located downtown and in the midst of a \$300 million redevelopment and expansion. During the colder months, the PATH serves as a welcome alternative route to get around; the 18-mile network of underground passageways connects many Toronto office and public buildings where one can shop, eat, catch a subway or just navigate without having to battle the elements.

The Toronto restaurant scene exploded in the last decade, and many of the restaurants allow group buyouts. Individual travelers will rejoice in the city's diverse ethnic makeup, which means they won't have to look far for a taste of home.

For groups meeting in Toronto, the city's lodging stock offers everything from basic business hotels to a wide range of boutiques and an abundance of 5-star hotels, thanks to a growth spurt at the high end in the last five years. High-level meetings and incentive groups can opt for their own brand of luxury, from the traditional feel of The Ritz-Carlton and the intimate contemporary elegance of

Four Seasons to the see-and-be-seen vibe of the Shangri-La. The rash of development at the top of the market raised the bar for all the competition, so many of the existing mid-market hotels upgraded their rooms and public spaces to stay in the game.

One of the most recent additions to the hotel scene is the Delta, which opened about a year ago. Now the

MICE:

meetings,
incentives,
conventions and
exhibitions



WORLD-CLASS CITY: Toronto skyline (top), and the Aga Khan Museum (bottom)

PHOTOS: © TORONTO TOURISM, © AGA KHAN MUSEUM

flagship of the Canada-based chain, it features sleek, modern design and Canadian touches, from art throughout to a bar serving craft cocktails made with Canadian whiskey. Located in the South Core, or SoCo district, between Front Street and Toronto's Harbourfront, the narrow tower stands near the financial and entertainment districts and the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Many of the Delta's 567 guestrooms afford breathtaking views of the city and lakefront.

Groups that include a number of attendees with families in tow might consider the Chelsea Hotel, offering many kid-friendly touches. The second floor of the hotel houses separate zones for younger children and teenagers, a family pool with an indoor slide, movie nights and more. The hotel offers reasonable

babysitting services as well as excursions to Toronto's islands, for guests who want a day at the beach. A number of suites include kitchenettes.

Typically, citywide conventions in Toronto run in the range of 4,000–6,000 hotel rooms. Larger groups have a wide variety of sites available downtown, including dozens of theaters; the massive Enercare Centre and Allstream Centre complex with more than 1 million square feet of exhibit space, 20 meeting rooms and a huge ballroom; and the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. The latter, following a \$25 million overhaul in 2012, can handle multiple smaller groups as well as larger conventions and enjoys a centralized location. Some 13,000 hotel rooms sit within a 10-minute walk of the facility, which is also connected to the PATH system.

Despite the contemporary feel of Toronto, some relics of the city's past remain. Visitors looking for a respite from glass and steel step back in time in The Distillery Historic District, a lively pedestrian-only enclave in one of the city's oldest neighborhoods. More than 70 cultural, hospitality and retail businesses populate the restored Victorian-era buildings that once housed the massive Gooderham & Worts whiskey distillery. A number of the galleries, performance venues and restaurants accommodate groups for dinners, receptions and more.

A standout, and one of the district's newest additions, is Cluny Bistro, a modern French restaurant. The 11,000-square-foot space, charmingly furnished and divided into more intimate rooms, includes a large wrap-around patio, providing excellent people-watching action. A large private dining space can be divided into two more-intimate rooms.

Two of Toronto's premier museums, the Art Gallery of

Ontario and Royal Ontario Museum, offer strikingly different venues for group events. The dramatic AGO, with an expansion designed by Frank Gehry, presents paintings and sculpture in a coolly modern environment, while ROM pulls together a mixed bag under one roof, with exhibits focusing on textiles, ancient cultures, Canada, biodiversity, world art and more spread over multiple levels in a more traditional style.

The two newest additions to Toronto's museum scene — the Aga Khan Museum and the waterfront Ripley's Aquarium of Canada — sit at opposite ends of the spectrum. The Aga Khan Museum, located on the outskirts of Toronto, features a striking and calm contemporary space dedicated to presenting an overview of the artistic, intellectual and scientific contributions of Muslim civilizations to world heritage. Spaces available for receptions, presentations and dinners include a 350-seat auditorium; a room inspired by a Persian salon; a stone-tiled, glass-enclosed courtyard; garden and patio areas; and a comfortable Patrons' Lounge.

The aquarium, on the other hand, is a busy maze of colorful galleries and stunning displays devoted to aquatic life. In addition to renting the facilities, groups can arrange for behind-the-scenes tours and custom dive shows as part of a signature event.

A welcome recent addition for travelers is the Union Pearson Express, which makes the transfer between Toronto Pearson International Airport and Union Station downtown painless and affordable. The \$24 trip takes 25 minutes, and trains operate every 15 minutes from early morning until late night. Group rates are available. A taxi, by contrast, takes about 45–60 minutes and runs about \$45.



Aga Khan Museum
agakhanmuseum.org

Allstream Centre
allstreamcentre.com

Art Gallery of Ontario
ago.net

Chelsea Hotel, Toronto
chelseatoronto.com

Cluny Bistro & Boulangerie
clunybistro.com

Delta Toronto
deltahotels.com

The Distillery Historic District
thedistillerydistrict.com

Enercare Centre
enercarecentre.com

Four Seasons Hotel Toronto
fourseasons.com

Metro Toronto Convention Centre
mtccc.com

PATH
torontopath.com

Ripley's Aquarium of Canada
ripleyaquariums.com

The Ritz-Carlton, Toronto
ritzcarlton.com

Royal Ontario Museum
rom.on.ca

Shangri-La Hotel, Toronto
Shangri-la.com

Toronto Eaton Centre
torontoeatoncentre.com

Tourism Toronto
seetorontonow.com

Union Pearson Express
upexpress.com

ART SPACE: Art Gallery of Ontario
PHOTO: © TORONTO TOURISM



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SAINT VINCENT AND
THE GRENADINES



Full Sail

Shaped by its seafaring past, Belfast sets an ambitious course toward a brilliant horizon. BY DEBRA BOKUR

Since 1613, when a Royal Charter bestowed it with town status, Belfast has been on a mostly steady ascent — officially becoming a city in 1888 and quickly achieving a reputation as a major force for its linen works and rope-making and shipbuilding industries. Wander into the magnificent City Hall in Donegall Square and this history spills through in illustrated stained-glass light onto marble surfaces. The massive Portland stone building, capped with a copper dome, maintains a strong presence in city center. Completed in 1906 in a combination of Edwardian and Baroque Revival styles on the site of the former White Linen Hall linen exchange, it houses a stunning porte cochère and the city's coat of arms.

The connection between Belfast and the sea echoes in several elements of the Belfast Coat of Arms, including two seahorses and the image of a ship in full sail against a blue sky on a blue sea. Perhaps a far more poignant link to the past is the legendary *RMS Titanic*, built in Belfast's shipyards. Just outside of City Hall, the Titanic Memorial Gardens and monument, constructed of gray Cornish granite, offer powerful tribute to this connection and the lives lost during the ship's long-ago maiden voyage

from Southampton to New York.

Belfast remains a major port city, but there's also plenty going on back on shore. New luxury hotels, an extensive new transportation hub and a new rapid transit bus service are all in the works. Loosely divided into the Titanic, Cathedral, Gaeltacht and Queens quarters, evolution is especially apparent in the Titanic Quarter, or TQ, where the 110,000-square-foot Titanic Studios has become one of Europe's largest film studios and the primary location for HBO's *Game of Thrones*. An expansion is already being planned, along with the development of a 19,000-plus-square-foot Titanic Exhibition Centre capable of accommodating large-scale exhibitions and up to 20,000 visitors.

Development is also well under way for the Titanic Exchange, a next-generation data center that will provide opportunities for investors in financial services, media and media software. A 24-acre site within TQ next to Queen's University technology hub houses the Northern Ireland Science Park. As one of Europe's most connected and secure telecom hubs, businesses and other occupants have access to an Open Access Carrier Neutral Network,

GRAND WELCOME: *Belfast City Hall and Belfast Eye*

PHOTO: © MARIN BEK | DREAMSTIME.COM

direct Tier 1 Internet access, fiber optics to every workspace and Europe's fastest direct fiber optic link to North America.

All that technology should get plenty of use, as an ambitious £29.5 million (about \$45 million) development of the Belfast Waterfront hopes to see an annual addition of 50,000 conference delegates arriving in the city. Along with new state-of-the-art office space and conference and event facilities, city leaders are prepared to attract new investment with competitive commercial property rates and a talented pool of well-educated professionals.

"Belfast already enjoys an impressive reputation for graduates in the fields of computing, finance, medicine and law emerging from Queen's University," says Cllr Arder Carson, Lord Mayor of Belfast. Carson adds that the addition of a new Ulster University city campus promises to positively affect the availability of highly skilled area talent.

But to see only Belfast's business potential is to completely underestimate the countless ways to unwind and be entertained in this historic city near the sea. Just for starters, Belfast hosts more than 70 cultural festivals each year. Two of the biggest events include the Ulster Bank Belfast International Arts Festival in autumn, Ireland's premier contemporary international arts festival.

