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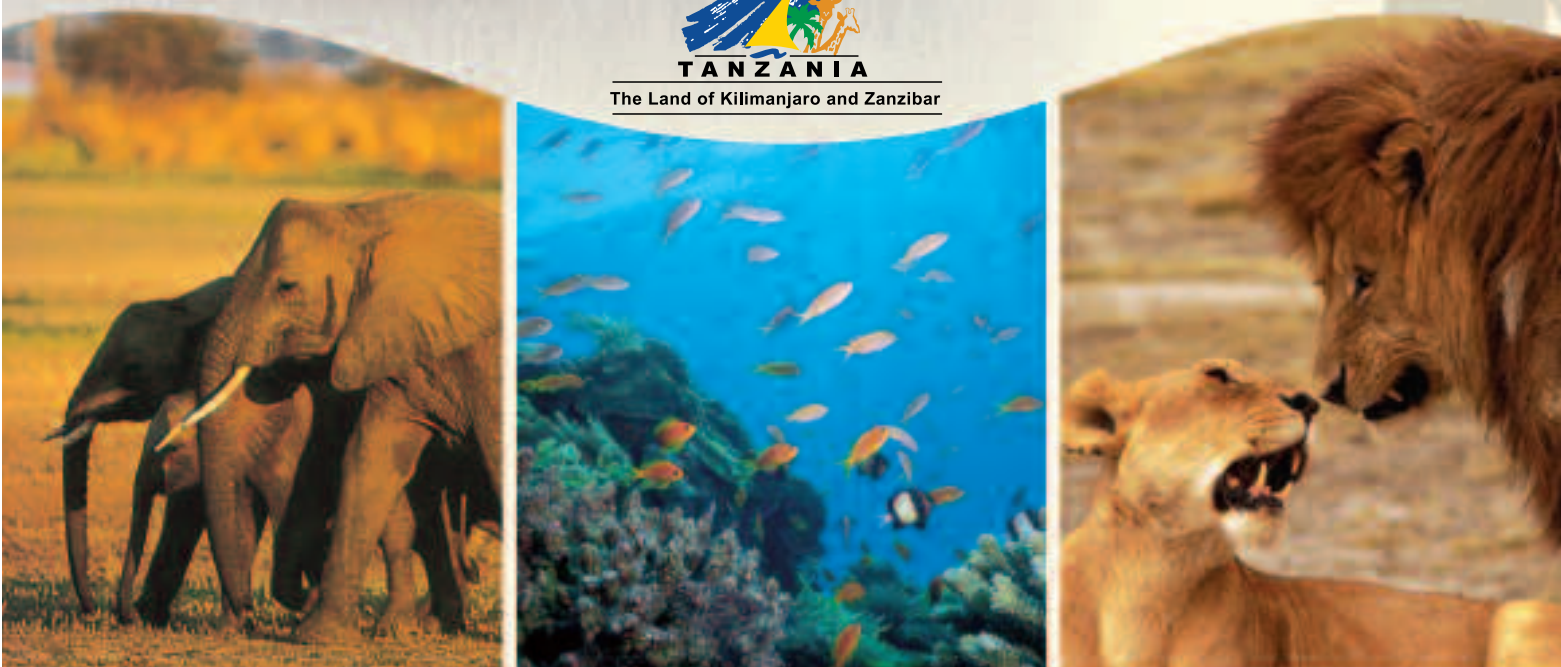
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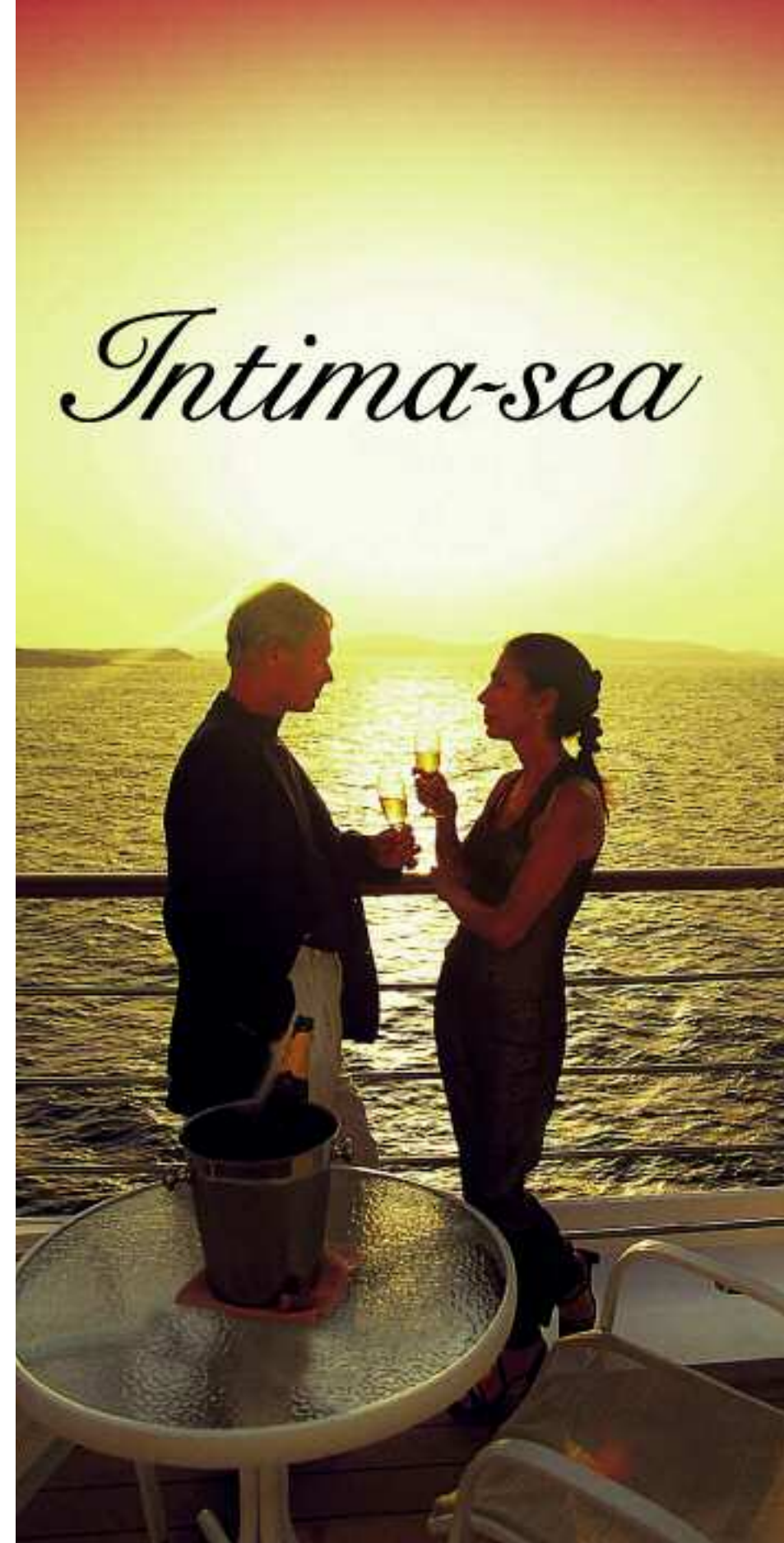
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## JAXFAX

### TRAVEL MARKETING MAGAZINE

IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY:

**Jet Airtransport Exchange, Inc. (JAX)**

52 West Main Street, Milford, CT 06460

203-301-0255 • Fax: 203-301-0250

**BPA Audited Circulation**

Douglas Cooke, CTC  
Publisher & Editorial Director, doug@jaxfax.com

Randi White  
Vice Pres./Associate Publisher, Randi@jaxfax.com

Maria Lisella  
Editor, Maria@jaxfax.com

Chantal Guillou-Brennan  
Art & Production Director, CBjaxfax@aol.com

Marjorie Vincent  
Business Manager, Marjorie@jaxfax.com

Katie Hultgren  
Editorial Assistant, Listings and Circulation Manager  
Katie@jaxfax.com

Clifton N. Cooke, CTC.  
Founding Publisher & Editor-at-Large, ClifCooke@aol.com

#### Worldwide Correspondents

Tom Bross: Austria & Germany

Katharine Dyson: Special Interests

Patricia Earnest: North America

Danielle Hayes: Africa, South America

Kathy Feeney: Southeast Correspondent

Denise Mattia: Caribbean/Mexico

Merrie Murray: Mediterranean

J. Herbert Silverman: Britain

Jonathan Siskin: Cruise Editor

#### Contributing Editors

Steve Brown, Jeff Burdick, Ron Butler, Jad Davenport, Ben Frank,

Chantal Guillou-Brennan, Patricia Harris, Ted Heck, Jehda Honculada,

Joan Jenkins, Mark Laiosa, Bob Levine, David Lyon, Barbara Rogers,

Betty Rolston, Phyllis Cocroft Meras, Maggie Zellers

Advertising in publication and on www.jaxfax.com  
sales@jaxfax.com

Circulation & Subscriptions  
circulation@jaxfax.com; 800-952-9329

Member of: ASTA—American Society of Travel Agents; ATA—Africa Travel Assoc.; NTA—National Tour Association; ATME—Association of Travel Marketing Executives.; CHA—Caribbean Hotel Assoc.; CTO—Caribbean Tourism Organization; PATA—Pacific Asia Travel Assoc.; USTOA—United States Tour Operators Assoc. "JAX FAX Travel Marketing Magazine" (ISSN 0279-7984) is published monthly by Jet Airtransport Exchange Inc., 52 West Main Street, Milford, CT 06460. Periodicals postage paid at Milford, CT, & additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to JAX FAX Travel Marketing Magazine, 52 West Main St., Milford, CT 06460. COPYRIGHT 2007. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A. No part of this publication may be reproduced in print or electronically without permission. Direct requests for permission to the Publisher, JAX FAX, 52 West Main St., Milford, CT 06460 or via E-mail: Doug@jaxfax.com



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# What the new Open-Skies Agreement means to Travel Agents

On March 30, the open-skies agreement went into effect, allowing airlines based in the United States and Europe to fly across the Atlantic between any two airports in each region. Previously, trans-Atlantic flights were governed by separate agreements between the United States and individual European nations, requiring airlines to take off or land in their native countries. This limited which airlines could serve certain airports. Now under the new open-skies agreement those restrictions will be lifted, allowing supply and demand to dictate all trans-Atlantic routes.

## So what does this mean for travel agents?

First of all, this could allow successful, low cost European carriers to open new trans-Atlantic routes, bringing the cost of travel to Europe down significantly. Ryanair, the Irish no-frills carrier, has plans to start a new airline that will fly from secondary European markets like Liverpool or Birmingham to a half-dozen American cities like Baltimore or Providence, R.I., for a base fare as low as 10 euros, or about \$16 at \$1.59 to the euro. While you may not make any money on the air portion of a clients vacation using Ryan Air, this will

open up travel to Europe to a whole new clientele that previously couldn't afford the high cost of trans-Atlantic air travel. And these new euro-travelers will need the advice of a professional travel agent!

Another benefit to travel agents is that with more routes expected to open it is also likely to encourage European carriers to compete more aggressively with one another across the Continent. It is these carriers that most heavily rely on air consolidators to fill a portion of these new seats, another profit center for savvy agents.

Don't however expect these changes overnight. While it is certain that additional carriers will soon start serving popular business hubs like London's Heathrow airport, the current record high fuel costs and weak value of the dollar will likely lead to a slow implementation of many of the new routes. Like deregulation in 1978, the long term effects of the open skies agreement will no doubt lead to better routes and pricing for consumers and increased sales opportunities for travel agents.

*Douglas Cooke*  
Doug Cooke, Publisher



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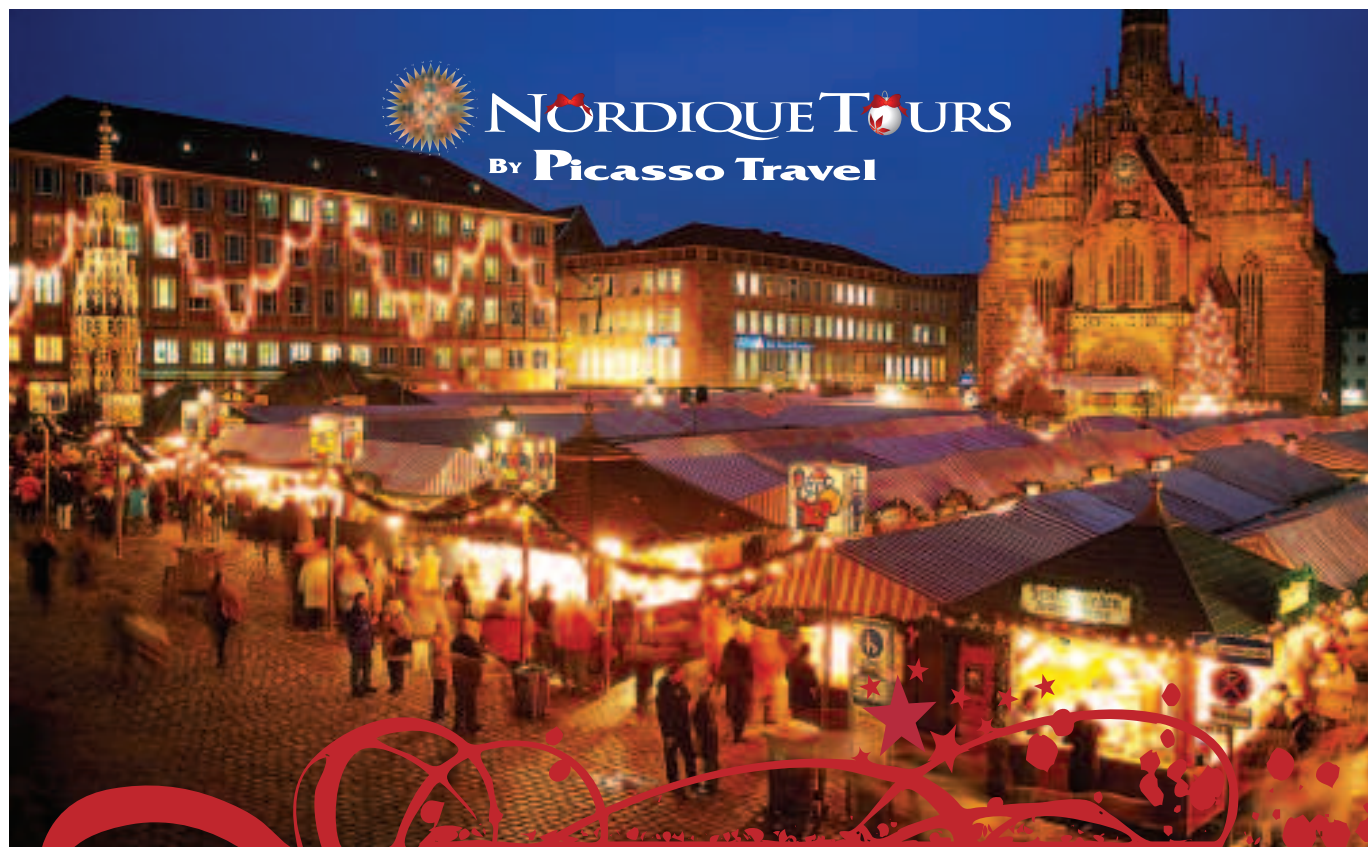
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# Bill of Rights Delayed On Senate Runway

Recently, a laudable attempt to create an Airline Bill of Rights was struck down. The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the New York law interferes with federal laws governing price, routes or service of airline carriers and that only the federal government has the authority to impose such regulations.

The Airline Bill of Rights would require all airlines at New York airports to provide snacks, water, fresh air, power and working restrooms for passengers on planes that leave the gate and sit on the tarmac for more than three hours [the average delay according to the Allied Pilots Union is 61 minutes]. The Bill would levy penalties of up to \$1,000 per passenger on airlines found in violation of the law.

The prime sponsor of the bill was Assemblymember Michael Gianaris (D-Astoria) who originally proposed the legislation in 2007 following numerous incidents in which passengers were left stranded on airplanes without basic amenities. Since New York airports report the most delays in the U.S., it made sense to start here; one of the most egregious examples was the United flight out of Albany that was delayed for almost eight hours. In a brief interview, Gianaris said, the bill speaks to such basic needs, it is a shame it

even has to become formal legislation. "It's no surprise the nation's airlines are held in such low regard when they fight tooth and nail to deny their passengers a clean bathroom or a drink of water," said Gianaris. "It's time for the airlines to recognize that passengers should be treated like human beings and not cargo."

While disappointed in the initial go-around, Gianaris said he is waiting for N.Y. Attorney General Andrew Cuomo to decide whether to appeal the Court's decision and secondly, wants to push Washington to step up to the tarmac.

A similar bill passed in the House and is currently stalled in the Senate, but Senators Barbara Boxer and Chuck Schumer are shepherding the bill. "At least we've highlighted the issues but the Feds dropped the ball," he said. "The airlines can fight in the courts all they want, but the court of public opinion has already rendered its decision," added Gianaris. "New York is leading the way toward a national standard that will resolve this question on behalf of the flying public once and for all." Call Gianaris at 718-545-3889.

Consumers are indeed fed up. The past year "was the worst year ever for the U.S. airlines," said Brent Bowen, a co-author and professor at the Univ. of Nebraska at Omaha's Aviation Institute that conducted a consumer survey.

Maria Lisella, Editor




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# Snapshots

## THE MONTH IN REVIEW

### Dutch Royals at Keukenhof Gardens

Dutch Crown Prince Willem Alexander officially opened the 59th edition of the world famous international flower exhibition of Keukenhof in Lisse, Netherlands. As a member of the International Olympic Committee, the Royal Highness cut a ribbon, supported by the Honorable Ambassador of the People Republic of China in the Netherlands, H.E. Mrs. Xue Hanqin, the vice mayor of Beijing City, Mr. Niu Youcheng, and the chairwoman of the Dutch Olympic Committee, Mrs. Erica Terpstra.



### Cruise3Sixty

The 1,500 travel agents at the Cruise Lines International Association's 4th annual cruise3sixty conference and trade show in Fort Lauderdale, expressed their strong optimism about continued sales in 2008.



Pictured are panelists and members, Mark Conroy (Regent Seven Seas), Rick Sasso (MSC Cruises), Carol Marlow (Cunard Line), Gerry Cahill (Carnival Cruise Lines), Dan Hanrahan (CLIA's marketing committee chairman and president and CEO of Celebrity Cruises and Azamara Cruises)

### Half Moon Bay, Jamaica

Prince Charles came to donate to a heritage project, which is the development of historical Falmouth in western Jamaica. This event at Half Moon Bay was part of their tour for Jamaica and the preservation of its environment.



Pictured are Louisa Calio, poet and artist beside, Camilla Parker Bowles, Duchess of Cornwall and businessman Volney Fray Chairman of the Montego Resort Board in the Royal Garden at Half Moon Bay Golf and Country Club Rosehall, Jamaica at a reception for the Prince and Duchess on their visit to Jamaica.

### Indus Wins Kudos Again

Indus Travels has again won recognition as India's "Best Tour Operator from the Americas" by India's Ministry of Tourism. This is the second time in a row that Indus Travels has won the coveted award. The National Tourism



Awards Ceremony was held in New Delhi and the Minister of Tourism, Mrs. Ambika Soni, presented the award to Mr. Syal, the Director of Indus Travels. Indus Travels has been able to maximize interest in India by offering an extraordinary combination of tours and unparalleled expertise.

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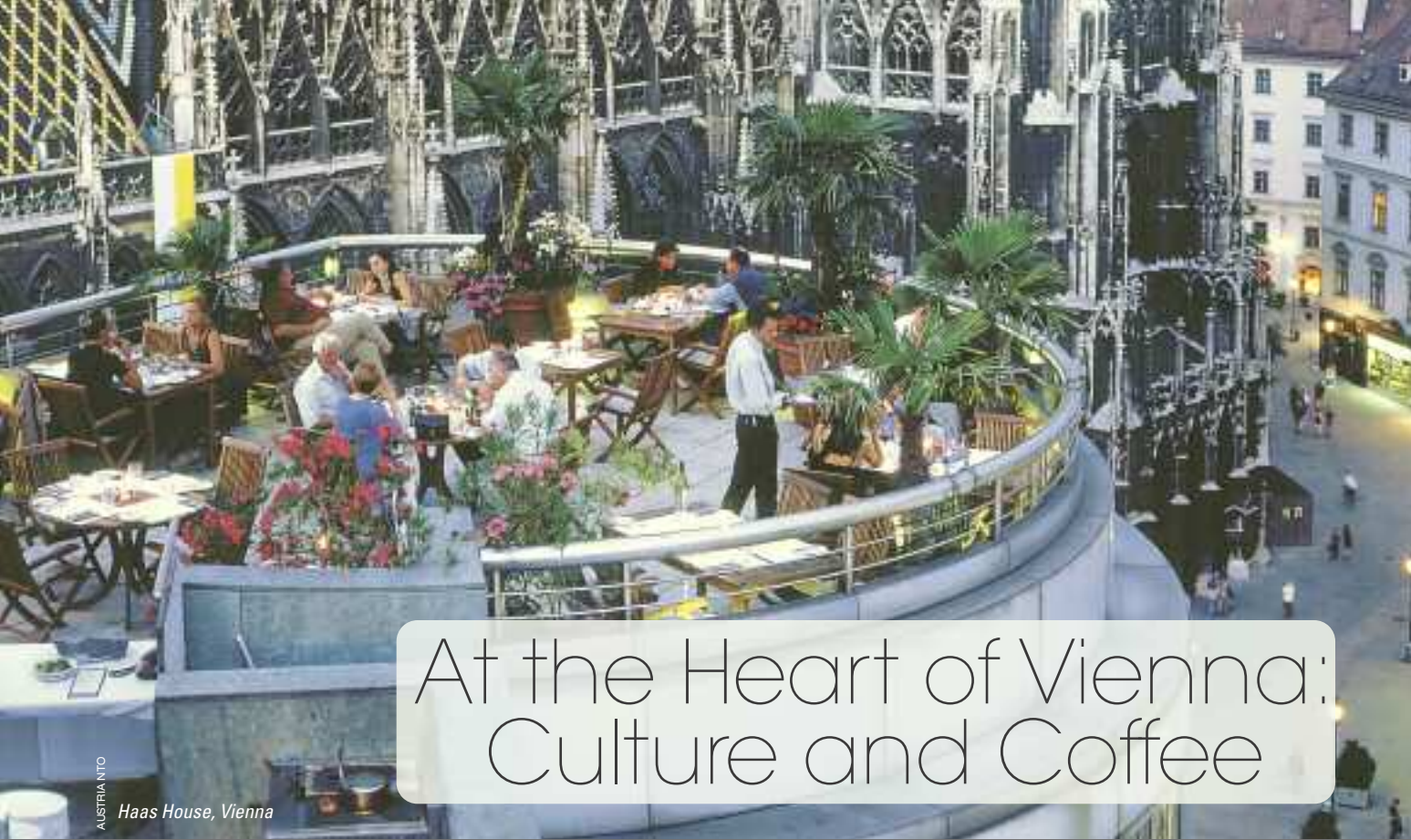
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AUSTRIA NTO

Haas House, Vienna

## At the Heart of Vienna: Culture and Coffee

By Tom Bross

forms beneath the stars, in front of the floodlit Neptune Fountain at Schönbrunn Palace. We all know about the Staatsoper (State Opera House), consistently ranked among the best-known local landmarks since its debut in 1869.

### Operettas and Operas

But another such venue—Theater an der Wien—has its own roster of notable world premieres. Beethoven's *Fidelio*, for instance, plus Franz Lehár's *The Merry Widow* and the comparably popular *Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss. Coming there in summertime: an operatic double-header, beginning with Federico Moreno Torroba's *Luisa Fernanda* from 1932, starring tenor Plácido Domingo (July 7-18), followed by Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (Aug. 10-19). Elsewhere in town, the 17th-century Schönbrunn Palace Theater presents a new *Die Fledermaus* production (July 11-Aug. 24).

For specially scheduled entertainment offerings, turn your attention to Vienna Operetta Summer performances, in the Wieden district's Theresianum Schlosspark (July 2-Aug. 9), and—in the Konzerthaus and other citywide venues—Wien Modern, a festival of contemporary music (Oct. 26-Nov. 30). At twilight time on the Ringstrasse's Rathausplatz, movie viewers gather for free Music Film Festival evenings, featuring cinema adaptations of opera, ballet, concerts and jazz projected on an outdoor screen (July 12-Aug. 31).

Organized in 1498 and world-renowned ever since, the Vienna Boys' Choir appears on featured Sundays in the Hofburg Palace's Royal Chapel. Accompanying a full symphonic orchestra, the youngsters will add their voices to Mozart's Missa Solemnis (June 22). For much lighter stuff, the The Merry Widow highlights the Volksoper's schedule (June 25), then the recently reopened Ronacher Theater stages a transatlantic transplant: Mel Brooks' rollicking musical comedy, *The Producers*, in a German-language rendition (June

30, July 2-8).

Alongside the Burgarten (locale of a much-photographed Mozart statue) and merely four short inner-city blocks from steeple-topped St. Stephen's Cathedral, the Albertina ([www.albertina.at](http://www.albertina.at)) contains a world-class collection of more than 60,000 drawings and 1,500,000 prints by graphics-arts masters ranging from da Vinci, Rubens and Dürer to Cézanne, Matisse and Picasso. But periodic exhibitions make the splashiest news. Two standouts highlight 2008's schedule. Austria's biggest-ever showing of Swiss-born Paul Klee's expressionist paintings—65 overall—will attract museumgoers (May 9-Aug. 10). It's Vincent van Gogh's turn later this year, when 50 of his paintings along with rare drawings will be displayed (Sept. 5-Dec. 7). For a rest-their-feet break, your clients can linger at the on-site DO&CO Café, where luncheons and refreshments enliven a terrace overlooking Albertinaplatz.

### Klimt at the Belvedere, Fun Fest on the Danube

Historical tidbit: Gustav Klimt completed *The Kiss* (above)—his famously sexy, gilded-layered masterpiece—in 1908. So there you have an excellent 100th-anniversary reason to see it "in person," along with other gorgeous Klimts, plus prominent works by French Impressionists and Viennese Biedermeier-period painters. They adorn the Upper Belvedere's Austrian Gallery inside Prince Eugene of Savoy's summer palace.

Travelers arriving in midyear might hear a barrage of sound coming from the Danube, where a skinny island developed as a flood barrier extends 13 miles—unobstructed parkland favored by bikers-hikers-rollerbladers-joggers and beach-blanket sunbathers. It becomes a stomping ground during the annual three-day Danube Island Festival (June 13-15), a thumpin', jumpin' party amounting to 500 hours of hip-hop, jazz, rock, pop, country, blues, cabaret acts and Wienerlied song sessions. Upwards of 3,000,000 revelers join in. Then, for utter contrast and a June 16th open-air grand finale: classical music-making by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra.

Keeping the month buzzing, competing international teams bring UEFA EURO football (a.k.a. soccer) action to Vienna, where seven deciding games of the Swiss and Austrian-hosted series will be played in the Prater recreation park's 53,000-seat Ernst Happel Stadium. They begin June 8th—culminating in the final championship matchup on the 29th. Expect the stadium to be jam-packed. Same for a free-admittance Central Fan Zone, extending 1.2 kilometers from the Rathausplatz, through Volksgarten public greenery and southward onto the imperial Hofburg's Heldenplatz. Ten giant screens along the route will treat onlookers to live telecasts of each match.

### For Luxury-Minded Clientele

Clients with five-star taste (and pocketbooks to match) should know about three new deluxe properties, all centrally located. Occupying a redeveloped neoclassical building dating from 1913, the 186-room **Steigenberger Herrenhof** will



AUSTRIA NTO

open in October on Herrengasse, therefore near the Hofburg palace complex ([www.steigenberger.com](http://www.steigenberger.com)). Amenities include a spa and 10 seminar rooms.

Another five-star beauty, in a 19th-century Wilhelminian edifice, the 68-room **Ring Hotel** overlooks the store-lined Kärntner Ring in the Staatsoper's immediate vicinity ([www.theringhotel.com](http://www.theringhotel.com)). Then, early next year, comes the **Hotel im Palais Schwarzenberg**, with 44 guest rooms fitted into the right wing of this 18th-century Baroque landmark on an 18-acre setting, walkable to Karlsplatz as well as Stadtpark greenery, ([www.palais.schwarzenberg.com](http://www.palais.schwarzenberg.com)).

### Mid-city, Mid-priced

During recent Viennese visits, JAX FAX stayed in a pair of mid-city "recommendaries." On the Schotten Ring, five-star, 194-room **Hotel de France** began existence in 1872. For a decade following 1945's end of World War II, it functioned as French military-occupation headquarters. Now refined comfort touches are evident, with Restaurant Bel Etage acclaimed for culinary excellence. High-season rack rates for doubles range 245-290 euros or from about \$390 to \$460 ([www.austria-hotels.at](http://www.austria-hotels.at)).

As of this month, attendees doing business in the city's

**T**his diverse, ever-appealing capital city is on a roll. A renowned tourism and business-travel hub at Europe's eastern-western juncture, Vienna tallied record-breaking visitor numbers for the fifth consecutive year in 2007. Overnight stays totaled 9,675,208—including 656,000 American overnights. Those figures surpassed (by 3.4%) incoming volume generated by 2006's internationally-promoted Mozart anniversary.

### The Culture of Coffee

Consider Vienna's cosmopolitan abundance: three opera houses, five concert halls, two major symphony orchestras, 26 museums (11 in the fine-arts category), five prominent theaters, eight bona-fide palaces. Size should also be on your clients' minds: 23 districts spread over 160 square miles; population totaling 1.8 million within city limits, with more parks than any other European capital.

Any roundup wouldn't be complete without mentioning the city's traditional coffee houses—113 by the latest official count. Two dozen qualify as concert-café, where patrons can sip coffee while listening to piano music or waltz medleys. Among the most venerable spots are **Landtmann**, **Café Central**, **Imperial**, **Prückel**, **Sperl**, **Schmidt Hansl**, **Diglas** and **Frauenhuber** (Ludwig van Beethoven's favorite hangout many years ago). Visit [www.wiener-kafeehaus.at](http://www.wiener-kafeehaus.at).

Among major symphonic events typifying civic prestige, audiences will enjoy free admittance to the fifth annual Concert for Europe (June 3), when the Vienna Philharmonic per-



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The Belvedere Palace is home to the Austrian Museum of Baroque Art.



The Neptune Fountain sits in front of the Schönbrunn Palace.

trade-fair halls can book accommodations at a four-star new-comer on adjacent Trabrennstasse: 251-room **Courtyard by Marriott** ([www.courtyard-wien-messe.at](http://www.courtyard-wien-messe.at)).

Opened last August on the Rennweg side of Belvedere's vast palatial and botanical-garden acreage, aptly named, four-star **Lindner Hotel am Belvedere** is sleekly modernistic and artsy, comprising 219 bedrooms, plus restaurant servings in a skylit conservatory, meeting facilities for up to 150 attendees, woodsy Heuriger wine tavern and seventh-floor fitness center-with-a-view ([www.lindnerhotels.at](http://www.lindnerhotels.at)).

### Bikes, Metro and City Cards

As in several other European capitals (Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Copenhagen, Helsinki), Citybike Vienna gives visitors pedal-pushing opportunities to do some up-close sightseeing via more than 1,000 kilometers of signposted pathways. Stocked with brightly colored two-wheelers, 54 rental stations are conveniently located alongside U-Bahn subway stations and charges are reasonable (1 euro for two hours, 4 euros for a morning or afternoon jaunt). The [www.citybikewien.at](http://www.citybikewien.at) website provides details.

Tell your cost-conscious FIT clients about the 72-hour Wien-Karte, still a bargain at 18.50 euros (about \$27)—valid for substantial price reductions at more than 36 museums,

### Austrian Airlines' 50th Birthday

At 50 years young, **Austrian** is a member of the prestigious **Star Alliance** and operates more than 100 aircraft on flights to more than 130 destinations. The airline, which transported 25,567 passengers in 1958, carried 10.8 million passengers in 2007. "One of Austrian's many strengths," says Paul Paflik, Austrian Airlines' General Manager North America, "remains its centrality in the heart of Europe." Austrian connects the world with dozens of cities in Eastern Europe, Russia and the former Soviet republics. "And unlike the nightmare of connecting through Europe's mega-airports," observes Paflik, "Vienna International Airport is compact, convenient and efficient."

Austrian is the only airline to operate nonstop flights to Vienna from New York, Washington D.C., Chicago and Toronto. The airline continues its expansion in 2008 with the launch of its new service to Sochi and Nizhny Novgorod in Russia and Baia Mare in Romania last month, to be followed by the Saudi Arabian cities of Riyadh and Jeddah in August.

Visit [www.austrian.com](http://www.austrian.com)

plus theaters, concert halls, shops and restaurants, even wine bars. Card holder also save money on guided tours and bicycle rentals, and they ride free on Viennese buses, street-cars and U-Bahn subway lines. Cards available at the Tourist Information Office on Albertinaplatz (alongside the opera house) and at most hotels.

**Austrian Airlines** (celebrating its 50th anniversary as of March '08) flies daily nonstops between New York JFK and Vienna VIE, also daily from/to Washington Dulles IAD and six times weekly between Chicago ORD and the Schwechat Airport gateway southeast of the city center. In addition, **Delta Air Lines** operates five-times-weekly nonstop service between Atlanta ATL and Schwechat.

FIT travelers like the time-saving advantages of riding aboard the green double-decker City Airport Train (CAT) from and to Vienna's international airport. The 11-mile commute takes only 16 minutes for nine euros (about \$13); in-town arrival at the Wien-Mitte rail station near the north side of the Stadtpark. CAT CAB, a supplemental service introduced last January, provides swift station-to-hotel transport for 24 euros (about \$35). Full details (and online ticketing) at: [www.cityairtransportation.com](http://www.cityairtransportation.com).

More specifically, the **Vienna Tourist Board** ([www.b2b.vienna.info](http://www.b2b.vienna.info)) keeps agents "in the know" about entertainment, exhibitions and special-events and is a handy search engine for hotel bookings at 350 properties.

On [b2b.wien.info](http://b2b.wien.info), agents will find specific information and services for tour operators and travel agents including downloads of the Event Manual, which previews the top events taking place in Vienna, and the Destination Guide, an essential reference for tour operators and counter staff.

Furthermore, agents can join the interactive online destinations course provided by the Austrian National Tourist Office in the U.S. and become an **Austria Expert**. Those who graduate from this course can continue their education by participating in one of the study trips to Austria and after a testing may earn the title A.C.T.S. (Austria Certified Travel Specialist). The Vienna Tourist Board has been a partner in this training program for more than 10 years.

For further information, contact **Marsa Kindl** at the **Austrian Tourist Office in New York**, E-mail [marsa.kindl-omuse@austria.info](mailto:marsa.kindl-omuse@austria.info) or call 212-575 7723-13.

For general information, contact the Austrian Tourist Office in New York City, 212-944-6880; E-mail: [travel@austria.info](mailto:travel@austria.info); Vienna Boasts High Repeat Business

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to Vienna see page 67 of the Listings Section

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

# Vienna Boasts High Repeat Business

By Maria Lisella

*Norbert Kettner was named Managing Director of the Vienna Tourist Board last September (see JF, Dec. 2007 issue). Kettner's intentions are to build on Vienna's powerful image as a "beautiful city with a great history" by harnessing its qualities as a "creative city" and "powerhouse of innovation."*

**JF:** Mr. Kettner, your CV indicates that you have been innovative in transforming arts and crafts into viable businesses. Do you see yourself as transferring what you learned in that realm to developing sustainable tourism in Vienna?

**Kettner:** I do indeed, because Vienna's vast creative potential has not yet been used to the full in tourism. There are still too many people, who associate our city only with its historic splendor without seeing its attractive modern facets.

**JF:** How is Vienna preparing for its role as Europe's capital of soccer for UEFA EURO 2008?

**Kettner:** The central fan zone will be right in the middle of the city: 1.2 kilometers of our famous Ring boulevard will be transformed for this purpose and provide room for 70,000 people. Nine giant screens will transmit the matches, efficient gastronomy will be provided as well as manifold entertainment from 9 a.m. to midnight. Entry will be free. Actually, the whole city will celebrate a big multinational party, not just for soccer fans, but also for those, who just want to enjoy the special atmosphere and excitement this event brings to "off side soccer" Vienna.

**JF:** Why should travel agents send their clients to your destination?

**Kettner:** Vienna is a must for everyone who claims to be well-traveled. Because it offers Europe at its best: Stunning historic treasures alongside with contemporary arts, design and lifestyle and an easy-going way of life. Because it is the world capital of music offering numerous concerts and music festivals throughout the year as well as 300 performances at the Vienna State

Opera, Theater an der Wien and the Volksoper.

**JF:** Are there new attractions for travel agents to pitch to clients?

**Kettner:** Lovers of classical music can look forward to 2009 when we shall celebrate the musical genius Joseph Haydn (1732 - 1809). Lots of star-studded concerts and a major exhibition will be staged, additionally in Vienna there are many places to visit and walk in the master's footsteps.

**JF:** Is there any new air service to report on?

**Kettner:** Air service is basically unchanged: Austrian Airlines operates non-stop flights between Vienna and New York (JFK), Washington DC. and Chicago. As the national carrier, it maintains a broad network of inter-European flights. Delta Airlines operates non-stop service between Atlanta and Vienna.

**JF:** What do you consider Vienna's best selling point?

**Kettner:** Vienna's ability to blend old with the most contemporary ideas, thus creating relevant events that cannot be experienced anywhere else. For example, the Life Ball, Europe's largest AIDS charity event that takes place on May 17, could not have been invented elsewhere, because it took the Viennese ball tradition as a starting point. Or the Magic of Advent is a direct "offspring" from our traditional Christmas markets.

**JF:** Can you give us a description of clients that visit your country?

**Kettner:** According to visitor surveys, the average visitor to Vienna is 40 years old, very well-educated and culture-minded. He or she travels with a partner, and generally without children. Only half of the city's guests are first-

time visitors while more than 30% of them have already visited more than twice.

**JF:** How many Americans visited in 2007? How does this compare to 2006 and what are your goals for the future?

**Kettner:** Last year our number of U.S. visitors dropped by 1.7 % to 262,000 and their 656,000 overnight-stays represent the same decline. Our goal is of course to increase figures, although the strong EURO is not very helpful at the moment. Nevertheless, in January and February we had an increase of U.S. visitors by 7 %, so we hope this will establish a trend for this year.

**JF:** Any trends to be on the look out for?

**Kettner:** In tourism I see a trend I should like to call the dissolving of target groups. In the past you could largely go by nations, age groups, special interest groups, etc.

These days individuality rules with every person being a target group in itself. Someone aged 50 might go in for baroque paintings and avant-garde architecture, music by Mozart and the Rolling Stones, haute couture and shabby chic, rustic food and luxury dining - all that and switching between poles every minute. This is a challenge for destinations, let alone destination marketing.

**JF:** What is the impression you would like visitors to take home after they visit?

**Kettner:** That one visit is not enough and that they will recommend Vienna highly to all their friends.





# SPAIN—Malaga's New Cultural Mantle

By Maria Lisella

You know you've reached Malaga when you peer out the plane's window and see Africa just beyond the Malaga Mountains known locally as *despeñaperros*, the mountain range that separates the region of Andalusia from central Spain's plains. At this point you are 10 to 12 miles from Africa, on a very clear day, you can see the Atlas Mountains and sometimes, even Gibraltar.

Set at the southern tip of Spain, Malaga is the gateway to the soul of Spain, the region of Andalusia. For the uninitiated, it is both exciting and maybe a bit surprising to see just how deeply the symbols of Andalusia – flamenco dancers, bullfighters, cured hams, sherry wines – inform quotidian life. Even mannequins in shop windows pose alongside a pile of simple chairs that echo the *tab-los* in which flamenco dancers and singers let rip with their passions and sorrows. In dark corners or backrooms of bars, cafes, the internal lives of ordinary people are on display, petitioning the gods, impressing each other and finally, this form of expression is becoming better and better known throughout the world.

At one time, Malaga, the city, was indeed dark and almost dreary in this sunny corner of Spain. It lacked self-esteem to allow for anthropomorphism. But much of the face and the fate of Malaga has and will continue to change particularly as it prepares to compete for the reign of Cultural Capital of Europe for 2016.

Malaga is firmly situated on the newly developed *Rutas de las Flamenco*, four- to five-day itineraries that include towns from Cadiz to Seville, tracing the route of some of the great figures of flamenco. One portion of the route links Malaga to Granada, which is about an hour's drive from the center of town. But don't shortchange Malaga, it has suffered enough from misperceptions



Malaga, Picasso's hometown

MARIA LISELLA



Faces of Malaga

MARIA LISELLA

and has emerged as an earthy cultural gem.

Inside town, pedestrian walkways have been created to encourage walking, to keep the city cleaner and brighter, making it more approachable without the smoky exhaust of auto traffic. Lining the walkways are sculptures that liven Calle Marques de Larios leading to the town square and the Old Town itself. From the Plaza de la Constitution you can see the black and white Art School of Malaga, where Picasso's father taught. Not far away is Picasso's kindergarten near the Town Hall. Alongside the square is Cafe Central, an old world sepia-toned, high energy place to join the natives for hot chocolate and *churros* on a wintry night.

Malaga also bred a young Pablo Picasso, whose childhood home can be visited but since it has been refurbished, it gives visitors just a hint of pre-modern Spain and the man we came to know as the most influential artist of the 20th century. Picasso was born in Malaga in 1881. What of course cannot be missed is the **Museo Picasso Malaga**, which is devoted to his work and influence that opened in 2003. The collection comprises 155 of his works donated by Christine and Bernard Ruiz-Picasso, his daughter-in-law and grandson. Their donation is the cornerstone of the Museum but there are rotating exhibits continually, as well as community programs for children and a café with a courtyard.

With a museum guide or just milling around alone amid so much Picasso in one place, he seems to communicate the playfulness and the gravity of so much stimulation throughout his 90-year life, as well as the tumultuous web of his personal life. And finally, to see the bicycle bars and seat used to create a bull's head, so simple, so significant. Rotating exhibits place Picasso's influence further in context. Set in the Buenavista Palace, a national monument built between 1516 and 1542, it is a wonder-

ful example of 16th century Andalusian architecture set in the old quarter of the city. The palace was among the very first buildings to be built by a nobleman who bucked King Ferdinand's decree by mixing and blending Arabic elements in the ceilings with Renaissance Italian marble work.

Recently, during excavations, the ground beneath the Renaissance and Mudejar architecture of the Palace revealed significant signs of the city's Phoenician, Roman and Moorish beginnings. Much of a 6th century B.C. Phoenician House is on view. The remains of double walls and vestiges of towers have altered the city's biography and sense of itself from a secondary site to a city that crisscrossed cultures meshing with Malaga's own history.

## New Relevance

By highlighting its past and its future, Malaga has created several new attractions that enhance its position on both the business map and the leisure, tourist map.

Celebrity architect Frank Gehry's team has also visited Malaga in the past few years and created a Convention Center of undulating titanium that flashes in the sun. The \$10-million **Museum of Town History** has been completed and in 2005, the city devised a plan to restore its Jewish quarter including the creation of a Sephardic museum and synagogue, the restoration of the Mudejar tower and construction of 10 housing units.

A Wine Museum ([www.vinomalaga.com](http://www.vinomalaga.com)) and the development of the Route of Tempranillo, the restoration of Roman baths and the Necropolis as well as caves of Tempranillo [www.rutadeltempranillo.org](http://www.rutadeltempranillo.org).

Additionally, over \$338 million is being spent on the Pablo Picasso International Airport with a new 224,000 sq meter terminal for 9,000 passengers to be completed this year. An increasingly popular port-of-call, Malaga is expanding its port. The \$294 million expansion calls for increasing the size of the commercial port with two new docks for the city.

Malaga is both a city and a province within Andalusia. Its significance has often been overlooked as it was once out of the way, and overshadowed by nearby light and airy spaces such as Marbella, its fabulous villa-like properties, seemingly endless golf courses, yacht marinas and the experiences associated with the Costa del Sol. Today, however, Malaga's hotel inventory has vastly improved, there is direct air service between the U.S. and Malaga as well as improved rail service. For those who base themselves in Malaga, Grenada is just an hour's drive from the city, other red-hot Andalusian destinations are not much further.

Malaga is aiming for the title of European Cultural Capital for 2016, and in a very ancient city, there is no time like the present to prepare for the future.

## Getting There and Getting Around

This year it will be easier for Americans to get to Malaga. Delta is launching nonstop service from JFK on June 4; since December the *AVE*, Spain's high-speed trains, have been making the journey from Madrid to Malaga in only two and a half hours – down from the previous four hours.

Rail Europe offers special web-only fares to agents at <http://agent.raileurope.com> that could save clients up to 10% over bookings made by phone (888-382-7245).

Call the Tourist Office of Spain in New York at 212-265-8822; Miami: 305-358-1992; Chicago: 312-642-1992 or Los Angeles: 323-658-7188; or visit [www.spain.info](http://www.spain.info)

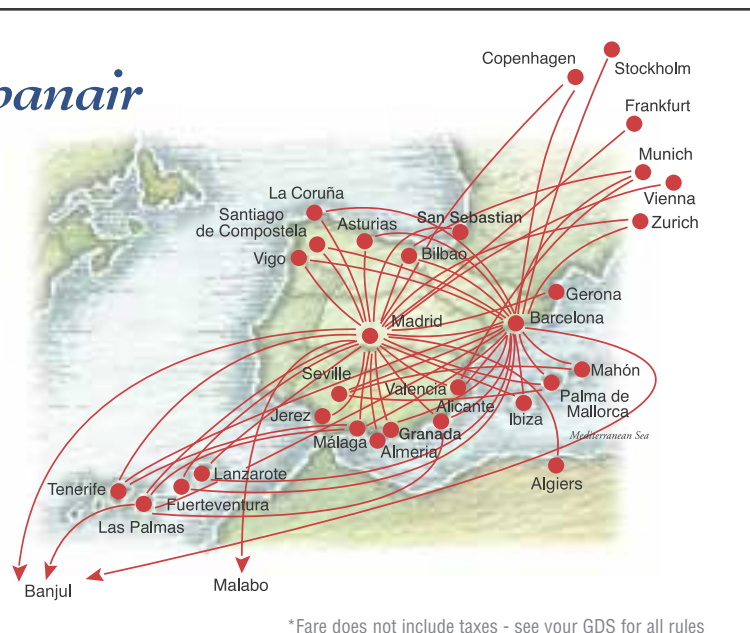
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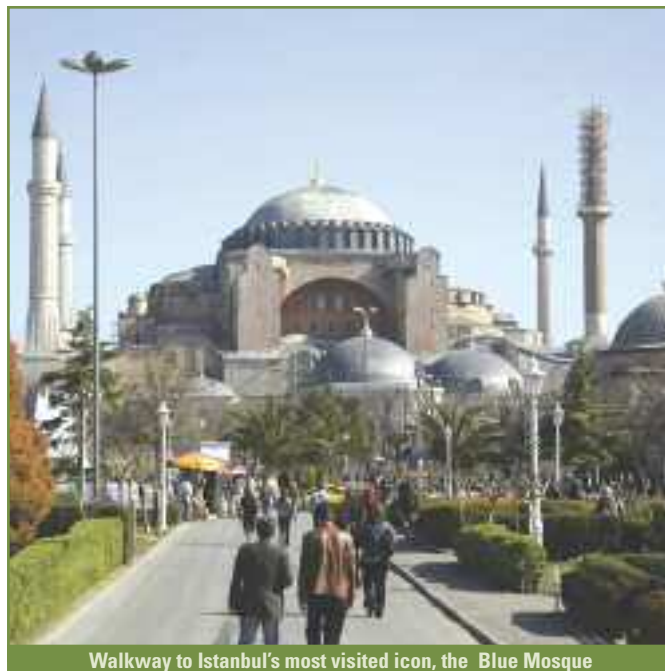
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# Turkey: Land of the Sunrise

By Denise Mattia



Walkway to Istanbul's most visited icon, the Blue Mosque

DENISE MATTIA

Istanbul is full of adventure, full of discovery, full of life. It's a city where 11 million inhabitants work and play hard in equal proportion.

It's like New York in overdrive. And, as in any cosmopolitan city with an exuberant youthful population, it's not uncommon to see rules customized occasionally. I watched in amusement one evening while a motorcyclist, impatient with congested traffic, picked his way through the pedestrian Istiklal Caddesi, along the track of the 19th century funicular that trundles down the center of the avenue during the day. No one was the least perturbed. It's just the way things are here.

Istiklal, a 15-minute walk from the Hyatt Regency Hotel ([www.istanbul.regency.com](http://www.istanbul.regency.com)) where I stayed last month, begins at the southern end of Taksim Square Park, across from the Independence Monument, an impressive edifice commemorating the establishment of the modern Turkish Republic in 1923. The memorial is positioned in the center of a wide circle, where a multicultural flurry of activity con-

tinues until sunrise. Residents of the five-star Marmara Hotel nearby can watch the fray or view the Bosphorus from their windows ([www.marmarahotels.com](http://www.marmarahotels.com)).

This district, known as Beyoglu, is a maze of streets full of boutique hotels, sidewalk restaurants, nightclubs and trendy shops. By contrast, the stately 19th century Pera Palas ([www.Perapalas.com](http://www.Perapalas.com)), which accommodated the rich and famous arriving on the Paris-Istanbul Orient Express, will retain its Old-World charm when it reopens later this year.