In summer, the Belfast Mela festival brings tens of thousands of visitors to the city for a celebration of world cultures expressed through music, food, fashion, dance and visual arts. During 2015, the city also welcomed the first annual Lughnasa International Friel Festival. Brian Friel, considered Ireland's greatest living playwright, was hailed with live concerts, dance performances, food and the Kite Tanica kite fair. Other highlights included a staging of Friel's play *Dancing at Lughnasa* and "Amongst Women," a series of talks led by some of the world's most renowned women in the fields of politics,

LODGING

THE FITZWILLIAM HOTEL

The Fitzwilliam features swish contemporary spaces in a stately building. Located next door to the Grand Opera House, it makes a great base for wandering city center. *Great Victoria Street* \$\$\$\$

THE MERCHANT HOTEL

At Belfast's undisputed luxury address, the guestroom décor reflects Victorian design, the spa theme exudes tranquility, and the events floor is all Art Deco. *16 Skipper St.* \$\$\$\$

TEN SQUARE HOTEL

Indulge in award-winning boutique luxury with a definite touch of whimsy, steps from City Hall and shopping in Victoria Square. *10 Donegall Square S.* \$\$\$\$

ON CAMPUS: Queen's University

PHOTO: © VISIT BELFAST

DINING

ACTON & SONS

Enjoy morning tea through dinner here, with lunch favorites such as sizzling portavogie prawns with chili and garlic. Craving potted duck? You're in luck: The menu includes Jars to Share. *17 Brunswick St.* \$\$\$

DEANE'S EIPIC

Sample fine-dining choices from Chef Danni Barry in an elegant, sophisticated setting. The small, progressive menu changes weekly. *28-40 Howard St.* \$\$\$\$\$

OX BELFAST

OX earns ongoing accolades for the innovative dishes, gin menu and wine offerings. Try the Friday and Saturday five-course seasonal tasting menu and vegetable menu with wine pairings. *1 Oxford St.* \$\$\$\$\$



CHECKING IN WITH CLLR ARDER CARSON

Lord Mayor of Belfast

BELFAST IS REGARDED AS NORTHERN IRELAND'S CENTRAL PULSE, BUT WHERE WOULD YOU SAY THE HEARTBEAT OF BELFAST ITSELF LIES?

Being Belfast's First Citizen, I would, of course, say in City Hall! While I admit to being biased, I do actually think if you stopped 10 people in the street and asked them the same question, most would independently say City Hall is the heart of Belfast. That's not just because it is a beautiful building, but it is right in the center of the city. It's also an incredibly important building in the city's history. It opened in 1906 and has seen many historic events and visits in the last hundred years, including various heads of state. In recent years, Belfast City Council made a conscious effort to make City Hall much more accessible to the general public, and I would argue it is a must-see for any visitor to the city. Within the building, notable features include

the porte cochère and Grand Entrance, The Grand Staircase, The Reception Room and The Great Hall. It is also important to point out the people of Belfast are also the city's heartbeat. Most who visit here remark on the warmth of our welcome, and we are proud of our reputation as one of the friendliest cities in the world.

WHAT'S CURRENTLY ON THE HORIZON WITH REGARD TO NEW DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE CITY?

Belfast is a city transformed in recent years, and its rapid transformation shows no sign of slowing down, with more than £1 billion (about \$1.5 billion) of investment estimated to be in the pipeline for the next decade. We have equally ambitious plans to become a world-renowned city for conferences. Central to that aim is the £29.5 million (about \$45 million) expansion of the Belfast Waterfront Exhibition and Conference Centre, which will see the venue's event space double in size. From May 2016, the new, fully integrated development will offer 75,347 square feet of flexible space and wow up to 4,600 guests with a brand-new event experience.

Working in partnership with other city service providers, including Visit Belfast, the Belfast Waterfront will ensure each event will stand out in the city and in the minds of the delegates. The expansion program is jointly funded by Belfast City Council, Tourism Northern Ireland and the European Regional Development Fund, under the European Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for Northern Ireland, and administered by Tourism Northern Ireland.

HOW WILL NEW DEVELOPMENT AFFECT BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES?

Our planning and investment decisions around the city's major capital projects and infrastructure are largely shaped by our ambitions to position Belfast as a progressive European city very much open for business and open to tourists. The new hotels that are in the pipeline are almost certainly influenced by the anticipated growth in the conference market, as well as the year-on-year increase in tourists to the city. The Belfast Tourism Strategy 2015–2020 includes an ambitious target of doubling visitor numbers by 2020.

BLOOMING BELFAST: *Botanic Gardens*

PHOTO: © VISIT BELFAST





literature, sports, business and academia.

Visitors to Belfast can enjoy a classical performance by the Ulster Orchestra or an evening of traditional music in a cozy pub, or plan their trip to coincide with a major music act at the SSE Arena (formerly the Odyssey). There's theater and dance at the MAC and Lyric theaters and drama at the Grand Opera House and Belfast Waterfront Hall.

"I would say that whenever you choose to visit, you'll find something inspirational," says Carson. "There's something to suit all tastes. Along with world-class music and theater, there are other cultural delights such as street performances, historical walking tours, public art, exhibitions at the Ulster Museum, a broad range of galleries from photographic to contemporary, plus a growing reputation for our bars, restaurants and local cuisine."

Today's Belfast is firmly at anchor as a business, leisure and cultural destination, with a range of experiences that would likely stun those long-ago mariners who once sailed in and out of the city's port. As Belfast's city leaders chart a course into 2016 and beyond, the journey promises to be exhilarating.

DIVERSIONS

Belfast gave both berth *and* birth to the original ship of dreams, the *RMS Titanic*. Today, one of the city's most enduringly popular destinations is Titanic Belfast, commemorating the ill-fated ship's existence from her conception to tragic end. Located next to the shipyard where the *Titanic* was built, the six-floor building — complete with nine separate interactive galleries — tells the historic tale of one of the world's most iconic vessels. Themed galleries include The Launch of the *Titanic*, Maiden Voyage, The Sinking, Myths & Reality and Visit & Explore the Wreck.

In the underwater exploration center, visitors can view live underwater footage or segments from a past deep-sea expedition conducted by explorer Robert Ballard's *Nautilus* exploration vessel. During Ballard's ongoing journeys via remotely operated underwater vehicles (ROVs), live footage is broadcast. Interactive features of the exhibition include high-definition video microscopes and simulators that allow a close look at ancient wrecks, mysterious marine life and recently ROV-mapped underwater landscapes.

COMMEMORATION: *Titanic Belfast in Titanic Quarter*

PHOTO: © SURANGA WEERATUNGA | DREAMSTIME.COM

JUST THE FACTS

Time Zone: GMT +0 (Daylight Saving Time +1)

Phone Code: Country code: 44

City code: 28

Currency: Pound sterling

Entry/Exit Requirements: U.S. citizens must have a valid passport with a full blank page; a visa is required for stays beyond 90 days.

Official Language: English

Key Industries: High-tech manufacturing, business and financial services, creative industries, environmental and new energy technologies, hospitality and food processing



SWEET TREATS: *Afternoon tea at Titanic Belfast*

PHOTO: © TITANIC BELFAST

Among the numerous artifacts on exhibit are the menu from the ship's last luncheon, a collection of promotional brochures, still-intact pieces of White Star china and a detailed handwritten launch notebook. To wrap up your land cruise, slip into the tearoom located within the Titanic Suite, with a décor that includes a replica of one of the ship's staircases. For added atmosphere on Sundays, live jazz music performances provide a backdrop to modern tea pouring and the excellent selection of cakes and treats available in the exhibition space's cafés.

INFO TO GO

Belfast International Airport and George Best Belfast City Airport serve the city. Belfast International, 20 miles to the north of the city, has no train connection to city center, but the dedicated Airport Express Bus 300 operates 24 hours a day to and from the city from a stop outside the terminal exit. Weekday service is at 15-minute intervals; off-peak and weekend service is less frequent. The International Airport Taxi Co. operates official taxis 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Stands are located outside the lobby exit on the right-hand side. Find car rental desks in the arrivals hall for Budget, Europcar, Hertz and Enterprise/National/Alamo. Belfast City Airport, just more than a five-minute drive from the city center, offers regular bus and train connections. It primarily connects to all main U.K. airports and some European airports.



ONLINE EXTRA

Jump to gtravmag.com/belfast to read about the Belfast Community Circus School.

Acton & Sons

actonandsons.com

Belfast City Hall

belfastcity.gov.uk/tourism-venues/cityhall

Belfast Mela

belfastmela.org.uk

Belfast Waterfront Hall

waterfront.co.uk

Deane's EIPIC

michaeldeane.co.uk

The Fitzwilliam Hotel

fitzwilliamhotelbelfast.com

Grand Opera House

goh.co.uk

The Merchant Hotel

themerchanthotel.com

OX Belfast

oxbelfast.com

SSE Arena

ssearenabelfast.com

Ten Square Hotel

tensquare.co.uk

Titanic Belfast

titanicbelfast.com

Ulster Bank Belfast

International Arts Festival
belfastinternationalartsfestival.com

Ulster Museum

nmni.com/um

Ulster Orchestra

ulsterorchestra.com

Visit Belfast

visit-belfast.com

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Taking It to the Streets

Las Vegas moves the action outdoors. BY WENDY O'DEA

For years Las Vegas developers and designers have been charged with funneling people through casinos rather than around them. The “What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas” activities the city is known for usually take place inside, often behind closed doors. (We’ll leave it at that.) But things are changing in Vegas as visitors spend more money on non-gambling activities. In fact, revenue from gaming at casinos in Las Vegas has steadily decreased in recent years as younger people spend more time and money on fine dining, entertainment, special events and other open-air activities.

Naturally, as a result, Las Vegas developers are reinventing the Strip and moving the party outdoors. MGM Resorts International, parent company of MGM Grand, Bellagio, New York-New York and Monte Carlo, among others, opened (or will soon open) a number of new outdoor spaces. MGM recently debuted BLVD Plaza, a pedestrian-friendly promenade at Monte Carlo Resort that features restaurants and entertainment, including street performers, along busy Las Vegas Boulevard.

“Visitors to Las Vegas are seeking dynamic social experiences and don’t necessarily want to be encumbered by four walls,” says Stacy Hamilton, director of public relations, MGM Resorts. “So we’ve created several open-air environments to encourage this type of experience.”

In 2016, MGM will unveil The Park, an eight-acre outdoor collec-



tion of dining, shopping and entertainment venues that will connect Monte Carlo Resort and New York-New York. It will also provide a walkway to the new Toshiba Plaza, a 20,000-seat arena — the largest in Las Vegas — that will anchor a new entertainment district currently taking shape. The Park and the arena both expect to open in April 2016.

Caesars Entertainment also got in on the action. The LINQ Promenade, alongside the LINQ Hotel across from Caesars Palace, features an outdoor square with food (including Sprinkles Cupcakes), shopping and entertainment. Its biggest attraction is the High Roller, an observation wheel — the world’s tallest — which slowly rotates 28 air-conditioned cabins with up to 40 people each to heights of 550 feet.