## First-Day Recommendations

One of the smart "watering holes" in this area is the 360 Rooftop Café ([360istanbul.com](http://360istanbul.com)), which offers a fabulous view of the city and comes alive after sundown. Refreshed after a strong Turkish coffee, I moved on to the lively Cicek Pasaji, a 19th century restored courtyard that's surrounded by rows of fast-food shops and good restaurants. Later in the evening I dined on chicken tandoor with

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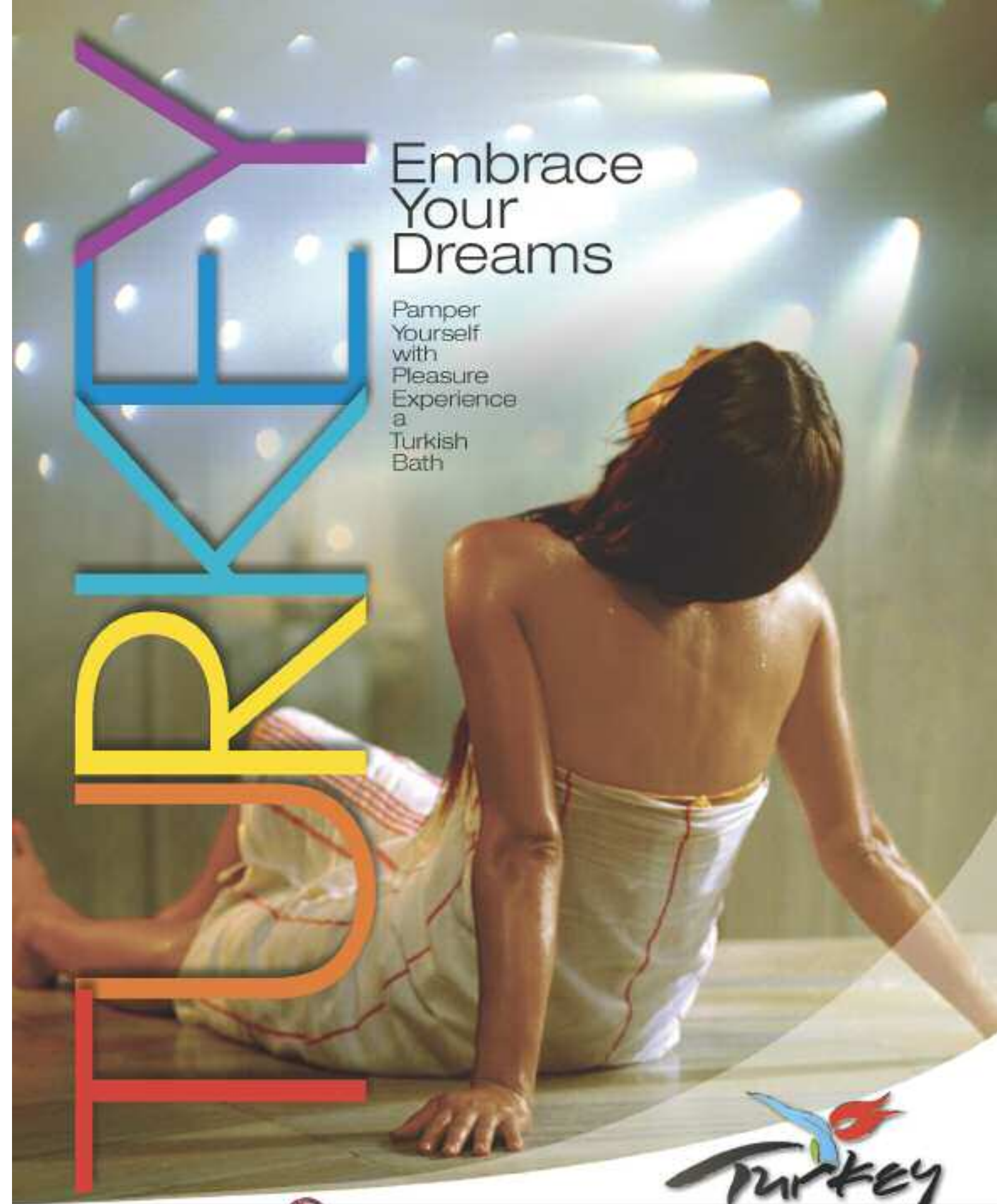
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## EUROPE

jasmine rice at **Cezayir** ([www.cezayir-istanbul.com](http://www.cezayir-istanbul.com)), a former Italian operatic school converted into an elegant bistro.

Still, I hadn't forgotten about the art and architecture (or the opulence) of Istanbul, which were my initial reasons for visiting the city. Sultans of the Ottoman Empire (14th to 20th centuries) added glory to their reigns by constructing buildings related to the Muslim religion, as well as public utility monuments such as marketplaces, citadels, fortifications, baths, palaces, fountains and bridges.

I headed due east from the **Hyatt** and the **Hilton** to the **Dolmabahçe Palace**, today, a 285-room structure. Built by Sultan Abdülmecid between 1842 and 1853 at a cost equivalent to 35 tons of gold, it stands at the edge of the Bosphorus that runs through the city. European-influenced Baroque and Rococo designs in the form of crystal chandeliers (the largest weighing 4.5 tons), a gigantic Baccarat crystal balustrade, gilded ceilings, hand-woven silk carpets and innumerable objets d'art that contribute to the grandeur of the apartments.

Nearby, the **Ciragan Palace Kempinski** has hosted guests since its conversion to a hotel in 1991. In addition to luxurious rooms, the palace has a spa and fitness center. Prices to stay there are palatial, ranging from about \$700 nightly for a standard room to \$54,000 for the Grand Sultan's suite or the one-bedroom Seaview Palace Suite costs about \$10K.

Call 800-745-8883; [www.kempinski-istanbul.com](http://www.kempinski-istanbul.com).

Crossing the Golden Horn, an inlet with a natural harbor where traders from distant lands once disembarked, I imagined what the city looked like centuries ago. No less crowded and exotic now than it must have been then, a cornucopia of meats, produce and condiments line the streets of the 17th century Spice Market. Luncheon at the popular **Pandeli** consisted of a steamy fish in papiote with a flakey spinach-filled pastry.



Istanbul Hagia Sophia

DENISE MATTIA

Farther south at the Grand Bazaar, few can resist stopping at stalls to look at inexpensive souvenirs, shiny ornaments, sensual fabrics and plush carpets in the labyrinth of 61 streets sheltered by roofs and Byzantine domes.

Eager to embrace additional wonders of Istanbul, I lingered at the thousand-year-old Hagia Sofia and the Blue Mosque, finally entering the high walls of the Topkapi Palace, the residence of Ottoman sultans from the 15th to 19th centuries. Since 1925 the palace buildings have been state museums, and their famous collections contain the magnificent Topkapi diamond in addition to golf-ball-sized rubies and emeralds.

The antiquities (many dating from the 6th century B.C.E.) housed in the **Archaeological Museum** include mosaics, friezes, statues and sarcophagi that come alive through the vision of photographer Ali Konyali, whose images appear as backdrops to the oeuvres.

Istanbul's rich artistic expression is in evidence at the **Istanbul Modern** ([www.istanbulmodern.org](http://www.istanbulmodern.org)), the city's first institution dedicated to contemporary art. Another "must see" is the **santralistanbul**, with its Center of Contemporary Arts, Museum of Energy and educational center. Built on the site of Istanbul's first power station, the museum complex opened in Sept., 2007 and includes an art park and an excellent restaurant. Visiting the 50s retro-modern bathroom is worth the trip ([www.santralistanbul.org](http://www.santralistanbul.org)).

For a knowledgeable and professional guide, E-mail **Prowin Tour**, at [info@prowintour.com.tr](mailto:info@prowintour.com.tr); or visit [www.prowintour.com.tr](http://www.prowintour.com.tr); request Gulgun Bogrek.

**Turkish Airlines** flies nonstop to Istanbul from New York and Chicago and has a code-share partnership with **American Airlines**. In March Turkish Airlines had joined the **Star Alliance**. Visit [www.thy.com](http://www.thy.com)

For general information, contact the Turkish Tourist Office, 212-687-2194; E-mail [ny@tourismturkey.org](mailto:ny@tourismturkey.org); [www.tourismturkey.org](http://www.tourismturkey.org)

*For consolidator fares and tour packages to Turkey, see page 79 of the Listings Section.*

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## IN THE NEWS

**FLO Boosts Commissions to 16%**

Knocking at Europe's door yet on the threshold of Asia, Turkey is truly a land of contrasts. For more than 16 years FLO USA has pioneered exciting explorations of Turkey's greatest natural and cultural sites, especially Istanbul, Ephesus and Capadocia. Known today as the leader in travel to Turkey, the company has boosted incentives for travel agents.

Now FLO USA is paying 16% commission on all shore excursions in Turkey's ports such as Kusadasi (Ephesus), Izmir, Dikili, Istanbul, Antalya and Bodrum. Services include- but not limited to-private guided tours, group tours, transfers, and hotel accommodations. **Carnival Cruises, Celebrity Cruises, Royal Caribbean, Norwegian Cruise Line, Disney Cruise Line, Oceania Cruises** have ports of call in Turkey, Greece and Egypt.

Shore excursions in Greece and Egypt are 12% commissionable as well as all escorted tour packages to those destinations. For groups of eight or more passengers, FLO USA offers special group rates.

Every year FLO USA modifies its itineraries primarily based on the feedback the company receives from client questionnaires and by continually reviewing new products and hotels. "We believe the factors that drive our growth include our focus on quality, our large selection of motor-coach tours, dedication to customer service and our policy of including quality components in each tour," says Cengiz Aras, President, FLO USA, Inc.

FLO USA's policy of providing all-inclusive tours focuses on making vacations a success rather than selling "optional" tours and add-ons in what has become a price-sensitive market. "We also include a FLO USA Travel Protection Plan at no additional cost to your clients as well as all meals in most of our tour packages," he adds. For those who prefer to travel independently, FLO USA offers "Private Tour Upgrades" so clients can travel at their own pace with a private guide and driver. Additionally, groups are limited in size to 16 to 24, to ensure better quality of service.

"Vacations are becoming a necessity in our lives," he

adds, so tour operators face a "one-time to impress" situation with each vacation sale. Call 888-435-6872; [www.flo-usa.com](http://www.flo-usa.com)

**More Connoisseurs in Scotland**

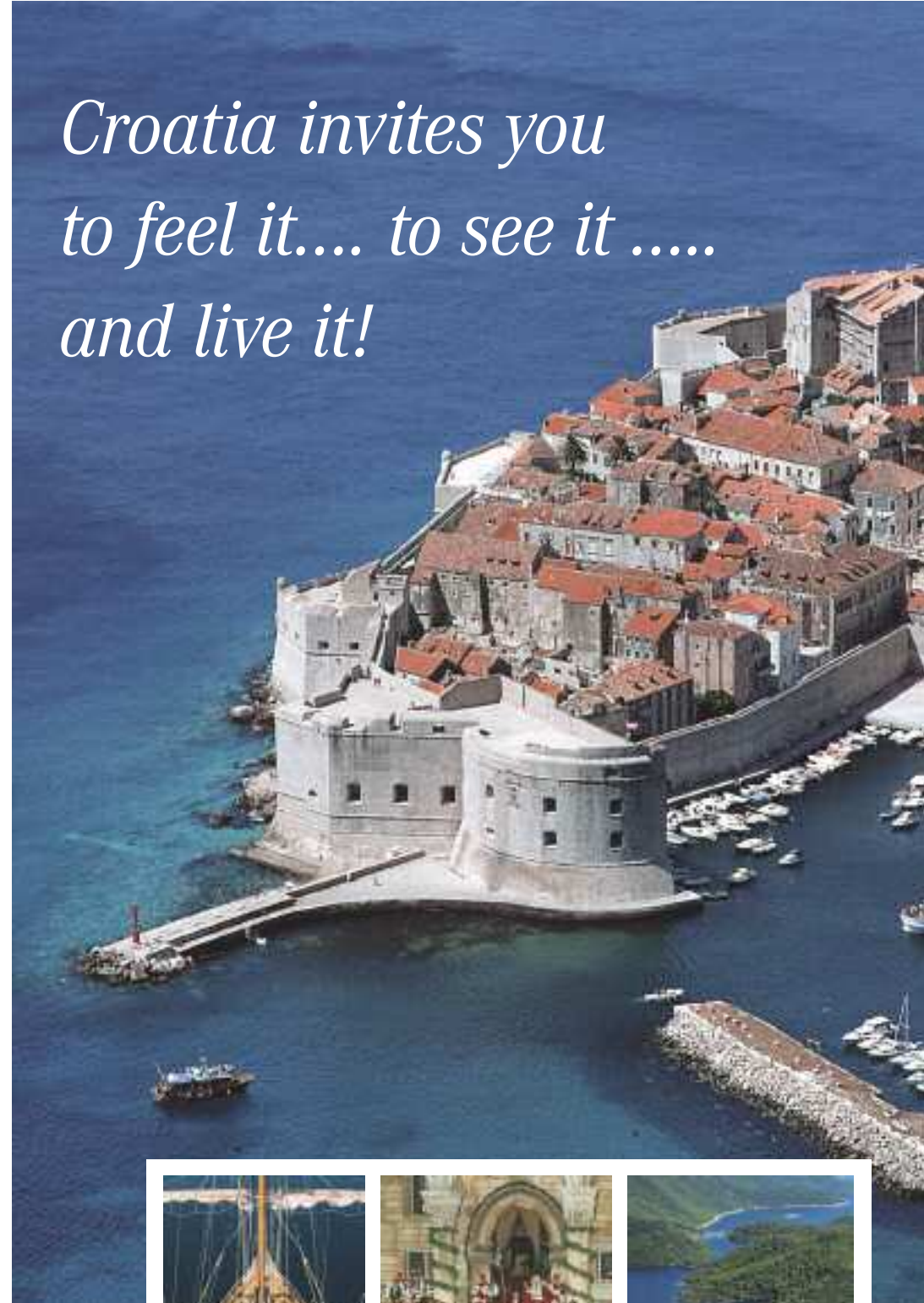
**Connoisseurs Scotland** announced four new hotel members, bringing its consortia of luxury Scottish travel options to twenty one luxury, boutique and grand hotel members, and partners including a small cruise line, luxury chauffeur car service, luxury leisure train, plus a golf operator. The new members are: Pool House, a romantic seven-room retreat located on the seashore of Loch Ewe; Cringletie House a baronial country house hotel in the Scottish borders; The Scotsman, converted from The Scotsman newspaper's offices into one of the most stylish hotels in Edinburgh, and The Glasshouse voted by Conde Nast Traveler as one of the top 50 hottest hotels in the world. In addition the luxury consortia has partnered with Wide World of Golf, offering the very best golf vacations in Scotland. Visit [www.luxuryScotland.co.uk](http://www.luxuryScotland.co.uk)

**Spanish Hotel Update**

The five-star 86-room **Barcelo Alba de Layos** just opened in Layos, Spain, about six miles from Toledo. The property is situated on the 18-hole Layos Golf Course and features a spa, a swimming pool and an ice fountain as well as horse-back riding, falconry, hunting, off-road driving and hot-air ballooning. There are two restaurants and bars and nine meetings rooms accommodating groups of up to 250 people. Rates start at \$175 per room, double, through Dec. 31, 2008. Visit [www.barcelo.com](http://www.barcelo.com)

At the same time, the **Majestic Hotel Group** opened the 53-room **Murmuri Barcelona**, in the city's Eixample district. The property features contemporary décor, offers a 1920s-style Marfil by Murmuri bar; WiFi throughout the hotel; and 32-inch, flat-screen TVs and iPods in all guest rooms. Thai chef Ian Chalermkittichai, owner of three restaurants in New York, oversees the Restaurante Murmuri. An inaugural rate of about \$275 per night includes breakfast and VAT. Visit [www.murmuri.com](http://www.murmuri.com)

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## EUROPEAN CRUISE NEWS

### Cruise Ships Bring 300,000 Visitors to Lisbon

In 2007, there was an increase in the number of cruise passengers disembarking in Lisbon. From January to November 2007, 282,662 passengers had docked in Lisbon, showing an increase of 6.7 percent compared to the 265,001 passengers from January to November in 2006. According to Lisboa Harbour Authority data, 30 ships docked in Lisboa during November representing an increase of 11.1 percent in relation to the 27 ships that docked in November 2006. The ships that docked in November transported a total of 40,255 passengers, which is a 65 percent increase in relation to 24,368 in the same month in 2006. Transit passengers – in comparison with turnaround passengers – represent the majority of passengers at Lisboa harbor. In November, this figure rose to 35,422 or 116 percent more than the 16,351 registered in the same period in 2006. In cumulative terms, the period from January to November 2007 recorded 254,135 transit passengers. That was 13.2 percent more than the total for 2006 when there were 224,487 passengers.

From the latest statistics from the Portuguese National Tourist Office, it appears as if travelers are once again discovering Portugal. Three major airports in the country saw substantial increases in passengers passing through in 2007. The Sa Carneiro Airport in the city of Porto had 17 percent more travelers last year, with 3.4 million landing or taking off there. At Lisbon's Portela Airport, 13.4 million people passed through, an 8.8 percent increase over 2007, and the Faro International had 7.5 percent more passengers last year, with a total of 5.4 million.

[www.insideportugaltravel.com](http://www.insideportugaltravel.com)



Belem Tower  
in Lisbon

### Elegant Cruises Sails to Summer Solstice

Elegant Cruises & Tours, Inc., a niche cruise line specializing in culturally enriching travel to Europe is introducing a new itinerary for the M.S. Andrea in 2008, exploring the Gulf of Bothnia, from above the Arctic Circle and the lands of the "midnight sun" to the cultural charms of Tallinn and the glittering city of St. Petersburg.

The inaugural voyage, timed to coincide with the near perpetual sunlight of the midsummer solstice, departs Helsinki, Finland on July 14, 2008 for a 12-night exploration of the secluded islands and fishing villages along the Swedish and Finnish coasts, with an opportunity to learn more about the Sami, or Laplander, culture. Highlights of the itinerary include Luleå, a port above the Arctic Circle, Jurmo Island, Uto Island, Bonhamn, Ulvon, Kodar Island and Rauma, a World Heritage Site.

Elegant Cruises & Tours, Inc. is a family-owned and operated company, now celebrating its 20th year providing culturally-focused travel to Europe. Vice-president and co-owner Tatjana Stanovic adds, "As we celebrate our 20th year, I'm excited to continue the company's long tradition of developing fresh itineraries to out-of-the-way destinations, as we do on our new cruise through the Gulf of Bothnia."

Air-inclusive rates for Elegant Cruises' new "White Night of Finland & Sweden" itinerary taking passengers to the top of the world via the Gulf of Bothnia begin at \$5,250, per person based on double occupancy. Air credits are available for cruise-only passengers. The M.S. Andrea has a limited number of single cabins, beginning at \$6,990. The M.S. Andrea will return to the Adriatic for stops along Croatia's Dalmatian coast. Call 800-683-6767; E-mail [info@elegantcruises.com](mailto:info@elegantcruises.com); [www.elegantcruises.com](http://www.elegantcruises.com)

### Louis Cruises Predict Rosy Outlook

Amid the anxiety of many European travel interests, Louis Cruise Line executives are readying for what looks like another banner season in the Mediterranean. Says Senior Vice President of Marketing & Sales George Stathopoulos, "Bookings from the United States are strong, in spite of a weak U.S. dollar. This is a clear indication that the company's continuous marketing and sales efforts in this mature and demanding cruise market are showing remarkable results." Louis Cruise Lines remains firmly committed to a strong presence in Greece. In fact, it is now the only company operating Greek flagged ships, with Piraeus as their home port. Following in the footsteps of a great cruising tradition, the Louis product combines the warmth and energy of the Greek spirit, with the solidity of the Group's 70-year history in operating Mediterranean resorts.

### Bolstering sailings from Greece...

The AQUAMARINE, formerly under charter to Transocean, now joins CRISTAL and PERLA to further enhance the company's popular Aegean Islands and Turkey cruise offering out of Piraeus. Well-planned three, four and seven-day itineraries include generous call times in select ports, such as Mykonos, Kusadasi, Patmos, Rhodes and Heraklion (Crete), Santorini with a plethora of sailing date options from early March through end of November. Total available capacity on the three and four-day sailings has increased for 2008 to

2,250 berths per sailing or 4,500 per week.

Additionally, CRISTAL will also be doing weekly overnight calls on the seven-night cruise itinerary in Istanbul in addition to the other exciting ports of call across the Greek Isles and Turkey, offering a great opportunity to explore the endless wonders of this grand 24-hour city. Towards the end of the season, CRISTAL is introducing four new itineraries that will include Egypt's Alexandria. The 480-cabin CRISTAL increases this year's available capacity on this itinerary and brings the berths offered on seven-day sailings up to 1,250.

### Sailings from Genoa/Marseilles...

During this season, the ORIENT QUEEN visits the islands of the Aegean Sea and Turkey on 10-Day cruises from Genoa/Marseilles with calls to Naples, Piraeus, Kusadasi, Patmos, Mykonos, Santorini, Katakolon and Messina. After completing an extensive refit, the CORAL returns to the Western Mediterranean with the popular seven-day Spanish Odyssey cruise from Genoa/Marseilles to Palma de Mallorca, Almeria, Malaga, Tangier, Gibraltar, Ibiza and Barcelona.

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## EUROPE

### AIR UPDATES

#### *Air Astana Celebrates U.S. Link*

By Merrie Murray

Last month, **Air Astana** (KC), celebrated its entry into the United States marketplace at a reception at the Kazakhstan Embassy in Northwest Washington DC. More than 80 people attended the event.

Kazakhstan's Ambassador to the U.S., Erlan A. Idrissov, welcomed guests, toasted Air Astana's inclusion in the U.S. Airlines Reporting Corporation (ARC), and shared a glimpse of his country in the heart of Eurasia. Kazakhstan supports tourism and plans to promote its unspoiled nature. Martin Craggs, Station Manager, Air Astana, London Heathrow Airport, also attended. Now that Air Astana is a part of the ARC, ARC accredited U.S. travel agents can issue Air Astana tickets to or from the United States to Kazakhstan and beyond, whether clients are traveling east or west around the globe. Agents receive a five percent commission.

Although not yet landing on U.S. soil, Air Astana has an extensive network of air services in place with partner airlines from cities like New York, Miami, Denver, Minneapolis, Chicago Washington, Los Angeles, Detroit and Atlanta to one of Air Astana's three growing hubs, Almaty, Astana, and Atyrau, Kazakhstan via numerous Asian, European and Mid-

dle-Eastern gateways. Passengers can connect through Frankfurt, London Heathrow, Amsterdam, Hanover, Moscow, Bangkok, Seoul, Dubai, Beijing and Delhi.

Because of Air Astana's reciprocal ticketing agreements, its services can be combined with the services of 70 of some of the world's finest airlines, including **Northwest Airlines, United Airlines, Lufthansa, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Virgin Atlantic, Aeroflot, and Asiana Airlines.**

Eighteen Boeing 767s, Boeing 757s, Airbus A320s, Airbus A321 and Fokker-50 aircraft make up the current Air Astana fleet. By 2014, this number is expected to almost double to 34 aircraft flying the Air Astana logo.

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Discounted Business Class fares at Swiss Air Lines are available for roundtrip travel July 1 through Aug. 31 from Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Miami. Travel must be completed by Sept. 6. Tickets must be purchased by April 30, and ticketing must be completed within 72 hours of the reservation. Sample fares include Boston-Rome, \$2,914; Chicago-Florence, Italy, \$3,014; and Los Angeles-Nice, France, \$3,006.

Visit [www.swiss.com](http://www.swiss.com)

### TOUR OPERATORS UPDATE

#### *Spirits, Food, Wine and Song*

##### SCOTLAND

**Scotland Experience's** The "Highlands and Whisky Trail" takes travelers in search of liquid gold (aka: Scotch Whisky). This itinerary provides a chance to experience the best of the Highlands with a visit to Speyside, Scotland's famous whisky producing area. Cost for this seven-night tour is from \$859 per person double in standard accommodations, at low-season rate and including rental car and breakfast daily. It also is available year-round.

Call 800-661-3830, [www.scotland-experience.com](http://www.scotland-experience.com)

##### EUROPEAN GASTRONOMY ROUTES

Three wine and gastronomy tours are on the autumn travel program from **BKWine**. Priced at \$1,656, the tours are organized by Britt Karlsson, founder of BKWine, based in Paris, who specializes in wine, food and gastronomic travel. The new tours on the program are: September 8-12: Bordeaux, the great classic, October 22-26: the Douro Valley in Portugal, November 12-16: Wine & Gastronomy in Champagne. BKWine organizes tours to France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Hungary and Austria.

Call 011-00-33-680-4535-70; [www.bkwine.com/wine\\_tours](http://www.bkwine.com/wine_tours)

##### FROM GERMANY TO SPAIN...

The highest ranked cruise ship in the world, according to the **2008 Berlitz Guide to Cruising and Cruise Ships**, **Hapag-Lloyd Cruises'** MS EUROPA is offering guests a world-class 14-day music festival departing Hamburg, Germany on September 14 and ending in Barcelona, Spain on September 28, 2008. Rates start at \$7,182 per person/based on double occupancy for an outside cabin for this musical voyage. The cruise also features concerts ashore in Hamburg, Lisbon, Cadiz, and in Palma de Mallorca. Ports along the musical route: St. Peter Port/Guernsey/Channel Islands, St. Malo/France, Bordeaux/France, Villagarcia/Spain, Lisbon/Portugal, Cadiz/Spain, Palma de Mallorca/Balearic Islands, Formentera/Balearic Islands, Ibiza/Balearic Islands.

Call 877-445-7447; [www.hl-cruises.com](http://www.hl-cruises.com)

#### *Magic Flute in the Metro*

Berlin's future "Bundestag" subway stop between the Kanzleramt [Federal Chancellor's Office] and the Reichstag will be filled with the sounds of Mozart from April 22 to May 25, 2008. Director and conductor Christoph Hagel has decided to put the unused station to use as a stage, directing Mozart's best-known opera The Magic Flute as a modern urban fairytale. The public can thus join love-struck Prince Tamino and the jocular Papageno on the search for the mysterious Pamina. [www.die-zauberfloete-in-der-u-bahn.de](http://www.die-zauberfloete-in-der-u-bahn.de)

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## EUROPE

### BEST BUYS

#### \$1679 TURKEY

**Cloud Tours** offers two popular tours to Turkey. Their seven-night Pearls of Turkey, takes your clients to the highlights of Turkey. The tour begins at \$1,749 per person in double occupancy and includes international air as well as Turkish domestic air, three nights in Istanbul, one night in Ankara, one night in Cappadocia and two nights in Izmir including daily breakfast, service fees and taxes, five days of sightseeing in Turkey with English speaking guide and entrance fees, four lunches, three dinners and all transfers. The Turkish Delights tour, an eight-night tour, begins at \$1,679 per person double with international and Turkish domestic airfare; three nights in Istanbul, one night each in Canakkale, Izmir and Pamukkale and two nights in Cappadocia including daily breakfast, service fees and taxes, seven days' sightseeing with English speaking guide and entrance fees, most meals and all transfers.