Shopping continues to be a big source of recreation among younger travelers, and that has not been ignored on the development front. The

OUT AND ABOUT: Yoga outside on the BLVD Plaza at Monte Carlo Resort (above), and LINQ Promenade (right)

PHOTOS: © MONTE CARLO RESORT AND CASINO, © CAESARS ENTERTAINMENT



ABOVE IT ALL: *LINQ High Roller*

PHOTO: © CAESARS ENTERTAINMENT

Grand Bazaar Shops, intended to mimic the outdoor markets and bazaars of İstanbul, opened earlier this year in front of Bally's.

Another factor driving visitors outside is the growing festival scene in Las Vegas. A number of festivals — including iHeartRadio, Rock in Rio and the Academy of Country Music's three-day Party for a Cause Festival — will take place on recently updated grounds at north and south ends of the Strip. MGM now offers two festival sites, the smaller MGM Resorts Village

and the 50-acre Festival Grounds, the largest festival space on the Strip. Promoters expect some events to draw hundreds of thousands of attendees.

"Most of the recent development has been about creating new experiences and keeping Las Vegas fresh," Hamilton adds. "There's always something new to discover." And that approach appears to be working. Las Vegas expects a record number of visitors — more than 40 million — this year, and most of them will likely be strolling along the Las Vegas Strip.

SCENIC DRIVES

Despite the city's desert location, there are worthwhile side trips that can provide a nice break from the sensory overload that is Las Vegas. High on the list is a helicopter tour of the Grand Canyon. Papillon Air Tours, the world's largest aerial sightseeing company, operates multiple flights a day over the rocky Arizona landscape and spectacular Grand Canyon. Papillon's red helicopters land on the canyon floor, allowing guests to not only spend some time exploring but also enjoy lunch with Champagne.

Another dramatic site worthy of a visit is the iconic Hoover Dam, a National Historic Landmark since 1937. The dam, providing power to Arizona, Nevada and California, is rated by the American Society of Civil Engineers as one of America's seven modern civil engineering wonders. Hoover Dam lies about 30 miles southeast of Las Vegas at the Nevada-Arizona border. Take U.S. 93 South and continue about 20 miles to Boulder City. In Boulder City, take a left at the second stoplight in town and continue on U.S. 93 for about five miles to Nevada State Route 172. Take NV 172 for about two miles to the dam. Head to the visitor center to gather information or sign up for a guided hour-long tour. Note that children under age 8 cannot participate in the tours, which fill up quickly. Go early if you're interested in a tour and you'll also avoid the heat of midday in the desert. Several charter companies also offer Hoover Dam bus tours from Las Vegas.

BLVD Plaza at Monte Carlo
montecarlo.com

Grand Bazaar Shops
grandbazaarshops.com

High Roller
caesars.com/linq/high-roller

Hoover Dam
usbr.gov/lc/hooverdam

Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority
lvcsa.com

LINQ Promenade
caesars.com

MGM Resorts International
mgmresorts.com

Papillon Air Tours
papillon.com

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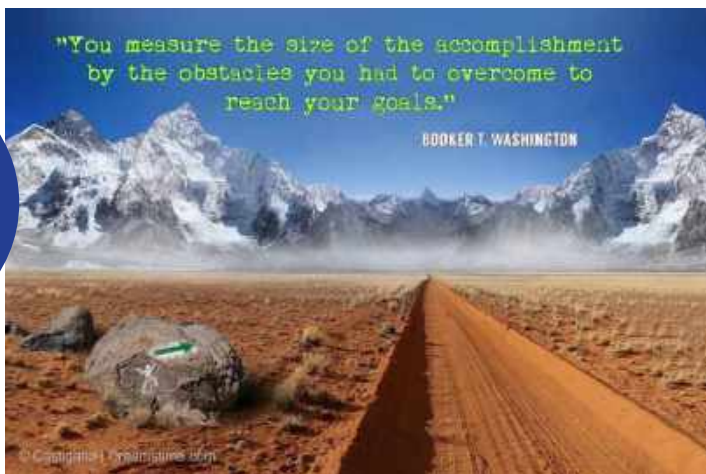
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f Time for some Monday Motivation.



As #autumn approached, Kimberly Krol wrote on our blog about #Oktoberfest: bit.ly/1FI38y5

Read our list of the world's coolest ruin sites: bit.ly/1UtXJMm

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f **WHERE IN THE WORLD?**
Name the country, bonus points for the town!
This town, built in the late 12th century, was restored to its former beauty after political turnover and rebellion. It features a peaceful river, an oversized castle and an ancient monastery. Can you guess where this is? — answer below

p Colorful and historic, Recife in Brazil is a seriously underrated tourist destination.



Follow us on Pinterest, or choose your favorite GT boards at pinterest.com/globaltraveler.



Quit monkeying around and check out our list of seven unique spas!

We had a lot of great write-ups on our blog this week, but one that made us long for the Windy City was John Wroblewski's inside scoop on Chicago pizza places.

Follow GT's Instagram, @globaltravelermag, for the best #snapshots from around the globe.

in News from Delta as it bans big game hunting trophies in the wake of Cecil the Lion's death. <http://bit.ly/1JLvid4>

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FINANCIAL CENTER: Shenzhen
Stock Exchange building
 PHOTO: © OUTCAST85 | DREAMSTIME.COM

Super Shenzhen

Find stylish venues for impressing clients in China's bustling business hub. BY ALLISON VOIGTS

Until 1980, Shenzhen was a quiet village populated by a few thousand farmers and fishermen; now this bustling metropolis of 11 million ranks among China's richest cities. Shenzhen's supercharged economy sprouted seemingly overnight when former premier Deng Xiaoping chose it as an incubator for economic reform and opening. Thirty-five years later, China's youngest city is one of its most powerful, boasting soaring skyscrapers and billions of dollars in foreign investment.

Strategically positioned along the border between mainland China and Hong Kong, the city connects to Hong Kong by bus, rail and ferry (though American passport holders must purchase a visa in advance to visit Shenzhen). Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport serves more than 60 Chinese cities and a handful of international destinations, and a high-speed railway connects Shenzhen to Southern China's other economic powerhouse, Guangzhou, in less than an hour.

Located 22 miles west of the city, Shenzhen's airport connects to the Luohu Commercial District by metro and to the Futian Central Business

District by taxi. Though fares are typically cheaper when flying into Shenzhen, travelers flying to Hong Kong can take public transit, ferry service or private van service to Shenzhen (approximately two hours, including border crossing).

Within the city, five metro lines offer convenient transit that bypasses Shenzhen's infamous traffic jams. To avoid traffic, many business travelers prefer to base themselves within the gleaming new Futian District. The design-focused InterContinental Shenzhen provides an atmosphere that's playful without being kitschy, with a Spanish theme that extends from the bellmen's toreador-inspired uniforms to the imitation beach. The 463 high-tech guestrooms feature LCD televisions and Bose sound systems as well as chandeliers and wood paneling.

Also located in the CBD, the Futian Shangri-La offers convenient access to the Shenzhen Convention & Exhibition Centre as well as the Shenzhen Civic Centre. The hotel's 478 tastefully appointed guestrooms feature Chinese touches such as wooden screens and metallic fabrics, as well as contemporary art and expansive views of the Shenzhen skyline. Start the day with a power breakfast in the hotel's Café Zen, serving both Western fare and local favorites such as dim sum and congee.

For classic décor and outstanding dining, the 439-room Grand Hyatt Shenzhen occupies 38 floors above the luxury MixC shopping center. Rooms feature marble bathrooms and floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the Luohu shopping district. The hotel's 1881 restaurant is among the most popular in Shenzhen for its Sichuan and Northern Chinese cuisine. Impress local colleagues with a business lunch of wood-fired Peking duck

Shenzhen's Dafen Oil Painting Village produces more than 5 million art reproductions per year. The village, formed in 1988, houses more than 5,000 Chinese artists.

1881

grand.hyatt.com

360° Bar, Restaurant & Lounge

shangri-la.com

Café Zen

shangri-la.com

China National Tourism Office

cnto.org

Dafen Oil Painting Village

dafenvillageonline.com

Futian Shangri-La, Shenzhen

shangri-la.com

Grand Hyatt Shenzhen

grand.hyatt.com

Greenland Lounge

www.pavilionhotel.com

Guangzhou Luhu Golf & Country Club

luhugolf.com

InterContinental Shenzhen

ihg.com

Mission Hills Golf Club

missionhillschina.com

MixC

themixc.com

Sand River Golf Club

srgc.cn

Shangri-La Hotel, Shenzhen

shangri-la.com

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport

eng.szairport.com

Shenzhen Convention & Exhibition Centre

www.szcec.com/eng

Yokohama

nanhaihotelshenzhen.com



ART COLONY: Dafen Oil Painting Village

PHOTO: © WAIHS | DREAMSTIME.COM

and an extensive Chinese tea list; reservations are a must.

Built to house government dignitaries (the guest list includes Premier Li Keqiang), the Shenzhen Wuzhou Guest House provides a more traditional Chinese experience. The 334-room hotel features guestrooms in both Western style and Chinese décor, as well as an extensive Chinese art collection, fitness center and meeting facilities.

If you'll be traveling back and forth or meeting associates from Hong Kong, the Shangri-La Hotel, Shenzhen's location near the border makes it a convenient meeting place. Though the hotel is older, service and facilities prove first-rate, including at the 360° restaurant, offering sweeping views of the city, prime steaks and an extensive wine list on the top two floors.

As a melting pot for workers from all over China and the world, Shenzhen offers cuisine as diverse as its inhabitants. Take your business meeting outside the hotel for lunch at Shui Zu Yu Xiang, a Chang'an Plaza restaurant whose Beijing-style fish and tofu dishes are sure to please any Northern Chinese associates. For a more international menu, Yokohama restaurant inside the Nan Hai Hotel serves the freshest sashimi in town while offering views of the ferries to Hong Kong and Macau.

Mid-afternoon, negotiate an agreement in the sophisticated atmosphere at the Greenland Lounge, where Shenzhen's elite sip afternoon tea beneath the glass-domed roof of the Futian District's Pavilion Hotel. If you need a more formal atmosphere to host a meeting, the Futian Shangri-La in the heart of the CBD offers a variety of stylish boardrooms complete with wood paneling, video conferencing and simultaneous translation systems.