Cloud Tours can customize an itinerary in Turkey to suit your client's needs and budget. The Istanbul Caper is a four-night extension that can be added to any tours to Greece, Italy or Spain and includes the highlights of Istanbul.

Call 800-223-7880; 718-721-3808; E-mail info@cloutours.com; www.cloutours.com

#### \$89 EASTERN EUROPE

Eastern and Central European destinations continue to offer the discerning traveler stylish, elegant properties of architectural interest and unique ambience at affordable prices. **Travel Bound** offers such properties in cities like Prague, with hotels such as the 19th century neo-classical **Mercure Old Town**, with prices starting at \$89 and the deluxe historical **Le Palais** hotel from \$150, which is one of the most beautiful examples of Belle Époque architecture in Central Europe. The fabulously opulent **Boscolo New York Palace** in Budapest is attractively priced at \$110. In Krakow, TB offers hotels such as the **Copernicus**, an historical townhouse built more than five hundred years ago, with prices from \$160 and **Pucic Palace**, starting at \$187, is the most unique hotel in Dubrovnik and the only hotel located directly within the old town walls. Prices are per person including breakfast, tax and service charges and are valid through Oct. 31.

Call 800-808-9541; or visit [www.BookTravelBound.com](http://www.BookTravelBound.com)

#### \$1960 FRANCE

**Randonnee Tours**, renowned for creating unforgettable travel experiences for intrepid, self-guided adventurers, is introducing several new trips for 2008.

Cycling in Brittany, France: Boasting dramatic coastlines, lush forests and enchanting medieval villages, this eight-day journey is a sensory experience like no other. Beginning in La Baule and finishing seven or nine days later in Hennebont, the tour showcases the most memorable sights, tastes, and scenery in the Brittany area. Priced from \$2,245 per person double; \$2,790 for luxe. As with all Randonnee Tours, distinctive accommodations and exclusive local experiences round out this wonderful journey through France; optional luxury upgrades available.

Call 800-242-1825; [www.randonneetours.com](http://www.randonneetours.com)

#### \$1499 SPAIN, PORTUGAL

The Douro River might well be Spain and Portugal's best-kept secret but **Trafalgar's** new 10-day Southern Spain & Portugal features an optional seven-day Douro Valley cruise to its land tour that visits Madrid, Toledo, Granada, Seville and Lisbon. The 10-day Southern Spain & Portugal, priced from \$1,575 per person, twin share (land only), is available through October 17, 2008. The optional seven-day Douro Valley Cruise extension is priced from \$1,499 per person double (cruise only). The Trafalgar Uniworld River Cruise includes all meals onboard, wine with dinner, shore excursions with local guides an experienced Cruise Manager and English-speaking crew. Agents might alert clients that they can save up to five percent by booking and paying for their tours seven months in advance of travel (discounts are also available for bookings four months in advance).

Call 800-854-0103; [www.trafalgar.com](http://www.trafalgar.com)

#### \$2995 FRANCE

Barging the canals of France has just gotten up to 40% less expensive for future guests of **French Country Waterways** who book select departures during the July-August summer season. The 18-passenger luxury barge *Esprit* makes its way through Burgundy's fabled Côte d'Or wine-growing region at prices of \$2,995 per person, double, reduced from the normal rate of \$5,295 or 43%. Standard fares of \$6,595 and \$6,795 for the eight-passenger luxury barge *Princess*, formerly the private barge of shipping magnate Daniel K. Ludwig, are reduced to \$4,500 and \$4,700; and the July 6 departure of the company's newest barge, the 12-passenger *Adrienne*, sailing in Champagne between Maizy and Château-Thierry, is priced at \$4,495, a 30% savings over the regular rate of \$6,395, and includes a night at the luxury Hotel Raphael in Paris.

Call 800-222-1236; [www.fcwl.com](http://www.fcwl.com)

#### \$200 ICELAND

Whether it's Iceland's famous visitors such as Yoko Ono and James Bond, internationally-renowned sites such as the Blue Lagoon and Unesco World Heritage sites, a world-class music scene and a wide range and beauty of its nature or the exciting escapades and scenic vistas, Iceland could be at the top of your client's lists of places to visit. **Iceland Travel** programs showcase the tremendous diversity Iceland offers ranging from scheduled tours for individuals and groups, custom-designed arrangements for your most discerned travelers, cruise shore excursions, special interest tours, study visits to creative incentive and meeting programs. A Reykjavik city break for three nights land only, starts at \$200 per person double. Iceland Travel is part of the Icelandair Group and is a member of Prestige Resorts & Destinations Ltd, Ensemble Travel Group - On Location Supplier; and an Allied member of USTOA.

Call 917-318-6225; E-mail sales@icelandtravel.is or kerstin@globalmarketinginitiatives.com; [www.icelandtravel.is](http://www.icelandtravel.is)

### BEST BUYS

#### \$1565 GREECE

Thirty-eight-year old **Crown Peters** is selling a slew of well-priced, many air-inclusive packages from New York to Athens, (other gateways available). Ranging in duration from six to 13-nights to Greece in concert with **Louis Cruise Lines'** newest vessels. All packages include transfers, meeting and assistance.

Crown Charms I: A six-night deal priced from \$1,565 per person double which spends three nights in Athens, including an escorted city sightseeing tour, and a three-day cruise to the Greek Islands and Turkey.

Crown Legend II: An eight-night program priced from \$1,980 per person double and includes two nights in Athens with a city tour, a four-day cruise to the Greek Islands & Turkey and three nights in Santorini.

The Crown Aegean I: Nine nights priced from \$2,095 per person double includes two nights in Athens with a city tour, four nights in Mykonos, and a three-day cruise to the Greek Islands and Turkey.

Finally, the 13-night Crown Ideal, which is priced from \$3,495 per person double includes three nights in a deluxe Athens hotel, a city tour, a three-night Classical Tour and a seven-day cruise to the Greek Islands and Turkey.

Call 800-321-1199; E-mail travel@crownpeters.com; [www.CrownPeters.com](http://www.CrownPeters.com)

#### \$317 LONDON

Every year, visitors from far and wide flock to the Royal Horticultural Society's renowned **Chelsea Flower Show** to see the crème de la crème of garden design and horticulture. The show takes place on the grounds of the Chelsea Royal Hospital, just a short walk from the **Draycott Hotel**, which is positioned between Chelsea and Knightsbridge making it the closest five-star hotel to the event. To celebrate this, the hotel is offering a deal for floral enthusiasts who would like to visit London. Priced from \$317 per person, enjoy an overnight stay in one of the Draycott's elegant rooms, as well as complimentary afternoon tea, chilled champagne at six and a steaming hot chocolate at bedtime as well as full English breakfast and a pair of all-day tickets to The Chelsea Flower Show; the package is valid May 22-24, 2008.

Call 011-020-7730-6466; [www.draycotthotel.com](http://www.draycotthotel.com)

#### \$224 EUROPE

**Rentalo**, an apartment rental company in London, created a SmartSearch feature that enables travel agents to research apartments for clients looking for an alternative to hotels. Bookings are commissionable, and apartments are sorted by location, price, the number of bedrooms and amenities. A one-bedroom apartment across the street from the Tower of London, for example, can sleep a family of five for \$250 per night with a three-night minimum stay. A one-bedroom Notting Hill flat with an elevator, balcony, daily maid service and free parking, is priced at \$224 per night. Visit [www.rentalo.com](http://www.rentalo.com)

#### 15% COMMISSION PAID BY PICASSO

**Picasso Tours**, which operates Nordique Tours, Picasso Tours & Cruises, Splendida Italia, and SwissMade Tours, is offering an additional five percent or 15 percent commission on the land and cruise portions of all new bookings made between April 8 and July 31, 2008 on departures throughout 2008. Air commissions on tour operator air fares remains at 10 percent. For more details about all of Picasso Tours packages, (Monday through Friday, 7 a.m.-5 p.m. PST). Picasso Tours is a division of Picasso Travel which is one of the largest air consolidators in North America. Picasso Travel is a member of ASTA, IATA, CLIA, USACA, ARC and BTC doing business for more than 27 years.

Call 800-995-7997; [www.picassotours.com](http://www.picassotours.com)

#### \$300 FRANCE

The **Concorde Hotels and Resorts** is selling a Marie Antoinette Exhibition package to run through June 30. The package is timed to coincide with an exhibition at the Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais of nearly 300 works relating to the French queen. Priced from about \$300 per night, per room, the package includes accommodations at a choice of six Paris hotels, admission for two to the exhibition, daily breakfast and a tea box from Maison Laduree. A two-night minimum stay is required.

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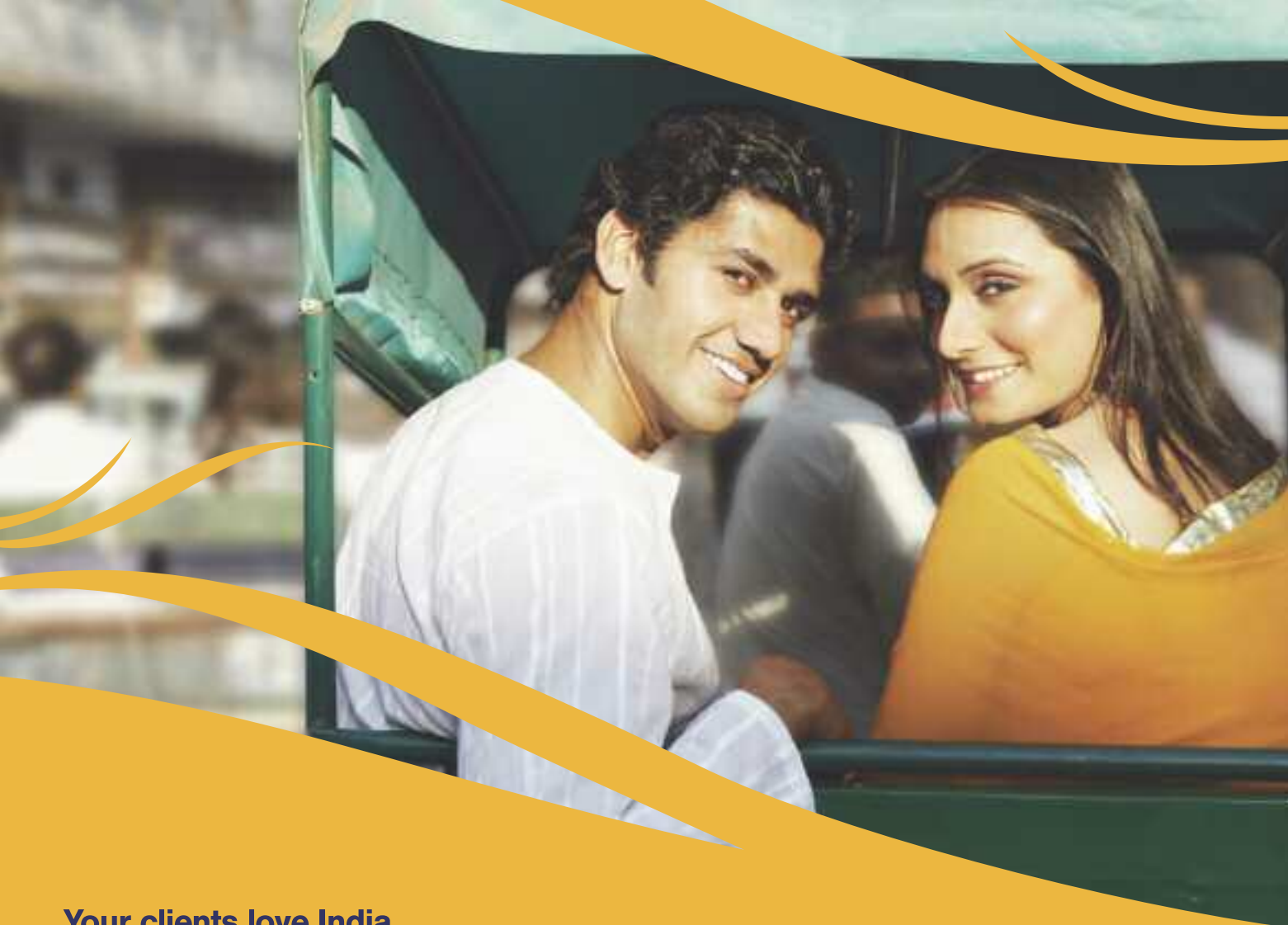
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## ASIA & THE SOUTH PACIFIC



INDIA NTO

### Mumbai's Secret Weapon: Bollywood

**M**umbai, the capital of Maharashtra, is the fastest moving, most affluent and industrialized city in India. As part of India's beautiful west coast, that runs down from Gujarat, through Mumbai to Goa, Karnataka and Kerala, Mumbai was blessed with a natural harbor that was developed by the British and remains one of the busiest ports of India, handling about 40% of India's maritime trade.

Mumbai (till recently known as 'Bombay'), derives its name from the local deity Mumba Devi, whose temple is still there. The Portuguese predecessors of the British preferred to think of the name as Bom Baim, the Good Bay. Mumbai is a group of seven islands, which today are known as Colaba, Mahim, Mazgaon, Parel, Worli, Girgaun and Dongri. Large expanses of open sea have been filled in, and tidal swamps have been reclaimed as the areas known as Churchgate and Nariman Point today.

#### Young and Trendy

While Mumbai has its classic sights, what has brought this city to new relevance and to the attention of new young travelers is its Bollywood.

Located in Mumbai, it is home to the world's largest film industry, producing an average of 900 feature films per year (over 450 movies more than Hollywood). Almost a century after the Lumière Brothers (inventors of the cinématographe) unveiled six silent short films in Mumbai in 1896, Bollywood has transformed itself into the pride of India, providing an affordable and magical escape. Movie tickets are among the cheapest in the world, costing approximately 20 cents. Despite

the low cost, India's \$8 billion film industry grosses over \$1 billion in sales per year accounting for over 73% of Asia Pacific's movie tickets.

Recent trends show that Bollywood has become increasingly popular in the United States with the success of films such as the joint Bollywood/Hollywood production, "Bride & Prejudice", the adaptation of Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice", "Bend It Like Beckham", "Monsoon Wedding", and Deepa Mehta's controversial "Fire," all marking the arrival of Bollywood into mainstream U.S. pop culture.

Additional evidence of Bollywood's rise in popularity is witnessed among today's pop culture as seen in Shakira's Indian movie-themed performance at the 2006 MTV Video Music Awards and the success of Bombay Dreams, Bollywood's first musical to hit Broadway, produced by the legendary Andrew Lloyd Webber, with music by composer A.R. Rahman. Moreover, in living rooms across the U.S., Bollywood fans can enjoy the best titles via "Bollywood On Demand" provided by Comcast, the largest cable television provider, and through video rental companies like Blockbuster and Netflix.

Why do people love Bollywood so much? Masala films (named after the Hindi word meaning "blend of spices") are typically over three hours long and feature not only rich romance, but lavish sets, vivid costumes and dynamic music with dance performed by the industry's greatest talent. Masala films are filmed in India's most gorgeous settings, such as Maharashtra's historic forts, or in the cosmopolitan city of Mumbai, providing viewers with a glimpse of the country's wealth. In addition to awe-striking locales, dynamic performances are built into melodra-

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\*Fares are exclusively available from the above mentioned preferred India partners. Fares may vary.

Fares shown are in US dollars and are for round-trip travel in Economy Class on Lufthansa or United. Saturday night stay is required and maximum stay is 12 months. Fares are subject to change without notice and are based on the most direct routing to each destination. Additional transfers will increase the fare. Fares do not include Fees, taxes and airport charges up to \$450, including the September 11th Security Fee of a maximum of \$10 per round-trip. Seats are limited and may not be available on all days/flights. Ticketing, cancellation, change and other restrictions apply.



## ASIA & THE SOUTH PACIFIC

matic plots with instantaneous shifts in location and even numerous costume changes between verses songs. Music from Bollywood films often times become so popular that they turn out to be as popular as the films themselves. With Bollywood stars such as filmmaker Satyajit Ray, awarded the Oscar for Lifetime Achievement, to the beautiful Ashwairya Rai, former Miss World and India's leading actress who stars along Meryl Streep in "Chaos" that was released in 2008, and with internationally-acclaimed films such as "The Namesake" and "Lagaan," Bollywood will continue to be a household word in the heart of America in the near future.

### Classical Sites in Mumbai

The classic attractions include the Gateway of India, a travel icon in Mumbai, which was once the principal port

when the visitors arrived in India by ship. Its architecture takes its leads from the conventional Arch of Triumph, mixing elements from Muslim styles of 16th century Gujarat.

One of the most popular promenades of Mumbai is the Marine Drive, built on reclaimed land during 1920, and running along the shoreline of Back bay, it starts at Nariman Point, and sweeps around by Chowpatty beach up to the Malabar hills. Chowpatty Beach is among Mumbai's famous beaches and is a popular spot for people seeking nightlife. It is also a setting for the vibrant annual Ganesh Chaturthi Festival.

On top of the Malabar hills are the Hanging Gardens and Kamala Nehru Park, which offer superb views over Mumbai. Some distance away from Malabar Hills is Mahalaxmi Temple, the oldest temple in Mumbai, dedicated to the Goddess of Wealth. Haji Ali

tomb and mosque is located nearby, and can be reached by a long causeway, which can be crossed at low tide. Other attractions of Mumbai include the Juhu beach and the Nehru Planetarium.

Within a 30-mile radius, are excursions worth including in any itinerary. The Elephanta islands are about 16 miles northeast of Apollo Bunder, or Gateway of India, while about 25 miles from the center of the city are the Krishnagiri Upavan National Park, Kanheri caves and the Manori beach, Montepezir and Jogeshwari Caves and Bassein, which separate Mumbai city from the mainland.

Call the India Tourism at 800-953-9399; or on the West Coast 213-380-8855; or visit [www.incredibleindia.com](http://www.incredibleindia.com)

*For consolidator fares and tour packages to India see page 98-99 of the Listings Section*

### Jet Airways Launches SF Flight

Indian airline, **Jet Airways**, is set to start daily service from San Francisco International Airport to Shanghai and India on May 5, marking the first time an Indian airline operates flights from San Francisco to Mumbai and the second airline worldwide to fly nonstop from San Francisco to Shanghai. The flight from San Francisco International Airport will also be the airline's fourth daily North American departure to India, following new launches of service from New York's JFK and Newark airports, and Toronto Pearson International Airport, within the past year.

The new Jet Airways transpacific flights aboard Boeing 777-300ER aircraft will offer unprecedented levels of luxury, privacy and comfort in the air, including First Class suites with the world's longest airline beds, private closets, dining tables for two, and 23" flat-screens.

Visit: [www.jetairways.com](http://www.jetairways.com)

### Sky Vacations Reaches New Heights

India travel specialist and consolidator, **Sky Bird Travel and Tours** launched **Sky Vacations** last spring with an eight-night tour from Delhi to Rajasthan, visiting Udaipur, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Fatehpur Sikri, Agra and Sikandra; seven-night/eight-day "Classical South India" tour from Chennai visiting Kanchipuram, Mahabalipuram, Madurai, Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, Kumarakom and Cochin; and the six-night "North India, Golden Triangle" tour from Delhi to Jaipur, Agra and Fatehpur Sikri. This year, programs have been further enhanced and the variety increased. Arvin Shah, Chairman, Sky Vacations says: "Sky Bird Travel has been recognized as an airline consolidator of distinction for over 30 years in the U.S." Sky Vacations compliments that service. "We offer your clients a wide choice of itineraries that give a glimpse of India's ancient past, its rich and varied cultural heritage, and a taste of its delectable cuisine, known all over the world."

Call 877-666-3113; visit: [www.skyvacations.net](http://www.skyvacations.net)

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## ASIA & THE SOUTH PACIFIC

### BEST BUYS

**\$3395 INDIA** SITA World Tours' 14-day Land of Maharas includes a camel safari on the wind swept dunes, a visit to Udaipur the City of Lakes, sunrise visit to the Taj Mahal, elephant ride to Amber Fort and tours to Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Mumbai.

Land prices begin at \$3,395 per person sharing and include first class accommodations, English speaking guides, transfers and all sightseeing as per the itinerary.

Call 800-421-5643; [www.sitatours.com](http://www.sitatours.com)

**\$6319 CHINA** Goway's Asia Tours from North America include The Splendors of China and Splendors of India branded as 'Holidays of a Lifetime' and available for stays of 21 and 20 days respectively. Fully escorted from North America, the programs include airfare, accommodations, most meals, guided sightseeing, all tipping and special interest fun themes with prices starting at \$6,319 per person for the China and \$9,599 for the India program.

Goway's China Odyssey, the most popular air-land inclusive tour to Asia, offers travelers the classic sights of China in a comfortable itinerary that can easily be extended to include vibrant Hong Kong and starts at \$2,859.

Call 800-387-8850; E-mail [info@goway.com](mailto:info@goway.com); [www.Goway.com](http://www.Goway.com)

**\$2531 INDIA** Picasso Tours, which also distributes products under its other divisions – Splendida Italia, SwissMade-Tours, Nordique and Picasso Cruises – introduced a new product line last year to the subcontinent dubbed Ports of India. Programs focus on north, south, central, east and west India in a series of programs with enormous variety and options.

The Exotic South, for instance, is a fully escorted 12-night tour that travels from Chennai, to Tanjor, Madurai, Ponticherry, Cochin and ends in Mumbai. Prices range from \$2,531 to \$3,406 per person double for land arrangements; air is additional but Picasso can and will assist agents with consolidator prices. A three-night extension to Goa costs about \$700 per person double. Frequent departures are scheduled through Feb., 2009.

Call 888-463-4249; E-mail [info@portsofindia.com](mailto:info@portsofindia.com); [www.portsofindia.com](http://www.portsofindia.com)

**\$3699 INDIA** Ritz Tours is making its first venture into India with the launch of the new 16-day Essence of India program for travel in 2008. "India is growing in popularity as consumers are more and more interested in embarking on cultural travel that offers a sense of spiritual enlightenment," said Pista Nadj, vice president of sales and marketing for Ritz Tours.

"We've enjoyed nearly three decades of tremendous suc-

cess with our China product, so we're excited to expand our portfolio into India," he added. Tours begin in Bangkok, Thailand, stop in India's capital of Delhi, on to Agra, home to the Taj Mahal, includes game-viewing safaris in the National Park. Ranthambore, ending in bustling Hong Kong, priced from \$3,699 per person double.

Call 800-900-2446; E-mail to [china@ritztours.com](mailto:china@ritztours.com); [www.ritztours.com](http://www.ritztours.com)

**\$7895 SOUTHEAST ASIA** Asia Transpacific Journeys is selling a new tour, The Cuisine and Culture of Thailand and Vietnam, a groundbreaking journey that is redefining how foodies travel to Asia.

This is 14-day trip small group trip (up to 18) departs Feb. 7, 2009. The per person, double, rate is \$7,895 for land costs that include luxurious accommodations, nearly all meals, regional flights, transfers, visa fees, tips, entrance fees, medical and emergency insurance and a comprehensive pre-departure packet.

A Custom Journey may be arranged for those who prefer private travel or other dates. Culinary travel diva Peggy Markel will lead the group into the countryside where lemongrass and coconuts are harvested, then into kitchens for roll-up-your-sleeves cooking lessons.

Call 800-642-2742; [www.asiatrangepacific.com](http://www.asiatrangepacific.com)

**\$625 MONGOLIA (CHINA)** Shangri-La Hotel, Huhhot's "Grassland Culture and Genghis Khan's Footprints" package, a three-day/two-night Inner Mongolia adventure available from June 1 to Sept. 30, lifts the veil on Mongolian culture.

The recently opened Shangri-La Hotel, Huhhot is the only international five-star hotel in the city and offers a luxurious starting point for the exploration, which includes an evening spent in a yurt on the Mongolian grasslands.

Huhhot is the capital of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, home to legendary warrior Genghis Khan with a landscape known for its vast grassland that blooms in the summer months, forests and numerous lakes. A one-hour flight from Beijing to Huhhot, where a half-day city tour includes the Inner Mongolia Natural History and Culture Museum, Da Zho Temple and nearby Antique and Mongolian Artifact Shopping Street with its more than 80 shops.

The "Grassland Culture and Genghis Khan's Footprints" package is \$625 per person, single or double occupancy in a Deluxe category room, including breakfast and all tour elements. Additional nights at Shangri-La Hotel, Huhhot or Shangri-La Hotel, Baotou, in Deluxe category room, including breakfast, are \$142 per room per night.

Call 866-565-5050; fax 011-86 471- 336 6666; E-mail [slhh@shangri-la.com](mailto:slhh@shangri-la.com); [www.shangri-la.com](http://www.shangri-la.com)



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# Latin America Dances to its Own Beat

**D**uring the past few months, hotel companies have been announcing expansion plans and new builds throughout Central and Latin America. Among the international banners flying in cities from Guayaquil, Ecuador to Lima, Peru and Cartagena, Colombia, are **Hilton, Radisson** and the luxury **Five-Star Alliance** that includes properties throughout the region including the **Ritz Carlton** in Santiago, Chile and **Caesar Park** in Buenos Aires, Argentina. **Hilton, Marriott, Crown** and **Express** are among some of the hotel chains that are investing heavily in Costa Rica.

**Radisson Hotels and Resorts Latin America (RHILA)**, a master franchisor of Radisson Hotels & Resorts, announced the addition of three new hotels to the Radisson system: the **Radisson Decapolis Hotel Miraflores** and **Radisson Hotel & Suites San Isidro** in Lima, Peru; as well as the **Radisson Summit Resort and Spa** in Panama.

**SuperClubs** entered the Panama market with its recent groundbreaking on the 300-room **Breezes Panama** in Playa Blanca, marking the first development in Central America for the Jamaica-based all-inclusive resort firm. The resort, scheduled to open in late 2008, is set on Panama's south coast fronting the Pacific.

Additionally, new itineraries based on the Mayans -- "El Mundo Maya" or the World of the Maya - who lived in

Guatemala, Belize, Mexico, Honduras and El Salvador weave through all these countries, so agents will be seeing more extensive tour programs that link their histories and cultures.

Many Latin American countries do not have tourist offices, but agents can obtain information from consulates, embassies, national airlines or U.S. airlines that serve Latin American countries.



## ARGENTINA

Besides the tango, nowadays Argentina is among the top international wine producers, which has given rise to tourism products involving wineries, vineyard tours and wine tastings.

Several provinces in the west and north of Argentina offer several visits to vineyards, wineries and restaurants where the wine is the indisputable star. According to a study of Wineries in Argentina, in 2006 a total of 1,004,810 tourists traveled the Wine Routes of Argentina.

The growth of the quantity of tourists who visit these routes (45%) has been bigger than the growth of total of those who visit Argentina in general (15.3%). The Province of Mendoza (in the western part) is the province with most visited wineries, but San Juan and Salta have also seen an abundance of tourist visits and other regions are also tourist ready: wineries dot the districts of López, Valentín Bianchi, San Telmo, Escorihuela, Cavas de Weinert, J&F Lurton, Trapiche, Flichman, La Rural, Norton, Félix Lavaque, Lagarde, Navarro Correas, Nieto Senetiner, Goyenechea and Chandon. Watch for new tours combining Argentina with Chile linked by the grape. Visit [www.geographia.com/argentina](http://www.geographia.com/argentina)



## BELIZE

Belize reported a 2.6 percent increase in total visitors for 2007 at their main point of entry, the Philip Goldson International Airport. Belize welcomed 151,616 U.S. visitors this past year, denoting an overall 72.3 percent increase from 1998 when only 87,991 Americans visited Belize. Arrivals from Belize's chief tourism markets outside of the U.S. continue to also thrive.

The growth of arrivals from Canada is of great significance with an increase of 6.7 percent over the last year. In addition, Belize continues to see an influx of European visitors with an increase of 31.2 percent over the last nine years, an average annual increase of 3.5 percent per year.

The hotel and cruise sector are key instruments in Belize's dynamic tourism industry. Employment in Belize's hotel sector increased 12 percent over 2006; hotel revenues for 2007 rose an impressive 13.8 percent over 2006. Official cruise figures for 2007 are recorded at 624,528 passengers aboard 278 cruise ship calls, which is a 12% decrease in cruise passenger arrivals, a direct result of Hurricanes Dean and Felix, but the industry has since recovered its footing.

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## SOUTH & CENTRAL AMERICA



### BOLIVIA

Bolivia is set in central South America; sharing borders with Brazil in the northeast and east; Paraguay in the east and south-east; Argentina in the south; Chile in the west; and Peru in the west and northwest.

Until recently mining has been the mainstay of the Bolivian economy. In the 1940s, minerals constituted over 70 percent of Bolivia's exports, mainly tin and tungsten. During World War II, the Allied Powers depended on Bolivian tin. Tourism is a small but growing activity in Bolivia with potential for greater foreign exchange earnings. The number of tourists jumped from 22,250 in 1970 to 155,400 in 1980 but fell to 127,000 by 1985, or about one percent of all tourism in Latin America and the Caribbean. More than 300 hotels and scores of motels and tourist accommodations add up to about 9,000 rooms and 16,000 beds. By 1997, 375,000 tourists visited Bolivia: 60 percent came from the Americas, 35 percent from Europe, four percent from Asia, and one percent from Africa. Income from tourism in 1997 was \$180 million.

The major tourist attractions are Bolivia's snowcapped mountains, Lake Titicaca, pre-Inca ruins at Tiwanaco, its vast tropical areas, remote national parks, sightseeing on the national railroad, and the Indian cultures. New attractions for some tourists are the locations where the celebrated 20th-century Marxist leader Che Guevara was captured and mortally wounded, and the stark village of San Vicente on the windy altiplano

where, in 1908, the romanticized U.S. outlaws, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, were ambushed and killed.

The government is actively promoting tourism and encouraging tourists to stay longer and also make it a prime destination. Most tourists spend only a few days in the country, combining their visit with longer stays in the neighboring countries.

Visit [www.bolivia-tourism.com](http://www.bolivia-tourism.com)



### BRAZIL

Best known for its spectacular four-day Brazilian Carnival celebrated annually during the month of February, Rio de Janeiro's amazing tropical beaches, the most famous of which are Copacabana and Ipanema, and major nearby attractions such as the Statue of Christ the Redeemer (Corcovado Mountain), Sugar Loaf Mountain, Maracana Stadium, Tijuca National Park, and Favela da Rocinha add up to a memorable vacation.

The number of foreigners visiting the country went from an average of 1.5 million per year in the 1990s to more than 4 million visitors per year since 2000, according to Embratur. Surveys indicate visitors find the country truly beautiful. The results also show that 52% of them return home boasting of their contact with the Brazilian people. After all, besides enjoying some of the most beautiful spots on the planet – which include countless beaches, ecological paradises and historical cities – visitors find the natives are eager to show them the best sights, and



assist them, rendering an unforgettable memory.

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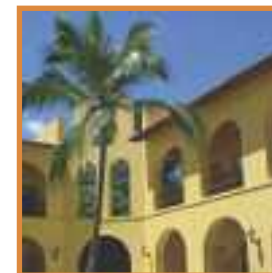
### CHILE

Situated south of Peru and west of Bolivia and Argentina, Chile fills a narrow 2,880-mile strip between the Andes and the Pacific; almost 30 percent of the country is covered by the towering ranges of the Andes. The southernmost point of South America is Cape Horn, a 1,390-foot rock on Horn Island in the Wollaston group, which, belongs to Chile. Chile also claims sovereignty over 482,628 square miles of Antarctic territory; the Juan Fernández Islands, about 400 miles west of the mainland; and Easter Island, about 2,000 miles due west. Among its most treasured areas is Patagonia.

One of Patagonia's least-known waterways, the Pascua runs through an uninhabited area in southern Chile that takes melt water from the Patagonian Ice Field, the largest expanse of permanent ice outside Antarctica and Greenland, for 38 tumultuous miles through steep granite valleys to one of the many fjords that serrate the southern coastline.

Currently, there is a movement afoot to protect the Pascua and the nearby Baker Rivers, both of which are threatened by the development of a vast hydroelectric project that would construct five large dams. The plans could impact on as many as 14 national parks and protected reserves.

Visit [www.chile.com](http://www.chile.com)



### COLOMBIA

Beyond the headlines, there is a thriving society with a rising middle class in Colombia, some of the best health care and universities in South America, and improved security.

In the past year, 196,054 foreigners visited Barranquilla, Cartagena and Santa Marta, an increase of 10,556 international tourists compared to 2006 when the total was 185,498.

Cartagena, alone received 133,172 tourists in 2007, a 3.3 percent increase compared to 2006, followed by Barranquilla with 48,882 visitors for a 9.6 percent increase, Santa Marta reported the highest increase – 17.4 percent or 14,000 tourists.

Nubia Stella Martinez, vice president of Tourism Proexport, says, the increase of tourists in Cartagena and Santa Marta undoubtedly is due, among other factors, to the return of cruise ships. Barranquilla on the other hand is an important business hub and is reinforced by events like Barranquijazz, Platform K and Carnival of Arts and Barranquilla. "The best tourism product that can be Colombia is the Carib corridor," she adds. "If we build this package with the historical part - cultural Cartagena, the cultural product, shopping and events of Barranquilla and nature and the beaches of Magdalena, we would have a highly competitive product."

The promotional plan for this year will see Colombia participate in almost 50 international fairs and trade shows in an effort to create a brand identity.

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## SOUTH & CENTRAL AMERICA



### COSTA RICA

Unquestionably, 2007 was a year of growth for Costa Rica's national tourism industry and the beginning of 2008 confirms consistency. January of 2008 marked a good start in tourist air arrivals according to the preliminary data gathered by the Costa Rica Tourist Board (ICT).

Despite economic worries in the main North American markets, the first month of 2008 shows optimism. International tourism arrivals have showed a steady growth. According to the ICT, 127,647 international visitors arrived by plane in January of 2008, marking a 13.7 percent over the same month of 2007.

For Costa Rica Tourism Minister, Carlos Ricardo Benavides, "These figures are excellent news, a 13 percent increase is way over the annual estimates and we should take advantage of this to work even harder throughout the year, especially now considering the economic situation, particularly in the United States."

In the case of the national airport Juan Santamaría, the numbers indicate an estimated increase of 15 percent, representing approximately 121,000 tourists. The Daniel Oduber airport has an expected increase of 7.3 percent, with 23,000 visitors.

EXPOTUR, the annual Costa Rica Travel Mart and Central America's prominent travel trade show will take place May 13 - 15 at the Hotel Ramada Plaza Herradura in San Jose, visit [www.expotur.com](http://www.expotur.com)

Call 866-267-8274; [www.visitcostarica.com](http://www.visitcostarica.com)



### ECUADOR

Ecuador begins 600 miles west of the coast of South America, where the Galapagos Islands serve as a living laboratory for the study of species evolution. The coastal region of Ecuador has retained its low-key charm and natural serenity. There are ample remote surfing beaches, charming fishing villages

and the bustling port city of Guayaquil.

Moving inland to the Andes region, Ecuador rewards visitors with breathtaking mountains, and the handsome capitol city of Quito. The eastern region of Ecuador is highlighted by the Amazon rainforest. Rich in biodiversity, thousands of exotic species of animals and plants await travelers.

Known mainly for the Galapagos Islands, travel agents attending the various trade shows that have taken place in the last year in Quito, Ecuador have returned with a new perception about Ecuador. Quito and its old town is among one of the finest preserved centers and it is commanding new investments and enhancements. Visit [www.purecuador.com](http://www.purecuador.com)



### EL SALVADOR

The famous Mayan Route weaves through several countries including El Salvador. Behind its modern International Airport, the largest in the region, its increasingly expanding highways, and ports as well as the business hub of Central America, its capital of San Salvador, is a country of traditions.

For now, the country is emphasizing its business profile as almost 25% of its visitor arrivals are for business and meetings. "We have the largest private banking sector in the region; and we are the second most important financial center after Panama. We have the TACA Group hub that further supports business travelers to use the country as a meeting center," says Rubén Rochi, El Salvador's first Minister of Tourism.

The cruise and seaports are also on the list for major investment as is a railroad, underwritten in part, by the Japanese, that will stretch from El Salvador through Honduras, thus linking the Pacific with the Atlantic Oceans.

El Salvador's first biosphere reserve was added to UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program's global network. Apaneca-Llamepepec is located in the western part of the country that conserves zones of primary succession mountain vegetation over lava fields. About 40 miles west of San Salvador is another UNESCO World Heritage site, Joya de Cerén. This was a pre-Hispanic farming community that, like Pompeii and Herculaneum in Italy, was buried under a volcanic eruption c. A.D. 600.

El Salvador received 1.4 million visitors from all over the world in 2006. "Our goal is to attract two million visitors by 2014, currently visitors spend about \$90 a day, we would like to boost that to \$140 a day; just as we would like to extend their stays from an average of 2.3 nights as we recorded in 2006 to five to seven days," he adds.

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### GUATEMALA

Guatemala has been called "Central America in concentrated form." With the region's highest and most active volcanoes,



most impressive Mayan ruins, and largest protected jungle, Guatemala packs incredible diversity into a country about the size of Tennessee. In addition to its natural wonders, the mix of indigenous

and Spanish in its population creates a fascinating culture.

The Republic of Guatemala is a country in Central America, in the south of the continent of North America, situated between the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. Bordered by Mexico to the north, Belize to the northeast, and Honduras and El Salvador to the southeast, it is a major link in the Rutas de las Mayas.

Except for the south coastal area, and the vast lowlands of the Peten in the north, Guatemala is mountainous, with a hot tropical climate more temperate in the highlands, and drier in the easternmost departments. All of the major cities are situated in the southern half of the country; the major cities are the capital Guatemala City, Quetzaltenango and Escuintla. The large lake Lago de Izabal is situated close to the Caribbean coast.

Guatemala has a rich and distinctive culture from the long mix of elements from Spain and the native Maya people. This diverse history and the natural beauty of the land has created a destination rich in interesting and scenic sites.

Visit [www.guatemala.com](http://www.guatemala.com)



### HONDURAS

Honduras is enjoying a boom in popularity, as travelers have found an untouristy destination.

A vibrant country, brimming with clear turquoise waters, pristine beaches, lush jungles, breathtaking mountains, challenging rivers, and fascinating ancient ruins, 2008 promises to be a landmark year in

tourism development in Honduras. The first luxury villas in the La Ensenada Beach Villas and Resort are expected to be finished and ready to use before the end of the year.

Roatan will surely consolidate its position as a leading port of call for cruise ships as Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines begins the expansion of the current dock to convert it into a full fledged passenger terminal for cruise ships. Carnival Cruise Lines is expected to invest in another passenger terminal that will be located at Coral Cay, also in Roatan. In addition, the new Tourism Free Zone that was declared by the Honduran National Congress is expected to have a very positive impact in the generation of new investments on all three of the Bay Islands.

Without doubt, a continued strong growth will continue to be seen throughout Honduras, which has been growing at a faster pace than the rest of the world

Honduras is also home to a rather large Garifuna society, also known as the Black Caribs, which first originated in XVII in San Vicente, about a century after the conquering of Central America, South America, and the lower Antilles.

Ecotours, inexpensive scuba diving, river rafting, soft adventure tours and mountain treks are what Honduras is known for today.

Visit [www.honduras.com](http://www.honduras.com)

### NICARAGUA

Admittedly getting around Nicaragua is not as easy as it is in other countries... but instead of flying between cities, visitors



are more likely to catch a bus or hire a car.

There are a number of reasonable hotels in Nicaragua that provide decent accommodation. Most of them accept Visa, MasterCard

and American Express - or you can pay in dollars if you are running short on the local currency. Otherwise you can pay in Cordobas. Hotel staff are generally friendly and speak either English, Spanish or a combination of the two. Make sure you book ahead to secure your room - especially during the holiday season or during festival time.

Numerous forms of ecotourism are offered throughout the country and make for an amazing vacation in Nicaragua. These guided tours will take you to Nicaragua's beautiful untouched natural splendors. From forest to marsh, from the archipelago to active volcanoes, Nicaragua has it all. Hike through jungle or up one of the massive volcanoes dotting the landscape. Dive in

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has all the elements of a Central American hotspot: teeming wildlife, sandy beaches, scuba diving, world-class fishing, English proficiency, reliable transportation and a cosmopolitan capital city.

Already an enormously popular port of call, Panama's most pressing concern now is a lack of hotel space so about 2,000 rooms will be added in the next three years. One of the biggest concerns in the tourism industry is the shortage of hotels in Panama City.

Fidel Reyes, a top Bern hotel executive, just did some research and came up with this list of all the hotels certain to be built in Panama City and nearby opening for sure from now until 2010: the 134-room **Holiday Inn City** at Knowledge opened March 27, 2008; 102-room **Radisson Colon 2000 Hotel and Casino** debuted April 15, 2008; coming on line are 134 rooms at **The Bristol Buenaventura** to open December, 2008. Future openings include the 103-room **Radisson Summit Golf and Resort** will open April 2009; the **Panama Marriott** is adding 80 rooms bringing the total to 376 rooms by late 2009.

Visit [www.panamainfo.com](http://www.panamainfo.com)



### PERU

Heir to ancient cultures and a rich colonial tradition, Perú is a magical spot with one of the richest biodiversities in the world. Peru features a total of 62 natural areas or conservation units, covering approximately 14.04% of the

country's territory. Further, Peri boasts four commercial airports and 10 ready for international flights: Lima, Arequipa, Chiclayo, Pisco, Pucallpa, Iquitos, Cusco, Trujillo, Tacna and Juliaca; 17 airlines operate international flights; seven airline companies offering domestic flights.

While Peru inevitably evokes images of Machu Picchu and the Inca empire, the country is riddled with archaeological sites that are a legacy of even more ancient times. Modern-day amenities have not been overlooked in Peru's pursuit of viable and sustainable tourism: the country counts 7,646 properties accounting for 131,624 rooms and 229,886 beds; additionally, Peru boasts 26 five-star hotels, 26 four-star hotels, 487 three-star hotels; 927 two star-hotels, 411 one star-hotels and 42 lodges.

The **Inkaterra** resorts are among those that have further contributed to preservation and growth.

Visit [www.peru.org.pe](http://www.peru.org.pe)

### Regional Information

Frommer's recommends the following websites:

<http://lanic.utexas.edu>: The University of Texas Latin American Studies Department's database features an extensive list of useful links for every country in South America.

[www.southamericadaily.com](http://www.southamericadaily.com): for solid daily reports, with good links.

*For consolidator airfares and tour packages to South & Central America see page 80-83 of the Listings Section*

## BEST BUYS

### \$999 PERU

**Sunny Land Tours'** one-week "Peru Express" tour is among the most economical tours to Peru in 2008. The seven-day tour is an air-inclusive program from Miami that visits Lima for a two-night stay and Cuzco for four nights. Included in the price are all transfers; touring activities in Lima and Cuzco; and accommodations with breakfast daily. Optional features include: excursions to Machu Picchu or Pisac Indian Market, hotel upgrades to first class and luxury hotels. This tour operates daily with departures from Miami and other gateways at applicable air fare and seasonal supplements upon request.

Upscale programs offered in the new Peru 2008 brochure include: the eight-day "Taste Of Peru" with visits to Lima; Cusco; Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu and is offered across several hotel categories. New programs offered include less-traveled routes in Peru visiting Trujillo; Chan Chan; Chiclayo; Sipan with Cusco; Machu Picchu and Lima. Other tour programs feature the Bigham Luxury Hotels and Train; Nazca and Inca Lines as well as Eco Lodges in the Amazonian Basin of Peru.

Call 800-783-7839; [www.PeruHotDeals.com](http://www.PeruHotDeals.com)

### \$240 MEXICO

The 12-room **Boca de Iguanas** boutique hotel is located on a pristine beach along Mexico's Costalegre. For wine-lovers, the "cava de vinos" will feature an expansive selection of 400 choice labels from Argentinean Merlots to Californian Cabernets and Australian Shirazes. The onsite organic fruit and vegetable garden will provide much of the harvest served at Dos Higueras restaurant - flavored with selections from the community herb garden - and will also boast an array of healthy choices based upon a low calorie spa menu. Signature dishes include the Boca de Iguanas "Surf 'n Turf" trilogy featuring garlic shrimp, juicy filet mignon with ancho chile vinaigrette and fresh fish of the day smothered in almond sauce; Artichoke hearts with Chipotle Mor-nay sauce; or fresh shrimp with spicy aioli sauce. Rates start at \$240 per night and include a hot, fresh made-to-order breakfast under the palm trees and daily happy hour cocktails.

Call 888-508-2405; [www.bocadeiguanas.com](http://www.bocadeiguanas.com)

### \$1600 BELIZE

Fishermen who prefer it to be just them and the sea can take advantage of the one person per boat packages available at the **Machaca Hill Lodge**, which provide the option of a single or double cabana. Rates for these packages range from \$1,600 for a three-night stay up to \$5,100 for a seven-night stay.

Those wanting a buddy alongside them can select one of Machaca's packages allowing two people per boat with the option of a single or double cabana. Rates for these packages range from \$1,170 for a three-night stay up to \$3,910 for a seven-night stay. Rates are per person and are valid for travel through December 17, 2008. Laundry service, roundtrip land transfers between Punta Gorda and the lodge, hotel and tax are also included in each package, as well as complimentary use of all onsite amenities including the pool, wireless internet, tram, canoes and bikes.

Call 501-722-0050; [www.machacahill.com](http://www.machacahill.com)



MOUNTAIN LODGE OF PERU

### \$2500 PERU

Over the course of the years, trek-loving people have been searching for new exotic adventures to experience, all of this with high-end accommodations and class. That is why, **Mountain Lodges of Peru** has created the first Lodge to Lodge trek to the sacred city of Machu Picchu, one of the new Seven Wonders of the World. This trek consists of a six-night Cusco to Cusco program over the Salkantay Trail, an alternate and not so transited route as the Inka Trail. Clients stay in four lodges strategically located over the route. They will trek from lodge to lodge, passing through spectacular sceneries such as exquisite snow-capped mountains, pristine rivers and lakes, green vegetation and forests, coffee bean plantations, and impressive valleys until they reach the crown jewel of their trip, Machu Picchu. This trek will also allow them to view Machu Picchu from the southwest at a distance, a view that not many people have the privilege to enjoy.

The \$2,500 rate per person includes all meals and accommodations during their stay at the lodges, lunches during the trek, guides, and hotel accommodations on the last night at Aguas Calientes, ticket to visit the ruins, and return via Vista Dome train to the city of Cusco. Agency commissions start at 15%. Departures are bi-monthly (2008) and weekly (2009). Call (011) 51-1-84-243636 or E-mail: [info@mountainlodgesofperu.com](mailto:info@mountainlodgesofperu.com); visit: [www.mountainlodgesofperu.com](http://www.mountainlodgesofperu.com)

# www.betex.bz

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- Experience Belizean Cultures and Cuisines

The South & Central American Travel Association (SATA) is a non-profit association that promotes the wonders of Latin America and the most experienced and established USA based travel suppliers.

The goal and purpose of SATA is to provide and improve tourism by bringing awareness and education of South & Central America to travel agents throughout the United States. Our members are committed to the education and promotion of these specialized destinations and promise to be very resourceful to travel agents.

SATA Supplier Members comprise:  
Airlines, Cruise Expedition operators, Hotels,  
Media Boosters, Tour Operators and Tourist Boards.

For more information, visit us online at  
[www.sata-usa.com](http://www.sata-usa.com)



## Antigua's New Delights

Antigua is a tropical paradise located in the Leeward Islands of the Caribbean; its cool tradewinds ensure the weather is perfect for annual sailing events and year-round vacationing. Antigua consistently ranks as one of the top vacation destinations in the world, with superb beaches, hotels, a vibrant culture, excellent restaurants and nightlife and a huge choice of tours and excursions.

This summer major properties are offering agents incentives and families affordable ways to vacation. Below are details on the newest value-oriented brand from Sandals to Jolly Beach's spa update to Elite Resorts' kids' programs.

### Valuable Pineapples

Sandals Resorts International (SRI), parent company of Sandals Resorts, Beaches Resorts and the Royal Plantation Collection, has introduced a new, value-oriented brand – Grand Pineapple Beach.

Grand Pineapple Beach Resort in Antigua will be re-flagged with the new moniker to become Grand Pineapple Beach Antigua. The 180-room Grand Pineapple Beach Resort on Antigua's northeast coast will become the Grand



Pineapple Beach Antigua.

Grand Pineapple Beach Resorts will accept singles, couples, families and groups. All-inclusive rates, which will be between 35% and 55% lower than the prices at Sandals, Beaches and the Royal Plantation Collection, will include accommodations; all meals and snacks; unlimited premium-brand beverages; non-motorized watersports; and nightly entertainment. Visit [www.sandals.com](http://www.sandals.com)

### Jolly Retreats

Jolly Resort's Palms Wellness Centre has enhanced the property by taking it right to the center of what has emerged as a "required facility," a spa. "There has been a growing demand for spa and beauty services from Jolly Beach guests that we have now been able to meet with an integrated facility," says P. Hilary Modeste, Director of Marketing Worldwide.

Additionally, a full salon has been included to address the

**Antigua & Barbuda's International Music Festival**  
**JUNE 12-15 2008**

artist performing  
**FRIDAY JUNE 13TH**  
 Lionel Richie  
 Brian McKnight  
 Maxi Priest  
 El-A-Kru & Tizzy

**SATURDAY JUNE 14TH**  
 Kenny Rogers  
 Keyshia Cole  
 Shaggy  
 Destra Garcia  
 Taxik & Claudette Peters  
 Burning Flames

for more info:  
**888.268.4227**  
[www.antiguamusicfestival.com](http://www.antiguamusicfestival.com)



## ALL-INCLUSIVE SAVINGS

AT JOLLY BEACH RESORT & SPA  
 FOR FAMILIES WHO "THINK JOLLY!"

### ALL INCLUSIVE JOLLY BEACH FAMILY FUN!



NEW JOLLY KIDZ CLUB & NEW JOLLY TEENZ CLUB

- One child stays free
- Kids up to 16 now qualify for the child rate
- Second child 3 to 16 years old pays child rate when sharing with two adults
- Kids under 3 stay free at Jolly Beach Resort & Spa all the time
- Valid for the Queen Superior room category
- US\$25 in Match Play Coupon or US\$10 in tokens at the nearby Grand Princess Casino

**15%** SAVINGS OFF REGULAR  
 ALL-INCLUSIVE ADULT RATES

**US\$40**  
 VOUCHER, COUPLES  
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**Palms**  
 Wellness Centre  
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OFFER VALID FOR BOOKINGS APRIL 1- JUNE 15, 2008  
 FOR TRAVEL APRIL 15 - DECEMBER 20, 2008  
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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL YOUR TRAVEL PROFESSIONAL OR JOLLY BEACH RESORT

Not combinable with any other offer or discount, not valid on child rate or 3rd and 4th person rates, applies to new bookings only, subject to change without notice.