However, in Shenzhen, many business deals are done

on the greens. As one of China's earliest adopters of the sport, the city has become a golf mecca, boasting half a dozen top-rated courses and the largest golf course in the world. Mission Hills Golf Club boasts 12 18-hole courses, each designed by a different world champion, and is widely considered to be the top club in Southern China. In addition to the club's five restaurants and clubhouse facilities, Mission Hills offers fully equipped conference rooms and an on-site event planning team.

Other excellent clubs include Shenzhen Golf Club, one of China's two oldest courses and a popular club among locals for its easily accessible Futian location. Sand River Golf Club, a 27-hole course designed by South African legend Gary Player, is part of the Palm Springs International Club and boasts floodlights for playing after dark. Sprawling across 180 acres of Luhu Park, the Guangzhou Luhu Golf & Country Club features a par-72 course designed by architect Dave Thomas.

If you need to pick up a gift prior to a business meeting, the upscale MixC shopping center, connected to the Grand Hyatt Shenzhen, houses luxury brands ranging from Armani to Prada. Before leaving the city, get fitted for a tailor-made suit or dress at the Luohu Commercial City straddling the border with Hong Kong. It's noisy and, at times, overwhelming, but a perfect example of the hustle and bustle that transformed Shenzhen into an economic superpower.



ONLINE EXTRA

Jump to gtravmag.com/shenzhen to read about Shenzhen's art and architecture.



www.spain.info

* In this city
the future is already here



Into the Night

Incheon awakens as the South Korean sun sets. BY ALLIE MOORE

Seoul is undoubtedly South Korea's epicenter for all things culture and entertainment, but the capital city's little sister to the southwest, Incheon, is all grown up and ready to establish herself. After hosting the 2014 Asian Games and undergoing a recent real estate overhaul, South Korea's third-largest city boasts its own little metropolis of restaurants, festivals and an exhilarating nightlife that offers a refreshing respite from saturated Seoul.

As the sun sets over the Yellow Sea, take a breather in Tochon, a calm Korean restaurant where you can enjoy authentic delicacies among aquariums and waterfalls. If you'd rather grab a quick take-away meal before starting your night, line up at Shinpo-sijang (within the Shinpo Market) for a casual Korean snack like *bibimbap* or spicy beef and vegetables.

South Korea's only Chinatown is located in Incheon, a city that prides itself on its proximity to mainland China. Stretch your wallet at Mandabok or opt for budget-friendly dumplings at Dada Bok. After a spicy meal of veggies and noodles, soak up views of Incheon's port over dessert and coffee at Café Castle, also located in Chinatown.

If you're craving a side of Western culture with your beef and noodles, Liquor Burger in Yeonsu-dong extends its American arms with all the comforts of home merged with an exotic locale. A big-screen projection television airs football (both European and American) and hockey, or get into the game with darts and foosball. A gentle mix of Westerners and Koreans flocks to the bar for its seven delectable burgers, including the Quadruple Bypass Burger.

As the sun sets, the lively streets of Bupyeong begin to wake from within the ordinarily peaceful city. The central Bupyeong Cultural Street is a veritable showcase of events throughout the year, and people-watching on this busy avenue never gets old.

While there aren't many (if any) LGBT bars in Incheon proper, a quick subway or taxi ride transports you to Seoul's Itaewon neighborhood with its gay-friendly thoroughfare. Grab a pre-bar snack at Always Homme or Eat Me, and then flow out into the hordes hopping from venue to venue. From dance clubs like Le Queen to the more refined cocktail lounge Almaz, the diversity of the neighborhood will appease all tastes.

As the evening begins to roll over into the morning, make one last stop at Paradise Casino inside the Grand Hyatt Incheon. Table games and slot machines keep risk-takers busy for hours.

Seoul may be the more well-known South Korean destination, but Incheon's short distance to the port and the airport solidify its acclaim as a burgeoning entertainment oasis.



SPICE UP THE NIGHT: *Incheon's Chinatown (top), and a traditional Korean snack of bibimbap (bottom)*

PHOTOS: © STEVEN1892 | DREAMSTIME.COM,
© APICHAART WANNAWAL | DREAMSTIME.COM

Grand Hyatt Incheon
hyatt.com

Liquor Burger
liquorburger.com

Paradise Casino
paradisecasino.co.kr

Incheon's proximity to mainland China guarantees diners the best Chinese food on the Korean Peninsula.

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Incheon Airport's passion to become the best in the world continues today.

- ★ Listed in Global Traveler's Hall of Fame for the first time in the world
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- ★ Selected as the World Best Duty-free Shop for 5 consecutive years by Business Traveller



BY THE SEA: The San Juan waterfront leading to Condado Plaza and hotels along the coastline

PHOTO: © RAULROSA | DREAMTIME.COM



Cool Condado

Find urban luxury in the center of a Caribbean playground. BY GREGORY D. MCCLUNEY

Close to the financial district and minutes from the history and culture of Old San Juan, El Condado is the luxury hub of San Juan and Puerto Rico. Visitors find luxury hotels like the Condado Plaza Hilton and the new Condado Vanderbilt (right out of the 1920s); boutiques such as Cartier, Armani, Gucci and Louis Vuitton; local fresh markets; protected beaches; and world-class fine dining, trendy bars, casinos and non-stop nightlife. It's all surrounded by views of the Condado Lagoon and cooled by breezes off the Atlantic Ocean.

Shoppers can enjoy a cocktail in an exclusive boutique on Condado's toney Ashford Avenue (often called the Caribbean's Fifth Avenue); view original art from several galleries; and then shop for souvenirs, local art and fresh produce from local farmers at El Mercado Urbano (the Urban Market).

Catch some sun and a massage at one of the luxury

hotels and spas that line the Atlantic Ocean beachfront and make your plans for dinner — almost every option is available right in the neighborhood. Foodies crowd Chef Martin Louzao's Cocina Abierta for his duck tacos with orange-grape pico de gallo. At another favorite, Pikayo in the Condado Plaza Hilton, Chef Wilo Benet blends Puerto Rican flavors with those of Eastern Europe and Africa, which he calls “nu + global mix cuisine.” The newest A-list eatery is 1919 in the Condado Vanderbilt by Juan José Cuevas, a Michelin-starred chef.

If it's too early to go clubbing, visitors can try their luck at one of the sleekest casinos in the Caribbean, Casino del Mar at La Concha Resort. It's right on the beach and offers cutting-edge gaming, high-tech slots and table games.

For nightlife, head to one of the most popular dance spots, La Piazza Terrace Club, part of the DiZucchero Italian Restaurant and home to some of the best DJs in San Juan. Or cruise down Ashford to Coco's Lounge at the Condado Palm. Nearby you'll find the popular El Barril and Esteban's on Aguadilla Street.

Condado is a little bit Fifth Avenue, a little more South Beach, with a nice dose of Puerto Rico mixed in to spice it up — an exotic combination.

1919
condadovanderbilt.com

Casino Del Mar
laconcharesort.com

Coco's Lounge
condadopalm.com

Condado Plaza Hilton
hilton.com

Condado Vanderbilt
condadovanderbilt.com

DiZucchero Italian Restaurant
dizuccheropr.com

La Piazza Terrace Club
lapiazzapr.com

Pikayo Restaurant
wilo benet.com/pikayo

Puerto Rico Tourism
seepuertorico.com



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OVERWATER: Auckland Harbour Bridge

PHOTO: © TRAVELLING-LIGHT | DREAMSTIME.COM



Activity City

Walk, sail, jump, sip and taste your way through Auckland. BY MARLENE GOLDMAN

We're cruising under the Auckland Harbour Bridge on a late-afternoon sail around the city's Waitemata Harbour when our boat captain says, "Okay, everyone, if you look up, you might get lucky and see someone bungee-jump off the bridge."

Our ferry slows down, and we get a clear view of a woman plunging from the bridge, held up by just a knot of a long rope that leaves her inches from the icy waters below.

New Zealand invented the bungee jump, which comes as no surprise considering the country is an adrenaline junkie's dream. Our trip on the Fullers ferry harbor cruise offers a quick taste of what the city has in store.

On land, as my colleague and I explore Auckland after a business trip, our itinerary includes one of the city's main cultural attractions: the Auckland War Memorial Museum, which houses well-curated Maori and Pacific collections. We spend a couple hours discovering the history and art of the country and are also treated to a Maori cultural performance showcasing song, dance and spiritual calls. Before leaving, we make sure to peruse the photographs by Margaret Matilda White, who captured

images from the Auckland Mental Hospital in the late 1800s.

The museum sits atop Auckland Domain, the city's oldest park, located on an ancient volcano. The Domain is also home to Sensory Gardens, Wintergardens, formal gardens and other open space.

Nearby lies the trendy village of Parnell, where we stop for a coffee at popular Domain and AYR Café before taking in the historic buildings, many of which have been transformed into boutiques, antique stores and specialty shops. Though mostly window shopping, we make sure to browse the irresistible Chocolate Boutique Café for a sweet-tooth fix, much like former President Bill Clinton did years ago.

Another art stop: We head to the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, focusing on local art, though here it is mixed with works by the European masters as well as other artists based in the Pacific region.

Afterward, we head downtown for the highlights of the easily walkable Central Business District — the funky shops and cafés on Karangahape Road, better known as K Road, and the more general shopping district on Queen and High streets. K Road is also Auckland's nightlife hub with

TALL TALES: Base jumping by wire from Sky Tower (top), and a view of the street through the tower's glass floor (bottom)

PHOTOS: © MATIASCAUSA | DREAMSTIME.COM, © MIRCEA DOBRE | DREAMSTIME.COM

karaoke bars, pubs and live music venues in the mix.

On our walk around the waterfront, we make a stop at the New Zealand Maritime Museum, located in the restaurant and entertainment precinct of Viaduct Harbour. Yachts used in the America's Cup take visitors sailing here and, though we don't make the trip, we do spy an America's Cup yacht in the harbor.

Just outside downtown Auckland, the Museum of Transport and Technology Aviation Hall impresses with its imposing military aircraft, such as the famous de Havilland Mosquito hanging overhead.

Our stay in New Zealand's capital is literally topped by a visit to SkyCity Auckland, home to the iconic 1,000-foot Sky Tower, touted as the tallest free-standing tower in the Southern Hemisphere. We watch visitors leap from the tower and fall 630 feet straight down, an activity aptly called SkyJump, though jumpers are tethered to a wire. And even though the attraction promotes its full-body harness and overhead safety lines, we opt for the slightly less terrifying SkyWalk, hugging the edge of the Sky Tower's platform.

For a lunch outing, we wander the City Works Depot, an old industrial complex now housing creative spaces like Dry & Tea, where patrons indulge in teas and cakes while getting a quick stylish blow wave, as well as foodie spots like popular Chef Al Brown's Best Ugly Bagels — hand-rolled, boiled and wood-fired to New York bagel perfection.

Culinary hot spots spread throughout Auckland in neighborhoods like Ponsonby, Britomart and Parnell and also along Federal Street Precinct, home of popular Depot, headed by award-winning Chef Al Brown, as well as trendy locales like MASU by Nic Watt, Sean Connolly's The Grill and Peter Gordon's Bellota.

Visitors can embark on a variety of special food and wine tours, and we make time on our short four-day visit for the most popular tour in Auckland — the daytrip to Waiheke Island, featuring 30 vineyards.

LODGING

THE LANGHAM AUCKLAND

Along with its 411 guestrooms, the 5-star luxury hotel at the heart of the city offers views of the Auckland Domain, as well as the Palm Court bar focusing on handcrafted cocktails. *83 Symonds St. \$\$\$\$*

PULLMAN AUCKLAND

With views of Auckland Harbour and parks, the hotel features 270 guestrooms and suites in the 14-story Pullman Tower, complemented by 70 deluxe rooms, one- and two-bedroom apartment-style suites and penthouses. *Corner Princes Street and Waterloo Quadrant \$\$\$\$*

SKYCITY GRAND HOTEL

Discover an oasis of sophisticated luxury in the vibrant heart of Auckland. The 5-star, 312-room hotel offers a range of facilities and services, including four on-site restaurants, three with award-winning chefs. *90 Federal St. \$\$\$\$*

DINING

CLOONEY

Since opening in 2006, Clooney has won awards for its unique approach to Kiwi cuisine. Housed in a former warehouse, the space now emanates visions of grandeur. *33 Sale St., Freemans Bay \$\$\$\$\$*

MASU BY NIC WATT

Winning *Metro Magazine's* Restaurant of the Year, Best New Restaurant and Best Smart Dining for 2014, MASU adds a modern twist to traditional Japanese *robata* cooking. *SkyCity Grand Hotel, 90 Federal St. \$\$\$\$*

SIDART RESTAURANT

Sidart combines fresh and unusual ingredients with a menu the chefs constantly craft and tweak throughout the year. Tasting menus offer five- or nine-course options with wine pairings. *Three Lamps Plaza, 283 Ponsonby Road, Ponsonby \$\$\$\$*





SEA LIFE: A vendor showing a lobster at Auckland Fish Market (left), and boats at Waiheke Island (right)

PHOTOS: © RAFAEL BEN-ARI | DREAMSTIME.COM, © ISABEL POULIN | DREAMSTIME.COM

Ananda Tours

ananda.co.nz

Auckland Art Gallery

Toi o Tāmaki

aucklandartgallery.com

Auckland Fish Market

afm.co.nz

Auckland Tourism

aucklandnz.com

Auckland War Memorial Museum

aucklandmuseum.com

Best Ugly Bagels

bestugly.co.nz

Chocolate Boutique Café

chocolateboutique.co.nz

City Works Depot

cityworksdepot.co.nz

Clooney

clooney.co.nz

Depot

eatatdepot.co.nz

Dry & Tea

dryandtea.com

Fullers

fullers.co.nz

Jurassic Ridge

jurassicridge.co.nz

Karangahape Road

kroad.com

The Langham Auckland

langhamhotels.com

MASU by Nic Watt

skycityauckland.co.nz

Mudbrick Vineyard & Restaurant

mudbrick.co.nz

Museum of Transport and Technology

motat.org.nz

New Zealand Maritime Museum

maritimemuseum.co.nz

Pullman Auckland

pullmanauckland.co.nz

Sheepworld

sheepworldfarm.co.nz

Sidart Restaurant

sidart.co.nz

SkyCity Auckland

skycityauckland.co.nz

SkyCity Grand Hotel

skycityauckland.co.nz

Waiheke Island

waiheke.co.nz

“I see the island as a food and wine island,” says Jenny McDonald, our guide and director of Ananda Tours, which runs tours of Waiheke Island. Waiheke is known for its Bordeaux-style red wines, and McDonald explains, “In general, New Zealand is known for Sauvignon Blanc, but they can’t grow that on the island.”

In addition to producing wine, the island farms fresh oysters, produces local honey and mills olive oil, all of which visitors can experience on tours.

Mudbrick Vineyard & Restaurant is one of many on Waiheke we visit, along with specialty vineyards such as Jurassic Ridge, known for carrying vegan wines which don’t use any animal products in their production.

We head out early one morning to watch the daily fish auction from a viewing platform at the Auckland Fish Market, another popular stop. Also at the market, the Big Picture Wine Experience includes an interactive session in the Aroma Room, which teaches about the distinctive aromas of various New Zealand wines. A wine tasting with a winemaker follows a wine video.

For our final excursion, we choose to visit Sheepworld, New Zealand’s sheep and wool center, providing a step-by-step insight into how the country farms its sheep and harvests and uses the wool.

A live demonstration starts with dogs bringing

in the sheep and continues to shearing and lamb feeding. The center’s “Wonderful Wool” multimedia exhibition explains how the shorn fleece is transformed into woolen products, some of which are on sale at the center’s small shop. I am tempted by everything from sheepskin rugs to miniature woolen stuffed lambs.

Alas, we’re not in Auckland at the right time for the interactive nature tour on Auckland’s Rangitoto and neighboring Motutapu islands with tribal guides. January through March and October through December, visitors participate in traditional practices such as food harvesting, weaving or learning the medicinal properties of the island’s flora and fauna.

We also learn New Zealand Rugby and Discovery Partners are building and will operate the All Blacks Experience visitor attraction in Auckland’s most recently developed waterfront precinct, The Wynyard Quarter. The interactive attraction showcasing the heritage, culture, people and stories from New Zealand rugby expects to open in 2017, all the more reason to schedule a return trip.



ONLINE EXTRA

Jump to gtravmag.com/tiritiri to read about Tiritiri Matangi Island.

INFO TO GO

Air New Zealand offers direct service to Auckland (AKL) from North American gateways including Los Angeles (LAX), San Francisco (SFO), Honolulu (HNL) and Vancouver (YVR). Starting in December, Air New Zealand will launch non-stop service from Houston (IAH). Domestic flights connect Auckland with destinations throughout the country. Cruising is another popular way to get to and explore New Zealand; most cruises depart from Australia and the Pacific Islands, and some are round-the-world journeys.



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NATURE'S BOUNTY: Secluded Sicilian beach cove (left), and La Vucciria food market in Palermo (right)

PHOTOS: © PATRICIA THOMSON/LA DOLCE VITA WINE TOURS

Abbondanza!

Sicily overflows with fabulous food and wine, beaches, hill towns and history. BY RON BERNTHAL

Sicily is Italy on steroids. Compared to the rest of the country, everything on this beautiful Mediterranean island is magnified. The color of the sea is brighter, food is spicier, sunsets are more ethereal, ruins are older and the landscape is more stunning than in Tuscany. And, of course, rush-hour traffic in Palermo can be worse than in Naples.

Recognizing the Italian word for beach, *spiaggia*, leads you to some of Sicily's best seascapes. The island boasts hundreds of beaches and private coves, including Spiaggia Sampieri, a two-mile-long beach near the fishing village of Scicli with crowded beach bars for eating, drinking and people-watching, as well as empty stretches of white sand. Spiaggia Marinello, near the coastal village of Oliveri, is known for its fine sand and warm water, with a breathtaking view across the sea to the Aeolian Islands. Swimming weather in Sicily stretches from May to September, and winter months prove relatively mild

along the coast.

First-time visitors to Sicily, however, too restless and inquisitive for total beach sedation, will find plenty to see and do, from the ancient Doric temples of Agrigento to the Palazzo Riso, Palermo's Contemporary Art Museum, displaying the works of the most important contemporary Sicilian artists. There are fascinating hill towns near Ragusa and Modica; quiet agricultural districts in the middle of the island where farmers grow the best lemons, almonds, figs, eggplants and olives in all of Europe; and spectacular views of the Mediterranean Sea and Mount Etna from touristy Taormina. With terrain that is 86 percent hills and mountains, a straight road is impossible to find, thus any driving journey on the island ends up taking two or three times longer than planned.

Older than the rest of Italy, Sicily harbors a strong feeling of independence. Once dominated by the Greeks, Romans and Muslims

SICILIAN LIFE: Vineyard on gentle slope in Etna region (top); a Marsala fish market (middle); and Monreale Cathedral, a UNESCO World Heritage site (bottom)

PHOTOS: © WVOEVALE | DREAMSTIME.COM; © PATRICIA THOMSON LA DOLCE VITA WINE TOURS; © PATRICIA THOMSON LA DOLCE VITA WINE TOURS

from North Africa, the island was conquered by the Normans in 1091, and much later by Spain and Bourbons from France. But Sicily maintained its own customs, dialects and style throughout its history. The island even resented being governed by mainland Italy; it finally became an autonomous region in 1946 under the new Italian constitution, with its own parliament and elected president.

Visitors can explore the archaeological treasures left behind during Sicily's tumultuous past in more than 65 parks, 70 museums and numerous structures throughout the island: castles, villas, churches, convents and ancient monasteries, including several UNESCO World Heritage sites. Many of Sicily's oldest cities and preserved excavations lie along the island's 620 miles of coastline, where two-lane roads — and sometimes the faster *autostrada* — encircle the island. Sicily's *autostrada* is mostly toll-free, with tolls collected near the more urban portions of the highway. Parts of the island's *autostrada* system look quite modern, with design-savvy tunnels and imaginative landscaping, while other sections can become heavily congested with maintenance closures and rush-hour traffic.