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 email: [info@jollybeachresort.com](mailto:info@jollybeachresort.com) | [www.jollybeachresort.com](http://www.jollybeachresort.com)



## CARIBBEAN & BERMUDA

most pressing needs from bridal parties and the fitness centre has also been relocated so it is now an accessible part of the Palms Wellness Centre.

The Spa has four treatment rooms and separate changing rooms for gentlemen and ladies including an open-air, stonework shower. Guests who prefer outdoor settings can take their massages on the beach or in the Gazebo overlooking the pool and Jolly's mile-long white sand beach.

All-inclusive rates start at \$173 through December 20, 2008. Rates are based on double occupancy and include accommodations, all meals, snacks and afternoon tea, house brand beverages, non-motorized watersports, and all taxes and service charges. All rooms are air-conditioned and face the ocean; each has a patio or balcony, direct-dial phone, cable TV and hair-dryer.

Jolly's new two-bedroom, two-bathroom Beachfront Cottage will prove popular with families; sleeping up to five people it boasts a sitting area and a verandah facing the ocean. Each Cottage is ideally situated in a quiet beachfront location on the resort's 40-acre property. Room rates range from \$330 per night for singles in a one-bedroom beachfront cottage to \$218 per person per night doubles for the same and \$695 per room per night for the two-bedroom cottage, valid through Dec. 20, 2008.

Jolly Beach Resort is commissionable to travel agents at 15% year-round on all bookings made directly with the resort. Call 866-905-6559; [www.jollybeachresort.com](http://www.jollybeachresort.com)



*The Lighthouse Bay Resort*  
*On the world's finest sand with*  
*miles of beaches and ultimate privacy!*

Set among Barbuda's turquoise sea on one of the most secluded beaches in the Caribbean, this perfect nine-suite sanctuary is a private haven of peace and tranquility with well-appointed luxury accommodations and personalized service. Guests can do as they please. Take part in the resort's endless list of activities or simply relax by the waterside. Enjoy the magnificent views and the gourmet culinary offerings.

### EARN 15% COMMISSION

Reservations: 516-767-0149 or 866-836-LHBR (5427)

Email: [gdistinctivelt@aol.com](mailto:gdistinctivelt@aol.com) or visit: [www.lhbresort.com](http://www.lhbresort.com)

Terms and Conditions: Subject to availability. Rates are based on double occupancy. Rates are per room per night. Black out dates apply. Inter-island flights are not included.



*Peace & Tranquility.*

*Luxury Accommodations.*

### Elite Pleasures

Award-winning Caribbean hotel company, **Elite Island Resorts**, is rolling out the red carpet for families this summer in Antigua at two upscale family-friendly, all-inclusive, oceanfront resorts. At **St. James's Club & Villas** and **The Verandah Resort & Spa**, kids under 12 stay and eat free while their parents enjoy the Instant Savings promotion of 15 percent on stays between May and June, 2008, and 20 percent savings July through August 15, 2008. Both Caribbean resorts cater to families with spacious guest accommodations and extensive kids club programs.

The Stay and Dine Free summer special allows one child to stay and dine free per adult when sharing the same accommodations, with a maximum of two adults and two children per room. Percent savings are applied toward the resorts' summer 2008 all inclusive rack rates based on double occupancy which start at \$495 for The Verandah and \$520 for St. James's Club including all food, beverages, room accommodations, taxes and gratuities.

"We want to encourage parents to share quality experiences with their children during summer vacation. The Verandah Resort & Spa and St. James's Club & Villas' children's programs make it easy for parents to relax and enjoy a spa treatment or a quiet dinner, knowing their children are enjoying supervised and enriching activities," said Steven E. Heydt, Elite Island Resorts president. Call 800-345-0356; [www.eliteislands.com](http://www.eliteislands.com)

### Lighthouse Bay Resort

**Lighthouse Bay Resort** is situated on Barbuda's extreme Northwest shore. It is accessible only by helicopter or boat being located on a strip of land separated from the main island by a shallow island lagoon. The resort's nine luxury suites are divided into three categories (Deluxe Rooms, One Bedroom Suites and One Bedroom Oceanfront Suites), all located just steps away from the sea. All rooms are spacious and offer either a king sized bed or two double beds, a large private bath, in room air conditioning, ceiling fan, direct dial telephone, flat screen television with satellite reception, alarm clock/radio/CD player, wireless internet and in-room laptop, personal safe, bathrobes and sandals, illuminated make-up mirror, hair dryer, and daily housekeeping services.

A welcome cocktail and cool towel await guests upon arrival. Lighthouse Bay's fine European chef prepares an enticing array of unforgettable international cuisine and all meals and non-alcoholic beverages are included in the price of one's stay. Spa treatments, island tours, fishing excursions, and other recreational activities maybe either enjoyed on premises or arranged for on site. Rates begin at \$1150/night, full American Plan(all meals inc.) Call:888-836-5427, or visit [www.lhbresort.com](http://www.lhbresort.com).

Antigua is easy to get to with scheduled flights and connections from the U.S. and Canada on **Air Canada**, **American Airlines**, **Continental Airlines**, **Delta** and **US Airways**.

For more information, call the Antigua and Barbuda U.S. Tourist Office at 888-268-4227; [www.antigua-barbuda.org](http://www.antigua-barbuda.org)

*For consolidator airfares and tour packages to Antigua & Barbuda see page 86 of the Listings Section*

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Rates are Per Person, Per Night

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Galley Bay  
Antigua's Exotic Escape



### ANTIGUA



from \$89

St. James's Club  
Antigua's Private 100-acre Peninsula



### ANTIGUA



from \$89

The Verandah Resort & Spa  
Antigua's Newest All Suite Resort



### ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES



from \$129

Palm Island Resort  
Our Private-Island  
Getaway in the Grenadines



### BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS



from \$89

Long Bay Beach Resort & Villas  
Tortola's Renown Beachfront Resort



### ST. LUCIA



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Windjammer Landing Villa  
Beach Resort & Spa  
Experience the Difference  
in St. Lucia



IATAN AGENTS ONLY.

\*AA Agent RT airfare from origin city \$169 / companion \$209 plus taxes. Some restrictions apply.  
For detailed information and to download your FAM Form visit [www.eliteislandresorts.com/fams](http://www.eliteislandresorts.com/fams)



## IN THE NEWS

### Pleasant Deals in Caribbean

Pleasant Holidays, one of the largest U.S. tour operators to Hawaii, Mexico, Costa Rica, Asia and the South Pacific recently launched its Caribbean Program. The Caribbean Program features: Jamaica, Bahamas, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, British Virgin Islands, St. Kitts/Nevis, St. Lucia, Dominican Republic, Turks & Caicos, Grand Cayman and Aruba. Over 80 hotels, resorts and condominiums will be featured, including Sandals, Riu, The Ritz-Carlton, Atlantis, Sol Melia, Four Seasons, Beaches, Occidental, Sheraton, Dreams and many others.

Land transportation and a full range of destination activities will be offered. Air Jamaica, Delta, United and U.S. Airways are among the key airline partners, with Hertz as the exclusive rental car partner.

To honor the "Sweet 16" March basketball tournament, travel agents will earn 16% for Caribbean bookings made by May 31, 2008, for travel anytime. The 16% commission applies to couples, individuals, groups, weddings and honeymoon packages.

Call 800-448-3333; for Groups, call 800-542-9244. Se Habla Espanol. CTS # 1007939-10. UBI #601-915-263.

### Free Upgrades on MSC Lirica

The free oceanview upgrade from an interior stateroom has been so popular that MSC Cruises is making the offer available on all of MSC Lirica's 2008-09 Caribbean itineraries. The free upgrade equals a savings of up to 52 percent off retail prices.

Cruise-only prices for a 7-night Caribbean roundtrip itinerary from Fort Lauderdale begin at \$629 per person, while rates for a 10-night Caribbean itinerary begin at \$879 per person. In addition, children ages 17 and younger sail free when sharing a stateroom with two full-fare-paying adults. All prices are cruise only, per person, double occupancy. Government fees and taxes for all guests are additional, as well as a fuel surcharge for the first and second guests in a stateroom. Prices are subject to availability; certain restrictions apply. Reservations must be made by June 30.

Guests booking the Free Oceanview Upgrade promotion must place a \$100 deposit per person. Upgrades available through agents. Visit [www.msccruises.com](http://www.msccruises.com)

### Aruba Specials for Mom's Day

This May, Aruba pulls out all the stops for our maternal units in celebration of the holiday's monumental 100th anniversary.

"It's Mother's Day every day of the year, but officially moms only get recognition on their official day, so to honor the most special individuals in our lives, we took the 100th anniversary of this holiday as an opportunity to celebrate them throughout 2008," said Myrna Jansen-Feliciano, managing director for the Aruba Tourism Authority.

For more information on Aruba, call 800-TO-ARUBA; [www.ARUBA.com](http://www.ARUBA.com)

## BEST BUYS

### \$400 ANGUILLA

Cap Juluca, the award-winning luxury hotel on Anguilla, is offering added value to already lower summer rates with a complimentary seventh night for guests paying for six nights. The offer is valid for new bookings only made now through August 31 for stays from May 1-August 31, 2008. Savings are \$400 for a Superior room, \$495 for a Luxury Room and \$650 for Junior Suite accommodation, the daily rate at that time of year. Government tax and service charge of 10% each are extra. Winter season rates for these accommodations are \$825, \$945 and \$1,310, respectively. Cap Juluca also offers Special Programs at low summer rates. The seven-night Romantic Rendezvous ranges from \$4,770-\$6,495, depending on type of accommodation, and the four-night Quick Getaway, ranges from \$3,040-\$3,995. Both plans include various extras such as dinners, a snorkeling excursion, taxi transfers to and from the Anguilla airport or ferry terminal, 10% tax and 10% service.

Call 888-858-5822; e-mail, [info@capjuluca.com](mailto:info@capjuluca.com); [www.capjuluca.com](http://www.capjuluca.com)

### \$1236 BAHAMAS

Good Things Come in Small Packages: Super-Clubs' Mini-moon packages are offering newlyweds a trio of affordable options that won't run short on luxury or romance. At Breezes Bahamas, located on Nassau's famed Cable Beach, the couples' first vacation as husband and wife begins on a sweet note with a welcome gift of Champagne and chocolate-dipped strawberries, followed by a sensual couples massage at the resort's Blue Mahoe Spa. Languid days on the sugary beach and romantic turndown amenities await the lovebirds in their Oceanfront room. The three-night/four-day land package starts at \$1,290 per couple. Couples celebrating their nuptials at Breezes Runaway Bay are whisked away in a private transfer to their verandah suite with private plunge pool for a three-nights irie package, starting at \$1,644 per couple. Newlyweds at Breezes Montego Bay can unwind in their Oceanfront deluxe guestroom, and toast their new life together with chilled Champagne at the resort's rooftop Jacuzzi. Three-night packages start at \$1,236 per couple.

Call 877-467-8737; [www.breezesresorts.com](http://www.breezesresorts.com)

### \$385 BARBADOS

Save more than 25 percent on regular season all-inclusive rates at the deluxe 76-room Mango Bay in sun-splashed Barbados for travel May through December 2008. These savings can be applied to the cost of airfare, sightseeing, shopping and much more. Rates from May 1 - Dec. 14, start at \$385 in Standard accommodations; \$400 in One-bedroom accommodations; \$415 in Superior accommodations; \$460 in a Deluxe room; and \$525 in an Oceanfront room. The cost of the Penthouse Suite is from \$1,500 per night. Rates are quoted per room, per night, based on double occupancy. The property is within walking distance of many shops in Holetown, 25 minutes from the capital city of Bridgetown, and 40 minutes from Grantley Adams International Airport.

Call 246-432-1384; [www.mangobaybarbados.com](http://www.mangobaybarbados.com)

## BEST BUYS

### \$159 BAHAMAS

To celebrate the grand opening of the all-new Sheraton Cable Beach Resort, the property is offering special "Grand Opening" rates for groups interested in hosting meetings or organizing events in the resort's brand new meetings facilities. Rates start at an unbeatable \$159 per person per night. Should groups desire to further enhance their meeting experience, the resort offers add-on meal plans as well as other value-added concessions based on group size and the number of room nights booked. The 694-room Sheraton Cable Beach Resort offers groups a complete resort experience. Set on seven exquisite acres, the resort offers stunning waterscapes, including three freshwater pools with flowing waterfalls, a swim-up bar and oversized whirlpools. Guests can enjoy the resort's six restaurants and lounges, as well as a unique and expansive set of amenities and activities that are shared with those of the neighboring Cable Beach Resorts properties, including the 30,000-square-foot Crystal Palace Casino, a golf course and a variety of water sport activities.

Call 954-624-1750; [www.sheraton.com/cablebeach](http://www.sheraton.com/cablebeach)

### \$1792 JAMAICA

Grand Lido Resorts & Spas and Breezes Runaway Bay Resort & Golf Club smooth the road to conception with the Sun, Sand, & Stork Procreation package. This five-day/four-night package starts at \$1,792 per couple.

The package includes a beachfront suite at Grand Lido Negril Resort & Spa, a royal beachfront room at Grand Lido Braco Resort & Spa, or a verandah suite with a private plunge pool at Breezes Runaway Bay Resort & Golf Club. Amenities include a welcome basket with Champagne, chocolate-covered strawberries, tropical fruit and whipped cream; fertility-enhancing red clover and raspberry teas stocked in rooms daily; a copy of *Getting Pregnant: What You Need to Know Right Now*, and a 30-minute couples' massage, and a reflexology session. Mention code, STORK8, when booking. Visit [www.superclubs.com](http://www.superclubs.com)

### \$690 GRENADINES

Palm Island, an exclusive 135-acre private island resort in the Caribbean's pristine Grenadines island chain, provides vacationers with a special 25 percent summer savings off all-inclusive rack rates when reservations are booked by May 19, 2008 for five night minimum stays. This intimate hideaway is also giving guests a \$250 resort credit to be used towards fascinating adventures such as a snorkel trip to the pristine reefs of the Tobago Cays, a Champagne Sunset Cruise, spa treatments, or a island-hopping day cruise—or towards an accommodations upgrade. The credit, along with the 25 percent savings off the all-inclusive rack rates, is valid for travel between June 1 and August 31, 2008. Low season all-inclusive rack rates start at \$690 per room, based on double occupancy; with the Summer Promotion savings, the starting rate drops to \$518. Palm Island, the Grenadines, is a 135-acre private-island hideaway.

Call 800-345-0356; [www.palmislandresortgrenadines.com](http://www.palmislandresortgrenadines.com)



BAHAMAS NTO

### \$599 TORTOLA, BVI

The Long Bay Beach Resort & Villas located on the stunning island of Tortola, offers the perfect summer package for vacationers who love to explore while away...featuring an exciting day sail (lunch, snorkeling and open bar) on the Mystique plus a day's rental car, guests will be able to get out and see the the BVIs. Plus to simplify mornings, breakfast is included along with Oceanview Deluxe accommodations, service charge and tax, starting at only \$599 for a three night stay per person double occupancy. Tortola is known for its rustic mountains with centuries-old ruins of forts and historic sites. Long Bay is known for its personal and caring service, casually elegant, plantation style hillside to shoreline location with a mile-long white sand beach. Call 800-858-4618; [www.longbay.com](http://www.longbay.com)

## POINT VILLAGE

For couples and families.

*The 'village within the village' on the Sands of Negril!*

Jamaica: Prime location overlooking Negril's seven miles beach, a great ambiance and as much (or little) to do as you could imagine! All inclusive packages or accommodation only. Accommodations are in charming studios, 1 & 2 bedroom apartments

**For rates & special packages call: 877-764-6852**

Email: [pt.village@cwjamaica.com](mailto:pt.village@cwjamaica.com)

Visit: [www.pointvillage.com](http://www.pointvillage.com)



## South Africa Re-Invents Itself, Again

South African Tourism has been sending several messages to American travelers lately zooming in on the country's affordability and the pulse-generating experiences one can have in this nation just by driving on a paved road inside a grand park.

Paris? Too expensive. London? Also too expensive. Montreal? Hard to believe but Canada is also too expensive. It seems like U.S. travelers, crushed by the tumbling dollar, have nowhere to turn to get a bang for their buck these days. Nowhere, that is, except South Africa, one of the few international destinations offering Americans a very favorable exchange rate – approximately 8.17 Rand per U.S. dollar at presstime. That's up from about 7.1 Rand per U.S. dollar just six months ago, and compared with the slide against myriad other currencies, quite a bargain, indeed.

Just do the math: a four-star hotel room in Paris could run between \$750-800 per night for a standard room. Current rates at **The Westcliff**, a world-renowned four-star hotel in Johannesburg, start at \$459 at the current exchange rate. The **Victoria & Alfred Hotel** in Cape Town, a luxury boutique hotel, has current starting rates of \$509 per night for a standard room. Meanwhile an entrée on the dinner menu at a trendy London restaurant might cost an average of \$50. A dinner for two at **La Madeleine** in Johannesburg, a long-time resident on many local critics' "top 10" lists, starts at just \$9.50. And with the favorable exchange, luxury shopping is going to cost a whole lot less in the land of the Rand than anywhere the EURO calls home.

### Affordable Luxury

In keeping with the theme of saving American travelers money on their South African vacation, many tour operators are offering affordable, air-inclusive packages. One such example is from **South African Airways Vacations**, the official vacations package division of South African Airways in North America, which is offering their "South Africa In Style" package priced at \$1,999.

This package includes roundtrip economy airfare from New York or Washington; four nights' accommodations at five-star

The Twelve Apostles Hotel & Spa, The Table Bay Hotel or the **Commodore Hotel** in Cape Town; and two nights at **Jackalberry Lodge**, a luxury game lodge in the **Timbavati Private Game Reserve**. This package includes six breakfasts, two lunches, two dinners, game drives at Jackalberry Lodge, ground transfers, and domestic flights within South Africa.

"Our message to American travelers is that South Africa is an affordable luxury destination," said Sthu Zungu, U.S. President for **South African Tourism**. "We want to showcase South Africa's inspiring story – through legends and icons such as Nelson Mandela, Shaka Zulu, Paul Kruger and others." The web-based campaign invites agents and their clients to create their own South African stories and itineraries. With its abundant wildlife, rich history, critically acclaimed wines, spectacular scenery and more than 1,500 miles of beaches, the campaign asks visitors, "Which South Africa would you like to explore?" My South Africa utilizes iconic South African personalities to highlight the country's cultural diversity and affordable luxury vacation options.

Visit [www.southafrica.net/usdeals](http://www.southafrica.net/usdeals)

Browsers are encouraged to find a travel package to suit their needs. From a seven-day "Taste of South Africa" package from \$1,999 to 12 days in "The Heart of South Africa" for \$4,999 with airfare from several getaways.

### Adventurous Souls

Anyone can visit South Africa, but it takes the heart of an adventurer to truly experience it. That's the message behind South African Tourism's new "Adventurers Wanted," a web-based marketing campaign. Aimed at U.S. travelers seeking pulse-pounding proximity to the greatest outdoor experience on the African Continent, the Adventurers Wanted website, "Living it Up in South Africa", highlights amazing experiences available throughout the country with a selection of nine affordable adventure vacation options.

Visit [www.southafrica.net/liveitup](http://www.southafrica.net/liveitup)



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**A 9 Day South Africa**  
**The History, Food & Wine with Safari**  
From **\$2399** | April '08 - Sept '08

"Our message to American travelers is that all varieties of adventure are theirs for the taking in South Africa, so come and get it," said Zungu. "We want to showcase South Africa's remarkable people, wildlife, culture and adventure offerings, as well as the many ways to experience them."

The Living it Up website unfolds with a description of South Africa's most enticing adventures, highlighted by the come-hither declaration that travelers can "Live it up in South Africa with packages starting at only \$1,999."

A constant scroll of eye-catching images reveals a variety of travel packages such as a seven-day Safari Getaway from \$1,999; and the 12-day Highlights of South Africa + Victoria Falls tour from \$4,990, all inclusive of international airfare on South Africa Airways, which is also selling flights trumpeted at \$1,296.

Clients who visit the site are encouraged to refer friends, with the chance to win a gift basket of South African goodies. Agents are invited to create their own itineraries, with options such as "Chill Out," "Hear the Roar of the Wild" and "The Adrenaline Rush of Adventure" linked to details on just how to plan such memorable vacations. Plus there is an easy link to a YouTube video full of appealing images of sites in South Africa.

Call South African Tourism at 800-593-1318; E-mail [info.us@southafrica.net](mailto:info.us@southafrica.net); [www.southafrica.net/liveitup](http://www.southafrica.net/liveitup) or [www.southafrica.net/usdeals](http://www.southafrica.net/usdeals)

*For consolidator fares and tour packages to South Africa see page 92-93 of the Listings Section*

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## Tanzania Outlines its Own Mission

By Maria Lisella

When **USA Today** released its prestigious list of the Hottest Travel Trends for 2008, Tanzania's famed Mt. Kilimanjaro swept the newspaper's "Exotic Adventures" category. This highly competitive list was compiled with extensive input from travel experts with news that reaches upwards of three million readers daily.

### What's in Tanzania?

Tanzania, the largest country in East Africa, is focused on wildlife conservation and sustainable tourism, with approximately 25% of the land protected by the Government. It boasts 15 (Mkomazi was recently added) National Parks and 34 game reserves. It is the home of the tallest mountain in Africa, the legendary Mt. Kilimanjaro; The Serengeti, named in October, 2006, the New 7th Wonder of the World by USA Today and Good Morning America; the world-acclaimed Ngorongoro Crater, often called the 8th Wonder of the World; Olduvai Gorge, the cradle of mankind; the Selous, the world's largest game reserve; Ruaha, now the largest National Park in East Africa; the spice islands of Zanzibar; and seven world Heritage Sites. Most important for tourism, the Tanzanian people are warm and friendly, speak English, although Kiswahili is the national language, and the country is an oasis of peace and stability with a democratic and stable government.

### What the Future Holds

Managing Director of the **Tanzania Tourist Board**, Peter Mwenguo has high expectations. "About \$ 1 billion is expected from tourism activities this year, an increase of \$862 million over last year."

Among the country's economic priorities are tourism, mining, Tanzania is the third largest mining center producing diamonds, gold, and the rare blue diamond, emeralds and other gem stones; and finally, agriculture is the third portion of the economic triangle. Surveillance of poaching has been successful as there is currently little or none, said Mwenguo.

To keep Tanzania as a premium destination, the tourist board is determined to keep the number of arrivals lower, achieve greater spending to keep the natural resources for future generations. "If you go for mass tourism, you will ruin the place, so we focus on less volume of people and more money spent," he adds.

What is paramount is that tourism revenue is put to good use – it is applied to health programs, building schools, advancing water supplies as well as into the tourism infrastructure. There is a movement afoot to raise the bar on compulsory education from the 7th grade to the 10th grade, another key to strengthening the destination as farmland still accounts for 60% of the land.

According to Hon. Prof. Jumanne Maghembe, Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism, it is expected that "the tourism sector, which currently contributes 17.2% to the economy of the United Republic of Tanzania, will reach even higher levels quickly." The Minister notes that the country's main markets are Britain, the U.S., Germany, Italy, France, Spain and Scandinavia. The U.S. market is extremely strong, and is predicted to outreach the others in the next few years. Additionally, Tanzania is beginning to attract more foreign investments from big travel names like Richard Branson and many others.

### Getting to the Top

"I'm hearing more people say 'I want to climb (Tanzania's) Mt. Kilimanjaro now, while it still has glaciers,'" Marian Marbury, owner of the woman-only **Adventures in Good Company** is quoted to explain one reason why this mythic mountain factors large and is considered a particularly desirable Exotic Adventure this year.



Adventurous climbers contribute to the booming tourism economy in Tanzania.

"There's a sense that many places and wildlife we've taken for granted are disappearing," she continues. "And the changes are happening now, within our lifetime."

Admittedly, it takes about 16 to 17 hours to reach Tanzania. Usually travelers stop over in Amsterdam in the morning and arrive in Arusha or Dar es Salaam by 8 or 10 p.m. respectively, which is why Mwenguo recommends planning for at least a 10 to 14-day stay. "During that timeframe you can factor in some game viewing, or visit our beaches on Zanzibar."

At the moment Tanzania's Mt. Kilimanjaro, the tallest mountain on the African Continent at 19,336 feet, remains ice-capped, snow-spread and majestic in glacial splendor. When that may change is a matter of scientific dissension. In a recent New York Times article featuring a first-person account of a climb up the majestic mountain's summit titled, "On Africa's Roof, Still Crowned With Snow," writer Neil Modie quotes experts who say that the mountain's glaciers are disappearing due to climate change, but also describes his own observation and experience of snow, ice, and diverse "spectacular" ecological zones throughout the mountain.

Steeped in legend, capturing the compelling beauty of Tanzania, Mt. Kilimanjaro holds a special place as one of Tanzania's famed tourist sites. For many tourists to the East African country, a climb up Kilimanjaro is the highlight of their lives. These climbers contribute to the booming tourism economy.

According to Gerald Bigurube, Director General of the Tanzania National Parks, "At the moment, between 30-35,000 people climb Mt. Kilimanjaro annually." The trek may be rigorous or accessible, depending on which of six different paths are selected.

"The best time of year for the climb," notes Bigurube "is January through February and mid-June through mid-October." Climbers may choose a variety of different camping arrangements on their way to the top of the mountain, ranging from simple to elaborate, the latter providing guides, porters and overnight camping sites with dining facilities.

For more information visit [www.tanzaniatouristboard.com](http://www.tanzaniatouristboard.com)

For consolidator fares and tour packages to Tanzania see page 93 of the Listings Section

## IN THE NEWS

### Air Mauritius' New Product

**Air Mauritius** expects to complete reconfiguration of its entire fleet of A-340 aircraft to two-class service by June.

The wide bodied fleet will feature a new lie flat business class product. At the same time, the first A330 aircraft, which were delivered a few months ago in Dec. 2007, has already been outfitted with 24 lie flat business class seats and 251 economy class seats.

The existing A340-300C and A340-300E will also feature a two-class configuration with 34 business class seats, 264 economy class seats on A340-300C and 266 on A340-300E. The new business class flatbed seats recline to 172° with an integrated massage function.

Air Mauritius is the national carrier of the Republic of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. Created in 1967, it currently operates a fleet of five A340-300, two A340-300E, two A319-100 and two ATR72-500.

Air Mauritius operates flights to 27 destinations in Europe, Asia, Australia, Africa and the Indian Ocean.

Call 800-537-1182; [www.airmauritius.com](http://www.airmauritius.com)

### Dubai World Africa Buys into Mantis

Dubai World Africa purchased a major stake in three world-famous South African wildlife reserves: **Shamwari Game Reserve, Sanbona Wildlife Reserve and Jock Safari Lodge**, all members of the **Mantis Collection**.

Adrian Gardiner, founder of Shamwari and the Mantis Collection said, "The Joint Venture with Dubai World Africa is a dream come true. Shamwari pioneered wildlife tourism in the Eastern Cape, and the group looks forward to taking advantage of the many opportunities resulting from this fantastic affiliation." According to Dubai World Chairman, Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, "Our investment into game reserves demonstrates our commitment to South Africa, and we are strongly focused on establishing a leading conservation-based company in South Africa."

Visit [www.shamwari.com](http://www.shamwari.com); [www.jocksafarilodge.com](http://www.jocksafarilodge.com) or [www.sanbona.com](http://www.sanbona.com)

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## IN THE NEWS

*El Al Purchases Four 777-200s*

EL AL, Israel's national airline, announced today that it has signed an agreement for the purchase of four state-of-the-art 777-200 extended range aircraft from Boeing for about \$540 million. Three of the new aircraft are scheduled to be delivered in 2012 and the fourth in early 2013. The new planes will be used on the USA/Israel routes. The four aircraft will be equipped with Rolls Royce engines and configured with 279 seats. They will also include the latest technology, the most comfortable, spacious seats and the most up-to-date in-flight personal entertainment and business applications for every passenger. EL AL has the option to purchase four new 777-300 model aircraft, instead of the four new 777-200 model. The airline also recently purchased two new 777 aircraft that operate on the USA/Israel route and earlier this year, EL AL also added two new 737-800 aircraft to its fleet and will add another three new 737-800's in early 2009. In October of this year, EL AL is also adding a 747-400 to be used on the USA/Israel route.

Call 800-223-6700; visit [www.elal.com](http://www.elal.com)

*New GM at Table Bay Hotel*

Sun International appointed Phillip Couvaras as the new General Manager of **Table Bay Hotel**, a stellar property located on Cape Town's waterfront. A native of Zambia, Couvaras has more than 20 years of experience working with Sun as the first General Manager of Sun International's Zambian hotels, **The Royal Livingstone** and **Zambezi Sun**.

Call 954-331 8135; Fax: 954-331-3252; E-mail: [SAinfo@sun-int.net](mailto:SAinfo@sun-int.net), [www.suninternational.com](http://www.suninternational.com)

*bmi sets off for Israel from Heathrow*

bmi, London Heathrow's second largest airline, launched daily non-stop flights between London Heathrow and Tel Aviv in mid-March. The new service marks the latest phase in bmi's mid-haul route expansion taking the total number of destinations served by the airline from Heathrow to 38 this summer. Nigel Turner, bmi chief executive officer, said, "Tel Aviv is a key destination in the Middle East and I'm delighted that today we launch daily non-stop services. Its addition further enhances our ever-growing network of destinations in an area of economic growth and development.

The route will initially be served by an Airbus A320 in a two class configuration with 20 seats in business and 108 in economy, with plans to increase capacity through the introduction of a Boeing 757 shortly.

The full list of bmi destinations is: Aberdeen; Addis Ababa; Aleppo; Almaty; Amman; Amsterdam; Ankara; Baku; Beirut; Belfast City; Bishkek; Brussels; Cairo; Dakar; Damascus; Dammam; Dublin; Durham Tees Valley; Edinburgh; Ekaterinburg; Freetown; Glasgow; Hanover; Jeddah; Jersey; Khar-toum; Leeds Bradford; Lyon; Manchester; Moscow Domodedovo; Naples; Palma Mallorca; Riyadh; Tbilisi; Tehran; Tel Aviv; Venice; Yerevan.

Call 800-788-0555 ; [www.flybmi.com](http://www.flybmi.com)

*Pope's Luxe Lodge in Malawi*

Robin Pope Safaris, whose walking safaris in the South Luangwa Park in Zambia is expanding into neighboring Malawi, with the introduction of Pumulani, the only luxury accommodation within Lake Malawi National Park is accepting bookings for July 2008. Consisting of a main lodge and ten separate stylish villas, Pumulani is located on a lush hillside overlooking the lake, which David Livingstone referred to as "Lake of Stars" and has been designated as a World Heritage Site. One of the villas has been planned for honeymooners, while another is a family villa that sleeps four or five. Guests will be met at Kamuzu Airport in Lilongwe.

Rates start at \$300 to \$425 per person per night for accommodations, meals, transfers and sports activities.

E-mail [info@pumulani.com](mailto:info@pumulani.com); [www.robinpopesafaris.net](http://www.robinpopesafaris.net)

*All Aboard Sun's Royal Livingstone Express*

Sun International's Royal Livingstone Hotel at Victoria Falls introduced a new luxury train service, the Royal Livingstone Express. It's an antique locomotive that combines the elegance of early 20th century rail travel along with panoramic views of the Zambezi Valley. Guests journey to the past with a railway experience in which fine dining meets the Zambia bush and opportunities abound to spot white rhino, buffalo, elephant and other African wildlife. The locomotive consists of two dining cars, a fully equipped kitchen car, a lounge car, and an observation car for viewing scenery. For \$150 per person, Wednesdays through Saturdays, a six-course dinner is prepared by the Royal Livingstone Hotel chefs. The trip departs near the hotel and takes approximately three hours, covering 12 miles.

Call 954-331-8135; E-mail [SAinfo@sun-int.net](mailto:SAinfo@sun-int.net); [www.suninternational.com](http://www.suninternational.com)

*Operator Launches Community Tourism*

Nairobi-based safari outfitter **African Latitude** announced the launch of a new community tourism program in Kenya. The company will soon open a community-owned lodge with the objective of educating the local Masai people on tourism skills so that they can eventually operate the lodge independently. Recently honored by National Geographic Adventure as one of the top 10 safari operators in the world, African Latitude strives to increase working relationships in safari operations with local communities.

The company has created partnerships so that the Masai people are directly involved with and benefiting from, the tourism industry – the ultimate model for sustainable tourism today. Along with this new project, the company has been training and working with Masai guides for over twenty years. This year, African Latitude is proud to introduce the nation's first woman Masai guide. She began leading clients on walking safaris in February 2008. The company plans to train more Masai women to be safari guides in 2008 as well.

Visit [www.AfricanLatitude.com](http://www.AfricanLatitude.com)

## BEST BUYS

## \$876 EGYPT

Canada-based **Indus Travels** is selling several tours to Egypt, the oldest tourist destination in the world that continues to attract visitors from the modern world to view the ancient world.

The eight-day version, Essential Egypt starts at \$876 while the 13-day program Absolute Egypt is priced at \$1,584 per person double which includes accommodations; daily buffet breakfast; transportation by A/C vehicle; sightseeing as per package details; 22 meals including 12 breakfasts, six lunches, and four dinners; all three meals during four-night cruise; English speaking local guide; and entrance fees to all monuments.

Call 866-978-2997; [www.industravels.com](http://www.industravels.com)

## \$5395 EGYPT

Luxury clients can uncover the mysteries of ancient Egypt with their own private Egyptologist on a new 11-day, "Exclusively Yours Egypt" program from **African Travel, Inc.** An Egyptologist escorts the entire trip, and all sightseeing is private. Included are luxury accommodations, a home-hosted dinner with an Egyptian family, round trip flight between Cairo and Luxor/Aswan, most meals and a day room prior to the return flight home. The itinerary features three nights Cairo, one in Luxor and five days cruising the Nile. Land arrangements start at \$5,395 per person double through Sept., 2008 departures (\$5,895 through December, 2008). Sample round trip airfare, New York - Cairo begins at \$1,225 economy, \$4,375 business class.

Call 800-421-8907; E-mail [ati@africantravelinc.com](mailto:ati@africantravelinc.com); [www.africantravelinc.com](http://www.africantravelinc.com)

## \$3749 GHANA

**Spector Travel** is offering a special tour to Ghana, Togo and Benin that is truly exceptional; it is intriguing, remote and makes for an incredible destination for the adventurous traveler. This 14-day tour will provide a rare opportunity to see some of West Africa's last remaining ancient cultures and tribes. Throughout these three countries travelers will see voodoo ceremonies, fetish markets, python temples, mask ceremonies, ancient slave castles and an elaborate Ashanti funeral. The dates of travel are from Nov. 19 – Dec. 2, 2008 and cost \$3,749 per person double including round-trip economy airfare from New York to Accra, 11 nights in first class hotels, with eleven breakfasts, sightseeing, transfers and service charges. Single rate is \$4,299. Call 800-try-Africa/879-2374; E-mail [africa@spectortravel.com](mailto:africa@spectortravel.com); [www.spectortravel.com](http://www.spectortravel.com)

## \$2600 SOUTH AFRICA

Guests in the new **Heritage Suites at the Steenberg Hotel & Winery**, 20 minutes from the center of Cape Town, in South Africa, have a special treat when they stay for two nights at a rate of \$2,600. The package includes accommodation for two in one of the recently completed 1600+ sq. ft. suites, all meals, and drinks. In addition, they will interact one night with award-winning Chef Garth Almazan who will show them how to prepare a contemporary South African dinner alongside the chef in their suite as he discusses the ingredients

used and how the African herbs and spices work together to create this unique cuisine. At the same time, the Steenberg wine steward will give them a private wine tasting of the superb Steenberg wines with tips on choosing a South African wine.

Call 011-27 21-713-2222; [www.steenberghotel.com](http://www.steenberghotel.com)

## \$4667 SOUTH AFRICA

Owned by Sir Richard Branson, **Ulusaba Private Game Reserve** is set in the heart of the **Sabi Sands Game Reserve** that borders the sprawling Kruger National Park in South Africa's Mpumalanga province. Because Ulusaba is privately owned, clients enjoy more than 5,000 acres of unspoiled, game-rich bush in near solitude. Experienced trackers and game rangers will accompany you on game drives in open land rovers, tracking the Big Five and sharing with you their vast knowledge of the surrounding wildlife.

Ulusaba has packaged a four-night stay in either the Rock Cliff Room or the Elephant Room (safari lodge) for \$4,667 per person sharing including round trip airfare from Johannesburg. Included are twice daily game viewing drives with a full time trained ranger and tracker, all meals and access to a wine cellar at the Safari Lodge with an outdoor dining area for up to six persons.

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# Slow Down to See the World



Matching clients with the right walking tour is the key to being sure you will see that client again and will give you insight into how to book soft adventure programs such as those listed below. For the mainstream traveler, we have focused on a few programs that include moderate rather than challenging itineraries. Each company lists its own guidelines that correspond to the lingo they may use to characterize a program, indicating the terrain and how long clients will actually walk. At Wayfarers, executives will put you in touch with return travelers so that you can get a first-hand account of their experiences that are divided into Easy, Moderate and Energetic, ranging from 6-8 miles daily or about 4-5 hours to 8-10 miles daily, 5-6 hours to 10-14 miles or 6-7 hours daily respectively.

## California

Long before the release of the Oscar-winning movie *Sideways*, **The Wayfarers** had plotted the gloriously scenic route of its four-night Santa Barbara walk through the heady terrain of California's Santa Ynez Valley wine country.

Walkers cover a mix of beach, bluff, mountain and vineyard footpaths, also taking in a taste of distinctive city life. Many of those camera-friendly locations where Miles (Paul Giamatti) and Jack (Thomas Haden Church) played out their weeklong escape are instantly recognizable. They include the great family-donated Firestone winery, where a picnic in the garden offers glorious vistas across the Santa Ynez Valley; a walk through Brooks Trail to the Curtis winery; and a tasting at the Andrew Murray winery, whose Rhone varietals sparked a lively conversation in the film. With accommodations at The Upham, Southern California's oldest operating hotel and known for its lush gardens and elegant antique furnishings, the Santa Barbara walk is priced at \$1,950 per person, with a single supplement of \$365. Autumn departure is October 5, 2008. Walks range from 5-12 days; a new women's-focused program with Girlfriend Getaways and Mother/Daughter walks adds spa treatments.

Call 800- 249-4620; [www.thewayfarers.com](http://www.thewayfarers.com)

## Newfoundland

**Butterfield & Robinson** offers 90 innovative itineraries in 60 destinations worldwide. Among their North America choices is this one bound for Newfoundland that quirky, isolated Atlantic isle as famous for its fun-loving inhabitants as for its cod fishery. Humpback and minke whales breach against a backdrop of summer skies off Newfoundland's Atlantic shore; this coast boasts the largest concentration of humpback whales in North America.

The vast island—which counts more moose than people in some parts—entered the recent public eye with the novel *The Shipping News* but has hosted B&R hikers for many years. Coastal walking trails are among the best on the continent, while a sunset paddle can find a kayaker face-to-face with a whale.

Other highlights of the B&R journey include a scenic flight over Gros Morne National Park, a traditional mussel "boil up," a visit to the site of the first Viking landing 1,000 years ago and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site; and a stay at The Lighthouse on Quirpon Island—where icebergs and whales regularly feature in the views. The Newfoundland Walking tour is priced at \$7,395 per person double with two departures: July 7 and Aug. 24.

Call 800-678-1147; E-mail [info@butterfield.com](mailto:info@butterfield.com); [www.butterfield.com](http://www.butterfield.com)

## Ireland

Always attuned to the needs of single travelers, **Go Ireland** offers single rooms at a supplement on all tours, plus the option of twin-room shares for members of the same sex, to eliminate single-supplement costs. The new Yoga Week tour combines gentle walking in Ireland's scenic Lakeland region with daily two-hour yoga sessions taught by an experienced yoga instructor. Relaxation, flexibility, concentration and mental calmness are achieved through yoga techniques that cover postures (asanas) and breathing (pranayama) in a program suitable for both beginners and experienced yoga students. Five afternoons of walking take an easy pace of four to five miles daily through Killarney National Park, where the spectacular landscape features lakes, oak forests, waterfalls and boglands, and is home to the native Irish red deer. Departing Sept 1, the seven-night Yoga Week Tour is priced in Euros at €990 or \$1,564 (at presstime) per person double. Included are: seven nights' accommodations at a three-star hotel, full Irish breakfast daily, four-course dinner each evening, packed lunches on the five walking days, a boat trip to Inishfallen Island, the expertise of a superb yoga/walking guide throughout the itinerary and transfers to and from Shannon airport. Go Ireland can also arrange golf, equestrian, fishing and self-drive tours.

Call 800-721-4672; [www.govisitireland.com](http://www.govisitireland.com)

## Montana and the Northwest

Dubbed the Serengeti of the American West, Yellowstone in Montana is the stage for a package from **Austin Lehman Adventures** (ALA). Participants will hike unpopulated backcountry trails, geyser basin boardwalks and mountaintop lookouts; raft the scenic Yellowstone; ride horses high into the Absaroka Mountains alongside 4th generation Montana cowboys. Learn both sides of the bison migration and wolf re-introduction controversies shaping today's Yellowstone, and why Chico Hot Springs Resort is a favorite haunt of Hollywood celebrities. The five-night program costs \$1,998 (\$600 single supplement) and departs on Sept. 7 and 14. ALA has also packaged a corner of the Northwest featuring Washington State's North Cascades National Park, departing Aug. 25 and Sept. 1. The land-only per person, double rate is \$2,398; add \$680 for the single supplement.

Call 800-575-1540; [www.austinlehman.com](http://www.austinlehman.com)

## BEST BUYS

### \$845 NEW YORK

New York City is a year-round favorite. **NYCity and Company** has prepared a three-night Girls Trip Itinerary that is sure to spice up anyone's summer. Entirely commissionable to agents, the group rates are based on a minimum of 10 rooms per night being utilized. From July 24-July 27, women travelers will spend three nights at the **Edison Hotel**, breakfast daily at hotel, roundtrip deluxe motor coach transportation between LGA, JFK, or EWR and Hotel (transfers are based on a minimum of 20 participants per bus), baggage handling and taxes. Among the featured elements are a manicure and pedicure from Lather Spa, a private Sex & the City Tour with "On Location Tours" and a private Garment Center Shopping Tour with Shop Gotham. Participants will see one Broadway show (Legally Blonde or Mamma Mia perhaps), and dine at Patsy's. The trip Includes NYCVP's Free Inclusions: admission per person to choice of the Empire State Building Observatory or the Rockefeller Center Tour; admission per person to the American Museum of Natural History; shopping discounts and vouchers for coupon books and an invitation to be a Special Guest of the CBS Early Show. The net rate is \$845 per person double. Call 877-NYC-TRIP; [www.nyctrip.com](http://www.nyctrip.com)

### \$836 BRITISH COLUMBIA

Latte sipping ladies, turn off your Blackberries, lose your heels, and channel your inner cowgirl with the Elkin Creek Guest Ranch's Cowgirl Bootcamp Package. Available from May 17 through Oct. 15, the Cowgirl Bootcamp package is priced at \$836 per person double and includes three nights of accommodation, all meals, and the Elkin Creek Guest Ranch's complete "Cowgirl Bootcamp" programs. June 13 to 15 and Sept. 12 to 14, the **Elkin Creek Lodge** will host a special ladies-only Cowgirl Bootcamp Weekend with a host of unique programming including the "Cowgirl Cookoff" where ladies will try their hand at an outdoor black box cooking competition... cowboy style. The 19-room Elkin Creek Guest Ranch offers a choice of accommodations in the two-bedroom, traditionally built log cabins, or in the Hill House with 5-bedrooms and a stunning river rock fireplace.

Call 877-346-9378; [www.adventurewestresorts.com](http://www.adventurewestresorts.com)

### \$2495 VIRGINIA

The Tides Inn "Learn to Sail Vacation Package," is where your clients will receive expert sailing instruction while enjoying four nights in a deluxe suite complete with a private slip, perfect for docking a "J Series" yacht. The resort sits on Carters Creek, an estuary bordered by the Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers.

The 2008 Tides Inn Learn to Sail Vacation package includes: four nights' accommodations in Lancaster House, the resort's deluxe suite with adjoining private boat slip; private daily sailing instruction with the experts from the on-site Premier Sailing School, the region's top professional sailing school recognized by the U.S. Sailing Association; successful completion earns them U.S. basic keelboat certification; daily breakfast and lunch for two; and sailing slickers for two.

Priced at \$2,495 for two (must be age six or older for sailing instruction), through October 2008.

Call 800-843-3746 or 804-438-5000; [www.TidesInn.com](http://www.TidesInn.com)

## IN THE NEWS

### For the wild child in you and yours

**EagleRider**, the country's largest motorcycle rental company also offers motorcycle tours — guided, self-drive and adventure. All Eaglerider rentals and tours are commissionable to travel agents at 15%.

The tour department provides VIP service for customers who just want to enjoy the perfect motorcycle tour without having to do the logistical planning involved in discovering the best routes and hotels. Guided motorcycle tours include the services of professional multi-lingual guides, chase vans for passengers and luggage, motorcycle-friendly hotels, a new model Harley-Davidson of choice, airport/hotel transfers, welcome/farewell dinners, and perfectly designed motorcycle touring routes.

Self-drive tours are perfect for independent spirits who want to launch a motorcycle adventure on their own, with friends, or with family. The self-drive packages include a late model motorcycle, hotel accommodations, a detailed day-by-day itinerary (with lots of useful tips), and transfers.

All trips range from three to eight days, or clients can opt for their "dream come true" custom-designed tour.

Eaglerider Tours are offered in many U.S. states as well as in New Zealand, Australia, and Spain.

Call 310-536-6777; [www.eaglerider.com](http://www.eaglerider.com)

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# REPORT FROM SEATRADE: Cruise Industry Remains Profitable Despite Economic Downturn

by Jonathan Siskin

While the daily drumbeat of ominous economic news dominates the headlines, the cruise industry has not yet been negatively impacted and maintains an optimistic outlook about the present and future of the industry. This upbeat attitude was reflected in statements by leading cruise executives at the "State of the Industry" session that highlighted the recent **Seatrade Convention** in Miami Beach that attracted a record 11,000 attendees. Gerald Cahill, CEO of **Carnival Cruise Line**, emphasized that the cruise business has consistently demonstrated resiliency in the face of previous economic downturns.

"We have continued to prosper during some very rough times in the early 1990s and following 9/11, and we feel we are well positioned to withstand an uncertain economy," he said. Political instability abroad is a potential deterrent that has not stopped people from cruising." Cahill went on to emphasize that the value of cruising continues to be a major selling point for the industry.

## Value Pay\$

Other CEOs noted that value for the travel dollar is a prime incentive for consumers to book a cruise vacation since the price of a typical cruise is 20-50% percent less than a comparable land vacation.

According to Adam Goldstein, CEO of **Royal Caribbean International**, "The value message is one of the most powerful assets we have as an industry." This sentiment was echoed by Colin Veetch, CEO of **Norwegian Cruise Line**, who explained that "the fundamentals of the cruise business are still strong, people have more disposable income and are willing to spend it on a vacation." Richard Sasso, CEO of **MSC Cruises USA**, was even more explicit as he bluntly stated that "unless all the oceans of the world dry up you are going to see cruise growth."

Dan Hanrahan, CEO of **Celebrity** and **Azamara Cruises**, cited a February survey by CLIA that 85 percent of its member agents expect sales to be as good or better than last year; 20 percent are even more bullish as they anticipate that this will be their best year ever for cruise bookings. The CLIA survey also indicated that 2008 will be another record year for the industry with 12.8 million expected to set sail; of that total, 10.5 million will be from North America and 2.3 million will come from international markets. Terry Dale, President and CEO of **CLIA**, noted that "CLIA member lines are having greater success in attracting an increasingly diverse population of vacationers of all ages, backgrounds and interests."

## Revitalized Shipyards

Another sign of industry growth is at the shipyards where business is booming and the "If we build them, they will



Gerry Cahill, president and CEO of Carnival Cruise Lines, shows a picture of his predecessor Bob Dickinson, during a lighter moment.



Daniel Hanrahan, marketing committee chair of CLIA and president and CEO of Azamara Cruises and Celebrity Cruises, delivers an introductory address at Seatrade 2008.

come" attitude is alive and well. Eight new ships and two redeployed vessels will join the CLIA fleet this year with a total of more than 23,000 berths. Looking toward the future, the industry is currently contracted to build 43 new ships with over 105,000 berths representing a \$25 billion investment, and between now and 2010 a new ship is slated to enter service every 32 days.

## Europe Still Gaining; Caribbean Still Ranks First

Cruise lines also have the ability to reposition ships from one region to another to take advantage of greater demand. While the Caribbean is still the number one cruise destination with around 50% of the market, there has been a gradual softening in demand recently and 2008 is the first year there will be a decrease in Caribbean capacity. As a result, several cruise lines are deploying more ships to Europe in 2008 which is currently the fastest growing market worldwide. The European market is expanding (it has risen 15 percent in the past year) similar to the growth of the U.S. market in the 1980s and 90s.

Latest statistics compiled by the **European Cruise Council** show that the U.K. is currently number one in Europe with 1.3 million cruisers last year, an 11% rise over 2006 while Italy registered the fastest growth up 23 percent for the year.

## Emerging Profit Centers

Along with Europe, South America and Asia are two emerging destinations attracting more cruise ships this year and load factors are expected to rise substantially in the future. China brought a large contingent to Seatrade and there was considerable buzz concerning the upcoming Olympics in Beijing and the new cruise terminal slated to open in Shanghai in 2009.

Another Seatrade session on upscale cruising was attended by executives representing several luxury lines including **Seabourn**, **Silversea**, **Crystal**, **Regent Seven Seas** and **Oceania**. Again, the emphasis was on the positive as more luxury ships are being built in anticipation of significant growth in the years ahead.

For example, Seabourn plans to introduce three new yacht-like vessels which will more than double the capacity of its fleet. "The baby boomers are the wealthiest population the world has ever seen, and they have disposable income that they want to spend," said Pam Conover, president and CEO of Seabourn. She also noted the importance of customizing the product and personalizing services to keep past guests coming back while attracting new cruisers.

Visit: [www.clia.com](http://www.clia.com)



## Cawanibuka Heads Up Fiji Specialist Program

Regional Director of The Americas, Ili Matatolu recently announced the appointment of **Sera Cawanibuka**

as the new regional coordinator Americas for the **Fiji Matai Specialists Program** for the **Fiji Visitors Bureau, North America** (FVB). In her new position, Cawanibuka's responsibilities will include the implementation of training, overseeing annual awards, organizing Fiji Super Fam trips and developing marketing materials for the 2008-2009

Matai Specialists Program. Cawanibuka will also oversee incentive-based initiatives, Matai newsletter, Bula seminars, and yearly roadshows.

"We feel that Cawanibuka will be an valuable asset to our North America team here in Los Angeles by facilitating our 2008-2009 Matai Specialist Program for North America," says Matatolu.

Starting as a Graduate Trainee at Fiji Islands Visitors Bureau in Nadi, Cawanibuka was quickly promoted to Marketing Office of Emerging Markets and most recently worked as the Sen-

ior Marketing Officer for Emerging Markets.