For agritourists heading into central Sicily, the A19 *autostrada* connecting Catania and Palermo offers a good start when driving into the interior, with smaller roads used to reach the farms, vineyards and citrus groves of the island's agricultural districts. Food tourism has become a big business in Sicily, mostly because of the artisanal and traditional way of agricultural production throughout the island. The Mediterranean diet, with its fresh fish, fruit and vegetables, grains and wine, is part of the Sicilian lifestyle. In recent years it helped draw more upscale tourists to the island's food markets, wineries and seaside restaurants, an important source of income for Sicily's still-struggling economy.

Choose among many *agriturismo* itineraries, from one-day vineyard visits to week-long tours that include organic farms, wineries, centuries-old olive and citrus groves and small family-run businesses involved in producing traditional Sicilian food like bread, honey, olive oil, marmalade and cheese. Visitors can arrange stays at historic country family estates converted into hotel accommodations offering modern amenities, delicious home-cooked meals and an opportunity to participate in grape harvesting or olive pressing.

One of Sicily's most exciting wine regions occupies the slopes of the 11,000-foot, volcanic Mount Etna, located in Etna National Park, established in 1987 and only an hour's drive from the bustling city of Catania. Other towns in the eastern wine region include Vittoria, Noto (one of the UNESCO sites south of Siracusa) and Faro in extreme northeast Sicily near Messina. The vineyards around Mount Etna — with its continually

INFO TO GO

Sicily lies close enough to Rome (one hour by air), Zürich (two hours), Paris (two hours, 20 minutes) and London (two hours, 50 minutes) for business travelers to plan a weekend or one-week visit. Most major European airlines fly directly to the two biggest airports, Palermo (PMO) and Catania (CTA), and low-cost carriers Ryanair, easyJet and others also serve the island. Taxis from Palermo Airport (about \$50–80; 30–50 minutes) or Catania Airport (about \$30–40; 20–40 minutes) into the respective downtowns are expensive; local buses cost considerably less but are slow and crowded. The train to/from Palermo Airport (about \$7; 40 minutes) provides a good option. Both airports include car rental facilities, your best bet for self-touring; add a Sicily map to your personal GPS device and bring it with you.





HOT SPOTS: *Tourists explore a volcanic crater on Mount Etna (top), and outdoor dining terrace at Planeta Wine Resort La Foresteria (right)*

PHOTOS: © NINEFOTO | DREAMSTIME.COM, © PLANETA LA FORESTERIA

Hotel Foresteria Baglio della Luna
bagliodellaluna.com

Hotel Villa Palocla
villapalocla.it

Italian National Tourist Board
italiantourism.com

Italian Wine Central
italianwinecentral.com

Palazzo Riso
palazzoriso.it

Passopisciaro Winery
passopisciaro.com

Planeta Estates
planeta.it

Tenuta Regaleali Estate
tascadalmerita.it

smoking and often snow-capped peak, cooler temperatures, extra rainfall and intense sunlight — produce excellent reds. “On Etna, soil composition depends on the specific lava formations from individual eruptions,” said Andrea Franchetti, one of Etna’s new wine pioneers and owner of Passopisciaro Winery, in a recent interview with *Wine Enthusiast* magazine. “Because Etna has multiple active craters, every lava flow has a different makeup.”

Another excellent wine region lies in the sun-baked hills about 30 miles southeast of Palermo. Here the Tenuta Regaleali estate “offers a step back in time when farms completely sustained themselves and the local villages on what grows on the property,” said Geralyn Brostrom, Certified Wine Educator and co-founder and education director, Italian Wine Central. “This estate is a true farm-to-table operation, elegant and rustic. It is owned by an Italian royal, Count Lucio Tasca, and offers accommodations, wine tasting and tours; and its cooking school, started by Anna Tasca Lanza over 25 years ago and now run by her daughter, Fabrizia, is well-known throughout Sicily.” The Regaleali estate also includes Villa Tasca, a luxurious, 18th-century Palermo villa available for rent.

Brostrom, a Napa-based wine professional who holds Italian and American citizenship, said another family business, Planeta Estates, has helped bring upscale wine tourism to Sicily over the past 20 years. “Although they have worked the land since the 1500s, their six commercial winery operations were begun in 1995,” said Brostrom. “They have a 14-room boutique hotel, La Foresteria, in Menfi near Sciacca, and an eight-room guest house, called Dorilli, on their estate in Vittoria, near Ragusa. They also have two nice country houses surrounded by vineyards in the Buonivini estate in Noto, where tours, wine tastings and lunches



are available all days except on Sundays and public holidays.”

On the western side of the island, in the area of Agrigento, find Foresteria Baglio della Luna, a 13th-century farmhouse beautifully transformed into a 23-room hotel overlooking the Valley of the Temples and close to beaches and the city of Agrigento. Another interesting hotel sits near the ancient town of Sciacca, founded in the fifth century B.C. by the Greeks. Situated among orange and lemon groves, Villa Palocla lies just 1.5 miles from San Marco Beach and five minutes from the café-filled square in Sciacca’s historic quarter.



ONLINE EXTRA

Jump to gtravmag.com/palermo to read about Arab-Norman Palermo, one of Sicily’s UNESCO Heritage sites.



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BEACH BEAUTY: Admiralty Bay, Bequia Island (left), and two palm trees framing a view of Saint Vincent

PHOTOS: © PKAZMIERCZAK | DREAMSTIME.COM, © ACHIM BAQUÉ | DREAMSTIME.COM

Island Time

Slow down in the barefoot paradise of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. BY RICHARD NEWTON

It turns out I've been liming most of my life. I just didn't know it until I got to the Caribbean island of Saint Vincent. Liming, verb: Idling in a public place or wasting time on a job. Oh yes, I've been liming for years, and in Saint Vincent I've found my spiritual home.

When you're in full liming mode, you don't walk, you saunter. And you don't saunter far. Mostly you sit under shade, sometimes alone, preferably with friends, watching the world go by.

Which is more or less what Saint Vincent has done since gaining independence from Britain in 1979. It is by far the largest of the 32 islands which, collectively, make up the nation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The Grenadines form a comet's tail of islands and islets curving south for 60 miles through turquoise sea. Saint Vincent itself is the comet: a big, green, rugged mass.

Despite its geographic preeminence, the island of Saint Vincent remained something of a backwater. The Grenadines are bejeweled with

high-end tourist resorts while Saint Vincent remains largely untouched, with an economy based on the export of bananas and arrowroot. All that is about to change.

Saint Vincent's great handicap has been geological. The island's volcanic origins produced a striking landscape of precipitous hills and valleys riven with streams and waterfalls and covered in tropical forest. These spectacular contours have come at a price: The dearth of flat ground prevented the building of an airport large enough to handle direct international flights.

Saint Vincent's existing airport, suitable for regional turboprops, crowds beside the cricket stadium on a patch of land fringing the town of Arnos Vale on the island's southern tip. It has been an enduring national indignity that international tourists heading to the Grenadines have usually done so via Barbados.

Vincentians knew that to build an international airport would



LOOK-OUTS: Yellow and red lifeguard booth on Grand Anse Beach, Grenada Island (left); and lighthouse in a tropical garden on Grenada Island (right)

PHOTOS: © PKAZMIERCZAK | DREAMSTIME.COM

literally involve moving mountains. For decades it remained a pipedream, but no longer. A site was identified at Argyle, on the east coast. Ground was broken on the \$240 million project in 2008, and while it would be an exaggeration to say work has continued apace (little gets done at pace on this island), the project is now nearer the end than the beginning, and Vincentians are contemplating the dramatic changes an international airport will bring to their sleepy shores.

Tourists (and, for good or ill, resort developers) will find much to discover when Saint Vincent properly opens to the world. The western, leeward coast (that is, the coast sheltered from the prevailing winds off the Atlantic) boasts some beautiful, white-sand beaches, while fashionable Young Island, a short water taxi ride from Arnos Vale, is a long-established retreat for the beautiful people and was one of several Vincentian shooting locations for the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies.

Idyllic beaches and smart resorts, already a dime a dozen in the Grenadines, will no doubt be one of the attractions of the new, interconnected Saint Vincent. But they will not be the only attraction. For instance, no other island offers anything quite like the Owia Salt Pond, a natural coastal pool nestling within rugged volcanic rock formations on the windward coast. Here you can swim — and lime — with Vincentians. Just be careful not to step on any sea urchins when wading.

The island's star attraction — which none of the Grenadines can compete

LODGING

BEQUIA BEACH HOTEL

This luxurious yet laid-back beachside property features beachfront suites or, for greater privacy, private villas with their own pools. *Friendship Beach, Bequia* \$\$\$\$

BUCCAMENT BAY RESORT

Perhaps the shape of things to come: a beautiful, all-inclusive resort on Saint Vincent's largely untouched (for now) west coast. *Saint Vincent* \$\$\$\$

THE COTTON HOUSE

The Cotton House is a byword for exclusivity, and the Caribbean resort of choice for royalty and celebrities. For now, access is usually via Barbados. *Mustique* \$\$\$\$

DINING

THE FIG TREE

In a lovely location overlooking Admiralty Bay, The Fig Tree serves Caribbean specialties (roti, curried mutton) and seafood. *Belmont, Bequia* \$\$

FIREFLY RESTAURANT

It's strictly reservations only at this fine-dining restaurant with Caribbean flavor. Don't be surprised to find yourself rubbing shoulders with international celebrities. *Firefly Hotel, Mustique* \$\$\$\$

THE FRENCH VERANDAH RESTAURANT

Enjoy local ingredients with a French twist at this restaurant with a pretty setting on the southern shore of Saint Vincent facing Young Island. *Mariners Hotel, Villa Bay Beach, Saint Vincent* \$\$\$

*The island of Saint Vincent is named
after the patron saint of Lisbon,
Portugal—Vincent of Saragossa.*

with for sheer scale — is La Soufrière, the massive, brooding volcano in the north of the island. Several trails of varying difficulty trace up and around the mountain's eroded flanks. The most ambitious route takes you coast to coast via the cratered summit.

It's spectacular, but no walk in the park. A local guide must accompany foreign hikers to ensure they're prepared for the vagaries of weather and terrain. Volcanic eruptions are unlikely but not impossible; La Soufrière last blew its top in 1979.