Cawanibuka is a graduate of the University of the South Pacific with a Bachelor of Arts in Tourism Management & Public Administration.

## Agent Information

For information about becoming a Matai Agent, [www.bulafijinow.com](http://www.bulafijinow.com)

For more information, contact Fiji Islands Visitors Bureau, Americas, in Los Angeles, California. Call 310-568-1616; fax 310 670-2318; E-mail [infodesk@bulafijiamerica.com](mailto:infodesk@bulafijiamerica.com)



## Roberto Cuesta Takes Marketing Reigns at Martinair

Carrier Martinair announced the appointment of **Roberto Cuesta** as their new Director Passenger Sales and

Marketing, the Americas. He assumed his new responsibilities last month. Cuesta began his career at **British Airways** as a Marketing Executive and Customer Service Agent, moving up to Marketing Manager Latin America and the Caribbean. He later went on to be Marketing Manager at **Lan Chile** and **Sportsya.com**.

This was followed by seven years at **South African Airways** as Vice President of Marketing-Americas, where he grew online sales by 5% (\$12 million), administered a \$10 million marketing budget, with responsibilities ranging from marketing, public relations, pricing, distribution, outside sales, and interline departments.

Before joining Martinair, Cuesta was the Account Manager for **The New York Times / nytimes.com**, where he generated \$6 million in advertising revenues while managing more than 60 accounts in various industries from

travel to technology, healthcare and banking.

Cuesta was recognized by the Chicago Direct Marketing Association with a Tempo Award for a Latin American and Caribbean TV ad. Direct Response TV awarded him First Place-TV Ad, Second Place-Direct Mail Piece, and Third Place-Fulfillment Piece.

Cuesta has a Master of Business Administration in Accounting, from Nova Southeastern University and a Bachelor of Science from the University of Miami.

Visit [www.martinair.com](http://www.martinair.com)



## Susanne Nordenbaek Leads VisitDenmark in N.A.

VisitDenmark has recently announced that **Susanne Nordenbaek** has been appointed Director of **VisitDenmark**

**North America**. She has been based in New York since January 2008.

During the transition to her new position as Director, she will continue her role as International Project Manager, Global Marketing Denmark – VisitDenmark's large-scale, major-city tourism marketing project.

Previously, Ms. Nordenbaek was

based in London as Marketing Manager for the Leisure Market at VisitDenmark UK & Ireland.

She began her tenure with VisitDenmark in 1999, working at the head office in Copenhagen. In 2001, Ms. Nordenbaek joined VisitDenmark in London as Marketing Coordinator and was promoted to Marketing Manager in 2002. While working in London, she earned a degree in project management and received a diploma in marketing from the London School of Marketing.

This year, VisitDenmark, Wonderful

Copenhagen and several Danish meeting professionals are busy launching a string of new activities with Copenhagen and the Øresund regions beginning with four unusual themes; "Conquer & Conquered," "Wet & Wild", "18 Holes & 7 courses" and "Fairytales & Tall Stories." Earlier this year, bmi regional launched a new route from Leeds Bradford to Copenhagen on 26th March. This is the Danish capital's 11th UK destination and is the only non-stop air link between Leeds and Copenhagen.

Visit [www.visitdenmark.com](http://www.visitdenmark.com)



# Atlas' Next Step: U.S. Presence

*Atlas was founded as a destination management company (DMC) founded in 1923. As such, Atlas has initiated and created various travel programs in accordance with the global trends. Its owes its continuity to the creativity of various generations of tourism personnel and executives who have contributed to its vast infrastructure and inventory since Atlas participated in the New York Times Travel Show, JAX FAX interviewed Mihovil Prpić, CEO, Atlas Destination Management Company, Croatia.*



**JF: Does ATLAS work as a land operator or a retail tour operator in the U.S. market?**

**Atlas:** Yes, we work as a land operator and ATLAS is the largest DMC and owns its own fleet, which guarantees customer service and strict quality control.

**JF: Are there any companies that represent ATLAS in the U.S.? If not, are you planning to appoint a GSA?**

**Atlas:** At this moment ATLAS is strategically working on a plan to be physically present in the U.S. The plan is to open a Sales office (SMC) Sales Marketing Company by 2009.

Clients can purchase our products direct or through tour operators. ATLAS has a special team that conducts intense market research and are up-to-date with all of the trends. We have leading partners from all parts of the world, Russia, Spain, Ukraine, England, France, Italy etc. with the focus of the U.S. market - Apollo, Capital, Alpitur, Politours, Pax, JTB, Classic Vacations US, Viajes El Corte Ingles, American Express, Carlson Wagonlit, Berg Hansen among others international tour operators.

**JF: What distinguishes ATLAS from its competitors?**

**Atlas:** First Atlas is the largest DMC in the region and is the only DMC in the region that owns its own fleets, which guarantees customer service as well as quality control. ATLAS has created an infrastructure by experts that allows us flexibility and affordability.

**JF: Are there new products you are selling this year?**

**Atlas:** We have a fantastic product that will be launched by this summer. It is a catamaran that can hold 400 pax which will start from Dubrovnik-Montenegro-Albania and back to Dubrovnik all in one day. We are proud to say that we are the first company and the only company in the region to have this new exciting product. New products for incentives: Renaissance Treasure hunt in Dubrovnik, Pirates Rebellion, Hot-Air Ballooning for team building, back to nature in the Konavle countryside, Cooking lessons - Mediterranean cuisine, Folklore dance course.

**JF: What is the agent commission base?**

**Atlas:** We sell at NET RATES, so agents are free to negotiate pricing and commissions.

**JF: How many agents are in your database and how many count you as a preferred supplier?**

**Atlas:** We currently have over 2,500 partners including agencies in our database and have a few agent groups that see us as their preferred supplier.

**JF: Any trends to be on the look out for?**

**Atlas:** The tourism industry in Croatia is growing rapidly each year with a focus from the U.S. Croatia is a country of fascinating diversity, rich in history and culture, with unspoiled nature, year-round destination. Environmental consciousness is among the trends of themed special packages such as "Green Meetings" and "The Future is Green."

**JF: What do you consider ATLAS' best selling point?**

**Atlas:** We maintain a wide range of professional experts on staff that guarantee quality and customer service. Atlas' best-selling packages are escorted tours through Croatia, Slovenia and neighboring countries.

**JF: Can you tell us about some of your new marketing campaigns for 2008, 2009?**

**Atlas:** We generally introduce our products and services at trade shows. We feature our products and services through our website and have a Sales Development Department that contacts and educates potential partners direct, through a one on one approach, which gives the partner a better understanding of the destination.

**JF: How can travel agents learn more about your company...do you offer seminars and workshops?**

**Atlas:** We have updated our website and we are present at all major trade shows in cooperation with the Croatian National Tourist Office. We offer in-house seminars and we also have a special educational team that educates travel agents throughout the world.

**JF: What is the impression you would like visitors to take home after they travel with ATLAS?**

**Atlas:** We would like clients to return home with an unforgettable and pleasant experience, knowing they will tell everyone their wonderful experience so they will come back with their family and friends.

Visit [www.atlas-croatia.com](http://www.atlas-croatia.com)

## Report from: Travel South USA Showcase and Florida Huddle

By Kathy Feeney

Two premiere travel trade shows, **Travel South Showcase 2008** and **Florida Huddle 2008**, recently paired suppliers and buyers to promote tourism in the Southeast and Florida.

### Travel South Showcase 2008

The 26th annual Travel South USA Showcase was held in Biloxi March 1-4. "Hosting Travel South Showcase 2008 provided Mississippi an effective vehicle to share with the industry how the Mississippi Gulf Coast is recovering from the impact of Hurricane Katrina," said Craig Ray, Director, Mississippi Development Authority, Tourism Division. "Part of the measure of success of an event such as Showcase is the buzz generated by the participants. The feedback has been very positive and encouraging. We appreciate the tremendous support we have received from the industry in our rebuilding efforts." More than 600 southeastern tourism participants - including 148 travel buyers, 25 travel service providers, 24

press members, 12 state tourism offices and 274 suppliers - attended the event. One-on-one meetings were interspersed with social and informal networking opportunities including pre and post fairs. Other events included a welcome party hosted by the **Mississippi Development Authority Tourism Division** at the **Biloxi Hard Rock Hotel & Casino** and a Mardi Gras hosted by **Louisiana North** at the host hotel, the **Beau Rivage Resort & Casino** in Biloxi.

Travel South USA's 2009 Showcase is slated for April 4 through 8 at the **Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center** in Kissimmee.

Visit [www.travelsouthusa.com](http://www.travelsouthusa.com)

### Florida Huddle 2008

The 32nd annual Florida Huddle ran Sunday, January 27 through Tuesday, January 29 in Tampa. After an opening reception Sunday at Busch Gardens followed by a party at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, 205 registered domestic and international

buyers met Monday for one-on-one appointments with 178 booth holders representing 287 tourism choices. First-time buyers from China and Italy were among Florida Huddle 2008's nine new buyer company attendees. The event was covered by 44 international trade trade journalists. The 2008 Florida Huddle featured a press conference by Lynn Warren, president of **Florida Huddle**; Steve Hayes, executive vice president for **Tampa Bay and Company**; Bud Nocera, president and chief executive officer for **Visit Florida**; Bill Lupfer, president and chief executive officer for the **Florida Attractions Association**; and Gary Sain, president and chief executive officer for the **Orange/Orlando Convention and Visitors Bureau**. Other Florida Huddle 2008 events included a dinner cruise from the Port of Tampa on the Yacht Starship.

Florida Huddle 2009 will be in Orlando Feb. 1 through 3 at the Caribe Royale Resort and Conference Center in Orlando.

Visit [www.floridahuddle.com](http://www.floridahuddle.com)

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## Love Letter from New Orleans

By Kathy Feeney

There are places to visit. And then there is New Orleans. At once spiritual and ribald, antique and artsy, spicy and sweet, New Orleans is a savory stew of sights, sounds, flavors and feelings. The clip clop of horses pulling carriages through the French Quarter mix with the soulful sounds of street musicians. Zydeco and rock music blare from the bars on Bourbon Street as the shrill whistles of trains trudging through the city blend with the baritone toots of steamboats sailing by on the Mississippi. This is the city of Mardi Gras, beignets, chicory coffee, Bananas Foster, Hurricanes (as in the drink, merci beaucoup) jambalaya, and jazz. The spirit of New Orleans makes you want to genuflect out of gratitude one minute and dance until dawn the next. There is and always will be only one New Orleans. And that is reason enough for the city's infamous adage: "Laissez Les Bon Temps Roulez!" - "Let the Good Times Roll!"

### Big Easy Primer

For an effortless introduction to the Big Easy, check out **Gray Line Tours**. The company's "Super City" offers a narrated overview of the city including a ride through the Central Garden District and a stop at a cemetery. Another good choice is Gray Line's "Hurricane Katrina Tour."

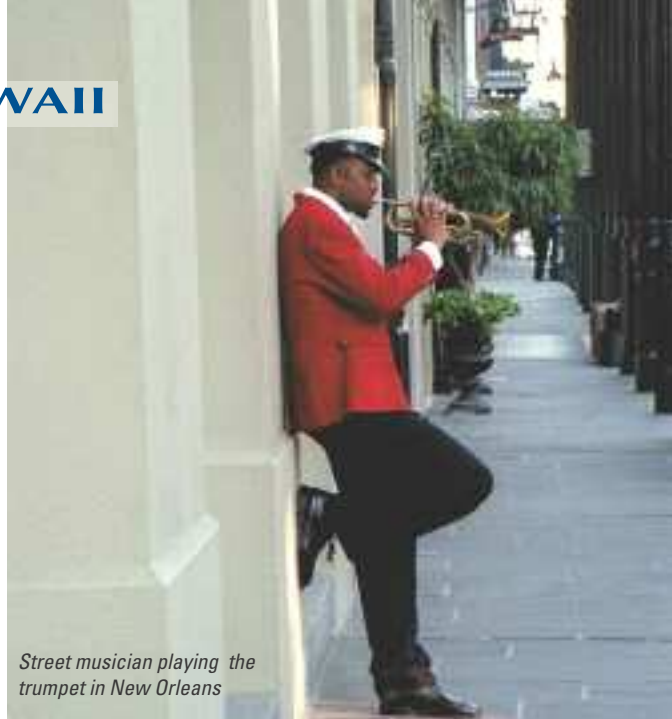
The tour is not for "gawkers," according to one guide, but for visitors who want to understand what happened during Hurricane Katrina. Participants will learn why the city was built on the Mississippi River and how the levees were breached. The tour travels through neighborhoods affected by the hurricane, such as Lakeview, Gentilly, New Orleans East, St. Bernard and the Ninth Ward.

Visit [www.graylineneworleans.com](http://www.graylineneworleans.com)

For more things to do in New Orleans check out [www.foreverneworleans.com](http://www.foreverneworleans.com) and [www.24nola.com](http://www.24nola.com)

### Staying There

JAX FAX stayed at The Maison Dupuy Hotel located on the corner of Rue Toulouse and Burgundy streets in the French Quarter. With wrought iron balconies overlooking the boutique hotel's tropical courtyard complete with a fountain and a heated swimming pool, the Maison Dupuy is a luxurious, yet functional respite for visitors and business travelers. Amenities include a 24-hour fitness room, valet parking, room service, voice mail and Internet access. The hotel's award-winning restaurant, Dominique's, features fine wines and a masterpiece menu. The Maison Dupuy offers a discount and an incentive to travel agents. According to Dana Crabtree, Reservations/Revenue Manager, "We will offer travel agents a special incentive (20% commission) to book during our slower periods and special discounts for themselves when they are visiting New Orleans." Travel agents can call Crabtree direct at 504-648-6115. Rates at the Maison Dupuy Hotel vary with the season. During peak season



Street musician playing the trumpet in New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS CVB

in spring and fall rates, per room per night range from \$129 to \$239; summer season runs June through September with rates per room per night ranging from \$89 to \$169.

Call 800-535-9177 [www.MaisonDupuy.com](http://www.MaisonDupuy.com)

### Voluntourism in the Big Easy

For your clients interested in combining a trip to the Big Easy with volunteer opportunities, the Marriott and Renaissance Hotels of New Orleans have created the "Big Easy Spirit to Serve" program. Rooms are priced seasonally and range from \$149 to \$269 per night, based on double occupancy. The program was kicked off in April as part of National Volunteer Month, but the offer is valid year-round. Here are the details: Fifty dollars per night of the guests' room rate will be contributed to New Orleans Habitat for Humanity to help in the revitalization of the Big Easy. Once reservations are confirmed, the Care Concierge at Marriott and Renaissance Hotels will provide recommendations of local volunteer organizations for guests who want to help in the rebuilding of New Orleans. Recommendations will be sent via email and the "voluntourists" will be supplied with breakfast for two to "keep them fueled throughout the day."

"The Big Easy Spirit To Serve" program is available at the **New Orleans Marriott, JW Marriott New Orleans, Marriott New Orleans at the Convention Center, Renaissance Pere Marquette** and the **Renaissance Arts Hotel**.

Call 866.530.3763 and ask for rate code XXAU or visit [www.neworleans.marriott.com](http://www.neworleans.marriott.com)

### Getting There

Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport offers 132 daily departures to 37 cities on 10 airlines, including **Air Tran, American, Continental, Delta Air Lines, jetBlue, Northwest, Southwest and United**.

Call 504-464-3547; [www.flymsy.com](http://www.flymsy.com)

For New Orleans Fams and Commissionable Packages Information, call 800-672-6124; [www.neworleanscvb.com](http://www.neworleanscvb.com) and click on the "Just for Travel Agents" section for listings of commissionable packages and group fams.



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## BEST BUYS

### \$1865 HAWAII

Hanalei Colony is offering a variety of packages and special values for 2008, including its popular Explore Napali Package designed for active travelers. The Explore Napali Package encourages travelers to explore Kauai's spectacular north shore while making their home base at the property. The package includes five or seven nights accommodations in a two-bedroom Ocean View condo, a two-hour guided tour of historic Limahuli Garden, a kayak for a day on the Hanalei River, an in-room or beach-front massage for two, a guidebook on hiking Kauai's trails and a special hiking gift.

The 2008 Explore Napali five-night package price is \$1,865 during low season (through May 31 and September 9 thru December 20) and \$1,990 for high season travel (June 1 through September 8 and December 21 through January 4, 2009). The seven-night package price is \$2,150 for low season and \$2,300 during high season.

For travelers over age 65, Hanalei Colony offers a 20% discount off rack rates year-round. Applicable to all room categories, the seventh night is free for every six paid nights at Hanalei Colony.

Call 800-628-3004; E-mail [aloha@hcr.com](mailto:aloha@hcr.com); [www.hcr.com](http://www.hcr.com)

### \$475 COLORADO

For those who are seeking to experience luxury and European charm without cringing at the currency exchange booth, **The Arrabelle at Vail Square**, the newest RockResort, is the perfect solution for summer travel.

This summer, leave your passports at home and enjoy a trip that is reminiscent of Europe, with a savings of over 40% from The Arrabelle's winter rates. From June 13 through September 27, great summer options are available through "The Arrabelle Bed & Breakfast Package." Summer rates for "The Arrabelle Bed & Breakfast Package" start at \$475 per night based on double occupancy. This package includes deluxe accommodations at The Arrabelle at Vail Square and breakfast for two at Centre V restaurant. The Arrabelle at Vail Square opened its doors at the foot of Vail Mountain in January as part of Vail's revitalization. The first luxury resort to open in Vail in over 25 years, The Arrabelle is designed to be reminiscent of a Bavarian alpine village.

Call 866-662-7625; [www.rockresorts.com](http://www.rockresorts.com)

### \$539 NEW YORK

The newly restored **Black Sheep Inn** in Hammondsport near Upstate New York's "Crystal City" of Corning offers two packages, when paired with the Annual Corning Glass Sale, create an opportunity for a weekend country getaway. Hosts Debbie Meritsky and Marc Rotman restored the town's historic Octagon House, one of the only remaining in the nation that is open for guests, to create a unique accommodation experience. A two-night Chocolate's All the Rage package from \$639 per person double, including homemade chocolate.

Visit [www.stayblacksheepinn.com](http://www.stayblacksheepinn.com)

WWW.JAXFAX.COM

## IN THE NEWS

### Collette Explorations in New England

**Collette Vacations** has developed a new program that explores New England's Coastline in June, July, and August. The nine-day journey is part of its newest product line, Explorations by Collette which features 16-24 passengers only, and promises travelers more personal experiences. On New England's Coastline, passengers will spend a day exploring Block Island, an idyllic paradise just off the coast of Rhode Island; savor a traditional lobster feast in Portland, Maine; and visit Pineland Farms in New Gloucester, Maine, where travelers will get an inside look at the farm, creamery, and equestrian center.

Other destinations featured on this tour include Newport, Cape Cod, Gloucester, Boothbay Harbor, and Kennebunkport.

"Each year, thousands of tourists flock to New England to visit the beaches, quaint seaside towns, and picturesque coastline," said Alyce Pagliarini, Collette Vacations' product manager for New England. For instance, while in Newport, our travelers will visit the famous Belcourt Castle – a 60-room 'summer cottage' resplendent with 13th century European stained glass, Renaissance armor, and 17th century paintings.

Passengers will gain insight into 19th century aristocracy and will leave with a better understanding of how their lifestyles influenced New England."

Visit [www.collettevacations.com](http://www.collettevacations.com)

### Canadian Rail Deals

Clients traveling in VIA 1 (first) class can now enjoy deep discounts along **VIA Rail's Windsor to Québec City Corridor** service. With fares starting at \$79 (the exchange being virtually equal to the U.S. dollar) travelers can book a ticket that includes complimentary meal and beverage service and access to relaxing Panorama Lounges located in many Corridor stations. Sample fares include travel from Toronto to Montréal for \$149, representing a discount of over 30%. Pay-for-demand wireless Internet service is also available on-board the Corridor. Space must be booked at least one day prior to departure. Visit [viarail.ca/ultimate](http://viarail.ca/ultimate)

Cash in on Comfort Class Deals on the Corridor: Travelers can also benefit from a special one day advance purchase of Comfort Class fares of \$59 valid between Toronto and either Montréal or Ottawa for travel completed by May 31, 2008, as well as our existing advance purchase fares within the Ontario (Windsor)-Québec corridor.

Seniors – Bring a Friend for FREE: Year-round, VIA's Senior Companion Fare allows passengers age 60 and over who purchase a ticket at the regular senior's fare to bring along a companion – of any age – for free when traveling in Comfort Class or at 75% sleeper/premium class fares. Tickets must be purchased at least five days prior to departure and are subject to availability. Visit [viarail.ca/2for1](http://viarail.ca/2for1).

Call 888-842-7245; [www.viarail.ca/offers](http://www.viarail.ca/offers)

MAY 2008

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## EGYPT

### Cairo-Aswan-Deluxe 3 nights Nile cruise-Luxor-Alexandria-Cairo

Departures: Nov 29 to Dec 10, 2008; Jan 24 to Feb 4, 2009; April 25 to May 6, 2009. Land Only \$1250. 11 Days / 10 nights. Includes all transfers per itinerary, superior first class hotel accommodations, daily buffet breakfasts and dinners. 3 nights full board in Nile Cruise. All sightseeing tours as specified in day by day itinerary posted online. English speaking tour guide-licensed by the Egypt Ministry of Tourism. Local transportation by Deluxe A/C brand new motorcoach, all admission fees & service charges, all hotels inspections, all local taxes. Spouse/companion welcomed.

FloUSA: register at [www.flo-usa.com](http://www.flo-usa.com) or call 888-435-6872

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Aegean Mediterranean Cruises & Tours 888.968.0335 [aegean@aol.com](mailto:aegean@aol.com)  
[www.aegeanmedtours.com](http://www.aegeanmedtours.com)

## INDIA

### Singapore, Delhi (Arrive), Agra, Jaipur, Mandawa, Chennai, Pondichery, Mamallapuram

11 days Price per agent on twin sharing: \$795 + taxes per person. Includes: Round Trip Vancouver/Singapore international air and domestic Most meals, All accommodation on twin/single basis with breakfast. All transfers, sightseeing, excursions as per the itinerary in exclusive chauffeur driven air conditioned vehicle. Welcome tour briefing. Elephant ride in Jaipur (Subject to availability). 01 Dinner at Mandawa. Domestic and International airfare. All meals at Chennai – Mammalpuram & Pondichery only. Service of English speaking tourist guide at Mamallapuram. Services of a qualified local English Speaking guides for sightseeing. Hotel and other site visits.  
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## INDIA, NEPAL

### Delhi, Jaipur, Taj Mahal, Agra, Kathmandu, Patan & Bhaktapur

12 days Luxury Fam: \$2667. Spouse extra supplement. May 30, 2008, Delhi, Jaipur Pink City, Taj Mahal, Agra, Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur Nepal. Includes, airfares, hotels, daily buffet breakfast, transfers, tours guides and Elephant Ride tour in Jaipur, Taj Mahal by sunrise. Airport and security taxes extra. 4 days Extension to Kashmir, June 9-12, 2008.

Himalayan International Tours: 212-564-5164, Fax: 212-564-2188; [www.himalayantours.com/India.Fam.tour.html](http://www.himalayantours.com/India.Fam.tour.html)

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# IndustryEvents

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT INFORMATION
May 12-15	Expotur	San Jose Costa Rica	<a href="http://www.expotur.com">www.expotur.com</a>
May 13 / 14	SATA 2008	W. Plains NY/Boston, MA	<a href="http://www.sata-usa.com">www.sata-usa.com</a>
May 15-18	Travel Trade's Cruise-A-Thon	Vancouver, Canada	<a href="http://www.ttshows.com">www.ttshows.com</a>
May 19-23	33rd Africa Travel Assoc. Congress	Arusha, Tanzania	<a href="mailto:info@africatravelassociation.org">info@africatravelassociation.org</a>
June 10 / 11	SATA 2008	Portland, OR/Seattle, WA	<a href="http://www.sata-usa.com">www.sata-usa.com</a>
June 15-18	Vacation.Com Annual Conference	Las Vegas	<a href="http://www.vacation.com">www.vacation.com</a>
June 21 to 25	Caribbean Tourism Summit	Washington, DC	<a href="http://www.caribbeantravel.com">www.caribbeantravel.com</a>
July 11-20	15th Annual Dive Fest	East Coast, USA	<a href="http://www.discoverdominica.com">www.discoverdominica.com</a>
Sept. 7-9	The Trad Show	Orlando, FL	<a href="http://www.thetradeshow.org">www.thetradeshow.org</a>
Oct 13-16	ITB Asia 2008	Singapore	<a href="http://www.discoveramericapavilion.com">www.discoveramericapavilion.com</a>
Oct 14 / 15	SATA 2008	Chicago IL/Indianapolis IN	<a href="http://www.sata-usa.com">www.sata-usa.com</a>
Oct TBA	ABAV	Rio de Janeiro	<a href="http://www.discoveramericapavilion.com">www.discoveramericapavilion.com</a>
Nov TBA	CITM 2008	Shanghai, China	<a href="http://www.discoveramericapavilion.com">www.discoveramericapavilion.com</a>
Nov 10-13	World Travel Market 2008	London, UK	<a href="http://www.discoveramericapavilion.com">www.discoveramericapavilion.com</a>
Nov 15-19	2008 NTA Annual Convention	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	<a href="http://www.ntaonline.com">www.ntaonline.com</a>
Nov 18 / 19	SATA 2008	Atlanta GA, Savannah, GA	<a href="http://www.sata-usa.com">www.sata-usa.com</a>

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