The holy grail of the island's forests is the Saint Vincent parrot, an attractive, multicolored species that came close to extinction in the 20th century, though numbers are now increasing. If you don't spot one in the wild, try the next best place: the Saint Vincent Botanical Gardens in Kingstown, where you can see them up close in an aviary.

The blustery Atlantic winds create a challenge for flying, one of the reasons parrot populations have chosen to stay put on individual Caribbean islands, gradually evolving into distinct species. Even light aircraft sometimes find themselves necessarily grounded, though there is an alternative means of getting around this nation of islands: inter-island ferry. When my flight from Arnos Vale to Bequia (pronounced Beck-way) was canceled due to a gale, I headed to the quayside in Kingstown and hopped on the next available boat.

The crossing took an hour through choppy seas. For a landlubber, the conditions proved uncomfortable, but they hinted at one of Bequia's great selling points. Although a fraction of the size of Saint Vincent, it is the largest of the Grenadines and boasts a

INFO TO GO

Currently, most international visitors arrive via Grantley Adams International Airport in Barbados. Scheduled and charter flights fly from there to Saint Vincent and individual Grenadine islands. Saint Vincent's E.T. Joshua Airport at Arnos Vale offers regular flights to neighboring Caribbean islands and to Puerto Rico. There is currently no official completion date for Saint Vincent's new international airport at Argyle, though the current target is the end of this year. Admiralty Transport operates ferry service between Saint Vincent and Bequia, and companies like Island Time Holidays offer crewed yacht charters for exploring the islands.

TROPICAL CUISINE: *Caribbean-style grilled filet of cavalli kingfish with a view of Admiralty Bay (top), and a Rasta man preparing food on a Bequia beach (bottom)*

PHOTOS: © ROBERT LERICH | DREAMSTIME.COM



perfect natural harbor fringed by the island's unassuming capital, Port Elizabeth. When we steered into the tranquil waters of Admiralty Bay, the ferry carefully picked its way among dozens of moored yachts. Bequia is a sailing paradise.

From the quayside, I was rowed out to one of the yachts, feeling perturbed after the rough ferry crossing. The crew busied themselves with preparations and hauled up the anchor. We slid serenely away and tracked down the leeward coast of this S-shaped island.

Beyond the cover of the southwest tip, the gale that had precluded flying to the island's little airport filled the sails. The yacht tipped to a sporty angle and the bow sliced gloriously through the waves. My childhood dreams of pirates and buccaneers were made real.

Mine was just a half-day voyage. I returned to Bequia in late afternoon and settled into the easy cadence of the island's barefoot life. The rest of the Grenadines would be saved for another trip: exclusive Mustique to the southeast, the privately owned island that is a favorite hideaway (in a literal sense) of royals and celebrities; Canouan, with its golf course and superb diving; and Union, the southernmost Vincentian Grenadine island (the islands beyond are administered by Grenada). With its mountainous interior, Union is Saint Vincent in miniature.

All that is for the future. When I woke up to a full day on Bequia, my schedule was clear. My only plan was to find a shady spot on a quiet beach and to spend the day liming.



ONLINE EXTRA

Jump to gtravmag.com/cricket to read about Saint Vincent's obsession with cricket.

Admiralty Transport
admiraltytransport.com

Bequia Beach Hotel
bequiabeachhotel.com

Buccament Bay Resort
buccamentbay.com

Canouan Island
canouan.com

The Cotton House
cottonhouse.net

The Fig Tree
figtreebequia.com

Firefly Restaurant
fireflymustique.com

The French Verandah Restaurant
marinershotel.com

Island Time Holidays
islandtimeholidays.com

Mustique Island
mustique-island.com

St .Vincent & the Grenadines Botanical Gardens
botanicalgardens.gov.vc

St. Vincent and the Grenadines Tourism
discoversvg.com

Saint Vincent International Airport Development Co.
svgiadc.com

La Soufrière Cross Country Trail
nationalparks.gov.vc

Union Island
unionisland.com



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The airline offers the service **AM Plus**, which is the Class that provides an extra 4" (10 cm) of legroom in the first three rows of the Economy Class cabin, with an additional seatback tilt, leather headrests, priority boarding and deplaning, Premier airport check-in counters and baggage identification tags, in all of its airplanes.

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This year the airline launched 5 new routes from Mexico City to Medellin, Toronto, Panama, Boston, Cozumel recently and by December 9th to Vancouver. For Mexico, the airline offers AM Vacations and more than 120 aircrafts including 787 Dreamliner in its fleet, airplanes that operate 2 routes to New York and Los Angeles.

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Let it Snow!

Celebrate winter Japan-style at the Sapporo Snow Festival. BY BARBARA RADCLIFFE ROGERS



CHILLING: Snow sculptures at the Sapporo Snow Festival

PHOTOS: © SEIKSOON | DREAMSTIME.COM, © SAMANTHA TAN | DREAMSTIME.COM

When enthusiastic Sapporo high school students built six snow statues in Odori Park in 1950, nobody dreamed 65 years later it would be the world-class Sapporo Snow Festival, drawing 2.4 million visitors to Hokkaido's capital.

By the time Sapporo hosted the Winter Olympic Games in 1972, the Snow Festival was already an international event, and two years later it became a venue for the International Snow Sculpture Contest. The 2016 festival, held Feb. 5–11, will feature more than 400 snow and ice sculptures, several of them life-sized replicas of iconic buildings.

The main site is still Sapporo's mile-long Odori Park in the city center. That's where you'll find the festival's signature snow sculptures, some of them 75 feet wide and rising 50 feet above the snow-covered streets. About a dozen of these mammoth snow buildings command attention, but more than 100 smaller works transform Odori Park into an ephemeral outdoor sculpture gallery. Some of the larger sculptures form stages for concerts and performances that keep the scene lively.

The statues are lit from sunset until 10 p.m. each night, and the trees overhead sparkle with thousands of tiny lights. The Sapporo TV Tower, also lighted, rises like a giant exclamation point at the eastern end of Odori Park. Although nothing beats looking up

at the sculptures from below, the tower provides the place for an overview. See them from the tower by day, then again at night for an entirely different effect.

For weeks before the festival, the equivalent of 6,500 five-ton truckloads of snow are hauled to the site and poured into gigantic wooden frames. When the snow is packed and solid, the frames are removed and carving begins. The largest sculpture of last year's festival was of the Kasuga Taisha Shrine in Nara, which took 3,500 members of the Japanese military nearly a month to finish, with each of its 1,540 separate decorative elements sculpted in intricate detail. During the festival, you can watch teams carving their entries for the International Snow Sculpture Contest.

In addition to Odori Park, two other areas of Sapporo host festival events, activities and sculptures. The wide main boulevard of the Susukino entertainment district is lined with more than 60 ice sculptures and an ice bar that serves hot drinks. The sculptures at Susukino are bathed in colored lights throughout the day and until 11 p.m.

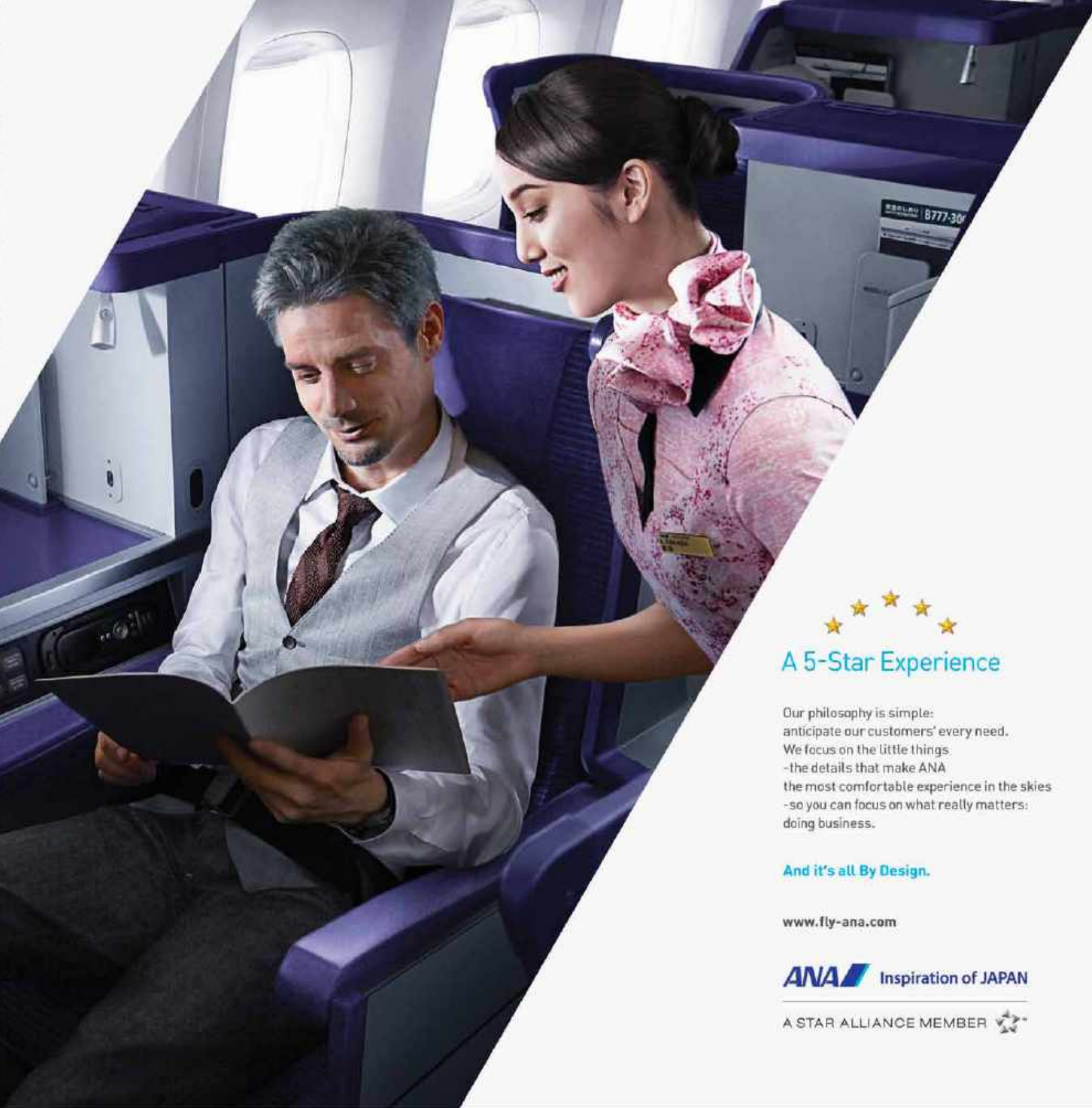
The family-oriented Tsudome site features giant snow slides, snow rafting, more snow sculptures, food vendors and an ice-skating rink. At another rink in Odori Park you can rent skates. New this year will be "bushwalking on skis" (Nordic skiing) with free equipment rentals.

Japan National Tourism Organization
www.jnto.go.jp

Sapporo Snow Festival
snowfes.com

Sapporo Tourism
welcome.city.sapporo.jp

Air shows by top snowboarders and freestyle skiers provide entertainment for spectators.



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Inner Space

Miami International Airport wins top awards for excellence in interior design. BY LISA MATTE



In recent decades, mall-like shopping centers, fine-dining restaurants and concierge services replaced the spartan airport facilities that were the norm well into the late 20th century. Now some airports are taking the concept of airports as destinations a step further, creating award-winning interior spaces both comfortable and aesthetically pleasing.

Earlier this year, the South Florida chapter of the International Interior Design Association recognized Miami International Airport's North Terminal Marketplace with its top retail design award, noting "the difficulty of the project in terms of site, and the success of integration into the existing architectural vocabulary, while producing a bright and attractive retail element."

Designed by Heery International, the Marketplace is located between Gates D26 and D29. The award-winning space celebrates Miami's diverse cultural offerings with, among other things, a selection of Caribbean foods and Cuban-style cigars.

Also this year, the Network of Executive Women in Hospitality gave a nod to the recent renovation of the lobby at the airport's MIA Hotel, and *Floor Focus* magazine recognized the hotel's white, blue and green terrazzo lobby floor with its Vision Design Award.

Located landside on the second floor of the airport's central Terminal E, the 252-room hotel offers guests direct access to airline ticket counters, departure concourses, airport concession shops, restaurants, public transportation and the rental car center.



In addition to award-winning designs, Miami International Airport also rolls out the welcome wagon with a new virtual passenger assistant. "Leticia," a human-sized interactive hologram, speaks both English and Spanish. During its initial testing phase, the virtual assistant is available at two entrances to the airport's South Terminal, offering 24/7 access to information about the airport's shops, restaurants and services.

MIAMI MODERN: MIA Hotel's new lobby (top left), the Marketplace (top right), and Leticia, the human-sized interactive passenger assistant (bottom)

PHOTOS: © MIAMI-DADE AVIATION DEPARTMENT

Miami International Airport
miami-airport.com

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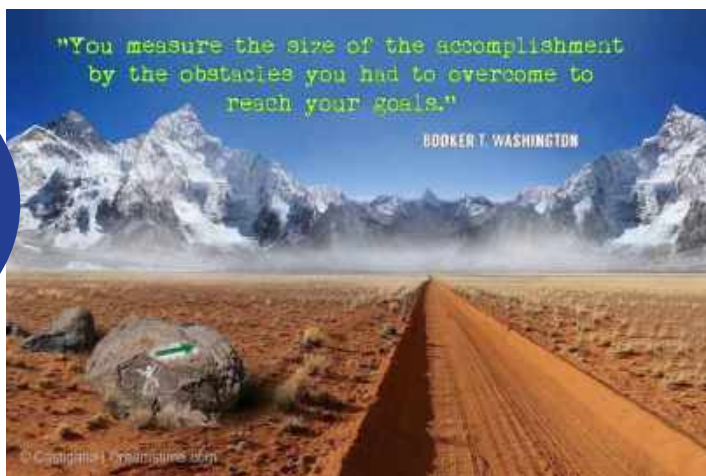
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f Time for some Monday Motivation.



As #autumn approached, Kimberly Krol wrote on our blog about #Oktoberfest: bit.ly/1FI38y5

Read our list of the world's coolest ruin sites: bit.ly/1UtXJMm

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f **WHERE IN THE WORLD?**
Name the country, bonus points for the town!
This town, built in the late 12th century, was restored to its former beauty after political turnover and rebellion. It features a peaceful river, an oversized castle and an ancient monastery. Can you guess where this is? — answer below



Quit monkeying around and check out our list of seven unique spas!

We had a lot of great write-ups on our blog this week, but one that made us long for the Windy City was John Wroblewski's inside scoop on Chicago pizza places.

Follow GT's Instagram, @globaltravelermag, for the best #snapshots from around the globe.

p Colorful and historic, Recife in Brazil is a seriously underrated tourist destination.



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in News from Delta as it bans big game hunting trophies in the wake of Cecil the Lion's death. <http://bit.ly/1JLvid4>

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Focus on ADHD

Adults with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder can improve their everyday lives. BY MARY B. GALLAGHER, RN, MSN, CCRN

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is a common childhood brain disorder which can persist through adolescence and adulthood. Symptoms include difficulty staying focused and paying attention, a struggle to control behavior and hyperactivity, making it hard for a child to do well in school or behave. Children and adults from all backgrounds can have ADHD.

In some cases ADHD is not diagnosed until later in life. Adult ADHD can cause significant problems that usually improve with treatment. For unclear reasons, females with ADHD are often overlooked as young girls and are not diagnosed until adulthood. Often a woman recognizes her own ADHD after her child receives the diagnosis and she sees similar patterns in herself.

Many adults with ADHD are unaware they have it and just assume everyday tasks are a challenge. Symptoms may include trouble concentrating, restlessness, impulsivity, difficulty completing tasks, disorganization, low frustration tolerance, mood swings, hot temper and trouble coping with stress. Difficulty focusing and prioritizing can cause missed deadlines and forgotten meetings and social plans. The inability to control impulses ranges from impatience when waiting in line or driving in traffic to mood swings and bursts of anger.

ADHD has been linked to trouble with the law, problems at work, alcohol and drug abuse, unstable relationships, frequent accidents, financial stress, job hopping, poor physical health and low self-esteem. Although it does not cause other psychological or developmental conditions, certain disorders or learning disabilities often occur with ADHD. Many adults with ADHD have depression, bipolar disorder or another mood disorder. Anxiety disorder may cause overwhelming worry, nervousness and other symptoms. Associated personality disorders include borderline personality disorder or antisocial personality disorder. Adults with ADHD may score lower on academic testing than is expected for their age, intelligence and education.

The exact cause of ADHD is unclear. It often runs in families, and researchers found much of the risk of ADHD is genetic. Certain environmental factors can increase risk, as can problems with the nervous system at key moments in development. ADHD is complex, and a genetic diagnostic test is not available yet.

If you think you have ADHD symptoms, call your health care provider for an evaluation. Depending on the results, you may need to see a psychologist or psychiatrist.

Because symptoms of ADHD differ in adults from those in the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), criteria specific to adults are used to confirm diagnosis. Your doctor may give you a questionnaire with an expanded list of signs and symptoms and examine their impact on your current life, such as school or work performance and relationships with family and friends.

Research suggests a combination of medication, cognitive therapy and life coaching significantly improves the prognosis of adults with ADHD.

Although not FDA-approved specifically for the treatment of ADHD, antidepressants are sometimes used. The antidepressant bupropion (Wellbutrin), which affects the brain chemical dopamine, shows benefits for adults with ADHD. Older tricyclic antidepressants sometimes are used because they affect the brain chemical norepinephrine. An adult with ADHD should discuss medication options with his or her health care provider, who will require an updated list of all medications the patient takes so no interactions occur.

Psychotherapy, including cognitive behavioral therapy, can help change one's poor self-image by examining the experiences that caused it. The therapist encourages the adult with ADHD to adjust to the life changes that come with treatment, such as thinking before acting or resisting the urge to take unnecessary risks. Marital and family counseling can help loved ones cope with the stress of living with someone with ADHD.

ADHD coaching can supplement treatment. Coaches have frequent contact with clients and can help determine the success of medications or other treatments, providing observations and advice to help tailor treatment. ADHD coaching is not psychotherapy; some people work with a coach while also working with a therapist or counselor. Coaching sessions deal with what's happening in the client's life with emphasis on challenges, opportunities and strategies for success. Coaches provide support between sessions by email or phone, and some assign homework to help the client accomplish objectives in living with ADHD.

Many support groups are available and can be found online or through a therapist. Alternative medicine such as yoga, meditation and taking omega-3 fatty acids may reduce your stress and decrease symptoms. Other alternative medicine treatments such as special diets, excessive vitamin or mineral supplements, and herbal supplements are ineffective as treatment for ADHD.

Preventing exposure to environmental toxins like cigarette smoke in the womb and mercury, lead and pesticides before or after birth helps prevent ADHD. Being breastfed and having adequate nutrients like vitamins, zinc, magnesium and omega-3 fatty acids are thought to provide protection against developing ADHD. It is believed encouraging exercise in young children helps prevent ADHD by promoting neurological development.

For some adults, finding out they have ADHD is a big relief. Connecting ADHD to lifetime problems helps them understand they can get better.

POTENTIAL RISKS FOR ADHD

- You have a blood relative with ADHD or other mental health disorder
- Your mother smoked or used drugs or alcohol during pregnancy
- Your mother was exposed to environmental poisons such as PCBs during pregnancy
- You were exposed as a child to environmental toxins such as lead
- You were born prematurely

National Institute of Mental Health
nimh.nih.gov

National Resource Center for ADHD
help4adhd.org

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- c. Cosmo Clock 21; Yokohama, Japan
- d. Big Ben; London, U.K.
- e. The Spasskaya Tower, Red Square; Moscow, Russia
- f. Glockenspiel; Munich, Germany
- g. Old Kowloon Station; Hong Kong, People's Republic of China
- h. City Hall; Philadelphia, Pa.
- i. Makkah Royal Clock Tower Hotel; Mecca, Saudi Arabia



Check your answers at
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